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Item No. 13.1.1
Halifax and West Community Council
December 12, 2018

TO: Chair and Members of Halifax and West Community Council

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Denise Schofield, Director, Parks & Recreation

-Original Signed-

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 22, 2018

SUBJECT: Point Pleasant Park Mobile App

ORIGIN

March 21, 2018 Halifax and West Community Council motion:

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Zurawski

That Halifax and West Community Council request a staff report on the development of a Point Pleasant Park Mobile App and an enhanced website and social media presence to provide information and guidance to park visitors. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Subsection 79(1) states (in part) that:

The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for:

- (k) recreational programs;
- (l) advertising the opportunities of the Municipality for business, industrial and tourism purposes and encouraging tourist traffic...
- ah) playgrounds, trails, including trails developed, operated or maintained pursuant to an agreement made under clause 73(c), bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities;
- (ai) public grounds, squares, halls, museums, parks, tourist information centres and community centres;

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax & West Community Council recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to develop and embed a Story Map in the existing Point Pleasant Park web page as a pilot project within the Halifax.ca website for 2019, and monitor the usage and popularity for future consideration in other parks.

BACKGROUND

On March 21, 2018, Halifax & West Community Council passed a motion requesting a staff report on the development of a Point Pleasant Park Mobile App and an enhanced website and social media presence to provide information and guidance to park visitors.

As recommended in the Point Pleasant Park comprehensive plan, an audio interpretive program was developed for the park. The program provides a self-guided tour of important sites and gives information on key topics using smart phones and downloadable sound files. These sound files are currently available on the HRM page for the park.

With recent changes to the website, the previous Point Pleasant Park webpage became consolidated with the new HRM webpage. During the reconfiguration, the information found on the previous website was downsized, and the process by which information is changed has become labor intensive. With these changes, updates are infrequent and changing information to reflect current events has become more centralized, which restricts Parks & Recreation's ability to be agile in updating content.

The current data on the website is static, and fairly high level. There is a static map of the park. Parks and Recreation would like to improve the customer experience by providing access to contextual information on the parks history, assets and location in an easily accessible format to park visitors to enhance their visit to the park.

DISCUSSION

There are several types of technology that could be considered for delivering the contextual information to visitors to Point Pleasant Park; an app that is built using internal resources; an app that is built via an external, third party group; or a story map that would be embedded in the Point Pleasant Park section of Halifax.ca.

Option # 1 - Halifax Mobile Application

A mobile app could be developed that may be used to access information from a mobile device. A mobile app would be accessed via an icon on the mobile device, rather than going to Halifax.ca.

An app built internally for Point Pleasant Park would require significant resources that cannot be supported at present though HRM's Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) department, as ICT does not currently have mobile app developers within their business unit.

Option # 2 - 3rd Party App

Pingstreet is another existing technology, via a location-based discovery tool, that is used by various Municipalities across the country. It provides users with real-time access to garbage and recycling calendars, current events, local government info and social media. Municipalities that currently use this tool include Ontario-based Mississauga, Kitchener, Barrie, Cornwall, Pickering and Waterloo, as well as Canada-wide with Yellowknife (NWT) and Paradise (NL).

Pingstreet can be used to easily publish location based data. For example, HRM could publish maps of trails that are already being published as open data in a user-friendly form. Pingstreet also can provide an overall framework to put all the HRM apps and maps in one place. That way, an HRM app could have the recycling app as one tile, and the maps of trails as another.

The cost of using Pingstreet for one 'tile' (which is used to point to an application or dataset) is \$800 annually, with a \$5,500 set up fee. This does not include the creation of the datasets or the applications

This option could be used in combination with the Story Map or a custom developed app, and this particular option would be better served if all HRM services were available on the Pingstreet App.

Building an app using an external third party is an option, but there could be a significant cost to this, as per the following example. Solid Waste Resources, with Halifax, had an app designed to provide information directly to the public on the municipality's waste collection service, including regular schedule information, schedule changes and information related to events such as curbside giveaway and household hazard drop-offs. The application is made available to citizens for direct download from 3rd party app stores. The cost to the municipality for the initial development of the application was \$15,000, and there is an additional \$0.50 per-subscriber cost to HRM (there are currently approximately 2000 subscribers to the application). All support and maintenance of the application is provided by the vendor, and it is not linked to any other municipal systems or data.

Option # 3 - Story Map

Esri Story Maps allow an organization to combine authoritative maps and data with narrative text, images, and multimedia content. Leveraging Halifax's GIS infrastructure, these Story Maps are web applications accessed through Halifax.ca.

A Story Map could be created in a short period of time using internal resources, similar to one already used by the Halifax Historic Neighbourhood webpage on the Halifax.ca website. A Story Map would be an easy, comprehensive way to share information that is cost effective and relatively easy to implement as it does not require coding and is based on existing technology and support processes. The Story Map would be embedded in the existing Point Pleasant Park website, and could be viewed on any kind of device, including mobile devices. Sound files from the current HRM park page can be incorporated into a Story Map format. Due to the ease of creation and ability to use existing data and infrastructure, it is recommended that staff be directed to create a Story Map to test its use and popularity for expansion. Staff within Parks would be identified and trained to maintain and update the story map.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendation in this report. Leveraging story map functionality would involve existing software licenses and internal Parks and Recreation staff time, so there would be no additional cost implications for this option.

Should Council decide to proceed with Options 1 or 2, then an unbudgeted funding source would need to be identified through a report to the Audit & Finance Standing Committee.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks considered rate low.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement is not applicable with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

ALTERNATIVES

- (1) Halifax & West Community Council could recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to develop a mobile app that may be used to access information from a mobile device as outlined in Option #1.
- (2) Halifax & West Community Council could recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to develop a 3rd Party App using Pingstreet technology as outlined in Option #2. This option could be used in combination with the Story Map or a custom developed app, and this particular option would be better served if all HRM services were available on the Pingstreet app.
- (3) Halifax & West Community Council could receive this report for information and not proceed with the request.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Sample Story Map – Downtown Halifax Historic Neighbourhoods

Attachment 2: Sample Ping Street – City of Kitchener

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Alana Tapper, Superintendent Parks West, 902.490.6534

Attachment 1 – Sample Story Map - Downtown Halifax Historic Neighbourhoods

GLOSSARY OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMS [f](#) [t](#) [e](#)

Downtown Halifax Historic Neighbourhoods

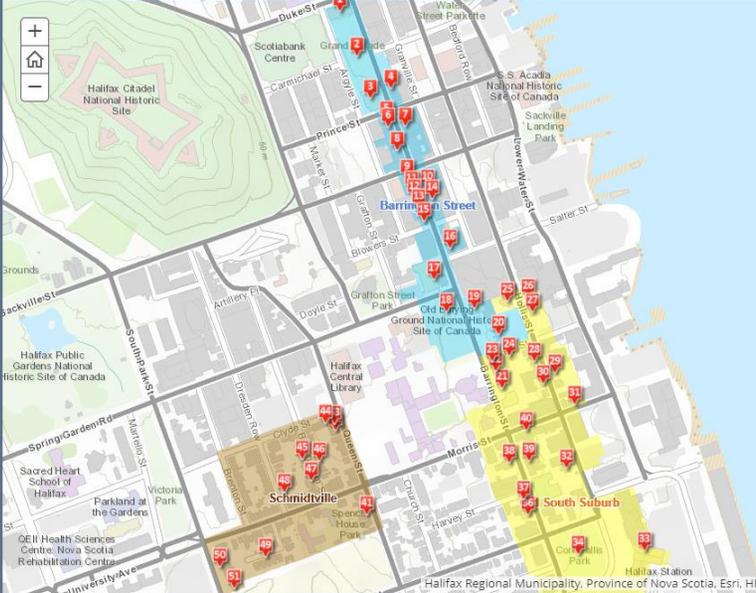
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HALIFAX



Explore Downtown Halifax Historic Neighbourhoods!

Learn about historic places in downtown Halifax by selecting images from the list or points on the map. Each historic place reveals part of the larger story of the historic neighbourhoods of Barrington Street, the Old South Suburb, and Schmidville. These places are only a few of the many historic buildings, open spaces, and neighbourhoods in downtown Halifax. However, a tour of these neighbourhoods will provide a good introduction to the early settlement and evolution of Halifax. All photos taken by HRM (M. Gerrion) except Government House taken by S. Campbell.



Halifax Regional Municipality, Province of Nova Scotia, Esri, HERE, Garmi...



1
City Hall, 1888



2
Grand Parade, 1749



3
St. Paul's Church



4
G.M. Smith Building, 1893



5
St. Paul's Building, 1897



6
Forrester Building, c. 1820



7
Colwell Brothers Building, c. 1871



8
Acadia Insurance Building, 1919



9
Tramway Building, 1916



10
Ketch Building, 1896



11
Church of England Institute, 1889



12
City Clu

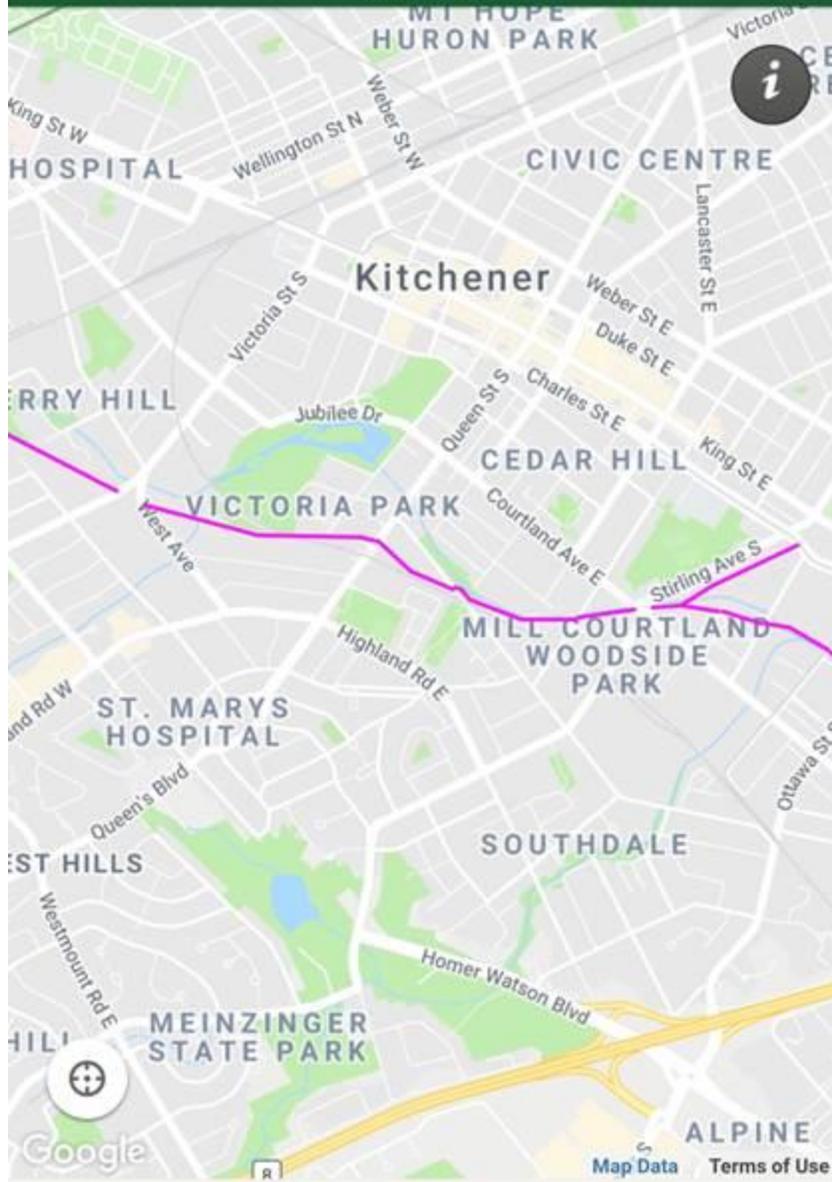
Attachment 2 – Sample Ping Street - City of Kitchener





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