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Date February 11, 2025 **Report No.** 2025-12
To Chair and Members
Committee of the Whole – Planning and Administration
From Nicole Wilmot
Commissioner of Community Development

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item
Item For Consideration

2.0 Topic **Museum Sustainability Plan Implementation Progress Update [Financial Impact: None]**

3.0 Recommendation

A. THAT Report No. 2025-12 regarding the Museum Sustainability Plan Implementation Progress Update BE RECEIVED.

4.0 Executive Summary

The Museum Sustainability Plan is a commitment to working with neighbouring municipalities and key partners in the arts and culture sector to provide unique offerings and quality service in order to increase awareness, attraction and support of the museum sector. The Museum Sustainability Plan (2020) (see **Appendix A**), report and implementation was approved by Brantford City Council in September 2020. City staff was directed to report back on implementation progress annually.

Staff provided updates on the first year priorities in March 2021 ([Report 2021-4](#)), second year priorities in March 2022 ([Report 2022-4](#)), third year priorities in April 2023 ([Report 2023-224](#)) and fourth year priorities in February 2024 ([Report](#)

[2024-7](#)). Staff have now completed the fifth and final year of implementation and are pleased to share the final update for the progress from Year 1-5 priorities undertaken in 2024, which include updates on:

- Memorandum of Coordination;
- The development of the Brant Museums & Galleries Association (BMGA);
- Creation of a Heritage Policy Statement;
- Brant Historical Society Financial Sustainability; and,
- Granting Programs Software.

The focus of the first four years of the implementation plan is to provide the local museum network with the tools they need to position themselves for success. In addition, the City continues to offer the Community Cultural Investment Program (CCIP), which is a grant program that provides operating assistance for small to medium sized non-profit cultural organizations in Brantford. In 2024, the City provided \$51,123 in programming support to 10 non-profit cultural organizations through the CCIP annual stream. The City also provided \$107,347 in programming support to 2 non-profit cultural organizations through the CCIP core stream, which is a 3-year commitment through a Museum Funding Agreement with each organization. All applicants and recipients in 2024 are members of the Brant Museums and Galleries Association (BMGA) or Brant Performing Arts (BPA) network, which are unincorporated networking, resource sharing and joint marketing and project groups that are coordinated by the Tourism Division of the City of Brantford.

5.0 Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this report is to inform City Council of the implementation progress made to date regarding the Museum Sustainability Plan (2020).

This report outlines the five year priorities from the Museum Sustainability Implementation Plan that have been completed or are currently ongoing.

6.0 Background

In 2007, Brantford City Council approved the City of Brantford Museum Sustainability Plan (CD2007-054). The Museum Sustainability Plan (MSP) was developed to ensure the long-term, ongoing viability of Brantford's museum

community, and provided a framework and strategy to address short and long term challenges and opportunities.

In February 2019, Council approved the recommendations to establish its 2019-2020 Council Priorities and provided direction to staff regarding next steps. Specifically, Council Priority #8 is: Development of a Consolidated Museum and Archives Facility, along with a Mid-size Performance Venue. One of the five tasks attributed to this priority was to update the Museum Sustainability Plan by Q1 2020. These priorities were reconfirmed for 2021-2022. Council Priorities were updated in 2023 and particularly Council Priority #2 Focus on productive and collaborative partnerships, Council Priority #6 Effectively and consistently engage with the community relate to the Museum Sustainability Plan and its direction moving forward.

The Tourism Division was tasked with coordinating the facilitation and development of a new Museum Sustainability Plan. Staff retained Novita Interpares in November 2019 to complete the Museum Sustainability Consultation and Findings Report project. The project was divided into two components – the consultation and findings phase, led by Novita Interpares, and the final report and implementation, prepared by City staff. In June 2020, the consultation phase of this project was completed. City staff presented the Museum Sustainability Plan Report (2020-270) to Council in September 2020.

On September 22, 2020, Brantford City Council adopted the following:

- A. *THAT Report No. 2020-270 regarding the Museum Sustainability Plan (2020) BE RECEIVED; and*
- B. *THAT the recommendations to the City of Brantford outlined in the City of Brantford Museum Sustainability Plan (2020) BE IMPLEMENTED; and*
- C. *THAT staff BE DIRECTED TO INCORPORATE the Implementation Plan in the City of Brantford Museum Sustainability Plan (2020) into current work plans; and*
- D. *THAT staff REPORT back to Council on the progress of the City of Brantford Museum Sustainability Plan (2020) by Q2 2021; and*
- E. *THAT staff RECOMMEND that unallocated funds remain in Capital Project ED1901 to support the implementation of the Museum Sustainability Plan (2020); and*

F. THAT the consultant BE DIRECTED to conduct a second round of interviews with all museums regarding the proposed Museum Sustainability Plan.

The recommendation was also amended to establish a new Consolidated Museum and Archives Facility Task Force, which was later disbanded in 2023 (Report 2023-101).

Council also received annual updates on the implementation of the Museum Sustainability Plan in 2021 ([Report 2021-4](#)¹), 2022 (Report [2022-4](#)²), 2023 ([Report 2023-224](#)³) and 2024 ([Report 2023-224](#)⁴).

7.0 Corporate Policy Context

7.1 2023-2026 Council Priorities

7.1.1 Strategic Theme #2: Focus on productive and collaborative partnerships.

- Six Nations, the County of Brant, GRCA, and other local institutions within the community.
- Focus on productive and collaborative partnerships.
- Effectively and consistently engage with the community.

7.1.2 Strategic Theme #6 Effectively and consistently engage with the community.

- Creating opportunities to include members of the community through the BMGA helps to ensure that public input is maintained during the implementation of this plan.

¹ Museum Sustainability Plan Implementation Progress Update (2021)

https://brantford.escribemeetings.com/_layouts/escrbe/pages/landing.aspx?action=report&Id=1505

² Museum Sustainability Plan Implementation Progress Update (2022)

https://brantford.escribemeetings.com/_layouts/escrbe/pages/landing.aspx?action=report&Id=2194

³ Museum Sustainability Plan Implementation Progress Update (2023)

https://brantford.escribemeetings.com/_layouts/escrbe/pages/landing.aspx?action=report&Id=3338

⁴ Museum Sustainability Plan Implementation Progress Update (2024)

<https://calendar.brantford.ca/meetings/Detail/2024-02-13-1800-Committee-of-the-Whole-Planning-and-Administration/4f75b2b4-d95c-41c4-b684-b11100e0c882>

7.2 Economic Development Strategy (2024)

The *Economic Development Strategy* (2024) supports the Museum Sustainability Plan by expanding and maintaining tourism opportunities to Brantford.

7.3 Municipal Cultural Plan (2014)

The recommendations in this report are supported by the following goals in the *Municipal Cultural Plan*:

1. *Improve and develop marketing and information resources to better communicate the value and availability of culture in Brantford;*
2. *Encourage capacity building by supporting the growth and development of local not-for-profit cultural organizations;*
3. *Provide and develop space for cultural and artistic activities;*
4. *Foster the participation of all citizens in arts, heritage and cultural experiences; and*
5. *Create an environment where arts, culture and heritage flourish, enhance civic pride and function as an economic driver for the community.*

8.0 Input From Other Sources

This Report was prepared with input from City staff (Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives Department, Planning Department, Engineering Department, Parks and Recreation Department), staff from County of Brant Tourism and Six Nations of the Grand River Tourism, as well as the Brant Museums & Galleries Association⁵ (BMGA).

9.0 Analysis

⁵ The BMGA includes representatives from the following organizations: Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead, Bell Homestead National Historic Site, Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition, Brant Museum & Archives, Burford Township Museum, Brantford & Areas Sports Hall of Recognition, Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre, Canadian Military Heritage Museum, Chiefswood National Historic Site, Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant, Grace Gallery, Great War Centenary Association, Her Majesty's Royal Chapel of the Mohawks, Myrtleville House Museum, Ontario Genealogical Society – Brant County, National Trust for Canada, Paris Museum & Historical Society, South Dumfries Historical Society and Woodland Cultural Centre.

The Museum Sustainability Plan (**Appendix A**) includes a strategic implementation plan that spans five years (2020 to 2025). Staff provided updates on the first year priorities in March 2021 ([Report 2021-4](#)), second year priorities in March 2022 (Report [2022-4](#)), third year priorities in April 2023 ([Report 2023-224](#)) and fourth year priorities in February 2024 ([Report 2024-7](#)). Staff has completed the final year of implementation and is pleased to update on new progress from Year 1-5 priorities undertaken in 2024, which include:

- Memorandum of Coordination;
- The development of the Brant Museums & Galleries Association (BMGA);
- Creation of a Heritage Policy Statement;
- Brant Historical Society Financial Sustainability; and,
- Granting Programs Software.

An Implementation Plan Report Card is included as **Appendix B** to this Report.

9.1 Memorandum of Coordination

City of Brantford staff reached out to County of Brant Tourism and Six Nations Tourism management on November 26, 2020 to discuss the development of a memorandum of coordination between the City of Brantford, County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River. The intent of the memorandum is to clearly identify roles and contributions from each municipality. Currently, City of Brantford staff provides the BMGA with in-kind organizational coordination and support such as drafting agendas and minutes, facilitating discussion, and contributing a small monetary amount annually for joint marketing projects. Once created, the memorandum will identify how the three communities can work together to sustain the BMGA going forward and provide all of the services that are needed. It would require a legal agreement and formal commitment from all parties.

In 2020, the County of Brant had respectfully asked to postpone the invitation until their staff had completed their Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan (ACHMP). This Master Plan was completed in Summer of 2024.

In summer of 2024, city staff reached out to both the County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River once again to revisit the discussion of developing a memorandum of coordination. With the County's first Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan completed, the County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River have both confirmed their eagerness to take this next step. The three communities have continued to meet over a period of the last six months to discuss the content of a memorandum and this memorandum will be finalized in February 2025. One specific goal of the memorandum is to acknowledge the shared responsibility of the BMGA between the three communities. This shared responsibility includes equal financial obligations between all three communities, roles and responsibilities of staff, including shared labour and time, and promotional strategies.

9.2 Support the Development of the BMGA

Tourism staff continues to work cooperatively with the Brant Museums and Galleries Association (BMGA) by organizing quarterly meetings (March, June, September and December in 2024), preparing agendas and taking minutes. In 2021, staff offered three capacity-building workshops to assist in the development of the BMGA.

In 2023, staff offered an in person capacity-building workshop to support the ongoing development of the BMGA. This workshop was provided free of cost to all members of the BMGA and BPA. The workshop was held at Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant on October 31st from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The workshop featured a guest lecture from Liz Driver at Campbell House Museum.

In the Fall of 2024 the BMGA held another workshop with Suzanne Mose from the Niagara Falls History Museum at Chiefswood National Historic Site. Twenty-five members of the BMGA attended the workshop that involved a motivational presentation from Mose about the history of the Niagara Falls Museum and the challenges facing museums in the current climate. The presentation followed a breakout session along with a BMGA and BPA joint meeting.

9.2.1 Capacity Building

As part of capacity building for the BMGA staff have initiated conversations with the County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River on sharing the role and duties associated with

running and maintaining the BMGA. Between the three groups a new division of labour has been outlined to share the roles and responsibilities surrounding meetings, workshops, marketing, social media and funding. All three groups will now be contributing equally to the funding, which will allow for increased opportunities for marketing, promotion and support. This division of labour will also allow for increased output and hours committed to the time and support of all related promotion and programming of the BMGA. This new agreement will be included as part of the memorandum to ensure a common goal.

9.2.2 Joint Marketing

In 2024, the BMGA also partnered on two joint marketing projects. First, a BMGA rack card (**Figure 2**) was updated and reprinted and was delivered to all the main programming and promotion locations in the City of Brantford, County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River. This rack card showcases members of the BMGA and invite the public and visitors to visit the arts and cultural assets in these three communities. An example of the rack card can be seen below.



Discover museums
and galleries in
Brantford and area

discoverbrantford.ca
brant.ca
sixnationstourism.ca



Figure 1: BMGA Rack Card

The BMGA was also highlighted at an event that took place on September 28, 2024 in Paris as part of the County of Brant's Culture Day Hub location. At this event BMGA rack cards were handed out and a pop up banner was made, which can also be used at future events.

9.3 Creation of a Heritage Policy Statement

In conversations with City staff in the planning department who serve as a liaison to the Brantford Heritage Committee, staff believe that the goals and direction of a heritage statement described by the consultant in the Museum Sustainability Plan already exist within the City's Official Plan.

The [Official Plan](#) contains policies related to cultural heritage and can be found in the following subsections of the document:

Subsection 2.2. – Guiding Principles – Principle 3 (and somewhat also Principle 4)

Subsection 3.2. – Promoting a Strong and Healthy Economy (policies d, e, and f).

Subsection 3.3. – Ensuring Good Urban Design (policies f and g)

Subsection 3.4. – Protecting Cultural Heritage Resources

Recognizing that this already exists, staff do not feel that a duplication of work is necessary to create a separate heritage policy statement.

9.4 Brant Historical Society Financial Sustainability

One of the long-term goals included within the Museum Sustainability Plan directed staff to work with the Brant Historical Society (BHS) to address their imminent financial crisis.

In order to help build their endowment fund to an amount that will provide steady and sustainable regular income, Brant Historical Society sold their building, located at 57 Charlotte Street to the City of Brantford on December 19, 2024 for \$1.6 million. As a provision of the sale, the City has agreed to lease back the property to the BHS for up to 10 years, at a nominal rate. This purchase will relieve BHS from the financial burden of maintaining the building and surrounding grounds. The funds from the purchase will also allow BHS to bring their books into order and invest in much needed updates and incorporate best practices for the museum and its collection. Additionally, this purchase will bring BHS in line with Glenhyrst Art Gallery and the Canadian Military Heritage Museum, both of which are sites that are owned by the City of Brantford but operate independently by external not-for-profit organizations.

9.5 Granting Programs Software

In the Spring of 2024 the City of Brantford purchased Good Grants, a grant management software. With the support of staff in the IT and Social Services Departments, city staff worked with Good Grants program staff to onboard and update the grant application process. This new software will allow for all applications to be submitted, reviewed, adjudicated and outcomes communicated online through one member portal. It will also allow for better KPI tracking for reports and program updates for staff and allow for users to track grant submissions, outcomes and results in one central database.

9.6 Next Steps

The implementation plan within the Museum Sustainability Plan has now been completed. Staff will continue to work with the County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River in collaboration and partnership to promote, support and grow the BMGA into the future. Likewise, city staff will continue to provide the support our local museums need through grant offerings, capacity building workshops and mentorship to ensure the long-term viability of our museums and the preservation of our history.

10.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as result of this report. The Museum Sustainability Plan project, including research, consultants fees and implementation came in under budget. The surplus \$23,965 of unspent funds remain in this Capital Project (ED1901). In 2025 and onwards these funds will be redirected to support capacity building workshops for the city's museum sector.

11.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

With the ongoing implementation of the Museum Sustainability Plan there are some environmental and climate implications to consider. The expansion of programs and site services at BHS will lead to a slight increase in energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions since energy systems will need to be utilized more.

12.0 Conclusion

The City of Brantford has a rich history and many cultural and built heritage assets that contribute significantly to civic pride, quality of life and tourism potential within the local community. Through socially-responsible programming and civic engagement, museums generate social capital, creating healthy, vibrant and livable communities. Many of Brantford's museums currently lack the capacity to adequately carry out these activities, and the Museum Sustainability Plan has been concentrated on building that capacity over the last five years.

Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives staff will continue to provide the support necessary for local museums and community groups to grow, flourish and create more sustainable futures.



Nicole Wilmot
Commissioner of Community Development

Prepared By

Adrienne Briggs, MMSt, Arts and Culture Coordinator
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Attachments:

Appendix A – Museum Sustainability Plan (2020)

Appendix B – Implementation Plan Report Card

Copy to:

Brant Museums & Galleries Association (info@bmga.ca)

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no
Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no