

Fears Greenbelt Plan in danger

The Ontario Greenbelt Alliance and Environmental Defence recently released a new study, Ontario's Greenbelt at Risk, which reveals threats to Ontario's Greenbelt, including plans for a highway which would cost \$4 billion and cut a 50-kilometre swath through Greenbelt land in Caledon, Vaughan and Halton Hills.

Constructing new highways through areas like the GTA West corridor, when regional rapid transit services are not available, is contrary to the Places to Grow Plan strategy, according to the study, and would result in worse traffic congestion, more pollution, increased global warming emissions, adverse health impacts and would mean paving over 3,400 hectares of farmland.

By limiting urban sprawl, the Greenbelt has protected Ontarians' access to local food, drinking water and natural areas. But, as this study shows, there are loopholes that need to be strengthened, commented Environmental Defence Executive Director Tim Gray.

It shouldn't be possible to put a new mega-highway through Greenbelt land.

Other threats outlined in the study include sprawl developments in the Greenbelt that would destroy farmland, forests and wetlands and the animals that live there; a proposal for an unnecessary airport in Pickering that would contribute to climate change, decimate farmland and forests and isolate Rouge Park from the Oak Ridges Moraine; and dumping of contaminated soil that puts drinking water and food sources at risk.

The Ontario government will review the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan this year.

By identifying these threats to the Greenbelt, we're giving the Province an opportunity to strengthen the plans, to make them better for Ontarians today and for future generations, commented Susan Swail, Ontario Greenbelt Alliance coordinator. And we're encouraging members of the public to have their say at [StrengthentheGreenbelt.ca](#)