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**Policy Title: Museums' Collections and Exhibitions**

**Policy Number: 05-01-11**

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**Section: Property and Facilities**

**Effective Date: March 3, 2020**

**Approved by:**

**Council**

**Subsection: Use of Public Property**

**Last Review Date: May, 2024**

**Owner Division/Contact:**

**Recreation & Culture/ Museums of  
Mississauga**

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## Policy Statement

The Museum Collection and Exhibition mandate is to hold artifacts and specimens in trust for Mississauga citizens; safeguard diverse memories for future generations; and guarantee equal access to heritage for all people.

## Purpose

This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff; the criteria for the development of the Museums' Collection; and the means of acquiring and disposing of Museums items.

## Scope

This policy applies to the development of the Museums' Collection and Exhibition Program for the Museums of Mississauga.

This policy is supported by the Acquisition and Management of Museums Artifacts Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which provides procedural information relevant to staff's roles and responsibilities for the Museum Collections.

## Legislative Requirements

The Museums of Mississauga is subject to all municipal, provincial and federal legislation governing its Collection, including the *Firearms Act* that applies to antique firearms owned by Museums and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Access to Privacy Act* (MFIPPA) that may apply to Museums' records. Museums' staff will consult with the Access and Privacy Officer, Legislative Services, Corporate Services Department, to ensure compliance with MFIPPA if access to records is requested.

## Background

Acquisition themes were developed through public consultation and include cultural moments of significance; leaders who played a significant role in shaping Mississauga; transportation and infrastructure development; industrial development; and the natural history that shapes our City.

The Museums do not collect Indigenous artifacts but work with Indigenous peoples to provide opportunities for education and outreach.

## Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

“City” means the Corporation of the City of Mississauga.

“Collection” means the assemblage of natural or cultural (i.e. handmade) objects/materials and intellectual property directly owned by the Museums of Mississauga, as a public trust and registered as part of its permanent collection, to be used for the exclusive purposes of preservation, research and presentation to the public.

“Preservation & Collections Supervisor” means the Preservation & Collections Supervisor, Museums Mississauga, Community Services Department, or their designate.

“Director” means the Director, Recreation & Culture, Department, or their designate.

“Education Collection” refers to an assemblage of objects that will be collected with the intent that they will be used by both the staff and members of the public for educational purposes, often in hands-on activities.

“Exhibition” refers to the practice of thematically displaying objects for the purpose of historical/heritage interpretation and education. Exhibitions can be based on materials in the Collection, created through partnerships or brought in on temporary loan from other cultural institutions.

“Museums of Mississauga” (Museums) means Bradley Museum; Benares Historic House; and Leslie Log House.

## Administration

The Museums' Collection is administered by the Museums of Mississauga Unit, Recreation & Culture Division, Community Services Department. The Museums of Mississauga follow the Museums of Mississauga Standard Operating Procedures (SOP); the Canadian Museums Association Ethical Guidelines; the Museums Conservation Guideline; and adhere to the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's Standards for Community Museums in Ontario.

Museums of Mississauga retain the right to determine which materials will be displayed, either in public exhibitions or for on-line viewing by the public. Acceptance of an object into the permanent Collection is not a guarantee that it will be exhibited.

## Accountability

### Director, Recreation & Culture

The Director is responsible for:

- Ensuring all applicable managers/supervisors are aware of this policy and of any subsequent revisions

- Ensuring compliance with this policy, and
- Signing agreements and/or authorizing acquisitions and loans in accordance with the signing authorities section of this policy

### **Manager, City Wide Programs**

The Manager, City Wide Programs is responsible for:

- Ensuring all applicable staff are aware of this policy and of any subsequent revisions
- Signing agreements and/or authorizing acquisitions and loans in accordance with the Signing Authorities section of this policy
- Reviewing the appraisal of items that are completed internally, and
- Approving de-accessioning of materials as recommended by the Preservation & Collections Supervisor

### **Preservation & Collections Supervisor**

The Preservation & Collections Supervisor is responsible for:

- Accepting donated objects for the Museums' Collection
- Accepting items that are transferred to the Museums' Collection
- Ensuring that the Manager, City Wide Programs is aware of any offered donations that have been declined
- Selecting objects for incoming loans related to historical artifacts and all outgoing loans
- Signing agreements and/or authorizing acquisitions and loans in accordance with the Signing Authorities section of this policy
- Recommending the de-accessioning of materials to the Manager, City Wide Programs and preparing all necessary documentation
- Ensuring appropriate measures are taken for the notification to authorities, proper storage and registration, if necessary, of any firearms and/or controlled substances, and
- Ensuring registration system(s) documentation is maintained and updated on a regular basis, in accordance with this policy and any supporting guidelines

### **Exhibition Coordinator**

The Exhibition Coordinator is responsible for:

- Signing related agreements in accordance with the Signing Authorities section of this policy, and
- Completing condition reports for incoming/outgoing exhibition materials as outlined in the Acquisition and Management of Museums Artifacts SOP

### **Collections Coordinator**

The Collections Coordinator is responsible for:

- Signing related agreements in accordance with the Signing Authorities section of this policy

## **Code of Ethics**

Museums of Mississauga staff must adhere to the following code of ethics:

- With the exception of items received through a bequest, staff must avoid the collection of items that are in direct conflict with the Museums' collecting mission and/or in conflict with Corporate Policy and Procedure – Human Resources – Conflict of Interest
- Staff must not act as dealers (i.e. regularly buying and selling items for profit) or assist members of the public in the acquisition or disposal of such items, except as part of their duties as employees of the City, and
- Staff may not attempt to influence the behaviour of a vendor who is conducting business with the City in a manner that would prove advantageous to the employee's personal collection

## Signing Authorities

The following signing authorities, based on the total purchase cost of the item(s) in the acquisition only, will apply for Museums Collection acquisitions and exhibition loans, including signing of agreements, where applicable. The Community Services Division should consult with Legal Services to determine the appropriate form of agreement to be used.

### Donations, Transfers and Loans

- Up to \$5,000 – Museums' Collection Coordinator and Exhibition Coordinator
- Up to \$10,000 – Preservation & Collections Supervisor
- \$10,001, up to and including \$25,000 – Manager, City Wide Programs
- More than \$25,000 – Director

### Purchases

- Up to \$5,000 – Museums Collection Coordinator and Exhibition Coordinator
- Up \$10,000 – Preservation & Collections Supervisor
- \$10,001, up to and including \$25,000 – Manager, City Wide Programs
- \$25,001, up to and including \$50,000 – Director
- More than \$50,000 - Council approval

Purchases by Museums' staff for the Collection, including associated costs (e.g. shipping, appraisals), are exempt from the Purchasing By-Law.

## Criteria for Acquisition

The following criteria will be applied when acquiring objects for the Museums' Collection:

- In accordance with the Canadian Museums Association's Ethical Guidelines for Museums, no illicit materials or items made from endangered materials will be acquired
- The object is suitable for research, exhibition and interpretation in a suitable historical context
- The object does not require conservation of a level or complexity that is beyond the means of Museums (an exception may be made if a donor or other source is willing to provide funding to pay for any required conservation)

- Duplicate and/or equivalent objects will not be acquired unless they have a specific function within the Museums' programmes, and
- The item can be properly stored

## Methods of Acquisition

Museums will not collect objects with the intent to trade, sell or de-accession the item. Material may be acquired through any of three methods: donation (including bequests), transfer or purchase and must be conducted in accordance with the processes outlined in this policy.

Regardless of the method of acquisition, the transfer of ownership of an object to the City must be accompanied by the appropriate legal documentation. Objects that are sent or dropped off at a Museum without proper source information or documentation may not be accessioned into the Collection, but may be used in the Education Collection, used as exhibit material or disposed of by the Preservation & Collections Supervisor.

## Condition of Material

In general, objects accessioned into the Collection must be in reasonable condition so that the Museums may fulfil the goal of preservation with as little alteration as possible.

An exception will be made in the case of an item that is deemed to reveal a truly unique aspect of Mississauga's history. Museums may collect these items regardless of condition or level of alteration, with the stipulation that these alterations be noted in any related interpretive materials.

## Donations of Material

Museums will accept donations in accordance with the Acquisition section of this policy.

## Appraisals of Donated Material

A donated object must be appraised within the taxation year to establish the fair market value. This amount will be shown on the official charitable donation receipt if a receipt is required. If the object is valued at \$1,000 or less, the item may be appraised by a City staff person qualified to make the appraisal.

If the object is valued at more than \$1,000 an external, professional written appraisal is required. It is the donor's responsibility to have the item appraised, including any related cost. The appraisal should clearly establish the justification for the determination of value. The City will not recommend a specific appraiser to a potential donor, but may provide a list of acceptable appraisers from which the donor may select.

Appraisals done internally will be reviewed by the Manager, City Wide Programs before any charitable donation receipt is requested from the Finance Division, Corporate Services Department. In the event that there is any question regarding the accuracy of an internal appraisal, an external appraisal may also be required before a receipt is requested. When an

external appraisal is requested and received, the official charitable donation receipt will reflect the value as established by the external appraisal.

### **Donation Receipts for Income Tax Purposes**

Where requested by the donor, the Preservation & Collections Supervisor is responsible for obtaining approval from the Manager, City Wide Programs before requesting an official charitable donation receipt for income tax purposes from the Manager, Business Planning and Financial Services and must provide all relevant documentation. Official receipts for accepted donations having a fair market value of \$20 or more can be issued only when the Manager, Business Planning and Financial Services, determines that the donation qualifies under Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) guidelines.

### **Release of Donated Materials**

When materials are donated, the donor will be asked to sign a gift form/agreement, in a form approved by Legal Services.

Any documents pertaining to the ownership of the object must be transferred to the City. The Preservation & Collections Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all documentation is filed appropriately.

As property of the City, the material will be used at the City's discretion. The item may be stored, exhibited, loaned for exhibit or research purposes or de-accessioned and disposed of at the discretion of the City.

### **Transfers**

Items may be transferred to Museums from other City facilities or other museums. Museums will accept transfers in accordance with the Acquisition section of this policy. The Collections Supervisor will determine the suitability of materials acquired through transfer, including the appropriate location for display or storage and will ensure all relevant documentation is provided with the item.

### **Loan of Materials**

The Manager, City Wide Programs and/or the Preservation & Collections Supervisor, in accordance with this policy, will determine the suitability of materials considered for loan, either incoming or outgoing and will advise the Manager, Risk Management of such loans in order to make arrangements for insurance, where appropriate.

### **Incoming Collection Loans for the Purpose of Exhibition**

Objects considered for incoming loan must be consistent with this policy and relate to the Museums' Collection mandate.

Museums will complete a detailed condition report on each incoming object. Any differences between the incoming condition report provided by the lending institution and the Museums' condition report will be noted and the lending institution will be notified immediately.

## Outgoing Collection Loans

Museums strive to maintain the Collection in the best possible condition and to make it available to the public. Museums will therefore give careful consideration to any request for the loan of any part of its Collection.

Institutions are eligible to receive loans of objects from Museums if the loan is determined to assist Museums in fulfilling their mission (i.e. making its Collection available to the public). The recipient institution must meet the necessary requirements to ensure minimum risk to the loaned Collection, as outlined below:

- Institutions must be able to supply Museums with the following documentation confirming the presence of
  - a) A functioning alarm system that is fully monitored
  - b) An adequate fire suppression system that is monitored by a fire department
  - c) Sufficient humidity and temperature control to ensure the stability of the loaned objects
  - d) Sufficient levels of staffing to ensure security of the object while being exhibited to the public
  - e) Insurance sufficient to cover loss due to any peril from the time the object leaves the Museum until its return
- At the discretion of the Preservation & Collection Supervisor, the recipient institution must agree to an on-site inspection of the recipient institution prior to any loan being approved, and
- Institutions must assume all costs associated with the appropriate climate controlled transportation of the loaned object(s) both to and from the recipient institution; selection of a third party to provide for the physical movement of the object(s) will be the responsibility of Museums.

A detailed condition report will be completed on each object before loan approval is given, with a second report completed at the termination of the loan agreement and before the object is reintroduced into the Collection. Loans will normally be approved for periods of up to one year. If appropriate, an extension may be granted, based on a detailed condition report completed at the time of the extension request and on the display needs of Museums.

The recipient institution will be responsible for the costs of any damage to the object while on loan. Repairs and return of the item to the City must be arranged by the recipient institution and be completed by a reputable conservator, as agreed to by Museums.

## Collection Purchases

Museums may purchase objects and/or collections that become available but that are not available by donation. All purchases must comply with the Signing Authorities section of this policy.

## Registration and Records Management

Museums will maintain a registration system(s) in accordance with professionally accepted standards and appropriate to each Collection. The system will include identifiable registration and catalogue information; documentation as outlined below; an image of the object; and de-accessioning details, if applicable. Acquisitions to the permanent Collection will be promptly entered into the registration system.

## Documentation

The Museums of Mississauga will maintain an inventory and complete documentation of all objects collected where such information is available, including:

- Circumstances surrounding the object's discovery, method of acquisition (e.g. where, when and by whom) and cost, if any
- Name of the original owner/maker and provenance (a chronological history of the object)
- The object's original use
- The location within Museums (items may also be displayed at the Civic Centre and in the City's public libraries or other temporary location) or if out on loan
- Condition status, including maintenance plan, and
- Any other pertinent facts

In all cases, documentation must be sufficient to satisfy the Preservation & Collections Supervisor that the object has been collected in accordance with the Canadian Museums Association Ethical Guidelines. The Preservation & Collections Supervisor may request additional information to verify any documentation that is provided and may consult with Legal Services staff if required.

Museums may collect materials that have incomplete documentation, provided they contribute to a clearer understanding of the development of Mississauga within the context of the Museums.

Requests for access to Collection records must be made in writing to the Preservation & Collections Supervisor.

## Conservation of Collection

Museums are committed to the long-term viability and conservation of their Collection by providing the physical environment, conservation services and collection management procedures necessary to meet this responsibility. The Museums Conservation Guideline, maintained by the Preservation & Collections Supervisor, outlines procedures such as Collection handling and environmental storage requirements. Collections staff will monitor environmental conditions existing in both storage and exhibit areas and will be responsible to report any significant changes to the Manager, City Wide Programs.



## De-Accessioning From the Collection

It may become necessary to de-accession objects from the Museums' Collection from time to time. Material may be de-accessioned for any of the following reasons:

- The object is discovered to be historically insignificant or a poor example
- The object is no longer within the scope of the Museums' Collection mandate
- Existence of a duplicate or equivalent object
- Irreparable damage and/or hazardous condition of the object which is beyond the capability of Museums to maintain
- Determination by Museums that the object was originally acquired illegally or unethically
- Repatriation or found to be more appropriate to the collection of another museum, and
- Determination by Museums that the object(s) is not useful for research, exhibition or loan

The initial review of items to de-accession will be the responsibility of the Preservation & Collections Supervisor and will be reviewed and endorsed by the Manager, City Wide Programs.

De-accessioning of such items will be accomplished in the following manner:

- Offered to another museum or cultural institution
- Offered for use in an educational collection at no cost
- Repatriated
- Destroyed by a third party company or in such a manner that prevents reassembling, or
- Sold at public auction (City employees and Museums volunteers are not permitted to purchase de-accessioned items. The public auction will be handled by a third party acting as an agent for Museums. Additional information on the sale of items is available in the guidelines.)

All proceeds from the sale of items at auction will be used to support the Museums' Collection. All de-accessioning will be fully documented by the Preservation & Collections Supervisor and the records maintained as part of the Museums' permanent collection records.

## Revision History

Reference	Description
GC-0409-2013- 2013 07 03	
January 30, 2015	Admin revision to allow acquisitions of up to \$5,000 by specific staff
July 22, 2016	Scheduled review. Admin changes to align with current practices and terminology
June 11, 2018	Housekeeping to reflect current position titles.

October 22, 2018	Scheduled review. Admin changes to align with current practices and staff structure.
March 3, 2020	Revised to reflect Museum's mandate and dissolution of MOMAC, other minor housekeeping updates.
July 26, 2022	Housekeeping revision to change the title of Manager, Financial and Treasury Services to Manager, Business Planning and Financial Services.
May 30, 2024	Housekeeping revision to update the Division from Culture to Parks, Forestry and the Environment. Updated title(s) from Manager, Museum and Small Arms Inspection Building to Manager, Indigenous Relations, Heritage and Museums, Collections Supervisor to Preservation and Collections Supervisor, and Collections Assistant to Collections Coordinator.
October 14, 2025	Housekeeping revision to update the Division from Parks, Forestry and Environment to Recreation & Culture. Updated title from Manager, Indigenous Relations, Heritage and Museums to Manager, City Wide Programs.