

**Greenbelt Foundation Interim Report  
Grand River Environmental Network  
Building Support for Greenbelt Friendly Local Planning and Greenbelt Expansion in the Grand  
River Watershed**

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**1) What has been accomplished to date? Main Activities, Important Outputs and Outcomes**

Our main activities have focussed as planned on:

- 1) Ensuring Greenbelt-friendly policies and sustainability in our Regional Official Plan Review currently underway, and
- 2) Ensuring broad participation and support for any potential expansion of the Provincial Greenbelt in the Grand River Watershed.

1) With regards to our area MCR's we have:

a) Raised awareness and encouraged public participation in numerous key meetings on Official Plans and community events at both the municipal and regional level. This has included:

- Regional Council Delegations
- Regional Committee Presentations
- Municipal Council Delegations

b) Created an alliance of community groups and organizations interested in Regional Official Plans and good governance. Held regular meetings, sent regular e-mails, updates, and communications to citizens and community groups to collaborate, raise awareness, educate and encourage participation. This has included:

- Regular meetings and updates
- Extensive communication between dozens of area non-profit and community organizations
- Extensive communications from each group to their membership

c) Met with staff and elected officials to increase environmental awareness and sustainability, improve environmental outcomes, and ensure more opportunities for public participation in Official Plans. This has included:

- Meetings with Regional Staff, the Regional Chair, and Councillors
- Meetings with Municipal Staff, Mayors and Councillors

d) Ensured recommended MCR scenarios have a strong environmental, intensification and sustainability focus. This has included:

- Working with planning schools, area universities, professors and planning experts to ensure the best possible planning and processes
- Outreach and education for community groups on good planning fundamentals

e) Worked to ensure strong public awareness, engagement, and involvement in the ongoing MCR processes. This has included:

- Worked with area newspapers, radio stations, television stations and other media to increase public awareness and involvement in MCR activities
- Webinars, presentations and other online meetings to educate and inform citizens, groups, staff, and elected officials
- Considerable social media and online efforts to inform and provide a steady stream of information to our communities

2) With regards to the potential expansion of the Greenbelt in SouthWestern Ontario we have:

a) Raised awareness and encouraged public participation in the provincial Greenbelt expansion consultation

b) Help to create an alliance of community and environmental groups interested in Greenbelt expansion across the Grand River Watershed and participated in weekly planning meetings.

c) Met with a wide variety of officials, advocates, organizations and community groups to promote Greenbelt expansion and stewardship. This has included:

- Meetings and Moraine Tours with MPP's
- Meetings and Moraine Tours with Regional and Municipal Councillors
- Meetings and Moraine Tours with Staff
- Meetings and Moraine Tours with Community Groups and Organizations

d) Collaborated with numerous area organizations to help develop a strategy, plan and mapping for Greenbelt expansion in the Grand River Watershed, then held a very successful launch event that garnered significant media coverage. This included:

- MPPs from 3 political parties in attendance
- Local and Regional elected officials in attendance
- Strong public participation
- Numerous newspaper articles and television coverage

e) Ongoing public awareness, engagement and involvement on the need and opportunity for Greenbelt expansion. This has included:

- Extensive social media engagement including Facebook and Twitter
- Considerable coverage on websites and through e-mail
- Webinars and education activities to our communities
- Considerable media outreach and engagement

## **What are the key outcomes that have contributed to the success of the project to date?**

### **1) Municipal Comprehensive Review/Official Plans**

Waterloo Region has traditionally lead with visionary planning ideals and has pioneered numerous new planning concepts here in Canada. Our community has numerous groups focussed on planning issues such as Smart Growth Waterloo Region and Hold The Line Waterloo Region that we have been able to partner and engage with for impressive outcomes.

Issues and concerns with the current ROP planning process has helped to generate considerable media attention and public involvement that we have been able to leverage to create a broad alliance of community groups working towards similar goals of sustainability, environmental protection, public engagement, community consultation and the best possible planning outcomes.

It has been impressive to see so many hundreds of citizens in our community speak up and become involved in the Municipal Comprehensive Review planning process. Our community will be so much stronger and long-term outcomes will be so much better because of this strong participation and collaboration.

### **2) Greenbelt Stewardship and Expansion**

The high environmental awareness in Guelph, Waterloo, and other parts of the Grand River Watershed along with repeated efforts to have these areas included in the Greenbelt has created an ideal network of community groups and organizations that we have been able to pull together to work towards common goals for Greenbelt expansion.

While not easy to have such large, diverse teams working on things the results have been powerful and our efforts continue to achieve impressive results across our vast region.

## **What challenges did you face?**

One of the primary challenges faced has been the ongoing pandemic and the limiting of public activities and events. The pandemic has also impacted timelines for the Official Plan processes.

As well, the provincial government has provided little information with regards to any timing or next steps on potential Greenbelt expansion which make it difficult to anticipate or plan.

**What is the critical focus for the work moving forward and how will challenges, current or foreseen be overcome?**

Our focus continues unchanged on both the MCR and Greenbelt expansion activities. We have had tremendous outcomes and success to date and will continue to move forward as planned – hopefully with the same impact and positive results.

**What if any changes need to be made to the work plan to complete the project? New Opportunities, new partnerships, knowledge transfer, etc.**

There are no changes or adjustments required at this point to our knowledge unless you would have suggestions or further ideas for us.

**List your main communications and public/stakeholder engagement outcomes (press, social media, membership growth, etc.).**

Our communications, engagement and media coverage has been extensive – particularly for the short timelines and modest funding for this project.

**1) Municipal Comprehensive Review and Official Plans**

- co-ordinated dozens of delegations to Regional and Municipal Councils
- extensive meetings with Chairs, Mayors, Councillors and Staff
- in-depth meetings with Regional and Municipal Staff
- meetings and presentations to MPP's and MP's
- numerous community webinars engaging hundreds of participants
- extensive media coverage with dozens of newspaper articles, radio, and television coverage
- considerable engagement on social media with tens of thousands of social media impressions on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

**2) Greenbelt Stewardship and Expansion**

- detailed meetings with Chairs, Mayors, Councillors and Staff
- in-depth meetings with Regional and Municipal Staff
- tours, meetings and presentations to MPP's and MPP candidates
- very successful Greenbelt Map launch event in collaboration with area groups
- extensive media coverage with ongoing newspaper articles, radio and television coverage
- ongoing engagement on social media, new websites in development, etc.

**Is there anything else that you would like to tell the foundation about the project?**

Please let us know any questions, ideas or if further information is required for any subject.

**2) Budget – see project budget report template**

Please see attached Budget Report Template. Currently we are on budget and within the anticipated levels of spending despite far greater community engagement and involvement than expected.

**3) Workplan Report Template - ontrack, delayed, completed, suspended...  
Expected Results, Activities, Performance Indicators**

All activities are on-track and moving forward as anticipated with many far exceeding expectations.

**4) Expense claims statement**

Not Applicable

**5) Receipts**

Not Applicable

**6) Resources- reports, media coverage, tools, photos, videos, etc.**

Media files and coverage archive can be supplied upon request...

Please let us know any questions or suggestions.