

Councillors stress importance of protecting Caledon's Greenbelt lands

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Caledon Council wants the Greenbelt to remain untouched in within the community.

While land in Caledon was not included in the Ford Government's recently-reversed Greenbelt land swap, the move brought attention to the Greenbelt everywhere.

In 2022, the province removed 7,400 acres from the Greenbelt, saying it was necessary to build homes and deal with the housing crisis. It then added 9,400 acres to the Greenbelt elsewhere.

Premier Doug Ford announced this swap would be reversed in a September 21 media conference, and expressed intentions to not touch the Greenbelt in the future.

Ward 5 Councillor Tony Rosa said Greenbelt legislation was passed to prevent development and urban sprawl on environmentally sensitive land.

"I am glad to hear the Province has reversed their decision and that they finally came to their senses on this issue," said Rosa. "Caledon's Greenbelt lands are a precious part of our landscape. These lands need to be protected for future generations."

Ward 6 Councillor Cosimo Napoli said he believes the Provincial Government made the right call by returning land to the Greenbelt. He said it's possible to strike a balance between safeguarding natural heritage and accommodating a growing population.

"While I understand that we face various challenges, including the need for more housing, there are solutions and we do not want to harm nature unnecessarily," said Napoli. "I want to commend the Provincial Government for taking responsibility and doing the right thing by reversing their decision on the Greenbelt swap."

Ward 2 Councillor Dave Sheen said reversing the swap was the right thing to do.

"The Province didn't need these lands to achieve their housing objectives in the first place," said Sheen. "I suspect reversing the decision is not going to be the end of this scandal."

Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell said he hopes the reversal will put more scrutiny on the proposed Highway 413, which would run through Caledon.

"For Greenbelt lands in Caledon, hopefully [the reversal] will be the spur moving forward to make sure they're protected from development pressures," said Maskell.

He said since the Province has reversed its Greenbelt swap, hopefully it won't ever consider taking any Greenbelt land in Caledon.