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BLACK HERITAGE MUSEUM SUPPORTED

By John Hessburg P-I Reporter

SATURDAY, July 11, 1987
Section: News, Page: D2

The kind of black heritage museum that Seattle needs would cost at least \$1.5 million and encompass at least 10,000 square feet, a consulting firm said yesterday.

It also would offer a wide variety of live and display arts and would be easily accessible to the city's black community.

Economic Research Associates, commissioned last spring by the city's Department of Community Development, issued a report that enthusiastically recommended the formation of a black cultural center.

The center would be financed by a public development authority, or special taxation district.

The consultants' report recommended the museum be owned by a public, non-profit group that could lease its facilities to private, non-profit organizations.

City Councilman Norm Rice, who was one prime mover behind financing for the museum study, yesterday said the abandoned Colman School in southeast Seattle may be one possible option for a building site.

But Rice stressed that if the city's black community wanted the museum badly enough, it would need to organize private financing and should not expect the city to offer money "carte blanche."

Black activists who have occupied Colman School for almost two years in hopes of pressuring the city to use the closed building for an African heritage museum and arts center could not be reached last night for comment.

Anne Fennessy, spokeswoman for Mayor Charles Royer, said a citizens committee appointed by Royer to study the black museum concept still hasn't submitted a final report, but is expected to do so within a week.

The consulting firm's report said a black cultural center would help young people form positive identities through visual and performing arts.

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