

Archives Strategy

Public Engagement Summary

October 2021

Background

The stories of Winnipeg and its citizens are told in the records and artifacts managed by the City of Winnipeg's (the City's) Archives, and we want all residents to be inspired to explore our history. The City's archival collection is unique and irreplaceable and includes minutes, by-laws, maps, photographs, drawings, and artifacts.

To ensure long-term preservation and access to these irreplaceable items, the City is exploring facility options to address the storage and preservation needs for its growing archival collection, to allow enough space for its programming, and to create an accessible space that allows Winnipeggers to continue to have access to records and conduct research.

Engagement

Engagement was conducted by the consultant in early 2020 to gather feedback from stakeholder groups. In spring of 2021, the City reached out to the community to collect feedback on the consultant's findings to determine recommendations for Council's consideration. Due to the amount of information required to provide informed feedback, an online survey and workshop-style events were used. Details of all engagement activities are in Table 1 below.

Although the survey findings are not statistically relevant (do not represent the entire Winnipeg population), it is important to recognize the value of hearing from those with knowledge and interest in the subject matter and the users of the Archives. At this point in the project, we asked community members to learn about the options and provide informed feedback, so techniques for in-depth informing and engagement were required. The survey, workshop, and written submission feedback were rich in informed input about user experience that will be used along with information from the consultant's report and cost-benefit analysis to make a recommendation.

Promotion

Public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- News release – May 25;
- Facebook and Twitter posts - 14 posts from May 25 – July 5;
- Facebook and Twitter paid ads – ads ran between May 25 – July 5;
- City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter - May 27, June 14, June 24;
- Print advertisements – Grassroots, La Liberté, and Canstar Weeklies – weeks of May 24 and 31, 2021.

Promotion samples are in Appendix A.

Table 1 Engagement activities

Date	Activity	Details
January 2020	Consultant team met with stakeholder groups with an interest in the City of Winnipeg Archives to inform the consultant's report.	Meetings included representatives from City departments, the Manitoba Historical Society, Heritage Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Foundation, the Association for Manitoba Archives, the Centre du Patrimoine, and the University of Winnipeg. Notes in Appendix B.
Launched on May 25, 2021	Project webpage – French and English. Webpage included links to information, the online survey, and a Q&A tool.	2,730 total unique visitors. 626 informed visitors (visitors who explored the site, e.g. opened documents). 217 engaged visitors (visitors who provided feedback).
May 25, 2021 – July 5, 2021	Survey (available online and through direct mail)	208 respondents. Self-selected participation that allowed residents to learn about the options and provide feedback on program improvements and facility options. Results are in Appendix C.
June 16, 17, 23,	Workshop events and meetings	Two events were held that were open to anyone to attend (June 16 - 32 participants; June 17 - 23 participants). One workshop was held with Indigenous community members (June 23 - 8 participants). All participants were invited to complete the survey afterwards. Manitoba Métis Federation (July 26) Workshop notes are in Appendix D.
May 25, 2021 – July 5, 2021	Written submissions	Four written submissions were submitted. Written submissions are in Appendix E.

Key Findings

- Most survey respondents understood the consultant's findings (81% or 169 of 208) and the facility options (88% or 178 of 208) after reviewing information and/or attending a workshop.
- In the online survey, when respondents were asked to rank the four options in order from 1 (most favoured) to 5 (least favoured). The results were:
 1. Option 4 (renovation of 380 William Ave.; 1.99 average)
 2. Option 1 (construct a new building; 2.27 average rank)
 3. Option 2a (two archives sites; 3.12 average rank)
 4. Option 3 (10-year new build; 3.64 average rank)
 5. Option 2b (two archives sites with one leased; 3.86 average rank).
- In the workshops, option 1 (construct a new building) was the most supported with some expressing support for option 4 (renovation of 380 William Ave.)
- Workshop participants had questions about the twenty-year timeframe and suggested more storage will be required due to a backlog in accepting community archives.
- Survey respondents and workshop participants wanted to see the Archives Strategy as a vehicle for reconciliation, with more engagement with Indigenous communities, Indigenous-focused programming, and spaces for the creation, preservation, and sharing of Indigenous histories in authorized and culturally appropriate ways.
- The most supported value statement in the survey was "growth and diversification of the archival collection is important to me." (83% or 172 of 208 respondents agreed). See Figure 1 below.

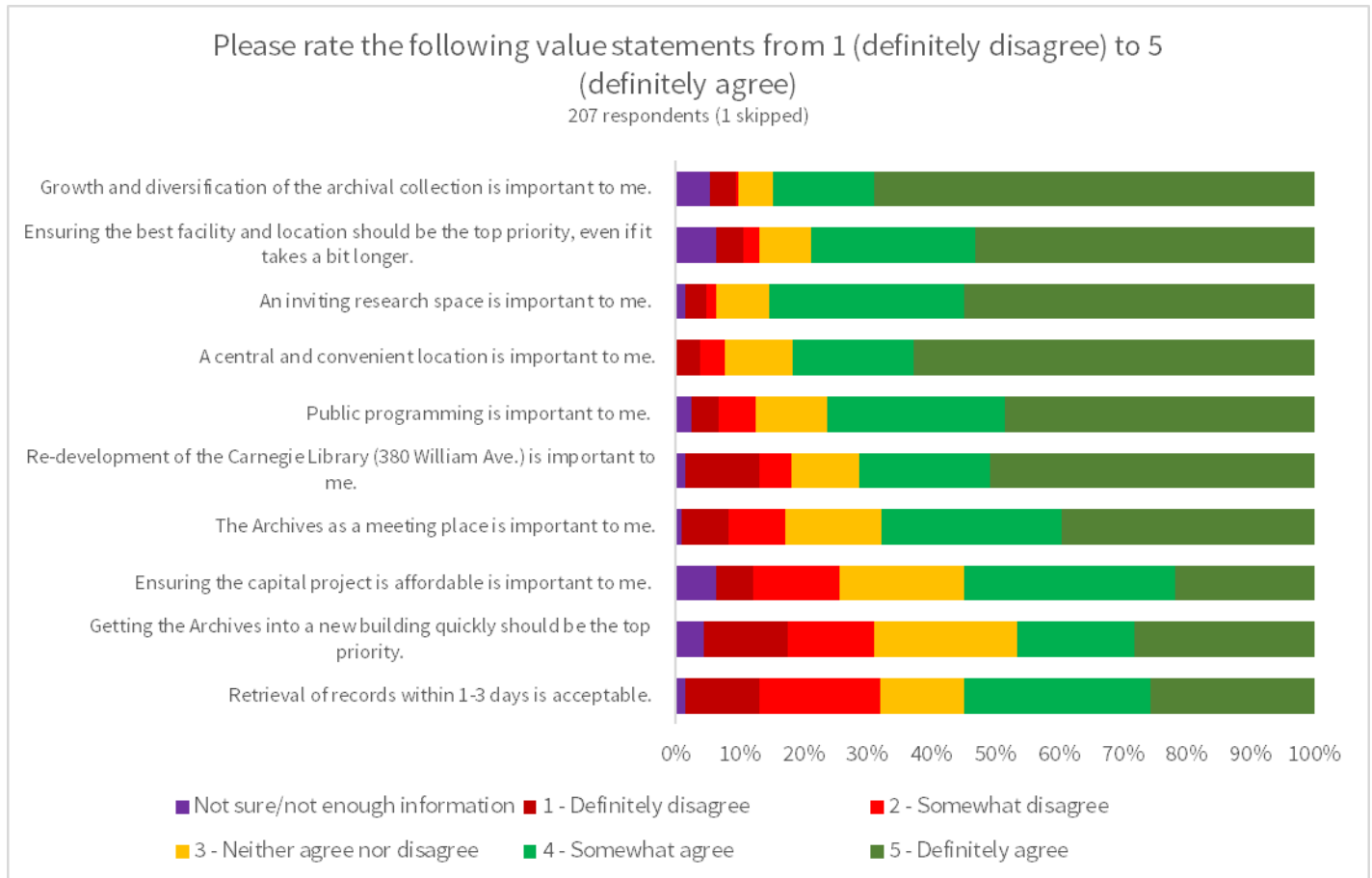


Figure 1 Survey value statement rating

Program Options

Program options were generally supported in workshop discussions and in survey feedback.

Ideas for additional programs and services:

- Guidelines or criteria for evaluating when community items are accepted
- Restricted archives area for researchers and staff
- Access to digital records and space to explore digital records
- Gift shop and cafe
- Rentable event space (revenue source)
- Group research space
- Gallery/display/exhibition space
- Additional classroom space required

Facility Options

When commenting on the facility options, participants noted the importance of ensuring the project is done well, while still expressing urgency in getting the project done quickly to protect the archives. There was very little support for two locations (Options 2a and 2b) and a 10-year facility (Option 3).

The tables below note the most prominent themes in the survey responses when asked about benefits and drawbacks of each facility option. These same themes were brought forward in workshop discussions.

Option 1 Benefits	Option 1 Drawbacks
- Purpose built (69 comments) - New (16 comments) - Modern (13 comments)	- Cost (84 comments) - Unknown location (34 comments) - Building something new instead of using an

- Meets long term requirements (13 comments)	existing historical building (15 comments) - Potential delays due to uncertainty and design (14 comments)
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Option 2 Benefits	Option 2 Drawbacks
- Central, accessible public-facing location (22 comments) - Multiple buildings offers a safety feature for records in case of unexpected disaster (21 comments) - Off-site storage allows more space for storage and expansion (12 comments)	- Delays for record retrieval (31 comments) - Costs, including increased operational and staffing costs (43 comments) - Risk of leasing (13 comments) - Risk of transporting records (22 comments) - Records are not as accessible with two sites (13 comments)

Option 3 Benefits	Option 3 Drawbacks
- Lower short-term costs (24 comments) - Purpose built (24 comments) - Meet short term needs quicker (10 comments)	- Risk that stage two expansion will not be funded (31 comments) - Risks of building in two stages (31 comments) - Cost (29 comments) - 10 years is not enough space and time (20 comments)

Option 4 Benefits	Option 4 Drawbacks
- Uses an existing heritage building (88 comments) - Central location (32 comments) - Cost savings (25 comments) - City currently owns the building (14 comments)	- Risks associated with renovations (35 comments) - Existing building limitations (e.g. size, layout, accessibility) (50 comments) - Unknown costs (42 comments) - Location (12 comments)

- Engage an Indigenous architect
- Consider the Hudson's Bay building and other existing buildings
- Renovate 50 Myrtle St.
- Potential for library partnerships
- Can 380 William Ave. be expanded further in the future?
- Operating costs should also be determined and considered for the options

Reconciliation and the City of Winnipeg Archives

Through conversations with participants, and especially Indigenous community members, the City's view of the potential for the Archives Strategy to advance truth-telling and reconciliation efforts was confirmed and further developed.

Survey respondents noted their support for the program improvement "expanded opportunities for Indigenous ceremonies, storytelling, and programming."

In the Indigenous community members workshop, we heard about the importance of creating a welcoming space for Indigenous people, and we were asked to consider heritage buildings as products of colonization.

The MMF's submission highlighted the importance of identifying and providing convenient access to records of the Manitoba Métis Community. The submission included the following recommendations:

1. The City continue engaging the MMF, through the Resolution No. 8 framework, as the Strategy is implemented to ensure the rights, interests, and claims of the Manitoba Métis are appropriately represented.

2. The City and the MMF work together to identify documents, artifacts, and other items of historical importance to the Manitoba Métis and ensure these items are shared with, or returned to, the Manitoba Métis.

3. The MMF and the City to establish partnerships as the Strategy is implemented.

Ideas for the Archives facility from workshop and survey participants:

- A longer timeline for archival space is required (20 years is not sufficient)

To learn more about the Archives Strategy, please visit winnipeg.ca/archivesstrategy

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Other key considerations:

- Hire an Indigenous architect to design the Archives facility.
- Who decides which records are 'significant to the community?' Consider a process to manage biases to accurately reflect the community.
- Ensure language reflects that Winnipeg's history is all of our history, e.g.: *recognize and support Indigenous ways of preserving and sharing historical knowledge information that fills in the gap in the colonial narrative.*
- Ensure narratives record the long history of Indigenous Peoples in Winnipeg before and after the City's incorporation, e.g.: *acknowledge Indigenous contributions and the agency of Indigenous people in Winnipeg throughout the City's history.*
- Support oral history, storytelling, and alternative ways of collecting archives to give voice to those that may not record their history in physical documents
- Ongoing engagement and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples are needed to ensure appropriate representation of Indigenous people and communities in records and the Archives space
- A distinctions-based approach that takes into account the unique histories and identities of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people should be part of the review and re-envisioning of the Archives

What We Heard	How It Was Considered*
The City should accept more donations from community sources (target of ~10% of total collection should be increased). Develop guidelines for accepting community archives.	Currently, private records of individuals or organizations comprise approximately 1-2% of the total Archives collection. The Cornerstone report projected growth of this portion of the collection (from 1192 linear feet of records to 3161 linear feet over 20 years) to comprise approximately 10% of the total collection. These growth projections are in line with other municipal archives studied, the City's population growth, and consistent with projected staffing and resourcing required to manage expected increases. The City Archives has existing appraisal criteria for acceptance of community records and has recently updated its website to provide additional information to potential donors. See winnipeg.ca/clerks/archives/donatingRecords.stm#1 for more information.
Details on digital archives are required in the Archives Strategy.	The City's Digital Archivist will review public feedback, consult with subject experts if needed, and verify and/or add to program needs and facility requirements. The Archives Strategy includes additional support for expanded digital content and services, including: dedicated and better-equipped research stations allowing access to both physical and born-digital records; more processing and accessioning of born-digital records; required servers space; and other recommendations to advance digital holdings made by the City's Digital Archivist.
Consider other amenities and services that could make the Archives a destination and important research and learning space.	Additional amenities, such as a gift shop and more exhibition space, may be considered as part of the detailed design, pending Council approval and funding allocation.
More than 20 years of storage space is required; 20 years is too short-sighted.	The planning horizon for growth of its physical collection is 20 years into the future. In planning for the future, comparable archival organizations surveyed as part of the development of the Archives Strategy expected

	growth to continue at current rates for approximately the next 10 years, past which growth in physical holdings are expected to decline as born-digital records become more common. The consultant's recommendations included room for growth of physical records past this 10-year mark, as well as an additional buffer to account for records currently held in City offices, and additional records from the community that may be expected to be transferred to the Archives in the coming years.
Option 4 (renovate 380 William Ave.) was the most supported facility option by survey respondents; option 1 (new build) was the most supported in workshops.	The Public Service is recommending Option 4 (renovate 380 William Ave.). Key considerations that informed this recommendation included suitability of the building for the Archives' needs, the building's availability, public feedback, and cost. This option includes space for the growth and diversification of the archival collection and would feature an inviting research space and enhanced public programming. It also offers a central and convenient location within the downtown area and would see the redevelopment of the Carnegie Library (380 William Ave.)
The history of Winnipeg in the Archives should be more representative; Incorporate the feedback from Indigenous community members, including services and facility feedback.	As part of the public engagement for the Archives Strategy, City staff met with Indigenous community members, the Manitoba Métis Federation, and others to solicit feedback. This consultation is part of ongoing efforts to build and sustain relationships with Indigenous Peoples that will inform Archives programming and projects moving forward.

*All recommendations require Council approval before proceeding to funding and next steps (e.g. construction).

Next Steps

In addition to information gathered via public engagement, the City is also conducting a cost-benefit analysis of the options and considered this information, along with the consultant's reports, in the development of recommendation.

The Public Service will present recommendations for the Archives programming and facility to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage, and Downtown Development (SPC-PD) in the fall of 2021.

All those who subscribed for updates will be notified of the next steps and their opportunity to appear in delegation once the administrative report is publicly available.

Appendices are in the [documents section](#)

Appendix A – Promotion samples

Appendix B – Stakeholder meeting notes (January 2020)

Appendix C – Survey results

Appendix D – Workshop notes

Appendix E – Written submissions