



**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL:
PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP**

PAAWG 2025-04 Meeting Minutes

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) met on November 20, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Peel Conference Centre located at 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite B, Brampton, Ontario. The meeting was also available through virtual participation via Microsoft Teams.

Members Present:

Raphael Adegboye, Representative of the Agricultural Community
Tom Dolson, Peel Federation of Agriculture (attended until 8:16 pm)
Pat Fortini, Regional Councillor, Peel Region
Karen Hutchinson, Vice-Chair, Caledon Countryside Alliance
Dwight Matson, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Britt McKee, EcoSource
Manjari Mehta, Citizen-at-Large
Gary Mountain, Chair, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Ed Russell, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Mark Vanderwees, Citizen-at-Large
Brian Wannamaker, Citizen-at-Large

Members Absent:

Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton
Mario Russo, Regional Councillor, Peel Region

Staff:

Learie Miller, Manager, Peel Region
Marsha Paley, Principal Planner, Peel Region
Melanie Williams, Advisor, Peel Region
Karen Buckle, Co-Ordinator, Agricultural Extension, Credit Valley Conservation
Holly Shipclark, Sr. Co-Ordinator, Agricultural Extension, Credit Valley Conservation
Patrick Esson, Sr. Project Manager, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Fallon Hayes, Project Co-Ordinator, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Ben Roberts, Acting Manager, Business Attraction and Investment, Town of Caledon

Guests:

Rebecca Pearce-Cameron, ALUS National
Stan Comeson, Trustee, Peel District School Board

1) Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) was called to order with quorum at 7:02 pm by Chair Gary Mountain. Attendance was called and quorum confirmed.

2) Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Holly Shipclark declared a conflict of interest with 08-CVC-25 and 09-CVC-25. No other conflicts of interest were identified by members in attendance.

3) Review and Approval of November 20, 2025 Agenda

Staff noted that the posted agenda had been revised and an updated agenda was circulated prior to the PAAWG meeting.

Moved by Tom Dolson, seconded by Karen Hutchinson.

That the Agenda for the November 20, 2025, meeting of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2025-24

4) Review and Approval of Minutes of August 21, 2025 Meeting

Moved by Manjari Mehta, seconded by Councillor Fortini.

That the Minutes of Meeting 2025-02 of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group, held on August 21, 2025, be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2025-25

5) Caledon School Garden and School Food Programs

*Stan Cameron, Trustee, Peel District School Board
Karen Hutchinson, PAAWG Member / Albion Hills Community Farm*

Stan Cameron and Karen Hutchinson presented on the collaboration between Albion Hills Community Farm (AHCF) and the Peel District School Board (PDSB) to provide school garden and food programs to 14 elementary and two secondary schools in Caledon.

The school garden initiative began in 2023 and has become a model that the PDSB and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board would like to replicate across all Peel schools. Numerous families, community partners and businesses provide financial, material and in-kind support to ensure the programs continues yearly. The fresh produce that is grown is provided to local food access centres, to the school families, students, school cafeterias and in-school culinary programs.

Caledon Crunch is a yearly school food program that promotes locally grown, nutritional food during Ontario Agriculture Week and Farm to School month. Over 10,000 apples, grown in Peel, were distributed to Caledon students and staff. This program is leading to a similar, larger Peel wide initiative.

Questions/Discussion:

Several compliments were given to the presenters on the program. Councillor Fortini noted the senior centre and school gardens in Brampton. Councillor Fortini suggested raised bed materials could be made from repurposed lumber from area developers and offered to be a contact.

6) Plant-Based Treaty

Tom Dolson, PAAWG Member / Peel Federation of Agriculture

The Plant-Based Treaty is an organization that promotes a plant-based diet. The Treaty itself has three 'demands' that incorporate 40 suggested 'proposals' that an individual, corporation or municipality can undertake to increase public access to plant-based alternatives, incorporate plant-based foods into diets to address food costs, support community garden programs and respond to climate change. The organization is bringing the Plant-Based Treaty to municipal councils requesting council's adoption. It has currently been adopted by the Town of Caledon, City of Brampton and City of Mississauga.

The Peel Federation of Agriculture (PFA) brought to PAAWG's attention that the Treaty's 'Demand 2: Relinquish', proposes restrictions on both Peel Region's and the Provincial Agricultural System regarding land use planning for livestock agriculture and its supportive agri-food network infrastructure, such as abattoirs. This is raising concern with the PFA and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), that municipal councils are adopting the Plant-Based Treaty without full understanding of the Treaty's 'demands and proposals' and limited knowledge of the agri-environmental stewardship that Peel farmers provide to address climate change or the value of livestock agriculture to Peel Region, the Golden Horseshoe and the Province.

Questions/Discussion:

The PFA is waiting for a formal response from the OFA on the Plant-Based Treaty and will provide it to PAAWG when available. PAAWG indicated interest in advising Regional Council on the value of all types of agriculture to Peel Region's food system. Peel staff will keep PAAWG updated.

7) Peel Rural Water Quality Program and ALUS Peel

a) Financial Report

Holly Shipclark, Credit Valley Conservation

The 2025 Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP) year has a budget of \$73,000.00 with additional cost-share funds of \$21,251.00 through Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), and from other funding partners for the three projects within TRCA's jurisdiction. As presented, pending approval, the total remaining PRWQP budget balance for 2025 is \$43,920.00.

The 2025 ALUS Peel contributions for new annual payments has been confirmed by ALUS National. ALUS National has been able to secure funding that enables ALUS Peel projects established in 2025 to receive 10 years of annual funding. This includes projects approved in 2024 but implemented in 2025. ALUS National is committed to still securing funding for matching acres from previously completed projects, and for the renewal of 5-year payment agreements.

Based on the changes to the ALUS Peel 10-year agreement, the requested new annual payment grant allocation in 2025 is \$12,555.00.

b) 2025 PRWQP and ALUS Peel Twilight Farm Tour

Karen Buckle & Holly Shipclark, Credit Valley Conservation

The annual PRWQP and ALUS Peel farm tour was a twilight tour on September 24, 2025, 4:30pm-7:00pm, at Whole Village, Caledon. The tour highlighted PRWQP and ALUS Peel projects completed at the farm over the past 20 years. Peel Region source water protection staff were keynote speakers. Planning has started for the 2026 farm tour and recognizing that there is a change in demographics and attendees, staff would appreciate members' input on the program agenda.

Questions/Discussion: None

Tom Dolson left the meeting at 8:16 pm.

c) ALUS East Hub Conference

Karen Buckle, Credit Valley Conservation

Program staff provided highlights on the ALUS East Conference, held in Chatham, ON. This conference was an opportunity for ALUS approval committees and program staff to share ideas, visit ALUS projects and interact with funders.

Questions/Discussion:

ALUS National staff indicated that the conference alternates between Ontario and Quebec. The 2026 location has not been confirmed at this time.

d) Canadian Agri-Food & Rural Advisory Extension and Education (CAREE) Conference

Fallon Hayes, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

PRWQP/ALUS Peel program staff from TRCA and Peel Region attended the Canadian Agri-food and Rural Advisory, Extension and Education (CAREE) conference. This conference brought together program and extension providers from 20 countries, and was also attended by dignitaries from the Senate, Province and University of Guelph. Program staff delivered a poster presentation on the success of the PRWQP/ALUS Peel through its unique partnership with PAAWG. The programs were recognized by receiving the honour of outstanding poster presentation.

Questions/Discussion: None

e) Project Applications

*Karen Buckle, Credit Valley Conservation
Fallon Hayes, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority*

Holly Shipclark declared a conflict of interest and left at 8:19 pm for the duration of projects 08-CVC-25 and 09-CVC-25.

I. 07-CVC-25 Tree Planting

Application 07-CVC-25 proposes \$200.00 in Peel Rural Water Quality Program grants and \$1,815.00 in total ALUS Peel annual payments for the restoration of marginal farmland under the “Tree Planting” category.

Questions/Discussion:

PAAWG asked questions regarding the environmental benefit of the project to mitigating non-point source pollution and its connectivity to the wildlife corridor in the valley feature. Program staff were requested to update the project summaries to ensure that the project’s purpose and outcomes were more specific.

Moved by Dwight Matson, seconded by Karen Hutchinson.

That application 07-CVC-25 be approved and that Peel Rural Water Quality Program funding be provided in the amount of \$200.00 under the category “Tree Planting”.

Carried PAAWG 2025-26

Moved by Britt McKee, seconded by Manjari Mehta.

That application 07-CVC-25 be approved for ALUS Peel annual payment funding in the total amount of \$181.50 per year for up to 10 years, for a total of \$1,815.00 subject to ALUS National confirming availability of the necessary funds, the project is eligible for funding in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding.

Carried PAAWG 2025-27

II. 08-CVC-25 Natural Area Enhancement and Creation

The application 08-CVC-25 proposes \$840.00 in Peel Rural Water Quality Program grants and \$720.00 in total ALUS Peel annual payments for the enhancement of pasture into native grassland habitat under the “Natural Area Enhancement and Creation” category.

Questions/Discussion: No comments or questions.

Moved by Karen Hutchinson, seconded by Manjari Mehta.

That application 08-CVC-25 be approved and that Peel Rural Water Quality Program funding be provided in the amount of \$840 under the category “Natural Area Enhancement and Creation”.

Carried PAAWG 2025-28

Moved by Raphael Adegboye, seconded by Britt McKee.

That application 08-CVC-245 be approved for ALUS Peel annual payment funding in the total amount of \$72.00 per year for up to 10 years, for a total of \$720.00 subject to ALUS National confirming availability of the necessary funds, the project is eligible for funding in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding.

Carried PAAWG 2025-29

III. 09-CVC-25 Cover Crop

The application 09-CVC-25 proposes \$182.00 in Peel Rural Water Quality Program grants under the “Cover Crop” category.

Questions/Discussion:

Moved by Councillor Pat Fortini, seconded by Karen Hutchinson.

That application 09-CVC-25 be approved and that Peel Rural Water Quality Program funding be provided in the amount of \$182.00 under the category “Cover Crop”.

Carried PAAWG 2025-30

Holly Shipclark re-entered the room at 8:58 pm.

IV. 03-TRCA-24 and 04-TRCA-24 Tree Planting and Natural Area Enhancement and Creation

Project 03-TRCA-24 and 04-TRCA-24 were approved by PAAWG at the November 2024 meeting (2024-04) for 5-year ALUS Peel annual payments. As these projects were established in 2025, the projects are eligible for a 10-year ALUS Peel agreement. PAAWG was requested to provide a new motion allowing the annual payment to be extended to a 10-year term for these two previously approved projects.

Questions/Discussion: No comments or questions.

Moved by Manjari Mehta, seconded by Karen Hutchinson.

That application 03-TRCA-24 be approved for ALUS Peel annual payment funding in the total amount of \$334.50 per year for up to 10 years, for a total of \$3,345.00 subject to ALUS Canada confirming availability of the necessary funds, the project is eligible for funding in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding.

Carried PAAWG 2025-31

Moved by Councillor Pat Fortini, seconded by Karen Hutchinson.

That application 04-TRCA-24 be approved for ALUS Peel annual payment funding in the total amount of \$567.00 per year for per year for up to 10 years, for a total of \$5,670.00 subject to ALUS Canada confirming availability of the necessary funds, the project is eligible for funding in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding.

Carried PAAWG 2025-32

V. 03-TRCA-25 Tree Planting

Application 03-TRCA-25 proposes \$9,499.52 in Peel Rural Water Quality Program grants and \$1,005.00 in total ALUS Peel annual payments for the restoration of marginal farmland under the “Tree Planting” category.

Questions/Discussion:

PAAWG inquired on how the invasive species removal will be undertaken. Program staff provided an overview of the process.

Moved by Brian Wannamaker, seconded by Dwight Matson.

That application 03-TRCA-25 be approved and that Peel Rural Water Quality Program funding be provided in the amount of \$9,499.52 under the category “Tree Planting”.

Moved by Ed Russell, seconded by Karen Hutchinson.

That application 03-TRCA-25 be approved for ALUS Peel annual payment funding in the total amount of \$100.50 per year for up to 10 years, for a total of \$1,005.00 subject to ALUS National confirming availability of the necessary funds, the project is eligible for funding in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding.

Carried PAAWG 2025-33

10) For Information

Melanie Williams, Peel Region

1) Grown in Peel 2025

Grown in Peel released a fall reel, with a winter reel coming for December. Building on the 'Caledon Crunch' model, Grown in Peel was able to support Peel Public Health and the YMCA of Greater Toronto to bring the 'Big Crunch' to all Peel District Board schools, providing 20,000 Ontario and Peel Region apples to 25,000 students at 53 schools.

Recruitment for the 2026 Grown in Peel program will be December 2025-January 2026. Grown in Peel will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2026.

11) Round Table and Other Business

1) 2025 PAAWG mileage expenses

PAAWG members are eligible for reimbursement of their 2025 travel expenses. Melanie Williams will circulate the claim forms to those members who have attended in-person meetings and the farm tour.

2) Peel-TRCA-CVC Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy

Peel-TRCA-CVC are developing a Biodiversity Strategy to help guide Region and Conservation Authority program development, what tools are needed for measuring and monitoring, and establish current state of biodiversity health in Peel region. PAAWG has been requested to participate, and a survey study will be circulated to PAAWG members. The program leads will attend a future PAAWG meeting to discuss the strategy.

12) Adjournment

Moved by Manjari Mehta.

That the November 20, 2025, meeting of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group be adjourned.

Carried PAAWG 2025-34

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm. The next PAAWG meeting will be held in-person at the Peel Conference and online via Microsoft Teams on February 19, 2025, at 7:00 pm.

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