



# THE GREENBELT IN NIAGARA REGION

**Municipalities have the primary role in protecting and enhancing the Greenbelt for the long term** by supporting agriculture, working to restore natural systems, and managing growth in a way to reduce sprawl through their land-use planning processes.

*9 in 10 Ontarians agree that the Greenbelt is one of the most important contributions to the future of the province!*

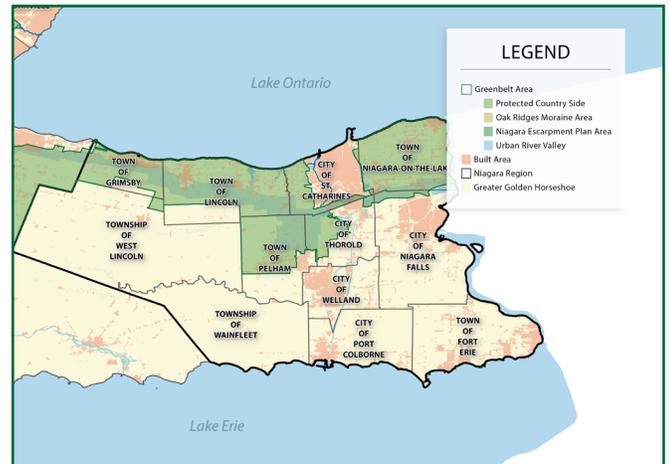
Ontario's Greenbelt is the **world's largest permanently protected greenbelt**. The Greenbelt is much more than a provincially legislated land-use plan – it is Ontario's solution for **fresh air, clean water, climate resilience, and a thriving economy with local food and healthy outdoor recreation**. The Greenbelt includes the best farmland, the region's major river systems, environmentally sensitive natural heritage, and 38 rural communities including towns and villages within Niagara Region.

The Greenbelt is Ontario's insurance policy for health and prosperity in a rapidly growing region, including **over 2 million acres of land at the center of the Greater Golden Horseshoe**. The Greenbelt Plan encompasses the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and together they work to protect our farmland and natural heritage while preventing urban sprawl. They complement the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which guides how growth should be accommodated in the region.

## The Greenbelt in Niagara Region

*Quick facts about the Greenbelt in Niagara Region:*

- Significant features of the Greenbelt in Niagara Region include the Niagara Escarpment and Twelve Mile Creek.
- Over **90% of all Ontario tender fruit production** is based in the Niagara Peninsula<sup>1</sup>.
- **Value of the Greenbelt's natural capital in Niagara Region: \$281 million**<sup>2</sup>.
- **Municipal tax revenue** from Greenbelt economic activity: **\$59 million**<sup>3</sup>.
- **1,827 active farms** in Niagara Region in 2016<sup>4</sup>, a majority of which are in the Greenbelt.
- **\$838 million in gross farm receipts in 2016**<sup>5</sup>.
- Approximately **23,000 jobs are dependent on the Greenbelt** in Niagara Region<sup>6</sup>.
- **\$1.41 billion** total regional agriculture GDP<sup>7</sup>.
- Agricultural land plays a critical role in the sequestration and storage of carbon – from 71 to 90 tonnes of carbon per hectare<sup>8</sup>.
- **Niagara Region lost 9.3% of its farms and almost 2.1% of its farmland from 2011-2016**. No prime agricultural land in the Greenbelt has been lost to redesignation<sup>9</sup>.



For all maps of the Greenbelt's geography, boundaries and land use plans, visit [www.greenbelt.ca/maps](http://www.greenbelt.ca/maps)

**Public support for the Greenbelt has never been higher:**

**9 in 10 Ontarians agree that it is one of the most important contributions to the future of the province.**

Show your support by signing the Greenbelt Pledge - a commitment to ensuring permanent protection of the Greenbelt in order to protect water, natural heritage and agricultural systems throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe region.

# TAKE THE PLEDGE!



## The Greenbelt is good for municipal finances! It lowers costs and liability.

The Greenbelt naturally provides \$3.2 billion<sup>10</sup> in eco-services each year, much of which would require costly and inefficient infrastructure to replace – costs largely borne by municipalities.

These eco-services include flood protection by wetlands, water capture and filtration by forested watersheds, air pollution absorption by trees, and climate regulation resulting from carbon storage in trees, plants, and soils. In addition, compact growth off the protected Greenbelt lands saves infrastructure costs and helps keep taxes lower<sup>11</sup>.

## There's plenty of room for more housing without building on the Greenbelt, and "there is no evidence that the Greenbelt Plan contributes to rising home prices."<sup>12</sup>

A study by RBC and the Pembina Institute determined that "Roughly 52,000 ha of land are still available to accommodate growth beyond 2031 without any incursion into the protected Greenbelt<sup>13</sup>." Further, "Based on municipal projections, 81% of the land available for development will still be unused in 2031. Therefore, Provincial land use policies, including the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, do not restrict growth."<sup>14</sup>

## The Greenbelt helps make Niagara Region a great place to live, work, play, and do business.

The Greenbelt in Niagara Region is home to significant natural, rural, and agricultural systems and resources that must be protected, like the Niagara Escarpment, as well as agri-business, conservation areas and recreational opportunities.

Municipalities can protect the Greenbelt's farmland and natural systems in the long term by meeting or exceeding their Growth Plan targets as they plan to manage future population growth in their upcoming **Municipal Comprehensive Reviews and Official Plan Reviews**.

### Quick facts about the Greenbelt:

- **9.1 million people** live within 20 km of the Greenbelt - 1.7 million in the Greenbelt itself<sup>15</sup>.
- **161,000 jobs** are dependent on the Greenbelt<sup>16</sup>.
- The Greenbelt's **economic impact is \$9.1 billion** annually<sup>17</sup>.
- The **recreational value** of the Greenbelt's land is **\$2.1 billion** per year<sup>18</sup>.
- **533,000 acres of lakes, wetlands, rivers, and streams** in the Greenbelt give us fresh, clean drinking water and **save \$360 million in clean water supply for households**<sup>19</sup>.
- **750,000 acres of farmed land** make it the predominant type of land in the Greenbelt.
- The Greenbelt contributes **\$18 million per year in air quality services provided by the Greenbelt's tree canopy**<sup>20</sup>.

Learn more about the Municipal Leaders for the Greenbelt and get involved by visiting [www.greenbeltleaders.org](http://www.greenbeltleaders.org).

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## Bibliography

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