



A great activity for classes studying urban and rural communities!

One of the essential elements of land use planning and development is balancing social, economic and environmental interests. To understand the importance and complexity of land-use planning and decision-making, have your students role-play individuals representing differing perspectives and concerns related to establishing a greenbelt.

Divide the class into different groups representing various stakeholders in the greenbelt debate. Possible stakeholders include:

Farmers - who want compensation for the diminished value of their land (because they can no longer sell it to developers).

Developers - who want the boundaries redrawn and options to swap land in or out of the greenbelt.

Environmentalists - who want the greenbelt expanded and want tighter restrictions on quarries.

Cities and Towns inside the greenbelt - who want exemptions for their own growth plans.

Cities and Towns outside the greenbelt - who want to be included inside the greenbelt.

Quarry and pit owners - who don't want so many rules on how they should operate their business.

Winery owners - who want exemptions to expand their facilities.

Citizens - who want to live in the area and buy affordable homes.

Business Interests - who want to use the land for commerce and economic growth.

Parks Department Workers - who want people to have a place for recreation.

Have students research their roles and prepare a short position paper for presentation at a mock public consultation. Then conduct a class discussion about the costs and benefits of having a greenbelt.

Consider the following questions:

- Would you agree with the government's decision to establish a greenbelt?
- What changes would you make to design a plan that best meets the needs of all concerned parties?
- How do changes in the environment affect life in a community?
- How does population growth affect life in an urban or rural setting?
- What factors influence land-use planning and decision-making?
- How do they get citizens get their opinions heard by the government?