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Item No. 13.1.1
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee
October 16, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee

FROM: Jacqueline Hamilton, Acting Commissioner of Operations

DATE: May 2, 2025

SUBJECT: Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy

ORIGIN

April 12, 2022 Halifax Regional Council motion (15.1.5)

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Mancini **THAT**

Halifax Regional Council:

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:
 - a. commence Phase 2 of the Museum Strategy by implementing recommendations 1- 4; and
 - b. implement operational recommendations 6-8, 10 and 11 as set out in the body of the staff report dated April 5, 2022, and return to Council as necessary; and
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to return to Council with a report on recommendation 5 (Feasibility Study – Phase 3 Regional Museum Strategy) based on the outcome of Phase 2.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED by Austin, seconded by Mancini **THAT**

Halifax Regional Council:

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:
 - b. implement operational recommendation 9 as set out in the body of the staff report dated April 5, 2022, and return to Council as necessary.

MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 3

January 28, 2014 Halifax Regional Council Motion (11.1.10)

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Karsten **THAT**
Halifax Regional Council:

...

4) Declare 90 Alderney Drive surplus to the needs of HRM and that an equivalent amount of money as realized from the sale of the property be put aside within the Sale of Land reserve to be used toward the establishment of a municipal museum in Dartmouth as part of a cultural cluster, and

5) Consider HRM's support and investment in community museums, regional museums, and collection of heritage artifacts as part of the Cultural and Heritage Priorities Plan and return to Council with recommendations for an HRM regional museum consistent with the direction outlined in the Plan.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

November 22, 2016 Halifax Regional Council Motion (Item 14.1.3):

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT Attachment B Ordinary Properties be further amended to remove PID 40506875 & PID 40938110, North Street at this time, and that staff be directed to prepare a report regarding the feasibility of the subject properties being a potential site for a municipal museum and to investigate whether transferring money realized from the potential sale from the subject properties should be deposited to Q606 Strategic Capital Reserve, and subsequently committed against Reserve Q526 to be contribute toward the establishment of a municipal museum in Dartmouth as part of a cultural cluster. Staff was asked to look at the implications of funding these types of projects in the future.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Museum Strategy (Strategy) is a phased approach to defining Halifax Regional Municipality's role within the regional system of community, provincial and federal museums and archives. The goal of the Strategy is to ensure stewardship of the municipality's artifact collections and related policies, while guiding municipal interpretation programming to promote equitable access and co-creation of programs that foster a deeper connection to the region's diverse history across all communities.

- The Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy Report (Attachment 1) explores a scale of operational museum models. The options that were considered range from status quo (limited municipal capacity to deliver a coordinated regional approach to museum and interpretive outcomes) to building and operating a stand-alone municipally-owned regional museum (capital investment). A comparison of other Canadian municipal museum models was also conducted to support the analysis.
- The report **does not** support the building and operating of a stand-alone municipally-owned regional museum at this time.
- This report recommends a decentralized model, emphasizing direct and enhanced municipal support for interpretation and assistance to community museums. Modest increase in staffing and resources would increase organizational capacity for collection care, civic interpretive projects and development of exhibits in municipally-owned facilities.
- The Implementation Plan (Attachment 2) delineates short and long-term steps that the municipality can take to immediately begin to enhance its interpretive programming, while building up capacity and strategic partnerships for the future. Implementation also recommends immediate capital repairs to existing municipally-owned buildings functioning as museums – Evergreen House and Quaker House.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy as a guiding municipal document for the implementation of a Regional Museum Model;
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to put forward the increased staffing requirements and contributions agreement costs as outlined in the financial implications section of this report for Council consideration as a service enhancement in the 2026/27 budget; and
3. Direct the CAO to consider and prepare, as part of the 2026/27 Budget and Business Plan the withdrawal of \$2,395,130 from the Capital Fund Reserve (Q526), and allocate the funds to Capital Project Account CB220002 PFE – Heritage Facilities Recap and CP190001 P&R - Cultural Assets to support capital repairs to municipally owned heritage museum properties and artifact storage project, with priority given to Quaker House and Evergreen House.

BACKGROUND

Regional Museum Strategy Phases 1 and 2

On April 12, 2022, Regional Council endorsed the recommendations of Phase 1 Regional Museum Strategy, directing staff to implement actions and return with Phase 2 of the Regional Museum Strategy. The Phase 1 report provided an in-depth overview of all museums located within the region, including their interpretive mandate and overview of collections. An analysis of interpretation and regional storytelling showed where there are gaps in municipal stories and provided a draft framework for future interpretive master planning, outlined in Action 3.1 of the *Sharing our Stories: HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan* (CHPP). The report also presented a comparative analysis of recent national museum builds with costs, operating models and trends. The report made 11 recommendations to inform the approach to Phase 2 of the Strategy.

Phase 2 commenced in 2023 with the hiring of consulting firms Lord Cultural Resources and AldrichPears Ltd. Through stakeholder workshops, targeted engagement and analysis, the recommended model and implementation plan was finalized in the Phase 2 Regional Museum Report in fall 2024.

Sharing our Stories: HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan

On January 9, 2024, Regional Council endorsed the direction contained in Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan as a framework for developing new planning documents, municipal policies and programs, and prioritizing community-lead storytelling, with community museums as key partners. This report addresses three specific actions contained in the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan:

Action 3.5: Continue a phased approach to produce the municipal Regional Museum Strategy, which will shape the municipality's role in museum operations and development.

Action 3.1: Develop an interpretive master plan to guide the municipality's role and investment in commemorative and interpretive initiatives, artifact and digital collections and cultural and heritage program delivery.

Action 2.7: Strengthen and expand the role of Municipal Archives in being stewards of our civic history.

Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History

On October 30, 2018, at the request of the Committee on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History, Halifax Regional Council authorized the establishment of a joint committee to reflect an equal partnership between Halifax Regional Council and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs. In July 2020, the final report and findings were presented to Regional Council. Two specific recommendations from the final report pertain to the development of a Civic or Regional Museum:

(6) That the HRM prioritize the creation of a civic museum, owned and operated by the HRM according to the highest professional museological standards, and begin immediately to explore potential funding and planning processes for this purpose.

(7) That, pending the opening of the civic museum, the HRM create a virtual museum, along with working with and supporting the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre to enhance its capacity for displaying material representations of Mi'kmaw history.

The Municipality's Current Role in Museums

Traditionally, the municipality has not had a formalized role in the regional museum landscape. The Museum Strategy aims to formalize its role.

The municipality owns four heritage buildings that operate as museums:

- Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society (DHMS) operates Evergreen House and Quaker House, Dartmouth, through a Management Agreement and co-manages the HRM/DHMS artifact collection.
- Fort Sackville Foundation operates Scott Manor House, Bedford, through a long-term lease.
- Sheet Harbour Heritage Society operates MacPhee House, Sheet Harbour, through a long-term lease.

Halifax Municipal Archives (HMA)

- Established in 2006, the Halifax Municipal Archives acts as steward of the municipal archival collection and serves as a primary research resource for external and internal municipal inquiries. The collection comprises municipal records such as reports, historic Council minutes, photographs, maps and plans as well as records donated by community groups.

Municipal Collections:

- HRM/DHMS Collection: Established in 1965 and comprises over 40,000 artifacts and archival items, pertaining directly to Dartmouth history. The collection is stored in a leased facility.
- Municipal Archives Artifact Collection: Established in 2006 and expanded in 2018, comprises artifacts directly relating to municipal functions.
- Other Municipal Collections: Public Art and Cultural Assets, Halifax Regional Police and Fire Collections.
- Municipally-owned and registered heritage buildings in respect to the *Heritage Property Act*. Financial Support for Museums.

Community Museum Funding:

- The municipality provides operational, capital and project funding to community museums through *Administrative Order 2018-010-ADM Respecting Interim Grants to Community Museums*. In 2025, fourteen community museums received a total of \$157,890 in operating funding with three-year operating agreements for each museum. Eight museums were awarded project funding totaling \$55,920. This report does recommend changes to the current program or envelope.

DISCUSSION

Phase 1 of the Strategy provided a comprehensive and thorough review of the current state of over 30 museums operating in the region. Its goal was to assess whether a new civic museum would benefit the municipality, or if a more decentralized regional management model would better meet the needs of the municipality, community museums and residents.

Building on this work, Phase 2 evaluates and identifies the best model for managing museum-related interpretation within the municipality in collaboration with existing community museums. It considers and evaluates the case for a central municipal museum approach while exploring the pros and cons of several alternative museum management models using other municipal museum models for comparison.

Beginning in 2023, Phase 2 focused on a series of municipally based museum stakeholder workshops, comprised of 20 museums, including community museums, Nova Scotia Museum and Pier 21 Museum. Other stakeholder organizations included Association of NS Museums (ANSM), Council of NS Archives (CNSA) and the Halifax Municipal Archives. The workshops were designed to collaboratively develop a new municipal museum model, based on a scale of operational models.

As outlined in the proposed Strategy, the recommended model considers the strengths and weaknesses of the current municipal heritage landscape. It identifies how the municipality and the 30+ museums, archives, and heritage organizations in the region can collaborate to deliver integrated and meaningful interpretation that benefits communities, residents, and visitors across the region. It provides mechanisms for addressing gaps in municipally based heritage interpretation and supports community-led storytelling.

Based on careful analysis, the Phase 2 study **does not** recommend pursuing the addition of a central municipal museum to the Halifax landscape at this time, for the following key reasons:

- There are likely to be interpretive and operational overlaps between the central museum and other existing community museums.
- A central municipal museum may compete for visitors with community museums.
- The construction and operation of a new central municipal museum comes with major costs to capital and operating budgets. The comparative analysis of other civic museums illustrated the significant financial challenges of both building and operating civic museums.
- It is unlikely that a central municipal museum could provide support or services to non-municipal museums, given that it will have its own mission and mandates to pursue. Where partnerships do occur, they would be likely to be “one-offs,” not providing ongoing support to community museums.
- The municipality could include community histories and storytelling through interpretation in parks and existing and new municipal facilities, ensuring a more equitable and regional approach, rather than a singular museum facility.

The Recommended Model:

The recommended model is an **enhanced municipal department in partnership with a fee-for-service non-profit organization(s)** to provide in demand functions that are outside the mandate of a municipal department. The model recommends staffing enhancement to the existing Culture and Community team in Parks & Recreation to deliver recommended services and public-facing programs. A fee-for-service partnership with the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) and Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA) is recommended to support organizational capacity such as the financial operating support provided to other cultural federation organizations. These two cultural federation organizations provide direct support, training and advocacy for museums and archives across Nova Scotia, services that the municipality does not currently nor would deliver through this model.

The primary functions of the model would be as follows:

- governance and high-level strategic planning supported by direction and advice from a Regional Museum Advisory Working Group;
- leading civic interpretive projects and developing content that can be displayed digitally and/or in municipal owned facilities and parks;
- providing indirect expertise to museums within the system by leveraging skills and existing resources within other municipal divisions (i.e., sharing past reports, frameworks, or policies.); and,
- collections management for the municipal collection and HRM/DHMS collection.

The model supports and enhances community museums while preserving their independence. Retaining autonomy was a very high priority for museums, regardless of what model was recommended. Community museums will maintain the primary function of delivering interpretation and public programming and fundraising within their communities. Additionally, museums will manage their own collections and do research. Community museums will have additional facilitative support from the enhanced municipal department and fee-for-service organizations for these functions.

Like many not-for-profit organizations, community museums struggle with capacity issues while maintaining museum standards and their facilities and collections. While regional museums do work interdependently, this Strategy formalizes working relationships and advances museum goals that cannot reasonably be accomplished on an individual basis. The goal of the model is for the municipality to take a leadership role in areas where other organizations are unable to, while ensuring community museums retain their autonomy. Increased or additional funding to community museums is not recommended at this time.

Municipality deliverable examples include:

- Oversight in a coordinated approach to civic interpretation through the Regional Museum Advisory Working Group. The municipality would take the lead in addressing the known gaps in civic interpretation and museums would be able to use this content and design for their own sites. The municipality would use existing municipal facilities for pop-up exhibits and interpretation.
- Knowledge-sharing of content and research when the municipality develops and implements Interpretive Master plans such as Halifax Common, Point Pleasant Park, etc.
- Leadership in leveraging municipal resources to support museums in areas such as disaster planning, Heritage Property issues, Diversity and Inclusion support, accessibility planning, environmental and climate change challenges, leveraging grants, etc.
- Leadership in developing digital storytelling and civic interpretive content. Most museum sites have their own websites and that practice would continue. The municipality, potentially through the existing partnership with Discover Halifax or the Halifax and Municipal Archives websites, could provide mapping or a landing page to link to sites to better present the museums in a regional context. In time, with the development of interpretive content and in conjunction with community museums, this could inform the Halifax Virtual Museum.

Next Steps and Implementation

The Strategy's Implementation Plan outlines the directions and actions required to develop the museum model, along with timeframes for them to be undertaken. Certain items are designated as ongoing guidance actions, while others are defined as tasks or projects with timeframes spanning 1 to 5 years. The adoption of the Strategy would lead to its implementation and specific actions, and resourcing would be identified through the Municipality's business and budget planning. The Strategy's Implementation Plan is attached to this report as Attachment 2.

As part of the overall implementation plan, the following specific actions are on-going or recommended for immediate consideration as part of the budget-planning process:

1. Staffing Plan, Culture and Community: This report recommends that two new full-time operational staff positions be established: Cultural Developer Collections and Cultural Developer Programming. The Culture and Community team currently consists of three staff and the implementation of the model and on-going delivery of Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan actions, municipal interpretation and collection management requires additional resourcing. At current capacity, staff cannot effectively implement the proposed Strategy and advance actions. Funding for 2 to 3 FTE's was outlined in the preliminary costing of the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan in Attachment B of the Staff Report approved by Regional Council on January 9, 2024.

2. Municipal owned Museums: In 2017, the municipality sold 90 Alderney Dr., the former Dartmouth City Hall. The surplus building had been considered as a new location for an expanded Dartmouth Heritage/Regional Museum but was deemed not appropriate for use as a museum. As a result of that decision and subsequent sale of the building, Regional Council directed on January 28, 2014 that the proceeds of \$2.4M be held and allocated towards a future museum. Where a new museum building is not recommended, it is advised that the funds be redirected toward accelerated and necessary capital repairs for existing municipal museums. It is recommended that prioritization be given to Quaker House and Evergreen House, as both are in need of immediate capital repairs and the capital upgrades would address on-going envelope issues/deferred maintenance and help to address accessibility issues. The Facility Design and Construction (FDC) division of Property, Fleet & Environment manages budget dedicated to heritage repairs across all municipal owned heritage buildings. Using this reserve funding for specific projects would alleviate pressure on this constrained budget. Any remaining balance would be used in support of other Museum Strategy-related capital and operational projects, as approved by Regional Council through annual budget-planning process.

FDC is currently reviewing the requirements for Evergreen House and Quaker House, focusing on accessibility, energy efficiency, and capital repairs. These estimated costs will be captured in the 2026/27 capital budget process.

3. HRM/DHMS Artifact Collection and artifact exhibits in municipal owned facilities: Leasing and Tenant Services, Corporate Real Estate is undertaking a plan for relocating the HRM/DHMS collection intended to align with the expiry of the current lease in May 2027. Ideally, the HRM/DHMS collection will be located in reasonable proximity to the Municipal Archives, leveraging staff resources and allowing for increased public access to the collection in storage.

It is recognized that there is a lack of exhibit space for the HRM/DHMS artifact and archival collections, as the historic Evergreen and Quaker houses offer limited space and present accessibility challenges. While the DHMS has been very successful in developing new exhibits that showcase the collection, physical constraints remain a significant barrier. It is recommended that planning for future exhibit opportunities specific to the HRM/DHMS collection be integrated within existing HRM projects such as the Downtown Dartmouth Waterfront Plan or recapitalization of Alderney Landing. Incorporating exhibit space into new or recapitalization projects in Dartmouth could efficiently increase public access to the HRM/DHMS collection.

4. Cultural Federations Financial Support: It is recommended to include in the draft 2026/27 Parks and Recreation operating budget, up to \$50,000 for annual service level or contribution agreements with Association of NS Museums and Council of NS Archives to advance implementation of the Strategy.

5. Interpretive Master Plan: Action 3.1 of the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan was identified as a long-term goal, with completion within a 10-year timeframe. This work can be advanced if the Museum Strategy is adopted and additional resources are approved. The intent of the masterplan is to guide the municipality's role and investment in commemorative and interpretive initiatives, artifact and digital collections and cultural and heritage program delivery. The masterplan assumes that community co-creation of local storytelling

and histories should be approached regionally rather than concentrated in a new stand-alone museum to ensure equity.

Conclusion

The goal of the recommended model is to strengthen the museums that are already cornerstones of many communities and provide new opportunities for residents to share their stories and see themselves reflected in the story of the municipality. The model achieves this by leveraging existing municipal resources, formalizing partnerships with aligned organizations and aims to provide a truly regional and equitable approach to interpretation. The recommended capital funding for the existing municipal museums and the HRM/DHMS collection ensures those heritage assets are protected. Lastly, it advances the actions of the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan and other municipal priorities, while acknowledging the financial pressures faced by the municipality.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In alignment with the recommendation in the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan, a minimum of two full-time equivalent (FTE) positions have been identified for Parks and Recreation.

- Cultural Developer Collections (Required in fiscal year 2026/27)
- Cultural Developer- Programming (Expected to start in fiscal year 2027/28)

The estimate FTE cost for 2026/27 is \$99,700 (Including benefit) and for 2027/28 is \$ 119,000 (including benefit). Funding for these positions will be brought forward for Council consideration in future operating budgets.

Additionally, two further staffing needs have been identified to support departmental capacity during implementation stage

- Diversity and Inclusion Advisor, Parks and Recreation: This position is not expected to be required until at least fiscal 2027/28 or later, however there are other work requirements within Parks for this type of position, and it is possible if the position is created earlier to fill this gap it could be leveraged later to complete required work associated with the strategy. The estimated cost of this position is \$94,000 (Including benefit) and the request will come back to Council once the timeline for the position is better understood.
- Digital Archivist, Halifax Municipal Archives: This position is staffed and does not carry additional financial implications.

The Capital upgrades to Evergreen House and Quaker House will be included in the 2026/27 capital budget process which can be funded through the proceeds of sale of 90 Alderney Drive. Regional Council will need to approve the release of \$2,395,130 from the Capital Fund Reserve (Q526) to Capital Project Accounts CB220002 PFE – Heritage Facilities Recap for repairs and upgrades (in the amount of \$2,000,000) and CP190001 - Cultural Assets to fund on-going Museum Strategy implementation including artifact collection relocation (in the amount of \$395,130). As capital project funding is finalized in 26/27 and beyond any adjustments to the allocated amounts will be addressed through reporting to Audit and Finance.

To support the implementation of the Regional Museum Strategy, Parks and Recreation will require an increase to its annual operating budget to fund the estimated \$50,000 Contribution Agreements with ANSM (\$30,000) and CNSA (\$20,000), starting 26/27 for a 3-year contribution agreement, pending Council approval through a future year operating budget process.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There is limited risk to adopting staff recommendations, as these are consistent with previous direction from Regional Council.

The primary risk of not adopting the Strategy is the absence of a comprehensive guiding document and implementation framework to enhance the service delivery of a municipal museum model. This includes interpretive programming, collections management and implementation of Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan actions. Implementation of the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan related to interpretation would be heavily impacted due to insufficient staff resources.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Phase 2 was conducted in partnership with community museums and associated stakeholders. If approved, engagement for implementation actions of the Strategy will continue, in accordance with the Collaborative category outlined in the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee could recommend that Regional Council:

1. Direct the CAO to direct staff to consider alternatives to the proposed Regional Museum Strategy. This may involve additional analysis and revisions, and a supplementary staff report.
2. Refuse to approve the Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy, thereby resulting in the continued use of the *Sharing our Stories: HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan* for broad guidance on a non-enhanced and current-level service delivery of museum and interpretive-related programming.
3. Refuse to direct the CAO to consider and prepare, as part of the 2026/27 Budget and Business Plan, the withdrawal from the Capital Fund Reserve (Q526) and allocation of funds to Capital Project Account CB220002 PFE – Heritage Facilities Recap and CP190001 P&R - Cultural Assets for capital repairs of municipally owned heritage museum properties and artifact storage project, with priority given to Quaker House and Evergreen House.
4. Approve the Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy as a guiding municipal document for the implementation of a Regional Museum Model but refuse to direct the CAO to put forward the increased staffing requirements and contributions agreement costs as outlined in the financial implications section of this report for Council consideration as a service enhancement in the 2026/27 budget;

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39
7A The purposes of the Municipality are to ...

- (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; ...

35 (1) The Chief Administrative Officer

- (a) shall coordinate and direct the preparation of plans and programs to be submitted to the Council for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of all municipal property and facilities;

...

- (e) carry out such additional duties and exercise such additional responsibilities as the Council may, from time to time, direct.

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

- (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;

120(3) The capital reserve fund includes...

- (a) funds received from the sale of property;

120 (4) A withdrawal from the capital reserve fund shall be authorized by the Council, by resolution, and may only be used for

- (a) capital expenditures for which the Municipality may borrow

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy Report

Attachment 2: Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy Implementation Plan

Report Prepared by: Kellie McIvor, Manager Culture and Community, Parks and Recreation 902.579.7342

The background of the cover is an aerial photograph of Halifax, Nova Scotia, showing the city, the harbor, and the suspension bridge. On the left side, there is a large, colorful geometric pattern made of triangles and squares in blue, yellow, red, and white, resembling a quilt or a mosaic.

Attachment 1

Halifax Regional Municipality Museum Strategy Phase 2

July 30, 2024

ALDRICHPEARS ASSOCIATES

Lord Cultural Resources

Halifax Regional Municipality

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
GLOSSARY.....	8
1. INTRODUCTION	10
2. PROJECT FOUNDATIONS.....	21
3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	34
4. RECOMMENDED OPERATIONAL MODEL	39
5. IMPLICATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION	53
6. COLLECTIONS	61
7. ACTION PLAN	66
APPENDICES	



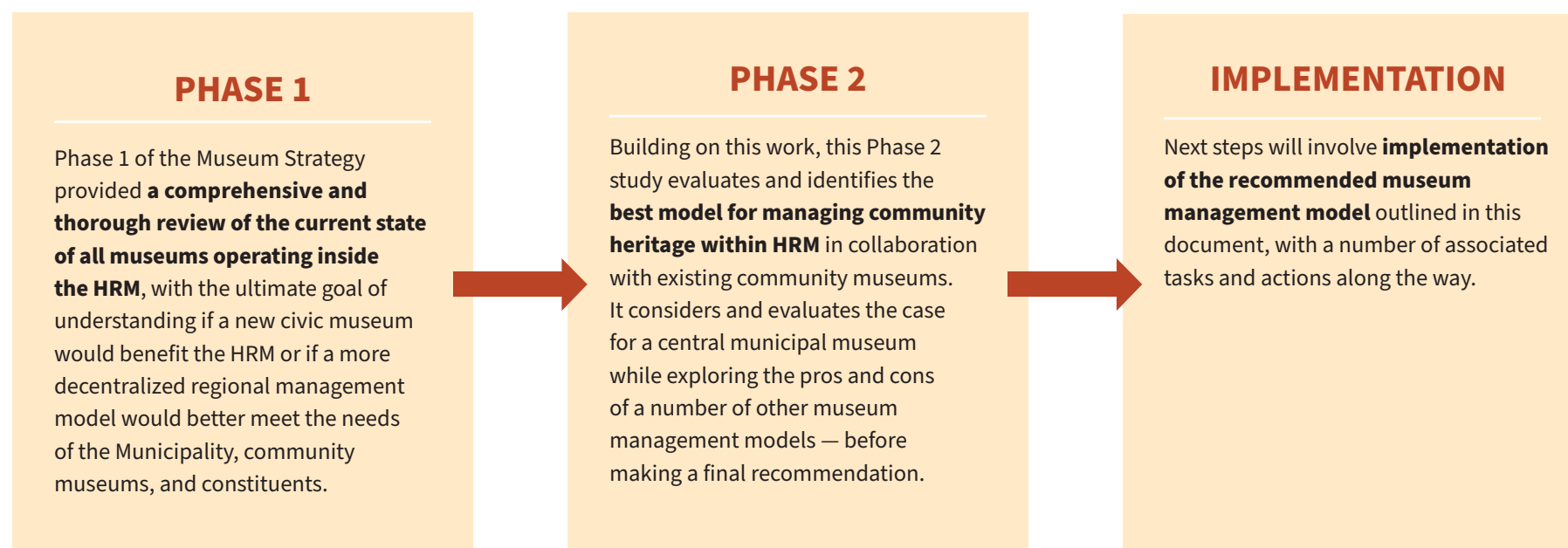
Executive Summary

Wikipedia: Tony Webster
<https://www.flickr.com/people/67296837@N00>



1.0 Overview

The Halifax Regional Municipality (the Municipality; HRM) has commissioned Phase 2 of a Regional Museum Strategy to guide the operation and implementation of heritage interpretation and programming within HRM for years to come.





2.0 Project Purpose

The Challenge

The Halifax Regional Municipality is rich in heritage — and in federal, provincial, and community museums, archives, and heritage sites that individually tell different parts of the Municipality's broader, collective story. However, there is also no single, central mechanism in place that provides an overarching vision for how heritage is organized within HRM, what is needed to guide heritage policy and operations in a comprehensive way, or how gaps in the broader municipal story might be addressed — nor is there a physical location that can help present these missing municipal stories once they are identified.

While there is strong municipal leadership, foundational cultural and heritage policies, and robust community-level relationships and networks in place, ***a regional museum management model is required to ensure that all partners are working towards a shared vision for the future, while simultaneously meeting their individual needs and leveraging each others' strengths.***

The challenge for a new regional museum management model will be to address the needs of diverse parts of the HRM's heritage landscape, including:

- » **HRM:** Allowing the Municipality to fulfill its heritage mandate and operational priorities while being supported by its heritage partners and organizations — ultimately ensuring an efficient distribution of services amongst key partners.
- » **Community museums and heritage organizations:** Supporting these institutions in interpreting their own community stories and histories, while connecting them to a comprehensive municipal story.
- » **Citizens and visitors:** Providing these diverse groups with a holistic, integrated heritage experience across the HRM that is currently missing.

The Way Forward

This study is the second part of a phased Museum Strategy that will meet these challenges and address these gaps. When it is implemented, the completed Museum Strategy — and its vision for an HRM museum management model — will ensure that communities across the region have increased access to relevant content and programs that foster a deeper, more holistic connection to the region's diverse history and that sparks engagement within, and across, communities.

To accomplish this, this study ***evaluated three potential models*** for moving forward:

- » A physical, central municipal museum
- » A department support program to support existing HRM museums
- » A combination of an enhanced municipal department with fee-for-service partnerships to undertake selected functions required for a healthy museum ecosystem



3.0 Methodology: Phase 2 Museum Strategy Scope

In order to identify the best management model for HRM, Phase 2 work involved stakeholder engagement, research, and rigorous analysis of the pros and cons of each model. Specific steps during Phase 2 included:

Project Goals and Approach to Stakeholder Consultation

This step allowed the team to confirm the goals for the project, refine the approach to stakeholder engagement, and identify key resources.

Comparables Analysis

To better understand potential museum system management models the team profiled five examples of museum management models across Canada. Three models were selected for in-depth assessment and evaluation. The analysis included deskside research and interviews with key staff members at each systems management organization.

Collections Analysis

Members of the consultant team met with the staff of the HRM's Municipal Archives and the Dartmouth Heritage Museum which are responsible for the Municipality's archival and artifact collections. The meetings with both groups allowed the team to review Phase 1 findings and to refine them based upon progress made in both institutions since that time. The results are reflected in Section 6.0 of this document.

Workshops

Phase 2 included four stakeholder engagement workshops focusing on revising and updating the SWOT analysis of the HRM heritage landscape conducted in Phase 1, identifying planning principles and priority functions to guide the selection of the preferred museum management model, and discussion of key considerations for implementation of the selected model moving forward. Participants included representatives from the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM), HRM Archives, Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA), and federal, provincial and community museums. These same representatives participated in all four workshops.

A high level summary of each workshop is captured here:

Workshop 1 SWOT and Prioritization

This first in-person workshop focused on:

- » Reviewing recent museum trends to establish a common base of knowledge
- » Revisiting the SWOT analysis from Phase 1 to understand what had changed
- » Defining museum system management models and their functions
- » Identifying priority planning principles that the HRM museum system management model must address



Workshop 2 Model Appraisal

The second in-person workshop reconvened participants to review Workshop 1 outcomes and to evaluate potential models. The session focused on:

- » Reviewing potential museum management models
- » Determining which model most closely addressed the planning principles identified in Workshop 1
- » Prioritization of the functions required by the HRM museum system management model

Workshop 3 High-Level Implementation

The third in-person workshop brought stakeholders together to review the results of Workshop 2 and confirm the preferred model for the HRM. The session focused on:

- » Reviewing functional priorities and potential models and identifying key assumptions for their operation
- » Defining pros and cons of each model and confirming the preferred option
- » Identifying potential functional partners and resource needs for the preferred model
- » Discussing how the model could enable fundraising / fund distribution

Workshop 4 Short-Term Implementation

In the final workshop the same participants came together virtually to explore practical operating assumptions of the preferred model and the resources needed to implement it. The session focused on:

- » Refining the operating assumptions for the preferred model
- » Defining implementation priorities
- » Discussing and refining resource needs moving forward

Draft and Final Reports

Results from the workshops and ongoing conversations with HRM staff were synthesized into a Draft and Final Report.



4.0 Key Findings

The Recommended Model

Ultimately, this study recommends a model that combines an enhanced municipal department with fee-for-service partnerships.

As described in this study, the recommended model takes into account the strengths and weaknesses of the current HRM heritage landscape and identifies how the Municipality and the 30+ museums, archives, and heritage organizations in the region can support each other in providing integrated, meaningful interpretation that benefits the entire region, including its communities, residents, and visitors. It provides mechanisms for addressing gaps in HRM-based heritage interpretation and supports community-led storytelling.

Importantly, the model provides maximum benefit to the Municipality and its constituents while minimizing risks. It also delineates short and long-term steps that HRM can take to immediately begin to improve its heritage system, while building up capacity and strategic partnerships for the future.

Benefits to HRM, Community Museums, and Constituents

In addition to the high level benefits already articulated above, the model will support the HRM, community museums, and constituents in a number of other ways:

- » Fulfills the goal of creating a Regional Museum Strategy as set out in the approved Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP).

- » Supports other municipal goals set out by the CHPP including “supporting cultural capacity” by strengthening support for community museums and “expressing culture through place” through physical representations of culture and history within communities.
- » Strengthens and supports the museums that are already cornerstones of many HRM communities.
- » Provides new opportunities for residents to share their stories and see themselves reflected in the story of the HRM.
- » Serves as a mechanism to support the development of an Interpretive Master Plan, as approved by HRM Council, thereby bolstering the overall impact of interpretation and storytelling in the HRM, and ultimately leading to a more complete and cohesive story of the HRM.

For more details on the recommended model and the rationale behind it, see Section 4.0 of this study.



WHY A STAND-ALONE MUSEUM IS NOT THE ANSWER

Based on careful analysis, this study **does not** recommend pursuing a the addition of a central municipal museum to the HRM landscape at this time, for the following key reasons:

- » There are more likely to be conflicting interpretive mandates and interpretive and operational overlaps between the central museum and other existing community museums
- » A central municipal museum may compete for visitors with community museums
- » A central municipal museum would be a potential drain on limited municipal resources given that the construction and operation of a new central municipal museum comes with major costs (both capital and operating)
- » It is unlikely that a central municipal museum could provide support or services to non-municipal museums, given that it will have its own mission and mandates to pursue
- » Where partnerships do occur they would be likely to be “one-offs,” not providing ongoing support to community museums

5.0 Next Steps

The study identifies the following highest priority items for implementing the recommended management model:

- » Undertake detailed action planning process that outlines the negotiation of new service-level agreements and detailed implementation plans with service delivery partners and recruitment and hiring of new HRM staff.
- » Develop the region-wide Interpretive Master Plan, as directed through the approved CHPP.
- » Develop and define a funding model.
- » Create a Regional Museum Advisory Working Group to guide the overall process.

For a detailed list of all tasks and actions see Section 7.0 of this study.



Glossary

CENTRAL MUNICIPAL MUSEUM

A city-owned bricks-and-mortar museum that tells a cohesive municipal story. Municipal staff are responsible for managing and operating the museum, and the municipality is responsible for providing capital and supplementary operating funding.

COMMUNITY MUSEUMS GRANT PROGRAM

The HRM Community Museums Grant Program supports registered non-profit and charitable organizations that operate a community museum as defined in Administrative Order 2018-010-ADM. The purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance for core museum operations and build the organizational capacity of eligible community museums located in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Culture is how we understand, express, and communicate our unique perspectives and histories, and the medium through which we celebrate the diversity of experiences and identities in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Culture includes the broad spectrum of arts and creative expression, community character and identity, culturally-held practices, languages, and traditions. Heritage is a critical component of culture—it's our cultural memory and how we can better understand the culture of our place and time through the lens of those cultural forms, traditions, arts, and expressions that preceded and informed it. Culture is the substance of our shared and unique identities, and the dynamic basis for defining who and what we are as a people.

FEE-FOR-SERVICE AGREEMENT

Agreements that are struck between the HRM and those partners that will assist with service delivery. Fee-for-service agreements can act as “force multipliers”; the main tool by which the Municipality will ensure that specific functions or services can be offered.

HUB AND SPOKE

This model is often used to describe how a central organization (the “hub”) coordinates operations and services in relation to other smaller organizations (the “spokes”) can be applied to a number of contexts. In a museum context, a municipality or organization may choose to provide a major museum and then have a series of smaller museums that fill remaining service delivery gaps or present different subjects. It can also be used to describe a museum management model where a centrally built museum is absent, but museum and interpretive efforts of a series of small museums are coordinated via a central body.

INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN

A tool to help organize, envision, plan, and implement an project that communicates thematic or interpretive content. Once developed and implemented, this “road map” can be used for the creation of engaging and educational experiences and can guide collections policies.

MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT

A municipal department is responsible for managing and operating city-owned museums. Museum employees are municipal staff, responsible for carrying out the day-to-day functions of the museums. Centralized staff may be responsible for providing system-wide support.

MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

A centralized support program that is housed under a municipal department which supports, but does not operate, independent community museums located within a municipality. Municipal staff are tasked with the job of facilitating and coordinating particular museum functions.

**MUSEUM**

Museums are democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artifacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people.

Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.

(International Council of Museums (ICOM), 2019)

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT MODEL

A museum management model is an organization, network, or operational structure that supports and sustains museums and heritage sites. The management body can focus on a city, region, or province. Some museum management models act as central governing authorities for city owned museums or provide financial support to independent community museums.

NON-PROFIT FEE-FOR-SERVICE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

An independent non-profit organization is under contract from the city to deliver support functions to museums throughout the municipality, which can include both independent community museums and municipally-owned museums.

REGIONAL MUSEUM ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

A strategic planning group that focuses on priority-setting and is a vehicle for continuous feedback from community museums. It is not a vehicle for the distribution of funds, nor is it a fundraising body — it is strictly a collaborative, advisory working group to keep communications open between the community museums and the municipality.

SEPARATELY-CONSTITUTED SUPPORT NETWORK

An alliance of institutions banded together to centralize support. The network maintains some relationship with the municipality, and can include municipally owned museums.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A study undertaken by an organization to identify its internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as its external opportunities and threats. An extensive SWOT analysis was undertaken in Phase 1 of the HRM Museum Strategy and updated for Phase 2.



Wikipedia: Tony Webster
<https://www.flickr.com/people/87296837@N00>

1.

Introduction

The Halifax Regional Municipality (the Municipality; HRM) has commissioned Phase 2 of a Regional Museum Strategy to guide the operation and implementation of heritage interpretation and programming within HRM for years to come.

Phase 1 of the strategy provided **a comprehensive and thorough review of the current state of all museums operating inside the HRM**, with the ultimate goal of understanding if a new civic museum would benefit the HRM or if a more decentralized regional management model would better meet the needs of the Municipality, community museums, and constituents.

Building on this work, this Phase 2 study evaluates and identifies the **best model for managing heritage within HRM** in collaboration with existing community museums. It considers and evaluates the case for a central municipal museum approach while exploring the pros and cons of a number of alternative museum management models — before making a final recommendation.



1.1 Project Purpose

The Challenge

The Halifax Regional Municipality is rich in heritage — and in federal, provincial, and community museums, archives, and heritage sites that individually tell different parts of the Municipality's broader, collective story. However, there is also no single, central mechanism in place that provides an overarching vision for how heritage is organized within HRM, what is needed to guide heritage policy and operations in a comprehensive way, or how gaps in the broader municipal story might be addressed — nor is there a physical location that can help present these missing municipal stories once they are identified.

While there is strong municipal leadership, foundational cultural and heritage policies, and robust community-level relationships and networks in place, ***a regional museum management model is required to ensure that all partners are working towards a shared vision for the future, while simultaneously meeting their individual needs and leveraging each others' strengths.***

The challenge for a new regional museum management model will be to address the needs of diverse parts of the HRM's heritage landscape, including:

- » **HRM:** Allowing the Municipality to fulfill its heritage mandate and operational priorities while being supported by its heritage partners and organizations — ultimately ensuring an efficient distribution of services amongst key partners.
- » **Community museums and heritage organizations:** Supporting these institutions in interpreting their own community stories and histories, while connecting them to a comprehensive municipal story.
- » **Citizens and visitors:** Providing these diverse groups with a holistic, integrated heritage experience across the HRM that is currently missing.

The Way Forward

This study is the second part of a phased Museum Strategy that will meet these challenges and address these gaps. When it is implemented, the completed Museum Strategy — and its vision for an HRM museum management model — will ensure that communities across the region have increased access to relevant content and programs that foster a deeper, more holistic connection to the region's diverse history and that sparks engagement within, and across, communities.

To accomplish this, this study ***identified and evaluated three potential models*** for moving forward:

- » A physical, central municipal museum
- » A department support program to support existing HRM museums
- » A combination of an enhanced municipal department with fee-for-service partnerships to undertake selected functions required for a healthy museum ecosystem

Ultimately, this study recommends the third model: a combination of an enhanced heritage department with fee-for-service partnerships. It also shows how and why a central municipal museum is not the right fit for the HRM at this time.

As outlined in subsequent sections, by combining an enhanced HRM department with fee-for-service partnerships, the recommended model best takes into account the strengths and weaknesses of the current HRM heritage landscape and identifies how the Municipality and the 30+ museums, archives, and heritage organizations in the region can support each other in providing integrated, meaningful interpretation that benefits the entire region, including its communities, residents, and visitors. This model provides maximum benefit to the municipality and its constituents while minimizing risks. It also delineates short and long-term steps that HRM can take to immediately begin to improve its heritage system, while building up capacity and strategic partnerships for the future.



1.2 Project Background

In October 2015, Halifax Regional Council requested an update on a plan to work with stakeholders, including the Board of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society, to determine the size and scope of a central municipal museum. Information was also requested on the next steps in the completion of this museum, including allocation of capital funding and how it related to the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan outlined in the January 28, 2014 motion and to the Cultural Spaces Plan.

Phase 1: Analyzing the Current Heritage Landscape in HRM

But, before any detailed planning could be realized the Municipality determined that it was necessary to establish a comprehensive overview of both HRM-owned and non HRM-owned museums and collections located within the Municipality, as well as an inventory and analysis of existing interpretive themes, visitor experiences, programming, and levels of municipal support.

In 2020, AldrichPears Associates and A.L Arbic Consulting developed Phase 1 of this Regional Strategy with the aim of establishing a baseline upon which any future strategic decisions could be based with regard to vision, scope, siting, and planning for a future central municipal museum model. The resulting Phase 1 plan did not present a definitive vision for what a future HRM museum model might resemble. Rather, it described the heritage interpretation landscape and capacity in HRM as it currently exists, assembled and analyzed this data, and provided recommendations for Phase 2 of the Strategy, including options for which models might be suitable for HRM, but would require further investigation.

The Phase 1 study included the following tasks:

- » Assessing all museums and their current offerings across HRM
- » Establishing a database system for museums within HRM
- » Identifying collections in HRM

- » Identifying region-wide gaps, challenges, and opportunities (SWOT analysis)
- » Identifying comparables
- » Identifying museum trends and good professional practices
- » Defining museum model options, including a central museum as well as a distributed approach
- » Recommending next steps and priorities for Phase 2 of the HRM Museum Strategy

For more details on the findings and conclusions of Phase 1 see Appendix A of this document. Additionally, Section 1.3 outlines some key shifts that occurred since the original Phase 1 study was undertaken.

Phase 2: A Model for the Future

In November 2022, HRM contracted AldrichPears Associates as project lead along with Lord Cultural Resources to complete Phase 2 of the Strategy, with the aim of identifying a museum system management model, whether that be in the form of a central, physical museum as initially envisioned by Council or as a more decentralized structure. Building on the foundation laid out by Phase 1, Phase 2 focuses on several key areas:

- » Collaboration with community museums and HRM staff to explore what an operational model might include
- » Evaluating and identifying the best operational model for providing interpretation across HRM
- » Leveraging and aligning municipal resources to strengthen and support the selected model
- » Supporting priorities identified in the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP) through this model
- » Laying the foundation for the development of an Interpretive Master Plan that will guide future interpretive offerings at a regional level



1.3 What's Changed Since Phase 1

Changes in the Broader Heritage Landscape

Since the start of Phase 1, the museum community at large has undergone seismic shifts. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted museum and heritage operations globally, raising questions about what museums and interpretation might look like in the future, as governments and populations searched for new ways of interacting professionally and socially. The year was also marked by unprecedented political tensions, protests, and increasingly visible impacts of climate change. Across Canada, museums were confronted with new questions about their responsibility in addressing these far-reaching issues and staying relevant to the communities they serve.

At the start of Phase 2, diverse HRM stakeholders were asked to pinpoint the major shifts they had seen in the regional museum landscape since Phase 1 had begun. The following is a summary of their responses:

- » While COVID-19 caused significant disruption to HRM museums, it also spurred innovation and built resilience.
- » Generally, there are greater considerations around broad partnerships and relationship building; HRM museums are expanding their communities of practice.
- » Through this period, relevance to their communities has continued to be critical to the success of HRM museums.
- » There is a stronger desire to understand the communities HRM museums serve; this has been coupled with an increase in equity, diversity, and inclusion programming along with more engagement with processes like Indigenous reconciliation.

- » Climate change has emerged as an important threat; it is a key consideration for the operation of HRM museums.
- » Strategic alignment with municipal goals is a critical factor for the success of HRM museums.

Changes within the HRM

In the context of these broader trends, the HRM's internal heritage strategies and operations have also shifted. These evolving structures, frameworks, plans, and partnerships provided a foundation from which to evaluate potential museum management models later in this study.

NEW MUNICIPAL TEAMS

The HRM supports heritage through a new team within its Parks and Recreation Business Unit. The Culture & Community Team relocated within the Parks & Recreation Business Unit in April 2023 to create synergies regarding the delivery of culture-related services and strategic planning projects. This Team serves a variety of functions including, but not limited to, providing heritage support (artifact collections, research & museums), supporting professional artists, and delivering a range of cultural planning services. Broadly, the Team aspires to facilitate important connections between cultural needs and HRM's various communities.

This Team will be invaluable in supporting the recommended museum management model outlined in this report.

NEW PRIORITIES

Approved in January 2024, HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP) is a strategic, action-oriented document that informs decisions regarding culture and heritage in the Municipality. It gives decision-makers, community partners, and residents a tool for setting priorities, and it directs how staff manage resources and projects to enhance the region's cultural and heritage vitality.



The Plan was created with the understanding that HRM's diverse communities should play an active role in implementing the Plan and crafting the stories and expressions of culture, arts, and heritage that are communicated throughout the region. To make this a reality, the Plan was shaped by a robust public engagement program, with input from diverse residents and stakeholders to identify needs and priorities. Much of this work focused on engaging underrepresented communities — such as Indigenous & Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, newcomer, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities — to ensure that they have opportunities to celebrate and share their unique stories.

The Plan outlines 44 strategic actions that HRM will address over the next decade. One of these actions involves developing a phased approach to create a Regional Museum Strategy which shapes HRM's role in museum operations and development. Thus, this current report is thus a vital component of the CHPP and HRM's overall cultural agenda.

At various points in this current study, linkages are made to the CHPP — highlighting alignments and specific ways that the museum management model can support the Plan's priorities moving into the future.

NEW FRAMEWORKS

One of the key actions outlined in the approved Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan is the development of an Interpretive Master Plan (IMP) to guide the Municipality's role and investment in commemorative and interpretive initiatives. The plan will develop a region-wide interpretive framework, organize stories, identify gaps where stories might be told, and define the ongoing use of resources and strategic collections, ideally in close collaboration with community museums.

The plan will also provide direction on:

- » Prioritizing potential public-facing and/or community-led interpretive projects
- » A program to remove items with a problematic legacy, which is inconsistent with the diversity and inclusion practices of the present day

- » Future collecting of artifacts that help round out gaps in the HRM story

As such, the IMP will be an integral tool for supporting the recommended museum management model. More details regarding the IMP as a key action can be found in Section 6.0.

LEVERAGING EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) and Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA) will be key partners in the implementation of the recommended museum management model. These not-for-profit organizations serve Nova Scotia museums and archives in areas of professional standards, education, preservation, collections management and advocacy. At a high level, this study outlines how these organizations can continue to perform these key services — allowing the HRM and other partner organizations to focus on other operational priorities and not duplicate efforts.

In addition, as a core part of the municipal landscape, the Halifax Municipal Archives will continue to support regional heritage operations through capacity building and support and potential co-location of HRM artifact and archives collections.

Further detail on the mechanisms that will allow an efficient sharing of services between partners is provided in Sections 4.0 and 5.0.



WHO'S WHO IN HRM HERITAGE

Culture and Community Team

The Culture and Community Team is the newest within the Strategic Planning & Design Division of the HRM's Parks & Recreation Business Unit. This Team relocated to this Division in April 2023 to create synergies regarding the delivery of culture-related services and strategic planning projects. It serves a variety of functions including, but not limited to, providing heritage support (artifact collections, research & museums), supporting professional artists, and delivering a range of cultural planning services. Broadly, the Team aspires to facilitate important connections between cultural needs and HRM's various communities.

Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM)

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) is a registered non-profit organization. Originally established in 1976 as the Federation of Museums, Heritage and Historical Societies, the name was changed to Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage in 1982. In 2007, to underscore the organization's refined focus on the province's museum sector, the organization assumed its current name—the Association of Nova Scotia Museums. Working in partnership with museums, communities and supporters, ANSM's mandate is to: support professional best practices in Nova Scotia's museums; educate Nova Scotians about the value of museums and Nova Scotian stories; act as a champion on behalf of museums in Nova Scotia; and engage in activities with provincial, national and international partners that further ANSM's aims and benefit the museum sector as a whole.

Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA)

The Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA) is a professional association for archives and archivists in Nova Scotia. The Council advocates for the proper preservation of archives and the importance of public access to these records through our member institutions. A number of dedicated professional archivists from member institutions occupy positions on the council's administrative committees. Through these committees, the CNSA endeavours to promote archival standards, procedures, and practices among its members and those institutions and organizations entrusted with the care of Nova Scotia's documentary heritage.

Halifax Municipal Archives (HMA)

The Halifax Municipal Archives (HMA) is the official repository for historical municipal government records and artifacts from HRM, the former Town/ City of Dartmouth, City of Halifax, Town of Bedford and County of Halifax. It also holds community records from the region, and a Reference Collection of published government documents and local history texts. Documents, maps, plans, photographs, objects, and audio-visual materials date from as early as the late-18th century but are primarily from 1900–2000. All relate to the history of the Halifax region, and especially the five municipal governments that were amalgamated into the Halifax Regional Municipality in 1996.



WHO'S WHO IN HRM HERITAGE, CONTINUED

Central Region Heritage Group (CHRG)s

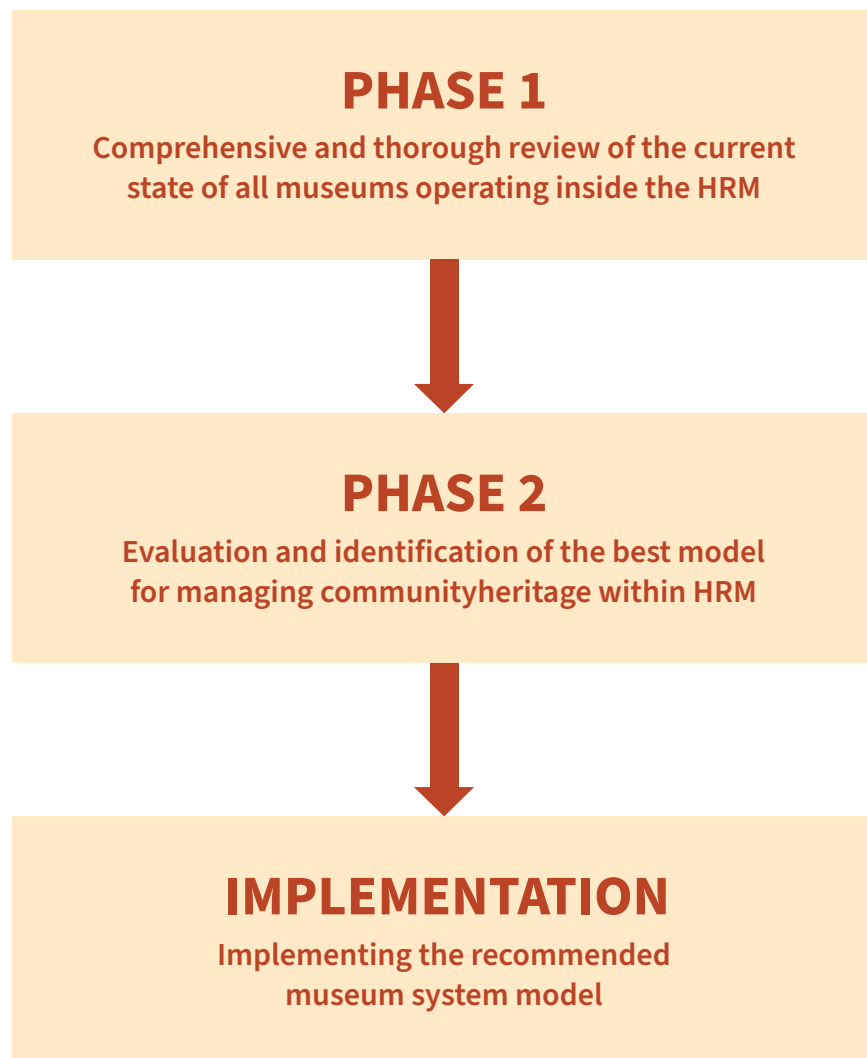
The Central Region Heritage Group (CHRG) is a gathering of representatives of the local museum community. Meetings are held 2-3 times per year and provide an opportunity for sites to share updates, and a chance for museum staff and volunteers to share ideas and obtain advice from other museum professionals. CHRG members are key stakeholders in the development of the HRM Regional Museum Strategy.

HRM-based Museums and Heritage Organizations

As presented in the Phase 1 report of the HRM Regional Museum Strategy study, a diverse range of museums, interpretive centre, farms, and historic sites operate within HRM. These include municipally-owned sites with managed agreements or lease agreements; provincially mandated or supported sites; federal and Canadian Armed Forces sites; community sites; institutional museums; and interpretive centres and heritage sites. A critical assessment of the museum landscape and current situation in HRM has informed the Phase II work to study and identify the best model for managing community heritage within HRM. The support of HRM-based museums and heritage organizations has been instrumental in developing this plan.



1.4 Process Overview



Phase 1

Work during Phase 1 included:

Assessing the museum “landscape” and current situation within HRM

The consultation work critically assessed the current situation and operational conditions for museums, collections and archives within HRM, including management, attendance, and funding factors. This included:

- » *Museums (based on an approved list):* The study identified and described museums, interpretive centres, farms, and historic sites within the region including HRM managed sites and community museums. Provincial and federal sites were included in the study, as well as private institutions and Department of National Defence sites. Libraries and archives were also addressed, as they relate to collections, heritage interpretation, and programming functions within HRM.
- » *Sites and Facilities:* The study described physical sites and facilities, buildings, and acreages for each museum in the study sample, including condition and use of space, accessibility, use/potential for new/augmented temporary displays, pop-up exhibits/events, and community programming.
- » *Interpretation:* The study surveyed where/how exhibits and programming are being used within HRM, including use of media and technologies. Stories, topics, and themes were also identified for individual sites, as were challenges and opportunities.

Establish database system for museums within HRM

A core task for the study was the creation of a live database that is used to house known data about sites within the study sample. This was developed using relevant HRM and ANSM criteria, which were already in use within the region. The database is based on a template system that can be maintained and updated periodically to assist museums in future, including relevant data needed to develop initiatives, projects with museums.



Identify region-wide gaps, challenges, and opportunities

The study assessed where perceived gaps, challenges, and opportunities exist within the HRM museum “landscape.” Specifically:

- » *Gaps and Critical Needs:* Based on collected data and research, the study examined and identified weaknesses and gaps (e.g., content, geography, and interpretive resources) that may be addressed in future projects that are part of the Museum Strategy.
- » *Relationships within the System:* The study identified how/where are sites currently coordinating, what systems are already in place and where there is cooperation, shared resources, and project initiatives that can be built upon.
- » *Collections:* As part of the collections assessment, the study identified challenges facing the municipal and site collections, particularly the absence of a dedicated Halifax collection compared to the large Dartmouth Heritage Museum collection.
- » *Collaborations/Partnerships:* The study identified current and possible future relationships between museum sites, HRM archives, provincial archives, HRM collections, and provincial (Nova Scotia Museum) collections. What might partnerships and projects look like?

Identify comparables and good professional practices

The study identified benchmarks for museum and archival projects, experiences, organization models, and costs by looking at new projects within HRM, across Atlantic Canada, as well as examples across the country. Additionally, it summarized examples of trends and good professional practices currently employed by museums and communities around the world to successfully deliver heritage interpretation within, and connect with, their communities.

- » *Museum Comparables:* The study identified recent project examples and associated benchmarks for museum and archival institutions, operations, and costs by looking at new projects within our region, as well as examples across Canada. This involved looking at both “stand-alone” and “systems-based” museum operational models.
- » *Museum Trends and Good Professional Practices:* This included an assessment of trends and good professional practices currently being employed by museums and communities nationally as well as internationally. Where is innovation happening in museum interpretation and programming, what kinds of products are being developed? A look at “pop-up” exhibit concepts, whereby temporary and non-permanent museum experiences are being used to communicate heritage to residents, was also explored.

Recommend next steps for Phase 2 of the HRM Museum Strategy

The final part of the study mapped out what Phase 2 of the Regional Museum Strategy should be, including short-term recommendations and longer-term major planning steps that will be taken to widen the foundation for an HRM Museum to succeed—specifically to provide a basis for decision-making going forward. This included long-term recommendations related to interpretive planning (specifically the development of an Interpretive Master Plan) and operational concept development. Proposed options/models for management of the HRM heritage ecosystem that will be considered as part of Phase 2 for the Museum Strategy were also included.

See the Appendix A of this document for more details on the process and outcomes of Phase 1.



Phase 2

Work during Phase 2 included:

Confirm project goals and approach to stakeholder consultation

This first step of Phase 2 allowed the team to confirm the goals for the phase, refine the approach to stakeholder engagement via a series of workshops, and identify key resources that could be used to push the project forward.

Conduct a comparable analysis

To better understand potential museum system management models, the team profiled examples of museum management across Canada. Five models were profiled for stakeholder review. The three most suitable models were assessed for the specific HRM context. The analysis included deskside research and interviews with key staff members at each management organization.

Conduct collections analysis

Members of the consultant team met with the staff of the HRM's Municipal Archives and the Dartmouth Heritage Museum which are responsible for the Municipality's archival and artifact collections. The meetings with both groups allowed the team to review Phase 1 findings and to refine them based upon progress made in both institutions since that time. The results are reflected in Section 6.0 of this document.

Engage stakeholders through workshops

Phase 2 included four stakeholder engagement workshops focusing on updating and revising the SWOT analysis of the HRM heritage landscape from Phase 1, identifying planning principles and priority functions to guide the selection of the preferred museum management model, and discussion of key considerations for implementation of the selected model moving forward. Participants included representatives from the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM), HRM Archives, Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA), and federal, provincial and community museums. These same representatives participated in all four workshops. A high level summary of each workshop is captured here:

Workshop 1 SWOT and Prioritization

This first in-person workshop focused on:

- » Reviewing recent museum trends to establish a common base of knowledge
- » Revisiting the SWOT analysis from Phase 1 to understand what had changed
- » Defining museum system management models and their functions
- » Identifying priority planning principles that the HRM museum system management model must address

Workshop 2 Model Appraisal

The second in-person workshop reconvened participants to review Workshop 1 outcomes and to evaluate potential models. The session focused on:

- » Reviewing potential museum system management models
- » Determining which model most closely addressed the planning principles identified in Workshop 1
- » Prioritization of the functions required by the HRM museum system management model



Workshop 3 High-Level Implementation

The third in-person workshop brought stakeholders together to review the results of Workshop 2 and confirm the preferred model for the HRM. The session focused on:

- » Reviewing functional priorities and potential models and identifying key assumptions for their operation
- » Defining pros and cons of each model and confirming the preferred option
- » Identifying potential functional partners and resource needs for the preferred model
- » Discussing how the model could enable fundraising

Workshop 4 Short-Term Implementation

In the final workshop the same participants came together virtually to explore practical operating assumptions of the preferred model and the resources needed to implement it. The session focused on:

- » Refining the operating assumptions for the preferred model
- » Defining implementation priorities
- » Discussing and refining resource needs moving forward

Draft Plan

Results from the workshops and ongoing conversations with HRM staff were synthesized into the current Draft Plan.

Final Plan

Staff feedback on the Draft Plan will be integrated into the Final Plan.

Implementation of the Museum Strategy

This study provides recommendations that will guide the implementation of the Museum Strategy — and its vision for an HRM museum management model. Recommendations and associated actions span both the short-term and long-term and provide a general plan for prioritization. See Section 7.0 for more details on these recommendations moving forward.



2. Project Foundations

The analysis of current museum trends, relevant museum management models, and the key functions of these models in this section provides context for understanding the findings and conclusions outlined in the subsequent sections. This analysis forms the foundation of the roadmap for integrated heritage delivery across the HRM.

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late Dr Naomi Jackson Groves



2.1 Museum Trends

Community Museum Trends

There are a number of trends in the community museum sector that are relevant to the HRM context, based on research for this and other museum-related projects, and our judgement and experience in the field.

Greater connection to community

Community museums are increasingly serving as sites of gathering, fostering a strong sense of community and serving as platforms for debate. They are evolving to be more responsive to community needs and current events, giving the communities a greater sense of ownership and belonging. Moreover, museums are transcending their traditional role and serving as social connectors, bringing the communities they serve together. One example of this is the Galt Museum & Archives, which responded to the community's interest in language preservation by offering free virtual Blackfoot Language Classes.

Representative collections and exhibitions

Community museums are expanding their collections and exhibitions to be more diverse and inclusive, particularly of under-represented groups. This can come in the form of new exhibition mandates that fill interpretive gaps in existing museums, or a more holistic transformation, such as the Sheffield Park Museum which shifted in name to the Sheffield Park Black History & Cultural Museum and began telling a more comprehensive multicultural story of the region.

Supporting historically underrepresented communities

Museums are increasingly dedicating efforts to support and connect with historically underrepresented communities. A specific focus has been made on providing Indigenous communities opportunities to tell their own stories in their own voices. An example of this is the FIRE grant program by Edmonton Heritage Council, which provides funding assistance to Indigenous individuals and organizations. Additionally, museums are diversifying their staff and boards to further enhance inclusivity.

Contemporary collecting and interpretation

A new emphasis on late 20th and early 21st century collecting is emerging among community museums, enabling the interpretation of recent history and current events. By doing so, museums are enhancing their relevance and fostering personal connections with visitors. Community museums are also embracing contemporary approaches to interpretation through innovative exhibition models, which can include pop-up installations, event-based experiences, and collaboration with other community organizations around socially relevant topics. At the outset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Woodstock Museum asked community members to share first person accounts, artwork, and photographs about their experience, which culminated in a 2023 exhibit, *Covid Stories*.

Caring and kindness initiatives

Community museums are increasingly acting as custodians of care within their communities, paying specific attention to vulnerable and marginalized people. These initiatives manifest through the development of spaces dedicated to healing, and programming that proactively responds to social events (such as incidents of hate and intolerance) by drawing upon lessons from history. For example, the Japanese American National History Museum hosted a "Love Our Communities" rally to support the Asian-American community in the face of rising anti-Asian violence.



Partnership development

Developing new opportunities to share resources and build connections is critical for community museums. These partnerships take many forms, including collaboration with community organizations that share similar objectives. By building on each other's strengths, these collaborations provide access to new audiences and create new ways of seeing and understanding. Interdisciplinary connections can enhance the impact and reach of community museums. In 2021, the Museum of North Vancouver (MONOVA) partnered with the North Shore Culture Compass to create an interactive tour of historic sites in the neighbourhood, allowing audiences to experience storytelling outside the museum's physical location.

Municipal Museum Trends

In addition to trends in community museums, new practices in Municipal Museum Management are important contexts to understand.

Developing a comprehensive regional story

Telling the story of a region through a cohesive interpretive plan is important for successful museum system management. Aligning many heritage and cultural organizations, such as archives, museums, and historic sites, in telling a comprehensive regional story builds a unified narrative. Hamilton Civic Museum is at the forefront of this practice, as it creates exhibitions that fill gaps in existing museum interpretation and strengthens partnerships with heritage and civic organizations.

City as museum

This innovative approach expands the concept of museum beyond traditional bricks-and-mortar spaces to include pop-up exhibitions, travelling exhibitions, and digital spaces as part of a distributed museum model. Cities themselves become museums, incorporating streetscapes, parks, theatres, neighbourhoods, modern and heritage buildings and public spaces into the telling of a comprehensive regional story. Edmonton has explicitly embraced this approach with its City As Museum Project, which distributes the interpretive experience throughout the city with pop-ups, digital content, and in-person tours like the Float Yer Boat historic river canoe tour.

Integrated / coordinated operations

This trend focuses on centralizing key operational aspects of museum management such as marketing, support services, collection management and storage. Integrating operations, supported by shared central staff, can improve efficiency and consistency. One of the most significant future goals of Halton Heritage Services is the creation of a centralized conservation facility to provide collections management and exhibition development support to community museums in the region.

Capacity building and professionalization

Municipal museum systems are increasingly focusing on capacity building across the system through providing training and resources in the form of centrally produced resources, classes and workshops, or certification programs. Associations frequently play a key part in this effort, as is the case for the Museums Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, which provides workshops and certification programs to members.



Strategic alignment with municipal goals

Aligning museum system management with municipal goals broadens funding opportunities and encourages collaboration between departments. This strategic alignment provides the museum system management body with a clear mandate and allows them to leverage other municipal plans and opportunities. Systems managers like Edmonton Heritage Council and Hamilton Civic Museum explicitly reference goals and objectives in city documents that their work helps to achieve.

Overall, our study of trends highlighted that community museums are rethinking their roles to better meet the changing needs of their audiences by fully engaging with their communities. At the same time, municipalities are changing their approach to museum management to align with municipal priorities, enhance visitor experience, and generally foster a stronger system.



2.2 Museum Management Models

Overview

A museum management model is an organization, network, or operational structure that supports and sustains museums and heritage sites. The management body can focus on a city, region, or province. Some museum system managers act as central governing authorities for city owned museums or provide financial support to independent community museums. Others are city-funded nonprofits that provide services to a member network of independent organizations. Different museum management models include:

Central Municipal Museums

A city-owned bricks-and-mortar museum that tells a cohesive municipal story. Municipal staff are responsible for managing and operating the museum, and the municipality is responsible for providing capital and supplementary operating funding.

Implications for HRM: Although central municipal museums can tell a cohesive story of a municipality or region, they usually do not take on a management role for unaffiliated community museums. This would leave a high level gap for community museums that would need to remain independent in the HRM context.

Municipal department

A municipal department is responsible for managing and operating city-owned museums. Museum employees are municipal staff, responsible for carrying out the day-to-day functions of the museums. Centralized staff may be responsible for providing system-wide support.

Implications for HRM: Currently, HRM only owns one museum (Dartmouth Heritage Museum). A Municipal Department system management model would require HRM assuming control of other community museums within the system, which would be costly.

Municipal department support program

A centralized support program that is housed under a municipal department which supports, but does not operate, independent community museums located within a municipality. Municipal staff are tasked with the job of facilitating and coordinating particular museum functions.

Implications for HRM: This model is most closely aligned with existing operating procedures, where centralized municipal staff oversee the museum system. Implementing this model would require an expanded staff component more explicitly tasked with the job of facilitating and coordinating museum functions.

Central municipal commission

A government-appointed body that oversees support for independent community museums, on behalf of a municipal government.

Implications for HRM: A central municipal commission would require additional resources from HRM in order to provide support to community museums.

Non-profit fee for service management body

An independent non-profit organization is under contract from the city to deliver support functions to museums throughout the municipality, which can include both independent community museums and municipally-owned museums.

Implications for HRM: There is no currently existing independent non-profit that could carry out this support role, and thus would require HRM to foster the creation of a new organization.



Separately constituted support network/ municipal partner

An alliance of institutions banded together to centralize support. The network maintains some relationship with the municipality, and can include municipally owned museums.

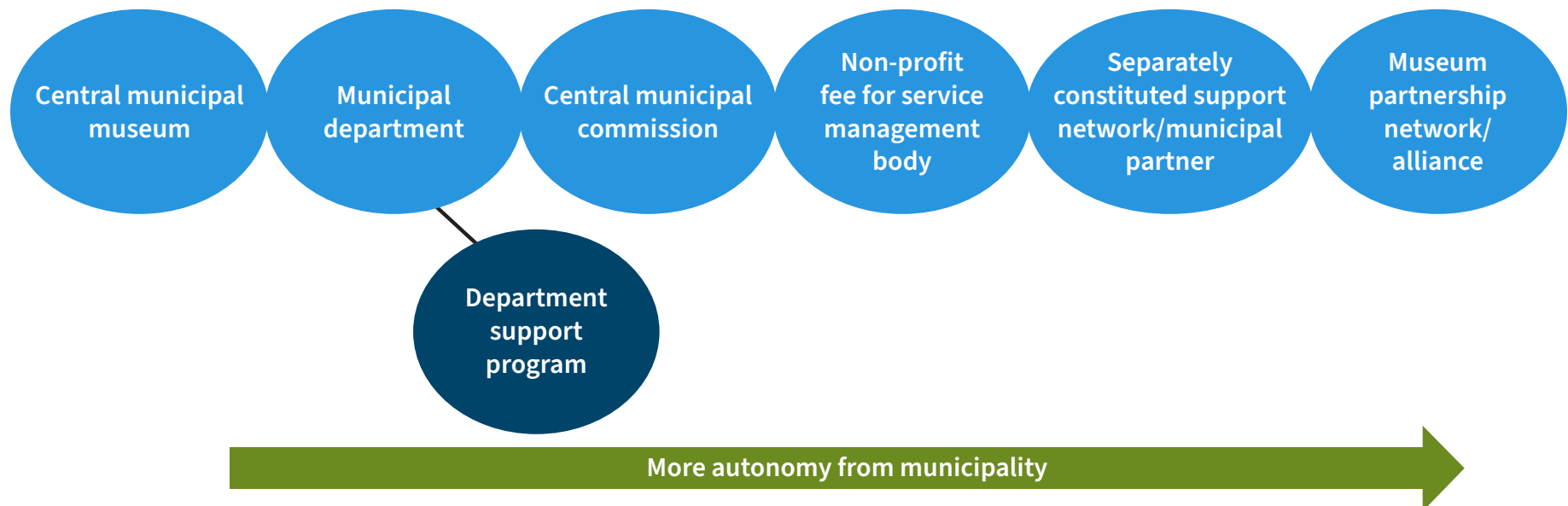
Implications for HRM: This system would allow resource sharing between the many existing community museums within the HRM, but does not provide a mechanism for telling a cohesive story of HRM.

Museum partnership network/ alliance

A coalition of independent museums coming together for common cause that are wholly independent of a municipality.

Implications for HRM: A museum partnership network requires minimal municipal resources, but does not provide a mechanism for telling a cohesive story of HRM.

The different museum system management models are largely defined by their autonomy from government, as illustrated in the chart below.





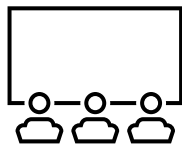
2.3 Overview of Functions

Museum management models carry out a wide range of functions to support regional community museums and provide meaningful cultural experiences to the public they serve. A healthy museum system will need to include all the following functions in some form or another:



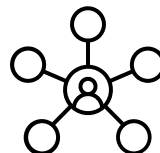
Financial support/ Fundraising

A mechanism to supplement community museum revenues with other monies, through operating or program-specific support.



Interpretation and programming

The creation and dissemination of interpretive content, which is then distributed throughout the system (either in network museums or in other public spaces).



Governance/ system-wide strategic planning *

Providing guidance on the future goals and priorities of the system through the creation and implementation of system-wide strategic plans.



Facility management and maintenance

Providing general site maintenance and upkeep services to museums within the system.



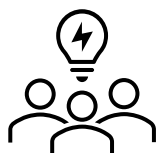
Collection management services

Support for the management and care for objects within community museum collections, through the provision of physical resources (collection management tools) and digital resources (shared management systems or databases).



Operational support/ marketing & promotion

The provision of operating services to museums within the system, especially the creation of joint marketing campaigns designed to promote the system.



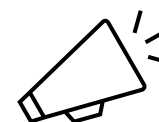
Professionalization/ capacity building

Programs for training and skill development for community museum staff.



Research resources and services

Research into system-wide matters, such as audience, system impact, and subject matter research.



Advocacy/ amplification

Advocating for community museums to municipal government, the press, and the community at large, including amplifying messaging from museums within the system.

**Note:* This function was developed further during the process and was split into two separate functions (Governance; and System-wide strategic planning)

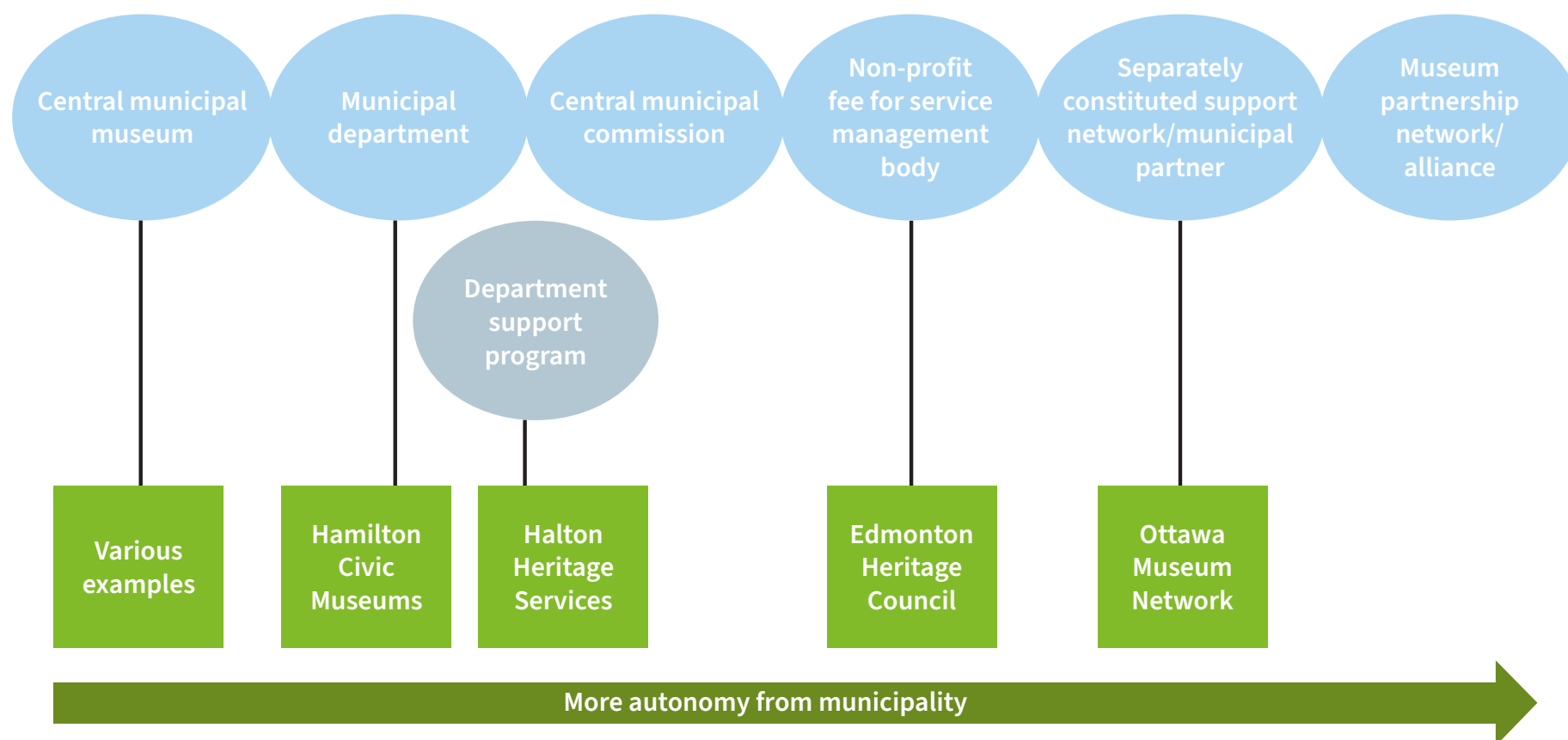


It is also important to realize that museum management models may not carry out these functions with equal emphasis. Primary functions are those that a model devotes a larger portion of resources to carrying out, while secondary functions are less of a focus. Understanding these functions was critical to identifying the needs of community museums and how HRM can meet those needs, and the descriptions of the functions evolved throughout the project to incorporate the unique needs of the HRM ecosystem.

2.4 Comparables Study

To better understand potential museum management models and the functions they carry out, the consultants profiled five examples across Canada. Our study included both deskside research and interviews with key staff members at each management organization. Below is a brief summary of the programs studied, with full profiles included in Appendix B.

Comparables are charted in the museum management diagram below:





Management Model Profiles

Central Municipal Museum

Various examples of stand-alone institutions

Central municipal museums are one way municipalities tell a cohesive story about their history, culture, and community, and thus are relevant to this study. Our team reviewed how municipal museums typically function, commonalities between them, and how they interact with existing community museums. Central municipal museums can take multiple forms, including:

- » A single central municipal museum, as seen in St. Catharines, Thunder Bay, Vancouver, Swift Current, Moncton, and others. This is the most common form of municipal museum
- » A decentralized heritage house museum network, as found in Toronto and Hamilton, where a series of municipality owned and operated museums tell the municipal story
- » A central museum with a satellite museum network. This form is rare, with an example coming from Waterloo which includes Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum, Doon Heritage Village, McDougall Cottage Historic Site and Schneider Haus National Historic Site plus a collections centre.

They also share the following common characteristics:

- » Organized under relevant municipal department and staff are municipal employees
- » Municipalities supply an average of 60%–70% (and sometimes more) of annual operating requirements. For example, the Moncton Museum cited in HRM Museum Strategy in Phase 1 receives 80% of its \$1 million annual operating budget from the municipality directly.
- » Earned revenue levels tend to be lower than overall museum averages (+ or – 20% as opposed to about 30% for all museums, as reported in the 2021 Survey of Canadian Heritage Institutions)

Implications for HRM:

- » Although central municipal museums can tell a cohesive story of a municipality or region, they typically have no management role as it relates to unaffiliated community museums.
- » Where they do manage museum systems (as in the case of Hamilton), the other museums in the system are similarly municipally owned and operated.
- » This is not the case in HRM, where the vast majority of community museums are independent charitable organizations. There are over 30 community, provincial, and federal museums that operate in HRM.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schneider_Haus#/media/File:Joseph_Schneider_Haus_NHS.jpg



Municipal Department

Hamilton Civic Museums

Hamilton Civic Museums is a network of 9 museums owned and operated by the Heritage Resource Management Section of the city. The program's primary function is the operations and management of the museums under the HCM umbrella, but Heritage Resource Management does provide some centralized functions and resources for those museums, particularly capacity building and programming.

As the museums under the HCM umbrella are all owned and operated by the municipality, all funding comes from the city's general fund.

Implications for HRM:

- » Hamilton's plans for a central municipal museum are currently on hold because of the required construction and operation costs. HCM has turned to a distributed exhibition and interpretation strategy to ensure a holistic story of Hamilton is being told.

HCM has greater ability to provide resources and align efforts between museums as they are all municipally owned.



By Jdstrung - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21572123>

Municipal Department Support Program

Halton Heritage Services

Halton Heritage Services (HHS) is a program area within the Halton Regional Government responsible for the operation, management, and provision of heritage services. The program grew out of a project re-imagining the Halton Region Museum as a community museum support provider and manager of the region's collections.

HHS's core functions are capacity building, collection management, and programming. It is planning the construction of a new Heritage Center with resources for exhibition preparation and collection management that community museums will also have access to.

As a municipal department, all of HHS's service budget of approximately \$950,000 comes directly from Halton Region.

Implications for HRM:

- » HHS moved away from a central regional museum because of high costs, low visitation, and insufficient support for community museums.

HHS has aligned support for community museums with its mandate to manage the region's collection by including resources to serve both in the planned heritage centre.



Halton Region Heritage Services



Non-Profit Fee-for-Service

Edmonton Heritage Council

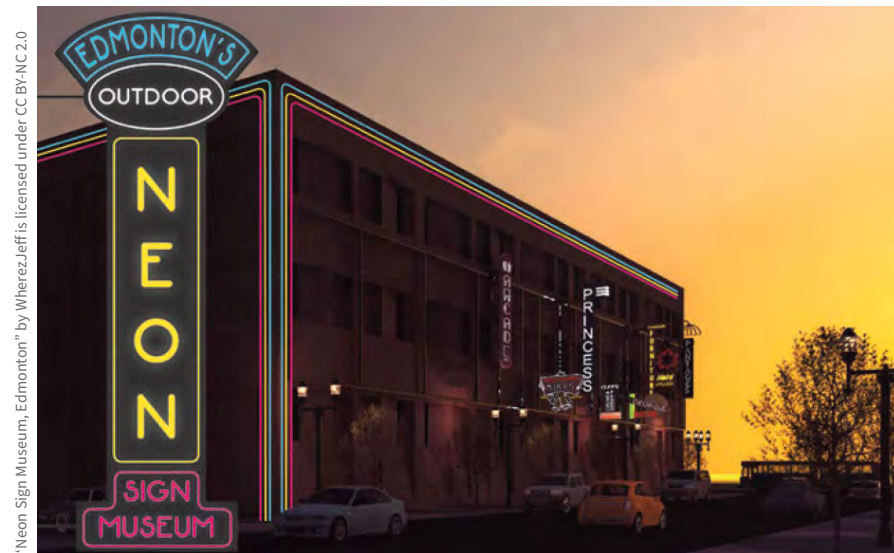
The Edmonton Heritage Council is a non-profit organization that aims to “connect people to the stories of our city by helping Edmontonians research, preserve, interpret, and advocate for our heritage” through its support for the 20+ independent museums throughout the Edmonton region. EHC has an explicit mandate to align its activities with Edmonton’s arts and heritage plan, which is demonstrated and communicated through direct links to the plan in their annual reporting.

EHC’s core functions are fund distribution, capacity building, and programming. Fund distribution has historically been EHC’s main function, and main way of supporting community museums, but recently programming has been of increasing importance as the city aims to tell a cohesive story of Edmonton without incurring the cost and operational burden of creating a municipal museum. EHC had explored the possibility of building and operating a new city museum, but rejected the idea for the foreseeable future due to the costs involved, and has therefore chosen to support storytelling through other means.

EHC’s 2023 budget of \$2.1 million comes primarily from the City of Edmonton (through grants and the city’s general fund). This budget is largely distributed to the community museums through EHC’s granting program.

Implications for HRM:

- » EHC has precisely aligned its programs and services with municipal goals, thus justifying funding.
- » EHC has not pursued a central museum because costs were beyond that which the municipality was prepared to support.
- » The model itself, which is an independent organization contracted by the city to manage the heritage sector, is a potential option for HRM and will be considered later in this report.



“Neon Sign Museum, Edmonton” by WherezJeff is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0



Separately-Constituted Support Network

The Ottawa Museum Network

The Ottawa Museum Network (OMN) is an independent non-profit membership network providing services to 11 member museums (which includes both independent community museums and City of Ottawa owned museums). OMN is a piece of a larger system, that includes a network of city of Ottawa owned and operated museums, a number of independent community museums that are financially supported by the city of Ottawa, and which also includes the OMN as a way of supplementing support to both city-owned and independent community museums.

OMN's primary functions are marketing and promotion, capacity building, and advocacy. Marketing and promotion is the largest of these functions.

OMN's annual budget of approximately \$380,000 comes primarily from the city, with the rest supplied by the provincial government. Funds are used to carry out support functions, with a small portion being distributed through a limited grant funding program.

Implications for HRM:

- » The entire system of museum support in Ottawa is orchestrated by the city.
- » OMN exists within a larger system of support for community museums provided by the city of Ottawa, which includes direct ownership of select museums.



Comparable Models within HRM

Within HRM, there are existing operating models which could serve as a guide for a potential museum management model. Although these examples have different areas of focus and mandates, they provide valuable examples of the types of operating structures and agreements that are possible.

HRM Parks and Recreation: Recreation Programming Division

The Recreation Programming Division is committed to supporting Council priorities through the delivery of a wide variety of structured and unstructured programming including aquatic services, indoor/outdoor recreation, youth at-risk programs, community development, volunteer services, inclusion and accessibility. The division has over 50 full time staff.

- » Provides support to over 50 recreation and community centres, almost all of which are operated via a community and not-for-profit board.
- » Manages HRM website to coordinate all recreation bookings; provides accessible information on all recreation facilities; leads promotion of recreational activities; works with other HRM Business Units on delivery of capital and operational projects.
- » The division has over 50 full time staff. Positions include operational staff such as area coordinators and community developers who work directly in community and management/administrative who provide leadership and financial stewardship for the division.
- » Recreation Program Delivery: Fosters healthy lifestyles, vibrant communities, and a sustainable environment through encouraging lifelong participation in recreation activities. People of all ages and stages of life can begin and continue to participate through structured programming or spontaneous free play activities.
- » Volunteer and Nonprofit Support: Celebrates and supports the work of volunteers, including enhancing capacity in community boards for the provision of alternate service delivery for the Halifax Regional Municipality.



HUB & SPOKE MODEL

Hub and Spoke Models are often used to describe how an organization coordinates operations and/or delivers services. HRM's Parks & Recreation Business Unit has used the Hub & Spoke Model as a way of describing their approach to delivering recreation services within local communities. HRM aims to organize recreation services into groups or clusters, within a defined area, so residents gain access to a wider variety of services and programming than can be accommodated within a single facility. In practice, this Hub & Spoke Model example focuses on providing a major recreation facility (i.e., Hub) - or in some cases several major facilities - that is surrounded by a series of smaller recreation assets like community centres, community halls, sports fields, playgrounds, etc. (i.e., Spokes). This approach is especially useful in communities that are identified as growth centres.

The Hub and Spoke Model can also be used within the context of museums. A municipality or organization can choose to provide a major museum and then have a series of smaller museums that fill remaining service delivery gaps or present different subjects. Distributing a series of satellite (or spoke) museums is one way that a municipality can present their complete story / history within various buildings or communities.

This model could also be used to describe museum operations from a high-level point of view where a centrally built museum is absent, but museum and interpretive efforts are coordinated. For example, in this type of a scenario, the "Hub" of a museum model could be a central body that sets an interpretive mandate or principles, provides support and advisory services, and provides funding opportunities to a series of small museums that collectively tell a more robust history of a defined area. The potential use and design of a Hub and Spoke Model can vary greatly depending on the community in question, contextual factors, and operational preferences.

Key Findings from Comparable Research

- » Municipal system managers have found success by aligning with overall municipal goals, as seen in Edmonton and Hamilton. Edmonton Heritage Council cites a clear alignment of their activities with the city's arts and heritage plan as a factor for a recent budget increase received from the city of Edmonton.
- » Municipalities are moving away from singular brick-and-mortar structures to tell a municipal story and instead relying on aligning interpretive approaches at various museums and utilizing pop-up experiences that meet audiences where they are. This is demonstrated by Halton's transition from a Regional Museum to a department support program, Hamilton's Virtual Exhibition projects, and Edmonton Heritage Council's City as Museum project.
- » When municipalities without a city-owned museum system aim to provide services and support to community museums within their jurisdiction (as in Halton Hills), it is usually provided by municipal departments or municipally funded non-profit organizations (as is the case with Edmonton Heritage Council). It would be unusual (and costly) for a municipality to assume ownership of independent community museums, but municipalities still find a way to support existing assets.
- » Municipalities are specifically working to support and tell the stories of historically marginalized populations, through grant programs and interpretive planning initiatives. Efforts were underway in all comparable organizations studied and range from relationship building with Indigenous groups in Halton Hills, *Stories of Migration and Belonging* virtual exhibition in Hamilton, and Edmonton Heritage Council's FIRE Granting program for indigenous artists.
- » Three of the models studied provide direct funding to community museums — two through a granting program (Edmonton Heritage Council and Ottawa Museum Network) and one through direct support for city-owned museums (Hamilton). The monies for these programs come directly from the Municipality.



Tourism Nova Scotia

3.

Findings and Conclusions

This section distills key findings and conclusions from stakeholder engagement workshops and subsequent research and discussion with HRM staff.



3.1 SWOT Analysis

In Workshop 1, stakeholders (which included representatives from community museums, provincial museums, CNSA, and ANSM) reviewed the SWOT analysis completed in Phase 1 of the project to confirm the results and identify any changes that may impact the management model. To facilitate a robust discussion, strengths and opportunities were discussed together, as were weaknesses and threats.

Overall, participants reported that many of the previously described strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats continue to exist. They also reflected on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the new challenges and opportunities it uncovered in the sector. An important change in situation for many of the participants was an increased need for diversity in audience, in partnerships, and in community museum storytelling. This need was reflected across almost every aspect of the museum system, from operations to interpretation. An emerging threat in multiple categories was the impact of climate change — through impact on facilities, on planning, and on budget through unexpected costs. Defragmentation, or the need to create a cohesive system that collaborates together and presents a complete story of the HRM, was an emerging priority in discussions.

Although these changes emerged, participants reaffirmed that while there are challenges facing the system, especially related to funding and relevance, there are also many opportunities to share new and exciting stories and forge new connections with communities.





3.2 Planning Principles

In Workshop 1, stakeholders from community museums and museum-supporting organizations were also asked to complete an exercise identifying priorities for the future museum system management. Specifically, they were asked to describe:

- » What is the municipality's ideal role in the future management model?
- » What things must the museum system management model absolutely accomplish?
- » What should we be wary of?
- » What should the museum management model not do?

From the responses to these questions, several planning principles were developed, defining what the HRM museum system management model must do.

THE HRM MUSEUM SYSTEM MANAGEMENT MODEL MUST:

- **Preserve community museum independence**, allowing organizations to operate without additional administrative burden or mandates on collecting and interpretation from a centralized body.
- **Support HRM's heritage and cultural delivery needs** by preserving and sharing a cohesive story of Halifax that connects and represents HRM residents.
- **Lead and support** the ongoing efforts of community museums, while respecting their independence; **uphold professional standards and assist museums in their achievement** through financial support, capacity building, and professional development.
- **Connect, convene and/or facilitate partnerships and collaborations** between museum workers, volunteers, and other sectors and organizations; **convene communities of practice** that include current museum, heritage, and archives workers.
- **Apply fairness principle: ensure equity in support roles** by not centralizing support among already well-resourced museums and spreading resources across all community museums.
- **Avoid interpretive overlap and gaps** that currently occur within the system.
- **Address the defragmentation problem** where community museums are disconnected, lacking resources, and the story of HRM is disjointed **through a system/ framework concept** that provides centralized access to existing resources and aligns interpretive efforts to fill in gaps.
- **Manage funding mechanisms and distribution methods.**



3.3 Assumptions

Also during Workshop 1, a list of assumptions about the HRM museum management model was made after discussion with HRM staff, community museum representatives, and partner organizations.

- » The HRM Culture and Community Team, Parks and Recreation will have staffing and capacity increase. This could range from a modest staffing increase to a larger increase, depending on model requirements.
- » Dartmouth Heritage Society's museums and collections will be considered as a single unit (one museum within the system).
- » Model will leverage existing HRM departments and activities (planning knowledge, building and site maintenance, and other initiatives).
- » Model will leverage (but not overlap with) existing non-profit museum management organizations and resources.
- » Monies provided for the HRM interim Community Museums Grant Program will be sustained and continually assessed.
- » Municipal takeover/ ownership of community museums by HRM is unlikely.
- » Model will rely on partnership with local communities.

These assumptions, along with input gathered in workshops, were used to inform model development and selection.

3.4 Priority Functions

In Workshop 2, the same participants were asked to identify which of the museum management functions were the best match with community needs, and if there were any functions the management model should not pursue. Three functions were identified as clear priorities for the museum system management body to pursue:



Financial support/
Fundraising



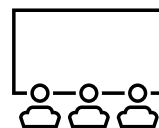
Operational support/
marketing & promotion



Facility management
& maintenance

Later in the process, governance/advisory and planning was added as a priority function as well.

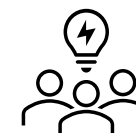
As these already exist in some form in HRM, participants identified the following functions as secondary to the core operations of the museum management model, but nevertheless important:



Interpretation and
programming



Collection
management



Capacity-building

Further discussions revealed opportunities to leverage and align with other municipal and provincial assets to carry out certain functions. For example, Discover Halifax already supports marketing and promotion, and could take on an expanded role. CNSA and ANSM currently offer professional development programs, which could again be expanded.



3.5 Pros and Cons of Potential Models

Workshop 2 participants were also asked to evaluate the potential museum management models according to their alignment with the previously identified planning principles. Our evaluation exercise focused on five potential models that were most realistic for HRM's current situation: a central municipal museum, a municipal department/ central museum network, a department support program, a non-profit fee for service management body, and a separately constituted network.

- » **Central Municipal Museum:** A city-owned bricks-and-mortar museum that tells a cohesive municipal story. Municipal staff are responsible for managing and operating the museum, and the municipality is responsible for providing capital and supplementary operating funding.
- » **Municipal Department/ Central Museum Network:** A centralized support program that is responsible for both managing and operating city-owned museums and supporting independent community museums located within a municipality. Municipal staff are tasked with the job of facilitating and coordinating particular museum functions.
- » **Department Support Program:** A centralized support program that is housed under a municipal department which supports, but does not operate, independent community museums.
- » **Non-profit Fee for service management body:** An independent non-profit organization that is contracted by the municipality to support museums throughout the municipality.
- » **Separately constituted network:** An alliance of museums banded together to centralize support, with some relationship to the municipality.

Ultimately, three models were selected as best positioned to carry out the planning principles:

CENTRAL MUNICIPAL MUSEUM

DEPARTMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

ENHANCED HRM DEPARTMENT AND
FEE-FOR-SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS

The next section identifies the recommended model that emerged and describes how it was arrived at.



4.

Recommended Management Model

This section recommends a model for implementation based on the workshop and consultation process and on the assessment of needs in HRM and the particular municipal context. The analysis found that an **enhanced HRM department and fee-for-service partnerships** would be most able to carry out the priority functions as identified by the community museum participants, could best take advantage of existing resources and partnerships within the ecosystem, and is most likely to be implemented based on current conditions.



4.1 Overview

Statement of Intent

The below statement of intent outlines the vision and purpose of the management model.

“With a program of financial support and professional development, HRM works with communities and partner organizations to tell the HRM story through local and specialized museums, temporary exhibitions and digital media.”

This statement was drafted by the consultant team, taking into account feedback from stakeholders gathered throughout the process. It serves to clarify the intent of the model and inspire further action, but may be altered or refined during the implementation process.

Summary of Recommended Model

Section 3.0 reviewed a short list of three models drawn from the longer list. The recommended model is an **enhanced HRM department in partnership with fee-for-service/independent non-profit organization(s)** to provide functions that are in demand but inappropriate for a municipal department, or those that already exist and can be better leveraged or enhanced.

While the recommended model has been specifically designed for the HRM context and includes unique elements, there are similarities to the models that have been implemented in Halton Hills, where a municipal department exists to serve local community museum needs, as well as Edmonton, where separate non-profit organizations deliver heritage and arts system management services and distribute funds under contract to the City. The recommended model’s involvement of the community museums themselves in an advisory committee echoes the Ottawa Museum Network, so there are elements of similarity there as well.

HRM Enhanced Municipal Heritage Department

Staff within the existing municipal department already have expertise, familiarity with the system and credibility in the museum community. While now limited in capacity, an enhanced department with additional staff and resources would be ideally positioned to carry out currently absent system-wide management functions. The primary functions of the department would be as follows: **governance** and **high-level strategic planning** supported by direction and advice from a Regional Museum Advisory Working Group; providing **facility management and maintenance** services to museums within the system by leveraging skills and resources within other HRM divisions; and **collections management** for the municipal collection and collection of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.



Secondary functions of the department would include supporting **professionalization and capacity building** activities offered by fee-for-service organizations. Organizations will be engaged through service-level agreements. Another secondary function is to conduct **research** into system-wide matters or select subject-matter research to address interpretive gaps. The enhanced department will do **interpretive planning** to fill in gaps in the overall story of Halifax and support some selective delivery. The department's work will avoid overlaps with community-level interpretation.

Municipal departments cannot engage in fundraising, but, with partners, they may advise community museums on available funding programs at the provincial and federal levels and provide expertise within the bounds of what is appropriate for municipal staff. Partners may be able to provide additional advice and capacity building in this area. The goal is to facilitate community museums' own fundraising efforts within their own communities.

Regional Museum Advisory Working Group

The Regional Museum Advisory Working Group would be a strategic planning group that focuses on priority-setting for the museum management body that has been recommended via this process. This advisory working group will also provide **direction to the municipal department** to inform strategic planning for the system. The advisory working group would be composed of community museum representatives as well as representatives from key service delivery partners, which drives consensus-building via participation and engagement. The advisory working group also works to sustain continuous, open communications between community museums and the municipality.

Fee-For-Service/NFP Organizations

As noted, some required functions already exist within HRM but need enhancement. Here, selected existing fee-for-service/independent non-profit organizations come into play. Functions such as **collections management, marketing and promotion, capacity building, research, and advocacy** for community museums are all areas in which existing organizations already fulfill some of these services. Those roles can be broadened and improved to better meet needs through fee-for-service agreements. In some cases, functions that are not currently being met (marketing, for example) may be undertaken by an existing organization in partnership with the municipality. In these cases, the enhanced HRM department would use service-level agreements as the mechanism for engagement.

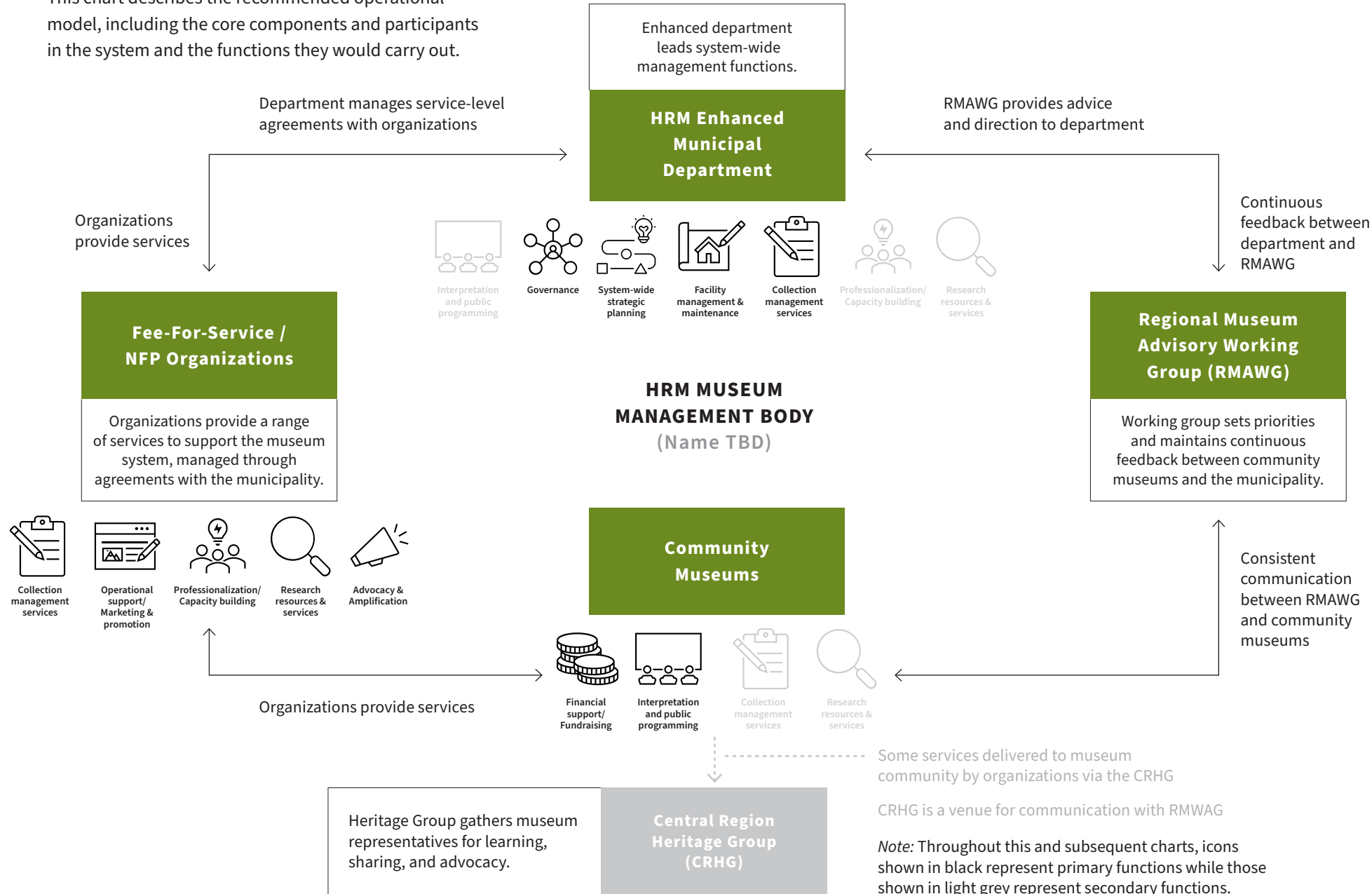
Community Museums

The model supports and enhances community museums while preserving their independence. Community museums will maintain the primary function of delivering their own unique **interpretation and public programming and fundraising** within their communities. Additionally, they will manage their own **collections** and do **research**. Community museums will have additional facilitative support from the enhanced HRM department and fee-for-service organizations for these functions.

The **Central Region Heritage Group (CHRG)** will continue to exist as a learning and sharing platform in which all community museum board members, staff and volunteers can participate. CHRG is part of ANSM's professional development function and is the vehicle as well for implementation of ANSM's TRACK (training, resources, assessment, coaching and knowledge-sharing) program. The CHRG will also be a venue for committee work that supports the museum system, such as the Collections Management Working Group, Interpretation Working Group, and Community Museums Implementation.

4. RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT MODEL

This chart describes the recommended operational model, including the core components and participants in the system and the functions they would carry out.



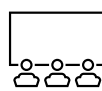
4. RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT MODEL



This chart summarizes the proposed distribution of services between the new enhanced HRM department and its partners.



Financial support/
Fundraising



Interpretation and public
programming



Governance



System-wide
strategic
planning



Facility
management &
maintenance



Collection
management
services



Operational
support/
Marketing &
promotion



Professionalization/
Capacity building

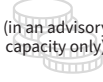


Research
resources &
services

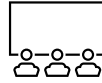


Advocacy &
Amplification

HRM Enhanced Municipal Heritage Dept.

HRM Enhanced Municipal Heritage Dept.										
<i>Dept. Staff</i>	 (in an advisory capacity only)									
<i>Regional Museum Advisory Working Group</i>	 (in an advisory capacity only)		 (in an advisory capacity only)	 (in an advisory capacity only)						
<i>Municipal Archives</i>										
<i>Central Region Heritage Group</i>										

Fee-for-Service NFP Organizations

Fee-for-Service NFP Organizations										
<i>ANSM</i>										
<i>CNSA</i>										
<i>Discover Halifax</i>										
Community Museums*										

* While community museums address all functions through their operations, the chart highlights the functions these museums help to implement at a system-wide level.



4.2 Pro-Con Analysis

This section analyses the pros and cons of each of the three options, based on consultations with stakeholders and the judgement and experience of the consulting team, beginning with the recommended option.

RECOMMENDED MODEL: ENHANCED HRM DEPARTMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FEE-FOR-SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

The recommended model has a number of advantages (“pros”), as follows:

One of the most common methods of fund distribution

Very few municipalities are able to fully fund all museums in their jurisdictions, and very few museums are able to survive on the basis of provincial/federal grants and earned revenue. Some level of municipal contribution is needed as well, and some level of contributed/donated revenue. This is because museums typically survive on a healthy mix of four basic revenue streams: earned, donated/contributed, investment/endowment (rare in the Canadian context) and government.

The recommended model has provision for continued municipal contributions through the existing grant program.

Operational independence

Community museums value their independence. This was the clearest and most unequivocal outcome of the early part of the consultation process.

The model allows community museums to maintain independence while giving them input into the overall strategic direction of the museum system and opportunity to participate in that system through joint projects and partnerships. Community museums will maintain the close connection and responsibility to the residents they serve, while gaining more support.

Freedom of operation

A degree of freedom in operations, insofar as it is in alignment with all municipal policies and strategic directions, is desirable. As a department of the municipal government, the museum system manager is responsible for implementing municipal policies and the directives of Council, but should, in most respects, be able to implement the model as it aligns closely with municipal policy.

More politically appealing to Council

Leveraging existing resources and directing existing initiatives toward a more strategic end — the management and support of community museums — is a benefit that can only come via the recommended model. A department support program would continue the support of community museums, but cannot pursue all prioritized functions and cannot effectively leverage other existing non-municipal organizations or initiatives, while a central municipal museum represents a very large and perpetual capital and operating cost commitment that holds little benefit to already-existing community museums.

Preserves community museum independence

The importance of this principle cannot be overstated, and it was a priority for all community museums that participated in this process. The recommended model limits the activities of the museum system manager and includes community museum representation in determining overarching strategic initiatives.

Formalizes alignments with partner bodies

The recommended model brings together existing partners in a more formal way, directing their contracted contributions strategically toward a set of established goals. It also enables a fulsome leveraging of their potential to support the desired functions and co-opts allied interests through the establishment of museum advisory/partnership bodies.



Avoids high costs associated with brick and mortar museums

As described earlier in this study and in Phase 1 of this project, a physical brick-and-mortar municipal museum would have not only capital cost implications, but would also require ongoing operating funds from the municipality. As described in Phase 1 of this report, museum capital costs in Atlantic Canada have ranged from \$5 million (Black Loyalist Heritage Centre) to \$130 million (in the case of AGNS) in pre-2020 dollars. Operating costs for municipal museums in other cities average around \$1 million annually, with 80% of that revenue coming directly from the municipality. (See HRM Museum Strategy: Phase 1 Report for details)

Leverages existing infrastructure/minimizes overhead

This advantage has been noted above. Instead of creating completely new infrastructure or systems intended to achieve outcomes that are already being at least partly achieved via existing initiatives, it makes much more sense to build upon what is already there, enhancing current efforts while filling in gaps.

Provides a more cohesive and comprehensive experience for HRM residents

Creating an experience that tells a more complete history of HRM and reflects the multicultural communities that make up the region is important to local residents. The recommended model makes use of existing resources to achieve these goals through a system wide approach to the HRM story.

While these are all advantages, there are a number of deficiencies that need to be considered as well:

Vulnerable to budget reductions

Even if the recommended option is approved and implemented, future budgetary conditions may result in cuts or adjustments. Again all options would be subject to this potential risk.

Lack of non-profit partner for fundraising

Ideally there would exist in HRM a body such as a fundraising arts council or some similar organization that would serve as the model's fundraising arm. The analysis has shown that there are no appropriate existing organizations, and no organizations willing to take on the role, nor is there appetite for the creation of such a body from scratch. That being the case, the recommended model includes alternative, community-based fundraising recommendations as a remedy, with the enhanced municipal department (the museum system manager) providing development advice, expertise and recommendations to guide locally-based efforts. This would also leverage already-existing and substantial fundraising including volunteer support.



MUNICIPAL SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

The “pros” for this model, best represented by the model in place in Halton Hills, Ontario, are that it provides practical support at a reasonable cost. While Halton Hills is a smaller municipality than HRM, the costs are essentially staffing, where 4 full-time equivalent municipal employees provide “on demand” services to local community museums. Centralization of such support services in a single department is also an advantage.

This option would also maintain community museum independence, since municipal staff operate essentially as advisors and assistants. For HRM, it would mean no changes to the existing department or funding structures, save for the addition of staff, and it would support the comprehensive story of HRM via such an advisory role.

However, as Phase 1 of this process illustrated, it would do little to strategically unite the museums and some degree of fragmentation would remain. Given the number of community museums in the Municipality, it is likely that demand for the services provided would exceed program capacity in short order. Moreover, key functions — most particularly, the enhanced fund development and distribution function, which was the top priority for community museums that participated in this process — would go unfulfilled, as a municipal department is unable to function as a fundraiser and can only distribute monies made available via municipal grant programs such as what already exists.

CENTRAL MUNICIPAL MUSEUM

A central municipal museum in HRM could come in one of two forms. The first would be a standalone museum created, built, and operated by the municipality, while the second could be the takeover of existing community museums to create a museum network, which means that all current community staff would become HRM staff and HRM would be directly responsible for all other operating costs. However, a key assumption for this exercise is that the HRM will not take over existing community museums, which are currently independent non-profit charitable organizations, because of the major cost implications involved. Therefore, the clearest option to pursue would be a new stand-alone museum.

The main benefits of a central municipal museum would be that the story of the HRM could be told in one central location. Moreover, the addition of a new institution would enhance the life of the community and provide an additional tourist attraction for the city.

The addition of a central municipal museum, which by definition would be municipally owned and operated, would add an additional museum to the already-large constellation of community museums in HRM, leading to questions of interpretive mandate and overlap (how would the central museum deal with stories already told in one or another existing community museum?), competition for visitors and a potential drain on limited municipal resources. The construction and operation of a new central municipal museum comes with major costs (both capital and operating). Given the large operating costs involved, the majority which would need to be borne by the municipality, (the average Canadian museum earns about 35% of its annual operating requirement – the rest comes from subsidies that are usually provided by the government). It is well known that construction costs have been rising in recent years all across Canada, with Statistics Canada reporting a 4.5% increase in Halifax in 2023 alone. Construction and other capital costs for a new municipal museum (fixtures, furniture, and equipment; exhibition costs; contingencies; design fees; etc.) would also be significant with limited ability to source funds outside the various levels of government.



An example is the case of Waterloo Region, Ontario (a municipality similar in size to HRM), where the annual operating budget for the Waterloo Region Museum is more than \$7 million per year, most of which comes from the municipality. This is a significant annual outlay that, if implemented in HRM, might endanger the municipality's ability to fund its existing community museum support programs (let alone enhance them or provide any of the other key functions as identified via this process).

Another instructive precedent is the construction of the Halifax Central Library, which had a total construction budget of \$57.6 million in 2010 (according to the Halifax Central Library Project Site). HRM was responsible for providing approximately \$26 million of that budget. Figures today would be significantly higher due to general inflation and the specific increase in construction costs.

In addition to the issues noted, it is unlikely that there would be compensating benefits to the community museums if a new central municipal museum were built. The comparables analysis, and the judgement and experience of the consultants representing decades of experience in the museum field in Canada and worldwide, demonstrates that central municipal museums do not typically provide support or services to non-municipal museums that happen to be located in the same city. This is for obvious reasons: the central museums are stand-alone institutions that have their own missions and mandates to pursue, and these never include taking responsibility for the management and operation of other independent, non-municipal organizations (unless there is a municipal takeover of the community museums, which as noted above cannot be assumed). There are sometimes loose or infrequent programmatic partnerships that may be instigated by the central museum that sometimes include other independent community museums (as in the case of Hamilton, Ontario, as discussed in a previous chapter) but such partnerships are usually “one-off” and do not provide any kind of ongoing support to the community museums.

The comparable study illustrates two examples of a shift in approach to municipal museums: in Hamilton, where a plan to build a new municipal museum has been repeatedly delayed due to cost and instead a new distributed model is being implemented, and in Halton Hills where an existing municipal museum was closed in favour of a support program.

While the idea of a municipal museum has been part of the HRM heritage conversation for a number of years, for the reasons outlined here, this study strongly recommends that a stand-alone museum should not be pursued for HRM.



4.3 Why favour this model?

The recommendation is based on the comparables analysis, the workshop and consultation process, and the judgement and experience of the consultant team.

Alignment With Key Assumptions

There are a number of assumptions that are likely to be factors in the overall municipal context over the coming years. These include:

Culture and Community Team, Parks and Recreation will have staffing and capacity increase

As of now, staff are barely able to manage the team's current responsibilities, and no matter which of the three most likely options were chosen there would be additional responsibilities and duties. This means that the increase may range from a modest staffing increase to a larger increase, with two of the options requiring a more modest increase, with the central municipal museum requiring a major increase. Municipal financial realities suggest that control of staffing levels (as in the enhanced HRM department options) would be the most realistic course of action.

The Dartmouth Heritage Society's museums and collections will be considered as a single unit (one museum within the system)

Although DHS is something of a special case by virtue of its special relationship with HRM, for the purposes of the model it will be considered a discrete community museum within the system equal to all others albeit without any change to its current institutional status.

Model will leverage existing HRM departments and activities (planning knowledge, heritage property program, building maintenance services and perhaps other initiatives)

There is no benefit to be gained from "reinventing the wheel." No matter what option is chosen, it simply makes sense to leverage existing resources to the best extent possible, and the recommended model must be that which can best do so. This is particularly important with regard to what are often physical-based requirements for presenting heritage.

Model will leverage (but not overlap with) existing non-profit museum management organizations and resources

This is similar to the above point. There are a number of existing organizations that already provide valuable services to the community museum sector in the HRM and beyond, such as the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) or the Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA), among others. These existing resources should also be leveraged, which means that the recommended museum management model must be one that has mechanisms enabling it to do so.

Monies provided for the HRM Interim Community Museums Grants Program will be sustained and continually assessed

This is a valued program, as confirmed in the consultations, and many community museums would not be able to properly function without it. It is assumed for the purposes of this planning exercise that the program will be maintained. Wherever possible, other municipal grant programs that fund museums will be consolidated with the community museums grants program.

Municipal takeover/ ownership of community museums by HRM is unlikely

In some cases, such as Ottawa, the municipality took over many formerly-independent community museums in the first decade of the 21st century. This is not assumed for HRM, partly due to the sheer number of museums that exist in the Municipality, and partly due to municipal financial realities.



This model will rely on partnerships with local communities

This is a key assumption. The involvement of local communities in supporting their community museums, whether that be via voluntarism, funding and fundraising or other community partnerships, will be important and is an efficient mechanism to deliver key elements of the HRM story.

The option most aligned with these assumptions is the municipal department support program, which is the model in place in Halton Hills, Ontario. However, the existence of other non-profit service organizations that provide services that can be better leveraged in the service of the overall system suggests some type of partnership: hence the recommended enhanced HRM department with fee-for-service partnerships. Indeed, ensuring full alignment suggests some level of partnership between the Municipality and the existing organizations, and this is the model that has been developed and recommended.

The central municipal museum option is relevant to some assumptions but is irrelevant to others and more to the point, is irrelevant or potentially detrimental to the community museums themselves, which is contrary to the point of this planning exercise and HRM's cultural aspirations overall. More on the relative pros and cons of each model is provided in the following section.

Alignment with Planning Principles

Early in the workshop process, a prioritization exercise was undertaken which led to a series of planning principles that have guided all subsequent work. The recommended model supports virtually all of the principles, as specified below:

- » **Support HRM's heritage and cultural delivery needs while preserving community museum independence**
 - *An enhanced department can partner with other entities in the model to carry out heritage and cultural delivery services without a costly and logistically challenging takeover of municipal museums.*
- » **Uphold professional standards and assist museums in their achievement**
 - *Functions carried out by the HRM department, as well as the additional support provided by existing fee-for-service/ non profit organizations, will assist museums in achieving the professional standards they strive towards.*
- » **Connect, convene and/or facilitate partnerships and collaborations; convene communities of practice**
 - *Partnerships are a key part of the model, and will be facilitated by the Regional Museum Advisory Working Group.*
- » **Ensure equitable treatment**
 - *Community museums are treated equally within the model.*
- » **Avoid interpretive overlap and gaps**
 - *Although the enhanced department and Regional Museum Advisory Working Group will not dictate exhibition content to community museums, it will encourage a cohesive narrative through an interpretive plan and system-wide strategic planning.*



» Fosters better integration

- *The vision, governance, and system wide strategic planning provided by the enhanced department, alongside collaborative opportunities, marketing, and advocacy provided by external partners will foster greater integration between museums and from the perspective of HRM residents served by museums.*

» Manage funding mechanisms and distribution methods

- *HRM already distributes funds through a grant program.*

Certain key priorities such as maintaining community museum independence, ensuring equitable treatment between the various museums and fostering better integration require a combination of municipal involvement and independent service delivery as in the recommended model, since virtually no other model in the “long list” as presented in earlier chapters can meet these needs.

Alignment with Priority Functions

This is perhaps the single most important criteria: ***what model can adequately service the functions that have been clearly identified as priorities by key stakeholders?*** In analyzing which model is the best fit for HRM, a key criterion is a match with priority functions. The previous section summarized workshop discussions with community museum leaders and HRM staff that isolated the functions which best matched with community museums needs and agreed principles.

The top three priorities included financial support/ fundraising, operational support/ marketing and promotion and facility maintenance and management, with other functions being isolated in further workshops and discussion (such as governance, for example, and enhancement of existing functions such as capacity building). With regard to the overarching goal of community museum system management, only an enhanced HRM department, with or without fee-for-service partnerships, would be possible; the central municipal museum option cannot include this as a function (since it would itself be a stand-alone, functioning museum).

Alignment with the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan

HRM’s Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP) — known as *Sharing our Stories* — is a strategic, action-oriented document that informs decisions regarding culture and heritage in the Halifax Regional Municipality. It gives decision-makers, community partners, and residents a tool for setting priorities, and it directs how staff manage resources and projects to enhance the region’s cultural and heritage vitality. The CHPP was approved by HRM Council in January 2024.



The Plan was created with the understanding that HRM's diverse communities should play an active role in implementing the Plan and crafting the stories and expressions of culture, arts, and heritage that are communicated throughout the region. To make this a reality, the Plan was shaped by a robust public engagement program, where the project team heard from diverse residents and stakeholders to identify needs and priorities. Much of this work focused on engaging underrepresented communities - such as Indigenous & Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, newcomer, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities — to ensure that they have opportunities to celebrate and share their unique stories.

Sharing Our Stories outlines 44 strategic actions that HRM will address over the next decade. One of these actions tells staff to use a phased approach to create a Regional Museum Strategy which shapes HRM's role in museum operations and development. Thus, this current report (Phase 2) is thus a vital component of the *Sharing Our Stories* Plan and HRM's overall cultural agenda.

HRM's Regional Museum Strategy and new museum model will not only enhance museums, but it will contribute to other Plan actions, such as 3.1: Develop an interpretive master plan to guide the municipality's role and investment in commemorative and interpretive initiatives, artifact and digital collections, and cultural and heritage program delivery. This action includes creating procedures for external and internal interpretive requests and prioritizing community-led interpretive projects, amongst other objectives. While Action 3.1 doesn't pertain solely to museums and archives, the findings from the Regional Museum Strategy will have an impact on how HRM proceeds with this initiative.

Depending on the outcomes and direction of the Regional Museum Strategy, it's also possible that this work may benefit additional actions from the *Sharing Our Stories* Plan, as well. These include:

- » Develop programming that celebrates the diversity of the municipality (e.g. African Heritage Month, Asian Heritage Month, Mi'kmaq History Month, Halifax Pride Festival and other cultural acknowledgements).

- » Enhance awareness and support for events commemorating Indigenous History Month, Treaty Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and other significant events.
- » Strengthen and expand the role of Municipal Archives in being stewards of our civic history.

Benefits to HRM

In addition to the already illustrated alignment between this recommendation and the planning principles and priority functions, this model will have significant benefit to HRM and its residents. First, it will fulfill the goal of creating a Regional Museum Strategy as set out in the 2023 *Sharing Our Stories: The Halifax Regional Municipality's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan*. The model also has the potential to further other goals articulated in the plan: "Support cultural capacity" by strengthening support for community museums, and "Express culture through place" through physical representations of culture and history within communities.

In addition to furthering the goals set out in previous cultural planning processes, implementing the recommended model will strengthen the museums that are already cornerstones of many communities, and provide new opportunities for residents to share their stories and see themselves reflected in the story of the HRM. When implemented, this model can serve as a mechanism to develop an Interpretive Master Plan, as approved by HRM Council, thereby bolstering the overall impact of interpretation and storytelling in the HRM, and telling a more complete and cohesive story of the HRM.



Summary

The model that best fulfills all of the above is the enhanced HRM department operating in partnership with fee for service/non-profit organizations that would fulfill some functions under contract. The nature of the contractual arrangement between HRM and the organizations in question is likely to be a service level agreement, a tool that is often used by HRM to obtain supplementary services from non-profit organizations.



5.

Implications and Implementation

Some resource requirements and operational implications will come with implementation of the recommended model. This chapter outlines such implications and resource needs to ensure that the model can function as intended. As noted, the recommended model is an **enhanced HRM department in partnership with fee-for-service/independent non-profit organization(s)** to provide functions that are in demand but inappropriate for a municipal department, or those that already exist and can be better leveraged or enhanced.



5.1 Implementing the Model Components

As noted, the recommended model has three main components: the **enhanced HRM department**, the Regional Museum Advisory Working Group and the fee-for-service agreements with selected partners.

In order to implement the recommended model, an enhanced HRM department will need to be developed. These enhancements entail revisiting the department's mandate to accommodate the new functions recommended by this report, and increased staffing capable of fulfilling the recommended functions in service of community museum system management while continuing to properly deliver on existing responsibilities. Clearly this will require Council approval for the additional expenditures.

STAFFING NEEDS OF AN ENHANCED HRM DEPARTMENT

In order to implement the enhanced HRM department, three full-time positions are initially anticipated. The positions will require future approval.

- » Cultural Developer, Collections: Coordinate care and control of HRM artifact and public art collections.
- » Cultural Developer, Culture and Community Programming: Implement HRM Cultural strategies and engagement. Oversee internal interpretive projects and external requests for community-lead interpretive projects.
- » Diversity and Inclusion Advisor, Parks and Recreation: The D&I Advisor participates on departmental projects, initiatives, and programs in support of business transformation in the area of diversity and inclusion.
- » Digital Archivist: Halifax Municipal Archives (HMA) to digitize HRM historical material as well as material from community museums that do not have adequate in-house scanning equipment.

Another major component is the **Regional Museum Advisory Working Group**. While the terms of reference for this Working Group must be developed internally and such a Terms of Reference will outline details such as mission and vision, number of members and scope, it is important to note that this group is fundamentally advisory, a strategic planning group that includes priority-setting and a vehicle for continuous feedback from community museums. It is not intended as a vehicle for the distribution of funds, nor is it a fundraising body — it is strictly intended as a collaborative, advisory working group to keep communications open between the community museums and the municipality and ensure that the activities of the enhanced HRM municipality and service level agreement partners remain focused on track.



EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL MUSEUM ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES

Short term:

- » Advise on Interpretive Master Plan scoping
- » Help coordinate and align resources for regional emergency planning
- » Review and assessment for Museum Grant Program

Longer term:

- » Advise on a collaborative collections strategy
- » Advise on implementing the Interpretive Master Plan
- » Advise and assist on regional grants to other orders of government (potentially led by enhanced HRM department)

Finally, **fee-for-service agreements** need to be struck with those partners that will assist with service delivery. Specific parameters will be determined through direct discussion with partners, but will largely focus on implementing the functions identified in this report. Some of these will be extensions to existing service level agreements, such as with ANSM or Discover Halifax. Service level agreements are the enhanced department's "force multipliers"; the service level agreement is the main tool by which some functions and services will be delivered or by which the enhanced HRM department's ability to deliver such functions or services will be extended.

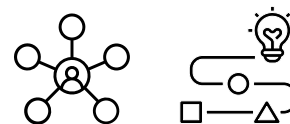


5.2 Implementing the Functions

The museum system manager, embodied by the recommended model, would oversee the prioritized functions in the following ways, beginning with the core or priority functions as identified via the consultation process (described in Section 3.4), then considering additional functions, identified as second-tier priorities through the consultation process.

What appears below is an outline description of how the prioritized functions would be implemented. What is required as perhaps the first implementation step is an action planning process. Such a process must be done internally (since staff must actually implement it) and would work out, in detail, exactly what would be required.

Priority Function: System-Wide Governance & Strategic Planning



Although not initially identified as core functions, governance and strategic planning were discussed with stakeholders later in the process and are two of the most crucial functions. The enhanced HRM department will lead governance and strategic planning, with direction and feedback from the Regional Museum Advisory Working Group. The section above describes the intention and scope of the Regional Museum Advisory Working Group, which will be an informal working group of museum representatives who convene to discuss sector-wide strategic matters and agree on broad sector goals. It will discuss sector-wide matters and provide information/non-binding advice and explore opportunities for collaboration with organizations and institutions with shared objectives. Representation may also be extended via mechanisms such as task forces that would include specialists or expertise from particular areas (for example, content specialists, marketing advisors, HRM Councillor, etc.) as needs require.



Financial Support/Fundraising



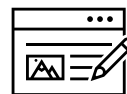
The fundraising function is essentially advisory in nature. As noted in a previous section, neither HRM staff nor the enhanced HRM department can be involved with actual fundraising; rather, the model envisions the enhanced department and its service level agreement partners as facilitators and coaches, whereas actual fundraising is led by individual museums incorporating a community-based, decentralized funding model to align and supplement existing funding mechanisms. However, it may be possible for HRM staff in the enhanced municipal department to coordinate grant applications in support of the museum model.

The model includes the following key features:

- » Consolidates the various HRM funding sources that museums currently draw from into one grant program.
- » Provides guidance on changes to HRM tax-relief programme.
- » Take lead with other organizations (ANSM, CNSA, Municipal Archives) to apply for more significant grants that could be in service to the HRM-based museums.
- » Special grant component to support system-wide initiatives & priorities.
- » Identifies potential funding sources and supports community museums in pursuing them.
- » Supports museums in harnessing fundraising potential within their communities.

It is important to note that the enhanced HRM department cannot actually take any active role in fundraising — it is a facilitator, a source of expertise and a capacity-builder, so that the community museums themselves can fundraise more effectively. In that facilitation role, it is likely that additional staffing support will be needed within the enhanced municipal department to carry out this function, and that advisory services from partner organizations (in particular ANSM and CNSA, as part of their capacity-building mandates) will be needed. The enhanced service level agreements would essentially account for this enhanced advisory service, but the exact limits of that effort would need to be worked out in detailed negotiation.

Priority Function: Operational Support/Marketing and Promotion



The enhanced HRM department will carry out this function with support from other organizations as applicable. Ideally, it will maintain and investigate options with Discover Halifax and may include expansion of the existing service level agreement with that organization to cover improved marketing for the community museums. The enhanced HRM department would provide advisory services, or liaise as necessary with other HRM departments where applicable, to provide assistance in other areas of museum operations such as emergency response, disaster planning and other key needs. To some extent, the facility maintenance function will fall under “operational support” and would be included here.



Secondary Function: Interpretation and Public Programming



In 2024, Regional Council approved the CHPP, which gives direction to develop an Interpretive Master Plan (IMP). The development of an IMP will assist staff of the enhanced HRM department to determine what stories and interpretive elements are missing from the local museum ecosystem. Such staff will then, in consultation with stakeholders, be responsible for developing specific themes, stories and interpretive techniques that community museums can use to create new interpretive elements and thus bolster the overall impact of interpretation and storytelling in the HRM.

The enhanced HRM department will further support interpretation and public programming efforts at community museums through:

- » Facilitating access to physical resources
- » Facilitating collection or content loans
- » Connecting museums with intellectual resources, which could include facilitating contact with historians, researchers and subject matter experts
- » Working with community partners to fill interpretive gaps and fulfill research needs
- » Engaging African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw communities and Mi'kmaw communities in a coordinated effort with community museums.

DEVELOPING AN IMP

As outlined in Phase 1 of the Museum Strategy, the scope of work for the IMP will include:

- » Develop a scope and phased framework for the project with timelines, expected resource requirements, and stakeholder identification in preparation of issuing an RFP.
- » Implement a stakeholder engagement process to gather input on stories that could be interpreted and/or that are under-represented within HRM.
- » Develop a regional thematic framework that will guide future interpretation of stories, collections, and the use of artifacts, as well as the development of programming and potential community collaborations. As part of this framework, identify gaps in content.
- » Identify and prioritize potential public-facing interpretive projects and programs that can be used to roll out the new interpretive framework.
- » Develop an artifact management and collections strategy. Identify gaps and alignments based on the proposed interpretive framework/themes.
- » Consider other resources that, when unified under a museum interpretive umbrella, might contribute to a better understanding of the Municipality, including its history, its communities, and its peoples.
- » Perform a “collaboration scan” to determine potential partnerships based on the proposed interpretive framework/themes.
- » Investigate and develop a commemorative heritage program for interpretive project requests.
- » Develop and implement a formal process through which the removal of challenging legacy artifacts, plaques, and statues can be considered.



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- » Facilitating collection or content loans
- » Connecting museums with intellectual resources, which could include facilitating contact with historians, researchers and subject matter experts
- » Working with community partners to fill interpretive gaps and fulfill research needs
- » Engaging ANSM and Mi'kmaw communities in a coordinated effort with community museums.

Secondary Function: Collection Management



This function would be managed by the enhanced HRM department with support from ANSM and potentially CNSA operating on a service level agreement. The main activities here include:

- » Formation of a collections management group
- » Expansion of existing collections management services/ system via enhanced service level agreement with appropriate partners
- » Enhanced training for HRM-based museums
- » Increased collection digitization resources

- » Continuing implementation of professional collections management practices and emergency preparedness
- » Guidelines for collections management/ loan protocols and policies.

Secondary Function: Capacity Building



As capacity-building is already a key activity of existing organizations in the area, the model's actions would be confined to expansion of such professionalization and capacity-building resources. The main change is oversight by the enhanced HRM department and the expansion of existing service level agreements with ANSM (and utilization of that body's Central Region Heritage Group) and potentially an additional one with CNSA. While there is openness to expansion of service level agreements among the partners, some of the initial work of implementation will include exploring exactly how they should be expanded and how ANSM, for example, which has a robust capacity building mandate, can be supported in augmenting or adjusting that mandate to provide increased support for community museums — for example, with advice around fundraising, or whether such partner organizations need to be supported to hire additional staff, which is to be determined in future discussions.



Other Functions

The above sections have focused on the priority and secondary functions of the museum management system identified through stakeholder consultation (section 3.4). Functions such as facility management and advocacy were not identified as priorities at this time. As these and other needs arise, the museum management body as described in this document will meet them using the mechanisms within the proposed structure of the model. This may include negotiations aimed at obtaining services of other municipal departments to address the needs, or establishing service-level agreements within new or existing partners. Ultimately the need for service delivery beyond the currently prioritized functions will depend on future conditions as well as changing strategic priorities as determined via strategic planning, which is a priority and ongoing function as discussed above.

5.3 Future Projects

There are a number of future projects that are currently being contemplated. These include a series of additional planning studies intended to advance the activities of the department and the regional museum system. For example:

- » Create plan for moving the DHMS artifact collection (2024/25) with class C costing
- » Prioritize potential co-location of Artifact and Archival Storage at Ilsley (Archives)
- » Investigate options for improved exhibit, envelope repairs and accessibility for Evergreen and Quaker House
- » Investigate opportunities within HRM capital plans and facility strategies to consider interpretation and exhibit infrastructure



6. Collections

This section summarizes a critical component of the Museum Strategy — the collections held by the Municipality and by community museums across the HRM. It provides context regarding the Dartmouth Heritage Museum collection, priorities and goals for HRM collections as a whole, and finally recommendations for moving forward. This study identifies the importance of developing an Interpretive Master Plan for HRM that will, not only define the stories and history to be told through robust exhibits and public programming, but will also, direct strategic artifact acquisition designed to supplement the existing collection by filling identified gaps within it.



6.1 Context

Collections Landscape

Halifax Regional Municipality is sometimes referred to as a “community of communities.” This concept is reflected in the variety of museum collections and resources assembled and managed by community groups and institutions large and small scattered throughout the Municipality. Typically, the collections originate from their communities and reflect the experience of the local area. They are unique, significant, and tell the diverse stories of HRM through the communities within it. Collectively, the individual communities and institutional efforts to preserve and illustrate aspects of history portray a large part of the experience of the Municipality; however, currently there is no overview that describes the development of the HRM community as a whole.

Topics covered in collections are rich in content and feature domestic artifacts, local industry and commerce, mining, lumbering, fishing, farming, and transportation. Many collections are supported with information from archival documents and photo collections. The diversity of these various collections provides the basis for exhibits and public programming that highlight the history of many local communities and together tell a broader story of the shared heritage of HRM.

Shifting Collections Policies

In the past, decisions regarding what to collect and who will collect it have occurred independently from other sites. In recent years some collaboration has been evident as sites have developed similar collection policies, collecting criteria and a common sense that each site has a finite capacity to preserve and utilize an object it may acquire. More selective choices are being made. Simultaneously, some sites are reassessing their existing collection based on a criterion that ensures any artifact does indeed warrant its place in the collection, and the inherent responsibility for its care.

The Dartmouth Heritage Museum Collection

The Dartmouth Heritage Museum (DHM) collection has special status within HRM as a municipally owned collection by virtue of the transfer of its ownership from the City of Dartmouth to the HRM at the time of municipal amalgamation. Its principal focus is the history of Dartmouth. The collection was not developed to illustrate the history of HRM beyond Dartmouth’s place in that story.

Although the DHM collection is owned by HRM, its use and care is largely delegated to the DHM Society under a management agreement with the Society. It functions as a community museum collection similar to other local and specialized museum collections in institutions throughout HRM. The collection is capable of interpreting a fairly comprehensive view of Dartmouth’s history but lacks space to fully utilize its interpretive potential.

As noted as part of the Section 3.3, while it is unique in terms of its size and care situation, this collection should be considered as a community museum collection only, and should therefore not be the basis for a central museum project initiative.



6.2 How the Recommended Model Will Benefit Collections

Community museums need adequate, predictable funding to ensure continuing management and protection of their collections and the development of appealing and informative interpretive programs. Effective collection management also requires standards, policies and procedures.

The recommended museums management model recognizes that the professional development programs and collection management services already offered by the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) are a reliable and efficient resource for ensuring the adoption of professional standards in every aspect of the operation of community museums. The management of the HRM's diverse museum collections is a fundamental area where the recommended model will help to meet these needs, in part because it builds upon an existing collaborative environment established in the Central Regional Heritage Group. This offers tangible benefits through a HRM-wide approach to collection development, preservation, research, exhibit and program development, staff training, shared expertise, and opportunities for joint advertising and promotion. Significantly it will foster a shared HRM perspective within the museum network and within their respective community. Donations will remain a primary source of collection development in the community museum as well as being shared to tell the broader story of HRM. Museums and their collections foster an awareness and sense of place within the local community and also enable that sense and pride of place that can be shared more broadly beyond the particular community.

The recommended model will facilitate the development and implementation of a HRM-wide strategy for collection development and management, collection conservation, and research to support focused and strategic collecting, based upon accepted museological criteria and guided by a regional Interpretive Master Plan. Opportunities to make collections accessible through exhibitions, public programming and electronic media (digitization) will be enhanced. Additional financial support earmarked for collection development will be more efficiently expended to support both the development of community collections and ensure they are a benefit to preserving and telling the broader HRM story. Currently some community museums lack the financial resources to acquire or preserve artifacts. This model will enable these museums the opportunity to jointly access funding to address this need.



6.3 Recommendations

Determining a way forward for the collections is not straightforward, and will require some short-term as well as longer-term work given the complexity of the materials and partners involved. We have thus organized recommendations into two categories: priority and possible recommendations for future consideration.

Priority Recommendations

- » **Preserve the independence of community museums** by recognizing that management of their collections is a fundamental responsibility and support their efforts to implement best practices by providing financial and professional development opportunities to enhance standards. This will be supported by advisory and capacity building services provided by CNSA, ANSM, HRM Archives and the Culture and Community Team.
- » **Develop and implement the Interpretive Master Plan.** This will guide future recommendations around collection acquisition and development policies that support community museums in contributing to the overall HRM story.

Possible Future Recommendations

Possible future actions related to collections may include the following — but will require further discussion between HRM and its partners to be refined and confirmed:

- » In collaboration with the Central Regional Heritage Group (CRHG), **investigate forming a Collections Management Working Group** with representation from each of the partner museums to initiate and coordinate collection management and development activities. Building on these recommendations and guided by the IMP, the proposed Collections Management Working Group, could work to:
 - Investigate collaboration opportunities for telling the Municipal story with the organizations and agencies represented on a Regional Museum Advisory Working Group.
 - Determine if artifacts relevant to the HRM story already in the regional museum network composed of national, provincial and community museums are available to be borrowed or transferred. Each institution's collecting mandate and practice should recognize the collecting mandate of other institutions in a cooperative and coordinated acquisition strategy. This will guide any acquisitions and deaccessioning strategy going forward.
 - Review and update the current policies and procedures relating to collection management, preservation and research being utilized.
 - Establish a relationship with the HRM asset disposal unit to ensure objects of historical significance are vetted by the Heritage Unit before disposal.
 - Establish a curatorial relationship with the Police and Fire Museums to resolve curatorial responsibility for collections held by them and formulate joint actions moving forward.



- Establish a collaborative relationship with HRM Police and Fire Departments, and Public Works to create protocols and procedures relating to museum security, public safety and disaster preparedness and response.
 - Explore the potential for a central digital portal with collection-based interpretation to supplement the HRM story. Again, this may be an outgrowth of the IMP recommendations.
- » ***Investigate how the HRM management agreement with the DHM Society could delegate clear responsibility for collection management to the Society*** with the funding agreement taking into account the resources required by the Society to house, manage and care for the municipally owned collection to professional museum standards. Rationalization of the DHM collection should continue, as guided by an IMP, including enhanced storage conditions and deaccessioning/reassignment of redundant material. In addition, the following related actions could be investigated in consultation with partners:
- Transfer of responsibility for the archival component of the DHM collection to the Municipal Archives.
 - Support DHM Society aspirations for adequate interpretive space for the DHM collection.



Musquodoboit Harbour Heritage Society

7.

Action Plan

While each of the requirements outlined in the previous section are important for the implementation of the recommended model, a more formal action planning process is needed to outline exact steps, resource requirements and timelines. This action planning must be undertaken by staff at a future time. Nevertheless, this section summarizes the priority actions that should be taken that will allow the model to succeed in the long term.



7.1 Implementation Table

The following represent the highest priority items for immediate action:

- » Undertake detailed action planning process that outlines the negotiation of new service-level agreements and detailed implementation plans with
- » Service delivery partners and recruitment and hiring of new HRM staff.
- » Develop the region-wide Interpretive Master Plan, as approved through the CHPP.
- » Develop and define a funding model.
- » Create a Regional Museum Advisory Working Group to guide the overall process.

The following chart summarizes all key recommendations along with their priority level.

Key recommendations		High/Short-Term Priority (Year 1)	Medium/Medium-Term Priority (Years 2-4)	Low/Long-Term Priority (Year 5-)
Create Regional Museum Advisory Working Group				
	Develop strategic and action plan to define initial priorities and detailed implementation steps	X		
	Develop detailed budget for enhanced HRM department on basis of strategic plan for staffing, increases to service level agreements and enhanced collection management, interpretation and programming	X		
	Develop Terms of Reference for Regional Museum Advisory Working Group	X		
Implement Fundraising Model				
	Develop scope of advisory activities	X		
	Extend partner service level agreements as required according to strategic plan		X	
	Explore increases to existing HRM community museum funding program		X	



Key recommendations		High/Short-Term Priority (Year 1)	Medium/Medium-Term Priority (Years 2-4)	Low/Long-Term Priority (Year 5-)
Hire additional HRM staff				
	Obtain Council approval for projected staff needs	X		
	Hire additional approved staff		X	
Develop and Implement Interpretive Master Plan				
	Conduct detailed interpretive planning	X		
	Work through Regional Museum Advisory Working Group to establish priorities		X	
	Develop new exhibitions and programs in accordance with the plan			X
Extend Capacity-Building Activities				
	Extend partner service level agreements as required according to strategic plan	X		
Implement Collections Management Working Group				
	Develop Terms of Reference		X	
	Work with Central Region Heritage Group to coordinate activities		X	
	Develop central digital portal			X
Support Community Museum Marketing and Operations				
	Explore expansion of service level agreement with Discover Halifax for the marketing function		X	



Key recommendations		High/Short-Term Priority (Year 1)	Medium/Medium-Term Priority (Years 2-4)	Low/Long-Term Priority (Year 5-)
	Work with other HRM departments and service partners to define support for building and facility maintenance, disaster planning, and other operational functions.		X	
Conduct Additional Activities				
	Create plan for moving the DHMS artifact collection (2024/25) with class C costing		X	
	Investigate options for improved exhibit, envelope repairs and accessibility at Evergreen and Quaker House		X	
	Investigate opportunities within HRM capital plans and facility strategies to consider interpretation and exhibit infrastructure			X
	Pending the outcome of the HRM Cultural Venue Study and subsequent Plan, options for building or recapitalized a new cultural facility that would support museum exhibition as part of the decentralized system may be considered as part of the on-going Venue Study/Plan			X



Appendices



A Phase 1: Executive Summary

HRM REGIONAL
MUSEUM STRATEGY
PHASE 1

Executive Summary



1. Overview

In 2019, The Halifax Regional Municipality (the Municipality; HRM) commissioned Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy to provide a comprehensive and thorough review of the current state of all museums operating inside the Halifax Regional Municipality. AldrichPears Associates, a Canadian interpretive planning consultant, with A.L. Arbic Consulting, were hired to complete the study. **This is the first step in a phased process** that is intended to resolve the need for a new build civic museum within the Municipality; specifically, whether a central civic museum is needed and, if so, what its future role might be and what form it might take.

In October 2015, Halifax Regional Council requested an update on a plan to work with stakeholders, including the Board of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society, to determine the size and scope of a municipal museum. Information was also requested on the next steps in the completion of a municipal museum, including allocation of capital funding and how it relates to the *Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan* outlined in the January 28, 2014 motion and to the *Cultural Spaces Plan*.



“While there is strong interest in moving the development of a municipal museum forward, there is significant and important work to be completed in order to achieve that goal. Completion of the upcoming second phase of the inventory work is needed in order to determine a complete understanding of all of HRM’s artifacts. Further, an overall strategy for a regional museum is necessary to start to determine the appropriate scope and necessary scale for such a service, which will in turn inform the necessary capital funding and resulting operating costs.”

“Determination of the size and scope of a municipal museum is a complex process. It requires a detailed inventory of all artifacts and a thorough understanding of any specialized storage and display requirements of the collection. Without the completion of the second phase of the artifact inventory, HRM will not have the necessary knowledge to be able to properly assess the necessary size and scope for a municipal museum.”

“Consideration of a Regional Museum at this stage also does not presuppose that it be one single, purpose-built facility, but rather could conceivably be a strengthening and a strategic resourcing of the existing community museum network.”

—HRM REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT (MARCH 22, 2016)

Before any regional museum plan can be realized—regardless of scale or structure—it was determined that it is necessary to establish a comprehensive overview of both HRM-owned and non HRM-owned museums and collections located within the municipality, as well as an inventory and analysis of existing interpretive themes, visitor experiences, programming, and levels of municipal support. This Phase 1 Study establishes a baseline upon which any future strategic decisions can be based with regard to vision, scope, siting, and planning for any future municipal museum in HRM.

The separation of a Regional Museum Strategy into phases was deemed necessary in order to ensure that the museum development process was rational and carefully considered. Phase 1 of the strategy does not present a definitive vision for what a future HRM museum might resemble, nor does it define how it might be created and operated. Rather, it describes the heritage interpretation landscape in HRM as it currently exists, assembles and analyzes this data, and provides recommendations for Phase 2 of the strategy. Phase 1 of the strategy addresses a number of key questions:

- » **What’s Current State HRM? (i.e., what’s the “lay of the land?”)**
- » **What are the strengths and weaknesses?**
- » **How is data accumulated and tracked?**
- » **What are the implications of constructing and operating a new/large civic museum?**

By addressing these questions early in the process, the Municipality can ensure that any future museum decision-making is based on sound data and is defensible. It is anticipated that a Phase 2 step that will build upon the research and data identified in this current first phase of work, and that begins to define the particulars of a regional museum strategy that will guide heritage interpretation and programming within HRM for years to come.

When it is finally realized, the completed HRM Regional Museum Strategy—and, presumably, the vision for an HRM civic museum or museum system, in whatever form it takes—will ensure that communities across the region have increased access to relevant content and programs that foster a deeper connection to the region’s history, that sparks engagement within the community, and that encourages a sense of belonging and pride in both new and long term residents. Furthermore, the completed strategy will also help showcase regional heritage for tourists who are eager to engage with this content.



2. Methodology: Phase 1 Museum Strategy Scope

Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy process addresses the issues identified above through a series of research steps, analyses, and conclusions. Work during Phase 1 included:

Assessing the Museum “Landscape” and Current State within HRM

Through site visits, consultation work critically assessed the current situation and operational conditions for museums, collections, and archives within HRM, including management, attendance, and funding factors. The study sample for Phase 1 of the HRM Regional Museum Strategy identifies and describes a total of 32 museums, interpretive centres, farms, and historic sites located throughout HRM, including HRM-managed sites, provincial and federal sites, and community museums, as well as an assessment of existing collections in HRM.

Municipally-Owned Sites with Management Agreements

- » Dartmouth Heritage Museum:
Evergreen House
- » Dartmouth Heritage Museum:
Quaker House

Municipally-Owned Sites with Long-Term Lease Agreements

- » MacPhee House Community Museum
- » Scott Manor House

Provincially-Mandated/Supported Sites

- » Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia
- » Fisherman’s Life Museum
- » Maritime Museum of the Atlantic
- » Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History
- » Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame

Federal & Canadian Armed Forces Sites

- » Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21
- » Halifax Citadel National Historic Site
- » Naval Museum of Halifax
- » Shearwater Aviation Museum

Community Sites

- » L’Acadie de Chezzetcook
(Acadian House Museum)
- » Africville Museum
- » Army Museum
- » Atlantic Canada Aviation Museum
- » Cole Harbour Heritage Farm Museum
- » Fultz House Museum
- » Hooked Rug Museum of North America
- » McMann House Museum/Genealogy Centre
- » Memory Lane Heritage Village
- » Moose River Gold Mines Museum
- » Musquodoboit Harbour Railway Museum
- » SS Atlantic Heritage Park &
Interpretation Centre
- » Waverley Heritage Museum

Institutional Museums

- » Gordon Duff Pharmacy Museum
(Dalhousie University)
- » Thomas McCulloch Museum
(Dalhousie University)

Interpretive Centres & Heritage Sites

- » Discovery Centre
- » HMCS Sackville
- » Shubenacadie Canal Fairbanks Centre
- » Spryfield Urban Farm



The study assesses the following six areas of focus for each site, which included feedback from stakeholders and community museums obtained through surveys, meetings, and workshops.

- » **Organization:** The study provides a snapshot of each site in the study sample (including practical details such as the community within which it operates, operating months and daily hours, and contact information), along with an organizational overview capturing information such as the site's mission and mandate, governing authority, registered charity status, board composition, and membership programs.
- » **Sites and Facilities:** The study describes physical sites and facilities, buildings, and acreages for each museum in the study sample, including condition and use of space, accessibility, use/potential for new/augmented temporary displays, pop-up exhibits/events, and community programming.
- » **Interpretation:** The study surveys where/how exhibits and programming are being used within HRM, including use of media and technologies. Current stories, topics, and themes are also identified for individual sites, as are challenges and opportunities.
- » **Collections & Archives:** Based on existing data, the study reviews the extensive collections and archival resources managed and supported by HRM and its stakeholders, as well as the type, scale, and unique qualities of the various museums and sites that make up the current regional museum experience.
- » **Operations and Management:** Based on existing data, the study reviews the operational and management situation for museums in HRM today, including how they are operated and by whom.
- » **Financial:** The study assesses how museums are faring overall, where they are obtaining funding, and whether budgets are being spent effectively.

Establishing a Database System for Museums within HRM

A core task for the study was the creation of a live database that is used to house known data about sites within the study sample. This was developed using relevant HRM and ANSM criteria, which were already in use within the region. The database is based on a template system that can be maintained and updated periodically to assist museums in future, including relevant data needed to develop initiatives and projects with museums.

Identifying Collections in HRM

Halifax Regional Municipality owns and cares for several distinct collections of artifacts, archival materials, and cultural assets. The focus of Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy was key artifact and archival collections as they pertain to a regional museum strategy. Broadly, these collections are:

The HRM/DHMS Collection

Comprising nearly 40,000 artifacts and archival items collected over a six-decade span, the majority of the HRM/DHMS collection is located off-site in a secure leased facility and is co-managed by one HRM staff and Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society (DHMS) staff and access is restricted for security reasons. Most of the collection pertains directly to Dartmouth history. The collection has its own Collection Policy (adopted by Council in 2009) and its own Collection Management Committee that governs the acquisition and removal of artifacts from the collection. The mandate is to collect and preserve artifacts with a direct connection to the history of the people and heritage of Dartmouth. Since 2016, the artifact collection records were migrated and are now digitally managed through Collective Access, an Association of Nova Scotia Museums managed and web-based artifact database. This important migration allows both HRM and DHMS staff and volunteers access to a shared but secure database. Prior to this, HRM did not have access to the collection records. The care of the collection and database occurs through the Culture and Events, Parks and Recreation Department.



Halifax Municipal Archives Artifact Collection (including the former “Civic Collection”)

In addition to the municipal archival collection, the Halifax Municipal Archives (HMA; the Archives) is the current steward of an artifact collection, with support from the Parks and Recreation Cultural Asset Manager. This collection includes objects with enduring value that were created or received by the Municipality. The alignment of the care of the Municipal Artifact Collection between the two business units is not a formalized structure and will require assessment of resources and capacity.

The former “Civic Collection” was a grouping of objects belonging to each of the pre-amalgamation municipal units that were intended to reflect the cultural, social, and political identity of these governments. In 2016, when HRM hired a Cultural Asset Manager, remaining artifacts in the inventory were located and consolidated. The original inventory was migrated to a Collective Access database. In 2018 HMA expanded its acquisition mandate to include municipally-related artifacts that have enduring value. Items such as fine art, gifts from visiting dignitaries (e.g., twinning cities, the Olympic Torch, etc.), some of which were on the “Civic Collection” inventory, were transferred to the Archives. The collection was carefully curated prior to items being fully catalogued in the Archives database.

The Public Art Collection

HRM has a traditional public art collection, most of the figural statues depicting historic males figures. There are few contemporary pieces, although new commissions aim to diversify the collection. An inventory was conducted in 2008 and it identified all statues, memorials, cairns, and plaques located within HRM boundaries.

Cultural and Heritage Assets

This collection consists of a wide variety of built heritage and landscape elements. Examples include the built heritage features of the Public Gardens such as the fountains, bandstand, statues, and iron fences. Another set of assets are the HRM-owned heritage buildings and structures such as the Dingle Tower, Bell Road Cottage, and the Peace Pavilion, among others. Smaller features include heritage fencing around areas such as Camp Hill Cemetery, the seawalls at Dingle Park, and granite curbs on Barrington Street. These assets are maintained and managed by a wide variety of HRM business units and not all have been formally inventoried or documented from a centralized perspective.



Public domain / Art Gallery of Nova Scotia



Identifying Region-wide Gaps, Challenges, and Opportunities

The study assesses where perceived gaps, challenges, and opportunities exist within the HRM museum “landscape.” **Specifically:**

- » **Gaps and Critical Needs:** Based on collected data and research, the study examines and identifies weaknesses and gaps (e.g., content, geography, and interpretive resources) that may be addressed in a future museum strategy.
- » **Relationships within the System:** The study identifies how/where are sites currently coordinating, what systems are already in place and where there is cooperation, shared resources, and project initiatives that can be built upon.
- » **Collections:** As part of the collections assessment, the study identifies challenges facing the municipal and site collections, particularly the absence of a dedicated Halifax collection compared to the large Dartmouth Heritage Museum collection.
- » **Collaborations/Partnerships:** The study identifies current and possible future relationships between museum sites, HRM archives, provincial archives, HRM collections, and provincial (i.e., Nova Scotia Museum) collections, and considers what future partnerships and projects might look like.

Identifying Comparables

The study identifies benchmarks for museum and archival projects, experiences, organization models, and costs by looking at new or recent projects within HRM, across Atlantic Canada, as well as examples across the country. Additionally, it summarizes examples of trends and good professional practices currently employed by museums and communities around the world to successfully deliver heritage interpretation within, and to connect with, their communities.

The study also identifies recent project examples and associated benchmarks for museum and archival institutions, operations, and costs by looking at new projects within our region, as well as examples across Canada. This involved looking at both “stand-alone” and “systems-based” museum operational models:

- » **Municipal Museum Models: Stand-Alone**
- » **Municipal Museum Models: Multiple Site/Service or System**
- » **Municipal/Civic Archives Models**
- » **Regional Museum/Cultural Site Projects: Within HRM**
- » **Recent Museum/Cultural Site Projects: Within Atlantic Canada**

Identifying Museum Trends and Good Professional Practices

The study includes an assessment of trends and good professional practices currently being employed by museums and communities nationally as well as internationally. It considers questions such as: Where is innovation happening in museum interpretation and programming? What kinds of products are being developed? A look at “pop-up” exhibit concepts, whereby temporary and non-permanent museum experiences are being used to communicate heritage to residents, is also explored.



3. Key Considerations

Phase 1 of the Museum Strategy identified the following key considerations:

Is HRM in the museum business?

While HRM is implicated in the management of several heritage properties and several important collections, and currently provides funding assistance to a number of museums within the region, there remains a question as to whether HRM is really in the “museum business.” It is clear by both its former and current actions that the Municipality is indeed in the ‘business’ of museums—if one thinks of museums as an enterprise that, like any successful enterprise, must have on board not only the right blend of products (i.e., stories, collections, and experiences) but also the right organization, staffing capacity and skills, and the financial resources with which to pursue its mandate.

Unfortunately, the condition of the Municipality’s museum ‘business’ is not currently successful, nor does it have the capacity to continue in its present form over the long term. While tremendous work has been accomplished to date by a small cadre of staff and committed volunteers, and there have been improvements to specific aspects, significant gaps remain that, if left unchecked, will limit success:

- » Current limitations on municipal staff capacity and resources is an immediate need and affects all aspects of the situation.
- » It is not fully understood the in-depth work that is ongoing as staff manage and use the collection nor that the work is so much broader than a collection management task.
- » Within HRM (and since the closing of the original Dartmouth Heritage Museum facility) there is a lack of sector specific expertise and knowledge about what is required to build, operate, and program a major museum venue (or system of venues akin to the Nova Scotia Museum).

Why have a civic museum? What would it achieve?

Over the years, the discussion around a civic museum has ebbed and flowed. Citizens of HRM consider museums part of the fabric of the municipality, and there seems to be general consensus in the region that a core part of Halifax’s civic story is not being told. In practical terms, there is currently no museum that addresses civic history in Halifax or Dartmouth, nor one that presents a comprehensive HRM story. Most communities in Canada with similar populations and cultural heritage have a civic museum institution of some scale and function (whether this institution is passive, active, or successful though varies). While one can find stories about the city of Halifax within exhibits at Parks Canada sites, Nova Scotia Museum sites, and community museums, no comprehensive story about HRM is currently being told anywhere. These individual locations where civic history is explored are all tangential to other mandates—be they military, pan-provincial or local (i.e., civic history is told through the lenses of very localized and/or focused themes). This puts HRM at a disadvantage not only for tourists who wish to know more about the city and region, but also for residents who do not have access to stories about their shared history—especially those that take into account recent amalgamated stories.



What role will a future museum play?

Halifax is unique as a capital city that has an overlapping mesh of private, community, municipal, provincial, and federal museums and heritage sites that often take on similar and/or complementary subject matter—and which many residents do not differentiate between, regardless of their stated mandates. Some see a new central regional museum as a way to correct this unintentional overlap and the perceived imbalance between communities within HRM, while providing a vehicle to express the region's shared heritage, stories, and collections, and to initiate discussions about current issues. Conversely, others perceive a “central” museum as a threat—potentially robbing communities of their identity, their uniqueness, and the autonomy to tell their own stories. These important perspectives must be acknowledged when considering the scope and role of any future regional museum.

What form will a future HRM museum take?

Is it a stand-alone museum, like some Canadian municipalities, or is it a museum system or network, as others have employed to connect with their communities? There is a consistent demand to reuse regional buildings as museums. Often these discussions are ad hoc and arise in reaction to sudden opportunities rather than as strategic initiatives that are determined based on clear rationale and siting.

Should HRM be the “keeper” of a regional civic museum?

While HRM is considered the keeper of public buildings and has recently invested in major public builds, like the Central Library (a comparable on many levels), it has never taken on any recent nor comparable museum builds of this nature.

How will a museum plan mesh with other HRM planning initiatives?

The Regional Museum Strategy will help define and align any future HRM museum model with existing regional plans, including the Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan, the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History, and the Nova Scotia Museum Interpretive Master Plan. This process is an important opportunity to build on current and relevant HRM initiatives supporting multiculturalism and reconciliation in the region, not only by defining a place within the Regional Museum Strategy for alternative and varied histories to be represented, but also by breaking down some of the barriers that currently separate collective regional museums and sites.



What does a centrally-planned and operated heritage interpretation system look like?

The HRM Regional Museum Strategy can help explore potential models for a future regional museum—be it a stand-alone facility, a systems-based model, or a combination thereof—and cultivate an understanding of what it takes to successfully plan, build, and operate such varied models in a modern municipality like HRM. It is important to understand what type of system will be needed and how it will be applied in order to promote success over the long term. Looking ahead, it will also be important to understand the true costs associated with capital costs and operations when considering the establishment of any civic museum and/or museum system.

Other than the obvious focus on a central museum, what other heritage-related issues can the Regional Museum Strategy also help address?

A thoughtfully developed Regional Museum Strategy will help identify possible directions for realizing the long-discussed civic museum (or civic museum system). Its role must also help with a number of issues that are intrinsic to heritage operations within HRM, including helping to rectify an absence of policies around heritage planning and funding; training and empowerment of staff who work within the system; and the establishment of a comprehensive policy framework that guides, protects, and enhances HRM resources (beyond the current “caretaker” model) and puts in place solid development of professional museum practices and skills development.



4. Key Findings

Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy identified the following key findings.

Site Analysis (SWOT)

The study assessed the strengths, weaknesses/challenges, opportunities, and threats that characterize museums in HRM, based on an analysis of the data collected during the course of the study, the consulting team's and HRM staff's existing knowledge of the operations and conditions of museums in HRM, and a round-table exercise carried out by the consulting team and HRM staff. The results of this analysis are appended to this Executive Summary, organized according to the six Site Profile Categories: Organization, Site & Facilities, Interpretation, Collections, Operations & Management, and Financial.

Key Partnerships

The study identified two current and key organizational partnerships within HRM that play a significant role in supporting the Municipality's stewardship of collections and the connection to the museum community.

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) is a registered non-profit organization. Originally established in 1976 as the Federation of Museums, Heritage and Historical Societies, the name was changed to Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage in 1982. In 2007, to underscore a refined focus on the province's museum sector, the organization assumed its current name.

ANSM's mission is to nurture excellence in and champion on behalf of museums in Nova Scotia. Their vision is: Museums in Nova Scotia are valued for their community service, are sustainable, and operate according to recognised standards of excellence. Working in partnership with museums, communities and supporters, the organization's mandate is to:

- » Support professional best practices in Nova Scotia's museums.
- » Educate Nova Scotians about the value of museums and Nova Scotian stories.
- » Act as a champion on behalf of museums in Nova Scotia.
- » Engage in activities with provincial, national and international partners that further ANSM's aims and benefit the museum sector as a whole.

ANSM provides professional assistance as part of HRM's Interim Community Museum Grant program, similar to the advocacy role and partnership played by Discover Halifax and Arts Nova Scotia. Working with ANSM in this way allows HRM, who does not have the capacity to provide training and direct professional guidance to museums in the region, to better support community museums. In 2018, HRM entered into a three-year service contract with ANSM for the provision of professional services in support of HRM's development and delivery of a Community Museums Grant Program.



Association of Nova Scotia Museums



The Halifax Municipal Archives

Created in 2006, the Halifax Municipal Archives (HMA) is the official repository for historical municipal government records and artifacts from HRM, the former Town/City of Dartmouth, City of Halifax, Town of Bedford, and County of Halifax. It also holds community records from the region, as well as a reference collection of published government documents and local history texts. Documents, maps, plans, photographs, objects, fine art, and audio-visual materials date from as early as the late 18th century but the majority are primarily from 1900-2000. All relate to the history of the Halifax region, and especially the five municipal governments that were amalgamated into the Halifax Regional Municipality in 1996. Records from the former City of Halifax dominate the collection.

The HMA is primarily a research centre focused on identifying, acquiring, preserving, and promoting access to municipal government and non-government archival records documenting the history of the region. The HMA actively collects official municipal government documents as part of its records management mandate; however, it assumes a more passive approach to collecting non-government archival material. The Reference Collection contains historical published materials that were created by the municipal government, such as the province's Legislative Library or those that are directly related to the region's history, geography, governance, and services. This includes municipal government reports, community service publications, newsletters, local history publications, and brochures.

The HMA collection is stored in a secure, monitored storage facility. Records and artifacts are located in a heated warehouse space, special media and vital records are stored in a temperature and humidity controlled vault, and publications are stored in an office area. Archival records and artifacts are stored in appropriate containers with adequate environmental controls. The facility has active pest-control, a disaster-recovery plan, and a sprinkler fire suppression system. Storage space is near capacity; no expansion is planned in the near future.

The HMA operates in a large, leased facility it shares with the Municipal Records Centre. Public access is provided in a research room with workstations, microfilm readers/scanners, Wi-Fi, and reference support. Numerous patrons comment that the location is too remote for such a prominent public-access building. It is directly on two bus routes, and has ample free parking and wheelchair accessibility; however, is not at all in the public eye.



Halifax Municipal Archives



Comparable Models

A central focus of Phase 1 was to research and assess comparable museum organizations and systems to build comparisons between the current HRM situation and how similar Canadian municipalities support/manage museums in other jurisdictions. The intent of this analysis was to determine where successes and pitfalls exist when one considers establishment of a civic museum or museum system at the scale imagined for HRM. This included assessing models where municipalities directly own, operate, and fund museums, as well as models where municipal governments provide operating support to museums that are operated by third parties, like historical societies.

Phase 1 also studied operational archival support/models in other cities to determine how a regional museum strategy might also address the requirements of the municipality's archival system going forward. Finally, the study assessed comparable new and/or planned museum projects within HRM, as well as in other locations within Atlantic Canada, in order to ascertain the implications of planning, financing, and operating museum projects on a civic scale.

A selection of museums in comparable municipalities, archive facilities, and museum projects were chosen in consultation with HRM as well as through an assessment of municipalities with comparable populations to HRM. The selection process also considered locations that offered regional variety (i.e., within different provinces), and how capital cities, like Halifax, balance civic museums with provincial and federal facilities often located within the same municipal or geographic region. The process also considered where civic museums needed to address amalgamated municipalities in their representation, interpretation, and operations.

Municipal Museum Models: Stand-Alone

- Museum of Vancouver
- Moncton Museum at Resurgo Place
- Museum of Surrey

Municipal Museum Models: Multiple Site/Service or System

- Halton Heritage Services
- City of Toronto
- City of Edmonton

Municipal/Civic Archives Models

- City of Thunder Bay Archives
- City of Edmonton Archives
- City of Ottawa Archives
- City of Saskatoon Archives
- Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame

Regional Museum/Cultural Site Projects: Within HRM

- Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
- Halifax Central Public Library
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- Discovery Centre
- Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 Expansion

Recent Museum/Cultural Site Projects: Within Atlantic Canada

- Black Loyalist Heritage Centre
- Mi'kmawey Debert
- Moncton Transportation Discovery Centre (Resurgo Place)

Libraries

- Winnipeg Public Library
- Halifax Public Libraries
- Various library spaces throughout North America



5. Recommended Next Steps

Phase 1 of the HRM Regional Museum Strategy focused on describing the current landscape and status of heritage interpretation and museums within HRM. It is understood that the Municipality seeks to carry on with a Phase 2 process, which would build upon the research and conclusions identified in Phase 1.

Recommended next steps that should be considered when defining the scope of work for Phase 2 (and/or separate studies that can be initiated as a lead up to the next major phase) were identified as part of the Phase 1 work. These recommended steps are summarized below, and ordered to support a logical build-up of knowledge that will eventually facilitate a decision about whether to proceed with a new civic museum and, if so, what would be involved in planning such a museum. Recommended steps may be approached as stand-alone projects or bundled together as required.

These recommended steps do not include any specific direction for a new civic museum in HRM, nor do they identify any conceptual arrangements or sites for such a museum. These types of decisions can only be arrived at after several other foundational steps are completed.

Continue existing funding support to museums.

Until such a time as HRM staff and Council are able to proceed with Phase 2 of the Regional Museum Strategy, it is recommended that current levels of financial support for museums in HRM be maintained.

Freeze approval of heritage-related interpretive projects.

Investment in ad-hoc heritage interpretive projects and signage installations should be paused to level out where and how heritage-related content is applied within HRM until an interpretive master plan for HRM can be developed. This will ensure that all future projects and investments align with the goals and interpretive objectives of this plan. This recommended delay should not apply to projects that have their content, design, and fabrication work already underway.

Continue to rationalize and maintain the municipal collection.

Until the Regional Museum Strategy is completed and an operational model selected (see appendices), it is recommended that HRM continue to support the rationalization of collections through facility enhancements where required and appropriate, dedicated resources for enhanced staffing and operational capacity, and professional advisory services for the ongoing care and management of municipal collections. It is also recommended that HRM explore potential shared co-located artifact and archival storage for HRM-owned collections and, potentially, more broadly with other museums and archives. The creation of a dedicated storage facility shared among museums within HRM has definite merit. The construction and management of a shared storage facility would spread costs of staffing, security, and maintenance among participating partners.



Maintain the Central Region Heritage Group.

The Central Region Heritage Group (CHRG) refers to the museums and archives located in HRM and meetings are open to all interested parties. HRM hosts the meetings, which occur two to three times per year. ANSM and HRM provide updates on funding, training, and status of strategies and plans, such as this report and the Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan. Meetings are well-attended and members were instrumental in sharing information for the site profiles developed as part of Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy. CHRG members are key stakeholders in the development and completion of the HRM Regional Museum Strategy.

Undertake detailed evaluation of possible operational models and delivery mechanisms as part of Phase 2 of the Regional Museum Strategy.

Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy identified a number of possible models that HRM may wish to pursue. The characteristics, and general pros and cons, of each of these models are described in the chart appended to this document. During Phase 2 of the Regional Museum Strategy, it is recommended that HRM staff, in consultation with key stakeholders and with the support of outside consultants as necessary, undertake a more detailed evaluation of these options to enable HRM to select a preferred museum model. The scope of work for Phase 2 of the Regional Museum Strategy should also identify the subsequent steps needed to develop detailed plans for implementation of the preferred option identified during Phase 2.

Undertake a Regional Interpretive Master Plan as part of Phase 2 of the Regional Museum Strategy.

During Phase 2 of the Regional Museum Strategy, it is recommended that HRM staff, in consultation with key stakeholders and with the support of outside consultants as necessary, undertake a comprehensive interpretive planning process for HRM. The suggested scope of this critical planning work is summarized in the full Phase 1 report.

Undertake detailed planning for a preferred museum model as part of Phase 3 of the Regional Museum Strategy.

Once HRM has selected a preferred model for its Regional Museum Strategy, it is recommended that HRM staff, in consultation with key stakeholders and with the support of outside consultants as necessary, initiate a detailed planning process for implementation of the preferred option.



Leverage and align HRM resources.

While Phase 2 and 3 of the Regional Museum Strategy are developed, HRM can alleviate some of the pressure on local sites as well as the perceived gaps in the current heritage landscape by leveraging its own resources, including existing municipal spaces and people. As a short-term step, this begins to allow the flow of stories and collections out to the public who are hungry for local content. In the longer term, it begins to test avenues and methods by which interpretation can be interwoven throughout the municipality without incurring prohibitive overhead costs. Examples include Africville Interpretive panels or the lending of municipal artworks in HRM owned facilities. Recommended initial steps are described in the full Phase 1 report.

Align with the Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan.

The principles of diversity and inclusion are integral to the Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP). The investigation or implementation of any outcomes of Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy should be tested against, and be in alignment with, these goals and values. Through the implementation of the CHPP and subsequent Regional Museum Strategy phases, the recommendations of the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History, as approved by Regional Council in July 2020, must be considered.

Manage site profile data gathered through Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy.

Throughout Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy, the consultants and HRM staff discussed how the data gathered about sites (organized in “Site Profiles”) might be maintained and augmented in future, so that information is not lost and can remain useful to planning work. It is recommended that a strategy be determined for ongoing upkeep of the Site Profiles once they are submitted to HRM.

Develop COVID-19 guidelines for the development of any proposed interpretive exhibits and program experiences within HRM that support municipal, provincial, and federal-level guidelines.

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing museums and public attractions to rethink many of their current and future experiences. It is practical to plan ahead for how visitors will engage with interpretation within the context of new norms for physical distancing, particularly as this relates to social interaction and touch-based interpretive media and programming within museums.



6. Final Remarks: What's Next?

Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy has provided a phased approach toward determining the need for, and scale of, a new regional museum model. As subsequent phases are developed and potentially resourced, the plans and outcomes will be tested against the goals and pillars of the Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan. The alignment with this plan, and with other HRM planning documents, will ensure that future heritage-planning programs and initiatives take into account the significant public consultation and feedback that has been conducted through those plans so they can reflect the needs of the municipality and its citizens. Careful development of future phases will also consider the impact to existing museums and heritage sites in the municipality.

Immediate next steps include:

- » **Report to Regional Council:** In 2021, Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy will be presented to Regional Council.
- » **Development of Phase 2:** It is anticipated that aspects of Phase 2 will require additional consultant support to provide sector-specific expertise. A timeline of priorities and an accompanying budget will be developed for 2022/2023.
- » **Further Engagement:** Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy included targeted engagement with key stakeholders, including the existing museum community, ANSM, and HRM Archives. Broader public consultation will take place as part of Phase 2.



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HRM REGIONAL
MUSEUM STRATEGY
PHASE 1

**Executive
Summary**

Appendices

Organization

STRENGTHS

- Museums are located throughout HRM, in urban and rural areas and in urban areas of HRM. Only three municipal districts do not have a museum located within their boundaries.
- Museums are important assets to the communities in which they are located. Museums represent and celebrate community pride and identity.
- The majority of HRM museums offer free admission, making them accessible to visitors from all income groups.
- 70% of museums have been in operation for over 40 years and therefore have established track records.
- Over two thirds of museums are governed by not-for-profit boards whose members are drawn from their local communities.
- The majority of museums in HRM have a strong local/community focus.
- HRM is home to a number of provincially or federally-operated museums, which are staffed by highly trained professionals and have access to a wider range of resources.
- Government and professional museum staff work well together.

OPPORTUNITIES

- More opportunities for board governance training could be provided.
- Museums can be a tool for creating community connections and strengthening identity, particularly in areas undergoing a high degree of population change.
- The current distribution of sites has the makings of a system/site-based network (pending the enhancement of communications, administration, funding models, etc.).
- New/innovative programs/services could attract new visitors/volunteers.
- Museum sites are like the branches of a tree: many exist and are fruitful; however, improving the “trunk” is a priority.

WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES

- There are geographic gaps in museum coverage, including the Musquodoboit Valley and Prospect/Peggy's Cove areas.
- Many existing museums were developed before the creation of HRM and have a very specific (local) focus. Because there was no systematic approach to the creation of these museums, there is limited integration among them.
- Overlapping mandates (local, provincial, federal) within a single geographic area are potentially confusing for the public, who may mistakenly perceive one as doing another's work.
- There is a declining pool of people to serve on museums boards, especially in rural areas where populations are declining.
- Some museums are closely tied to individuals or small groups who founded them and lack a broader support base.
- There is a declining connection to heritage within communities as populations decline and newer residents have fewer links to the history of the community.
- Some museum boards do not have a strong understanding of good governance principles.
- The majority of museums in HRM are only open on a seasonal basis.

THREATS

- Long-term feasibility of maintaining the current/increased number of museums.
- Continued rural depopulation could diminish the pool of museum volunteers to the point of insufficiency.
- If museums are not successful in making their work relevant to new/younger residents who do not have long connections to the community/story being told, museum support, volunteers, and visitors may dwindle as core supporters age and are not replaced.
- There is limited capacity at the center (i.e., there is no strong central system); if the 'core' isn't healthy, branches can die.
- If individual sites do not start to talk/collaborate more, they will remain isolated.
- Ongoing external changes (i.e., development) may continue to put pressure on museum sites.

Site & Facilities

STRENGTHS

- Museums are important physical assets in their communities; their mere presence is a benefit to the community.
- Many represent the last vestiges of a community (i.e., helping with the survival of diminished places).
- Museums are often owned by the communities they reside in.
- Museums usually occupy unique buildings that are often the only remnants of the original community.
- Museums fulfil the need for preservation and access to historic structures and landscapes.
- Visitors are able to see/experience original buildings and sites related to a community or story.
- Existing temporary exhibit spaces have the potential for travelling or shared exhibits role, in partnership with others.
- Museums provide indoor and outdoor spaces for community use, for meetings and events, festivals, weddings, etc.
- Most sites (but not all) are physically accessible to the public.
- Many museums offer publicly accessible amenities (e.g., public washrooms, a CAP site, picnic tables, etc.).
- Many museums offer connections to trail systems and offer opportunities for outdoor recreation.

OPPORTUNITIES

- There is potential for restoration of buildings and sites.
- Some sites have the capacity to augment their existing spaces for other/future uses, and take advantage of available space to grow their functionality.
- Under-used spaces can become used for other purposes (e.g., future exhibits and programs, pop-up exhibits, etc.).
- Some sites could be used as film locations (however, this may sometimes become a threat to the site with uneven returns on invested time/resources).

WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES

- Many museum buildings are old, in poor condition, and have considerable ongoing maintenance needs.
- Some sites have limited capacity and there is sometimes conflict between balancing preservation needs versus visitor use/numbers (e.g., associated wear and tear on historic fabric).
- Accessibility is varied. Many locations and physical infrastructures are not ADA accessible.
- Public services are limited or non-existent in some places.
- Housing museum exhibits and collections in old structures presents risks for collections.
- Some sites have poor environmental controls for their collections.
- Some sites have limited space and/or lack of flexible space for temporary and pop-up exhibits.

THREATS

- There continues to be disparity in the quality of site infrastructure, with stagnation of some sites (no change is current status).
- Unchecked wear and tear on site fabric and infrastructure could lead to continued deterioration of historical structures.
- Lack of funds for repairs and maintenance could result in the continued deterioration of museum facilities, especially heritage buildings.
- Not all sites have good conservation plans and/or policies they can refer to when undertaking renovations or repairs.
- Many sites are lacking in basic and/or modern security systems.
- Most sites have no fire suppression systems.
- Threats from fire, sea level rise, climate change, hurricanes, and other acts of god remain ever-present.
- Sites must continue to deal with liabilities and code violations (often increasing in strictness).

Interpretation

STRENGTHS

- There are many existing stories already in place.
- There is a wide variety of topics and themes already interpreted at sites.
- The HRM military story is well covered.
- Rural and coastal life is well interpreted.
- There is a growing awareness that under-represented stories need to be interpreted going forward (e.g., African Nova Scotian stories, Mi'kmaq stories, women in Nova Scotia, etc.).
- There have been some recent investments in sites/stories.
- Some new stories are being told within the region.
- Much research and heritage knowledge is already in place.
- Staff and volunteers are passionate about the stories being interpreted.
- In many cases, museums may be the only place where some of these “stories” are told within HRM (regardless of how limited or out of date interpretive methods may be).
- Good examples of great programming and outreach exist within the region (some examples include the Army Museum, Africville Museum, Memory Lane Heritage Village, senior home programs, etc.).
- Museums feature some staff animation/living history experiences.
- Exhibits/programs are typically a reflection of the community they reside in.
- Interpretation presents an opportunity to interact with people from the community.
- There is high quality interpretation at sites within the urban centre.
- There is a variety of interpretive resources and vehicles at work already.
- Local sites provide an opportunity to use collections at a local level.
- There is potential for more collections-based stories and content.
- Many sites are outward looking (and are aware of other HRM sites and related activities).
- Many existing sites have potential for partnerships in exhibit development, programming and cross promotion activities.

WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES

- There are no clear guidelines in place to guide messaging and focus on underlying regional themes, identifying new stories to tell, etc. (i.e., a muddled approach to interpretation exists across the region).
- There is a lack of interpretation about the Halifax Peninsula, specifically the story of the city and its residents.
- There is a lack of capacity to identify and research new stories (compared to existing themes/stories where past research has been exhaustive—e.g., Halifax Explosion).
- Current themes and stories tend to appeal to an older audience (and may not be relevant for younger audiences).
- There is limited capacity to appeal to and build new audiences within HRM.
- There is a lack of renewal, change, and investment (e.g., aging exhibits and media). Ongoing stagnation of existing interpretation and exhibits remains.
- There is a lack of capacity to renew interpretation at the local level (e.g., to undertake research, writing, design, etc.).
- The overall quality of interpretation is inconsistent in some places (ranging from simplistic methods right up to modern technology).
- There is a lack of variety and innovation in the use of interpretive media/presentations.
- Many exhibits lack a variety of interactive and tactile (hands-on) media experiences.
- Varied languages: bilingual, trilingual or multilingual interpretation is minimal.
- Use of space is often uneven, and with misplaced priorities (e.g., space devoted to retail vs. interpretation).
- Maintenance capacity continues to be limited/non-existent.

OPPORTUNITIES

- It is possible to generate and present new and different content; specifically, content identified as gaps in the current HRM context (see 6.1.3 above, as well as the appended document related to possible content/topics).
- More relevant themes/stories could be developed.
- The development of shared stories (e.g., Halifax Explosion) across sites is possible.
- Existing stories could be presented from different locations, perspectives, and in different ways.
- The development of coordinated efforts in terms of storytelling and theming between sites is possible.
- It is possible to link together several sites with complementary stories and themes.
- There is potential to leverage existing resources for dealing with sensitive subjects (e.g., diversity, inclusion, etc.).
- There are opportunities to invite visitors to participate more in storytelling/interpretive experiences.
- Labelling and mounting techniques could be enhanced.
- Use of new media, mobile media, and new technologies is becoming easier to adopt.
- There is potential to offer a greater variety of interpretive techniques and methods (e.g., live animation, theatre groups, social media, etc.).
- The development of food-based experiences have potential.
- The development of temporary/pop-up exhibits and/or experiences are possible in many places.
- An increased use of the landscape around a museum/site may be possible for pop-ups and events.
- There is potential to develop the spaces “in between” sites (e.g., interpretation appearing within the community, public parks, trails, pedways/malls, downtown, at schools, etc.).
- There is potential to develop more collections-based themes/stories (drawing from collections that are under-used) and getting the collections “out there.”
- Engaging with the arts and other similar collaborators outside of the museum world (e.g., dance, spoken word, non-traditional experiences) has great potential.
- There is potential to develop curriculum-based programming and increase “taking interpretation to the schools.”
- There is potential to establish partnerships with industry and the private sector.

THREATS

- There remains a limited capacity to update/change content.
- If interpretation does not remain relevant, public interest levels could decrease.
- Sites may not have an understanding of, or a process for, working with sensitive topics (e.g., Indigenous content).
- Sites may not pick up on planned and suggested initiatives (e.g., HRM recommendations or new/proposed ways of collaborating are not adopted).
- Possible perception among existing museums that they may lose their autonomy and ability to tell their own stories if there is a move toward greater centralization (e.g., regional interpretive plan, central museum).
- Costs and budget limitations are not addressed.
- Updates to technology outpace the capacity or a site and its associated funding.
- Seasonal operations continue to impact the continuity of staff and embedded knowledge at sites.

Collections

STRENGTHS

- The collective holdings of HRM's museums are extensive.
- The collections in many cases are unique, significant, and tell their community's story.
- ANSM and the Collective Access system are valuable resources.
- Many sites are committed to looking after their collections.
- Many collections are well-suited to interpret the themes of their sites/communities (e.g., community life, industry, and commerce).
- There is a broad representation of material (e.g., photographs, fine art, textiles, wood and metal artifacts, and archival material).
- General conditions are good (stable) at most sites.
- There is already some collaboration between sites regarding what to collect, sharing policy decisions, techniques, etc.
- More selective choices are being made with regard to acquisitions and deaccessioning policies. Sites have developed similar collecting policies, acquisition criteria, and consideration of future use and conservation requirements.

WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES

- The size of the collections is challenging to manage and there is inconsistency in the quality of collections in some cases.
- There is an overall lack of proper storage and conservation systems in place.
- Many sites have poor environments for storing/displaying collections.
- There is a significant scope of work and limited staff capacity required to manage collections properly (i.e., accessioning, conservation, record-keeping).
- Information about collections can sometimes be scant (e.g., lack of provenance).
- Some museums have a backlog of artefacts to be recorded into their collection database.
- There is a lack of conservation expertise and skills retention.
- It is a challenge to fill interpretive gaps (e.g., collecting new things for new stories).
- Capacity to purchase/obtain important items is limited (e.g., accessions budgets).
- There is an absence of strategic collecting at sites regionally (e.g., not always based on shared themes, historic context, and research).
- There is no mechanism for HRM to receive donations.
- Collaborative collecting and acquisition between sites to manage "orphans" is haphazard.
- There is limited sharing of current collections between sites.
- Currently, artifacts relating to the history of Halifax are not being acquired (i.e., compared to Dartmouth materials).
- There is a noticeable lack of resources to support historical research that is necessary to bring the collection and community stories alive for visitors.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Greater collaboration between sites (regarding collecting, exhibiting, digitization, conservation, etc.).
- Franchising interpretation (storytelling and themes) across multiple sites through the use of extant local collections.
- There is an opportunity to rationalize the collections within HRM based upon accepted museological criteria and a thematic framework.
- Contemporary collecting related to extant and new themes could occur.
- Alignment and parity of collections with themes and locations within HRM.
- An increased use of collections to tell new stories and broaden interpretation.
- Generating a conservation strategy for particular objects.
- Expanding research opportunities and appealing to wider audiences by putting more collections online.
- Digital databases could offer quick access to data and “patterns,” be used to prioritize conservation items, and is an opportunity to engage with the public.
- Exploring corporate funding for acquisitions.
- Creating a shared storage space and facilities (e.g., shared costs, risk, staffing, security, skills, etc.).
- Product development and sales based on collection items (as design inspirations/prototypes).
- Development of a research program, including oral history to develop and interpret the collection and related themes.
- Development of a collection strategy to tell the collective story of HRM, including peninsula Halifax.

THREATS

- Time (i.e., deterioration of objects, ongoing threats, gaps in themes increasing).
- Crowded storage spaces and facilities at capacity.
- Gaps in collections and collection development for new and relevant themes.
- Not addressing conservation needs (e.g., almost no one is working with conservators at the moment).
- Stagnation of the HRM collection (e.g., not collecting contemporary items).
- Lost collecting opportunities (e.g., objects lost or destroyed).
- Quantity of digital records/items accumulating that requires different types of management methods/capacity.
- Absence of legislation and mandates needed to achieve geographic parity in an HRM collection.
- The lack of formal HRM sanction and allocation of resources for preservation and public access for the Police and Fire collections.
- Ongoing inconsistency of skills/staffing when dealing with collections.
- Loss of institutional/corporate memory and knowledge about certain collections/objects.
- The lack of historical research means important stories are being lost.

Operations & Management

STRENGTHS

- Museums provide hundreds of full and part-time jobs throughout HRM, many of which are in rural areas.
- Museum staff are dedicated, passionate and inventive.
- Some museums in HRM have a large, professionally-trained staff who have a wealth of knowledge and experience.
- Larger museums in HRM and government agencies are a source of expertise for smaller museums and museums without paid staff.
- All museums in HRM benefit from strong contingents of community volunteers, without whose tireless efforts many of these museums would not be able to operate.
- Museums in HRM are important educational and recreational resources, hosting hundreds of thousands of visitors from HRM residents annually.
- Museums are important tourist attractions within HRM, hosting millions of tourist visits annually.
- Many museums undertake innovative partnerships/collaborations with other heritage attractions, educational institutions, community groups, and tourism industry partners.

WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES

- A number of smaller museums and museums in rural parts of HRM have limited paid staffing or no paid staff.
- Smaller museums and museums in rural communities have difficulty attracting and retaining staff qualified staff because of low salary levels.
- Some museums rely on the efforts of a single founder or small group of founders and lack succession plans to replace these founders when they are no longer able to be as heavily involved.
- Many museums rely on summer employment programs to hire staff and face uncertainty every year about whether programs will exist and whether their applications will be successful.
- The pool of museum volunteers, especially in small communities within HRM, is limited and there is a high rate of turnover due to workload. This leads to the loss of corporate memory and consistency.
- This can also lead to considerable turnover in management and the loss of continuity and corporate memory.
- There are few opportunities for professional development after staff have been hired.
- Many sites, particularly smaller and rural sites, have limited access to technology and make limited use of new media for communications and marketing.

OPPORTUNITIES

- More standardized and formal policies/procedures, training, implementation, and professional standards could be developed.
- Many sites can benefit from improved technology and communications.
- Professional staff working for larger museums, other museums with specialized skills and retired museum professionals could provide peer-to-peer training and mentorships.
- Museums could benefit from having access to skill sets from other sectors and from other departments/units within HRM.
- ANSM could play a larger role in skills development/training for HRM museums.
- Partnership between museums that interpret similar topics could be expanded.
- Museums in HRM could learn from other parts of the cultural sector (e.g., theatre, music, film) how to make more effective use of communications and marketing technologies, particularly social media.

THREATS

- Staff and volunteer burnout.
- Aging and loss of long-term staff volunteers and their experience/corporate memory.
- Loss of champions and leadership within the system.
- Lack of succession planning.
- Inability to offer levels of pay necessary to attract new employees and compete with other sectors for workers.
- Continued lack of professional development/training.
- Lack of standardized policies.
- Inability to compete with other attractions and media for leisure time and spending.
- Overall lack of appreciation for the role and relevance of museums within our communities.
- Limited capacity at the centre (i.e., there is no strong central system).
- Not increasing collaboration/networking among sites.

Financial

STRENGTHS

- There are four museums in HRM that are funded through management or long-term lease agreements.
- The interim museum grants program has greatly enhanced the financial stability of the museums that have received funding through the program.
- Museums in HRM generate millions of dollars of operating revenues from a variety of public, earned, and contributed sources.
- As some forms of government revenue have decreased, many museums have found inventive ways to diversify their revenue from other sources.
- Museums in HRM inject millions of dollars into the local economy through direct spending on staffing, building maintenance, utilities, and the purchase of goods and services.
- Museums in HRM also provide spin-off financial benefits to the communities in which they are located by attracting tourists who spend time and money at hotels, restaurants, and other businesses in their communities.
- Precedents exist for the presence and role of municipally/provincially-funded museums in HRM.

WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES

- Many museums in HRM, particularly smaller museums and those in rural areas do not receive any form of ongoing operating support, making financial stability an ongoing challenge.
- Demand for operating support exceeds current funding capacity.
- There is a disparity in funding (i.e., some sites are well funded but most struggle to get by season-to-season).
- Capital funding needs often exceed available sources of funding.
- Museum funding has historically been ad hoc. Museums are always seeking funds, but there is no mechanism to rationalize funding “asks.”
- There are limited opportunities for self-generated and contributed funds, especially in rural communities.
- Most museums in HRM lack capacity/skills in fundraising /sponsorship development.
- There is a common perception that museums are “paid for” by the government and that citizens do not/should not have to pay for them.
- Some funding programs require sites to match funds for project grants, which many are unable to do.
- Provincial and federal funding has been stagnant while expenses have been increasing.
- After paying administrative, as well as facility and site costs, museums in HRM on average have had little left to invest in other key functions such as interpretation and programming, marketing and fundraising, collections, and access to information.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Increasing fundraising, even within small communities, is feasible, but will require training and mentorship.
- Some sites could diversify/increase revenue generation, but will require training and mentorship, potentially from sites with strengths in these areas.
- Partnerships/collaborations between sites (e.g., joint programming, interpretation) could create new revenue streams.
- Funding could be reallocated and/or funnelled to museums in new/different ways.
- Funding application processes could be consolidated.
- Sites could share costs and services (e.g., bulk buying, shared administrative costs/services).
- Shared and in-kind services could be accessed via HRM staff and the city's existing operational system.
- Standardized financial reporting across all sites would allow for better tracking and comparisons of financial performance.

THREATS

- Cuts to government funding programs (including operating, capital, and student employment programs) due to changing government priorities and financial pressures.
- COVID-19-related decreases in museum attendance, leading to lower revenues from admissions, retail sales, program fees, and other forms of self-generated revenues.
- Financial downturn, leading to lower levels of contributed revenue (fundraising).
- Operating costs escalating at a rate that exceed revenue-generation.
- Lack of a consistent and coherent funding and approvals process.
- Diverting resources from the branches (existing museums) to fund a new civic museum.

POSSIBLE OPERATIONAL MODELS: PRELIMINARY DIRECTION FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION IN PHASE 2

It was not within the consultants' scope of work for Phase 1 of the HRM Municipal Museum Strategy to make a recommendation on whether HRM should pursue the creation of a new central civic museum, or take another approach. More detailed research and analysis will be required to allow HRM to arrive at a preferred regional museum strategy. However, to assist with this process, the consultants have outlined the characteristics of four possible models, and their respective pros and cons. These models should be explored further during Phase 2.

MODEL	Funding and Limited Services (<i>Status Quo</i>)	1A. Regional Museum Network: <i>Delivered Directly by HRM</i>	1B. Regional Museum Network: <i>Delivery Outsourced/Contracted</i>	2A. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: <i>Directly Operated by HRM</i>	2B. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: <i>Independently Operated</i>
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KEY CHARACTERISTICS					
	- HRM would continue to provide financial support to projects and groups that are running existing museums in HRM. - HRM would continue to manage the existing collection and storage facilities with current resources. - HRM would continue to be responsible for the preservation and care of its important artifact and archival collections. - HRM would continue to administer municipally-owned artifact and archival collections. - Existing museums would continue to operate independently, with minimal advisory/coordination services provided by HRM. - HRM would continue to engage in existing management agreements for the operation of the three municipally-owned museums. - HRM would not proceed with the creation of a new civic museum. - HRM would not develop museum-related educational programming. - HRM would not develop or host museum exhibitions. - Limited dedicated HRM museum heritage staff.	- HRM would take a system/network-based approach to funding and supporting museums in HRM. - Services would be coordinated, expanded, and delivered to existing museums (i.e., curatorial services, design, conservation, technical advice, etc.). - HRM would continue to provide financial support to groups that are running existing museums in HRM through a permanent Museum Grant Program, management/lease agreements, the Community Grants Program, Tax Relief Program, District Capital Funds, and Councillor Activity Funds. - HRM staff would continue to manage and develop the HRM collections, and provide appropriate storage facilities. - HRM would continue to be responsible for the preservation and care of its important artifact and archival collections. - HRM staff would provide curatorial direction and expanded advisory services to museums within HRM. - HRM would take a more active role in developing, leading, and potentially delivering interpretive projects and museum education programs utilizing existing museums and other host facilities. - This model may require the creation of an externally resourced, dedicated committee that could provide strategic direction and oversight on curatorial and advise on funding matters. - Edmonton and Halton municipalities are examples of this model.	The characteristics of this model would be the same model 1A, except that: HRM would outsource delivery of part of all of the proposed advisory services and the administration of funding to an external organization such as the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM).	This model would involve the creation of a new stand-alone civic museum that would: - Be directly operated by HRM. - Be funded by HRM. - Be operated by staff who are HRM employees. - Museum would have staff dedicated to care for, and manage, the HRM collections. - HRM would continue to be responsible for the preservation and care of its important artifact and archival collections. - The bulk of HRM collections could continue to be stored off site, while any items requiring special care could be stored in climate-controlled spaces within the new museum. - Develop and deliver inhouse programs such as exhibits and educational programs. - Partner with other existing museums in the region to deliver regional content at the new stand-alone museum as well as in the communities. - Provide some assistance to other museums in the region with the development of exhibits and programs to be delivered at other museums and community facilities throughout the region. - Require an oversight mechanism, such as a Board of Directors or advisory committee. NOTE: Vancouver and Surrey Museums are examples of stand-alone models. Toronto Museum is a hybrid of models 2A and 2B. Toronto currently has a systems-based approach whereby services/support are	This model would involve the creation of a new stand-alone civic museum that would share all of the same characteristics as model 2A, except: - In this model, a new central civic museum would be operated by an arm's length, independent entity/corporation, similar to the model that exists for Halifax Public Library. - The new museum would have its own board. - Museum staff would be employees of the museum corporation, not employees of HRM.

POSSIBLE OPERATIONAL MODELS: PRELIMINARY DIRECTION FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION IN PHASE 2

It was not within the consultants' scope of work for Phase 1 of the HRM Municipal Museum Strategy to make a recommendation on whether HRM should pursue the creation of a new central civic museum, or take another approach. More detailed research and analysis will be required to allow HRM to arrive at a preferred regional museum strategy. However, to assist with this process, the consultants have outlined the characteristics of four possible models, and their respective pros and cons. These models should be explored further during Phase 2.

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				provided to regional museums by municipal staff; however, they are also currently planning a new central museum that would be directly operated by the City.	
PROS					
	- Does not require an increase in financial support for museums in HRM. - Does not require a major capital and operating investment in the creation of a new civic museum. - Continues to provide current levels of support to existing community and municipally-owned/operated museums. - Applications to the Interim Museum Grants Program would continue to be reviewed by the Community Grants Committee.	- Would invest more resources in improving the conditions and professional practices of existing museums in the Municipality, rather than investing in the creation of a new civic museum. - HRM would have more influence over themes and stories being communicated (i.e., Municipality is a more active partner in the interpretation of HRM's stories). - Halifax Police and Fire collections would become integrated into the overall system. - Would allow for a strategic, integrated approach to the creation and delivery of interpretive content and programs that would allow for a richer and more cohesive story of the municipality to be communicated to residents. - Partner sites would benefit from gaining access to enhanced advisory services, content development, and programming. - Would make use of existing museums and other community facilities to host exhibits and programs across the region. - HRM-wide strategic projects may be eligible for alternative funding sources.	This model shares all of the advantages as those associated with model 2A, as well as the following additional advantages: - A community partner, such as ANSM, which has staff who have existing knowledge of museum best practices and can utilize existing systems, may be able to deliver expanded HRM museum advisory services and administer museum funding programs on behalf of HRM more effectively than if these services are delivered directly by the Municipality. - Outsourcing expanded museums support/advisory service to a community partner may be more cost-efficient than HRM staff delivering these services/supports directly.	A new directly managed civic museum could: - Become a popular visitor attraction. - Provide a central location for visitors to begin their exploration of the history of the Municipality as a whole. - Provide the opportunity to take a holistic, integrated approach to the interpretation of the history of the region, including addressing gaps in themes and stories that are not interpreted at any existing sites (e.g., Districts 9, 10, and 12, Halifax Police and Fire, and controversial topics such as Cornwallis, etc.). - Provide a suitable venue for the exhibition of municipally-owned artifact and archival collections. - Offer a mechanism to engage with residents in meaningful discussions about regional heritage. - Potential for high quality exhibition and program product development. - Provide an opportunity to develop a combined museum-archives facility and expanded heritage department. - Potentially allow for some operating efficiencies to be realized through support services that could be provided to the civic museum by HRM (e.g., payroll, groundskeeping services).	A new centrally located, independently operated museum would have the same pros as a new directly-operated civic museum, plus the following additional pros: - A new, independently operated civic museum, with its own board, could draw knowledgeable board members from the community. - A new, independently operated civic museum may be better positioned to raise funds from other levels of government and private sources.

POSSIBLE OPERATIONAL MODELS: PRELIMINARY DIRECTION FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION IN PHASE 2

It was not within the consultants' scope of work for Phase 1 of the HRM Municipal Museum Strategy to make a recommendation on whether HRM should pursue the creation of a new central civic museum, or take another approach. More detailed research and analysis will be required to allow HRM to arrive at a preferred regional museum strategy. However, to assist with this process, the consultants have outlined the characteristics of four possible models, and their respective pros and cons. These models should be explored further during Phase 2.

MODEL	Funding and Limited Services (<i>Status Quo</i>)	1A. Regional Museum Network: <i>Delivered Directly by HRM</i>	1B. Regional Museum Network: <i>Delivery Outsourced/Contracted</i>	2A. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: <i>Directly Operated by HRM</i>	2B. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: <i>Independently Operated</i>
CONS	- No central/unified civic museum/archival facility. - No central location to exhibit HRM-owned collections. - Halifax Police and Fire collections remain 'orphaned.' - Without a central, dedicated curatorial system, the ability to tell a holistic and cohesive story of the Municipality using existing museums located across the municipality is limited (e.g., Halifax and peninsula). - HRM artifact collections remain largely in storage and their interpretive potential remains underutilized. - Not increasing financial support or expanding advisory services to existing museums will limit the ability of the Municipality to influence the nature and the quality of the interpretation of the HRM story. - Project funding decisions are ad-hoc and not based on museum-specific criteria. - HRM-owned and operated sites remain ad hoc in their municipal role and strategic rationale. - No capacity to take on complex, regional projects or manage large collections. - Dependent on existing museums in HRM and outside agencies to develop, lead, and deliver interpretive projects. - HRM has limited control over the municipal themes and stories that are communicated and how they are interpreted. - Forgoes the potential opportunity to create a new centrally located civic heritage attraction. - Forgoes the potential to create a mechanism to engage with residents in meaningful discussions about HRM heritage.	- Would require additional, specialized HRM staff to deliver enhanced services. - Would require increased operating and project-related funding. - Would require greater coordination with and buy-in from existing museums. - May require investment in infrastructure in order to enable local facilities to host new exhibits and programs. - Would require investment to develop an integrated HRM museum network and an identity, as well as to build public awareness and buy-in.	- HRM would not maintain as direct a connection to existing museums in HRM if services were outsourced to a third party. - Lack of direct HRM involvement in the delivery of services may reduce the level of buy-in by participating museums. - Potential complexity of choosing and managing the partner relationship.	A new, directly managed civic museum would: - Require significant capital investment to select a location and to plan, design, and construct a new museum. - Require considerable ongoing operating support. - May involve higher staffing costs than 2B. - May result in reductions in current levels of financial support for other existing museums in HRM in order to meet the capital and operating costs of a building and running a new civic museum. - Have limited ability to fundraise unless a "friends of" group or similar not-for-profit arm/association is established. - Draw resources/audiences away from other existing museums in HRM. - Potentially create a politically-charged issue regarding site selection.	A new, independently operated civic museum would face the same challenges as a new, civic museum that is directly operated by HRM, plus the following additional challenges: As an arm's length corporation/agency, an independently operated civic museum may be more prone to budget reductions than a business unit within HRM.



B Comparable Profiles

To better understand potential museum system management models and the functions they carry out, the consultants profiled five examples across Canada. Below are the full profiles for four of the five examples (we have not included a profile for the central municipal museum option as it referenced a number of individual examples).

Non-Profit Fee-for-Service Management Organization: The Edmonton Heritage Council

The Edmonton Heritage Council was created in 2010 as a result of the City of Edmonton's 2008 culture plan entitled *The Art of Living*. Its **mission** is as follows:

"We connect people to the stories of our city by helping Edmontonians research, preserve, interpret, and advocate for our heritage."

Its **mandate** is:

"The EHC has a mandate to serve as a leader in advancing Connections and Exchanges, Edmonton's 10-year arts and heritage plan".

The mandate statement's reference to Connections and Exchanges, the City's 10-year plan to transform arts and heritage (2019-29), is key. This document replaced the Art of Living plan and provides EHC with a set of strategic priorities and directions that gives structure to its activities. This is the animating force for everything EHC does, and accomplishments related to the Connections and Exchanges plan are explicitly noted in EHC's annual reports. It is worth noting that Connections and Exchanges was developed in parallel with the City of Edmonton's broader municipal strategic plan with the expressed intent of achieving maximum alignment – a key ingredient for success. (Note that the plan also directs the activities of two other independent City partners, the Edmonton Arts Council and Arts Habitat Edmonton).



Organization and governance: As noted, the EHC is an independent not-for-profit charitable organization, created as a result of City policy and functioning as a contractor to the City of Edmonton. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors that includes one non-voting City representative who plays a monitoring role on behalf of the City and provides information and background regarding City initiatives.

Key Functions: EHC's core functions are fund distribution, capacity building and programming. Although one of the directions in the original *Art of Living* report that gave rise to EHC was to examine the potential for the creation of a city museum, this has not yet come to pass for a number of reasons, including the magnitude of projected capital and operating costs, given that city museums must be heavily subsidized by their municipalities (see the Contextual Analysis for data), and ongoing questions regarding the role and position of the 20+ independent community museums located within the city boundaries. Like Halifax, most of these are independent (and value that independence); Edmonton has just a few municipally owned-and-operated museums including the John Walter Museum, the Edmonton Valley Zoo and the John Janzen Nature Centre. In addition, there is a non-public City-run Artifact Centre and Fort Edmonton Park which is owned by the City but operated by the private-sector Fort Edmonton Management Company.

Given this situation, programming has been growing in importance, particularly the Edmonton City as Museum Project (ECAMP) which was originally conceived as a “stepping stone” to a physical city museum but which has evolved into a “museum without walls” or distributed museum concept. ECAMP appears in *Connections and Exchanges* under the general aim of “Edmontonians feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to peoples, places and stories.” The plan instructs EHC to “jumpstart Edmonton City as Museum initiative to establish its role as a program and a place of dialogue, exchange and collaborative city building through heritage.” Marginalized communities have been a particular focus and programming is offered via digital platforms.

An EHC program well worth mentioning is the FIRE (Funding Indigenous Resurgence in Edmonton) program which provides up to \$10,000 for Indigenous individuals and organizations that tell stories about the Edmonton community (as per the EHC mission). EHC provides grant-writing guidance, connects applicants to other resources and promotes funded projects as well as providing funding. Indigenous reconciliation is a major pillar of the *Connections and Exchanges* plan and a priority of Edmonton City Council.

Relationship to Community Museums: EHC's main connection to community museums is its fund distribution role, although capacity building is also a key service and point of contact.

While EHC is open to involving community museums in programming initiatives such as ECAMP, little progress has been made. EHC has also initiated an Edmonton Heritage Network that was intended to coordinate communications, share information and training, and coordinate interpretation and facilitation of joint programming. While the Heritage Network has been underfunded in the past and has had a limited impact to date, this situation has been ameliorated and EHC plans to re-activate it over the coming year. There are no formal membership requirements to be a member of the Heritage Network.

Collection Management: Management of the City of Edmonton collections is undertaken at the City's Artifact Centre by City of Edmonton staff. This is outside the mandate of the Edmonton Heritage Council.

Financial profile: The EHC's approved expenditures for 2023 are approximately \$2.1 million. This represents a \$400,000 increase over 2022. City Council has further approved an additional \$250,000 increase for 2024, \$200,000 for 2025 and a similar amount for 2026. Much of the increase resulted from the EHC's strict alignment to *Connections and Exchanges*, but also to its positioning as an Indigenous reconciliation and resident well-being organization (as opposed to a “heritage” organization, although it is that) – both of which are clear municipal priorities.



Of the total revenues, City of Edmonton grants provides about 69% of the total, with another 25% coming from the City of Edmonton General Fund. Earned revenues comprise about 6% - these are earned revenues from the Casino Fund and membership fees and donations.

Regarding expenditures, “external services”, which consists of grants administered by EHC and distributed to other organizations, accounted for the largest single category at about 48% of total expenditures, underlining the importance of EHC’s fund distribution function. Personnel costs were the next-largest category at about 44%, with utilities at 5% and materials, goods and services at 3%.

Municipal Department Support Program: Halton Heritage Services

Halton Heritage Services is a program area within the Halton Region responsible for the operation, management, and provision of heritage services as well as the preservation, care, and management of Halton Region’s Historical Collections.

Halton Heritage Services was formed as the result of a re-envisioning of the Halton Region Museum. In 2014, a Master Plan for heritage services in the region recommended that a Halton Heritage Center be developed to care for the collection, enhance programming, and support existing heritage groups. To implement this plan, Halton Heritage Services was formed.

Halton Heritage Services has the following vision and mission.

Vision: Halton Region leads a vibrant and inclusive heritage community that connects people and place, and links the past, present and future to enrich the lives of Halton residents.

Mission: Halton Region shares the stories of Halton by supporting and collaborating with community partners to raise public awareness of Halton’s rich heritage. Halton Region preserves, manages and provides access to the tangible and intangible heritage resources held in the public trust by Halton Region for the benefit of Halton residents.

The program area operationalizes strategic directions in the 2014 Heritage Services Master Plan, including:

- » The establishment of the Halton Heritage Centre;
- » Conservator services;
- » Expanded and new education programs to support delivery of the Region’s new Heritage concept;
- » Exhibit development for community presence;
- » Expanded marketing and heritage online presence.

Organization and Governance: Halton Heritage Services is a program of Halton Region, under the legislative and planning services department, economic development division. As such, all Halton Heritage Services staff are municipal employees.

Staff requirements: Currently, Halton Heritage Services has 4 full-time staff members.



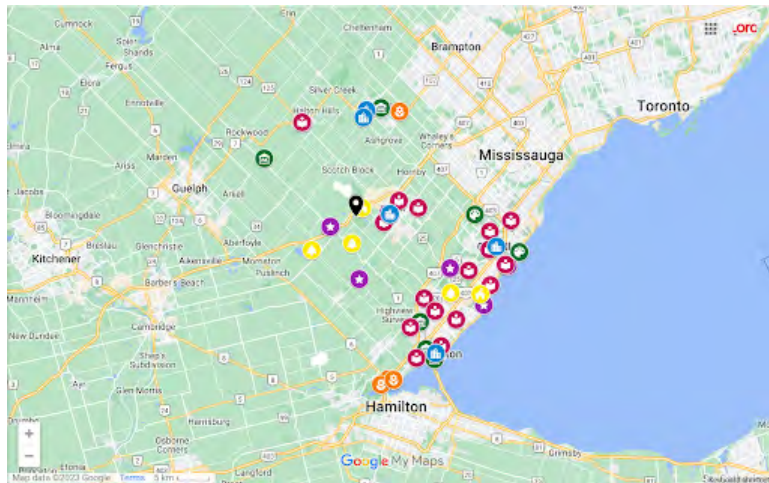
Primary functions and activities: Halton Heritage Services has four primary pillars of service:

Share: Deliver heritage services to Halton residents and cultural heritage partners, with a focus on facilitating preservation of and public access to tangible and intangible heritage across Halton through exhibitions, programming and research.

Activities under this pillar of service include offering traveling exhibitions to heritage partners, and facilitating exhibitions of HHS Collections in non-museum spaces (including schools and libraries).

Network: Establish and implement a facilitative Halton Heritage Network that fosters capacity building, collaboration and connectedness among local heritage organizations.

This pillar focuses on the management of the Halton Heritage Network, which provides advisory, training, and support services for cultural heritage organizations within Halton. Members are spread across the region, and include museums and galleries, historical societies and cultural association, libraries, gardens, and parks.



Advise: Provide unique services and supports to build capacity among members of the Halton Heritage Network, thus ensuring the ongoing preservation of local history and culture.

Main activities under the Advise pillar include identifying member needs, delivering high-quality advisory services, creating resource lists, and assisting with marketing and communications. Some activities are tactical and practical, such as offering large-scale printing and bulk buying for exhibition materials, while others are more wide ranging such as creating a regional collections management platform.

Preserve: Act as the steward of Halton Region's Historical Collections, including archives, photographs, objects, archaeological materials and a local history reference collection.

HHS is responsible for caring for and managing Halton Region's Historical Collections. Current activities under this pillar include a significant deaccessioning project, and the planning for a new collections facility that provides workspace and exhibition preparation to network members along with storage for the collection.

Currently, HHS's main focus is on collections management support for the many community museums and historical societies in the region. Priorities include training on general care and handling of collections and supporting digitization efforts and the creation of a centralized database.



Relationship to Community Museums: Halton Heritage Services has no formal relationship to community museums in the area, acting only as a voluntary provider of support and resources. HHS does coordinate the Halton Heritage Network, allowing partner organizations (including community museums) to access HHS resources. Membership in the network is voluntary.

Financial Profile: As a municipal department, all funding comes directly from Halton Region Municipality. Halton Heritage Service's 2023 Budget is \$958,000. Of that, \$630,000 is direct costs and \$328,000 are capital financing and other costs.

Halton Heritage Services does not provide any direct fund distribution to community museums or local heritage organizations.

Halton Region estimates that the construction of the Halton Heritage Centre will cost approximately \$8,000,000 and will occur in 2025.

Municipal Department: Halton Civic Museums

Hamilton's Civic Museums consist of 9 civic museums located in the city of Hamilton which are owned and operated by the Heritage Resource Management Section of the city. The Heritage Resource Management Section acts as an umbrella organization providing support and services to all the civic museums, and is Hamilton's de facto heritage agency.

Since 2019, the Heritage Resource Management Section has been undergoing a restructuring project to create a more systemic method of managing civic museums, providing more centralized resources and greater cohesion between museums. This process is the result of public consultation and a new Civic Museum Strategy which outlines a vision and specific actions for Hamilton Civic Museums.

Vision: The Hamilton Civic Museums will become museums of, by and for the city rather than just museums which are operated by the City. To do this they will preserve and present the many untold stories of Hamilton and Hamiltonians in a sustainable, accessible, inclusive and engaging manner. The city itself, including its peoples, streetscapes, parks, theatres, neighbourhoods, buildings and public spaces, will be treated as a museum that embodies its collective history. The Hamilton Civic Museums will become equal parts physical, mobile and virtual.

Organization and Governance: Hamilton Civic Museums are operated and managed by the Heritage Resource Management Section of the Tourism and Culture Division. Heritage Resource Management is also responsible for the city collection, heritage structures, and outdoor monuments in Hamilton.

Staff requirements: Heritage Resource Management has 81 staff members, with a combination of full-time and part-time staff equaling 49.5 FTEs. Roughly 80% of those positions are dedicated to the management and operations of individual museums, meaning approximately 9.9 FTEs are dedicated to centralized services.

Primary functions and activities: Heritage Resources Management's primary function is the day-to-day operations of the 9 civic museums under the HCM umbrella. However, the section is also responsible for providing a number of centralized functions and resources for the museums. These include collection management services, governance and system-wide strategic planning, professionalization and capacity building, and operational support.

Professionalization and capacity building is a particularly important function for the Heritage Resource Management Section, as museums are asked to become more "outward-facing" and less competitive with each other. A workforce development program, which includes external-led workshops and internal knowledge sharing has been critical in gaining staff buy-in for a new vision of Hamilton Civic Museums.



That the museums are all municipally owned and operated allows for a greater level of coordination and operational support. Heritage Resource Management is able to lead strategic planning work for the entire section and is also able to provide operational support staff (such as centralized school trip coordination).

Heritage Resource Management is growing its interpretive planning functions, with the goal of telling a more cohesive and representative story of Hamilton. To this end, the section is currently developing a city-wide interpretive strategy, and has already launched a web platform to host digital exhibitions. Rather than building a standalone museum, the focus is on the concept of a cohesive story, told through digital platforms and pop-ups in existing spaces (especially Hamilton Public Library).

Relationship to Community Museums: Heritage Resource Management is the owner and operator of all civic museums. Each site has a supervisor, with Program Manager functions centralized to Heritage Resource Management. Heritage Resource Management also tries to create a community of practice and provide resources for non-city owned museums and historical societies within the municipality.

Financial Profile: As museums are owned and operated by a municipal department, financial information is incorporated into overall municipal budgets.

Community Museum Support Partnership: the Ottawa Museum Network

The Ottawa Museum Network (OMN) is an implemented recommendation emerging from the City of Ottawa's 2005 Museum Sustainability Plan, created in 2007 in response to that report's articulated need a new service delivery model for museums. The OMN has a membership of 11 community museums, some of which are independent and some of which are City of Ottawa museums.

The mission, or reason for being, of the Ottawa Museum Network is as follows:

"The Ottawa Museum Network (OMN) works to provide a strong voice for Ottawa's community museums, and through collaboration, to strengthen the capacity of member museums; to celebrate, reflect and share the stories of Ottawa's diverse and evolving communities and to foster pride in heritage and a sense of belonging to the greater Canadian community."

The OMN also has a vision statement, which is aspirational as vision statements should be:

"The OMN is a strong, sustainable local museum community that works collaboratively and aspires to a future in which our members are recognized for their innovation, social relevance and collaboration with diverse communities."

Strategically, the OMN has recently changed direction from an organization primarily occupied with conducting research and gathering data to one focused on amplification and marketing on behalf of its members.



Organization and governance: OMN is an independent non-profit charitable organization that is almost fully funded by the City of Ottawa. It is Board governed, with the directors of the 11 member museums comprising the Board's membership. Because three of the members are actually City of Ottawa museums, three Board members are City staff. Once a museum becomes a member, that museum's director is automatically a board member. Acceptance of new members is entirely within the OMN director's purview (i.e. the City of Ottawa has no say in the matter); generally all that is required is that the museum be in the City of Ottawa's borders, deal with an aspect of Ottawa's story and be willing to join and (on behalf of the leadership) commit to Board membership and participation. It is worth noting that OMN leadership believe that the current rules around Board composition are not ideal, and that external Board members would be beneficial.

Key Functions: OMN has five key functional areas, the most important of which is to promote and advance the interests of its 11 member museums via marketing and promotion (this one function takes up a third of OMN's operating budget). Capacity building is a major function as well, including communities of practice and information sharing. Building inclusion and diversity (including Indigenous truth and reconciliation) is another key area and a needed one since not all member museums have the resources to effectively advance these goals on their own. Advocacy for the members rounds out the key functions.

There is a small fund distribution (granting) function, but it is strictly for translation and innovation rather than general operating funding and is therefore very narrow, with the small \$40,000 grant program (the funding comes from the City of Ottawa) reflecting its limited scope. Most funding for community museums is provided directly by the City of Ottawa via its community museum support program.

Overall the goal is to pool access to critical tools and services needed by community museums in order to raise their visibility with the Ottawa public, build their capacity and generate economies of scale.

Collection management: The City provides services like artifact storage to some (Billings, Cumberland, Gloucester, Fairfield, Nepean, Pinhey's Point) but not others (Goulbourn, Vanier Museopark, Bytown, Osgoode or Watson's Mill). Collections and collection storage was a huge issue for OMN in the past but efforts to build a shared collection storage facility for the use of all members have not yet borne fruit. For the time being, the City of Ottawa collections are centrally managed by City staff, while OMN provides assistance to member museums in digitization efforts.

Staff allocation: OMN has 3 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions plus contract staff (project-based and intern staff). The recent strategic change away from research and data gathering has generated enough savings to provide for the third FTE, just hired in 2023.

Financials/ budgets: The City of Ottawa provided \$322,000 in operating funding to OMN in 2022-23, equivalent to about 85% of the total OMN operating budget. City funding will increase slightly to \$327,440 in 2023-24. The balance comes from the provincial government (Heritage Organizations Development Grant). Occasional special project funding comes from provincial sources such as the Trillium grant program.

Attachment 2: Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy Implementation Plan

Key recommendations		High/Short- Term Priority (Year 1)	Medium/Medium-Term Priority (Years 2-4)	Low/Long-Term Priority (Year 5-)
Create Regional Museum Advisory Working Group				
Parks and Rec -SPD*	Develop strategic and action plan to define initial priorities and detailed implementation steps	X		
Parks and Rec - SPD	Develop detailed budget for enhanced HRM department on basis of strategic plan for staffing, increases to service level agreements and enhanced collection management, interpretation and programming	X		
Parks and Rec – SPD and HMA**	Develop Terms of Reference for Regional Museum Advisory Working Group	X		
Implement Fundraising Model				
Parks and Rec – SPD and HMA	Develop scope of advisory activities with Association of NS Museums and Council of NS Archives	X		
Parks and Rec – SPD HMA	Extend partner service level agreements as required according to strategic plan		X	
Parks and Rec and Finance	Explore increases to existing HRM community museum funding program		X	

*Strategic Planning and Design Division, Culture and Community team

**Halifax Municipal Archives

Key recommendations		High/Short-Term Priority (Year 1)	Medium/Medium-Term Priority (Years 2-4)	Low/Long-Term Priority (Year 5-)
Hire additional HRM staff				
Parks and Rec - SPD	Obtain Council approval for projected staff needs	X		
	Hire additional approved staff		X	
Develop and Implement Interpretive Master Plan				
Parks and Rec, Heritage Planning, HMA, Diversity and Inclusion	Conduct detailed interpretive planning	X		
Parks and Rec – SPD and HMA	Work through Regional Museum Advisory Working Group to establish priorities		X	
Parks and Rec – SPD and HMA	Develop new exhibitions and programs in accordance with the plan			X
Extend Capacity-Building Activities				
Parks and Rec	Extend partner service level agreements as required according to strategic plan	X		
Implement Collections Management Working Group				
Parks and Rec – SPD and HMA	Develop Terms of Reference		X	
Parks and Rec – SPD and HMA	Work with Central Region Heritage Group to coordinate activities		X	
Parks and Rec – SPD and HMA	Develop central digital portal			X
Support Community Museum Marketing and Operations				
Parks and Rec	Explore expansion of service level agreement with Discover Halifax for the marketing function		X	

Key recommendations		High/Short-Term Priority (Year 1)	Medium/Medium-Term Priority (Years 2-4)	Low/Long-Term Priority (Year 5-)
Parks and Rec, Facilities Design and Construction, HaliFact,	Work with other HRM departments and service partners to define support for building and facility maintenance, disaster planning, and other operational functions.		X	
Conduct Additional Activities				
Parks and Rec, Real Estate	Create plan for moving the DHMS artifact collection (2025/26) with class C costing		X	
Parks and Rec, Facilities Design and Construction	Investigate options for improved exhibit, envelope repairs and accessibility at Evergreen and Quaker House		X	
Parks and Rec, Facilities Design and Construction	Investigate opportunities within HRM capital plans and facility strategies to consider interpretation and exhibit infrastructure			X
Parks and Rec, Facilities Design and Construction	Pending the outcome of the HRM Cultural Venue Study and subsequent Plan, options for building or recapitalized a new cultural facility that would support museum exhibition as part of the decentralized system may be considered as part of the on-going Venue Study/Plan			X