

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Minister Lisa MacLeod
Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
6th Floor, 438 University Ave
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Dear Minister MacLeod:

On behalf of the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, I am writing today to express our support for the Play On! Canada organization's efforts to reorganize Canada's national street hockey program, including this funding application.

The Vaughan Chamber of Commerce is one the largest business associations in the Greater Toronto Area. Throughout covid, we been a vocal advocate for the business community and launched programs to ensure businesses can adapt to the changing landscape. We have convened town halls with business experts, launched a digital acceleration program, created dedicated resources to ensure information flow to SMEs and distributed more than 86000 antigen test kits to support our community.

[Play On! Canada](#) is a national non-profit organization, led by an inclusive and independent Board of Directors. The organization uses one of Canada's most culturally significant pastimes (street hockey) as a tool to bring entire communities together with opportunities for Canadians of all genders, ages, and abilities to connect, be active, and have fun. Prior to COVID-19, the same management team organized a pan-Canadian street hockey tournament holding 170 events spanning every province for 15 seasons.

Play On! Canada events have historically been important to communities across Canada including Vaughan. The project has helped advance reconciliation, celebrated our national heritage, and generated significant economic, physical, social, and mental health benefits for youth in the region. A recent report by Brock University suggests that a typical 4000 participant event also generates \$3.3M in annual economic benefits to each community.

The Chamber as an organization is dedicated to the economic revitalization of Vaughan from the impacts of Covid and we believe Play On! can be valuable to support the success, prosperity and recovery of our community.

With an executive team that also includes leaders of some of Canada's most successful events (2015 Pan Am Games, 2017 Invictus Games, etc.) Play On! Canada is uniquely qualified to deliver. To help Canada with post pandemic economic, social, and health recovery, they are seeking to resume programming beginning again as early as summer 2022 (conditional on funding applications being successful and an environment conducive of safe outdoor programming.)

The project has received expressions of partnership support from members of the Aboriginal Sport Circle, Kids Help Phone, thirty-three municipalities (each of which will close their streets for four days for their respective community event), our Mayor, Sportsnet, Hockey Canada, the Ontario Hockey Federation, and

more than two dozen members of Federal and Provincial Parliament including several Cabinet Ministers. We are adding out our support to this event.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of the benefits of this project including these time-sensitive funding requests.

Sincerely,



Brian Shifman
President and CEO
Vaughan Chamber of Commerce

cc. Minister Helena Jaczek
Scott Hill

