



REPORT FOR ACTION

Update on City of Toronto Archaeological Collections Repository

Date: May 1, 2017

To: Planning and Growth Management Committee

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

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report presents an update on work completed by staff to determine the requirements for a City of Toronto archaeological collections repository. Based on a survey of archaeological consultants, data held by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, and a review of the City's own holdings, a facility with a minimum of 12,000 square feet should meet the City's storage and curation space requirements over the next 20 years. Staff will report later in 2017 on City-owned properties suitable for a repository, and the capital and operating budget implications of establishing such a facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Planning and Growth Management Committee direct the Chief Planner, City Planning Division and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to report back in the fall of 2017 on:

- a. the availability of any City-owned facilities to accommodate an archaeological collections repository, and what measures would be required to adapt those facilities for repository purposes; and
- b. the associated operating and capital budget impacts associated with establishing a City of Toronto archaeological collections repository.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no immediate financial impacts with the adoption of this report.

Operating and capital costs associated with any facility to accommodate an archaeological collections repository will be reviewed as part of the 2018 Operating and 2018-2027 Capital Budget and Plan submission by City Planning and considered against other unfunded City priorities.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 14, 2016, City Council requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture Division to report to Planning and Growth Committee on a preliminary plan to accommodate the acceptance of City of Toronto-based archaeological collections currently held by archaeological consultants, estimating the growth of collections over the next 10 years and identifying space and staffing requirements for the storage and curation of those records and artifacts. In addition, staff were to report on consultations with Real Estate Services to determine the availability of any City-owned facilities which could accommodate these collections, and what measures would be required to adapt those facilities for storage purposes.

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

Link to the City's Archaeological Management Plan:

http://www1.toronto.ca/city_of_toronto/city_planning/urban_design/files/pdf/masterplan_arc.resources.pdf

COMMENTS

The City Planning Division requires the completion of archaeological resource assessments on lands defined as holding archaeological potential should those lands be subject to soil disturbance. This is in accordance with the City's Archaeological Management Plan. While the majority of assessments are completed as a condition of approval for planning applications, City capital projects and environmental assessments may also have archaeological assessment requirements.

Most of the archaeological assessments done in Toronto are undertaken by independent consultant archaeologists licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990. Should the

archaeological assessment result in the determination of an archaeological site, the material culture (artifacts) and related data are gathered and held in trust by the consultant on behalf of the Province unless a suitable collections repository is available for deposit and curation. The Province does not regulate storage conditions, which include professional offices, commercial storage lockers, and private garages and basements.

Official Plan policy 3.1.1.41 stipulates that the City will provide a repository to take possession of all archaeological artifacts and records of archaeological assessment activities undertaken in Toronto, for the purpose of maintenance, research and exhibition. The City's existing artifact collection facilities, operated by the Museums and Heritage Services section of Economic Development and Culture, contain some archaeological collections. However, the City's facilities are already beyond capacity and cannot accept any additional archaeological materials.

The City's two existing collection storage facilities contain 150,000 historic objects as well as over one million archaeological specimens. These facilities are outdated and unsuitable for the purposes for which they were originally intended. While a new repository for archaeological materials would address one aspect of the issue, it would not address the City's collection storage needs in a comprehensive fashion.

Development of a preliminary plan for a City of Toronto archaeological collections repository has, to date, involved:

- 1) assembling data on existing archaeological collections relating to the City of Toronto;
- 2) determining the physical scope of a repository based on existing collections and forecast collections growth;
- 3) searching the City of Toronto's property portfolio for a building with vacant space meeting the basic requirements for a repository.

Collections Data Assembly:

To understand the extent of collections currently held which pertain to the City of Toronto, staff compiled information from three sources:

- 1) a survey of about 40 Cultural Resource Management firms (75% response rate) who have recently conducted archaeological assessments in Toronto, collecting data on site name, date of excavation, cultural affiliation, collection size, artifact count, digital documentation size, current collection custody or location, as well as storage and special collections issues pertinent to the material;
- 2) the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's PastPortal database, containing information on all registered archaeological sites in Toronto;

3) the City's own archaeological holdings, managed by Museums and Heritage Services, and inspection by City staff of select collections held by other repositories.

While the project began with a sole focus on collections generated through the development review process, it became apparent that a more comprehensive approach was needed. A number of legacy collections were identified as being at risk; several public institutions expressed an interest in consolidating their collections with the City's; and there are curatorial benefits to a centralized repository. Research findings reflecting this broader scope are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of All Toronto-Related Collections and Location of Current Deposit

Currently Held By	Sites (count)	Sites (%)	Boxes (count) - sites with reported data only	Boxes (%) - sites with reported data only
Archaeological consultants and Cultural Resource Management firms	168	51%	1,341	60%
City of Toronto (Museums and Heritage Services)	16	5%	671	30%
Other repositories (Ontario Heritage Trust, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Toronto District School Board, etc.)	84	25%	189	8%
Unknown/destroyed	64	19%	35	2%
Total	332	100%	2,236	100%

The box count in the above chart does not include the 104 sites (31% of total) lacking reported data. Based on best estimates by City staff, Toronto has 332 registered archaeological sites which have produced over 2 million artifacts. This amounts to about 3,500 banker boxes of artifacts, exclusive of undetermined "samples" and oversize items.

Physical Scope of a Repository:

Since 2009, Museums and Heritage Services staff have undertaken two projects to determine the requirements for a new collections storage facility for the City of Toronto's own artifacts, including archaeological materials.

Based on these studies and the data recently gathered, a facility dedicated to the storage and curation of archaeological materials requires:

- 1) an exterior loading zone with a covered dock and lift;

2) a collections processing area, including a shipping/receiving area, a quarantine area, an acquisitions area, and a conservation lab;

3) a curatorial area, including a workroom, file room, server room, supplies room, lunch room, photography studio, staff room, washroom, housekeeping area, general storage area, and a public access/researcher room;

4) an archaeological collections storage area, providing for all known existing collections relating to Toronto, with an allowance for 20 years of collections growth, oversize items, and soil samples.

The total indoor area for the proposed repository is about 12,000 square feet (1,100 square metres).

Property Search:

Real Estate Services has identified three properties that meet the basic parameters for a repository and will continue to search the existing stock of City-owned properties over the next few months.

Next Steps:

Staff will inspect and assess the suitability of the City-owned properties identified by Real Estate Services for the purpose of establishing a City of Toronto archaeological repository. If a suitable building is found, capital costs for retrofitting will be estimated.

Staff will develop a proposed staffing model for a 12,000 square foot archaeological collections repository. The operating costs for the facility, including the new staff complement, will be estimated.

The above matters, along with potential funding sources, will be reported on to the Planning and Growth Management Committee by November 15, 2017. Should no suitable City-owned property be identified for a repository, other options for housing Toronto-related archaeological collections will be reviewed at that time.

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