

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
6th Floor, 438 University Ave
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

August 20, 2021

The Honourable Kinga Suma
Minister of Infrastructure
College Park 5th Floor Rm 5E200, 777 Bay St
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister MacLeod and Minister Suma,

On behalf of the Ontario Museum Association (OMA) and the 700 museums across the province, I am writing to ask that museums be included and eligible for the **Capital stream of the Community Building Fund** being administered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This may require additional and dedicated capital funding for museums.

In March 2021, in responding to the MHSTCI *Reconnecting Ontarians: Re-emerging as a global leader* White Paper, the OMA recommended “eligibility for infrastructure funding in stream 2, especially to increase accessibility and capacity to welcome tourists.”

Museums, like sport and recreation facilities, are also required to make changes to their physical spaces to meet COVID-19 related public health requirements, as well as repair, renovate and retrofit in order to maintain and extend their life as important community assets. The current Capital stream of the Community Building fund excludes museums from receiving funding to make these necessary improvements, while sport and recreation facilities are deemed eligible for this community infrastructure funding.

Museums, heritage, and cultural infrastructure contribute to the wellbeing of communities: Museums have a return of \$3.70 for every dollar invested, with an estimated \$1.6 billion in total annual economic benefits to Ontario. Across the province in every community, 700 Ontario museums welcome 19.4 million visitors in a usual year, a number that had grown 15% over the five years before the pandemic. Cultural institutions are a part of what defines a community’s unique identity and 83% of Ontario mid-size cities found cultural and recreational amenities effective in their work to renew their downtowns.

Municipalities report that, “Arts, culture and heritage improve the ability of municipal governments to influence local economic development by attracting and retaining a skilled and talented workforce.”¹

For all Ontarians, museum activities and programs contribute to wellbeing and social participation resulting in measurable health benefits. For example, more than 45,000 seniors participate in specialized programs in local museums across the province per year, combatting social isolation and supporting wellbeing among Ontario’s older adults.

Ontario's museums and cultural infrastructure are key assets for communities to provide safe, local experiences and opportunities for connection during this period of pandemic recovery. Ensuring museums receive essential funding for their facilities by including them in the Capital stream of the Community Building Fund supports the government's goals in rebuilding communities hit by the pandemic.

This provincial investment presents a unique opportunity to support Ontario's museums as key community assets contributing to pandemic recovery.

We look forward to your response and to working together for Ontarians at this critical time.

Sincerely,



Paul Robertson
President
City Curator, Cultural Services, City of Kingston

Cc:

Kevin Finnerty, Deputy Minister, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Chris Giannekos, Deputy Minister, Infrastructure
Katharine Bambrick, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Trillium Foundation
Marie Lalonde, Executive Director, Ontario Museum Association

Enclosures:

- [Exhibiting Resilience: Empowering Ontario's community museums for strategic recovery](#)
- [Ontario Museum Association Response to "Reconnecting Ontarians: Re-emerging as a Global Leader": Including museums in MHSTCI strategies](#)

1. *Policy Statement on Social-Economic Development*, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, March 2016.

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