
DATE: December 15, 2011

REPORT TITLE: **GOLDEN HORSESHOE FOOD AND FARMING ACTION PLAN, 2021**

FROM: Norma Trim, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed 'Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021', attached as Appendix I in the report of the Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services dated December 15, 2011, titled "Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021" be endorsed;

And further, that the Region of Peel support the formation of a Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance with the Regions of Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel and York, the City of Hamilton, the City of Toronto, the Ontario Ministries of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the GTA Federations of Agriculture and other partners;

And further, that the implementation of specific actions under the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021, be the subject of separate reports to Regional Council in the future, as required;

And further, that Region of Peel staff be directed to begin working with partners to implement the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021;

And further, that the Regional Chair work with the leadership of the proposed Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance in the development of a joint funding request to the Province and to assist the Alliance in its efforts to secure funding for the Action Plan;

And further, that a copy of the subject report and the proposed Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021, be circulated to the Town of Caledon, City of Brampton, City of Mississauga, the Conservation Authorities within the Region of Peel, the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Niagara Escarpment Commission, for information.

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GOLDEN HORSESHOE FOOD AND FARMING ACTION PLAN, 2021**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- In 2010, background research to help inform development of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021, indicated:
 - The Golden Horseshoe is the second largest food and farming cluster in North America. This cluster is comprised of primary production, food processing, food distribution, food service and food retail sectors.
 - The economic activity of the cluster in the Golden Horseshoe is estimated to be \$12.3 billion, which in turn leverages \$35 billion to the Canadian economy.
- The Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee, in partnership with the Region of Niagara and City of Hamilton, have created an Action Plan for the Golden Horseshoe which supports economic development; land use planning, agriculture production as well as public health and nutrition initiatives in relation to the food and farming sector.
- Regional staff recommends endorsement of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021, and further collaboration with partners through the formation of a Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance to include the Greater Toronto Area Agriculture Action Committee, the Region of Niagara and City of Hamilton.

DISCUSSION**1. Background****a) The Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee**

The Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee (GTA AAC) was established in September 2005 as an action item of the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Plan (GTA Agricultural Action Plan). The role of the GTA AAC at that time was to facilitate and co-ordinate the partnership of GTA municipalities (Regions of Durham, Halton, Peel and York, and the City of Toronto), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), GTA Federations of Agriculture and agricultural stakeholders, to implement the GTA Agricultural Action Plan.

Today, the membership has expanded to include the Holland Marsh Grower's Association, the Toronto Food Policy Council and representatives from the food processing and retail industries. AAFC, OMAFRA, Toronto and Region Conservation, Friends of the Greenbelt and the Ontario Farmland Trust assist through an advisory role.

b) Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Plan

In 2005, the GTA Agricultural Action Plan was endorsed by the Regions of Durham, Halton, Peel and York, AAFC, OMAFRA, MMAH, and the GTA Federations of Agriculture. Funding of \$200,000 to each of the GTA Regions was provided by the Province, for the four Region's to provide the GTA AAC with funding to implement the GTA Agricultural Action Plan. The GTA AAC was able to utilize the \$800,000 in funding to leverage an additional \$255,000 and in-kind support from AAFC, the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, Conservation Authorities, Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance and the GTA Federations of Agriculture.

The GTA Agricultural Action Plan identifies 37 actions to address issues related to economic development, education, marketing and land use planning in the Region's of Durham, Halton, Peel and York, and the City of Toronto. The purpose of these action

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items is to foster a positive environment for farming in the GTA and improve the competitiveness of the industry.

2. Accomplishments of the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee**a) Achievements**

Since 2005, the GTA AAC has been undertaking activities to implement the GTA Agricultural Action Plan. These activities involved extensive partnership building, research, support of economic development initiatives, strategic development of programs with partners and acting as a liaison for the agricultural community with the agri-food sector. Some of these activities include:

Advocacy

- Comment on the Provincial Policy Statement 5 year Review
- Briefing to the Province on agriculture policy priorities for consideration in the 2011 Budget

Project Collaboration

- Ethnic Market Potential and New Crop Possibilities Workshop
- Capturing Local Food Markets Seminar
- City to Country Farm Tour
- Ontario Culinary Tourism Summit
- Creation of the Pick Ontario Freshness Website
- Homegrown Ontario Branding
- Creation of a Durham Farm Fresh Indoor Market
- Creation of a Greenbelt Fresh Website
- FarmStart New Farmer Project

Public Events

- Information booths at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair
- Creation of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair Farm Market
- Participation in the World's Largest Multi-cultural Salad at Taste of Scarborough

Research and Consultation

- GTA Local Food List
- GTA Demographic Profile
- Comparison of Agricultural Land Use Policies within the GTA Regions
- GTA Profile of Agriculture and Agri-Business Attributes
- Vineland Research and Innovation Food and Farming Summit
- Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Summit
- Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Background Report
- Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021

b) Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee Funding Summary

In 2012, the GTA AAC will fully utilize the \$1.055 million in funding they received to implement the GTA Agricultural Action Plan. Expenditures were disbursed over GTA AAC administration costs and support of the activities outlined above. Major project expenditures include the GTA Demographic Profile, the GTA Profile of Agriculture and Agri-Business Attributes, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Background Report and the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021.

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3. Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021

a) Background

In August 2009, the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, in partnership with the GTA AAC, the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation and the Region of Niagara, hosted a session with stakeholder organizations to discuss issues related to food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe. Through these discussions, it became evident that organizations were working on similar and overlapping projects and actions.

As a result, the GTA AAC, Region of Niagara, City of Hamilton and Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation joined forces to create a united action plan to support the development of the thriving food and farm sector in the Golden Horseshoe.

The outcome is the "Golden Horseshoe: Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021" (the Action Plan). This Action Plan compliments, builds upon and moves forward the goals of the GTA Agricultural Action Plan. Its broader encompassing area and expanded partnership enables the GTA AAC to more efficiently and effectively engage and collaborate on issues focused on economic development, land use planning, agriculture production as well as public health and nutrition.

b) Phases of Development of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021

Phase 1 - The "Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Background Report"

The "Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Background Report", released in January 2011, was developed to provide a social, economic and environmental profile of agriculture in the Golden Horseshoe today. In this report, it was highlighted that:

- The food and farming cluster in the Golden Horseshoe is the second largest in North America. This cluster is comprised of the primary production, food processing, food distribution, food service and food retail sectors.
- The economic activity of this food and farming sector is estimated to be \$12.3 billion, which in turn leverages \$35 billion to the Canadian economy.

The backgrounder also provided insight into the opportunities and challenges for enhancing the existing farm and food cluster in the Golden Horseshoe over the next 10 years. The Background Report is undergoing editing and will be available to the public in 2012.

Phase 2 - "Food and Farming: An Action Plan, 2021" Summit

On March 30th, 2011, the "Food and Farming: An Action Plan, 2021" Summit was held bringing together over 100 stakeholders from government, the agri-food processing industry, retailers, non-government organizations and primary producers. The Summit consultation provided key comment for the creation of the "Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021" as well as a catalyst for new collaboration and partnerships.

Phase 3 - "Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021"

Based on the findings of the "Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Background Report", the Summit and additional extensive consultation with stakeholder representatives from agricultural organizations, government, agri-food processing and agri-retail industries, the "Golden Horseshoe: Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021" was created over the summer

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of 2011. This Action Plan is being broadly circulated to partners including Regional Councils for endorsement.

Phase 4 - Launch of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021

Once endorsement of the Action Plan has been received from Regional Councils and partners, there will be an official launch of the final "Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021". This is projected for late February 2012.

c) Vision and Opportunities of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021

The Action Plan outlines a 10 year vision for the Golden Horseshoe. It strives to establish the Golden Horseshoe as a globally renowned "vibrant food and farming cluster, characterized by profitable farming operations, a thriving hub of food processing, food retail and food service businesses, extensive research capacity, innovative technology and a wide range of healthy and safe products."

The Action Plan is divided into five main opportunities, each with a corresponding series of actions to support the success of the opportunity. These are:

- A. *Grow the Cluster*- Grow the Golden Horseshoe cluster so it becomes the leading food and farming cluster in the world, renowned for healthy and safe products.
- B. *Link Food, Farming and Health*- Educate current and future consumers about the importance of locally sourced food and farming products for enhancing their health and well-being.
- C. *Foster Innovation*- Encourage and support innovation to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the Golden Horseshoe food and farming cluster.
- D. *Enable the Cluster*- Align policy tools and their application to enable food and farming businesses to be increasingly competitive and profitable.
- E. *Cultivate New Approaches*- Pilot new approaches to support food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe.

4. Proposed Direction

a) Role of Regional Staff

The Action Plan emphasizes the need for co-ordinated planning and economic development approaches within the Golden Horseshoe. Examples of actions in the Action Plan include:

- Align and strengthen dedicated economic development and planning resources to support the food and farming cluster in the Golden Horseshoe.
- Harmonize and improve policy tools in the Golden Horseshoe for consistent implementation responsive to the needs of food and farming businesses (e.g., provincial policies, official plans, taxation, regulations).
- Secure the mandate for local health units within the Golden Horseshoe to promote increased consumption of local food.

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Economic development in the Region of Peel is an area municipal mandate. Co-ordination of economic development efforts in support of the Action Plan in the Region of Peel will continue to be lead by the area municipalities, in collaboration with other Golden Horseshoe municipalities and Regions, OMAFRA, AAFC, representatives from the food and farming sectors, and other partners.

Currently, Regional planning staff provides staff support to the GTA AAC. Regional planning staff will continue to be involved with the Action Plan in a supportive role through Regional planning initiatives.

b) Endorsement of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021

Regional planning staff and area municipal economic development staff have provided comment on drafts of the proposed Action Plan. Internal departments such as the Region of Peel Health Unit and the Office of Strategic Innovation & Policy were also circulated for comment.

Regional staff support the goals, objectives and direction that are being proposed. Therefore, Regional staff are recommending endorsement of the Action Plan.

c) Endorsement of a Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance

The continuation of the GTA AAC is dependent on the on-going partnership of its Board members and collaboration with the partners undertaking the Action Plan. A new alliance is recommended to provide an overarching body committed to monitoring the process, working with the partners on their different tasks, measuring success and making adjustments when required, in order to move this Action Plan forward. This alliance is also essential to co-ordinated efforts in leveraging funding as well as making more efficient and effective use of resources to implement the actions.

Regional staff support the formation of an alliance between the GTA AAC, the City of Hamilton and Region of Niagara, to create a new Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance to implement the Action Plan. The organizational model for this alliance will be developed in consultation with the current partners.

5. Funding

As funding to the GTA AAC winds down, it is anticipated that new funding will be needed over the 10 year timeframe of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021, to accomplish the tasks. The proposal to develop a broader regional collaboration of partners in the Golden Horseshoe is recommended in order to attract and direct new investments into the region from the federal and provincial governments and private sector.

Regional staff recommends that the Regional Chair work with the leaders of the proposed Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance to support their efforts to secure funding for implementation of the Action Plan including providing assistance to develop an initial funding request to the Province. Securing senior government funding to assist with the implementation of the Action Plan is an important first step, before determining if any additional financial contribution is needed from other partners.

Initial funding from the Province is needed in order to:

- Establish the governance structure for the alliance;
- Undertake initial tasks; and

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- Leverage additional funding and partners.

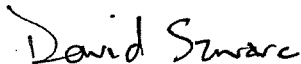
CONCLUSION

The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021, provides actions that will support and grow the thriving food and farming sector in Peel Region and the Golden Horseshoe. It responds to the common challenges and opportunities that the partners in the Golden Horseshoe share and are working to respond to. The plan focuses on enhancing these opportunities and removing barriers to promote a competitive and sustainable food and farming sector in the Golden Horseshoe.



Norma Trim
Chief Financial Officer
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Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

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c. Legislative Services

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