

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.

MARKETING

The Greenbelt covers a vast region surrounding the Greater Golden Horseshoe but where is it being marketed? The greenbelt is being marketed to urban, suburban and rural citizens using methods that hope to reach the residents in their communities.

Theory | Understanding Greenbelt's marketing

William Cronon and Donna Haraway have studied nature and have come to the conclusion that it has become a socially constructed entity, where people believe they may escape reality by travelling to rural and 'natural' places. William Cronon argues that nature is not nearly so natural as it seems. Interestingly, his notions of wilderness and how it has changed throughout history is significant to the Greenbelt. When settlers came to the Americas, land/nature was a wasteland; our culture has reinvented the meaning of wilderness. Now there is a push to preserve and protect nature, an interesting paradox. Cronon introduces 'sublime landscapes' which are rare places on earth where one can have an interaction with God - it is believed these places would be in the wilderness or close to nature. However, he points out the central paradox where "wilderness embodies a dualistic vision in which the human is entirely outside the natural" p. 80 - there is a clash between humans and nature. He concludes it is important to recognize the specific habits of thinking and those create cultural constructions of wilderness. [Cronon, W. (1996). Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature. W.W. Norton & Company]

Key Points:

- Farmers are the biggest contributors and supporters of the Greenbelt
- Two-thirds of the Greenbelt is farmland
- Disabled and multi-ethnic groups are missing as targets of Greenbelt marketing



The main target market for the Greenbelt is local people

Urban
In the case of urban dwellers living in an area close to the downtown core, the greenbelt is being marketed using innovative methods to reach a broad cross-section of society. The image of an open-space that provides rest and relaxation, as well as healthy food is a constant theme. Currently, an art installation depicting scenes of the Greenbelt has been constructed along the Harbourfront walkway along the lakeshore in downtown Toronto to capture the attention of leisure seekers. This installation reaches tourists and residents alike, and brings the images of nature, open space, and locally-produced food to a concrete-laden downtown location. The Evergreen Brickworks farmers market attracts many families and individuals from across Toronto throughout the summer. Children's activities promoted by TVO Kids introduced the Greenbelt to urban-raised children by showcasing locally-grown produce through games and skits.



Where is the Greenbelt marketed?

Suburbs

In the suburbs, the Greenbelt is reaching residents through slightly different methods. At hockey games in suburban cities, such as Brampton and Oshawa, Friends of the Greenbelt volunteers have provided free t-shirts, displayed greenbelt-themed vignettes and provided locally produced apple-cider to spectators. Local high schools have participated in cooking competitions that utilize only food items grown in the Greenbelt. These activities raise awareness of the Greenbelt to all generations in hope they will continue to support its existence.



Rural

And in the Greenbelt itself, residents are encouraged to buy local through the establishment of farmers markets. Residents can also participate in farm tours and other events that help to further connect them to their surroundings. Through innovative methods, tailored to the residents living in various settlements patterns, awareness of the Greenbelt and its importance to the region is growing. Through further education and promotion, the future success of the Greenbelt seems to be on solid ground.

What activities are currently marketed?
The following are major activities that the Greenbelt promotes through media:

- Farmers Markets & Pick Your Owns
- Typical farmland/rural countryside image
- Emphasis of "family fun-time"
- Farm/agricultural culture
- Promoting a local economy as one based in agriculture



- Entertainment & Lodging
- World class chefs make meals in wineries
- Museums, art galleries contribute to "Classy culture"

- The Greenbelt isn't only for agriculture, but also a classy place to wine and dine
- Innovative ways to entertain: live performances in wineries, guest appearances by celebrities
- Showcase architecture and sustainability
- Lodging (emphasis on organic food)

Leisure Activities

- Mountain climbing, hiking, biking, skiing, fishing, bird watching, camping ± authentic experience of nature that attracts a variety of ages

Educating Near and Far

- Portrays the Greenbelt as a place for investment in research and development projects, innovation
- Cutting edge technologies in sustainability

A Just-in-Time Local Food Supplier

- Idea to enjoy wholesome food beyond the farm
- Breaks the physical boundaries and stereotype that fresh and local produce are only found on a farm or for those who live on a farm or in a suburb
- Urbanites can benefit from the Greenbelt too!

Project by: Professor Laura Taylor, Dania Ansari, Camilia Changizi, Farah Ibrahim, Laine Rosenberg and Sean Stewart