




CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Tourism and Culture Division

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 18, 2020
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Virtual Commemoration of 175 Years of Hamilton's History (PED20199) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	John Summers (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1747
SUBMITTED BY:	Carrie Brooks-Joiner Director, Tourism and Culture Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the City of Hamilton approve the expenditure of \$200 K, to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve (110046) to develop an online commemoration of the 175-year anniversary of the founding of the City through broad community engagement and creation of content and a website which will lay the groundwork for a virtual Museum of Hamilton.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2021 will mark the 175-year anniversary of Hamilton's incorporation as a City in 1846. At the October 14, 2020 Council meeting, staff were directed to develop a proposal to create and deliver an online commemoration of 175 years of Hamilton's history in 2021 as a first phase of a virtual Museum of Hamilton. This report proposes a timeline and a budget to develop and launch this online commemoration by December 2021. This facilitation of the telling of Hamilton stories through online content will be the first step in developing a virtual Museum of Hamilton to complement the existing Hamilton Civic Museums.

Alternatives for Consideration - Not Applicable

FINANCIAL - STAFFING - LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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Financial: The funding for the required project coordination, research, contracted design services, public engagement and user testing to build and launch the site is estimated at \$200 K in one-time costs as noted in the table.

Hamilton 175 Project Budget	
Contract web design and development including e-commerce	\$80 K
12-months hosting and technical support	\$3,000
12-months customer relationship management software license	\$2,000
Hamilton 175 graphic identity development	\$5,000
Contact Community Curator	\$75 K
Contract research	\$10 K
Mid-summer Happy Birthday Hamilton event (within any restrictions in place at the time)	\$25 K
TOTAL	\$200 K

Staffing: A Community Curator will be hired on a 12-month contract for this project. In recognition of the goals for the Hamilton 175 project to present a broad and diverse understanding of the City's history, recruitment for this position will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the City's Equity and Inclusion Policy (2016).

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following motion, was Moved by the Mayor, and passed at the October 14, 2020 Council meeting:

WHEREAS, 2021 will mark 175 years since the City of Hamilton was founded in 1846;

WHEREAS, the citizens of Hamilton have expressed support for the idea of a Museum of Hamilton; and,

WHEREAS, a virtual museum approach offers significant and cost-effective potential for offering public content and experiences within COVID-19 restrictions and will complement and expand in-person programs at the existing civic museums;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That Tourism and Culture Division staff be directed to develop a proposal to create and deliver an online commemoration of the 175 years of Hamilton's history in 2021, as a first phase of a virtual Museum of Hamilton, and report back to General Issues

Committee.

The City of Hamilton owns and operates eight civic museums. Each museum has a specific site-based interpretive mandate and offers related programming. There is at present no dedicated space for city-wide exhibits or programs that are not part of an existing historic site.

The Museum of Hamilton concept envisions a broader and deeper approach to the City's history which would complement these existing civic museums and historic sites. Such a space would offer opportunities to address broader historical themes, engage with wider and more diverse audiences and facilitate collaboration on programs and exhibits with residents and other organizations.

In 2019, the Tourism and Culture Division retained consultants to conduct an external engagement for the new Hamilton Civic Museum Strategy and a City of Hamilton Museum. Stakeholders and members of the public expressed support for the idea of a Museum of Hamilton.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

This project addresses the following actions of the City's Urban Indigenous Strategy:

- Action 7 - Work with Indigenous communities to provide education to staff and residents about acknowledging traditional territories in Hamilton.
- Action 11 - Incorporate more Indigenous stories and voices into the City of Hamilton's culture and heritage plans.
- Action 12 - Use markers and signs to restore Indigenous names and identify significant Indigenous landmarks in Hamilton. This could include street names, trails and parks.

This project will enhance the implementation of the City's Equity and Inclusion Policy (2016).

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

External

- Manager of Communications, Hamilton Public Library
- Manager, Collections and Extension Services, Hamilton Public Library
- Hamilton Museum Citizens' Committee members

Internal

- Senior Project Manager, Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy, Children's Services and Neighbourhood Development Division, Healthy and Safe Communities Department

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The commemoration will begin in January 2021 with a proclamation by the Mayor's office. Heritage Resource Management social media channels will feature regular Hamilton 175 content throughout the year. Selected events at Hamilton Civic Museums will be branded with the Hamilton 175 graphic identity throughout the year. Community engagement for content development will begin in the first quarter of 2021 and will continue to the end of the third quarter. A Happy Birthday Hamilton event will be held mid-summer, with the location, scope and format to be determined by COVID-19 guidelines. The foundation for the virtual museum will be built throughout the year as content is developed throughout the spring and summer, led by the Community Curator and in collaboration with Hamilton's many communities. Content will also be shared through Heritage Resource Management social media channels.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated what was already a growing trend towards museums doing more online engagement, which has proven to be an effective and cost-effective means of reaching new and wider audiences. Even before the pandemic necessitated rethinking current audience engagement practices, the museum community was exploring ways to be more community-focused and involved beyond the walls of its institutions.

Today, museums are seeking to offer spaces for interaction and engagement with their collections and to support communities in telling their own stories. This requires a different space than the traditional model of an institution focused on building artefact collections and creating its own exhibits. A virtual approach offers significant and cost-effective potential for not just responding to COVID-19, but also for offering heritage-based content and experiences that will complement and expand in-person offerings at the existing civic museums.

The Hamilton 175 project is grounded in the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion as outlined in the City's Equity and Inclusion Policy (2016). In terms of equity, the history of Hamilton is thereby understood to include all stakeholder communities, with the groups and individuals that they include. The scope of the City's history embodied in this project will recognize the positive power and richness that exists when different communities, groups and individuals with a variety of backgrounds, orientations, expressions, identities, skills and experience are represented in the historical narrative. Valuing equity and diversity in this way will use the principle of inclusion to create a

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shared historical understanding. Through public engagement in the researching, understanding and presentation of these stories, the project will develop mutually beneficial connections with the City's stakeholder communities.

The creation of a website interpreting the City of Hamilton's 175-year history featuring digital exhibits and experiences will offer a wide-ranging and inclusive view of its past, present and future. It will allow for the co-creation and collaborative development of community-based stories. Through the use of digital mapping, different layers of the City's history can be made available for exploration and understanding, beginning with Indigenous presence more than 10 K years ago on the land where Hamilton now stands. Through user-generated content applications, residents and others will be able to attach their own stories and images to enrich the overall narrative of the City. The use of best-practice standards for web accessibility will make these historical experiences broadly available. The new website will also allow for the display digital versions of the historic collections held by other City agencies such as the Hamilton Street Railway.

A high degree of interactivity, the submission of user-generated content and other engagement opportunities will provide insight into residents' views of the history of "their" city which can be taken into account in the ongoing revitalization of Hamilton Civic Museums programming and collecting. With additional resources dedicated to the development, facilitation and sharing of broad Hamilton stories, this online engagement approach could be expanded into a virtual Museum of Hamilton.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Not Applicable

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement and Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Culture and Diversity

Hamilton is a thriving, vibrant place for arts, culture, and heritage where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None

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