

SPRAWL VS. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES:

Securing our Local Food and Freshwater Future

Southern Ontario is blessed with great farmland and natural water features like wetlands, streams, lakes and moraines. Properly protected, they can continue providing vital locally grown food and fresh water, especially as the climate crisis worsens. We can thank the Greenbelt for providing an important level of protection. Unfortunately, much of the farmland and many streams and wetlands in and around the Greenbelt are now being threatened by new pressure for sprawl-style development.

Some want us to believe we have no choice but to sacrifice our food and freshwater future for new development. They are wrong.

We can meet all of our housing needs, the expected growth in population and preserve the precious farmland and water features in and around the Greenbelt. This factsheet shows you how.

The Fresh Water Benefits of Sustainable Communities:



Protect Streams, Moraines and Wetlands



Protect land that cleans the water



Rely on existing sewage treatment plants and water sources

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: THE FRIENDS OF FRESH WATER AND LOCAL FOOD

They are a greener and more climate resilient communities that:

- Avoid urban expansion by using under-utilized spaces within existing towns and cities;
- Provide a healthy mix of affordable housing types (bachelors to 4+ bedrooms; townhouses to 6-storey buildings) to suit different stages of life and incomes;
- Maintain farmland close to where people live;
- Maintain pollinator habitat which is vital for better crop yields;
- Maintain wetlands, streams, rivers and other lands vital for filtering and storing fresh water;
- Rely on existing water sources and sewage treatment facilities, therefore relieving pressure for new infrastructure.

Sprawl: The Enemy of Fresh Water and Local Food

Sprawl is a 1950s recipe for building cities that:



Bulldozes large amounts of farmland, natural areas and precious water sources, often on the edge of towns and cities but also far removed from existing towns and cities;



Builds isolated homes in neighbourhoods far away from where people work and shop;



Destroys farmland and pollinator habitat, further separating farms from where people live and reducing crop yields;



Destroys wetlands and threatens the health of streams, rivers and other lands necessary to clean and store fresh water;



Puts new pressure on rural wells, rivers and lakes by increasing water demand and sewage outflow.

Want to learn more about Sustainable Communities and sprawl? Visit greenbeltalliance.ca





CLEAN WATER, LOCAL FOOD, AND THE GREENBELT

The Local Food Benefits of Sustainable Communities:



Protect Precious Farmland



Keep Farms close to where we live



Protect Pollinators and their Habitat



Help our Farmers

In 2005, the Province realized the importance of preserving our precious and finite water resources and farmland and created the Greenbelt to permanently protect 2 million acres of some of southern Ontario's best farmland and natural heritage features. This action leaves future generations with a huge natural legacy that will become increasingly important to get us through the climate crisis.

Unfortunately sprawl development devours farmland, wetlands, streams, rivers and other precious water resources around the Greenbelt (see Factsheet: Sprawl, the Enemy of the Greenbelt). However, by better using spaces in existing towns and cities, sustainable communities protect the Greenbelt's farmland and water resources.

HELP ENSURE A FRESH WATER FUTURE AND SECURE OUR FOOD SUPPLY: GET SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BUILT!

Right now, many municipalities are discussing where they will build homes for future residents. Many developers want sprawl that devours natural spaces and farmland and pollutes fresh water and clean air in and around the Greenbelt. **But, more and more local community members are pushing back against sprawl and demanding more farm-friendly, water-friendly and Greenbelt-friendly sustainable communities.**

Contact your local Councillor today and let them know you do NOT support more sprawl. Instead, demand climate-friendly, **sustainable communities** that are walkable, transit-focused communities with a variety of affordable housing options for different incomes and stages of life.

Want more information on sustainable communities, farmland and water resources?

Environmental Defence and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture: **"Farmland at risk: How better land use planning could help ensure a healthy future for agriculture"** <https://tinyurl.com/8rwdf89m>

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