

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

Background

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

Goals

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

- protect agricultural lands as a natural resource of major importance to the economic viability of the Region;
- support Region of Peel farmers and agricultural organizations as valuable contributors to the community and the economy of Peel;
- promote healthy rural communities that contain living, working and recreational opportunities that respect the natural environment and resources;
- increase awareness of and mitigate rural pollution sources by promoting environmentally sound land management practices to protect surface and subsurface water; and
- deliver the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP).

Purpose

The purpose of the Working Group is to:

- a) solicit issues and concerns and provide a forum for the exchange of information for Peel's farming industry, agricultural organizations, community groups and rural citizenry and to advise the Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA, and make appropriate recommendations to Regional Council;
- b) assist Regional Council in implementing Regional and area municipal official plan policies and programs and provide input on how agricultural and rural issues can be incorporated into goals and objectives in the review of Regional and area municipal official plan policies;

- c) assist Regional Council in the implementation of provincial legislation related to farm practices and act as interim arbitrator on local nuisance complaints;
- d) encourage public awareness and education of agricultural and rural issues and facilitate communication of the PRWQP to agricultural and rural groups, agencies and/or organizations, and the public at large;
- e) review studies, plans, proposals, and provide comments and recommendations on legislation, programs, funding, alternative solutions, approaches, plans or studies dealing with agricultural and rural issues which are within the responsibilities and financial capabilities of the Region of Peel, as required by provincial legislation, or as referred by Regional Council;
- f) provide guidance to CVC and TRCA staff on the development and implementation of the CVC and TRCA jointly administered PRWQP, including but not limited to:
 - Eligible Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) for grant compensation;
 - Grant rate and ceiling for each BMP;
 - PRWQP and project eligibility guidelines;
 - Application and project approval process;
 - PRWQP delivery;
 - Marketing and promotional strategy of the PRWQP; and
 - Areas of improvement.
- g) assist CVC and TRCA in ensuring that the PRWQP funds are administered on a priority basis in accordance with the PRWQP guidelines, as amended;
- h) review and approve eligible PRWQP Water Quality Improvement Plans and project funding proposals for grant assistance for the PRWQP;
- i) resolve appeals on decisions of Water Quality Improvement Plans and PRWQP project funding; and
- j) assist CVC and TRCA to conduct a strategic review of the PRWQP as required (i.e. every 5 years).

Membership

- 1) The Working Group consists of three Regional or area municipal Councillors and 9 additional members. Elected officials who are members are appointed for a term of four years, or until successors are appointed by Regional Council. Non-elected members may be appointed for a term of up to eight

years. After non-elected members terms have expired, non-elected members may continue to sit as members until their successors are appointed.

2) Members are appointed as follows:

- Regional Chair (ex-officio) (1)
- Regional or area municipal Councillors (3)
- Peel Federation of Agriculture (2; plus 2 alternates)
- Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association (1; plus 1 alternate)
- Peel Agricultural Societies, other special agricultural interest groups (2; plus 2 alternates)
- Three citizens-at-large (3)
- Youth organization (1; plus 1 alternate)

3) The representatives of all organizations or agencies should have special rural and agricultural qualifications, interests and abilities as well as the capacity and willingness to devote the necessary time to the Working Group.

4) Members are expected to attend all meetings. Should they be unable to so, it is the responsibility of the member to make arrangements for an alternate where applicable to attend the meeting in their place.

5) The citizens-at-large should possess expertise, experience and willingness to liaise with the range of agencies, organizations and interest groups represented and represent the interests of the broader community rather than a specific interest group.

6) Openings for membership shall be publicly advertised in accordance with the Region of Peel Public Notice Policy. All citizens of Peel Region and any representatives of organizations involved in agricultural and rural issues in Peel Region are invited to apply. Applicants shall submit the required application form to the Region of Peel Clerk's Office. Membership applications shall be reviewed by Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA staff and the Chair of the Working Group. Recommendations for membership shall be made to Regional Council via a Regional staff report. Members shall be formally appointed by Regional Council.

7) A 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. The Chair/Vice-Chair should be prepared to devote time between meetings for related business and to occasionally make presentations at other meetings.

8) Alternates have the power to vote only in the absence of regular Working Group members.

Quorum

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

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

The Working Group shall meet generally on a quarterly basis or more frequently as required.

Agenda items should be forwarded to Region of Peel support staff or to the Chair at least one week in advance of meetings. Agendas shall be made available to the public on the Region of Peel website and in hard copy at the Region of Peel Corporate Services Integrated Planning Division one week prior to the meeting, and materials shall be circulated two days in advance of the scheduled meeting by e-mail or mail to members. Public materials shall be available from the Region of Peel Corporate Services Department (Integrated Planning Division, 6th Floor, Suite A, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Brampton). Confidential materials shall be circulated to members only in accordance with section 239 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Decisions of the Working Group on PRWQP applications and water quality improvement plans shall be decided by a majority vote of those members present at a meeting. Where a decision cannot be obtained at the approval stage, CVC and TRCA staff shall consider the opinions of the arguments both in favour of and opposed to the application or water quality improvement plans when recommending final projects to the funding agencies.

The Chair may invite or receive an individual, interest group, agency or consultant to appear as a delegation in an advisory capacity, and/or to submit or present information which shall assist the Working Group in carrying out its mandate.

Meetings shall be open to the public unless determined by the Working Group that an in-camera meeting is required. Section 239 of the *Municipal Act* must be adhered to, in that matters discussed in-camera be restricted to the exceptions outlined in section 239. One week's notice shall be given to the public via the agenda including justification for going in-camera. The committee may move in camera to discuss items during the meeting as necessary.

Minutes

Meeting minutes will be approved by the Working Group. Once approved, meeting minutes will be posted on the Region of Peel website. The Working Group meeting minutes are public including the approval of PRWQP project applications. However, specific details which could supersede the privacy of PRWQP project application such as personal information, shall be kept anonymous and confidential. The release of these details shall be in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Role and Responsibility of Support Staff

Staff representatives from the Region of Peel Corporate Services Department shall provide administrative and research support to the Working Group. This includes, but is not limited to the preparation and distribution of agendas and supporting documentation; and the taking, preparation and correcting of minutes.

Staff representatives from CVC and TRCA shall provide community outreach and technical support to the Working Group for the PRWQP. This includes, but is not limited to the completion, circulation, review and presentation of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program's Water Quality Improvement Plans and projects; distribution of approved project grants; and program promotion at special events.

Funding Agencies

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 and the Ministry of the Environment through the Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA). Conservation authority staff may be required by these funding agencies to seek final approval from the PAAWG committee, ensuring the overall PRWQP principles, framework and funding requirements are met.

The PRWQP is a co-operative partnership between the Working Group, funding agencies and Councils. Should the funding agencies not agree with the Working Group direction/decisions, staff shall endeavour to have agency decisions deferred and the issue brought back to the Working Group for review.

Approval Process of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program

If required, project applications may be circulated to area municipal, Regional and/or Provincial staff for technical comments.

The Working Group shall approve, deny or defer the Peel Rural Water Quality Program's Water Quality Improvement Plans and project applications.

Appeals of Application Decisions of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program

Where requested by PRWQP applicants, the Working Group shall hear and decide on appeals of individual PRWQP applications. Applicants must make a request to appeal in writing to the Chair of the Working Group.

The appellant shall be allotted five minutes to present their appeal and members may then ask the appellant questions.

Decisions on appeals shall be based on a majority vote of the members present at the time the appeal is heard. Quorum must be met for a decision to be made on an appeal. Voting during appeal hearings shall be done in open session by a show of hands.

Annual Reports and Work Plan

An Annual Report summarizing the activities completed by the Working Group shall be prepared by Region of Peel Corporate Services, CVC and TRCA staff representatives. The Annual Report shall be provided to Regional Council as well as CVC and TRCA's respective Board of Directors. An annual work plan shall be prepared by the Working Group outlining the direction for the upcoming year. The work plan shall be submitted to Regional Council as well as CVC and TRCA's respective Board of Directors after the first Working Group meeting of the year.