

Report to Community & Protective Services Committee

To: Chair and Members
Community & Protective Services Committee

From: John M. Fleming
Managing Director, Planning and City Planner

Subject: Deferred Matter 3 - Status Update for the Naming of a
Permanent Site for Vimy Ridge Park

Meeting on: May 29, 2018

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the following status update **BE RECEIVED** with respect to the naming of a permanent site for Vimy Ridge Park.

Status Update

As a result to two concurrent requests to name/rename two different city owned sites as Vimy Ridge Park in time for the 100th anniversary of the Vimy Ridge battle, on March 3, 2017 Council directed staff to:

- a) Complete appropriate stakeholder consultation and report back with respect to a location that would be adequate for a suitable Vimy Ridge commemorative location, including the necessary budget;
- b) The request to name a parcel of land located adjacent to Charlie Fox Overpass at Hale Street and Trafalgar Street "Vimy Ridge Park" be referred to the process above, and;
- c) The necessary arrangements be made to designate the above site as the temporary Vimy Ridge Park until the permanent site has been established.

A subsequent direction on May 3, 2017 eliminated the second original site (Mildred Barons Park) for consideration and added a new site at the 427 London Wing building (within London International Airport lands) to be considered.

Work to Date:

In 2016/17, staff had already been working on the plans for a "Veterans Park" in association with the completion of the Veterans Memorial Parkway community enhancement program that could be the location for military related memorials. This site is on Oxford Street at Crumlin Road at the gateway to the City from the airport. This concept plan has been partially implemented with site grading and seeding through an arrangement with Dancor Developments during site preparation for their first phase of development adjacent to this site. This park is the third site under consideration as it has a link to the VMP and a growing military history presence along Crumlin Road.

Members of the London community installed Vimy Ridge Memorials in various London locations to recognize the 100th anniversary date of the Battle of Vimy Ridge on April 9, 2017. One of these locations was on the lands that became the temporary Vimy Ridge Park site. Another location was at Remembrance Gardens, a site on River Road at the VMP by the "Remember November 11" Group. This Group has formally adopted this site and has installed many commemorative military memorials within their City - approved concept plan for the park. This group declined being formally considered as one of the sites to be assessed as the permanent Vimy Ridge Park site.

The temporary Vimy Ridge Park site was recognized with temporary signage and the 100th anniversary ceremony was held.

In May of 2017, it was formally announced that the formal Environmental Assessment process for High Speed Rail would begin. Preliminary work has indicated that approximately 15m of the Hale/Trafalgar site may be required to expand the rail corridor. The EA is scheduled to occur through 2018/19.

A project team was established to complete this project, including staff from Parks & Recreation Operations, Neighbourhood and Fire Services, Communications, Culture Office, and Planning Services.

Staff have met with the proponents of two of the sites: lands at the S-E corner of Trafalgar Street and Hale Street and the 427 London Wing. This location is owned by the group and is situated on Airport Authority lands at the north end of Crumlin Road. This site has other military memorials and a formal tree planting associated with the Vimy celebrations.

With the completion of the VMP project in July 2017, some of the remaining capital funds (\$105,000) were allocated by Council to assist with the creation of the permanent Veterans Park site. Depending on what is required to develop the site, this funding may not be sufficient to complete the project.

Staff reached out to the Board of the Vimy Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion in December 2017 to assist with “appropriate stakeholder consultation”, and they offered to help with this stakeholder consultation process. It is important to have this support and direction as there are many military related groups that may wish to comment on this issue. At this time, the consultation process has not been finalized.

Evaluation of the Selection of a Permanent Vimy Ridge Park

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was a defining moment for the creation of Canada as a country with its own identity. The Canadian National Vimy Memorial is a war memorial National Historic Site in France dedicated to the memory of Canadian Expeditionary Force members killed during the First World War. It also serves as the place of commemoration for Canadian soldiers of the First World War killed or presumed dead in France who have no known grave. The monument is the centrepiece of a 100-hectare preserved battlefield park that encompasses a portion of the ground over which the Canadian Corps made their assault during the initial Battle of Vimy Ridge offensive of the Battle of Arras. The Battle of Vimy Ridge was the first occasion on which all four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force participated in a battle as a cohesive formation, and it became a Canadian national symbol of achievement and sacrifice.

“Vimy Ridge” would be recognized as a prominent name for a park site selected in London and as such due diligence must be taken for consideration of this site selection.

Draft Evaluation Criteria

Staff have developed draft criteria for the site evaluation process (Appendix A) that will be used to formally review the three possible sites for the best site for the naming of a permanent Vimy Park and possibly an expanded Vimy Memorial in the future.

Some key questions to be answered through this review process include:

Park Site

- Is there a suitable context for the park and memorial site
- How much parking and what site amenities are required to support annual Vimy Ridge events and other commemorative events to occur at a permanent Vimy Ridge Park?
- Should a Vimy Ridge Park have high visibility and accessible access?
- What impact will the High Speed Rail Environmental Assessment have on the Hale/Trafalgar temporary Vimy Park site?

- What are the full capital costs and on-going operational costs and who would bear those costs for development of a permanent Vimy Ridge Park?

Public Art/Memorial(s)

- Is a memorial required for Vimy Ridge Park, and if yes, should this memorial be located on public land and maintained by the City on an ongoing basis, as per the Public Art/Monuments Policy?
- What scale and design would be suitable for a Vimy Ridge Memorial for the significance of the Vimy Ridge battle in Canada’s history?
- What are the costs for developing a Vimy Ridge Memorial and how would this project be funded, as there is no funding currently available from the Culture Office Public Art/Monument budget for a Vimy Ridge Memorial?

The draft evaluation criteria and these key questions should be consistent with City Council’s Parks naming policy and needs to be reviewed as part of a stakeholder discussion process.

Next Steps

Partnering with the Vimy Legion Branch, the City team will be organizing the stakeholder consultation program.

With that input and any updated information from the High Speed Rail EA, staff will complete the site assessment process and report that back to the proponents of the two sites and those that participated in the consultation process. Further discussion may take place with the proponents regarding the assessment and implementation.

A final report will be brought back to Council late next fall for endorsement and will include a cost estimate for the works and timing for implementation.

This report was prepared with input from the project team.

Prepared and Submitted by:	A. Macpherson, OALA, Manager, Environmental & Parks Planning
Recommended by:	John M. Fleming, MCIP, RPP Managing Director, Planning and City Planner

MT/mt

Appendix A

DRAFT SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

CRITERIA	Hale/Trafalgar	427 Wing	Oxford St.
PHYSICAL SITE - existing			
Ownership			
Suitable size			
Prominent location			
Event capacity			
Event suitability			
Ease of public access- car/transit/walking			
Existing Parking / #			
Accessible pathway			
Future constraints			
Other approvals required			
MONUMENT POTENTIAL			
Relevancy to Site/Context			
Suitable scale			
Visibility from street			
FUNDING REQUIRED			
Capital costs			
City costs			
Operating costs			
City costs			
Site "Adopted"			
SUPPORT KNOWN			
Military Branches			
Community			
On-going education / opportunities			