HALIFAX

Item No. 15.1.5
Halifax Regional Council
April 12, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 5, 2022

SUBJECT: Phase 1 Regional Museum Strategy

ORIGIN

January 28, 2014 Halifax Regional Council motion (Item 11.1.10):

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Karsten

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Declare that 90 Alderney Drive is unsuitable for a museum, based on the CBCL structural assessment;
2. Refer 90 Alderney Drive for review in accordance with the process defined in Administrative Order 50;
3. Direct staff to complete the ongoing work on the inventory and restoration of HRM cultural artifacts;
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.

October 6, 2015 Halifax Regional Council motion (Item 11.7.4)

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Karsten:

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct staff to prepare a staff report that:

1. Outlines the findings of the conservator's report on phase 1 of work on the DHMS Artifact collection;
2. Outlines a plan to work with stakeholders, including the Board of DHMS, to determine the size and scope of a municipal museum;
3. Outlines the next steps in the completion of a municipal museum including allocation of capital funding

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and how it relates to the Cultural and Heritage Priorities Plan outlined in the January 28th motion and the subsequently requested Cultural Spaces Plan;
4. Explains the relationships with and impact to other museums in HRM;
5. Outlines potential short-term options, including opportunities for displaying the artifacts;
6. Outlines potential cost sharing and fundraising opportunities; and
7. That Council direct staff to release the completed conservator's report (executive summary attached) that outlines the work completed on the artifacts and the ongoing requirements to maintain the collection.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

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 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.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that 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 6-11 as set out in the body of this report, 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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to the January 2014 and October 2015 motions of Regional Council. The report contemplates the future direction for a Regional Museum in the municipality and introduces the final consultant report for Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy.

The background section describes the prior motions of Council, the various municipally owned artifact and cultural asset collections, municipally owned heritage sites that operate as museums and significant corporate initiatives pertaining to a Regional Museum.

The discussion section of this report includes information on the key findings of the consultant report, the phased approach to completion of the Regional Museum Strategy and the 11 recommendations suggested for subsequent phases of the strategy. The report concludes with proposed next steps in the development of the strategy.

Attachment One is the Executive Summary of Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy conducted by the project consultants AldrichPears Associates and AL Arbic Consulting. Attachment Two is an overview and update to the municipally owned collections and the current operational structure of HRM staff and business units in support of heritage initiatives and collections management.

BACKGROUND

Introduction
Beginning in 2009, Halifax Regional Council directed staff to review the current state of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum (Society) [DHMS] and collection and to consider the possibility of a establishing a regional museum. Subsequent staff reports have centered on finding a new location for the Dartmouth Heritage Museum and its collection or on the care and control of the municipality's artifact and archival collections. A summary of past reports is included below:

October 6, 2015 Regional Council recommendation report directed the development of a multi-phased approach to define the municipal role and mandate in relation to a municipal museum, specifically to include assessment of the DHMS' existing collection, stakeholder engagement, current state analysis of community museums operating in HRM and alignment with other corporate plans relative to the possible future development of a regional museum. Cumulatively these considerations have formed the basis what is now referred to as the Regional Museum Strategy

March 16, 2016 Regional Council recommendation report entitled *"Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society Request for Management Agreement and Funding"* followed the completion of a consultant-led project that entailed physically unpacking most of the artifact collection in storage. The ensuing motion directed the negotiation of a revised Management Agreement between HRM and DHMS, with funding increased from $50,000 to $100,000/year structured based on a clearer understanding of the collection itself and of the requirements for its proper care. This agreement was renewed for a 5-year term in 2019. The rationalization of the collection continues, and a collection update is provided as Attachment 2 to this report.

November 22, 2016, Regional Council motion related to the properties on North Street as a potential site for a municipal museum.

March 28, 2017, information report, "*Sale* of *90 Alderney Drive / Regional Museum Update"* provided Council with an update on the sale of the property and status of the collection.

Overview: Current HRM Museums, Existing Collection and Operational Roles
The current municipal roles pertaining to museums include:
1. Municipally owned heritage buildings that operate as museums:
    - Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society (DHMS) operates Evergreen House and Quaker House, through a Management Agreement and co-manages the HRM/DHMS artifact collection.
    - Fort Sackville Foundation operates Scott Manor House through a long-term lease.
    - Sheet Harbour Heritage Society operates MacPhee House through a long-term lease.

2. Halifax Municipal Archives (HMA)
    - Established in 2006, the Halifax Municipal Archives acts as steward of the municipal archival collection and serves as primary research resource for external and internal municipal inquiries. The collection is comprised of municipal records such as reference reports, historic Council minutes, photographs, and planning documents.

3. Municipal Collections:
    - HRM/DHMS Collection: Established in 1965 and comprised of over 40,000 artifacts and archival items, pertaining directly to Dartmouth history.
    - Municipal Archives Artifact Collection: Established in 2006 and expanded in 2018, comprised of artifacts directly relating to municipal functions.

- Other Municipal Collections: Public Art and Cultural Assets, Halifax Regional Police and Fire Collections.
- HRM-owned heritage buildings and inventory of registered heritage buildings in the region in respect to the Heritage Property Act.

4. Municipal Interpretive Projects: Since 2017, HRM has undertaken several significant interpretive projects that illustrate important civic histories, outside of a built museum setting.
    - Fort Needham Park: Upgrades to the park include interpretive elements that commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion.
    - Halifax Explosion Markers: Thirteen interpretive elements located throughout the region that commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion.
    - Africville Park: Five large-scale interpretive panels that tell the story of Africville, through the words and images of former residents.

HRM also provides operational, capital and project funding to community museums through *Administrative Order 2018-010-ADM Respecting Interim Grants to Community Museums*. In 2018, in response to a request from community museums, this interim operational funding program was established to support eligible community museums more equitably. In 2021, thirteen community museums received a total of $122,000/year, which supports operating costs over a three-year term. In addition to operating funding, the program also supports eligible capital projects and event funding. In 2020, the program was renewed for an additional 3-year term.

Related Planning Initiatives

Two key planning initiatives have also been implemented or are nearing completion, including, "Sharing Our Stories": The Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP) and the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History.

"Sharing Our Stories": Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP)

HRM is developing a strategic policy document that will direct the creation of municipal policies for culture and heritage and guide Regional Council and administrative decisions. Sharing Our Stories will establish clear priorities and will assist in the development of official planning documents, annual budgets, and investment decisions over the next ten or more years. The goal of the priorities plan is to improve access to culture, promote diversity & inclusion, support cultural development, and strengthen the creative economy. Substantial public and stakeholder engagement have been conducted and has helped inform the goals, pillars, and actions of the plan. The Regional Museum Strategy is aligned with those outcomes and subsequent phases will be conducted in co-ordination with and direction from the CHPP, upon approval of Regional Council. It is anticipated that the CHPP will be presented to Regional Council in 2022.

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 was presented to Regional Council. Two specific recommendations 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.

With regards to (7), the Halifax Municipal Archives currently provides virtual content through . online exhibits, using the archival collection to provide public access and interpretation of specific municipal histories. Activity related to this action will continue with on-going enhancement of online offerings through the Halifax Municipal Archives and the library and the development of Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan.

DISCUSSION

Regional Museum Development Overview
This report presents the findings of the Phase 1 Regional Museum Strategy report and provides an update on the municipal artifact collections. The final report is the first of its kind for the municipality and gathers all pertinent, current-state regional museum information in one comprehensive document.

In response to the 2015 motion of Regional Council, RFP 19-013 was issued for consultation services to undertake a current state analysis of all regional museums both HRM-owned/operated and non-municipally operated. In early 2019, AldrichPears Associates was awarded the contract and the resulting consultant report represents Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy. The executive summary of the report is included as Attachment 1 and the update on municipal collections and operational roles is included as Attachment 2.

Key Findings
The key findings of the report include:
- There are over 30 community, institutional, provincial, and federal museums and the region is well represented both geographically and thematically in terms of specific community histories, although interpretive gaps have been identified. Regional community historical societies and archives also help to support community museums through their research.
- Community museums play an important role as stewards of community histories, buildings and artifacts and act as social and cultural hubs in their communities. Volunteers are frequently the only staff and are critical to sustaining community museums. Annual municipal tax relief is currently one of the methods of municipal support to community museums. These groups also have access to project specific funding under the Community Museums Grants Program and may seek assistance under the District Activity/Capital Fund. Those located in HRM-owned property also receive a rent discount and HRM pays some annual operating costs.
- There are clear gaps in both the stories being told and the delivery of those stories in current collections. Frequently, the diversity of communities is lacking, and capacity and resources are often limited in developing new exhibits.
- There is no regional framework or guidance through which to develop or support new interpretive content, exhibits, or consider a collaborative approach to collections across the regional museums.
- There is a lack of interpretation about the Halifax Peninsula, specifically the story of the city and its residents. This gap is also represented in the lack of City of Halifax artifacts in the municipal collections, as there has not been a mandate to create or consider a broader and regional, municipal collection.
- Current HRM staffing in the delivery of heritage support and collection management, including the municipal Archives is very limited and decentralized within the organization.

These findings are why the review and consideration of new museum operational models is the key recommendation to be completed as Phase 2.

Regional Museum Project Phasing
An effective strategy for the development of a Regional Museum requires an understanding of the current landscape, both within the Municipality and, comparatively, in relation to other jurisdictions across Canada. Staff approached the Regional Museum Strategy as a phased project to better manage the extensive work required. Staff determined that the groundwork of Phase 1 was required to inform subsequent phases, with the proposed Phases 2 and 3 identified through the consultants' findings of Phase 1. The status of the phases is as follows:

Phase 1: Completed. Phase 1 findings establish a baseline and rationale upon which any future strategic decisions are contemplated regarding vision, scope, siting, and planning for any future municipal museum build or museum model in HRM.

Phase 2: Noted in detail below in #1 of the Regional Museum Development Recommendations. This will be initiated should Regional Council approve the recommendations of this report.

Phase 3: Feasibility study and plan implementation of new museum system and/or building. This will require Regional Council approval.

Regional Museum Development Recommendations
The development of a civic or regional, new build museum requires a long-term plan and significant capital, operational and staffing resources. In addition, it requires a collection that fully supports the enhanced organizational mandate. Currently, HRM does not have the collection to support a regional museum. The largest artifact collection, the HRM/DHMS collection is not regional in representation. Further, the municipality is home to over 30 museums, each with different interpretive mandates and collections. (The full site profiles can be found in the consultants' report.) The on-site assessments of the community museums were conducted by curators and museum specialists in collaboration with the sites and serve to illustrate the interpretive strengths and gaps in the collective artifact collections and the interpretive stories that those collections help to illustrate. They recognize the important role these sites play throughout the entire region and especially in their own communities.

As part of the Phase 1 work, next steps to be considered when defining the scope of work for Phase 2 and/or separate studies that can be initiated as a lead up to Phase 3 have been identified. They are summarized below and ordered to support a logical build-up of knowledge that will allow for a decision about whether to proceed with a new museum and, if so, what would be involved in the planning and establishment of such a museum. Some recommendations suggest a continuation of current operational and funding programs and others are new projects and initiatives. Recommendations may be approached as stand-alone projects or bundled together as required. The fully described list of recommendations can be found in the Executive Summary (Attachment 1).

Phase 2 Recommendations – New Initiatives

1. **Undertake detailed evaluation of possible operational models and delivery mechanisms (Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy)**
    Comment/Rationale: The analysis of scaled museum systems for the municipality will provide an opportunity to consider a future role in terms of a new museum build or new museum system. It may also consider near-term options for enhancing the HRM-owned museums, through renewed exhibits, expansion of Evergreen House or site-specific, external interpretive content. It is anticipated that the evaluation of comparative models and delivery options can be conducted and delivered in 2023/24.

2. **Leverage and align HRM resources**
    Comment/Rationale: Integrated with the Phase 2 operational model review, options for creating effective heritage delivery and collection care in the near-term will be examined. Issues may include consideration of co-locating the various artifact and archival collections or prioritizing the integration of interpretive projects in new facilities, street-scaping, and parks. Recent examples of aligning HRM resources to deliver heritage content include the Africville Interpretive panels, the co-management of the municipal artifact collection at HMA and the lending and display of municipal fine art in HRM owned facilities.

3. **Align with the Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan**
    Comment/Rationale: Several of the Museum Strategy recommendations, such as diversifying interpretive content or developing a municipal Interpretive Masterplan are mirrored in the CHPP actions. The goals and pillars of the CHPP clearly define the municipality's role in providing and supporting diverse and inclusive culture, heritage and arts programming and initiatives that are reflective of and

responsive to needs of the region. Subsequent phases of the Museum Strategy will be informed through those goals and pillars.

4. **Undertake a Regional Interpretive Master Plan (Phase 2 Regional Museum Strategy)**
Comment/Rationale: The Interpretive Master Plan is the most comprehensive recommendation and is also a key action of the CHPP. Examples of gaps to be considered include the lack of a municipal program for commemorative or community history projects/requests; lack of a regional approach around heritage delivery and collections; and an ad hoc approach to interpretive delivery. It is anticipated that cross business unit collaboration will be necessary to prepare a plan for the development of this master plan. Because this initiative is so dependent upon the results of the CHPP and is so cross-departmental in nature, the scope is considered beyond the more narrowly defined scope of this Museum Strategy.

Phase 3 Recommendation – New Initiative

5. **Undertake detailed Feasibility Study for the preferred museum model (Phase 3 Regional Museum Strategy).**
Comment/Rationale: With the options provided by the Phase 2 operational review and with the public and stakeholder feedback on those options, the municipality will be well-positioned to undertake Phase 3, the feasibility study that will result in a choosing an operational museum model or system. The options may range from status quo with limited direct support to museums beyond grants and limited collection resources; to a museum system in which enhanced and direct support is delivered by the municipality across the region in a hub and spoke model. Lastly, it may result in the building and operating of a new Regional Museum. The Phase 2 operational review is considered the next and important step, as the leap from current status quo of limited staff and resources to the potential building and operation of a new Regional Museum is considerable.

Operational Recommendations – On-going and existing
The following programs and initiatives are currently in place and administered by municipal staff in support of the regional museum community. The Phase 1 report recommends the continuation of these 'current state' practices as follows:

6. **Continue existing funding support to museums**
Comment/Rationale: In 2020, the Interim Community Museum Grant program was amended to expand funding categories and was based on feedback from the community museum community. It is due to be reviewed and updated prior to 2023. The HRM program is the sole operational funding program available to community museums in the region, as many community museums are excluded from the provincial Community Museum Assistance Program (CMAP) funding. The findings of this report show the operational funding provided to community museums enables these sites to maintain their operations, protect and develop their collections and continue to provide outreach to their communities.

7. **Continue to rationalize and maintain the municipal collection**
Comment/Rationale: Under direction of the 2014 and 2015 motions, as of 2016, rationalization of the collection has continued under the management of the Cultural Asset Manager, despite delays due to COVID-19 and restricted access to the warehouse. Collections management and rationalization requires the very careful deliberation of each of the 40,000 artifacts recommended for either acceptance into or removal from the collection. It also entails enhancing the individual database records through digitization and research. With one HRM staff, two DHMS staff and a small team of committed volunteers it is expected that work will continue into the latter part of 2023/2024. Refer to Attachment 2 for a detailed analysis of the collections.

8. **Maintain the Central Region Heritage Group (CHRG)**
Comment/Rationale: During 2020 and due to COVID-19, the CHRG did not meet, although most CHRG members participated in the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) web based COVID-19 meetings and training sessions. CHRG meetings have resumed virtually in 2021, with quarterly

meetings planned. The meetings are an important opportunity to share updates and advice and for the municipality to keep museums informed on major planning initiatives and grants.

9. **Freeze approval of heritage-related interpretive projects**
   Comment/Rationale: The absence of a program for developing and/or assessing and implementing interpretive requests and initiatives has been identified as a programming gap. Currently, requests or initiatives are assessed on an ad hoc basis without a formal approval process. It is anticipated that options for developing a municipal commemorative program would flow through the outcomes of the CHPP. Staff recommend that inflight projects such as the Cogswell Commemorative Program proceed, while new heritage related interpretive projects and external requests be deferred pending the development of a municipal commemorative program.

10. **Manage site profile data gathered through Phase 1 of the Regional Museum Strategy**
    Comment/Rationale: The site profiles of HRM-based museums are based on a template developed in collaboration with the museums. The profiles contain pertinent operational, curatorial, and financial information that will require updating and maintenance to keep current. Methods for updating these profiles are being considered.

11. **Develop COVID-19 guidelines for the development of any proposed interpretive exhibits and program experiences within the region that support municipal, provincial, and federal-level guidelines**
    Comment/Rationale: In their role as the provincial umbrella organization for museums, the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) has been the lead advisor for museums during COVID-19, providing enhanced training, operational guidance, and advice. Museums follow Nova Scotia Health COVID -19 protocols.

Conclusion and Next Steps:
The Phase 1 Regional Museum Strategy report acknowledges that the current state of staffing and resources does not allow for growth beyond the current level of collection care and limited interpretive projects. The Halifax Regional Municipality has limited staff pertaining to the care of collections, research, interpretive projects, administration of built heritage and administration of grants for museums and community history, across four business units. There is no centralized business unit for heritage delivery and staff collaboration is frequent, but informal in structure.

While much improvement in museum standards for the collections has been achieved, capacity is at limit and frequently strained. Collection management is precise and governed by the specific collection mandates and policies. Without a review and expansion of the mandates, with sustainable resources, the current artifact collections have a narrow scope and do not reflect the diversity of the region. Phase 2 is required so that options for increasing both capacity of staff and/or resources; and options for creating a more regional collection can be explored and presented.

The consultant recommendations for Phase 2 entails two main undertakings:

Conduct an in-depth analysis of five, scaled operational models and governance
The primary undertaking for Phase 2 of the Museum Strategy, is an in-depth analysis to present options for consideration for HRM's role regarding museums and collection support, cultural and heritage program delivery, and governance. The models would be based on the comparative analysis of other Canadian municipalities in terms of heritage delivery, ownership of collections and relationship to civic and community museums. Section 7, *Comparables Analysis* can be found in the full report and provides a detailed overview of different municipal museum models, including hub and spoke delivery, such as Halton Region and large-scale municipal models, such as Toronto, with direct management of museum sites and well-resourced heritage programs such as the arms-length Heritage Toronto.

The in-depth descriptions of the five models can be found in the Executive Summary and consist of:

- **Funding and Limited Services - Status Quo** – Limited and decentralized staff, narrow collection mandates, primary support to museums is financial.
- **Regional Museum Network: Delivered Directly by HRM** – A hub and spoke model, or similar, with direct municipal delivery in assisting with exhibit development and collection care to museums in the region. Increased organizational capacity to enhance collection care, research, interpretive projects and develop exhibits in HRM-owned facilities.
- **Regional Museum Network: Delivery Outsourced/Contracted** – Provide financial support to organizations to provide a hub and spoke model or similar model as above, on behalf of the municipality.
- **New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: Directly Operated by HRM** – A new or integrated museum building, with operational staff, resources, increased capacity for collection management, expanded collection and mandate, including new storage facility, and potential integration of Halifax Archives within the new museum.
- **New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: Independently Operated** – Provide the capital and operational support to a regional partner that has the capacity to manage the new museum facility on behalf of or in partnership with the municipality.

The Development of a Regional Interpretive Masterplan

The second undertaking is far broader in scope than a solely museum-focused project. The need for HRM to develop an Interpretive Masterplan has been identified through several planning initiatives and the lack of an Interpretive Master Plan was identified as a gap in policy direction, decision-making criteria, and program delivery. It is also identified as an impediment in the review of collection mandates for all HRM's collections. This comprehensive plan will require consultants, dedicated staff resources and budget, and significant public and stakeholder engagement. Due to the broad scope of an Interpretive Masterplan, it is recommended to direct this work through the CHPP. Examples of actions required to realize an interpretive master plan can be found in Section 8.2.6 in the full report.

The Nova Scotia Interpretive Master Plan is an example of a broad, regional heritage interpretive master plan that identifies an interpretive framework, organizes stories, and defines the ongoing use of resources and strategic partnerships.

Each undertaking, while different in focus and execution, aims to address gaps identified in the Phase 1 findings. It is anticipated that through development of Phase 2, the scaled plan of potential operational models in support of a new-build regional museum or museum system can be delivered to Regional Council in 2023/24. Further, upon completion and approval of the CHPP, the next phases of the Museum Strategy and an Interpretive Master Plan can be considered through and tested against the guiding principles and actions of that substantive plan. As noted, many of the initiatives are underway and will continue to be actioned with updates and reports on specific initiatives provided to Regional Council as warranted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Proceeds of sale of 90 Alderney Drive were allocated to Reserve Q526 in 2017. The 10-year Capital budget has allocated $39,000,000 in CB000076, *Regional Heritage Museum*, under the following schedule:

        2027/28 - $ 2,000,000
        2028/29 - $ 7,000,000
        2029/30 - $30,000,000

Consulting fees for Phase 2 are estimated to be between $50,000 and $100,000 and can be funded from CP1900001 with possible partial funding from Capital Fund Reserve.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Risks associated with endorsement of the Phase 1 Regional Museum Strategy are low. Based on the internal staff evaluation, there is minimal direct risk to the Municipality associated with its recommendations. Categories of risk assessment include Environmental, Reputational, and Financial.

Risks associated with Phase 2 are mitigated through the Request for Proposals process and internal collaboration between multiple stakeholders in the area of museums, culture, and heritage-related delivery.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement was conducted throughout the Phase One Regional Museum Strategy.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no associated environmental risks associated with the Phase 1 Regional Museum Strategy.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Regional Council could direct the Chief Administrative Officer to only implement certain recommendations.

2. Regional Council could direct the Chief Administrative Officer to not continue with Phases 2 and 3.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Phase 1 Regional Museum Strategy Executive Summary
Attachment 2: Collection Update and Municipal Roles in Support of Heritage in the Region

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Kellie McIvor, Cultural Asset Manager, 902.579-7342

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.
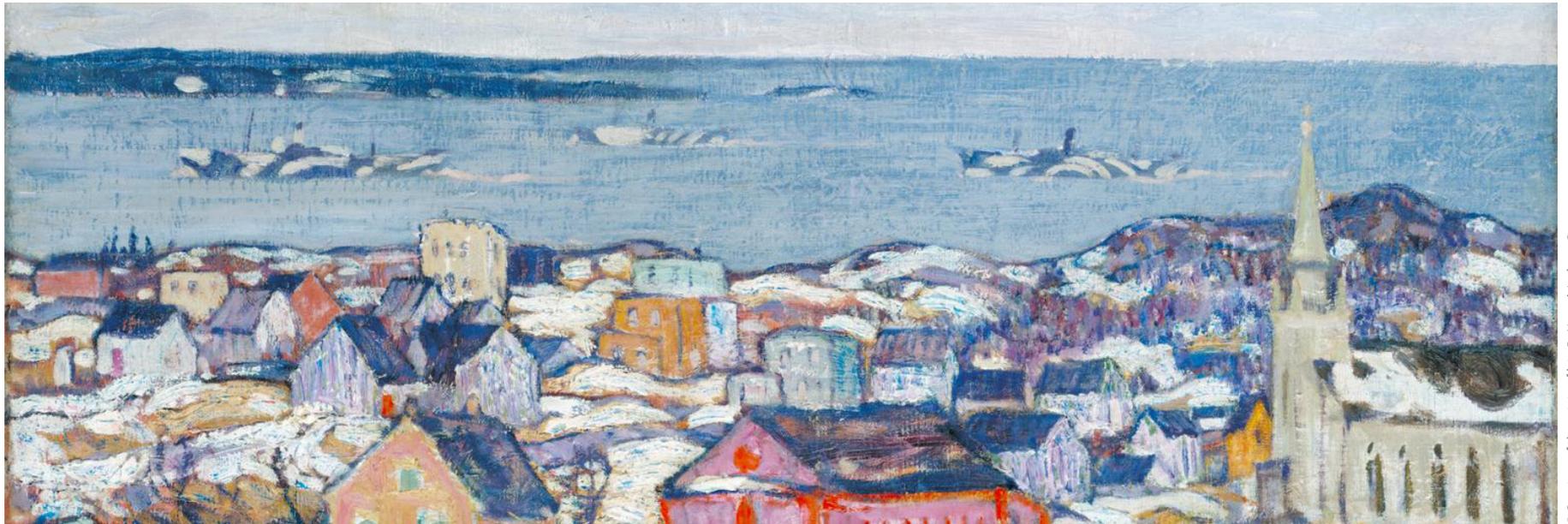
© Courtesy of the estate of late Dr Naomi Jackson Groves

HRM REGIONAL
MUSEUM STRATEGY
PHASE 1

Executive Summary

Appendices

SWOT

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 or 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 fudging 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 *(Status Quo)*	1A. Regional Museum Network: *Delivered Directly by HRM*	1B. Regional Museum Network: *Delivery Outsourced/Contracted*	2A. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: *Directly Operated by HRM*	2B. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: *Independently Operated*

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 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.

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 *(Status Quo)*	1A. Regional Museum Network: *Delivered Directly by HRM*	1B. Regional Museum Network: *Delivery Outsourced/Contracted*	2A. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: *Directly Operated by HRM*	2B. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: *Independently Operated*
				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 and can utilize existing systems 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 *(Status Quo)*	1A. Regional Museum Network: *Delivered Directly by HRM*	1B. Regional Museum Network: *Delivery Outsourced/Contracted*	2A. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: *Directly Operated by HRM*	2B. New Stand-Alone Civic Museum: *Independently Operated*
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.

Collection Update and Municipal Roles in Support of Heritage in the Region

The purpose of Attachment 2 is to provide an update on the municipal artifact, public art/cultural assets, and archival collections and to provide an overview of the municipal organizational structure and staff roles that support the delivery of heritage programs and care of the collections. This operational and capacity overview provides context for the planned Phase 2 of the Museum Strategy and the presentation of potential models of operation the municipality may consider in support of expanded heritage support and delivery.

Overview of Municipal Organizational Structure

The Halifax Regional Municipality has staff, across four business units, that are responsible for the care of collections, interpretive projects, administration of built heritage and administration of grants for museums and community history. There is no centralized business unit for heritage delivery; staff collaboration is frequent, but informal in structure.

The Role of Finance and Asset Management

Currently, most direct support to community museums and heritage organizations in HRM is financial. The primary source of direct funding to community museums is through the Interim Museum Grant Program.

Finance Policy and Planning are responsible for most of the administration and delivery of this funding. Municipal financial support to museums flows through several funding programs and initiatives. The final report analyzed all sources of direct municipal funding to museums in the region and concluded the main sources are: Community Grants; District Capital; Councillor Activity; Interim Museum Grant Program; Management/Lease Agreements and Tax Relief Contribution. The analysis showed that between 2016/2017 and 2019/2020, the cumulative amount of support to museums totalled over $1.5M.

Financial Policy and Planning – two staff manage the Interim Community Museum Grant Program, Community Grant Program, Community Interest category of Real Property Disposal AO50, Tax Relief and Contribution Agreements as assigned.
- Teams Lead Grants & Tax
- Community Developer

The Role of Heritage Planning, Planning and Development - Heritage Property Program

The purpose of the Heritage Property Program is to conserve significant heritage resources including buildings, streetscapes, sites, areas, and districts.
The principal aims of the Heritage Property Program are to:
- Recognize significant heritage resources and support their inclusion in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality and the designation of Heritage Conservation Districts
- Provide conservation advice and information to heritage property owners
- Facilitate the ongoing maintenance, preservation, restoration, and the reuse/rehabilitation of heritage properties through financial incentives and the administration of provincial and municipal regulations
- Advise the Heritage Advisory Committee

Heritage Planning – six staff manage the Heritage Property Program. Planning and Development also has one staff that oversees Administrative Order 46 Respecting HRM Asset Naming Policies.
- Principal Planner
- Planner I, II and III
- 2 x Heritage Planner Researchers
- Asset-Naming staff

The Role of the Halifax Municipal Archives

Discussion of a Regional Museum requires an understanding of the critical role the Halifax Municipal Archives (HMA) performs in the stewardship, preservation, and accessibility of regional history. The HMA is part of the Corporate Information Management section of the Municipal Clerk's Office, and is governed by the Administrative Order Respecting Corporate Information Management (AO-2015-001-GOV) and a suite of internal policies and procedures. The HMA operates primarily as a reference centre providing access to historical municipal records and facilitating primary historical research about the region.

Collection
Established in 2006 after the provincial archives divested its municipal holdings, the HMA acquires, preserves, and promotes access to municipal government and non-government archival records documenting the history of the region. It is the official repository for inactive Municipal records of enduring value. The HMA complements the municipal record by acquiring donations of community records from individuals, businesses, and organizations active in the municipal sphere, unless they are within the acquisition mandate of another local archive or museum. Acquisition has been focussed on municipal records as the HMA has sought to establish its primary mandate and address a backlog of archival transfers. To date, there has been little proactive solicitation of donations from community groups.

The HMA also collects corporate publications created by or for the Municipality, as well as published material directly related to the region's history, geography, governance, and services. In 2018 the HMA informally assumed physical custody of small artifacts intrinsically connected with the Municipality, such as gifts to mayors, commemorative items, and documentary fine-art. Responsibility for this collection is shared with HRM's Cultural Asset Manager.

Facility
The HMA collection is safely and securely stored at the Corporate Information Management facility located at 81 Ilsley Avenue in Burnside. This leased facility has limited room for growth, but as the Municipality's semi-active records are increasingly created and managed digitally, the records disposition process will eventually free up more space for modest increases to archival analog holdings.

Access
The HMA has a fully accessible Reading Room where researchers can consult records on-site during limited reference hours. Staff respond to reference requests via phone and email throughout the week, and often provide digital copies for requestors. Most research requests are from the public (80%), while the remaining are internal requests (20%) from staff and elected officials. Staff facilitates access to holdings and performs minimal research for external clients but will perform in-depth research on behalf of internal clients. Most requests originate within the HRM region (83%), few from elsewhere in Nova Scotia (1%), 12% are from researchers elsewhere in Canada, and 3% are international researchers.

HMA's focus for providing access is through online sources, including its Archives Database as well as online source guides available through its website. Currently approximately 80% of HMA's collection is described in the online searchable database, as there is constantly new material acquired that needs to be processed (selected, arranged, re-housed, catalogued) and there is a sizeable backlog of unprocessed material.

Access to municipal government records is governed by the freedom of information and protection of personal privacy part of the *Municipal Government Act*. HMA identifies any restricted information in records at the time of acquisition and processing. When possible, records containing restricted information are made accessible through redacted copies or formal research agreements.

There is no dedicated exhibition space at the HMA. When possible photographs and maps are displayed in public areas, such as the Reading Room and other office spaces. Several artifacts are in also currently in use in the facility, including former Dartmouth and Halifax mayor's desks and the County Councillors' table). HMA also occasionally loans material for display elsewhere (past examples include Pier21, City Hall, fine art for use in municipal offices, etc.).

<u>Digitization for Access</u>
An estimated 20-30% of the HMA collection has been digitized. Provincial and federal archival grants have funded previous large-scale digitization projects to scan, describe (index), and put on-line large volumes of records, such as <u>Council minutes</u>, <u>Annual Reports</u>, <u>Urban Renewal photographs,</u> <u>Halifax Explosion sources</u>, <u>aerial photographs</u>, <u>Africville-related material</u>, <u>Mi'kmaq content</u> and <u>audio-visual material</u>. The HMA also provides on-demand digitization services for individual users.

<u>Staffing</u>
HMA is staffed by a Municipal Archivist, half of an Information Analyst/Archivist position, one Archives Technician temporary contract, augmented by occasional externally funded contract positions and volunteers. These 1.5 FTE+ report to the Manager of Corporate Information Management and share the work of acquisition, processing, re-housing, cataloguing, preservation, reference services, and outreach.

A survey of similarly sized archives across Canada indicates that HMA's staff contingent is well below average: Quebec City-16, Vancouver-8, Ottawa-9, Richmond-6, Winnipeg-5, Thunder Bay-5, Regina-4.

The Role of Parks and Recreation

In 2016, the new role of Cultural Asset Manager, Culture and Events was staffed, with the task of managing and maintaining the municipal artifact and public art/cultural asset collections. In addition, this role leads the Regional Museum Strategy, represents the municipality in the Central Regional Heritage Group and leads some of the municipal interpretive projects. This is the only operational heritage position in Parks and Recreation.

Parks and Recreation also manages the operating and lease agreements for the four HRM-owned museum buildings, through Community Partnership.

<u>HRM-owned sites operated as museums</u>
The municipality owns four heritage properties that are operated as museums:
- Evergreen House and Quaker House, Dartmouth, managed by the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society (DHMS) through a Management and Operating Agreement (renewed in 2019).
- Scott Manor House, Bedford, operated by the Fort Sackville Society through a long-term lease (signed in 2019).
- MacPhee House, Sheet Harbour, operated by the Heritage Society through a long-term lease in partnership with the Sheet Harbour Chamber of Commerce (signed in 2019).

The museum sites are operated independently and HRM does not influence programming or exhibits. In the cases of Scott Manor and MacPhee House, the artifact collections are owned solely by the associated societies. Scott Manor does exhibit a small collection of artifacts on loan from the HMA Artifact collection. The leases do not include operational funding, although capital improvements and some services are provided by HRM. The Societies are eligible for funding through the Interim Museum Program.

The DHMS Management and Operating Agreement stipulates requirements for co-management of the artifact collection and operation of the two heritage sites. Capital costs for upkeep of the heritage houses, leasing and operating costs for the artifact warehouse and some operational services are also provided by HRM, as outlined in the agreement.

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 the municipality's artifact warehouse and is co-managed by one HRM staff, the Cultural Asset Manager, two DHMS staff, and DHMS volunteers. Most of the collection pertains directly to Dartmouth history. The collection has its own Collection Policy (adopted by Council in 2009) and has its own Collection Management Committee that governs the acquisition and removal of artifacts from the collection. The HRM/DHMS mandate is to collect and preserve artifacts with a direct connection to the history of the people and heritage of Dartmouth. In 2001, with the demolition of the Wyse Rd. facility, the majority of the artifact collection was moved to its current location at the artifact warehouse.

Rationalization and Reconciling Records
Rationalization refers to the curatorial review of the artifact collection. Through this curatorial review, artifacts that are deemed to be surplus to the collection, are in poor condition, or are better suited to the mandate of another institution are identified, and recommendations for deaccessioning presented to the Collection Management Committee. Deaccessioned artifacts are permanently removed for destruction if condition is too deteriorated or for donation to other not-for-profit institutions and museums.

The rationalization of the artifact collection began in 2014 with the unpacking of the artifacts in storage. Since then, and with the terms of the renegotiated management agreement with DHMS, the curatorial review of the collection has significantly progressed. The HRM Cultural Asset Manager, DHMS staff, and trained volunteers of DHMS perform the collection management tasks together, which are planned in collaboration and formalized through a Work Plan, as outlined in the Management and Operating Agreement.

Reconciliation of the collection follows rationalization and refers to the further refinement of the collection through assuring that records in the Collective Access database are accurate and that all records reflect that the artifacts still exist in the collection. Since the complete unpacking and inventorying of the collection in storage and on display in the two heritage DHMS sites, reconciliation is now possible and is on-going.

- To date, the ceramics, some textiles, glassware, books, metalware, furniture, small textiles, transportation artifacts and the archival collection have been assessed for deaccessioning, with an estimated 5,000 artifacts deemed surplus to collection needs.
- In 2020 all archival materials located at Evergreen House were consolidated and rehoused in the artifact warehouse. This important consolidation ensures the collection can be globally reviewed and better supports access activities such as digitization and research requests.
- As the archival and artifact collection are assessed, materials pertaining directly to municipal governance are transferred to the HMA, in a collaborative collection strategy.
- Since 2016 fine art pieces located throughout HRM buildings--including items which were part of the former "Art Loan" program--have been located and documented. In cases where new art is requested for display, the Cultural Asset Manager assesses the space, recommends potential art, facilitates the loan, and oversees installation. Recent examples include the art in the Downie Wenjack Legacy Space and the renovated 6th floor Director's Suite at Alderney Gate.
- Recent acquisitions include Helen Creighton's personal artifacts related to her travels and her life at her home, Evergreen House. Donated by Creighton family descendants, this donation illustrates the important role and trust afforded the DHMS. Helen Creighton was made a "National Historic Person" in 2018 through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and the HSMBC commemorative plaque was installed on the Evergreen property.
- In 2020, at the request of Risk and Insurance, most of the fine art collection was appraised to ensure sufficient coverage. Further appraisals on other parts of the collection are planned.
- External exhibits outside of Quaker and Evergreen House include an exhibit of the history of Starr Manufacturing and skates developed by DHMS and using artifacts from the collection for the BMO 4-Pad.

Collective Access Database and Nova Muse
In 2016, the digital artifact collection records were migrated and are now digitally managed through Collective Access, an online artifact database managed by the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM). This important migration allows both HRM and DHMS staff and volunteers shared access to a secure database. Prior to this, HRM did not have direct access to the collection records.

In addition to the curatorial review, artifacts in the collection are fully documented, with digital photography or scanning and enhancement of provenance, description, condition, and location. All curatorial decisions are recorded in the Collective Access database. Since 2016, over 16,000 individual records have been updated, with associated digital images/files added. The Collective Access database has controlled access for security reasons. It is estimated that 30% of the collection has been digitized.

The collection is publicly available for viewing and research online through Nova Muse, an online portal and exhibit platform managed by ANSM. There are over 4,500 HRM/DHMS artifacts on Nova Muse, with new batches updated on a regular basis.

<u>Artifact Warehouse</u>
The artifact warehouse has restricted access and is not open to the public, although research requests and access can be facilitated. It has been the collection storage facility since 2001. The building is leased (renewed in 2019 for 5 years) and provides a basic but mostly stable environment for the collection. Leasing and operating costs total approximately $120,000/year. The building facility has not been substantially upgraded during the tenure of the lease and there have been past issues with roof leaks. Staff mitigate the risks through actions such as installing plastic sheeting to protect vulnerable artifacts, re-housing artifacts to provide a buffer, and ensuring environmental monitoring. Because the building is not HRM-owned, leasehold improvements have been modest and solely in support of the protection of the collection. Leasehold improvements in recent years include a new security system, heating system, LED lighting and artifact shelving. To support the administration of the collection and enhancement of records, HRM has invested in technology such as computers, scanners, and photographic equipment.

Safeguarding the collection and managing the facility is the role of the Cultural Asset Manager, supported by DHMS staff and volunteers and HRM Facilities Maintenance & Operation. HRM is responsible for all costs associated with the lease, operations of the facility and collection management equipment and supplies.

Halifax Municipal Archives (HMA) Artifact Collection

This collection includes 2-D and 3-D objects with enduring value that were created or received by the Municipality. It is distinct from the HRM/DHMS collection and is governed by its own policy, mandate and Collection working group.

The former "Civic Collection" was a group of objects belonging to the pre-amalgamation municipalities which were collected with the intention to reflect the cultural, social, and political identity of these governments. An inventory of these objects was created in 1996 by a Heritage Project Team that was brought together in response to concern about the fate of heritage items during the process of municipal amalgamation. Inventoried items ranged from chains of office and fine art to office furniture and business cards, as well as artifacts from the Police and Fire Department collections and most items were left in-situ. Following its creation in 2006, the HMA took on care and custody of any record material (photographs, documents, maps/plans) identified from the Civic Collection that were found in various offices and storage units.

Beginning in 2016, the Cultural Asset Manager identified and located additional "Civic Collection" artifacts. In 2018 HMA expanded its acquisition mandate to include municipally related artifacts that have enduring value. Items such as fine art located in City Hall, gifts from visiting dignitaries and twinning cities, and remaining artifacts from the "Civic Collection" inventory were officially transferred to the HMA. These materials are viewable online and available for review on-site at the HMA. In some cases, artifacts and fine art are available for long-term loan.

The care and control of these artifacts is through an informal partnership of the HMA and Parks and Recreation. Expansion of the collection and opportunity for increased interpretation is limited due to lack of staff capacity, resources, and a formalized mandate

Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and Halifax Regional Fire (HRF) Collection

Currently, artifacts and historic municipal assets associated with both HRP and HRF continue to remain under the care and control of those departments. In the absence of a formalized mandate date for care and control of the artifacts, the practice has continued. Municipal archival items from those departments continue to follow the Record Management Retention plan and revert to the HMA as custodians, based on that schedule or when older archival files are discovered.

Interpretive Projects in a non-museum setting

In the absence of opportunity for interpretation of the collection outside of the DHMS heritage houses, there have been several and recent HRM projects that provide interpretation outside of a traditional built-museum setting. This is a current trend for museums.

- Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary: The Needham Park upgrade in 2017 and the series of 13 Halifax Explosion Markers installed throughout the region commemorate the impact of the Halifax Explosion through interpretive elements in the landscape.
- Africville Park: Between 2019 – 2021, five new interpretive installations in Africville Park were installed to provide an opportunity for park visitors to learn the story of Africville through the lens and words of former residents. This was a collaborative project with the Africville Trust and Africville Genealogy Society as the project stakeholders.
- Pilot-Project: In 2019, a consultant-lead pilot project in support of the development of an interpretive program for external requests was completed. The aim was to provide structure around design, public and stakeholder engagement and content. The projects included a sign commemorating the former neighbourhood referred to as 'The Avenue' and a sign illustrating the Oathill Lake conservation efforts.

Public Art Collection

HRM owns and maintains approximately 250 pieces of public art and cultural assets, located on municipal lands and in municipally owned buildings. The collection ranges from traditional, colonial-focused statues to smaller cultural assets such as plaques and interpretive signage. Collection maintenance is managed primarily by the Cultural Asset Manager, including the Collective Access database inventory. New public art projects are facilitated by the Community Developer, Culture and Events.

In 2020, the former Public Art Policy was replaced by Administrative Order Number 2020 001-OP Respecting Public Art. The changes to the Policy were developed to update the operational model and improve the overall efficiency of the Municipality's existing public art service delivery relative to the terms adopted by Regional Council in 2008, while keeping the Policy's original intent. The updates include the use of more relevant definitions and terminology, realignment of public art funding models within current and emerging corporate planning and greater clarification regarding decision-making and governance to remove administrative barriers to program delivery.

Between 2008 – 2021 HRM completed 16 Public Art installations, totalling 28 new works and 6 artworks were accepted through a Deed of Gift.