Western Canada Aviation Museum
Shirley Render – Executive Director

Submission for the City
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The Western Canada Aviation Museum is an award-winning museum with over 30-years of serving the community. Housed in a 91,000 sq ft facility, we have retrieved and restored aircraft that showcase Canada's rich and unique aviation heritage. We tell the story in a variety of ways - exhibits (5 galleries), special programming and the Take Flight education program. We also provide a safe and fun environment for 120 volunteers, a mix of seniors and youth.

In 2005 Hartley Richardson (who will lead our capital campaign), Barry Rempel, CEO of the Winnipeg Airports Authority and I publicly announced plans for a new home. **Our aim is to create a world-class destination and signature facility at the Richardson International Airport**. Our new Purpose-designed facility will be next door to the new terminal and its 4 million annual passengers and two hotels. This synergy will add a major boost to the economic, social and educational environment of Winnipeg.

Working with our professional design team, we have developed a new Operating Model/Business Plan that will bring about a fundamental change from the Museum's current appeal, which is now primarily to those with a keen interest in aviation, to a destination that uses Canada's remarkable aviation history to showcase aviation adventure and innovation in an educational and entertaining environment that will appeal to a much broader range of people.

However, there is much to be done before we "open the doors" on our new facility (2013). Substantial qualitative changes will be required such as continuing to ramp up programming, community outreach, refurbishing exhibits, finalizing conceptual drawings, tendering and a re-branding and re-naming project. In November 2008 we requested $60,000 (up from $39,500) or 5% of our operating budget of $1.2 million. The City Museums Board recommended a $790.00 increase, essentially a slap in our face, when we are on the cusp of such an exciting development.

$40,290 is inappropriate for our physical size, operational expenses, scope and professionalism of exhibits and children's and public programming and any show of assistance for our plans to become a signature facility. Coming after years of inconsistent WAC funding is hard to understand - {for eg. 1999: $29,000, $29,000, $28,250, $25,000, $41,500, $39,500 (2008)}. It appears that the new City Museums Board has little understanding of the different levels of professionalism among the museums or our potential. We salute the other museums but question, for example, why one museum, which is not even open on a regular basis, would receive $60,000/year for operating/maintenance. We too would be grateful for $60,000 to be used only for ops/maintenance. Our Natural Gas bill alone was $68,062 in 2008. Land rental, property taxes, Hydro, Natural Gas, water, maintenance, supplies, insurance (building alone, not the Collection), caretaking, snow removal is $256,592 and this does not include the total complex.

We raise 89% of our operating income and receive only 11% from government ($55,900 prov)! We have worked hard since 1974 to remain financially sustainable. It appears that we are penalized for our good management.

Our activities attract a lot of media attention. We raise the City's profile every time we are in the news. Our 2009 activities, such as the coming Canadian premiere of "aviation nose art" and the arrival of the Avro Lancaster, August 3rd, have already generated inquiries from out of province. Winnipeg is recognized as an aviation pioneering and innovation centre, past and present - making it an ideal location for a world-class aviation museum.

We respectfully ask that the proposed funding be increased to $60,000 to assist us in our next phase of development. This will send a signal to our supporters that the City recognizes our potential and our aim to create a signature facility at the Richardson Airport.