

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS LONDON ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR HERITAGE (LACH) MEETING ON MAY 9, 2018
FROM:	ROSANNA WILCOX DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC INNOVATION
SUBJECT:	HEAR, HERE CULTURAL INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Community and Economic Innovation, the following Hear, Here Cultural Interpretive Signage Program Report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

- None

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to provide an overview of the Hear, Here Cultural Interpretive Signage Program for London, which will be implemented in 2018 – 2019 by the City of London’s Culture Office in partnership with Western University’s Dr. Michelle Hamilton, Director MA Public History and Associate Professor, Department of History; Dr. Ariel Beaujot, Department of History, University of La Crosse on sabbatical with Western’s Public History program; and Dr. Mark Tovey, MITACS Post-Doctoral Fellow in Public History.

BACKGROUND

The Hear, Here Cultural Heritage Interpretive Signage Program is an audio documentary project based on oral histories of place. These oral interviews contextualize events, heritage buildings, monuments, significant individuals, and cultural and natural landscapes. Portions of these oral interviews are distilled into short engaging stories, typically less than 2 minutes in length. Each story is associated with a particular Hear, Here sign that is placed in close proximity to where the stories have taken place. These signs display a toll free number along with an extension corresponding to the story and location. Residents and visitors can call the number, enter the extension and hear a story that happened near that location in the authentic voice of the person who experienced it. After listening, users can also stay on the line and leave their own story, which may be included in the future.

The Hear, Here Program is often promoted through pamphlets with maps that available at local tourism office and/or similar locations. There may also be a website that has information about the program as well as access to both audio podcasts and transcripts of those podcasts.

Professor Ariel Beaujot of the University of Wisconsin La Crosse (www.hearherelacrosse.org) initiated the Hear, Here Program as part of the History Department's Public History program two years ago. Research, oral histories, phone programming, and some web design was completed by undergraduate students. This project won the 2016 American Association for State and Local History's Leadership in History Award. Attached as Appendix "A" to this report is the "*University Of Wisconsin La Crosse Department Of History Hear Here Voices Of Downtown La Crosse Brochure*" for further review.

The Hear, Here Program in La Crosse has had a wide reach. As of November 2017, the website has had visitors from around the world, with almost 10,000 people from 113 countries exploring the stories online. Between March 2015 and January 2018, there were approximately 6,500 phone calls to the system from 48 of the 50 states, with the majority of these calls coming from outside their local area code, demonstrating its success as a tourist attraction.

HEAR, HERE LONDON

The Hear, Here Cultural Interpretive Signage Program is now expanding to Kamloops, Indianapolis, New York City, as well as London, Ontario. The City of London's Culture Office, in partnership with Western's Public History Program, would like to implement Hear, Here London as part of a two phase approach.

Phase 1

In 2018, 10 sites will be implemented with signage in the St. George-Grosvenor-Piccadilly London neighbourhood. This will be the public history implementation of the oral history project of Dr. Mark Tovey, who has been with the City of London's Culture Office for the last 2 years.

London, Ontario is unique in that it has intact Victorian neighbourhoods both north and south of the downtown core. Dr. Tovey's project examines the neighbourhood north of London's core, an area of fascinating stories extending back to the mid-19th century. Historically, this region included military, institutional, and industrial uses, as well as the residential and commercial uses obvious today. Dr. Tovey has been conducting oral history interviews in this area and identifying compelling stories from those interviews that are associated with specific locations. Audio versions of some of these stories will be made available on Hear, Here signs in the proposed area of Great Talbot HCD (7 signs), and on Richmond Street between Oxford Street and the CPR Tracks (3 signs). The proposed locations are as follows:

- 141 Sydenham Street;
- 205 Sydenham Street;
- 190-192 Richmond Street;
- 797 Richmond Street;
- 825 Talbot Street;
- 149 St. James Street;
- 204 St. James Street;
- 724 Richmond Street;
- 711 Richmond Street; and,
- 743 Richmond Street.

Phase 2

Phase 2 will see 20 sites implemented with signage in 2019 in the SoHo London neighbourhood, in partnership with Dr. Michelle Hamilton of Western University and Dr. Ariel Beaujot of the University of Wisconsin La Crosse. These Public History professors will be exploring the African-Canadian, ethnic, and working-class history of SoHo London and leading their Masters' students through this local Hear, Here project. While some sites will arise out of the students' research in the fall of 2018, the following locations are being proposed for the SoHo London neighbourhood location:

- Fugitive Slave Chapel;
- Beth Emmanuel Church;
- Richard Berry Harrison Park;
- London Soap Factory Monument;
- Medical School Buildings;
- Railway and the Roundhouse;
- Old Victoria Inn (now SoHo Bar and Grill);
- Simcoe School WWI Memorial;
- Labatt's;
- City Mills;
- Jewish Hall and School (Hill/Waterloo); and,
- John Law Foundry (Hill Street).

Research by Dr. Hamilton and Dr. Beaujot, along with their Masters students will include:

Summer Term 2018: further identification of sites, identification of historical interviews, local archival research, and consultation with community stakeholders.

Fall Term 2018: research into sites and preparation for oral interviews.

Winter Term 2019: oral interviews/dramatic readings of printed interviews, website programming, phone system programs and community launch.

Hear, Here London Signage and System Components

The City of London will own the Hear, Here Program signs (76.2 cm w x 58.5 cm), which are being designed to include the City Logo, made by the City's sign shop (attached as Appendix "B" to this report). The signs will be placed on the angled top of bollards located on City of London property. In order to determine the 1-800 telephone number for the London Hear Here signs, the back-end telephone system is currently being established. Following a review of scope, feasibility and technical considerations, there may be an opportunity to link videos to the audio podcasts of various signs on a Hear, Here London website.

Financial Costs of the Hear, Here Program

The approximate cost of the London Hear, Here Program for 30 locations (Phases 1 and 2) is \$14,000 and can be accommodated through the existing Culture Office budget. This funding will cover the sign production by the City of London sign shop, the 1-800 number and back-end phone system from CenturyLink Canada, as well as the bollards to be placed on City land.

Dr. Michelle Hamilton of Western's Public History Program will be applying for grants in September 2018 to cover costs of Phase 2 and additional cost considerations such as: the London Hear, Here website, maintaining the 1-800 number and back-end telephone system, a Western University Research Assistant to oversee the research, promotional materials, etc.

Community Consultation

As part of his oral history project and the Hear, Here Program, Dr. Mark Tovey has recently consulted with key stakeholders in the St. George-Grosvenor-Piccadilly area. These include, but are not limited to: the St. George-Grosvenor Community Association (SGGNA); and, the Piccadilly Area Neighbourhood Association (PANA).

Additionally, Dr. Michelle Hamilton has recently consulted with the following key stakeholders about the Hear, Here Program including, but not limited to: Ward 13 Councillor Tanya Park; the SoHo Community Association; the former Promised Land Project (at Huron University College); the Black Voices Press project (Huron University College); the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO); and, the London Heritage Council.

Letters of support from the St. George, Grosvenor Neighbourhood Association and the London Heritage Council are attached as Appendix “C” to this report.

CONCLUSION

The Hear, Here Cultural Interpretive Signage Program is an audio documentary project that contextualizes events, heritage buildings, monuments, significant individuals, and cultural and natural landscapes. The Hear, Here London Program will be a user generated vehicle to share the unique stories of both the St. George-Grosvenor-Piccadilly London neighbourhood and the SoHo London neighbourhood. Thank you to the many community members who have, or who will contribute their stories to this project.

SUBMITTED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
ROBIN ARMISTEAD MANAGER OF CULTURE	ROSANNA WILCOX DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC INNOVATION

cc:

- Dr Ariel Beaujot, Department of History, University of La Crosse
- Dr. Michelle Hamilton, Director MA Public History and Associate Professor, Department of History, Western University
- Dr. Mark Tovey, MITACS Post-Doctoral Fellow in Public History, Western University
- Mr. Gary Irwin, Division Manager & Chief Surveyor, Environmental & Engineering Services
- Mr. Mark Ridley, Sr. Technologist, Environmental & Engineering Services

Attachments:

Appendix “A” - University of Wisconsin La Crosse Department of History
Hear Here Voices of Downtown La Crosse Brochure

Appendix “B” - Hear, Here Cultural Interpretive Program Signs

Appendix “C”- Letters of Support from the St. George, Grosvenor Neighbourhood Association
and the London Heritage Council