

Established in 1889, the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) is the self-regulating body for the province's architecture profession. It governs the practice of architecture and administers the Architects Act in order to serve and protect the public interest.

The Honourable Steve Clark
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
College Park 17th Flr, 777 Bay St
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

April 19, 2021

Re: Consultation on growing the size of the Greenbelt

Dear Minister,

The Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) supports contemporary urban planning principles which recognize the ecological and social damage caused by sprawl models of development. We advocate for complete communities, and sustainable development that reduces car-dependence and protects our remaining natural resources and agricultural land.

Growth should generally be accomplished through an increase in development density within already serviced lands over greenfield development and further sprawl. The 2018 study for the Neptis Foundation, *Planning the Next GGH*, found that Municipalities in and around the Greenbelt have adequate space for expansion without proposing further growth into valuable undeveloped land vital for its biodiversity, waterways, food security, recreational and cultural value to the province and its people.

The OAA writes to express its support of Greenbelt expansion. The OAA believes it is critical to permanently protect the Greenbelt in its entirety. While highways may have traditionally been acceptable development within the Greenbelt, we are concerned about the potential impacts associated with the resurrected proposals for Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass. The preservation of the Greenbelt should be first and foremost in that decision-making process.

We have attached responses to the discussion questions in an Appendix, and welcome any further discussion.

Regards,



Susan Speigel, Architect
OAA, FRAIC
President

Appendix

Question 1: What are your thoughts on the initial focus area of the Study Area of the Paris Galt Moraine?

- We recognize the entire criticality of the Paris Galt Moraine as a filter to the groundwater resources of the GGH and its importance too as a carbon sink, nature preserve, and recreational resource for the large populations surrounding it. It is critical to preserve it through Greenbelt protection and Conservation Authority oversight.

Question 2: What are the considerations in moving from a Study Area to a more defined boundary of the Paris Galt Moraine?

- We recommend leaving the decision about specific boundaries of these eco-systems and their connectivity to experts. Indigenous consultation should also be taken into account.

Question 3: What are your thoughts on the initial focus area of adding, expanding and further protecting Urban River Valleys?

- We support the protection of our water resources as part of an overall watershed system connecting the Greenbelt with Lake Ontario as significant headwaters, river corridors, and wetlands that support flora and fauna, clean water systems, prevent erosion, and provide needed recreation space and tourism. We recognize the importance of the contiguous forest provided by these corridors and their role as carbon sinks, improving air quality and helping to mitigating climate change

Question 4: Do you have suggestions for other potential areas to grow the Greenbelt?

- We recommend that Lake Simcoe and the Simcoe Sub-Area as clearly identified in the Places to Grow Plan (Ref 6.1), between Barrie and Orillia is a highly critical area to add to the Greenbelt to protect its farmland, areas of hydrological importance, and to concentrate urban growth in Simcoe County to within already services zones.

