



# News Release

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## **DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO DISCUSS NEW OPERATING AGREEMENT FOR DETROIT HISTORICAL MUSEUMS TODAY WITH CITY COUNCIL**

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**DETROIT** -- Representatives from the Mayor's office, the Detroit Historical Museums and the Detroit Historical Society expect to come before Detroit City Council today to begin discussions on a proposed operating agreement that would transfer daily operations of the Detroit Historical Museums to the Society. Like the agreement approved last week for the Detroit Zoological Institute, the proposed plan is expected to ensure the continued operations of the Museums, while significantly decreasing the City's level of financial support.

Discussions between the City of Detroit, which currently owns and operates the Museums, and the Detroit Historical Society began last summer when the Mayor announced his intention to eliminate all City funding for the Detroit Historical Museums by the end of the 05-06 fiscal year.

City support for the Museums, which include the Detroit Historical Museum, the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, and Historic Fort Wayne, has declined dramatically in recent years. In fiscal year 2003-04, the City provided \$3.5 million for the Museums. In the 2005-06 fiscal year, that number is expected to fall to approximately \$1.5 million. Under the proposed agreement, the City's level of support would be further reduced by two thirds, saving the City an additional \$1 million.

Key points of the proposed agreement include the following:

The City will maintain complete ownership of the Museums, property and assets, including an extensive collection of priceless artifacts.

The Society will manage the day-to-day operations of the main museum in the Cultural Center and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum on Belle Isle. The City will retain operational responsibility of Historic Fort Wayne, although the Society will have access to, and will operate the Collections Resource Center at Historic Fort Wayne, which houses the Museums' artifacts.

The Society has reached tentative agreements with both unions representing existing Museum staff members and will include these positions in the new organization.

Upon acceptance of the proposed agreement, the City will provide an annual grant to the Society to assist with this transition and to ensure the organization's ability to advance its mission and continue its service to the community.

The agreement preserves the role of the Detroit Historical Commission, whose members are appointed by the Mayor, and includes a provision for the Detroit City Council to appoint representatives to the Society's Board of Trustees.

This agreement will enable the Detroit Historical Museum and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum to remain open to the general public, including the thousands of schoolchildren who visit each year as part of organized classroom tours. The Museum's docent-led tours have long been recognized for their alignment with the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) benchmarks for elementary school students.

"The City of Detroit and the Detroit Historical Society have been partners for more than 75 years, working together to preserve and present our rich history," commented Robert Bury, Executive Director & CEO of the Detroit Historical Society. "Upon approval of the proposed agreement, this partnership will continue and the future of these great community treasures will be assured."

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The Detroit Historical Museum is located at 5401 Woodward Ave. (corner of Kirby) in Detroit's Cultural Center area. Permanent exhibits include the famous Streets of Old Detroit, Frontiers to Factories, The Motor City, and The Glancy Trains.