

**Veterans Memorial Parkway Community Program  
September 2011 – June 2017  
Summary Report**

## **Background**

The Veterans Memorial Parkway Community Program was a unique project which honours veterans, enhances the environment, and improves the local community. Veterans are honoured through the creation and installation of a series of rock based features acknowledging their service and sacrifice to the community; the local urban forest is enhanced through the planting of thousands of large caliper trees; and the community benefits through the implementation of a professional landscaping plan along a major access route into London's heart.

## **Honouring Veterans**

Nine commemorative features were installed along the Veterans Memorial Parkway (VMP). Six as part of the original infrastructure project by the City of London, the Province of Ontario, and the Federal Government. The VMP Community Program created three more, Bravery (with the Local Chapter of Landscape Ontario), a VMP Gateway sign (with General Dynamics Land System Canada, and an interpretation of the Canadian Flag in Stone (with Triple H Landscaping and the 61<sup>st</sup> Scout Group).

To blend with the monuments, trees were planted in straight rows and uniform spacing to create the impression of “soldiers on parade”. Each block of trees, typically 100 or more, were identified as “Living Guards of Honour”.

## **Enhancing the Urban Forest**

Approximately 2,700 large trees between 40mm & 55mm in diameter were added by the VMP Community Program to the 300 surviving caliper trees planted in 2010 by the London Area Scoutrees Program. Although a detailed survey of the tree needs to be done, observations seem to indicate that the 95% survival rate recorded in the 2015 survey seems to be holding.

## **Community Engagement**

The various sectors of London's community participated in the project to a very large extent. Volunteers contributed almost 15,000 hours of service, worth an estimated \$500,000. Volunteers came from London Area Scouts and Guides, various Community Organizations, employees and their families from the corporate sponsors, students from Fanshawe College and Western University, and professionals from the area's landscape and arboriculture sectors. Community sponsors also contributed over \$300,000 in cash donations and an estimated \$136,000 in donations-in-kind.

In addition, many of the businesses along the VMP have taken it upon themselves to maintain the “Living Guards of Honour” in front of their establishments. Many community volunteers have come out in the spring as part of the City of London’s Clean and Green program to pick-up the garbage and litter that accumulates along the parkway over the winter.

### **Innovation and Research**

The VMP Community Program approached community-based tree planting project in a different and somewhat unique manner. The nationally award winning methodology (Canadian Nursery and Landscape Association Community Engagement Award 2014) that was developed proved that properly managed community volunteers with the help of professional volunteers and the VMP Community program staff can safely plant large caliper trees (40 – 60 mm in diameter) with a much higher survivability percentage than normal for “Street Trees”.

The VMP Community Program Methodology was also recognized by the International Society of Arborists in a feature article in their Ontario Arborist magazine.

### **The VMP Community Program Methodology:**

- In general, a planting project of 200 – 500 trees is done by large numbers of community volunteers supported by volunteer professionals and assisted by staff from the VMP Community Program.
- Tree planting projects are designed to plant all the trees in a single morning, followed by an after-planting event such as BBQ’s.
- Planting sites are planned, approved, permitted, and professionally marked in concert with the various departments of the City of London.
- Preparations such as the digging of the holes and the placement of trees and planting materials are completed several days before the actual planting date by a combination of volunteer and paid professionals.
- Volunteers are assembled at a central location, formed into teams, and briefed and trained by their team leaders and VMP CP Staff.
- Depending on the site locations, volunteers are transported to the planting site by buses.
- Volunteers are kept safe through partnering with the Search and Rescue Team of St. John’s Ambulance and London’s Auxiliary Police Force. The VMP CP was able to achieve a virtually spotless safety record (only 2 relatively minor injuries in 15,000 volunteer hours over 7 years).

### **Best Practices**

The VMP Community Program was committed to developing the best planting techniques that were both possible and practical. To that end, the VMP Community Program:

- Pioneered in Ontario, the use of a 48” diameter tree planting auger as bigger holes are better for tree acclimatization and survival.



- Partnered with A&L Canada Laboratories to conduct soil sampling of planting sites so that we could properly select the best trees for the actual environment in which they are to be planted.
- Experimented with easy to use soil amendments and supplements.
- Conducted an experiment with Vineland Research to see if major site modifications can improve tree survivability and health.
- Developed a tree survey kit and methodologies that can be used by young volunteers to collect data on tree development and condition.
- Created and maintained a tree database with information on every tree planted by the organization.
- Experimented with “mudding-in”, a technique of tree planting that helps to secure the root-ball and stabilize the trees until they can “settle-in” and adapt to their new environment.
- Experimented with alternative tree wraps, staking and tethering, and the use of coco-nut fibre mats instead of mulch both to improve ease of installation and effectiveness.
- Where possible conducted after planting watering, especially during droughts in the first two years.
- Experimented with different tree species based on their survivability in “harsh” environments rather than strictly following a “native tree species” policy.

Over the years, planting along the VMP has become an annual event, where participants contribute to the infrastructure of their city and their communities and have a little fun as well at the post planting BBQ. Contributions from the Original Cakerie were a big hit at the BBQ.



## Finance Report

The Veterans Memorial Parkway Community Program has also been a great financial success over its seven year run. The surviving trees along the VMP have an infrastructure value of \$1,500,000. They were planted a cost to the City of London of under \$500,000. The community contributed over \$600,000 in cash and donations-in-kind. Volunteers contributed another \$600,000+ worth of time and effort.

From the beginning of the program, the City of London made funds available for program and project development, fund-raising, community engagement, marketing and communications, and general administrative support. In 2014, council approved additional funding at \$50,000 per year until the end of 2017. \$25,000 of the 2017 allocation remains.

In addition, the Veterans Memorial Parkway Community Program shows a cash surplus of approximately \$28,000. The majority of these funds represent the tree replacement allowance and some last-minute donations that arrived after the program was completed.

A financial summary follows and a detailed financial statement can be found below in the appendices.

## Financial Summary 2011-2017

### Revenue

City of London - Program Development & Support Grants	295,000.00
City of London - Tree Planting Grants	188,400.00
City of London - VMP Maintenance Limited Contract	42,110.00
Community Support Donations	303,683.20
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>829,193.20</b>

### Volunteer Value & Donations-in-Kind

Volunteer Value	502,400.00
Donations-in-Kind	136,160.00
<b>Total Volunteer Value</b>	<b>638,560.00</b>
<b>Total Program Value</b>	<b>1,467,753.20</b>

### Expenditures

Program Development & Support	279,000.00
Program Overhead	18,640.66
Promotional Expenses	20,027.60
Planting Stock	339,946.48
Planting Materials	42,590.96



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Volunteer Related Expenses	35,788.15
Commemorative Project Expenses	32,726.50
Maintenance Costs	31,910.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>800,630.35</b>
<b>Cash Surplus or (Deficit)</b>	<b>28,562.85</b>



## Observations

1. Over the course of the program, the steering committee drew on the accumulated experience of landscapers, arborists, and foresters for tree planting advice. Unfortunately, all of that experience lead to a great deal of differing opinions regarding techniques and best practices. We listened to everyone, consulted with Forestry educators, and researched best practices from a variety of sources. In the end, we tried various techniques, documented what we did, and have attempted to monitor the results. In the next few years, we should continue to survey the condition of the planted trees and match that data against the planting methods.
2. Urban streets and arterials roadways are harsh environments for trees. Compaction, lack of organic materials, soil chemistry, and heavy salt loads are a few of the problems faced by trees trying to establish themselves in these specialized mini-ecosystems. In our experience, tree species should be selected for their ability to survive and thrive, rather than by adherence to a desire to return to a historical eco-system. Wherever practical, the VMP Community Program used native trees, but in order to have a healthy diversity of tree species, the program experimented with non-native species that were better suited to the environments encountered. We have taken into consideration the “invasiveness” of the non-native trees selected.
3. Projects of this nature, need to take into account the opinions of the community in which the project takes place. The truth of the adage “Culture eats Strategy for Breakfast” is readily evident on the VMP and with the tree planting project. The City of London policy on the VMP as with similar arterial roadways in the city, is to allow the planting sites to naturalize. Although understandable, this policy runs counter the feelings of many residents in the area. Areas where the grass is not cut appear to be neglected. Since the VMP is designed to honour veterans, the impression of “neglect” rapidly evolved into anger that veterans were being “disrespected”. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many of the businesses along the VMP are voluntarily maintaining the “Living Guards of Honour” fronting their properties, providing a very visible contrast.
4. Properly supervised and supported Community Volunteers can successfully engage in large scale caliper tree planting projects in highly visible areas. Based on the data accumulated to-date, the volunteers, especially Scouts and Guides, have a higher success rate than the professionals. We believe that this is due to an willingness to adhere to different planting methodologies and a vested interest in the success of the project.



## Recommendations

1. Given the success of the VMP Community Program, many businesses and community groups have expressed an interest in participating in similar projects across the City of London.

*We therefore recommend that City Council consider supporting a similar community base tree planting initiative.*

2. There was a bit of confusion between the various roles of the program and project management teams of the VMP Community Program.

*We therefore recommend that program and project development, fund-raising, marketing and communications, and community engagement be considered separately from the project management and administration built into each individual project plan and budget.*

3. Based on the research and experience available, after-care is an important component for success in tree survivability and viability post planting. Trees need to be watered during times of drought during the first couple of years after their planting. There are also some relatively simple and inexpensive treatments that can be applied to reduce the effects of salt on young recently planted trees. For example, some municipalities such as Brampton spread gypsum around trees planted in medians and boulevards in high salt-load areas. These treatments in the spring have proved to be much less expensive than the replacement costs for trees that have died. Trees should be pruned as required to help them get a good start.

*It is therefore recommended that an after-care program be implemented by the appropriate departments with the City administration.*

4. As previously stated, city streets and arterial roadways are harsh environments for trees. Soil compaction, lack of organic material, high PH levels, and soil chemistry need to be assessed to determine what are the factors that will likely stress newly planted trees.

*It is therefore, recommended that soil testing, consideration for site amendments, and soil enhancements become an integral part of the planning process for any future planting project.*

5. Research is key to the development of successful tree planting methodologies and techniques. Practices should be based on data and not on opinion. Data collection and analysis strategies are therefore important to the success of future planting projects. The VMP Community Program recorded a great deal of data at initial planting of the trees along the VMP.

*It is therefore recommended, that some or all of the cash surplus of the VMP Community Program be used to fund a comprehensive community volunteer based survey of all the trees planted as part of the VMP Community Program. We have been working with local area Scouts and Guides to develop the means to conduct these surveys with volunteers. As a result, a strategy and a proposal for conducting such a research initiative can be easily prepared.*

6. To-date there appears to be as many as five different City of London departments and divisions involved in various tree planting projects. This creates a confusing situation for community-based planting organizations with regards to conflicting priorities, regulations, and strategies.



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*It is therefore recommended that the City of London creates an internal coordinating committee and that community based tree planting organizations are invited to participate with that committee.*

To the best of our knowledge, the data contained within this report is accurate.

Barry A. Sandler, B.A. B.Ed.  
Executive Director

Cam Cunningham  
Chair, Board of Directors





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**Veterans Memorial Parkway Community Program  
Financial Details**

As of July 31, 2017

(Report numbers prepared by J. Sabatino, Controller, Landscape Ontario)

<b>Revenues</b>	<b>2011-2017</b>
<b>Program Development And Support</b>	
City Of London-Funding	295,000.00
	<hr/>
	<b>295,000.00</b>
<b>Planting Projects</b>	
City Of London-Extra Grant	188,400.00
3m Canada-Sponsor	25,000.00
3m Canada (Scouts Canada)-Sponsor	15,000.00
Starlim North America-Sponsor	25,000.00
Starlim	10,000.00
Td Bank Friends Of The Env	33,000.00
Trojan Technologies-Sponsor	32,500.00
General Dynamics	20,000.00
Stihl Limited	20,000.00
Talbot Mkting	20,000.00
Landscape Ontario-Milton	10,000.00
Landscape Ontario London Chapter	7,500.00
Startech	15,000.00
Sunlight Fnd	8,000.00
Echo Power	5,700.00
Other-Public Donations	5,700.00
John Cook & Family	5,000.00
Lawson Fnd	5,000.00
Royal Cdn Air Force Assoc Of Can 427 Wing	5,000.00
80th Group /Scoutrees Planting	2,000.00
B Polhil-Via City Of London	2,000.00
Polish Combatants Asoc	2,000.00
Rotary Club Of London	2,000.00
Penny Drive	1,583.20
Kellogg Canada	1,500.00
Form & Build Mgmt	1,000.00
Hyde Park Lions Club	1,000.00
Lambeth Lions Club	1,000.00



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Revera Retirement Lp	1,000.00
Eunjac Investments(Parkwood Hospital)	500.00
James Packaging Ltd	500.00
UNIFOR Local 27	200.00
	<b>472,083.20</b>

**Commemorative Projects**

Landscape Ontario London Chapter	10,000.00
General Dynamics	10,000.00
	<b>20,000.00</b>

**Maintenance**

City Of London	42,110.00
	<b>42,110.00</b>

**Total Revenue**

**829,193.20**

**Expenditures**

**2011-2017**

**Program Costs(Overhead)**

**Program Development And Support**

CEPM a division of Eunjac Investments Inc.	279,000.00
	<b>279,000.00</b>

**Administration Fees**

Marketing Expenses	154.47
	<b>154.47</b>

**Legal Fees**

Garfin, Zeidenberg Llp	2,000.00
	<b>2,000.00</b>

**Campaign Expenses**

Andrew Harris-Photography	250.00
Bell Media-Ads	2,796.00
CEPM Reimbursements -Brochures-Cufc	298.00
CEPM Reimbursements -Business Cards	44.00
CEPM Reimbursements -F&B-Fundraising Receptions	1,892.82
CEPM Reimbursements -Fundraising-Bookmarks/Sponsor Certs	1,063.53
City Of London-Cufc Booth	600.00
Copying Charges	214.09
Echinda-Website Dev	2,280.00
Kimmick Ldscp-Fundraising-Copying	139.80



Kwik Kopy-Flyer-Cleanup Event	81.65
Mesh Integrated Comm-Materials-Logo/Bkmk/Posters	3,893.00
Mesh Integrated Comm-Signage-London Home Show	300.00
Mesh Integrated-Web Updates	265.00
Talbot Mkting-Sponsor Plaques	2,368.30
	<b>16,486.19</b>
<b>Total Program(Overhead) Costs</b>	<b>297,640.66</b>

**Planting Project Costs**

**Promotional Exps**

Awards Reception	2,828.33
Banners/Printed Materials	887.44
Banners/Stickers	245.00
CEPM Reimbursements -Caps/Helmut Labels	675.32
CEPM Reimbursements -Photography-Appreciation Reception	250.00
Earth To Business Mkting-Social Media/Mkting Fees	6,695.42
Sponsor Recognition Event-F&B	5,055.54
Talbot Marketing-Tshirts/Panel Caps	2,190.55
Terry Robb Photography	1,200.00
	<b>20,027.60</b>

**Planting Stock(Trees/Shrubs)**

Baseline Nurseries-Trees/Materials	96,265.33
Cedarbrook Tree Farm	170.00
CLC Tree Services	16,100.00
Connon Nurseries-Plant Material	25,811.25
Dutchmaster Nurseries	50,620.00
Fisher Landscape-Mulch	2,318.00
Kimmick Ldscping-Trees	542.95
Tunpetti Corp-Trees	135,820.00
Winkelmolen Nursery	11,098.95
Zimmermanns Ldscp	1,200.00
	<b>339,946.48</b>

**Planting Materials**

B Sandler/CEPM Reimbursements -Marker Flags/Supplies/Stakes	7,917.41
Baseline Nurseries-Stakes/Tree Guards	3,646.60
BLR Waterboy-Watering	504.00
Bobcat Of London-Equip Rtl	409.50



Dennis Jewlal-Tree Wrap	600.00
Escapes-Hole Drilling	960.00
Grandpas Gdn Ldscp-Labour/Bobcat	482.50
G-Sol-EZ Tree Planting Systems	9,474.00
Lanktree Tree Service-Watering/Tree Removal	6,615.00
Patcon Services-Hole Drilling/Planting	5,806.95
Tunpetti-EZ Planting Systems/Mgmt Fees/Pest Removal	6,175.00
	<hr/> <hr/> <b>42,590.96</b>
<b>Volunteer Exps</b>	
Barakats 2 Inc-BBQ For Vol Planters	2,489.90
Barry Sandler/CEPM Reimbursements -Misc Supplies/F&B	8,924.31
Barry/Laura Sandler-Event Mgmt Fees	500.00
Bobcat Lof London-Bobcat Rtl	2,847.10
Buses-Volunteers	2,370.00
City Of London-Traffic Cone Replacement	216.00
Corenells Bar B Q-BBQ For Vol Planters	9,737.00
Dennis Jewlal-Radio Rtls	599.40
Escapes Outdoor Living-Labour/Equip	3,470.00
Grant Harrison-Travel	171.04
Halls/Tents/Tables Rtls	2,783.00
Jerry Hakkers-Coffee-Vols	23.87
Johnsons Sanitation-Portajohns/Sinks	680.00
Kensal Rental-Equip Rtl	239.00
Kimmick Landscaping-Truck Window Replacement	239.00
Kimmick Ldscp-F&B	122.27
Kimmick-Bobcat Fuel/Delivery	239.25
Michael Martins-Lunch/Misc Re Vol Planting Crews	137.01
	<hr/> <hr/> <b>35,788.15</b>
	<hr/> <hr/> <b>438,353.19</b>
<b>Total Planting Project Costs</b>	
<b>Commemorative Projects</b>	
<b>Promotional Exps</b>	-
<b>Planting Stock(Trees/Shrubs)</b>	
Baseline Nurseries-Plants-Bravery Feature	385.90
	<hr/> <hr/> <b>385.90</b>
<b>Feature Materials</b>	
Stone Paradise-Stone Features	11,300.00
Mike Winia(Mikes Wood Sol'tn)-Plaques	2,000.00



Custom Rock Creations-Bravery Feature Engraving	2,250.00
	<u><u>15,550.00</u></u>

**Feature Site Prep**

All Terrain Prop Maint-Excavator Services	327.00
Con-Pact Concrete-Foundations	14,075.00
Stone Paradise-Crane Rtl	480.00
Langley Utilities-Bravery Feature Install	1,713.53
London Police Serv-Traffic Control	195.07
	<u><u>16,790.60</u></u>

**Total Commemorative Project Costs**

32,726.50

**Maintenance Costs**

**Planting Projects**

PGS Landscape	31,910.00
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**Commemorative Projects**

-

**Total Maintenance Costs**

31,910.00

**Total Expenses**

800,630.35

**Surplus (Deficit) For The Year**

28,562.85

**Non-Cash Contributions to the Program**

(Numbers prepared by B. Sandler, Executive Director, VMP Community Program)

**Non-Cash Donations**

**Volunteer Value & Donations-in-Kind**

Volunteer Planters (12,000 hr. @ \$20.00)	240,000.00
Board of Directors (112 hrs. @ \$75.00)	126,000.00
Landscape Ontario (2,560 hrs. @ \$50)	128,000.00
Consulting (28 hours @ \$75)	8,400.00

**Total Volunteer Value**

502,400.00

**Donations-in-Kind**

Landscape Equipment (20 days @ \$500)	10,000.00
CEPM Web- Site (84 months @ \$15)	1,260.00
CEPM Survey & Pruning (Services paid for)	2,000.00
Original Cakerie (140 cakes @ \$50)	7,000.00
A&L Soil Testing (200 samples @ \$35)	7,000.00



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St. John's SAR Team (168 hrs. @ \$50)	8,400.00
Auxiliary Police & Equipment (50 officers and equipment @ \$250)	12,500.00
Flag Feature (Triple H & 61 Scouts - Materials, & Volunteers)	15,000.00
Material Discounts (Avg per Tree - \$25)	70,000.00
Talbot Marketing (promotional materials & discounts)	3,000.00
<b>Total Donations-in-Kind</b>	<b>136,160.00</b>
<b>Total Non-Cash Value</b>	<b>638,560.00</b>