



**City of Kingston  
Information Report to Heritage Kingston  
Report Number HK-19-010**

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<b>To:</b>	<b>Chair and Members of Heritage Kingston</b>
<b>From:</b>	<b>Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services</b>
<b>Resource Staff:</b>	<b>Colin Wiginton, Director, Cultural Services</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>January 16, 2019</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Community Engagement Events, ‘Your Stories, Our Histories’, Q1 2019</b>

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**Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to provide Heritage Kingston committee members with an overview of the ‘Your Stories, Our Histories’ project currently underway that includes an extensive public consultation process in the form of a series of community engagement events ([Report Number 18-354](#)).

The ‘Your Stories, Our Histories’ project launched on September 6, 2018 and is intended as a mechanism through which to gather community input that will be used to develop an updated Cultural Heritage Strategy for the City of Kingston. This Strategy will be used to guide the development of exhibits, programs and events offered through the Cultural Services Department, and specifically the exhibitions and programs offered through Kingston City Hall National Historic Site, the PumpHouse and MacLachlan Woodworking Museum. It will also be used to guide the development of exhibitions and programs to be offered as outreach initiatives throughout the Kingston community.

‘Your Stories, Our Histories’ provides an opportunity for the community to contribute to the development of an inclusive and balanced historical narrative for Kingston that covers an increasingly diverse range of possible topics. As part of this engagement, specific themes, stories and histories will be discussed that include engagement opportunities designed to explore Sir John A. Macdonald and his legacies in a more complete way in order to develop a more inclusive version of history that is appropriate to today.

With Council’s approval, staff have contracted the First Peoples Group based in Ottawa to assist with this engagement project ([Report Number 18-377](#)). First Peoples Group specializes in inclusive engagement and facilitation practices led by a team of consultants who have worked with all levels of government, offering support and community education on cultural topics,

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developing business plans and planning policy, leading conflict resolution, mediation and negotiation with a focus on consensus building.

This report provides an overview of the development of the 'Your Stories, Our Histories' project and outlines the current and future components of the project as well as the timeline for completion. This report is being brought before Heritage Kingston in order to provide information and to seek feedback from Heritage Kingston, through consultation, regarding the project's next steps. This opportunity to consult will assist staff, as well as members of the Cultural Heritage Working Group, to work together to plan appropriately and to pursue the engagement opportunities need to complete this priority work in 2019.

**Recommendation:**

This report is for consultation purposes.



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**Discussion:**

As part of Heritage Kingston's mandate, the Committee members act as an Advisory Committee to provide advice and guidance as it relates to City of Kingston policy development and implementation that, in the case of the 'Your Stores, Our Histories' project, involves the creation of a framework and policy for collecting, narrating and commemorating the Kingston story while providing an opportunity for the Committee to champion all aspects of Kingston's cultural heritage resources; and thus support cultural heritage and public education.

This report is intended to provide members of Heritage Kingston with an overview of the 'Your Stories, Our Histories' project that includes an extensive public consultation process in the form of a series of community engagement events. The Committee members are being asked to provide advice and guidance regarding the projects proposed next steps that includes the work being done by the Cultural Heritage Working Group in support of this project.

**Background**

The [Kingston Culture Plan](#) (ARCP-10-034) approved in 2010 proposed that Kingston's most compelling cultural asset is its powerful historical narrative. The Kingston Culture Plan went on to suggest that Kingston's many stories need to be developed in compelling ways and told through a variety of means and opportunities. It also recognized that telling Kingston's stories is not the mandate of the City alone but that it is a shared responsibility that must involve the larger community. In this regard, the Kingston Culture Plan called upon the City of Kingston to play a leadership role to foster and coordinate a community-wide approach to history and heritage.

Among the recommendations included as part of the Kingston Culture Plan, Recommendation #3 specifically spoke to the need to develop a cultural heritage strategy that could be used to develop and support community programs, events and exhibitions that help tell Kingston's stories in all their diversity as a component contributing to Kingston's cultural vitality. In the years that have followed the approval of the Kingston Culture Plan, staff have pursued this work in various ways through subsequent strategies as well as through various exhibits, programs and events.

This work has involved the pursuit and alignment of many initiatives around sector development—such as heritage funding and cultural tourism—as well as long range planning related to the exhibits, programs and events offered through City-owned museums and sites. This work first began with the development of An Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy approved in 2014 ([ARCP-14-001](#)) and has continued through the development of subsequent documents such as the Kingston Commemorations Strategy in 2015 ([ARCP-15-008](#)). Further work has also been pursued through subsequent projects such as the Engage for Change: YGK Reconciliation Journey that began in 2017. At each step, staff have worked to foster dialogue regarding people, places, events and ideas that can be leveraged to shape a broader understanding of local history that is increasingly diverse, inclusive and balanced.

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### Your Stories, Our Histories

The intent of the 'Your Stories, Our Histories' project ([Report 18-354](#)) is to prompt a community conversation in order to hear what people think about how the City of Kingston is representing local history and to capture input about stories and/or histories that are less well known or less frequently profiled. The first phase of work was launched on September 6, 2018 using [GetInvolved.CityofKingston.ca](#). This phase of engagement has allowed community members to offer their input regarding stories that need to be shared, profiled or given more careful consideration.

The input that has been received to date as part of a first phase of work that began in September 2018 has been dominated by feedback regarding Sir John A. Macdonald and his legacy. This was anticipated given the close association that exists between Kingston and Sir John A. Macdonald and in light of events that have taken place in other communities across Canada. Sir John A. Macdonald continues to be an important topic of discussion and it is one that elicits strong emotions, all of which are valid especially as conversations have evolved in relation to the impact his policies have had on Indigenous people in Canada and in light of the 94 Calls to Action that were issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015.

History is fluid and evolving and many important questions are currently being asked at a national level that cannot be ignored locally. The connection between Sir John A. Macdonald and Kingston is not one that can be ignored but it is also important to note that the intent of 'Your Stories, Our Histories' is to prompt conversations at a local level. Sir John A. Macdonald was a Kingston resident before he emerged as a leader with national significance so it is important his story be contextualized in terms of what happened before and after his time, especially in Kingston, in order to shape an understanding and appreciation of local history that is more diverse, inclusive and balanced.

With 'Your Stories, Our Histories', the intent is not to erase history or to remove elements related to those histories but to foster conversations in which questions get asked and gaps get identified so more people will see their lives and experiences reflected in the stories that get shared. As part of the briefing associated with this report, staff will present a synopsis of the feedback received to date that can be used to help inform how this project evolves in 2019 in the context of the public engagement events currently being planned.

### Engagement Timeline and Next Steps

At this time, the input received from September through December 2018 is being reviewed and plans are underway to develop the public engagement events that will comprise the bulk of the community consultations being scheduled for 2019. City staff are working with the team from the First Peoples Group along with the members of the Cultural Heritage Working Group to plan for a series of in-person engagement opportunities that will give Kingston residents the chance to share their stories and to assist in developing themes and topics that can be used to inform the development of the next iteration of a cultural heritage strategy.

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The current schedule of engagement events is presented at a high-level in the table below and staff will outline in more detail the engagement proposals and timelines related to this project as part of the briefing that accompanies this report.

**Table 1: Development and Engagement Timeline, ‘Your Stories, Our Histories’ Project**

<b>Strategy/Activity</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Kingston Culture Plan	2010
Integrated Cultural Heritage and Tourism Strategy	2014
Kingston Commemorations Strategy	2015
<b>Your Stories, Our Histories</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
Online engagement	September 6, 2018- Ongoing
Facilitation Planning and Initiation	Late 2018-Jan 2019
Public Talk/Workshop: Why Stories Matter	Q1 2019
Engagement Event: Generating Themes	Q1 2019
Public Talk: Monuments, museums, and history	Q2 2019
Workshop: Sir John A. Macdonald	Q2 2019
Engagement Events: Generating Themes, sharing stories	Q1 - Q2 2019
Report: “What we heard”	Summer 2019

At this time, staff are asking the members of Heritage Kingston to offer their ideas and input regarding the engagement events being planned and staff are also interested in hearing feedback regarding potential speakers, workshops and events where pop-up style engagement activities could occur. This opportunity to consult will assist staff, as well as members of the Cultural Heritage Working Group, to work together to plan appropriately and to pursue the engagement opportunities need to complete the work needed in 2019 related to ‘Your Stories, Our Histories’.

#### **Existing Policy/By-Law:**

The ‘Your Stories, Our Histories’ project relates to the implementation of the Kingston Culture Plan, including Recommendation #3, 53 and 59. This Project also supports the delivery of the Council priorities identified as part of Kingston’s Strategic Plan, 2015-2018, including Protect Heritage. The opportunity to consult with Heritage Kingston is also supported by By-Law 2010-205, Committee By-Law, that defines Advisory Committees as a committee that is established to provide advice to Council in accordance with the committee’s Mandate/Terms of Reference and By-Law 2010-2016, Schedule B-4 further defines Heritage Kingston’s role as advisory and consultative and that it be involved in educating and informing the community about matters related to Kingston’s cultural heritage.

#### **Notice Provisions:**

Not Applicable.

#### **Accessibility Considerations:**

Not Applicable.

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**Financial Considerations:**

Not Applicable.

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**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

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**Exhibits Attached:**

Not Applicable