

Cemetery Master Plan – Additional Background & Recommendations

Reconciliation and Serving Indigenous Community Members

Address Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action Number 57, regarding Professional Development and Training for Public Servants, and Call to Action Number 79, regarding history and heritage Commemoration, as they apply to the City of Saskatoon’s cemeteries. The TRC Calls to Action urge all levels of government and organizations to understand and end harmful colonial practices and their affects on Indigenous peoples. These Calls to Action also advocate for changing policy and programs to improve relationships with Indigenous Peoples and repair the harm of colonial practices.

- Develop a community outreach framework with the perspective of long-term relationship building and collaboration with Indigenous community partners regarding addressing Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action Numbers 57 and 79:
 - TRC Call to Action No. 57, Professional Development and Training for Public Servants:

“We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.”

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Calls to Action, 2015.
 - TRC Call to Action No. 79, Commemoration:

“We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to: i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat; ii. Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada’s national heritage and history; and iii. Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada’s history.”

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Calls to Action, 2015

The Next of Kin Memorial Avenue

The Next of Kin Memorial Avenue is recognized by the City of Saskatoon (City) as a valuable and symbolic Historic Site, and is also classified as a National Historic Site by Parks Canada, as it is one of the last such intact memorials in Canada. Its sentimental and heritage value to many stakeholder groups within the community and the nation cannot be overstated, and there is a clear need to protect its integrity into the future for posterity.

- Next of Kin Memorial Avenue was originally envisioned to connect to downtown through 3rd Avenue North. There is an opportunity to reinforce the link to Woodlawn Cemetery through landscape treatment and street-design elements along this route. Discussion with various City departments, including Planning and Development, will be required to determine the feasibility of this opportunity.
- Woodlawn Cemetery has a long-standing tradition, of Veteran commemoration through a Memorial Tree Plaque Program, and the naming of cemetery roadways to memorialize military battles, ships, and notable personnel serving in national war efforts, that has significantly contributed to the character and cultural significance of Woodlawn Cemetery.
- Many plaque stands are in disrepair and deteriorating and will need to be replaced soon. There is opportunity for partnership with the Heritage coordinator in pursuing funding to assist in the maintenance of the plaques and stands. Funding may also be available for a project for streamlining the plaque dedication records system and making it searchable and geo-navigable online.
- Trees throughout the Cemetery have grown into their plaque stands, and stands have had to be cut-out of the base of trunks as they were killing the trees. The Cemetery has been replacing the tree stands as funds have come available; however, there is currently another 400 tree plaques that require tree stands.
- The Avenue paving will require pavement renewal/upgrading in the near future (Roadways, Fleet and Support Department responsibility).
- The Avenue's stately mature elms comprise a significant symbolic impression on entry and procession to the Cemetery and are worthy of a priority maintenance regime to ensure the health and longevity of these trees. The Cemetery replaces Memorial Avenue elms should they die; however, the trees are vulnerable to Dutch Elm disease.
- As a living memorial recognized as a Historic Site with local and national value, it is recommended that the City undertake collaborative efforts between departments and partnering organizations, such as the Heritage Society, in maintaining the site. Alternative funding, such as grants, may be available for heritage preservation and should be sourced where possible.

- Develop a Wayfinding Strategy and implement a range of information, historic interpretation, and directional signage, including repair and replacement of memorial plaques along Next of Kin Memorial Avenue.

Heritage, Memorial Tree and Road Signage

Due to ongoing maintenance concerns, the heritage signage for the roads of remembrance in the cemetery have been discontinued, putting this heritage feature at risk for being lost within community memory. Lack of road signage also complicates navigation of the site.

Nearly 1,400 memorial trees have been dedicated, each to a particular individual with a bronze plaque placed on an iron “guard” or stand in front of the tree. One challenge of the Memorial Tree Plaque Program is that no fees are collected in consideration of the future maintenance of the memorial trees, their replacement should they die, or for the repair or replacement of memorial plaques and stands. There is a possibility to establish a memorial forest maintenance and development fund for the maintenance of dedicated trees, replacement of dead trees and deteriorated or missing plaques and stands. Future pricing of memorial tree sales should include contributions to such a fund as a way to sustain this valued community feature into the future. In developing interpretation, there may be possibilities to pursue grant funding along with strategic partnerships, with organizations, such as local Legion groups, the Saskatoon Heritage Society or Parks Canada who monitors and promotes designated National Historic Sites.

Record keeping and tracking of markers to trees and their locations has also been a challenge for staff. The system comprises of a hard-copy record book and maps, which is difficult to search and navigate in maintaining the memorial tree signage and locating a particular dedication for family members. There is opportunity to ease the difficulty of the navigation of this system and provide public access to these records online by entering this data into the mapping and recording keeping system of Stone Orchard. This system is already used by staff to track and share grave site records.

- Develop an interpretive framework, maintenance and replacement strategy for historic signage of memorial trees and roads at Woodlawn Cemetery. Explore partnerships for the maintenance, promotion and interpretation of heritage site features, such as memorial tree and road signage.
- Integrate the Memorial Tree Plaque program into Stone Orchard to improve the record keeping and tree mapping system, improve public access to record information, and ease pressure from staff in addressing informational inquiries. City Administration to consider coordinating and collaborating with community, Culture and Heritage in pursuing funding opportunities for this work.
- Establish a memorial forest maintenance and development fund (for maintenance of trees, replacement of dead trees and deteriorated/missing plaques and stands).

Wayfinding and Directional Signage

Due to Woodlawn Cemetery's unique layout and tricky site access points, wayfinding around the site can be challenging for first time visitors who do not use or have access to maps on their smart devices. The cemetery has maps available online for download and printing, but these can be challenging to use as the maps do not always correlate with information on site, such as the lack of signage identifying heritage names of cemetery roadways. It is especially difficult for visitors to find their way to the administration building to access cemetery services, as there is no direct route to the building. A wayfinding and signage strategy is needed for Woodlawn Cemetery, which should include the signage identifying heritage cemetery driveway names.

- Develop and implement a wayfinding and directional signage strategy, inclusive of online and print resources (online maps/apps), as well as on-site signage (e.g. wayfinding kiosk), to help visitors orientate and navigate the site.

Field of Honour

Currently, the Woodlawn Cemetery Field of Honour sections are open to serving Veteran members of the Canadian Armed Forces, allied Veterans of WWII and the Korean War, and serving or past members of the RCMP. Members of the Saskatoon Police Service killed in the line of duty are also able to inter in the Field of Honour. In all cases of those eligible, the spouse of the deceased person is also able to inter in the Field of Honour plot. In recognition of the risks and sacrifice made in serving the community, there is a desire to extend the right to burial in the Field of Honour to first responders, such as Fire Fighters and Paramedics, as well as their spouses.

- There are many Indigenous Veterans, and their service is held in high regard by their families and communities. There is opportunity to build greater public awareness and recognition of Métis and First Nation Veterans in the Cemetery, for example:
 - The plaza surrounding Soldiers' Cairn is an important and treasured venue for Veterans and Legion organizations for its role in the Decoration Day ceremonies. Include the Treaty 6 and Métis nation flags next to the Saskatchewan and Canada flags in the plaza space as a sign of recognition of Indigenous contributions to Canada's War efforts. This initiative is of high priority to Métis community members. Community members are prepared to meet on this initiative.
 - Indigenous Veterans Day takes place on November 8th, and there may be opportunity to celebrate and honour Indigenous Veterans at the Cemetery.
 - Opportunity to extend invitation to Indigenous Veterans' group, and Saskatchewan First Nations Veterans' Association (SNFVA), to collaborate in Decoration Day programming.
- A new Field of Honour is proposed in section 92A of the undeveloped lands. It is centred on the alignment with the existing Field of Honour adjacent to the south. This new Field of Honour will provide approximately 25 years of additional burial

capacity, as well as provide cremation interment options in this space. With the current capacity of 50-55 years, this new Field of Honour will ensure Woodlawn Cemetery will retain its central role as the civic home for military and protective services burial and commemoration in Saskatoon over the next 75 years.

Community Awareness

Promoting existing events hosted, within Woodlawn Cemetery, by the City and the Saskatoon Heritage Society, as well as efforts underway in creating a self-guided historical tour available online, are all great opportunities to spread awareness and connect residents to the Cemetery. Opportunities for new events could include working with local theatre groups to host dramatic productions within the Cemetery, or passive recreational activities, such as photography and bird watching.

Events that connect the community in remembrance of their loved one, are especially meaningful ways to create community connections and relevancy, such as the festival of memorial installations at Night for All Souls held annually in Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver, British Columbia, or the memorial Ice Candles lighting up the Lake of the Woods Cemetery during the Festival of Lights in Kenora, Ontario. There are many opportunities to partner with local groups that have expressed interest in promoting the Cemetery, such as the Saskatoon Branch of the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society and Saskatoon's Heritage Society in bringing such events to Saskatoon residents. Promoting and facilitating such ways of connecting the community to the Cemetery is recommended as a genuine, meaningful and successful method to uplifting the profile of Woodlawn Cemetery within the community.

- Undertake the development of a marketing strategy and community engagement plan to increase community awareness of Woodlawn Cemetery, its unique character and features, as well as services it provides to residents.
- Celebrate local community culture, history and heritage through:
 - Promoting events held in the Cemetery, such as the Shared Garden Ceremony
 - Promoting the Decoration Day event and educate the public on the history and significance of the Next of Kin Memorial Avenue
 - Promoting the history and significance of the Nutana Pioneer Cemetery site
 - Promoting resources for historic and heritage information related to the Cemetery (such as Saskatoon Heritage Society Tours and the self-guided tour currently under development)
- Work with Indigenous community partners in developing a historical and heritage Interpretive framework.
- Investigate potential partnerships (such as with the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society — Saskatoon Branch, Saskatoon Heritage Society, and Parks Canada), as well as grant and funding programs to assist the City Cemetery Program in community outreach initiatives.

Nutana Pioneer Cemetery

Nutana Pioneer Cemetery is an inactive cemetery under the care of the City. The site is designated as a Municipal Heritage Property by the City, and afforded protection under *The Heritage Properties Act*. This status is also recognized nationally as a Municipal Heritage Site by Parks Canada, and it is recommended that maintenance, repairs or any proposed improvements respect the heritage values of this site.

- Create a simple entry feature identifying and celebrating Nutana Pioneer Cemetery as a sacred space.
- Develop a restoration strategy for key historic headstones as part of the historic interpretation of the site.
- Maintain and enhance Nutana Pioneer Cemetery as a cultural landscape to commemorate local heritage and provide a place for passive recreation and quiet reflection.
- Do not reactivate for burial purposes.
- Replace the existing plaque commemorating the establishment of Nutana Pioneer Cemetery with correct information, and develop historic interpretation information to convey the cultural and historic significance of Nutana Pioneer Cemetery that includes Indigenous history as a foundational element.
- Develop event programming celebrating the cultural and historic significance of the Cemetery.
- Map the position of graves in Geographic Information System (GIS) software and link them to the names already logged in the Cemetery Records data base. This will enable the public to search the records and locate the position of graves via their smart devices for family or general genealogical interest.
- Register Nutana Pioneer Cemetery with the Cemetery Regulator (the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan (FCAA)).
- Address vandalism of Nutana Pioneer Cemetery through community education and consider the installation of security cameras.