

2019 Report on the Archives

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Sections 253 and 254 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, the Archives Branch preserves and provides access to Ottawa's municipal records. The Archives further supports Section 255 of the Act through the establishment of retention periods for long-term and continuing value records.

The primary mandate of the City Archives is to steward and manage the corporation's vital and civic archival information assets. Vital records form 97 per cent of archival holdings at the City of Ottawa Archives.

The Archives:

- identifies, acquires, organizes, preserves and describes civic records and items that have research value as well as historical significance and makes them accessible;
- determines which civic records have archival value and authorizes their transfer to the custody of the City Archives for preservation; and
- authorizes the destruction of civic records that do not have any archival value and have reached the end of their retention period in accordance with the records retention by-law approved by City Council.

In addition, the Archives actively pursues its Council-approved mandate to aid Ottawa's diverse communities in keeping their own archival records, and to acquire records to supplement and document the heritage and development of the City of Ottawa. The City Archives is accountable for:

- acting as the guardian of the City's corporate memory and documentary heritage;
- ensuring that civic records that document the rights, privileges and obligations of the City and of individuals are preserved and accessible;
- documenting the lives of the City's citizens, the organizations they create and their contributions to the community; and

- increasing awareness of the City's rich heritage through research, interpretation, and promotion.

Public Service

The Archives provides public service out of three physical locations: The Central Archives (100 Tallwood Drive), Rideau Branch (North Gower), and the Gloucester Branch (Leitrim). The Central Archives provides leadership, policies, guidelines, procedures and standards consistent with best archival practices.

The Archives serves Council and City staff in all departments who need to refer to minutes, by-laws, agreements, policies, plans, reports, historical files, etc. to confirm decisions and policies approved in the past and to make informed recommendations and decisions. Citizens, students, genealogists and researchers also consult the Ottawa City Archives.

Partnerships

The Archives has established partnerships with several research organizations and one archives:

- Archives of the Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada, Ottawa and Seaway Valley Presbyteries;
- Ontario Genealogical Society – Ottawa Branch, which includes the research libraries of The British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa and The United Empire Loyalists, Sir Guy Carleton Branch; and
- C. Robert Craig Memorial Library.

These organizations store their research materials at the Central Archives and provide public access to them, while maintaining ownership, custody and management responsibilities for these resources. In exchange for the space, the partners assist Archives' staff with reference requests.

Corporate Policy

The Archives is responsible for one corporate policy that directs City staff on how to manage their records. Specifically, the Official Gift Policy provides a framework that defines and governs the receipt and disposition of official gifts as records of the corporation.

The Archives also participates regularly in reviews of the corporate Donation Policy.

Information Management Systems

The City uses two information management systems to manage its archival records:

1. RMS is used to manage official business records which have been designated as archived; and
2. MINISIS is used to manage archived private records, as well as certain City records that have been accessioned by the Archives.

There is currently no integration between these systems.

DISCUSSION

2019 Summary and Statistics

The principal work of the Archives in 2019 included:

- appraising corporate records for archival value and determining disposition through Continuous Disposition Authorities (CDAs), including the General Continuous Disposition Authority (GCDA), now updated quarterly;
- ensuring long-term preservation of the City's corporate records, as well as those of its diverse communities, through environmental controls, pest management, preservation housing, conservation treatments, and archival mentorship;
- culling of duplicates within the archived civic records; and
- re-appraising, reviewing and identifying archived corporate records to ensure discovery and long-term access.

The measurable successes of the Archives program in 2019 included:

- Space for 760 boxes of civic records recouped through contents compression;
- 17,155 hours of specialized research, including 4,581 research requests by City staff and the public processed by Reference Services staff;
- 335 new CDAs issued;
- 1,265,269 unique webpage views of materials held by Archives and accessed by researchers online under agreement with [Ancestry.ca/newspapers.com](https://www.ancestry.ca/newspapers.com);

- 3,057 descriptions added to online Ottawa Museums and Archives Catalogue (OMAC) between October 2018 and October 2019, bringing the total to 57,129 descriptions, of which 23,169 (41 per cent) have images;
- 17 per cent increase in 2019 over 2018 in use of OMAC (representing Archives collections plus all participating City and Community museums), now averaging 226 unique pages views per day [based on January to October data];
- 16,391 hours of work contributed by 104 volunteers, a significant engagement with the community;
- Approximately 3,150 volume descriptions entered into the Records Management System in preparation for archival ingest;
- Approximately 125 hours of specialized conservation treatments;
- 45 linear feet of archival records were remediated of mould and pests by contract specialists and released to the vaults; and
- Planning and executing work on 22 exhibits, with over 100 items reviewed to ensure preservation during display.

Private Records Donations

Subsection 8(1) of Schedule “C” within the *Delegation of Authority By-law* provides as follows:

“The City Clerk, the Manager, Legislative Services, and the City Archivist individually are delegated the authority to negotiate, approve, conclude, and execute agreements related to the long-term deposit of library and archival materials in the City Archives, including executing deeds of gift and letters of acknowledgement as required, provided that such agreements:

- a) are in accordance with applicable City policies;
- b) are related to approved departmental programs and objectives; and
- c) are within approved budget limits.”

Under Subsection 8(2) of Schedule “C”, the exercise of the above-noted delegated authority shall be reported to the appropriate Standing Committee at least once in each

calendar year. Pursuant to this reporting requirement, the following list identifies donors of cultural property acquired by the City Archives in 2019:

- Fred Allport, Maitland, ON
- Mary E. Armstrong, Ottawa, ON
- Ruth Armstrong, Ottawa, ON
- Marc Aubin, Gatineau, QC
- Deborah Beaudoin, Ottawa, ON
- William Blampied, Ottawa, ON
- Brian Booth, Ottawa, ON
- Owen Cooke, Ottawa, ON
- Bryan Dorling, Ottawa, ON
- Joan Dow, Ottawa, ON
- Isobel Eastman, Ottawa, ON
- David Gorman, Mississauga, ON
- Phyllis Kendall, Lombardy, ON
- Jacqui Kielty, Ottawa, ON
- Pam Little, Ottawa, ON
- Manotick Horticultural Society, Ottawa, ON
- David McNiece, Ottawa, ON
- James O'Regan, Ottawa, ON
- Ottawa Public Library, Ottawa, ON
- Karen Payne, Ottawa, ON
- Rideau Club, Ottawa, ON

- Rideau Township Historical Society, Ottawa, ON
- Robert Thomson, Ottawa, ON

Initiatives for 2020 and Beyond

In 2019, the Archives began to realign its strategic direction toward the seven priority areas defined in the City of Ottawa Strategic Plan 2019-2022 as follows:

1. **Economic Growth & Diversification:** Encourage economic growth and diversification by supporting business investment and expansion, talent attraction and retention, showcasing the city’s bilingual and multicultural character, and branding Ottawa as a place to be.
2. **Integrated Transportation:** Enable effective mobility through a sustainable, accessible and connected city transportation system.
3. **Thriving Communities:** Promote safety, culture, social and physical well-being for our residents.
4. **Environmental Stewardship:** Grow and protect a healthy, beautiful, and vibrant city that can adapt to change.
5. **Service Excellence Through Innovation:** Deliver quality bilingual services that are innovative and continuously improve to meet the needs of individuals and diverse communities.
6. **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Ensure sustainable infrastructure investment to meet the future growth and service needs of the city.
7. **Thriving Workforce:** Promote bilingual Service Excellence by supporting a workforce that is healthy, diverse, adaptive and engaged.

Overall, while directly contributing to one long-term sustainability goal of the City – that of Culture and Identity – the Archives by its very nature indirectly supports all seven priority areas by keeping and providing access to information potentially of aid to the City in pursuing these goals.

The following table sets out the strategic elements of the branch and how they relate to specific Term of Council Priorities.

Strategic Element	Priorities	Status
<p><i>Identify pre-amalgamation inactive records to be archived</i></p> <p>In 2019, the Archives identified approximately two million legacy pre-amalgamation (to January 1, 2004) inactive records that have not yet been transferred to the archives. This includes a number of manual records systems that have yet to be captured by the City's records keeping systems. The Archives will develop a plan to analyze the data through verification and re-appraisal to ensure vital civic records can be transferred to the Archives in compliance with the appropriate approved disposition authority.</p>	5,6	Started 2019
<p><i>Improve/streamline CDA process</i></p> <p>In 2019, the Archives increased its direct engagement with records creators, furnishing better information about records under appraisal and making this scope information available for other purposes.</p>	3,5,6	Ongoing
<p><i>Cull non-archival material from legacy transfer</i></p> <p>This year, the Archives was able to cull duplicates and non-archival material from the Archives vaults that represent 971 archival boxes of records. These records were in large part cheque stubs from former municipalities, invoices, and photocopies of records that were archived as part of a large legacy transfer. After culling, boxes were compressed into smaller archival boxes, disposed of, or returned to the Archives' vaults.</p>	5,6	Ongoing
<p><i>Working collaboratively with the Information Management Branch (IM), process manual accessions</i></p> <p>The Archives has begun the reclassification and acquisition of essential City records on the Information Management System (RMS). Information Management (IM) has assisted with verifying the quality and consistency of data entry.</p> <p>Providing advice to IM and outside contractors as to requirements the Archives recommends in proposals for replacements of BIMS and RMS. These requirements better reflect the Archives workflow</p>	5,6	Ongoing

<p>in the larger records continuum and ensure adherence to legislation.</p>		
<p><i>Implement block review protocol in support of active dissemination/routine disclosure</i></p> <p>Finalizing review of Board of Control records as test case for instituting block review. Block review is a systematic methodology that supports the City’s Active Dissemination Policy. Through block review, Archivists may identify blocks of records in the course of business that may be suitable for release in their entirety.</p>	<p>3,5</p>	<p>Ending 2020</p>
<p><i>Develop Archives consortium</i></p> <p>Work early in 2019 on developing a west-end hub was delayed by external issues regarding the chosen facility site. Support was provided to the Cumberland Township Historical Society, however, in its bid to have the Petrie House turned over to City use as a heritage centre in the east end. In 2020, work will proceed with developing a directory of local archives and seeking interest in pursuing solutions to mutual concerns.</p>	<p>3,5,6</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><i>Engage under-represented communities through documentation planning</i></p> <p>As a result of analysis in 2018-2019, private records acquisitions in 2020-2021 will be predicated on engaging the Lebanese and South Asian communities of Ottawa with respect to advice, instruction, donation, or other assistance with their archival records. Both of these groups number in the top 10, by size of population, in terms of Ottawa’s cultural heritage, yet are proportionally least well documented in our holdings thus far.</p> <p>The Branch’s documentation planning approach, previously based solely and non-strategically on geographic and topical analyses, was examined according to new analytical functions which specifically address this strategic objective.</p> <p>Analysis from a diversity-inclusion perspective indicates that the Archives needs to address an imbalance in its archival service to</p>	<p>3,5</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>the City to better reflect the diversity of cultural communities in Ottawa and their impact on the City’s development.</p>		
<p><i>Respond to Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report by partnering with indigenous communities on multiple initiatives</i></p> <p>The Archives was pleased to continue its representation on the Aboriginal and Working Committee sub-group in 2019. During this past year, the Archives held a meeting with Chief Kirby Whiteduck and Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation Council. In addition, there was a permanent establishment of the Pikwàkanagàn flag and Algonquin-Anishinabeg Nation flag in the atrium at the Central Archives in the James Bartleman Centre, along with the Franco-Ontarian Flag.</p>	<p>3,5,7</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><i>Implement substitution protocol and develop digitization priorities and planning tool</i></p> <p>In 2019 the Archives moved forward, in partnership with IM, to test the implementation of a substitution protocol and develop digitization priorities for physical records. After reviewing the available technology, Archives staff believe that they can provide a stable and reliable digital substitution program for records and shall continue in 2020 to pursue and review the options available to do so.</p>	<p>1,3,4,5,6</p>	<p>Started 2019</p>
<p><i>Develop long-range plan for exhibitions</i></p> <p>The groundwork for future exhibits was formed during 2019 and will help us moving forward as we finalized the long-range plan for exhibits. An exhibit manual will be completed in 2021.</p> <p>The Archives commissioned a micro-fade testing project, performed by the Canadian Conservation Institute, to investigate the effects of light exposure on archival holding, deemed representative of vulnerable holdings. This project will assist future exhibit planning. Guidelines and recommendations documents were also produced to assist with future decision-making.</p>	<p>1,3,6</p>	<p>Started 2019</p>

<p><i>Develop interpretation plan for Ottawa Sports Hall of Fame</i></p> <p>During 2019, the Archives outlined plans for the Ottawa Sports Awards and Ottawa Sport Hall of Fame, but these have not yet been finalized with the partners.</p>	1,3,5,6	Started 2019
<p><i>Respond to display requests from Mayor's Office/Protocol to increase community engagement</i></p> <p>During 2019, the Archives planned, developed and installed exhibits/displays for the Mayor's Office and Protocol, including the following completed displays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G.B. Greene Plaque • Chains of Office updates to include a fifth chain and new mount/display • Patrick Chan Key to the City display • Key to the City Recipients display revamp • 100th Anniversary Institute of planners - event display and conference exhibit • Confed line launch LRT exhibit • Barrick's Hill • BNA Act planning • Francophone Rendez Vous exhibit / special event • Doors Open 2019 • Archives Awareness Week 2019 • Dutch tulip festival panel <p>Work into 2020 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netherlands – Enduring Bonds 	1,3,4,5	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor's Gifts – two additional cases to be installed 		
<p><i>Develop and implement strategy to engage City staff/improve knowledge in the corporation of Archives products and services</i></p> <p>Several reference guides have been developed for City staff, and these have been made accessible. They are not able to be posted, however, since the training required to finalize the documents for <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)</i> compliance has not been offered. The Archives internal campaign included outreach events such as Archives Awareness Month. The creation of an Ozone web page is also part of this campaign.</p>	1,5,6,7	Ongoing
<p><i>Develop Archives comprehensive preservation plan</i></p> <p>In 2019, the Archives began work on a global Preservation Assessment, reviewing the status of environmental controls in all areas including displays, pest management, preservation housing, emergency response, preservation-related policies and procedures, and Conservation Lab processes. Recommendations will be developed for each of these areas, including proposals for future surveys. This report is integral to the Preservation Program.</p>	4,5,6	Started 2019
<p><i>Improve workflow to respond better to client requests for copies of archival materials, especially photographs</i></p> <p>Review reproduction order workflow to make process more streamlined for both Archives' staff and clients.</p>	1,3,5	Start 2020
<p><i>Improve copyright documentation to improve dissemination and use by clients</i></p> <p>Review and update copyright status for archives descriptions in MINT Integrated database platform, including identifying copyright holders where possible and whether copyright has expired or still subsists. This will enable more informed and better use of our holdings.</p>	1,3,5	Start 2020
<p><i>Improve descriptions of current archival material and increase online availability of descriptions</i></p>	1,3,5,6,7	Ongoing

<p>This consists of re-describing archival records to current professional standards or fully describing legacy collections, many of which require significant contextual research to inform researchers of their historical value. These descriptions are then made available in the Archives' online catalogue, thereby improving access to its holdings. In 2019, the Archives revised or created 370 descriptions related to over 30 collections and added hundreds of new links between related materials. Notable collections described include corporate Urban Renewal series, corporate Engineering photographs, and the Workers' Heritage Oral History Project.</p>		
<p><i>Improve client tools for self-directed learning and resource discovery</i></p> <p>The Archives has a multi-pronged approach to developing client research tools, which includes improving the online research catalogue with revised/new descriptions of its holdings, and offering research guides for self-directed learning. In 2019, the Archives began developing a new series of Customer Service guides on how to most efficiently use the Archives; two guides were completed of a total of eight, which will be made AODA compliant in 2020 and published on the Archives' webpage. For 2020, the remaining six guides will be completed and published. As well, the Archives began developing a thematic research guide on Urban Renewal collections in its holdings that will allow researchers to easily discover this material. This guide will be completed in 2020 and will also be made available online. Further thematic guides will be developed in the coming years to improve self-directed resource discovery.</p>	<p>1,3,5,6,7</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>