

# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES:

## The Greenbelt's Best Friends

If you love the Greenbelt and natural areas, you'll love Sustainable Communities. They're designed for people, provide a mix of affordable housing, and make it easy to get around without a car. They use land in built-up areas and preserve natural spaces, farmland, fresh water and clean air near the Greenbelt. Bottom line: sustainable communities are more efficient and much cheaper than sprawl development and are a smart solution to the climate crisis.







### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: HELPING THE GREENBELT AND NATURAL SYSTEMS

Sprawl destroys natural areas and farmland (see factsheet "Sprawl: the Enemy of the Greenbelt"). Sustainable communities avoid this by better using land in existing towns and cities.

This protects farmland, wetlands, forests, and natural areas in and around the Greenbelt. And it keeps the entire Greenbelt system healthy, which protects us from extreme weather and flooding, cleans our water, stores carbon and grows our food. The Greenbelt and its surrounding ecosystems represent a legacy of natural spaces, farmland to grow local food and fresh water for future generations. Building sustainable communities preserves this legacy for future generations.

#### What are Sustainable Communities?

They are greener and more climate resilient communities that:

-  Avoid urban expansion by using under-utilized spaces within existing towns and cities
-  Provide a healthy mix of affordable housing types (bachelors to 4+ bedrooms; townhouses to 6-storey walk-ups) to suit different stages of life and incomes.
-  Provide homes close to where you live, work and play, making it easy to move around by walking, cycling and transit.
-  Keep property taxes in line by better using under-utilized services such as schools, transit, health centres, community centres and sewers.

#### Sustainable Communities: Environmental Benefits

✓	 GREENBELT Friendly
✓	 FARMER Friendly
✓	 WILDLIFE Friendly
✓	 Build CLIMATE RESILIENCE





# HELP THE GREENBELT TODAY: GET SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BUILT!

Right now, many municipalities are discussing where they will build homes for future residents. Most developers want sprawl that devours natural spaces, farmland, fresh water and clean air in and around the Greenbelt. But, **more and more local community members are pushing back against sprawl and demanding more Greenbelt-friendly sustainable communities.**

Contact your local Councillor today and let them know you do NOT support more sprawl. Instead, demand Greenbelt-friendly, **sustainable communities** that are walkable, transit-focused communities with a variety of affordable housing options for different incomes and stages of life.

Sustainable Communities: Economic Benefits	
✓	CLIMATE Friendly
✓	Affordable, MIXED HOUSING
✓	Affordable PROPERTY TAXES
✓	Affordable ENERGY BILLS

## THE BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

**Sustainable communities “renew” our towns and cities.** They create affordable homes and reduce environmental harm.

**Sustainable communities reduce your energy bill and air pollution.** Less driving means less money spent at the pumps. More efficiently built compact homes mean less energy used for heating and cooling.

**Sustainable communities help deal with the climate crisis.** Less energy use means less fossil fuel use and more climate resilience.

**Sustainable communities enhance our ability to feed ourselves.** Farmland is preserved so we keep our access to fresh, healthy local food. We don’t make global food scarcity worse and do our bit to get through the climate crisis.

**Sustainable communities help the natural systems that provide us with vital free gifts.** We maintain wetlands and natural spaces and the free clean air and water they create. And we maintain natural systems we need to get through the climate crisis (eg. flood protection, storing carbon, habitat for pollinators, etc...).

**Sustainable communities keep property taxes down.** They better use existing roads, sewers, community centres, transit and bridges to service new residents and put much less strain on property taxes, compared to sprawl development.

**Sustainable communities reduce our car dependence.** Because we can walk, cycle and take transit to get around, we dramatically reduce car use, which saves us money, keeps us healthy and fit and helps the environment.

### Want more information on sustainable communities?

(aka smart growth and complete communities)

Greenbelt Foundation: **Creating Complete (Rural) Communities**  
(<https://www.greenbelt.ca/complete-communities>)

Environmental Defence: **What is Smart Growth?**  
(<https://environmentaldefence.ca/what-is-smart-growth/>)

### Like this factsheet?

Find more at [greenbeltalliance.ca](https://greenbeltalliance.ca)

