

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Heritage Toronto is accepting proposals for the development of a new microsite to host and highlight Heritage Toronto's plaques and location-based programming in one interactive map experience.

The budget for the plaques map development is \$38,000 to \$40,000, with a projected launch in Spring 2026. The deadline for submissions is Friday, January 9, 2025.

ABOUT HERITAGE TORONTO

For more than 70 years, Heritage Toronto has been building a better city by bringing people together to explore Toronto's shared past and its peoples' lived experiences. Heritage Toronto is a registered non-profit and charitable agency of the City of Toronto.

Heritage Toronto delivers 80+ public programs annually, including [tours](#), [plaques](#), [digital programs](#) and exhibitions, the [Heritage Toronto Awards](#), the [Emerging Historians](#) program and the [Equity Heritage Initiative](#).

Heritage Toronto is run by a small and dedicated team of full-time staff members with the support of contract employees, freelancers, and volunteer board members. The plaques map team will consist of:

- Chris Bateman, Manager, Plaques
- Meg Sutton, Plaques Coordinator

Heritage Toronto's registered charity number: #119266609RR0001

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this project is to provide the public of Toronto and its visitors with a digital resource for exploring the city's history through an exploration of the existing historical plaques. In addition, this project presents an opportunity to join together other existing location-based programming (e.g. walking tours, story maps, articles) by Heritage Toronto.

"Many people have pointed to sites and asked me, 'Is this exactly where this event took place?' I think people need a point of entry to a story—they need a connection, and a marker can be that starting point."

— Susan Fohr, Museum Coordinator,
Fort York National Historic Site

Through this microsite development, Heritage Toronto seeks to highlight and connect all programming produced by Heritage Toronto: 900 plaques, 27 digital tours, and other relevant external content (e.g. open-source projects like OldTO).

The microsite should be an information-rich, visually appealing, and provide users with an easy-to-use method of exploring Toronto's history through a dynamic map interface. The map will be updated to add new plaques and remove outdated ones, so it should be easy for Heritage Toronto staff members to manage and add to as the plaques program and content grows.

AUDIENCE

Per Statistics Canada's 2016 General Social Survey (GSS), 73 per cent of Toronto residents have visited a cultural site. With an estimated population for the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of approximately seven million, the total addressable market (TAM) for this microsite could exceed five million potential users per year.

Whether in-person or online, Heritage Toronto aims to create an accessible and equitable experience for residents, newcomers, and visitors to explore the city's diverse heritage.

EXISTING TECHNOLOGY

Our vision for the plaques map microsite is an API-first, headless CMS microsite that integrates with the existing technology used by Heritage Toronto.

The Heritage Toronto website was most recently redeveloped in 2023. It is hosted on WordPress, and the various programming is supported by a digital tech stack that includes:

- ResourceSpace, DAM for hosting 900+ plaque records (location data, images, and information) [\[link\]](#)
- ArcGIS, a cloud-based mapping tool [\[link\]](#) [\[link\]](#)
- MapSVG, WordPress map plugin (deprecated) [\[link\]](#)
- Cloudways, for managed cloud hosting
- Cloudflare, CDN for security and speed
- Eventbrite, an online platform for hosting event pages
- Formidable, a WordPress plugin for form submissions
- Blackbaud eTapestry, an online fundraising platform for donations

TECHNICAL FUNCTIONALITY

User Experience

- **Location-Based Discovery:** The map should allow users to explore pinpoints geographically by neighbourhood, area, or "What's near me?" that captures their geolocation and offers suggestions nearby.

- **Filtering and Grouping:** The map should allow participants to select subjects of interest from a menu, or by exploring by time period. Tags and filters should offer users a discovery-based route or map view by connecting sites across the city by specific subject or area of influence. Please see the Index for existing content groupings.
- **Database Field Inclusion and Search:** Keyword search ability that will query the database fields for content metadata, date, title, and theme. For the ResourceSpace fields that can support filtering and groupings, please see the Index tab.
- **Curated Tours:** The map should offer the ability to select from a selection of pre-built tours that are curated by Heritage Toronto staff based on timely themes or subjects of interest. These curated tours could be based on existing Heritage Toronto content beyond the plaques (e.g. incorporating content from Galleries and Articles).
- **Map Design:** The map design should consider the best views for the user to experience the content. For example, a terrain view or 3D view for contextualizing locations, or a simplified view for a cleaner design.
- **UI:** User interactions with map pinpoints and other site elements should be engaging and accessible (e.g. how is it indicated to the user that they are hovering over a pinpoint).

Data and Technical Architecture

- **API-First Structure:** Map-related metadata and non-map content (text, images, descriptions, titles) should be stored separately from the map itself.
- **Layering Open-Source Information:** The project should consider the functionality of enriching the map with existing open-source information, see examples in the Index.

Performance

- **Accessibility:** Accessibility is a fundamental consideration in Heritage Toronto programming, and is required to meet WCAG Accessibility Compliance. Please see the existing accessibility statement [\[link\]](#). Map and microsite should be high-contrast, colour-blind friendly, and the site should be accessible via a screen reader. The ability to indicate the accessibility of the stops themselves and the curation of an accessible tour should be considered within the scope of the project.
- **Caching:** The map should employ a caching system to ensure optimized site speed, stability, and load time.

User Accounts and Social

- **User Accounts, Saving, and UGC Map Creation:** The plaques map should consider the functionality of allowing users to save map pins and create their own custom walking tours. However, the preference is for this to be managed by the mapping software, so the Heritage Toronto team is not responsible for managing user profiles and data.
- **Social sharing:** Tours or individual pins should have social sharing buttons that pull in the relevant OG image and metadata.
- **SEO/AEO/GEO:** Careful consideration of how data is read by search engines and LLMs to surface the microsite to more users.

Staff Needs and Functionality

- **Updates:** The map should be dynamic, with new plaques being made available throughout the year as they are completed and others removed if they are taken down for maintenance or replacement. Ideally, update functionality could be done via ResourceSpace at regularly timed intervals (e.g. Sunday at 2AM) or via a manual forced update button to refresh the cache.
- **Reporting Feature:** The map will need to have an ability for users to contact and interact with the Heritage Toronto staff. If a plaque is missing or damaged, users should have the option to submit a report to Heritage Toronto staff. This feature should be accessible from the individual plaque marker.
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** The map should have the ability to include sponsor placements. These may be at a site-wide level, an individual tour level, or a content category level.

SCOPE OF WORK

Project Management

- WBS and Project Management: Oversee project management from project start to launch, including workback schedule, correspondence and meetings, status updates and reporting, and production management.
- Training and Documentation: Provide training and documentation to support Heritage Toronto staff.

Discovery

- Design and Branding: Microsite branding identity work, which should be unique but complementary to the Heritage Toronto branding. Design work will also include establishing a design system and incorporating visual elements like map pinpoints and sponsor logos.
- Software Recommendations: Make recommendations for software, including considerations for API integrations to optimize site speed and load time. Provide recommendations for GIS software used to build the map based on its suitability for the project. Tools currently being considered include, but are not limited to: ArcGIS, Carto, Mapbox, Tableau.
- Standardize Data and Content Categorization: Refine content into curated categories that are distinctly visually represented on the map, and that users can use to filter and search, customizing their experience based on their interests.

Design

- Low-Fidelity Prototyping and Wireframing: Prototyping of features and functionalities, including rounds of revision and approval from stakeholders.
- High-Fidelity Prototyping: High-fidelity prototype that includes both mobile and desktop

views.

Development

- Build Custom Map Using GIS Software: Coding of map, including map filters and search, integrations with third-party tools and user accounts.
- Build APIs to Integrate Existing Data: Manage the API connection to support multimedia content for each historical plaque or landmark. Integrated caching system to ensure optimized site speed, stability, and load time.
- Build Microsite Via Headless CMS: Microsite should be optimized for desktop and mobile, with careful consideration for the information presented for each device type.

Accessibility and Testing

- Responsive Build and Browser: Testing on multiple device types to ensure compliance with most common browsers and devices.
- WCAG Accessibility Compliance: Adherence to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), specifically the WCAG 2.1 AA standard,
- Quality Assurance and Testing: Quality assurance testing and refinement

Launch

- Warranty: Launch and post-launch bug fixes and snagging for a warranty period (90 days) following the launch to ensure stability.

BUDGET

The budget for the plaques map is approximately \$38,000 to \$40,000.

This budget should cover:

- **Software Advising and Implementation:** The budget should include advising on the appropriate software tools, and the implementation of those tools e.g. headless CMS, GIS, and others.
Note: The cost of the tools themselves (e.g. annual subscriptions) will be budgeted separately.
- **Branding and Design:** The budget should include design elements, a design system, and a website style guide
- **Information Architecture Analysis:** Information gathering, competitive analysis and feature recommendations, site map creation, and user flows
- **Web Design and Development:** Back-end design, thoughtful UI/UX, front-end design
- **API Implementation:** Planning and implementation for API integrations with existing software
- **Testing:** QA, UAT, and accessibility testing.
- **Project Management:** The budget should include all the resources to handle the project management tasks, meetings, training and documentation.

Proposed Payment Schedule

- Payment 1: 25% deposit on contract signing
- Payment 2: 25% payment after brand identity and design
- Payment 3: 25% payment billable after design and prototyping
- Payment 4: 25% payment billable after successful launch and post-launch review

Proposed Project Timeline

- Proposal submissions open: Fri, Dec 12, 2025
- Proposal submission deadline: Fri, Jan 9, 2026
- Vendor interviews: Wed, Jan 14 to Fri, Jan 16, 2026
- Vendor selection: Mon, Jan 19, 2026
- Brand identity discovery and design: Mon, Jan 19 to Fri, Feb 6, 2026
- Design and prototyping: Mon, Feb 9 to Fri, Feb 27, 2026
- Development and QA: Mon, Mar 2 to Fri, Apr 10, 2026
- Testing and revisions: Mon, Apr 13 to Fri, Apr 24, 2026
- Website launch, post-launch bug fixes and optimization: Week of Apr 27, 2026
- Hand-off and maintenance: Mon, May 4 to ongoing

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please submit proposals in PDF format. Proposals should include:

- **Project Team:** Include a bio of your organization and the individuals who will be working on the project.
- **Process:** Tell us about how you work, including working hours, cadence, communication style, and anything that will help us understand how we can best collaborate.
- **Budget:** Please provide a budget, including a detailed breakdown for each phase of the development project.
- **Deliverables and Timelines:** Outline your recommendations for the project, including timelines and milestones. While we have outlined a proposed schedule in this RFP, we are open to adjustments based on your expertise.
- **Software:** Include your recommendations for tooling or process for software selection.
- **Portfolio and Past Projects:** Please provide links to past projects, references, or reviews.
- **Ongoing Support:** Please include available options for continuing support and site management, including any additional costs.

Please submit proposals by **Friday, January 9, 2026** using this form:

[Form submission link](#)

For questions about your submission, please contact:

Lydia Hrycko
lydiahrycko@gmail.com

INDEX

REFERENCES AND INSPIRATION

1. [NYC LGBT](#)
 - **What we like about it:** Fast loading, Google Maps-based, content curations and groupings, listing of historical sites categorized visually by colour
 - **What we would do differently:** Crowded cluster of dots is not very clean or user-friendly, preference for curation rather than aggregating all points on the map
2. [An Extremely Detailed Map of the 2020 Election](#)
 - **What we like about it:** Takes an overwhelming amount of data and presents it cleanly. Good looking, feels richly detailed without being overwhelming, easy to navigate.
 - **What we would do differently:** No option to dig deeper than the data presented on mouse over
3. [Blue Plaques](#)
 - **What we like about it:** Timeline view, large inventory of data and map points, hosted on ArcGIS
 - **What we would do differently:** Limited UI when scrolling over map pinpoints, information is strictly text and not presented in a visually appealing way, very flat map that doesn't provide much contextual information
4. [Ireland Holly Wells](#)
 - **What we like about it:** Clusters of pinpoints to not overwhelm user

- **What we would do differently:** Limited UI when scrolling over map pinpoints, information is strictly text and not presented in a visually appealing way, very flat map that doesn't provide much contextual information
5. [National Inventory of Architectural Heritage \(NIAH\) 3D Viewer](#)
- **What we like about it:** Counter of visible stops, daylight toggle (sun position) that gives users a realistic view
 - **What we would do differently:** Slow load time, limited UI when scrolling over map pinpoints, information is strictly text and not presented in a visually appealing way,

OPEN SOURCE MAP DATA

1. Sidewalk Labs OldTO [\[link\]](#)
2. City of Toronto Open Data [\[link\]](#)

HERITAGE TORONTO WEBSITE DATA

WordPress Content Categories

1. 2SLGBTQIA+
2. Agriculture
3. Architecture and Buildings
4. Arts
5. Black History
6. Business and Industry
7. East Asian Heritage
8. Education
9. Faith and Religion
10. Food and Drink
11. Health Care
12. Immigration and Multiculturalism
13. Indigenous History
14. Infrastructure and Public Works
15. Latin American Heritage
16. Law and Justice
17. Military, War, and Conflict
18. Parks and Nature
19. Politics
20. South Asian Heritage
21. Sports and Leisure
22. STEM

23. Transportation
24. Women's History

RESOURCESPACE DATA

ResourceSpace Categories

1. Advocacy
2. Community or Special Events
3. Education and Engagement
4. Emerging Historian
5. Heritage Toronto Awards
6. Marketing and Communication
7. Plaques
8. Tours
9. Other

ResourceSpace Sub-Categories

1. Architecture Award
2. Bike Tour
3. Book Award
4. Bus Tour
5. Commemorative Plaque
6. Community Heritage Award
7. Consultation
8. Digital
9. Doors Open
10. Exhibit
11. Heritage Property Plaque
12. Lecture
13. Legacy Plaque
14. Other
15. Panel
16. Public History Award
17. Short Publication Award
18. Sounds Like Toronto
19. Special Achievement Award
20. State of Heritage
21. Volunteer Award
22. Walking Tour

ResourceSpace Historical Themes

1. 2SLGBTQIA+
2. Access and Disability
3. Agriculture
4. Archaeology
5. Architecture and Buildings
6. Black History
7. Business and Industry
8. Charities and Membership Organizations
9. Disasters
10. East Asian History
11. East Asian Heritage
12. Education
13. Entertainment and Leisure
14. Faith and Religion
15. First Nations
16. Food and Drink
17. Former Towns and Villages
18. Health Care
19. Immigration, Refugees, and Multiculturalism
20. Immigration and Multiculturalism
21. Indigenous History
22. Infrastructure and Public Works
23. Inuit
24. Labour History
25. Latin American History
26. Latin American Heritage
27. Law and Justice
28. Law and Social Justice
29. Métis
30. Military, War, and Conflict
31. Movies and Visual Arts
32. Music and Performing Arts
33. Parks and Nature
34. Politics
35. Public Works and Infrastructure
36. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
37. Southeast Asian History
38. South Asian History
39. South Asian Heritage
40. Sports
41. Sports and Leisure
42. STEM

43. Suburban History
44. Transportation
45. West Asian and North African History
46. Women's History
47. Writing and Literature

ResourceSpace Time Periods

1. Pre-colonization
2. 1615–1793
3. 1794–1834
4. 1835–1899
5. 1900–1953
6. 1954–1998
7. 1999–today

ResourceSpace Toronto City Wards

1. Ward 1 Etobicoke North
2. Ward 2 Etobicoke Centre
3. Ward 3 Etobicoke-Lakeshore
4. Ward 4 Parkdale-High Park
5. Ward 5 York South-Weston
6. Ward 6 York Centre
7. Ward 7 Humber River-Black Creek
8. Ward 8 Eglinton-Lawrence
9. Ward 9 Davenport
10. Ward 10 Spadina-Fort York
11. Ward 11 University-Rosedale
12. Ward 12 Toronto-St. Paul's
13. Ward 13 Toronto Centre
14. Ward 14 Toronto-Danforth
15. Ward 15 Don Valley West
16. Ward 16 Don Valley East
17. Ward 17 Don Valley North
18. Ward 18 Willowdale
19. Ward 19 Beaches-East York
20. Ward 20 Scarborough Southwest
21. Ward 21 Scarborough Centre
22. Ward 22 Scarborough-Agincourt
23. Ward 23 Scarborough North
24. Ward 24 Scarborough-Guildwood
25. Ward 25 Scarborough-Rouge Park

ResourceSpace Toronto Neighbourhoods

1. Agincourt North
2. Agincourt South-Malvern West
3. Alderwood
4. Annex
5. Avondale
6. Banbury-Don Mills
7. Bathurst Manor
8. Bay-Cloverhill
9. Bayview Village
10. Bayview Woods-Steeles
11. Beaches-East York
12. Bedford Park-Nortown
13. Beechborough-Greenbrook
14. Bendale-Glen Andrew
15. Bendale South
16. Birchcliffe-Cliffside
17. Black Creek
18. Blake-Jones
19. Briar Hill-Belgravia
20. Bridle Path-Sunnybrook-York Mills
21. Broadview North
22. Brookhaven-Amesbury
23. Cabbagetown-South St.James Town
24. Caledonia-Fairbank
25. Casa Loma
26. Centennial Scarborough
27. Church-Wellesley
28. Clairlea-Birchmount
29. Clanton Park
30. Cliffcrest
31. Corso Italia-Davenport
32. Danforth
33. Danforth East York
34. Don Valley Village
35. Dorset Park
36. Dovercourt Village
37. Downsview
38. Downtown Yonge East
39. Dufferin Grove
40. East End-Danforth

41. East L'Amoreaux
42. East Willowdale
43. Edenbridge-Humber Valley
44. Eglinton East
45. Elms-Old Rexdale
46. Englemount-Lawrence
47. Eringate-Centennial-West Deane
48. Etobicoke City Centre
49. Etobicoke West Mall
50. Fenside-Parkwoods
51. Flemingdon Park
52. Forest Hill North
53. Forest Hill South
54. Fort York-Liberty Village
55. Glenfield-Jane Heights
56. Goldfale-Cedarbrae-Woburn
57. Greenwood-Coxwell
58. Guildwood
59. Harbourfront-CityPlace
60. Henry Farm
61. High Park-Swansea
62. High Park North
63. Highland Creek
64. Hillcrest Village
65. Humber Bay Shores
66. Humber Heights-Westmount
67. Humber Summit
68. Humbermede
69. Humewood-Cedarvale
70. Ionview
71. Islington
72. Junction-Wallace Emerson
73. Junction Area
74. Keelesdale-Eglinton West
75. Kennedy Park
76. Kensington-Chinatown
77. Kingsview Village-The Westway
78. Kingsway South
79. L'Amoreaux West
80. Lambton Baby Point
81. Lansing-Westgate
82. Lawrence Park North
83. Lawrence Park South
84. Leaside-Bennington
85. Little Portugal

86. Long Branch
87. Malvern East
88. Malvern West
89. Maple Leaf
90. Markland Wood
91. Milliken
92. Mimico-Queensway
93. Morningside
94. Morningside Heights
95. Moss Park
96. Mount Dennis
97. Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown
98. Mount Pleasant East
99. New Toronto
100. Newtonbrook East
101. Newtonbrook West
102. North Riverdale
103. North St. James Town
104. North Toronto
105. O'Connor-Parkview
106. Oakdale-Beverley Heights
107. Oakridge
108. Oakwood Village
109. Old East York
110. Palmerston-Little Italy
111. Parkwoods-O'Connor Hills
112. Pelmo Park-Humberlea
113. Playter Estates-Danforth
114. Pleasant View
115. Princess-Rosethorn
116. Regent Park
117. Rexdale-Kipling
118. Rockcliffe-Smythe
119. Roncesvalles
120. Rosedale-Moore Park
121. Runnymede-Bloor West Village
122. Rustic
123. Scarborough Village
124. South Eglinton-Davisville
125. South Parkdale
126. South Riverdale
127. St. Andrew-Windfields
128. St Lawrence-East Bayfront-The Islands
129. Steeles
130. Stonegate-Queensway

131. Tam O'Shanter-Sullivan
132. Taylor-Massey
133. The Beaches
134. Thistletown-Beaumont Heights
135. Thorncliffe Park
136. Trinity-Bellwoods
137. University
138. Victoria Village
139. Wellington Place
140. West Hill
141. West Humber-Clairville
142. West Queen West
143. West Rouge
144. Westminster-Branson
145. Weston
146. Weston-Pelham Park
147. Wexford/Maryvale
148. Willowdale West
149. Willowridge-Martingrove-Richview
150. Woburn North
151. Woodbine-Lumsden
152. Woodbine Corridor
153. Wychwood
154. Yonge-Bay Corridor
155. Yonge-Doris
156. Yonge-Eglinton
157. Yonge-St. Clair
158. York University Heights
159. Yorkdale-Glen Park