

Terms of Reference Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance

Background

The Golden Horseshoe is home to one of the largest food and farming clusters in North America. The potential for this significant cluster to continue to grow, however, cannot be taken for granted.

Recognizing this, the five Regions of Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel and York, together with the cities of Hamilton and Toronto, and the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation came together in Fall 2009 to secure funding for the development of a strategy and action plan to support food and farming across the Golden Horseshoe and in the Holland Marsh. An informal Steering Committee, with representation from across the Golden Horseshoe, oversaw development of a ten year Action Plan entitled the “Golden Horseshoe Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy - Food & Farming: An Action Plan 2021” (the Action Plan).

The Action Plan was launched on March 2, 2012. This Terms of Reference outlines how an Alliance of partners will work together to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan for the betterment of the Golden Horseshoe and Ontario.

Mandate

There is a need for one entity to oversee implementation of the Action Plan given the diverse range of stakeholders with an interest in food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe and a similarly diverse range of partners that will need to collaborate to implement the Action Plan. Just as importantly, there needs to be an entity that will take a leadership role to champion and ensure implementation of the Action Plan over the next ten years.

The Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance (the Alliance) will, more specifically, be responsible for:

- Overseeing implementation of the opportunities, and monitoring actions and tasks set-out in the Action Plan;
- Recommending adjustments to the Action Plan in consultation with partners;
- Pursuing and aligning funding as necessary to implement tasks;
- Promoting the Action Plan in cooperation with partners;
- Reporting on progress to funders, the provincial and municipal governments, and other partners;
- Participating in a yearly review on the performance of the Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance Coordinator (the Coordinator); and,
- Developing partnerships to implement tasks.

Alliance Composition

The membership of the Alliance is to reflect the goals of the Action Plan to ensure that the Golden Horseshoe retains, enhances and expands its role as a leading food and farming cluster. To this end the Alliance will include representatives from the participating municipalities, the Friends of the Greenbelt

Foundation, and representatives of the food and farming value chain, such as primary production, processing, retailing and research.

The Alliance will be comprised of up to 17 members, including Chair(s) / Vice-Chair, as follows:

- A representative from each of the Regions of Niagara, Halton, Peel, York and Durham, and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto (7 - plus alternates);
- A representative from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation (1 - plus an alternate); and,
- Representatives from the food and farming sectors in the Golden Horseshoe (7 -9)

Each of the Regions and Cities may appoint one representative and an alternate to the Alliance. These may be either municipal staff or elected officials. It is important that municipal representatives have a reporting relationship to their respective councils to communicate progress and to speak on behalf of their municipality to ensure that action of that municipality contributes towards implementation of the Action Plan . The municipal appointments should have an interest in the Action Plan's success.

Seven to nine representatives from the agriculture and/or agri-food sector shall be appointed by the municipal representatives of the Alliance to represent a wide range of interests throughout the food and farming sector, including a cross-section of commodities, industry groups, research, business, etc. The Steering Committee shall recommend sector representatives to the Alliance for appointment.

Membership, Attendance and Alternates

Membership shall be reviewed every 2-years, or earlier if a member is no longer able or available to fulfill their role. Members shall continue to serve until their replacements are appointed.

Attendance at Alliance meetings is highly important for continued success. Where a representative cannot attend, the alternate should attend in their place. If quorum cannot be met, an alternative meeting date will be chosen. Where a representative has not attended three consecutive meetings, the Chair(s) / Vice-Chair shall contact that representative or the municipality and seek alternate representation.

Advisors

Advisors will be requested from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, other Provincial and Federal ministries as required, and the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario. These advisors will provide support to the Alliance, in a non-voting capacity.

Technical working group(s) will be coordinated as required, to provide support and guidance for the implementation of the opportunities, actions and tasks set-out in the Action Plan.

Procedures

Co-Chair or Chair/Vice – Chair Model

The Alliance members may choose to follow a Chair / Vice- Chair or Co-Chair model. Should a Co-Chair model be chosen, the duties defined below will be shared between the Co-Chairs.

Elections

Chair / Vice- Chair will be elected annually by the membership of the Alliance.

Role of the Chair

The Chair(s) shall preside over each meeting of the Alliance and assist members in reaching consensus on decisions. In the absence of the Chair(s), the Vice-Chair will act as Chair at the meeting.

The Chair(s) shall act as primary spokesperson, and, in cooperation with the coordinator, coordinate the presentation of the Alliance's position to its partners and other stakeholders as required.

It shall be the duty of the Chair(s), with respect to any meetings over which they preside, to adhere to Robert's Rule of Order.

Roles and Responsibility of Members

Alliance members shall champion the Action Plan by:

- Attending (or sending their alternate to attend) and actively participating at all meetings;
- Working with other Alliance members to attempt to reach consensus on decisions before the Alliance;
- Communicating with and act as primary liaison to their organization and community regarding progress of the Action Plan;
- Seeking additional funding, in cooperation with other Alliance members, to realize implementation of tasks or actions;
- Encouraging further implementation and cooperation within their representation to act as a model for other groups/sectors/organizations to follow in implementing the Action Plan;
- Coordinating with the organizations or sectors they represent, to implement or assist with the implementation of actions; and
- Adhering to these Terms of Reference.

Conflict of Interest

Members shall declare a conflict of interest before agenda items are presented.

Quorum:

A majority of the appointed Alliance members shall constitute quorum. If quorum is not met, information reporting can be received.

Compensation

No compensation shall be made to members of the Alliance for their participation by the Alliance.

Alliance Resolutions

The Alliance will seek to achieve consensus on decisions. Recommendations are “carried” if supported by a majority. Only resolutions as they appear in the adopted Minutes shall be considered as officially representing the position of the Alliance.

When an issue arises, the Alliance will attempt to reach consensus on how the Alliance should resolve the issue.

If a consensus cannot be reached, a question before the Alliance will be put to a vote and each Alliance member or their alternate, will be entitled to one vote.

A motion shall be deemed to be carried when a majority of the members present and voting have expressed agreement with the question.

Public Access and Delegations

Unless otherwise determined, all meetings will be open to the public.

Meetings of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance will be open to delegations of no longer than 10 minutes, at the discretion of the Chair.

Meetings

The Alliance meetings shall be held quarterly or at the call of the Chair(s), with the provision that at least four meetings be held per year in a variety of locations within the Golden Horseshoe.

Minutes and Agenda

The minutes of each Alliance meeting will be circulated to the Alliance members and approved, at the following meeting. The approved minutes will be forwarded to all the partners represented on the Alliance, for information.

The Alliance agendas and minutes will be prepared by the Coordinator with input from the Chair(s).

Annual Reports

An annual report and budget summarizing the progress on implementing the Action Plan from the previous year shall be prepared by the Coordinator on behalf of the Alliance. The annual report shall be forwarded to the partners represented, and more broadly as determined by the Alliance and Coordinator.

An annual review of the Alliance’s role and effectiveness will be completed to encourage continuous improvement, and may include suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference for the coming year. This shall be completed by the Alliance under the direction of the Chair(s).

Presentation of an annual progress report will be made to participating municipal councils and other partner representatives as deemed necessary.