

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES:

Helping Meet Our International Climate Commitments

If you care about Canada's international climate commitments, you'll love Sustainable Communities.

In 2015, Canada committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions 30% by 2030. That means reducing our fossil fuel use, keeping carbon-storing forests and wetlands healthy and accelerating our transition to renewable energy. Sustainable Communities do exactly that while creating more livable and affordable communities. Bottom line: they are smart climate solutions that also protect other smart climate solutions, like the Greenbelt.

Sustainable Communities	VS.	SPRAWL
✓	Reduces fossil fuel use	✗
✓	Protects carbon sinks like the Greenbelt	✗
✓	Improves climate resilience in existing cities and towns	✗



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: MEETING OUR CLIMATE COMMITMENTS BY PROTECTING THE GREENBELT

The Greenbelt is a vital carbon sink. The farmland, wetlands, forests and natural areas within and around the Greenbelt are key to the Greenbelt's ability to keep carbon in the ground and help Canada meet its international climate commitments.

Unfortunately sprawl devours farmland, forests and natural areas near the Greenbelt (see "Sprawl, the Enemy of the Greenbelt"). By better using available spaces in existing towns and cities, Sustainable Communities protect the Greenbelt and surrounding carbon sinks and keep them healthy.

To meet our international climate commitments, we need to keep the Greenbelt and surrounding ecosystems healthy. Sustainable communities do exactly that.

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 gentle density and 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 public transit and decreasing car-dependence;



Keep property taxes in line by better using services such as schools, transit, health centres, community centres and sewers.

Want to learn more?

Read "Sustainable Communities: the Greenbelt's Best Friends" and "Sprawl: the Enemy of the Greenbelt" available at greenbelt.ca.





The Climate Benefits of Sustainable Communities:

✓		Less Energy Needed to Build
✓		Less Energy Needed to Get Around
✓		More Natural Infrastructure
✓		More Carbon Sinks
✓		More Climate Resilience

Want more information on sustainable communities and our international climate commitments?

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

United Nations: **Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**
(<https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals#sustainable-cities-and-communities>)

Like this factsheet?

Find more at greenbeltalliance.ca

HELP MEET OUR INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE OBLIGATIONS TODAY: BUILD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES!

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 (see Sprawl: the Enemy of the Greenbelt). But, **more and more local community members are pushing back against sprawl and demanding more climate-friendly and Greenbelt-friendly sustainable communities.**

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

THE CLIMATE BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Sustainable communities use less energy. Building new homes in under-utilized urban spaces and better using existing infrastructure (eg. schools, public transit, community centres, roads, sewers) leads to dramatically less energy use than building sprawl.

Sustainable communities reduce polluting carbon emissions from vehicles. Residents can walk, cycle and take public transit. Car use is much lower, cutting costs and carbon emissions.

Sustainable communities bring more climate friendly natural infrastructure into existing towns and cities. Rain and pollinator gardens, trees, parks and retention ponds are typically incorporated into underutilized spaces. This turns grey spaces into green spaces and creates more climate resilience.

Sustainable communities help the natural systems that provide us with vital free gifts key to getting through the climate crisis. They maintain wetlands and natural spaces which create clean air and water. And they reduce flooding, store carbon and provide pollinator habitat. And they maintain natural systems that provide flood protection, storing carbon, and pollinator habitat, that will get us through the climate crisis.

