APPENDIX A:
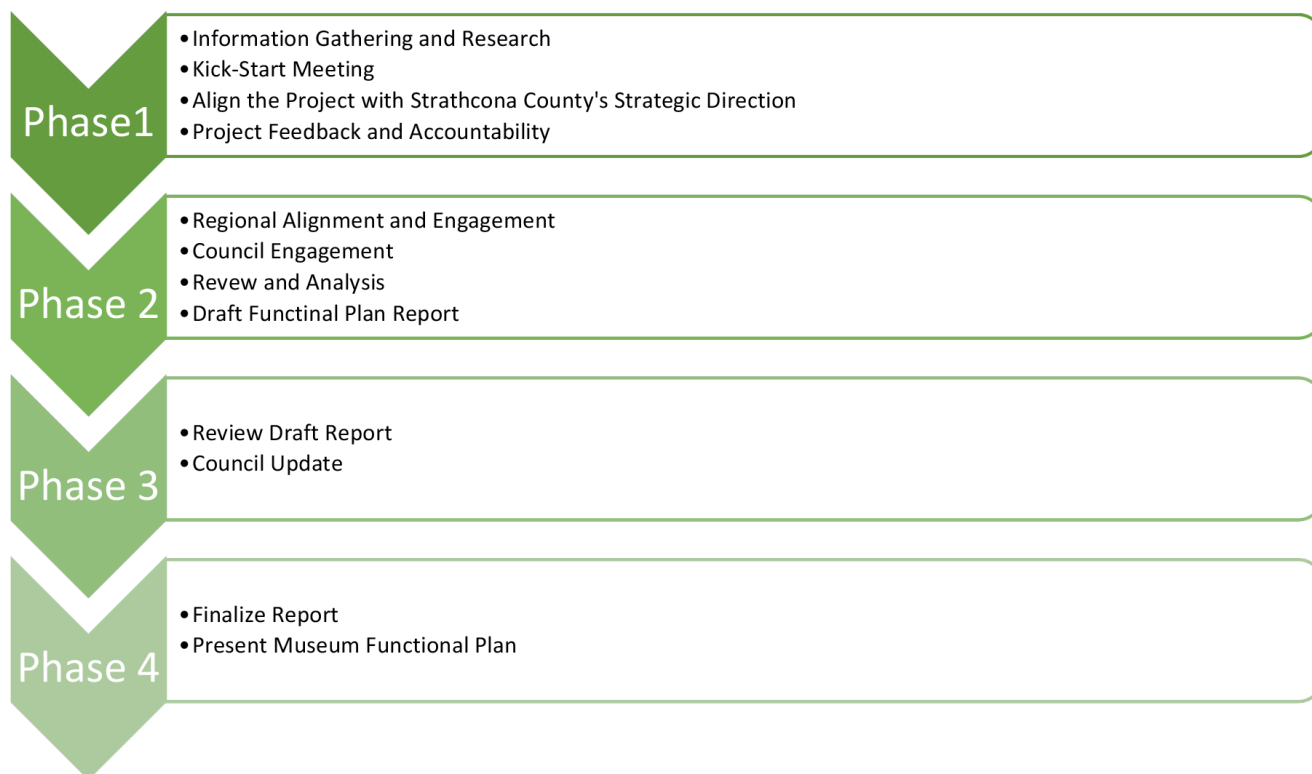# REGIONAL CONTEXT REPORT

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1.0 Background

1.1 Functional Planning Process

The Strathcona County Museum and Archives (SCMA) is a non-profit organization founded to preserve and promote the history and heritage of Strathcona County. It is operated with building space and financial support provided by Strathcona County.

In 2018, Prairie Wild Consulting Co. was contracted by Strathcona County to conduct a comprehensive review of the operations of the SCMA. This included a value for service audit with options for the future of the Strathcona County Museum and Archives. This process engaged with over 900 respondents through online, intercept, and direct interviews with community stakeholders, administrators, members of the public, and Council. The engagement results highlighted the SCMA's continued importance to the County and identified some potential future directions for SCMA operations, services, and programming.

Based on the potential identified in the comprehensive review, Strathcona County contracted Prairie Wild Consulting Co. in 2020 to develop a Functional Plan to define requirements, strategies and priorities for pursuing it. Specifically, the Functional Plan examines needs related to programs and services, audience, land and location preference, space, transportation and parking, accessibility, technology, operating models, environmental considerations, marketing, and partnerships. The Functional Plan was process was laid out in the following phases:

Phase1
- Information Gathering and Research
- Kick-Start Meeting
- Align the Project with Strathcona County's Strategic Direction
- Project Feedback and Accountability

Phase 2
- Regional Alignment and Engagement
- Council Engagement
- Revew and Analysis
- Draft Functinal Plan Report

Phase 3
- Review Draft Report
- Council Update

Phase 4
- Finalize Report
- Present Museum Functional Plan

1.2 Report Scope

To ensure regional alignment and engagement in the Functional Plan, Prairie Wild Consulting Co. examined the regional context for a museum in Strathcona County. This involved gathering information on demographic and tourism trends in the region around Strathcona County. Information on related cultural institutions in the region, such as museums, archives, and galleries, was also collected. This information was used to highlight the program and service areas that are well represented or underrepresented regionally, where potential competition exists for the SCMA, and where there are opportunities for partnerships and cooperation with other institutions. Museums, archives and other related cultural institutions within approximately 100 km around Strathcona County were examined. The 100km radius, or about a one-and-a-half-hour drive, was chosen to represent locations within easy driving distance. Sixty-six museums and related institutions were operating in the region in the summer of 2020. Four additional museums had closed in recent years or were soon scheduled to close. Information for the sixty-six operating institutions was collected relating to:

- Location and distance from the SCMA
- Local municipal population
- Type and specialty
- Operating hours and admissions
- Programs and services
- Permanent Displays
- Outreach Activities
- Mobile
- Collection

- Governance
- Board
- Staffing
- Volunteers
- Funding
- Budget
- Visitor base and numbers
- Other amenities
- Partnerships

1.3 Strathcona County Museum & Archives Summary

To better understand where the Strathcona County Museum & Archives (SCMA) fits within the regional context, below outlines a summary of the SCMA establishment, facility & collections, and current services provided.

Establishment: The SCMA was established in 1995 when Strathcona County granted the Strathcona County Heritage Foundation the former fire hall building for that purpose. The Strathcona County Heritage Foundation's mission was to preserve and showcase the unique and diverse stories and artifacts from the Strathcona County area. This has remained the SCMA's primary mission. The SCMA is recognized by both the Alberta Museum Association and the Archives Society of Alberta.

Facility & Collections: The SCMA's permanent exhibits include Village Square, Indigenous Peoples' Gallery, RCMP Station and Fire Hall, and the Natural History Gallery. A Special Exhibits Gallery hosts rotating exhibits. The SCMA archives collection includes manuscripts, photographs, maps, blueprints, and reference materials. The collection includes approximately 11,000 artifacts and 31,000 documents. The SMCA offers facility rentals for events up to one-hundred-and-fifty (150) people.

Services: The SCMA is open to visitors Monday to Saturday from 10:00am to 4:00pm year-round. The SCMA encourages educators to book field trips to the museum. Museum staff are available to present at remote events. SCMA Executive Director Mathew Levitt hosts the Royal Alberta Museum's Intangible Alberta podcast. The museum maintains an active social media outreach effort. Normal annual events include the Family Day Pancake Breakfast, and the Remembrance Day Program.

2.0 Regional Tourism

2.1 Defining the Tourism Region

Defining Strathcona County's proper tourism region is a question with several valid answers. When considering nearby institutions to include in the regional context this study uses approximately a 100km radius (about a one-and-a-half-hour drive) from the current SCMA location. Given the high level of intra-Albertan tourism, it is entirely appropriate to consider all of Alberta as the tourism region. Doing this has the benefit of aligning with data collected at the provincial level. Alberta Tourism's Edmonton and Area Tourism region is only approximately a 50 km radius around Edmonton and is therefore much smaller than the intended scope of this study. Furthermore, according to Alberta Tourism's own data only about 17% of domestic visits to the Edmonton and Area Tourism Region came from within said region. The Central Albertan Tourism Region surrounds the Edmonton and Area Tourism Region and encompasses most of the 100km radius around the SCMA considered to be the museum's immediate catchment area. The Central Alberta Tourism Region extends well beyond 100km from the SCMA. However, the Central Alberta Tourism Region also accounted for 42% of all domestic trips to the Edmonton and Area Tourism Region in 2017. Taken together, the Edmonton and central regions account for 59% of trips to the Edmonton region.

2.2 Destination Management and Tourism Strategy Alignment in the Region

The Strathcona County Tourism Strategy and Implementation plan conceptualizes tourism development within the destination management framework from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). According to the UNWTO, destination management "consists of the coordinated management of all the elements that make up a tourism destination. Destination management takes a strategic approach to link-up these sometimes very separate elements for the better management of the destination." This requires the destination management organization (DMO) to coordinate the many interests and organizations involved towards a common effort. This includes coordination between attractions, stakeholder networks, the communities hosting them, visitors, and the environment. It broadens the role of the DMO from marketing to coordinating and planning. The destination management cycle demonstrates how taking such an integrated approach allows the DMO to foster a virtuous cycle. The elements of this cycle are: 1) Building a place where people will want to visit. 2) This location will become more attractive as a place to live. 3) Businesses will locate nearby to access workers and markets. 4) The increased business presence will induce business related travel.

As an internationally recognized standard, the destination management framework has been adopted in other tourism strategies in Strathcona County's broader tourism region. Edmonton Tourism's plan *Our Road Map to Original 2019-2022*, reflects similar language and revolves around the destination management framework. The same is true of the *Central Alberta Destination Management Plan* (2015) formed as a joint initiative between Tourism Red Deer, City of Red Deer, Red Deer County, Town of Rocky Mountain House, Town of Sylvan Lake, Town of Innisfail, Lacombe Regional Tourism, City/County of Lacombe, Town of Blackfalds, Town of Ponoka, Olds Institute, Clearwater County, and Alberta Culture and Tourism (advisory member).

Regional alignment on tourism strategy concepts makes coordination of regional tourism more likely. Furthermore, the destination management framework fundamentally encourages a more collaborative than competitive approach. Viewing the tourism growth through the destination management cycle encourages organizations to move past zero-sum thinking and instead focuses on positive feedback form local and regional improvements, including improvements to other organizations' operations.

2.3 Tourism Characteristics

2.3.1 Alberta

Total Person Visits – Tourism in Alberta consists largely of in-province and, to a lesser extent, domestic visitors. In 2017 there were 36.9 million total person-visits recorded in Alberta. Of these, 30.8 million (~83.5%) were from Alberta, 4.1 million (~11%) were from other Canadian provinces or territories, 941,000 (~2.5%) were from the United States and 1.1 million (~3%) were from overseas countries.

Tourism Expenditures – However, average spending per person per visit followed the inverse of the visitation volume trend with Albertans spending the least per person ($207) followed by other Canadians ($471), Americans ($900) and overseas visitors ($1,180). Tourism expenditures totaled $8.9 billion with $4.824 billion spent by Albertan visitors, $1.967 billion spent by other Canadians, $847 million spent by Americans, and $1.252 billion spent by visitors from overseas countries.

Among domestic visitors, the majority of tourism expenditures were for the necessities of travel, accommodation, and food service. The two main expenses were food and beverages ($1,918,003,000) and private vehicle rental ($1,716,557,000). Accommodations was the third largest expense ($1,117,692,000), followed by public/local transportation ($843,044,000). Recreation and entertainment only accounted for $ 425,416,000, while another $770,952 was spent on retail and other expenses.

Economic Benefits – In 2017 tourism supported 72,500 jobs (full-time equivalent employment in person years). Tourism contributed $7.3 billion to Alberta's GDP, including $4.3 billion in direct activity, $1.8 billion in indirect activity, and $1.2 billion in induced activity.

Employment in accommodation and food services in Alberta increased rapidly from 131,200 in 2011 to a peak of 153,500 in 2015. Since this peak, employment has slowly leveled off to 146,100 in 2019. Over the same period, total receipts from food services and drinking has steadily increased each year from $595.13 million in 2011 to $796.51 million in 2019.

| Employment in Accommodation and Food Services in Alberta 2011-2019 Source: Tourism Alberta Market Monitor	Total Receipts from Food Services and Drinking in Alberta 2011-2019 Source: Tourism Alberta Market Monitor

Trip Purpose – Albertan visitor trips in 2017 were primarily for pleasure (42%) and to visit friends and relatives (40%). Only 10% of these trips were for business. Other Canadians were more likely to be visiting friends and relatives (51%). 29% of their trips were for pleasure and 14% were for business. American visitors were the group most likely to be travelling for business (29%). 34% of their trips were for pleasure and 25% were to visit friends and relatives. Overseas visitors were the most likely to be travelling for pleasure (54%). 29% were visiting friends and relatives and only 9% were travelling for business.

Among domestic travelers the most popular activities were hiking or backpacking, visiting family or friends, cultural activities, visiting national, provincial or other nature parks, and doing no specific activity.

Travel Seasons – The main season for overnight trips in 2017 was July to September (35.1%). This is nearly twice the rate seen across other travel seasons. Travel in other seasons was evenly distributed across the other seasons: January – March (20.7%), April – June (22.1%), October – December (22.1%).

Accommodations – Among domestic travelers in Alberta in 2017 the most popular means of accommodation was to stay with friends or family (56%). Hotels, resorts and other commercial rental options accounted for 33% of overnight stays, while campgrounds, RV parks, and back country camping accounted for another 11%.

Arts and Cultural Activities - The 2017 Survey of Albertans on Culture found that 86% of Albertans had attended or participated in an arts or artistic event in the past year. Performing arts was the most popular category with 62% of respondents attending at least one such event in the past year. 46% had attended community arts festivals, fairs or cultural performances and events. 35% had visited visual arts events at galleries and studios or art exhibitions. 12% had attended artist talks or lectures about their work. 10% had attended literary events, and 14% had attended other arts and culture events.
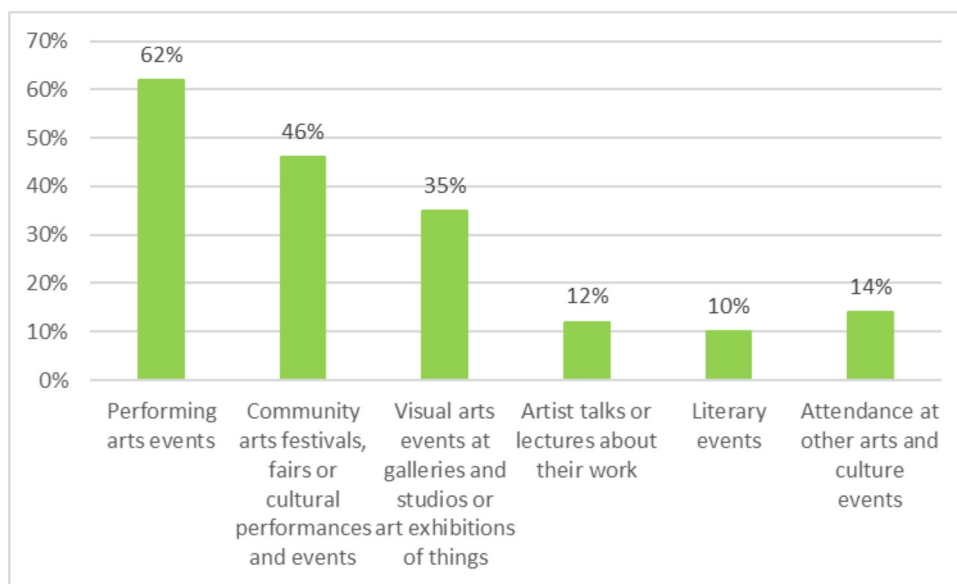
Attendance at Art and Artistic Events 2017
Source: The 2017 Survey of Albertans on Culture

Historic Sites and Museums – This report's environmental scan took a comprehensive approach to examining as many historic sites and museums within approximately 100 km from the SCMA as possible. There is no correspondingly comprehensive statistical information on museum and historic site attendance available in Alberta. The best available data is provided by Tourism Alberta.   Tourism Alberta's figures are estimates based on approximately 18 historic sites (exact number varies over time) and museums including the RAM. Attendance at historic sites and museums rose gradually between 2011 and 2015. The closure of the RAM between 2015 to 2018 corresponds to an interruption in this trend that is rectified after 2018.
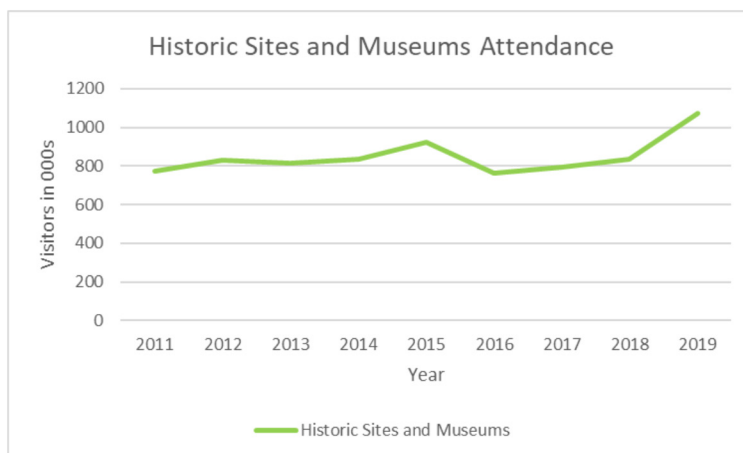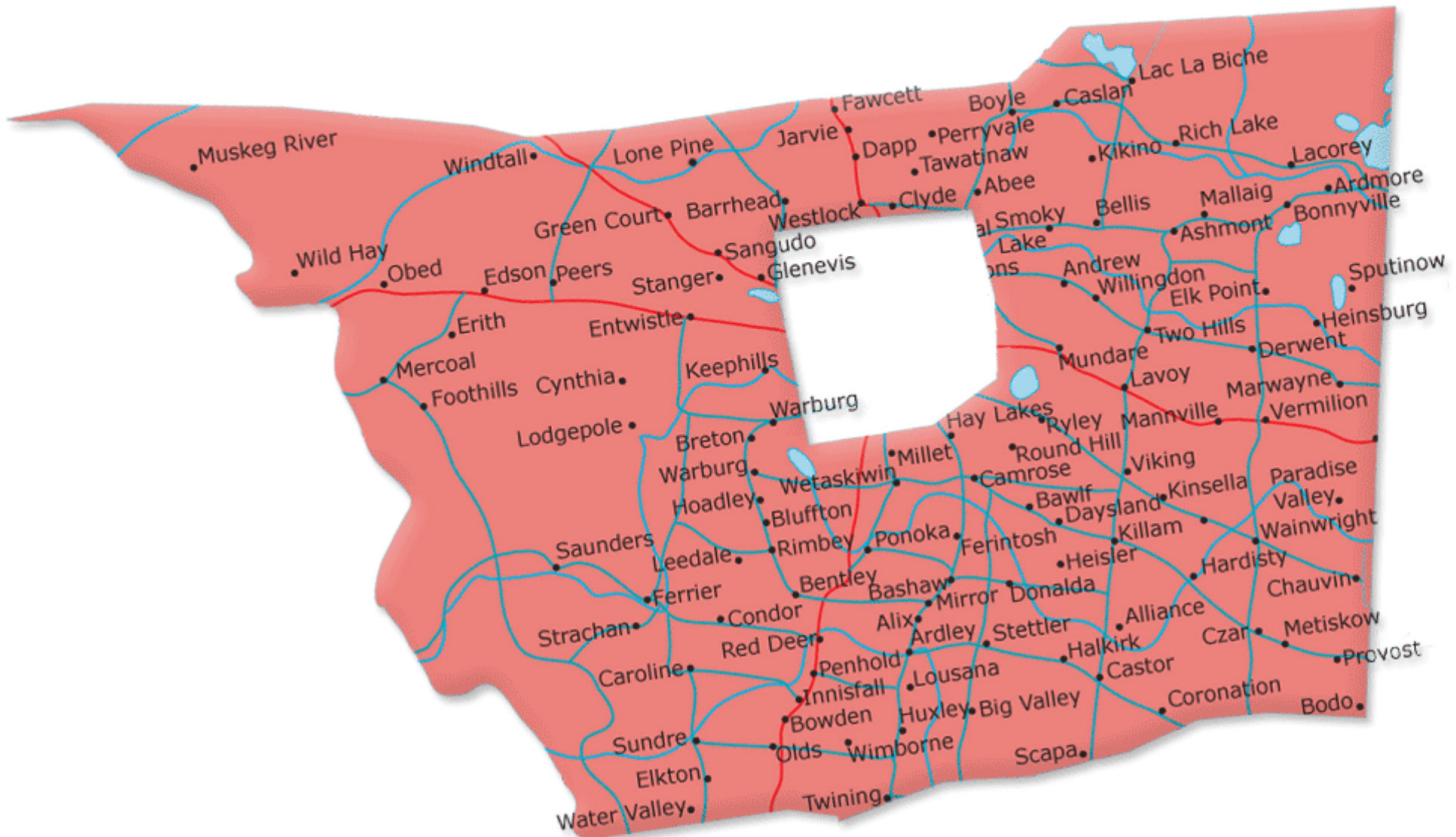

Employment in Accommodation and Food Services in Alberta 2011-2019
Source: Tourism Alberta Market Monitor

2.3.2 Alberta Central Tourism Region

The Alberta Central Tourism Region used by Tourism Alberta corresponds approximately to the area between Muskeg River, Lac Biche, Bodo, and Water Valley, excluding the Edmonton and Area Tourism Region.

Alberta Central Tourism Region

Source: https://www.comeexplorecanada.com/alberta/regions/alberta_central/

Total Person Visits – Domestic tourism in the Alberta Central Tourism Region consisted almost entirely of in-province visitors. In 2017 there were 8.959 million total person-visits recorded in the Alberta Central Tourism Region. Of these, 8.557 million (~96%) were from Alberta, and 402,000 (~4%) were from other Canadian provinces or territories.

Tourism Expenditures – Domestic tourism expenditures totaled $929,376,000 with $836,464,000 spent by Albertan visitors, and $92,912,000 spent by other Canadians.

Among domestic visitors, the majority of tourism expenditures were for the necessities of travel, accommodation, and food service. The two main expenses were private vehicle rental ($382,335,000) and food and beverages ($309,448,000). Accommodations accounted for $87,306,000, but public/local transportation only accounted for $8,748,000. $50,870 was spent on recreation and entertainment and $90,668 was spent on retail and other expenses.

Trip Purpose – Albertan visitor trips in 2017 were primarily for leisure (45%) and to visit friends and relatives (44%). Only 6% of these trips were for business.

Among domestic travelers the most popular activities were hiking or backpacking, visiting family or friends, camping, doing no specific activity, and entertainment/cultural activities.

Travel Seasons – The main season for overnight trips in 2017 was July to September (41%). This is twice the rate seen across other travel seasons. April to June was the next most popular season with 27% of trips. October to December accounted for 19%, while only 13% of trips occurred in January to March.

Accommodations – Among domestic travelers the most popular means of accommodation was to stay with friends or family (60%). Campgrounds, RV parks, and back country camping accounted for another 21%. Hotels, resorts and other commercial rental options were slightly less popular than camping at 18%.

2.3.3 Edmonton and Area Tourism Region

The Edmonton and Area Tourism Region corresponds approximately to an area 50 km around Edmonton. This includes the area between Opal, south of Leduc, Hay Lakes, and east of both Genevis and Warburg.

Edmonton and Area Tourism Region

Source: https://www.comeexplorecanada.com/alberta/regions/edmonton_area/

Total Person Visits – Domestic tourism in the Edmonton and Area Tourism Region consisted primarily of in-province visitors. In 2017 there were 7.33 million total person-visits recorded in the Edmonton and Area Tourism Region. Of these, 6,091 million (~84%) were from Alberta, and 1.188 million (~16%) were from other Canadian provinces or territories.

Tourism Expenditures – Domestic tourism expenditures totaled $1,884,946,000 with $1,301,062,000 spent by Albertan visitors, and $583,884,000 spent by other Canadians.

Among domestic visitors, the majority of tourism expenditures were for the necessities of travel, accommodation, and food service. The two main expenses were food and beverages ($503,084,000) and private vehicle rental ($391,849,000). Accommodations accounted for $297,646,000 and public/local transportation accounted for $272,615,000. Visitors spent $311,252,000 on retail and other expenses and another $105,501,000 on recreation and entertainment.

Trip Purpose – Albertan visitor trips in 2017 were primarily to visit friends and relatives (48%). 27% of trips were for leisure and another 15% were for business.

Among domestic travelers the most popular activities were doing no specific activity, visiting friends or family, entertainment or cultural activities, bars/night clubs/restaurants, and shopping.

Travel Seasons – Overnight travel was somewhat more prevalent between July and December with 29% of trips occurring between July and September and another 27% between October and December. The remainder of trips were fairly evenly distributed throughout the year with 21% occurring between January and March and 23% between April and June.

Accommodations – Among domestic travelers the most popular means of accommodation was to stay with friends or family (55%). Hotels, resorts and other commercial rental options were a close second choice at 44%. Only 1% used Campgrounds, RV parks, and back country camping.

3.0 Museum and Related Cultural Institutions

3.1 Location and Distance from SCMA

Edmonton accounted for twenty (20) of the sixty-six (66), or 30% of the institutions in the region. Another two (2) were located in Strathcona County. Outside Edmonton, the remaining institutions were distributed nearly evenly between the four cardinal directions from the SCMA. However, nearly all institutions within 50 km were located to the north or west. This trend is especially pronounced if the Edmonton institutions are included.

Table 3.1.1 Museum Location Relative to the SCMA
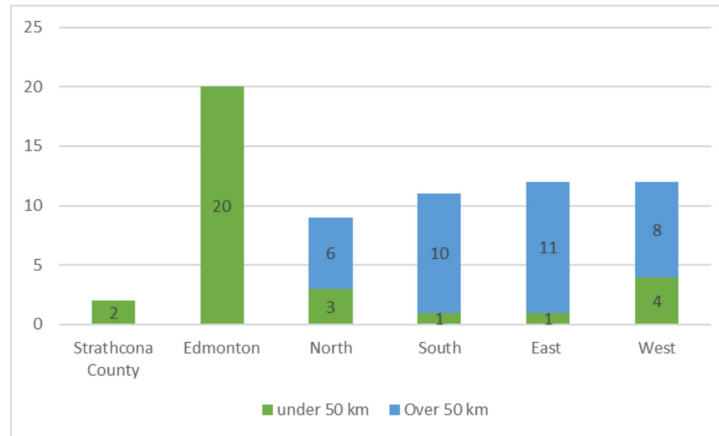
3.2 Local Municipal Population

Edmonton is by far the most populous municipality host to a museum or related cultural institution in the region with 932546 residents in 2016. All twenty (20) institutions in a municipality with a population over 100,000 were from Edmonton. Only nine (9) other municipalities hosting a related cultural institution in the region had over 20,000 residents. Six (6) more had populations between 5,000 and 9,999. Twenty-four (24) municipalities had populations under 5,000.

Table 3.2.1 Local Municipal Populations
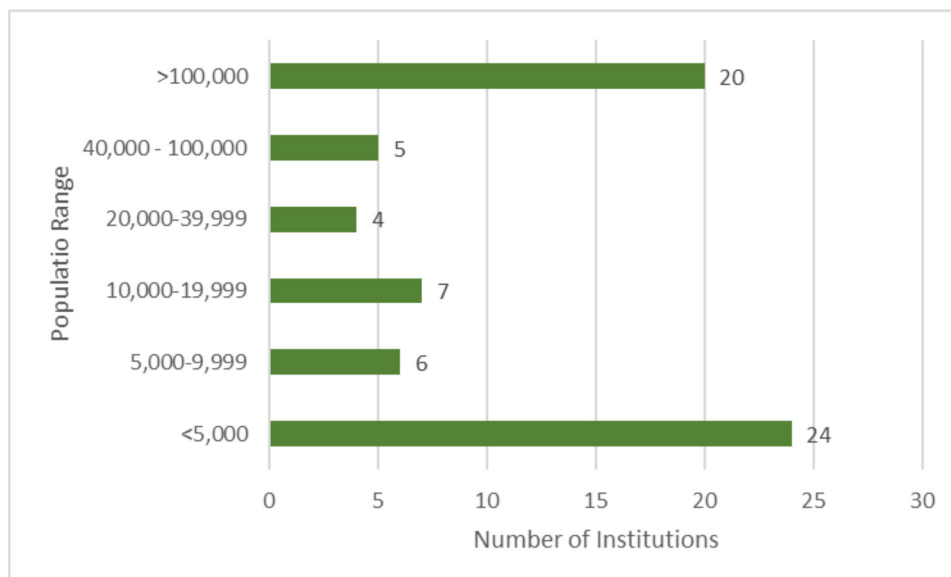
3.3 Type and Specialty

Each museum or cultural institution's type and speciality can be categorized according to its geographic and topical specialization. The majority, forty-three (43), limited their scope to mainly local matters. Twelve (12) institutions presented a provincial focus. Five institutions (5) were national in scope, while another six (6) examined their topic through an international lens. Institutions were nearly evenly split between those with a broad topical approach and those with a narrowly specialized topic. However, all but three (3) institutions with a broad topical specialization were also geographically local in focus. The exceptions were the University of Alberta Museums, The Royal Alberta Museum, and the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Only these large-scale operations have the resources to maintain both a broad topical scope and a broad geographical scope. In contrast, only ten (10) of the thirty (30) topically specialized institutions also had a local geographical focus.

**Figure 3.3** Museum Geographic and Topical Ranges
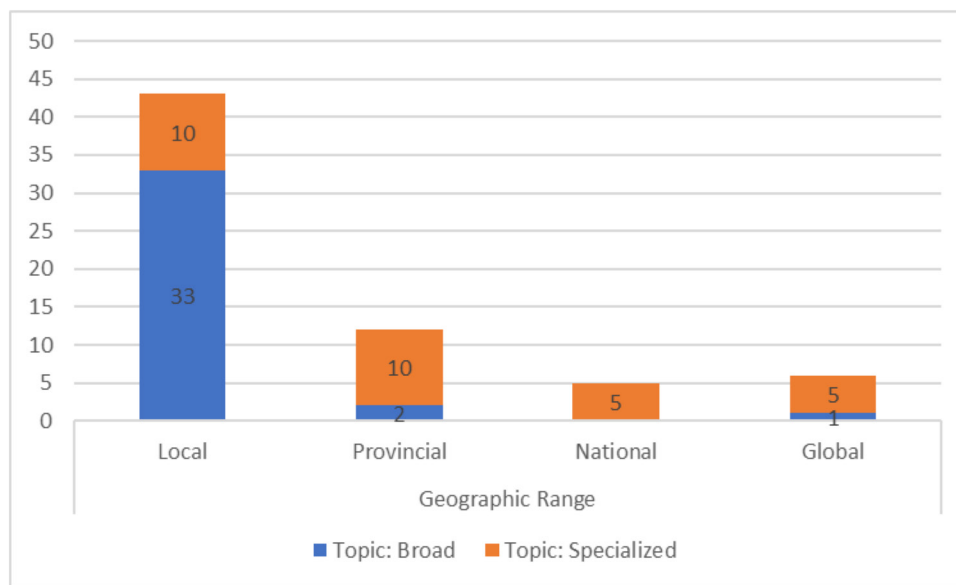
3.4 Operations

3.4.1 Operating Days and Hours

Normal museum operations have been disrupted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Current operating hours are in flux depending on public health requirements. Where possible, this section presents normal operating hours for comparison.

Information on operating season was available for 56 institutions. Institutions operating year-round formed a majority with thirty-four (34) total institutions. However, eleven (11) of these had variable seasonal hours. These institutions offered reduced operating days and hours in the winter season compared to the summer. Twenty-one (21) institutions only operated in the summer season. Overall, this demonstrates a significant preference for the summer season.

Figure 3.4.1 Operating Seasons Comparing 56 Museums
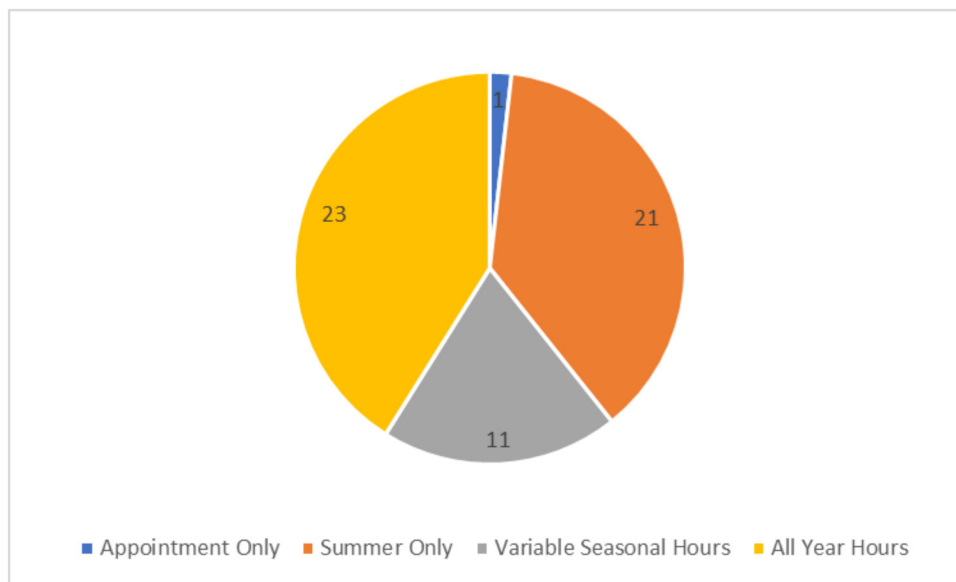
The preference for the summer season is even more pronounced when total weekly operating hours are considered. Detailed operating hours were available for 43 institutions. As shown in Figure 3.4.2, nearly twice as many total weekly operating hours were offered in the summer season as in the winter season. Another trend in operating hours is the strong preference for afternoon hours. Afternoon hours accounted for over 69% of all operating hours. The remaining hours were mostly offered in the morning (27%). Less than 4% of all operating hours were offered in the evening, generously defined as any time after 5:00 pm. The most common schedule was to be open five (5) days per week from 10:00 am to either 4:00 pm or 5:00 pm.

Figure 3.4.2 Total Weekly Operating Hours Comparing 43 Institutions
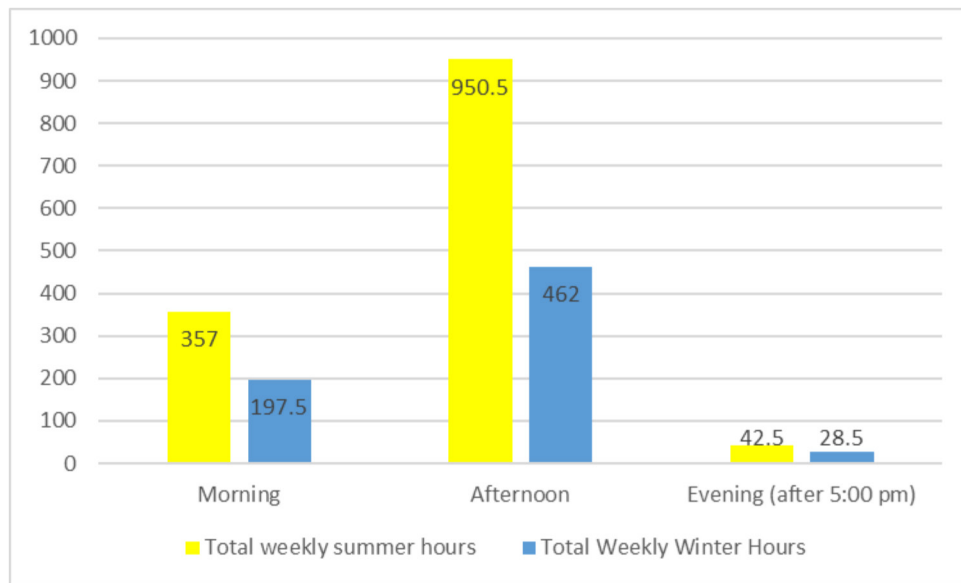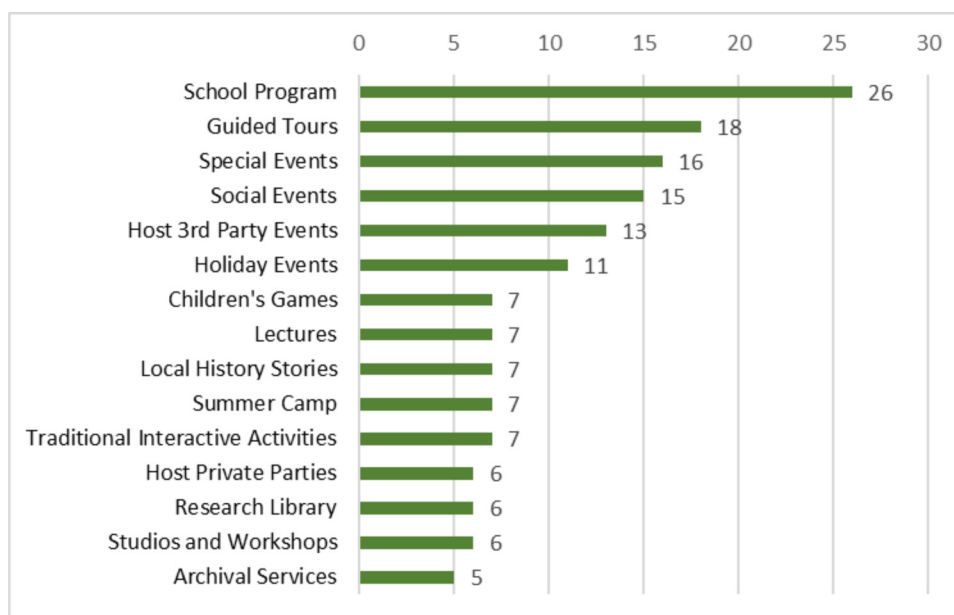

3.4.2 Admissions

Only eleven (11) institutions had a stated minimum payment for general admission. Seventeen (17) were by donation only. Others only charged for specific programs and services, such as theatre or train ride programs.

3.5 Programs and Services

Table 3.5.1 Top 15 Common Program and Service Areas

3.5.1 Children's Programming

Programming across the institutions studied had a strong focus on children's activities particularly on educational programing. Twenty-six (26) institutions had prepared programs to accommodate visits by school groups. These programs ranged in sophistication from presentations around a single topic suitable for only a few grade levels to distinct day courses tailored to provincial curriculum at each grade level and even customization options for educators to select based on their learning objectives. Several institutions offered children's camps to cover breaks in the usual school year. Seven (7) institutions offered summer camps, three (3) offered spring break camps, and two (2) offered camps to coincide with teachers' professional development (PD) days. Other activities oriented towards children outside their role as students included games and physical activities, day programs, and hosting birthday parties.

3.5.2 Events and Activities

Other activities and events targeted a broader audience. Both guided and self-guided tours through display areas remain staple activities. Sixteen (16) institutions held special events and celebrations featuring elements from their collections, or less commonly travelling collection items. Eleven (11) institutions held holiday events. These were sometimes related to a historical theme, for example with Remembrance Day, but were often designed more as family and community celebrations. Similarly, fifteen (15) institutions hosted events that were primarily social in nature. These social events included fundraising efforts. Thirteen (13) institutions provided space for events and recurring activities organized by third-party groups. These events and activities, such as local crafts clubs or ESL courses, may or may not be related to the museum collection. Six (6) institutions rented space for private parties, and three (3) rented out space for photoshoots. Though in these cases the museum in question is mainly providing a room rental service, it is still a way that people use the space and is a potentially important functional consideration. Lecture and presentation series were used to examine particular topics in greater depth. A less common variant on this was to host discussion groups around a topic. Hands-on experiences included engaging visitors in traditional

interactive activities, such as butter churning. Studios and workshops were offered in some cases around both artistic endeavours and traditional crafts.

3.5.3 Archival Services

Archival services were rare. Only the Provincial Archives of Alberta offers a full suite of archival services. Two (2) museums offered digital archival service. Two (2) other institutions were the official repository for local municipal records. Six (6) institutions had research or reference libraries. These libraries included reference materials and some archival material related to the museum collection. Some research assistance was offered including assistance in finding information and copying files or documents.

3.5.4 Online and Virtual Services

Movement to online and virtual services has been accelerated due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Larger institutions especially have converted existing in-person programs into virtual formats and are developing more online content. For example, TELUS World of Science has converted summer camps, small groups sessions, lecture series, presentations, and in-person activities to virtual formats. Some virtual elements, such as virtual tours, predate the pandemic. The more common pre-Covid online services were to provide historical articles, information, photographs, and documents online. Forty-eight (48) institutions operated their own website, while thirteen (13) relied on a page from a municipal website only. Locations with their own site were more likely to offer services and information online. At least nineteen locations (19) provided some remote collection access or historical information in this way. This includes online viewing for current and past exhibits. Some sites used Facebook and other social media to disseminate information, event announcements, photographs, and video presentations.

3.6 Permanent Displays

Figure 3.6.1 Top 17 Common Display Types
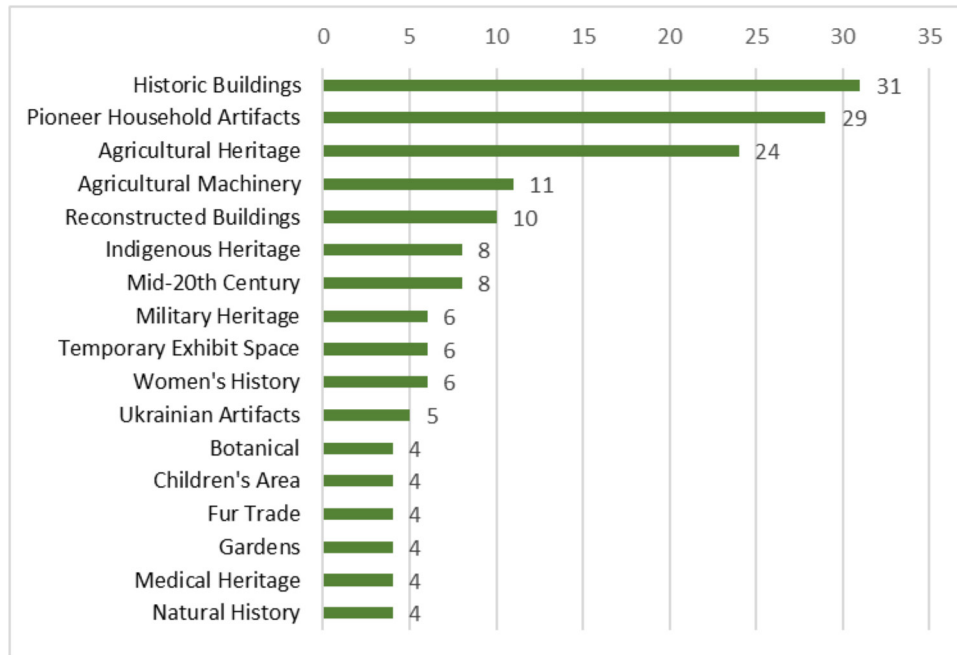
3.6.1 Restored and Reconstructed Historic Buildings

Incorporating restored or reconstructed historic buildings is a popular practice among museums in the region. Thirty-one (31) museums use restored historic structures including schoolhouses, train stations, stores, homes, churches, grain elevators, water towers and others. Many buildings have been relocated from their original foundation to be preserved on the museum grounds. The Alberta Railway Museum, and the Camrose and District Centennial Museum are examples of museum using multiple historic buildings. Several museums are based primarily around preserving a specific historic structure, including the Dr. Woods House Museum, the Innisfree Historical Prairie Bank Museum, the John Walter Museum, the Rutherford House Historic Site, and the Spruce Grove Grain Elevator Museum. Some historic structures have been repurposed, often not for the first time, as museum gallery and office space. The alternative approach is to furnish the structure as it would have been used in the period when it originally operated. With this approach, the structure itself becomes the exhibit. Some sites combine furnished space and repurposed gallery space.

Ten (10) museums use reconstructed historic buildings. Institutions that use reconstructed historic buildings extensively include the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, and Fort Edmonton Park. In both examples, the reconstructed buildings are used to construct historic districts that recreate built environment from one or more historical periods. Museums that invest the effort to reconstruct historic buildings use them as furnished exhibits or combine several into heritage villages.

3.6.2 Pioneers

Early pioneer settlement in the prairies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was the most commonly represented historical period, represented with pioneer household artifact displays at twenty-nine (29) museums. Household artifacts include clothing, textiles, furniture, tools, cookware, and other items. General store displays and furnished home displays are popular representations for this period. Some museums dedicated special attention to settlement efforts by particular ethnic groups including Ukrainians (6), Romanians (2), African Americans (1), Chinese (1), and Swedes (1). Most preserved historic buildings and reconstructed buildings were from this period.

3.6.3 Agricultural Heritage

Twenty-four (24) museums had displays on agricultural heritage, including eleven (11) with heritage agricultural machinery. There was a significant overlap between agricultural heritage displays and pioneer displays. Most agricultural heritage displays focus on the settlement period. Seventeen (17) of the twenty-four (24) museums displaying agricultural heritage also displayed pioneer heritage.

3.7 Outreach Activities

Figure 3.7 Outreach Activities
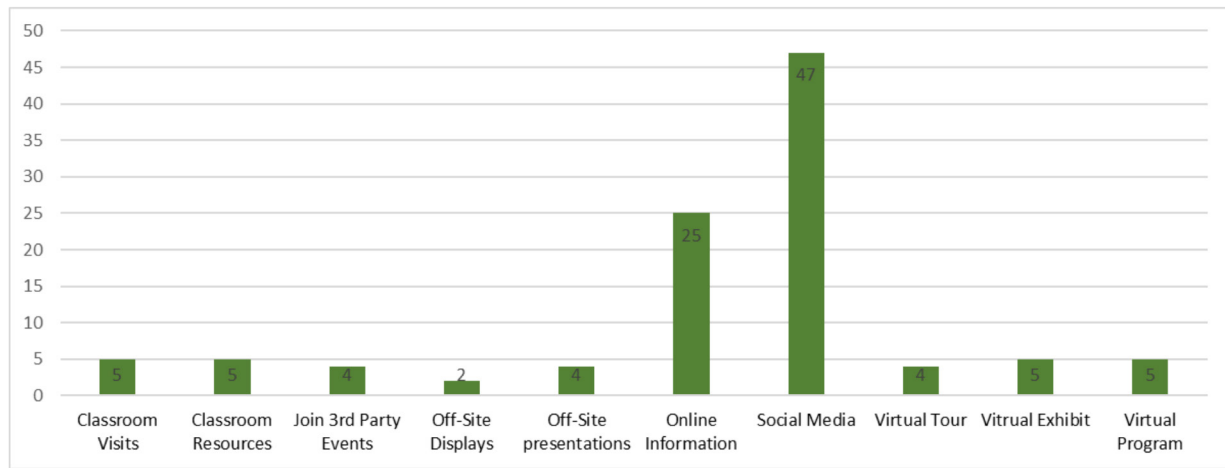
Outreach activities include any activity designed to bring the museum experience to an outside audience without them having to attend the museum. Online outreach methods were far more prominent than in-person methods. Fifty-five (55) institutions have an online outreach effort, while only twelve (12) used an in-person method. Forty-seven (47) institutions maintained a social media presence, most prominently on Facebook. This space was used to post updates, events, and even short videos. At least some pages showed active historical society or other community engagement. Twenty-five museums used their websites to disseminate historical information, or detailed information about their collections, including detailed background articles, photographs, technical specifications, and archival documents. The variation in detail provided in some cases makes this approach similar to a virtual exhibit. However, only five (5) museums had clearly differentiated virtual exhibits. More active online engagement methods, such as virtual tours and virtual programing, were less common. Only four (4) institutions offered virtual tours. Five (5) offered virtual programming. Virtual programs included activities normally done in-person, such as classes, discussion groups, and online presentations.

In person engagement activities were less common. Educational support accounted for some in-person activity. Five (5) institutions provided visits to classrooms, and five (5) offered educational resources for teachers to employ in the classroom. Other in-person activities included four (4) institutions delivering presentations and two (2) institutions putting on displays at third-party locations. Generally, these locations were nearby cultural institutions or public places. Some off-site presentations and displays were due to four (4) institutions participating in events organized by third parties.

3.8 Mobile

Only five (5) institutions had their own mobile apps. Apps are a versatile tool able to fill several roles. Two (2) museums have apps that provided remote activities. Two (2) apps are designed to facilitate self-guided historic area walking tours. Only the Edmonton Valley Zoo app was designed to orient visitors to the site. It includes an interactive site map, amenity locations, a program schedule, and information on the collection.

The regional tourism app History Check is designed to provide guidance to historic sites to tourists across Alberta. This provides a marketing opportunity for institutions in the region and could encourage more tours.

3.9 Collection

Figure 3.9 Top 14 Common Collection Items
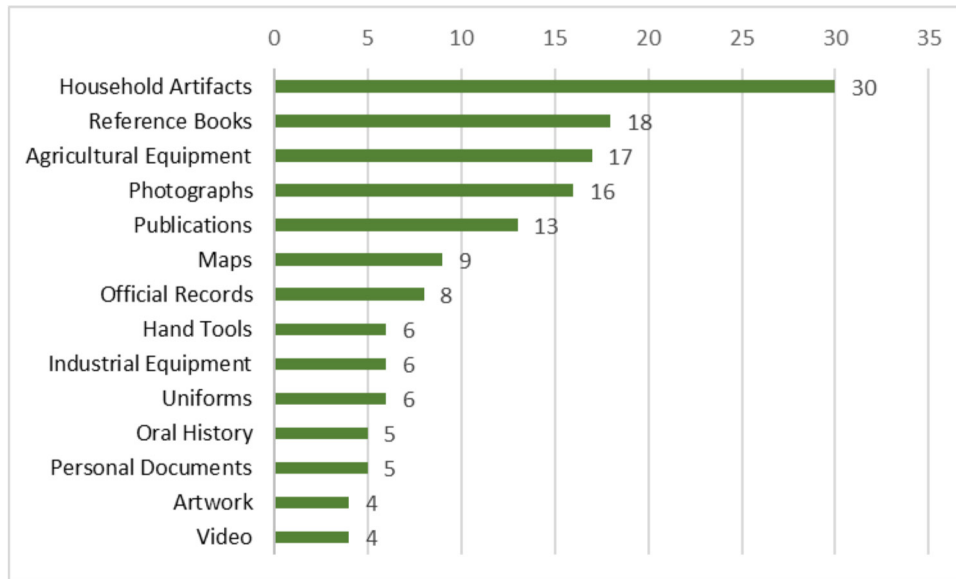
Thirty (30) institutions hold household items in their collection, making this the most commonly held collection item. This is admittedly a broad category including any artifact of everyday life. Household artifacts include textiles, kitchenware, furniture, and personal items.

Reference books are the second most common collection item. These are not artifacts per se, but rather secondary sources used to provide context to the collection and a background in relevant topics. Eighteen (18) institutions augment their collection with reference material.

Several archival record types are commonly held in museum collections. At least sixteen (16) museums hold significant historical photograph collections. Thirteen (13) institutions hold historical publications, including newsprint, journals, manuals, and publications from various organizations. Nine (9) museums hold maps. Eight (8) museums hold official records. These include municipal records, marriage records, funeral records, school board records, military service records, official correspondence, and business and organization records. Five (5) museums have personal documents in their collections. These are mainly diaries, and letters. Four (4) institutions have video recordings. Archival material features prominently in regional museum collections despite their lacking archival services and storage capacity.

Work related equipment from several different industries was included in collections. Seventeen (17) museums hold agricultural equipment. This includes machinery and agricultural implements. Six (6) museums hold other industrial equipment related to such industries as railroads, oil, and timber. Six (6) museums have other hand tools in their collections.

3.10 Governance

Figure 3.10 Governance Structure Distribution
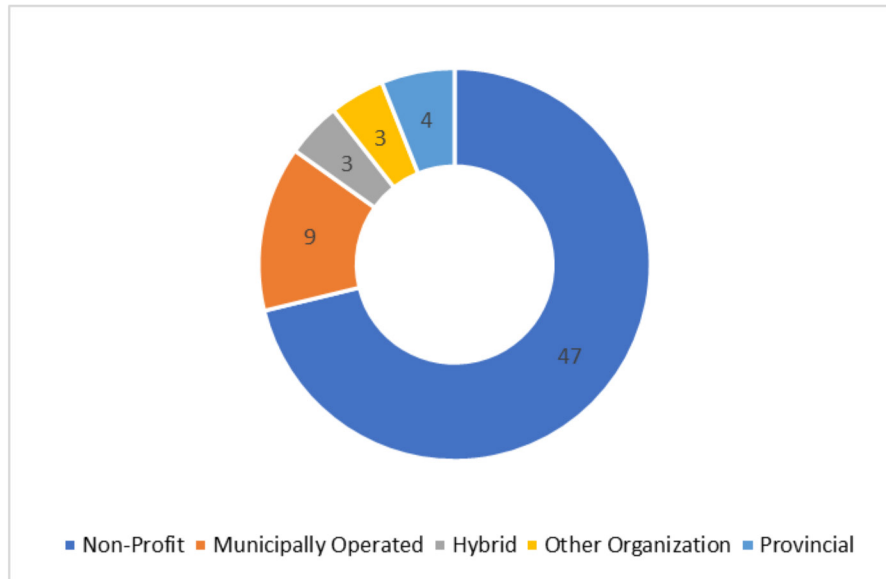
Forty-seven (47) of the sixty-six (66) institutions examined are structured as non-profit organizations, making this the most common organizational structure by far. Nine (9) institutions are municipally operated and three (3) more are operated with a joint municipal and non-profit hybrid structure. These are the Alberta Aviation Museum, the Canadian Energy Museum, and Fort Edmonton Park. In these instances, the municipality owns the property, but a non-profit volunteer board is involved in oversight and in operating the museum. Four (4) institutions are operated by the provincial government. Three (3) institutions were operated by other major organizations. These are the University of Alberta, the Edmonton Public Schools Board, and the Order of St. Basil the Great.

Since most institutions are non-profits, the governing boards for these institutions are volunteer members drawn from the relevant historical society membership. Board members generally have specific roles such as chair, vice-chair, treasurer, fundraiser, or director. Exact distributions vary. Some historical societies that draw members from across a region, such as the Canadian Northern Society, attempt to balance geographical representation on their boards.

3.11 Staff and Volunteers

Figure 3.11 Full-Time and Part-Time Employee Numbers
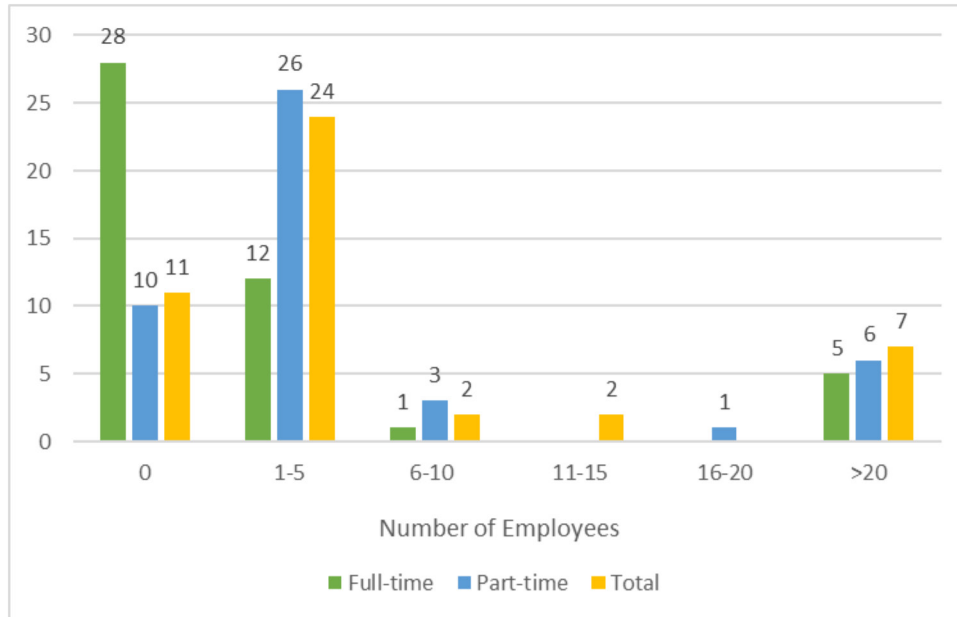
Most institutions operate with a small staff complement. Eleven (11) institutions had no permanent staff. Twenty-four (24) had between one (1) to five (5) total staff. These represent primarily part-time positions. There exists a significant gulf between the staffing levels at most non-profit and municipally run institutions and those run by the province or Edmonton. Only four (4) institutions have between six (6) to twenty (20) total staff, while seven (7) have more than twenty (20) total staff. Those institutions with more than twenty (20) staff include major provincial institutions such as the Royal Alberta Museum (RAM), and the Provincial Archives of Alberta. The RAM lists approximately one hundred (100) employees Staff levels at these institutions can be substantially greater than most. TELUS World of Science had sixty-two (62) full-time, and one-hundred-and-sixty-six (166) part-time employees as of 2019. It and University of Alberta Museums are the only institutions with over twenty (20) employees that are not run by either the province or Edmonton.
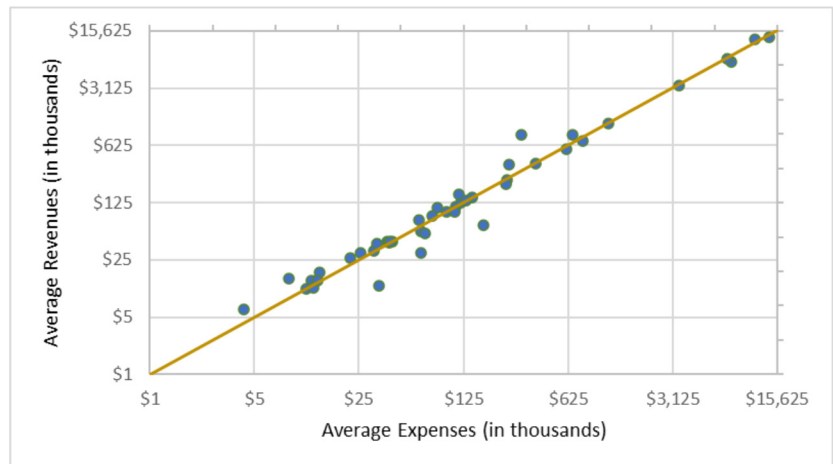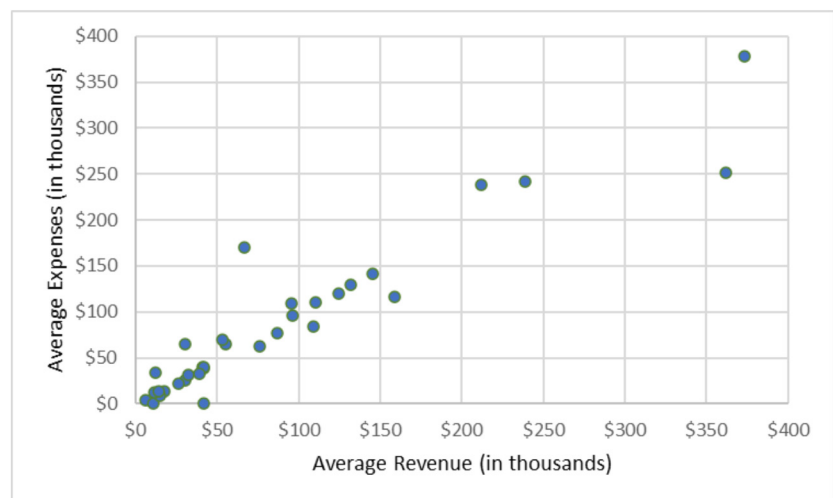
3.12 Budget and Funding

At least partial information on revenues and expenses between 2014 and 2019 was available for forty-four (44) institutions. However, information was not always available for each year in that period. Furthermore, revenue could vary substantially from year to year. To arrive at as balanced a comparison as possible, an average was taken from the available revenues or expenses data for each institution. The results are shown in Figure 3.12.1. with the 45-degree line representing the break-even point between reported revenues and expenses. Most institutions have their revenues and expenses balanced close to the break-even point as shown. Large institutions including TELUS World of Science, the Art Gallery of Alberta, and the RAM have budgets that dwarf those of most museums at approximately $13.5 million, $7 million and $12 million respectively. Thirty (30) institutions out of the forty-four (44) studied had budgets under $200,000. Twenty-four (24) had budgets under $100,000, and seventeen (17) had budgets under $50,000. Museums with less than $200,00 budgets are primarily the local, non-profit operations. Institutions with average budgets below $400,000 are shown in Figure 3.12.2.

Figure 3.12.1 Average Budget 2014-2019 (log scale)

Figure 3.12.2 Average Budget 2014-2019 (< $400,000)

Large institutions show consistent growth or at least stability between 2014 and 2019. For example, RAM revenues grew from $8,868,000 2014 to $15,050,000 in 2019. PAA funding remained stable through this period, rising from $3,249,000 in 2014 to $3,328,000 in 2019. The growth pattern for non-profits and those institutions with budgets under $200,000 was more variable with some institutions showing growth, and others decline. A few could best be described as volatile with sharp increases and decreases in revenue and expenditure from one year to the next.
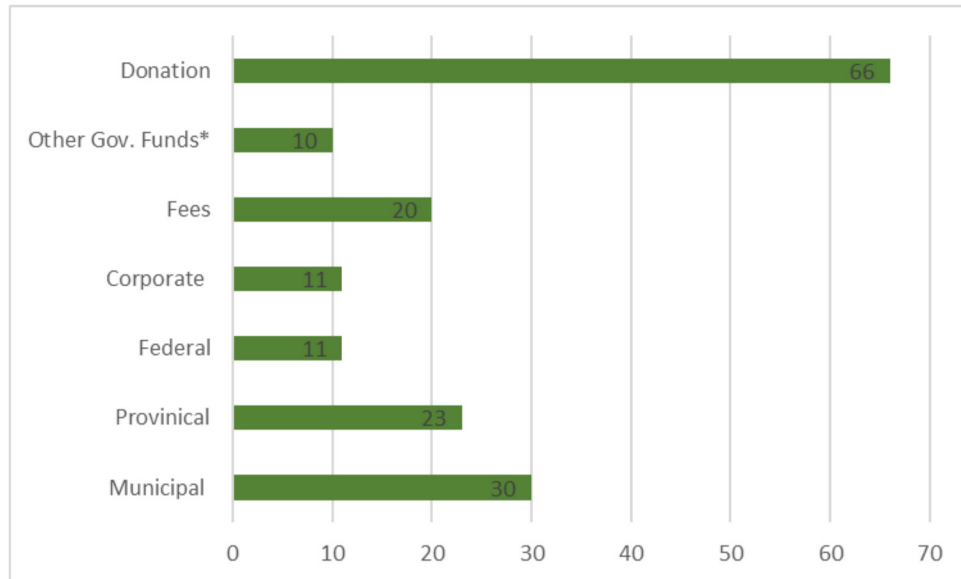
Figure 3.12.3 Common Funding Sources

*Government funds where the level of government is unspecified.

Unsurprisingly, all institutions rely on donations to some extent. Donations include money, time (volunteering), and collection items. Forty-nine (49) of the sixty-six (66) institutions received some government support. In ten (10) cases, the exact source of support was unspecified in CRA records. At least thirty (30) institutions receive municipal support, while twenty-three (23) receive provincial funds, and eleven (11) receive federal funds. This includes funding from provincial, federal, and municipal granting agencies. At least twenty (20) institutions raised their own funds through fees, including admissions, rentals, and fees for specific services like train rides.

3.13 Amenities

Several institutions offered other amenities not directly related to their collection or main program. These amenities are shown by prevalence in Figure 3.13. The most popular such amenity on offer was the gift shop. Twenty-one (21) institutions out of the sixty-six (66) examined operated gift shops. Gift shop offering vary as individual shops attempt to offer distinct products relevant to their host institution or region. This includes selling locally produced artisanal products. The Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum's museum store operates from the restored Star Store building and offers some products reminiscent of those sold by the original Start Store in the early 1900s.

Event space rental was the second most popular amenity on offer with seventeen (17) institutions offering this service. Event rentals typically accommodate birthday parties, weddings, photoshoots, meetings, and other events. The space available for rental is often the regular program space repurposed. Some institutions also have conference or meeting rooms for rental. Only Two (2) institutions offered catering services along with their event rentals.

Food service was only available at select institutions. Nine (9) operated a restaurant or café. However, one institution reported that after having to close its restaurant due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was uncertain if it would be reopened. Four (4) institutions provided an outdoor picnic area for visitors who brought their own meal. Confectionaries were available at two (2) locations.

The Canadian Energy Museum was unique in providing a campground.

Figure 3.13 Amenities by Frequency
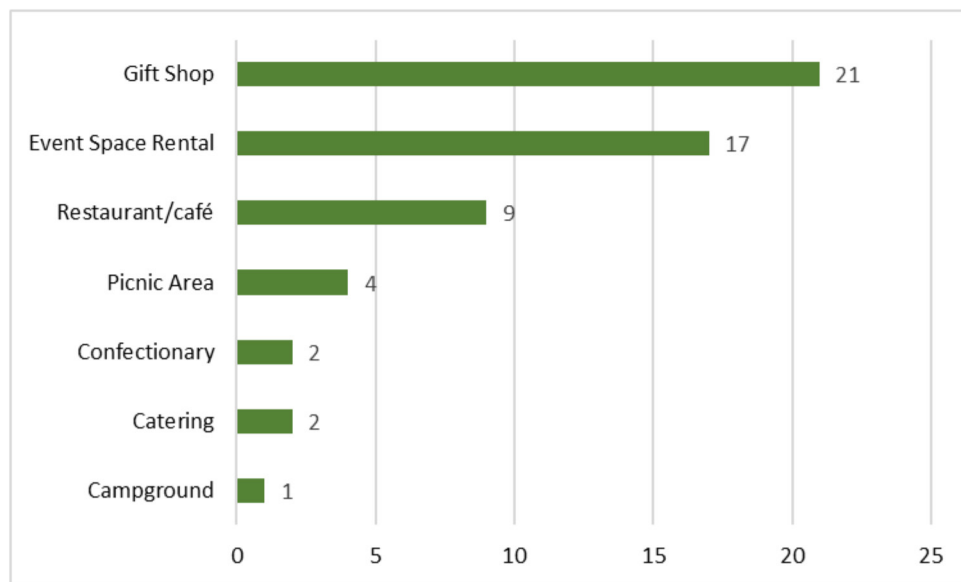
3.14 Partnerships

Partnerships are an essential resource for museums providing, among other things, funding opportunities, expanded programing options, shared professional expertise, and improved connections and name recognition. Figure 3.14.1 shows the main benefits derived from these partnerships and approximately which partners provide them. Museum partners are shown by type and approximate frequency in Figure 3.14.2.

Figure 3.14.1 Partnership Benefits and Sources

Funding

Government
Corporate
Friends' Societies

Museum Associations
Related Institutions
Heritage Societies

Professonal
Expertise &
Promotion

Programming

Community Clubs
Heritage Societies
Related Institutions
Friends' Societies

Funding support is the most common partnership type. Forty-nine (49) institution have government sponsors and another eleven (11) have corporate sponsors. These arrangements are almost entirely for financial support, though in some cases sponsors choose to support specific programing options. In some cases, government partners coordinate certain tasks with the museums they choose to work with. For example, the Musée Héritage Museum manages the City of St. Albert's historic sites. Some large, government run institutions have "friends" societies associated with them. These societies' primary mandate is to raise funds, but it is not uncommon for them to also organize their own programs at the museum in question, or to put on events that are part fundraiser, part social or community event.

Twenty-six (26) institutions were officially recognized by the Alberta Museums Association (AMA). The Edmonton Radial Railway Society, despite not being officially recognized, receives operational funding and other support from the AMA. The AMA Recognized Museum Program is an accreditation program based on performance and professionalism standards assessed by the AMA. The AMA supports Alberta museums by providing grants, professional development, networking opportunities, and fostering partnerships.
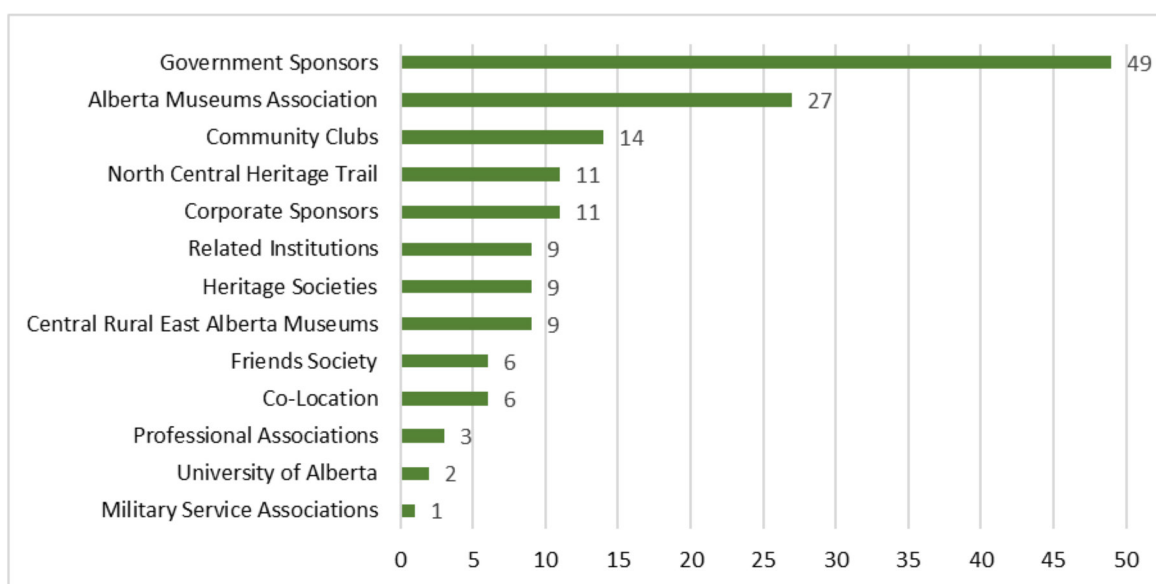
Two regional museum and historic stie associations had twenty (20) members between them from the sixty-six (66) examined in this study. Eleven (11) were associated with the North Central Heritage Trail, while nine (9) were associated with the Central Rural East Alberta Museums. These associations operate on a similar basis, providing joint marketing and promotion, encouraging regional historical tourism, and encouraging cooperation between members.

In addition to the museum associations listed above, several institutions arranged collaborations with other related institutions, and societies. Nine (9) institutions have working relationships with other museums and archives, or related cultural institutions. Another nine (9) institutions collaborate regularly with outside historical societies. This includes both local historical societies and provincial or national associations such as the Alberta Grain Elevator Society. Two (2) institutions have working relationships with the University of Alberta. These partnerships were similar in that they focused on exchanging expertise and professional knowledge. Cooperation on programs between institutions seems to be less common, though there were examples, such as the Art Gallery of Alberta's collaboration with the Edmonton Public Library Reading Club Program, and the Edmonton Radial Railway Society's operating streetcar lines for Fort Edmonton Park.

Various community clubs cooperated with at least fourteen (14) institutions. Community clubs often organize events, such as historic themed social events. Other collaborations include joint displays, such as the Museé Morinville Museum's work with the Morinville Art Club to display local artisans' work in the museum. A similar example is the Reynolds – Alberta Museum's collaboration with vintage car clubs for the Car Clubs Cruise to Reynolds event.

Six (6) institutions had partnerships built in, due to being co-located with other services or cultural institutions. For example, the Multicultural Heritage Centre is co-located with an art gallery. Visitor or tourist information stations were co-located with the Innisfree Historical Prairie Bank Museum, and the Onoway Museum and Heritage Centre.

Figure 3.14.2 Museum Partners

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