
REPORT TITLE: Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives

FROM: Kealy Dedman, Commissioner of Public Works

RECOMMENDATION

That the revised Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group ('PAAWG') Terms of Reference attached as Appendix III in the report of the Commissioner of Public Works, listed on the May 27, 2021 Regional Council agenda, titled "Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives", be approved;

And further, that the ALUS Peel Pilot Project ('Pilot Project') be endorsed, in principle;

And further, that the Commissioner of Public Works be authorized to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with ALUS Canada, Credit Valley Conservation ('CVC') and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority ('TRCA') to implement the Pilot Project subject to ALUS Canada confirming funding and CVC and TRCA Board endorsement of the Pilot Project, on business terms satisfactory to the Commissioner of Public Works and on legal terms satisfactory to the Regional Solicitor;

And further, that the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance's ('Alliance') request for annual funding of \$30,000 be extended an additional five years from 2022 to 2026 to implement strategic projects of the 'Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan 2021-2026', subject to the annual budget approvals process;

And further, that a copy of the subject report be circulated to the Town of Caledon; City of Brampton; City of Mississauga; the Regions of Durham, Halton, Niagara and York; the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto; the Ministries of Agriculture and Food, Rural Affairs, and Municipal Affairs and Housing; Credit Valley Conservation; Toronto and Region Conservation Authority; and, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance, for information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2019-2020 the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group:
 - Reviewed and commented on Peel 2041+ draft policies and mapping;
 - Approved Peel Rural Water Quality Program grants totalling \$212,094 supporting 31 on-farm stewardship projects and leveraging an additional \$179,273 in funding;
 - Assisted in the development of the ALUS Peel Pilot Project concept and endorsed revisions to the PAAWG Terms of Reference; and
 - Provided input to the updating of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan 2021-2026.

Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives

- Peel Region has worked with ALUS Canada, the CVC and TRCA to develop plans for an ALUS Peel Pilot Project that would complement the existing Peel Rural Water Quality Program, increasing support for on-farm environmental stewardship projects at no additional cost to the Region. Subject to Regional Council endorsement, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be developed to formalize working arrangements among the partner organizations.
 - The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance and the Region of Peel continue to collaborate on agriculture and agri-food initiatives relevant to the Region. In 2020 the Alliance completed a major review of its Action Plan and adopted a new Action Plan for 2021 to 2026.
-

DISCUSSION

1) Background

The Region of Peel recognizes the contributions of the agricultural sector to the local economy, to environmental conservation and to the cultural heritage of the Region. In 1997, the Region established the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (“PAAWG”) to act as an advisory body to Regional Council and to build closer connections to the farming community. A 2020 study by the Greenbelt Foundation found that such advisory bodies play an important role helping to facilitate the exchange of information between municipalities and the agricultural sector and a better understanding of the issues facing farmers.

This report provides a summary of PAAWG’s activities in 2019 and 2020. It also:

- Outlines a proposal to build on the existing Peel Rural water Quality Program (PRWQP) through a partnership with ALUS Canada;
- Proposes revisions to the PAAWG Terms of Reference to enable PAAWG to play a central role in the ALUS Peel Pilot Project; and
- Provides an update on the activities of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (“the Alliance”) and recommends that Peel Region continue its financial support for the Alliance.

2) Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group is appointed by Council to assist the Region in protecting agricultural lands and supporting the agricultural industry in Peel. Its membership consists of three Regional or Area Municipal Councillors plus nine additional members representing a range of agricultural interests in Peel. The Working Group continued to work during Covid-19, holding virtual meetings.

The Working Group keeps the Region informed of issues and concerns of the agricultural community and provides the agricultural sector with an opportunity to learn about and provide input to Regional initiatives. PAAWG plays a major role in providing input to the Regional Official Plan and contributes to the Region’s efforts to achieve its agricultural goals, objectives and policies.

Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives

a) 2019-2020 Programs and Projects

i) Peel 2041+ Regional Official Plan Review

PAAWG was provided with regular updates on the Official Plan Review. It received presentations and provided comments on:

- Agricultural and Rural Systems Policies and Mapping;
- Greenlands System Policies and Mapping; and
- The Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Study (SABE), with a focus on the Agricultural Impact Assessment component of the Study.

ii) Peel Rural Water Quality Program

The Region, in partnership with Credit Valley Conservation (“CVC”) and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (“TRCA”), has implemented the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (the “Program”) since 2004. The Program provides technical and financial resources to farmers to encourage stewardship focused on protecting and enhancing water quality and the natural environment. The Working Group is the approval authority for grant applications submitted under the Program.

During 2019-2020, the Working Group approved approximately \$212,094 in grants supporting the implementation of 31 voluntary farm stewardship projects. The grants leveraged an additional \$179, 273 from project proponents and funders to help complete these projects. The projects included tree planting, natural area enhancement and creation; nutrient management; manure storage; chemical storage; and livestock fencing to protect watercourses and other environmentally sensitive features. Appendices I and II provide more information about the Program’s accomplishments.

iii) Grown in Peel

The Grown in Peel Local Food Guide (the “Guide”) has been published by the Region since 2006. It is a joint initiative of the Regional Planning and Growth Management Division and Peel’s Healthy Eating Team within the Region’s Health Services Department.

The Guide is a local food marketing initiative to promote local agriculture, connect residents to the farmers who produce their food, and increase residents’ access to safe, healthy and affordable food in Peel Region. The Guide displays information about participating Farms and Farmers’ Markets, lists the products sold at each Farm and Farmer’s Market, and provides information about healthy eating.

The distribution of the Guide has been paused since March 2020 due to COVID-19 redeployments. Regional planning staff will be evaluating the potential to re-launch the Guide for the 2022 publication year.

Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives

iv) Other Topics

The following are additional topics that were reviewed by PAAWG for discussion and comments.

- (1) Provincial Policy Statement Update;
- (2) Peel Food Action Plan;
- (3) Conservation Authority Natural Heritage System for the Region of Peel;
- (4) GTA West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment;
- (5) Proposed Changes to the Provincial *Drainage Act*;
- (6) Provincial *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, Bill 156*; and
- (7) Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) Action Plan Update.

b) Update to PAAWG Terms of Reference

In 2020, the PAAWG Terms of Reference were reviewed and updated to enable the Working Group to play a significant role in the ALUS Peel Pilot Project as discussed below. In addition, a number of housekeeping changes were made. The proposed modifications to the PAAWG Terms of Reference have been endorsed by the Working Group. A copy of the updated Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix III.

c) 2021 PAAWG Work Plan

The following action items remain as priorities in the work plan for 2021:

Policy Research, Development and Monitoring

- Peel 2041+ Regional Official Plan Review and implementation;
- Provincial Consultation on Agricultural Impact Assessment Guidelines;
- Peel Food Charter and Peel Food Action Council; and
- Town of Caledon Official Plan Review.

Policy and Program Implementation

- Review and approval of Peel Rural Water Quality Program funding applications;
- Review and provide advice on implementation of the ALUS Peel Pilot Project;
- Participate in and provide advice on the Grown in Peel program; and
- Participate in action items identified in the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan.

Regional Projects and Initiatives

- Review and comment on proposed Regional capital infrastructure development projects and initiatives.

Communication and Outreach

- Assist in developing Peel Region farm tours and other communication and outreach initiatives.

Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives

3) ALUS Peel Pilot Project

a) Background

ALUS Canada is a Canadian non-profit organization that works with farmers to restore and enhance the natural environment on their farms providing cleaner air, cleaner water, carbon sequestration, erosion control, flood mitigation, pollinator support and wildlife habitat. ALUS Canada accomplishes this by supporting local, community-led programs in which farmers play a critical role.

ALUS Canada originated in 2000 and is active in six provinces stretching from Prince Edward Island to Alberta. It is well regarded in the agricultural community. Currently there are ALUS projects in eight Ontario communities, though none in the Golden Horseshoe.

ALUS Canada shares many of the goals of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP) and embodies many of the same operating principles. Like the PRWQP, ALUS focuses on supporting voluntary stewardship among farmers, with farmers playing a key role in designing and delivering the program at the community level. ALUS is unique, though, in providing annual payments to farmers for the provision of ecological restoration and enhancement on their farmland.

b) Proposed Pilot Project

Peel Region, in partnership with CVC and the TRCA, has worked with ALUS Canada to develop an ALUS Canada Pilot Project in Peel. This project would be the first of its kind in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, reflecting the Region's leadership in supporting the environmental stewardship work of farmers. The Pilot Project is supported by PAAWG.

A three-year pilot project is proposed that would build on and complement the existing Peel Rural Water Quality Program. ALUS Canada would provide additional funding to support environmental stewardship projects carried out by farmers on their lands and thus increase the potential uptake of environmental restoration and enhancement projects by farmers in Peel. The focus would be on lands that are marginally productive, inefficient to farm, and/or environmentally sensitive.

It is proposed that Council authorize staff to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") with ALUS Canada, Credit Valley Conservation and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority for the ALUS Peel Pilot Project. The MOU would embody the following principles:

- The Pilot Project will be an extension to the existing PRWQP, adding value to the existing program and providing national recognition;
- Communication materials used to publicize the Project will recognize ALUS as a supplement to the PRWQP;
- The Pilot will be locally led and managed within the guidelines set by ALUS Canada;
- PAAWG will play a key role in advising on implementation of the Project and will be responsible for reviewing and approving applications from individual farmers for funding;
- ALUS Canada providing annual base funding for the Pilot Project of approximately \$75,000 per year. The funding provided by ALUS Canada will, at a minimum, cover

Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives

the costs of the annual payments to farmers and the administrative costs above and beyond those related to administration of the PWQRP. The Pilot will not result in additional costs to Peel Region or the Conservation Authorities; and

- The partners will evaluate the efficacy, benefits and costs of the Pilot and may extend the Pilot beyond the initial three-year term.

c) Implementation/Next Steps

If the Pilot Project is supported by Regional Council, the CVC and the TRCA the MOU then will be signed by the parties. The next steps then will address implementation:

1. With PAAWG's participation, developing Project guidelines addressing for example, what types of farmer-initiated projects will be eligible for funding; and
2. Establishing procedures for project administration.

4) Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance

The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (the GHFFA) was formed in 2012 as a partnership among the Regional Municipalities and Federations of Agriculture in the Golden Horseshoe and the single tier municipalities of Hamilton and Toronto. The Alliance also includes representation from other stakeholders such as the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Greenbelt Foundation and colleges and universities with an interest in agriculture and food. Councillor Downey currently serves as the Chair of the Alliance.

In 2012 the Alliance released the "Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan 2021". The Action Plan identified pathways for a more integrated and coordinated approach to food and farming viability in the area to ensure that the Golden Horseshoe retained, enhanced and expanded its role as a leading food and farming cluster. The Alliance approach enables the partners to share resources, knowledge and experience and respond to agricultural issues from a broader regional food and agricultural system perspective and with a common voice.

Each municipal partner has supported the Alliance and the implementation of the Action Plan through in-kind staff time and a financial contribution of \$30,000 per year. The funding provided by the municipal partners assists in leveraging provincial and other funding to implement the Action Plan. Through this collaboration, the Region is able to cost-share and leverage resources on projects having greater impact to the Region and the regional agricultural system. In 2018 Regional Council endorsed a request that Peel Region provide \$30,000 per year for three years to the Alliance to implement strategic projects. This funding helped support renewal of the Alliance's Action Plan which has identified new priorities for 2021 to 2026.

a) Accomplishments 2019-2020

Incorporation

From 2012 to 2018 the Alliance operated under the auspices of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). In 2018 the Authority made the decision to incorporate as a not-for-profit organization. The first year of operations under this new model was 2019.

Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives

Implementation of the “Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan 2021”

During 2019 and 2020 the Alliance undertook the following in support of the Action Plan:

- Consulted on and made significant contributions respecting the changes to the Provincial Policy Statement and the *Conservation Authorities Act*;
- In response to the potential closing or relocation of the Ontario Food Terminal, the Alliance and the City of Toronto commissioned the Canadian Urban Institute to make recommendations for the modernization of the terminal;
- Completed Years One and Two of a Research Project with the University of Guelph to assess the Economic Impact of Purchasing of Local Food in Long Term Care Homes;
- Added new partners and data points to ConnectOn mapping and data base of agri-food assets for use in planning and economic development to support the economic viability and employment growth in the local food sector. This included continued partnership with the Trillium Manufacturing Network to integrate manufacturing with farm sector data in the database;
- In conjunction with the Holland Marsh Growers, completed a Carrot Value Chain Study identified the flow of Ontario Grown Carrots domestically and as they were exported;
- Continued sharing of best practices in Economic Development and Planning with staff members of the partner municipalities;
- Facilitated information exchange on adaptation to COVID-19;
- Hosted a webinar, “A Path to A Resilient and Vibrant Future”, exploring key actions to support the continued growth of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Cluster; and
- Collaborated in developing “Always in Season”, a toolkit for communities to support the agri-food sector.

b) Action Plan Update 2021-2026

In 2020 the Alliance developed a new Action Plan to guide the Alliance over the next five years, from 2021 to 2026. The development of the Action Plan involved extensive research into current and future trends and consultation with stakeholders. The agri-food system in the Golden Horseshoe is facing new challenges with COVID-19, unprecedented levels of food insecurity, the urgency of climate change, labour issues and supply-chain disruptions adding to the existing pressures on the system.

The new Action Plan has the following goals with priority actions attached to each:

- The GHFFA is recognized as the leading organization with expertise on food and farming issues and opportunities in the Golden Horseshoe Region of Ontario;
- Establish the Golden Horseshoe as Canada’s leading innovative agriculture and agri-food cluster; and
- Enable the agri-food cluster to support sustainability outcomes.

More detail respecting the Action Plan can be found in the Executive Summary attached as Appendix IV to this report.

Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives

c) Regional Support

When the Alliance was formed in 2012 the Region made a commitment to provide funding to 2018. In 2018 that commitment was extended to 2021, the last year of the original Action Plan. The Alliance has requested that the partner Regions and Cities each continue to support the Alliance through an allocation of \$30,000 per year (see Appendix V). This would continue the contribution that Peel Region has made in previous years. It is recommended that Council endorse this annual allocation for the five-year term of the new Action Plan for consideration as part of the annual budget approvals process.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

There is no risk to the Region associated with the recommendations in the report. Normal due diligence provisions, including consultation with Region legal staff for drafting purposes, will be included in the MOU for the ALUS Peel Pilot Project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Peel Rural Water Quality Program, with an annual Budget of \$75,000, provides direct grants to farmers undertaking approved environmental stewardship projects funded from CVC and TRCA Special Levy projects. The ALUS Peel Pilot will not result in additional costs to Peel Region or the Conservation Authorities.

The Region has been supporting Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance through its annual operating Budget of \$30,000 since 2014. It is proposed that this funding be continued for a period of next five years from 2022 to 2026, the term of the Alliance's new Action Plan, subject to annual Regional Council Budget approvals.

CONCLUSION

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group and the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance facilitate and enhance relationships between the Region and agricultural groups, other municipalities and stakeholders within Peel and across the Golden Horseshoe and with the Province. Both organizations make important contributions supporting farmers and the agricultural system in Peel. The ALUS Peel Pilot Project will complement the existing Peel Rural Water Quality Program, providing incentives for farmers to increase their environmental stewardship activities.

APPENDICES

Appendix I	Peel Rural Water Quality Program 2019 Status Report
Appendix II	Peel Rural Water Quality Program 2020 Status Report
Appendix III	Updated Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Terms of Reference
Appendix IV	Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Action Plan 2021-26 – Summary
Appendix V	Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Funding Request

Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Update 2019-2020 and Related Initiatives

For further information regarding this report, please contact Adrian Smith, Director and Chief Planner, Ext. 4047, adrian.smith@peelregion.ca.

Authored By: Don Campbell, Principal Planner.

Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

Department Commissioner, Division Director, Financial Support Unit and Legal Services.



Memo

To: Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group

From: Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation
Nadine Abrams, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Date: January 6, 2020

Re: Peel Rural Water Quality Program – 2019 Status Report

The year 2019 marked the fifteenth complete program year for the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP). This status report summarizes the program's accomplishments over the past fifteen years, with an emphasis placed on the 2019 program year.

Types and Number of projects approved in 2019:

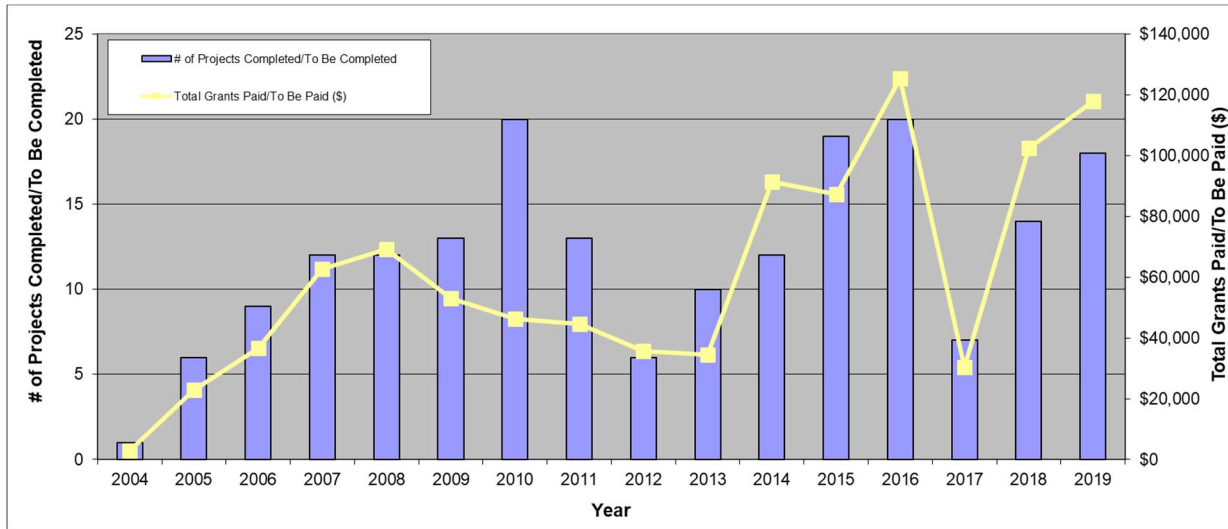
Manure Storage	1
Milkhouse Washwater	0
Barnyard Runoff Control	0
Nutrient Management Strategy	1
Nutrient Management Plan	1
Private Well Upgrade	0
Clean Water Diversion	0
Livestock Access Restriction	0
Erosion Control Structure	0
Tree Planting	9
Education	0
Chemical Storage	0
Fuel Storage	0
Silage Storage Upgrade	0
Irrigation Management	0
Integrated Pest Management	0
Cover Crop	5
Natural Area Enhancement and Creation	2*
TOTAL PROJECTS APPROVED	19

*One of the Natural Area Enhancement and Creation Projects was withdrawn after approval.

Grants paid and/or to be paid on 2019 projects: \$117,871.98

Annual program activity:

In 2019, nineteen projects were approved and eighteen projects have been completed or are in progress. Total grants paid/to be paid is \$117,871.98. This financial support has leveraged an additional \$90,369.98 from project proponents and other funders to assist with the completion of these eighteen projects. The graph below illustrates the programs performance for each year since 2004.



Notes: -2004 was not a complete program year.
 -Statistical discrepancies between annual status reports are a result of approved projects not proceeding with construction, therefore resulting in a withdrawal of applications.

After a slower than normal year in 2017, both total projects completed/to be completed and grants paid/to be paid rebounded in 2018. This upward trend continued in 2019, resulting in an above average year for both projects completed/to be completed and grants paid/to be paid.

Program accomplishments:

Between 2004 and 2019, the PRWQP has engaged 75 individual farm businesses and has paid/allocated a total of \$963,405.96 in funding towards 192 agri-environmental projects. These funds have leveraged an additional \$3,500,290.53 to contribute to the completion of projects valued at \$4,463,696.49.

Environmental benefits of BMPs:

Over the past fifteen years, agri-environmental projects completed with technical and financial assistance from the PRWQP have helped to:

Safely store 292,453 m³ of livestock manure to reduce the risk of nutrient, pathogen and bacteria contaminating drinking water, streams and wetlands.



This equates to 40,091 dump trucks of manure!

Install 15.95 km of livestock fencing to improve the habitat quality of our streams, wetlands and woodlots and to reduce water quality impacts caused by sediment, nutrient and pathogen/bacteria.



Plant 56,062 trees and shrubs to restore degraded habitats, reduce erosion and to sequester carbon dioxide.



Restore and/or protect 137 ha of land to improve water, air, soil and habitat quality.



This is an area equal to 137 football fields!

In 2019, advertisements for the program were run in the Caledon Enterprise every other month. In addition, our social media presence was increased with numerous tweets and Facebook posts published.

Program staff also promoted the program at the following events/workshops:

- Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association Annual General Meeting
- Peel Dufferin Plowing Match
- Soil Sampling and Fertility Planning Workshop
- Natures Benefits Twilight Tour
- Woodlot Management Workshop (2)
- Site Visits

Program staff will continue to advertise the program in local media, by attending events and meetings and by hosting and participating in workshops. Staff encourage Peel Agriculture Advisory Working Group members to continue promoting the program to friends, neighbours, and peers. Peer to peer promotion of the program is the best form of advertisement, and we depend on you to help spread the word.

If you have any questions regarding the 2019 program year, please contact Program staff.

Sincerely,



Mark Eastman

Credit Valley Conservation



Nadine Abrams

Toronto and Region Conservation



Memo

To: Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group

From: Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation
Nadine Abrams, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Date: January 22, 2021

Re: Peel Rural Water Quality Program – 2020 Status Report

The year 2020 marked the sixteenth complete program year for the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP). This status report summarizes the program's accomplishments over the past sixteen years, with an emphasis placed on the 2020 program year.

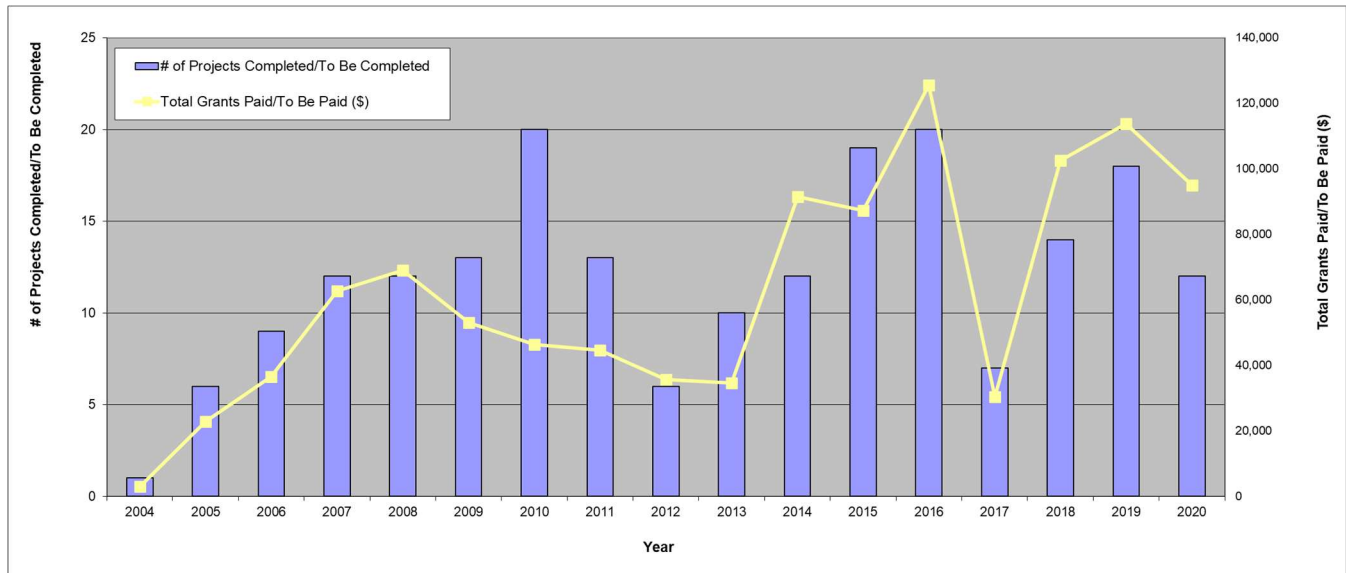
Types and Number of projects approved in 2020:

Private Well Upgrade	1
Livestock Access Restriction	3
Tree Planting	4
Chemical Storage	2
Cover Crop	2
TOTAL PROJECTS APPROVED	12

Grants paid and/or to be paid on 2020 projects: \$94,922.37

Annual program activity:

In 2020, twelve projects were approved, and seven projects have been completed to date. Total grants paid/to be paid is \$94,922.37. This financial support has leveraged an additional \$88,902.97 from project proponents and other funders to assist with the completion of these twelve projects. The graph below illustrates the programs performance for each year since 2004.



Notes:

- 2004 was not a complete program year.
- Statistical discrepancies between annual status reports are a result of approved projects not proceeding with construction, therefore resulting in a withdrawal of applications.

As illustrated by the graph, program uptake increased in 2018 and 2019, however, the program was unable to sustain the momentum through 2020; this was likely in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the number of projects completed/to be completed and grants paid/to be paid in 2020 did not surpass 2018/2019 numbers, the twelve projects match the long-term program average and the grants paid/to be paid finished stronger than the long-term average of approximately \$62,000 per year.

Program accomplishments:

Between 2004 and 2020, the PRWQP has engaged 78 individual farm businesses and has paid/allocated a total of \$1,054,225.11 in funding towards 204 agri-environmental projects. These funds have leveraged an additional \$3,589,921.13 to contribute to the completion of projects valued at \$4,644,146.24.

Environmental benefits of BMPs:

Over the past sixteen years, agri-environmental projects completed with technical and financial assistance from the PRWQP have helped to:

Safely store 349,011 m³ of livestock manure to reduce the risk of nutrient, pathogen and bacteria contaminating drinking water, streams and wetlands.



This equates to 43,626 dump trucks of manure!

Install 21.97 km of livestock fencing to improve the habitat quality of our streams, wetlands and woodlots and to reduce water quality impacts caused by sediment, nutrient and pathogen/bacteria.



Plant 59,055 trees and shrubs to restore degraded habitats, reduce erosion and to sequester carbon dioxide.



Restore, protect and/or manage 327 ha of land to improve water, air, soil and habitat quality.



This is an area equal to 327 football fields!

In 2020, advertisements for the program were run in the Caledon Enterprise. In addition, our social media presence was increased with numerous tweets and Facebook posts published.

Due to Covid-19, in-person promotion of the program was more limited than previous years and was restricted to the Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association Annual General Meeting, the Build Resilience in Your Soil Workshop and site visits.

Program staff will continue to advertise the program in local media, by attending events and meetings and by hosting and participating in workshops. Staff encourage Peel Agriculture Advisory Working Group members to continue promoting the program to friends, neighbours, and peers. Peer to peer promotion of the program is the best form of advertisement, and we depend on you to help spread the word.

If you have any questions regarding the 2020 program year, please contact Program staff.

Sincerely,



Mark Eastman

Credit Valley Conservation



Nadine Abrams

Toronto and Region Conservation

PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) is a voluntary Working Group established by Regional Council in partnership with Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). PAAWG and its members are bound by these Terms of Reference and are ultimately responsible to Regional Council.

Goals

To assist the Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA in their efforts to:

1. protect agricultural lands as a natural resource of major importance to the economic viability of the Region;
2. support Region of Peel farmers and agricultural organizations as valuable contributors to the community and to the economy of Peel;
3. promote healthy rural communities that contain living, working and recreational opportunities that respect the natural environment and resources;
4. increase awareness of rural environmental issues and opportunities and adoption of environmentally beneficial land management practices (BMPs) in the agricultural sector to conserve resources and improve environmental quality; and
5. deliver the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP) and related programs supporting adoption of environmental stewardship practices by the agricultural community.

Purpose

The purpose of PAAWG is to:

1. advise and inform the Region of Peel respecting matters of interest or concern to the agricultural community;
2. provide advice to Regional Council regarding Regional and area municipal official plan policies and programs;
3. assist Regional Council in the implementation of provincial legislation related to farm practices and act as interim arbitrator on local nuisance complaints as may be appropriate in accordance with Provincial guidelines;
4. provide advice to Regional Council on Federal and Provincial legislation, policies, guidelines, programs and projects affecting the agricultural industry;
5. foster public awareness and understanding of agricultural and rural issues;

6. review and comment on Regional studies, plans, programs and projects that may impact on the agricultural industry;
7. advise Peel Region, CVC and TRCA staff on the development and implementation of the PRWQP, including but not limited to:
 - a) Eligible Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) for grant compensation;
 - b) Grant rate and grant cap for each BMP;
 - c) PRWQP and project eligibility guidelines;
 - d) Application and project approval process;
 - e) PRWQP delivery;
 - f) Marketing and promotional strategy of the PRWQP; and
 - g) Areas for improvement.
8. assist CVC and TRCA in ensuring that the PRWQP funds are administered on a priority basis in accordance with the PRWQP guidelines, as amended;
9. advise Peel Region, CVC and TRCA respecting the implementation of programs that support or complement the PRWQP, including the Peel ALUS Pilot Project, with regard to matters such as program guidelines, budget, community engagement and communications;
10. review and approve applications for grant assistance under the PRWQP and the Peel ALUS Pilot Project; and
11. assist Peel Region, CVC and TRCA in conducting strategic reviews of the PRWQP, and of the Peel ALUS Pilot Project, as required.

Membership

1. The members of PAAWG shall be appointed by Regional Council and serve for the term of Council or until their successors are appointed by Council. Non-elected members may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms or for additional terms as may be approved by Council.
2. The Working Group shall be comprised of a maximum of 14 members consisting of the following:
 - Regional Chair (ex-officio)
 - Regional Councillors (3);
 - Federation of Agriculture (2; plus 2 alternates)
 - Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association (2; plus 2 alternates)
 - Representative of a Peel Agricultural Society or other special agricultural

interest group (2; plus 2 alternates)

- Three citizens-at-large (3)
 - Representative of a Peel youth organization or an alternative representative of the agricultural community (1; plus 1 alternate)
3. The representatives of all organizations, agencies and citizens-at-large should have:
- a. rural and agricultural qualifications and interests;
 - b. experience and willingness to liaise with the range of agencies and organizations represented on PAAWG; and
 - c. the capacity and willingness to devote the necessary time to PAAWG.

Openings for membership shall be publicly advertised in accordance with the Region of Peel Public Notice Policy. Membership applications shall be reviewed by Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA staff. Recommendations for appointments to PAAWG shall be made to Regional Council via a Regional staff report. Members shall be formally appointed by Regional Council.

4. An applicant from the community must:
- a) be a qualified elector in Peel Region pursuant to the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (a Canadian Citizen, 18 years of age or older and a resident/tenant or owner of land in Peel Region), or;
 - b) be a qualified elector in Ontario representing a group or organization that acts on behalf of members of the agricultural sector who reside in the Region of Peel; and
 - c) not be an elected official of Peel Regional Council or of the Council of a Peel area municipality; and,
 - d) not be an employee of the Region of Peel or a Peel Region area municipality.
5. Members are expected to attend all meetings. Should a member be unable to attend a meeting, it is the member's responsibility to arrange for an alternate (where applicable) to attend in his or her place.
6. If a member fails to attend three successive meetings without authorization from the Chair of PAAWG, that member's appointment may be terminated.

Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected at the first meeting annually and shall serve for the remainder of the calendar year. The Chair and Vice-Chair may be re-appointed for subsequent years.

Quorum

Quorum constitutes a minimum of five (5) PAAWG members. The Regional Chair shall be counted in determining quorum.

Remuneration and Expenses

Non-elected members of PAAWG shall be eligible for reimbursement of mileage or public transportation expenses incurred which are deemed necessary for full participation in PAAWG. Expense claims will be submitted in accordance with the Region of Peel Expense Claim policy.

Pecuniary or Conflicts of Interest

Members shall declare applicable pecuniary or conflicts of interest before agenda items are presented including the approval or appeal of PRWQP project applications.

Meetings

1. PAAWG shall meet on a quarterly basis or more frequently as required.
2. Agenda items should be forwarded to Region of Peel support staff or to the Chair at least three weeks in advance of meetings. Agendas shall be circulated to PAAWG members via email and made available to the public on the Region of Peel website one week prior to the meeting. Agendas shall be available in printed form upon request to the Region of Peel, Regional Planning and Growth Management Division, Public Works.
3. Decisions of PAAWG shall be decided by a majority vote of those members present at a meeting. Quorum must be met for a decision to be made.
4. Any person wishing to appear before or present information to a meeting of PAAWG shall submit a written request to support staff and the Chair of PAAWG at least one week prior to the meeting.
5. Meetings shall be open to the public unless PAAWG determines, in accordance with Section 239 of the *Municipal Act*, that an in-camera meeting is required.

Conduct and Procedures

Where not specified in these Terms of Reference, the conduct and procedures of PAAWG will be governed by the relevant sections of Peel Region Procedures By-law 56-2019 (as amended).

Minutes

The minutes of each meeting will be amended as necessary and approved by PAAWG at its next meeting. Once approved, meeting minutes will be posted on the Region of Peel website. PAAWG meeting minutes are public including the approval of PRWQP project applications.

Role and Responsibility of Support Staff

1. Staff from the Region of Peel, Regional Planning and Growth Management Division, Public Works shall provide administrative, research support and advice to PAAWG. This includes, but is not limited to, preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and the preparation minutes.
2. Staff representatives from CVC and TRCA shall provide community outreach and technical support to PAAWG for the PRWQP and other related programs. This includes, but is not limited to the review and presentation of Peel Rural Water Quality Program and Peel ALUS Pilot project applications to PAAWG; distribution of approved project grants; and program promotion.

Peel Rural Water Quality Program Funding

The PRWQP is a co-operative partnership between Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA, the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund, Peel Federation of Agriculture and Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association. Conservation authority staff are responsible for the delivery of the PRWQP and the distribution of project grants to private landowners. Grant funders include the Region of Peel, Federal and Provincial funding agencies and non-governmental funding agencies. Conservation authority staff may be required by external funding agencies to seek final approval from PAAWG, ensuring that the overall PRWQP principles, framework and funding requirements are met.

Approval Process of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PWQRP)

PAAWG shall make decisions to approve, deny or defer PRWQP project applications in accordance with these Terms of Reference and the PRWQP Guidelines. Regional staff may circulate applications to municipal, Regional and/or Provincial staff for technical review and comments prior to PAAWG making a decision.

Reconsideration of Decisions on Peel Rural Water Quality Program Applications

An applicant who wishes to request that PAAWG reconsider a decision on a PRQWP application shall submit the request in writing to the Chair and PRWQP support staff. The request shall be heard at a meeting of PAAWG at which the applicant shall be allotted five minutes to present the request. PAAWG members may then ask the

applicant questions. PAAWG shall make a decision on the request by majority vote in accordance with these Terms of Reference.

Annual Reports and Work Plan

An Annual Report summarizing PAAWG's activities and accomplishments during the previous year shall be prepared by Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA staff. The Annual Report shall be provided to Regional Council as well as CVC and TRCA's respective Board of Directors.

At the beginning of each year a work plan shall be prepared by PAAWG for the upcoming year. The work plan shall be submitted to Regional Council and the CVC and TRCA Boards of Directors after the first PAAWG meeting of the year.

A Vibrant Future



Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance
Action Plan 2021-2026

Acknowledgements

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE FOOD AND FARMING ALLIANCE WORKING GROUP FOR THEIR EXPERTISE.

Kiersten Allore-Engle	Region of Durham
Allison Brown	Region of Durham
Stacey Jibb	Region of Durham
Joanne Hickey-Evans	City of Hamilton
Brian Morris	City of Hamilton
Anna DeMarchi-Meyers	Region of Halton
Don Campbell	Region of Peel
Erik Acs	Region of Niagara
Linda Sicoli	Region of Niagara
Meena Hassanali	Region of York
Jennifer Best	Region of York
Michael Wolfson	City of Toronto
Anna Shortly	Greenbelt Foundation
Danielle Collins	Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Carolyn Puterbough	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR EFFORT AND PARTICIPATION ON THE PROJECT TEAM.

Janet Horner

Executive Director
The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance

Kathy Macpherson

Vice President, Research and Policy
The Greenbelt Foundation

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE MANY MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE BOARD FOR THEIR TIME AND EXPERTISE PROVIDED TO INFORM THIS ACTION PLAN.

Project Team

Principal and Lead Consultant: Dr. Bronwynne Wilton, PHD, Wilton Consulting Group

Project Support: Krista Kapitan, Dawson McKenzie, Alex Petric, and Riccardo Peggi, Wilton Consulting Group



Possibility grows here.

GOLDEN HORSESHOE
FOOD AND FARMING
ALLIANCE



WILTON
CONSULTING GROUP

Why the Golden Horseshoe Matters

Wrapped around the western edge of Lake Ontario lies one of Canada’s most dynamic and flourishing regions—the Golden Horseshoe. Spanning from Niagara in the southwest to Durham in the northeast, the region contains over half of Ontario’s population and over 60% of the province’s businesses.¹ Among the many industries in the region, the Golden Horseshoe supports one of Canada’s largest agri-food clusters.

Thanks to an abundant supply of fresh water, large swaths of fertile soil, and a diverse and ever-growing population, the Golden Horseshoe boasts a concentration of farming, food processing, and distribution capacity.

The region plays a major role in Ontario’s local food system as well as providing a significant number of commodities for export.



The Vision

The Golden Horseshoe is globally renowned as a vibrant and sustainable agri-food cluster, characterized by profitable farming operations of all sizes, a thriving hub of food processing and food retail, extensive research capacity, and innovative technology.



52% of Ontario’s agri-food jobs are in the Golden Horseshoe.



The Golden Horseshoe has over 70% of Ontario’s acreage for peaches, plums, grapes & pears.



Farmland prices in the Golden Horseshoe were among the highest in Ontario in 2016.



The Golden Horseshoe is home to 61% of Ontario’s food and beverage business



The number of farms in the Golden Horseshoe have fallen by 30% since 1996.



The province recognizes 2 Specialty Crop Areas within the Golden Horseshoe

How We Will Achieve the Vision

GOAL A:

The GHFFA is recognized as the leading organization with expertise on food and farming issues and opportunities in the Golden Horseshoe Region of Ontario.

- Achieve organizational excellence.
- Advocate on behalf of the food and farming sector in the Golden Horseshoe

GOAL B:

Establish the Golden Horseshoe as Canada's leading innovative agriculture and agri-food cluster.

- Grow the cluster via networking and relationship building.
- Enable municipal and other agri-food cluster stakeholders to enhance data-driven decision making across the Golden Horseshoe.
- Foster research and innovation.

GOAL C:

Enable the agri-food cluster to support sustainability outcomes.

- Enhance the economic capacity of agriculture and agri-food cluster in the Golden Horseshoe.
- Enhance the capacity for the agri-food cluster in the Golden Horseshoe to contribute to public health outcomes.
- Support ongoing climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives and foster collaborations that position the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors as leaders in sustainability.

HIGHLIGHT

Foodvalley, Netherlands

Leading the World in Agri-food Innovation

Around the turn of the 21st century, the Netherlands made an ambitious decision to make significant investment in its agricultural sector. Despite its small size and limited resources, the country is now the second-largest food exporter in the world, thanks to its forward-thinking development strategy and access to regional markets. This work has been accelerated by the creation of Foodvalley, a knowledge-driven agri-food ecosystem in 2004.

Foodvalley connects entrepreneurs and innovators with global networks to spark sectoral growth. It is comprised of 185 member companies from Asia, Europe, and North America. At the center of Foodvalley is Wageningen University & Research, one of the largest research and education centers in agri-food. Today, Foodvalley consists of 8,000 scientists, 70 science companies, and 20 research institutes. The ecosystem facilitates cooperation between companies, knowledge institutions, and governments to drive innovation and development.

Why the Alliance is Needed: Current & Future Trends in Agri-Food

Agri-food Cluster Growth and Resilience

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The **COVID-19** pandemic has highlighted the importance of the resiliency of Canada's agri-food sector and sectoral coordination is necessary for a robust recovery that builds a better industry for the future.
- **Exports** play a key role for Ontario's agri-food sector and hold potential for further growth.
- **Innovative practices** across the value chain may help address several challenges within the sector.
- There are ongoing questions related to **labour supply** within both agriculture and food production.
- **Planning policy** needs to protect the agri-food sector's present assets without limiting the potential for new innovations and business growth.

Securing the Region's Agricultural System for Long-term Viability

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Farmland Prices** have become increasingly expensive in recent decades.
- There is constant pressure to convert farmland to other uses in areas across the Golden Horseshoe outside of the Greenbelt, resulting in **farmland loss**.
- Many farm and food business owners are approaching retirement and are facing challenges related to business **transition/succession**.
- In near-urban areas, there may be agricultural business opportunities that can use **smaller farm lots** for high-revenue activities engaging urban residents.
- Growth of **urban agriculture** (such as community gardens and controlled environment agriculture) may create opportunities to grow the sector while posing challenges for policymakers.
- **Agritourism** creates opportunities for farms across the Golden Horseshoe and requires ongoing policy attention.

Food, Farming, and Sustainability

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Climate change** will impact agriculture in Canada, and municipalities will need to be forward-thinking in how they address this challenge.
- A changing climate may pose problems for agricultural operations but may also create new opportunities in Ontario, making agricultural planning and economic development key tasks in the coming years for **climate change adaption and mitigation**.
- Farms play an important role in the local ecosystem, and there are opportunities to foster **sustainable farming practices** in the Golden Horseshoe.
- **Food insecurity** is an ongoing concern in the Golden Horseshoe, and the local food sector has a part to play in addressing this issue.

HIGHLIGHT

The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance

Opportunities to Drive Cluster Development

Like Foodvalley, the Alliance has much to offer to drive agri-food cluster development. The Golden Horseshoe region contains a network of innovative research spaces and expertise, a healthy agri-food business environment, and access to domestic and international markets.

The Alliance's efforts over the past ten years have fostered a municipal environment for planning and development that is ready to accelerate agri-food innovation and business development. The Alliance's collaborative and regional nature positions it to be the facilitating force for agri-food cluster development in the region.

4.0 Action Plan

This Action Plan includes a set of goals, objectives, and actions that will guide the core activities of the Alliance over the 2021-2026 timeframe. Alliance staff, in collaboration with Working Group members, are responsible for implementing this plan. Ultimately, they are accountable to the Board of the Alliance, and then back to member municipalities. The Alliance reports on the progress towards the Action Plan annually to their board, the five regional Councils, City of Hamilton Council and City of Toronto Council.

How to Read this Action Plan

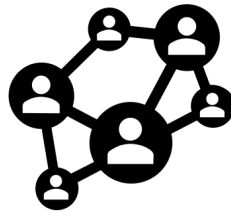
The action plan is broken down into 3 overarching goals. The goals are derived from engagement results with key stakeholders about where they think the Alliance should be in 5 years. Each goal has its own roadmap to demonstrate how the Alliance will work towards desired outcomes. The goals are broken down into objectives that help meet that goal, and actions that complete the objective. Beside each action in the table, there are columns that indicate how success will be measured. This includes when an action should be completed by, who the lead should be, and partners and collaborators to consider.



The actions under each objective are broken down into three key Alliance roles. The Alliance roles are identified throughout the Action Plan using these three icons:



Knowledge sharing



Strengthening regional policy and opportunities for sector growth



Expanding/strengthening networks



In some instances, partnerships should be sought to lead the action items. An Alliance lead action item is indicated with a checkmark; however, it is implied that there will be some level of collaboration in most of the action items. To indicate seeking out a potential partner to lead the action item, a handshake icon is used.



Alliance leadership



Partnership or collaboration



GOAL A:

The GHFFA is recognized as the leading organization with expertise on food and farming issues and opportunities in the Golden Horseshoe Region of Ontario.

Over the past decade, the Alliance has built a strong foundation of expertise on the food and farming sectors within the Golden Horseshoe Region. In late 2019, the organization shifted to an independent, incorporated model. It is now poised to embrace a more formalized organizational structure, which can help the Alliance to achieve its goals more quickly and efficiently. Refining the roles within the Alliance will increase accountability and clarify the group's responsibilities.

Currently, the Alliance has a strong network base which includes upper-tier municipalities, the provincial government, educational organizations, and farm advocacy groups.

Expanding this network by building relationships with new partners will open avenues to support the agri-food sector in new ways. The Alliance is positioned to enhance its capacity to respond to new developments in the agri-food sector, potentially increasing its influence within higher levels of government and society. These steps, taken over the next 5 years, will help to maintain momentum gathered over the last ten years, and establish the Alliance as a recognized leader in supporting the agri-food sector.

ACTIONS | A.1 - Achieve Organizational Excellence



ACTION | A.1.1

Lead/Support

GHFFA Staff and Board

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Greenbelt Foundation

Timeline

Jan 2021- Jun 2021

Develop an operational manual to refine and confirm the governance structure, financial sustainability, and organizational roles and responsibilities. The operational manual should include updates to the Board and Working Group Terms of Reference and incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.



ACTION | A.1.2

Lead/Support

GHFFA Staff and Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Greenbelt Foundation

Timeline

Jul 2021- Dec 2021

Develop and execute a Communications Strategy, subdivided for 3 audiences: Internal Stakeholders (the working group and board), External Stakeholders, and Government Relations. Ensure that communication continues to be a core component of Alliance operations.



ACTION | A.1.3

Lead/Support

GHFFA Staff and Board

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Alliance Board

Timeline

Jan 2021- Dec 2021

Develop a formal letter of commitment template to be signed by each member municipality and partner. This letter should demonstrate commitment to the agri-food sector through involvement in the Alliance. Signatories should include the Chair of the Board of the Alliance, and the appropriate signatory (i.e. the Mayor, Executive Director of partner organizations, etc.)



ACTION | A.1.4

Lead/Support

GHFFA Staff

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Working Group

Timeline

Each AGM from 2021-2026

Use the Annual General Meeting as an opportunity to celebrate wins, report on outcomes and enhance relationship building with existing and new collaborators by expanding attendance to over 100 people representing a broad range of stakeholders across the Golden Horseshoe, from researchers, to innovators and investors, municipal partners, conservation authorities, other ministries and provincial leaders, farmers, and more.



ACTIONS | A.2 - Advocate on behalf of the agri-food cluster in the Golden Horseshoe



ACTION | A.2.1

Lead/Support

GHFFA Staff and Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Greenbelt Foundation, OMAFRA

Timeline

Anually beginning March 2022

Collaborate with Alliance members to design and implement a series of workshops (up to 5) and roundtables (2) to elevate the agri-food cluster in the Golden Horseshoe. (See action items, B.1.1, B.1.2, B.1.3, B.2.3, C.1.5).



ACTION | A.2.2

Lead/Support

GHFFA Staff and Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Greenbelt Foundation

Timeline

Anually beginning Jan 2021

Collaborate with Alliance members to develop short, plain language position papers to be published annually to support the agri-food sector in the Golden Horseshoe (up to 5). These position papers should bring forward the latest research and examples of innovative policies aimed at supporting a thriving and dynamic agri-food supply chain. They may include papers responding to policy challenges, or proactive papers based on emerging opportunities. For example, one of the position papers should explore land tenure agreements that provide entrepreneurial opportunities for new entrants to the farm and food sector.



ACTION | A.2.3

Lead/Support

GHFFA Staff

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Timeline

Jan 2021 - Dec 2022

Engage with the **Canadian Chamber of Commerce Agriculture and Agri-food Policy Committee, Canadian Agri-food Policy Institute, Arrell Food Institute, Bioenterprise, the TCI Network, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada** and other similar organizations to enhance the national presence of the Golden Horseshoe agri-food cluster. For example, **Foodvalley** in the Netherlands is a nationally-recognized agri-food cluster.



ACTIONS | A.2 - Advocate on behalf of the agri-food cluster in the Golden Horseshoe



ACTION | A.2.4

Lead/Support

GHFFA Staff and Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Alliance Board

Timeline

Annually beginning in 2021

Organize regular Queen's Park Days or similar events to highlight how the agri-food sector in the Golden Horseshoe is an economic driver in Ontario.



ACTION | A.2.5

Lead/Support

Alliance Board

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Working Group

Timeline

Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Advocate for expanding access to high-speed internet to enhance equity in economic opportunity linking rural and urban communities in the Golden Horseshoe.



ACTION | A.2.6

Lead/Support

Alliance Board & Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators

GHFFA Staff

Timeline

Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Continue to ensure municipal partners (including single, upper and lower-tier municipalities) in the Golden Horseshoe have committed planning and economic development staff roles with a focus on the agri-food sector. Encourage interdepartmental collaboration at the municipal level beyond economic development and planning to support the agri-food cluster and continue to collaborate across municipalities.



GOAL B:

Establish the Golden Horseshoe as Canada's leading innovative agriculture and agri-food cluster.

The Golden Horseshoe provides significant contributions to the agri-food sector in Ontario. The Golden Horseshoe region is home to over one million acres of prime farmland including two important specialty crop areas.

It is also home to 52% of Ontario's agri-food sector jobs and 61% of Ontario's food and beverage processing businesses. The Alliance has a role to play in positioning Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector as a leading innovator.

ACTIONS | B.1 - Grow the cluster via networking and relationship building



ACTION | B.1.1

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Dec 2026

Collaborate to convene and host roundtable discussions with Golden Horseshoe municipalities, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and food manufacturing industry leaders on the opportunities and challenges to expand agri-food manufacturing in the Golden Horseshoe.

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Food and Consumer Products Canada
Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority (HOPA)
OMAFRA
Food manufacturing companies



ACTION | B.1.2

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Dec 2023 - Dec 2026

Host roundtable discussions on the opportunities for agri-food entrepreneurship “centres of excellence” across the Golden Horseshoe.

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Durham College	Vineland Research and Innovation Centre
Niagara College	Holland Marsh Research Station
The University of Guelph	Meat and Poultry Ontario, Canadian Food Innovation Network
George Brown College	District Ventures Kitchen
York University Yspace	Other groups spurring innovation in the agri-food sector.



ACTION | B.1.3

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Dec 2023 - Dec 2026

Host a workshop to bring together automation engineers, software developers, and primary production to network and expand opportunities to develop innovative food and on-farm technologies (e.g. robotics, artificial intelligence, sensors, etc.).

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Vineland Research and Innovation Centre
Farm Organizations
Post-secondary institutions



ACTIONS | B.1 - Grow the cluster via networking and relationship building



ACTION | B.1.4

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Dec 2026

Host 2-3 cross-municipal business to business networking events resulting in partnership opportunities for farm, agri-food, and restaurants/food service businesses across the Golden Horseshoe. Consider inviting an engaging speaker of interest to farm businesses and retailers to attract interest.

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Chambers of Commerce across the Golden Horseshoe and Greater Golden Horseshoe
Business development stakeholders representing Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) in the Golden Horseshoe
Municipal Economic Development Staff



ACTION | B.1.5

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Durham College Centre for Food

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Mar 2023

Showcase opportunities in the Golden Horseshoe for intensive market garden, urban agriculture and urban farming business development. Begin by hosting an Alliance Board and Working Group meeting at Durham College Centre for Food.



ACTION | B.1.6

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Feed Your Future, Golden Horseshoe Workforce
Development Boards

Timeline
Jan 2021- Dec 2024

Support initiatives that promote agri-food sector employment by hosting 2-4 series of Feeding Your Future career fairs within each of the Golden Horseshoe regions/cities.



ACTION | B.1.7

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Ministry of Labour, Training, Skills & Development

Timeline
Jan 2021- Dec 2024

Explore funding and/or training/skills development opportunities that exist within the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development relevant for agri-food cluster development.



ACTIONS | B.2 Enable municipal and other agri-food cluster stakeholders to enhance data-driven decision making across the Golden Horseshoe.



ACTION | B.2.1

Lead/Support
ConnectON

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Food & Consumer Products of Canada

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Dec 2023

Develop an economic snapshot of the agri-food sector in the Golden Horseshoe that includes labour market data to attract agri-food manufacturing opportunities to the Golden Horseshoe.



ACTION | B.2.2

Lead/Support
ConnectON

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Working Group, OMAFRA

Timeline
Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Explore the opportunity to develop open and/or fee-based access portals within the ConnectON tool. Continue to build on opportunities for collaboration with the Agricultural System Portal.



ACTION | B.2.3

Lead/Support
ConnectON

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Working Group, OMAFRA

Timeline
Jan 2021- Dec 2026

Host 1-2 mapping workshops by 2026 to teach interested municipal partners about the full suite of ConnectON asset mapping capabilities to foster economic development activity. Workshops may be virtual and consist of a combination of formal presentations and hands-on peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Municipal partners can include those within the Golden Horseshoe and elsewhere in Ontario.



ACTION | B.2.4

Lead/Support
ConnectON

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Working Group, OMAFRA

Timeline
Jan 2021- Dec 2026

Showcase a series of aggregated data products for the Golden Horseshoe region, and Ontario more broadly. This may include labour market data (see also action item B.2.1), incubator/innovation spaces, or data pulled to inform timely policy conversations. The aggregated data products could be turned into infographics or briefs for GHFFA members to share with their networks.



ACTIONS | B.3 - Foster Research & Relationship Building



ACTION | B.3.1

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Dec 2026

Foster research that facilitates import replacement opportunities and market development strategies by enabling regional farms to experiment with growing culturally relevant foods.

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Greenbelt Foundation
Farmers and farm organizations
Vineland Research and Innovation Centre



ACTION | B.3.2

Lead/Support
GHFFA Staff & Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Grow the uptake of the Serving Up Local project by expanding the project within long term care facilities across the Golden Horseshoe and including other broader public sector opportunities.

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Greenbelt Fund
Other municipal partners (i.e. long-term care facilities, University of Guelph and other post-secondary institutions)



ACTION | B.3.3

Lead/Support
Greenbelt Foundation & Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2021- Dec 2026

Support the expansion of locally grown and processed fruits and vegetables in the Golden Horseshoe by enabling progress towards the actions identified in the 2020 Plant the Seeds report.

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
Vineland Research
And others



ACTIONS | B.3 - Foster Research & Relationship Building



ACTION | B.3.4

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Meat & Poultry Ontario

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Dec 2026

Support activities that offer opportunities to grow the meat and poultry processing capacity in the Golden Horseshoe and surrounding areas, focusing on small and medium enterprises.



ACTION | B.3.5

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Dec 2026

Explore creative uses of existing serviced land in urban areas in the Golden Horseshoe for production that may include small-scale intensive production opportunities and/or community gardens (e.g. greenhouses, tech-hubs, agri-food corridors, intensive controlled environment gardens, and as regenerative projects in brownfield areas).

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Greenbelt Foundation
Municipal Economic Development and planning staff



ACTION | B.3.6

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Greenbelt Foundation & Fund

Timeline
Jan 2022- Dec 2026

Investigate regional opportunities to develop, invest in and/or incentivize creative re-use of existing infrastructure to support food incubators, accelerators, commercial kitchens³, ghost kitchens, and packaging facilities. (See B.1.3)



ACTION | B.3.7

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Timeline
Jan 2024- Dec 2024

Encourage the development of a “catalogue” of definitions for the various creative and innovative uses associated with urban agriculture. Definitions may include urban agriculture, urban farm, urban garden, peri-urban agriculture, vertical farming, etc.⁴



³ Ghost kitchens are an emerging way for food companies to do business. In this model, restaurants and other food service providers do not have a storefront but rather, prepare foods in a kitchen and deliver straight to your door. This has become particularly popular during the pandemic. For more on ghost kitchens, see this article, [here](#).

⁴ The City of Atlanta’s “Aglanta” initiative has a webpage describing these definitions and more. There is an opportunity for the Alliance to lead similar work across the Golden Horseshoe. <https://www.aglanta.org/>

GOAL C:

Enable the agri-food cluster to support sustainability outcomes.

The collaborative, regional nature of the Working Group is one of the strongest components of the Alliance. This collaboration is crucial for implementing planning and economic development policies and activities that support the continued prosperity of the agri-food sector.

This collaboration has the potential to enable the Golden Horseshoe agri-food sector to meet sustainability objectives related to the economy, communities, and the environment. Further, the Alliance can demonstrate progress towards sustainability objectives to demonstrate its leadership and commitment to a prosperous future.

ACTIONS | C.1 - Enhance the economic capacity of agricultural land in the Golden Horseshoe.



ACTION | C.1.1

Lead/Support

GHFFA Staff & Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Timeline

Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Maintain regular Working Group meetings as a space to collaborate and align land use policy and economic development topics and best practices from a food systems perspective.



ACTION | C.1.2

Lead/Support

Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators

See Below

Timeline

Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Strengthen collaborative opportunities with OMAFRA to provide expert advice in the review of land use policy tools, documents, and amendments, and develop connections with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to ensure Alliance input regarding provincial planning policy.

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing



ACTION | C.1.3

Lead/Support

Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators

See Below

Timeline

Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Continue to collaborate with the OMAFRA regional economic development staff to support strong regional-provincial connections and forge new collaborations with other provincial and federal groups such as the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development; Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks; Environment and Climate Change Canada, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada and Ministry of Finance.

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, Innovation, Science and Economic Development
Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks
Ministry of Finance



ACTIONS | C.1 - Enhance the economic capacity of agricultural land in the Golden Horseshoe.



ACTION | C.1.4

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Alliance Board, Greenbelt Foundation

Timeline
Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Share best practices and lessons learned to encourage consistent treatment of the on-farm diversified uses as defined in A Place to Grow, the Greenbelt Plan, and OMAFRA guidelines across the Golden Horseshoe.



ACTION | C.1.5

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2023 - Dec 2026

Identify a partner to host 2-3 educational workshops to address farm and business succession/transition issues.

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Farm Management Canada
Farm Credit Canada
Canadian Association of Farm Advisors
Ontario Federation of Agriculture



ACTION | C.1.6

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Support cross promotion of agritourism activities across the Golden Horseshoe and explore opportunities to develop regional agritourism activities such as 'Farm Fresh' initiatives and 'Culinary Trails'.

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Greenbelt Foundation
Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association
Local 'farm fresh' organizations
Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO's) for the Golden Horseshoe



ACTIONS | C.2 Enhance the capacity for agricultural land in the Golden Horseshoe to contribute to public health outcomes.



ACTION | C.2.1

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Municipal Public Health Stakeholders

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Dec 2026

Invite public health staff from each member municipality to participate in an annual Working Group meeting to discuss food access initiatives and GHFFA work.



ACTION | C.2.2

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Alliance Board

Timeline
Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Monitor the activities of local food policy councils and efforts to enact food charters and strategies from food access and availability perspectives. Participate in regional initiatives as needed and consider the **National Food Policy** priority outcomes in Alliance activities.



ACTION | C.2.3

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Dec 2026

Discuss opportunities for incentives to remove business/enterprise development barriers for small-scale urban agriculture and community gardens across the Golden Horseshoe within urban areas, specifically with respect to publicly-owned land. (See also B.3.5)

Potential Partners & Collaborators

Greenbelt Foundation
Rouge National Urban Park
Urban agri-businesses
Other relevant stakeholders



ACTIONS | C.3 Support ongoing climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives and foster collaborations that position the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors as leaders in sustainability.



ACTION | C.3.1

Lead/Support
GHFFA Staff

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Help position the farm and food sector within the Golden Horseshoe as a leader in meeting sustainability metrics by networking with the National Index Project and the Canadian Agri-food Sustainability Initiative.

Potential Partners & Collaborators
National Index Project
Canadian Agri-food Sustainability Initiative



ACTION | C.3.2

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
See Below

Timeline
Jan 2021 - Dec 2026

Continue to support the ongoing activities of organizations such as the OSCIA and Conservation Authorities in their work to promote and encourage the adoption of environmental stewardship best management practices across the Golden Horseshoe. For example, this may include promoting OSCIA environmental farm plan workshops amongst farm businesses in the Golden Horseshoe.

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Conservation Authorities,
Ontario Farmland Trust
Ecological Farmers of Ontario
Among others



ACTION | C.3.3

Lead/Support
Working Group

Potential Partners & Collaborators
Greenbelt Foundation

Timeline
Jan 2022 - Dec 2026

Provide support for all municipal partners to develop climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies for agriculture by sharing good practices for developing and implementing climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in the Working Group priorities for 2022-2026.





Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance
P.O. Box 55
Milton, Ontario
L9T 2Y3

April 12, 2021

Chair Iannicca and Regional Council
Region of Peel
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton, ON
L6T 4B9

Dear Chair Iannicca and Members of Council,

As a member of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance, Peel Region works with other municipalities in the Golden Horseshoe to support farming and the agri-food sector. The purpose of this letter is to request that Peel Region renew its annual funding commitment to support implementation of the Alliance's Action Plan.

After 2020 tested all of us to stay strong and resilient, we discovered that our food system was able to respond to the many challenges Covid provided as well. The Golden Horseshoe contains over half of Ontario's population and is home to Canada's largest food and farming cluster. The region contains 61% of Ontario's food and beverage businesses and 52% of Ontario's agrifood jobs. Strength in this cluster has been essential as we move into the second year of the pandemic.

In 2020, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance worked to refresh its 10-year Action Plan and chart a new way forward for the next 5 years. Our first plan, released in 2012, never imagined a world with pandemics, unprecedented levels of food insecurity, the urgency of climate change and continued development pressures on our most precious resource – our finite supply of productive agricultural lands.

In September 2020, the Board of the Alliance approved a new Action Plan entitled “*A Vibrant Future*” that contains three main areas of focus:

- 1) The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance is recognized as the leading organization with expertise on food and farming issues and opportunities in the Golden Horseshoe Region of Ontario.**
- 2) Establish the Golden Horseshoe as Canada’s leading innovative agriculture and agri-food cluster.**
- 3) Enable the agri-food cluster to support sustainability outcomes.**

Forty different actions and projects are outlined in the plan to help keep the Golden Horseshoe Food Cluster strong and thriving. To implement the projects, the Alliance has been successful in securing additional, matching project support from the Federal government, the Province, and the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation. The Alliance also collaborates with other organizations to share the lead in implementing projects with common goals in the Agrifood cluster. Additional information about the Alliance can be found at our website www.foodandfarming.ca.

Summary of Alliance Accomplishments in 2020

1. With guidance from Wilton Consultants, the Alliance developed a new five-year Action Plan containing 40 actions for implementation by the Alliance and partners to ensure a strong and vibrant Golden Horseshoe Food Cluster.
2. The Alliance responded to consultations regarding proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act, the Toronto Food and Beverage Strategy, Agricultural Systems Mapping, Opportunities for Import Replacement report from the Greenbelt Foundation, and proposed Amendments to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
3. Year two of a Research Project with the University of Guelph was completed to assess the economic impact of purchasing of local food in Long-Term Care Homes. As the focus in participating long-term care homes in 2020 was on fighting the outbreaks of the pandemic, the project pivoted to develop recommendations for the sector regarding the food spend in LTC. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Alliance fund this three-year project.
4. The Alliance funded a project with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Federal Agricultural Partnership that resulted in the development of the “Always in Season Toolkit”. The Toolkit is a guide for communities in supporting and promoting local agriculture, food and beverages.
5. ConnectOn, the Asset Mapping database of the Alliance, added additional manufacturing data to the database for use by Alliance partners. In addition, significant effort was spent by Alliance partners to update data within the database. In Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon, data from 2015 was replaced with the most recent municipal data focussing on food and beverage processing and retail businesses.

6. The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus commissioned ConnectOn to map all agri-food and manufacturing assets in South Western Ontario. This move completed Asset Mapping data for all of Southern Ontario and will contribute data required to extend the Agricultural Systems mapping outside of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. This project was completed on time and on budget in early 2021.
7. Continued sharing of best practices in Economic Development and Planning occurs with staff members of the Cities and Municipalities through monthly zoom meetings.

2021 Work Plan Projects

1. **Always in Season Film Project** – As in-person gatherings will still be uncertain in 2021, the Alliance and York Region are collaborating on the production of a film to feature carrot production in the Holland Marsh and new young farmers in York Region. This project gives the Alliance the ability to promote local food production through media channels.
2. **Local Food in Long-Term Care** – Now in its final year, this Alliance-funded research project at the University of Guelph has been examining the local food spend in Long Term Care. It will be publishing results and making recommendations to the Ontario Government on food spend in Long Term Care Homes. This research has been conducted with the collaboration and data from the Regions of Durham, Peel, Halton, Hamilton and Niagara.
3. **Up in Smoke Cannabis Webinar** – On April 20, 2021, the Alliance is hosting a Webinar to examine best practices in planning for Licensed Cannabis Producers in Ontario.
4. **ConnectOn - Continued Data Refresh and Data Uploads from Partners**
5. **Expansion of ConnectOn Data Base through Southern Ontario** – The Western Ontario Warden's Caucus Asset Mapping project was completed on March 31, 2020 on time and on budget. This move completed Asset Mapping data for all of Southern Ontario and will contribute data required to extend the Agricultural Systems mapping outside of the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
6. **Expansion of ConnectOn Data Base to Northern Ontario** – The Northern Policy Institute have commissioned the Alliance to map Agrifood and Manufacturing Data for Northern Ontario. This project will also add an additional industry sector to the database that can be templated for the rest of the province.
7. **Position Paper on a relevant Agri-Food topic area** – This year's paper will examine wedding barns.

Financial Request

The Region of Peel's current funding commitment ends in 2021. The Alliance is requesting that the Region continue its financial support of the Action Plan and extend its current funding commitment of \$30,000 a year for five years to 2026, the life of the Action Plan. This request is being made to each of the Regional Councils within the Golden Horseshoe, and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto.

Since 2012 each Regional Council in the Golden Horseshoe and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto has appointed a Council representative to the Alliance and contributed financially to implement the Action Plans of the Alliance. Partner Regions and Cities support the work of the Alliance through an allocation of \$30,000 each per year. The contribution helps to provide core funding and leverage additional dollars for

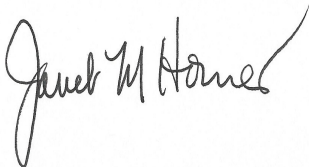
the projects and activities of the Action Plan. In-kind contributions also are made by the partner municipalities through time allocated to the management of the various initiatives.

On behalf of the Alliance, I would like to thank the Region of Peel for its ongoing support to advance food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe Region. Should you have any further questions please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Honey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chair
Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance
Councillor Region of Peel

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janet M. Horne', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Executive Director
Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance