

Report

Date January 15, 2025

File:

Subject Mountain View Cemetery Services Plan Update

PURPOSE

To provide Council with updated recommendations that address long-term expansion plans for the Mountain View Cemetery.

BACKGROUND

At the September 10, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting, the Mountain View Cemetery Services Plan (Attachment 1) was presented to Council for consideration and feedback. In the presentation to the Council, staff recommended the creation of a capital reserve fund at a rate of \$184,047 per year for the next 10 years to account for future expansion and that Council select concept plan #1 for the preferred build-out design. Dialogue and discussion ensued with concerns related to future expansion costs/plans as well as the need for environmentally friendly burial services. Recognizing immediate municipal budget pressures, Council referred the Cemetery Services Plan back to staff to consider alternative options to delay the implementation of the capital reserve fund until 2026, and that future concept design plans consider environmentally friendly interment options.

DISCUSSION

The Mountain View Cemetery Services Plan is a comprehensive document intended to guide the delivery of interment services over the next thirty years. Through the research and public engagement process, Urban Systems developed two different cemetery expansion concept plans that echoed their findings while also addressing the future expansion needs of the cemetery within the next 10-12 years.

In consideration of Council's concerns, staff have identified alternative options for Council's consideration. With respect to the deferral of reserve fund development to 2026, staff can accommodate that request as there is flexibility in the plan to delay by one year without significantly impacting project implementation. However, through parallel discussions related to updating the municipal Development Cost Charge (DCC) bylaw, staff have confirmed through the DCC consultant that the cemetery expansion project would qualify as an approved community project through this bylaw. This means that 90% (\$1,654,662) of construction costs for expansion would be captured through this bylaw, leaving North Cowichan to cover the remaining 10% (\$202,422). Council could direct staff to reduce the capital reserve contributions to \$20,242 per year for the next 10 years or consider a budget submission of \$202,422 to be included in future capital planning as the project construction nears, likely in 2035.

Acknowledging Council's concern for incorporating environmentally friendly burial services into the future site design, staff will ensure that these are considered as part of the final design once the project nears the detailed design phase. As the detailed design phase of the future cemetery expansion site isn't required for another 8-10 years, Council does not need to make an immediate decision about future services or site design. Between now and then, staff will continue to monitor cemetery industry trends annually and will report back to Council as the project proceeds and nears closer towards a detailed design phase.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council,
 - a. Adopt the Mountain View Cemetery Services Plan as attached to the January 15, 2025, report from the Director of Parks and Recreation;
 - b. Direct staff to begin infill construction for 2025 as part of the approved capital plan and build future phases into the 5-year capital planning process;
 - c. Refer the long-term cemetery site expansion to the DCC bylaw update process;
 - d. Direct staff to include environmentally friendly interment options to the future expansion plans as it nears the detailed design stage; and,
 - e. Direct staff to create a cemetery capital reserve fund at a rate of \$20,242 per year as part of the 2026 business planning process.
2. **(Alternative Option)** THAT Council,
 - a. Adopt the Mountain View Cemetery Services Plan as attached to the January 15, 2025, report from the Director of Parks and Recreation;
 - b. Direct staff to begin infill construction for 2025 as part of the approved capital plan and build future phases into the 5-year capital planning process;
 - c. Direct staff to include environmentally friendly interment options to the future expansion plans as it nears the detailed design stage; and,
 - d. Direct staff to create a cemetery capital reserve fund at a rate of \$184,047 per year as part of the 2026 business planning process.
3. **(Alternative Option)** THAT Council
 - a. Direct staff to explore other options.

IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report. North Cowichan's current Five-Year Financial Plan allocates \$75,000 in 2024 and 2028 to initiate some of the recommendations for future cemetery development and expansion unless otherwise directed by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council,

- a. Adopt the Mountain View Cemetery Services Plan as attached to the January 15, 2025, report from the Director of Parks and Recreation;
- b. Direct staff to begin infill construction for 2025 as part of the approved capital plan and build future phases into the 5-year capital planning process;
- c. Refer the long-term cemetery site expansion to the DCC bylaw update process;
- d. Direct staff to include environmentally friendly interment options to the future expansion plans as it nears the detailed design stage; and,
- e. Direct staff to create a cemetery capital reserve fund at a rate of \$20,242 per year as part of the 2026 business planning process.

Report prepared by:



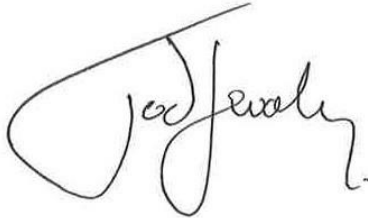
Neil Pukesh
Director, Parks and Recreation

Report reviewed by:



George Farkas
General Manager, Planning, Development and
Community Services

Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment:

- (1) Mountain View Cemetery Services Plan