

CORPORATE POLICY



Policy Title: **City of Waterloo Museum – Research Policy**
Policy Category: **Administration**
Policy No.: A-027
Department: Community Services
Approval Date: January 11, 2016
Revision Date: May 16, 2022
Author: Karen VandenBrink, Museum and Collections Manager/Curator
Attachments: N/A
Related Documents/Legislation:
Fees and Charges By-law
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Key Word(s): Museum, research

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Waterloo Museum is committed to the pursuit of research by staff and external researchers. Research plays an integral role in the process of understanding our heritage and celebrating the stories of our community. Research enables the Museum to produce meaningful and accurate exhibitions, programs, and published works, as well as facilitate community partnerships and assist and encourage the research of others.

PURPOSE:

This policy sets out the framework for research within the Museum and its collection. In alignment with the Museum's mandate, this framework is intended to support interpretation of the fabric of the past, encourage scholarship, and provide opportunity for knowledge sharing, thus enhancing the profile of the City of Waterloo Museum and the community as a whole.

Mandatory Policy, *Municipal Act*: No
Policy Administration Team, Review Date
Corporate Management Team, Review Date

DEFINITIONS:

City: The Corporation of the City of Waterloo.

Local history: includes but is not limited to the geography, natural history, archaeology, genealogy, ethnography, and the cultural, social, commercial and industrial history of the City of Waterloo.

Museum: The City of Waterloo Museum, as an institution that collects, preserves and makes available to the public heritage resources, which it holds in trust for society.

SCOPE:

The Museum's primary research objective is to serve and support the operation of the Museum. Staff will also assist and encourage the research of others.

While all research should relate to the mandate of the Museum, its range will be broad and it will include structured formal projects and more focused research investigations of smaller scope. All research undertaken must focus on the accuracy and objectivity of results.

Research will include, but is not limited to, the following primary areas of investigation:

- collections research (including buildings, objects and specimens) related to current holdings, loan items or proposed acquisitions
- material history, social history, and political history of the city
- public programming, exhibits and events
- staff training and development
- operation of the Museum, including administrative and museological concerns such as conservation, collections management, exhibit design and marketing
- communication to the public in educational settings and through a broad range of publications, including both print and electronic
- sharing of the Museum's resources to assist others in the community

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the Museum, as well as to any external researchers seeking access to the Museum, its collections and library.

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

This policy will be communicated by means of:

- posting on the City of Waterloo website
- posting on the City of Waterloo intranet available to staff
- sharing with relevant interested parties and collaborators
- providing training to staff and volunteers

POLICY:**1.0 Research Program**

The Museum and Collections Manager/Curator will establish priorities for the research program. The research program will be consistent with the Museum's mandate and vision, and will reflect the needs of the Museum's community, site, collections and programming.

Research will be in keeping with good collection management practices. The Museum will endeavor to fully identify the origins, uses, and history of all the material in its collection, exhibits, programs and publications and will ensure that the research findings are accurately presented.

Research priorities are as follows:

1. Research that has a direct connection to the history of the Waterloo and its connection to the Region
2. Research that has a direct connection to the history of Canada and how it shaped Waterloo
3. Research in global history of interest and connection to the people of Waterloo

To be of value, research needs to be communicated or shared. Through its research program, the Museum will communicate and share its research via:

1. Collection materials, temporary, travelling exhibits that include artifacts, reproduced materials and interpretive materials;
2. oral communication such as interpretation, education programs, professional presentations, public lectures, and training;
3. publications such as internal reports, articles in professional journals, exhibitions catalogues, books, media and print;
4. responses to inquiries from the public and external researchers;
5. City of Waterloo communications channels; and
6. other appropriate avenues of communication.

The research program will comply with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* which is intended to: a) provide a right of access to information, and b) protect the privacy of individuals with respect to their personal information held by the City and to provide individuals with a right of access to information about themselves, subject to applicable exemptions.

Ownership of research information gathered by Museum staff or volunteers in any form (e.g. print, audio, electronic, photographic) in the course of employment by the City is and shall remain the exclusive property of the City and not of the employee/volunteer.

Copyright of all formal research publications and other documentation produced by employees/volunteers will be held by the City and the publication for profit or otherwise, shall be in its sole discretion and for its sole benefit.

Subject to mutual agreement, as expressed in writing between the City and the employee/volunteer, information gathered may be used for other purposes.

2.0 Support for Internal Research

The City of Waterloo will provide the Museum with the following resources to support internal research by staff and volunteers:

- a specialized Museum library with appropriate budget to allow for adequate maintenance and expansion will exist to support the research needs of staff and the general public. The resources of the library will include a wide range of forms of print materials and electronic offerings
- a computerized collections management database with digital image capability will be maintained to facilitate work centered on the Museum's collections
- internet access and electronic mail will be available to staff as needed for research
- web pages will be maintained to announce information about the Museum's activities, resources and research services
- capacity to produce and disseminate research materials
- support for research being conducted off site
- clerical and other support staff to complete research
- time and adequate space for staff to conduct research
- access to training in order to improve the research skills of both staff and volunteers
- support access to library, archival and Museum resources in the community and beyond

As well as its own resources, the Museum will endeavor to use appropriate outside resources, as they are made available, to support the internal research program. These may include but are not limited to special grants, seminars, and services.

3.0 Support for External Researchers

3.1 On-site research

The Museum will allow members of the public to access its collections for research purposes. The type of access given to a researcher may vary depending on the type of information requested. Access privileges will be determined by the Museum and Collections Manager/Curator.

Prior to being granted access to the collections:

- A researcher will demonstrate an understanding of the Museum's care and handling procedures
- A researcher will communicate to the Museum and Collections Manager/Curator the nature and purpose of their research by completing the information request form
- Staff will provide guidance to external researchers in the proper handling of the Museum's objects and archival materials
- Staff will advise that any additional assistance from staff or volunteers will be charged in compliance with the City's Fees and Charges By-law
- A clean, well-lit and separate study area will be provided to external researchers

The Museum will not allow a private external researcher to remove any artifact from its facility for research or documentation purposes. Loans of artifacts to other Museums or education institutions will be considered in accordance with the Collections Policy (A-008).

3.2 Remote access to the collections/research information requests

The Museum will respond to requests for research support/information regarding its collection from those who are unable to visit the Museum, unfamiliar with research methods, or lack an understanding of the Museum's care and handling procedures.

The Museum staff will record the nature and source of remote inquiries.

The Museum will endeavor to ensure that the research services offered are on a cost-neutral basis. As such, the Museum may charge all disbursements to the individual making the request.

A fee will be applied to an information inquiry when part or all of the research is conducted by staff or volunteers of the Museum. The individual making the request will be informed of the estimated cost before the work begins. Fees will be in accordance with the City's Fees and Charges By-law.

The Museum and Collections Manager/Curator may waive research service fees for dissemination of the information requested if in their judgment such dissemination will benefit the public in general.

When publishing materials obtained from the Museum, staff will direct researchers to acknowledge the Museum and other sources.

The City must be acknowledged where substantial support, material or otherwise, has been provided to the research of others that result in publication or exhibitions. Acknowledgment of the results of research by employees/volunteers will be made, as appropriate.

Researchers will be informed that they are responsible for obtaining the publishing rights for any materials retrieved from the Museum collections. The Museum in no way assigns the right of publication when it distributes copies of items from its collection.

REVIEW:

The policy shall be reviewed by staff every four years and shall be updated as required.

COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, the City may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.