



## **Background Information**

### ***Golden Horseshoe Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy and Action Plan Phase 1 Report***

Study commissioned by: The Greater Toronto Area Agriculture Action Committee (GTAAAC), together with the City of Hamilton, Niagara Region and the Holland Marsh Growers' Association

Study funding support primarily provided by: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP). In Ontario, this program is delivered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC). Other funders include the regional governments, local federations of agriculture, the Credit Valley Conservation Authority and The Greenbelt Foundation.

Idea for the study: It began at a July 2009 meeting of all of the groups that commissioned the research. These groups all farm in spaces within the greatest-urban concentration anywhere in Canada, and are part of the second-largest food processing economy in North America (second to Chicago's cluster and larger than the one in Los Angeles). The group decided to collaborate to create a practical action plan to ensure co-existence of agriculture, food processing and urbanization for mutual benefit, as well as sustainability of the environment, human health and the economy.

The vision: To create a ten-year plan that will serve as a blueprint for progress. The strategy and action plan will strengthen Ontario's second-largest economic driver (agriculture, agri-business and food processing) within Ontario's Golden Horseshoe and Holland Marsh. It will also maximize mutual benefits for farmers and consumers within this densely-populated region. A profitable agriculture industry in the Golden Horseshoe and Holland Marsh area that is environmentally and socially responsible, as well as responsive to market demands will be the main outcome of the ten-year Action Plan. It will identify opportunities for market growth and the resulting economic activity driven by changing population ethnicity and increasing consumer needs for healthy, nutritious foods.

#### Project Phases:

1. Development of a discussion document including all previous research on the topic and drafting of an Action Plan: <http://www.planscape.ca/pdf/GoldenHorseshoeDRAFT17Jan-2011.pdf>
2. A stakeholder consultation process: March 30, 2011 "Food and Farming: An Action Plan 2021 Summit", Delta Meadowvale, Mississauga, to ensure diverse and thoughtful input into the final plan.
3. Preparation of a final Action Plan, based on stakeholder input.

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