

The Canadian Fire Fighters Museum (CFFM) is interested in relocating to the Memorial Arena site. We believe our mandate and vision complement both the strategic plans passed by Cobourg's Council and fit the arena's physical attributes.

Why a museum?

After 40 years in its previous quarters in Port Hope, ON the **Canadian Fire Fighters Museum (CFFM)** requires a new location and facility to continue its work. Long before the forced move due to soil remediation, the CFFM explored many options for both a site and the type of facility it needs. Professional museum planners were hired to provide guidance and the results were useful in guiding our search. We have prepared a Vision document to guide our planning and future operations.

### **A Vision<sup>1</sup> for the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum**

The new CFFM will be a vibrant, engaging, and ever-changing space. It will be an anchor attraction in Cobourg, as well as meeting places for families, resources for schools, and popular destination for tourists. Research shows that open-ended educational and cultural experiences are coming into greater demand. Fire museums such as CFFM will help children develop essential foundation skills, spark creativity, foster curiosity, and give visitors a love of learning that may stay with them throughout their lives.

Our vision dovetails with the Town of Cobourg's Strategic Plan. Specifically, the pillars of Places (preserving and supporting heritage and culture), Partnerships (supports Town of Cobourg's obligations for solar panels and Curling club) and Prosperity (the Museum will be an employer plus attracting 12,000 visitors).

It supports the Aug 2019 Cultural Master Plan by creating spaces and synergies with other cultural venues and will be planning events that draw visitors attending festivals etc.

Although the Recreation Strategic and Implementation Plan is limited to the CCC, the Museum's vision supports the Plan's themes of accessibility, collaboration and partnerships and programs.

Our vision, mission, and values

**Vision:** contribute to broad understanding of how peoples' interaction with fire and its consequences shapes human society.

**Mission:** We will be a nationally recognized leader in engaging Canadians in the rich history of fire fighting in Canada through an exceptional collection, innovative programs, collaborative approaches, and professional conduct.

**Values:** The values embodied in our work towards achieving our Mission are:

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<sup>1</sup> vision statements are statements of what an entity wishes to be in the future. A mission statement is characterized as what an entity wants to do in the present in terms of the market it serves, the products/services it offers and the way it differentiates itself.

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- creativity and innovation in the use of our resources to generate new insights, knowledge, and experiences.
- inclusivity and respect of diversity so that we can provide opportunities for anyone to participate in our work while welcoming different perspectives.
- collaboration in our approach and openness to communities of all kinds and all locations.
- accountability for the use and deployment of our resources, honour in our commitments and transparency in our acts to earn trust.

### The Arena as a Museum

The CFFM seeks a 25,000 sq foot building to house and interpret its truly exceptional collection while providing visitors with an accessible, comfortable, and engaging experience. The Arena's concrete floors are a solid draw. In addition to the former ice pads becoming our fire truck display area, the work we have done identified the following types of space needs:

- A. Visitor Services (admissions, washrooms, coat rack, retail etc.)
- B. Exhibitions both permanent and temporary
- C. Programming and Event space
- D. Collection management and storage
- E. Administration and building services

The Arena can provide those spaces though it requires significant alteration to suit our purposes.

Our preliminary inspection identified changes to make the arena accessible and habitable for our fleet of fire trucks and the visiting public.

- A. a lift or possibly internal ramps to the second floor to comply with accessibility standards etc. If engineering advice determines the cost effectiveness and compliance, we would look at installing suitable indoor ramps as an alternative to a lift.
- B. the main space would require extensive insulation and heating and cooling to make possible year-round operation at tolerable temperatures and levels of humidity
- C. expansion of the turning radius at the Zamboni ramp including some demolition and rebuilding.

Other renovation considerations include improvements to the building's visual appeal.

- D. the removal the cooling units from the roof of the mechanical room
- E. creation of a new entrance via the same mechanical room involving removal of the big pumps and compressors.

As the building owner, the Town will benefit from these renovations for years to come, and the Museum board is committed to working with the Town of Cobourg to examine the feasibility and costs of completing the work.

The Board is committed to a fundraising campaign. We will fundraise and access grants to assist but require a 10–20-year lease for understandable practical reasons. Fundraising as a tenant can be tricky

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but the advantages of longer-term leases can be articulated in our appeals to the donors. In addition, to be eligible for cultural grants a long-term lease is a requirement.

Waiving the rent for years 1-3, will further boost our fundraising goals and allow us to proceed sooner with building improvements and opening to the paying public. The Town of Cobourg would also be saving its annual operating cost of \$102,000 /year.

#### Offsetting Costs

Our museum has several sources of revenue. Our pro-forma breaks down revenues as Admission (using the Ontario Museum Profile as a guide, Gift Shop (\$5,500 in 2018), Food Concession, Facility Rentals and Program Revenue. We also have revenues from Memberships, Fundraising (donations, capital campaign, and planned to give), grants (both Government and Foundation) and lottery.

Admissions were 5,000 a year to the Port Hope site with more than 80% being non-local. That was accomplished in a very sub-standard facility (operated seasonally only). Our plan is to move to a year-round operation, and we believe we can attract 12,000 and more each year. The pandemic has also enlightened us in the way in which people interact with cultural institutions. We will embrace the virtual world to extend our reach and use electronic platforms to deliver content, provide virtual and textual access to its collections and provide links to like institutions around the world. Our priority however is to the physical visit, touch and feel experience.

The CFFM is kicking off a membership drive in 2022 but is planning a wider outreach which includes a Fire Fighter liaison and partnerships with other museums and most recently Six Nations Brantford.

#### Conclusion

The CFFM is interested in transforming the Memorial Arena into an accessible, anchor and cultural attraction that benefits the Town of Cobourg. We would like first right of refusal on the arena pending a serious and thorough second look at the facility in the company of an engineer (either the Town's or one we would hire for the tour.)

The CFFM would like to lease the Memorial Arena for 10-20 years.

We will fundraise for the renovations essential to operate a unique specialized museum with universal appeal.

In our first year of operation, we will attract 12,000 paying visitors to the Town of Cobourg.

We will save the Town of Cobourg, \$102,000 in operating expenses annually.

Our vision for the re opened Museum is exciting, relevant, and good for Cobourg.