



"The Canadian Automotive Museum is dedicated to preserving and sharing Canada's automotive experience."

Oshawa City Council

August 5, 2022

Dear Mayor Carter and City Council,

The Canadian Automotive Museum (CAM) has been a dedicated member of the Oshawa cultural community since 1963 and is one of the longest operating businesses in the downtown. We have remained dedicated to educating, preserving, and promoting Canada's automotive experience for almost 60 years. As a top-rated attraction, the CAM provides economic spinoff benefits to Oshawa businesses; as an example, during March Break 2022 we attracted more than 1,000 visitors to downtown Oshawa, bringing \$130,000 benefit to the community *in that one week alone*. Our visitors explore automotive history beyond our walls with our Downtown Oshawa Automotive Heritage Walking Tours directing our patrons to area business and supporting the City's "Support Local" campaign. Community access is also a priority as we provide free admission during City events such as Doors Open Oshawa and Kars on King, as well as coordinating museum donors to support free admissions for local area classes.

City of Oshawa Report to Council (FIN-22-41)

This recent City Report documented the City's support of the Canadian Automotive Museum funding of \$10,000 per year in the 1970s, rising to \$25,000 per year by the mid-1990s. City funding to the museum was cut at that point, with funding only resuming in 2015 at an average of \$5,000 per year. The CAM has been engaging with the City through staff, councilors, and committees since 2014 to find a solution to make funding more proportionate to the Community benefits, including applying for the Anchor Grant program; despite annual requests to City staff and presentations to the Finance Committee and Council, this has been repeatedly denied by the City based upon the premise that a new grant formula has always been on the horizon. After waiting more than five years, this new grant formula has now been released (FIN-22-54). Based on our understanding, this new grant program will continue the pattern of not being responsive to our needs and hence the necessity for deeper discussion and action.

In order to address the current situation, we request:

Review all City funding streams for external agency cultural funding for 2023

- That the City review all sources of external agency cultural funding (i.e. Parkwood Estate, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa Museum, Ontario Regiment Museum, and Canadian Automotive Museum) to allow all institutions to be treated more equally during the 2023 budget process. According to the FIN 22-41, "staff are unable to locate a policy related to the External Agency Program and associated criteria," which suggests that this policy that distributes \$1.5 million annually is rudderless and administered in an ad hoc manner.



Reinstate an annual operating grant for the CAM

- We request the restoration of an Annual Operating Grant from the City, as had been in place for decades (FIN-22-41), and is done for similar institutions in Oshawa. We were requested by the City to provide evidence of how similar cultural institutions are treated throughout the province; we provided information that according to the Ontario Museum Association, independent museums receive an average of 23% of their operating funding from their local municipality. Our request, which is below this formula, is \$50,000 per year, or 18.5% of our 2019 operating budget of \$271,000.

Council Directive to support long-term capital needs

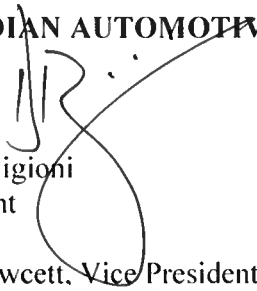
- We request that City Council approve a motion to act as a financial partner for future capital projects for our facility maintenance and expansion in downtown Oshawa, as is currently done for similar Oshawa institutions. The CAM currently plans to spend \$75,000 for safety and security, and improvements to our entranceway. Our request is that the City contribute 50% of this cost, and the Museum will match that investment. This would be a meaningful first step to allow the Museum to continue to expand and grow in downtown Oshawa.

Property Tax Relief

- The Canadian Automotive Museum has advocated for property tax relief for decades and requests tax abatement, or an equivalent grant, of our property taxes as soon as practicable. This would bring us into alignment with other institutions in the City. We have followed the steps suggested in FIN-22-41 and approached MPAC and the school boards and have been referred back to the City who renders the tax bill in all instances.

Oshawa's automotive heritage matters – it matters culturally, and it matters economically. We look forward to the City of Oshawa being a meaningful partner in the preservation of our local heritage and the revitalization of downtown Oshawa. We eagerly await your reply.

CANADIAN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM


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