

PARTNERSHIP STUDY REPORT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Cultural Development Fund project funded by the Government of Ontario was undertaken in 2014 with the goal of identifying ways that the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County, the Belleville Public Library and John M. Parrott Art Gallery, and the Hastings County Historical Society could improve collaboration, cooperation and sharing of knowledge and expertise. The report provided recommendations on ways for the three partner organizations to:

- Deliver coordinated services, programs and events
- Jointly promote our services and programs
- Achieve cost efficiencies to better serve the City of Belleville and Hastings County communities

The research project involved literature reviews and interviews with major stakeholders, staff, volunteers, local historians, relevant City and County leaders and employees, as well as specific librarians, archivists, museum curators and historical society directors across southern Ontario. M. Sam Cronk was hired as the Project Researcher and authored the final study report.

The Belleville City Council approved a plan in June 2013 to locate a new facility for the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County in the existing Belleville Public Library and John M. Parrott Art Gallery building. An office space will also be created for the Hastings County Historical Society.

Potential Co-location Stakeholder Benefits

The project identified a number of potential benefits for the co-location of the three organizations in one central downtown location. A benefit of establishing closer links between the partner organizations is that it allows for greater sharing of resources and expertise and for the reduction of any service or collection duplication. Co-location also leads to a greater understanding of one another's mandates, roles and structures and provides a better awareness of the range of resources available in the partnering institutions. In turn, staff and volunteers are well equipped to provide customers with accurate and appropriate referrals.

Co-locating in the Library building gives customers access to a wide range of cultural and heritage services in one location and increases options for life-long learning and engagement. The project is also aligned with the City's Downtown revitalization initiative and with the 10-Year Cultural Plan for Hastings County and the Quinte Region. It offers new opportunities for the three organizations to better promote ourselves and to raise our visibility in and beyond the local region.

Lastly, from a financial accountability and sustainability standpoint, the study identifies the benefit of a full and more efficient use of the Library building that will result in annual operating cost savings for both the Archives and the Library.

Recommendation Highlights

The final study report, released in June 2015, documents major findings and provides recommendations for achieving efficiency, improving collaboration and successful co-location.

Some of the recommendations include:

- For the three partners to communicate frequently and meet regularly, and provide information updates to each other, staff, volunteers, and the public on ongoing projects, events, programs, and on the construction project itself.

- Hold a ‘welcome mixer’ for all Library staff and Archives volunteers creating informal opportunities to meet and get to know each other before the facility construction is completed.
- Once the Archives is up and running in its new facility, hold in-house tours of both the Library and Archives, including “behind the scenes” resources.
- The report recommended several innovative ideas for joint programs for various audiences and age groups. The report also recommended that staff and volunteers for the three groups should be encouraged to make suggestions for joint programming ideas.
- Allow for an expanded role for social media and increased communications with the public, including cross-promotion of events and programs for all three partners.
- Have students enrolled in the Media, Arts and Design program at Loyalist College assess Library and Archives websites and social media strategies to suggest improvements.
- Coordinate collections and services to avoid duplication between the Archives and the Library, and to transfer appropriate items between the organizations as needed.

An Ontario Cultural Development Fund Project

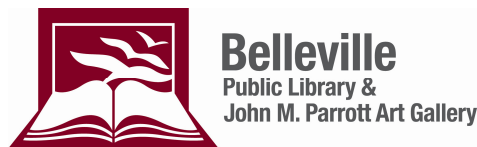
Project Partners:

Belleville Public Library and John M. Parrott Art Gallery

Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County

Hastings County Historical Society

Funding provided by the Government of Ontario



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