

Greater Sudbury Museums Revitalization Plan

Presented To:	City Council
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Type:	Managers' Reports
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Recommended by:	Chief Administrative Officer

Report Summary

This report provides recommendation regarding the museum's current heritage assets and a vision for the future of Museum Services.

Resolutions

Resolution 1:

That the City of Greater Sudbury approves the Terms of Reference for a new Greater Sudbury Museums Advisory Panel, and directs staff to proceed with recruitment of potential members for review and appointment by the incoming Council for the 2022-2026 Term.

Resolution 2:

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to prepare a Business Case for consideration in the 2023 budget process that includes:

- a) Additional staff resources for Museum Services, increased maintenance and operational funds;
- b) Additional resources for facilities maintenance, Museum operations and modernization of online presence.

All as outlined in the report from the Chief Administrative Officer, November 8, 2022.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

If approved as presented, the recommendations in this report support Council's 2019-2027 Strategic Plan Goal Six: a nationally recognized centre of artistic excellence, vibrancy and creativity. They also support the achievement of Goal Seven: One of Ontario's top tourism destinations and Greater Sudbury Cultural Plan 2015-2020. The recommendations in this report do not directly support either the goals of the Population Health plan or the CEEP goals.

Financial Implications

If approved as presented, staff will develop a business case for Council's consideration during the 2023 Municipal Budget process.

Introduction

This report responds to Council direction on February 8, 2022, to develop a Museums Revitalization Business Plan for consideration as part of the 2023 Budget process.

Staff completed an in-depth review of the current operations and challenges for Museum Services. Based on this analysis, and including input received from community stakeholders, there is a clear misalignment between the community's service expectations and the corporation's capacity to fulfill them. As previous reports described, museum operations have remained largely unchanged in the 20 years since municipal needs, artifact conservation and program resources, are continuing at the present time.

These issues are due, in part, to evolving industry practices that reflect expectations for governance, artifact management and customer service that pre-amalgamation local museum services never had the ability to meet. An increase in partner events brings more visitors to the museum sites but creates additional pressure on staff and budgets. As with all community initiatives, the changing nature and amount of volunteer resources also has an important effect on CGS Museums.

Recognizing the current challenges and the need to manage the museum's human, physical and financial resources, staff prepared a Museums Revitalization Plan attached as Appendix "A" that highlights opportunities and guides Council in best practices for good management and future success of CGS community museums.

The Museums Revitalization Plan focuses on addressing five main concerns: Staff Resources, Governance and Structure, Vision and Strategy, Site and Facilities and Artifact Conservation and Storage.

This plan represents a significant change from current and past practice. Nevertheless, the Museums Section has the potential to provide an effective service level that is not only generally accepted, but also provides significant community value. To achieve this, however, requires an increased investment of funds tied to a clear vision for the service's intended outcomes, guided by community expectations through a Museums Advisory Panel. A Draft Terms of Reference for a Greater Sudbury Museums Advisory Panel is also recommended to Council and attached to this report as Appendix B.

Should an increased investment not take place for 2023, staff will work to adjust service levels to match available resources; prioritizing services that have previously demonstrated the most public interest and community value.

Background

As detailed extensively in the Council Report of February 8, 2022, CGS Museums Services have been operating four museum sites across CGS since amalgamation without a generally accepted service level or overarching coordinated strategy. Museums were generally managed with a focus on minimizing expenditures, consistent with the pre-amalgamation approach. One consequence of this was minimal annual increases in staff resources and budget. Other consequences included insufficient capacity to meet evolving customer service expectations or to design and provide relevant programming, or to ensure work processes remained current with sector norms or best practices. This resulted in long-unaddressed challenges regarding governance, facility renewal and infrastructure needs, artifact conservation and program resources.

According to information from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, and the Ontario Museum Association, a community museum funded by a local government should reflect the following characteristics:

- Adherence to the requirements of the Heritage Act

- Staff resources that have sufficient, appropriate technical and administrative skills/experience to not only sustain the service's administration needs, but also to ensure programming and artifact management reflect industry standards
- An advisory body that can demonstrate community support, provide guidance in prioritizing programs and activities, develop and validate strategic direction, and ensure representation for culturally significant communities

Greater Sudbury Museum Services operates as a "Community Museum" as defined under the Heritage Act and continues to receive a modest annual grant from the Province for this designation. CGS Museums should have a current Strategic Plan that provides a clear, Council supported vision for the role museums have within the community to deliver appropriately funded level of service. The creation of the Greater Sudbury Museums Advisory Panel, as per the 2019 recommendation of the Auditor General, will not only meet the Community Standards of Museums, but it will also be a valuable resource in developing a renewed vision that could be expanded to include a broader representative of the vast cultural heritage of the community including the diverse cultures of the Indigenous and Francophone peoples.

Anderson Farm Museum, Copper Cliff Museum and Flour Mill Museum are all located in heritage structures that have significant maintenance and asset renewal requirements. Over the past ten years, the City of Greater Sudbury has allocated approximately \$2 million towards facility capital renewal, including the budget for the Flour Mill Museum relocation. Subject to Council's direction from this report, additional capital requirements remain to address current requirements for health and safety, accessibility, the need for secure storage that meets industry standards for climate control and building load capacity, and to fund the final configuration of the Flour Mill Museum Relocation project. For example, a \$467,000 project will be considered in the 2023 Capital Budget to ensure that the barn and stable buildings at Anderson Farm can be reopened to public access.

Governance and Structure

In keeping with the Auditor General's 2019 recommendation that, following the next municipal election, the CGS recruit and appoint members to a Museums Advisory Panel to meet the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act and the governance standard for community museums, staff have prepared a Terms of Reference for the Advisory Panel as part of the Museums Revitalization Plan and are recommending its adoption as Resolution 1.

The CGS Museums Advisory Panel will provide advice and contribute to the creation of short- and long-term plans for Council's consideration. The plans will contain goals and objectives relevant to the purpose of the museum and consistent with the vision of the City of Greater Sudbury. Panel members will provide advice to Museum staff in meeting municipal, provincial and federal policies and procedures pertaining to museum operations and activities.

The Advisory Panel will specifically provide advice on formulating the museums' statement of purpose, help create written policies specific to museums operating standards, and recommend programming to be delivered to the community. The draft Terms of Reference for a Greater Sudbury Museums Advisory Panel has been attached as Appendix "B".

Human Resources

The current budget for Museum Services provides for one FTE position – Museum Curator. As indicated in previous reports, the complement of one permanent full-time staff member is not sufficient for Museum Services to meet its objectives of proper heritage conservation, public programming and meeting industry best practices for community museums.

It is recommended that, beginning in 2023, two additional full-time positions are added so that the Museums Services Section will operate with the following three full-time positions:

- A new Non-Union Coordinator who will take the lead in administration, supervising summer students, community partnerships, funding application and liaison with CGS support services such as facilities maintenance.
- The current Curator who will now be able to focus on public programming, exhibition development and artifact conservation
- A new permanent Assistant Curator who will assist the Curator and make progress on recording and assessing the collection to ensure it is appropriately sized and focused for this community and the Museum's mandate.
- Three summer student positions to assist with artifact curation and program delivery. Additional students may also be secured through provincial or federal programs.
- While adding two full-time positions, the recommendation also includes a reduction of current part time hours which will partially offset the additional costs.

This staffing level will allow the Section to meet the objectives outlined in the Revitalization Plan and allow Museum Services to deliver an appropriate level of service. The net additional 2023 financial requirement for the recommended human resources is \$168,579.

Sites and Facilities

As detailed in Appendix A, the estimated capital investment requirement over the next five years (2024-2028) is approximately \$2.5 million. This estimate reflects investments that preserve the integrity of the heritage buildings as artifacts themselves, as well as archaeological resources present on the property.

CGS has made progress towards meeting capital requirements by investing capital funding for the maintenance of the facilities and heritage buildings. In the years of 2019-2022, the City invested \$540,000 towards capital projects at Anderson Farm to increase the safety and use of the facility. In completing this work, additional needs were identified that will be presented as part of the 2023 Capital Budget.

Significant investments have also occurred at the Flour Mill Museum site in recent years. The heritage house and log cabin structures were moved from St. Charles Street to O'Connor Park in 2019 to allow for the expansion of a wastewater lift station. The third structure at the former site was condemned and a final determination on its replacement is required in the short to medium term. Further public consultation would provide more clarity on community needs and help determine the best use of these buildings.

Copper Cliff Museum has extensive renewal needs related to the building condition and its location on a small parcel of land. These issues require additional assessment in future and, once this information is obtained, a review of this location's role in museum services function should be undertaken in the medium term.

Rayside Balfour Museum is housed in the Azilda's Gilles Pelland Library and acts as more of a heritage exhibit gallery space. In the medium term, this space could be used to display temporary exhibits on a rotating schedule, with themes determined through public engagement.

Staff continue work to fully assess the needs for safety, security and accessibility at all sites. Over the medium term, as the strategy for the future of CGS Museums is developed, a conservation/maintenance plan for GSM properties should also be completed to identify appropriate building envelope work and how each facility and site fits into an overall plan. This will provide specific details of where capital funding should be allocated to ensure the City meets the industry standards in protecting their assets and providing safe, functional sites for staff and the community.

Artifact Collection and Storage

The CGS has an extensive collection of artifacts in its care. It is estimated that just 5% of the artifacts have the curatorial and legal documentation required for community museums. This level is well below the average of 60-65% identified through a survey of twenty comparator museums in Ontario. This process is time-consuming and there are several reasons for this situation, but improvement is not realistic unless the Curator is able to provide additional focus to this effort. In the immediate term, additional artifact acquisitions will remain frozen until a strategic plan and updated acquisition policy are in place.

To meet the industry standards for caring for the collection, Museum Services should have one or more exclusive spaces for the storage of the collection. These areas should be large enough to store existing artifacts without crowding, have appropriate environmental and access controls, and be equipped with proper shelving and operating areas.

Staff have estimated that 6,750 square feet of storage space with appropriate conditions and controls are required to accommodate the collection, including space allocated to essential collection management and care support functions. Current storage sites lack sufficient temperature, humidity or security controls to meet industry standard requirements. Development of storage solutions should be part of a longer-term strategy created in consultation with the Advisory Panel and the community.

In the short term, staff will continue to identify alternative storage options that can provide increased security, climate control and accessibility to safely store the collection until a long-term storage solution is determined that can consolidate the collection into an appropriate storage facility.

Website Development

Websites are an important tool to help bring awareness and marketing to the museums for potential visitors. The website contains a vast amount of detailed information, including previews of collections and exhibits, to visitor guides, event calendars, research documentation, and donor lists.

The existing Museum website is outdated and not compliant with accessibility requirements. Subject to Council's directions regarding museum services the website will be decommissioned, with key elements temporarily moved to the CGS website. An internal review determined that a separate website will best meet the CGS' goals for Museum Services be developed in 2023 in alignment with a renewed museums strategy.

Vision and Strategy for Future of Museum Services

As described in detail in the Museums Revitalization Plan, Greater Sudbury Museums are the keeper of the community's stories and collective identity. The Museums Section provides the following services to the community:

1. The collection, preservation and curation of artifacts and heritage facilities that are representative of the history of Greater Sudbury and its constituent communities.
2. The provision of interpretive programs and displays to allow citizens and visitors to understand the stories and events that helped to form today's Greater Sudbury.
3. Support for non-profit groups that host events at museum sites and facilities which bring additional visitation and awareness of the museums and their importance to the cultural life of the community.

Museum Services offer many heritage and cultural services to the community through exhibition development and accompanied programming available at the museum sites to the public and through hosting school tours. They also participate in annual community events, provide historical displays for community venues and deliver presentations on historical topics for various senior groups in the community. They provide customer service by providing information on research inquiries and granting permission for the reproduction of the Greater Sudbury Heritage Image photograph collection, coordinating museum rentals and supporting events that are hosted by community partners, as well as developing and publication of ads for the various upcoming events and programming.

These public facing activities consume many hours of administrative, planning and organizational duties to be successful. With the current human resources available, Museum Services does not have the capacity to meet service needs related to providing public programs, supporting community partners and ensuring proper heritage conservation practices are in place. Additional resources would allow Museum Services to concentrate on the proper curation and research of the City's many artifacts, and to use those artifacts in the development of new exhibitions and programming.

Museum operations will be strengthened through the appointment of an active Museums Advisory Panel and an increase in staff resourcing. These changes would enable the development of an appropriate strategic plan. This plan is vital in setting the direction of the museums by bringing Council, the Museums Advisory Panel, Museum staff and the community together with a shared vision for the future.

While the final determination of the Museum's vision and strategy are being developed, a survey of other community museums strategic plan's themes and goals have been reviewed and may provide insight into the strategic direction Greater Sudbury Museums could consider for the future. These are summarized in Appendix A.

Greater insight into perceptions around of the role of the museums, current environment and circumstances, both internal and external need to be examined as part of the process of creating a strategic plan. This environmental scan should involve the Advisory Panel members, museum staff, volunteers and a cross section of individuals, community organizations and municipal staff in the areas of heritage, recreation, communications, education and tourism.

This engagement will assist the Advisory Panel and Museum Staff in developing a Vision for the future, a revitalized Mission Statement and the development of goals, objectives and program concepts to meet the need of the community.

Role of Community Partners/Volunteers

CGS has many active volunteer-based community groups that have an interest in preserving and promoting local history. Museum Services supports these community groups to host a variety of events across CGS that benefit the community and help bring awareness to the City's heritage and museum sites. Many of the volunteer groups work in partnership with Museum Services to enhance the available programming by providing their expertise through demonstrations, hosting guided tours and collaborating with the City to apply for Provincial and Federal grants to help fund infrastructure projects at the museum sites to benefit all parties. These dedicated volunteers demonstrate a passion and commitment for promoting and preserving local history and would be an asset as members of an Advisory Panel for the museums.

At the same time, and as in other sectors, the number of museum volunteers has steadily declined since the creation of Greater Sudbury in 2001 and the lack of staff resources makes it challenging to recruit and train new volunteers. This places additional pressure on the remaining volunteers as well as the CGS staff to provide additional effort and may hinder the ability of staff to deliver other services.

Conclusion

A municipal museum service has the potential to provide significant community value. In the short term, an increased investment of human resources and the appointment of a Museums Advisory Panel will enable the museums to develop a renewed vision with clear goals, objectives and program concepts to meet the needs of the community. A continued commitment for investments in the maintenance of our sites and facilities will ensure staff and public safety and the vitality of our heritage structures.

The attached Museums Revitalization Plan provides an in-depth review of the current challenges Museum Services is facing with operating the four museum sites with limited resources. The report provides a review of the varied services offered at each museum site and focuses on opportunities to improve these services by reviewing current museum trends and practices that will aid Museum Services in developing engaging

exhibits and programs that educate, inform and entertain visitors on the topics that are important to Greater Sudbury's heritage and the community's interests.

As indicated, staff is recommending the creation of a CGS Museums Advisory Panel, as well as a Council direction to produce a business case for additional resources, to be considered during the 2023 Municipal Budget deliberations.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Museums Revitalization Plan, City of Greater Sudbury, October 26, 2022

Appendix B – Draft Terms of Reference for a Greater Sudbury Museums Advisory Panel

Resources Cited

Collingwood Museum Three Year Strategic Plan 2013-2016

<https://silo.tips/download/collingwood-museum-three-year-strategic-plan>

Lincoln Museum & Cultural Centre Strategic Plan 2020-2025

https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2flincoln.ca%2fsites%2fdefault%2ffiles%2f1068_lincoln_museum_cultural_centre_strategic_plan_2020-2025_final.pdf&c=E,1,RMfVioYSnb2V_VhtMXqkIYIRNBPGvceOYiQrMs-7sUP3hxmdUv2ZENWI2RN20pb5uGqKh0bLhI2IzU9p5B4Fj0Q_vzUcRiF3BXUH7GMY9j1meDIV&typo=1

[Greater Sudbury Museums Review – City Council Meeting February 8, 2022](#)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=43321>

Governance Audit of the Greater Sudbury Public Library – CGS Audit Committee, December 3, 2019

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&attachment=28150.pdf>