

## **Naming of an existing Public Lane North of Bloor Street West, extending between Albany Avenue and Howland Avenue**

**Date:** October 7, 2024

**To:** Toronto and East York Community Council

**From:** Director, Engineering Support Services, Engineering and Construction Services,  
General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

**Wards:** Ward 11 - University - Rosedale

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that the name "Orpheus Choir Lane" be approved to identify an existing public lane located north of Bloor Street West, extending between Albany Avenue and Howland Avenue

This naming proposal complies with the City of Toronto Street Naming Policy which can be found at <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/street-naming/>.

This naming proposal is in alignment with the objectives of the Guiding Principles for Commemoration in the Public Realm.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Engineering and Construction Services and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture recommend that Toronto and East York Community Council:

1. Approve the name "Orpheus Choir Lane" for an existing public lane located north of Bloor Street West, extending between Albany Avenue and Howland Avenue.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The cost to install street name signage is approximately \$500 and is included within the Transportation Services Division's 2024 Operating Budget.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact section.

## DECISION HISTORY

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This is the first time that this issue is before Community Council.

## COMMENTS

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At its meeting on July 19, 2022, City Council adopted the City of Toronto Commemorative Framework and approved revisions to the Street Naming Policy. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.6>

Community Councils have delegated authority to decide street naming matters which comply with the City of Toronto Street Naming Policy.

An application was received on May 10, 2024, requesting to name the existing public lane located north of Bloor Street West, extending between Albany Avenue and Howland Avenue, as “Orpheus Choir Lane”, in honour of the Orpheus Choir. Formed in 1964, the Choir has brought an innovative and diverse range of choral music to Toronto, while promoting a diverse and inclusive choral music community. The concerned lane is shown in Attachment 1.

The applicant provided the following background and rationale:

### **“Orpheus Choir Lane”**

*Since its creation in 1964, the choir has been led by prominent choral conductors: John Sidgwick, James Whicher, Lloyd Bradshaw, John Barnum, Brainerd Blyden-Taylor, Norman Reintamm and Robert Cooper, and is now recognized as one of the most innovative and versatile choral groups in the country.*

*Through its Sidgwick Scholar Program, created in 1989 to commemorate the choir's 25th anniversary and honour the choir's founders, Orpheus has helped launch the careers of some fine young Canadian singers, including Wallis Giunta, James Westman, Leslie Ann Bradley, Patricia O'Callaghan, Johane Ansell, Victor Micallef, Vasil Garvanliev, Maeve Palmer, and more.*

*In 2015, for the choir's 50th anniversary, the Board wished to inaugurate a legacy initiative, of benefit to younger singers. The result was a vocal training program for high school students, offering them the opportunity to experience rehearsals and performance with a high-quality choir.*

*Continuing Orpheus commitment to young emerging professionals, in 2017 an ad-hoc mentoring program for young conductors was formalized into the Apprentice Conductor Program, which provides a young conductor with a stipend, the opportunity for mentorship from the choir's Artistic Director, and the chance to conduct the choir in performance. In the 2020-2021 season we inaugurated an Emerging Composer program, which establishes a composer-in-residence who would create new works for workshopping and performance by the choir.”*

## **Historical Research on the Orpheus Choir Lane**

The Orpheus Choir has been a presence in Toronto's choral music community since 1964. Founded by John Sidgwick, the Choir was established to bring untraditional choral music to Toronto. The organization has continually embodied its motto "expect something different" by expanding Toronto's musical scene. In the 1990s, the Choir participated in several multicultural festivals across the city. Under Conductor Brainerd Blyden-Taylor's direction (1987-2002), the Orpheus Choir pursued an increasingly diverse range of music with a focus on Afrocentric performances. The organization has recently offered concerts to support mental health and well-being, celebrate cultural diversity, and commemorate the First World War.

Orpheus Choir connects Toronto communities in two ways. First, their annual concerts enrich Toronto's cultural landscape by bringing music ranging from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century, and from classical to experimental styles to audiences. Second, the Choir itself is a dynamic community, facilitating vital connections between Torontonians of different ages, educations, backgrounds, and professions.

In 1989, the Sidgwick Scholarship Program was initiated to support emerging choral singers from diverse backgrounds. Since then, the Orpheus Choir has provided professional development opportunities for youth and members of equity deserving groups through scholarships, the Vocal Apprentice Program, and their Emerging Composer Program. The Choir's musical program also supports growth in Canadian music through commissioned works, as well as premiering international works in Canada and Toronto.

A complete Historical Research Report is available upon request.

The proposed name has been circulated for comment and is acceptable to Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services, and Toronto Paramedic Services.

Councillor Dianne Saxe, Ward 11 - University-Rosedale, supports this naming.

Consent was provided by Jessica Newman, a member of the Board of Directors, the Orpheus Choir of Toronto.

Community support was demonstrated with a petition of signatures from the local community.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Avi Bachar, P. Eng.  
Director, Engineering Support Services, Engineering and Construction Services

## **CONTACT**

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Karen Carter, Director, Museums and Heritage Services, Economic Development and Culture, 416 392-9135, [Karen.Carter@toronto.ca](mailto:Karen.Carter@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Patrick Tobin  
General Manager, Economic Development and Culture


## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Sketch No. PS-2024-021, showing the location of a Public Lane north of Bloor Street West, extending between Albany Avenue and Howland Avenue

**Attachment 1: Sketch No. PS-2024-021, showing the location of a Public Lane north of Bloor Street West, extending between Albany Avenue and Howland Avenue.**



 <p>ENGINEERING &amp; CONSTRUCTION SERVICES ENGINEERING SUPPORT SERVICES LAND &amp; PROPERTY SURVEYS</p>	<p><b>PROPERTY INFORMATION SHEET</b></p> <p><b>NAMING OF AN EXISTING PUBLIC LANE NORTH OF BLOOR STREET WEST, EXTENDING BETWEEN ALBANY AVENUE AND HOWLAND AVENUE.</b></p>		
	<p>NOTE: THIS SKETCH HAS BEEN COMPILED FROM OFFICE RECORDS. MEASUREMENTS ARE APPROXIMATE</p>		
	<p>CHECKED BY: ANA MICHALEK</p>	<p>WARD 11 - UNIVERSITY-ROSEDALE</p>	<p>SKETCH No. PS-2024-021</p>
	<p>PREPARED BY: S. LOMBARDO</p>	<p>DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2024</p>	