



# SMART GROWTH

## Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

*For Immediate Release*

### **Province Announces Plans to Protect Important Water Resources, Smart Growth Waterloo Region Encourages Local Citizens to Speak Up in Upcoming Consultations**

*Waterloo Region, Ontario* - Smart Growth Waterloo Region is pleased to see the province release plans this morning that could expand the Greenbelt beyond the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area, including into Waterloo Region.

Over the next 90 days, consultations will be held in Waterloo, Guelph, Brantford, and other Ontario communities. The provincial government is looking for feedback from the public on these important plans to protect the important water resources we all depend on from the growing pressures of development.

“Our water is increasingly under threat from development and climate change,” states Kevin Thomason from Smart Growth Waterloo Region. “Stronger protections for our essential water sources will help to ensure the resilience and the future success of our communities, particularly with the rapid growth that Waterloo Region is experiencing.”

The Greenbelt permanently protects lands from urbanization, helps to ensure the integrity of our agricultural system and natural eco-systems, and is one of the largest and most significant in the world. Protecting water in wetlands, streams, headwaters and groundwater recharge areas such as the moraines is critical to providing communities dependent on groundwater like ours with abundant, clean, and secure drinking water supplies.

Local community and environmental groups have worked for years to secure provincial support for and reinforcement of our local water and natural heritage protections such as our Regional Official Plan, Protected Countryside and Countryside Line designations.

“Waterloo Region has lead with numerous environmental protection initiatives over the past decade. As long as the strongest of local and provincial rules prevail, an expansion of the Greenbelt to the Waterloo and Paris-Galt Moraines will provide multiple layers of

protection for these critical groundwater recharge areas,” says Mike Boos, a co-founder of Smart Growth Waterloo Region. “Our members have long advocated for vibrant urban centers surrounded by thriving countryside and this announcement today provides a proposal that could strengthen that balance.”

Polling consistently shows extremely strong support for the Greenbelt with the vast majority of Ontarians agreeing that the Greenbelt is one of the most important initiatives for the future of the province, helping to protect farmland, rural communities, water sources, and natural greenspace.

Smart Growth Waterloo Region anticipates that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs will host a consultation and town hall meeting in Waterloo Region sometime in January or February during this 90 day consultation period. We encourage local citizens as well as local organizations to speak up and provide feedback to the government supporting this important water protection initiative. To learn more please visit [smartgrowthwaterloo.ca](http://smartgrowthwaterloo.ca) or the government website at [ontario.ca/greenbelt](http://ontario.ca/greenbelt).

Smart Growth Waterloo Region is a grassroots group started in 2013 by community members to raise awareness and support for local and provincial smart growth policies.

- 30 -

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