

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 22, 2017</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>CATHY SAUNDERS CITY CLERK</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>REQUEST FOR NAMING OF VIMY RIDGE PARK</b>

**RECOMMENDATION**

That, on the recommendation the Civic Administration, the request to name a parcel of land shown on the attached Appendix "A", located adjacent to the Charlie Fox Overpass at Hale Street and Trafalgar Street, "Vimy Ridge Park" BE DENIED as the future use of the site as parkland is not anticipated and the land needs to be held in abeyance pending further clarity regarding the provincial high speed rail initiative.

**PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER**

None.

**BACKGROUND**

The attached (Appendix "B") submission from Shawn Lewis, as a member of the Argyle Community Association and a member with the Royal Canadian Legion (Duchess of Kent Branch 263), to name property located on the south-east side of the Charlie Fox Overpass at Hale Street and Trafalgar Street "Vimy Ridge Park" has been considered in accordance with the "Naming/Re-naming or Dedicating of Municipal Property, Buildings and Park Elements" Policy.

The following additional materials were submitted in support of the application:

- A letter of support from the Honourable Irene Mathysen, Member of Parliament for London-Fanshawe
- A petition in support from eighteen (18) individuals
- A letter of support from in support from Trinity on Hale, United Church Community Centre
- An email of support from Brian Harris, District A Deputy Commander, Royal Canadian Legion

Rationale in Support of the Application

The application submission and additional material indicate the following in support of the application:

- Renaming the land would commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 2017.
- The land could be dedicated in honour of Canadian Veterans past, present, and future.
- On April 9, 2016, an official dedication ceremony was held to install the "Vimy Ridge Memorial". The Vimy Ridge Memorial is comprised of a metal sculpture of a World War I era helmet atop a rifle, a flag pole flying the Canadian flag, along with a cross and dedication plaque. The applicant is concerned that without officially designating this parcel of land as Vimy Ridge Park, the ability to maintain the Vimy Ridge Memorial feature may be compromised in the long term.
- Vimy Ridge Park is in line with the use of the area as the Charlie Fox Memorial Overpass pays tribute to local veteran Charlie Fox and Canadian pilots of World War II. Additionally, the north-east side of the Charlie Fox Overpass is "Trooper Wilson Place", a small residential street named in honour of London's Mark Wilson, who gave his life in Afghanistan in service to our country.

In addition, a door-to-door canvass was conducted on April 24, 2016 to solicit the support of the residents of the immediate area. All residents with whom contact was achieved were unanimous in their support of this proposal.

In addition to the neighbourhood support, the Argyle Community Association passed a motion at its Annual General Meeting on April 20, 2016, to express the support of the membership.

It is noted that an additional report has been submitted to the same meeting of the Community and Protective Services Committee seeking approval to rename an existing park from Mildred Barons Park to "Vimy Ridge Park".

### The Battle of Vimy Ridge

The material submitted in support of the application provides the following history of the Battle of Vimy Ridge:

The Battle of Vimy Ridge marked the first time all four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force participated in battle together, making the achievement and sacrifice a truly Canadian moment in history. The Battle of Vimy Ridge is one of the most important moments in our country's history. Many historians concede it was the birth of our nation, the first time our young nation was recognized on a worldwide perspective. The Canadian Corps suffered 10,602 casualties: 3,598 killed and 7,004 wounded. The cost was high, but the victory at Vimy Ridge changed the course of World War I and as a result the course of history.

### Review of Council's entitled "Naming/Re-naming or Dedicating of Municipal Property, Buildings and Park Elements"

The Council Policy entitled "Naming/Re-naming or Dedicating of Municipal Property, Buildings and Park Elements" states the following :

- (a) Priority (in order of preference) shall be given to continuing the current naming/re-naming practice of City of London property and buildings after:
1. the area or planning district in which the property or building is located to provide a geographical association to help the public to locate to a park, bridge or building more easily;
  2. the most dominant "constant feature either within or nearby" the selected site such as an associated significant ecological or natural resource feature;
  3. an historical name related to London's heritage and/or historical folklore;
  4. an event or person of international, national or provincial significance; or
  5. an organization (or individual, with the section of election officials currently in office) to recognize:
    - particular activities and significant contributions to the London community and/or society; and/or
    - outstanding contributions and/or sponsorships made toward the development and/or enhancement of a property or building.
- (b) Preference shall be given to naming City of London Elements (within parks or buildings) after an organization or an individual.

The Policy indicates that names shall be unique and name duplication and similar sounding names shall be avoided.

Applicants are to assume responsibility for securing consensus with the community with respect to the application. Opposition to the application must be addressed by the applicant.

The Policy further indicates that the applicant is to consult with external stakeholders in the community and identify possible objections and/or positive responses to determine the level of support for the requested civic naming. As noted previously in this report, we are receipt of submissions in support from the Honourable Member of Parliament Irene Mathyssen, a petition in support from eighteen (18) individuals and a letter from in support from Trinity on Hall, United Church Community Centre. In addition Mr. Lewis indicates that he is a member of the Argyle

Community Association and a member in good standing with the Royal Canadian Legion (Duchess of Kent Branch 263).

Application Review

The Municipal Addressing Advisory Group (MAAG), which is comprised of representatives from Emergency Services, Utility Companies, the City’s Planning, Compliance Services, Clerk’s and Engineering Services has indicated no objection to the proposed park name “Vimy Ridge”.

The City’s Realty Services, in consultation with Transportation Planning and Design, has indicated that the subject land is being held in abeyance until further clarity from the provincial high speed rail initiative is obtained. The CN Rail corridor adjacent to the property in question has been identified as a high potential route and a result the subject land could be impacted in both the short and the long term. The land is remnant and Municipal Council will need to determine the long term use of this land. As a result, Realty Services is of the opinion that it would be premature to determine the suitability of this land as a park, which directly impacts any consideration to naming the land as “Vimy Park”.

Parks Planning indicates that they have formally declined any municipal need for a park at the subject location and therefore are not in support of the request.

Although the Civic Administration recognizes the importance of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Vimy Ridge, there are a number of events and initiatives that the City will be undertaking to commemorate the Anniversary. The Civic Administration indicates that if a park were to be created to recognize this important event, a property in a more prominent location of the City would be more appropriate. The Civic Administration is working on a “Veterans” park to be located at Veterans Memorial Parkway and Oxford Street through the Veterans Memorial Parkway project, where future commemorative features and celebrations could occur.

The City of London wants to continue to honour its Canadian Veterans (past, present and future). This attached list (Appendix “C”) provides an example of a snapshot of a variety of commemoration initiatives and other contributions the City of London has been and is involved with to honour our Veterans and the Military. Throughout Canada’s sesquicentennial year, and over the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vimy Ridge in April 2017, we have a unique opportunity to bring awareness to these initiatives and recognize the contributions that Veterans have made to Canada and London.

Financial Implications

The Civic Administration has advised that the cost to place signage at the Park is minimal and can be absorbed within the Parks Planning budget.

The public may have higher expectations for the development and maintenance of any park that is established in recognition of our Veterans, and therefore could result in increased capital and operational costs. However, some cost efficiencies may be achievable by aligning a Vimy Park venue with the Veterans Memorial Parkway.

Conclusion

The Civic Administration has noted concerns with respect to the request to name a parcel of land located adjacent to Charlie Fox Overpass at Hales Street and Trafalgar Street, “Vimy Ridge Park”, and is recommending that the request therefore be denied.

<b>PREPARED BY:</b>
<b>CATHY SAUNDERS CITY CLERK</b>

## APPENDIX "B"

Cathy Saunders

City Clerk, London ON

April 25, 2016-04-25

Dear Ms. Saunders,

As a resident of east London and as the Community Outreach member of the Argyle Community Association, and as a member in good standing with the Royal Canadian Legion (Duchess of Kent Branch 263), it is my privilege to write to you today to officially make application to the City of London for the creation of "Vimy Ridge Park".

This request is to officially designate property on the south east side of the Charlie Fox Overpass at Hale and Trafalgar properly zoned and designated as "Vimy Ridge Park"

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, an official dedication ceremony was held on the land in question for the "Vimy Memorial" installation. The Vimy Memorial feature, comprised of a metal sculpture of a WWI era helmet atop a rifle, alongside a flag pole flying the Canadian flag along with a cross and dedication plaque have been well received by the neighbourhood (see attached). However, without officially designating this parcel of land as Vimy Park, we are concerned about the ability to maintain the Vimy Memorial feature in the long term.

Thematically, this is an appropriate designation for this piece of land. It is consistent with the dedication of the "Charlie Fox Memorial Overpass" at Hale and Trafalgar Streets, a beautiful installation at the round about that pays tribute to local veteran Charlie Fox and Canadian pilots of WWII. On the north east side of the Charlie Fox Overpass is "Trooper Wilson Place", a small residential street named in honour of London's Mark Wilson, who gave his life in service to our country in Afghanistan. The addition of Vimy Ridge Park on the south east side of the Charlie Fox Overpass would bring together tributes to Canadian Forces service in WWI, WWII, and Afghanistan.

History has shown that it is important remembrance features be located in close proximity and in highly visible locations in order to ensure they do not fade from public awareness and memory. This proposal achieves that, by providing a memorial park for reflection and remembrance alongside existing tributes.

This proposal is also supported by the community, including nearby residents. Prior to the installation of the Vimy Memorial, organizer Larry Lauer of Hale St. engaged with residents in the area to gain their support. In addition to Larry's efforts, past Argyle Community Association Infrastructure representative Nick Sauter has been actively seeking park designation for this space for more than 3 years. Considerable community dialogue has occurred around this proposal and residents are supportive. In follow-up to that, a door-to-door canvass was conducted on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 to solicit the support of the residents of the immediate area. All residents with whom contact was achieved were unanimous in their support of this proposal. An attached scan of the signatures of support collected during this contact is attached. Even those who were not immediate residents but happened to be in the area expressed their support.

In addition to neighbourhood support, the Argyle Community Association passed a motion at our Annual General Meeting of April 20<sup>th</sup>, to express the support of the membership and call on the City to accept this proposal.

I have also been able to have a dialogue with MP Irene Mathyssen and with the District Command of the Royal Canadian Legion. Both the Legion and our local Member of Parliament, who serves on parliament's Veterans Affairs Committee, have expressed their support and are providing letters confirming that support.

It is my hope, on behalf of all those supporting this proposal, that upon review you will be able to provide a positive recommendation to Council to move forward with establishing Vimy Ridge Park at the south east corner of Hale and Trafalgar St. It is the sincere hope of all involved that this can occur in a timely manner so that the official designation can occur in coordination with the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 2017

Sincerely,

Shawn Lewis

Infrastructure and Community Outreach Chair,

Argyle Community Association

APPENDIX “C”

Examples of City of London Veterans Initiatives Involvement

Type of Initiative	Name
<b>PARKS AND GARDENS</b>  development, enhancement and maintenance	Victoria Park including a Veterans Garden
	Veterans Memorial Parkway (VMP) including the National/Provincial Flag memorial and 8 commemorative features
	Veteran’s Garden on River Road
	Trooper Mark Wilson Park – small memorial plaque
	Lambeth Veterans Park
<b>TREE PLANTING</b>	VMP – Honour Guard blocks of trees
	Vimy Ridge Commemorative Tree Planting
<b>PUBLIC ART AND MONUMENTS</b>  (creation and maintenance)	Boer War Monument
	Holy Roller Tank
	Charley Fox Memorial Monument
	LAV III Monument
	Victoria Park Cenotaph
	Victoria Park Cannons
	Lambeth Cenotaph
	Simcoe School War Memorial
	Sacrifice Memorial Public Art
	Byron Legion Public Art
	Dutch Carillon in Victoria Park
	Veterans Memorial Parkway (VMP)
<b>STREET AND BRIDGE NAMING</b>	Field Marshal Wolseley Bridge
	Charley Fox Memorial Overpass
	Trooper Wilson Place
	Streets of Honour Program
	Veterans Memorial Parkway (VMP)
	Trafalgar Street
<b>CEREMONIES</b>	Remembrance Day
	Veterans Memorial Graves
	Celebrate Canada 150
	Veterans Cemetery Decoration Day
<b>MUNICIPAL GRANTS</b>	Canada Day at the Forks
	Community Heritage Investment Program (CHIP) Grants e.g., funding to Secrets of Radar and RCR Museum
<b>INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE PLAQUES AND DISPLAYS</b>	Victoria Park Interpretive Signage and Plaques
	Canadian War Cemeteries in Victoria Park
	City Hall Lobby plaques and books (e.g., liberation of Holland, First Hussars) and Remembrance Books of our War Dead
	City of London Website and Map (Streets of Honour Program and Book of Remembrance)
	Western Counties Cultural Heritage Landscape Interpretive Signage
<b>HERITAGE MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE BUILDINGS</b>	1st Hussars Museum
	Eldon House
	Museum London
	T-Block (once part of Wolseley Barracks)