

**Ministry of
Citizenship and
Multiculturalism**

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October 6, 2023

John Ecker
Chair
Ontario Heritage Trust
10 Adelaide Street East, 3rd Floor
Toronto, ON M5C 1J3

2024-25 Annual Letter of Direction

Dear Chair Ecker:

I am pleased to share our government's 2024-25 priorities for the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT). Per the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive (AAD), and as the agency continues with its work for the upcoming fiscal year, this letter sets out my expectations for the Ontario Heritage Trust. These priorities should be addressed in OHT's 2024-25 Business Plan and Annual Report, as well as identified in the attestation memos submitted with each report.

The OHT is a key partner of the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, and I am counting on you and OHT's Board of Directors to meet your roles and responsibilities for the agency as the province tackles ongoing fiscal challenges. As part of OHT's business planning process for the coming year, I will rely on OHT to foster sustainable economic growth while actively supporting the government's anti-racism and inclusion initiatives to build an equitable Ontario and promote a sense of belonging through informed policies, programs and services. Most importantly, I will expect the agency to continue to conserve, interpret and share Ontario's heritage and rich history, as specified in its mandate. In doing so, I invite collaboration with other agencies, Ministry partners, stakeholders and communities to drive efficient innovation across all lines of business, with particular attention given to sharing OHT's success stories with Ontarians.

OHT's Board of Directors play a vital role in helping OHT achieve its mandate. It is important that OHT's goals, objectives, and strategic direction continue to align with our government's priorities and direction. In that regard, it is important that the Chair and Board fulfill their respective leadership roles while working together to establish any goals, objectives, and strategic direction for the OHT consistent with its mandate and government policies, including expectations included in this letter. Specifically, I ask that you and OHT's Board recognize and adhere to sections 7.5 and 8.5 of the current Memorandum of Understanding (fully executed December 15, 2022), which outlines the accountability relationships for the CEO and the CEO's roles and responsibilities. As part of the government of Ontario, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of the people of Ontario and ensure that they provide value for money while also adhering to all applicable government policies and directives.

While the Chair and Board do not involve themselves in the day-to-day operations of the OHT, it is important that you and the Board come together to continue to set the agency's strategic direction. The CEO shall continue to be responsible for operationalizing and monitoring the progress of the strategic direction and the priorities identified in this letter, while keeping the Board apprised of the agency's progress. Further, it should be noted that, while direction is being provided on priorities, the OHT must continue to adhere to all relevant legislation, the MOU, and all applicable Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet (TB/MBC), Public Service Commission (PSC), and other government directives and processes, including the OPS Code of Conduct.

In the case of any perceived conflict between direction received in this letter and the MOU, legislation, or government directives/policies, it is my expectation that you to consult with myself or my Chief of Staff for clarification.

With the anticipated retirement of the CEO in September 2023, I ask that you, the Board, and the incoming CEO come together to ensure that the OHT focus on the following priorities. It is my expectation that the Chair work with the Board to set the goals, objectives, and strategic direction, with the CEO to operationalize and implement, the following:

1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

- Opportunities for fundraising and revenue generation through partnerships for longer-term sustainability, where appropriate.
- Efficiencies and savings through innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability.
- Operating within the agency's financial allocations.
- Compliance with applicable direction related to accounting practices and supply chain centralization, including leveraging Supply Ontario's bulk purchasing arrangement and working with Supply Ontario on strategic procurement initiatives.
- Compliance with realty interim measures for agency office space.

2. Transparency and Accountability

- Abiding by, and ensuring Board members are aware of, applicable government directives, policies, and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as well as ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting.
- Processes/policies to inform my Ministry of key activities and initiatives as per the MOU, including ensuring Ministry staff are made aware of all planned events or issues, including contentious matters, public communication strategies and publications, and stakeholder and other public consultation discussion.
- Adherence to accounting standards and practices and supporting the CEO in their responsibilities to responds to audit findings and requests for financial information where applicable.
- The appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in agency governance and accountability, and providing the Minister with annual skills matrices to facilitate the appointment of qualified individuals to the board.
- Requirements for the agency's AAD mandate review, scheduled for 2024-25, including participating in interviews/meetings, providing information requested by the Ministry, and complying with any other related requests from the Ministry.
- The annual review and updating of agency KPIs to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

3. Risk Management

- An effective process for the identification, assessment, and mitigation of agency risks, including cyber security, and any future emergency risks that abides by OPS risk management processes and requirements.

4. Workforce/Labour Management

- The optimization of OHT's organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery, including redeploying resources to priority areas, where needed. This is to be done in compliance with OPS directives and policies on human resources and labour relations practices.
- Human Resource and Accommodations strategies in alignment with OPS directives and policy.
- Adherence to TB/MBC labour and bargaining mandates.
- Prudent and efficient management of operational funding and workforce size.

5. Diversity and Inclusion

- Diversity and inclusion initiatives through the promotion of an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace.
- An inclusion engagement process to ensure all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making.
- Performance metrics that demonstrate the efforts and achievements of the OHT in promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace and program offering.

6. Data Collection, Sharing and Use

- Improvements on how the agency uses data in decision-making, information sharing and reporting, to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery.
- Increased data sharing with Supply Ontario when applicable regarding procurement spending and planning, contract arrangements and vendor relations to support data-driven decision-making.

7. Digital Delivery and Customer Service

- Digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met.
- A variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations.

These are the government-wide commitments for board-governed provincial agencies.

In addition to supporting the government priorities, you will demonstrate excellence in program and service delivery while maintaining my direction for the Board of Directors to set the goals, objectives, and strategic direction, and the CEO to operationalize and implement, for the following:

1. Continuing to Provide Key Services

OHT will ensure ongoing alignment with the government's priorities while meeting its mandate to conserve, interpret and share Ontario's heritage and rich history. As the Ministry responsible for oversight, I ask that OHT meets its mandate, as outlined in section 7 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*,

R.S.O. 1990 by continuing to:

- Effectively own, manage and protect a portfolio of provincially significant heritage properties;
- Act as a centre of expertise on the protection and conservation of significant heritage properties;
- Educate the public in the role and importance of Ontario's heritage.

2. Red Tape Regulatory Burden Reduction Initiative

The Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction initiative seeks to reduce the costs and burdens related to regulatory compliance requirements. You and your agency's CEO have previously been invited to submit suggestions to improve agency operations and I continue to welcome any recommendations you may have. To support these efforts, I ask that you, in partnership with the Board and the CEO:

- Bring forward to the Ministry specific initiatives for cost-savings and other opportunities for efficiencies.
- Work with the Ministry to facilitate projects that seek to reduce burdens on OHT's operations, where applicable.

3. Doors Open Ontario

- The continued expansion and enhancement of the program for Ontarians and ensure Doors Open Ontario is presented as a key program of the Trust as an agency of the government.
- The ongoing work with the Minister's Office to encourage further engagement/participation by faith-based organizations and other places of worship, acknowledging that many places of worship are already part of Doors Open Ontario.

4. Focus on In-Person Programming

- The continued focus on in-person events, commemorations, and visiting and honouring heritage sites.
- Inclusive, multi-faceted, and expanded programming that is delivered to and reflects the diverse audiences and narratives of Ontario's population.

5. Ontario Heritage Act

- Provide insight, expertise and advice to the Ministry on matters relating to the conservation, protection and preservation of the heritage of Ontario.
- Provide insights and expertise to the Ministry regarding implementation of government priorities (e.g. Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan) with respect to:
 - Annual housing supply action plans.
 - Balancing sound heritage conservation practices with achieving key identified outcomes.

6. Public Events/Communications

- The profile of the work of the OHT is important and the Board and CEO will work with the Ministry and Minister's Office to ensure awareness and partnership on upcoming events and opportunities for participation by the Chair, Board, and or the Minister/Parliamentary Assistants.

7. Economic Growth and Development

- Opportunities with the Ministry regarding:
 - Supporting the government's growth and development efforts and in particular, its commitment to rebuild Ontario's economy.
 - Key Performance Indicators that best demonstrate the economic, social and community value of OHT's delivery of its mandate as part of the annual government fiscal planning process.

8. Address Direction Related to the Community Jobs Initiative (CJI) and Centralization of Broader Real Estate Authority (CBREA)

- With OHT identified as a CBREA "complex/integrated" entity, continue to work with the process of the implementation of Phase 2 of the initiative, as required.
- Work with the implementation of the Community Jobs Initiative (CJI), as required.

I would be pleased to discuss these priorities during our next meeting, and I look forward to hearing how they will be reflected in the agency's upcoming business plan and ongoing agency operations.

Thank you and your fellow board members for your continued commitment to the OHT. Your work and ongoing support is invaluable to me and the people of Ontario.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jonathan Kent, Chief of Staff, Jonathan.kent@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,



Michael Ford
Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism

c: Wayne Kelly, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Heritage Trust
Keith Palmer, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism
Melody Robinson, Chief Administrative Officer/Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional and Corporate Services Division, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport