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Region of Peel 10 Peel Centre Drive, Council Chamber, 5th Flr, Brampton, ON L6T 4B9 <u>council@peelregion.ca</u>

Dear Mayors and Members of Regional Council,

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is the fastest growing region in North America. Long considered the engine of the province, it is home to 70 per cent of the population of Ontario and generates two thirds of its economic output. By 2051 the population of the area will grow from seven to 14 million.

The old response to how to deal with such extraordinary growth was to allow never-ending sprawl — this no longer works for us. Sprawl has become a destructive, even irresponsible force, limiting our future and exacting a social, economic, environmental and financial price we can no longer afford.

Sprawl has destroyed vast areas of our world-class farmland and threatens to gobble up 10,000 acres in Peel Region. It has cut through wide swaths of our natural heritage, greatly diminishing, and damaging our ecological health and wealth. It has required billions and billions of dollars spent on new highways that create even more congestion and steadily lengthen our daily commutes. And it has dramatically and tragically failed to meet the challenge of providing affordable housing for most people.

Clearly, we need to change the way we think and do things. Fortunately, more and more people have begun to do just that. All of us need to resolve and make decisions that encourage sustainable growth, not sprawl.

Our economic growth, environmental health and community well-being are not separate events — they are interconnected and interdependent. We need to build more compact, walkable, transit-oriented communities that offer affordable housing and access to goods and services. We need more local and nearby farming — not less; and we should be paying more attention to what farmers require in their pursuit of agricultural productivity and the food security so vital to all of us. And we need to be far more respectful, protective and appreciative of the extraordinary health and wealth-giving powers of this region — and to steward it accordingly.

The year 2022 will be a watershed for dealing with these needs and concerns and demonstrating what we truly value. I applaud the leadership from Mississauga Council and the motion noting that the proposed Highway 413 will have a disastrous impact on the environment, encourage residential sprawl. Choices will be made – by citizens and governments alike. And the choices we make – or fail to make – will have a profound and lasting impact on us and generations to come.

The provincial election in June and the municipal elections in November will play into the federal government's evolving agenda as all three levels of government seek to address these issues in the light of an emerging post-pandemic world and the continuing and escalating challenges of climate change.

Sincerely,

David Crombie

Chair, Friends of the Golden Horseshoe

Former Member of Parliament, Mayor of Toronto, Royal Commissioner, and Chair of the Greenbelt Council