

Sunshine Coast Regional District

Cemetery Master Plan



LEES
+
ASSOCIATES

Final Report

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Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) commissioned LEES+Associates to conduct a review of its cemetery services and develop a Master Plan to guide the future operations, care and maintenance, and development of its three burial sites: Seaview Cemetery, Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery and Kleindale Cemetery. Seaview is an active cemetery, with burial lots available for sale. Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery is closed, except for families interring in pre-purchased graves. Kleindale Cemetery is a small cemetery that is full and closed to burials.

This plan will enable the SCRD to better understand the spatial, funding and community needs to ensure the long-term fiscal, social and environmental sustainability of cemetery services over the next 25 years. It includes an analysis of local demographic, disposition and interment trends; an assessment of cemetery operations, services, landscape and infrastructure; identifies challenges and opportunities; and it provides recommendations for future service delivery as well as strategic guidance for implementation.

Cemetery Demand + Needs Analysis

Cemetery Market Profile + Projected Demand

- The Sunshine Coast Regional District Local Health Area (LHA) is the cemetery's Market Area. The Market Area population will grow from 31,800 in 2021 by 10.4% to 35,100 by 2046;
- Due to the passing of the Baby Boomer generation, it is anticipated that the Market Area's death rate will increase from 10.8 deaths per 1,000 residents in 2021 to 12.1 deaths per 1,000 residents by 2046;
- From 2016 to 2021, the Market Area had:
 - 2,095 resident deaths, averaging 350 deaths per year in the LHA, including:
 - 105 resident casket burials, averaging 18 casket burials per year in the LHA, and
 - 1,990 resident cremations, averaging 330 cremations per year in the LHA.
- From 2022 to 2047 the Market Area will have approximately:
 - 9,700 resident deaths, averaging 390 resident deaths per year in the LHA, including:
 - 500 resident casket burials, averaging 20 casket burials per year in the LHA, and
 - 9,200 resident cremations, averaging 370 cremations per year in the LHA.

Cemetery Activity + Community Service

- SCRD has been interring 66% of community members choosing casket burial and 8% of community members choosing cremation at its cemeteries. The majority of SCRD's interments take place at Seaview Cemetery.

Historic Interments

- From 2016 to 2021, at Seaview Cemetery there were:
 - 76 casket lot burials, averaging 13 burials per year;
 - 127 cremation lot burials, averaging 21 burials per year, and
 - 26 cremation niche interments, averaging 4 interments per year.

Projected Interments

- Over the next 25 years, from 2022 to 2046, Seaview Cemetery is projected to have:
 - 350 casket lot burials, averaging 14 burials per year;
 - 600 cremation lot burials, averaging 24 burials per year, and
 - 120 cremation niche interments, averaging 5 interments per year.

Historic Sales

- From 2016 to 2021, Seaview Cemetery had:
 - 118 casket lot sales, averaging 20 casket lot sales per year;
 - 45 cremation lot sales, averaging 8 cremation lot sales per year, and
 - 38 cremation niche sales, averaging 6 niche sales per year.

Projected Sales

- Over the next 25 years, from 2022 to 2046, SCRD cemeteries are projected to have:
 - 550 casket lot sales, averaging 22 casket lot sales per year;
 - 210 cremation lot sales, averaging 8 cremation lot sales per year, and
 - 175 cremation niche sales, averaging 7 niche sales per year.

Estimated Supply - Inventory + Capacity

- SCRD's casket lots and columbaria niches at Seaview Cemetery are expected to be sold out in 2- 3 years;
- SCRD's in-ground cremation lots at Seaview Cemetery are expected to be sold out in 30- 35 years;
- SCRD could increase its casket lot inventory at Seaview Cemetery by converting a section of cremation lots into casket lots;
- Seaview Cemetery has 0.75 acres in undeveloped land and potential infill space that could be developed into approximately 375 casket lots. This could provide an additional 15 – 20 years of casket lot sales;
- Short Term Strategy - SCRD will need to develop an additional 1.1 acres of cemetery land to ensure it will be able to meet the expected community demand over the next 25 years, and
- Long Term Strategy - SCRD will need to acquire and develop an additional 5 acres of cemetery land to ensure it will be able to meet the expected community demand over the next 100 years.

Key Development Recommendations

Proposed development at Seaview Cemetery includes:

- Creating a new burial area on the forested section in the south-west corner of the cemetery, incorporating an improved operations yard and building with public washrooms;
- A cremation garden that incorporates the existing columbaria as part of a range of cremation interment options;
- Changing the orientation of graves in the last remaining undeveloped western section of the cemetery so they align north-south with the slope of the land;
- Infilling redundant driveways and paths with new in-ground casket and in-ground cremation interment;
- Planting new trees and shrubs to improve the landscape of the triangular cremation garden by the cemetery entrance;
- Enhancing the main cemetery entrance with a new gateway and cemetery sign;
- Information kiosks to improve wayfinding around the cemetery, and to aid visitors in locating graves of friends of and family members, and
- Planting new trees and shrubs to improve the landscape buffer

protecting the cemetery from highway noise.

Proposed development at Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery includes:

- Expanding capacity at the cemetery by creating a series of small cremation garden with columbaria units, small green burial areas, scattering trails, and memorial walks;
- Enhancing the main cemetery entrance with a new gateway and cemetery sign;
- An information kiosk to improve wayfinding around the cemetery, and to aid visitors in finding graves of friends or family members, and
- Re-routing the hiking and biking trails so they do not cut through the existing burial areas or future burial areas.

Operations Assessment

- Prices are on par with or higher than rates at other cemeteries in the region. Seaview Cemetery has fewer interment and memorialization options than are typically offered at comparable Canadian cemeteries;
- The older eastern section of the cemetery is attractive. The mature forest to the south side of the cemetery and trees along the cemetery perimeter are assets that add to the character of the western section of the site;
- Seaview Cemetery's grave adornments and east-west lot alignment are hindering the safety, accessibility, efficiency and quality of site care and service delivery. There is also a creek that goes through the centre of the cemetery with bank erosion, which could impact families' graves;
- SCRD has skilled, dedicated staff serving its cemetery administration and fieldwork operations. It also has a dedicated cemetery website and a sophisticated records management software;
- SCRD administrative staff do not have a dedicated space to serve community members. SCRD's cemetery records management system is not connected to its financial and mapping systems;
- There are clear procedures, a work schedule and standards of care outlined for the cemetery contractor's services in the terms of agreement. There are no standard operating procedures or a maintenance schedule in place to guide SCRD's cemetery administration and field work staff;
- There are conflicting statements, as well as inconsistent, missing, and incorrect information in the current cemetery bylaw, and
- Cemetery operating costs exceeded its sales and service revenue by \$55,000 per year. Operations are subsidized by a property tax allocation, some of which is placed in a reserve fund, which can be used to pay for development and enhancement initiatives.
- The Perpetual Care Fund (PCF) is not expected to generate sufficient income to support cemetery site care in the next ten years.

To enhance the efficiency, quality of service and sustainability of its cemetery operations, SCRD should:

- Expand its range of cremation interment options with a small land footprint, such as additional columbaria niches, family vessels and scattering gardens, and introduce a diverse range of memorialization options (such as engraved boulders, plaques, a memorial wall, etc.);
- Add new fees for additional services (disinterment, after hours funerals, the installation or modification of vases, memorials and headstones, reservation of adjacent lots, monument and graveside cleaning, and issuing duplicate or replacement certificates, etc.)
- Develop new full-body in-ground interment options, such as additional casket lots, green burial, and family estates.
- Increase cemetery rates annually by the rate of inflation, a minimum of 3% per year;
- Increase SCRD's transfer license fee from \$35 to the market average of \$60;
- Consider introducing a 50% discounted rate for infants, children, veterans, and indigents to enhance goodwill and SCRD's level of engagement with its residents.
- Introduce a non-resident premium of 100% to SCRD cemetery price list. As part of this process, SCRD will need to define its qualifying criteria for residency and non-residency, and add this to the Cemetery Bylaw;
- Change the orientation of new casket lots at Seaview Cemetery. This avoids the need for complex solutions for grave cover leveling and mowing;
- Expand and clarify the bylaw regulations language concerning grave adornments and ornamentation. Increase enforcement of these regulations at Seaview Cemetery;
- Introduce a public education initiative regarding grave adornments and ornamentation, and communicate to community members how these items impede the site maintenance and pose a safety hazard. Organize a community member 'clean-up day' at Seaview Cemetery.
- Increase the resilience of the cemetery system, preserve institutional knowledge in SCRD's operations and mitigate the risk of service disruption by recruiting and training an assistant for the Parks Services Assistant to provide administrative support and back up;
- Enhance the cemetery customer service experience by identifying a private room in SCRD's facilities that administrative staff can reliably and regularly reserve to meet bereaved families;
- Collaborate with Central Square technical support to learn how to use Stone Orchard Software more effectively and better integrate it with SCRD's financial and mapping systems;
- Develop a cemetery sales and marketing plan to be implemented by the cemetery's administration staff after the SCRD develops more inventory to sell. This could increase SCRD's market capture rate and operating revenue;

- Undertake an analysis of whether it is more cost-effective for SCRD to assign its operations staff to undertake 100% of the tasks in the current General Services Agreement. This should be done before renewing the Contractor's agreement in 2023;
- Create an annual maintenance plan and schedule of care that aligns with seasonal conditions and cemetery site activity, as well as a Standard Operating Procedures manual for all aspects of cemetery operations;
- Prioritize a Comprehensive Review and Revision of SCRD's Cemetery Bylaw, and
- Pursue a comprehensive financial plan and business case analysis within the next three years. Prioritize identifying the PCF funding gap and taking action to address it. Review the potential strategies for accelerating the growth of the cemetery's PCF and assess their feasibility, given SCRD's current regulations and resources available.

Implementation Plan

Essential recommendations that should be implemented immediately include:

- New cemetery land acquisition;
- Update the cemetery bylaw;
- Begin to adopt new interment options;
- Introduce a public education initiative regarding grave adornments;
- Design and develop infill areas A,B and C;
- Design and develop the cremation garden expansion, and
- Conduct a feasibility study to confirm the ground conditions of the Elphinstone Cemetery property is suitable for the proposed interment and memorialization options.

Essential recommendations that should be implemented in the next 2-5 years include:

- Design and develop new cemetery lands;
- Pursue a comprehensive financial plan and business case analysis;
- Design and develop the Seaview Southwest burial expansion area;
- Assess and implement creek storm water management recommendations to protect Seaview Cemetery from erosion, and
- Work with MOTI to address storm water from the highway damaging Seaview Cemetery.

Essential recommendations that should be implemented in the next 5+ years include:

- Design and develop later phases of the new cemetery lands, and
- Implement Elphinstone burial expansion.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) commissioned LEES+Associates to conduct a review of its cemetery services and develop a Master Plan to guide the future operations, care, and development of its three burial sites.

This plan will enable the SCRD to better understand the spatial, funding and community needs to ensure the long-term fiscal, social and environmental sustainability of cemetery services over the next 25 years. It includes an analysis of local demographic, disposition and interment trends; an assessment of cemetery operations, services, landscape, and infrastructure. It identifies challenges and opportunities, and provides recommendations for future service delivery and strategic guidance for implementation.

Cemetery Sites Overview

The SCRD has three cemeteries that it owns and operates including:

- Seaview Cemetery (primary active site)- 1706 Lower Road, Roberts Creek, BC;
- Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery (inactive site), 1059 Keith Road, Gibsons, BC, and
- Kleindale Cemetery (inactive site)- 5767 Menacher Road, Pender Harbour, BC.

Seaview Cemetery is the SCRD's only active cemetery for at-need burials and pre-need sales of a right-of-interment. It is approximately 5.7 acres and located on a triangular shaped property. It is bounded on the north by Sunshine Coast Highway, on the south by Lower Road and on the west by a privately owned property. The earliest recorded interment at Seaview Cemetery dates from 1937, with many other unrecorded interments prior to 1937. The SCRD assumed operations of the cemetery in 1976.

The Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery property is approximately 10 acres of land on the steep slopes of Mount Elphinstone. Approximately one acre was cleared, and a grass lawn established for cemetery purposes, accessed by a steep gravel drive from Keith Road. The remaining nine acres comprise of tall second growth forest. The ground is covered with sword ferns and salal. It is steep and uneven with rocks, boulders and fallen forest debris. An unsanctioned trail leads from the cemetery and connects with a series of trails covering the upper part of Mount Elphinstone. The main road leading up the cemetery access road is the site of an RV park. The cemetery access road to Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery is unpaved and also provides access to a cement batch plant and gravel pit.

The SCRD would like to understand whether it is viable to re-open Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery to provide some or a full range of interment and memorialization services. It requires an assessment of Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery's development potential and use.

Kleindale Cemetery was never a legally sanctioned cemetery and was therefore closed by the Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Cemeteries Division for any further burials in 1982. The SCRD continues to maintain the cemetery.

"Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals."

-Sir William Ewart Gladstone

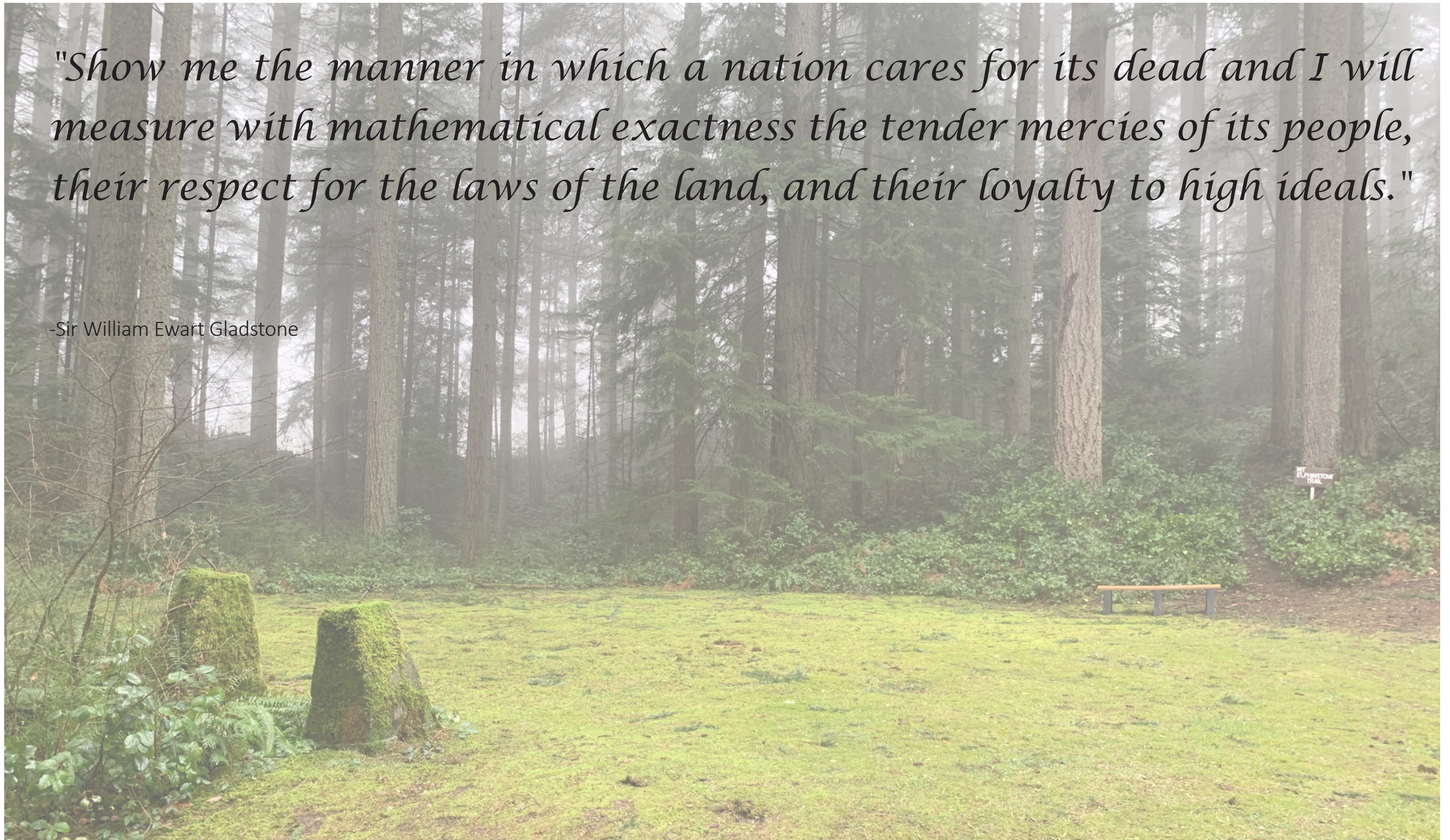


Figure 1: Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery. Source: LEES+Associates



Chapter 2: Cemetery Demand and Needs Analysis

This chapter identifies the region served by the cemeteries operated by the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD). It includes an overview of the region's demographic characteristics, including its population growth, death rates, dispositions, and interment trends. These are the key drivers of community demand and future need for additional burial inventory and cemetery land in the SCRD.

The chapter concludes by comparing the projected demand to the current supply of inventory available and identifies the remaining capacity at the current cemetery sites. The outcome of this analysis is to determine the additional burial inventory and land needed to continue providing services to the community over the next 25 years.

Key Findings

The following section is a summary of the key findings from the cemetery demand and needs analysis.

Current Market Profile + Historic Demand

- The cemeteries primarily serve the residents of the Sunshine Coast Regional District Local Health Area (LHA). This is the Market Area assessed in this analysis;
- The Market Area currently has 31,800 residents. From 2016 to 2021, the LHA had approximately:
 - Increased its population by 1.6%;
 - Averaged 10.8 deaths per 1,000 residents per year;
 - 2,095 deaths, averaging 350 deaths per year, including:
 - 105 casket burials, averaging 18 casket burials per year, and
 - 1,990 cremations, averaging 330 cremations per year.

Future Market Profile + Projected Demand

- The Market Area population will grow 10.4% to 35,100 residents by 2046;
- Due to the passing of the Baby Boomer generation, it is anticipated that the Market Area's death rate will increase to 12.1 deaths per 1,000 residents by 2046;
- Over the next twenty-five years, from 2022 to 2047 the Market Area will have approximately:
 - 9,700 resident deaths, averaging 390 resident deaths per year in the LHA, including:
 - 500 resident casket burials, averaging 20 resident casket burials per year in the LHA, and
 - 9,200 resident cremations, averaging 370 resident cremations per year in the LHA.

Cemetery Activity + Community Service

- SCRD has been interring 66% of community members choosing casket burial and 8% of community members choosing cremation in the Market Area at its cemeteries;
- Seaview Cemetery is the only active cemetery providing 100% of the interment inventory to SCRD residents. From 2016 to 2021 Seaview Cemetery provided:
 - 76 casket lot burial services, averaging 13 casket lot burials per year;
 - 127 cremation lot burial services, averaging 21 burials cremation lot per year, and
 - 26 cremation niche interment services, averaging 4 interments per year.
- Over the next 25 years, from 2022 to 2046, SCRD cemeteries are projected to provide:
 - 350 casket lot burial services, averaging 14 casket lot burials per year;
 - 600 cremation lot burial services, averaging 24 cremation lot burials per year, and
 - 120 cremation niche interment services, averaging 5 interments per year.

- From 2016 to 2021, Seaview Cemetery sold to community members:
 - 118 casket lots, averaging 20 casket lot sales per year;
 - 45 cremation lots, averaging 8 cremation lot sales per year, and
 - 38 cremation niches, averaging 6 niche sales per year.
- Over the next 25 years, from 2022 to 2046, SCRDC cemeteries are projected to sell:
 - 550 casket lots, averaging 22 casket lot sales per year;
 - 210 cremation lots, averaging 8 cremation lot sales per year, and
 - 175 cremation niches, averaging 7 niche sales per year.

Estimated Supply - Inventory + Capacity

- Seaview Cemetery’s casket lots and columbaria niches are expected to be sold out in 2-3 years;
- Seaview Cemetery’s in-ground cremation lots are expected to be sold out in 30-35 years;
- SCRDC could increase its casket lot inventory at Seaview Cemetery by converting a section of cremation lots into casket lots;
- Seaview Cemetery has 0.75 acres in undeveloped land and potential in-fill space that could be developed into 375 casket lots. This would provide an additional 15 – 20 years of lot sales, and
- SCRDC will need to develop an additional 1.1 acres of cemetery land to ensure it will be able to meet the expected community demand for casket lots over the next 25 years.

Market Area Profile

This section of the cemetery master plan describes the Market Area served by SCRDC’s cemetery sites. It identifies the area’s geographic boundaries, as well as the ethnic and religious profile of its residents. These variables will affect the future demand and need for SCRDC’s cemetery land and interment services.

LEES+Associates obtained detailed demographic and vital statistic population, deaths, and disposition data from the Provincial government for the region identified as the Market Area.

Geographical Boundaries

The SCRDC’s cemeteries primarily serve the residents of the communities within the Province of British Columbia’s Local Health Area (LHA) 333, shown in the adjacent map of the region (Figure 1), which consists of:

- LHA-3331 Gibsons;
- LHA-3332 Sechelt; and
- LHA-3333 Sunshine Coast Rural.

It has been assumed in this analysis that most of the community members served by SCRDC’s cemeteries are locals to this area.

Typically, any non-locals served are originally from the SCRDC and have family that are already interred in the SCRDC’s existing cemetery sites.

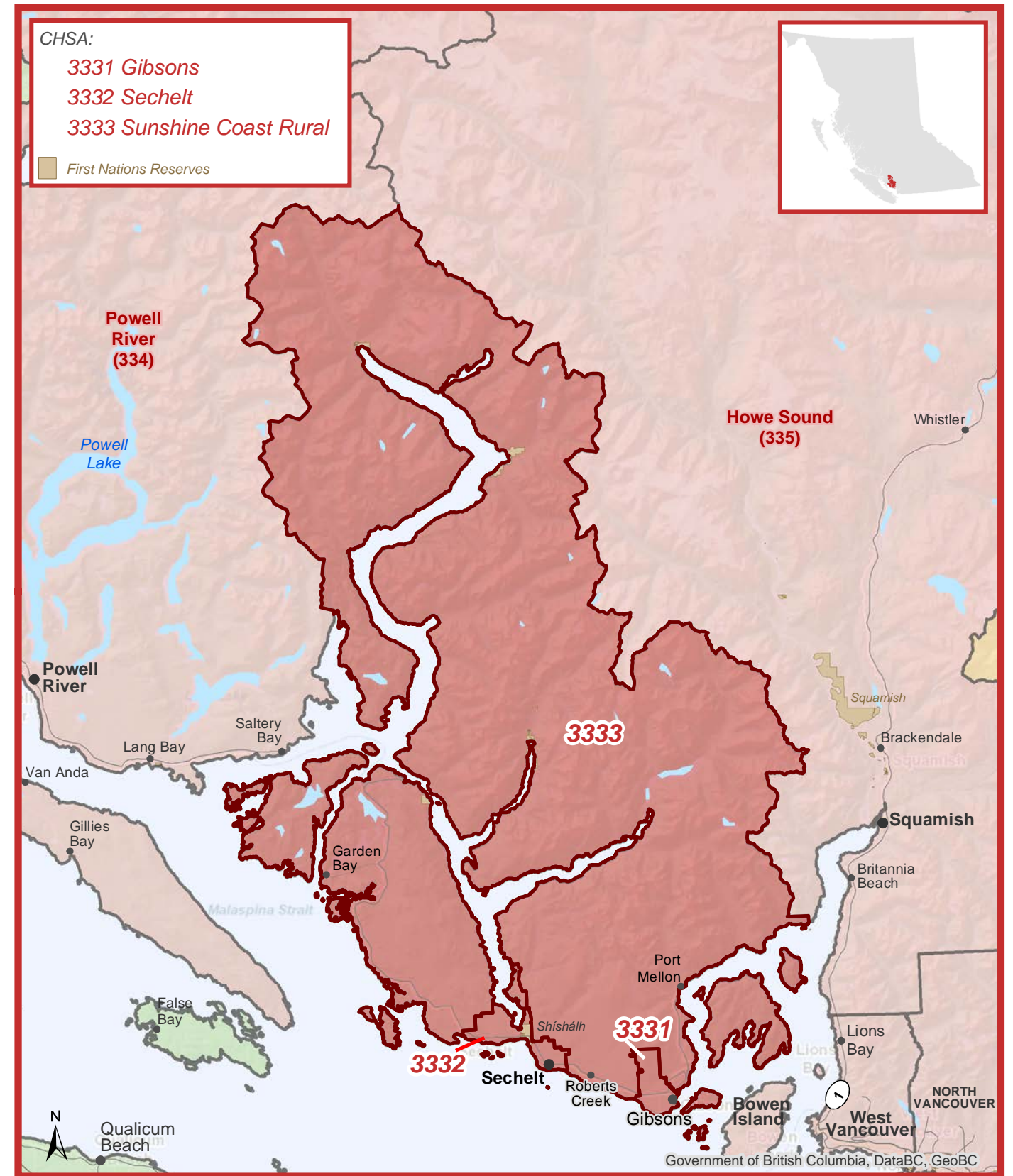


Figure 2: Sunshine Coast Local Health Area 3333 – Cemetery Market Area Map, Source: BC Ministry of Health

This image shows the relative locations of the SCRD's existing cemetery sites with the local communities served, as well as the boundary of the LHA.



Figure 3: Market Area Map, showing the locations of SCRD's Existing Cemetery Sites, and the Local Communities Served, Source: LEES+Associates

Religious and Ethnic Profile

Individual preferences determine a person’s disposition and interment choices. These preferences are shaped by personal values, family traditions and socio-economic considerations. Religious affiliations and ethnic groups also have cultural practices, which can be a significant influence on an individual’s end-of-life choices.

Religious Profile

Understanding the religious profile of the Market Area residents is important in helping SCRD meet local demand for different types of interment and memorialization options. Some religions require specific forms of disposition and interment. For example, some groups require in-ground casket burial, while others require cremation. There are several groups that discourage or even forbid cremation, and because of this, it is expected there will always be a portion of the population that will need in-ground casket burial.

The following figure illustrates the current religious distribution of residents in the Market Area.

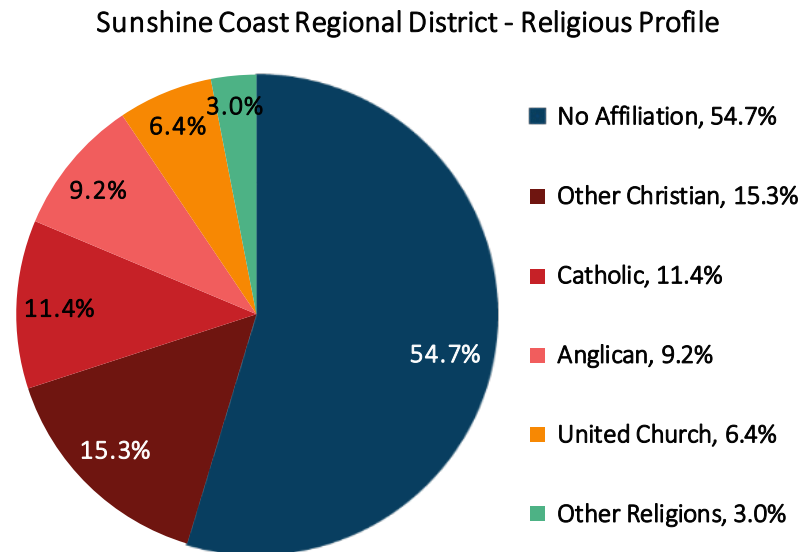


Figure 4: SCRD’s Resident Religious Distribution, Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey.

Analysis of the Market Area’s religious profile finds that:

- 55% of residents report having no religious affiliation;
- 42% of residents identify as Christian, and the largest Christian group that residents identify with is the Catholic Church (16% of the population), and
- 3% of residents identify with other religions, including those that are Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh, and other faiths. Each of these make up less than 1% of the population.

Ethnic Profile

An example of ethnically based influence is the preference of many Italian and Portuguese families to be interred in mausoleum crypts or columbaria rather than being buried in graves. In-ground casket burial is the culturally preferred interment option for many Indigenous families in Canada.

The following figure illustrates the current ethnic distribution of residents in the Market Area:

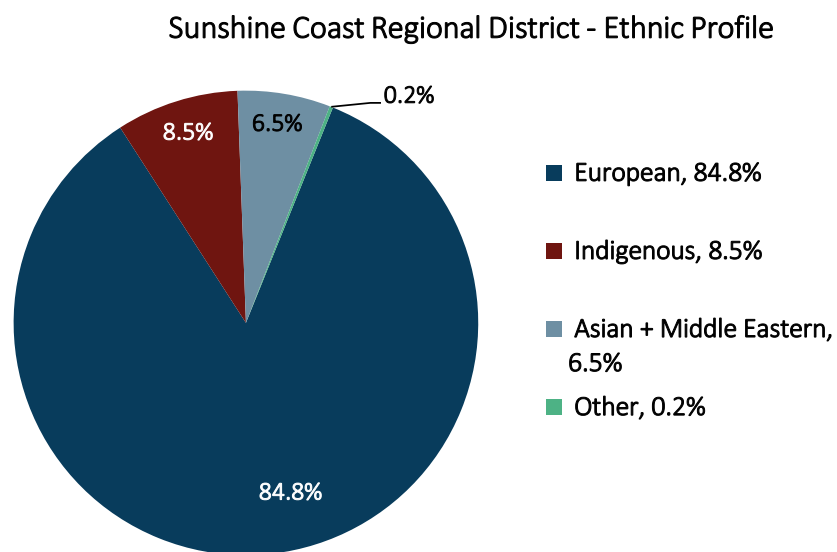


Figure 5: SCRD’s Resident Ethnic Distribution, Source: Statistics Canada, SCRD Census Profile.

Analysis of the Market Area’s current ethnic profile:

- The majority of Market Area’s residents report having a European origin, largely from the British Isles, and
- A smaller, but sizable portion of Market Area residents are of Indigenous, Asian, and Middle Eastern origin.

The Sunshine Coast Regional District is located within the territories of the Sechelt (shíshálh), Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh), Tla’amin and Klahoose First Nations.

The shíshálh Nation currently own and operate their own cemetery site. Members of the shíshálh Nation are interred on these lands.

The Skwxwú7mesh Nation does not have any cemeteries on the SCRD. They are currently served by two burial grounds for the Skwxwú7mesh Nations – one in West Vancouver and one in North Vancouver.

Tla’amin First Nations is located at the north end of Powell River. The Klahoose First Nations is located on Cortes Island. They own and operate their own cemeteries.

Historic Cemetery Market Summary

The following graph summarizes the findings of the historic cemetery market analysis and show the trends that defined the Market Area served by the SCRD from 2016 to 2021. In this graph the population growth data aligns with the left vertical axis. Death, cremation, and casket burial data align with the right vertical axis.

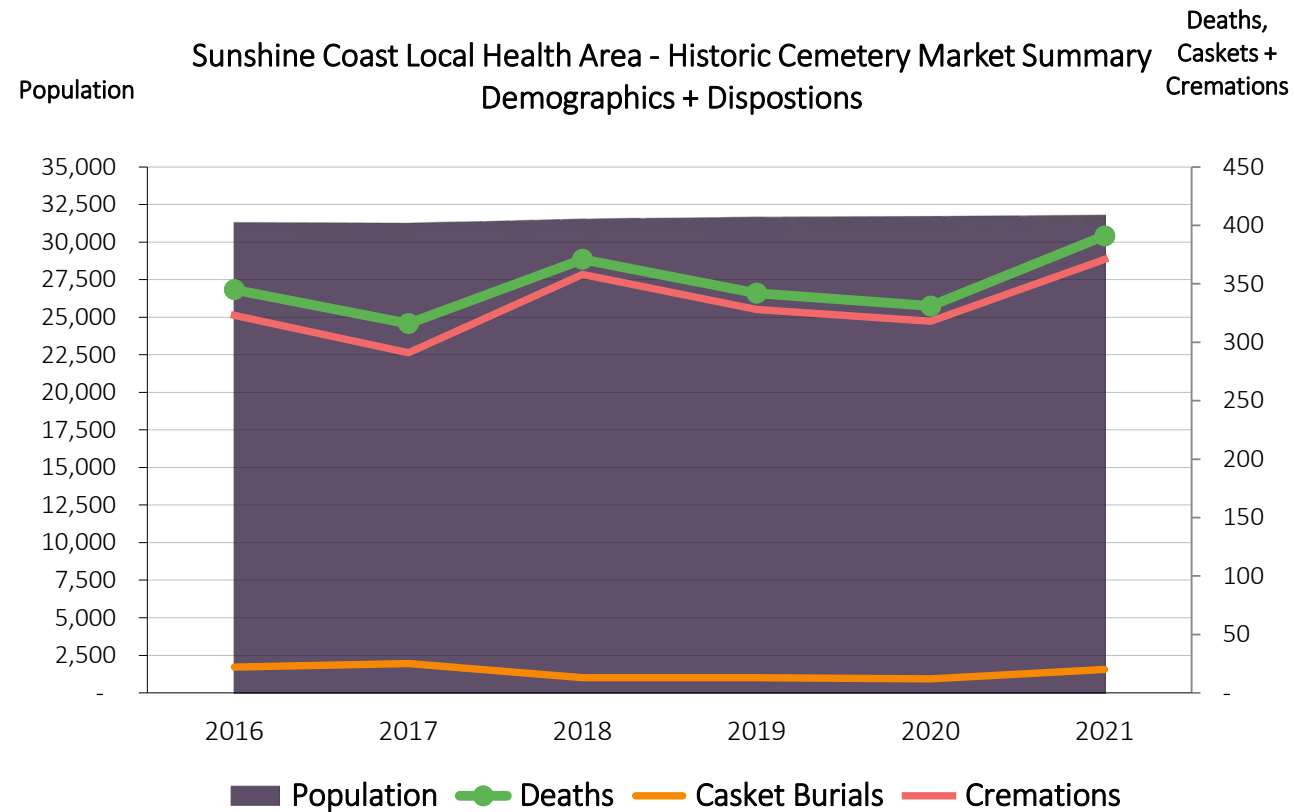


Figure 6: SCRD's Historic Cemetery Market Summary of Demographic + Disposition Variables, Source: LEES+Associates

The following section outlines the analysis and findings for each of the demographic and disposition variables, which is included in this summary of SCRD's historic cemetery market profile.

Cemetery Demand - Demographic Trends

The following table summarizes the Market Area's historic and projected population numbers and its rate of annual average growth.

Market Area Served	Population 2016	Population 2021	Average Growth 2016 - 2021	Population 2046	Average Growth 2022 - 2046
Sunshine Coast LHA 333	31,300	31,800	0.34%	35,100	0.40%

Table 1: Market Area Historic and Projected Resident Population, Source: Province of British Columbia – BC Statistics: <https://bcstats.shinyapps.io/popApp/>

The following table summarizes the Market Area's historic and projected number of deaths and the death rate relative to the area's population numbers.

Market Area Served	Average Annual Deaths 2016 - 2021	Average Deaths Per 1,000 2016 - 2021	Average Annual Deaths 2022 - 2046	Average Deaths Per 1,000 2022 - 2046
Sunshine Coast LHA 333	349	10.8	390	11.4

Table 2: Market Area Historic and Projected Resident Deaths and Death Rates, Source: Province of British Columbia – Vital Statistics: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/statistics-reports/deaths> & <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/statistics-reports/vital-statistics-annual-reports>

The "Baby Boom" generation includes those born between 1946 and 1964. As this large cohort reaches its life expectancy, the average death rate will increase and the need for cemetery services will also grow. The average life expectancy of this cohort is about 80 years.

Statistics Canada predicts the increasing aging population in the Market Area will cause increased need for cemetery and funeral-related goods and services beginning in 2026 when the oldest of the Baby Boomer generation reaches the age of 80. The number of deaths is expected to increase until 2045 when the youngest members of the Baby Boomer cohort turn 80.

The anticipated passing of the Baby Boomers will increase the local death rate from the 2021 rate of 10.8 deaths per 1000 residents, to an anticipated 2.1 deaths per 1000 residents by 2046.

Due to the anticipated population growth and increased death rate, by 2046 in the Market Area will have:

- Increased its resident population by 10.4% from 31,800 in 2021 to 35,100 residents by 2046;
- Increased its annual resident deaths from 391 per year in 2021 to 424 per year in 2046, and
- 9,700 resident deaths, averaging 390 resident deaths per year over the next 25 years.

Cemetery Demand - Disposition Trends

National Cremation Rate

Disposition describes how human remains are handled after death. The most common forms of disposition in North America are in-ground casket burial and cremation.

Cremation is increasingly the preferred form of disposition for most Canadians. What individuals and families then choose to do with cremated remains varies greatly. They are usually contained in an urn, for future interment in an in-ground lot, placement within an above ground columbaria niche or scattered. The National average cremation rate increased from 63.1% in 2011 to 73.7% in 2021 and is expected to continue to rise across the country.

Figure 7 illustrates the preference for cremation in the Canadian Provinces and Territories, as of 2020.

Provincial Cremation Rate

The cremation rate in British Columbia increased from 82.3% in 2011 to 86.0% in 2021. The Cremation Association of North America (CANA) predicts British Columbia's cremation rate will rise to 87.1% by 2025.

Local Cremation Rate

From 2016 to 2021, in the local Market Area there were:

- 2,095 resident deaths, averaging 350 resident deaths per year,
- 105 resident casket burials, averaging 18 resident casket burials per year, and
- 1,990 resident cremations, averaging 330 resident cremations per year

During this period, the cremation rate in SCRD's Market Area averaged 95% - significantly higher than the average Provincial cremation rate.

Given the region's already exceptionally high rate, as well as its current religious and ethnic profile- we anticipate the proportion of cremations in the Market Area can be expected to level out and will maintain an average rate of 95% of dispositions over the next 25 years.

Projected Cremations and Casket Burials in the Market Area

Analysis of the projected disposition trends in the Market Area finds that over the next 25 years, from 2022 to 2046, there will be:

- 500 deaths where residents choose casket burials, averaging 20 per year, and
- 9,200 deaths where residents choose cremation, averaging 370 per year.

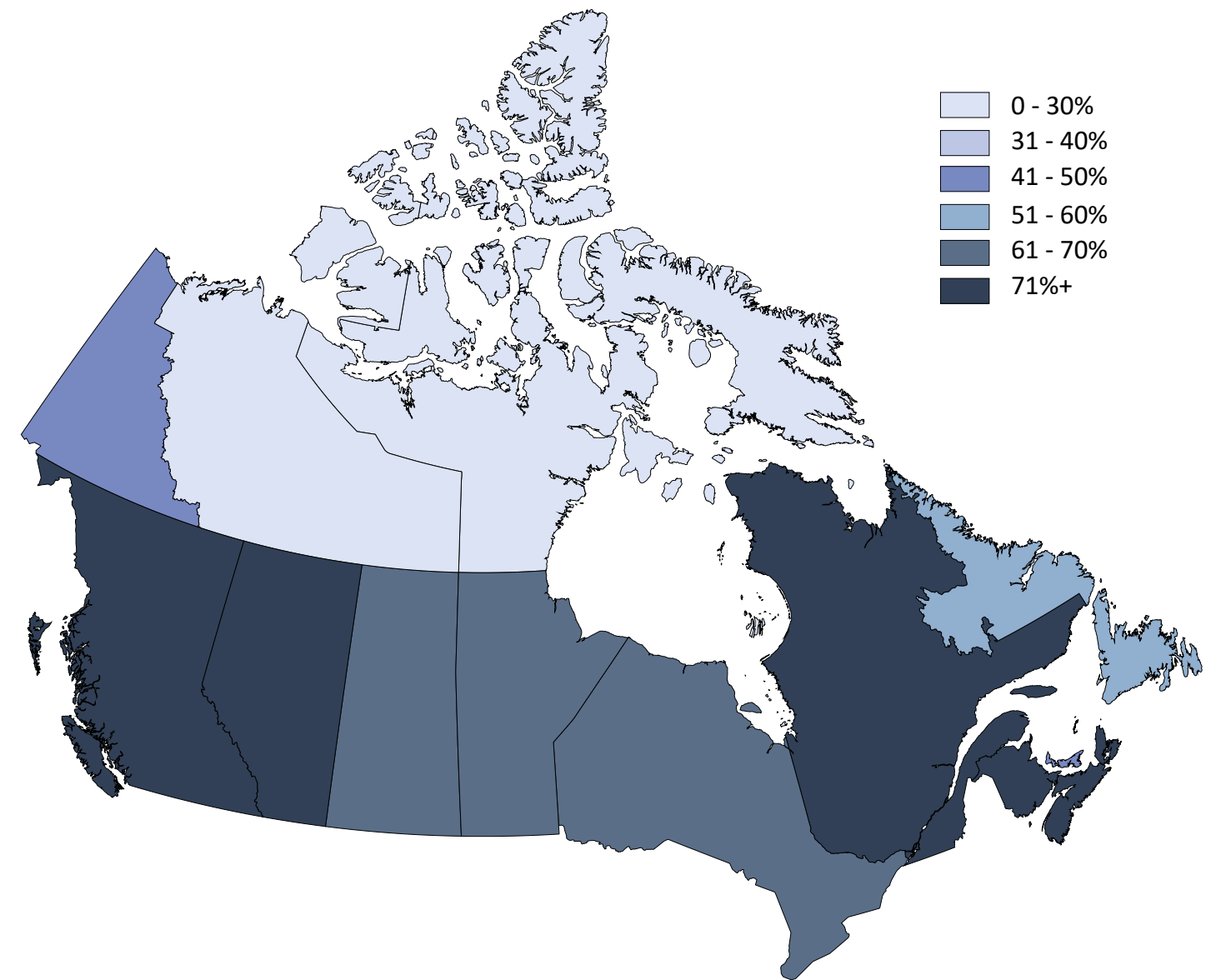


Figure 7: Map of 2020 Canadian Cremation Rates as a Proportion of Total Deaths, Source: Cremation Association of North America (CANA).

Projected Cemetery Market Summary

The following graph summarizes the findings of the projected cemetery market analysis and show the trends that will define the Market Area served by the SCRD, over the next 25 years from 2022 to 2046. In this graph, the population growth data aligns with the left vertical axis. Death, cremation, and casket burial data align with the right vertical axis.

This graph provides an overview of the total demand in the SCRD's Market Area. Due to the projected population increase and the increasing death rate, this region-wide demand for cemetery services and cemetery land is expected to steadily increase.

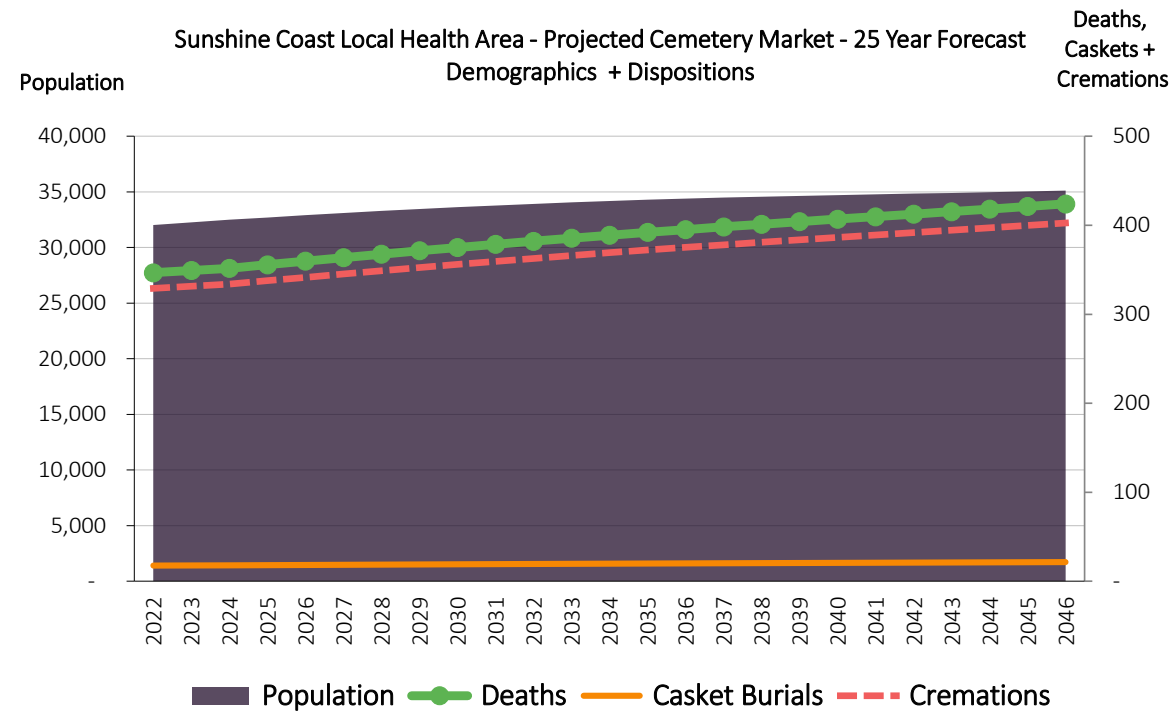


Figure 8: SCRD's Projected Cemetery Market Summary of Demographic + Disposition Variables, Source: LEES+Associates

The following section examines the share of the total market demand that has historically been met by SCRD cemeteries and identifies how many requests for cemetery services and inventory sales that SCRD can expect over the next 25 years.

Historic Interments and Sales

Cemetery Activity Trends

This section reviews the historic demand for SCRD's cemetery interment services and inventory sales.

The percentage of a Market Area's total demand for casket burials and cremations interment services that is met by a cemetery is commonly referred to as its "market capture rate." This is measured in terms of the number of annual interments at the cemetery, as a proportion of the number of deaths in the Market Area within the same year. It reflects the portion of residents served each year by a cemetery.

The number of annual inventory sales is also an important measure of demand with respect to estimating a cemetery's remaining capacity and life span. In the short term, a cemetery's annual lot sales typically exceed its number of annual interments.

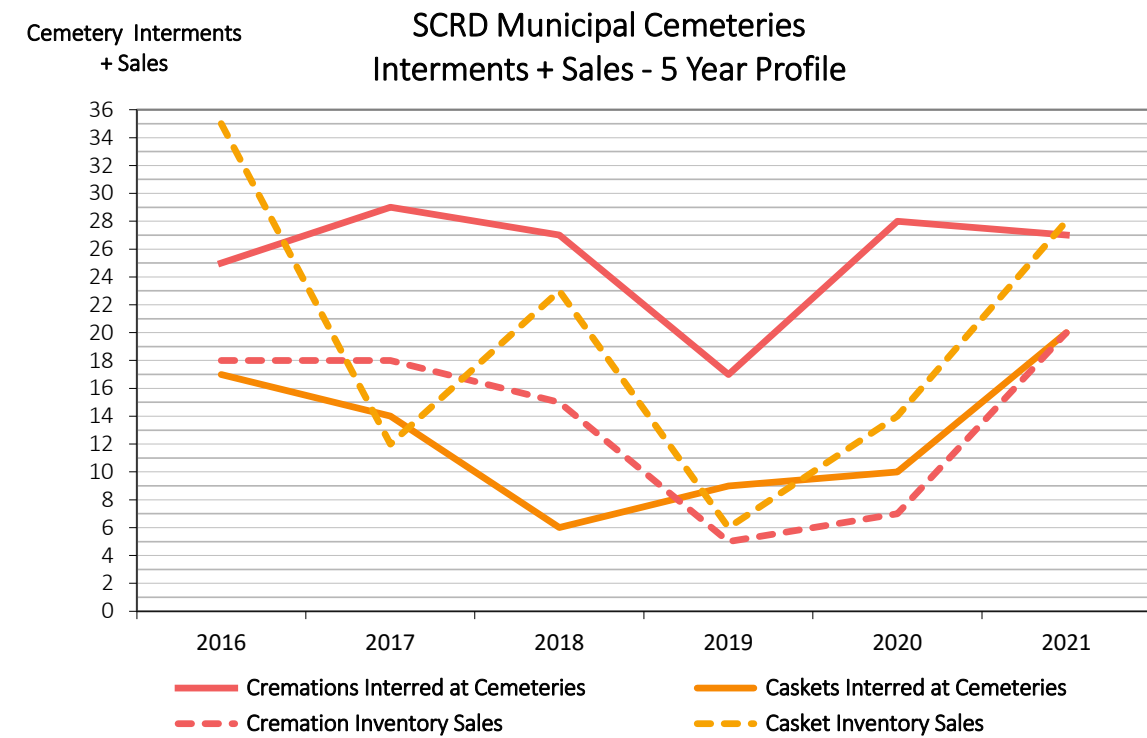


Figure 9: SCRD's Historic Cemetery Sales and Interments, Source: SCRD Cemetery Records.

The following graph summarizes SCRD's historic cemetery interments and sales from 2016 to 2021.

This graph shows that SCRD has been interring approximately 2 cremated remains for every cremated remains inventory sale. In contrast, SCRD is selling 1.5 casket lots annually for every casket it interrs.

This implies that there are a significant number of community members pre-purchasing casket burial lots at Seaview Cemetery to inter multiple cremated remains. This puts an extra demand on SCRD's cemetery casket lot inventory.

Cemetery Interments and Sales Summary

Future projections of demand for SCRD's interment services and inventory in this analysis assume that the historic market capture rates in Table 3 and the sales to interment relationship ratio in Table 4, will continue forward over the next 25 years.

Interment and Market Capture from 2016 - 2021		
Interment and Disposition	Total from 2016 - 2021	Average Per Year
Casket Lot Interment	76 casket interments	13 casket interments
Casket Burial Market Capture	105 resident casket burials	18 resident casket burials
Casket Burial Market Capture	72%	72%
Cremation Lot Interments	127 cremation lot burials	21 cremation lot burials
Cremation Niche Interments	26 niche interments	5 niche interments
Cremation Interments (Lots + Niches)	153 cremation interments	26 cremation interments
Cremation Dispositions	1989 Cremations	332 cremations
Cremation Market Capture	8%	8%

Table 3: SCRD's Interments and Market Capture from 2016 to 2021, Source: LEES+Associates and SCRD's Cemetery Records.

Sales and Interment Relationship Ratio from 2016 to 2021		
Sales	Total from 2016 - 2021	Average Per Year
Casket Lot Sold	118 lots sold	20 lots sold
Casket Lot interment	76 casket interments	13 casket interments
Casket Lot Sales to Inters Ratio	1.55	1.55
Cremation Lots Sold	45 lots sold	8 lots sold
Columbaria Niches Sold	38 niches sold	6 niches sold
Cremation Inventory Sold (lots + niches)	83 lots + niches	14 lots + niches
Cremation Interments (lots + niches)	153 cremation interments	26 cremation interments
Cremation Lots Sales to Inters Ratio	0.54	0.54

Table 4: SCRD's Sales, and Sales to Interments Relationship Ratio from 2016 to 2021, Source: LEES+Associates and SCRD's Cemetery Records

Community Member Preferences

The proportion of residents that choose to be buried in a cemetery varies significantly and is influenced by several factors. These include:

- The attractiveness of the cemetery site;
- The diversity of the product and service options;
- The cemetery’s level of universal accessibility;
- The level of cemetery operator community engagement;
- The cemetery’s proximity to residential areas and residents;
- The cemetery’s ability to meet religious/ethnic traditions, and
- Pricing.

A high cremation rate affects the total number of families that are likely to choose interment at a cemetery. This is because most cremated remains in North America are not interred in cemeteries. Many families choose to scatter a family member’s cremated remains in unregulated areas such as public parks, private property, lakes, rivers, and other outdoor places of personal meaning. In contrast, most families choosing casket burial will inter in their local cemetery.

Market research by LEES+Associates over the past two decades finds that most Canadian municipal cemeteries will serve a market area that consists of one community and its surrounding rural area.

These cemeteries typically provide service for 80%-90% of those choosing casket burial, and 10%-20% of those who choose cremation in their community.

SCRD is interring 72% of casket burials and 8% of cremations in its Market Area. These market capture rates are below average compared to other Canadian municipal cemeteries. This could be in part due to the limited number of interment options available to residents at SCR D’s cemeteries.

SCRD staff work closely with Devlin Funeral Home, the only funeral service provider in the SCR D. In addition to delivering services at SCR D’s cemeteries, Devlin Funeral Home reports serving residents that chose to be interred at other cemeteries and churches on the SCR D, including Sechelt Indian Cemetery, Forest View Cemetery in Pender Harbour, and cremation scattering gardens at local churches. A small portion of SCR D residents chose to be interred in cemeteries in the Vancouver area.

Projected Interments and Sales

This section estimates the projected demand for SCR D’s interment services and inventory sales. This projection assumes that historic service rates, interment patterns, sales trends, and average annual growth in the Market Area will remain consistent and continuous over the next 25 years.

The following graph summarizes SCR D’s projected cemetery interments and sales over the next 25 years, from 2022 to 2046.

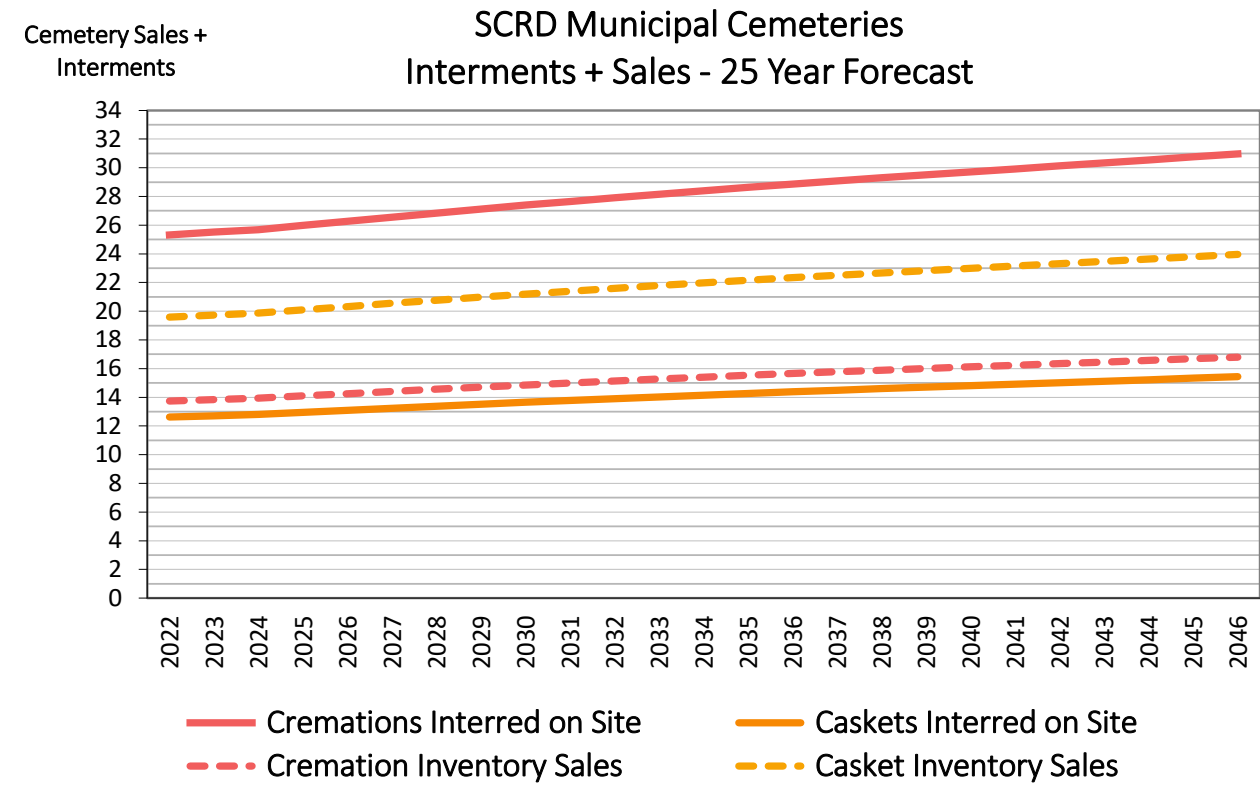


Figure 10: SCR D’s 25 Year Projections – Defining Future Demand, Source: LEES+Associates.

Projections of interment numbers over the next 25 years finds that SCR D can expect:

- 350 casket lot burial services, an average 14 burials per year;
- 600 cremation lot burial services, an average 24 burials per year, and
- 120 cremation niche interment services, an average 5 interments per year.

Projections of sales numbers over the next 25 years finds that SCR D can expect:

- 550 casket lot sales, an average 22 casket lot sales per year;
- 210 cremation lot sales, an average 8 cremation lot sales per year, and
- 175 cremation niches, an average 7 niche sales per year.

In this section, “universal accessibility” refers to the overall visibility of the cemetery’s profile to the Market Area’s residents, how easy it is for them to locate the site, as well as navigate within it.

Inventory and Capacity (Supply)

This section of the report analyzes the current developed inventory of casket lots, cremation lots and columbaria niches, and the capacity of any undeveloped land and potential infill areas at the SCRD's cemeteries, comparing it to the land needed to meet the expected demand over the next 25 years.

Sales Capacity

In this cemetery demand and needs analysis, we compare the anticipated sales demand to the number of casket lots, cremation lots and niches available for sale, and then estimate the number of years of sales remaining. For context, all existing burial inventory is supplied at Seaview Cemetery. Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery is closed to new sales of graves, and is not suitable for expansion because it is too steep. Kleindale cemetery is very small, full, and closed.

"Sales" refers to all purchases of a right-of-interment for in-ground burial lot ("grave"), or columbaria niche at the SCRD's cemeteries. A sale may take place significantly in advance of the need for interment services at municipal cemeteries.

"Casket lot" inventory refers to all in-ground burial lots at SCRD cemeteries that can accommodate a full in-ground casket burial. According to SCRD's bylaw, the size of a casket lot is 6' x 9'. In practice, SCRD staff have been interring caskets in lots that are 5' x 10'.

"Cremation lots" inventory refers to all in-ground burial lots at the SCRD that accommodate only urns. The size of a standard cremation lot is 2' x 2.5'.

The amount of inventory available for sale is usually a cemetery's most limited resource and is the primary constraint for cemetery operations. A cemetery usually only sells a grave or niche once, whereas it is possible for these single lots or niches to accommodate multiple interments.

Interment Capacity

Interment capacity is the total space available for interments in the cemetery's inventory. This includes lots and niches that are currently available for sale, as well as those lots and niches that have been purchased in advance of need but are not yet occupied.

"Interments" include the opening and closing service provided to the purchaser of a right-of interment. At the SCRD cemeteries, interments entail the burial of the deceased's casket or urn in a grave or placement of an urn within a columbarium niche.

The capacity of an interment space (a casket lot, cremation lot or columbaria niche) refers to the number of times these opening and closing services can be done after it has been sold, and the number of caskets and/or urns that can be placed within it.

Interment capacity is defined by cemetery bylaw and the physical size of the interment space.

In addition to its inventory available for sale, SCRD cemeteries have a high number of pre-purchased, reserved burial lots and columbaria niches that accommodate community member interments. The majority of the Seaview Cemetery's inventory available for interment, is within its pre-purchased inventory reserve.

There is a contradiction in the current bylaw regarding the interment capacity of burial lots at SCRD's cemeteries.

According to SCRD's Cemetery Bylaw:

"One interment may be permitted in each grave space in the cemetery. A single grave may inter six cremations or one full burial and up to five cremations." and

"Each columbaria niche may hold a maximum of two interments of cremated remains dependent on niche size."

There is an opportunity here for the SCRD to improve the clarity of the bylaw language concerning the number of burials that is permitted in a casket and cremation-only grave space.

Interment + Sales Patterns

The following historic interment and sales patterns at SCRD's cemeteries are assumed to continue over the next 25 years and affect the future demand for its inventory and services. These are that:

- 70% of annual interments at Seaview Cemetery take place within pre-purchased, reserved lots and niches;
- Multiple cremated remains interments regularly take place within single burial lots at Seaview Cemetery.
 - From 2016 to 2021, SCRD interred 1.8 urns for every 1 cremation option sold. In contrast, during the same period SCRD sold 1.5 casket lots for every 1 casket interred.

The purchase of casket lots solely for the interment of cremated remains constrains its availability to community members who need the larger lots to accommodate casket interment.

Due to religious or ethnic burial traditions, these community members choosing casket burial do not have an alternate inventory option available to them at SCRD cemeteries. Whereas cremated remains can be currently accommodated at Seaview Cemetery by casket lots, cremation lots or columbaria niches.

These interment and sales patterns imply that SCRD will need to:

- Accelerate the development of its casket lots to accommodate both the demand from community members choosing casket burial, as well as those using casket lots as a cremated remain estate, and/or
- Reduce the number of cremated remains it permits in a casket lot and offer family estate lots that are specifically dedicated to interring a larger number of cremated remains interments than is permitted casket lots.

These strategies would redirect demand for casket lots and encourage the purchase of the more plentiful cremated remains inventory.

Cemetery Inventory Available for Sale

The following table summarizes SCRD’s developed inventory that is available for sale (all of which is currently at Seaview Cemetery), the projected average number of sales per year (over the next 25 years), and the estimated number of years of sales remaining.

Inventory Type	Developed Inventory for Sale	Average Sales Per Year	Years of Sales Remaining
Casket Lots	42 lots	22 lot sales per year	2-3 years
Casket Lots- Jewish	14 lots		
Cremation Lots	253 lots	8 lots sales per year	30- 35 years
Columbaria Niche	16 niches	7 niche sales per year	2-3 years
Total	325 lots + niches	37 sales per year	

Table 5: SCRD’s Cemetery Inventory Sales Capacity, Source: SCRD Cemetery Records.

Cemetery Inventory - Available For Interment

The following graph summarizes all the existing inventory at SCRD cemetery sites available for interment. The dashed, white line is the dividing boundary between reserved inventory and inventory available for sale.

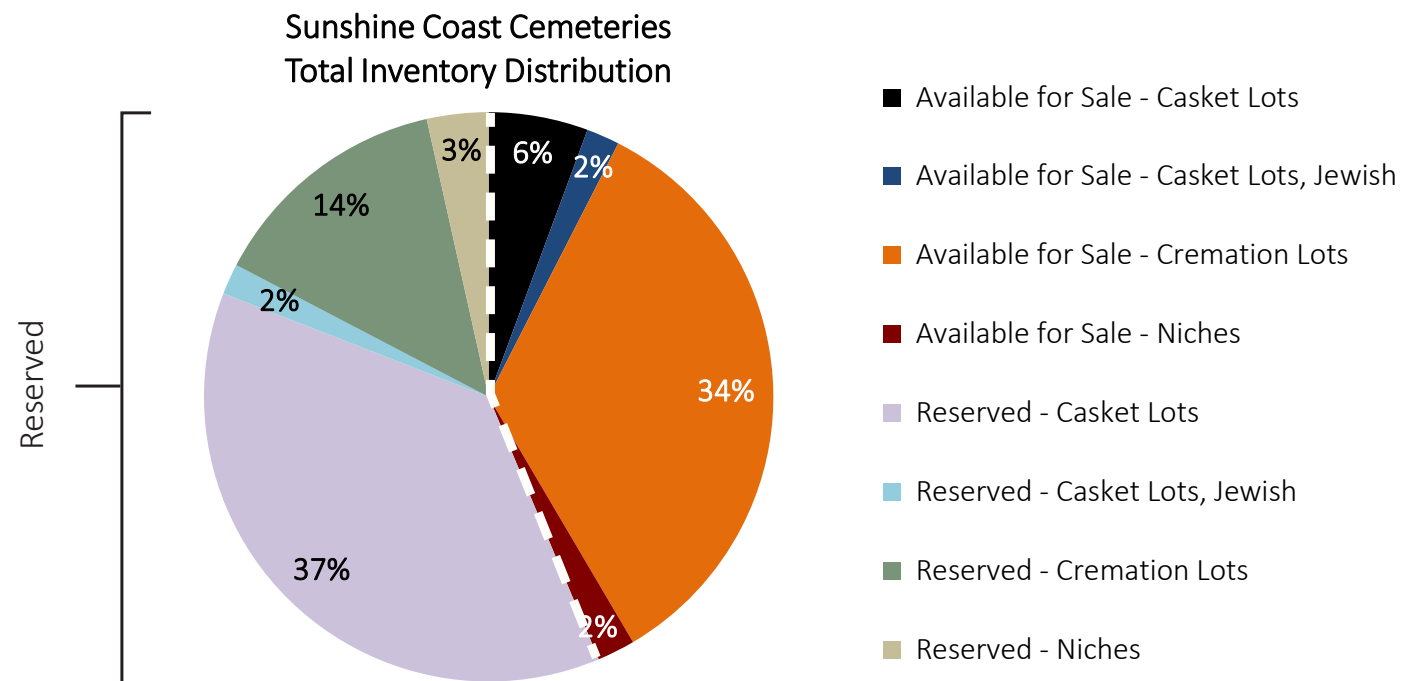


Figure 11: Summary of SCRD’s Cemetery Inventory Interment Capacity, Source: SCRD Cemetery Records.

The following table summarizes SCRD’s pre-purchased, reserved inventory that is available for interment, in addition to the SCRD’s inventory available for sale.

Inventory Type	Pre-purchased, Reserved Inventory	% of Inventory Reserved	Total Inventory Available for Interment	Years of Sales Remaining
Casket Lots	277 lots	87%	14 inters per year	20- 25 years
Casket Lots- Jewish	13 lots	48%		
Cremation Lots	103 lots	29%	23 inters per year	10- 15 years
Columbaria Niche	26 niches	62%	5 inters per year	8- 10 years
Total	419 lots + niches	56%	42 inters per year	

Note: % of Inventory Reserved = This is the portion of Total Inventory Available for Interment that is pre-purchased and reserved by community members.

Table 6: SCRD’s Cemetery Inventory Sales Capacity, Source: SCRD Cemetery Records.

This table shows that SCRD can expect to continue interring residents at its cemetery sites long after its final lot is sold. Residents of the Sunshine Coast LHA will need SCRD to plan to continue operating its cemeteries as an active site for funerals and interments for the next 25 years.

After the last burial takes place, SCRD will then need to maintain its cemeteries as inactive in perpetuity. This is required by British Columbia’s Cemetery and Funeral Services Act, Division 3 — Maintenance and Care Fund Provisions.

Total Capacity - Undeveloped Land + Infill Opportunities

Infill Strategy – Development and Densification

There are often opportunities at cemetery sites to develop space not historically allocated for interments and densify site capacity through a range of strategies. This may include:

1. Closing low-traffic paths, roads, and other amenities, for use as added interment space;
2. Strategically placing new in-ground lots with a smaller, more flexible land footprint (including small cremation lots and scattering gardens), and
3. Adding above-ground interment options such as family vessels or columbaria and memorial wall niches.

Besides the inventory currently available, SCRD has some undeveloped land and in-fill opportunities that it can use to add additional inventory.

The following table summarizes the land and areas potentially available to be developed into new cemetery inventory and provides an estimate of the number of additional years of sales this additional capacity could provide.

Undeveloped Land + Infill Area Available	Future Inventory for Sale - To be Developed	Average Sales Per Year	Additional Years of Sales
0.75 acres- Seaview	375 lots	22 casket lots	15- 20 years
3.5 acres-Elphinstone	1,759 lots	22 casket lots	75- 80 years
4.25 acres- SCRD Cemeteries	2,125 lots	22 casket lots	90 - 100 years

Table 7: : Summary of SCRD's Total Capacity, Source: SCRD Cemetery Records + LEES Site Observations.

The quality of the 3.5 acres of undeveloped land at Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery identified in Table 7, is a preliminary estimate of the flat areas that may be suitable for future burials. The practical potential of this landscape's future development into additional interment space, will be assessed further in a later chapter that provides a "Cemetery Landscape + Facilities Assessment."

Currently given the steep grade and landscape conditions at Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery, it may be more beneficial for the SCRD to maintain this land as a park rather than developing it for further cemetery sales.

Reclamation Strategy - Unclaimed Lots

Another option available to increase its cemetery land capacity is to reclaim abandoned, pre-purchased lots.

According to **British Columbia's Cemetery and Funeral Services Act , Section 37-** a lot may be reclaimed, in accordance with the following terms:

37 (1) If a lot previously sold has not been used and

- a) the lot holder with the right of interment is at least 90 years of age or, if living, would be at least 90 years of age,
- b) a period of at least 50 years has elapsed from the date the lot was sold, and
- c) the operator has been unable to locate the lot holder after having given notice in accordance with section 34 (2),

the operator may apply, as prescribed, to the registrar for permission to reclaim the lot and to sell it to another person.

(2) The registrar must, within 30 days after receiving an application under subsection (1),

- a) grant the application, with or without conditions, or
- b) reject the application, with written reasons for the rejection.

3) A contract for the sale of a lot referred to in section 32 (1) (b) or (c) must contain a statement setting out the provisions of subsection (1) of this section.

(4) If a lot is reclaimed and sold with permission of the registrar and the lot is subsequently required for use by the lot holder with the right of interment, the operator must provide another lot of equal or greater value acceptable to the lot holder or a person referred to in section 51 (1).

The first step in a reclamation strategy would be for the SCRD to identify and confirm the location of all existing sold, used, and unclaimed lots. Some cemeteries seek to increase their capacity and conserve land through the reuse and resale of unclaimed lots. These are usually lots that have been purchased from the SCRD several decades ago, but whose owners have not had any contact with the SCRD since the time of purchase.

The best practices surrounding this strategy include:

1. Identifying individuals and families who have purchased burial plots more than 50 years ago;
2. Attempting to find the last known lease/lot owner;
3. Advertising in the local media (e.g., newspapers) to find them, and
4. Determining where no contact can be established with the buyer or family members, for the potential lots available.

Precise terms surrounding the circumstances and expiration of the right-of-interment in an unclaimed lot should be fully delineated in the SCRD's Cemetery Bylaw. However, a review of the bylaw finds that this is not addressed in the current local regulations.

Unclaimed lots that are determined to be available can then be resold, typically at the current fair market value.

It is important to consider that just because a lot was sold 50 or more years ago, it does not necessarily indicate a lack of family interest. Thorough investigation and significant staff time may be required to determine if unclaimed lots are available.

SCRD staff estimate that there are about a dozen reserved lots that could be 50 years or older.

New Cemetery Site Considerations

As SCRD review the land options for a new cemetery, it will need to define and consider a wide range of site suitability criteria, legislative requirements, and community member needs.

With respect to legislative requirements, SCRD will need to consider the rules and regulations of the

- Heritage Conservation Act, and
- Cemetery and Funeral Services Act.

With respect to community member needs, SCRD is advised to prepare a plan for public consultation during this process.

In the selection and development of a new site in the future, it will be important to be mindful and respectful of First Nations territorial ownership of the lands. SCRD should include the Sechelt (shíshálh), Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh), Tla'amin, and Klahoose First Nations during its consultation phase, to identify their needs and any concerns regarding sensitive cultural areas, related to the future cemetery's ongoing development and operations in the region.

Recommendations - Cemetery Demand + Needs Analysis

Cemeteries are unique in that their land use designation is legislated to remain unchanged in perpetuity. For this reason, it is prudent for communities to plan to have enough cemetery land capacity to meet community needs for at least 100 years. A cemetery system's inventory and land capacity's "Years of Sales Remaining" is an important indicator for measuring its performance and long-term sustainability.

There is a critical need to develop additional cemetery land, particularly to provide more casket lot and columbaria niche inventory, with less than 5 years of sales remaining. A strategy is required to provide this inventory in the short term to address the immediate need, as well as the medium and long term.

We advise the following approach:

- 1.Short Term Strategy (1-2 years): Inventory conversion and reclamation at Seaview Cemetery (1-2 years);
- 2.Medium Term Strategy (2-3 years): Infill and expansion of burial areas at Seaview Cemetery by developing the forested areas, and
- 3.Long Term Strategy (3-5 years): Purchase of more suitable land for cemetery purposes that will provide burial capacity for the next 100 years.

To ensure that its cemeteries will be able to continue to provide its full range of services over the next 25 years, it is recommended that SCRD implement the following initiatives:

SHORT TERM

- Convert adjacent cremation lots into casket lot inventory and installing additional columbaria on site within 1 years;
- Limit the number of cremated remains permitted in a casket lot and introduce cremation estate lots within 1 years;
- Implement a reclamation strategy for reserved lots that are 50 years or older within 2 years.

MEDIUM TERM

- Accelerate development of the 0.75 acres of undeveloped land and infill areas identified at Seaview Cemetery within 2 – 3 years.

LONG TERM

- Identify potential future sites to expand the SCRD's cemetery lands within 2 years;
- Acquire and develop at least 1.1 acres of new cemetery land in the next 3 years, so it can continue to meet the expected demand of its community members over the next 25 years, and
- Acquire and develop approximately 5 acres of new cemetery land to develop over the next 10 years, to fully serve the coming generations of Sunshine Coast community members for the next 100 years.

The SCRD has the option to pursue a more limited services model through cremation gardens, memorial walls, and green burial pods when Seaview Cemetery runs out of casket lots within 3 years.



Figure 12: Seaview Cemetery. Source: LEES+Associates



Chapter 3: Cemetery Landscape and Facilities Assessment

This chapter is an overview of the opportunities and constraints of Seaview Cemetery and Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery for burial expansion. Opportunities and constraints were identified through a desktop study, a site visit, site photos, and interviews with staff.

At the direction of SCRD Staff, Kleindate Cemetery was not assessed in detail as part of this report. It is very small, full, and closed with no opportunities.

This chapter is set out under the following headings:

- Seaview Cemetery Overview;
- Seaview Cemetery Opportunities and Constraints;
- Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Overview, and
- Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Opportunities and Constraints.

Seaview Cemetery Overview

Seaview Cemetery is a six acre wedge shaped piece of land located in Roberts Creek with the Sunshine Coast Highway to the north, Lower Road to the south and a residential property to the west.

The cemetery has a traditional cemetery feel with open lawn burial areas surrounded by trees along the perimeter, buffering it from the surrounding roadways. The cemetery is broadly split into two burial areas - the old section to the east and the active section to the west. The land becomes more steeply sloping from the north to the western burial area, up to approximately a 12% grade. There is a mix of upright and flat markers throughout the cemetery, and all the lots face east-west. The lawn areas are littered with various species of ornamental trees that have been planted on or near graves by families. The burial sections are connected by a narrow gravel road.

Seaview Cemetery Opportunities and Constraints

The following section is an overview of the opportunities and constraints that were identified at Seaview Cemetery. The opportunities and constraints inform the concept plan found in later chapters of this report.

The opportunities and constraints are set out under the following headings:

- Burial Expansion;
- Interment and Memorialization;
- Cemetery Governance and Administration;
- Landscape Character and Maintenance;
- Operations;
- Ground Conditions and Topography;
- Storm Water Management;
- Access and Circulation;
- Signage and Wayfinding;
- Cemetery Perimeter, and
- Amenity.

Burial Expansion

There is an opportunity to extend the operational life of the cemetery by:

- Establishing a new burial section on the undeveloped forest lands in the south west of the property.
- Expanding the columbaria area into the larger cremation garden precinct, including a scattering garden, family vessels and an ossuary.
- Infilling redundant pathways and driveways with additional burial inventory.

Interment and Memorialization

There are a number of opportunities to enhance the interment and memorialization options offered at Seaview Cemetery. These include:

- Opportunity to add scattering as an interment option, along with a memorial wall for families and friends to remember loved ones without the need for interment.
- Ceasing the practice of adding grave covers and low walls when new burials take place. The layout of burial lots is tight and these additions to the grave create maintenance and operational issues.
- Opportunity to change the layout and orientation of the burial lots for future burials and future burial sections so that there is adequate room for maintenance and operational procedures such as mowing and opening and closing of graves.
- Opportunity to provide a small children's burial section where parents can be buried with their kids.
- Opportunity to enhance the aesthetic of the cremation sections H-F in the old section. The proximity to the roadways makes this area feel hostile. Improvements to the buffering and quality of the landscape are needed.



Figure 13: Existing one sided columbaria units and concrete columbaria base.



Figure 14: Empty area in the older section.



Figure 15: Wooded in the south west corner of the property to be used for expansion.



Figure 16: Redundant road that could be close and used for infill.

Cemetery Governance and Administration

The SCRD needs to update the cemetery bylaw with clear rules to educate families as well as provide a foundation for enforcement. These rules include:

- Stop allowing families to add custom grave covers. Issues with the grave covers include:
 - Some are poorly constructed and not able to withstand the elements and standard cemetery maintenance practices (lawn mowing, etc.).
 - Poorly constructed grave covers have created a financial liability and Health and Safety liability to visitors. The SCRD will be obligated to fix or remove them if the family can not be contacted; and
 - The amateur nature of the design and construction of many grave covers has negatively impacted the overall landscape standard and appearance of the cemetery.
- Gain control over adornment, ornamentation and planting on graves.
 - The ornamentation placed on graves directly impacts the adjacent graves and families that visit.
 - Adornment, ornamentation and planting contribute to the untidy and unattractive aesthetic of the cemetery. This can be a deterrent to existing and new families considering whether to bury a loved one at the cemetery. The attractiveness of a cemetery can impact the price families are prepared to pay for the right of interment.
 - Need to develop a tree management strategy to attend the over mature trees that have been planted by families throughout the years. Trees and shrubs planted by families can cause maintenance and operational issues and impact adjacent graves.

Landscape Character and Maintenance

- Opportunity to develop a Tree and Planting Plan and Tree Management Strategy to ensure that the long term health and structure of the tree canopy that defines the landscape character of the cemetery and protects visitors from the noise and movement of the surrounding highways is secure for future generations.
- Opportunity to enhance the cemetery landscape by planting trees in the older section.
- Need to repair or remove sunken grave covers for safety of staff and visitors.
- Opportunity to explore whether a full irrigation system should be put in, or whether hose bib taps/quick couplers could be installed to spray the lawns in the event of potential forest fires and prolonged heat waves due to more extreme climate events affecting the health of the grass.



Figure 17: Example ornamentation, upright markers of various sizes and dissimilar and personalized grave covers.



Figure 18: Example of ornamentation and shrubs planted by families encroaching on adjacent graves.



Figure 19: Example of trees and shrubs planted by families and need to be maintained or removed.

Operations

- Opportunity to enhance the operations shed and storage area by adding lock-block storage bays, a larger storage shed and fencing or planting to screen the area from visitors to the cemetery.
- Need to consolidate the bulk materials into the storage area.

Ground Conditions and Topography

The graves are all oriented east-west in conflict with the north-south grade. In the western section of the cemetery the grade is approximately 12%. This causes challenges for the operations team trying to provide a level platform for the lowering device at graveside services for families to be safe while attending the service, and it is challenging to install level grave covers.

Large rocks and boulders risk tearing out the side walls of adjacent graves and create challenges for opening and closing graves. Graves lower down the slope often require water to be pumped out as they are dug and prior to a family attending a graveside service.

Storm Water Management

It is likely that more extreme climatic event will occur in coming years as are result of climate change. There is a need for SCRD to work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to ensure they prevent storm water from the highway damaging the cemetery as it did during the storms of fall, 2021.

There is a need to evaluate the creek that runs through the cemetery. The bank conditions show signs of significant erosion which, if left unchecked, could potentially impact adjacent graves, or have a more serious impact on the cemetery.



Figure 20: North west corner soil pile. Need to enhance aesthetic of bulk materials storage.



Figure 21: New section of cemetery slopes from north to south.



Figure 22: Example of grave with water that will need to be pumped out.



Figure 23: Cornwallis Creek. Need to assess the risk of erosion to the adjacent graves.

Access and Circulation

Access and circulation for visitors and maintenance and operations is generally good.

- Need to establish where visitors should be parking their vehicles in the parking area along Lower Road or whether they are permitted inside the cemetery. Signage may be required in the Lower Road parking area.
- Opportunity to enhance the cemetery driveway by upgrading the gravel surface to asphalt, and by installing concrete curbing to reduce the risk of erosion.
- Opportunity to remove the secondary operational access route as part of a future burial expansion area in the south west part of the cemetery. All access would come through the main cemetery entrance, which would require removal or modification to the existing archway to allow taller operational vehicles through.

Signage and Wayfinding

- Opportunity to create cemetery signs that are more visible and appropriate in scale to replace the existing corporate brand signage.
- Opportunity to enhance the information provided to families and visitors by installing a kiosk with a map of the cemetery, rules and regulations and other announcements.

Cemetery Perimeter

- Opportunity to enhance the perimeter of the cemetery by establishing a perimeter characteristic that includes similar fencing and planting.

Amenity

- Opportunity to include gathering spaces as informal places to reflect and remember a loved one.
- Opportunity to create a walking path loop to encourage visitors to explore the cemetery.

Refer to Seaview Cemetery Opportunities and Constraints Diagram on page 22 for a summary of the opportunities and constraints.



Figure 24: Existing curbing. Opportunity to enhance the cemetery appearance with asphalted driveways and concrete curbing.



Figure 25: Fencing on the north side of the cemetery, opportunity to enhance the perimeter.

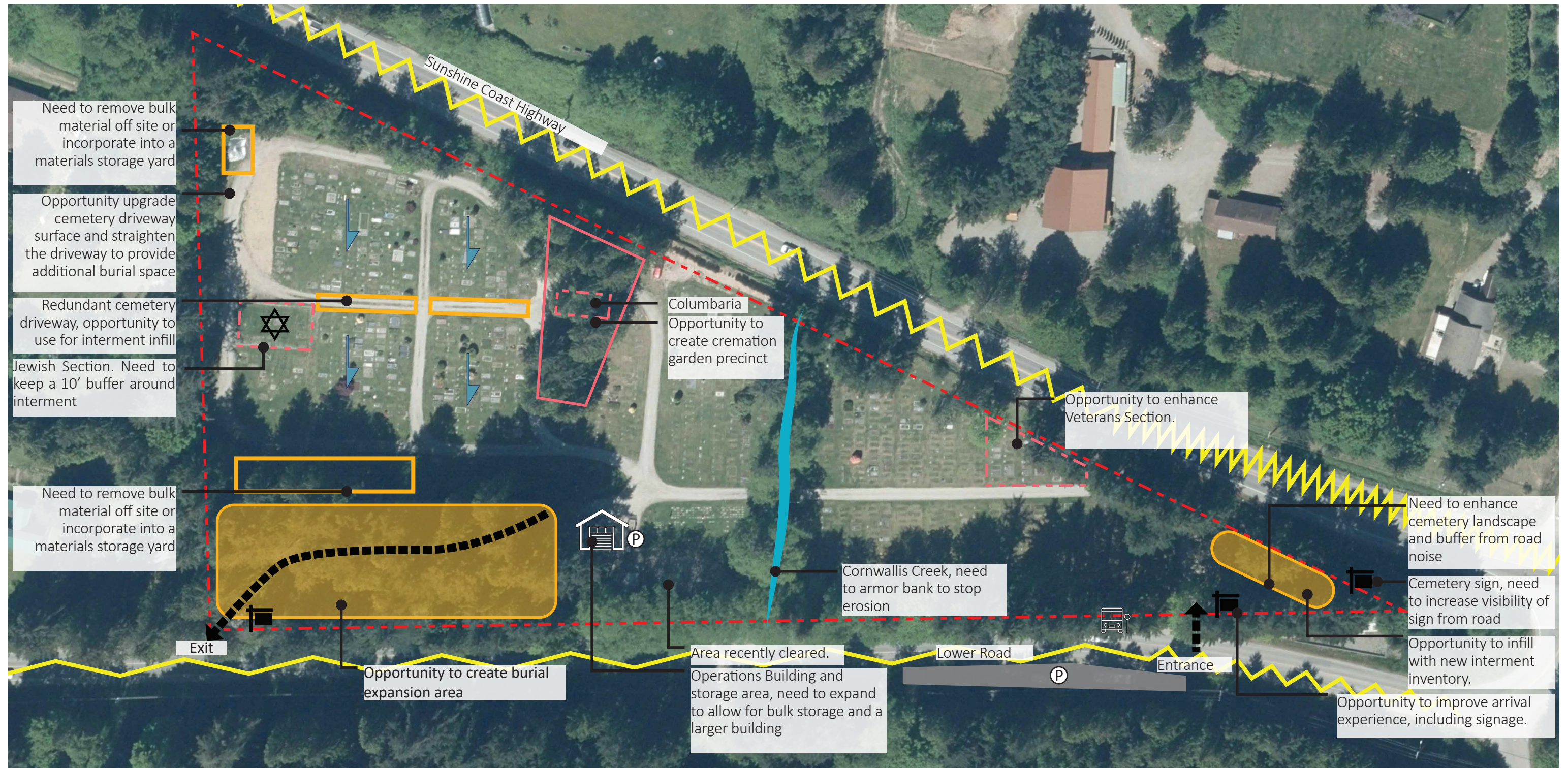


Figure 26: Main cemetery entrance. Need to modify or remove arch.

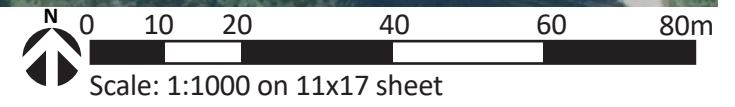


Figure 27: Standard cemetery sign. Opportunity to make the sign more visible from Sunshine Coast Highway by creating a larger sign.

Seaview Cemetery Opportunities and Constraints Diagram



- Legend**
- - - Cemetery Land Extents
 - - - Entrance / Exit
 - ~ Cornwallis Creek
 - ▲ Slope
 - ⚡ Traffic noise
 - Signage
 - 🚌 Bus stop
 - 🏠 Operations building
 - Ⓟ Parking
 - Proposed infill areas
 - Proposed burial expansion



Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Overview

The Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery sits on a 10.5 acre plot of largely forested land on the slopes of Mount Elphinstone. The land is located north of the Town of Gibson, on the west side of Keith Road.

The approach to the vehicle gate marking the cemetery entrance is along a rough gravel driveway to a small parking lot. The cemetery driveway becomes steep as it continues to a one acre lawned burial section in the northwest corner of the property surrounded by the forest. The majority of the undeveloped property consists of forest on steep rocky slopes, low-lying wet areas, and ravines with creeks.

The existing lawned burial section has a mix of upright and flat markers. Some graves are unmarked. A number of markers have fallen over or have been engulfed by the forest. The burial section is steeply sloping. This prevents backhoes and other machines being able to access and safely dig graves, so they must be dug by hand.

This cemetery is no longer active or selling plots, however cremation burials are permitted for those families that hold the rights to a pre-purchased lot. Along with the operational challenges, the cemetery does not accept full-body burials in the existing section due to the uncertainties about the accuracy of record keeping with regard to the location of existing burials.

Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Opportunities and Constraints

The following section is an overview of the opportunities and constraints that were identified during the site analysis of the Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery. The opportunities and constraints inform the concept plan found in later chapters of this report. The opportunities and constraints are set out under the following headings:

- Burial Expansion;
- Landscape Character;
- Ground Conditions and topography;
- Access and Circulation;
- Signage and wayfinding;
- Operations, and
- Amenity

Burial Expansion

The opportunity to add significant additional full body in-ground interment capacity is very limited. The cemetery is located on the side of a mountain and the grades are generally too steep for municipal cemetery operations. Those areas which are less steep appear to have ground that is damp or wet, as evidenced by the existing willows.

While no geotechnical site investigations have been undertaken to date, based on a visual assessment of the property, it is likely that significant modifications to the forested lands would be required to allow for traditional methods of full body in-ground burial, including:

- Clearing and grubbing of the forest;
- Importing large quantities of fill to create shallower grades, and
- Removal of large rocks.

Steep grades would still present a challenge to those with limited mobility.

A cost-benefit analysis of modifying the land would likely reveal it is not a favorable investment compared to purchasing other land that is more suitable for municipal cemetery development.

If the SCRD intends to retain the Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery property for burial expansion purposes, there is an opportunity to explore the potential to create small cremation gardens with columbaria units, scattering trails and memorial walks. There is an opportunity to establish a unique burial setting that include a mix of cremation gardens and green burial pods, which would be located in areas that have shallow enough slopes to accommodate a hand dug grave.

The potential land that could be used for full body in-ground burial is not sufficient to provide the capacity necessary to meet the burial needs of the community in the medium or long term without significant grading and associated construction costs. New land will need to be found soon, despite any future burial expansion that takes place at the Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery property.

Landscape Character

The majority of the site is covered in a mix forest with streams running from the north end of the site to the south. The on-site streams and neighbouring Chaster Creek contribute to a tranquil ambiance of the forest. There is an opportunity to utilize the tranquil beauty of the forest landscape to create small, intimate burial pods connected by a looping gravel pathway.

The clearance and modification to the forest landscape needed to create burial areas will be a major constraint.



Figure 28: Wooded area with minimal slope. Example of an area that has opportunity to be developed for burial expansion



Figure 29: Existing burial area. Example of sunken and sloughing graves.

Ground Conditions and Topography

The cemetery ground conditions are unknown and should be tested prior to and further planning done for the expansion of the cemetery. It is recommended the SCR D does the initial testing by doing a two to three test digs in various areas of the property. Assume the test dig has positive results, the SCR D should get a full survey of the property and geotechnical investigation to determine the viability of the ground conditions for in-ground interment.

Access and Circulation

There is a gated access road that allows vehicle access only when the gate is unlocked. Pedestrians can access the site at anytime.

There is a need to ensure the access road to the cemetery main entrance is realigned to allow for a two-way traffic flow and that it is located on cemetery or SCR D owned property. The surfacing of the access road and cemetery driveway will need to be upgraded.

If the cemetery were to be made active with expanded burial capacity, the SCR D will need to ensure that the parking area outside the cemetery gate is on SCR D land and is sanctioned as the cemetery parking lot.

An assessment is need to determine whether there is sufficient parking capacity. Currently the parking lot can hold a maximum of six to seven vehicles. There is a need to ensure SCR D communicates the parking rules to funeral homes and families attending a funeral in the cemetery. They will need to park on the roads in the adjacent neighbourhood as the parking lot and access road are too small to accommodate a large number of vehicles.

There is an opportunity to enhance the entry experience with upgraded gates, a welcome sign and information kiosk, and possibly a sculptural element such as welcoming figures.

Operations

Burial expansion will require a new materials storage area, and possibly a small operations building to store tools and equipment for general site maintenance and opening and closing graves.

Refer to Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Opportunities and Constraints Diagram on page 25 for a summary of the opportunities and constraints.



Figure 30: Example of the typical landscape character of the property.



Figure 31: Cemetery gate and entrance sign. Opportunity to enhance.



Figure 32: Example of existing cemetery driveway conditions.

Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Opportunities and Constraints Diagram



Legend

- - - - Cemetery Land Extents
- Operational Vehicle Access
- Recreational Trails
- ✱ Gate and Cemetery Sign
- P Parking
- Watercourse
- ▶ Slope Direction
- Existing Burial Area
- Cleared Area
- Slopes of 5-12%
- Slopes of 12-20%
- Slopes of more than 20%

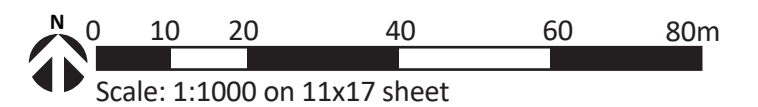




Figure 33: Kleindale Cemetery. Source: Google Earth.

At the direction of SCRD Staff, Kleindale Cemetery was not assessed in detail as part of this report. It is very small, full and closed with no opportunities. The cemetery operates as a pocket park and Staff intend to continue its long term maintenance at a park level of service.



Chapter 4: Seaview Cemetery Concept Plan

Seaview Cemetery currently has two to three years of casket lots, two to three years of columbaria niches, and minimum of 30 years of in-ground cremation lots to sell. This concept plan and recommendations have been created primarily in response to the need to provide:

- Additional interment inventory via the development of a new burial area with full body in-ground burial inventory as a priority, and
- A holistic site-wide approach that will be able to accommodate future interment and memorialization trends and needs.

This chapter is organized under the following headings:

- Key Objectives;
- Seaview Cemetery Concept Plan;
- Seaview Cemetery Interment Diagram;
- New Burial Areas;
- Infill Strategy, and
- Cemetery-wide Improvements.

Key Objectives

Key objectives of the Concept Plan are to:

- Ensure that the SCRD can provide cemetery services to SCRD residents for decades to come;
- Integrate the future burial expansion area as part of the holistic cemetery experience;
- Create an interment and memorialization plan that is adaptable to meet the future needs of families as they change over upcoming decades;
- Maintain the existing landscape buffer protecting the cemetery from the adjacent roadways and enhance the landscape buffer in areas where there is insufficient protection;
- Enable greater options for programming at the cemetery such as celebrations of life, and events and programs such as Mothers day, and
- Create a space with park-like amenities such as benches, so families can comfortably visit the cemetery.

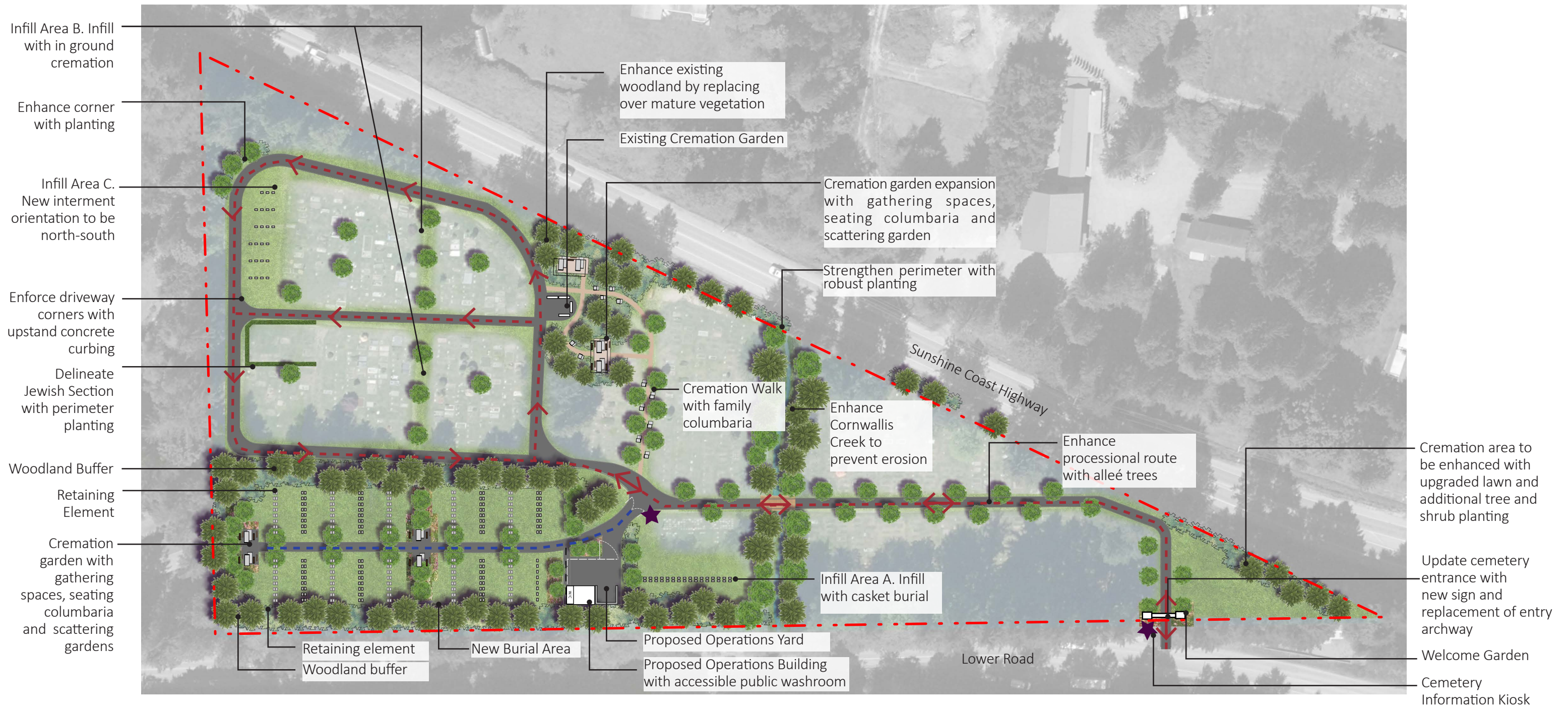
Seaview Concept Plan

The concept plan on the following page describes the spacial organization of the proposed development of Seaview Cemetery. Proposed development includes:

- Creating a new burial area on the forested section in the south-west corner of the cemetery, incorporating an improved operations yard that includes an operations building with public washrooms;
- A cremation garden that incorporates the existing columbaria as part of a range of cremation interment options;
- Changing the orientation of graves in the last remaining undeveloped western section of the cemetery so they align north-south with the slope of the land to do away with the need for grave covers;
- Infilling redundant driveways and paths with new in-ground casket and in-ground cremation interment;
- Planting new trees and shrubs to improve the landscape of the triangular cremation garden by the cemetery entrance;
- Enhancing the main cemetery entrance with a new gateway and cemetery sign;
- Information kiosks to improve wayfinding around the cemetery, and to aid visitors in locating graves of friends and family members, and
- Planting new trees and shrubs to improve the landscape buffer protecting the cemetery from highway noise.

Each recommendation above is described in detail on the pages following the concept plan.

Seaview Cemetery Concept Plan



Infill Area B. Infill with in ground cremation

Enhance corner with planting

Infill Area C. New interment orientation to be north-south

Enforce driveway corners with upstand concrete curbing

Delineate Jewish Section with perimeter planting

Woodland Buffer

Retaining Element

Cremation garden with gathering spaces, seating columbaria and scattering gardens

Enhance existing woodland by replacing over mature vegetation

Existing Cremation Garden

Cremation garden expansion with gathering spaces, seating columbaria and scattering garden

Strengthen perimeter with robust planting

Cremation Walk with family columbaria

Enhance Cornwallis Creek to prevent erosion

Sunshine Coast Highway

Enhance processional route with alleé trees

Cremation area to be enhanced with upgraded lawn and additional tree and shrub planting

Update cemetery entrance with new sign and replacement of entry archway

Welcome Garden

Cemetery Information Kiosk

Retaining element

Woodland buffer

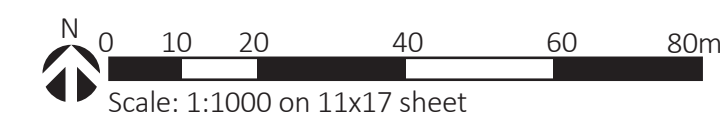
New Burial Area

Proposed Operations Yard

Proposed Operations Building with accessible public washroom

Lower Road

Lower Road



Legend

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Existing | Proposed | | |
| Cemetery Land Extents | Cemetery Driveway - Limited Access | Cemetery Information Kiosk | New and Enhanced Woodland Planting |
| Cemetery Driveway | Pedestrian Only Path | Gathering Space | Specimen Tree |

Seaview Cemetery Interment and Memorialization Diagram

This interment and memorialization diagram describes the spatial organization and mix of interment and memorialization options proposed as part of the Seaview Cemetery Concept Plan.

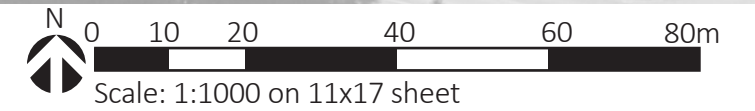


Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Existing | Proposed | |
| --- Cemetery Land Extents | ■ Cremation Garden | ■ Casket Lot with upright marker |
| | ■ In-ground Cremation Lot | ■ Casket Lot with flat marker |

Estimate Interment Capacity

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| New Burial Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casket Lots: 10-15 years • In-ground Cremation lots: 10-15 years • Columbaria Niches: 35-40 years | Infill Area A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casket Lots: 1-2 years | Cremation Garden and Cremation Walk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbaria: 50+ years • In-ground Cremation lots: 10+ years |
| | Infill Area B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-ground Cremation lots: 10 years | |
| | Infill Area C <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casket Lots: 1 year | |



New Burial Area

The new burial area will be created by clearing trees and importing fill material to create a level lawned burial area. It is proposed to keep as many existing trees as possible to form a buffer around the burial area. In addition, a new operations building and fenced yard is proposed. It will have a washroom that will be open when there is a graveside service taking place. The operations area will be fenced and screened from view. Section A-A: New Burial Area Central Cremation Garden and Section B-B: New Burial Area with Green Burial on page 32 describe how it will feel being in the space.

The concept for the new burial area offers an immediate solution to the need for more columbaria niches, in-ground casket lots and the need for more interment and memorialization options.

The design concept includes:

- A mix of in-ground casket and in-ground cremation interment;
- A Cremation Garden that offer a mix of interment options for cremated remains including:
 - Columbaria niches;
 - Memorial walls;
 - Family vessels, and
 - Scattering gardens with an ossuary.

This new burial area is projected to serve the community demand for the following amount of time:

- Cremation in-ground interment demand for 10-15 years,
- In-ground casket interment demand for 10-15 years, and
- Cremation niche demand over the for 35-40 years based on the columbarium units having 70 niches each.

New Burial Area Interment and Memorialization Diagram



Legend

Existing

--- Cemetery Land Extents

Proposed

■ Cremation Garden

■ In-ground Cremation Lot

■ Casket Lot with upright marker

■ Casket Lot with flat marker



0 10 20 40m

Scale: 1:500 on 11x17 sheet

Green Burial

If the provision of green burial at Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery proves too challenging, or if the SCRD is not able to secure additional land to develop a new cemetery, there is the option to develop a small green burial section as part of the proposed expansion area a Seaview Cemetery.

Green Burial is an emerging trend for families seeking more sustainable methods of interment. The proposed Green Burial Section is in response to the inquiries and requests received by SCRD admin staff for a green burial option.

The concept design of the Green Burial Section is to create a distinct and beautiful native landscape character consisting of gladed meadow burial areas set surrounded by woodland plantings. The character of this section will be distinct from the rest of the New Burial Area, which will have a traditional lawn burial character.

The Green Burial Section will offer single depth, full-body interment in a simple biodegradable casket or burial shroud, and a communal marker in each burial area with names of those interred in the area.

Due to the high demand for more casket burial space at Seaview and the need to optimize the minimal space available, it is recommended that the first phase of approximately 10 Green Burial lots be developed. Depending community interest this option, the section should be expanded. If this interment option does not gain traction at Seaview Cemetery, the allotted area should then be used for traditional in-ground casket interment.

As this will be a new offering, it is recommended that staff undergo training on how to provide a green burial option to families.



Figure 34: Green Burial Meadow: Mowed Pathway, Source: Unknown

New Burial Area Alternative Layout with Green Burial Option



Scale: 1:500 on 11x17 sheet

Legend

Existing

--- Cemetery Land Extents

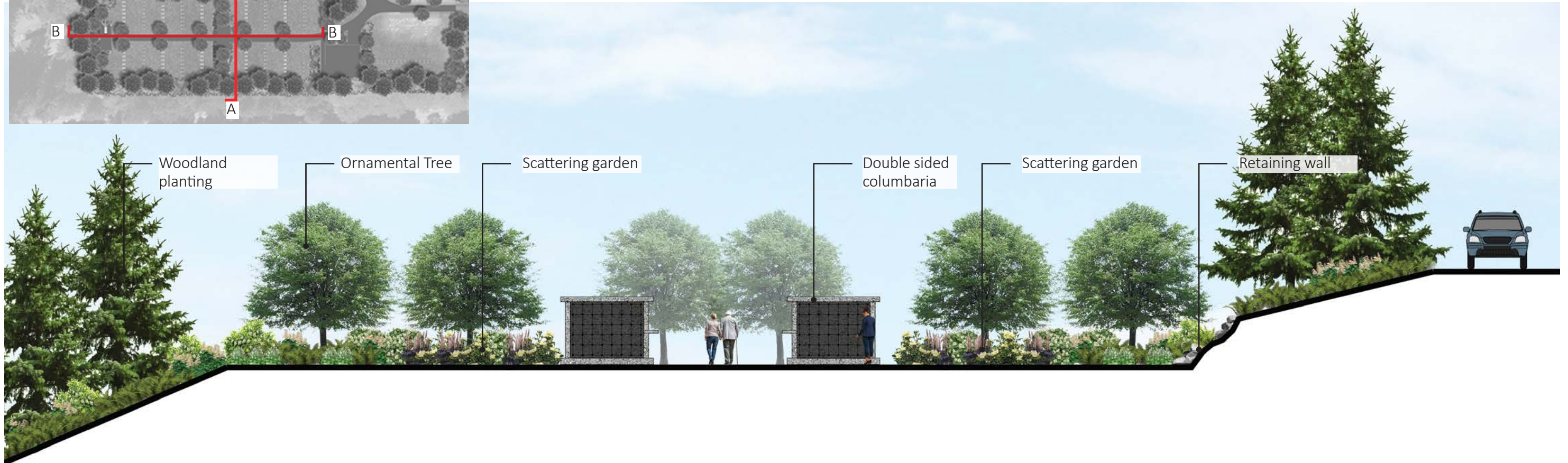
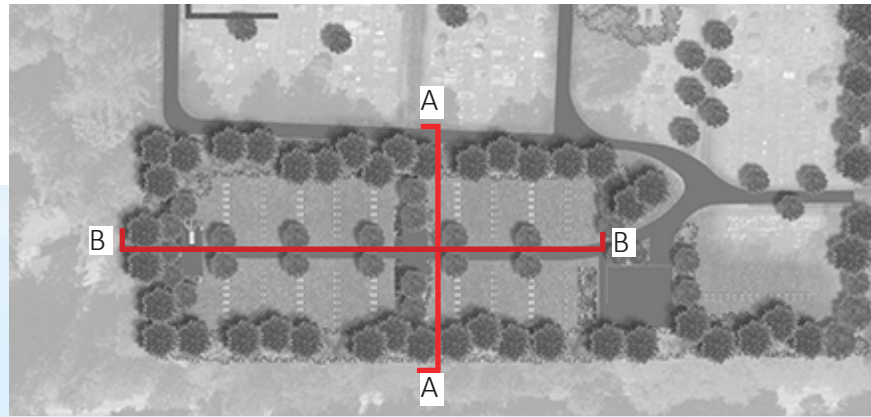
Proposed

Cremation Garden
 In-ground Cremation Lot

Casket Lot with upright marker
 Casket Lot with flat marker
 Green Burial

New Burial Area Sections

Key Plan



Section A-A: New Burial Area Central Cremation Garden

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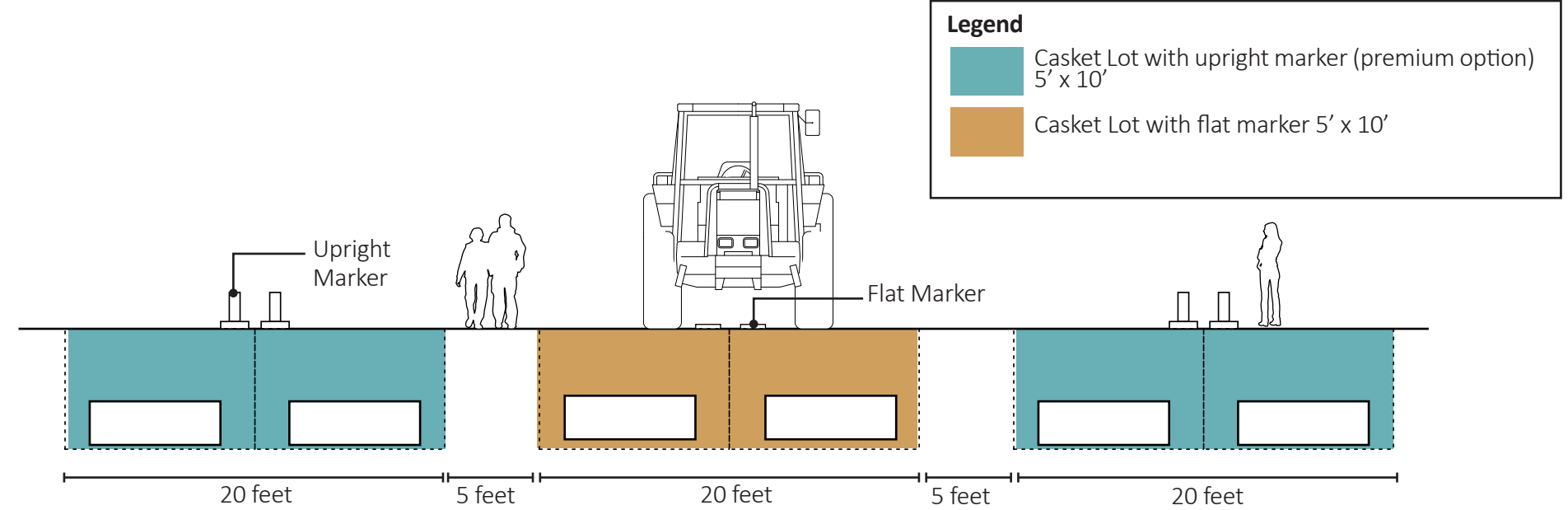
Section B-B: New Burial Area with Green Burial

1:200 on 11.x17 Sheet

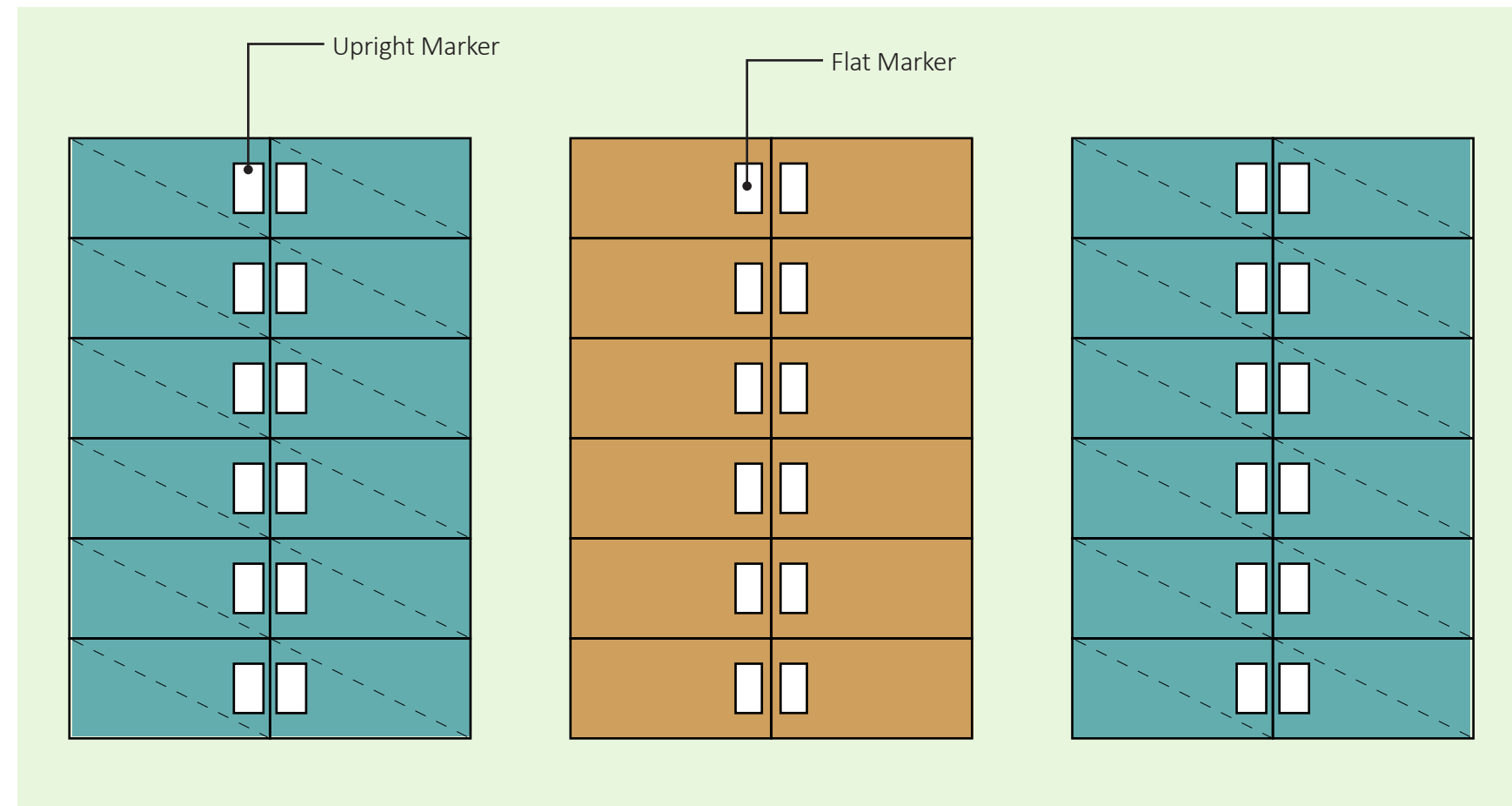
In-ground Interment

To optimize the space in the new burial area, lots are organized to maximize layout while taking operations into consideration. The casket lot layout alternates between upright and flat markers to allow large equipment to access all the areas. The spaces left between the blocks offer pathways for families to stand and walk. These areas are dimensioned to allow for future infill to prolong the life of the Cemetery. Refer to the Typical Casket Layout Diagrams on page 33.

Typical Casket Layout Diagrams



Expansion Areas, Typical Interment Layout - Section



Expansion Areas, Typical Interment Layout - Plan

Cremation Garden

The new burial area will include two cremation gardens. These areas will double as gathering spaces for families. The Cremation Gardens should include:

- A diverse range of interment and memorialization options, including Columbaria Niches, Scattering Gardens, Family Vessels and Memorial Walls;
- Seating;
- Appropriate vegetation, including plants tolerant of cremated remains in scattering beds;
- Spaces for celebrations of life;
- Columbaria, memorial wall, and family vessel materials and colours that are complimented by Seaview Cemetery landscape;
- Columbaria units should face east-west where possible, to allow both sides to receive direct sunlight, and
- Columbaria units should all be two-sided.

The proposed cremation garden in the new burial area includes four columbaria units; however, these do not need to be installed all at the same time and can be installed on an as-needed basis.



Figure 35: Cremation Garden, Boundary Bay Cemetery, Delta, BC. Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 36: Family Vessel, Shuswap Cemetery, Salmon Arm, BC. Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 37: Family Columbaria, Okotoks Cemetery, Okotoks, AB. Source: Sunset Memorial & Stone

Infill Strategy

Existing Cremation Garden Expansion and Cremation Walk

The existing cremation garden consists of two single-sided columbaria units, with the foundation poured and ready for the install of a third columbaria. The mature woodland surrounding this area and the redundant road that loops past offer a great opportunity to expand the cremation garden to provide a range of cremation interment options that will serve the SCRD community for 50+ years.

The expansion of the cremation garden should include a wider range of interment and memorialization options such as:

- Double-sided columbaria;
- Family columbaria;
- Family vessels;
- In-ground cremation interment;
- Scattering gardens, and
- Memorial walls.

The design of the Cremation Garden Expansion and Cremation Walk will be part of a future project. The design will respond to the existing landscape conditions and restrictions.

Infill Strategy

The Seaview Cemetery Interment and Memorialization Diagram on page 29 highlights three areas for infill, including:

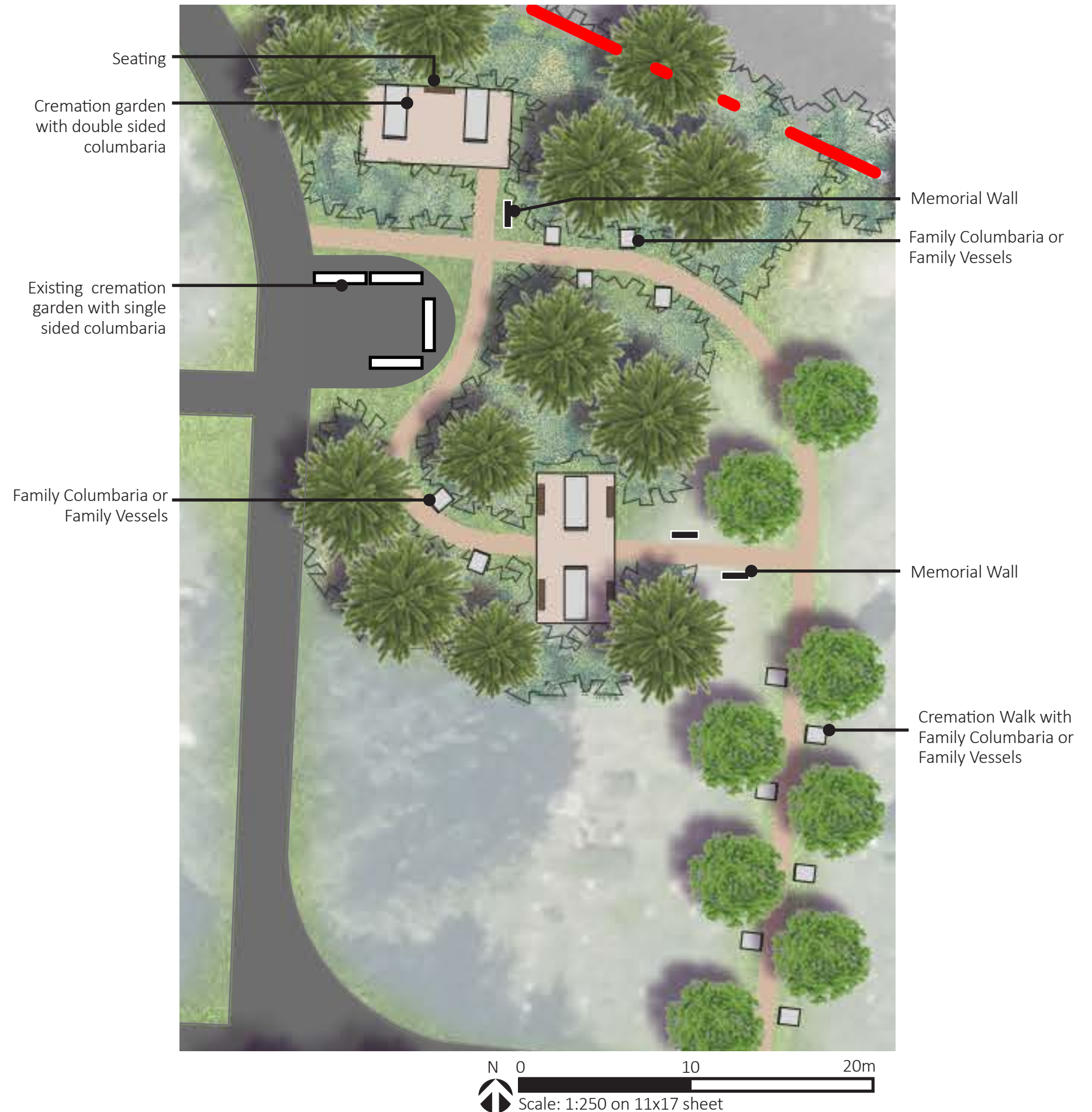
- Infill A: lawn space that has recently been cleared, adjacent to the exiting operations building.
- Infill B: A redundant driveway running north to south.
- Infill C: Driveway edge that has been recently prepared for interment.

Infill area A and area C are suitable for in-ground casket interment infill. Infill area B has a slopes from north to south at approximately 11%. This is not ideal for casket interment and should be infilled with in-ground cremation.

This infill strategy offers and additional:

- Three years of in-ground casket interment, and
- 10 years of in-ground cremation interment.

Existign Cremation Garden Expansion and Cremation Walk - Diagram



Cemetery Wide Improvements

It is recommended that the Cemetery-wide improvements are guided by the following strategies:

- Site Finishings;
- Landscape Management Plan;
- Vegetation Enhancement;
- Cornwallis Creek Enhancement;
- Circulation and Wayfinding Strategy, and
- Operations Building and Yard.

Site Furnishings

A guide for site furnishings should be established to ensure overall coordination of the style across the cemetery. The guide should include the existing developed sections of the Cemetery and the future expansion area.

Landscape Management

Seaview Cemetery boasts a classic traditional British Columbia cemetery landscape character with tall trees and lawn burial areas. It is recommended that a Landscape Management Strategy be developed to ensure the Memorial Parkland characteristics are carried through the detailed design of the burial expansion areas and enhanced in the existing cemetery.

The Landscape Management Strategy should include but not be limited to:

- A holistic Tree Management Strategy to ensure that the Memorial Parkland landscape character continues as aging and dying trees are replaced. The strategy should consider which species of trees will be able to adapt to the changing conditions on the site, e.g., climate adaptation and threats from pests and disease;
- Standard Operating Procedures for the care and maintenance of the cemetery landscape, and
- Managing and/or removing trees and shrubs planted by families on graves without authorization.

A strategy to maintain and remove where necessary, should be made for the trees and shrubs that have been planted by families on graves.

Vegetation Enhancement

It is recommended that the following vegetation upgrades are made in order to enhance the overall aesthetic appeal of the Cemetery.

The perimeter of the cemetery that borders the Sunshine Coast Highway should be enhanced with coniferous plantings that will protect the cemetery from the noise and undesirable views of the highway.

Trees should be planted over graves which are occupied or in locations where tree roots will not be at risk of future disturbance to increase the amount of shade in the cemetery.

New trees and plantings should align with the existing landscape character of the cemetery.

Cornwallis Creek Enhancement

Cornwallis Creek runs through the center of the cemetery property. The banks of the creek are showing erosion and wear. This may pose a risk to adjacent occupied graves. In anticipation of the increase in frequency of more intense climatic events such as the 'atmospheric rivers' of fall 2021, an assessment by a qualified hydrological engineer should be carried out to assess measures that are necessary to protect the graves along the creek.

Aesthetics are an important consideration for the bank stabilization. As such, bioengineering methods that emulate natural processes should be used wherever possible.

Circulation and Wayfinding Strategy

In order to improve the experience of visitors to the cemetery, and to assist others including Operations Staff and Funeral Directors to undertake their duties more easily, it is recommended that a wayfinding and signage strategy is developed.

Entrance

With the development of the proposed burial expansion area, the existing operational access route will be extinguished. All vehicles will come through the main cemetery entrance. The existing steel archway will need to be raised or a new entry feature installed to enable large and tall operational vehicles such as backhoes to enter.

Signage

The cemetery does not have an information kiosk or map and families must rely on an online map or verbal directions to grave sites given by SCRD staff. To improve the wayfinding around the cemetery there should be an information kiosk installed at the entrance. The kiosk should include a map of the cemetery and a space for special announcements and cemetery rules to be posted. A second map of the cemetery should be located at the junction between the existing cemetery and New Burial Area.

The second layer to improving information signs is to add corresponding section markers. Section markers will allow visitors and operations staff to easily locate specific sections and rows. The section markers should be designed to match the cemetery aesthetic.

Circulation

Cemetery driveways should be upgraded to enhance the appearance of the cemetery and to aid in controlling the storm water run-off. The driveways should be asphalted and finished with flush concrete curbs.

The proposed vehicle circulation is described in the Access and Circulation Diagram on page 37 opposite. The main entrance driveway allows for two-way traffic. At the central junction of the cemetery the flow changes to one way only when there is a graveside service with many people attending.

The New Burial Area will have a 3 metres wide processional driveway that will limit vehicular access to operations crews, funeral coaches and family members with limited mobility attending grave side services. This driveway should otherwise only be a pedestrian route.

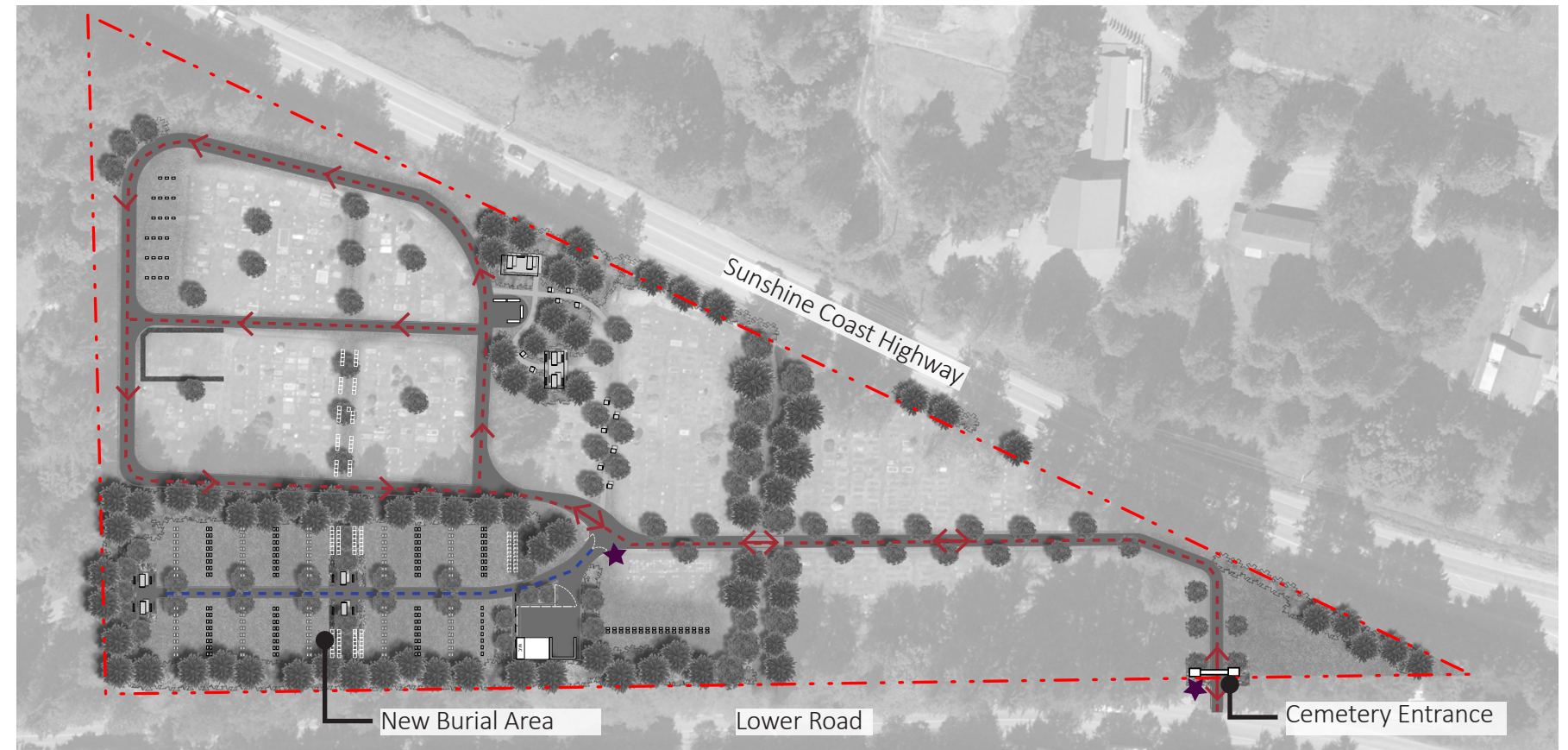


Figure 38: Example of an information kiosk with cemetery map. Lakeview Cemetery, Cold Lake, AB, Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 39: Example of an asphalt driveway with flush concrete curbs. Elk Falls Cemetery, BC. Source: LEES+Associates

Access and Circulation Diagram



Legend

- Cemetery Land Extents
- Cemetery Driveway: one way traffic during graveside service
- Cemetery Driveway: two way traffic
- Cemetery Driveway: operational vehicles and funeral coach access

0 20 40 60 80m
Scale: 1:1500 on 11x17 sheet

Operations Building and Yard

A larger operations storage building and designated area for material storage is required. It is proposed that the existing operations area is removed and relocated as part of the development of the proposed New Burial Area. This operations yard should be enclosed with a fence and buffer planting to screen the area from visitors. The operations building should be a contemporary building that is elegant and in keeping with the cemetery aesthetic. The building should be sized appropriately to accommodate the necessary operational equipment for the cemetery operations as well as a public washroom.

Lock block bays should be included in the operations yard for material storage. Material storage should be exclusively stored in the operations yard and should no longer be piled along the cemetery driveways.

Public Washroom

It is recommended a public washroom be included as part of the proposed operations building. It will be open to family members and friends when a graveside service is taking place.

Conclusion

Implementation of the recommendations set out in this section of the Master Plan will help ensure the SCRD is able to:

- Provide sufficient interment and memorialization options for the residents of SCRD for years to come, and
- Operate, maintain and enhance the cemetery to ensure it retains its tranquil sacred landscape character to attract and serve more SCRD families.



Figure 40: Precedent image: modern storage shed. Source: Unknown



Figure 41: Precedent image: modern storage shed. Source: Unknown



Chapter 5: Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Concept Plan

This chapter of the report sets out recommendations for the development of the Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery, and is organized under the following headings:

- Key Objectives;
- Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Concept Plan;
- Circulation and Wayfinding, and
- Interment and Memorialization.

Key Objectives

Key objectives of the Concept Plan are to:

- Create an unique interment and memorialization plan that optimizes the land that is otherwise generally unsuitable for modern municipal cemetery operations, and
- Create a concept plan that is flexible and can guide a field fit design that responds directly to the land and the forest.

Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Concept Plan

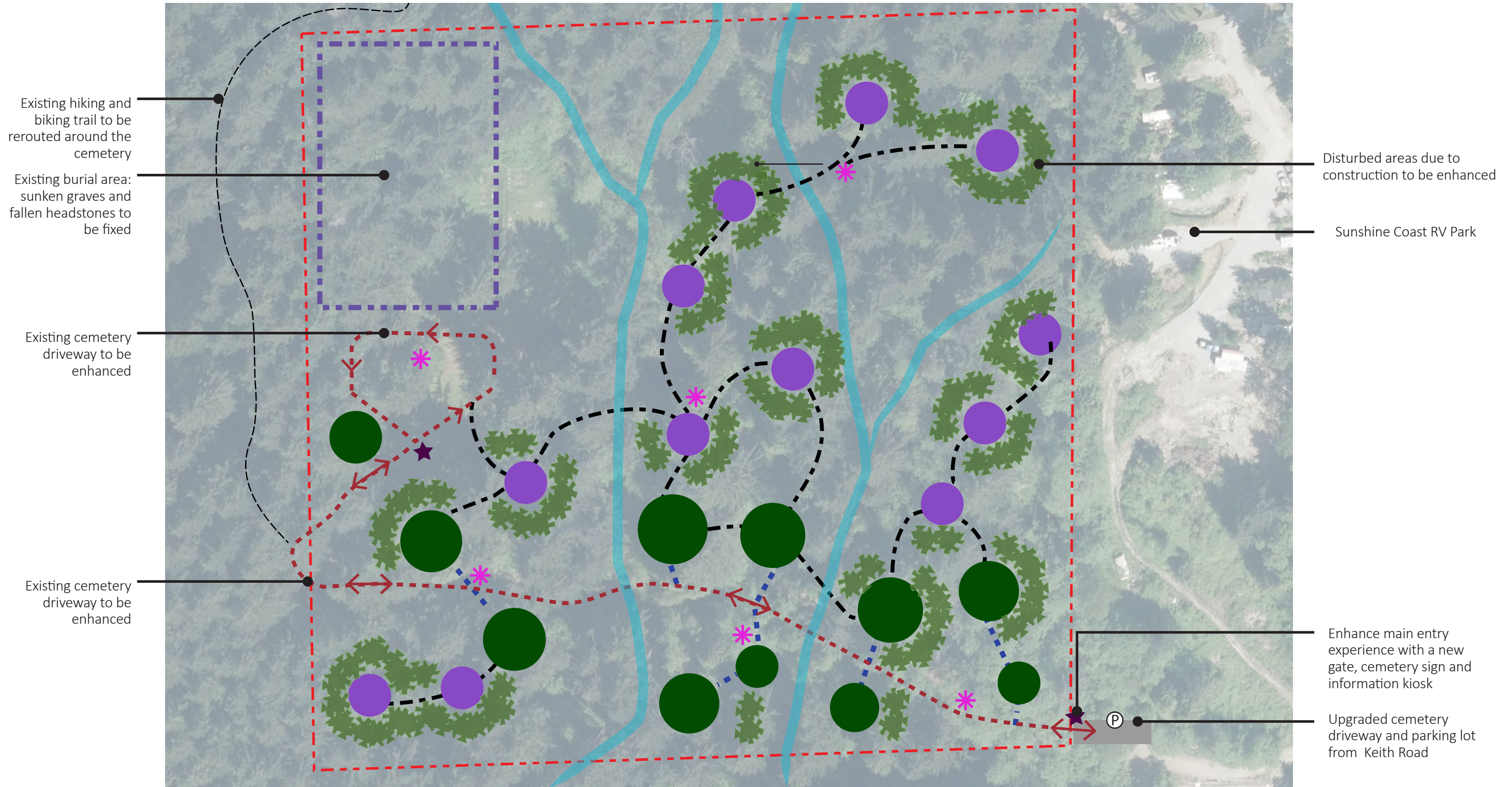
The concept plan on the following page describes the spatial organization of proposals for the development of Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery. Proposals include:

- Expand capacity at the cemetery by creating a series of small cremation gardens with columbaria units, small green burial areas, scattering trails, and memorial walks;
- Enhancing the main cemetery entrance with a new gateway and cemetery sign;
- An information kiosk to improve wayfinding around the cemetery, and to aid visitors in finding graves of friends or family members, and
- Re-routing the hiking and biking trails so they do not cut through the existing burial areas or future burial areas.

It is described as a Diagram rather than a Concept Plan because the locations shown for development of burial inventory are indicative. The actual locations for development will be confirmed as part of a future phase of this project. Future phases will entail confirmation that there is no environmental legislation that would be applied to this cemetery that could hinder the development of proposed burial inventory; a site walkover to select and mark out potential cremation garden sites and connecting trails with flagging tape; followed by a geotechnical site investigation to confirm the ground conditions are suitable. The extents will be surveyed and detailed designs for the first phase of development will be produced. The process envisaged for the development of green burial will follow a similar process. There may also be opportunities for families to select a spot of their choice within the forest pre-need or at need, with final approval of the location from the cemetery team.

Each recommendation highlighted above is described in detail on the pages following the Concept Diagram.

Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Concept Diagram



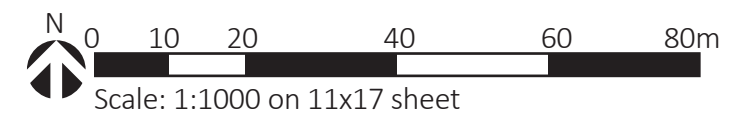
Legend

Existing

- - - - Cemetery Land Extents
- . - . - Cemetery Driveway
- - - - Interment Area
- Water Course

Proposed

- - - - Hiking and Biking Trail
- - - - Operations Access
- - - - Scattering Walk and Memorial Trail
- ★ Gathering Space
- ★ Information Kiosk
- Cremation Garden
- Green Burial Pod



Existing Inactive Burial Section

Due to uncertainties surrounding the accuracy of the burial records, reactivation and development of new burial inventory is not recommended in the existing inactive burial section. It should be maintained and enjoyed as the pioneer section for historical purposes. Improved interpretation signage of the pioneer section is recommended.



Figure 42: Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery: Existing Burial Area. Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 43: Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery: Existing Burial Area. Source: LEES+Associates

Interment and Memorialization

Interment and memorialization options proposed as part of burial expansion at Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery include:

- Green Burial;
- Cremation Gardens, and
- Scattering Trails and Memorial Walks.

Green Burial

There are three green burial pod layout typologies that could be field-fitted into the existing forested lands of Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery. These include:

1. High density grave pod
2. Medium density grave pod
3. Low density grave pod.

A high density grave pod could be developed where there are larger gaps in the tree canopy and the ground conditions are suitable for burial. A medium density pod would be developed where there is less room. Low density grave pods or individual graves could be slotted in between trees

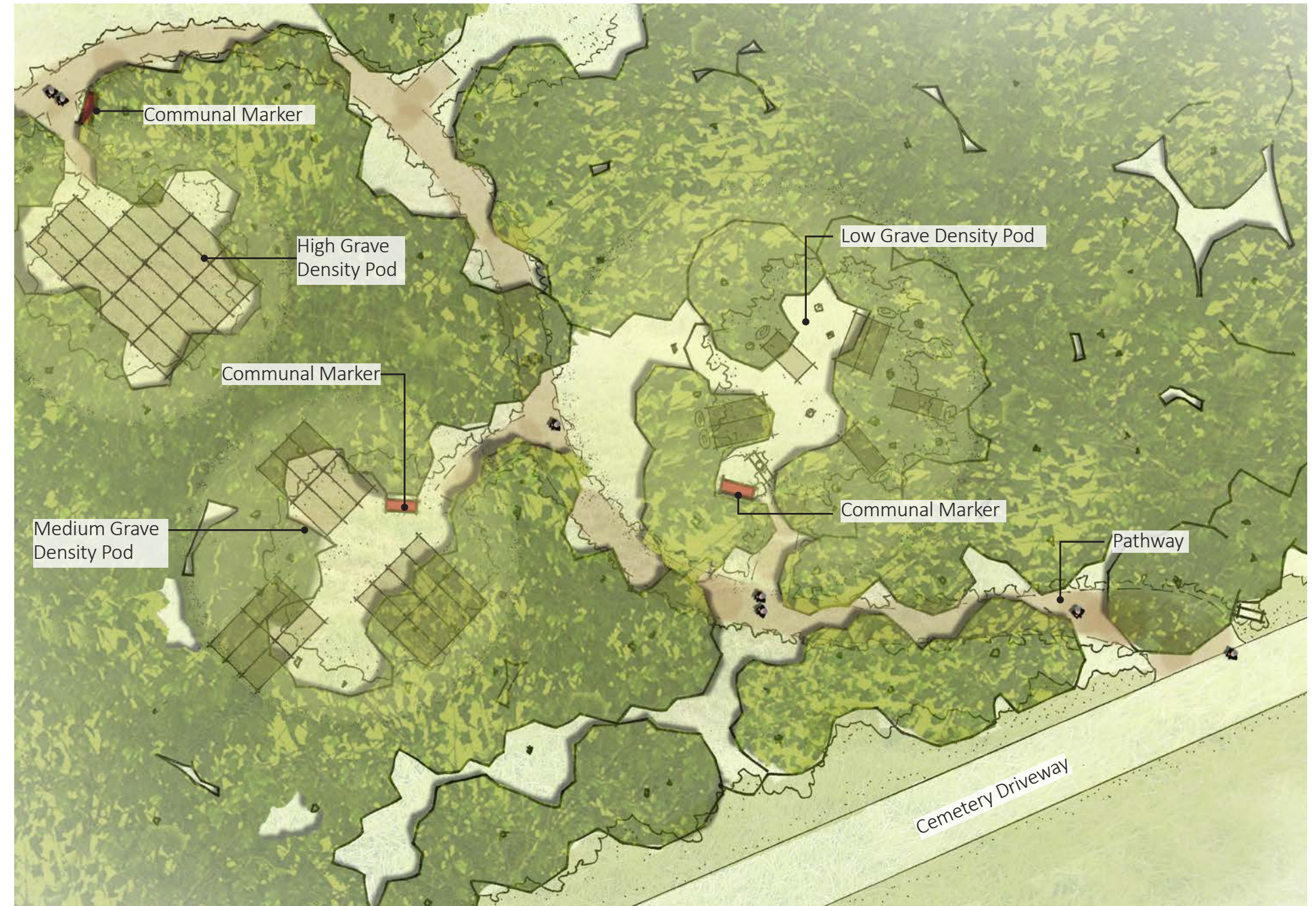
The Green Burial service to families will offer:

1. Single depth, full-body interment in a simple biodegradable casket or burial shroud;
2. A communal marker for each burial area with the names of those interred in the area;
3. No concrete vault or plastic grave liner, and
4. Environmental enhancement by replanting the gravesite with native species.

Cemetery Records:

The locations of green burial graves will be marked out on site, and the GPS coordinates recorded. This information will be uploaded into the SCRD's existing Cemetery Records software and mapping.

Green Burial Pod Layout Typologies



Cremation Gardens

With potential sites confirmed as suitable for cremation garden development, each cremation garden should include:

- A diverse range of interment and memorialization options, including Columbaria Niches, Scattering Gardens, Family Vessels and Memorial Walls;
- Seating;
- Appropriate vegetation, including plants tolerant of cremated remains in scattering areas;
- Spaces for gathering, and
- Columbaria, memorial wall, and family vessel materials and colours that are complemented by Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery landscape.

Scattering Trails and Memorialization Walks

The cremation walk will provide the opportunity for families to commemorate and memorialize a loved one through memorial boulders, and memorial benches. Interment opportunities will include scattering gardens, family vessels, in-ground cremation interment and family columbaria.

Cemetery-Wide Improvements

It is recommended that the Cemetery-wide improvements are guided by the following strategies:

- Site Finishings;
- Landscape Management Plan;
- Circulation and Wayfinding Strategy;
- Amenity, and
- Operations Yard.

Site Furnishings

A guide for site furnishings should be established to ensure overall coordination of the style across the cemetery. The guide should include the existing developed sections of the cemetery and the future expansion area.

Landscape Management Plan

It is recommended that the SCR D develop a tree and vegetation management strategy to safeguard the forest which is this cemetery's primary asset.



Figure 44: Precedent Image of a Forest Cremation Walk. Memorial Woods. Royal Oak Burial Park, BC. Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 45: Precedent Image of a Forest Cremation Walk. Memorial Woods. Royal Oak Burial Park, BC. Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 46: Precedent Image of a Forest Cremation Garden, Esquimalt, BC. Source: LEES+Associates

Circulation and Wayfinding Strategy

Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery is not intuitive to navigate to. Directional signage should be installed at the intersection of Keith Road and Cemetery Road. SCR D will need to secure the rights to the road that leads to the cemetery gate and the parking area outside of the gate. Improvements to the entry are to include a new entry gate, new cemetery sign and an information kiosk.

The existing cemetery driveway is to be upgraded to meet accessibility standards.

The Cremation Walk pathways connecting the cremation gardens should be wide enough to allow for small operations machines for installation of the cremation gardens and maintenance purposes. The operational routes that connect the Green Burial Pods to the cemetery driveway will need to be wide enough to allow access by small backhoes to open and close graves.

It is proposed that visitors park in the parking lot and walk into the cemetery. Controlled vehicle access will be permitted to immediate family and friends and to those with limited mobility attending a graveside service.

Amenity

It is recommended that the SCR D actively encourages and promotes the cemetery for passive recreation and enjoyment. This includes circular walking trails with benches, and connection into the wider trails network across Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery. It is recommended that the existing mountain bike trail is realigned so it connects lower down into the cemetery driveway rather than through the existing lawned burial area.

Operations Yard

A small fenced and screened operations yard is proposed close to but generally out of sight of the main cemetery entrance. A small operations building could be added to store tools and equipment if the cemetery operations team find it necessary for operational efficiencies.

Conclusion

The implementation of the recommendations for Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery will allow the SCR D to:

- Provide new interment and memorialization options in a forest setting that has a different landscape appeal to Seaview Cemetery;
- Expand interment capacity and serve SCR D families for many years to come, and
- Optimize the land for multiple uses as a memorial forest, an historic site, and as a passive recreational asset as part of the SCR D's network of parks and open spaces.



Figure 47: Precedent Image of a Cemetery Gate, Elk Falls Cemetery, Campbell River , BC. Source: LEES+Associates



Chapter 6: Operations Assessment

This chapter provides an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges to the SCRD's cemetery operations. It includes a review of SCRD's existing cemetery offerings and identifies options to further enhance its offerings and revenue streams.

It looks at the organizational structure and resources invested by the SCRD in its cemetery operations. This includes reviewing the human resources, records management, regulations, procedures, tools, and equipment dedicated to the cemeteries' management, administration, site care and the delivery of its services.

This chapter concludes by reviewing the financial performance of the cemetery system, and identifying how the SCRD can improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of its operations.

Key Findings

The following section summarizes the key findings from the operations assessment.

Products, Services + Pricing

- Strength - Prices are on par with or higher than rates at other cemeteries in the region.
- Weakness - SCRD cemeteries have fewer interment and memorialization options than are typically offered at comparable Canadian cemeteries;
- Opportunity - There are three changes that could increase its revenue and keep SCRD aligned with regional pricing practices:
 - Add a non-resident premium up to a maximum of 175% of its resident rate and remain on par with the average rate for the region. Alternately, increase standard prices by 175% and discount rates to residents by the same %;
 - Increase its transfer license fee from \$35 to \$60 and remain on par with the average rate for the region, and
 - Add new fees for additional services (the installation of vases, the modification and repair of memorials and headstones, a premium for the reservation of adjacent lots, monument, and graveside cleaning, and issuing duplicate or replacement certificates, etc.)
- Opportunity – SCRD may increase cemetery revenue by introducing scattering services, family columbaria, family vessels, green burial, as well as additional support services and memorial choices.

Cemetery Operations - Accessibility + Aesthetic

- Strength- The older eastern section of the cemetery is attractive. The mature forest to the south side of the cemetery and trees along the cemetery perimeter are assets that add to the character of the western section of the site;
- Weakness- Seaview Cemetery's grave adornments and east-west lot alignment is hindering the safety, accessibility, efficiency and quality of site care and service delivery. There is also a creek that goes through the centre of the cemetery. It is showing signs of bank erosion that if not addressed, could impact families' graves, and
- Opportunity – SCRD can enlist the aid of community members to address the safety concerns and site care challenges related to grave ornamentation. This may increase the engagement and interest of Market Area residents in Seaview Cemetery.

Cemetery Operations - Human Resources, Administration + Field Work

- Strength- SCRD has skilled and dedicated staff serving in the cemetery administration and field work sectors of its operations. It also has a dedicated cemetery website and sophisticated records management system;
- Weakness – SCRD administrative staff do not have a dedicated room space to serve community members when they come to purchase a lot at-need or pre-need;
- Weakness –SCRD's cemetery records management system is not connected to its financial and mapping systems. This can decrease service quality, system efficiency and records accuracy, and
- Opportunity – SCRD can improve the quality of service and resilience of cemetery operations by training additional admin staff, integrating its software programs and its online cemetery map.

Cemetery Operations - Bylaw, Practices + Procedures

- Strength- There are clear procedures, a work schedule and standards of care outlined in the contractor's terms of agreement for Seaview Cemetery;
- Weakness – There are no standard operating procedures or a maintenance schedule in place to guide SCRD's cemetery administration and field work staff. There are conflicting statements, as well as inconsistent, missing, and incorrect information in the current cemetery bylaw, and
- Opportunity – There is potential to increase the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of SCRD's cemetery administration, service delivery and site care by reviewing and fully documenting the cemetery's policies, practice, and procedures.

Cemetery Operations - Financial Performance

- Strength- The SCRD cemetery operations are funded by a substantial property tax allocation, which more than covers its operating costs. It also has a substantial cemetery operating reserve fund, which it can draw upon to enhance its services, cemetery sites, and systems;
- Weakness – The SCRD's cemetery operating costs exceeded its revenue from user fees and service charges by \$55,000 per year. As it stands, SCRD's Perpetual Care Fund balance is not expected to generate sufficient investment income in the next ten years, and
- Opportunity – Population growth and the passing of the Baby Boomer generation may drive up the demand for services and potentially grow the cemetery's revenue at a rate that out paces increases in costs, over the next decade. This will move the SCRD closer to the financial operating breakeven point.

Product and Services

This product and services review compared SCRD's offerings relative to those at municipal cemeteries across Canada and at similar cemeteries in communities near the SCRD. These communities included Whistler, Squamish, Williams Lake, and Powell River.

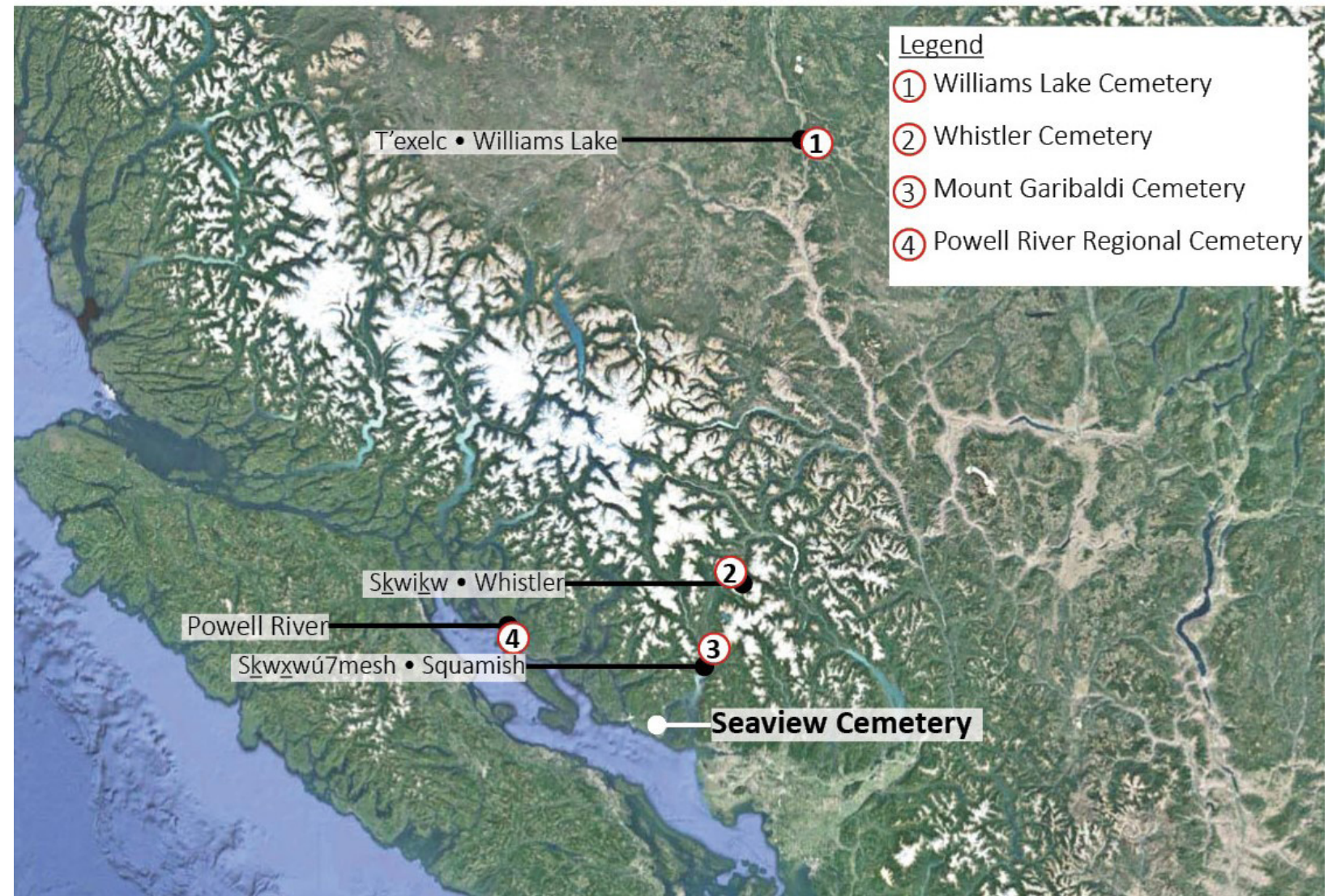


Figure 48: Product + Services Benchmark Cemeteries + Communities, Source: LEES+Associates.



Figure 49: Seaview Cemetery Casket Lots. Source: LEES+Associates.



Figure 50: Community Columbaria, Seaview Cemetery. Source: LEES+Associates.

Current Interment and Memorialization Options

This section identifies the products and services that are currently offered at Seaview Cemetery, as well their nature, service capacity and level of preference from community members for each offering.

In-ground Interment + Designated Sections

The SCRD currently offers:

- Casket Lot In-Ground Burial,
- Cremated Remains Lot In-Ground Interment, and
- Interment in Dedicated Sections.

These are common offerings at Canadian cemeteries, and SCRD's community members have regularly purchased these offerings and used interment services over the past five years.

Casket Lot In-ground Interment:

A casket lot can accommodate a single casket and up to 5 cremated remains, or six cremated remains. These lots are commonly purchased and used as a cremated remains estate, where families inter multiple cremated remains.

Over the past 5 years, 33% of services have been in-ground caskets lot interments and 59% of sales have been casket lots.

Cremated Remains Lot In-ground Interment:

The SCRD currently offers in-ground interment services of cremated remains in smaller cremation lots. Families are permitted up to two urns in a cremation lot.

Over the past 5 years, 55% of services have been cremated remains lot interments and 22% of sales have been cremated remains lots.

Interment in Designated Sections:

Canadian municipalities often offer dedicated sections within their cemeteries such as :

- Infant and child burials;
- Prominent religious groups (e.g., a Catholic Section)
- Prominent local ethnic groups, (e.g., a Muslim Section); and
- Veterans, interred within a "Field of Honor."

SCRD does not presently have any veteran graves available for sale, nor does it offer veterans a discounted rate for interment services.

Seaview Cemetery currently offers a dedicated section for Jewish caskets. It also contains a cenotaph surrounded by veterans' graves and a small area for infant interments. The Sunshine Coast Jewish Burial Society (the Society) approached the SCRD regarding development of a 'Jewish Section'. The Board agreed provided the Society fully funded the development, which they did. There have been no requests for dedicated sections from other religious groups.

Given that the SCRD's cemeteries are inclusive and available to everyone, it is not recommended that SCRD begin to develop separate sections on a religious basis. The communities served are becoming increasingly secular.

If there is a need to serve the Muslim community with burial services a separate section may be required because the graves are required to be oriented towards Mecca and are inconsistent with the standard east-west layout of existing graves.

Community Columbaria

SCRD offers the above-ground interment of cremated remains in columbaria niches.

Over the past 5 years, 11% of services have been niche interments and 19% of sales have been columbaria niches.

Community columbaria are above-ground structures or walls with many recessed niches, which accommodate cremation urns. A standard columbarium unit will house the cremated remains from multiple families in separate niches. Up to two interments are typically allowed in one standard columbaria niche.

Columbaria construction costs (and their relative niche price to the customer) vary widely, depending on size, design details, and associated amenities placed in the adjacent landscape. All installations typically have a high return on investment (approximately 200% or more) and provide a growing source of revenue, due to the rising demand for cremation.

Columbaria also have a low cost of interment. It takes significantly less time and cost to place an urn within a niche (known as "interment") than to inter an urn within an in-ground burial lot.

Columbaria also preserve interment land capacity, takes little space, and can be placed in areas unusable for other types of interment. In addition, the opening and closing of columbaria niches are not constrained by seasonal ground conditions.

Additional Services

The SCRD cemetery rates list includes fees for the following additional support services:

- After hours Weekday burial premiums (\$250-\$500);
- Saturday, Sunday and Holiday burial premiums (\$400-\$600);
- Grave liners (\$120-\$358);
- Exhumation/Disinterment (\$300-\$2,000);
- Transfer License (\$35);
- Memorial installation (\$150), and
- Single Niche Place Inscription (\$250).

All these additional service fees are common at cemeteries across Canada and should be continued.

New Interment and Memorialization Options

This section identifies new products and services that are common at other Canadian cemeteries and that could be introduced to Seaview Cemetery or offered a new cemetery site.

This review compares SCRD's offerings to those at municipal cemeteries across Canada and at similar cemeteries in communities near the SCRD. These communities include Whistler, Squamish, Williams Lake, and Powell River.

Double Depth Burial

Double depth burial services are a common offering at Canadian municipal cemeteries. For example, Williams Lake Cemetery (a benchmark community in this operations assessment) currently offers double depth burial to its residents.

Ideally Seaview cemetery would allow double depth full body in-ground burial for SCRD to maximize its interment capacity. Unfortunately, due to this site's wet ground conditions in the remaining active sections of the cemetery do not permit this.

A high ground water level and rocky soils, which makes digging to an extra depth difficult and would result in flooded graves. Consequently, in-ground interments at Seaview Cemetery are currently limited to one casket per grave.

SCRD could potentially offer this service at a new cemetery site which is not impacted by these geotechnical constraints. If the SCRD were to offer this service at a future site it would need to mandate the use of a vault in all double-depth lots as a grave-side safety measure and acquire the equipment necessary to lower a casket to sufficient depth to accommodate two casket burials.

Double depth burial should be part of the offerings at any new cemetery, and this should be a key factor in determining whether a site is suitable for cemetery use.

Family Estate Plots

Family Estate Plots are a premium interment offering that include a small area of a cemetery to be dedicated to one family. They often consist of one large headstone or memorial dedicated to the family and smaller individual headstones for each family member interred in the plot. The dimensions, number of interments and types of interments allowed vary between cemeteries and are typically established by the operator of the cemetery and enforced by the Cemetery Bylaw.

The premium price of a family estate typically reflects the associated development cost and ongoing maintenance of the landscape features included.

Family Estate plots typically include a combination of interment spaces and landscape features such as the following mix of offerings:

- Two double-depth lawn crypts, (four traditional in-ground burials);
- Cremation lots (up to 16 cremation interments);
- Marker foundation;
- Memorial bench;
- Planting beds, and
- Fencing or hedging that differentiates the family plots from the rest of the cemetery.

Since the SCRD allows up to six cremated remains to be interred in a full-sized lot, residents are effectively treating SCRD's casket lots as Family Estate plots for their cremated remains.

Family Columbaria

A family columbarium is essentially the same as a community columbarium, except they are scaled for a single-family, which holds the exclusive right-of-interment to all the niches or other features. Family columbaria vary in size, price, and design. All memorialization is dedicated to members of that family. Custom features can be added to meet personal family tastes, customs, and religious practices as well as accommodate cemetery standards. Personalized engravings can be added to the roofline, sidewalls, and doors.

The cemetery operator owns the family columbarium, and the family purchase the right of interment for its exclusive use. Cemetery staff typically work with the families in choosing an appropriate location for their family columbaria.

Family Vessels

Family vessels are a premium cremation offering. They are large granite urns about 30" tall with an interior capacity of 14 cubic feet, designed for placement at key locations, along pathways, and in cremation gardens. Each vessel accommodates up to 4 hard urns, 10 soft urns, or 15 comingled remains.

Each vessel is owned by the cemetery, which sells families a right-of-interment for its exclusive use. Since these vessels are a new offering in North America, their introduction would require marketing to increase awareness of this option. As such, family vessels should be installed in phases, beginning with one or two units placed in the cemetery.

Family Vessels are offered at several Canadian and American cemeteries. Rates range from \$6,000 to \$13,000 each, depending on their size and quality of positioning within the cemetery. Services for placing a nested urn or comingling remains within the vessel are typically \$200 for each interment.

Like columbaria, family vessels preserve interment land capacity, because they take little space and can often be placed in areas unusable for other types of interment.



Figure 51: Family Columbaria, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver, BC.
Source: Wayne Worden



Figure 52: Family Vessel, Woodlawn Cemetery, RMWB, AB.
Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 53: Communal Marker, Royal Oak Burial Park, Victoria BC. Source: LEES+Associates.



Figure 54: Green Burial, Royal Oak Burial Park. Source: LEES+Associates.

Scattering Gardens + Ossuaries

Canadian cemeteries often offer scattering as a cremation interment option. With this option, families are given the option to scatter all or a portion of the cremated remains into a garden.

Scattering gardens are attractive natural or ornamental areas that offer a place for the scattering of cremated remains. Scattering gardens are a flexible and efficient use of land with respect to interment capacity. The shape and size of these gardens vary widely across Canada.

The smallest LEES+Associates have seen at Canadian cemeteries is 10' x 33' (323 ft² – 3 m x 10 m). However, they can be smaller and are often much larger.

A memorial wall is often associated with a scattering garden.

An ossuary is a container used to hold the cremated remains of more than one individual. It is common for an in-ground or above-ground ossuary to be installed in a scattering garden, allowing for a portion of the cremated remains to be scattered and the remainder to be placed in the ossuary.

Cremated remains are alkaline and salty so the reduction of cremated remains going directly into the scattering garden extends the life of the plants.

Services for scattering cremated remains in a scattering garden range from \$100 to \$300 for each interment in British Columbia.

Whistler Cemetery currently offers dedicated scattering areas to their residents for \$119 and to non-residents for \$239.

Green Burial

Green Burial, also known as “natural burial,” “country burial” or “woodland burial,” is defined as a below-ground burial with:

- No embalming;
- A fully biodegradable casket or shroud;
- No use of grave liners or concrete vaults;
- A form of habitat restoration of the gravesite such as planting with native species, and
- A communal marker, no marker, or a simple marker made of local and natural materials.

The Jewish, Muslim, and Bahá'í communities have traditionally interred the deceased according to green burial principles. Recently the Catholic Church has begun to actively embrace green burial, based on the tenets of green burial aligning well with its core beliefs and practices.

Several cemeteries in BC now offer green burial service, and many more across Canada plan to add green burial to serve their communities. Green burial is an emerging trend as the philosophy of having a lighter touch on the environment resonates with many peoples' personal philosophies regarding reducing their impact on the planet.

The Canadian-based Green Burial Society of Canada (GBSC) (<http://www.greenburialcanada.ca/>) is a non-profit organization that offers a certification program to qualifying service providers and lists the Canadian cemeteries currently offering green burial.

Additional information about the certification can be found in “Appendix A – Green Burial Certification Process.”

There are currently five certified providers of green burial services in British Columbia, all of which are located on Vancouver Island or the in the Lower Mainland. There are no certified green burial providers in the interior of British Columbia. Although not certified, the City of Prince George and the City of Penticton do currently offer green burial services at their cemeteries, for the same prices that they offer their traditional in-ground burial services.

Powell River Regional Cemetery (a benchmark community in this operations assessment) currently offers green burial options to its residents.

When adding green burial to its cemetery fees list, green burial lot inventory should be offered at the same rate as those lots in the operator's traditional burial grounds.

Committing to providing green burial would provide a marketing opportunity for SCRD and would increase resident engagement with its cemeteries. Media and social network sites are especially attuned to stories about Green Burial.

SCRD has received enquiries from community members about green burial, therefore it is expected that offering this as a new option will likely appeal to many residents. For this reason, it is recommended the SCRD find ways to provide an initial phase of green burial to test the community's level of interest.

The greatest challenge to green burial is currently public awareness and industry education. Misconceptions exist surrounding health and safety concerns as well as cost. Work should be done to challenge these misconceptions through education initiatives, promotion through funeral homes, and pricing commensurate with other full depth burial services.

Over the long term, maintenance costs are typically less as a green burial area is expected to take on a naturalistic, less manicured appearance.

Memorialization Options

With increasingly mobile families and people choosing not to inter the cremated remains of their loved ones in a cemetery, there is potentially a market for selling memorialization options without interment.

Common memorialization options include:

- Grave-side and niche vases;
- Engraved bronze plaques on benches, markers and memorial walls;
- Statuaries (in religious cemeteries);
- Photographic memorials;
- Engraved boulders;
- Columbarium niche inscriptions;
- Monuments and markers, and
- Communal living memorial areas with trees, plantings, shrubs, and flower beds.

The benchmark communities in this operations assessment offer a diverse range of memorialization options. For example:

- Powell River Regional Cemetery currently offers a variety of lot markers, in-ground and crypt vases, niche inscriptions, and photographic memorials to its residents.
- Whistler Cemetery offers memorial plaques, engravings, and installations.
- Mount Garibaldi Cemetery installs memorial benches with an inscribed bronze plaque by donation.

SCRD currently only offers its residents niche inscriptions. Other memorialization options that are potentially suitable for SCRD's cemeteries include:

- Memorial walls, with bronze plaques;
- Engraved boulders (as part of a forest cremation walk for example), and
- Flower vases (as part of the effort to tidy up the ornamentation of Seaview Cemetery's graves sites).

New Additional Support Services

Canadian cemeteries often apply fees for a wide range of additional support services. A detailed list of these options is summarized in "Appendix B – Additional Cemetery Support Services". The fee for these services varies widely across different municipal cemeteries.

A few of these support services are offered at the benchmark communities reviewed in this plan- for example:

- Powell River Regional Cemetery currently offers disinterment (\$900 to \$3,810), headstones (\$200 to \$740), vases (\$70) and vase installation (\$70 to \$130), curbing (\$920 to \$1,200) and lifting of a curb or marker (\$130 to \$400).
- Williams Lake Cemetery currently offers disinterment (\$250 to \$1,500), vase installation (\$60), and marker modification (\$75) (removal and reinstallation).
- Whistler Cemetery currently offers disinterment (\$493 to \$4,180.40).
- Mount Garibaldi Cemetery currently offers disinterment (\$770 to \$3,100), vases (\$45) and vase installation (\$120).

SCRD has an opportunity to incrementally enhance its cemetery revenue by expanding its fees by enhancing its support services.

The benefits of offering new services should always be balanced with consideration of the anticipated resourcing needs and the administrative cost to deliver the new services and manage the added fees.

Some of the fees that could be considered by SCRD – which could be implemented easily and with little to no cost to the SCRD, include a charge for:

- Vase installation
- Reserving adjacent lots;
- Monument and grave-side cleaning;
- Issuing duplicate or replacement certificates, and
- Memorial and headstone modification or repair.



Figure 55: Memorial Wall, Lakeview Cemetery, Cold Lake, AB.
Source: LEES+Associates.

Cemetery Pricing Benchmark Study

This section analyzes the offerings at SCRD cemeteries and compares their prices to other similarly sized cemeteries in the region and across Canada.

Market Trends

Cemetery pricing in Canadian cemeteries tends to follow consistent market trends. For example, large urban centres often have higher rates than small towns and rural communities due to the increased demand relative to local supply.

Cemeteries in large urban centres also tend to provide a greater diversity of offerings than small towns and rural communities. Families value a variety of interment options and are willing to pay a premium to accommodate their culture, religious and personal preferences.

The following figure shows the pricing continuum for typical Canadian cemetery offerings:



Figure 56: Pricing Continuum for Typical Canadian Cemetery Offerings, Source: LEES+Associates.

Price Benchmarking

Best practices for cemetery pricing entail annual comparisons of the rates of cemeteries in communities with similar business models, climate conditions, landscapes, as well as population ethnic and religious composition.

This price benchmarking study reviewed SCRD's rates relative to the averages at municipal cemeteries across Canada and at similar cemeteries in communities near the SCRD. These communities include Whistler, Squamish, Williams Lake, and Powell River.

The following table compares and summarizes the rates for the most common, primary offerings available at the cemeteries in this study, including the care and maintenance fund fees.

Price Benchmarking Summary of Prime Offerings

Note:

Regional Rate: The average of cemeteries in comparable communities situated in the region surrounding the SCRD.

Canadian Rate: The average spectrum of rates for low to high quality offerings within LEES+Associates price analyses for cemetery plans from 2014 to 2021.

Additional Services: This is not an exhaustive list of all the additional services on the price list for SCRD or the benchmark communities in this study. It is a summary of three most common additional services listed in this study.

Cemetery Offering	SCRD Rate	Regional Rate	Canadian Rate	Price Comparison: Vaughan's Relative Position
Casket and Cremation Lots / Niches				
Adult Casket Lot	\$1,500	\$894 to \$2,363	\$1,000 to \$3,000	Regional: On Par Canadian: On Par
Child and Infant Lot	\$800	\$387 to \$824	\$400 to \$1,000	Regional: On Par Canadian: On Par
Cremation Burial Lot	\$500	\$386 to \$969	\$500 to \$1,500	Regional: On Par Canadian: On Par
Columbaria Niche	\$1,500	\$681 to \$1,472	\$1,000 to \$5,000	Regional: Above Average Canadian: On Par
Opening and Closing Services				
Adult Casket Lot	\$1,300	\$1,284	\$750 to \$2,000	Regional: On Par Canadian: On Par
Child and Infant Lot	\$600	\$777 to \$840	\$250 to \$1,000	Regional: Below Average Canadian: On Par
Cremation Burial Lot	\$500	\$322	\$250 to \$750	Regional: Above Average Canadian: On Par
Columbaria Niche	\$275	\$233	\$100 to \$500	Regional: On Par Canadian: On Par
Additional Services				
Transfer Licenses	\$35	\$57	\$50 to \$100	Regional: Below Average Canadian: Below Average
Memorial Installation	\$150	\$173 to \$349	\$50 to \$100	Regional: On Par Canadian: On Par
Weekend and Holiday Services	\$400 to \$600	\$353 to \$583	\$250 to \$1,000	Regional: On Par Canadian: On Par

Table 8: Price Benchmarking Summary of Prime Offerings, Source: LEES+Associates

SCRD’s cemetery pricing is generally on par with the regional and Canadian averages for the services and offerings they are providing to their community members. This finding confirms that SCRD fees are in alignment with the regional market value for its cemetery services and therefore its prices are within the expectations of its community members for its offerings.

It would be challenging for SCRD to justify increasing their rates beyond the rate of inflation. Therefore, this limits the SCRD’s ability to increase its cemetery fees significantly as a strategy to grow its cemetery operating revenue.

The detailed results of the price benchmarking study for the SCRD cemetery system can be found in “Appendix C – Detailed Price Benchmarking Study.”

Price Changes + Strategic Positioning

SCRD last raised its cemetery fees significantly in 2018. This increase aligned its rates with the fair market price range for municipal cemeteries in the region.

Increasing fees annually by the rate of inflation, at a minimum, is the standard practice at most cemeteries LEES+Associates have analyzed over the past two decades. Consumer Price Index reports from the International Monetary Fund find that inflation has ranged from 2% to 3% in North America over the past decade.

Therefore, to align its pricing practices with other municipal cemeteries in British Columbia the SCRD should plan to increase its prices annually in line with the rate of inflation, expected to be a minimum of 3% per year.

Community residents and other stakeholders (funeral homes, religious groups, etc.) often ask a municipality to justify price increases greater than the rate of inflation. This can be done by informing and educating them about the significant gap between the:

- Current cemetery rates and the regional average rate;
- Cemetery’s operating revenue and expenses, and/or
- A cemetery’s Perpetual Care Fund’s (PCF) current balance and the projected balance needs to be fully funded. A PCF is fully funded when its future interest income is expected to pay for its future care and maintenance costs.

Greater price increases can also be justified by a commitment by the owner-operator to develop and improve a cemetery site’s infrastructure, aesthetic, and interment capacity.

These pricing practices align with the common municipal philosophy of the ‘individual user payment’ and moving cemetery operations towards financial self-sustainability. This is the preferred position of many Canadian and American municipal cemeteries- rather than the whole community paying for a service that is subsidized by tax dollars in perpetuity.

Cemetery demand is relatively inelastic, meaning that there is usually little impact from price changes on the demand and need for a cemetery’s services. Currently, the majority of the SCRD’s cemetery rates are on par with its’ neighboring communities. This means SCRD can continue to increase their rates, with little risk of losing revenue to residents choosing to be interred elsewhere, provided they continue to be increased within the expected regional price range (also known as the fair market value range).

Most municipal cemeteries operate on a “cost leadership” business model where they tend to compete on affordability. Private and some religious cemeteries operate a “differentiation” model, which entails offering a highly diverse range of customized services and premium offerings. Cemeteries with many interment and memorialization options are often perceived as being more attractive and as offering better value. This enables them to charge higher rates than other cemetery operators can charge.

Almost all municipal cemeteries are run as a service to their communities, and these municipalities support their cemetery system, subsidizing them with tax dollars to some degree. SCRD will need to decide where its business model sits on this spectrum of cost recovery. There is an understanding that few municipal cemeteries operate a full break-even cost recovery model. It is even more unusual for a municipal cemetery to operate a “for-profit” model.

Non-Resident Pricing

SCRD does not presently charge a non-resident premium. A significant number of Canadian municipal cemeteries charge a non-resident premium on inventory sales.

The purpose of the higher non-resident fee is in part, an acknowledgment by municipalities that its residents have supported the cemeteries through their annual tax contributions for many years. Non-residents that are interred in municipal cemeteries usually have not made a comparable contribution. Therefore, the non-resident premium is intended to make the overall, long-term financial support of the cemetery system provided by all users more equitable.

Non-residents typically pay a premium on top of the resident rate, ranging from 25% to 200% on cemetery lot, crypt, and niche sales. Though less common, some communities also choose to charge a premium on their cemeteries’ interment services. Alternatively, some North American communities intentionally opt to list and/or present their cemetery offerings at the upper end of the regional market price spectrum and then offer their residents a “discount” – rather than charge a “premium” to non-residents.

Cemeteries that charge a non-resident premium, usually define a “non-resident” as an individual that did not reside or own property in the cemetery operator’s municipality for a minimum of one year, before that individual’s date of death. Less commonly, some communities choose to make the required period of residency or property ownership longer, requiring five or ten years of local residence.

Community surveys undertaken by LEES+Associates have historically found that most resident respondents typically support a pricing policy whereby non-residents pay more than residents.

There tends to be particularly high support for these premiums in communities with land scarcity, where they are used as a strategy to reserve the limited cemetery land for the municipality’s residents.

The following table identifies the three comparable communities in this price benchmarking study that apply a non-resident premium to their cemetery services.

Note:
Cemetery’s Average Service Non-Resident Program: Is the average non-resident premium percentage across all the offerings at the cemetery. Some cemeteries do not use the same percentage premium for all its offerings.

Total Site Average Premium: Is the average non-resident premium percentage across all three cemeteries in the region that have a non-resident premium.

Benchmark Community	Cemetery’s Average Service Non-Resident Premium
Whistler Cemetery	100%
Williams Lake Cemetery	50%
Squamish Mount Garibaldi Cemetery	385%
Total Site Average Premium	175%

Table 9: : Benchmark Communities with Non-Resident Premiums, Source: LEES+Associates.

Service-Oriented Pricing Strategies

Some Canadian communities have a social services policy that directs their cemetery staff to offer free service or a discounted rate to select residents. This may include rates for:

- Indigent residents (for those on disability and low-income households);
- Emergency responders including members of the police, fire, and ambulance services;
- Veterans, and
- Infants and children.

SCRD presently offers a discounted rate to families for the lot and burial services of an infant or child. All of the comparable communities in this price benchmarking study also do this.

Whether a municipality offers service-oriented pricing for any or all these groups, depends on the philosophy of its Council and Elected Board members. Canadian municipal cemeteries are commonly supported as a public service to the community and are subsidized by residents' tax dollars.

These groups are typically a very small proportion of the community members served by municipal cemeteries. Therefore, offering a discounted rates to members of these group are not expected to significantly affect the financial sustainability of a cemetery's operations. Municipalities often find that offering discounts to these select residents tends to encourage goodwill from the community and can mitigate the resident reaction to other price increases at the cemetery.

However, given the limited inventory available at SCR D's existing cemeteries, expanding discounted pricing to attract these groups may not be the best option right now. At this time in the cemeteries' life cycles, land is increasingly scarce, and it is expected that a municipality would seek to maximize the potential revenue from its remaining cemetery land. Therefore, expanding service-oriented pricing may be more feasible option after the SCR D develops and opens a new cemetery site.

Accessibility and Aesthetics

Seaview Cemetery Landscape

In Chapter 3 there is a detailed site analysis and examination of SCR D cemeteries' landscapes. This section includes a focused review of Seaview Cemetery's accessibility and aesthetics, and how it relates to the operational level of service to community members, as well as visitors' experiences at Seaview Cemetery. A high quality, aesthetic landscape and an accessible site which is easy for staff and visitors to navigate is a key measure of operational efficiency and community satisfaction for a cemetery.

The Eastern Half

The character of the older eastern section of the cemetery is one of heritage with mossy lawns, simple graves and markers surrounded by mature trees around the property boundary. The active cremated remains section in the far eastern corner is not a pleasant place for families. The lawn is patchy and needs attention, shrub planting is needed to screen the harsh wooden fences, and the road noise impacts the tranquility of this part of the cemetery.

There were very few adornments on graves across the eastern half of the cemetery because it is the older section so there are infrequent visitors to these graves. There are very few broken markers. There are however, the occasional cracked or sinking concrete grave cover, but nothing observed required immediate action to make them safe.

The Western Half

The aesthetics and accessibility of the western section of the cemetery is compromised by the custom grave covers, fences, plantings, and adornments. The stand of mature forest to the south side of the cemetery and trees along the cemetery perimeter are assets that add to the character of the cemetery.



Figure 57: Cemetery Overview. Source: LEES+Associates

Site's Navigability

Seaview Cemetery is generally flat or gently sloping in the eastern half, becoming steeper with grades of up to 12% in the western half. It is more challenging for those who are less mobile to move around and visit graves here.

Families and friends attending a graveside service are permitted to drive into the cemetery behind the funeral party. Visitors can drive all the way round the cemetery which makes grave visitation easier for those with mobility issues. Visitors park their cars on the cemetery driveways or by the operations building. There is sufficient room for vehicles to pass and there is no need to provide a parking lot inside the cemetery. Visitors have the option of using the parking lot outside of the cemetery on the opposite side of the road. This parking lot is not associated with the cemetery.

Operations vehicles have the option to use the main entrance gate, or the secondary gravel road leading to Lower Road. If the main entrance gate was modified so that the sign did not restrict the height of vehicles, the secondary gravel road could be extinguished.

Litter

Seaview cemetery is clean, and there was no litter observed during the site visit that took place as part of this operations assessment. Litter control is one of the services provided by SCRD's cemetery contractor.

Irrigation

Seaview Cemetery is not irrigated and SCRD's cemetery contractor is not required to water the grounds. The grass goes brown in the summer, but regularly comes back green and healthy in the fall. The SCRD has not received any complaints received about the site's brown grass in summer.

The SCRD should monitor how the grass lawns and trees contend with climate change. Increasing droughts and 'heat dome' events during summer, could make it necessary to irrigate the grass at some point in the future to maintain its health, otherwise it will be killed off and will not come back green in the cooler wetter months.

This is a challenge given that the SCRD cemeteries must comply with municipally mandated annual water restrictions. This will impact the SCRD's ability to effectively irrigate its cemetery sites in the long term.

Drainage

SCRD's cemetery contractor is required to routinely check culverts during heavy rains and remove any debris that may cause erosion.

During the atmospheric river storms of November 2021, storm water from the highway washed across the cemetery lawns and damaged the gravel driveways. Blocked drains in the adjacent highways contributed to these conditions.

There is a creek that goes through the centre of the cemetery. This is showing signs of bank erosion that if not addressed could impact families' graves.

Grave Adornments + Ornamentation

Seaview Cemetery is challenged by widespread use of highly personalized gravesite commemorations and custom grave covers. An in-depth review of the operational impact of this practice is set out in this section of the report.

Grave adornment and ornamentation at Seaview Cemetery include artificial flowers, live shrubs and other plants, statues and figurines, glass and ceramic vases, lanterns, and solar lights, windmills, seats, personal memorabilia (including a guitar and a skateboard), as well as various types of edgings and custom grave covers. While adornments are undoubtedly placed as tokens of affection and memory, most items tend to weather, fade, and eventually fall apart.

Glass, metal, or ceramic items often end up in pieces, which are not only unsightly but can also be a hazard to the operations staff and contractor personnel that maintain the cemetery. Ornamentation makes it time consuming and inefficient to carry out basic site care operations such as cutting the grass because staff must be very careful not to touch or damage the ornamentation of families' graves.

The proliferation of adornments and ornamentation at Seaview Cemetery has an adverse impact on the experience of other families when they come to visit a family member buried in an adjacent grave. The cumulative effects from the mass of adornments and ornamentation have a significant adverse impact on the quality of the cemetery landscape and experience of people visiting the cemetery,

How a cemetery looks and feels directly affects the number of families choosing to be buried at Seaview Cemetery resulting in impacts to the price that SCRD is able to charge for its services. This ultimately impacts the annual revenue of the cemetery.



Figure 58: Example of Grave Ornamentation. Source: SCRD

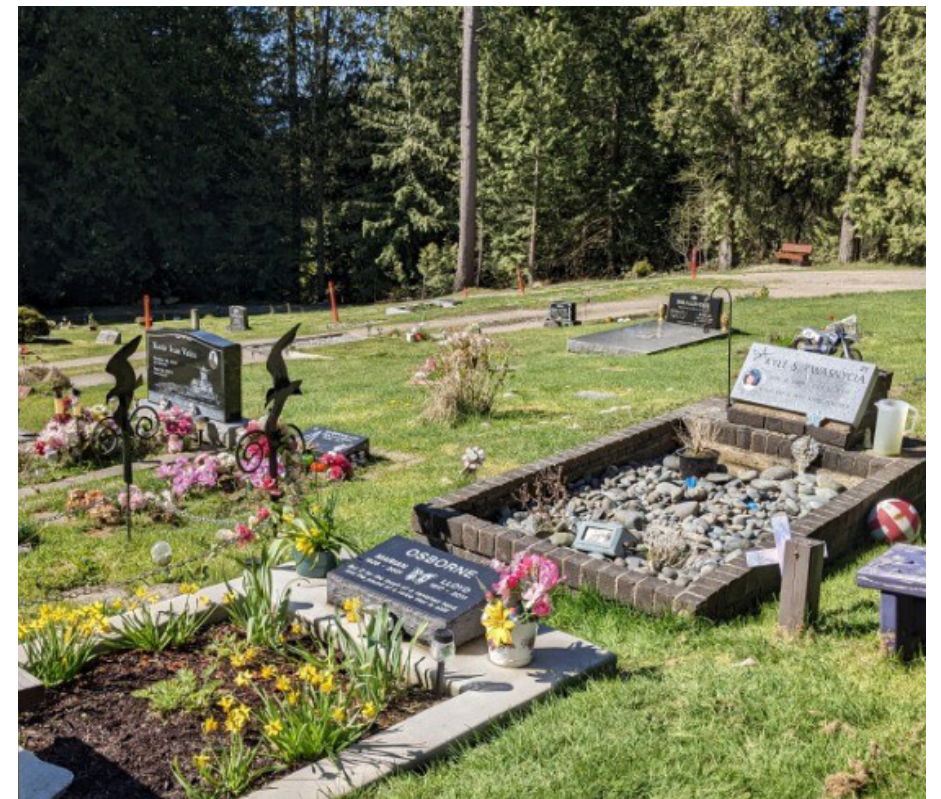


Figure 59: Example of Grave Ornamentation. Source: SCRD



Figure 60: Example of custom grave cover. Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 61: Example of custom grave cover. Source: LEES+Associates

Cemetery Bylaw

The Cemetery Bylaw (689) addresses ornamentation and adornments to a limited degree., Section 11, Term 11.2 states that:

“Cut flowers, wreaths and floral offerings may be placed on graves, but may be removed by the Caretaker when their condition is considered to be detrimental to the appearance of the cemetery.”

Section 10 - Memorials outlines the terms and conditions for memorial markers, tablets and monuments, but does not speak directly to grave covers.

SCRD staff have not enforced these sections of the bylaw or have enforced them inconsistently, in relation to what is permitted for grave covers and markers, adornments, and memorabilia. The Cemetery Bylaw does not stipulate in detail what is permitted or prohibited to be placed within the cemetery or for what time-period.

As a result of the lack of clear detail about adornment and ornamentation in the cemetery bylaw, the lack of consistent enforcement of the rules that are in place, and the SCR D’s historic desire to ‘accommodate the individual wishes’ of family members, a permissive culture has developed culminating in an excessive array of adornments, memorabilia, and ornamentation to graves at Seaview Cemetery.

Custom Grave Covers

The ground in the western active half of Seaview Cemetery has a steep slope of 12% running across the graves, which are consistently aligned east-west. The result is a need for retaining wall solutions in order to produce level grave covers. SCR D staff have historically tried to ‘accommodate’ the wishes of families in terms of their choice of grave cover and the range of low retaining wall solutions to make the grave covers level. Families have been permitted to undertake this work themselves with varying quality of materials workmanship and degrees of success. These amateur grave covers could lead to a significant financial liability for the SCR D to fix them, make them safe, or dismantle them over the coming years.

Changes in the Approach to Managing Adornment, Ornamentation and Custom Amateur Grave Covers

The SCR D needs to develop a strategy for addressing the ornamentation and grave cover issues. For example:

- Update the bylaw with clear language and enforce the bylaw consistently;
- Alert families to any upcoming changes with appropriate notice
- Consult families. Tell them why this is important and what the SCR D is trying to achieve for everyone’s benefit and enjoyment. Obtain families’ feedback and incorporate into the way the SCR D will address the issues, and
- Work with families on an individual basis to address issues with their gravesites.

There may be some resistance to these changes from community members. The SCR D will likely need to prioritize education, reinforcing that though families have purchased a right of interment on the land, the SCR D maintains a responsibility to manage and operate this community cemetery in a manner that benefits all members of the community.

The extent to which amendments can be made to existing families grave covers will be on a case-by-case basis dependent on the issues and willingness of a family to cooperate. For new burials however, the current issues can largely be extinguished through a clear bylaw with consistent enforcement.

Once the necessary changes to the bylaw have been made the SCR D will have achieved the following:

- Ornamentation and grave covers will be compliant;
- The cemetery will look cleaner and tidier
- The cemetery will be more efficient and safer to maintain
- The liabilities presented by custom amateur family grave covers will be reduced.

Additional details and strategic options for addressing grave adornments are outlined in “Appendix D – Precedent Case - Managing Cemetery Ornamentation in BC”.

Community Satisfaction

The SCRD does not currently have a formal process in place to collect feedback from the community members its cemeteries serve. However, informal feedback (both compliments and complaints) has been received by SCRD staff from community members.

SCRD staff report that community members informal feedback suggests they are satisfied with the level of service related to the opening or closing of the graves. The most common feedback from residents are inquiries about green burials, and complaints regarding the types of markers allowed on newer plots, which only permits flat markers.

Cemetery Human Resources

This section of the report provides an analysis of the roles and responsibilities of SCRD staff and contract workers directly involved with supporting and managing the cemetery system.

The objective of this section is to identify and assess the current resourcing, organizational structure, policies, and practices. These are examined with the purpose of optimizing the SCRD's operational efficiency and community satisfaction with the cemeteries and related services.

Resourcing Review- Cemetery Staffing + Organization

There are no staff solely dedicated to the operation of the SCRD cemetery system.

Cemetery staff on both the administration side and the field work side of the cemetery operations are responsible for over 100 parks, trails, and open spaces. SCRD staff interviewed as part of this operations assessment, feel that they need to dedicate more time to the cemetery operation to meet the minimum standard of service to SCRD families.

In addition to the SCRD's staff, the cemetery system also employs contractors to undertake regular site care and maintenance work. SCRD also hires a backhoe and dump truck operator for the interment of caskets on an as-needed basis.

The SCRD does not presently have a formal organization chart providing a summary of all its cemetery staff and contractors, with a clear outline of the roles and responsibilities for those involved with cemeteries.

Figure 62 is an organization chart prepared by LEES+Associates based on the feedback provided by SCRD staff during this review. It outlines the current reporting structure, roles, and responsibilities in the cemetery system. This chart identifies all the SCRD staff and contract workers currently involved with and responsible for SCRD's cemetery operations. SCRD should strive to keep this chart up to date and track the annual Full Time Equivalent (FTE) hours spent on the cemetery operations for each position. FTE is valuable data that can be used in the costing of cemetery activities in the future.

Organizational Chart

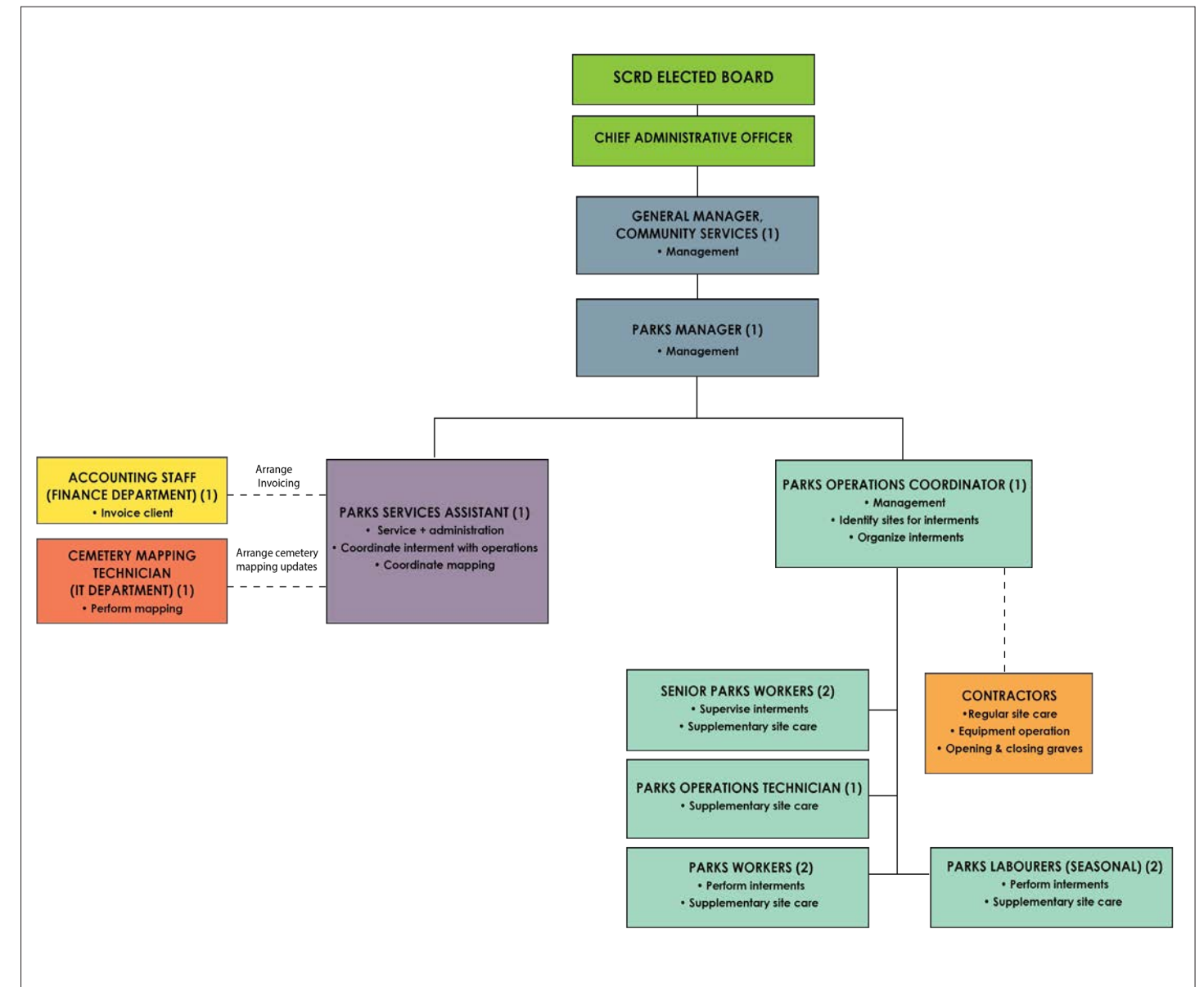


Figure 62: Organizational Chart. Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 63: Dedicated Community Member Meeting Room, Mountain View Cemetery, Source: LEES+Associates.

Cemetery Administration

This section reviews the roles and responsibilities of SCRD staff involved with sales, service, records management, and community engagement, as well as the resources available to staff for cemetery administration.

Sales + Service

The Parks Services Assistant is the SCRD staff member in charge of:

- Providing front counter customer service to the community,
- Providing information to the families and the funeral home,
- Arranging lot sales and the updating the cemetery's records,
- Notifying operations staff to prepare an interment plan,
- Requesting a cemetery plot mapping update;
- Submitting an invoice request for cemetery services to finance staff, and
- Preparing applications to Consumer Protection BC when requesting permission for cemetery improvements, including the development of additional plots, placement of a new fence, addition of a new columbarium, etc.

Currently, there are no support staff with knowledge and experience to undertake this role and these responsibilities, in the absence of the Parks Services Assistant.

The SCRD does not presently have a dedicated, private, and comfortable meeting space for grieving families to discuss burial arrangements and to choose a grave with staff.

The Parks Services Assistant shares an office with three other people. There is a small meeting room adjacent to this office which is reserved when the Parks Services Assistant knows in advance that a family is coming in. However, this room can be booked by all SCRD staff and consequently not always available. In this case the family must wait while the Parks Services Assistant locates an empty office or other meeting room. This is below the level of care that most municipalities consider acceptable. It impacts the quality of experience that families receive from the SCRD.

Records Management

This section provides information about the options available to the SCRD to enhance its records management systems, which support the recommendations provided at the end of this chapter.

Software Tools

SCRD's cemetery staff primarily use a software called Stone Orchard Software (SOS). This preparatory software is specifically designed to support municipal cemeteries with administration, records management, and online information search. The use of this software can increase reporting efficiency, reduce time requirements, and decrease errors from duplicate data entry tasks.

The Stone Orchard Software is a powerful tool, however its not currently being used to its full potential.

SOS has the capability to integrate interment and memorialization site activity, inventory records, and georeferenced data, with financial information and up-to-date electronic maps of grave locations. With SOS, a municipality can arrange to link digital records spatially with GIS mapping to improve the SCRD's cemetery site operations, asset management, and customer service.

When these maps are linked to SOS records, it enables a municipality to provide staff, funeral homes, and other site visitors with a custom Online Search website for the cemetery that is accessible from a computer. The grave location app on a mobile device can direct staff or a visitor easily to precise gravesites.

This remote access functionality can reduce the time and effort spent by cemetery staff who have had to guide visitors through the cemetery to find a grave. It is also helpful for operations staff who triple-check the location of a new grave to ensure they are working in the correct location.

SCRD has not purchased the Online Search component of SOS, so staff are not currently set up among Central Square's Online Search pages for cemeteries. Consequently, SCRD staff and site visitors are not currently able to take full advantage of the enhanced navigability offered by this feature. Activating this feature could further improve the cemetery operational efficiency and community member satisfaction with Seaview Cemetery.

Information Gaps

There are currently some information gaps in SCRD's data collection fields of the record keeping system related to the tracking of the:

- At-need + Pre-need status of sales and services, and
- Residency status of the customers served.

Adding information to these fields should be part of SCRD's cemetery record keeping practices.

System Integration

There is currently a time lag that exists between the entry of data in SOS, the billing of community members for the purchase of a right of interment and when the mapping database gets updated. This delay creates inefficiencies in the SCRD's cemetery administration and inaccuracies in the online Seaview Cemetery map.

SCRD staff use the VADIM Financial System for processing cemetery sales and service requests, bills, and payments. Invoices are first generated through SOS, and then are manually forwarded to the Finance Dept. for final billing to the customer.

In the short term, there is a VADIM general ledger export feature in SOS that SCRD can use. A general ledger export and can be sent to the Finance Dept to import into the VADIM software. In the long term, it is possible for Central Square, VADIM and SCRD's IT department to collaborate and build a background interface which would automatically integrate the two systems.

SCRD staff also use an ESRI Cemetery Mapping Database for the mapping of its cemetery lots, which is not linked to SOS. The Seaview Cemetery map currently posted on the SCRD's cemetery website is not currently connected to Stone Orchard Software. It must be manually updated through the GIS Dept.

As with the SCRD's financial system, creating an interface solution may be possible for the existing mapping system. The cost and capability to do so is related to whether these systems are on the same database server/network locations.

Technical Support

SOS troubleshooting is available to staff through the annual maintenance agreement available through Central Square. SOS's technical support can accommodate specific questions about the use of their system. SCRD can submit queries to stoneorchard-support@centralsquare.com. SOS requests that inquire about different topics or components of the system should be sent separately.

An online support portal hosted by Central Square can be accessed by clicking the question mark icon from the top right corner of the Stone Orchard application window, or by visiting <https://support.centralsquare.com>. Support is also available by phone. Customer inquiries are typically responded to within 24 hours for registrants of the annual maintenance program.

Training

There is also an opportunity for SCRD staff to enlist for further training in SOS. SCRD cemetery administration staff have had little training in the effective use of the system and its reporting capabilities. Training on the entire SOS system is available through online training sessions at an hourly rate.

SCRD's cemetery operations would become more robust, resilient, and efficient in its service delivery if two of its administration staff were fully trained on the data entry, customization and reporting functionality of SOS, its central records management software.

Community Engagement + Promotion

There are no plans, strategies, or initiatives in place to attract families to Seaview Cemetery or raise its profile within the communities it serves.

By increasing the informative content and user-friendly format of the cemetery's website, the more likely residents are to engage with cemetery sites and their staff. This includes reaching out to purchase lots, making pre-need service arrangements, more frequently visiting the cemeteries for public events, recreational use (walks, observing nature, etc.), as well as visiting the graves of family and friends interred on site.

The SCRD's cemetery system website is currently helpful and easy to use. It provides visitors with contact information for the Parks Assistant / Cemetery Clerk, as well as a detailed site map of Seaview Cemetery that identifies the location of lots and key site features. There is also an informative "Question and Answers" section and links to the cemetery's fees schedule, bylaw, Provincial legislation, and regulations. There is one cemetery site photo.

SCRD's cemetery website content and format is good, though there are opportunities for further enhancement – such as adding more photos of its offerings, services and landscape, and integration with social media sites. This could further increase community member engagement and investment in Seaview Cemetery.

There has been no other proactive marketing, annual cemetery events, or site tours undertaken by SCRD staff in the past five years.



Figure 64: Seaview Cemetery, Example of Mossy Landscape.
Source: LEES+Associates



Figure 65: Seaview Cemetery, Example of Sloping Landscape,
Source: LEES+Associates

Cemetery Field Work- Service and Maintenance

This section reviews the roles and responsibilities of SCRD staff and contractors involved with interment service delivery, site care and maintenance, as well as the resources available to staff for this cemetery field work.

SCRD Staff- Field Work Roles + Responsibilities

SCRD's operations staff is responsible for:

- Confirming the interment date and service plan with the cemetery administration staff;
- Identifying the gravesite;
- Organizing the site excavation;
- Supervising the burial;
- Closing the gravesite;
- Documenting the interment;
- Alignment with SCRD Community Services Division, and
- Arranging for onsite pre-meeting with contractors to discuss work plan and any safety concerns (full burials only).

In preparation for a graveside service of a casket burial, SCRD operations staff set up the boards and greens, and places the lowering device around the opened grave. SCRD staff also fully dig and prepare cremation lots for urn interment services.

With respect to site care, SCRD operations staff provides supplementary site care support by maintaining Seaview Cemetery's trees, ditches and provides any extra cleanup required after storms.

SCRD operations staff keeps track of time spent at the cemetery through timesheets, however the time recorded by staff does not currently distinguish between maintenance, interment services and other on-site activities.

SCRD would be able to better assess the operational efficiency of its staff and the long-term financial sustainability of the cemetery system if it implemented a more rigorous tracking system to identify and report the time and material costs for each these key elements of its field work.

This is particularly important for enabling financial staff to track the precise cost of site care. This is an important variable in the formula for determining the financial health of a cemetery's Perpetual Care Fund.

Contract Worker - Field Work Roles + Responsibilities

SCRD contracts the labour and equipment on an as-needed basis for the opening and closing of full body in-ground burial graves. The Contractor's workers open the grave and move the soil to a fill pile. This includes the use of one backhoe, one dump truck, and the contractor's operators.

SCRD outsources the regular landscaping, lawn care, snow removal and road maintenance work at its cemeteries to a Contractor. This work mainly takes place at Seaview Cemetery. However, the contractor also cuts the grass at Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery.

The site care Contractor's agreement expires May 31, 2023, with an option to extend it by two years. The service provided is annual (12 months). It includes several other SCRD sites, in addition to the cemeteries, that require frequent maintenance.

The Contractor uses Seaview Cemetery's storage facility for its equipment and materials required to perform its services. Contractor staff provide grass cutting services and maintain Seaview and Kleindale Cemeteries mostly in the growing season, and after storms.

Quality of Care

Efficiency of Grass Cutting

The custom installations of grave covers have had a direct impact on the efficiency, standard and cost of mowing the cemetery lawn around them.

The maintenance team currently weed whip the grass around the grave covers because there is not enough room for deck mowers or push mowers. This is having an impact on the quality of the cemetery lawn, which is inconsistent, and has a lot of moss in it.

Efficiency of Opening/Closing + Graveside Set Up

The decision to stick rigidly to the east-west grave alignment has caused SCRD staff problems when undertaking the graveside set up in the steeper parts of the western half of Seaview Cemetery. Occasionally the cemetery field work team need to:

- Move headstones and grave covers to provide sufficient room for the backhoe to open and close the grave, and
- Use wooden planks and boards to counteract the steep cross fall slope and create a level platform on which to set the casket lowering device. The platform needs to be safe and secure for the pallbearers to lower the casket into the grave. Sometimes family members must stand on the boards to participate in the service and say their final goodbyes when they throw handfuls of dirt into the open grave.

These challenges are mainly because of the cemetery's east-west grave alignment. Given the complications of preparing a safe graveside set up, the Parks Operations Coordinator and three other field staff are the only ones trusted to supervise these operations which adds to their workload.

Maintenance Schedules

The SCRD's Contractor has an operations and maintenance schedule included in the terms and conditions of its agreement. The Contractor currently provides its landscape and lawn care services to Seaview Cemetery on a weekly basis. Road maintenance and snow removal are undertaken on an as needed basis.

The SCRD's operations staff do not have a schedule of care for their cemeteries' site maintenance. It is common practice for municipal cemeteries in Canada to have an annual maintenance plan that schedules the range and frequency of seasonal tasks. The nature and timing of these tasks are plotted out based on each municipality's climatic and landscaping needs.

Practices and Procedures

SCRD has some standard operating procedures (SOPs) for cemetery site care in the Contractor's General Services Agreement. This includes a service schedule, and outlines the tasks, standard of care and detailed terms of service for their work at Seaview Cemetery.

SCRD has outdated standard operating procedures for cemetery administrative that predates its acquisition of its Stone Orchard Software license.

However, SCRD does not have a current, consolidated standard operating procedures and practices manual that document all its policies and processes, for both its administration and field work staff during the daily operations of its cemeteries.

Municipal cemetery manuals commonly include all procedures and practices related to service delivery, health and safety, site maintenance, lot locating and digging techniques, and bylaw regulation enforcement. SOPs following best practices also include oversight, financial, records management, marketing and sales practices, and procedures for its cemetery system.

An example of a Table of Contents from a cemetery's SOPs in the interior of British Columbia can be found in "Appendix E – Example: Standard Operating Procedures Manual, Table Of Contents".

Cemetery Bylaw

This section provides a preliminary review of the SCRD's cemetery bylaw.

Additional details regarding cemetery bylaws that form the foundation of this analysis can be found in "Appendix F – Introduction to Cemetery Bylaws".

Bylaw Review: Sunshine Regional District

This initial, high-level review considers whether the SCRD has a cemetery bylaw that is 'responsive' to the expectations and needs of its community members, as well as whether the existing bylaw can easily facilitate the addition of expanded services and goods to those now being offered at the SCRD's cemeteries. The most current 'approved/official' cemetery bylaw (No. 689) for the SCRD's cemeteries is dated from 2014. The existing bylaw is outdated which suggests a comprehensive update of the SCRD's cemetery bylaw.

A preliminary review of the existing bylaw reveals the following:

- Inconsistent, missing and incorrect information: There are statements within the existing bylaw that are inconsistent with the language set out in current legislation, regulation, or elsewhere in the bylaw. Information about cemetery operations, management, interment rights, cancellation rights, operating rules, and regulations are unclear, insufficient, erroneous or are absent from the bylaw. For example:
 - Casket lots currently being sold and used are 5' x 10'. The bylaw currently states they are 9' X 6', and
 - All new lots developed in the past two years and future lots are only allowed to have flat markers. This is not reflected in the bylaw. The rest of the cemetery allows for most types of upright and pillow markers.
- Ease of Use + Clarity: The existing bylaw in many places is difficult to understand. There are points in the existing bylaw that need rewording or need to be expanded and strengthened to clarify operational needs/requirements. For example:
- The bylaw states that "One interment may be permitted in each grave space in the cemetery. A single grave may inter six cremations or one full burial and up to five cremations." These two sentences are contradictory.
- Ease of Amendment: The existing bylaw is mostly organized in a way that enables SCRD staff to amend key information placed in a series of Schedules appended to the bylaw. This avoids the need to invoke SCRD Board approval of the main bylaw document every time a minor change is required. The cemeteries' memorial standards could be moved into a Schedule. The interment permit form, services offered, and fees and charges, are already in Schedules.

Bylaw responsibility

SCRD is responsible for what happens in every cemetery under their ownership, control, operations, maintenance, and management. This means that SCRD's Elected Board and staff are accountable to cemetery client families, cemetery visitors, the Province of British Columbia, and the community at large. SCRD's governing authorities are responsible for how every cemetery is operated, how service is provided, and how they are maintained.

It is the responsibility of a cemetery owner/operator to establish and maintain an up-to-date bylaw for cemeteries under their control. A weak, ambiguous, incomplete, or outdated bylaw can mean the SCRD's Elected Board, along with SCRD staff, will endure regular complaints about the cemetery from users and visitors and, at worst, expose the SCRD – unnecessarily- to considerable legal and financial liability.

Having an effective cemetery bylaw will:

- Establish clear standards of design , service, maintenance, and mandate the quality and forms of products permitted in a cemetery;
- Protect the SCRD as the cemetery operator and underpin their ability to establish, apply and enforce cemetery rules of use- equitably- to every user;
- Contain language to promote the protection and preservation of the significant heritage and historical importance that is present in community cemeteries, and
- Reflect and be consistent with the current cemetery (and related) legislation and regulations.

Next Steps

The SCRD's cemetery bylaw needs to be updated. A comprehensive review and revision of the existing cemetery bylaw, would:

- Bring the existing bylaw into compliance with Provincial legislation and regulations,
- Ensure that the SCRD meets the Provincial standard for a municipal cemetery, and
- Move its cemetery operations to a more efficient, sustainable, and professional operation with a "best practices" footing.

This comprehensive review and update process would enhance the bylaw by:

- **Expanding and Strengthening the Text:** It would ensure consistency with Provincial legislation and the regulations throughout the bylaw, improve the definitions section and several other subject areas that are lacking key information. It would also strengthen language throughout the bylaw related to rules and regulations of use and remove or replace outdated terminology;
- **Improving Content, Consistency and Flow:** It would resolve any contradictions or inconsistency in content that may be present between existing sections, resolve descriptions and details around lot types, permitted memorials, etc. It would reorder the sections and content to have a more logical 'flow,' thus making the bylaw easier to use;
- **Enhancing its Format and Structure:** It would add clearer language consistent with modern cemetery management, improve details around interment rights purchase and use, lot types, permitted memorials, etc., and
- **Increase its Effectiveness and Efficiency:** It would optimize the bylaw format that permits, through an uncomplicated amendment process, the ongoing addition of expanded service offerings to better meet the needs of cemetery users, e.g., new cremation interment and eco-friendly green burial options, as well as opportunities to permit bereaved families to create meaningful memorials.

An updated bylaw would provide the SCRD with a more complete bylaw that will:

- Increase its ease of use for the SCRD Board, cemetery staff, and cemetery users;
- Be more easily understood by client families and cemetery visitors;
- Promote standard operational, service, and maintenance outcomes and facilitate better management of the aesthetic appearance of SCRD cemeteries;
- Limit or mitigate legal risk and financial liability exposure for the SCRD, and
- Enable the addition of new interment and service options arising from this new cemetery plan.

Financial Review

This section includes a high-level review of the cemetery operation's financial performance and a measure of its sustainability. Two important performance indicators used to assess the short term and long-term financial health of a cemetery system is its proximity to :

- **Operating Break-Even point:** This is the point in time when a cemetery can fund itself while meeting the service expectations of the community. This indicates whether a cemetery can cover its operating costs with its reliable sources of annual revenue, and
- **Perpetual Care Fund Stability point:** This is the point in time when a Perpetual Care Fund (PCF) is fully funded and expected to generate enough investment income to meet its long-term site care and maintenance costs.

Cemetery General Operating Fund - Short Term Sustainability Measure

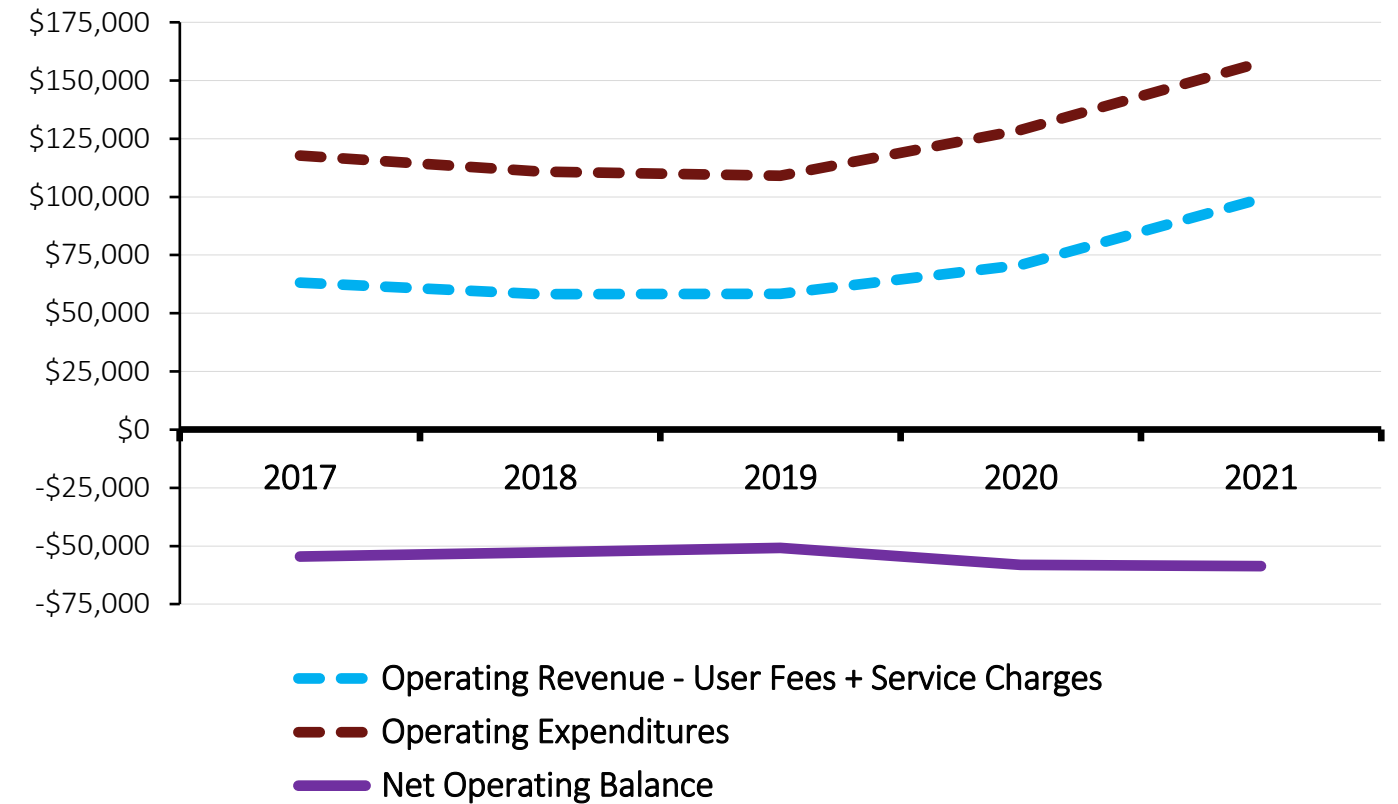
Current Operating Financial Status

Figure 66 summarizes the historic operating financial performance of the SCRD's cemeteries by calendar year, as reported by SCRD staff from 2017 to 2021.

SCRD's operating revenue is largely from Seaview Cemetery while its operating expenditures include both the cost to operate Seaview Cemetery, as well as the costs to care for SCRD's two inactive cemeteries.

The SCRD cemeteries' costs exceeded revenue from user fees and service charges by an average \$55,000 per year over the past five years. Cemetery operating revenue covered 56% of operating expenditures during this period.

SCRD's Cemetery System
Operating Financials, 2017-2021



* The dollar values in this graph do not include non-operating revenue (e.g. property tax) used to cover costs.

Figure 66: SCRD's Cemetery System Operating Financials, 2017-2021, Source: SCRD's Finance Department

The balance of the SCRD's cemetery operating expenditure was paid for and subsidized by an allocation of property tax income. Over the past five years, the SCRD allocated, on average, \$46,000 per year more than what was required to cover the cemetery's operating costs. These excess funds were subsequently transferred into a Cemetery Operating Reserve Fund at year end.

Most municipalities support their operations to some extent with tax dollars, because cemetery revenue rarely fully funds its operating costs. LEES+Associates has found that the majority of North American municipalities it has assessed over the past decade tend to prioritize supporting their cemeteries as a community service to its residents. They strive to improve the financial performance of their operations, while steadily reducing the demand on the tax base and moving toward break-even. Therefore, the SCRD's cemeteries operating financial performance is on par with other communities in the Province.

The SCRD's projected population growth, as well as the increasing death rate projected by the bereavement sector due to the upcoming passing of the Baby Boomer generation, is projected to boost sales at the SCRD's cemetery system over the next 25 years. This is expected to drive the future demand for cemetery services at Seaview (particularly cremated remain interment options) and enhance its financial sustainability in the future.

A comprehensive financial plan and business case analysis would identify further opportunities for the SCRD to close the operating gap and move towards break-even. This would entail an in-depth review and examination of historic and projected operating revenue and expenses over the next 50 years.

Cemetery Operating Reserve Fund - Capital Funding Resource

The SCRD’s Cemetery Operating Reserve Fund had a 2021 year end balance of \$407,494.

Use of monies in this reserve fund is governed by the Bylaw 655. According to this bylaw, the monies in this reserve fund shall only be used for:

- Unanticipated expenditures for operations;
- Funding one-time projects, and
- Mitigation of sudden and marked increases to taxation and/or fees.

The Cemetery Operating Reserve Fund is invested in a pooled manner with other SCRD reserve funds. A portion of this fund is invested in short term liquid funds to be drawn on as needed, based on planned transfers included in the SCRD’s current Financial Plan Bylaw. In other words, use of funds in this reserve is subject to approval and inclusion in the current Financial Plan Bylaw.

Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund - Long Term Sustainability Measurement

A key factor in the future viability of a cemetery system is the adequacy of its Perpetual Care Fund (PCF). Canadian cemeteries usually contribute a portion of cemetery sales revenue to the principal of a long-term investment fund (e.g., trust, GIC), which is then expected to fund the care of the cemeteries in perpetuity.

This obligation for a cemetery’s care and maintenance is expected to begin at the time the cemetery is established, extending through the period during which they are active and generating revenue, and continuing long after the site is full and no longer generating revenue. The PCF principal is expected to generate interest income which is either retained in the fund to generate compounding returns or withdrawn annually to pay for present day site care and maintenance costs.

Planning for a fully funded PCF involves comparing the investment income and maintenance costs projected at the time the cemetery site is expected to become inactive. The future investment income generated by the PCF will need to be equal to, or greater than the projected maintenance cost. When the investment income needed has been established, it is possible to identify the PCF end balance and appropriate revenue contributions necessary over the period of the cemetery’s active life span, to reach that end balance.

Cemeteries are unique facilities and services, which are usually constrained in their governance by Provincial legislation, which stipulates that cemetery owners must provide “care and maintenance” of their properties in perpetuity. This legislation mandates that:

- A cemetery PCF be managed very conservatively, and
- Access to the PCF principal is restricted and investment income can only be spent on current cemetery care and maintenance.

The intent is for the PCF’s interest income to offset inflation, providing it with funds to pay for a higher site maintenance cost in the future, at a time when there are no further sales revenue to support it.

British Columbia provincial legislation mandates that all cemeteries contribute 25% of the price of a right of interment related to an in-ground grave, 10% of a right of interment related to a columbarium or mausoleum, and \$10 for each memorial installed at the place of interment.

In the last two years of pricing research, LEES+Associates has also found British Columbia communities are often contributing above the provincial minimum to the Care and Maintenance Fund - at 30% of plot sales, 20% of columbaria and 15% of mausolea sales.

Current PCF Status

The following table lists all the elements that contributed to the SCRD’s PCF balance from 2017 to 2021.

Element	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Opening Balance	\$147,773	\$157,450	\$173,125	\$190,219	\$215,100
Annual Sales Contribution	\$9,078	\$12,680	\$11,645	\$13,148	\$17,375
Interest Income Earned	\$600	\$2,994	\$5,449	\$11,734	\$(1,540)
Interest Rate	0.4%	1.9%	3.1%	6.2%	-0.7%
End Balance	\$157,450	\$173,125	\$190,219	\$215,100	\$230,935

Table 10: SCRD’s Perpetual Care Fund Activity from 2017 to 2021, Source: SCRD’s Finance Department.

Figure 67 provides a general summary of the historic performance of SCRD’s PCF over the past five years, from 2017 to 2021.

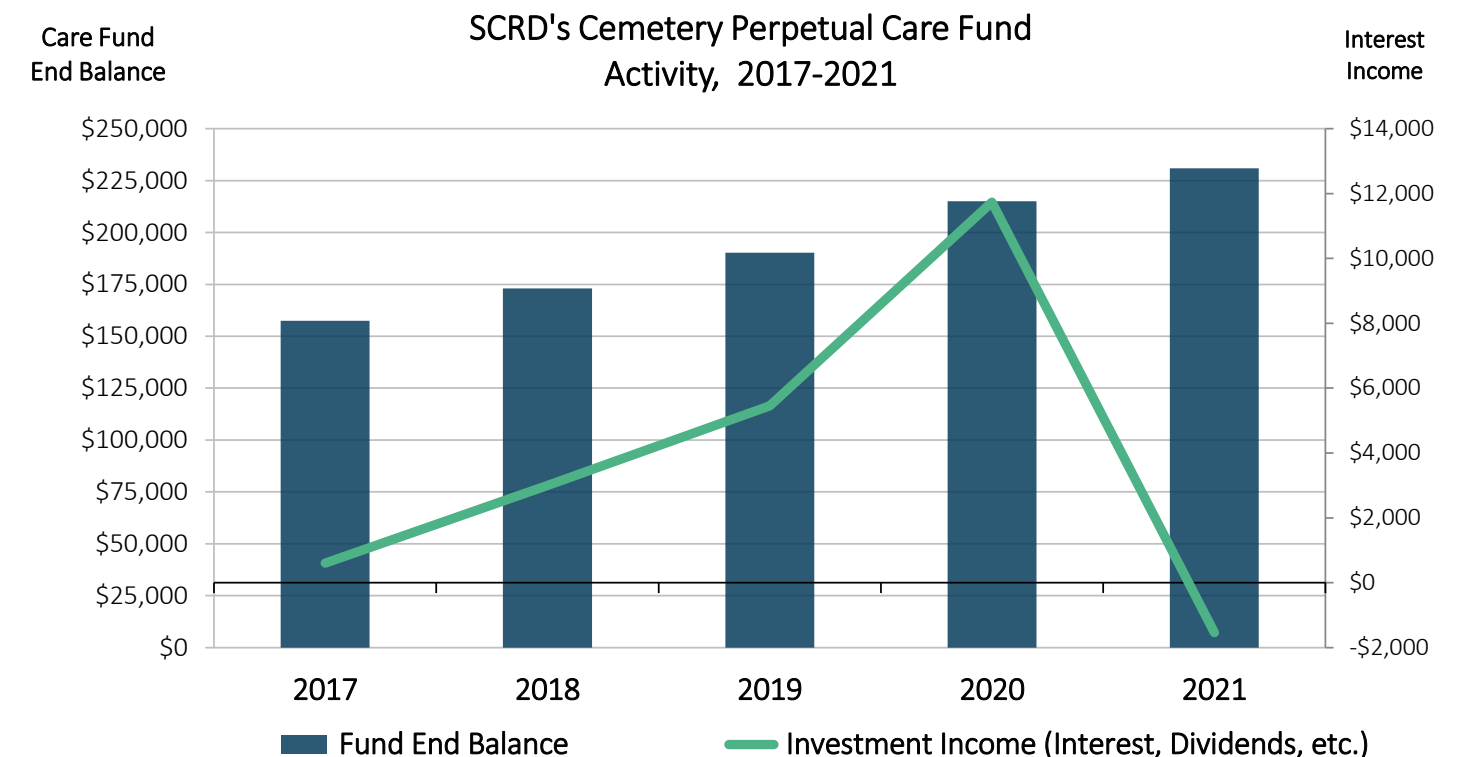


Figure 67: : SCRD’s Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund Performance, 2017 to 2021. Source: SCRD’s Finance Department

As of December 31, 2021, the SCRD’s cemetery PCF’s end balance was \$230,935.

To be sustainable, the annual interest income earned by the PCF needs to exceed the cemetery’s annual care and maintenance costs. The SCRD does not currently track its site care and maintenance costs as a distinct category of costs separate from the rest of its operating expenses. Therefore, we are unable to compare its precise value to the annual interest income currently earned by the PCF.

However, LEES+Associates is certain that SCRD’s care and maintenance costs significantly exceed the value of the annual income earned by the PCF. Over the past five years, it averaged \$3,900 per year, with an annual interest rate of 2.2% per year. This rate is on par with the average rate of returns from a PCF (between 1% to 5%) typically received by municipal cemetery operators in Canada during this period.

For SCRD’s cemetery operations to become more financially sustainable, it will need to accelerate the growth of its PCF. The actual degree of funding required depends upon the level of care to which the Regional District decides to maintain its cemetery sites after they become inactive.

Accelerating the SCRD’s growth could be accomplished through a variety of measures. The following table summarizes five common strategies to accelerate Perpetual Care Fund growth. This is not a menu of recommendations, but a list of potential strategies. Some or all these options may be implemented to achieve more resilient SCRD cemetery operations.

1. Retain and Compound Interest Income
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strategy entails halting the practice of interest income withdrawals from the Perpetual Care Fund to offset current care and maintenance costs (SCRD is currently using this strategy).
2. Substantially Strengthen the Principal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strategy entails directly increasing the principal and future interest income by making extraordinary, fixed contributions to the Perpetual Care Fund from a general tax fund, a discretionary reserve fund, or an asset sale.
3. Increasing the Annual Interest Rate of Return
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strategy entails comparing the available professional organizations offering financial services and researching the range of instruments available for cemetery operators to invest its funds reliably and conservatively, while generating a better return.
4. Increasing the Percentage Sale Contributions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strategy entails increasing the portion of cemetery sales revenue that is allocated to the cemetery’s Perpetual Care Fund, above the minimum required by Provincial legislation.
5. Increasing the Fees for the Cemetery’s Inventory Sold
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strategy entails increasing total revenue by increasing the fee per sale and consequently the Perpetual Care Fund portion for each sale

Table 11: Common Strategies to Accelerate Care and Maintenance Fund Growth, Source: LEES+Associates.

A comprehensive financial plan and business case analysis with an indepth analysis and forecast of the PCF is necessary to determine the best strategy for SCRD.

It would determine the PCF balance required to fully fund the cemetery sites’ perpetual care and identify the best options available to SCRD to ensure the short and long term sustainability of its cemetery operations.

Recommendations - Operations Assessment

The following recommendations will enhance the SCRD’s cemetery operations, improve its service levels, and expand its future revenue. To optimize its services, systems, and sustainability it is recommended that the SCRD:

Products and Services

- Identify the start-up and ongoing operating cost for cemetery operations to provide the new products and services it plans to offer as a result of this plan;
- Expand its range of cremation interment options with a small land footprint, such as additional columbaria niches, family vessels and scattering gardens;
- Introduce a diverse range of memorialization options (such as engraved boulders, plaques, memorial walls, etc.);
- Introduce a select number of new support services that are low cost and easy to implement. This may include new fees for the installation of vases, modification or repair of memorials and headstones, reserving adjacent lots, monument and graveside cleaning, issuing duplicate or replacement certificates, etc.;
- Develop new full-body in-ground interment options, such as additional casket lots, green burial, and family estates;
- In the short term, this can be done by reconfiguring the remaining inventory available for sale, adding new space from infill areas, reclaimed reserved lots, and developing the remaining undeveloped land at Seaview Cemetery.

Cemetery Pricing

- Increase SCRD’s cemetery rates annually by at least the rate of inflation (a minimum of 3% per year);
- Add to the cemetery bylaw a schedule that includes a list of the current fees and terms that will automate the addition of this annual increase;
- Introduce a minimum non-resident premium of 100% to the SCRD cemetery price list. This premium could feasibly be as high as the regional average non-resident premium, at 175%.
- As part of this process, SCRD will need to define its qualifying criteria for residency and non-residency and add this to the Cemetery Bylaw;
- Increase SCRD’s transfer license fee from \$35 to the market average of \$60, and
- Consider introducing a 50% discounted rate for infants, children, veterans, and indigents to enhance goodwill and SCRD’s level of engagement with its residents.

Cemetery Operations - Accessibility + Aesthetics

- Change the orientation of new casket lots in the remaining sections of Seaview Cemetery where the grade is steep to avoid the need for complex solutions to gravesite setup and grave leveling, as well as difficulties with opening and closing graves;
- Expand and clarify the bylaw regulations language concerning grave covers, adornments, and ornamentation. Increase enforcement of these regulations at Seaview Cemetery;
- Educate client families in advance of proposed changes. Communicate to community members how these items impede the site maintenance and pose a safety hazard. Organize a community member 'clean-up day' at Seaview Cemetery, and
- Consider offering families with existing ornamentation on the lots of loved ones the option of paying an annual fee to allow existing noncompliant items to remain for a designated period.

Cemetery Operations - Administration

- Increase the resilience of the cemetery system, preserve institutional knowledge in operations and mitigate the risk of service disruption, by recruiting and training:
 - An assistant for the Parks Services Assistant to provide a back-up for the responsibilities related to this role. This can be an existing staff member being trained in this role or through the retention of a new employee. This person should:
 - Provide support to the Parks Services Assistant. They should not only be present when the Parks Services Assistant is unavailable, and
 - Be fully trained in Stone Orchard Software, as well as all the responsibilities associated with cemetery administration and customer service.
- Enhance the cemetery customer service experience by appropriately furnishing a dedicated a private room in SCRD's facilities that administrative staff can reliably and regularly reserve to meet bereaved families.
- Until a more dedicated space is available, the SCRD should encourage a more advanced reservation of the current meeting room being used to meet with community members. On its cemetery website and over the phone, staff should request that 'Families make an appointment' prior to arriving at the SCRD office.
- Collaborate with Central Square technical support to learn how to use Stone Orchard Software more effectively and better integrate it with SCRD's financial and mapping systems.
 - The SCRD's cemetery staff should undergo training in the customization and effective use of Stone Orchard Software, including its Online Search functionality, and
 - The SCRD's staff should work with Stone Orchard Software experts to remove redundant processes and develop an automatic interface with SCRD's financial and mapping systems.
- Develop a cemetery sales and marketing plan, after the SCRD develops more inventory to sell. This could increase SCRD's market capture rate and operating revenue. This would be implemented by the cemetery's administration staff.

Cemetery Operations - Field Work, Policies, Procedures + Bylaw

Undertake an analysis of whether it would be more cost-effective for SCRD to assign its operations staff to undertake 100% of the tasks in the current General Services Agreement. This should be done before renewing the Contractor's agreement in 2023;

- Create an annual maintenance plan and schedule of care for SCRD's operations staff that aligns with seasonal conditions and cemetery site activity;
- Compile a Standard Operating Procedures manual for all aspects of SCRD's cemetery operations.
- This will enhance the consistency of service, the efficiency of staff, and serve as an important resource for future training of new cemetery staff.
- Pursue a Comprehensive Review and Revision of SCRD's Cemetery Bylaw as a priority in the near future.

Cemetery Operations - Financial Review

- Pursue a comprehensive financial plan and business case analysis as a priority in the near future. In preparation for this plan and analysis the SCRD should identify and track:
 - User fees and service charges revenue line items by each casket burial and cremated remains service and sales options offered (casket lot sale, cremation lot sale, niche sales, casket lot burials, cremation lot burials, niche interments, etc.), and
 - Operating costs specifically related to cemetery site care and maintenance. This will include all time and material costs incurred by SCRD staff and contractors.
- Prioritize identifying SCRD's current site maintenance costs for its cemeteries. This is an important step in determining the cost coverage shortfall the PCF interest income needs to overcome to cover the future site care costs, and
- Take the necessary action to address the financial gap in the PCF's ability to cover SCRD's cemetery site care costs. This includes reviewing the list of potential strategies for accelerating the growth of the cemetery's PCF and assessing the feasibility of the options available, given SCRD's regulations and resources available.



Chapter 7: Implementation Plan

This chapter summarizes the recommendations for improvements to the SCRD's cemetery system in priority order and gives a Recommended Budget Allowance (RBA) for each recommendation. This chapter is broken down into the following sections:

- Land Acquisition Recommendations Implementation Plan;
- Operational Recommendations Implementation Plan;
- Seaview Cemetery Recommendations Implementation Plan;
- Elphinstone Cemetery Recommendations Implementation Plan;
- Total Recommended Budget Allowances, and
- Summary.

Flexibility of Order of Priorities

The priority is to acquire new lands and develop a first phase of the new cemetery with inventory to last approximately 25 years. If it proves challenging to do this in the next five years, the SCRD could flip priorities by developing the south-west corner of Seaview Cemetery first, while continuing to pursue the goal of acquiring new lands.

Recommended Budget Allowances

Accompanying the phasing recommendations are Recommended Budget Allowances (RBA's). These high-level dollar amounts can be used for capital budget planning purposes. They include estimated consulting planning and design fees, construction costs, as well as contingency amounts of 25%. The RBA amounts are based on current pricing. The SCRD should allow for compound inflation on these RBA amounts every year.

A financial plan was not part of the scope of this project. Typically capital projects are funded by injections from a municipalities' general capital budget, but it is recommended that the SCRD utilize its existing Cemetery Operating Reserve Fund to assist in paying for the implementation of some development recommendations set out in this master plan.

Land Acquisition Recommendations Implementation Plan

The table below highlights key operational recommendations and their priority level.

Land Acquisition Recommendations							
Recommendation	Page Number	Essential/ Non-Essential	Immediate 0-2 Years	Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 Years	Long Term 10+ Years	Recommended Budget Allowance
Begin New Cemetery Land Acquisition Strategy	Page 15	Essential	*				\$4,000,000
Design and develop first phase of new cemetery land to serve the community for 25 years	Page 15	Essential		*			\$2,000,000
Develop later phases of new cemetery land from 2042 to last 100+ years	Page 15	Essential				*	Costing to be determined in 20 years time

Operational Recommendations Implementation Plan

The table below highlights key operational recommendations and their priority level.

Operations Recommendations Continued							
Recommendation	Page Number	Essential/ Non-Essential	Immediate 0-2 Years	Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 Years	Long Term 10+ Years	Recommended Budget Allowance
Update cemetery bylaw	Page 55	Essential	*				\$7,500
Begin to adopt range of interment options	Page 48-50	Essential	*				Pricing is included in the Seaview Cemetery SW corner expansion costing
Introduce public education initiative regarding grave adornments	Pages 55 & 64	Essential	*				Internal project
Pursue a comprehensive financial plan and business case analysis	Pages 61,63,64	Essential		*			\$25,000
Recruit and train assistant for admin support	Page 64	Non-Essential		*			Internal Project
Identify private room in SCRD's facilities for meetings with bereaved families	Page 57	Non-Essential		*			Internal Project
Increase utilizations of Stone Orchard Software	Page 64	Non-Essential		*			Internal Project
Undertake analysis of whether it is more cost-effective for SCRD to assign its operations staff to undertake 100% of the tasks in the current General Services Agreement- before renewing the Contractor's agreement in 2023	Page 64	Non-Essential	*				Internal Project
Develop a landscape management strategy for all cemeteries	Page 36	Non-Essential		*			\$20,000
Develop a cemetery sales and marketing plan (after SCRD develops more inventory to sell)	Page 64	Non-Essential		*			\$15,000
Compile a Standard Operating Procedures manual for all cemeteries	Page 64	Non-Essential		*			\$25,000
Begin implementation of overall wayfinding access and circulation strategy for all cemeteries	Page 37 & 44	Non-Essential		*			Internal Project

Seaview Cemetery Recommendations Implementation Plan

The table below highlights key Seaview Cemetery recommendations and their priority level.

Seaview Cemetery Recommendations							
Recommendation	Page Number	Essential/ Non-Essential	Immediate 0-2 Years	Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 Years	Long Term 10+ Years	Recommended Budget Allowance
Design and develop infill areas A, B, and C, as well as cremation garden expansion	Page 35	Essential	*				\$20,500
Design and develop the expansion of the cremation garden	Page 35	Essential	*				\$680,000
Undertake the design and development of Seaview Southwest burial expansion area	Page 30	Essential		*			\$2,800,000
Assess and implement creek storm water management recommendations to protect Seaview Cemetery from erosion	Page 36	Essential		*			\$250,000
Work with MOTI to ensure they address storm water from the highway damaging Seaview cemetery	Page 36	Essential		*			Internal Project
Implement cemetery boundary fencing and buffer planting at Seaview Cemetery	Page 36	Non-Essential			*		\$150,000

Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Recommendations Implementation Plan

The table below highlights key Elphinstone Cemetery recommendations and their priority level.

Elphinstone Cemetery Recommendations							
Recommendation	Page Number	Essential/ Non-Essential	Immediate 0-2 Years	Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 Years	Long Term 10+ Years	Recommended Budget Allowance
Conduct feasibility study to confirm ground conditions are suitable for proposed interment and memorialization options	Page 39	Essential	*				\$50,000
Implement Elphinstone burial expansion	Page 42	Essential			*		\$700,000
Repair and improve Elphinstone Pioneer cemetery section	Page 41	Non-Essential			*		\$150,000

Total Recommended Budget Allowances

The table below sets out the sub-totals and total Recommended Budget Allowances:

Recommendation	Immediate 0-2 years	Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 years	Long Term 10+ years	Subtotal
Land Acquisition and Phase 1 Cemetery Development	\$4,000,000	\$2,000,000			\$6,000,000
Operations Recommendations - Essential	\$7,500	\$25,000			\$32,500
Operations Recommendations - Non-Essential		\$60,000			\$60,00
Seaview Cemetery Recommendations - Essential	\$700,500	\$3,050,000			\$3,750,500
Seaview Cemetery Recommendations - Non-Essential			\$150,000		\$150,000
Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Recommendations - Essential	\$50,000		\$700,000		\$750,000
Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery Recommendations- Non-Essential			\$150,000		\$150,000
Subtotal	\$4,758,000	\$5,135,000	\$1,000,000		

Summary

The high-level Recommended Budget Allowances represent a conservative estimate of the total cost of all the major capital development and consulting recommendations if they were to be fully realized over the next 25 years and beyond. These costs will be spread out over at least two 10 year capital plan cycles.

It is highly likely that each recommendation will be implemented in phases over several years if not decades. It is for Senior Leadership at the SCRD to determine the priorities and phasing strategy as part of the budget planning process to implement the recommendations in this report.

The full RBA amounts may not need to be expended. For example, if the SCRD is successful in acquiring and developing new cemetery lands, there may not be a need to develop the southwest corner of Seaview Cemetery for many decades.



Chapter 8: Conclusion

This Cemetery Master Plan provides the SCRD with a roadmap to guide cemetery policy, operations, and site development over the next 25 years. The Master Plan includes:

- An analysis of community demographics;
- An analysis of cemetery land needs;
- A review of and recommendations for cemetery products and services offered by the SCRD;
- A review of and recommendations for the financial, administrative, and operational management of the SCRD's cemetery system, and
- The creation of development plans to guide the evolution of Seaview Cemetery and Mount Elphinstone Pioneer Cemetery to serve the needs of SCRD communities in the coming years.

The master planning process engaged a spectrum of stakeholders including key SCRD staff. The Master Plan has been built on financial analysis as well as a rigorous review of demographic and industry trends and projections.

This master plan report represents a suite of information and recommendations that, in combination, equips the SCRD with a roadmap for cemetery development. This ensures that there will be appropriate inventory and cemetery services available to serve the needs of SCRD community members in the coming years, as well as to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the cemetery system as a whole.

Appendices

Appendix A - Green Burial Certification Process

The Canadian-based Green Burial Society of Canada (GBSC) (<http://www.greenburialcanada.ca/>) is a non-profit organization that offers a certification program to qualifying service providers and lists the Canadian cemeteries currently offering green burial.

The process to become certified by the Green Burial Society of Canada, and the related documentation required to apply for certification can be found at the GBSC website.

This process includes three steps.

1. **REVIEW** the [GBSC Approved Provider Criteria](#) to determine the appropriate category for your cemetery.
 - This document includes a Glossary of Terms to assist the SCRD choose the appropriate category;
2. **COMPLETE** the [Approved Provider Application](#).
 - Submit it to the GBSC via: gbscapplications@gmail.com , then:
3. **REVIEW** the [GBSC Statement of Ethical Practices](#).
 - Every Approved Provider is required to sign this document and post it at their cemetery office.

Appendix B - Additional Cemetery Support Services

Some of the extraordinary rates for additional support services charged by other cemeteries in British Columbia include fees for:

- Curbing;
- Discards;
- Tent rental;
- Bench permit;
- Snow removal;
- Disinterments;
- Legal inquiries;
- Administration;
- Winter services;
- Grave transfers;
- Vase installations;
- Pallbearer services;
- Marker re-leveling;
- Monument cleaning;
- Marker modification (removal or reinstall);
- Surrender and sell backs;
- Flower placement service;
- Lifting of curbing or a marker;
- Wreath refinishing handling fee;
- Concurrent service fee;
- Genealogical Information;
- Surcharge for late funerals;
- Concrete slab for lanterns;
- Grave deepening premium;
- Special order processing fee;
- Chairs and lowering device fee for graveside services;
- An additional copy of the bylaw;
- Retrieval of records from archives;
- Reservation fee for adjacent lots;
- Urgent accommodation fee for unplanned services;
- Bronze marker order/handling fee/installations;
- Handling & placing of funeral home supplied liners;
- Replacement right-of-interment certificates;
- Issuance of a Duplicate Certificate of Interment Rights, and
- Making arrangements for monuments and foundations.

In deciding which new service fees to add, it is important to consider that too many additional charges can make people feel that they are being overcharged for small tasks or standard items. This can lead to community member resentment and disengagement. In addition to considering the impact to residents, any new fees should be balanced with the anticipated resourcing and administrative cost to implement and maintain those fees.

In addition to considering the impact to residents, and new fees should be balanced with the anticipated resourcing and administrative cost to implement and maintain those fees.

SEASONAL PRICING

It is a common practice for Canadian cemeteries to charge a premium for opening and closing during the winter, particularly in regions with climates where conditions result in more labour time and effort for each interment.

This is often covered by an additional service fee for winter services or snow removal for cemetery users during the months from November to March

None of the communities in this price benchmarking study currently apply a winter premium to their cemetery services. However, there are other northern municipalities in British Columbia that do apply a premium for interment services and snow removal in the winter.

SCRD could explore introducing seasonal pricing, if staff feedback and timesheets indicate that burials and site care needs extra time, during the winter or other exceptional weather conditions.

Appendix C - Detailed Cemetery Price Benchmarking Study

Price Benchmarking - 2022 Cemetery Rates Comparison												
Item	Sunshine Coast RD Cemeteries Resident	Sunshine Coast RD Cemeteries Non-Resident	Powell River Regional Cemetery Resident	Powell River Regional Cemetery Non-Resident	Whistler Cemetery Resident	Whistler Cemetery Non-Resident	William's Lake Cemetery Resident	William's Lake Cemetery Non-Resident	Mount Garibaldi Cemetery Resident	Mount Garibaldi Cemetery Non-Resident	Average Resident	Average Non-Resident
Market Area Population - 2016 National Census	Sunshine Coast RD - 29,970		Powell River RD - 20,070		City of Whistler - 11,854		City of William's Lake - 10,753		City of Squamish - 19,512			
Right of Interment for Lots and Niches												
Interment Rights - Adult Casket Lot - MIN	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 1,100.85	\$ 2,201.69	\$ 575.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 850.00	\$ 5,400.00	\$894	\$2,363
Interment Rights - Adult Casket Lot - MAX	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,220.00	\$ 1,220.00	\$ 1,100.85	\$ 2,201.69	\$ 575.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 840.00	\$ 5,400.00	\$934	\$2,405
Interment Rights - Child Lot	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 460.00	\$ 460.00	\$ 642.16	\$ 1,284.32	\$ 350.00	\$ 450.00	\$ 550.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$501	\$824
Interment Rights - Infant Lot	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 280.00	\$ 280.00	\$ 642.16	\$ 1,284.32	\$ 350.00	\$ 450.00	\$ 275.00	\$ 550.00	\$387	\$641
Interment Rights - Cremation Lot - MIN	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 410.00	\$ 410.00	\$ 458.69	\$ 917.37	\$ 350.00	\$ 550.00	\$ 325.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$386	\$969
Interment Rights - Cremation Lot - MAX	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 410.00	\$ 410.00	\$ 458.69	\$ 917.37	\$ 350.00	\$ 550.00	\$ 325.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$386	\$969
Interment Rights - Columbaria Niche - MIN	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 445.00	\$ 445.00	\$ 917.37	\$ 1,834.74	n/a	n/a	private offering	private offering	\$681	\$1,140
Interment Rights - Columbarium Niche - MAX	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,110.00	\$ 1,110.00	\$ 917.37	\$ 1,834.74	n/a	n/a	private offering	private offering	\$1,014	\$1,472
Interment Rights - Mausolea Crypt - MIN	n/a	n/a	\$ 7,025.00	\$ 7,025.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$7,025	\$7,025
Interment Rights - Mausolea Crypt - MAX	n/a	n/a	\$ 15,570.00	\$ 15,570.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$15,570	\$15,570
Interment Rights - Green Burial - MIN	n/a	n/a	\$ 1,020.00	\$ 1,020.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$1,020	\$1,020
Interment Rights - Green Burial - MAX	n/a	n/a	\$ 1,020.00	\$ 1,020.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$1,020	\$1,020
Interment Rights - Scattering - MIN	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 119.26	\$ 238.51	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$119	\$239
Interment Rights - Scattering - MAX	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 119.26	\$ 238.51	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$119	\$239
Opening / Closing Services												
Adult Burial - Single Depth	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 995.00	\$ 995.00	\$ 2,090.20	\$ 2,090.20	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,550.00	\$ 1,550.00	\$1,284	\$1,284
Child Burial	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 635.00	\$ 635.00	\$ 1,034.52	\$ 1,034.52	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 1,440.00	\$ 1,440.00	\$840	\$840
Infant Burial	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 575.00	\$ 575.00	\$ 1,034.52	\$ 1,034.52	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,300.00	\$777	\$777
Cremated Remains Burial	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 479.86	\$ 479.86	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 385.00	\$ 385.00	\$322	\$322
Columbaria Niche Inurnment	\$ 275.00	\$ 275.00	\$ 220.00	\$ 220.00	\$ 246.99	\$ 246.99	n/a	n/a	private offering	private offering	\$233	\$233
Crypt Entombment Service	n/a	n/a	\$ 440.00	\$ 440.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$440	\$440
Disinterment - Adult Lot	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,985.00	\$ 2,985.00	\$ 4,180.40	\$ 4,180.40	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 3,100.00	\$ 3,100.00	\$2,941	\$2,941
Disinterment - Child/Infant	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,815.00	\$ 1,815.00	\$ 2,069.04	\$ 2,069.04	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 3,100.00	\$ 3,100.00	\$1,846	\$1,846
Disinterment - Cremation Lot	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 959.72	\$ 959.72	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 770.00	\$ 770.00	\$720	\$720
Disinterment - Niche	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	n/a	n/a	\$ 493.98	\$ 493.98	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$494	\$494
Memorialization + Other Fees												
Transfer License	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	n/a	n/a	\$57	\$57
Memorial Installation Fee - MIN	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 210.00	\$ 210.00	\$ 183.47	\$ 183.47	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	n/a	n/a	\$173	\$173
Memorial Installation Fee - MAX	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 740.00	\$ 740.00	\$ 183.47	\$ 183.47	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	n/a	n/a	\$349	\$349
Engraving / Inscription - MIN	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 282.27	\$ 282.27	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$341	\$341
Engraving / Inscription - MAX	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 1,205.00	\$ 1,205.00	\$ 395.18	\$ 395.18	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$800	\$800
Grave Liners + Vaults - MIN	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 640.00	\$ 640.00	\$ 33.95	\$ 33.95	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00	\$230	\$230
Grave Liners + Vaults - MAX	\$ 358.00	\$ 358.00	\$ 1,270.00	\$ 1,270.00	\$ 33.95	\$ 33.95	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 670.00	\$ 670.00	\$581	\$581
Extra Depth Surcharge - MIN	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	n/a	n/a	\$200	\$200
Extra Depth Surcharge - MAX	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	n/a	n/a	\$200	\$200
Weekend Surcharge - MIN	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00	n/a	n/a	\$353	\$353
Weekend Surcharge - MAX	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 497.50	\$ 497.50	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00	n/a	n/a	\$483	\$483
Holiday Surcharge - MIN	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00	n/a	n/a	\$453	\$453
Holiday Surcharge - MAX	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 497.50	\$ 497.50	\$ 900.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00	n/a	n/a	\$583	\$583
After Weekday Hrs Surcharge - MIN	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	n/a	n/a	\$150	\$150
After Weekday Hrs Surcharge - MAX	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	n/a	n/a	\$150	\$150

Appendix D - Precedent Case: Managing Cemetery Ornamentation in BC

SCRD is not alone in dealing with this problem. The City of Campbell River initiated a process to remove noncompliant features placed at its municipal cemetery. The City decided that the way to deal with the issue was to provide notice and a (nine month) grace period to allow people to remove all nonstandard items. The City committed to then removing all items that remained and storing them at a municipal site for pick up for an additional year. After this, the items were considered abandoned and discarded.

This initiative resulted in complaints and some angry families. The City however, decided to follow the lead of other municipal cemetery operators and simply weathered the period of discontent until people accept that the new cemetery regulations would be enforced in the future, with no exceptions.

SCRD can add new regulations to its bylaw concerning unauthorized grave adornments and adopt a similar strategy. Notice of its plan to update the cemetery bylaw – particularly concerning ornamentation could be listed on SCRD’s webpage, the local newspaper, social media sites and in a posting at Seaview Cemetery. It is very important that the timeline announced to the public be followed and that no exceptions are made. Possessions collected at the end of the grace period should be held for at least six months to allow families to reclaim them. In future, staff should be vigilant in removing all noncompliant items as soon as they appear.

The issue of, noncompliant edging, markers and grave covers may be more difficult to address due to the investment that may have been made to install these items. One approach would be for the SCRD to offer families the option of paying an annual fee to allow existing noncompliant items to remain on a year-by-year basis. Then, following a period of 5 to 10 years, the fee could be waived, and remaining installations could be allowed to remain. This would place these noncompliant features in the same category as other historic items, such as old fencing curbs and headstones that do not meet current bylaw but remain at the site and would at least allow the SCRD to collect a fee for their care and maintenance. The problem would lie in the challenge and expense of administering this strategy.

It is clear from the level of adornment at the Seaview Cemetery that families are used to this practice. In some cases, the practice may reflect dissatisfaction with the level of care being provided to their loved ones’ graves. A public education session may be needed that would clarify that families may purchase a right of interment, but do not actually own the gravesite or the niche occupied by their loved one.

Once site improvements are initiated at Seaview Cemetery, some families may appreciate that efforts are being made to improve the aesthetics and amenities of the site. Providing opportunities to contribute to the cemetery through events may also help people engage more appropriately with their cemetery.

Appendix E - Example: Standard operating Procedures Manual, Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Administrative Procedures..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 1.1 Sales Procedures – With Family Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 1.2 Sales Procedures – With Funeral Home Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 1.3 Interment Order Form – Liaison with Engineering and Public Works..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 1.4 Administrative Procedures for Record-Keeping..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 2 Field Work Operations Procedures Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.1 Interment Checklist..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.2 Casket Burial Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.2.1 Pre-dig checklist for casket burials Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.2.2 Digging the grave for casket Interments..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.2.3 Setting up for graveside funeral service for casket interments..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.2.4 Closing the grave for casket interments Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.2.5 Restoring the grave Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.3 Cremation Burial Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.3.1 Pre-dig checklist for cremation burial..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.3.2 Digging a grave for cremation interment in a cremation plot..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.3.3 Digging a grave for cremation interment in a casket plot..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.3.4 Setting up for graveside funeral service Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.3.5 Closing the grave Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 2.3.6 Restoring the grave Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 3 Monuments and Memorials Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 4 Regular Cemetery Maintenance Procedures..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 4.1 Softscape Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 4.1.1 Lawns..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 4.1.2 Trees and Shrubs Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 4.2 Hardscape..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 4.3 Snow Management Error! Bookmark not defined.
 - 4.4 Maintenance and Administrative Procedures Error! Bookmark not defined.

Appendix A – Organizational Chart

Appendix B – Cemetery Site Plans

Appendix C – Sample Interment Right Contract

Appendix F - Introduction To Cemetery Bylaws

PURPOSE OF EFFECTIVE CEMETERY BYLAWS

The effective management, operation, and maintenance of modern, sustainable cemetery services are founded on an effective and enforceable bylaw. The cemetery bylaw, whether used by the cemetery operator, a client family, cemetery visitors, or an outside service provider, should be easy to understand, apply and enforce.

A good cemetery bylaw will be used to guide the cemetery operator's actions in the operation and maintenance of a cemetery (or cemeteries) under their ownership or control. By clearly setting out rights, rules, and regulations of a cemetery, the operator can mitigate their exposure to potential problems, conflicts, disagreements, or exposure to litigation. A strong¹⁸ cemetery bylaw is an essential tool in organizational risk management.

The cemetery bylaw can also be viewed as a 'legacy statement' as the bylaw is the 'starting point' from which operating policies and procedures are established to guide the long-term, day-to-day administration, provision of service, and maintenance in the cemetery. Given the long-term, successional 'life' of a cemetery, these are essential tools as responsibility transfers over the years to newer generations of management and staff.

A comprehensive, up-to-date, cemetery bylaw applied and enforced consistently will demonstrate to every cemetery user that the cemetery is being operated under standards of best practice, is applied equitably to all users, and ensures the cemetery is operated and maintained to a high standard of professional service and aesthetic appearance.

A strong cemetery bylaw is the foundation upon which the professional management and provision of service in a cemetery are made possible.

BYLAW AS RISK MANAGEMENT

Resolving a simple complaint, satisfying a Provincial inspector, or, in the worst case, dealing with legal action against the SCRD. A legal resolution will, first and foremost, be based upon an examination of "What does the bylaw say?" If a cemetery bylaw can be shown to be outdated, ambiguous, inconsistent with legislation, or 'silent' on critical cemetery management, operation, and maintenance matters, then this lack of a 'strong' bylaw may expose the cemetery and the SCRD to considerable legal risk and imposed financial settlements.

¹⁸ "Strong" is commonly used to describe legal or quasi-legal documents. Describing a document as 'strong' indicates a standard of writing is used that incorporates key criteria like directness, plain words, readability, good structure, relevance, tone, etc.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The municipal cemetery operator has three key areas of accountability in the operation of cemeteries under their control, in equal measure, the municipality is directly answerable to the:

- **Cemetery Users** - The bereaved client families to which cemetery goods, services, and facilities are provided;
- **Municipal Taxpayers** – These are the community's residents, represented by the municipal mayor, Council and/or Elected Boards, through whom the community's assets are protected and ensured to be operationally sound, environmentally sustainable, and professional fiscal management are always followed, and
- **Provincial Regulators** – These are the legislative representatives, who through their oversight work to ensure cemeteries are operated in accordance with the law (including both the Act and the Regulations) and a transparent and equitable manner, with a special focus on consumer protection.

British Columbia has some of the most comprehensive and extensive legislation and regulation governing the bereavement care sector (cemeteries, crematoria, funeral service, transfer services, pre-sales, etc.) in North America. The primary documents containing legislative language and regulations governing cemeteries in the Province of British Columbia is:

- **Cemetery and Funeral Services Act¹⁹, ' (the Act), and the**
- **Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Regulation. ²⁰**

In addition to these key documents related to the ownership, management, and operation of cemeteries some secondary acts and regulations can have a bearing on cemetery management and operation, including (but not limited to) those covering business administration, consumer protection, personal representatives and executors, workplace safety, etc.

Every cemetery operator, including SCRD's Elected Board, needs to ensure they are operating within the most current law (including the Act, the Regulations, and its most recent amendments) and that key cemetery management and operational personnel understand and have a working knowledge of the legislation and regulations governing cemeteries under their purview.

¹⁹ **Cemetery and Funeral Services Act**
https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/consol2/consol2/96045_01

²⁰ **Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Regulation -**
https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/298_2004

Appendix G - Glossary of Terms

Definitions Source: Adapted from various sources by LEES+Associates.

AT-NEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the time of, or immediately following death. ▪ Usually refers to the time of purchase of funeral or cemetery services. 	CEMETERY SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The disposition of human remains by interment or cremation and includes the supply of goods incidental to the provision of such service but does not include the sale of lots.
BOOK OF MEMORIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plaque with a list of names of the deceased who typically are in areas not readily accessible. ▪ A type of memorial monument. 	COLUMBARIUM (plural: COLUMBARIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A structure, building, an area in a structure or building that contains, as an integral part of the structure or building or as a freestanding section, niches for the inurnment of cremated remains. ▪ Can be “Individual,” “Family” or “Community,” based on the number of niches, and how they are sold.
BURIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One form of interment. ▪ The placement of human or cremated remains in a grave. 	COMMEMORATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A ceremony, service, or symbol of memory for a person/people, or event.
BURIAL LINER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Like a burial vault, however, unlike a vault, it only covers the top and sides of the casket 	COMMINGLING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The mixing of the cremated remains of more than one deceased person.
BURIAL PERMIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A legal document issued by a regulatory authority authorizing the final disposition of human remains. 	CONTAINER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A self-contained receptacle or enclosure other than a casket, made of rigid cardboard, pressed wood, or other similar material that is of sufficient strength to hold and conveniently transport human remains but does not include a metal or fiberglass casket, receptacle, or enclosure made of plastic or a similar substance, or a pouch or bag.
BURIAL VAULT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A protective, sealable outer receptacle, into which a casket or urn is placed, and is designed to restrict the entrance of gravesite elements into the casket or urn. 	CREMATED REMAINS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The human bone fragments that remain after a cremation, including the residue of any other materials cremated with the human remains.
BYLAWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The written regulations, rules, or laws governing the organization, management, and operation of a cemetery, mausoleum, columbarium, or crematorium. 	CREMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The irreversible reduction of human remains to bone fragments through the application of flame and intense heat; in some jurisdictions, this may include the repositioning or movement of the body during the process to complete the cremation; and the manual or mechanical reduction of the bone fragments after removal from the cremation chamber.
CAPASCRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The maximum amount of cemetery inventory that a site can potentially contain, as defined by its geographic limits after all unused land is fully developed. 	CREMATION LOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A space used or intended to be used, specifically for the interment of cremated remains. Typically, it is smaller than a full-sized lot.
CARE AND MAINTENANCE FUND (also known as PERPETUAL CARE FUND or CARE FUND)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An irrevocable trust fund established, held, and administered in accordance with applicable law, with the income from the fund to be used for the upkeep and repair of a cemetery, mausoleum, or columbarium. 	CREMATORIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The building or part of a building that is fitted with approved appliances for the cremation of human remains and includes everything incidental or ancillary to it.
CASKET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A rigid container usually constructed of wood, metal, or similar material, ornamented and lined with fabric, designed for the encasement of human remains. 		
CASKET ENTOMBMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When a casket is interred in a mausoleum. 		

CREMORIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A memorial property or columbarium niche that contains cremated remains. 	GRAVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One kind of lot. ▪ A portion of ground in a cemetery, used or intended to be used, for the burial of human remains or cremated remains.
CRIB GRAVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A grave lot surrounded by a small picket fence. 	GRAVE LINER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A fiberglass or concrete structure that is installed over a casket once it has been placed in the grave.
CRYPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One kind of lot. ▪ Typically, a space in a mausoleum that is used or intended to be used for the entombment of human remains. 	GRAVE MARKER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be in-ground (flat) or upright.
DEATH CERTIFICATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A legal document certifying the vital statistics pertaining to the life and death of a deceased person. 	GREEN BURIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A more environmentally conscious alternative to “traditional burial.” Typically includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. no embalming; b. burial directly in the ground, without a grave liner or vault; c. a fully biodegradable burial container (casket or shroud); d. interment sites planted with indigenous ground cover, and e. no individual grave markers.
DIRECT (or IMMEDIATE) DISPOSITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The final disposition of human remains without any formal viewing or visitation, ritual, rite, service, or ceremony. 	INTERMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disposition by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. burial of human remains or cremated remains in a grave; g. entombment of human remains in a mausoleum, crypt, or; h. inurnment of cremated remains in a columbarium niche.
DISINTERMENT (also known as EXHUMATION)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The removal of human remains, along with the casket or container or any remaining portion of the casket or container holding the remains, from the lot in which the remains had been interred. 	INVENTORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Represents the total amount of currently developed and installed interment spaces available for sale, including grave lots, crypts, and columbaria niches.
DOUBLE DEPTH LOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A lot dug at extra depth at the time of the interment of the first casket to allow for the accommodation of a second interment at regular depth. 	INTERMENT RIGHTS HOLDER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Also known as a “lot holder” in other parts of Canada, this is the person in whose name the right of interment in a lot is registered in the records of a cemetery and, where the interment has taken place, includes the person who has legally acquired ancillary rights to the lot.
EASEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The right acquired, whether or not supported by a certificate, to interment in a lot. 	INURNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One form of cremated remains interment. ▪ The process of placing cremated remains in a receptacle including, but not limited to, an urn and placing the urn into a niche.
ENTOMBMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One form of interment. ▪ The placement of human remains in a mausoleum crypt. 	LAWN CRYPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A concrete or other durable and rigid outer receptacle that is installed in a grave before burial.
FAMILY COLUMBARIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See columbarium 		
FAMILY ESTATE LOTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A family estate lot contains 6-12 lots together. 		
FAMILY VESSEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A large urn for several cremated remains. Remains may be comingled or may be contained in smaller, individual urns, held within the larger vessel. 		
FLAT MARKER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A grave marker that is set flush with the ground. 		
FUNERAL SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The arrangements, care, and preparation of human remains for interment, cremation, or other disposition and includes the supply of goods incidental to the arrangements, care, and preparation, but does not include the sale of lots. 		

LEVEL OF SERVICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of service refers to the degree of investment an operator gives to its cemetery’s site care, asset maintenance, and other key processes that support its operations, as well as the extent of interment and memorialization services provided. The level of service is measured on a scale of Basic (Legislative Minimum), Average (Common Practice), and Optimal (Best Practice). 	OSSUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A vessel for the interment of two or more cremated remains. ▪ Typically, the cremated remains are commingled.
LOT HOLDER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Also known as the “interment rights holder” in Ontario, this is the person in whose name the right of interment in a lot is registered in the records of a cemetery and, where the interment has taken place, includes the person who has legally acquired ancillary rights to the lot. 	OUTER CONTAINER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A receptacle, which is designed for placement in a lot to accept the placement of a casket or urn.
MAINTENANCE FUND (also known as CARE FUND or PERPETUAL CARE FUND)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A fund established for the upkeep and repair of a cemetery, mausoleum, or columbarium. 	PERPETUAL CARE FUND (also known as CARE FUND or MAINTENANCE FUND)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An irrevocable trust fund established, held, and administered in accordance with applicable law, with the income from the fund to be used for the upkeep and repair of a cemetery, mausoleum, or columbarium.
MAUSOLEUM (plural: MAUSOLEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A structure or building that contains interior or exterior crypts designed for the entombment of human remains. 	PRE-NEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any time before death. ▪ Usually refers to the time of purchase of funeral or cemetery services. ▪ “Pre-need planning” refers to the process of making arrangements and/or entering into contracts regarding future cemetery services for one or more persons who are still alive at the time.
MAUSOLEUM CRYPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A chamber of a mausoleum of sufficient size for the entombment of human remains. 	REGISTRAR (Consumer Protection BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The person at Consumer Protection BC responsible for the administration and enforcement of applicable laws and regulations relating to cemetery and funeral services.
MEMORIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A product, meeting the bylaw standard of a cemetery, used, or intended to be used to identify a lot or to memorialize a deceased person interred or to be interred in a lot, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a marker, headstone, tombstone monument, plaque, tablet, or plate on a lot; or b. a tablet inscription, lettering or ornamentation on a crypt or niche front, or c. a tree, boulder, or other feature so identified; ▪ A ceremony, rite, or ritual commemorating the life of a deceased individual without the human remains present. 	SCATTERING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The irreversible dispersal of cremated remains over land or water or commingling in a defined area in a cemetery.
NICHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One kind of lot. ▪ A space, usually within a columbarium, for placing a receptacle containing cremated remains. 	SCATTERING GARDEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An area within a cemetery, usually providing an attractive natural or ornamental setting, dedicated to the scattering of cremated remains.
		UPRIGHT MARKER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A grave marker that is not flush with the ground is mounted on a footing and intended to be visible over the surrounding finished grade.
		URN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A receptacle for holding cremated remains.

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