May 13, 2016

The Honourable Michael Coteau  
Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport  
9th Floor, Hearst Block,  
900 Bay Street,  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E1

Re: Ontario’s Draft Culture Strategy

Dear Minister Coteau:

On behalf of our members, the Ontario Association of Landscape Architect (OALA) would like to express its support to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport in its plan to develop a multi-year Culture Strategy. A comprehensive and inclusive strategy could prove to be an important tool in strengthening Ontario’s vibrant and diverse cultural sector, providing both economic benefit and increased appreciation of Ontario’s rich cultural identity and landscape.

Founded in 1968, the OALA is the self-regulating professional organization representing accredited landscape architects in Ontario. OALA’s over 1,200 full and associate members are engaged in both public and private practice, applying artistic and scientific principles to research, planning, design and management of both natural and built environments. They promote sustainable environments through land stewardship. The OALA’s mission is to promote, improve and advance the profession of landscape architecture and maintain standards of professional practice and conduct consistent with the need to serve and to protect the public.

The OALA is supportive of the efforts of the Ontario Association of Architects, the schools of architecture, landscape architecture and design and the public to include the design professions of architecture and landscape architecture in the Culture Strategy. Landscape architecture is about creating, designing, and building a great city, a great street, a great park, a great place - a place that moves or inspires, that responds to the natural environment and the community. Landscape architecture is about creating beautiful, intelligent, inspired and resilient landscapes, landscapes that evolve but endure in quality of design and materials. The profession requires a creative, artistic process where the canvas is the landscape and the natural environment.

Promoting, improving and advancing the profession of landscape architecture and maintaining standards of professional practice and conduct consistent with the need to serve and to protect the public interest.
Many of the cultural heritage landscapes were designed by landscape architects. The culture of a society embodies its values, it is what we leave behind for future generation to understand and appreciate our lives. More often than not, landscape architects are responsible for integrating and interpreting culture, stories and history into the public realm through design or art.

Landscape Architects are also leaders and proud supporters of cultural events such as Jane’s Walk and Doors Open.

The OALA supports the principles of diversity, inclusion, quality of life, economic development articulated in the draft Culture Strategy. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport should recognize and improve its support of architecture, landscape architecture and design, recognizing their contribution to culture and include them in Ontario’s Culture Strategy. The inclusion of landscape architecture, architecture and design as an art in the Culture Strategy will help to ensure that the government’s goals of building a strong economy and vibrant communities, attracting tourists and investment, and contributing to job creation are met, and will be a clear signal to other jurisdictions that Ontario values the contributions of design industry.

We trust our feedback will be taken into account by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport as it establishes Ontario’s first Culture Strategy, and we look forward to an inclusive Culture Strategy for Ontario that recognizes architecture, landscape architecture and design as integral components of Ontario’s culture.

Sincerely,

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Jane Welsh OALA, CSLA
Vice-President