

# APPENDIX F

## Strathcona County Museum and Archives Review

# Making Additional Links

September 2018

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## A1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

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Strathcona County led a review of the Strathcona County Museum and Archives (SCMA). This process included working with the Strathcona County Heritage Foundation (SCHF) Board, SCMA staff, and Strathcona County Administration to review the Museum and Archives' current operations and complete a value for service audit that includes options for the SCMA in the future. A thorough engagement process was undertaken to ask community members, County Council, Administration and other stakeholders whether a museum and archives is valuable to this community. They all gave their thoughts on the current museum, and their vision for its future, including activities and potential location.

The full report provides details of the review, findings from the engagement process, best and promising practices, and potential options moving forward. One component of the review was to make important links to other County initiatives. Section 4 in the report is dedicated to "Making the Links". As the review process progressed, new information was presented that was important to capture and highlight in the report. County Administration requested that further investigation through targeted engagement be completed to make additional links to ongoing County and SCMA initiatives, and capture this information in an addendum. The second phase of engagement captured additional links on the following:

- Bremner House Heritage Site and a proposed Heritage Village
- Community Hub
- Centre in the Park Area Redevelopment Plan
- Recreation and Culture Strategy
- Strathcona County Art Gallery@501
- SCMA Board and staff Initiatives

These linkages help to reinforce the recommendations presented in the SCMA Review report and inform the other processes to ensure they complement one another. Strengthening the links will reduce duplication of efforts and will help to ensure cost efficiencies in the short, mid and long term when determining the next steps.

The following sections describe the engagement process and outline in further detail the links to the above processes in relation to the SCMA Review.

## A2. INVESTIGATIVE (TARGETTED ENGAGEMENT) PROCESS

This additional investigative process was requested by County Administration after the draft SCMA Review report was completed. The targeted engagement was triggered by the links made during the SCMA review process as outlined in the report. There was also new information presented to Council and Administration regarding progress on other County initiatives. This added process began July 1, 2018 and was completed September 14, 2018.

The targeted engagement included one-on-one interviews in-person and by phone, focused conversations, and email and phone correspondence. The process included engagement with a member of Council who was not able to participate during the review engagement process, County Administration, the interest group for the proposed Strathcona County Heritage Village (SCHV), SCHF Board and SCMA staff, and the Community Hub consulting firm. The engagement process is summarized in the following table.

**Table A2.1 Summary of Targeted Engagement**

<b>Who</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Dates of Engagement (2018)</b>
Councillor	In-person interview	July 16
Interest Group	Focused conversation	July 16
Director of Family and Community Services	In-person interview	July 16
Centre in the Park Area Redevelopment Plan County Project Lead Planner II, Long Range Planning	In-person interview	July 18
SCHF Board and SCMA Staff Members	In-person meeting, email correspondence	July 18, August 28
Community Hub Consultant – Intelligent Futures	Phone interview	August 21

To ensure consistency with the initial SCMA Review engagement, a similar process was used. This included:

- an overview of the process to date
- sharing the learnings
- thoughts about the current SCMA
- the links to other processes
- thoughts moving forward

There were phone and email communications throughout this investigative process with the County Project Lead, the Manager of Cultural Services. All of the engagements were documented and have informed this addendum.

### A3. FINDINGS – SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

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Below includes a summary of the findings from the investigation from each of the processes and initiatives mentioned in Section A1.

#### A3.1 Bremner House Heritage Site and Proposed Heritage Village

The investigation of a Heritage Village began in 2004 and had various starts and stops due to economic cycles. During the June 2018 Council meeting, Bob Weller, Lynn Goyer and Bob Leman, informally referred to themselves as the “three old guys”, presented to Council to share their vision for a Heritage Village. This vision includes:

- various historic buildings
- agriculture
- machinery
- antique/vintage transportation modes
- cultural components e.g. aboriginal days, ethnic days
- education
- programs

Their vision for the proposed Heritage Village is intended to be complementary to the new Multi-Purpose Agriculture Facility being developed near the Bremner House Heritage Site.

As a result of the June meeting, a motion was put forward by Councillor Paul Smith:

*(2018 07 17) 2018/296: THAT Administration prepare a bylaw to establish a council committee, including members of the public, for the purpose of developing a preliminary governance structure for the Strathcona County Heritage Village, and to provide a tentative site layout, advice on the proposed project, and to undertake consultation with stakeholders including public groups, County Administration, and consultants; and that the proposed bylaw be brought to Council by the end of October 2018.*

*2018/297: THAT the motion on the floor be referred to Administration to prepare a report on an interim site plan and return to Council for consideration by the end of the fourth quarter of 2018.*

During the presentation, the Strathcona County Heritage Village Interest Group shared that the Heritage Village could act as and include a museum. There was only one mention of the SCMA Review process. This triggered the need for further investigation to confirm what was being proposed for the Heritage Village and the recommendations of the SCMA Review report by County Administration.

Upon completing further engagement with the Councillor Smith and the Interest Group, the following was highlighted:

- the current museum is more attractive to seniors than youth
- the archives, while excellent, are lesser known than the artifacts on display

- A future museum and archives should be educational, inclusive and engaging.
  - Inclusivity means to tell the story of Strathcona County including people, places and cultures.
  - The SCMA would be a place that people come to more than once.
  - There will be rotating exhibits.
  - There will be an evolving vision, telling the story of the County over time.
- The County has the opportunity to be a model for other communities.
- The proposed Heritage Village is viewed more as a snapshot in time (1940s-1950s) providing opportunities to have real experiences e.g. tractor pull, gardening.
- The Bremner House is not suited to be a museum. It is a complementary heritage site.
- There has been no engagement with community members and stakeholders regarding the proposed Heritage Village.
- There is an opportunity to be proactive and investigate the infrastructure requirements at the Bremner Site as work continues on the Multi-Purpose Agricultural Facility to accommodate a future Heritage Village in this area (to allow for phasing of a development in the future).
- There would be more parking available in the Bremner area.
- People are offering donations e.g. old houses, barns.
- It is important to work with all groups and stakeholders to move a vision forward.
- A functional study and transparent investigation are required.

### **A3.2 Community Hub**

Through the Community Hub engagement process, participants identified the Hub as a space where people of all ages can come. It is a welcoming place that helps people get to where they want to go and provides access to services and expertise. Three types of services are envisioned for the Community Hub:

- core services focusing on early childhood and parenting, youth, and seniors
- complementary services
- casual interactions and community-building activities

In addition to service delivery, it is envisioned as a space where people can visit whether they are accessing services or not. A physical location for a Community Hub has not been determined at this time. When a location was further explored, considerations included proximity to amenities, central accessibility to visitors and transportation options.

It was recognized that the existing Community Centre in Centre in the Park currently acts as a sort of community hub. People go there to access County services and programs including municipal social services, visit the municipal art gallery and library, or grab a bite to eat at the restaurant.

Through the investigative engagement process, it was acknowledged that there is potential for the museum to act as one of the anchor amenities within the Community Hub. Similarly to the SCMA Review, the Community Hub process is also being linked to other County initiatives such as the Centre in the Park Area Redevelopment Plan.

Should Council choose to explore the Community Hub concept further, the next steps of the Community Hub process would involve:

- further engagement of citizens and potential Hub partners
- determination of an operating and governance model
- determination of location and design decisions

### **A3.3 Centre in the Park Area Redevelopment Plan**

The Centre in the Park Area Redevelopment Plan (CITP ARP) planning process is currently in Phase 2, which includes refining a plan concept, drafting a plan and technical study, and an internal County review. The findings from the CITP ARP engagement process are currently being summarized to inform the draft plan.

Based on discussions with the County Project Lead, areas for different types of uses will be identified. This includes local community services by area and major community services that serve the County as a whole. The CITP ARP will focus on form (rather than use) and the consideration of densities.

Some of the general principles coming out of the ARP process include:

- compact mixed uses
- high pedestrian oriented development
- clustering of community services/civic hubs
- gathering areas

It was shared that the ARP is meant to be flexible and a museum located in Centre in the Park would be complementary to other uses identified for the area.

People engaged in the ARP have expressed that Centre in the Park is not active after 8 p.m. and they would like something to do in the area. There are opportunities for events and programming if a museum is located here.

### **A3.4 Recreation and Culture Strategy**

Strathcona County is developing a new Recreation and Culture Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to identify opportunities for revitalization and expansion of recreation and culture infrastructure and amenities in the County. This process is in the engagement phase, seeking input from community members and stakeholders. The County recognizes that the SCMA and Strathcona County Art Gallery@501 are cultural resources for its residents, so financial contributions are provided.



### **A3.5 Strathcona County Art Gallery@501**

During the SCMA Review, County Administration shared that the art gallery in the Community Centre, Gallery@501, is outgrowing its current space. This was further validated by the art gallery staff during this investigative process, when it was noted:

- the art gallery is lacking sufficient space for storage and programming
- the ceilings are not the typical height of a standard art gallery, which limits the types of displays and artwork that can be brought in

### **A3.6 Strathcona County Heritage Foundation Board and Strathcona County Museum and Archives Staff Initiatives**

Since the SCHF approached Council in February 2018, there have been ongoing efforts by the SCHF Board and SCMA staff to enhance the museum in its current location. Some of these initiatives are in collaboration with Strathcona County and funding has been provided to:

- extend the student employment contracts from 8 to 16 weeks so students have the opportunity to complete an inventory of the museum artifacts and create a five-day “Science in History Summer Camp” for 2019
- upgrade the server, computers and programs making them stable and compatible with County systems and provide funds for 24/7 computer support
- engage a janitorial service
- integrate archival photos through the community, e.g. north east corner of Brentwood and Alder in Sherwood Park has an archival photo on a traffic cabinet
- provide funding for off-site, climate-controlled artifact storage

The SCMA has applied to maintain its status with the Archives Society of Alberta and the Alberta Museums Association. The Museum and Archives has also committed to providing continuing education for staff and the SCHF Board has adopted a five-year Strategic Plan.

## **A4. LINKAGES TO THE MUSEUM REVIEW**

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This section highlights other County initiatives relative to the SCMA review.

### **A4.1 Bremner House Heritage Site and Proposed Heritage Village**

In the SCMA Review report, the Bremner House Heritage Site is recognized as one of the many cultural and historic assets of the County. Visioning Scenario 2: *Plan for a new Museum outside of Centre in the Park* could consider the Bremner House Heritage Site area as a possible location for a new museum.

While this is included as an option, this location was not emphasized by the community as the first choice for a County museum. There was stronger support to locate the SCMA in Centre in the Park, which is outlined as Visioning Scenario 1.

In the SCMA Review report, and further reiterated through this investigative process, the Bremner House Heritage Site is deemed a complementary historic and cultural node to a museum, whether the Heritage Village proceeds or not. There are opportunities to include elements of each at two separate locations with the potential to do likewise at other historic and cultural sites e.g. the Beaver Hills Biosphere Reserve, Strathcona Wilderness Centre.

The Bremner House Heritage Site and Multi-Purpose Agricultural Facility fall under the purview of the Transportation and Agricultural Services department. It will be important that the information presented in this report is considered as the Bremner House Heritage Site and surrounding area are further developed. Continual communication between Transportation and Agricultural Services and Recreation, Parks and Culture is necessary.

#### **A4.2 Community Hub**

Through the SCMA Review process, there were a significant number of people who supported a new museum and archives in Centre in the Park. This plus an evidence base led to the recommendation that the SCMA be located in Centre in the Park, following a retrofit of County Hall. This also included the addition of the art gallery as it has already outgrown its current space. If this vision is realized there are opportunities to build on and incorporate a formal Community Hub.

The synergies between the SCMA and a Community Hub are demonstrated through the following:

- The SCMA and Art Gallery@501 can act as a strong anchor point for the Community Hub, as a gathering place, educational centre and cultural catalyst.
- The Museum provides organizational support services for volunteers, who contribute to the overall strength of a community and a community hub. Some examples include: youth justice volunteers; Strathcona Retired Teachers Association; newcomers; people with disabilities; and primary, secondary and post-secondary students.
- The Museum is a place that provides excellent access to local based materials, knowledge and history through its archives and collections. It serves as a research centre for students, professionals and enthusiasts. The museum also serves as an important centre of employment and training in the community-based sector in various ways.
- As evidenced through the public engagement process, an overwhelming 90+ percent of people value museums as a critical community asset that define a unique sense of place.

As the Community Hub process proceeds, consideration should be given to two different levels of involvement:

- Partner:
  - Contributes funding, expertise and resources
  - Is tied to an agreement with specified terms
  - Is typically a group, agency, or other non-profit
- Ally:
  - Contributes expertise, connections, and ideas
  - Does not require signing an agreement
  - Is symbolic
  - Can be individual or an organization

Continued discussions about whether the SCMA is a partner or ally of the Community Hub will help define the kind of involvement that is most beneficial to both initiatives.

### **A4.3 Centre in the Park Area Redevelopment Plan**

The key recommendation from the Museum Report is:

*“That Strathcona County Council support in principle Visioning Scenario 1 – a new museum and archives within Centre in the Park – as the best community museum option. This location will position the Strathcona County Museum and Archives to become a cultural heritage amenity of excellence within an existing Cultural Hub.”*

This recommendation was strongly supported through the SCMA Review process and is being validated through the CIP ARP process. A museum and archives aligns with the general principles coming out of the ARP process.

- It is a community service that can form part of a civic hub (as stated above in the Community Hub).
- It will include a mix of uses – museum, archives and art gallery – that together provide a variety of programming and services.
- Locating in Centre in the Park provides access to those using public transit, walking or other modes of transportation in Sherwood Park.
- It is a gathering area for all and may be used to host events.
- A museum and archives in Centre in the Park realizes the vision of making the area a destination.

### **A4.4 Recreation and Culture Strategy**

The Recreation and Culture Strategy will outline the County’s short-term (0 to 4 years), mid-term (4 to 8 years) and long-term (8 to 12 years into the future) recreational and cultural priorities. The Museum is a cultural asset in the County and will be considered as part of the strategy.

### **A4.5 Strathcona County Art Gallery**

Museums and art galleries share natural alliances and have many similarities with respect to how they operate, what programs and services they offer, and what they hope to achieve in the community. Museums and art galleries are places where people gather, learn and interact. As shared in *Section 6: Review of Other Community Museum and Archives Operations* and *Appendix B: Comparable Community Museum Review and Analysis Table* in the report, there are a number of examples where a museum and art gallery are combined.

Combining a future museum and art gallery at one location helps to benefit the museum, archives and art gallery with their current facility challenges while being economically considerate of the County and other potential partners.

### **A4.6 Strathcona County Heritage Foundation Board and Strathcona County Museum and Archives Staff Initiatives**

The SCMA initiatives apply directly to the review. Some of the initiatives such as server and computer replacement were fostered through the review process as they were of an urgent nature. If the server and computers were not replaced, many files, archives and other documents may have been lost.

The SCMA 2018-2023 Strategic Plan priorities align with the SCMA Review. There are three priorities identified:

- Increase Financial Sustainability and Capacity
- Increase Volunteers and Board Members
- Enhance Community Engagement

The contents of the Strategic Plan further inform the potential future of the SCMA. The plan is fluid and may change depending on the scenario(s) the County decides to pursue.

## A5. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS MOVING FORWARD

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This investigation has been beneficial to make the additional links between the above ongoing processes. It has strengthened capacity between County departments and Administration to ensure the links are considered as each respective process moves forward.

It is imperative the links continue to be made with the following key considerations in mind:

- Consistency of what has been shared and is being recommended for the future
- How each process is complimentary to the other
- Timing and synergies amongst processes
- Value for service and money
- Respect for and honouring of the community voice, promising practices and technical expertise

These links ultimately help to bring forward thorough information to enable Council to make an informed decision-- one that is in the best interest of the community and also provides cost-effectiveness and efficiency in the long term.