



October 29, 2021

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
438 University Avenue, 6th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Attn: Ryan Albright, Senior Coordinator, Games Unit

Dear Minister MacLeod,

We, the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) of The Corporation of the City of Brantford and The Corporation of the County of Brant (the Municipalities), submit this letter, which requests that due to the coronavirus pandemic and the constraints it presents to the planning and organizing of the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games (the Games), as well as the health and safety impact on the participants and the residents of the two municipalities, that the Games be postponed to the next available date.

This request follows a thorough review of the Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA), jointly signed by The Corporation of the City of Brantford and The Corporation of the County of Brant as co-host to the Games, and the Province of Ontario. The TPA and accompanying Ontario Games Bid Guidelines present a comprehensive standard of hosting; the Games Organizing Committee (GOC) now faces significant challenges in meeting these standards based on the limitations outlined in the Province of Ontario's Roadmap to Reopen – Step 3.

While the approximate draw of the Games will be 1,000 participants, officials and supporters from across Ontario, a survey of Ontario Senior Games Association participants completed in September 2021 suggests that registration will be much lower. Many participants expressed great concern and uncertainty over the fourth wave and variants. The Games includes ten events at fifteen locations in addition to three planned social events. The age demographic of participants is 55+.

Under the terms of the TPA, the GOC is required to plan a multi-sport event to the standard indicated in the Bid Guidelines, unless otherwise instructed by Games Ontario.

No changes to the Bid Guidelines have been communicated to date. Current recommendation from the Brant County Health Unit indicates that each team remain cohorted and at no time should there be interaction between teams, except during competitive play. This limitation drastically affects the social nature of this event, which many participants look forward to. These social events, including the Opening Meal, Opening Ceremony and the Middle Night event, provide time to gather in celebration of collective athletic achievements.

The efficiency of public transportation provided by Brantford Transit is also seriously affected with Brant County Health Unit recommending a limit of transporting one team per trip. There are substantial increases in costs to accommodations, food services, special events, sport logistics and volunteer services, totalling an additional \$240,535 to host in February 2022 under current Province of Ontario Step 3 guidelines.

The transmission rate of COVID-19 is low in Brantford and the County of Brant. It would not be responsible to the residents of the two municipalities who have worked hard to keep case numbers low to host an event that would bring up to 1,000 people from around the province. The potential for community spread would be too high.

In October, the Councils of the two municipalities adopted motions to recommend to the province to postpone the Games. Following this vote, the respective Councils directed the CAOs to submit a letter of support to postpone the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games to the Province of Ontario through Games Ontario to a mutually agreed upon date in 2023. The Municipalities, as represented by the CAOs, stand behind this request for the safety of the participants, the municipalities and the overall success of this event, and request a response in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Brian Hutchings
Chief Administrative Officer
The Corporation of the City of Brantford

Michael Bradley
Chief Administrative Officer
The Corporation of the County of Brant