

Mayor Pat Fiacco  
City of Regina  
Box 1790, 2476 Victoria Avenue  
Regina, SK  
S4P 3C8

Dear Mayor Fiacco and Councillors:

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Library Association, I am writing to voice our great concerns over the recent report from the City Clerk and City Manager to the Finance and Administration Committee regarding the City of Regina Archives. With the recent centennial of the city highlighting the importance of municipal history and with citizens' rising expectations in regards to access to information in a liberal democracy, the Saskatchewan Library Association is very surprised and concerned that the City of Regina is considering limiting access to the City Archives.

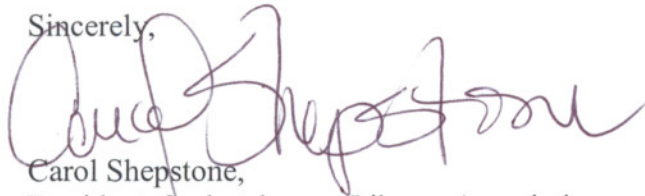
By eliminating the City Archivist position, access to Regina's archival record, including City of Regina and private and corporate citizens' record, will be severely curtailed. An archivist is trained not only to provide reference services and help retrieve records for researchers but also to collect, organize, describe, manage, and preserve those records. No other professionals or institutions are trained to provide these same services. Without a professional archivist responsible for the records, many will become inaccessible (unable to be found) to the public, not collected in the first place, or destroyed through improper storage.

It seems the City proposes to transfer the responsibility for providing access to the public record among other departments and institutions. As stated, other institutions are not prepared or trained to provide access to unpublished records or to build the collection into the future. Libraries, for example, organize and provide access to predominantly *published* information, and other city departments would have much less expertise. Fracturing the responsibility for these records would effectively cut off ready access to the existing records and impede any future coordinated development of the collection. Further, by closing the office to the public except on an appointment basis, the City would further limit access to a collection that, by its unpublished nature, is difficult to access in the first place.

By devaluing the importance of the city's historical record, the City of Regina is making a decision which will affect generations of citizens to come. Needless to say, limiting access to the public record is extremely troubling in a democracy built on the idea of an informed citizenry—access to information is a public right. We hope Regina's *next* centennial celebrations will not be marred by gaps in our collective historical memory.

We urge you to reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Carol Shepstone', written in a cursive style.

Carol Shepstone,  
President, Saskatchewan Library Association

Cc:

Councillor Louis Browne  
Councillor Wade Murray  
Councillor Jocelyn Hutchinson  
Councillor Sharron Bryce  
Councillor Fred Clipsham  
Councillor Mike O'Donnell  
Councillor Michael Fougere  
Councillor Terry Hincks  
Councillor Bill Gray  
Councillor Jerry Flegel  
The Regina Leader-Post