



November 18, 2022

TO: Premier Doug Ford, Minister Steve Clark

RE: Ontario proposal to remove land from the protected Greenbelt to build 50,000 new homes

RECOMMENDATION:

1. No land should be removed from the protected greenbelt to build homes. It is not needed and it does not make economic sense.

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Clark,

Mr. Premier, the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association *insists* that you keep your promise to Ontarians, as you stated 'unequivocally' in 2018:

"Unequivocally, we won't touch the greenbelt. Unlike other governments that don't listen to people, I've heard it loud and clear. People don't want me touching the greenbelt, we won't touch the greenbelt.

"...all my friends, I listen to you. You don't want me touching the greenbelt; we won't touch the greenbelt."

Premier Doug Ford, 2018 [<https://twitter.com/i/status/991406495920246789>]

Minister Clark, the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association *insists* that you, too, keep the promise to Ontarians you made last year:

"I want to be clear: We will not in any way entertain any proposals that will move lands in the Greenbelt, or open the Greenbelt lands to any kind of development.

"This is a plan that doesn't take existing land out of the Greenbelt, it doesn't allow for land swaps, it doesn't change any of the policies that the previous government put into place when the Greenbelt was created in 2005."

Minister Steve Clark, 2021

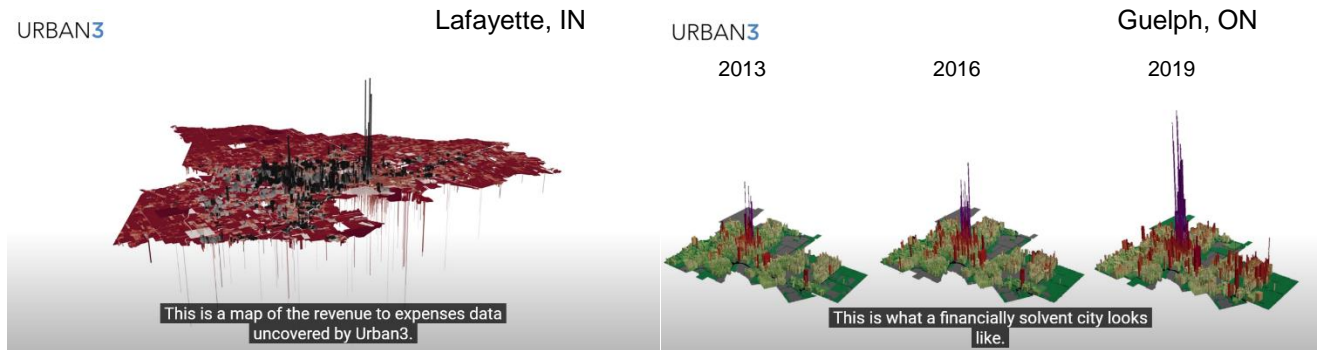
More homes need to be built faster – there is no debate about that. However, the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association strongly disagrees that in order to accomplish that objective, even one hectare of the greenbelt needs to be opened up for development

According to Urban3's extensive "municipal return on investment" modelling¹, the modern car-centric suburban style of development is broken. This is precisely the type of development that

¹ reference: Urban3 – Suburbia is Subsidized: Here's the Math
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Nw6qyyrTel>

would occur on the areas of the greenbelt you are now proposing to open. Typically, these developments generate low relative tax revenue per hectare. They are farthest from existing infrastructure, therefore, most expensive to service, both initially and on an operating basis. They rely, almost totally, on vehicular transportation for access and egress which adds cost as well as substantial environmental pressure.

Two examples from Urban3’s extensive library of research:



The Lafayette model graphically depicts the net revenue and expenses data for individual parcels of land in the City – net positive in grey and net negative in red. The point is clear; the suburbs are a drain on the City’s resources.

The Guelph example clearly shows how significant increases in overall revenue per hectare can be achieved over a short period of time by encouraging the development of walkable neighbourhoods within the existing geographical city borders – without resorting to the kind of urban sprawl that has been common in and around the GTA for the past decade or two.

There are compelling environmental reasons for not touching the greenbelt, which others have outlined clearly and concisely. Moreover, there is evidence that substantial amounts of serviced and developable land already exist within the Greater Golden Horseshoe which are more than sufficient to meet the current new build targets for homes. “Land is available, both inside the built up areas and on undeveloped land outside the greenbelt.”² There is no need whatsoever for the province to cast its eye on this important natural resource.

The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association (SLNA), incorporated in 1983, represents over 35,000 residents living in the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood of Toronto. The neighbourhood – bounded by Yonge St., Queen St. E., Parliament St. and the rail corridor to the south – is a mixed-income, ethnically diverse residential and commercial community adjoining the Central Business District. It contains the oldest neighbourhood in the (now) City of Toronto, the *original ten blocks* of the Town of York (dating from 1793). It is also one of the downtown neighbourhoods that is parkland deficient – containing only about 15% of the City standard amount of parkland per resident. Our residents value public realm and open spaces highly, and the SLNA Board of Directors strongly objects to the proposed repurposing of any land in the greenbelt for development. It isn’t needed and it does not make economic sense.

² Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force, 2022 (a body appointed by your government)

The Province has an opportunity in the midst of this time of pressing need for more-homes-faster to decide what kind of developments to encourage. More car-centric, distant-from-everything homes on the greenbelt in particular – or anywhere else – should not be one of them.

Thank you for your attention to this input.

Sincerely,



p.p.

Board of Directors
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association

cc: Mayor John Tory

City Councillors:

Ausma Malik
Chris Moise

Councillor's Staff:

Tom Davidson, Bushra Mir
Tyler Johnson, Edward LaRusic

Members of Provincial Parliament:

Chris Glover
Kristyn Wong Tam

Members of Parliament:

Hon. Marci Ien
Kevin Young

SLNA Board of Directors:

Ms. V. Ilgacs	Mr. S. Linton	Ms. S. McMillan
Ms. D. Patterson	Ms. T. Tenenbaum	Ms. R. Tilson

FoSTRA:

Rick Green - Chair

Additional information: Ask Strong Towns, with Joe Minicozzi (Urban3)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMkIMhFQezU>

[methodology @ ESRI: 15:32]

[accounting – “the (American) city model as we know it is broke”: 39:39]