



**GOLDEN  
HORSESHOE**  
FOOD AND FARMING  
ALLIANCE



**Annual Report 2016**



## Chair's Report

Three years ago, in 2014, the Alliance executive established the Chair's position as a permanent role rather than rotating, as it had been done in the early days of the organization. It has been my sincere pleasure to serve you in that role since it was established.

On that same day, an election was being called – a minority government was falling and the Premier was heading back from announcements in eastern Ontario, Belleville and Kingston, to dissolve the legislature. Around the table we were in the process of developing “planks” for platforms with ideas and solutions. It was a conversation that was heady in the direction and the desire to see better for communities throughout the Golden Horseshoe – with the hopes of expansion beyond. The Alliance, in my humble opinion, was, even at our early beginnings, an eclectic group that was formed evolve into something far more than the pieces that sat around the table; a greater good in a time when solutions seemed unachievable.

With many organizations competing around the broader societal table, new ideas – instead of a reliance upon the same ol', same ol' – seemed like a novelty. We did not need to imagine a collection of individuals that included academics, business owners, bureaucrats, NGO and farm organizations, planners, economic developers, farmers, and politicians of every position: turns out, that was how the Alliance had been designed.

Due to the make-up of this organization, finding and implementing projects, programs, and our 10-year strategy plan was not only doable but is now on the cusp of being completed. I offer my congratulations because there are organizations, companies, established businesses, even governments, that fail to get beyond the establishment of a vision, let alone work on policies or platforms that they believed in when written but abandon with great haste when the going gets tough. The Alliance had a few tough moments, exceptionally difficult times that would have allowed others to say, “Well, we gave it a good try and did our best but it wasn't meant to be”.

Too often, failure is the price we pay for those who don't want to put in the hard work and effort required to make a difference. As a society, we have become blasé towards achieving measurable, tangible results that showcase the maxim “the needs of many outweigh the needs of the few or the one”. That was never an option around the Alliance table. Our Action Plan has guided our work and ensured that we were never stuck in the weeds, mucking about where we did not belong. We, as a group, knew what our focus was, what our intentions were, and what the resolve around the table meant. Individuals have come and gone, based mostly around employment options and opportunities,

but the ideals that had led to the formation of a new organization never wavered and has and will continue with others.

The glue through it all was Janet Horner, an individual without whom we would not be where we are. She has truly been a stabilizing force, the eye of the hurricane, if you will, while we battered around ideas, concepts, innovative direction, and solutions; guiding us with a steady hand while making sure that we dotted our "I"s and crossed our "T"s – no easy or mean feat, to be sure. Your executive has been outstanding to work with, particularly Bill, with his land use background and wealth of knowledge around many of the issues pressing our farm and food vision throughout the Golden Horseshoe. And each and every member, from the working committee to the board to our various liaisons from governments provincially and municipally add to that strength and knowledge.

What is the future? That is up for you folks to decide. It always has been. When the Greater Toronto and Area Agricultural Action Committee, GTA ACC for those into acronyms, was in process of dissolving last year, I made the comment surrounding Greek mythology, that GTA ACC, with a great amount of thought and courage, had given birth to a greater entity along way, in similar fashion to Cronus fathering Zeus. This was not bragging or bravado, I sincerely believe it was something that could have been seen happening - a natural extension of the work that had begun nearly half a decade earlier.

The guiding principle of working together on a regional basis was founded by those original members of the GTA AAC. That is why I acknowledge the efforts of Allan Thompson, Peter Lambrick, and others. It is the proper evolution of any organization, if they truly believe in achieving results, that they go to the next step; fostering change and driving the agenda that they want to accept and not what is presented to them as "gospel". I acknowledge the past, the efforts and foundations that had been laid well before the Alliance. But I would contend that the Alliance has stepped up to the challenge and then some.

The real future of the Alliance was born from the table conversations in a dreary hotel off the 401 in Mississauga where the strategy plan started to percolate; but where the seeds of doubt had also been cast – again, with the argument that another organization was not required; that others would be able to do the role equally well. Looking around the splintered and shattered countryside of organizations and companies, I can say without a moment's hesitation, that we are not duplicating the efforts of others, we have carved our niche in this crowded space and are moving forward the agenda of the Action Plan.

In fact, I believe I could argue that the whole premise for the Canadian government's "World-Leading Clusters and Partnerships" program – a "cluster approach to innovation" – was one that was envisioned by this Alliance five years ago. The opening statement of the Action Plan begins "Ontario's Golden Horseshoe is home to one of the largest food and farming clusters in North America". We knew that agriculture was an economic driver long before our governments looked away from the auto industry long enough to see the steady underreported growth of the AgriFood sector in this province. We knew that municipalities continue to put roadblocks up to growth in the AgriFood sector right across the Horseshoe. We have worked hard to suggest changes to the 4 Plans that make them supportive of agriculture. We must continue to check off the items in our Action Plan to keep our cluster strong and growing. Strong leadership, progressive policy and cooperative action is required. Our work is not done!

I would like to leave you with this, a quote from American scholar Warren Bennis -- "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality". We have been doing that, and will continue to do so. And that makes us as unique as the makeup around the table.



## **Executive Directors Report for 2016**

I often refer to my dog-eared copy of the Action Plan to make sure that the Alliance is on track with the activities and projects that we undertake. Sixty-two actions guide our work and as the years have passed we see real progress with some of those actions and less traction with others. Here are some of the highlights of 2016.

### **Actively Participate in review of the Greenbelt Plan**

We did not know in 2012 that the Greenbelt review would turn into a **4 plan Review** but we were able to be extensively involved in the review during 2015-16. Our final submission contained 13 pages of suggestions and solutions to ensure that **agricultural lands were protected, definitions and policies of the plans were aligned, connectivity of the agricultural system was maintained**. While we know that all our suggestions will not make the final cut, we were able to focus our message and align with other farm groups in one voice.

### **Track trends related to greenspaces, community gardens, and urban agriculture**

A small grant in 2016 enabled **Toronto Urban Growers (TUG)** to extend the mapping of Toronto's urban agriculture to the rest of the Golden Horseshoe. Public Health units in the municipalities are particularly interested in mapping this information.

### **Develop and implement realistic local food, beverage, bio-product, and ornamental procurement policies for public and broader public sector agencies**

In May 2016, our **Greenbelt Fund** project to increase Local Food Procurement in Long Term Care Facilities and Municipal Cafeterias began. Project teams in **Durham Region, Halton Region** and the City of **Hamilton** have benchmarked their local food purchasing and are designing new menus substituting items that can take advantage of cost savings and superior products made from local foods. This project continues through 2017 and will track increase in local food procurement.

### **Establish a program at the Golden Horseshoe regional level to acknowledge and promote environmentally progressive practices in the food and farming sector**

With the help of the **Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program** we designed this program with program goals, potential partners, funders and outcomes. It will be implemented at a future date.

**Support incubators that provide access to capital, processing line time and expert advice for entrepreneurs in food and farming**

The GHFFA continues to support the work and direct inquiries to **FoodStarter, OAFVC, and Niagara College** as provide start up services and advice to new food entrepreneurs. We continue to advise the **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority** on their incubator farms on public lands

**Support and promote healthy local food choices by food service providers at colleges and universities**

**Mohawk College** received funding from the Greenbelt Fund to increase local food purchasing on their campus. The GHFFA sits on the Advisory team for this project. Over 4,000 students were surveyed about their food habits and purchasing of local foods. Phase two (2) rolls the project out to three more college campuses.

**Complete and maintain an inventory of existing production, processing, distribution, and marketing infrastructure that supports food and farming activities**

Our on-going project in Asset Mapping was contracted by the **Ontario East Economic Development Corporation** to map the value chain assets from Northumberland County to the Quebec border. Data was collected during 2016 with upload taking place in 2017.

**Canada 150 Farm Family Project**

Application was made in 2016 for a project to recognize Ontario Farm Families that have been continuously farming for 150 years. Although funding was not received, the GHFFA have allotted dollars in 2017 to provide recognition of those farms in the Golden Horseshoe.

2017 will see the release of the government response to the 4 Plan Review. We continue to assist OMAFRA with the Agriculture Systems project and the Farms Forever consultations. Some exciting stories will emerge from the Canada 150 project and we are working with EDCO to try to merge the data platforms of the Manufacturing and AgriFood Asset Mapping projects. The Alliance are doing some ground-breaking work that has provincial significance and lasting influence. We should be proud of our efforts. I thank the Board members for their vision and direction in the implementation of our Plan. Special thanks to Chair Jamie Reaume who has provided sound guidance and comic relief through the last year.

It takes a team to manage the work of the Alliance. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Project Managers – Janice Janiec, Marilyn Bidgood and Soni Craik Christie; students – Harry Moss, Andrew Payne, Khulsan Khan and Brayden Libawski; Administrative support from Lia Lappano and Lorna Wilson and our Staff Working Group members – you know who you are! Thank you for a great year.



**GOLDEN HORSESHOE FOOD AND FARMING ALLIANCE – April 2017**



|  |                   |   |                    |                    |
|--|-------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Beginning Balance (as at January 1, 2017) - Carry Fwd. From 2016<br>Carry Fwd from GTAAAC In trust with Foundation | \$127,850.        |  |                    |                    |
|  | \$ 12,500.        |   |                    |                    |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>  | <b>\$140,350.</b> |   |                    |                    |
| <b>REVENUES</b>  |                   | <b>2017 Actual</b>  | <b>2017 Budget</b> | <b>2016 Actual</b> |
| Halton Region  |                   |   | \$30,000           | \$30,000           |
| Peel Region  |                   |   | \$30,000           | \$30,000           |
| York Region  |                   | \$30,000  | \$30,000           | \$30,000           |
| Niagara Region   |                   |   | \$30,000           | \$30,000           |
| Durham Region  |                   |   | \$30,000           | \$30,000           |
| City of Toronto  |                   |   | \$30,000           | \$30,000           |
| City of Hamilton   |                   |   | \$30,000           | \$30,000           |
| OMAFRA (Asset Mapping)   |                   |   |                    | \$69,550           |
| Ontario East   |                   |   | \$16,086           | \$23,414           |
| Greenbelt Fund (Local Food)  |                   |   | \$75,000           |                    |
| Growing Forward 2  |                   |   |                    | \$23,237           |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>  |                   | <b>\$30,000</b>   | <b>\$301,086</b>   | <b>\$326,207</b>   |

| EXPENSES  | 2017 Actual | 2017 Budget | 2016 Actual |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Salaries - TRCA   | \$396       | \$2500      | \$2,953     |
| Benefits - TRCA   | \$116       | \$1000      | \$1,028     |
| CONTRACT SERVICES   |             |             |             |
| -Executive Director, Project Manager, Working Group Support           | \$31,600    | \$110,000   | \$110,000   |
| Travel and Hospitality  | \$995.      | \$15,000    | \$13,300    |
| Communications  | \$1,300     | \$3,600     | \$5,200     |
| Website Hosting   |             |             |             |
| Office and Misc   | \$525       | \$2,000     | \$3,000.    |
| Printing, Gifts, External Contributions                               |             |             |             |
| CONFERENCES/SEMINARS/   |             |             |             |
| -Municipal Ag Ec Conference, Ontario Farmland Trust, Queens Park Days |             | \$10,000    | \$19,242..  |
| ACTION PLAN   |             |             |             |
| Asset Mapping - GGH and Database                                      | \$1,000     | \$30,000    | \$77,330    |
| Asset Mapping – Ontario East  | \$4000      | \$16,086    | \$24,982    |
| Taste Your Future – F&B Ontario                                       |             | \$10,000    |             |
| Canada 150 Farm Family  |             | \$20,000    |             |
| Municipal Local Food Procurement                                      | \$9,200     | \$80,000    | \$39,050    |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>   |             | \$300,086   | \$267,622   |
|   |             |             |             |
|   |             |             |             |