

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

Ministère du Tourisme, de la  
Culture et du Sport



Assistant Deputy Minister

Sous-ministre adjointe

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Feb 24, 2014

Fatima Scagnol  
Corporate Secretary  
The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place  
200 Princes' Boulevard  
Toronto, ON M6K 3C3

Dear Ms. Scagnol,

I understand that the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place recently approved the 2014-2016 Exhibition Place Strategic Plan. As Assistant Deputy Minister of the Tourism Planning and Operations Division at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the plan outlines several areas of direct interest to the Ministry, specifically, Ontario Place revitalization and convention and large scale event hosting in Toronto.

Ontario Place Corporation also has an interest in the plan and, by way of this letter; I am pleased to share the thoughts of the Ontario Place Board of Directors and management. The Board commends Exhibition Place on the Strategic Plan and notes that the plan is thoughtful, well-developed and positioned to be a key planning document for Exhibition Place (and the general area).

#### Convention and Event Hosting

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC) is an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The MTCC is Canada's most successful convention facility, due in large part to its strategic location in the downtown core. MTCC is located in a precinct that includes multiple convention quality hotels, a transportation hub (Union Station), attractions and amenities that make it highly desirable for convention planners and delegates. Its operations have a significant impact on the tourism sector and economy. In 2012-13 the economic impact related to conventions, trade shows and public events held at the MTCC was \$402M.

The potential of expanded convention space in the City of Toronto was examined extensively when the community was considering the development of casino, hotel, meeting and entertainment venues less than two years ago. This research demonstrated that site location is a key variable in a convention planner's decision of where to take their events.

The desire of Exhibition Place to pursue expanded exhibition and convention space on its grounds in order for Toronto to capture a larger share of the convention business and remain a top tier convention city is acknowledged. The Ministry understands the importance of the convention sector in promoting tourism and encourages Exhibition Place to work closely with the MTCC to develop strategic partnerships to promote tourism and economic activity in the City in a balanced way.

Efforts to expand convention space in Toronto should build on the strengths of the City as a convention destination, while expanding the potential for new business. This would in turn ensure that the greatest tourism and economic impact is achieved in a manner which does not further segment the meeting and convention market within the City. Given the geographic proximity of the two locations, a strategy which focuses on complimentary goals and purposes, and avoids replication or duplication, would be optimal.

#### Ontario Place Revitalization

The Province is committed to revitalizing Ontario Place into a year-round multi-use waterfront destination and urban park. I am pleased to see this reflected as a transformation opportunity in the Exhibition Place Strategic Plan.

The Province and the City have an ongoing dialogue about Ontario Place and Exhibition Place with the aim to enhance the visitor experience at both sites. I am encouraged that the Exhibition Place Strategic Plan 2014-16 identifies the need to examine better connectivity between the two sites, and to the surrounding communities, which aligns with the recommendations of the Minister's Advisory Panel on Ontario Place revitalization.

There is tremendous potential for this part of the waterfront to be an exceptional space and we look forward to continuing to explore possible synergies and greater connectivity between the two sites.

#### Ontario Place Corporation

The Board and management of Ontario Place agree with the direction being taken and see many opportunities for ongoing synergies between the two sites including, and beyond, the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games.

The Board and management view transportation infrastructure as a critical enabler of future success and note that the strategic planning being undertaken by Exhibition Place, and ongoing Ontario Place revitalization efforts, provide an opportune time to address the transportation issues facing both of the sites. The Board has indicated that implementation of the plan may be enhanced by a risk management strategy which notes the known high-level risks related to achieving the strategic goals. The Plan states that both sites are ‘inextricably linked by close proximity’ and, to this end, the Board notes that consideration could be given to a commitment to jointly develop the future plans for both sites.

Congratulations on the hard work that has been put into the Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Morah Fenning', written in a cursive style.

Morah Fenning

Cc: Steven Davidson, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport  
Eriks Eglite, Transition General Manager, Ontario Place Corporation  
Dianne Young, Chief Executive Officer, Exhibition Place