

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2021

TO: CITY OF HAMILTON GENERAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

FROM: HAMILTON MUSEUM CITIZENS' COMMITTEE

RE: PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
TOURISM & CULTURE DIVISION  
HERITAGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SECTION;  
CIVIC MUSEUM STRATEGY REPORT; NOVEMBER 17, 2021;

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.2**

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The long-awaited Hamilton Civic Museum Strategy Report is finally being presented to the General Issues Committee on November 17, 2021 (see Agenda item 8.2)

Unfortunately, it contains a serious omission. It does not address the direction given by Council regarding a City of Hamilton Museum.

Council was clear on March 28, 2018. It directed staff *"to include the investigation of the feasibility of a City of Hamilton Museum as part of the work of the Hamilton Civic Museum Strategy and report to the general Issues Committee when the strategy is complete."*

The Hamilton Museum Citizen's Committee was formed in 2019 in response to that initiative as a *"friendly resource to help guide the creation of a vibrant, living museum"* and *"a central facility that strengthens our existing network of regional museums."*

The Report included in the Agenda for November 17<sup>th</sup> (Report PED21212) completely sidesteps the issue of a City of Hamilton Museum.

It references an earlier Information Report (No. PED20172) which contained no recommendations regarding the feasibility of a Hamilton Museum and was received for information only by the General Issues Committee over a year ago, on October 7, 2020, with no further action.

However, the Civic Museum Strategy attached as Appendix "A" to the November 17<sup>th</sup> Agenda (the "Strategy") does not fulfill Council's direction of March 2018 which required a report on such an investigation *"when the strategy is complete"*.

The Strategy does not include any discussion about a City of Hamilton Museum. Its only reference to a Museum of Hamilton is in the last of 4 specific Actions included in the first of 6 action themes, entitled *"Action One Embrace the City" i.e., "iv. Explore how the idea of a Museum of Hamilton could best be realized."*

While the Hamilton Museum Citizens' Committee supports "exploring how the idea of a Museum of Hamilton could best be realized", that is wholly inadequate as the sole reference to a Museum of Hamilton in a comprehensive long-term Museum strategy.

The *Strategy* references (but does not incorporate) an external report from CIVICPLAN Consultants (see *draft* included as Appendix (“B”) of Agenda item 8.2) and purports to summarize “three categories” of responses from the more than 1700 participants in CIVICPLAN consultation.

However, the CIVIC PLAN report includes four categories, one of which is entitled “MUSEUM OF HAMILTON but that category is glaringly omitted from the *Strategy*.

The CIVICPLAN report notes that the discussion of a “Museum of Hamilton”, meaning a central space providing an overarching narrative about the City’s history, “*is an important complement to the broader vision of the future of museums in the city.*”

We agree.

CIVICPLAN concluded its report with the observation that:

*“A clear message from respondents across the engagement was that there is high satisfaction with Hamilton Civic Museums and strong pride in what they provide. Specifically, this manifests in local pride that positions museums as key venues to better communicate the story of the city and its various people and communities. Further, this is demonstrated in the desire to see improvements to the existing museums, as well as in the support for the idea of a new Museum of Hamilton as a place to showcase Hamilton for both locals and tourists.” (emphasis added)*

We agree.

We respectfully submit that a comprehensive feasibility study of a dedicated Museum of Hamilton is overdue and ought to be a serious priority for Council to begin to address the long-standing and conspicuous deficit represented by the absence of such a museum in the City’s existing Museum complement.

We strongly urge Council to direct, in the spirit of its March 2018 direction, that such a comprehensive study, including cost estimates, be undertaken forthwith and included in an amended *Strategy* and that the Civic Museum Strategy remain as an Outstanding Business List item until such study is complete.

Thank you for your consideration.