



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

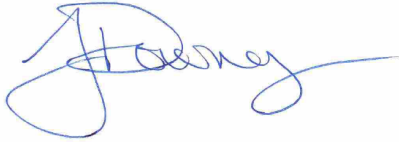
The Region of Peel's current funding commitment ends in 2021. The Alliance is requesting that the Region continue its financial support of the Action Plan and extend its current funding commitment of \$30,000 a year for five years to 2026, the life of the Action Plan. This request is being made to each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

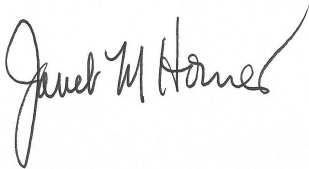
the projects and activities of the Action Plan. In-kind contributions also are made by the partner municipalities through time allocated to the management of the various initiatives.

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. H. H.', 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, reading 'Janet M. Horne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Executive Director
Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance