

Community Cemetery Assessment Phase 3 Report**Report Purpose**

To provide an update on the Community Cemetery Assessment for Phase 3 and determine next steps.

Recommendation

N/A

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 2 - Healthy and Safe Community

Goal 4 - Municipal Excellence

Goal 2 Priority - A diverse, welcoming, inclusive, and an accessible community for all

Goal 4 Priority - Optimal use of resources that meets the community's needs

ReportBackground

In 2018, Council initiated an external review and report on the viability and desirability of a community cemetery in Strathcona County. Urban Systems was procured in early 2019 as the consultant to lead a cemetery assessment on behalf of the County.

The Community Cemetery Assessment was designed with four distinct phases, three of which are completed and the last one pending approval from Council to move forward. The phases included:

- Phase 1: Assessment of cemetery needs (completed in 2020)
- Phase 2: Review of the current market, the potential services and form of a new community cemetery (completed in 2020)
- Phase 3: Analysis of financial feasibility and operational structure (completed in 2022)
- Phase 4: Evaluation of potential sites (pending Council direction)

Phases 1 and 2 were completed in 2020 and key findings were that the existing cemeteries in Strathcona County have the capacity to meet demand for the next 30 years and there are opportunities to improve awareness and accessibility.

Project findings

In the spring of 2022, the County initiated work on Phase 3 of this project to conduct a financial feasibility and funding analysis of the scenarios. In addition, options for existing rural and faith-based cemeteries were explored. Analysis was completed on the three scenarios identified below; financial analysis reflects 30 years of construction and operation.

Scenario 1 – Develop a full-service community cemetery

- Scenario 1 would provide an exclusive new cemetery for County residents, but at the highest cost, and is dependent on finding a suitable site ideally close to Sherwood Park.

Revenues	Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Surplus/Deficit w/o Capital Expenditures	Surplus/Deficit w/ Capital Expenditures
\$13.3M	\$12.7M	\$6.7M	\$0.6 M	-\$6.1M

Scenario 2 - Partner with one or more existing cemeteries to offer limited cemetery services

- Scenario 2 would provide opportunities to leverage existing cemeteries, but the quality of the cemetery experience may be compromised, and the cost could still be significant

Revenues	Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Surplus/Deficit w/o Capital Expenditures	Surplus/Deficit w/ Capital Expenditures
\$2.2M	\$4.2M	\$0.7M	-\$2.0M	-\$2.7M

Scenario 3 – Enhance cemetery services through the supporting actions identified below:

- Supporting Action 1 - Publicize opportunities and services at existing cemeteries
- Supporting Action 2 - Designate a location on public land for scattering in the County
- Supporting Action 3 - Connect rural and historic cemeteries with local supports

Scenario 3 provides opportunities to support existing cemeteries, but the County would have limited control over cemetery services and experiences. One or more of the supporting actions could be implemented along with any of the scenarios. Costs to pursue Scenario 3 would include staff time and marketing costs.

Next Steps

Should Council decide to proceed with the cemetery project, they would select a preferred scenario and supporting actions, if any. Selecting scenarios 1 and 2 would require a Phase 4 of the project, while selecting scenario 3 would not require Phase 4 and could be completed within existing budget by County administration.

Administration does not recommend proceeding with the cemetery project at this time, and will not proceed unless alternate direction is provided by Council.

Council and Committee History

January 21, 2020, Council received the results of Phase 1 and 2 of the Cemetery Needs Assessment and approved *THAT Administration include funding up to \$60,000 in the 2021 budget process for Phase 3 of the Community Cemetery Project*. This funding was deferred until 2022 and \$20,000 was budgeted to fund Phase 4 of the project, pending Council's approval to proceed with Phase 4.

July 16, 2019	Administration presented to Priorities Committee on the status of the Community Cemetery Assessment and introduced the successful proponent, Urban Systems.
July 3, 2018	Council approved <i>THAT the 2019 budget include funds, up to \$60,000, to support an external review and report on the viability and desirability of a community cemetery in Strathcona County; and that this report be provided to Council for consideration by the end of 2019.</i>
September 12, 2017	Council approved <i>THAT an expenditure of \$16,500 from Council Priority Funds be provided to BOSS for costs associated with pursuing professional exploration of the cemetery needs of Strathcona County residents and developing a plan to service those needs.</i>

Other Impacts**Policy:** n/a**Legislative/Legal:** n/a**Financial/Budget:** Should Council not proceed with Phase 4 of the project, the \$20,000 currently allocated in the 2022 budget for Phase 4 will no longer be required.**Interdepartmental:** Recreation, Parks and Culture, Planning and Development Services**Master Plan/Framework:** Social Framework**Enclosures**

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