

**Ministry of Heritage,
Sport, Tourism and
Culture Industries**

Minister

6th Floor
438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 2R9
Tel: 416 326-9326

**Ministère des Industries du
patrimoine, du sport, du
tourisme et de la culture**

Ministre

6^e étage
438, avenue University
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 2R9
Tél : 416 326-9326



November 12, 2020

Mr. Todd Halpern
Chair
Destination Ontario
10 Dundas Street East, Suite 900
Toronto, ON M7A 2A1

2021-22 Mandate Letter

Dear Mr. Halpern:

Thank you for taking on the role of Chair of the Board of Directors of the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation, operating as Destination Ontario. Your team's work contributes to a spectacular double bottom line in Ontario reflecting our rich cultural fabric and contributing to our economic success.

I often say Ontario offers the world in one province. Destination Ontario's world class marketing makes our jobs in the ministry – showcasing Ontario and attracting visitors – easier. The important work you are doing at Destination Ontario helps market the province as a truly unique place for residents and visitors to explore and discover.

I recognize the success of your collaboration with Regional Tourism Organizations, Destination Marketing Organizations, sector associations and Destination Canada to help showcase local experiences. Please continue to take a leadership role in terms of a collective brand message, testing new innovative technologies and tools, and, a visitor-first approach in strategic planning, as you work with your partners to meet the needs of Ontario's communities and fulfil your mandate.

As you develop your business objectives, performance goals and other activities for the coming year, I ask that you consider a number of key government priorities.

.../2

The heritage, sport, tourism and culture sectors were one of the first hit by COVID-19 by a “triple threat” of health, economic and social crises. This has had an unprecedented and devastating impact on the ministry’s agencies and operations and on our sectors. There’s been no guide book on how to recover, but together, we’ve been supporting the work of the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee, shining a light on our sectors’ challenges at the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, and will help inform the next phase of *Ontario’s Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19*, to responsibly restart the economy. This coordinated effort will also culminate in a five-year strategic plan for the ministry, with a view to helping us rebuild and re-emerge as a premiere visitor destination. We need to be, and we will be, ready to welcome the world back to our province.

Destination Ontario’s marketing efforts will be central to the recovery of Ontario’s heritage, sport, tourism and culture industries. In 2021-22, I expect Destination Ontario to continue the implementation of its phased marketing approach with a key focus on a strong Ontario brand message in Ontario and beyond, to safely ensure Ontario is a top choice among travel destinations, building on the success your organization has had in working with Ontario Creates to develop Ontario Live, a virtual hub to assist the tourism and arts sectors in recovery from COVID-19, and the Domestic Recovery Marketing Support Program in collaboration with Destination Canada that will reinvigorate local tourism economies and deliver a much-needed boost to local businesses.

As part of the government of Ontario, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value for money to taxpayers. This includes:

1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

- Operating within your agency’s approved budget.
- Identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation, innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability.
- Identifying and pursuing efficiencies and savings.
- Complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization, Realty Interim Measures and Agency Office Location Criteria.

2. Transparency and Accountability

- Abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting.
- Adhering to requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, and responding to audit findings, where applicable.
- Identifying appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the board’s role in agency governance and accountability.

3. Risk Management

- Developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks, including planning for and responding to emergency situations such as COVID-19.

4. Workforce Management

- Optimizing your agency's workforce to enable efficient and effective fulfilment of government priorities, while enhancing customer service standards.
- Streamlining back office functions to ensure that all available resources are redirected towards the critical front-line services that Ontarians depend upon.

5. Data Collection

- Improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information sharing and reporting, including by leveraging available or new data solutions to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery.
- Supporting transparency and data sharing with the ministry, as appropriate.

6. Digital Delivery and Customer Service

- Exploring and implementing digitization or digital modernization strategies for the provision of services online and continuing to meet and exceed customer service standards through transition.
- Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including COVID-19.

I also ask that your staff work with my ministry to ensure your objectives and business model are aligned with your mandate, government priorities and the ministry's five-year plan, once it is launched. I encourage you to build on the strong Ontario brand that reflects the integrated impact of heritage, sport, tourism and culture in the province, and to work with industry partners toward increased alignment in targeting key markets.

As the government continues to respond to COVID-19, there will be ongoing efforts to ensure that provincial agencies focus on improving the customer experience, adopting service innovation, offering more services virtually and online, and eliminating redundancies as part of the Enhanced Agency Evaluation being led by Treasury Board. This work will build on the advancements in digital service delivery made during the pandemic and the comprehensive review of provincial agencies that was completed in Fall 2019 to improve services, address inefficiencies and more effectively spend taxpayer dollars. The government is also continuing its Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction initiative to reduce the cost of complying with regulations and reduce the number of regulatory compliance requirements, including red tape, on Ontario businesses. Staff from my Ministry may reach out to you to support these initiatives.

As a key ministry partner, I will rely on your help to advance ministry priorities such as supporting the recovery and rebuilding of our tourism industry with the goal of attracting international investment to the province when it is safe to do so.

I value your role in marketing our province in co-operation with the tourism industry, the Government of Ontario, and other governments and agencies. I ask that you ensure your agency continues to deliver this important work in a manner consistent with government priorities. As we move forward, it will be important to continue to work closely together, including taking a coordinated approach to communications, so that when it is safe to welcome the world back to our province, we are ready.

Together, our work has the potential to drive billions of dollars in economic activity and create thousands of jobs. Our work supports that incredible double bottom line - strong economic growth and a resilient cultural fabric that reflects the diversity and strength of Ontario's communities. As the Minister responsible for this important suite of industries, I recognize that there is a lot of work ahead of us to get our economy moving again and to make sure that Ontario remains an economic powerhouse.

I know that with Destination Ontario's help, we will succeed.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa".

Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

- c: Lisa LaVecchia, President and CEO, Destination Ontario
- Nancy Matthews, Deputy Minister, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
- Sarah McQuarrie, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agency Relations and Accountability Division, Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries