

# **Sprawl Hurts Us All!**

**A guide to the costs of sprawl development and how to create livable communities in Ontario**

A Sierra Club of Canada Report



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A guide to the costs of sprawl development and how to create livable communities in Ontario

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A Sierra Club of Canada Report

The Sierra Club of Canada's Eastern Canada Chapter has been working to protect Ontario's and Quebec's communities and critical natural areas for more than 25 years. "Sprawl Hurts Us All" is a national campaign of the Sierra Club.

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## Executive Summary

Rampant suburban sprawl development in Ontario's metropolitan areas has led to chronic traffic jams, conflicts over the use of green space and soaring public costs to service growth.

This report examines the differences in benefits and costs between land-use decisions that stimulate low-density sprawl development at the outer edges of urban centers and alternatives which would result in smarter growth. The report includes much province-wide information, but focuses on the Greater Toronto Area and municipalities from Hamilton to Niagara, regions of the province currently confronted with decisions about proposed developments and highway projects that would dramatically impact the future of their communities.

The report shows that residents of southern Ontario could pay more than \$69 billion for new roads, sewer and water networks to serve Los Angeles-style growth over the next 25 years. In the next 30 years, residents of Greater Toronto, Hamilton and Niagara could lose to suburban sprawl an area of farm and forestland nearly twice the size of the existing city of Toronto. This unfettered growth tears at the fabric of our environment, threatens the quality of our community life, and forces substantial local tax increases.

Fortunately, there is a better way. Through acting on clearly defined smart growth, we can develop in areas with existing infrastructure, preserve farms and natural areas, revitalize existing neighbourhoods, and support car-independent living. Quite simply, we can control our taxes, help to balance our budgets, and protect both the character of our communities and our natural areas.

In order to make smart land decisions, we must:

1. Stop building new highways in Ontario because they only bring more suburban sprawl development and air pollution that kills and sickens thousands of Ontarians each year.
2. Freeze new greenfield development projects until the Ontario government passes appropriate smart growth legislation.
3. Protect threatened farmland and green space by establishing urban growth boundaries and promoting conservation easements and purchase of development rights.
4. Freeze water supply projects that would trigger massive suburban sprawl.
5. Require an analysis of the financial, health and environmental costs of proposed developments before permits are issued.
6. Create a 1 million acre greenbelt around the Golden Horseshoe (Niagara Falls to Oshawa).
7. Abolish the Ontario Municipal Board and replace it with a new appeals board.

## Introduction

Ontario's cities and towns are growing at record rates. Some areas, such as Simcoe County, are expected to increase as much as 90% by the year 2028 ([www.gov.on.ca/FIN](http://www.gov.on.ca/FIN)). The Greater Toronto Area (GTA), expanding by 20% over the last ten years, ranks as one of the fastest growing larger cities in North America. Every year the GTA grows by the equivalent of the city of Barrie. According to government studies, all of the GTA's growth could be accommodated without any new development on the Oak Ridges Moraine, the green belt that crowns the GTA (GHK, 2002). Yet current trends show land being gobbled up at an unprecedented rate.

In the GTA during the 1960s, the average amount of developed land per person was a modest 0.019 hectares. By 2001 that amount has tripled to 0.058 hectares per person (Gilbert et.al., 2001). If sprawl development continues as it has over the last decade, a total of 120,800 hectares of agricultural land would have to be destroyed by 50-80 years from now to accommodate a megalopolis running nonstop from the shores of Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe.

Population Growth in Central and Southern Ontario				
Census County/Area	1996	1999	2028 (Projected)	% Increase
Greater Toronto Area	4 778 900	5 073 000	7 487 400	57
Essex	361 300	375 500	479 700	32
Hamilton-Wentworth	481 500	493 800	580 900	21
Middlesex	403 500	409 600	458 500	14
Niagara	414 800	421 700	476 800	15
Ottawa-Carleton	743 000	763 900	954 800	29
Simcoe	339 900	365 800	645 700	90
Waterloo	418 300	438 400	606 100	45

Source: [www.statscan.ca](http://www.statscan.ca), [www.gov.on.ca/FIN](http://www.gov.on.ca/FIN).

Urban centers were originally created to make life easier--a place where people could live and work in close proximity to all of their daily needs (Fenniak, 2002). According to the Toronto Dominion Bank and others, suburban sprawl development draws employment and population away from the urban core, triggering falling property values, declining services, and rising property taxes (TD Economics, 2002, Tomalty & Paul, 1999).

It is no surprise that citizens, elected officials, planners and administrators alike have become increasingly dissatisfied with this suburban sprawl pattern of development. It contributes to a lower quality of life, the declining health of central cities, increasing costs for public services, and environmental degradation.

This wasteful pattern of land development is not necessary or inevitable. With the information provided in this report, citizens can stop further sprawl development and create a sustainable vision for growth in Ontario.

### ***Defining sprawl and the alternative smart growth***

*In Ontario, sprawl development is becoming increasingly apparent and is threatening the quality of life of millions of people. Sprawl is uncontrolled, unplanned, irresponsible, low-density development on an urban periphery beyond existing infrastructure and areas of*

employment (Jackson & Kochtizky, 2001). There is a cost-effective alternative known as SMART GROWTH. Smart growth uses resources efficiently, supports economic development and jobs, creates healthy, safe communities and neighborhoods, and protects green-space and farmlands (Smart Growth Network, 2001). See the table below to compare and contrast these two development scenarios.

	SPRAWL	vs.	SMART GROWTH
Definition	Sprawl is uncontrolled, unplanned, irresponsible low density development on an urban periphery beyond the edge of service and employment areas		Smart growth is resource efficient, supports economic development and jobs, creates healthy, safe communities and neighborhoods, protects greenspace and farmlands
Characteristics	wide roads - designed to move automobiles rapidly and not designed to move people		pedestrian and transit friendly roads designed to move people safely and allow for interaction of neighbours
	single land-use - isolating where people live from where they work, shop, enjoy recreation and go to school		mixed land-use – shops, schools and jobs can be reached without using an automobile
	emphasis on private realm - yards, cars, gated communities		emphasis on the public realm – public facilities, parks, pedestrian friendly environments
	unplanned development - often found in environmentally sensitive areas and on useful farmland		planned development - concentrated in suitable areas
Effects	takes away choices from individuals and communities		creates a range of housing opportunities and choices
	decreases the quality of life of people because it harms the environment and can cause health problems		preserves environmentally sensitive areas and farmlands and reduces air pollution
	costly to taxpayers because of the need for expensive infrastructure		provides an opportunity for community members and stakeholders to collaborate in development decisions

### The Costs of Suburban Sprawl

We have been lead to believe that all growth is good since growth increases the tax base, thereby leading to a strong local economy. The truth is that any increased tax

revenue is overwhelmed by the costs of delivering new services, the loss of farmland, and increased commuting distances. Ultimately, taxpayers finance the high cost of suburban sprawl.

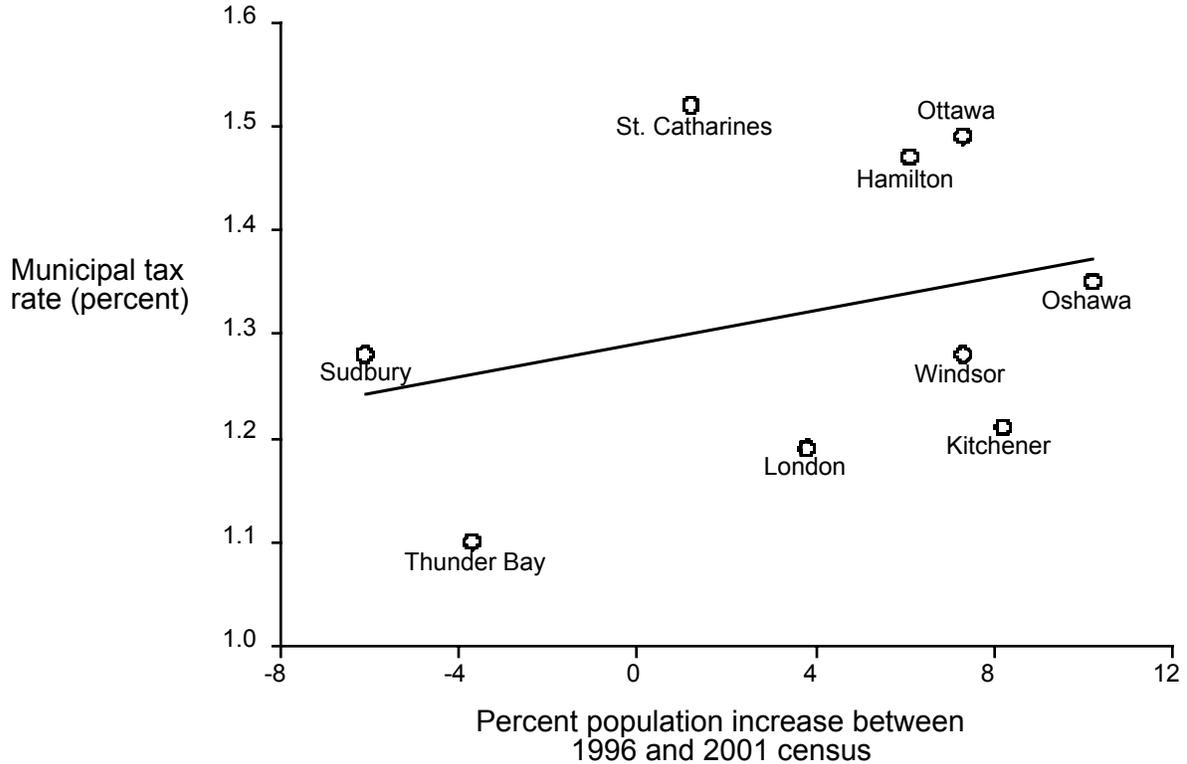
If low-density sprawl development continues in the GTA, \$55 billion will be needed for capital investment over the next quarter-century to build new roads, sewer and water networks, as well as another \$14 billion in operating expenditures. This translates into a whopping \$69 billion total or \$2.75 billion per year (Slack, 2002)!

Taxpayers will be footing this bill. For instance, if the Trafalgar Moraine north of Oakville is developed, infrastructure cost estimates indicate that water and wastewater servicing for North Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills Highway 401 frontage will cost an estimated \$680 million over the period to 2011. The expansion of regional roads is likely to cost at least another \$100 million during the same period, says the 1999 Halton Urban Structure Plan. Due to these and other costs, the region predicts that property taxes will increase an average of 3.3% per year for 15 years, or by about 50% by 2016, according to the Regional Municipality of Halton Report CS-30-01.

*Land use: The costs of sprawl are surprising*

The taxpayer shoulders the financial burden of building low-density housing in areas with little or no existing infrastructure. Revenues from property taxes, development charges, user fees and provincial income taxes are used to pay for infrastructure including road, water, sewer and school construction, solid waste disposal, fire and police protection, hospitals and recreational services.

An examination of taxation in major urban Ontario centres (excluding the GTA) reveals that, contrary to conventional wisdom, tax rates are not lower in faster growing municipalities (Figure 1). These data demonstrate that municipal tax rates are variable, and tend to be marginally *higher* in the fastest growing communities.



Data sources: Statistics Canada 2001 census ([www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)), Canadian Federation of Independent Business ([http://www.cfib.ca/default\\_E.asp?l=E](http://www.cfib.ca/default_E.asp?l=E)).

Similarly, residential tax rates are 38% lower in the City of Toronto than in the surrounding municipalities of Brampton, Markham, Mississauga, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan, which are growing at more than twice the rate of Toronto. This disparity is likely due to differences in development costs. Whereas new developments in the City of Toronto occur on existing infrastructure, the surrounding municipalities are well known for their extensive greenfield development on farms and forestland that require expensive new infrastructure.

Converting farmland and forest to sprawl can put local budgets in the red. Conserving land can be less expensive for local governments than subdivision style development (Almack, 2001). Upon first inspection, this may seem counter-intuitive since it is believed that open space does not make significant contributions to the tax base. However, the cost of servicing sprawling residential development outweighs the tax benefit. In studies across the Eastern and Midwestern United States, servicing residential areas costs (on average) \$1.17 for every tax dollar collected. In contrast, servicing farmlands and forests costs only \$0.34 for every tax dollar collected, according to studies by the American Farmland Trust. Farmlands and forests that remain protected are a great municipal tax benefit. Values for Canadian municipalities were not available.

## Revenues compared to service costs for different land uses

Land-use	Cost ratio
Residential building cost	1:1.17
Commercial building cost	1:0.33
Farmland, forest and open space cost	1:0.34

Source: American Farmland Trust

### **Oakville sprawl means more death and taxes**

Current plans for development in Ontario reveal that we will continue to lose our rural land. In May of 2002, Oakville town council voted to pass an Official Plan Amendment (OPA 198) that places Oakville's last remaining rural lands (approximately 3,075 acres) into the urban envelope. The amendment effectively eliminates a growth boundary in a town that is already 80% urban, and guarantees a continuation of sprawl.

Oakvillegreen, a local grassroots group, realizing that Oakville's unbridled sprawl has already resulted in unacceptable costs to human health, the environment, and to taxpayers' pocketbooks, is undertaking various political initiatives in order to maintain Oakville's previous urban boundary, thereby containing growth within the existing urban area.

In Halton, the region that includes Oakville, the health costs of air pollution in 2000 were a staggering \$290 million, including \$18 million in costs to the health care system. The human cost was 55 premature deaths, 400 hospital admissions and 1,425 emergency room visits (Regional Municipality of Halton report MO-22-02). Studies undertaken during the 1990s show that Oakville consistently experiences longer periods of poor or very poor air quality than Toronto, Burlington, or Hamilton (2001 Halton Ecological and Environmental Assessment Committee). Continued automobile-dependent development in North Oakville and the Trafalger Moraine will result in more gridlock and traffic congestion. This, combined with the loss and degradation of Oakville's last remaining green space, can only contribute to the further deterioration of air quality and a consequent increase in human and economic costs.

### ***Sprawl devours farms***

Ontario is blessed with 21,568 km<sup>2</sup> of class 1 farmland, the best soil for agriculture, more than half the total for the entire country (Statistics Canada, 1996 Agricultural Census). Since 1981, 4,700 km<sup>2</sup> (1 km<sup>2</sup> every day!) of prime agricultural land in Ontario has been permanently lost to development ([www.greenontario.org/strategy/sprawl.html](http://www.greenontario.org/strategy/sprawl.html)).

Unless our plans for development change, much more of our best agricultural land will be destroyed. More than 19% of Ontario's best farmland has already been lost to strip malls and pavement ([www.greenontario.org](http://www.greenontario.org)). In the area from Niagara Falls to Oshawa known as the Golden Horseshoe, an additional 1,070 km<sup>2</sup> (90% of which is class one farmland) will be committed to urban development by the year 2031. This area of land is nearly twice the size of the existing city of Toronto (634 km<sup>2</sup>) (Neptis Foundation, 2002).

Our local supply of affordable, fresh food is imperiled by urban sprawl. For example, one third of the land within the City of Ottawa is farmland. The amount of farmland lost to urban development within Ottawa has increased by 16% between 1976 and 1996 ([www.ottawa2020.com](http://www.ottawa2020.com)). In the same time period, the City of Toronto has lost 60,000 hectares of farmland to development, or 3,000 hectares per year ([www.city.toronto.on.ca/torontoplan](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/torontoplan)). In 1967, 62% of the GTA was class 1-3 farmland, by 1999 the amount of class 1-3 farmland had decreased to only 44% of the GTA (Almack, 2001).

The loss of agricultural lands has important socioeconomic implications. In the GTA, agriculture represents 3% of the economy. The value of the GTA farming industry is larger than the value of the farming industry in each of the Maritime Provinces. In addition to the benefit of some self-reliance within urban centers, many of the agricultural lands are located within close proximity of markets so there are fewer transportation costs associated with distributing farm products (Almack, 2001). If land use trends continue, Ontario's ability to produce food will be diminished and more of our food will be transported from distant agricultural areas. The inevitable result is increased food prices.

### ***Sprawl produces traffic congestion***

Suburban sprawl and car-dependence are two sides of the same coin, they each drive the other. Roadways in sprawl development areas are typically not suitable for pedestrian use or designed to accommodate cyclists. Sprawl developments usually don't have a large enough population density to support public transit operations, and the design of their cities makes development of efficient transit systems difficult. Transit systems are economically feasible only at population densities greater than 4,000 persons per sq. km (Gilbert et al, 2001). Therefore, sprawling suburbs are automobile-dependent communities that must devote a large amount of land to roads and parking, land that cannot generate revenue from property taxes or rent (STPP, 1999).

Automobile dependency typically increases the number of automobiles per household. The need to operate at least two cars increases total car payments, operating costs, parking costs and related environmental costs. Typically, the cost per household is at least 40% greater in an automobile-dependent community than in a community with a more balanced approach to transportation and a reduced reliance on automobiles (VPTI 1999). The Canadian Urban Transit Association reported in 2002 that workers with a 32 km round trip commute to work save \$522-719 per year on gas when they choose to ride public transit (based on a car getting 9 kilometers per litre and gas costing \$0.56/litre).

Traffic gridlock is inevitable with more cars on the road. More commuters are also traveling greater distances, further exacerbating problems. Each new highway development, constructed with the promise of alleviating traffic congestion is followed only by new sprawl and further highway use. In general, gridlock will return to a highway within five years of expansion (Hansen, 1995). Since much of our recent highway construction simply results in urban sprawl, each Ontario taxpayer should be asking this question: How much of the \$1 billion spent on Ontario's highways every year ([www.mto.gov.on.ca](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca)) has been wasted by encouraging suburban sprawl?

### ***Cost of highways: \$1 billion per year***

Greater highway access and more roads extending beyond urban areas attract land developers and increase low-density housing. Sprawling development tends to increase the distance between where people live and where they work (and places such as school, shopping, and recreation areas) and increases the number of trips made daily. Total weekday travel is predicted to increase by 64% between 1996 and 2031. This increase is primarily due to greater automobile use (GHK, 2002).

*A greater proportion of commuters (45% more) commute further than 20 km between home and work in Ontario's fastest growing urban centers (Ottawa, Toronto and Kitchener) than in Ontario's slowest growing urban centers (St. Catherines, Sudbury and Thunder Bay) (Statistics Canada 1996 Census).*

### ***Sprawl means more air pollution***

The separation of living from working spaces in the suburbs and a lack of sustainable transportation options forces people to get in their cars more often and drive further, generating more air pollution. Just one of the devastating effects is acid rain, the combination of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide with moisture in the atmosphere that kills plants and animals and contaminates surface water when it falls as precipitation. Another outcome is global climate change, the build-up of heat-trapping carbon dioxide pollution in the atmosphere. The ramifications of global warming are far-reaching and include damage to coasts and crops, the spread of infectious disease and the extinction of many plant and animal species (Sierra Club, 2002).

Vehicles are Ontario's largest source of carbon dioxide, the major contributor to global warming (Pollution Probe, 2001). Other pollutants spewed from vehicles include carbon monoxide, particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, sulphur oxides, methane, ozone, road dust and toxic gases such as benzene (Litman, 2001). Many of these nasty emissions make up what is referred to as smog. Estimates suggest that on-road transportation sources contribute as much as 40% of the pollutants that make up smog (Pollution Probe, 2001). As we become more reliant on automobiles with continued sprawl and less public transportation, we can expect a rise in concentrations of these air pollutants. For example, car use is increasing at about 2% per year in Toronto (TEA, 2001). If current trends continue, carbon emissions and fuel consumption will increase a further 75% between 1996 and 2031 (GHK, 2002).

Not surprisingly, the number of smog days is increasing in Ontario. In 2000 there were 3 advisories covering 4 days, and by 2001 there were 9 smog advisories covering 23 days (TEA, 2001). By September 9, 2002, there were a whopping 31 smog advisory days in Ontario. Air pollution in the form of smog can cause bronchial infections, aggravate cardiac diseases, increase the frequency and severity of asthma attacks, irritate eyes and decrease immune function. In the year 2000, the effects of air pollution caused 1,900 premature deaths in Ontario (OMA, 2001). Approximately 13,000 people make emergency room visits and 9,800 people are admitted to the hospital each year because of dirty air (OMA, 2000).

The health-related costs of air pollution are astronomical. In a report issued by the Ontario Medical Association in 2000, it was estimated that air pollution costs Ontario citizens \$10 billion per year. Hospital and emergency room visits cost \$600 million,

absenteeism \$565 million, pain and suffering \$5 billion and loss of life \$4 billion (OMA, 2001). If pollution continues at current levels, the Ontario Medical Association suggests the costs will increase to \$12 billion annually by the year 2015.

### ***Automobiles and Inactivity a lethal combination***

A serious health associated problem in sprawling areas is that people tend to get less exercise because they use their cars to get to far away malls, schools and work (Jackson & Kochtitzky 2001). Inactivity contributes to a wide range of health problems including heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, depression and some types of cancer (Litman, 2001). With increased reliance placed on car use, these health problems could become more prevalent. In the GTA and Hamilton-Wentworth area on an average day more than 62% of all trips are made by car, 13% by public transit and 6.3% by walking or cycling (Greater Toronto Services Board, 2000).

### **CASE STUDY**

#### A road to debt: The Red Hill Creek Expressway

Red-Hill Creek Valley is a 7 km long greenspace corridor located in the regional municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. It is the last remaining corridor between the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario. For decades there have been plans to build the Red-Hill Creek Expressway through 90% of the ecologically significant Red Hill Valley, connecting the Lincoln Alexander Parkway to the Queen Elizabeth Expressway and creating a superhighway loop around the City of Hamilton.

The estimated cost of the project is \$220 million (\$28 million per km, \$280 per cm). The provincial government has pledged \$110 million to help cover the cost of the project but the remaining funds will need to be raised through both regional property taxes and funding cuts to other programs worth \$41 million dollars. The estimated cost of the project does not include road maintenance that is expected to cost an additional \$19.7 million annually.

The tax increase incurred to each homeowner for expressway construction and debt is expected to be \$150 a year in addition to the \$338 per year charge for road repair and construction. Furthermore, 1996 water and 2001 sewer rates have increased 70% to accommodate new suburban sprawl growth.

Conservationists feel that the ecological, social and economic impacts of the expressway will far outweigh any new business that the expressway will generate. Many fear the expressway will act as a further conduit for sprawl development and shunt businesses away from downtown Hamilton to suburban malls.

The valley contains an abundance of wildlife, links the world-renowned Bruce Trail along the Niagara Escarpment to the Hamilton Waterfront trail, contains numerous soccer and baseball fields as well as culturally significant heritage building sites and native burial grounds. The proposed expressway will require that the Red-Hill Creek be relocated and will cut the valley into 30 individual pieces. Studies on the health impacts show that air pollution generated from the proposed road will likely adversely affect children and the elderly, especially those with existing respiratory and serious health conditions, and thus increase health costs for the city.

Data Source: Friends of the Red Hill Valley website: <http://www.hwcn.org/link/forhv/>,

### ***Sprawl pollutes our drinking water***

Sprawl development increases the amount of land covered in paved surfaces. Subdivisions with houses on large lots have 10-50% more paved or nonporous area than do clustered or traditional developments with the same number of households (Biodiversity Project, 2001). As the amount of impervious surface area increases, water runoff from precipitation occurs at a much faster rate than it would if it had the chance to soak through the ground and return to the water table. Urban runoff can contain pollutants such as nutrients, pathogens, industrial and automotive chemicals, oils and pesticides. Eventually this chemical soup will flow into rivers and streams, disrupting the rate of water flow through wetlands and streams and altering aquatic habitats.

Unfortunately, toxic pollutants can concentrate in wetlands, lakes and rivers where they are eventually passed up the food chain. Toxins in drinking water supplies can also affect humans (Biodiversity Project, 2001). Unless we act now, sprawl will continue to be a major threat stressing watersheds throughout Ontario and impairing the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem (IJC, 2001).

### ***Measuring Stream Watershed Health in the GTA***

*A stream's health depends on the proportion of impervious surface in its watershed. Studies have shown that flooding can occur when 25% of a watershed is impaired, and a stream ecosystem will undergo serious stress when changes in the watershed exceed 45% (Gilbert et al., 2001).*

*Development on Etobicoke Creek and the Don River watersheds have easily exceeded these standards for serious stress. About 80% of the Don River and 55% of the Etobicoke Creek watersheds are developed. There are plans to boost development on the Don River watershed to 90% and on the Etobicoke Creek watershed to 58%. Clearly, development practices in these watersheds are not sustainable and are too great to maintain these ecosystems (Gilbert et al, 2001).*

### ***Sprawl obliterates natural resources with pavement***

Sprawl development gobbles up open space such as woodlands, wetlands, farmlands and even cultural and historic sites rapidly and often without consideration of the services that these spaces provide. By removing forests and wetlands we diminish the land's ability to remove toxins from the water we use for drinking and eliminate valuable habitats for plants and animals.

Prior to European settlement, 90% of the landscape in Southern Ontario was covered by forests. Today, due to urban sprawl, only 20% of the land is covered by forests in most counties and municipalities (FON, 2002). Also since European settlement, approximately 80% of southern Ontario's wetlands have been lost to development (Conservation Council of Ontario, 2001). Between 1951 and 1971, approximately 5000 archeological sites were destroyed in Halton, Peel and York regions (Berridge, Lewinberg, Greenberg Ltd., 1991). The services that these ecosystems and culturally significant sites provide are permanently lost once sprawl development takes hold.

## CASE STUDY

### Dumb growth: paving Leitrim Wetland

Proposed development of the 400 hectare Leitrim Wetland on the outskirts of Ottawa exemplifies "dumb growth" that sacrifices environmental values and common sense on the altar of developer greed. Plans to drain the wetland will destroy a rare habitat and increase leaching of toxic chemicals from a nearby waste site. Taxpayer dollars will help fund this folly that has slipped off the radar screen of government officials.

The Leitrim Wetland, purchased for development in 1989, is representative of the South Eastern Ontario wetlands that used to cover much of the area, and has changed very little since the glaciers retreated. These wetlands are home to hundreds of plant and animal species, and are critical to environmental health and ecosystem functioning. Unfortunately, most of our southeastern Ontario wetlands (75-90%) have been permanently lost due to human activity.

In order to construct houses on the Leitrim Wetland, the water level must be reduced. This puts the remaining 'protected' wetland at risk of draining and permanent loss, and increases the probability that toxic chemicals from a nearby waste site will leach into the planned residential area.

In May 2000, the Ottawa regional council voted to fast track \$6 million to provide for the infrastructure costs for the wetland development. This highlights the financial burden taxpayers must shoulder for our poor land-use planning. According to Councilor Alex Munter, this development makes no sense since there are large areas of land available for urban development in less sensitive areas throughout Ottawa.

Ottawa politicians who approved the decision to develop this area seem to have ignored the concerns of government and university scientists, private citizens, and environmental groups, including the local Sierra Club in Ottawa.

### ***The environmental costs of converting greenspace into pavement are staggering***

*Did you ever wonder what the total environmental cost of converting land to pavement or a subdivision might be? An advantage to high-density development as opposed to sprawl is that it concentrates environmental impacts and minimizes the amount of greenspace lost (Litman, 2001). A dollar value, known as land conversion costs, can be assigned to the environmental benefits that are lost when land is built on (see the table below).*

*Environmental benefits encompass a wide variety of ecological benefits (the preservation of habitat and species), recreational benefits (hiking and fishing etc.), cultural benefits (the preservation of culturally significant sites) and tangible economic benefits (such as tourism revenue and water resources). What is the cost of sprawling development in your community?*

Land Use Impact	Environmental Cost Per Hectare
Farmland to Settlement	\$ 20,000
Farmland to Pavement	\$ 40,000
Second Growth Forest to Settlement	\$ 40,000
Second Growth Forest to Pavement	\$ 20,000
Wetland to Settlement	\$ 80,000
Wetland to Pavement	\$ 100,000

Source: Litman, 2001; Bein, 1997

### Smart Growth is an easy way out of our growing pains!

Developing our urban centers through true smart growth is a positive alternative to suburban sprawl. Growth can be managed in a traditional pattern that concentrates homes and jobs in a pedestrian-friendly town center, accessible to transit and surrounded by farms and open space. Smart growth can save a significant amount of money while protecting sensitive environmental areas, and minimizing all negative environmental impacts of development. By giving people the choice to not have to use cars for errands and work, quality of life is improved as people are freed from time-consuming traffic jams.

We do not have to reinvent the wheel to grow smarter! Models of smart growth abound in charming older sections of cities across Ontario, reflecting a time when smart growth was the rule, not the exception. For instance, just in Toronto the highly desirable St. Lawrence Market, Danforth, Annex and High Park neighborhoods exemplify the principles of smart growth.

#### *Ten principles of smart growth*

1. *Smart growth communities **accommodate mixed land-uses** and discourage single use districts.*
2. *Smart growth communities use the concept of **compact building design**. Compact communities use land more efficiently and have a population density required to support public transportation.*
3. *Smart growth communities have a **range of housing choices** that accommodate the housing needs of residents of all income levels.*
4. *Smart growth communities are **friendly to pedestrians**, increasing access to all members of the community and reducing paved areas.*
5. *Smart growth communities contain **distinctive, attractive neighbourhoods with a strong sense of place**. Communities that reflect the historical, geographical, cultural and economic context of the region will retain economic vitality and value.*

6. Smart growth **preserves open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.**
7. Smart growth **strengthens and directs development towards existing communities** by utilizing the resources that are already in place.
8. Smart growth communities **provide a variety of transportation choices** by increasing the number of safe reliable public transportation routes and creating connectivity in between pedestrian, bike, transit and road facilities.
9. Smart growth makes **development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective.** Local and provincial government agencies need to eliminate barriers to smart growth and put into place policies that create incentives supporting innovative, cost-effective, pedestrian-oriented, and mixed-use developments.
10. Smart growth **encourages community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.** Input from all members of a community in planning and developing will meet the needs of all citizens.

For more information about smart growth principles, please refer to the Smart Growth Network, 2001 (<http://smartgrowth.org>).

Saving money through smart growth is more than simply a hopeful idea: studies over the last 12 years clearly indicate that smart growth is financially sound. The Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study (IBI group, 1990) and revisions to the study by Blais (1995) estimated the future costs of development under different development density scenarios. The results of these studies suggest that in comparison to low density development, high density development incurs lower capital costs for items such as road, sewer and health services construction, and lower operating costs (Blais, 1995). A more compact and efficient development pattern could save an estimated \$12.2 billion in capital costs over the next 25 years in the GTA, a savings of 18% compared to the current development patterns (Slack, 2002).

Furthermore, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation examined capital costs, replacement costs, operating costs and maintenance costs for a 338 hectare site in Nepean, Ontario under a low-density sprawl development scenario and a higher density mixed-use development scenario (Slack, 2002; Essiambre-Phillips-Desjardins Associates, 1995). They found the mixed-use high-density scenario would cost 8.8% less than sprawl development. The largest cost savings for the mixed-use scenario was found in road construction. By accommodating mixed land uses there was a reduction in the residential share of the cost burden.

Smart growth can also result in significant savings on automobile expenses. Households in high-density communities have, and require, fewer cars than households in sprawling communities. Cars in suburban sprawl communities are driven longer distances and more frequently than cars in high-density communities. In the U.S., households in suburban sprawl communities spend \$15,584 per year on automobile ownership, more than double the \$7,265 spent in high density communities (Litman, 2001; [www.vtpi.org](http://www.vtpi.org)).

### ***Smart growth means good business***

Smart growth means a cleaner and healthier environment, which translates into a healthy business environment. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (1996) reports that in the U.S., states with lower pollution and a cleaner environment have more jobs, better socioeconomic conditions and are more attractive to new business. A clean environment is extremely important for Ontario businesses such as the tourism industry.

Tourism in Ontario generates jobs and revenue. In 2000, the tourism industry accounted for \$17.7 billion in tourism expenditures and provided over 9% of Ontario's employment (443,000 jobs) (MTCR, 2001). In Ontario, more than 7 million people take part in fish and wildlife related activities (MNR, 2000). Recreational fishing and hunting account for \$4.4 billion in expenditures annually (<http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/> ).

### ***What are urban growth boundaries?***

*An urban growth boundary is more than just a line that separates the urban and rural zones of a municipality, it forbids development outside the boundary until the area inside is fully developed. For example, the urban growth boundaries legislated by the state of Oregon in the 1970s must be set by each local government to accommodate growth for the next 20 years. The boundary must be approved by the state. If the boundary does not meet criteria set out in the state's planning act, and the municipality refuses to comply, enforcement measures are available. With its land-use law, Oregon remains one of the most attractive, livable states in the nation.*

### ***What are conservation easements?***

*Conservation easements are created when landowners donate the development rights of their land to organizations such as the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust or the Nature Conservancy. Landowners receive tax benefits and the property is protected according to their wishes when it passes to future owners.*

### ***An example of good land use planning in Ontario – The Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act***

*Canada's oldest and most extensive land use plan is based around the Niagara Escarpment. The Escarpment, a limestone cliff, runs through 725 km of southern Ontario, from the Niagara River to Georgian Bay on Lake Huron. Along with its natural beauty, the escarpment is home to a great diversity of plant and animal species, many of which are rare or endangered.*

*The position of the escarpment places it in the path of strong development pressures from sprawling southern Ontario cities. Public pressure to protect the Escarpment began in the late 1950's when aggregate pit development was threatening the preservation of the cliff landform. By 1972 the Government of Ontario and concerned citizens developed the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act to ensure that any development is compatible with the natural environment (Pim et al., 1998).*

*Under the Niagara Escarpment Plan, all land is designated for a particular use, where natural areas are protected and buffered from urban development. It is important to note that development is permitted in urban areas and smaller centers (such as villages), but is restricted to minimize the impact and further encroachment of urban growth on rural and natural areas. This plan places a premium on public participation and citizen monitoring of*

*development and environmental impacts. While development takes place, citizens can work cooperatively with developers towards mutually beneficial solutions.*

*Throughout Ontario, we can look at our own natural and rural areas that are worth protecting. The Niagara Escarpment Plan can be seen as a positive example of how we can work towards our goals of reduced urban sprawl (with all of the associated economic, and health benefits), promoting sustainable economic growth and preserving rural and natural areas.*

**Source: Pim, L., R. Lindgren, & I. Attridge. 1998. *Protecting the Niagara Escarpment. A Citizen's Guide.***

## **Government of Ontario's Dumb Growth Vision**

Under pressure from Ontario residents hungry for a better way to live, the Ontario Conservative government recently told everyone that they were working to protect our economy, environment and communities through a new approach called smart growth ([www.smartgrowth.gov.on.ca](http://www.smartgrowth.gov.on.ca)). Astonishingly, construction of the Mid-Peninsula Highway and expansion of the 400 series of highways in southern Ontario, such as highways 407 and 427, was one of their first initiatives under their new smart growth vision. New highways are a recipe for expanding suburban sprawl development. The Conservative government policy has gone a long way toward fostering more dumb growth by green washing us with buzzwords, such as smart growth, to make it look as though they are environmentally progressive.

### ***A good term-- Smart Growth --gets dragged in the mud***

In Ontario, the Conservative government's vision of smart growth is different from the vision of smart growth presented in table one of this report. The Ontario government's "smart growth" vision promotes all forms of economic growth, whether sustainable or not, and compromises environmental and community values. Furthermore, it lacks a formal strategy document that defines targets for preserving farmland and natural areas, energy efficiency and residential density ([www.greenontario.org/smartgrowth](http://www.greenontario.org/smartgrowth)). The Conservative 'Made in Ontario' smart growth will not control sprawl, protect farmland and natural areas, reduce air pollution, nor ensure healthy communities, according to the Conservation Council of Ontario.

Elected in 1995, the Conservatives immediately pulled provincial resources out of the environment ministry, cutting its budget by nearly half, and got out of the business of planning how our urban areas would grow. They also pulled the plug on transit investments that would have seen a new subway line along Eglinton Ave. and lengthening of the Spadina line to York University in Toronto (Moloney, 2002). By 1998, the province completely eliminated subsidies for the Toronto Transit Commission that had amounted to \$104 million in 1995 (Theobald, 2003).

Changes to the Planning Act were made to loosen regulation of development and cut citizens out of participation in the planning process. As a substitute for rational, informed planning, a Provincial Policy Statement was generated. This document, which is full of wonderful statements and laudable goals, has been largely an exercise in public relations. It was drafted as a guideline, which municipalities must "have regard for," and it is therefore not legally binding in any way. Information on the

provincial policy statement can be found at:  
[http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts\\_1\\_8198\\_1.html](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_1_8198_1.html).

The government also decided to found the now-defunct Greater Toronto Services Board, an impressive agency that was set up to fail. It was made up of elected representatives from Greater Toronto Municipalities. Its mandate was to develop a long-term regional infrastructure plan, and run GO Transit. It generated a report, *Removing Roadblocks*, which set out a plan to develop a more integrated transit plan across the region, protect our economic competitiveness and rein in sprawl. Unfortunately, it had no budget to undertake this endeavour, and it was disbanded in 2001 in order to make way for the new provincial Smart Growth Councils, later renamed Panels to further dilute their powers to that of advisory boards.

The Smart Growth Panels, formed to look at development issues in 5 regions across the province, are instead an attempt by the Conservative government to sidestep the issues of urban sprawl. Membership on these panels is by invitation only, and is not proportional to regional populations. For instance, the Central Ontario Panel, which covers 38,000 square kilometers and 7.6 million people, has one representative from Toronto, which constitutes about 61% of the population of the GTA, and 5 representatives from the 905 regions. Worse still, the representation on these panels is not about representing municipalities or constituents. The representatives are there to share only their personal opinions.

The panels are part of a larger plan to continue suburban sprawl as usual under a new name. The proof lies in the budgets of the provincial government for 2001 and 2002. Crowing that it was supporting smart growth by expanding transit to address congestion and gridlock, the government from 1999 to 2002 invested \$2.892 billion in highways, more than 10 times the paltry \$242 million it spent on transit. In the 2002-2003 budget, the government dedicated over \$1 billion for highways while cutting transit investments to \$193 million (Government of Ontario, 2002).

Since their election, the Conservatives have proven to Ontario citizens that they do not understand true smart growth principles. Looking at the way they rank the 3 deficits—the environment, society and economy—in triple bottom line accounting can best sum up their positions. They think that the economy is more important than society, which is more important than the environment. In reality, the economy and society are simply sub-systems of the natural environment, which sustains life as well as the economy and society. The way we live, and how we develop our cities has a tremendous impact on the natural environment and we must protect it at all costs. Simply continuing full speed down this highway, but changing the name of what we're doing is not enough.

#### HOW THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT CAN START SMART GROWTH IN ONTARIO:

- Stop building or planning for new highways. They take us away from Smart Growth.
- Make the Provincial Policy Statement a binding document, which municipalities and regions must obey when making land use decisions.
- Change the structure of the Smart Growth Panels so that they are representative of populations in a given region.
- Ensure that the Smart Growth Panels are transparent and open to citizen involvement. Upgrade their status from 'advisory board' to Councils with power to influence land use decisions.

## **The Ontario Municipal Board: Democracy lost**

When a town refuses to stretch its urban growth boundary to accommodate new subdivisions, developers know they will often find a sympathetic ear at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). An un-elected appeals board that has the final say on whether new sprawl projects can proceed, the OMB and its decisions are one of the leading causes of suburban sprawl, especially in southern Ontario. Fed up with watching the OMB overturn the decisions of democratically elected town councils, citizens are building a ground swell of support to drastically reform the OMB to make it a fair and democratic body.

The successful appeal of a municipal official plan, resulting in the expansion of urban boundaries outside established limits, is a primary cause of urban sprawl in the GTA region of southern Ontario. It has resulted in thousands of acres being converted from rural to urban uses, particularly in York, Durham, Peel and Halton region.

Under Section 22 of Ontario's *Planning Act*, developers can appeal decisions of democratically elected municipal councils to the OMB. The OMB is a quasi-judicial land use tribunal with non-elected members who are either permanent members or are appointed for 3-year terms. Because OMB decisions are final, developers often seek a hearing at the OMB.

The OMB makes its decisions in large part based on the evidence and legal arguments put forth, and weights evidence according to the credentials and OMB experience of witnesses. Without the resources or opportunity to hire the best and most qualified witnesses, municipalities and citizen groups are on unequal footing with well-heeled developers in this forum.

Funding and access to resources are the most significant obstacles blocking citizen and government efforts to influence planning decisions at the OMB. Often, large-scale development interests can muster resources to hire legal witness teams with more experience and credentials than any government or citizen group could afford. For example, in the recent Richmond Hill Oak Ridges Moraine hearing it is estimated that the developer groups encouraging sprawl onto the Moraine expended approximately \$15 million, while the Town of Richmond Hill spent just over \$1 million dollars. Such pressures are greater in smaller municipalities where the yearly capital budget is only a few million dollars. Intervenor funding used to be provided to citizen groups for public interest matters, but was eliminated under the Conservative government, led by Mike Harris and Ernie Eves.

OMB members are often ill informed and poorly educated regarding the subject matter they are deciding upon. In hearings on urban sprawl, a number of environmental issues related to growth management, hydrology, hydro-geology, terrestrial ecology, aquatic ecology, and agronomy are often raised. As very few OMB members have any formal training in these disciplines, the inability to understand critical subject matter is an obstacle to effective and responsible decision making.

The OMB has become a highly procedural forum where citizens and governments are often subjected to harsh timelines with heavy penalties. Lawyers and members often bring forth motions supported by affidavits, request typed written responses to queries within limited timeframes, and threaten costs if a timeline is missed or if exact evidence or issues are not clarified to their liking.

A disturbing trend is the threat of costs by development lawyers against citizen groups and the willingness of OMB members to award costs to developers when municipalities and citizen groups oppose their plans. Such cost awards are often given with little or no convincing evidence of intentional wrongdoing. For example, recently in Collingwood, developers proposing a project not only obtained approval of their plan but were awarded costs of \$500,000 from the local municipality by the OMB. In addition, after expending hundreds of volunteer hours and over \$20,000 in expert fees in a hearing to prevent urban sprawl into the last and best forest in the Town of Markham, local citizen group Save the Rouge Valley System was forced to pay \$10,000 in costs to developers. Although both of these decisions are subject to appeals and reviews, such decisions on costs discourage municipal councils from upholding their own official plans, resulting in looser urban growth boundaries and the temptation to accommodate rather than resist urban sprawl.

The Sierra Club is calling on Ontario to abolish the OMB and replace it with a new appeals board. One solution is to restrict the opportunity to appeal regional official plan urban boundaries to the new board, allowing the appeals board to still play a role in making tough decisions regarding infill development and local planning matters. Additional training for board members and rigorous testing on a diverse range of issues related to growth management should be employed to determine competency and knowledge of basic legal and planning principles related to sprawl issues. Another important step would be for the province to make intervenor funding available for incorporated public interest groups where matters of provincial interest such as air, water and land resources are at stake. Clearly, the current system is unfair and tipped in favour of development interests who wish to accommodate additional urban sprawl.

### **Road to ruin**

Recognizing that congestion rises to meet road capacity, activists and planners agree that we cannot pave our way out of our problems. Nevertheless, the Ontario government is pushing ahead with more than \$10 billion worth of new and expanded highways across the province over the next 10 years.

These projects include: extending Highway 427 to Highways 400 and 11 north of Barrie; lengthening Highway 404 and linking it with Highway 400 at Bradford; building a new road next to Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph; extending Highway 407 East to Highway 35/115; and building a ring road at the south end of Ottawa to connect Highway 17/417 with Highways 416 and 417, just to mention a few!

One of the most wasteful projects is the \$1.5 billion Mid-Peninsula Highway, which will be a toll road stretching from Fort Erie to Hwy 407 in Burlington. Promoted to relieve pressure on the Queen Elizabeth Way in the Hamilton and Niagara Peninsula area, it is opposed by the governments of Burlington and Hamilton.

The Mid-Peninsula Highway would destroy chunks of the Niagara Escarpment, a U.N. World Biosphere Reserve. It will boost the death toll from road fatalities and increased air pollution. The road will elevate carbon dioxide emissions at a time when we are trying to curb this greenhouse gas under the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty. As a toll road, it will not draw traffic from the QEW, as shown by the Highway 407 experience.

A new study from the Railways to the Future Committee of Transport 2000 and the Sierra Club finds that investing just 20% of the \$1.5 billion earmarked for the Mid-

Peninsula Highway could fund high-speed rail service that would out-compete truck shipping and attract passengers from the freeway system (Thwaites, 2002). But an essential link in this transit alternative, the Canada Southern Railway (CASO) running from Fort Erie to Windsor, is being torn up.

Environmental groups are battling the Ministry of Transportation to save the CASO and ensure that the environmental assessment for the highway will look at a full range of options, such as not building the highway, changing land use patterns and enhancing rail transport.

### **Oak Ridge's Moraine Conservation Act saves the area for developers**

Late in 2001, the Ontario government announced it would protect 90% of the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) through legislation steering development into already urban areas (MAH, 2001). While this may sound reasonable, there are so many loopholes in the act allowing for continued urban expansion and destruction that it will not protect the environmental integrity of the moraine at all.

The ORM is a 160 km long glacial landform of valleys, ridges, hills and streams extending from Rice Lake in the east to the Niagara Escarpment in the west in southern Ontario. Sand and gravel in the landform filter and release rainwater into aquifers and watercourses flowing north into Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe and south into Lake Scugog, Rice Lake and Lake Ontario.

Toronto is sprawling into moraine towns from Orangeville to King City, Uxbridge and Oshawa (Immen, 2001). Those concerned about water quality fear that unfettered, unplanned growth along the moraine will deplete and pollute the region's only source of ground water.

The Sierra Club objects to the ORM Conservation Act because regional councils can petition the government to expand urban areas into conservation areas, allowing for development on these sensitive lands. Aggregate extraction from sand and gravel pits is still permitted in some areas. A final position must be taken in the act that states that removal can no longer occur. The plan lacks a comprehensive groundwater protection approach and permits golf course construction, which guzzles massive amounts of ground water (3 million liters of water per day). A groundwater plan must be put into place immediately which includes conservation measures and water quality protection. Finally, the act should address sprawl issues and require meaningful and enforceable urban growth boundaries.

Recently, the Ontario government made a complete mockery of the ORM Conservation Act when Municipal Affairs Minister Chris Hodgson ordered the construction of 8,000 new homes on the most environmentally sensitive part of the moraine in Richmond Hill (Barber, 2002).

Back in 2001, the most heated moraine battle involved a proposal to build 10,000 homes in the "pinch point," the narrowest stretch of undeveloped moraine land. Hodgson ended the battle in fall, 2001 by claiming he had persuaded developers to swap their holdings in Richmond Hill for provincially owned farmland in North Pickering, saving the ORM lands from development.

But since then, Hodgson has approved the construction of 6,600 homes on those same Richmond Hill lands he supposedly saved, and gave permission for 1,300 more homes

on nearby farmland on the ORM. Meanwhile, the developers still get to keep the free gift of land in Pickering that was "swapped" for the disputed ORM lands. This land swap could result in a windfall of hundreds of millions of dollars for developers. The provincial Liberals have promised in their policy document to cancel the deals if they form the next government.

### **What you can do to combat urban sprawl**

Combating urban sprawl may seem like a daunting task, but so many of us are demanding a stop to highways and senseless sprawl that decision-makers will have to start listening to us---or be booted out of office! In addition to making your voice heard, you can make smart personal choices about the type of communities you choose to live in. By urging others to do the same, we will help to reduce the environmental, economic and social burdens associated with urban sprawl.

#### ***A list of actions that you can take to help combat urban sprawl:***

Demand that **the Ontario government put an immediate stop to plans for new highways** such as the Mid-Peninsula Highway and expansion of the 400-series.

Demand that **the Ontario government improves its "smart growth" plan** by establishing enforceable urban growth boundaries for all Ontario towns and cities.

Urge your local government and the Ontario government to **increase the amount of money set aside for public transportation** by dedicating a portion of the provincial gas tax and shifting some of the funds spent on car-oriented projects over to transit.

**Become involved in land-use planning early** before zoning and development permits have been issued. Demand tax impact statements for new development projects before development projects begin. You will be more effective at stopping an unsustainable development project if you are involved early in the game. Developers, local and regional governments will be more receptive to implementing smart growth principles.

**Set a positive example** by choosing to live in an existing cost-effective high density community that is close to where you work, shop and recreate. You will save time and money and help the environment! Walk, bike, use public transit, or carpool to work.

**Use environmentally friendly design principles** in your home that conserve energy, maintain trees and keep pavement to a minimum.

**Protect ecologically sensitive areas** from development by supporting the purchase of parks and conservation areas or by protecting ecologically sensitive land through conservation easements. Protect and **preserve farmland** from uncontrolled development by purchasing development rights.

**Join groups opposing sprawl development activities and form coalitions among groups.** Environmentalists are not the only people interested in combating urban sprawl. For example, agricultural and historic preservationists, urban redevelopment groups, fishing and hunting clubs and tourism associations are concerned with the

impacts of sprawl as well. By joining forces your message will be louder at public meetings and with planners and developers.

### ***Making smart growth happen in Ontario***

In order to achieve the principles of smart growth in Ontario there are a number of initiatives that must be implemented. These actions require strong provincial leadership, sound development plans, and a clear indication of where development can and cannot occur.

An essential step towards eliminating suburban sprawl is to reduce the amount of available land for development through the protection of prime agricultural land and significant natural areas. This can be achieved by:

- a) strengthening provincial Planning Act requirements protecting farmlands and natural areas
- b) creating enforceable urban growth boundaries and
- c) establishing and supporting conservation easements which adequately compensate landowners and protect areas vulnerable to unfettered sprawl development.

By increasing development density and promoting mixed land-use development in existing urban areas, the amount of ecologically valuable land consumed, energy used for transportation and expenditures on new infrastructure can be reduced drastically. In Ontario, this can be achieved by developing regional and provincial land-use plans that identify where growth should be allowed to occur and by adjusting municipal taxes to encourage urban renewal over farmland and natural area development. New infrastructure and water supply projects that trigger massive sprawl must be rejected and use of existing infrastructure should be maximized.

Local governments and the Ontario Government must encourage healthy community development and design. Creating people-centered neighborhoods that focus on viable alternatives to cars and support public transit, as well as promote energy conservation in homes and buildings, are necessary to create efficient smart growth communities. These communities will have adequate greenspace and recreation areas, support community based cultural, recreational and economic activities, and ensure everyone has easy access to health care, education and social services.

### **Conclusions**

In Ontario, it is becoming increasingly apparent that current patterns of sprawl development are unsustainable. This report has illustrated that low density uncontrolled sprawl development is economically, socially and environmentally more costly than high-density smart growth development.

Ontario taxpayers finance sprawl development through increased taxes, increased transportation costs and increased commuting times to and from work.

Sprawl development negatively impacts human and environmental health and contributes to a decreased quality of life. The sprawl development scenario causes increases in traffic congestion, traffic-related accidents, toxic air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and noise pollution. Sprawl contributes to a loss of prime agricultural land, recreational and natural lands, decreased water quality and the loss of wetlands.

Luckily, there is a sustainable alternative to sprawl development called smart growth. Smart growth saves money, protects the environment and creates livable communities. The guiding principles of smart growth include: accommodating high density mixed land-use development that is oriented around public transit; creating people centered healthy communities; preserving open space; and directing development towards existing communities.

A vision for future growth in Ontario must encompass the guiding principles of smart growth. A focus on developing within existing infrastructure wherever possible is critical. Through smart growth, we can preserve our land and resources at the same time as supporting strong economic development and healthy communities.

### **Additional resources**

Sierra Club, Eastern Canada Chapter  
Challenge to Sprawl Campaign  
24 Mercer St. Suite 102  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5V 1H3  
Phone: 416-960-9606  
Fax: 416-960-0020  
E-mail: [easterncanadachapter@sierraclub.ca](mailto:easterncanadachapter@sierraclub.ca)  
Online: [www.sierraclub.ca/eastern](http://www.sierraclub.ca/eastern)  
Or: [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

Conservation Council of Ontario  
[www.greenontario.org/smartgrowth/](http://www.greenontario.org/smartgrowth/)

Citizens Opposed to Paving the Escarpment (COPE)  
[www.cope-nomph.org](http://www.cope-nomph.org)

Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE)  
[www.niagaraescarpment.org](http://www.niagaraescarpment.org)

Federation of Ontario Naturalists  
[www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org)

Friends of the Red Hill Valley  
[www.hwcn.org/link/forhv/](http://www.hwcn.org/link/forhv/)

Oakvillegreen  
[www.oakvillegreen.com](http://www.oakvillegreen.com)

Transport 2000 Ontario  
[www.transport2000.ca/ontario](http://www.transport2000.ca/ontario)

Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse  
1400-16<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Suite 225  
Washington, DC 20036  
ph: (202)-332-7000  
[www.sprawlwatch.org](http://www.sprawlwatch.org)

Smart Growth Network  
1794 Columbia Rd NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
ph: (202) 328-8160

Canadian Urban Institute  
Suite 400, 100 Lombard St.  
Toronto, ON, Canada  
M5C 1M3  
ph: (416) 365-0816  
[www.canurb.com](http://www.canurb.com)

Smart Growth Canada  
[www.smartgrowthcanada.com](http://www.smartgrowthcanada.com)

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