

Preliminary Assessment for a “Civic” or “City” Museum in Edmonton
Edmonton Museum Steering Committee

Final Report

Submitted by:

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Preliminary Assessment for a “Civic” or “City” Museum in Edmonton

Executive Summary

This preliminary assessment examines the possibility of establishing a “city” museum for Edmonton. It also considers the need for a support program for local museums. The idea of establishing a city museum has arisen many times over the past 60 years and with recurring frequency during the past decade. The high cost of building an actual museum without any real understanding of its benefits always was a deterrent. Nevertheless, a strong desire prevails in the community but a city museum needs to be very carefully conceived and developed incrementally.

This conclusion is based on initial consultations with a range of stakeholders, including local museums; on a preliminary assessment of collections currently owned by the City and local museums; on previous studies; on capital, operating and visitor estimates; and on a survey of best practices in cities in Canada and elsewhere. The assessment also considered the development of a “civic” museum that focuses exclusively on municipal services but this option is not regarded as viable by stakeholders or supported by other sources and studies consulted.

The city museum envisioned would focus on Edmonton as a place. It would be a focal point for a comprehensive local history and for a range of heritage activities. It should have the capacity to be a public forum for learning about Edmonton’s past, present and future through provocative displays and public programs that chronicle, respond to and challenge myths and realities. A city museum would therefore attempt to fill in the gap in collecting, preserving and interpreting objects and stories about life in Edmonton that are not held or told by small, local museums or other cultural institutions. Examples of themes are: *Edmonton: The Northern City*; *Edmonton: The Modern City*; *Edmonton Neighbourhoods*; and *Edmonton: The City of Champions*.

As the assessment indicated, much current enthusiasm for city museums comes from capital cities, whether provincial or national, which already have major institutions, such as the Royal Alberta Museum, in Edmonton’s case, but are now taking their local history more seriously. Seen in this context, an Edmonton city museum has the potential to be a unique legacy whose mandate is to convey the city’s many legacies. In this respect, and as confirmed by other assessment findings, the museum could be much more than a heritage facility by having outreach programs throughout the city and by playing a role in heritage planning and in preserving the built environment. It should also ensure that all Edmontonians see themselves in the museum, whether Aboriginal people, other ethnocultural groups, newcomers, young or old.

Indeed, there was strong support for the very idea of a city museum, particularly when it was described as a dynamic, community-driven organization that would interpret large and inclusive themes. Initially, many people – even those working in local museums – had a limited notion of what a city museum could be. Several people commented that if it a museum were to be created it had to be done well. It therefore became evident that initially building a museum facility is not the sole and predictable option. A museum can proceed in stages from a preliminary series of exhibitions and programs in temporary accommodations to a purpose built, or retrofit facility, but at every stage the work should be of excellent quality.

Consequently, this assessment recommends a bottom-up strategy. The museum should be incorporated and seed funding provided by the City to enable the incremental development of

exhibitions and programs while building a profile and momentum for the project over a 5-10 year period. This would also entail creating and articulating a compelling vision; establishing a governance structure; establishing a preliminary budget and program; building a diverse and multigenerational audience; assessing collections; identifying potential champions and patrons; and determining an initial and permanent location.

While establishing a city museum is a priority, the assessment also recommends creating a support mechanism for existing local museums. A funding program should be developed that provides project and/or operating support for existing museums to collect and interpret aspects of the history of Edmonton. Requests for capital funding should continue to be assessed individually on the basis of merit. All eligible museums should be evaluated by a rigorous peer review process using criteria developed by the City that would include governance, mandate, community benefit, accessibility and sustainability. The proposed program will require an office to administer it – either a cultural affairs office or city department, an arms-length heritage council, or a department in the city museum. Existing museums should also be encouraged to develop a network to further facilitate funding, shared marketing and programming. Where possible collections, should be consolidated to reduce duplication but existing museum organizations should maintain control over their collections. The incremental development of a city museum could shepherd the activities of local museums and also address the pressing state of extant collections, including the City’s holdings in the Artifact Centre which require urgent attention.

There are a number of museum projects currently in development: the Royal Alberta Museum, the Art Gallery of Alberta, the University of Alberta’s Curatorial Research Facility, and the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum. As well, Fort Edmonton Park continues to grow, filling in the gaps in its master plan. Each of these institutions has its own unique mandate that must be considered in establishing and planning a city museum. They could benefit its evolution in the same way that the many cultural expansion projects in Toronto are being called a renaissance, or they could detract, with the museum regarded as further competition for funding and audience. The difference between all facilities, including their needs and benefits must become very clear to all citizens in order to gain support for a city museum.

Ultimately, there are risks if the move to establish a city museum does not happen imminently. First, and as noted above, City-owned collections are in crisis due to inadequate storage. Second, there have been far too many failed, yet understandable, attempts at developing a museum. There is now momentum which is widespread due to many factors, among them Edmonton’s designation as a 2007 Cultural Capital. Third, Edmonton’s current economic growth, while challenging in many respects, particularly in the case of housing and other rising costs, has created a climate of confidence, determination and multiple opportunities. Consistent with this situation is a museum committed to being an active community-driven organization that seeks to convey Edmonton’s past, present and future to its citizens. In the final analysis, there is more than sufficient room and opportunities for a city museum that focuses on Edmonton as a distinctive and growing metropolis.

Introduction

This project is one of a number of cultural planning initiatives being spearheaded by the City of Edmonton. The Edmonton Arts Council is developing a Cultural Plan for the City, a plan that will include additional heritage elements as well as consideration of a city museum. Heritage issues were raised in recent meetings held by the Department of Planning and Development to revise the City's Historical Resources Management Plan (called a Heritage Plan). They were also raised in community consultations facilitated by the Edmonton Arts Council in developing the vision, policies and programs for arts, heritage and culture broadly speaking that will comprise the Cultural Plan. Edmonton's being named Canada's Cultural Capital in 2007 also focuses attention on municipal support for cultural initiatives, including heritage projects. These are opportunities that may increase momentum for the development of an Edmonton Museum.

Through this preliminary assessment for an Edmonton Museum, the consultants were asked to prepare a report that:

- Clarifies three identified concepts: a museum about the history of municipal government agencies and services; a museum about the history of Edmonton; and a museum network and/or museum assistance program; or some combination of the concepts or an additional concept;
- Includes a summary and brief analysis of best practices in other municipalities;
- Assesses the relevancy of past studies of a City of Edmonton Museum;
- Includes a list of stakeholders and a summary of findings from stakeholder consultations;
- Includes a preliminary assessment of collections currently held by the City and by those local museums interested in participating in a museum program; and
- Assesses the merits and challenges of each concept including:
 - an indication of stakeholder support, potential barriers and opportunities;
 - an evaluation of City of Edmonton and community fit;
 - an evaluation of the suitability of each concept in the context of the extant collections; and
 - preliminary cost estimates and visitation predictions for each concept based on available comparative data.

Methodology

This study was requested by City Council. A Steering Committee was established comprised of co-chairs John Mahon, Executive Director of the Edmonton Arts Council (project manager) and Virginia Stephen, Chair of the Edmonton Historical Board; and members Gerry Osmond, Executive Director of the Alberta Museums Association; Michael Payne, City Archivist and Rob Smyth, Carol Watson and Roger Jevne all from the Department of Community Services, City of Edmonton.

Edmonton-based Catherine C. Cole and Associates was contracted to conduct the study, working with her colleague Lon Dubinsky of Montreal. Catherine met with the Steering Committee three times during the four-month study (including once with Lon as well), and was in regular contact with the co-chairs. The Steering Committee provided input into the list of proposed stakeholders to be consulted.

The consultants met with City of Edmonton staff at Fort Edmonton Park/the John Walter Museum, the Artifact Centre, the Department of Transportation and Streets, and the Edmonton Police Service. The consultants also visited and met with staff at various local museums: the Edmonton Public Schools Archives and Museum; the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses Museum & Archives; the C & E (1891) Railway Museum; the Alberta Aviation Museum; the Alberta Railway Museum; the Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum; the Telephone Historical Centre; the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum of Alberta (UCAMA); the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada Arts & Crafts Museum (USWLC); the Ukrainian Museum of Canada, Alberta Branch; the Edmonton Radial Railway Society; the Telus World of Science; the Edmonton Sports Museum & Hall of Fame; the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta; and the Canadian Militaria Preservation Society. As well as meeting with staff, consultants developed a preliminary sense of the scope of collections. The Steering Committee reviewed the summary of findings from these meetings.

The consultants also met with a broader circle of members of the heritage community, including representatives of the University of Alberta Museums; the Edmonton Historical Board; the Edmonton and District Historical Society; the Alberta Labour History Institute; the Northern Alberta Pioneers and Descendants Association; and the Heritage Community Foundation as well as a small group of individuals in the city whose professional focus is less directly heritage but who are leaders in diverse sectors of the community and share an interest in the future of the city. Due to the limited time and budget allocated for the project, the list of people to be interviewed at this stage was restricted.

The consultants reviewed previous studies related to the possibility of establishing an Edmonton Museum in the holdings of the City Archives and private offices and pieced together the history of the city museum concept. The consultants also reviewed best practices for city museums in selected centres nationally and internationally. The information obtained from this research is contained in this report. The recommendations come from an understanding of the situation locally, nationally and internationally by the consultants and from their professional expertise in the museum field.

Following the Steering Committee review of the draft report, the consultants distributed the section of the report dealing with local museums to those consulted during the study and revised the summary of findings where necessary.

Key Findings: The Three Options

Option I “Civic” Museum

A “civic” museum was defined in the RFP as limited in scope to a museum of the history of civic administration in Edmonton. Therefore, it would include artifacts, exhibitions and programs related to local government and municipal services past and present (e.g., police, fire, transit, telephones and power). It would not extend beyond civic government and administration to themes such as local industry, arts and culture, transportation and communications, Edmonton’s diverse cultural communities, or sports history. There are museums in municipalities throughout Canada about specific municipal services such as police service and fire department museums, some of which make significant contributions to their community; there are no real models of a more comprehensive civic museum in Canada.

The words “civic museum” are also often used interchangeably with “municipal museum” to refer to a museum that is entirely or primarily municipally funded, in the same sense that the words “public library” are used. Over the past 15 years, museums have been under increasing pressure to generate revenue to offset operational costs but there is still an expectation that a civic museum would be municipally funded.

Stakeholder Support

There was no support for a “civic” museum among those interviewed. All agreed that any museum to be developed should include local government and municipal services but if a museum was limited to this subject matter it would have little relevance and audience appeal.

City of Edmonton and Community Fit

There is a fit for this concept within civic government, but not within the larger community.

Suitability in the Context of Extant Collections

Edmonton Police Services and Edmonton Transit have extensive collections. Other City departments should be surveyed to determine if they have also collected material related to their history. For example, the Fire Department has heritage vehicles that it uses for parades. There are also several local museums related to former municipal services, such as telephones and power, that could be incorporated into a larger museum. The City also owns collections that are broader in scope than local government (i.e., collections housed in the Artifact Centre) that need to be considered.

Preliminary Cost Estimates

There are no cost estimates because this option is not recommended. Yet the cost of developing and operating a civic museum would be comparable to the cost of a city museum. It would require a smaller storage facility but the exhibition and program space and overhead costs would be similar.

Visitor Predictions

Civic politicians, employees and elementary school students studying local government would constitute the primary audiences. People interested in a specific municipal service, such as police or transit, would also visit.

Potential Barriers and Opportunities for Cooperation with Stakeholders

Local museums could participate in exhibitions and programs consistent with their interests; community-based organizations would be unlikely to support a museum in which they did not see themselves.

Option II “City” Museum

Vision and Mandate

A “city” museum would be much broader in scope and have much greater appeal. It would include civic history as well as city history. The City currently provides significant support to the preservation and interpretation of local history through Fort Edmonton Park, the John Walter Museum, and the City Archives. But there are huge gaps, such as post-1920s-contemporary issues, thematic approaches, interventions throughout the city, and interdisciplinary work. City-owned collections (e.g., objects in the Artifact Centre, the police and transit collections) are currently at risk and inaccessible to the public.

The city museum would provide a focal point for a comprehensive local history and for heritage activities. The museum could be a forum for debate about Edmonton’s past, present and future; it could combine provocative displays and public programs that challenge and respond to public attitudes and expectations. It could be a contemporary museum that encourages the latest scholarly and popular revisions of Edmonton and regional history.

In these respects its mandate would be similar to the Museum of Sydney, Australia which sees itself as a truly public institution. Like the Seoul Museum of History in Korea, another city museum in a city that is also a capital, the museum would also explore Edmonton’s role as the centre of Alberta’s political, economic and cultural life. In fact, much of the current enthusiasm for city museums comes from capital cities, whether provincial or national, which have regional history museums and are now taking local history more seriously.

The primary market for a city museum in Edmonton would be local residents consistent with the approach taken by the Museum of Venice whose audience, unlike other museums in that city, is not entirely tourist driven. The museum would therefore be community-based, its exhibitions and programs developed in collaboration with local partners. Moreover, Edmonton’s tourism market is largely visiting friends and relatives(VFR); developing strong support for the museum among local residents will also lead to attracting tourists. The museum could also play a role in improving awareness of the city nationally and internationally through mechanisms such as its website, virtual and travelling exhibitions and participation in professional museological dialogue.

Other city museums offer inspired visions and program possibilities. Like the Sao Paulo City Museum in Brazil, albeit a mega-city with a different set of challenges, the museum could address issues of urbanization relevant to Edmonton’s experience, the large urban Aboriginal community, for example. Moreover, many young people in particular see themselves as a part of a world community and are interested in cultural trends that are pervasive globally.

A city museum could also play an important role in defining Edmonton; in engaging people who participated in the development of the city in preservation and interpretation of its history. It could

show Edmontonians and visitors alike different perspectives on where the city came from and why it is the way it is today, helping them to make informed decisions about future planning. The museum would not be a passive, didactic institution, but a lively, interactive place of wonder. The museum would be more than a heritage facility; it would develop interventions throughout the city similar to programs of the Copenhagen City Museum. Ideally, and like Copenhagen as well, an Edmonton city museum would have a role in heritage planning, in preserving the built environment.

Roles and Themes

Museums by definition collect, preserve, study and interpret objects. They perform a role similar to that of an archives in preserving community memory. They are a city's safe deposit box, where tangible cultural heritage is retained and intangible heritage studied and interpreted. However, it is exhibitions, public and educational programs – not the complex and essential behind-the-scenes work – that people tend to think of first when they think of museums. Museums today, particularly those in the majority that are without major collections of valuable unique, signature artifacts and works of art, realize the value of temporary exhibitions and ongoing programming in attracting repeat visitors. Here are several suggestions for program concepts and possible exhibitions.

Edmonton: A Northern City

The exhibition would explore Edmonton's perception of itself as the gateway to northern Alberta and the far north (transportation and communications, resource development, supplies, medicine, and home to urban Aboriginal people). It would include perspectives of people living in the north and be developed with partners from Northern Alberta and the territories. It would also look at Edmonton as a northern city internationally (its position relative to other major northern cities such as Stockholm), and how being an urban, northern city defines Edmonton as a place (e.g., the seasonal rhythms of summer and winter life). This latter portion of the exhibition could be a travelling exhibition of sections developed independently by three or four different northern cities all looking at the question of what it means to be a northern city.

Edmonton: City of Champions

The exhibition would begin by deconstructing the origins of the moniker. It would provide examples of champions throughout Edmonton's history, both in sports (e.g., Grads, Mercurys, Eskimos, Oilers) and in other areas (e.g., volunteerism, philanthropy, civic leaders). It would compare how Edmonton sees itself to how others see the city. Visitors would be invited to write their own slogan for Edmonton, or to vote for slogans provided by other visitors.

Why Edmonton?

The exhibition would explore the reason Edmonton was established where it is and why people have come to this place through time. The exhibition would consider motivations such as: economic opportunity, physical safety and freedom, family and friends. It would focus on people ranging from the Aboriginal people who first lived in the area and who continue to congregate here from other places, to explorers, fur traders, miners, settlers, and recent migrants and immigrants have come to Edmonton, what their expectations were and whether or not they have been realized.

Edmonton: A Modern City

Fort Edmonton portrays the city as a fur trade centre and bustling pioneer settlement, however, Edmonton is today a very modern city. These contrasts are evident in many places, especially in a country like Greece with its ancient civilization and yet its Museum of Volos is committed to

interpreting contemporary life. In Edmonton's case, it grew from a city the size of Red Deer before WWII into a major Canadian city in the post-war period. Its position nationally has changed as Winnipeg declined in importance and both Calgary and Edmonton grew. Edmonton is a city where it is still possible to meet the people who created and developed it, to touch history. The exhibition would focus on the post-war boom, the influx of immigrants initially from Europe and later from throughout the world, and how these factors have shaped the city. It would explore why Edmonton and Calgary have grown at a similar rate into cities with very different characters. Diverse organizations such as the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and the Multicultural Health Brokers could be invited to partner in developing the exhibition.

Edmonton Collects

The exhibition would feature various private collections of artifacts related to specific aspects of Edmonton's history (such as sports teams, schools, advertising, local manufacturing companies and businesses), why people are interested in these things and what we can learn from these collections. Public programming could include an *Antiques Roadshow* type of event where visitors would be encouraged to bring in objects related to aspects of the history of Edmonton for identification and advice on care.

Historical Events that Define Edmontonians

As in the life of an individual there are milestones in the life of a city that define and shape it: recent events like the Oilers 2006 run for the Stanley Cup... the Tornado... the Commonwealth Games... and nearly forgotten events like the 1915 Flood... The exhibition would explore events that have brought people from all walks of life together through time and show how these events affected individuals and groups and how they shaped the city. The exhibition could be interactive; visitors would be asked to decide for themselves which was the most important event and why, and to rearrange objects and write a label explaining their choice.

Edmonton's Neighbourhoods

A series of small exhibitions would feature individual neighbourhoods and their development and challenges. For example, Edmonton's older neighbourhoods are struggling to maintain their built heritage. The exhibitions could include both archival and contemporary photographs as well as artifacts related to local figures and associations such as Edmonton's community leagues which are a unique feature of the city. The exhibitions would be developed in collaboration with neighbourhood partners and, following display at the city museum, could be given to the community to be re-installed in the community league or other local hall.

Relationship to Public Events

People often insist that Edmonton is an "event city". Wherever possible, the city museum should get on the bandwagon, mounting temporary exhibitions to provide context for one of a kind national and international events such as the Junos or the Track and Field Games. There is also the possibility of re-mounting the same exhibition for several years in the case of annual events such as the festivals and the Canadian Finals Rodeo.

These examples are provided simply to illustrate that a contemporary city museum does not have to portray a chronological history of the city, but could be much more creative and engaging.

Stakeholder Support

There was strong support for the idea of a city museum, particularly when it was described as a dynamic, community-driven organization that would interpret large themes and ideas. Initially most people – even those working in local museums – had a limited idea of what a city museum could be. Several people commented that if a museum was going to be created, it had to be done well. There should be no half measures. It was also evident that initially building a museum is not the sole and predictable option. The museum could proceed in stages from a series of exhibitions and programs in temporary accommodations to a purpose-built, or retrofit facility, but at every stage the work should be of excellent quality.

It must be emphasised that a goal of this study was to meet with representatives of local museums and a very small sample of people beyond this immediate circle. Much more community consultation should be undertaken as there is wide support for a city museum. In January 2007, Leger Marketing conducted an OmniAlberta survey with 300 Edmonton respondents 18 years of age and older that included the question whether respondents were interested in visiting a museum that focuses on the history of Edmonton. Eighty percent responded positively.¹

City of Edmonton and Community Fit

The idea of establishing a city museum has come up many times over the past 60 years, with recurring frequency in the past fifteen. When Fort Edmonton Park was developed in the 1960s, some expected it to perform the role of a city museum. But the Fort is limited in mandate, scope, theme, time period, and interpretive approaches; it fills an important role in the community but it could never be a city museum. Since this has become more widely understood, efforts to establish a city museum have renewed. A will in the community to develop a museum prevails but the museum needs to be very carefully conceived and developed incrementally.

There are a number of museum projects currently in development: the Royal Alberta Museum, the Art Gallery of Alberta, the University of Alberta's Curatorial Research Facility, and the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum (UCAMA). As well, Fort Edmonton Park continues to grow, filling in the gaps in its master plan. Each of these institutions has its own unique mandate: the human and natural history of the province; historical and contemporary art; international research collections; Ukrainian culture; and early Edmonton history. These developments must be considered in planning a city museum. They could benefit this initiative, in the same way that current cultural developments in Toronto are being called a renaissance, or they could detract with the museum considered as competition for funding and audience. However, the recent announcement that the Royal Alberta Museum redevelopment has been put on hold should not affect this proposal. In the final analysis, there is sufficient room for a city museum that focuses on Edmonton as a place. It is critical to begin the process now, to ensure that when these capital projects are complete, the city museum has the momentum and critical mass to get support from key funders.

Suitability in the Context of Extant Collections

In addition to the municipal collections mentioned above under the civic museum option, the City has approximately 45,000 artifacts in storage in the Artifact Centre. These objects were acquired for a variety of reasons, including the possibility of being exhibited at Fort Edmonton Park or the John Walter Museum, but some will never find a home in either museum. These collections are stored in poor environmental conditions at the Artifact Centre, a former brewery built over a spring with

¹ City of Edmonton Museums. Analysis of Findings. OmniAlberta, January 2007. Leger Marketing.

resulting moisture problems and little control over relative humidity. Either the building must be renovated to deal with the environmental issues and build in better storage systems, or the collection should be moved to another facility. Similarly, the former Police Museum collection is in storage and a long-term solution is required. The Transit collection is dispersed in several storage rooms and temporarily accommodated in the Cromdale bus barns and several locations throughout the transit system. A long-term solution is required.

In addition to the City's own collections, some of the local museums may soon require a new home. The Telephone Historical Centre, for example, has concerns about its imminent demise (within the next decade) and would donate its collection and provide support for a city museum. The Loyal Edmonton Regimental Museum and Alberta Genealogical Society have long-term leases with the City in the Prince of Wales Armouries. When the armouries was renovated in 1992, the intention was for local heritage organizations to be co-located there until the archives grew and required the entire space. Whether the archives would ever take over this space now is in question, but if it did, these organizations would require new homes.

The City also has several halls of fame that do not currently receive as much notice as they could: In addition to the Sports Hall of Fame, which is currently establishing its own museum, there are the Cultural and Community Services Halls of Fame contained within the Salute to Excellence Program and other equally important merit programs such as the Edmonton Historical Board's Awards Program. There is also a wall in City Hall dedicated to former mayors and councillors. Halls of fame have very limited audience appeal beyond those immediately connected to whatever field they represent, but innovative approaches could be used to provide a greater profile to these individuals without occupying all of the exhibition space.

Perhaps more important, there are many private collections that do not fit within the mandate of existing museums, some extensive. Tangible records of early businesses, arts and cultural organizations, social services, health care and educational facilities, family and community life that would be refused by Fort Edmonton Park, the Royal Alberta Museum, or existing local museums. These collections would form the basis of a city museum. A city museum would also have the capacity to rationalize collections, to deaccession inferior examples and duplicates and retain the most significant artifacts.

Preliminary Cost Estimates

In order to retrofit a heritage building, or construct a new facility, capital costs could be up to \$50M, independent of land or building acquisition. The City's ongoing commitment to operating costs could be expected to be \$1M a year. Construction costs are escalating daily in Edmonton due to the boom (estimates of 23%/year were recently quoted). It is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy without determining the size and functional program for the museum, and when it would be built. The museum would be able to generate significant revenues through government and foundation support, corporate sponsorship, and earned revenue, but significant ongoing municipal funding is critical. Before the museum reaches this stage, it will require \$250,000-\$500,000/year for incremental activities depending upon the condition of the temporary facility. This funding will be dedicated to developing exhibitions and programs, building widespread community support for the vision, and planning towards a permanent home.

Visitor Predictions

It is premature to predict numbers with any degree of reliability. However, Fort Edmonton Park currently welcomes 250,000 visitors a year, one quarter of the population of the city; the Telus World of Science attracts approximately 500,000. Fort Edmonton is a seasonal operation with some events during the off-season, whereas the city museum would be a year-round operation. With adequate support, a city museum could attract as many visitors as Fort Edmonton and would aspire to attract as many as the Telus World of Science over time.

Adults and families would be primary audiences. A museum is one of **the** few environments in society today that provides an intergenerational shared experience. Friends can reminisce over their common histories; children of all ages can gain insight into their parents' and grandparents' lives.

Newcomers to Edmonton would be an important audience. When museums develop appropriate exhibitions and programs, immigrant groups and ESL classes use museums as a means of understanding local culture and traditions, developing their sense of citizenship and engagement, and building vocabulary.

Another particular audience would be students of all ages. There are many curriculum links, at all grade levels, that could be explored. The museum could become a site for a City Museum School, in collaboration with the City Hall School and other similar programs in the city, allowing students to spend a full week at a time attending classes in the museum. One of the major deterrents for students in attending field trips is the cost of bussing; the city museum could partner with Edmonton Transit to transport the students on the heritage buses and integrate their program into the visits.

The museum could also partner with the University of Alberta and Athabasca University, where possible, with Museums and Collections Services and the new Material Culture Institute at the former, and the emerging Heritage Resources Management Program and Women's Memory Project at the latter, and with specific academic disciplines in terms of research and exhibition development. It could also become a laboratory for the business, marketing and tourism aspects of museum work.

The museum would become as integrated into the community as possible, affording opportunities for people to tell their own stories. For example, the museum could partner with May Week and with organizations like the Alberta Labour History Institute in hosting their Labour History Day. There are many organizations and activities throughout Edmonton that need an interpretive and custodial home.

Potential Barriers and Opportunities for Cooperation with Stakeholders

As with the civic museum concept, local museums could participate in exhibitions and programs consistent with their priorities and interests. Each museum has its own vision, mandate, target audiences and objectives – sometimes they overlap, but not always. They are primarily concerned about the future of their own museums, not about developing new museums. Existing museums see the potential benefit of collaborating with a city museum on the development of exhibitions and programs about larger subjects, and the potential for a city museum to introduce themes developed more fully in their museums and point visitors to them. For example, an exhibition about Edmonton as a northern city could touch on the Northern Alberta Railway and point to the Railway

Museum for more information. It could touch on bush pilots and point visitors to the Aviation Museum. It could touch on communication and point them to the Telephone Historical Centre.

Due to the limited budget and time frame allocated to this study, and the need to consult with local museums about the funding program concept, the stakeholder consultation was restricted to members of local museums and a handful of members from the broader community. Some of the most important stakeholders for this project will not come from within these circles. They will come from the larger community: cultural organizations, immigrant and social service organizations, the arts and cultural community, the business community, the education sector, the community leagues, and private collectors.

Option III Funding Program for Existing Museums

A funding program should be developed that would provide project and/or operating support to local museums that collect and interpret aspects of the history of Edmonton. Requests for capital funding should continue to be assessed individually on the basis of merit. All eligible museums (i.e., those recognized as a museum by the Alberta Museums Association) should be assessed through a rigorous peer review process using criteria developed by the City that would include governance, mandate, community benefit, accessibility, sustainability, etc. Some museums are national or provincial rather than local in scope and should be able to access more other sources of funding. Mechanisms would be in place to ensure that museums demonstrated accountability.

Stakeholder Support

Existing museums would welcome support.

City of Edmonton and Community Fit

The City should support the acquisition and preservation of artifacts related to the history of Edmonton as assets for present and future generations; it should support interpretation of the history of Edmonton that is relevant to Edmontonians and visitors. Many of these small museums have developed because of the vision of a handful of individuals committed to ensuring that these stories and the artifacts associated with them are not lost. Their efforts should be acknowledged and rewarded. However, it must be acknowledged that these museums only tell part of the story, and that if a larger city museum is not developed, more small museums will emerge over time (the proposed Sports Hall of Fame and Museum is but one example). In Winnipeg, for example, the lack of a city museum has led to 40 museums being developed throughout the city.

Suitability in the Context of Extant Collections

There would be a number of benefits to establishing a funding program, such as better coordination of efforts to preserve and promote Edmonton's history; better protection of existing collections; increased ability to develop programs and activities that will engage Edmontonians; increased ability to involve Edmontonians through voluntarism and partnerships with local museums; and increased economic impact. However, there are also limitations: the lack of exhibition space for broad themes, temporary or travelling exhibitions, gaps in themes and holdings of existing museums, and lack of support for municipally-owned collections.

Preliminary Cost Estimates

The amount of funding provided to individual museums varies considerably in other cities, from little or no funding to millions of dollars. Most local museums would benefit from a modest amount of support that would enable them to carry out a project, but that would not require them to hire full-time staff (\$5,000-\$10,000); for museums with full-time staff, and regular operating hours, larger operating grants (\$50,000-\$75,000) would be appropriate. The funding program could be introduced with a budget of at least \$500,000 plus administration costs. A separate budget should be established for start up costs for the city museum. The proposed funding program will require an office to administer it – either a cultural affairs office within the City, an arms length heritage council, or a department in the city museum.

Visitor Predictions

Most local museums currently attract very few visitors – so few that they were reluctant to answer this question. Some have no way of keeping track of the number of visitors they receive; they do not charge admission and do not monitor visitation beyond occasional entries in a guest book. Many are not open regular hours or are only open seasonally. Most have very specific mandates that limit their appeal to a small audience: 3,000-5,000 visitors would be a reasonable expectation for a small museum operated largely by volunteers that was open year round; 10,000 or more for a museum with full-time staff. Museums with a large enough facility and a lot of volunteer support can organize and host special events that attract 2,000 or more visitors on one day, but most of these museums would be stretched to accommodate 50-100 visitors in a day. Events such as Doors Open and Historic Edmonton Week can boost numbers significantly, but also stretch volunteers and can only be done once a year. However, visitation is only one measure of community benefit and impact: a number of museums provide outreach programs, deliver educational programs to schools and cultural groups, participate in events such as Heritage Days, and have developed publications, websites and virtual exhibitions.

Potential Barriers and Opportunities for Cooperation with Stakeholders

The City should develop a mechanism for supporting existing local museums. Funding is one aspect of that support, but it is also important to provide local museums advice and direction about collaborative marketing and programming, and volunteer support. This support could come from the city museum, giving the museum a leadership role within the circle of smaller museums. The opportunity to consolidate some of the collections in one location should also be explored. There is currently little communication or cooperation among existing museums. Municipal support should also be provided to build a network among local museums and develop collaborative initiatives such as joint marketing.

Implementation

It will take several years for the vision of the city museum to be understood and accepted throughout the city. The museum should be incorporated and seed funding provided by the City to enable the incremental development of exhibitions and programs on various themes while building profile and momentum for the project over a 5-10 year period. Earlier efforts to initiate a city museum were unable to rally enough interest to develop the project, for various reasons. Some focused on the facility itself and tried to get support for a complete museum rather than approaching the project incrementally. The high cost of building an actual museum, without any real understanding of its benefits was a deterrent. The 1994 and 2002 concepts fell victim to economic recessions.

Develop and Articulate a Compelling Vision

The proposed museum should embrace the history and culture of the city in the largest sense possible, including contemporary Edmonton. Exhibitions and programs should show how the past affects our lives today and focus on what makes Edmonton distinct. Everyone in Edmonton should see themselves in the museum, whether recent immigrants or Aboriginal people, whether young or old. The museum should change on a regular basis, feature dynamic programming, be interactive, engage community groups and individual visitors. It has to remain new and fresh.

The question of how to market the museum is very important. The words “City Museum” or “Edmonton Museum” suggest an institution with a fairly narrow mandate – broader than a civic museum, but still limited in people’s imaginations. The very word museum is a deterrent to some who are not familiar with the ways in which modern museums engage with their communities. Either a creative name needs to be found or significant effort put into explaining what is meant by a city museum.

Establish a Governance Structure

The museum should be governed at arms length from the City. There should be a formal relationship and commitment from the City, but autonomy is important in terms of generating public and corporate support and providing the necessary leadership and identity. An arms length museum has more intellectual freedom than a government run museum. (Consider the difference between the Glenbow Museum and the Royal Alberta Museum, for example.) A new group of people should be identified to develop this museum, individuals without a connection to existing museums in the city. Formal relationships should be established with existing museums and with many community partners.

Establish a Preliminary Budget and Initiate Programming

The city should fund the project generously, providing initial capital funding and the core of an endowment fund. If the museum is not going to be developed and managed properly, it should not be initiated at all. The museum can begin in an interim facility and develop organically, be allowed to grow without being too constrained by preconceived notions of what type of facility is required. It will take years to develop the museum; in the interim, temporary exhibitions in strategic locations throughout the city, educational programs, virtual exhibitions, etc. may all be used to build profile and momentum for the project.

Develop a Network of Existing Museums

There is very little awareness of the smaller museums throughout the city. Existing museums should be supported by a central facility, through funding, shared marketing and programming. Where possible, if collections were to be combined, they should be consolidated to reduce duplication, but existing museum organizations should maintain control over their collections (not necessarily exhibitions and programs). Some museums should remain where they are (e.g., Alberta Aviation Museum and the new Ukrainian Canadian Museum and Archives), but smaller museums and collections that are not fixed should be encouraged to become a part of the larger museum (e.g., Sports Hall of Fame and Museum and the Telephone Historical Centre).

Collections Assessment

A collections policy should be developed and a collections assessment undertaken of city-owned collections. Strengths and weaknesses and any gaps or areas of duplication among existing collections should be identified, as well as requirements for storage of current assets and projected growth. The collections can be brought together virtually through an intranet site, with the potential to upload some information to *Artefacts Canada*, the national database of museum holdings, to make them accessible to all.

Identify Champions and Patrons

The museum will ultimately require major patrons – projects like the concert hall did not go ahead until the commitment from Francis Winspear. Similarly the art gallery redevelopment concept struggled for many years before John and Barbara Poole’s leadership donation. The museum also requires a number of champions – not necessarily the same people as the major benefactors, but well-respected individuals within the community who can garner more support, individuals who are not affiliated with any one of the existing local museums. Taxpayers need to see that they will not be bearing the full cost of the project, that there is support from other levels of government, the corporate and private sectors.

Identify Potential Locations

Ideally the museum should be located in the downtown area or in Old Strathcona, adjacent to an arts and entertainment district. A number of possible locations were discussed including:

- the Land Titles Building on Churchill Square, which the City should acquire in order to retain the perimeter of the square;
- within the proposed arena, which is intended to be more of a community centre than is Rexall;
- within Jasper Village East, co-locating with UCAMA and the Jewish Synagogue restoration site;
- the old Immigration Hall, which is currently derelict and has great historical significance;
- the decommissioned EPCOR power plan, which has great historical significance to the Aboriginal community and both the city and the province;
- somewhere along 118th Avenue as part of the proposed neighbourhood revitalization as an arts district;
- on the site of the old arena at Northlands, after the new arena is built;
- the Artifact Centre, the former Bohemian Brewery by Queen Elizabeth Pool, which would require renovation and expansion;
- at Coronation Park, co-located with the Telus World of Science
- at the municipal airport, co-located with the Aviation Museum.

There may be others. It was beyond the scope of this study to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each site, determine feasibility, and to make specific recommendations.

Strike While the Iron is Hot

Developing a city museum has been proposed many times in the past, including the celebration of both the 75th and 100th anniversaries of the city. Museums make great legacy projects but it will be many years before another commemorative opportunity comes along.

Crisis, such as the lack of environmental controls which is a critical argument for the redevelopment of the art gallery – can be another instigating factor. The Artifact Centre, which houses the City’s collection, is in a very inadequate facility and it could be argued that the collection has been in crisis for many years. Museums are often established to preserve heritage buildings that are under threat, to find a new use for an old place. The Land Titles Building and the Immigration Hall both provide opportunities in this regard.

In recent years, museums have increasingly become key elements in downtown revitalization in North America and Europe. The proposed arena, the redevelopment of Jasper Village East or the revitalization of 118th Avenue are all potential opportunities. The museum needs to be open to the possibility of becoming an effective and valuable fit in whichever option becomes the City of Edmonton’s priority.

As mentioned above, the redevelopment of the Royal Alberta Museum (now in question), the development of the new Art Gallery of Alberta and the proposed Curatorial Research Facility at the University are a blessing and a handicap. The difference between these facilities, and the need and benefit of all must become very clear to all Edmontonians in order to gain support for and establish a city museum for Edmonton.

Literature Review of the History of Edmonton Museum Concepts

A number of different concepts for a city museum have been explored over the years. Much has changed both in museology and in the city during this period. Edmonton has blossomed as an arts community but its heritage development lags behind.

The City of Edmonton established an Archives Committee responsible for collecting historical artifacts and archives in 1938.² Two years later, Council decided that the archives would be kept in the public library, then west of the Hotel Macdonald. In 1947, the committee's mandate expanded to include marking historic sites as well as collecting artifacts and archives and it became the Archives and Landmarks Committee. In 1958, the Archives and Landmarks Committee and the Northern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers Association (now Northern Alberta Pioneers and Descendants Association, NAPDA) collaborated on the development of an historical exhibition in the Civic Block and the restoration of the John Walter House, which opened in 1959. The Archives and Landmarks Committee continued to accumulate records and artifacts and, in 1960, opened the Historical Exhibits Building in the old Telephone Exchange on 112 Avenue and 101 Street, a stand alone museum with regular hours of operation. A second John Walter house opened in 1963. In 1966, the Northern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers Association donated their collection of artifacts and archives to the City of Edmonton. The Archives and Landmarks Committee became the Edmonton Historical Board.

In 1967, Cam Finlay became Director of Historical and Science Services, responsible for developing Fort Edmonton Park, the John Walter Museum and the Historical Exhibits Building. The Fort Edmonton Foundation was established in 1969 to support the development of the Fort. In 1973, the City Archives came into existence in the Historical Exhibits Building. Helen LaRose became the manager, and the artifacts were sent to the Artifact Centre for use in Fort Edmonton Park or the John Walter Museum. The third John Walter house was moved to the site in 1974. The 1846 replica of Fort Edmonton was developed in the early 1970s, followed by 1885 Street in the late 1970s, 1905 Street and 1920 Street in the 1980s. Other specialised museums were also explored by the City, including a military museum in the Connaught Armoury,³ and an Edmonton Air Museum.⁴

In 1975, the Edmonton Historical Board launched its Recognition Awards program, essentially the City's heritage hall of fame. In 1980, the City considered establishing a museum as a 75th anniversary project and Council allocated \$750,000 towards the creation of a city museum. The concept of developing a museum and archives, possibly co-located with a science centre, at the Bohemian Maid Brewery (site of the Artifact Centre), was considered in 1981.⁵ The report did not explore the vision in any detail but concluded that this was a feasible location and provided some information that could provide a starting point if this location were to be considered at this time.

The 1983 Mayor's Task Force on the Heart of the City raised the question of a city museum within the context of downtown revitalization. From 1986-1988, the Edmonton Downtown Development Corporation investigated the feasibility of locating the museum and archives in the old Civic Block,

² Lawrence Herzog, "The Edmonton Historical Board Marks 65 Years" *Real Estate Weekly*, Vol. 21 No. 43, Oct 30, 2003.

³ *Connaught Armoury Military Museum Proposal*, 1975.

⁴ Jane C Weaver, *Edmonton Air Museum: Consolidated Summary*, 1969-1974.

⁵ *Edmonton Museum and Archives: The O'Keefe Brewery Site: A Feasibility Report*. Roman Fodchuk & Associates Ltd. and Ron Boruk Architect, 1981.

co-located with a concert hall.⁶ These studies again focused on a specific facility and the information provided is primarily technical, regarding the potential to restore the Civic Block specifically, rather than conceptual, about what the museum might contain and how it might be developed. As long-time Edmontonians will recall, the Civic Block was torn down and the Winspear Concert Hall built on the site.

The Prince of Wales Armouries was then selected as the site for the City Archives, independent of the museum. The archival function is required by the Municipal Government Act and covered by municipal policies and bylaws, whereas municipal support for a museum is discretionary.⁷ The funding initially earmarked for the city museum was reallocated (with its interest) to the city archives. When the archives moved into its new facility in 1992, it did not require the entire space. The archives became a heritage centre with like-minded organizations such as the Loyal Edmonton Regiment (LER) Military Museum, the Alberta Genealogical Society, and more recently the Telephone Historical Centre (THC) as tenants.

From 1990 to 1994, another round of consultations identified seven potential locations for a city museum, none of which are options today.⁸ Lord Cultural Resources led a team that conducted an environmental scan and market analysis, developed the program for the building, proposed a governance and organizational structure, and cost estimates. Much of the information provided in this report is now out of date but does provide benchmark information that could be used today for comparative purposes. The idea of a city museum was strongly supported in a public survey conducted at that time, as it is supported in the Omnibus results in 2007. The question is, what does a city museum mean to the people being surveyed? The study did not propose a compelling vision for a city museum. The museum was to focus on post-1930 Edmonton (because of Fort Edmonton's cut-off date), and the suggested themes predictable.

The report stressed the need for interactivity, and proposed inclusion of a children's museum, a concept that was kept alive for several years. However, in the meantime, the popularity of children's museums has declined in favour of incorporating hands-on activities for children in exhibitions that also interest adults and encourage intergenerational experiences. The Telus World of Science has redeveloped its children's exhibitions and activities and developed extensive programs, and the Royal Alberta Museum's current redevelopment concept also includes a children's museum. The concept also included a visitor centre, a function that has been incorporated into the World Trade Centre. The second study was limited to architectural and engineering issues related to converting the Churchill Exchange Building into a museum so no longer has any bearing on the discussion as the City decided not to acquire the building.⁹

The idea of developing a city museum was raised again as a potential centennial project for the City, but was considered to be too large a project to be realized within the relatively short time frame and

⁶ *Edmonton Museum and Archives Proposal for the Civic Block*. Edmonton Downtown Development Corporation, December 1986; *The Civic Block Museum and Archives*. Feasibility Study. Lambu-Scott Architects Ltd., 1988.

⁷ <http://www.edmonton.ca/citygov/policy/C448.doc>; Corporate Records and Information Management Bylaw <http://www.edmonton.ca/bylaws/C12101.doc>; Municipal Government Act http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/Acts/M26.cfm?frm_isbn=0779747542

⁸ *Background Report. Planning and Financial Feasibility Study for a Civic Museum in Downtown Edmonton*. Lord Cultural Resources Planning and Management Inc. in association with Bittorf Thorkelsson Associates Inc., Nichols Applied Management Inc., and Hanscomb Consultants Inc., 1991.

⁹ *Discover Edmonton Museum. Final Report*. Brinsmead Ziola Associates, 1994.

limited budget allowed and was turned down in favour of the development of Sir Winston Churchill Square.

The idea of a city museum came up again during Bill Smith's term as mayor in relation to the idea of merging the Provincial Museum and the University of Alberta Collections and/or the Edmonton Art Gallery. One proposal saw the city museum as a gallery within the redeveloped Provincial Museum. Another saw the civic museum being developed in the former Art Gallery building after the Art Gallery and Provincial Museum had merged and relocated to the Cominco Lands at the end of 99th Street north of the post office. This concept failed due to the post 9/11 recession of 2002.

Interview Summary: Community Members

Members of the broader community generally supported the idea of establishing a city museum, several with genuine enthusiasm and excitement. They thought that the civic museum concept was too narrow a mandate, but understood that the city has a responsibility to its existing collections and that they should be incorporated within city museum. Most respondents did not think that the words city museum or Edmonton Museum suggested a dynamic, creative facility. That energy needs to be inherent in the vision. The city is changing very quickly now as a result of the boom, making it all the more important to preserve and understand our past.

Most felt that existing local museums were very specialized and that even if a network was developed, and formal relationships were established with local museums, providing support to local museums is a separate issue from and does not fill the need for a city museum. There are too many gaps and the small museums are limited in their ability to serve the community. They suggested that the museum should embrace the history and culture of the city in the largest sense possible. They suggested a number of the themes included in this report.

Although this is being called a city museum, community members thought it was essential that the museum reflect Edmonton and the surrounding region, not just the city limits, and that surrounding communities be approached for potential collaboration, partnerships and funding. Historically, relationships between First Nations, Métis, and European communities were interdependent. There is a growing interest in Métis and First Nations history among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and opportunity to develop effective partnerships. It is important to engage Aboriginal communities in a non-political way.

Respondents felt that the museum's first responsibility was to the people of Edmonton, and that tourists would be a secondary audience. New residents are a particular audience; the museum could help to familiarize newcomers to the community. It will be challenging, but critical, to engage members of ethnocultural communities.

Community members felt that it was important for the museum to have an arms length relationship to the City, that there should be a formal relationship between the City and the museum and an ongoing funding commitment from the City, but that autonomy was important to generate public and corporate support, and provide necessary leadership and identity. The museum will require regional, provincial and federal government support but the City should provide generous funding, both capital and the core of an endowment fund.

In discussions regarding potential champions for the project, a number of names and approaches were suggested. It would be advisable to engage members of the founding families, businesses and community organizations to give authenticity and support. But it is also important to involve members of newer communities, cultural communities and the surrounding area.

A number of potential locations were discussed and somewhere in the downtown area favoured. Community members stressed the importance of building the museum incrementally: fleshing out the concept, getting the group of champions together, initiating programming, and assessing potential sites simultaneously.

Interview Summary: Museums in Edmonton

There are many museums and related organizations in Edmonton, ranging from:

- provincial museums and historic sites (the Royal Alberta Museum, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and Rutherford House);
- to City-owned and operated museums (Fort Edmonton Park, the John Walter Museum, the John Jansen Nature Centre, the Muttart Conservatory, the Edmonton Zoo, the Artifact Centre, the Edmonton Police Museum and Archives, and the Edmonton Transit heritage program);
- to independent, stand alone museums (Telus World of Science, Ukrainian Canadian Archives & Museum of Alberta, Alberta Railway Museum, Alberta Aviation Museum, Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum, Telephone Historical Centre, Victoria Composite High School Museum and Archives, Edmonton Radial Railway Society, Edmonton Sports Museum & Hall of Fame, Edmonton Power Historical Foundation, and the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta);
- to museums that have a parent body (Museums and Collections Services/University of Alberta, Edmonton Public Schools Archives and Museum, Alberta Association of Registered Nurses Museum & Archives, C & E (1891) Railway Museum/Junior League of Edmonton, Ukrainian Museum of Canada, Alberta Branch, and the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada Arts & Crafts Museum (USWLC).

Not all of these would necessarily qualify as museums according to the International Council of Museums which defines a museum as: *a non-profit making permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, the tangible and intangible evidence of people and their environment*; or the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) whose definition is more specific: *A non-profit, permanent establishment, exempt from federal and provincial income taxes, open to the public at regular hours and administered in the public interest for the purpose of collecting and preserving, studying, interpreting, assembling and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment, objects and specimens of cultural value, including artistic, scientific (whether animate or inanimate) historical and technological material.* The CMA definition includes institutions as diverse as science centres, historic sites, art galleries, zoos, and botanical gardens. The Alberta Museums Association has initiated an accreditation process, which could be used as a benchmark in identifying eligibility for municipal funding in the future.

There are also a number of local heritage organizations with an interest in a potential museum. At this stage, only a few have been consulted (the Edmonton Historical Board, Edmonton and District Historical Society, Alberta Labour History Institute, and the Heritage Community Foundation). If the concept is to be developed further there is a larger list of organizations that should be consulted, including the Northern Alberta Pioneers and Descendants Association; Alberta Genealogical Society, Edmonton Branch; Association Canadienne-Francaise de l'Alberta; CKUA Radio; Edmonton Ghost Tours; Highlands Historical Foundation; Historical Society of Germans from Poland and Volhynia; Ismaili Council for Edmonton; Loyal Orange Association; Lutheran Historical Institute; Old Strathcona Foundation; Olde Towne Beverly Historical Society; Out an' About Tours; and various cultural societies. As well, art galleries have not been consulted at this stage but should be considered.

There are currently a number of heritage events, such as May Week, Edmonton and Athabasca History Week, Historica Heritage Fairs, Doors Open, and Airfest that should be taken into

consideration by a city museum. The Edmonton and District Historical Society has recently formed a History Centre in Queen Alexandra School and will be developing curriculum-based educational programs with the long-term goal of becoming a heritage equivalent to the Bennett Environmental Education Centre. Ultimately, a new organization is required, one that has the city museum as its focus.

Meetings with representatives of many museums and local heritage organizations revealed that there is not much support for the idea of establishing a museum of civic administration. The scope was considered to be too narrow to be of much interest. The police and transit heritage programs would be interested in participating in a larger museum concept.

There was more support for the idea of developing a city museum, a Museum of Edmonton, and an Edmonton museum network and funding program. Local museums would be interested in contributing to exhibitions and programs led by a city museum, in accessing a municipal funding program, and in initiatives such as collaborative marketing, always a challenge for small museums. The history of local museums shows that they sprouted up due to the end of a historical period or to mark an important anniversary. This suggests that if there is no place to tell the full story i.e. if a city museum is not established, it is likely that more small museums will emerge in the future.

The notion of a concept like the Smithsonian's museums on the mall was raised. However, restricting this discussion to history museums, existing museums are not all interested in co-locating in one place. A number of museums are grounded to their current (or proposed locations). They can not move because either:

- they are historic sites (Fort Edmonton Park; John Walter Museum; C & E (1891) Railway Museum (replica); the Ukrainian Canadian Archives & Museum of Alberta; the old Beth Israel Synagogue; the Edmonton Public Schools Archives and Museum in MacKay Avenue School);
- they have an ongoing relationship to the institution in which they are housed (the Victoria Composite High School Museum and Archives; College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta; Ukrainian Museum of Canada, Alberta Branch; Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada Arts & Crafts Museum); or
- it would be extremely expensive and challenging to move them because of their collections (the Alberta Railway Museum; the Edmonton Radial Railway Society; the Alberta Aviation Museum). The Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum could move, but has invested significantly in its current location and benefits from co-location with the City Archives.

The organizations that were most interested in co-location are those that currently lack a permanent home (Edmonton Police Museum and Archives; Edmonton Transit; Edmonton Sports Museum & Hall of Fame; Edmonton Power Historical Foundation). The Telephone Historical Centre in particular is vulnerable due to its ageing volunteer base and lack of sustainable funding. Some of these museums would be interested in becoming a part of a larger city museum. If a city museum were to be established, a number of potential locations for a city museum were mentioned.

The concept of merging local museums into one city museum is not practical financially or in terms of volunteer or audience support. Local museums are funded largely through casinos and lotteries, funding that would no longer be available if they were all to merge into one museum. Most informants felt that the museum should be operated at arms-length from the City but with substantial municipal funding, possibly a dedicated endowment. Several commented that the City

should not initiate a museum unless it is prepared to fund it adequately. The important educational and curatorial roles of a museum, and the need for public support much like a public library must be recognized; museums should not be considered primarily as attractions, but as research and educational institutions, as institutions that foster a sense of place and identity. Admissions alone will not support the museum. Informants also noted that science and technology and youth, not heritage, are priority funding areas for corporate foundations. Corporate funders may be interested in a city museum project if it were tied to downtown or community revitalization or had a significant component interpreting local industries. On the other hand, heritage does appeal to private donors who could be encouraged to add to an endowment established by the city.

Current volunteers have particular interests in a technology or a specific aspect of Edmonton's history, while new volunteers could be attracted to an institution with a broader mandate. An organizational structure like that of the Edmonton Aviation Heritage Society, which has both independent and shared functions, should be considered. There would be benefits to sharing storage space and conservation labs, for example. If collections of various museums were to be combined, some artifacts should be deaccessioned to reduce overlap. Some of the partners in a city museum could come from existing museums but there are a lot of subject areas not covered by any of the existing museums so additional partners would be identified.

The relationship between Fort Edmonton Park and a city museum came up in several interviews. Fort Edmonton covers the early history of Edmonton but its ability to explore more recent history (post-1920s) or to interpret history thematically is limited by its heritage park format. Edmonton is a modern city; it is largely a post-World War II city and much of its story cannot be told at Fort Edmonton. The park is also a seasonal facility, with limited access in the off-season. A few expressed the view that the City should focus its energies on improving Fort Edmonton rather than establishing a new museum. Some felt that the City's current administrative structure was not the most effective for museums, that the proposed museum should have a director with a background in local history and museology that was responsible for all aspects of the museum.

Ongoing programming and temporary exhibitions on a wide variety of topics that would provide breadth as well as depth are essential to attract repeat visitors. A number of people commented that the museum could play an important role in building a sense of community, which is particularly important given the increase in number of people migrating to Edmonton from other parts of the country and immigrating from around the world. The museum could help to give a voice to newer immigrants. The need to consult within the Aboriginal community was stressed.

If existing museums were brought together in some way, broader themes could be explored that would be of more general interest. A few raised concerns about whether the history of Edmonton, particularly as could be told through artifacts, was unique noting that there are a lot of boring museums in Canada. Several commented on the limitations of technology museums, that they should be more about people. A couple mentioned the interest in establishing a home for the Sports, Culture and Community Service Halls of Fame, but others noted that halls of fame have a very limited audience so the information would have to be presented in an innovative, space effective way (i.e., interactive kiosks rather than portraits on the walls). Others noted that if collections were to be combined in a city museum, the communities that developed them should be able to borrow them for specific purposes (ceremonial events, exhibitions, etc.); a city museum should retain its grassroots connection.

Museum	Governance	Scope of Collections	Scope of Program	Funding	Number of Staff	Number of Volunteers	Visitation
Alberta Association of Registered Nurses Museum & Archives , est. 1970s, hired staff in 1991 for 75 th anniversary	College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta; New Brunswick and the national org. also have museums	2,000 artifacts, corporate records and records of nursing associations; provincial mandate; began collecting material when schools of nursing in hospitals started closing in early '70s	Permanent and temporary exhibitions; duplicate exhibitions for travel throughout province; have website and CD; provincial outreach program; double-sided posters; open to the public; seniors tours, some students	Funded by College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta; project grants from AMA, ASA, AHRF, and partnerships with nursing faculty at UofA	1 librarian/archivist	Have had some volunteers but not enough for them to do	Does not record visitors
Alberta Aviation Museum , est. 1983; in current location since 1991; has plans for upgrades to their existing facility and a major expansion	Non-profit society; federally registered charity; note: comments are limited to the museum, not the Heritage Society as a whole	Edmonton focus; also northern Alberta & Canada; extensive collection of aircraft and related artifacts; books & archival material	Airfest: a major annual event that attracts 18,000 visitors; interactive exhibitions; curriculum-based grade 6 programs; extensive woodworking and metalworking facilities; partnerships with organizations like NAIT to develop and deliver programs and with youth centre, seniors centre, Catholic Social Services	Discretionary funding from the City in 2006; previously self-sustaining; casinos; paid admission; educational programs; gift shop; donations; grants; facility rentals; some earned revenue, i.e., film projects	ED full-time; office manager, gift shop manager, and archivist full-time	40 active in restoration, 60-70 total, average age 75; volunteer mgt. issue; need volunteers for display & reception	18,000 paid admissions plus 2,000-4,000 students/year; busy May – September, weekends in winter; 400 members; numbers vary from year to year
Alberta Railway Museum	Non-profit society	Focused mandate CN/Northern Alberta Railway; 3 rd largest railway museum in Canada, 65 cars, 25,000 photos; oral histories; have telegraph system, teletypes, etc. but no where to display them; use some of the cars as exhibition halls; could display ephemera at city museum and encourage visitors to go to ARM	Facility just within city limits but has no city water, moved 30 years ago, would like LRT to extend to museum; extension of Anthony Henday Drive/195 Ave will improve access; initially at Cromdale; sewer or natural gas, does have half a mile of live track, former spur line	Liability insurance is expensive -- \$9,000/year; casinos; Alberta Museums Association; Alberta Historical Resources Foundation; Wild Rose Foundation; support from the City for roadway maintenance	No permanent staff; up to 3 summer staff through STEP and Service Canada	75 members, 15 active; board works 10+ hours/month, 2 professional steam engineers; people interested in trains, old stuff	3,831

Museum	Governance	Scope of Collections	Scope of Program	Funding	Number of Staff	Number of Volunteers	Visitation
Artifact Centre , est. 1967 in the Cromdale Bus Barns, in 1972 moved to the old Bohemian Brewery in Walterdale	City of Edmonton	Extensive collection; 90,000 artifacts, half of which are dispersed throughout Fort Edmonton; collect anything pertinent to the history of Edmonton, including contemporary ephemera, gifts to the city, etc.	No programming at the artifact centre	Part of civic administration	2 full-time	None at the centre	Not open to the public
C&E Station Museum	Junior League of Edmonton/ Friends of the C&E Station	Small collection & exhibition of artifacts related to the C&E station and railway; the station is a replica constructed in 1982, the original station was opposite the Strathcona Hotel	Participate in heritage events such as the telegraphers annual international event, Historic Edmonton week, etc.; the Edmonton Radial Railway Society high level bridge trips stop at the station; educational program; publication	STEP grant; \$2,000 program budget from the Junior League; the Friends raise funds for specific purposes	1 STEP student; the League office manager will take visitors through in the off-season	10 in the Friends; 20 in the League; the numbers have dropped substantially	Popular during special events
Canadian Militaria Preservation Society	6 board members	Extensive private collection of Canadian militaria on long-term loan to the society – all aspects: uniforms, badges, home front, objects reflecting children’s lives during wartime, etc.; 4,000+ sq. ft; thousands of artifacts	The collection is not catalogued and limited research has been done; thematic displays; intends to participate in a virtual exhibition about the home front with the Heritage Community Foundation; has close relationship with the Royal Alberta Museum	No budget; supported by Milarm Co. Ltd. in terms of space, overhead, staff; private acquisition budget	No staff designated to the museum; Milarm staff available as required	Curator	Does not keep track, but more than 2,000/year (40+ /week) primarily military, collectors & specialists
Edmonton Police Museum , est 1987; would like to see in city museum; stories related to events, character of police force, as members	Had an advisory board, dissolved by a former Chief of Police; there is an historical unit, attached to honour guard	History of policing in Edmonton area, from Fort Edmonton to North West Mounted Police, to Alberta Provincial Police, to Edmonton Police Service, changes in the work itself; 14’ x 25’	Currently limited to forensic science exhibition at the Telus World of Science; developed junior detective program; maintain heritage cars for parades; wrote a history of the EPS	No budget	Currently none, had a curator	N/a	N/a

Museum	Governance	Scope of Collections	Scope of Program	Funding	Number of Staff	Number of Volunteers	Visitation
of community; museum could increase public confidence in police		rolling storage for archives plus 6,000 sq. ft. artifact storage off-site					
Edmonton Power Historical Foundation, operates out of Alberta Heritage Exhibition Park, west of Leduc, est 1987	Non-profit society; federally registered charity	Collection grows as power plants close (i.e., Cloverbar, EPCOR in 2009), some artifacts very large (steam engine 10 tons); currently occupy 2,000 sq. ft., half a Quonset; also have operating manuals, drawings, pictures, etc.; could use 25,000 sq. ft.	Have written history of Edmonton Power; before 9/11 provided tours of EPCOR; moved to Leduc because of space requirements; exhibits educate public about how power industry works; developed online curriculum-based school programs		None	9 directors, 40 members	Currently only 3 public events/year but thousands of visitors each day
Edmonton Public Schools Archives and Museum, McKay Avenue School closed 1983; retained building because of its significance, home of first legislative assembly, etc.	Edmonton Public School Board	Maintains archives for school district; note: Strathcona High School also has a museum and archives, as does Victoria School for the Performing Arts	Major restoration project in 1987; original 1881 school house was restored as an EPS centennial project in 1982; curriculum-based educational programs; building is used for board and public functions	Receives allocation from the school board, as do schools	4 FT/2 PT; 7 hourly	4 volunteers who come in once or twice a week	Up to 15,000 including school children
Edmonton Radial Railway Museum, 1970s	Non-profit society; federally registered charity	City stopped operating streetcars in 1951; people who used them ageing; 5 operating streetcars at FEP, 3 over the High Level Bridge; over 20 streetcars in total, including bodies, also banking parts for future restoration; archives, some ephemera	Operate seasonally both at Fort Edmonton Park and out of the TransAlta Bus Barns; provide training for drivers; want to integrate a little museum in the Bus Barns	City pays \$40,000/year to society to operate streetcars at FEP; access grants, looking into casinos; society raised funds for their building at the Park	No paid staff; all drivers at FEP and all restoration work done by volunteers	115 members, 15,000 volunteer hours/year; need to get new/young people involved	Visitation included in FEP figures

Museum	Governance	Scope of Collections	Scope of Program	Funding	Number of Staff	Number of Volunteers	Visitation
Edmonton Sports Museum and Halls of Fame , hall of fame has existed since 1950s but has not had a proper home	Non-profit society; federally registered charity	No collection yet; currently identifying potential acquisitions in community	Have small space on main floor of Chancery Hall, no exhibitions yet; exploring possibility of moving into proposed arena	Have initiated 'Founders' Circle' fundraising campaign; plan to access lotteries funding	No staff; Edmonton Sports Council staff available	N/a	N/a
Edmonton Telephone Historical Centre , began in 1980s, inc. 1985; was in Old Strathcona from 1987-2003; moved into Armouries in 2005	Non-profit society; provincially registered charity	Donated 75% of its collection to the RAM with an agreement that it would be exhibited in the new galleries; would like to donate remainder of collection (best part) to a city museum		\$100,000-\$125,000/yr operating budget; receive \$50,000 operating grant from Community Services; annual fundraising campaign – Telus matches funds raised; pay \$1,200/m to the city in rent;	1 FTE, 3 days/week on site; 2 days/week working from home; teacher and accountant also on contract	~10 volunteers who come in once a week	Not huge, but visitors they get are interested
Edmonton Transit , a transit museum would not survive independently but interested in co-locating, questioned accessibility of the municipal airport	City of Edmonton, Department of Transportation and Streets	Need storage and maintenance facility for heritage buses, currently ~15 buses, photographs	Provide popular historical tours using heritage buses; have developed history of transportation program for grades 2/3 and 6; displays at Capital Ex; writing a history book; 100 th anniversary in 2008, planning heritage programs; value of program in encouraging use of public transit	Cost of operating historic buses is very high	No dedicated staff, group of oldtimers who look after buses, now retiring	1 who provides the tours	8,000-9,000 people/year participate in tours; turn away hundreds of people each year
Fort Edmonton Park / John Walter Museum	City of Edmonton	45,000 artifacts displayed within the various buildings	Continuing to add new buildings and features, another 30 buildings / projects in the plan; extensive programming, special events, educational programs, summer camps, etc.	City funding and earned revenue; 60% municipally-funded; 40% cost recovery; the City covers \$3.6M/year of the \$5.8M budget	Staff integrated into other City attractions, therefore difficult to calculate	600 volunteers from all walks of life, both episodic & ongoing volunteers	~200,000 visitors, up 20% in 2006 season, trying to improve attendance

Museum	Governance	Scope of Collections	Scope of Program	Funding	Number of Staff	Number of Volunteers	Visitation
Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta , former incarnation in 1970s	Non-profit society; federally registered charity	Significant collection, primarily archival; scope is Red Deer north	Have plans to develop old Beth Israel Synagogue on 95 th Street when Catholic congregation closes; has done a book project and a movie, working on a second; participate in Historic Edmonton Week	Memberships; grants; donations; and casinos	1 – half-time position	Board members	122 reference inquiries in 2006; 500 attended film premier; film show to 15 community groups
Loyal Edmonton Regiment Museum , started 1920 with returning WWI soldiers, 1980s became serious; moved into Armouries 1992	Non-profit society; federally registered charity; Loyal Edmonton Regiment commander serves on the board	Military service of individuals from Northern Alberta; 250,000 artifacts, including large collection of badges, medals and accoutrements; storage facility in the basement	2 exhibition galleries; virtual museum; online curriculum-based education programs	Paid \$500,000 on leasehold improvements in 1992, does not pay rent now; funded through grants; casinos, bingos, donations; budget \$30,000/year	1 part-time	20-25 volunteers active, either military or spouses; those who started with museum, not attracting volunteers	Low due to fact that small museums are dispersed throughout the city, access and marketing a challenge
Telus World of Science , est 1978; initially as planetarium; 1989 bankrupt, board and staff dismissed	Foundation; federally registered charity; governance has changed over the years; City owns building, Foundation the programs	Not a collections-based museum, interactive science centre	Have accelerated new programming, new things to see every month; substantial school programming; outreach programming throughout the province, northern BC, NWT; developing new planetarium as a research centre	\$6.5M; 20% of operating costs (\$1.4M) from city; self-generate remainder; would like multiyear service agreement; \$1M sponsorships/donations	70 FTE	250 volunteers; diverse, not just interested in science	~500,000; growing no. of repeat visitors; 140,000 students/yr; plus 40,000 through outreach
Ukrainian Canadian Women's League Arts & Crafts Museum;	Museum Committee a sub-committee of the Women's Group	3,000 artifacts, Ukrainian cultural heritage; maintained according to AMA standards	Displays in the museum; outreach programs; curriculum-based educational programs; demonstrations & classes	No real budget; no longer hire students as unable to top up their salaries	None	eight committee members	No regular hours of operation

Museum	Governance	Scope of Collections	Scope of Program	Funding	Number of Staff	Number of Volunteers	Visitation
est. 1952			embroidery, sewing jackets, weaving, baking; lectures; research traditional crafts and costumes; pavilion at Heritage Days				
Ukrainian Canadian Archives & Museum of Alberta (UCAMA) , founded in 1972, opened in 1974	Non-profit; federally registered charity	Extensive collection; over 3,000 artifacts plus archives and organizational histories; more than 5,000 photos of early Ukrainian settlers; over 50,000 books and magazines; have grown beyond current space	Construction beginning on new museum on Jasper Ave.; close to historical Ukrainian core, cultural hub; museum focuses on urban Ukrainians in contrast to UCHV; curriculum-based educational programs, grade 4; intend to be inter-cultural; Shumka stage in Louise McKinney Park	Received \$3M from the provincial government and \$3M from the city for the renovations	1 staff; 2 previously	Board of directors, all working elsewhere, no other active volunteers	Limited in current location
Ukrainian Museum of Canada, Alberta Branch , began c1920s	Non-profit; Saskatoon branch was registered as a charity in 1970 but the Alberta branch is not	Significant collection, includes objects from the Ukraine as well as those brought to Alberta by immigrants; small library and archives	Two – three events per year; participate in Heritage Days, temporary exhibitions, fashion show, public event to identify and learn how to care for objects; borrow from other branches	Rent facility from the Women’s Association; funded through casino and student employment grants	Only summer students	10 members of board of directors, plus volunteers	

Environmental Scan

Internationally, city museums have grown in number and changed in purpose significantly over the past decade. In 2005, the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities was established, “reflecting the growing focus world wide on cities: their economic importance, their spectacular growth and the problems and possibilities they present. The matters for debate about the city are endless: pollution, regeneration, the private car, public transport, the flight to the suburbs, and the destruction of heritage, insensitive development. The Committee aims to be at the centre of this debate, not least through supporting and encouraging museums of cities in their work of collecting, preserving and presenting original material on the city’s past, present and future, work which can reinforce the city’s identity and contribute to its development.”¹⁰

Only one of the six largest cities in the Canada has a city museum, the Vancouver Museum, established in the late 19th century. There are many museums in Montreal, which interpret aspects of the city’s history, among them the Pointe-à-Callière, Centre d’histoire de Montréal, the McCord Museum, and Écomusée du fier monde. The historical interpretation of large urban centres in Canada is generally dispersed through the built environment: historic sites and heritage districts; specialised museums that focus on specific urban themes; and, where appropriate venues exist, temporary exhibitions. However, a new phase is apparent in large and major cities. Edmonton is not alone in considering the establishment of a city museum in one form or another while being committed to the development or expansion of other cultural facilities. Toronto and Ottawa are both working towards city museums.

Increased population and changing demographics are certainly factors but so is the desire to be a “creative” and “livable” city that is notable for its amenities, particularly in the arts, heritage and recreation. In some metropolitan areas this aim is coupled with urban revitalization, especially in downtown cores and/or in cities facing economic challenges. For example, cities in the United Kingdom, such as Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester, on the verge of collapse as a result of de-industrialization, have gone through significant urban transformations with the historic built environment, museums, other cultural institutions, and post-secondary educational institutions pivotal to successful regeneration, if not gentrification.

Recognizing these trends, the scan contains information on a select group of city museums, related institutions and recent or proposed plans in major cities in Canada and internationally that may provide possible directions for Edmonton.

Vancouver (Population: Greater Vancouver: 2,180,737)

Vancouver Museum

The mandate, content, size and operating costs of the Vancouver Museum should be weighed when considering a city museum for Edmonton. Founded over 100 years ago, since the mid-1960s the Vancouver Museum has been located in parkland in the Kitsilano district of the city in a building it shares with the H.R. Macmillan Space Centre. The Maritime Museum is also located in the park. The Vancouver Museum receives annual support from the City through its Office of Cultural Affairs. Current funding stands at \$700,000; the total budget is \$1.8M. Apart from major support for these three organizations and Science World, the Office does have a program to support local museums

¹⁰ <http://camoc.icom.museum/about/index.php>

and heritage related organizations in the city. The exceptions are two historic buildings/museums which each receive \$3,500 annually and are owned by the City.

The museum is a nonprofit organization and registered charity but the City owns the building and covers all utility and maintenance costs. Other support comes from the British Columbia Arts Council (\$160,000) and various federal and provincial projects grants, such as a recent \$2M infrastructure grant to refurbish two history galleries. The remaining funding comes from individuals, corporate donations and sponsorships and earned revenue. The most significant recent contribution was a large gift from long-time museum supporter Joyce Walley that resulted in a learning and community centre being established in her name.

While current funding may suggest stability, the museum has had a rocky history in the last twenty years and at several times was threatened with closure. Part of the difficulty centred on governance and a clear commitment from the City to support it. Currently it is governed by the Vancouver Museum Commission, which includes appointees by the City and by the museum. There are 15 full-time (including 2 curators) and five permanent part-time employees, of which the unionized staff is in a separate bargaining unit from other City workers. The museum is also home to 12 affiliated community groups such as the Vancouver Historical Society and the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia that meet regularly and are periodically involved in programming.

In recent years, the museum has taken an innovative approach to exhibition planning developing exhibitions about each decade of the late 20th century that feature different neighbourhoods and issues particular to each era. The museum offers neighbourhood walking tours and a *Secrets Of The City Series* that takes visitors to different locations throughout the city, to explore the museum's primary artifact, the city itself. Exhibitions are developed in partnership with community members and are intended to attract diverse targeted audiences. The museum has a significant collection of over 100,000 objects and recently completed an assessment of these holdings and formulated a new collections policy. In addition to its permanent exhibitions the museum has 10,000 square feet of temporary exhibition space dedicated to local themes and travelling exhibitions, many of which are large in scope such as the current show *Totems to Turquoise: Native North American Jewellery Art from the Northwest and Southwest*.

Nancy Noble, the current CEO, points out that the museum faces two major challenges. First, it needs to develop a stronger identity if it is to increase attendance and play a more active role in the cultural and educational life of the city. Noble suggests that this vision may begin with a name change, as there is a tendency to confuse the museum with other cultural institutions in the city, such as the Vancouver Art Gallery. Second, both the Space Centre and the Maritime Museum are hampered by mandate, organizational and financial uncertainties thus raising the possibility of the museum incorporating them given their location. There are nearly 60 museums and galleries in Vancouver of which the Vancouver Museum is the most comprehensive history museum. The Office of Cultural Affairs certainly recognizes this situation and plans to review it, beginning with a study of cultural facilities beginning in June 2007.

Lesson for Edmonton: The operating cost of this long-standing and comprehensive city museum is almost \$2M with roughly 40% from the City of Vancouver whereas as the most recent acknowledgement about other organizations point to circumstances that Edmonton has already begun to address.

Calgary (Population: 988,193)

In 2006, the City of Calgary provided \$1.5M to the Glenbow Museum, 12% of the \$12.6M annual budget. The city also provides operating grants and maintenance support to Heritage Park and Fort Calgary, which are nonprofit organizations on land owned by the City. Amounts mounted respectively in 2006 were approximately \$1.8 million and \$176,000. The two organizations, along with other major cultural institutions in the City in which City has direct involvement such as the Calgary Zoo, also benefit from the Gas Tax rebate, a fund that will provide \$20M per year for the next five years for capital improvements and projects. In 2006 Heritage Park, for example, received approximately \$1.2 million from this fund and related sources, such as a Community Investment Fund. The City does not support small or local museums and as of this writing no program is envisioned. There have been some discussions about establishing a city museum and, of late, a civic art gallery.

Lesson for Edmonton: The City of Calgary is demonstrating leadership in the case of large heritage organizations and initiatives but not with respect to needs of small organizations.

Montreal (Population: 1,565,000)

Montreal does not have one specific museum like Vancouver but several museums that document and present aspects of the city's history.

Pointe-à-Callière

This museum, which opened in the early 1990s, is housed in a signature architectural building in Old Montreal. It focuses on the city's archaeological history. The structure in fact is built on the ruins of one of the earliest sites of European settlement. It also has a relatively small temporary display space that has thematic exhibitions related to city life or hosts travelling exhibitions about cultural and social history from other countries. The budget is \$6M with approximately 70% coming from the City of Montreal.

Centre d'histoire

Open in 1983, and housed in an historic fire station just a few blocks from the Pointe-à-Callière, the centre has a permanent exhibition focusing on five defining moments in the history of the city, with an emphasis on the 20th century and temporary exhibitions that focus on the experiences of particular communities. The centre has a budget of approximately \$750,000 with \$540,000 coming from the City (\$474,000 for salaries, the remaining for operations and programs), \$163,000 from the Quebec Ministry of Immigration and the remaining amount in the form of project grants from various provincial and federal government agencies and departments.

The City of Montreal also funds the Maisons de la Culture, a network of cultural centres in its boroughs and districts that share space with city libraries. Frequently, these centres have historical exhibitions and contemporary displays about the city. Other museums in Montreal which interpret aspects of the city's history include the McCord Museum of Canadian History and the Écomusée du fier monde. Situated in an old Art Deco public bath, the Écomusée du fier monde immerses visitors in the industrialization of Montreal and the working people of the Centre-Sud area of the city. *Simply Montreal: Glimpses of a Unique City* at the McCord Museum is a permanent, yet changing, exhibition about urban life in the city, while temporary exhibitions like *The Scots: Dyed in the Wool Montrealers* look at the legacy of specific communities.

Lesson for Edmonton: The lengthier and deeper a city's history, the greater number of museums and heritage organizations. In Montreal's case there are two museums specifically devoted to the city's history each of which receive about 70% of their total funding from the City. The city also provides funding to other museums including the McCord and the Écomusée.

Toronto (Population: 4,558,800)

Toronto does not have a specific city museum but the Culture Division of the City of Toronto manages 10 museums and their collections under a Museum and Heritage Services Unit. Museums include Fort York, a national historic site, several historic houses, an historic inn, a combined industrial heritage site and arts centre, a schoolhouse, a rural history museum and a small general history museum. In all Toronto has over 55 museums and historic sites and 26 archives, some of which are expanding, such as Black Creek Pioneer Village. The city also has a Doors Open program that is estimated to attract 175,000-200,000 people yearly.

Toronto has considered establishing a city museum for over twenty years, in an effort to strengthen its heritage resources, expand collections, and present an inclusive and comprehensive history. There is a trail of internal reports, consultant studies and public discussions. The most recent consideration was given in 2004.¹¹ It has particular resonance for Edmonton given its analysis, findings, recommendations and public reaction.

The study recommends the creation of a cultural attraction, not a museum per se, yet three of the four proposed components are museological.

1. A "Main Visitor Experience" intended to introduce residents and visitors to the history and life of Toronto and to serve as gateway to other historical sources and resources throughout in the city. The study recommends a "time machine" as the core of a primarily multi-media presentation.
2. The "Found-ary," a repository for the research, care and management of collections about Toronto's history that will have public access. It will include the City of Toronto's collection estimated at 100,000 objects as well as artifacts from other museums and heritage organizations wanting to rent space. The report also pointed out the need for the Experience Centre and the Found-ary to provide a more culturally inclusive history of the city.
3. An International Travelling Exhibition Hall for "high quality and major travelling exhibitions and art expos that often bypass Toronto due to the lack a museum quality venue."
4. A "Global Centre for Cities" – an institute that will explore urban issues in Canada and worldwide in partnership with universities, governments and nongovernmental organizations.

The recommended name for the initiative/facility is Humanitas, which the report urges the City to patent and trademark thus suggesting possibilities for branding the concept and the place. The report recommends that the facility will cost approximately \$200M, require a staff of over 80, and that operating costs will be approximately \$8M per year. It is projected that almost 60% will come from earned revenue and the remainder from governments and the private sector, although no specific amount is suggested for financial support from the City of Toronto.

¹¹ Lord Cultural Resources, Canadian Urban Institute, ERA Architects Inc., and Lura Consulting, *Humanitas: Feasibility Study for a New Cultural Attraction on Toronto's Waterfront*. September 2004.

The rationales behind the project are that it will: contribute toward revitalization of the waterfront; enhance Toronto's prestige as a global destination; and bolster the city's creative economy. As noted, the city's history is an essential component of the facility yet it is not envisioned as a museum. In fact, the report notes that attendance at museums administered by the City attract only 100,000 people per year but the proposed structure is projected to have a market of about four times this figure. This is based on its appeal as a multi-faceted attraction for residents and tourists coupled with the lure of other cultural institutions in Toronto such as the Canadian Opera Company that have moved to new buildings or in the case of the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario are undergoing major architectural transformations.

Reaction to the proposal in Toronto invites further reflection relevant to Edmonton. Recent articles, letters and an editorial in the *Toronto Star* consider the proposal "vague and impractical" and stress that what's needed is a City of Toronto Museum in a place that lends itself to telling about the city's rich and diverse history. The preferred option is the historic Saint Lawrence Market in the city's downtown core, which is championed by, among others, former Mayor David Crombie.

However, and according to press reports on April 2, 2007, Rita Davies, the Director of Culture for the City of Toronto, announced that a 3.6 acre parcel of land owned by the City has become available at the foot of Bathurst Street, adjacent to the historic Canada Malting company silos. Toronto City Council will now be asked to designate the site for the proposed museum, although the suggested name Humanitas is now in question. A launch board is expected to seek proposals from private development partners to help cover the cost of the estimated \$200M project. For his part, Crombie has enthusiastically endorsed this latest move but also indicated that the facility did not preclude turning St. Lawrence Market into a heritage site.

Lesson for Edmonton: The estimated cost of the proposed city museum is \$200M. Other projections include an operating budget of \$10M, a staff of about 80 and visitor estimates four times the current figure for the local museums supported by the city. The scale of the project emphasizes the high and possibly escalating costs required for an initiative that is essentially top-down in its conception and design and which is primarily one of bricks and mortar.

Ottawa (Census area population: 1 million)

The City of Ottawa does not have a specific city museum but currently owns and operates four museums: Billings Estate, Cumberland Heritage Village, Gloucester and Pinhey's Point, and provides funding to another seven community-owned museums: Diefenbunker, Goulbourn, Nepean, Osgoode Township, Vanier, Watson's Mill and the Workers Heritage Centre. Funding toward operations of all museums is provided through a four-year Museum Sustainability Fund that in 2007 is approximately \$2M and projected to rise to almost \$4M in 2009. Capital support is additional and this year is \$1.3M. The cornerstones for the fund are a Heritage Plan and Museum Strategy that were developed in 2002-2003.¹² The fund and other museum and heritage initiatives are administered within a Cultural Services unit that reports to the Community Funding and Cultural Services division of the City's Department of Community and Protective Services. In addition to the work of unit staff, there is a Steering Committee overseeing the fund that includes three city councillors, unit and division heads and a member each from the heritage community and the museums supported. As for long-term projects, two under consideration are a Preservation Centre

¹² Catherine C. Cole and Associates. *Heritage Plan* contained within Ottawa 20/20 *Arts and Heritage Plan*, April 2003; Catherine C. Cole and Associates. *Museum Strategy*, 2003.

and a Heritage Virtual Gateway to tell the history of the city and introduce residents and visitors to various City-owned and supported museums.

Lesson for Edmonton: Ottawa's newly instituted Museum Sustainability Fund provides guidelines, standards and a possible structure for a support program for Edmonton local museums.

Winnipeg (Census area population: 694,668)

For many years the City of Winnipeg has supported several local museums, out of an estimated 40 museums in the metropolitan area, by providing some funding for operations and/or maintenance and other services through municipal departments. These are: Musée Saint-Boniface, St. James/ Assiniboia, Transcona, Seven Oaks, Ross House, Fire Fighters, Grants Old Mill and Barber House as well as two centres devoted to natural history. Additionally, the Manitoba Museum and two others received annual support from the Winnipeg Arts Council. Recognizing its support was inconsistent, the City set up a committee in 2003 to provide guidelines for a subsequent study, completed in 2006, that examined in detail the needs and challenges facing museums. It was also concluded that creating a city museum that complemented or encompassed the existing museums was not feasible financially or organizationally.

The City has recently established a Museum Board which will oversee the support of the museums currently funded. It is comprised of three city administrators, including the archivist, and five members of the community. A consultant will be retained on a part-time basis to initially develop a specific support program, complete with funding guidelines, procedures and expectations and coordinate it on a yearly basis. Funding for the organizations for the initial year of the program will be approximately \$750,000 with any increases subject to approval by City Council. In addition to these museums, several City services have collections. Most notable is the Police Department, which maintains and display its holdings as a component of its training program for recruits and its continuing education responsibilities.

Lesson for Edmonton: As with Ottawa, the Winnipeg approach confirms the importance and value of creating a support program for local museums which can be managed with a budget that would be in line with Edmonton's requirements.

Halifax (Population: 359,111)

Museums in the Halifax Regional Municipality receive support from a unit in the Community Development Division of the Department of Recreation, Tourism and Culture. The principal objective is to develop and promote cultural and heritage resources in the municipality by facilitating networking, providing liaison to other municipal departments and external agencies, offering training opportunities and providing small amounts of funding to heritage organizations and sites.

Lesson for Edmonton: The lesson is unfortunately that there is not sufficient support for local museums nor is there a city museum, both of which may be partly due to the presence of several components of the Nova Scotia Museum and national historic sites, such as the Halifax Citadel.

Chicago (Population: 3 million)

The Chicago History Museum is a city museum in the traditional sense. Founded in 1856 and incorporated in 1857 as the Chicago History Society, it is a privately endowed independent institution. Its building has gone through several renovations, including a major overhaul in 2006 of

75% of its space at which time it changed its name to the Chicago History Museum. The museum is devoted to telling the stories of the city and its people through a collection of 22 million objects and documents, exhibitions, programs and publications. It contains some conventional displays but has a rich and varied program of exhibitions, a community gallery that focuses on neighborhoods, and an array of public activities that convey the social and cultural diversity of Chicago. Current offerings include exhibitions on the history of roots music and the work of a local photojournalist that includes his most recent photographs of city life, and a program and tour about the great bars and pubs of Chicago.

Lesson for Edmonton: This institution, traditional as it is, demonstrates that a city museum can be a vital and substantial resource operating as a nonprofit and charitable organization with multiple sources of funding.

Glasgow (Metropolitan area population: 2.3 million)

The Glasgow Museums consist of 13 institutions and historic sites across the city, which include the Burrell Collection, Fossil Grove, Gallery of Modern Art, Resource Centre, Kerlgrave Art Gallery and Museum, Martyr's School, McLellan Galleries, Museum of Transport, People's Palace and Winter's Gardens, Pollok House, Provand's Lordship, St. Mungos Museum of Religious Life and Art, and Scotland Street School Museum. The group has an overall director as well as heads of the various museums and reports to the City's Culture and Leisure Services Department. While no institution or site is specifically a city museum, many convey aspects of Glasgow's history from different perspectives. Of particular significance for Edmonton is the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, a new storage facility that provides extensive public access to collections.

Lesson for Edmonton: In particular, the Glasgow Museums demonstrate the importance of leadership for the museum network and increasing attention given to providing great public access to collections.

Liverpool (Metropolitan area population: 816,000)

In 1986, several national museums and galleries became the National Museums Liverpool. Included was the World Liverpool Museum founded in 1861 and known as Liverpool Museum until 2005. In the meantime, the Museum of Liverpool Life opened in 1993 with a mandate to present the particular history and contemporary experience of the city. While considered a success, it closed in 2006 in order for work to begin on a new Museum of Liverpool scheduled to open in 2010. This signature architectural building will be situated on Liverpool's revitalized waterfront, will cost an estimated \$150M and is projected to have 750,000 visits per year. Funding will come from National Lottery Fund, from other UK sources, such as the Regional Development Agency, and from the European Economic Community. Private contributions thus far include a \$2M donation from the Garfield Weston Foundation, which has its origins in Canada. Other institutions that comprise the Liverpool group include an International Slavery Museum due to open in August 2007 and the Walker Art Gallery, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Sudley House, Merseyside Maritime, HM Customs and Excise National Museum and a National Conservation Centre.

Lesson for Edmonton: In Liverpool, Glasgow and other cities in the United Kingdom, museums and other cultural institutions are at the centre of revitalization and regeneration efforts in the urban core. But while Liverpool's current building project is impressive, it is important to consider whether something may be lost given its size and given the success of its successful and modest predecessor, the Museum of Liverpool Life.

Manchester (Metropolitan area population: 2,240,000)

Urbis, a new facility, which focuses on world cities and cultures, is located in the very heart of Manchester, in Cathedral Park, the first public park developed in over 200 years. The facility is an integral part of efforts to revitalize Manchester's urban core and its importance is reflected in the substantial funding it received from England's Millennium Fund, the European Development Fund and local government. It receives its annual funding from Manchester City Council. Urbis is one of the sites that inspired the recommendation, noted above, for a multifaceted cultural facility on Toronto's waterfront. Yet the attendance figure provided for Urbis is about 100,000 a year, far below the projected attendance for the proposed attraction and almost identical to the attendance for the 10 museums managed by the City of Toronto.

Lesson for Edmonton: Manchester too has relied on a cultural institution to help revitalize its core. But its visitor estimates seem to be well below what was expected thus raising the issue of the extent to which attendance and audiences can be accurately predicted.

Sheffield (Population: 520,000)

Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust was established in 1998 to take over management of non-industrial museums and galleries in Sheffield from City Council although Council continues to provide an annual grant of almost \$5M to support operations. The Trust is responsible for the new Millennium Galleries, Graves Art Gallery, the historic property Bishop's House, and Weston Park Museum in which there is a substantial consideration of Sheffield's past. This includes a social history collection documenting the lives of local people from 1500 to the present. Sheffield's historical significance as a centre for the production of domestic and decorative metalwork is also featured in the Millennium Galleries.

The circumstances behind the creation of the Trust are instructive. By the middle 1990s many museums, galleries and other cultural institutions throughout Britain were in severe condition physically and economically as a result of government neglect and long-standing budget shortfalls. The initiation of a National Lottery and the subsequent creation of the Millennium Fund resulted in substantial support for capital projects of which Sheffield and many other cities took full advantage. But there was no provision for operating funds. The development of the Trust created a financial mechanism for ongoing support and a new organization for administering several of Sheffield's various museums and galleries, although not all, a distinction made between industrial and non-industrial museums. Reflecting on the Trust arrangement and the purpose of a city museum, Janet Barnes, exhibitions and collections manager offered this observation.

On a Saturday or Sunday I see all sorts of people using the gallery and museum who would not usually be in the same space together. The opportunity for museum to be a socially benign space where all visitors are equal is surely an important component of social life, especially as society is increasingly segregated, restricted and confined. Opportunities for conversation and social meeting are important consequences of the displays. This I think is the core role of the municipal museum. The management structure is merely a means to an end.¹³

¹³ Jane Barnes. "Are Municipal Museums Outdated?". The 1998 European Museum Forum Lecture. www.assembly.coe.int/Museum/ForumEuroMusee/Conferences/barnesE.htm

Lesson for Edmonton: Like other projects in UK cities noted above, Sheffield's museums required funding from many government sources and the creation of a Trust for ongoing support and administration. Edmonton, as well other Canadian cities, must weigh the likelihood of receiving various kinds of government and private support as well as recognize the necessity of having an endowment fund to help sustain the organization.

Cardiff Museum Amgueddfa Caerdydd, scheduled to open in 2010 (Population: 320,000)

Cardiff, like Edmonton, is a young city with a longer past, recently celebrating its 100th anniversary as a city. Also like Edmonton, it is the fastest growing capital in Europe. The city is reinventing itself as a service and knowledge based city. A new \$10M museum is being developed by Cardiff Council in a former library in the city centre, co-habiting with the existing Visitor Centre, to tell the story of the city and its people. It will be a social history museum, based around objects and stories. In the meantime, the museum project has developed temporary exhibitions in the library building, such as: *Moving Stories, Cardiff's Century and Cardiff's War*. These exhibitions are a focus for collecting artifacts, stories and images, as a testing ground for development of the museum, and building public support for the museum.

Lesson for Edmonton: Given its temporary exhibitions and other preliminary activities, Cardiff demonstrates what can be done incrementally while an actual city museum is in the process of development and realization.

Copenhagen City Museum (Population: 1,847,737)

This 105-year-old museum, housed in an 18th century building, began its life as a typical European city museum, a guardian of city treasures reflecting city pride. In 1993, the museum began to deal with contemporary Copenhagen, showing how the present is built on the foundations of the past. Visitors begin with contemporary exhibitions and trace the city back to its 12th century origins. The museum conveys its message simply and clearly with minimal use of new technologies. The museum has interventions throughout the city, such as walking tours with MP3 players accompanied by young poets who have created city poems. A Diesel House Museum opened in 2006 around a giant diesel engine in what was once Copenhagen's power station; the project includes interpretation of the engine's manufacturer, Burmeister and Wain, and is a public-private partnership with the firm. The museum has 25 staff and a budget of more than \$2M/year. The museum is owned by the City, run on an arms length basis, with a 4-year agreement in place. Under Danish law, the museum plays an active part in city planning. The city's heritage is taken into account when planning decisions are made or a building project contemplated.

Lesson for Edmonton: This museum demonstrates that a city museum can engage in many interpretative and community-based initiatives using both the latest technologies and developing interventions and other outreach programs throughout the city.

Stockholm (Regional population: 1.9 million)

Stockholm is included because of geographical and population affinities. As Sweden's capital it has several large national institutions and many small museums but it also has a specific city museum that includes a focus on the city's history and another on the county in which Stockholm is located. These are the Stockholm Stadsmuseum and the Västmanlands Läns Museum, outside the city, that respectively have a budget of \$14M, with 80% coming from government, and \$3M, with 56% coming from government.

The scope and support of these museums are noteworthy. National or provincial cultural institutions dominate capital cities to the extent that their history and heritage are often overshadowed. Stockholm is an important exception that pays particular attention to its life and times. It is also a northern metropolis relatively distant from major cities in Europe as Edmonton is to major cities in Canada yet its cultural infrastructure and historical appreciation are very significant, although it must be acknowledged that Stockholm has a very lengthy past. Malmo and Gotëborg, Sweden's other major cities also have comparatively large museums in which city history and culture are prominent and whose annual funding in both cases is approximately \$10M.

Lesson for Edmonton: In Stockholm's case, as with most other museums and galleries in Sweden, government support – municipal, regional and national – often accounts for over 80% of funding.

Museum of Venice, scheduled to open in 2010, Venice (Population: 272,000)

In recognition of the fact that no museum in Venice deals with the entire urban history of the city, Venice is currently developing a museum of the city and its lagoon. Unlike other museums in Venice, its primary audience is local residents. It aims to make visitors more aware of the fragility of Venice, stimulating a more sensitive form of tourism. The museum will be funded primarily by the National Department of Cultural Affairs. Housed in a former hospital for victims of the 1423 plague, restoration will be completed in 2007. The museum will incorporate archaeological excavation of the site and will show how the lagoon and the city developed through time. It will be the main branch of a museum network that will be developed over the next decade and include a quarantine hospital, and archaeology museum and a maritime museum.

Lesson for Edmonton: Venice's tourism industry is its lifeblood, but the Museum of Venice is, in contrast to other museums and galleries, intended to benefit residents and to interpret contemporary issues in the city.

Museum of Volos, scheduled to open in 2007 (300 km north of Athens, population: 150,000)

The museum will interpret the modern Greek city, a case study of the urban phenomenon and its various aspects. Located in an old tobacco warehouse in the oldest district in the city, near the Tsalapata Industrial Museum of Plinth and Ceramics, the two museums will form an inter-related museum complex. The project is intended to help rehabilitate the district and the city. The Volos Municipal Centre for Historical Research and Documentation surveyed cities throughout the world, and hosted an invitational conference to gain input into the planning process.

Lesson for Edmonton: Edmonton does not share Greece's ancient history, but like Greece it does have both old and new aspects to its history, and the city museum can interpret modern history in a way that Fort Edmonton can not.

Sydney (population: 3 million)

The Museum of Sydney was built on the site of the first Government House (built in 1788, demolished in 1846), uncovered in the 1980s during construction of a commercial development. The Friends of First Government House lobbied the NSW government to commemorate the site. The government decided, after considerable archaeological work and research, to create a public plaza to commemorate the site and to establish a museum to interpret its significance. The Museum of Sydney is a forum for debate about Sydney, past, present and future; a museum that combines provocative displays and public programs that challenge and respond to public attitudes and expectations; a museum of the 21st century that encourages the latest scholarly and popular revisions

of Australian and world history. The plaza features a public artwork created by an Aboriginal artist working with a non-Aboriginal artist and a 'ghost house' marking the outline of the original building. Inside the museum features exhibitions on subjects of strong local interest that also situate visitors in the city: *Thoroughly Modern Sydney*; *My City of Sydney*; *From the Skies* (the changing face of Sydney in aerial photography), *Bridges of Sydney*; and *On Location Sydney* (Sydney through the eyes of film). The Historic House Trust system also includes a Museum of Police and Justice in an historic site a few blocks away, that takes an equally modern view of exhibitions and programs: *Tough Men, Hard Times: Policing the Depression*; *Dissent and Disorder: a Portrait of Sydney in the 1930s*; *City of Shadows: Inner City Crime & Mayhem, 1912-1948*, etc.

Lesson for Edmonton: Like the Copenhagen Museum, the Museum of Sydney is broad in scope and operates as a proactive institution that raises and interprets multiple perspectives on issues of interest to a diverse public.

Seoul (population: 10 million)

The Seoul Museum of History shows how the capital city has developed and transformed into its current state through presenting its history and culture. The museum portrays Seoul as the centre of Korea's political, economic and cultural life. Unlike other museums in Korea, the Museum of History is being developed in the way that most Western museums are, through the support of volunteers and donations of artifacts from private individuals. The museum features both international travelling exhibitions and permanent exhibitions that introduce Seoul to visitors and reconnect the city to local people. Opened in 2002, after a decade of construction and another five years of planning, the museum uses current exhibitry and is positioning itself internationally through its annual symposium exploring various aspects of urban museums.

Lesson for Edmonton: This institution reflects the current enthusiasm for city museums by cities that are also capitals, whether provincial or national, which have regional history museums but are now taking local history more seriously.

Sao Paulo City Museum (population: 17.9 million; 24 million in metropolitan area)

The museum, established in 1975 as an historical museum, was reconceived in the 1980s not as an exercise in nostalgia, but to address issues such as urban marginalization, the housing crisis, pollution, violence, and social tension, in addition to historical themes. Five themes were identified: territory, population, economy, socio-political movements, and sustainability. A new museum will be developed in the 18th century Marquesa de Santos mansion, located near the origins of the city. The museum makes connections between the past, present and future and believes that ultimately, the museum's collection is the city itself. The project is part of a rehabilitation program intended to promote economic and social development in the historic core of the city. The city has been rebuilt three times over the past century.

Lesson for Edmonton: Sao Paulo, one of the world's mega-cities, has a very different and complex set of social and economic challenges yet it demonstrates the importance of addressing issues of urbanization, for example in Edmonton the situation of the large Aboriginal community. As a city teeming with young people, Sao Paulo also conveys how they are part of a world community who are engaged with cultural trends that are pervasive globally.