

Second Update on City of Toronto Archaeological Collections Repository

Date: October 17, 2017

To: Planning and Growth Management Committee

From: Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division and General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report presents a second update on work completed by staff respecting a City of Toronto archaeological collections repository. Two options were explored for managing collections held by consulting archaeologists. The first entails creating a stand-alone City-operated repository that would take all Toronto-based collections, at substantial cost to the City. The second option, which is recommended by staff, entails having most Toronto-based collections go to an existing repository in Hamilton managed by Sustainable Archaeology, at no cost to the City. Only those collections from the museums and other heritage properties managed by the Economic Development and Culture Division would be deposited in the City's existing museum collections centre, at minimal cost to the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division and General Manager, Economic Development and Culture recommend that:

1. City Council adopt the principle that Toronto archaeological collections, except those noted in recommendation 2 of this report, be deposited in the repository managed by Sustainable Archaeology at McMaster University in Hamilton.
2. City Council direct that Archaeological collections related to the museums and other heritage properties managed by the Economic Development and Culture Division be deposited in the City's museum collections centre.
3. City Council request the Province of Ontario to provide direction and funding to support the transfer of Toronto-based archaeological collections to Sustainable Archaeology.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report. Curation of the archaeological collections from the museums and other heritage properties managed by the Economic Development and Culture Division will be accommodated within the Division's operating budget.

The Acting Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

In response to a Council request (July 14, 2016), the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture Division presented an update on work completed by staff to determine the requirements for a City of Toronto archaeological collections repository.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.MM20.15>

On July 4, 2017, staff were asked to report back on the suitability of properties owned by the City and the provincial and federal governments for a repository and the capital and operating budget implications of establishing such a facility.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PG21.14>

COMMENTS

In the 2017 update report to Council, staff outlined the physical requirements for an archaeological repository capable of handling all known existing collections relating to Toronto, with an allowance for 20 years of collections growth, oversize items, and soil samples. This amounts to about 3,500 boxes (each 1 cubic foot) of material.

As requested by Council, the Chief Corporate Officer contacted the provincial and federal governments to identify space in the Greater Toronto Area that could be leased by the City of Toronto for the purposes of establishing a City-run repository. No suitable properties were identified.

A portfolio review was also undertaken with Real Estate Services. Multiple City-owned properties were reviewed, with one vacant City property identified as being suitable for a repository. At 22,600 square feet, 160 Rivalda Road would meet the City's needs in excess of 20 years. The capital retrofit costs were estimated at \$2.5 million, though key information is lacking with respect to the building's structural, electrical, and fire alarm and life safety systems, which may also require upgrades. No concept plans or schematic designs have been developed to establish a repository on this property.

The operating costs for this facility were estimated at \$0.65 million annually. This estimate includes four new permanent staff, as well as materials and supplies, services and rents, and utilities. Additional short-term contract staff would also be required to process those collections currently held by consulting archaeologists.

Given these significant costs and the financial pressures currently facing the City, staff have identified an alternate option for preserving Toronto's archaeological heritage. This involves depositing all Toronto archaeological collections unrelated to City property in the facilities managed by Sustainable Archaeology.

Sustainable Archaeology is an archaeological research facility and collections repository established as a collaborative effort between McMaster University and the University of Western Ontario. It was created with a \$9.8 million capital grant from the Canadian and Ontario governments.

Two facilities opened in 2011-12; one in London, the other in Hamilton, each with differing specialities. Western has a geophysics and digital imaging/3D scanning lab, and capacity for 54,000 boxes. McMaster has a processing and analytics lab, and capacity for 35,000 boxes.

Both facilities charge fees for the long-term curation of collections. The fees depend on several factors including requirements for packing, conservation, cataloguing, and archive processing. One-time fees range from \$150 to \$900 per 1 cubic foot box, depending on the nature of the collection and work required to bring it up to Sustainable Archaeology's curation standards. A separate curation fee of \$30 per gigabyte of digital data is charged for archival purposes. Fees for digitizing non-digital archival material are charged on a case-by-case basis.

Charging fees for service are common for all archaeological repositories. A 2007-08 study of 221 American repositories by the US National Parks Service found 53% charged fees with an additional 6.6% considering implementation of fees. Repositories that do not charge fees include universities accepting only material from their own staff, repositories no longer accepting collections, or are agencies receiving state or federal funding. Fees ranged from US\$72.50 to \$1,200 per box.

It could be argued that charging fees for incoming archaeological collections might offset the operating costs of a repository run by the City of Toronto. However, 3,500 boxes of Toronto-based material charged at \$150 per box (the cost charged by Sustainable Archaeology for collections requiring minimal processing) would only produce one-time revenue of \$0.525 million. Collections requiring rehabilitation could be charged higher fees that produce more revenue, but these collections would require more staff time for processing.

Provincial involvement in resolving this curation challenge is essential as the requirement for archaeologists to preserve collections on behalf of the people of Ontario derives from the Ontario Heritage Act. Under the Act, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport can direct where archaeological collections shall be deposited. It is recommended that Council request the Province of Ontario to provide direction and funding to support the transfer of Toronto-based archaeological collections to the

repositories managed by Sustainable Archaeology. The provision of financial support is especially important for those legacy collections which are at risk of deterioration or loss, such as those stored in private basements, garages, etc. by former consulting archaeologists who are no longer in practice.

Given space constraints, it is recommended that only those archaeological collections related to City of Toronto museums and other heritage properties managed by the Economic Development and Culture Division be deposited in the City's museum collections centre. In addition to artifacts, this centre currently houses archaeological collections related to the City's history museums and a small number of other Toronto heritage sites. These materials would remain in the care of City staff.

The Deputy City Manager, Internal Corporate Services, has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

CONTACT

Susan Hughes, Project Manager
Heritage Preservation Services
Tel: 416-338-1096; Fax: 416-392-1973
Email: susan.hughes@toronto.ca

Wayne Reeves, Chief Curator
Museums and Heritage Services
Tel: 416-392-6830; Fax: 416-392-6830
Email: wayne.reeves@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP
Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning Division

Mike Williams
General Manager
Economic Development and Culture
Division