

# faculty of environmental studies

## Graduate Students in Regional Planning| Studies of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt Plan

Contemporary regional planning issues include: governance, growth management, transportation, food security, social justice, marketing and ecological values.

# FOOD SECURITY

The Greenbelt is a place of local food production.

### Food Providence

The vast distances between food production and food consumption may leave us unable to see how our food choices contribute to unsustainable food production practices and diminish our sense of belonging to our ecological landscape (Kloppenborg Jr. & Lezberg, 1996, p.95).

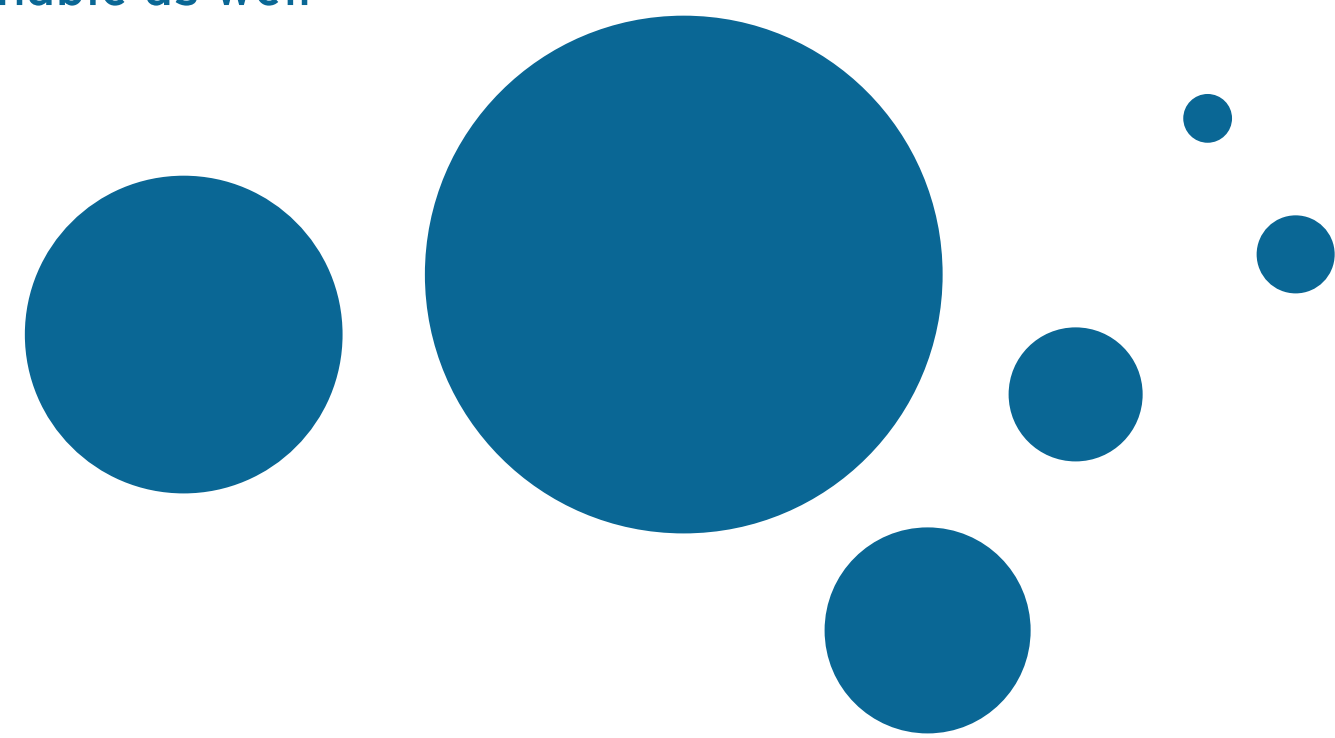
## How is agriculture supported in the Greenbelt?

- Efforts to support agriculture in the Greenbelt pursue a comprehensive and inclusive approach to ecological and sustainable agriculture.
- While organic production is low, programs are designed to encourage more expansive ecological services. Promote of sustainable business models
- Conduct local market research
- Provide economic and educational assistance to new farmers (Farm Start Website, 2010)
- Promote environmental stewardship amongst farmers
- Increase diversity in agriculture through grants

Two-thirds of grants made by the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation are agriculture related (Carter-Whitney, 2010).

### Conclusion

- While these programs do have widespread environmental benefits, they could be counteracted by the continued reliance on large-scale, high-input, mono-crops, such as corn
- While a stewardship approach to a farmer's whole acreage is beneficial, production must be sustainable as well



References  
Carter-Whitney, M. (2009). Bringing Local Food Home: Legal, Regulatory and Institutional Barriers to Local Food. Toronto: Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.  
Greenbelt Foundation, The. (2010). Greenbelt Foundation Provides Grants for Innovative Projects. Available from <http://www.greenbelt.ca/greenbelt-foundation-provides-grants-for-innovative-projects-0>

## The ways in which local food is made accessible

- On-Farm sales, U-Pick
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Institutional food purchasers through LFP
- Farmer's Market
- Buying Clubs
- Greenbeltfresh.ca



Source: [http://www.vitalitymagazine.com/julyaug08\\_guidetoorganics](http://www.vitalitymagazine.com/julyaug08_guidetoorganics)

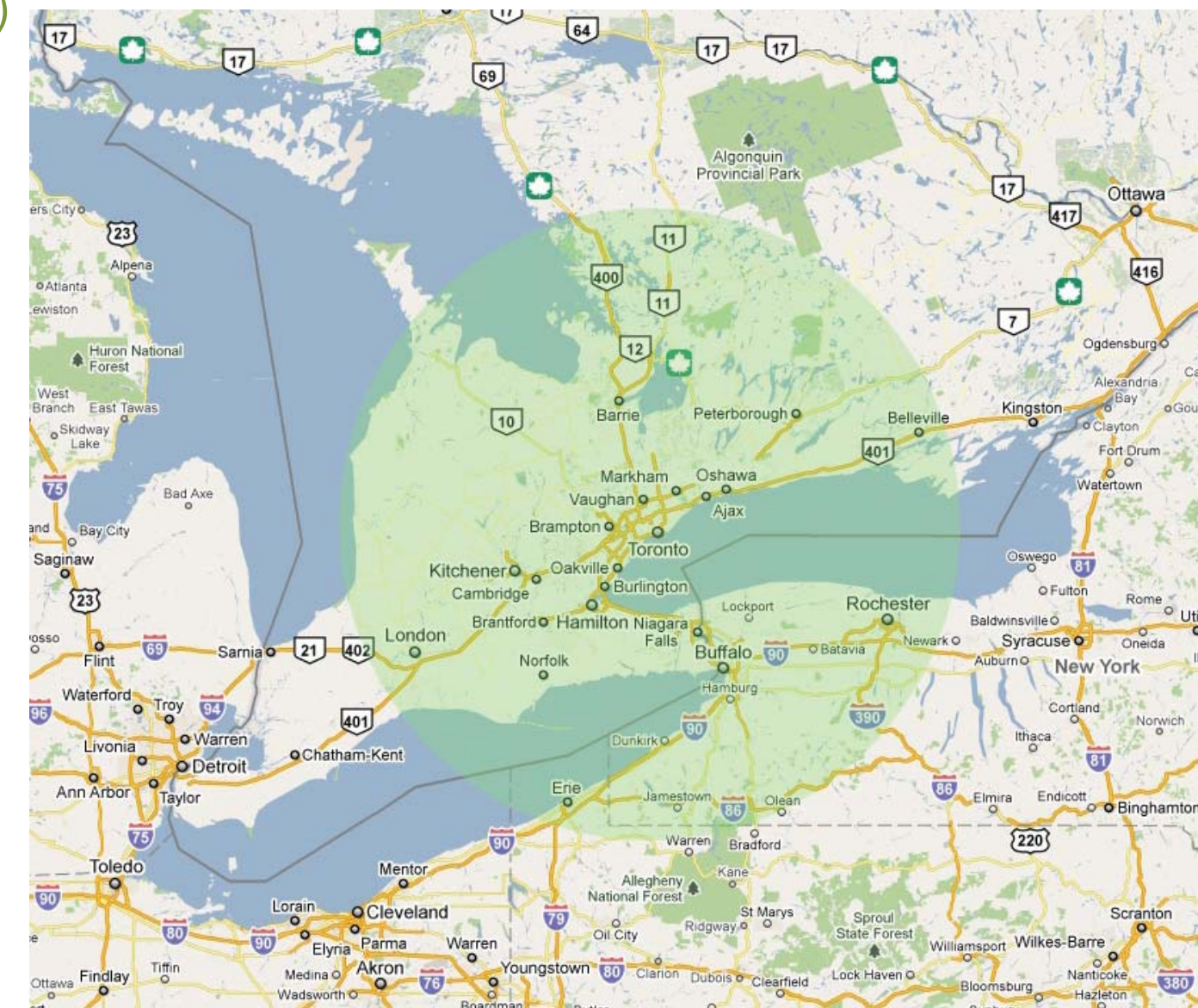
Entering these larger markets and making alternative movements more effective, however is challenging in many ways. Access to and availability of local food is problematic. A premium has been attached to local and organic food, as witnessed below. An analysis of food pricing is indicative of financial barriers associated to growing and buying local produce.

### "Foodshed"

The term "foodshed" is a variation of the bioregionalist concept of the watershed, adapted to describe an agricultural area that produces a significant proportion of the food consumed in a nearby urban centre.

Nina-Marie Lister provides a vivid description of a foodshed in relation to Toronto that captures the ecological imagery the metaphor is meant to evoke and bases a foodshed's boundaries on both social behaviour and physical distances. She writes:

[A] foodshed captures the food products that flow from local farms surrounding a given urban area, and routes them into the city to the population that will consume them. Based on the time it would take an urbanite to make a short day trip to a local farm ... Toronto's food shed reasonably lies within a two-hundred kilometer radius of the city (Lister, pp. 151-154)



## The Challenges of Food Accessibility

1. Food Procurement : The grocery industry conventionally limits integration of smaller producers to the mainstream food chain.
2. Local Food Labelling: Even though people are increasingly interested in purchasing local foods, it is not always labelled to that effect and labelling is optional
3. Health Regulations: Regulations are generally developed to apply to large-scale production. This reduces the ability of farmers to process on-farm or conduct value added activities. Federal Abattoirs are working at full capacity and are generally reluctant to provide services to smaller producers (Carter-Whitney, 2009; Greenbelt Foundation, 2010)

### Local Food Plus (LFP)

- Connecting farmers and processors to independent retailers and institutions such as school and restaurants.
- Non-profit, non-governmental certifying organization
- Brings farmers and consumers together to create a sustainable food system
- Flexible certification, addressing barriers in achieving organic status (Friedmann, 2007)
- Farmers in Greenbelt have certification fees waived
- Approximately 40 LFP-certified famers in Greenbelt currently (Friedmann, 2007)

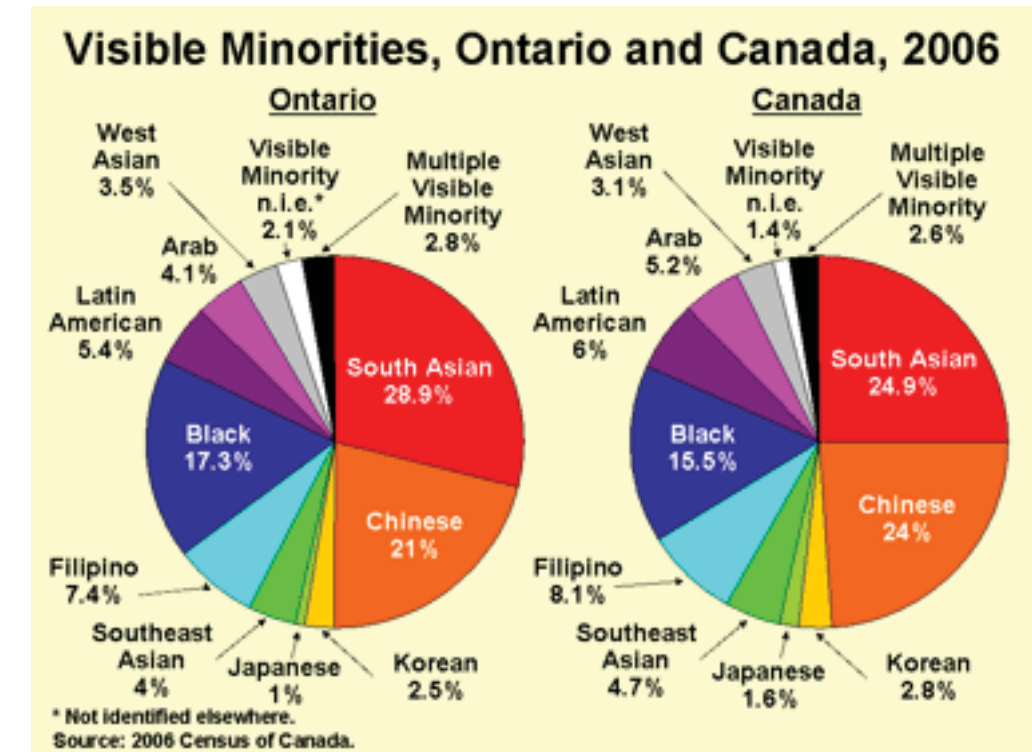
### LFP Requirements:

- Biodiversity
- Animal Welfare
- Crop specific standards
- Energy Use
- Proximity
- Labour
- Based on continuous improvement

## Friends of the Greenbelt Give voice to Ethnic Greenbelt Communities

For many years, Canada's ethnic diversity was not reflected in what was being grown in Ontario. Newcomers suffered from the nation's failure to respond to the cultural values of minorities. Thankfully, recognizing the symbolic value of food in people's lives as well as the opportunity for Ontario farmers to capture this niche marketing opportunity, the Friends of the Greenbelt has responded to this increase in demand for ethnic foods through grant provisions.

1. The New Farmers Project
2. Locally-grown cultural food guides
3. The Stop Community Food Centre



Project by: Professor Laura Taylor, Will Hill, Pascal Jean, Josh Neubauer, Ryan Shannon, Leah Winter and Jessica Yuan