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December 18, 2008

Honourable Jim Watson
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, ON
M5G 2E5

Subject: Greenbelt Council's Progress Report – Highlights 2008

Dear Minister:

I am pleased to provide you with the Greenbelt Council's year end report for 2008. The attachment to this letter provides an overview of our activities of the past year.

2008 has been a very busy year for the Greenbelt Council and in addition, there have been some changes to our membership. In May of this year Russ Powell retired as a Greenbelt Council member. Russ's commitment and contribution to the protection of the Greenbelt and in particular, the Oak Ridges Moraine has been invaluable. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

I am very pleased that our Vice-Chair Donna Lailey and Rebecca Wissensz have agreed to be reappointed for an additional two-year term and Debbe Crandall has also agreed to an additional one-year term. In August of this year two new Council members - Cecil Louis and Erin Shapero were appointed to the Council for two-year terms. A third new member, Bachir Hosn was appointed in late November for a one-year term. We welcome their appointments and look forward to working with them.

Following up on our advice that we provided in 2007, this spring your ministry also developed and consulted on criteria to be used to consider municipal requests to expand the Greenbelt. Council members had the opportunity to take part in the workshop sessions and provide our comments to you on the draft criteria. We are pleased that the final criteria are now in place and we look forward to hearing of future requests to expand the Greenbelt.

Council has also focussed its efforts on related government initiatives and has had discussions with provincial staff on a variety of matters including transportation corridors in the Greenbelt, the protection of Lake Simcoe, The Places to Grow Plan and Greenbelt performance measures as highlighted in the attached report. We are pleased to see that the Lake Simcoe Protection Act has received final approval.

Over the course of this year we have also continued to strengthen our working relationships with organizations that support the vision and goals of the Greenbelt Plan. In September Council had the opportunity to formally meet with the Board of Directors of the Greenbelt Foundation. Council had a very successful first meeting with the Foundation and we have agreed to meet on an annual basis.

On a personal note, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for taking such



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an interest in our work and regularly attending our Council meetings. I appreciate the support that you have given us on our various initiatives and we look forward to working with you over the next year.

Finally, I would like to thank staff from the Ministry and our Executive Coordinator Bill Winegard for their hard work, dedication and support that they have provided to the Council over this past year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Elgie
Chair

Attachment

- [**Attachment: Progress Report Details \(December 18, 2008\)**](#)
- [**Minister's response to the 2008 Greenbelt Council Progress Report**](#)



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Greenbelt Council Advice :

- Over the past year the Greenbelt Council has had the opportunity to provide advice to the Honourable Jim Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on a variety of Greenbelt related matters including the latest government priority Growing the Greenbelt.
- We are pleased to report that Council has also been successful in fostering working relationships with other provincial ministries concerning advice provided in 2007, particularly with respect to some agricultural issues and regarding transportation corridors, etc. in the Greenbelt.

Growing the Greenbelt:

- In spring, 2008 the government undertook an initiative to develop and consult on criteria to be used to assess potential municipal requests to expand the Greenbelt. This initiative was in part, in response to advice the Council had given to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in February, 2007.
- Greenbelt Council members took part in the consultation sessions and also provided formal comments on the criteria to expand the Greenbelt. On August 11, 2008 the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing released the final criteria to be used to consider municipal requests to Grow the Greenbelt.

Transportation corridors in the Greenbelt:

In February 2008 the Greenbelt Council recommended that the special significance of the Greenbelt needs to be recognized by the public and by all ministries of the government when Environmental Assessments and construction for major transportation infrastructure are taking place. This advice was forwarded to the Minister of Transportation for his consideration.

- In a letter dated July 10, 2008 from The Honourable Jim Bradley Minister of Transportation (MTO), the Greenbelt Council was advised that the Ministry of Transportation was developing an approach to fully integrate the goals, objectives and policy requirements of the Greenbelt Plan into their planning and Environmental Assessment processes.
- Staff from MTO also met with the Council on a number of occasions to discuss this approach as well as some specific projects. MTO committed to attend Council meetings on a regular basis.

Agriculture:

- In July, 2007 the Greenbelt Council provided a series of advice to the Minister. Part of this advice addressed agriculture related issues in the Greenbelt and included:
 - The need to develop an integrated strategy for sustainable farming and food in the Greenbelt;
 - Encouraged the preservation of agricultural land in the Greenbelt through agricultural land trusts; and
 - The need to consider a review of the property tax assessment policies of the facilities for on-farm processing and the on-farm sale of farm grown products.



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- This advice was forwarded to the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the Honourable Greg Sorbara, Minister of Finance at that time for their consideration. To date, the Council has met with staff from OMAFRA on a few occasions to discuss agricultural advice on the Greenbelt.
- In August the Chair and some members of the Council met with the OMAFRA Deputy Minister and staff from that ministry to discuss their advice related to agriculture in the Greenbelt.
- In September the consultant (Wayne Caldwell) who was hired by OMAFRA to undertake a study on the use of agricultural land trust arrangements (e.g. easements) in Niagara attended a Council meeting to solicit their input and insight on agricultural easements. Council has requested that consideration be given to allow them to review draft report prior to its release.
- The Council has received updates from the Ministry of the Environment on the status of the Lake Simcoe protection strategy and most recently an overview of the proposed Lake Simcoe Protection Act and Plan. MAH staff also gave brief updates to Council throughout the year.

Implementation of Greenbelt Act and Plan:

- Over this past year, the Greenbelt Council has kept current with the implementation of the Greenbelt Plan and Act through regular updates and presentations from MMAH staff, along with staff from other provincial Ministries and those in other organizations.
- The Council has kept informed of current Greenbelt related issues through the ongoing exchange of information by Ministry staff and Council members of resource materials, reports and articles.
- Staff from the Ministry of Transportation attended a number of Greenbelt Council meetings throughout the year to update Council on a recent initiative to fully integrate the goals, objectives and policy requirements of the Greenbelt Plan into its planning and Environmental Assessment study processes.
- Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure staff from the Growth Secretariat gave a presentation on the Growth Plan and how it relates to the Greenbelt.
- Council is having a meeting with the Ministry of Finance staff to discuss Council's advice regarding undertaking a review of property tax assessment policies relating to facilities for the on-farm processing and the on-farm sale of farm grown products.

Performance Measurement Framework:

- Greenbelt Council has continued to work with MMAH staff on the development of their performance measurement framework for the Greenbelt. The Council has provided their input primarily through Virginia Maclaren who has met with MMAH staff throughout the year and provided her insight and expertise into the initiative.
- MMAH staff continued to update the Council on the status of the performance measurement framework. At their October meeting Council received a demonstration on how census data and Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) databases such as NRVIS and SOLRIS can be applied as a way of measuring change in the landscape of the Greenbelt. A more comprehensive update was provided in December which outlined a series of draft indicators.

Promotion and Outreach:

- In October Dr. Elgie, Clay Switzer, John Middleton, Cecil Louis and Bill Winegard attended the Niagara Escarpment Commission's Leading Edge Conference. Debbe Crandall also attended and was part of a panel where she discussed her role in leading protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine. The focus of the conference was on Niagara Escarpment research and "State of the Escarpment" reporting.
- In November, Dr. Elgie and Bill Winegard represented the Greenbelt Council at the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure's Summit to Manage Urban Growth. The summit focused on the implementation of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe which is of key importance to the Greenbelt.

Greenbelt Council Liaison:

- In April, 2008 six workshops were held across the Greater Golden Horseshoe area to discuss the draft criteria to consider municipal requests to expand the Greenbelt. A few of the Council members were able to take part in these workshop sessions: John Middleton attended the Niagara

Falls session, Debbe Crandall attended the Peterborough session, Virginia Maclaren attended the Markham session and Executive Coordinator Bill Winegard attended the Guelph session.

- In accordance with our Terms of Reference Council continued to strengthen its relationship with a number of Greenbelt related organizations.
- In March, Burkhard Mausberg, President of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation attended the Council's meeting and outlined the Foundation's funding programs and priorities for that year
- In September, the Greenbelt Council met with the Greenbelt Foundation Board of Directors. This was our first formal meeting and both the Council and the Foundation agreed that we should meet on an annual basis to support the liaison between the two organizations.
- In December, Kim Gavine, Executive Director of the Friends of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation gave an update on the programs and funding of the Foundation.

Changes in Greenbelt Council Membership:

- Russ Powell retired as a member of the Greenbelt Council in June, 2008. Council greatly appreciated the insight and expertise Russ provided and he will be missed.
- In May, the Greenbelt Council Chair Dr. Robert Elgie was reappointed by Minister Watson for another year. Debbe Crandall was also reappointed for another year. Donna Lailey, Vice-Chair and Rebecca Wissenz were reappointed for a two-year term. All of these member's terms original terms expired in June.
- Council was pleased to welcome three new members this year. In August, Minister Watson appointed Erin Shapero and Cecil Louis for a two-year term and In November, the Minister appointed Bachir Hosn for a one-year term.
- Council is pleased to report that it now has members with cross-appointments to a number of Greenbelt related organizations. Donna Lailey is also a Director of the Board of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, Debbe Crandall is also a Director of the Board of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, Cecil Louis is also member of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and Erin Shapero is also a member of the Municipal Leaders for the Greenbelt.

Minister Watson attending Council meetings

- Council was very pleased that Minister Watson has been able to drop by almost all of its meetings this year. Members appreciate the Minister's and his staff's commitment to the Greenbelt and willingness to listen.

Greenbelt Council Website:

- The Greenbelt Council web pages have been regularly updated to reflect new appointments including the biographies of all members, the minutes from Greenbelt Council meetings, and all letters of advice provided to the Minister as well as the respective responses.

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January 28, 2009

Dr. Robert Elgie
Chair
Greenbelt Council
777 Bay Street
16th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Dear Dr. Elgie:

Thank you for your letter of December 18, 2008 in which you provided me with the Greenbelt Council's year end report for 2008.

2008 was a very busy and productive year for the Greenbelt Council. I along with my staff have had the opportunity to attend many of your Council meetings throughout this past year. We now have a greater understanding of the valuable role that Council plays in protecting the Greenbelt. Under your leadership as Chair, Council continues to play an important role in providing our government with ongoing strategic advice regarding the Greenbelt and I appreciate all of your efforts.

Council's strategic input and advice throughout the Growing the GB initiative was greatly appreciated. Council played a very important role in helping my ministry work towards a final set of criteria to expand the GB and to deliver on a key government priority. In particular, I was pleased to see that Council members participated in the public consultation sessions, providing us with their first hand observations and feedback.

As you mentioned, this past year also saw some changes in the make-up of Council. I am very pleased that you – along with Donna Lailey, Rebecca Wissensz and Debbe Crandall - agreed earlier this year to be reappointed to the Greenbelt Council for another term.

We also acted on your previous advice and welcomed three new members to the Council this past year. Cecil Louis, Erin Shapero and Bachir Hosn each bring a diverse experience base from the municipal sector, the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the broader Greenbelt community.

I am also pleased to see that the Council has been active in continuing to foster successful working relationships with other Greenbelt-related organizations such as the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation. I further understand that staff from our partner ministries have provided Council with updates and dialogue on a variety of Greenbelt related initiatives, such as Growing the Greenbelt; provincial transportation planning; agriculture; and protecting Lake Simcoe. Over the next year, I encourage you to maintain these working relationships and to build upon your accomplishments.

I would like to thank Council again – as would my staff - for all of their hard work and commitment over this past year in supporting the protection of the Greenbelt and I look forward to meeting with you and Council members throughout 2009.



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Jim Watson, MPP
Minister

Cc: Greenbelt Council