

DATE: June 18, 2018

REPORT TITLE: **PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP AND GOLDEN HORSESHOE FOOD AND FARMING ALLIANCE ANNUAL UPDATE AND FUNDING REQUEST**

FROM: Janette Smith, Commissioner of Public Works

RECOMMENDATION

That the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance's request for annual funds of \$30,000 a year for three years from the Region of Peel to implement strategic projects of the 'Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021', be endorsed for consideration as part of the annual budget approvals process;

And further, that a copy of the report of the Commissioner of Public Works, titled "Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group and Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Annual Update and Funding Request" 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 2017 the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group:
 - Collaborated on the development of the 2017 Grown in Peel Guide and program review.
 - Reviewed and commented on the Region of Peel Official Plan Review.
 - Approved Peel Rural Water Quality Program grants, allocating \$35,459.50 to nine rural water quality projects.
- Over the same time period, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance ("the Alliance") has initiated and completed strategic projects to implement the 'Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan: 2021'.
- Initial project work by the Alliance has provided a better understanding of the regional agricultural and food system influencing Peel Region.
- The partnership with the Alliance enables the Region to better understand and respond to agricultural issues from a broader regional food and agricultural system perspective.
- Funding support to the Alliance is proposed to continue to 2021 to the end of the Golden Horseshoe Action Plan subject to approvals, as part of the annual budget process.

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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Region of Peel recognizes the contribution of the agricultural sector to the local economy and cultural heritage of the Region. In 1997, the Region established the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group ("the Working Group") to create a closer link between the agricultural community and the Region.

The Region is also partner to the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance ("the Alliance"), an organization that supports broader collaboration among regional agricultural interests.

2. Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group

The Working Group is appointed by Regional Council to assist Peel in its efforts to protect agricultural and rural lands, support farming and promote the importance of the agricultural industry to the region. The Working Group keeps the Region informed of issues and concerns of the agricultural community. It plays a major role in providing input to the Regional Official Plan and contributes to the Region's efforts in achieving its agricultural goals, objectives and policies.

The Working Group is comprised of one political representative, Councillor Innis, and ten public volunteers who are appointed for a four-year Term of Council. Volunteers represent farming organizations as well as food and farming sector representatives within Peel. Appointments to renew membership will be made in the next term of Council.

a) 2017 Programs and Projects

i. Peel Rural Water Quality Program

The Region, in partnership with Credit Valley Conservation and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, 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.

In 2017, the Working Group approved \$35,459.50 in grants to support the implementation of nine projects. An additional \$31,404.92 was leveraged from project proponents and other funders to assist with the completion of these projects.

Since initiation, the Program has allocated a total of \$748,154 in cost-share grant funding towards 161 agri-environmental projects. These projects have a total value of just under \$4.1 million in on-farm stewardship enhancements in Peel. Annual funding for delivery of the Program is approved through the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Credit Valley Conservation budgets.

A detailed performance summary is attached as Appendix I.

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In 2017, a housekeeping update of the Program Guidelines was undertaken to clarify the interpretation of project categories. The revised guidelines are available from the Office of the Regional Clerk.

ii. Peel Environmental Farm Tour

The Working Group hosted more than 30 participants including municipal staff, Councillors and members of the public on a farm tour that showcased a variety of projects implemented on Peel farms through the Peel Rural Water Quality Program. The farm tour provided educational information about agri-environmental practices and helped to further promote the Program to farmers.

iii. Grown in Peel Local Food Guide

The Grown in Peel Local Food Guide (“the Guide”) has been published by the Region since 2006. The Guide promotes local farms, retailers and farmers’ markets in Peel.

In recognition of Canada 150, the 2017 Guide celebrated 150 years of farming in Peel Region. Approximately 20,560 copies of the 2017 edition were distributed across Peel with the help of over 100 community partners including local municipalities, Regional Councillors, educational institutions and agricultural associations. An expanded version of the Guide also continues to be available online at GrownInPeel.ca.

Throughout 2017, consultations were held with stakeholders and the public to review the program to ensure that it was still meeting the needs of the local farms, retailers and farmers’ markets as well as users of both the paper guide and website. The look of the 2018 Guide, released in May, has been refreshed to address the feedback from consultations and align with new corporate branding.

iv. Special Topics

The Working Group was consulted on a variety of special topics, including:

- Proposed and final Peel Food Charter developed by the Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy’s Food Security Task Force
- Release of the amended Provincial Plans and proposed Provincial Agricultural System and Natural Heritage System mapping
- Region of Peel Long-Range Transportation Plan update
- Region of Peel Agriculture Census Bulletin
- Region of Peel Official Plan Monitoring Performance Indicators for agriculture
- Peel 2041: Region of Peel Official Plan Review
- Conservation Authorities Permitting Guidance for Agriculture
- Town of Caledon Commercial Fill study
- Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance Food Charter
- Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Canada 150 farms program
- Town of Caledon Town-Wide Design guidelines

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b) 2018 Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group Work Plan

In 2018, the Province released the agricultural land base mapping for the Provincial Agricultural System. The Region needs to refine and incorporate the Provincial Agricultural System mapping and corresponding Provincial policies into the Regional Official Plan. A key focus of the Working Group will be to provide guidance on the identification of the Agricultural System for the Region throughout the refinement process.

The following action items remain as priorities in the work plan for 2018:

Policy, Research and Development

- Peel 2041: Regional Official Plan Review – Agricultural Resources Focus Area
- Peel-Caledon LEAR Study and refinement of prime agricultural area mapping
- Consultation on draft Provincial Agricultural Impact Assessment Guidelines

Peel Rural Water Quality Program

- Review and approval of Program funding applications
- Five year review of Program guidelines and project categories

Support Agri-Food and Agri-Business

- Participate on the 'Grown in Peel' Working Group and provide direction to the Guide

3. Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance

In 2012, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance ("the Alliance") was formed to implement the 'Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan: 2021' ("the Action Plan"). The Action Plan is posted on the Alliance's webpage at foodandfarming.ca/food-and-farming-action-plan/.

The Alliance is comprised of a Council representative from each of the Golden Horseshoe Regions, and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto. There is also representation from agriculture related industry associations, non-profits and other stakeholders. Mayor Thompson and Councillor Downey are the Regional Council's representatives to the Alliance, with Councillor Downey currently in the role of Vice-Chair of the Alliance. This multiple partner approach enables the Region to share resources and respond to agricultural issues from a broader regional food and agricultural system perspective.

Municipal partners each support the implementation of the Action Plan through in-kind staff time and a financial commitment of \$30,000 per year, within the operating budget. Initial funding from each of the municipal partners to implement the Action Plan was endorsed for a five year term, ending in 2018. Funding from municipal partners to implement the Action Plan is requested to be renewed to the end of the Action Plan in 2021. Municipal partner funding assists in leveraging provincial and other partner 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.

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a) Accomplishments of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance

i. 2017 Implementation and Support of the Action Plan

The achievements of the Alliance in 2017 include projects, outreach and engagement initiatives and communications.

Projects:

- **Food and Farming Asset Mapping:** An ongoing project to maintain a database and map agri-food supply chain assets across the Golden Horseshoe. This asset database was used as a foundation for the Provincial Agricultural System information portal. New partnerships have enabled the database to expand and include Eastern Ontario. As well, through a grant from the Provincial Rural Economic Development Fund, the Alliance has partnered with the Economic Developers Council of Ontario to include manufacturing information in the database.
- **Local Food Procurement in Long-Term Care Homes:** This project has developed best practices, tools and training to assist municipalities in finding opportunities to incorporate local food in municipally operated long-term care homes. Three pilot projects have been hosted in the City of Hamilton, Halton Region and Durham Region, which helped inform the development of the manual and tools for broader implementation in other jurisdictions. The Region of Peel is currently working with the Alliance and the Greenbelt Foundation to investigate implementation of the initiative in all five of the Region's long term care homes to increase the amount of local food offered in facilities and improve the nutritional health and well-being of residents.
- **Farmers Guide to the Planning Application Process**

Significant engagement initiatives:

- Municipal Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Forum
- Canada 150 Farm Family recognition program

Engagement, policy review and communication initiatives:

- Consulted with the Province and responded to the draft Provincial Agricultural System mapping, Implementation Procedures and Methodology
- Golden Horseshoe Agriculture Census profile
- Published online e-newsletters and stories showcasing agriculture in the Golden Horseshoe, including activities within Peel Region

b) 2018 Implementation and Support of the Action Plan

The Alliance has identified priority activities for 2018 which aim to complete several long-term projects, continue with outreach and engagement initiatives, and provide responses to important provincial policy and plan reviews. These include:

- Continuation of Local Food Procurement in Municipally-Operated Facilities and Cafeterias and expansion to other Region's within the Golden Horseshoe
- Continuation of the Food and Farming Asset database and updating of data

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- Hosting a series of workshops and tours on agricultural systems planning and the agri-food network in the Golden Horseshoe
- Development of a report card to demonstrate progress towards achieving the goals of the Action Plan
- Consult with Province on draft Provincial guidelines for Agriculture Impact Assessments
- Online e-newsletters and stories showcasing agriculture in the Golden Horseshoe

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Region's funding for the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance initially identified a commitment of \$30,000 over five years (2014-2018) to support implementation of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan. The Regional funding of \$30,000 annually, has been established within the operating budget, and is proposed to be continued to 2021 to the end of the Action Plan subject to annual Regional Council budget approvals.

The continued operation of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group, the Peel Rural Water Quality Program, the publication of the Grown in Peel Guide and the Region's participation on the Alliance is supported through Regional and conservation authority staff support. Staffing costs are not included in the above amounts.

CONCLUSION

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group and the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance continue to facilitate and enhance relationships between the Region and agricultural groups within Peel, the Golden Horseshoe and the Province. Each is a valuable contributor to realizing agricultural goals and policies of the Region. These collective activities help ensure that Peel's agricultural sector is supported and viable.



Janette Smith, Commissioner of Public Works

Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Peel Rural Water Quality Program 2017 Status Report

For further information regarding this report, please contact Adrian Smith, Acting Director, Integrated Planning, extension 4047, Adrian.Smith@peelregion.ca.

Authored By: Melanie Williams

Reviewed in workflow by:
Financial Support Unit



Memo

To: Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group

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

Date: February 2, 2018

Re: Peel Rural Water Quality Program – 2017 Status Report

The year 2017 marked the thirteenth complete program year for the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP). This status report summarizes the program’s accomplishments for 2017 and over the past thirteen years.

Number of projects approved in 2017: Nine

Types of projects approved in 2017:

Manure Storage	0
Milkhouse Washwater	0
Barnyard Runoff Control	0
Nutrient Management Strategy	0
Nutrient Management Plan	0
Private Well Upgrade	0
Clean Water Diversion	0
Livestock Access Restriction	2
Erosion Control Structure	0
Tree Planting	4
Buffer Strip Planting	0
Education	0
Chemical Storage	0
Fuel Storage	0
Silage Storage Upgrade	0
Irrigation Management	0
Integrated Pest Management	0
Cover Crop	3*
Natural Area Enhancement and Creation	0
TOTAL	9

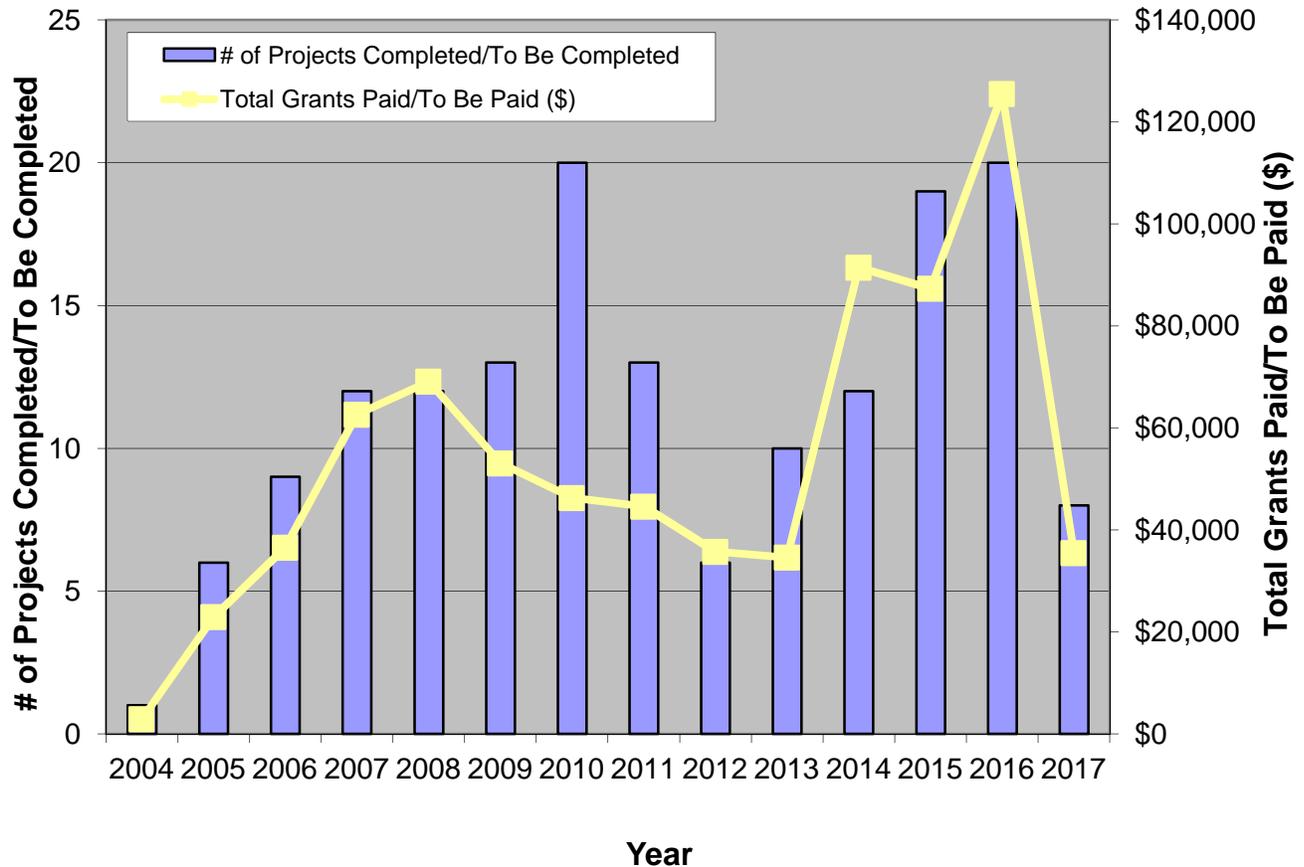
* Three cover crop projects were approved, but one has been withdrawn. Therefore, it is anticipated that 8 projects will be completed.

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Grants paid and/or to be paid on 2017 projects: \$35,459.50

Annual program activity:

In 2017, nine projects were approved and eight projects have been completed or are in progress. Total grants paid/to be paid is \$35,459.50. The \$35,459.50 of grant support has leverage an additional \$31,404.92 from project proponents and other funders to assist with the completion of these 8 projects. The graph below illustrates the program’s 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.

The number of projects undertaken decreased in 2017. Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group members may be aware that the Provincial-Federal Growing Forward 2 Program is set to close in March 2018 with the new five year Canadian Agricultural Stewardship Program (CAP) beginning at that time. It is speculated that CAP will provide greater access to cost-share funding for Peel farmers, as the focus on improving soil health is expected to shift beyond the Lake Erie watersheds into the rest of the province. Throughout 2017, Program staff heard from farmers that they were delaying projects until CAP was released in hopes of getting greater financial support for their project. This may help explain why the

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PRWQP experienced a decrease in the number of projects undertaken in 2017. With a strong provincial program being released in 2018, Program staff anticipate that the number of PRWQP projects and grant dollars allocated will increase.

Program accomplishments:

Between 2004 and 2017, the PRWQP has paid/allocated a total of \$748,154 in funding towards 161 agri-environmental projects. These funds have leveraged an additional \$3,370,244 to contribute to the completion of projects valued at \$4,074,156.

Environmental benefits of BMPs:

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

Safely store 265,125 m³ of livestock manure to reduce the risk of nutrient, pathogen and bacteria contaminating drinking water, streams and wetlands.



This equates to 38,092 dump trucks of manure!

Install 13.15 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 29,465 trees and shrubs to restore degraded habitats, reduce erosion and to sequester carbon dioxide.



Restore and/or protect 114 ha of land to improve water, air, soil and habitat quality.



This is an area equal to 114 football fields!

Program promotion:

In 2017, advertisements for the program were run in the Caledon Enterprise every other month. An advertisement was also placed in the winter edition of the Golden Horseshoe Soil and Crop Improvement Association Newsletter. Please see below for a copy of the advertisement.

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

- Equine Workshop
- Environmental Farm Plan Workshop
- Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association Annual General Meeting
- CVC Twilight Tour – Grassland Birds
- Peel Plowing Match
- Peel Environmental Farm Tour

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Peel Rural Water Quality Program



GRANTS to Support
Farm Stewardship

**It pays to protect water quality when you apply
to the Peel Rural Water Quality Program**

Eligible Projects Include:

- tree planting
- livestock fencing
- erosion control structures
- fuel storage
- manure storage
- well upgrading
- composting structures
- wetland and meadow restoration
- cover crops and more!

Contact Us For More Information:

<p>Credit Valley Conservation Phone: 905-670-1615 ext.430 Toll-Free: 1-800-668-5557 ext.430 meastman@creditvalleyca.ca www.creditvalleyca.ca</p>	<p>Toronto and Region Conservation Phone: 416-661-6600 ext.5349 nabrams@trca.on.ca www.trca.on.ca</p>
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peelregion.ca/planning/paawg/prwqp.htm



**CREDIT VALLEY
CONSERVATION**



Region of Peel
Working for you



**Toronto and Region
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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 2017 program year, please contact Program staff.

Sincerely,



Mark Eastman

Credit Valley Conservation



Nadine Abrams

Toronto and Region Conservation