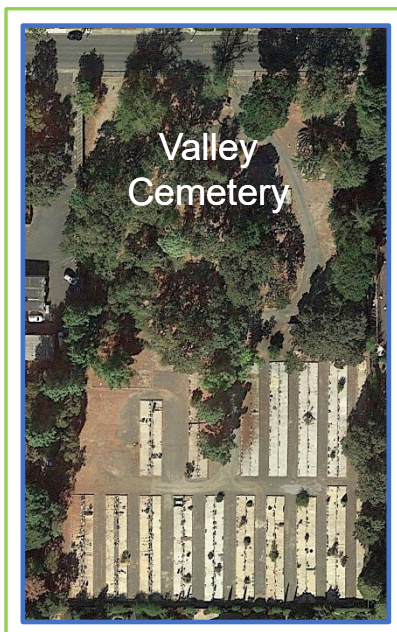
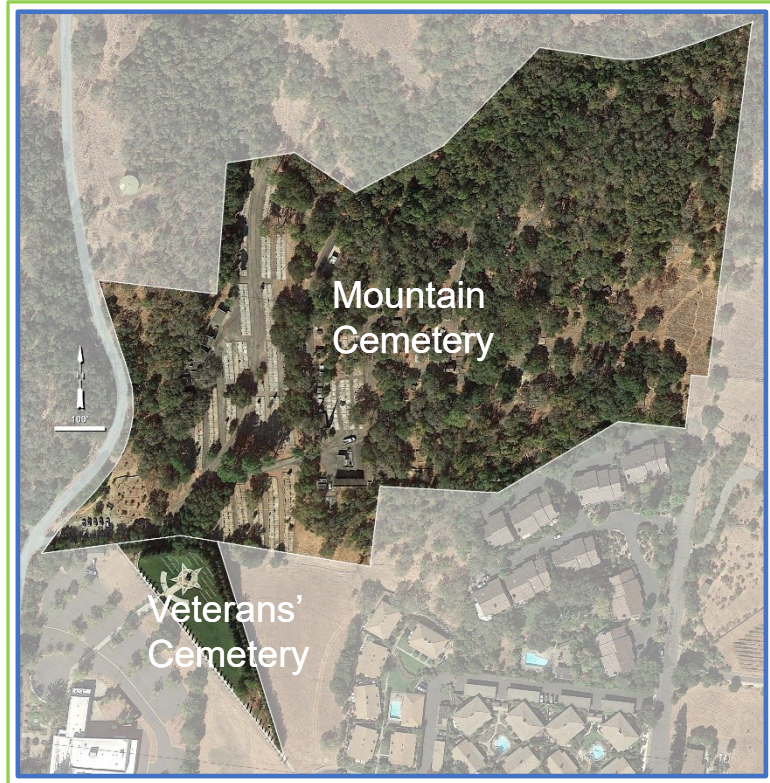




City of Sonoma Cemeteries

Sonoma, California

Planning Study



November 16, 2022



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Mountain Cemeteries in Context

Air Photo of Mountain and Veterans Cemetery Properties





Mountain Cemeteries

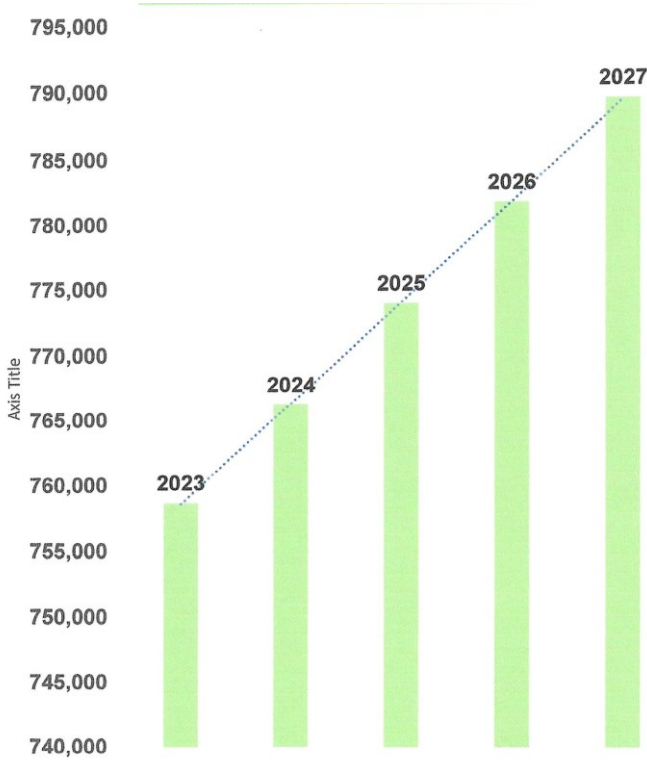
Air Photo of Mountain and Veterans' Cemeteries



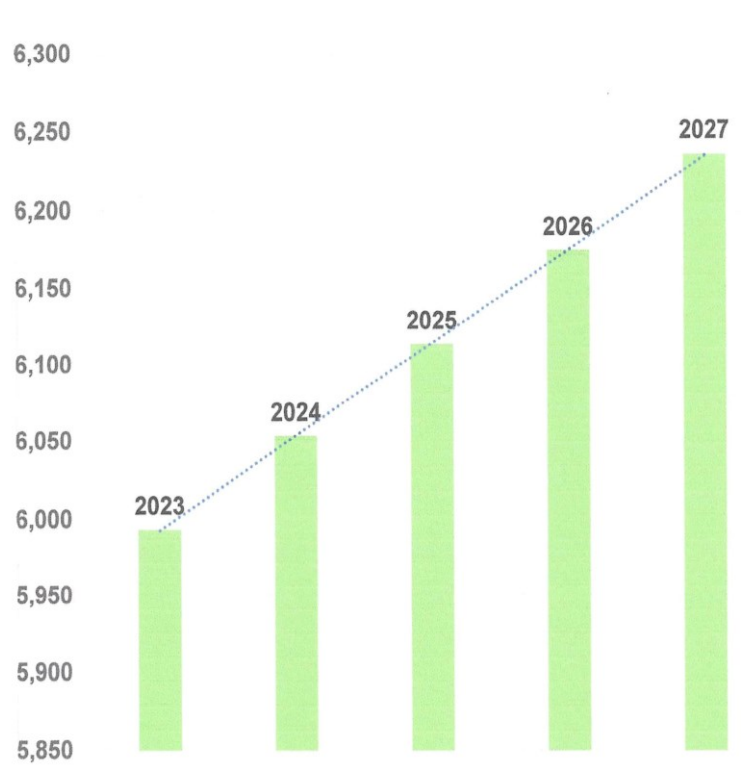


Service Area Needs and Opportunities

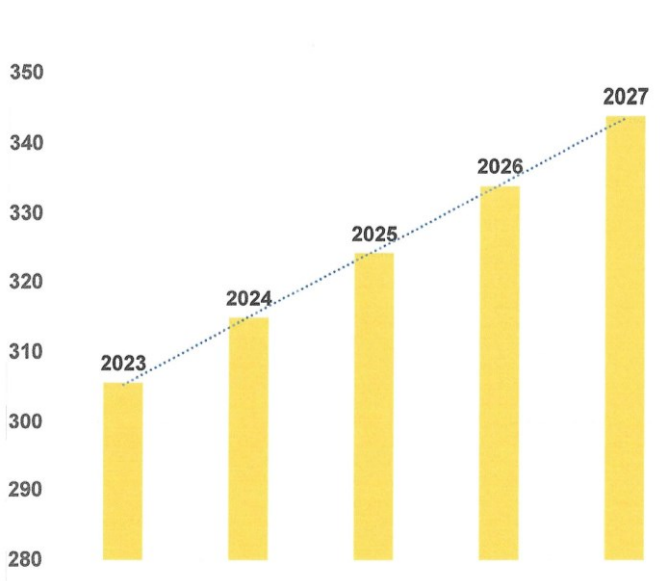
Sonoma Service Area Population



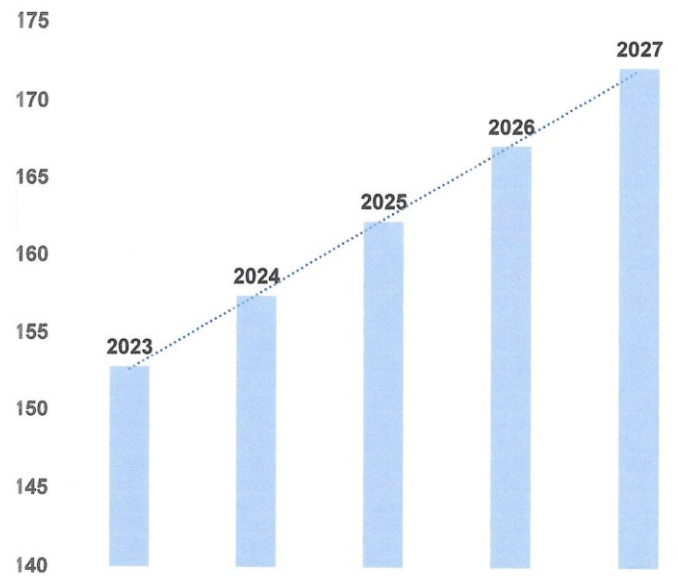
Deaths per Year in Service Area



Sonoma Projected At-Need Sales



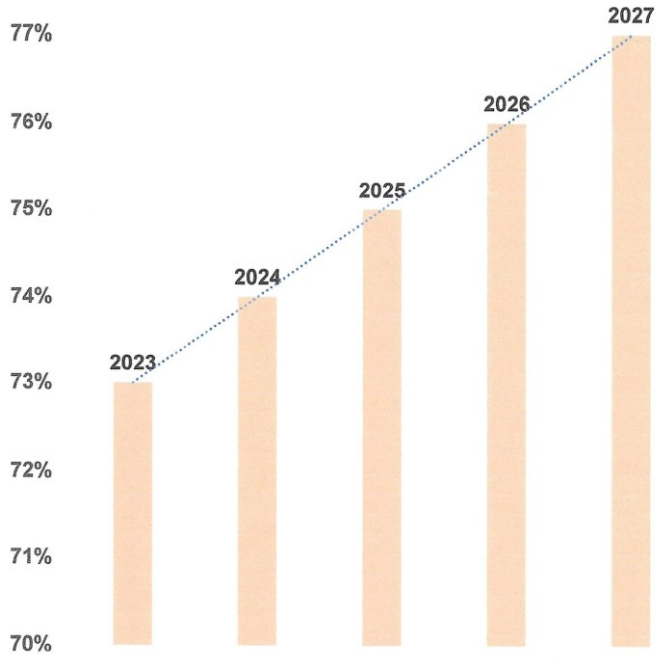
Sonoma Projected Pre-Need Sales



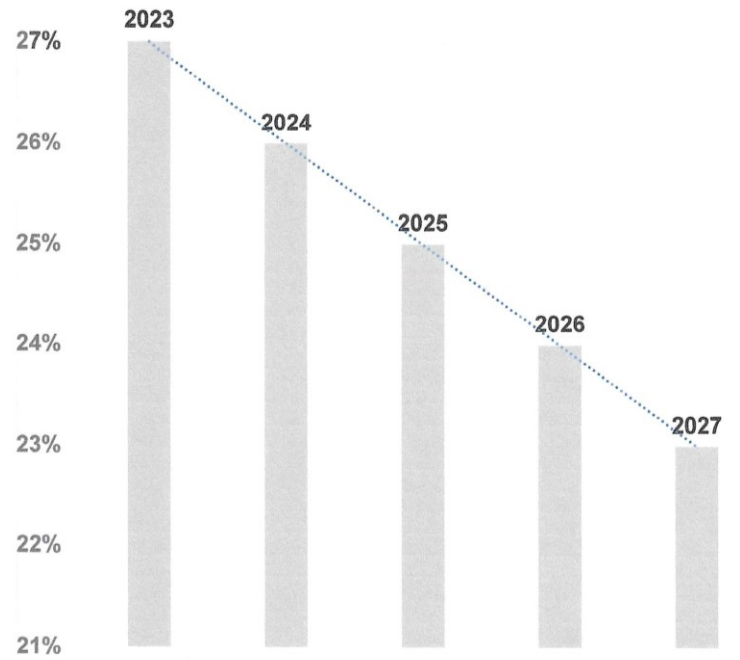


Service Area Projected Sales and Inventory Mix

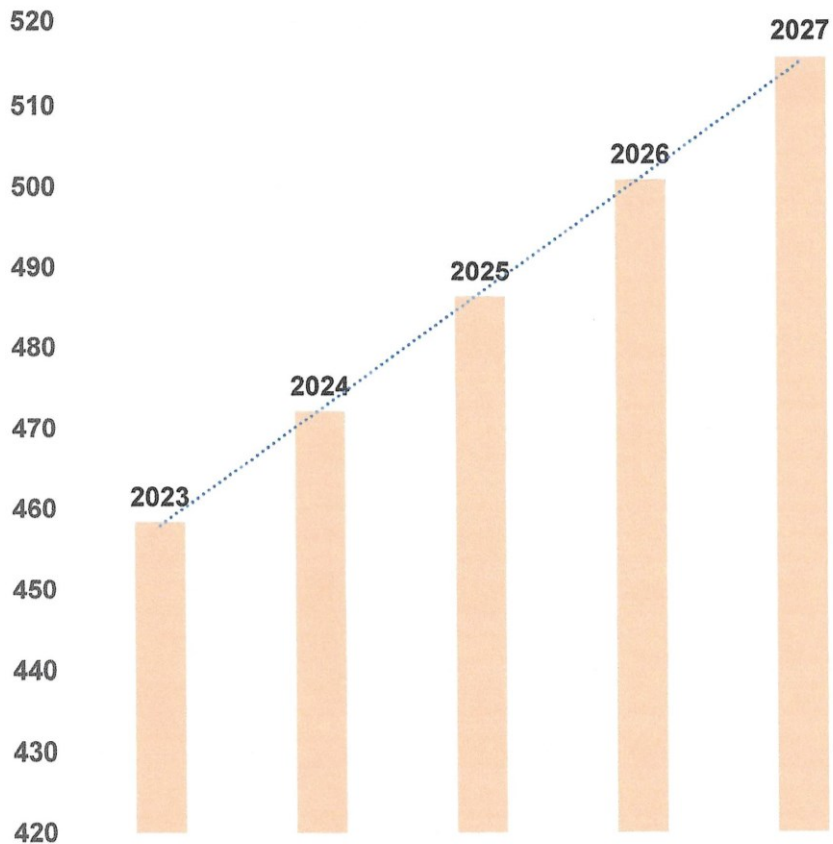
Projected Cremation Percentage



Projected Non-Cremation Percentage



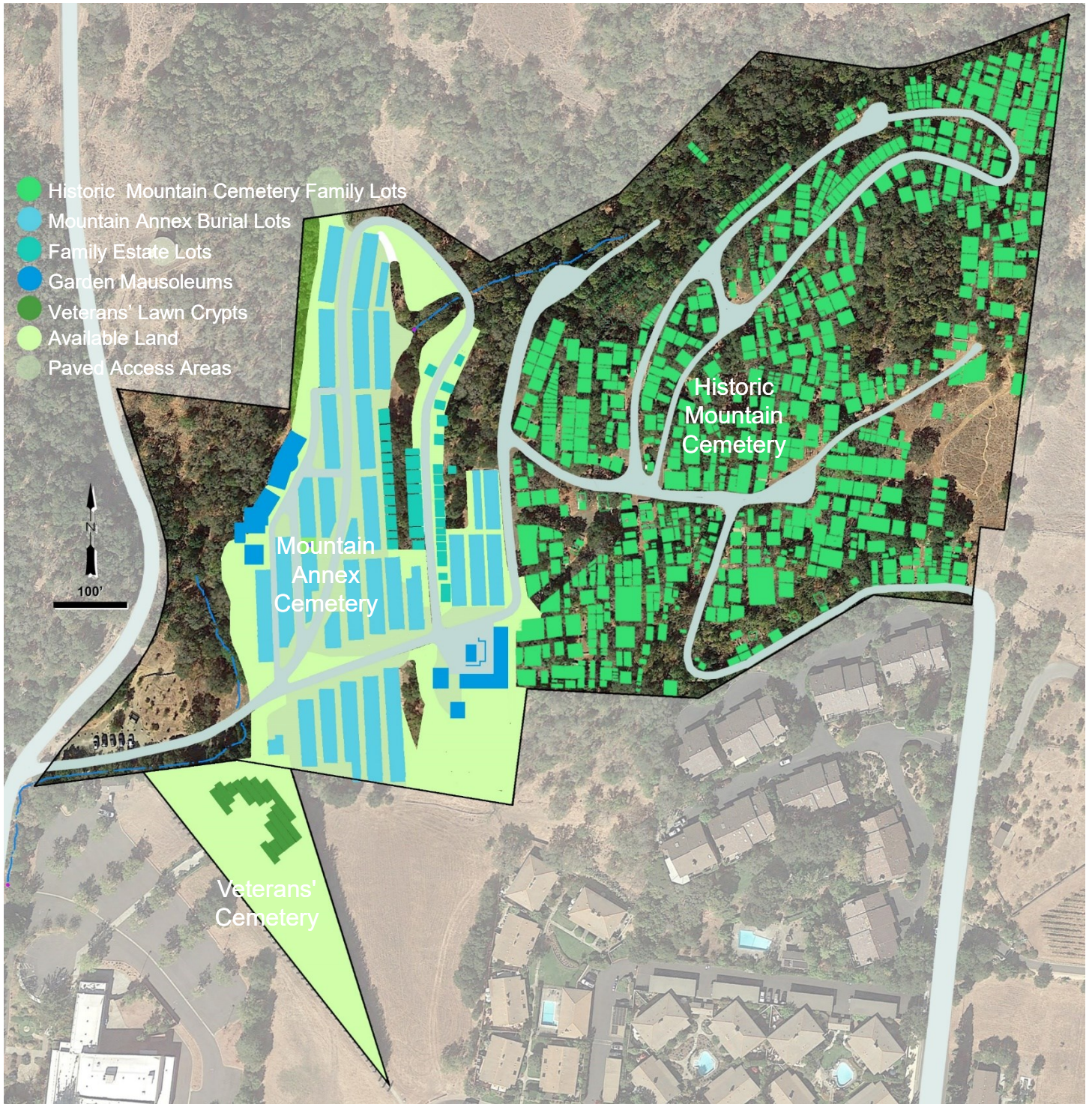
Projected Total Sales





Mountain Cemeteries

Existing Development at Mountain and Veterans' Cemeteries





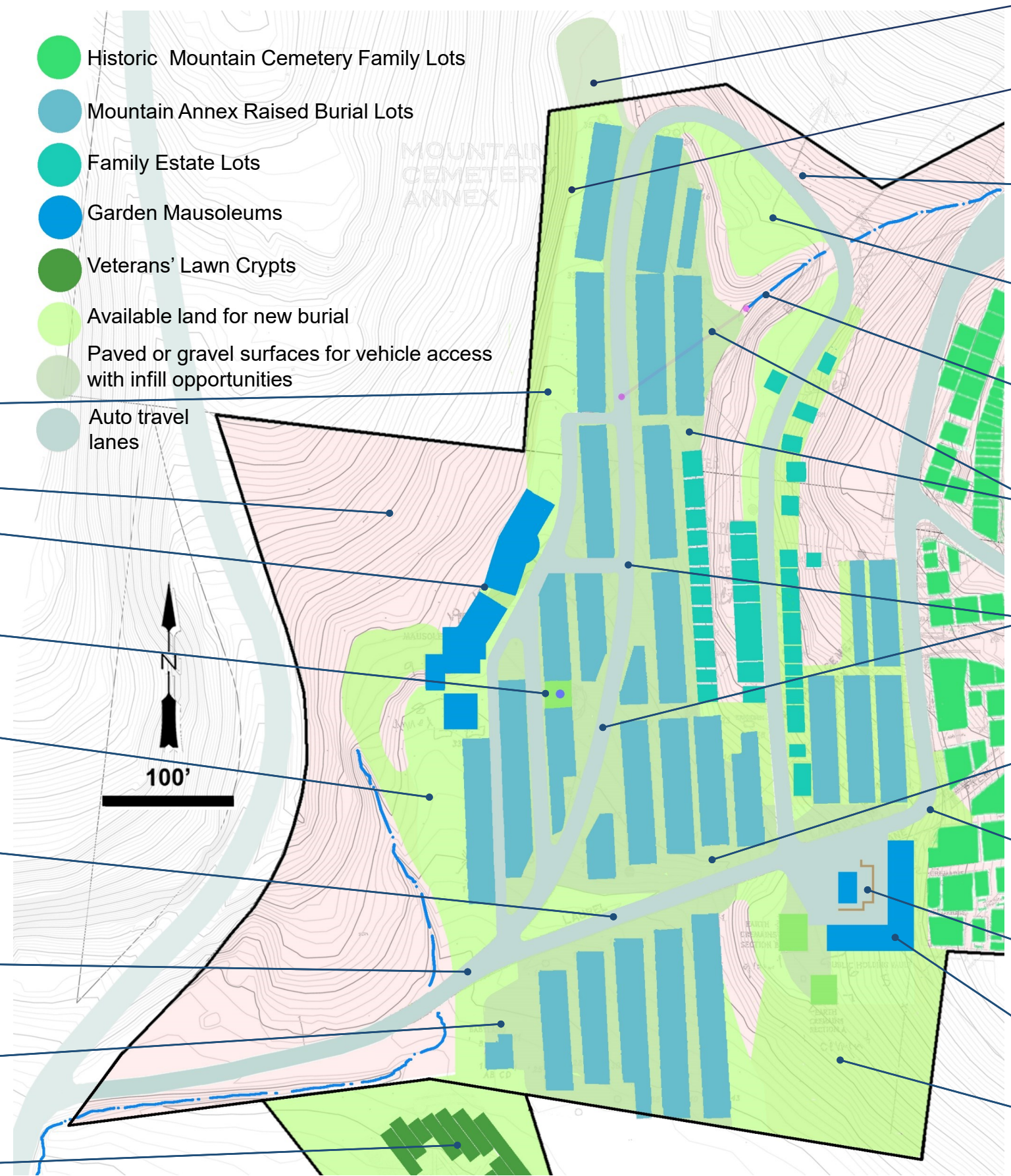
Mountain Annex Cemetery Photos of Existing Conditions





Mountain Cemetery Analysis of Existing Conditions

- Historic Mountain Cemetery Family Lots
- Mountain Annex Raised Burial Lots
- Family Estate Lots
- Garden Mausoleums
- Veterans' Lawn Crypts
- Available land for new burial
- Paved or gravel surfaces for vehicle access with infill opportunities
- Auto travel lanes



Land is available along this property line and is suitable for earth retaining mausoleums and a mix of indoor and outdoor cremation options.

Slopes too steep to develop for cemetery use.

The existing mausoleums provide good models for new development.

The existing columbarium is a good example of the types of cremation facilities that are needed for an expanding market preference.

The old roadbed and gentle slopes in this area are suitable for cemetery development and have a good visual connection to the arrival zone into the cemetery

This important arrival corridor and historic entry drive to both the original Mountain cemetery and the current annex facilities is the primary image and identity zone for the cemetery and needs functional and visual enhancement.

The Cemetery entrance requires visual definition, enhancement and identity improvements.

Babyland can be expanded and coordinated with opportunities for heritage burial by utilizing the undeveloped areas for mixed inventory in this prime entrance location.

See the Analysis of the Veterans' cemetery (page 16)

The existing maintenance area should be condensed and screened from cemetery views

Land is available along this property line and is suitable for earth retaining mausoleums and a mix of indoor and outdoor cremation options.

Slopes in this area can be utilized with earth retaining systems to accommodate private mausoleum structures.

This open upper terrace provides opportunity for garden development with dramatic views into the existing cemetery and beyond.

The natural stream valley is an important visual asset within the highly developed annex and should be utilized as part of new development in the three surrounding areas.

These two undeveloped areas at the foot of the stream valley and the base of slope offer opportunities for a variety of cremation facilities.

The extensive paved areas in this annex can be minimized with selected landscape islands and plantings to soften and minimize the visual expense of the paving.

The undeveloped land areas along the central corridor and drive to the historic cemetery can be enhanced with landscape improvements and could include cremation garden options.

The entrance point into the historic cemetery should be celebrated and enhanced.

Extensive paving areas at the south mausoleum complex offer opportunities for a wide variety of inventory options

The existing mausoleum can be expanded to the south.

This significant area of open land provides opportunities for structural and other burial options.

Mountain Cemetery Recommendations for Future Development and Enhancement

Estimated New Burial Capacity

- 872 Mausoleum Crypt spaces
- 724 Full Body burials in double-depth ground burial
- 120 Baby Land spaces
- 232 Cremation Niches by old mausoleum
- 1405 Cremation inurnments in garden settings
- 4000 Niches in indoor buildings
- 700 Columbarium Niches in courts between niche buildings
- 288 Cremation spaces in North Cremation Courts

1,716 Full Body Burials
6,625 Cremation Burials

Total Burials = 8,341+

Continue the existing garden mausoleum development with earth-retaining structures and include facilities with both outdoor granite niches and secured, indoor glass front niches.

Provide meditation courts with earth retaining columbarium walls and cremation gardens between the crypt and niche buildings.

Utilize the available land beside the existing mausoleums to create additional raised, full-body burial beds per the existing. Enhance this new burial area as part of the arrival zone.

Add new historically inspired gateway, fencing, signage, and landscape treatments to identify and enhance the entrance zone. Include wayfinding information and rules and regulations. Establish a common sign design for Mountain and Valley Cemeteries

Create cremation gardens as part of an overall landscape enhancement plan for the entrance area

Expand and enhance the Babyland facilities.

Expand the raised burial beds as space allows.

See the Master Plan for the Veterans' cemetery (page 16)



Provide fencing and landscape planting to buffer the maintenance yard from cemetery views.

Pre-install retaining wall lots for private mausoleum estates.

Develop cremation gardens on existing overlook terrace with committal shelter and niche inventory.

Enhance the creek valley and create a columbarium court on the lower terrace that focuses on the stream valley.

Widen road at new estate lots for estate parking and traffic management and create new private mausoleum lots.

Develop an earth-retaining columbarium wall and cenotaph facilities with a meditation court and special feature such as a fountain or sculpture.

Celebrate the entrance to Historic Mountain Cemetery with historically-inspired gate posts (utilize and repeat the existing historic post), identity signage, interpretive signage telling the people and the history of the cemetery, and special landscape enhancements.

Develop cremation gardens in the currently paved areas at the south mausoleum. Incorporate pull-off and handicap parking.

Add couch crypts on the east side of the south mausoleum and single of tandem crypts on the south side to create a new face of the building on the new South Terrace. Extend this structure as a two-level, earth-retaining mausoleum creating the east wall of the new south terrace.

Utilize the earth removed for mausoleum construction to create the expanded South Terrace. Incorporate double-depth lawn crypts to provide the needed full-body burial for Mountain Cemetery. Develop new cremation gardens with a committal shelter and overlook court on the new South Terrace.



Mountain North Annex Master Plan North Terrace, North Mausoleums and Cremation Courts





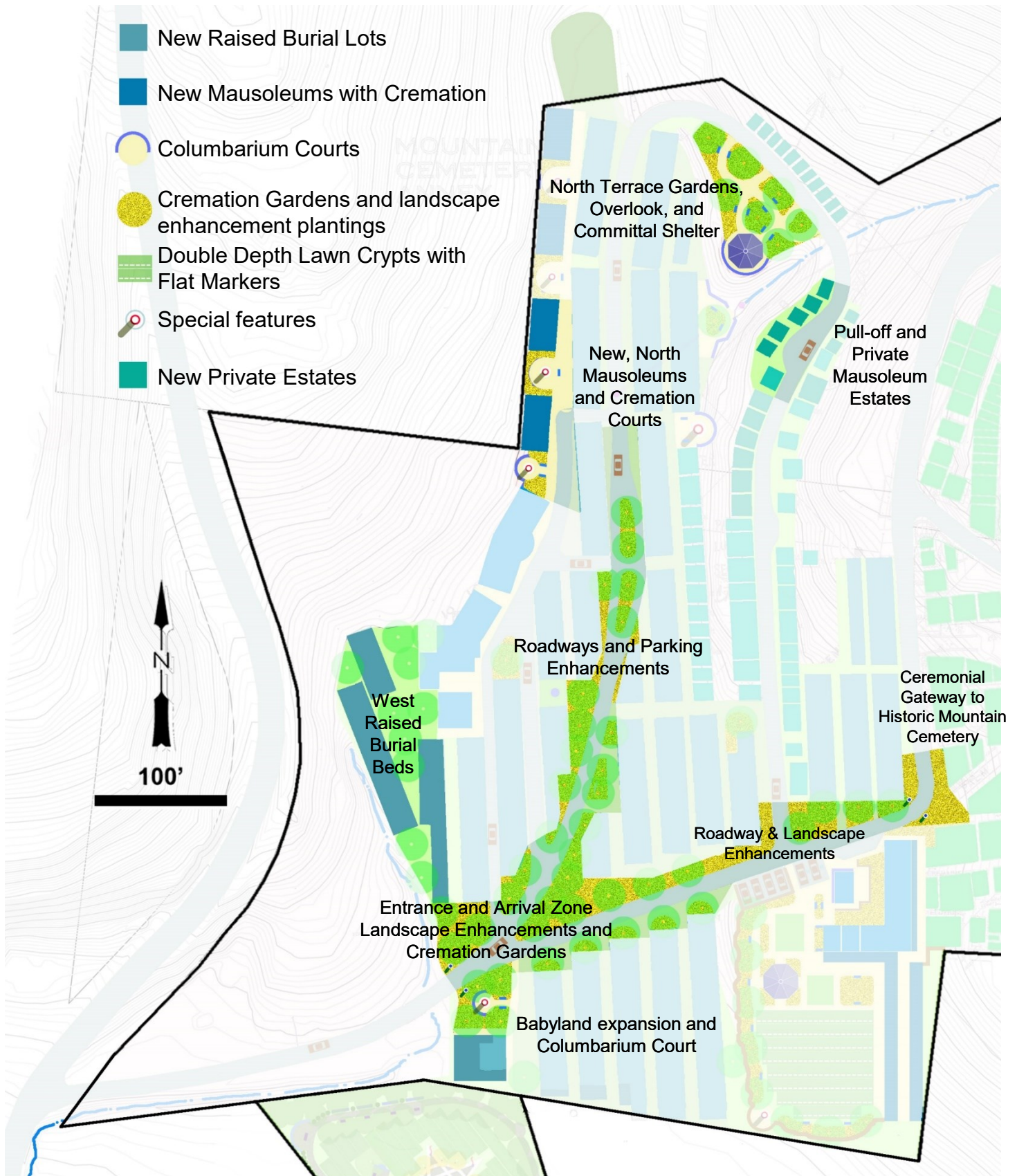
Mountain South Annex Master Plan Cemetery Entrance and Arrival Zones





South Terrace
Mausoleum Additions, Cremation Gardens and Double Depth Lawn Burial





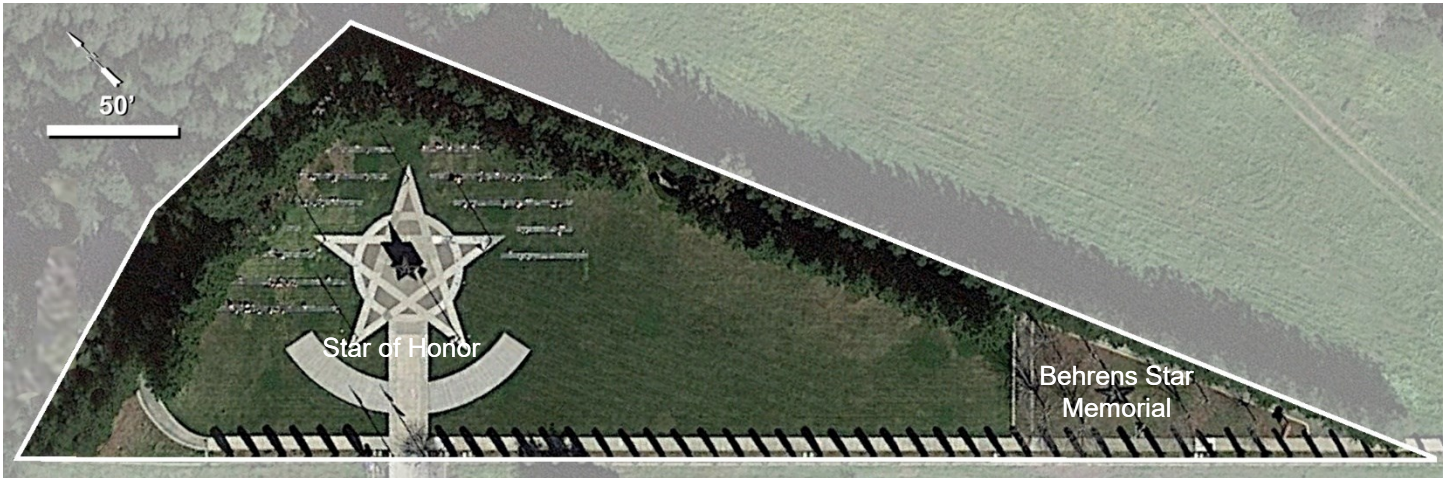


Veterans' Cemetery Photos of Existing Conditions

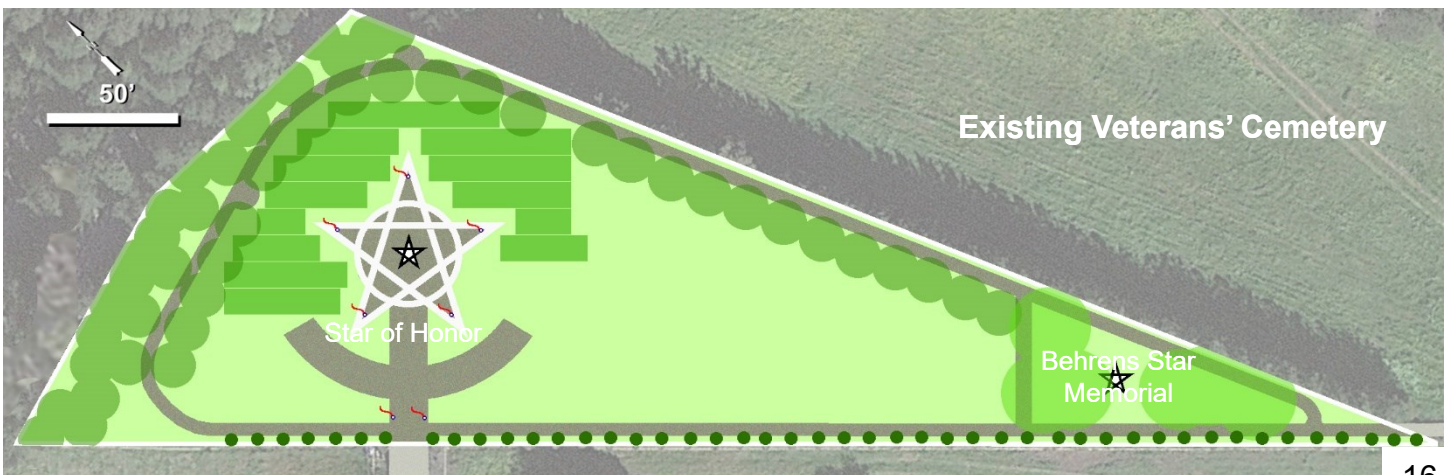




Air Photo and Analysis of Existing Conditions



- The Veterans' Cemetery's undeveloped land has a high water table requiring engineered drainage to be usable for preinstalled crypt burial.
- The southern triangle of land and the Behrens' Memorial Star can be enriched with gardens for cremation facilities, cenotaph memorialization and for meditation seating.
- The unused strip of land paralleling the south sidewalk with the visually powerful, militaristic row of shrubs lining this walk offers the opportunity for interspersed cremation walls to accommodate the growing percentage of military cremations, and to enhance visual separation and privacy from the parking areas and potential future development to the southwest.
- The western corner of the site needs screening of the westerly off-site views to maintenance facilities and offers specialized burial facilities for cremation and/or cenotaph memorialization.
- The Veterans' Cemetery lacks seating for the elderly and infirm, and for meditation.
- The approach walkways and paved arc of the Star Court and sculpture can be enhanced with lighting and landscaping.





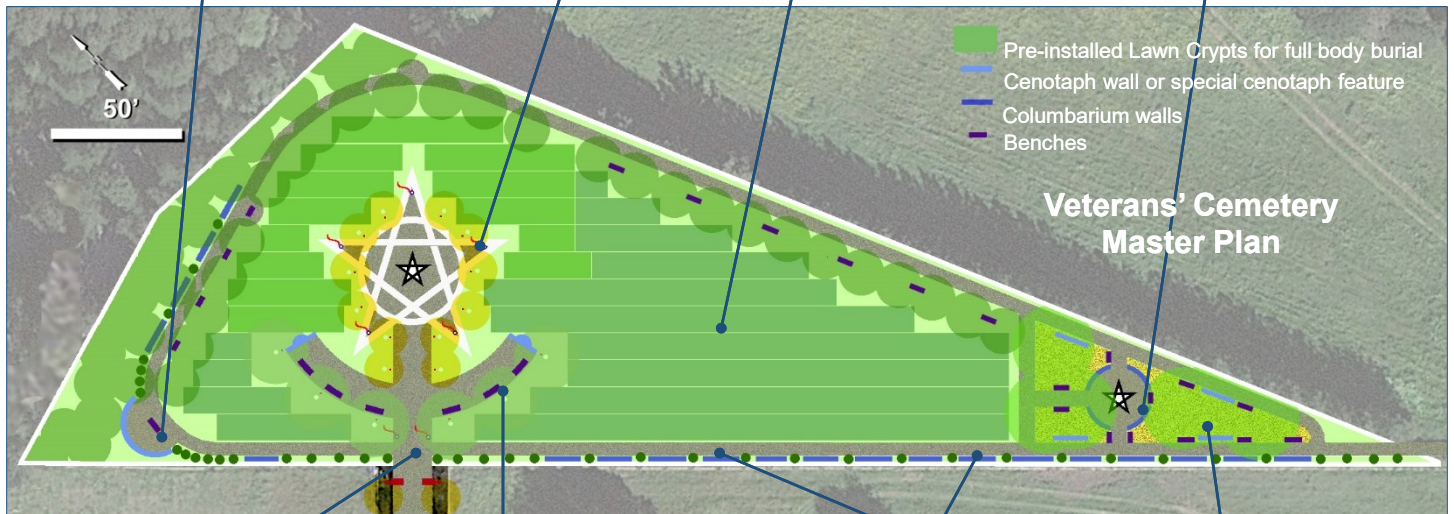
Veterans' Cemetery Recommendations for Future Development and Enhancement

Cenotaph memorial wall and meditation court. This wall accommodates the growing need for remote memorialization and serves to enclose this corner of the cemetery and can block undesirable off-site views.

Highlight the flags at the Star of Honor court with lighting. Add flowering trees and up-light these trees, as well, for nighttime accent and security.

Complete the construction of the traditional lawn crypts including sub-drainage to de-water the sub-surface soil conditions.

Develop this area as a columbarium court that builds upon and highlights the Behrens Star Memorial. Develop the surrounding area as garden to enhance this area as a secluded meditation area.



Enhance the VA Cemetery entrance with landscape planting. Include additional walkway and landscape lighting.

Add benches and shade trees at the paved arc to make this an inviting location for quiet meditation and for viewing the Star memorial sculpture.

Add columbarium walls along the north and west walks. These cremation walls help satisfy the growing need for cremation in Veteran cemeteries. These also add privacy and buffer off-site views.

Incorporate benches and cenotaph memorials into this new garden.

Estimated New Burial Capacity

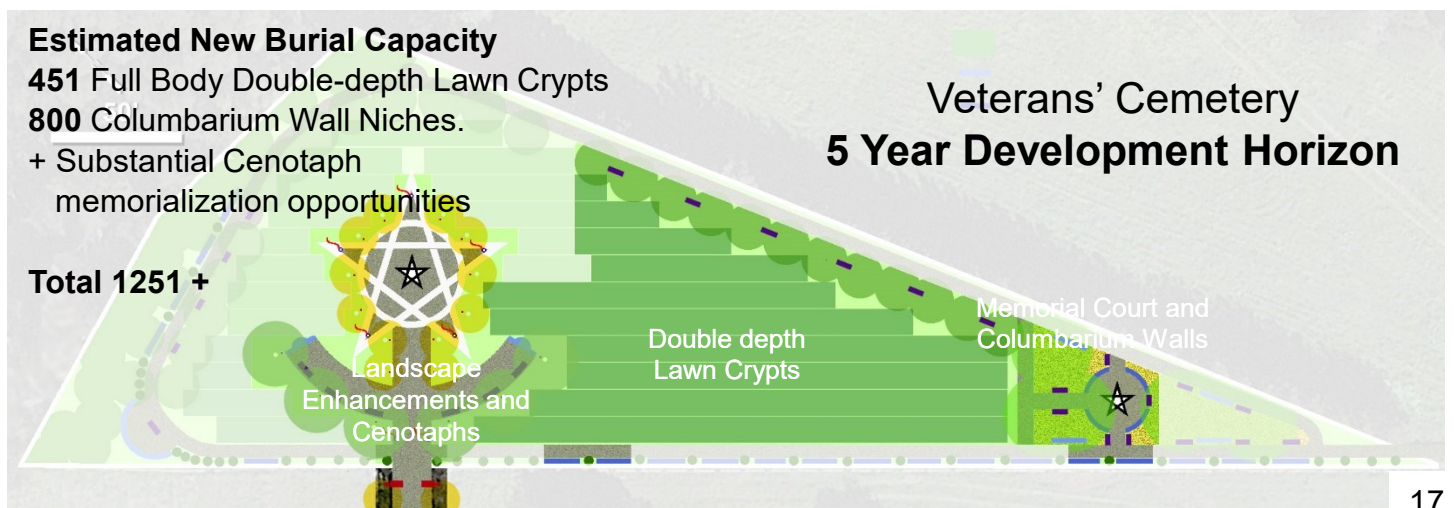
451 Full Body Double-depth Lawn Crypts

800 Columbarium Wall Niches.

+ Substantial Cenotaph memorialization opportunities

Total 1251 +

Veterans' Cemetery 5 Year Development Horizon





Valley Cemetery Air Photo of Existing Conditions





Valley Cemetery Photos of Existing Conditions



This City-owned land is outside of the cemetery fence and is currently used for school access and parking. Future cemetery development should include facilities that screen and buffer the off-site views to the school. Use of this area requires investigations into the best access points avoiding existing burials as much as possible.

Possible historic soldier burial area. Needs to be investigated for possible reuse & recognition.

Documented historic burials. (Typical)

The existing free-standing columbarium is popular and should be repeated and augmented. An extensive variety of additional cremation options should be added to satisfy the ever-increasing demand for cremation.

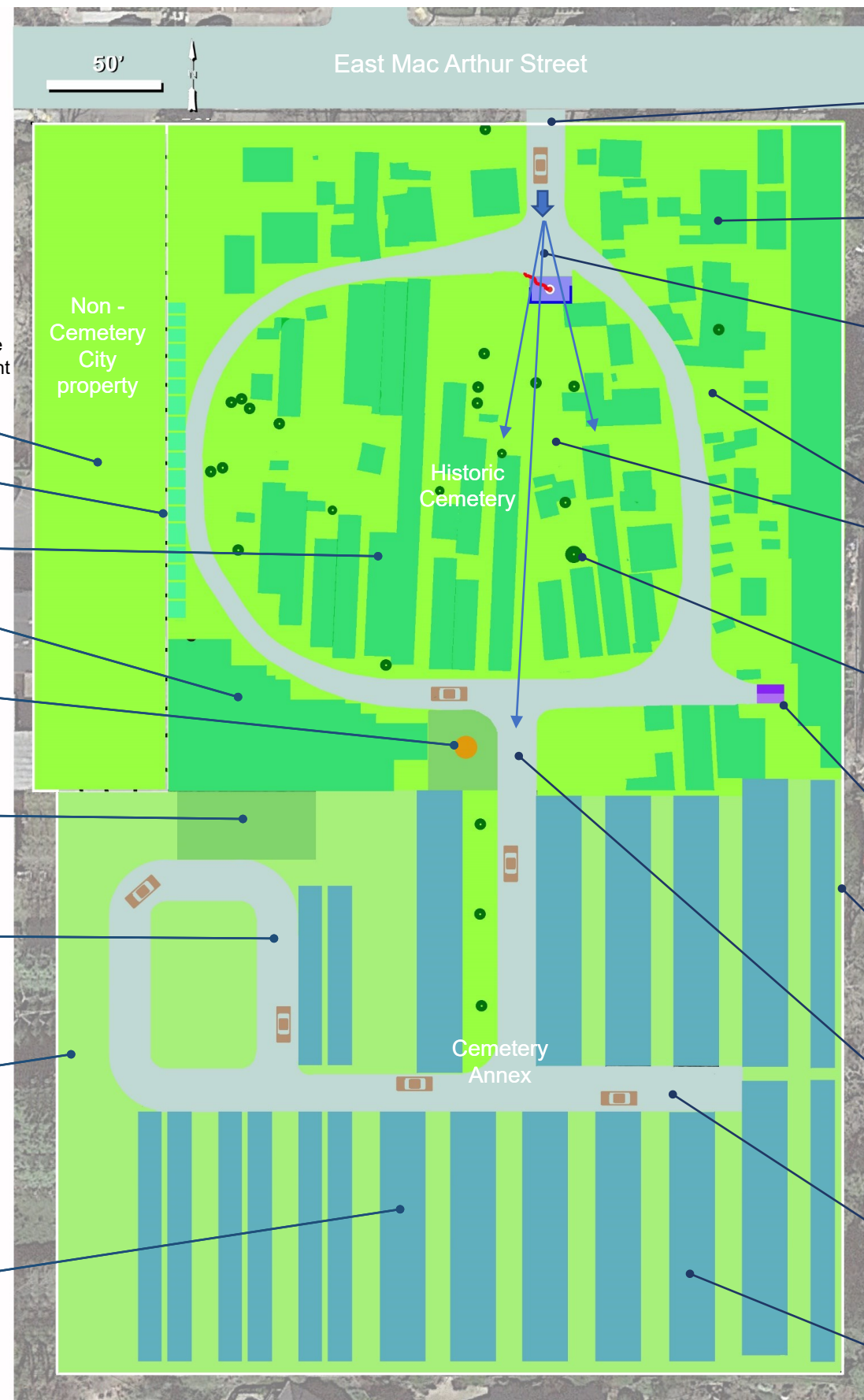
Existing in-ground cremation. This area lacks adequate landscaping.

Undesignated cul-de-sac needed for turn-around of exiting cars. This is the minimum space required for easy turning and needs to remain functional with new any development.

This western area is used for earth spoils and miscellaneous storage. It is unattractive and should be reorganized to take less space and visually screened as much as possible.

The existing raised, full-body burial beds are popular and should be expanded in concert with extensive cremation options. These areas need landscape enhancement including tree cover to be consistent with the historic cemetery landscape.

- Existing Roadways
- Historic Burial Lots
- Raised Burial Lots
- Existing In-ground Cremation
- Available Land
- Roadways available for new development



The existing chain link fence and gate are inappropriate for this historic cemetery. Public sidewalks should be extended to improve the safe and convenient pedestrian access to the cemetery.

Documented historic burials (Typical)

The existing entrance and flagpole features need site improvements, new identity features and enhanced landscaping for a fresh and inviting public appearance. Site improvements and new development in this area should create open views along the entry road centerline to allow distant views into the body of the cemetery revealing its rich historic character.

Scattered available land areas. There are not records documenting burials in many of these areas. Investigations are needed for these locations to assess their possible use for infill as full body burial or cremation facilities and landscape enhancements.

This magnificent specimen oak requires special attention to protect and preserve this tree for as long as possible. A cemetery-wide tree management and replacement plan is needed. The other existing trees are in various conditions of health and safety. These need to be evaluated and remedial actions are required.

The existing tool shed should be relocated to a less visible location.

Perimeter security fencing is in poor condition in many locations on the west, north, and east sides. The model for improvements is the fencing currently on the south property line

These existing cemetery roads are unpaved and are appropriate for a historic cemetery, but some require upgrading and maintenance.

This roadway is not required to achieve acceptable walking distances to the existing facilities and can be repurposed for burial facilities.

Existing, single depth, raised beds.

Estimated New Burial Capacity

886 Full Body burials
1,930 Niche and Inground Cremation spaces.

Total 2816+

Note: Available spaces within the historic cemetery may be substantial. Accurate subsurface exploration is needed to determine the limits of unburial land within the historic section. Many additional opportunities exist to add cremation features in small available spaces as needed in the future

Additional City owned property

Improve the appearance of the raised cremation beds with new gravel and/or xeriscape groundcovers.

Develop a columbarium and meditation court with connecting paths and cremation gardens to visually and functionally link the new and existing facilities.

Relocate and improve the maintenance shed and yard to this corner. Surround with fencing and provide large gate for service activities.

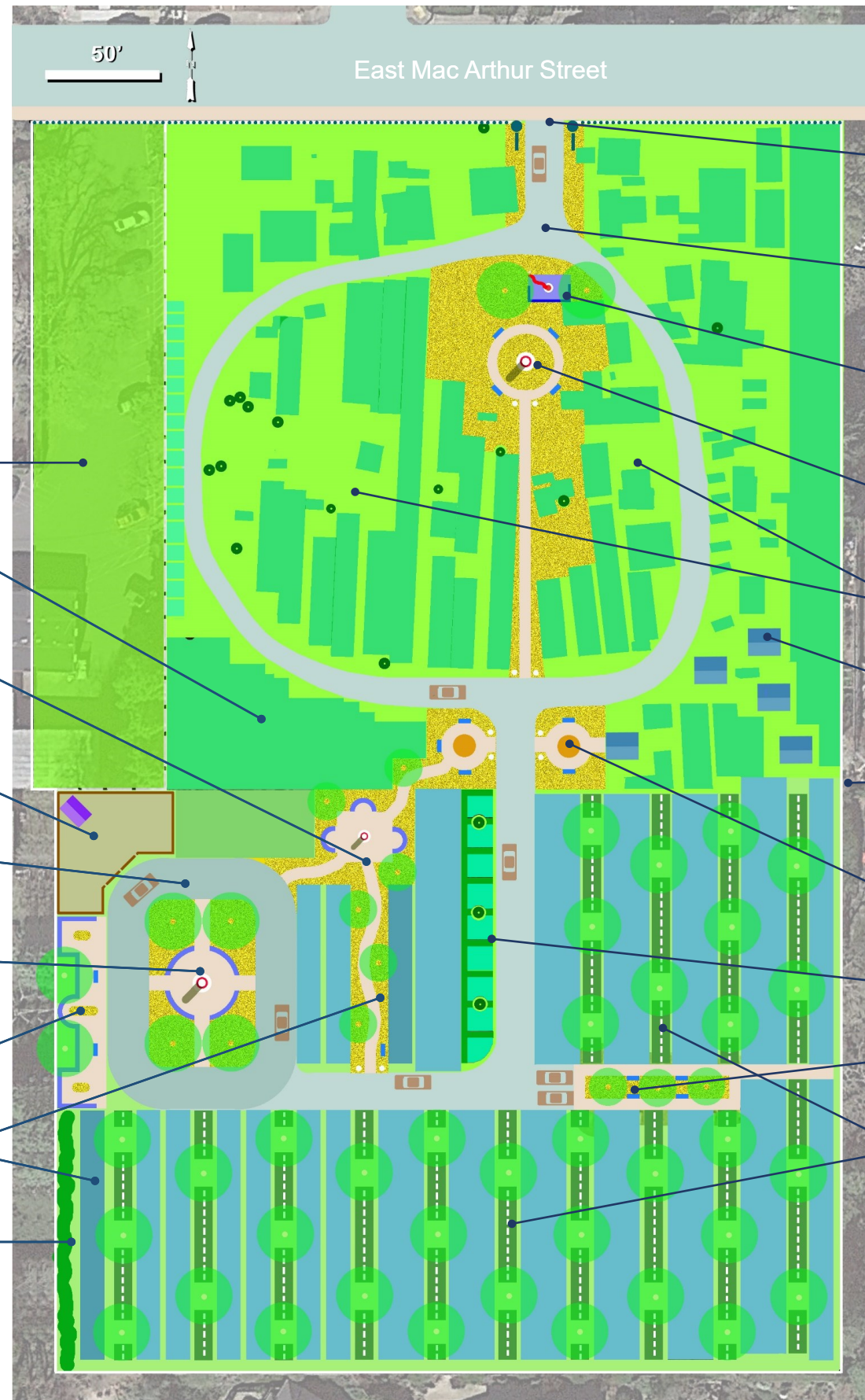
Create a new loop road with curbing that is adequate for cortege access and circulation.

Develop the created island with cremation facilities including a columbarium walled court and cremation gardens. Raise this island with curbing.

Buffer off-site views and activities with walled columbarium courts.

Infill these areas with a traditional, single-depth raised burial bed.

Buffer offsite views with tall hedge planting along the property line.



Improve and enhance the Valley Cemetery entrance with historically appropriate picket fencing and gates, new identity signage.

Enhance the entire entry zone with new landscaping and gravel bed treatments, and with roadway improvements.

Redesign the existing flag structure and incorporate identity signage for the cemetery. Coordinate new signage design with that for Mountain Cemetery.

Utilize unburied land for infill as cremation gardens with a wide variety of cremation options. Create a central feature area with mediation seating and amenities, and special features.

Determine the limits of existing burials to establish areas suitable for full-body and cremation burial infill.

Relocate the existing maintenance shed to the western edge and make this area available for premium family mausoleums.

Repair or restore the perimeter fencing as needed on the east and west property lines.

Repeat the development of a columbarium unit on the east side of the central road and enhance both to maximize their capacity while enhancing their appearance.

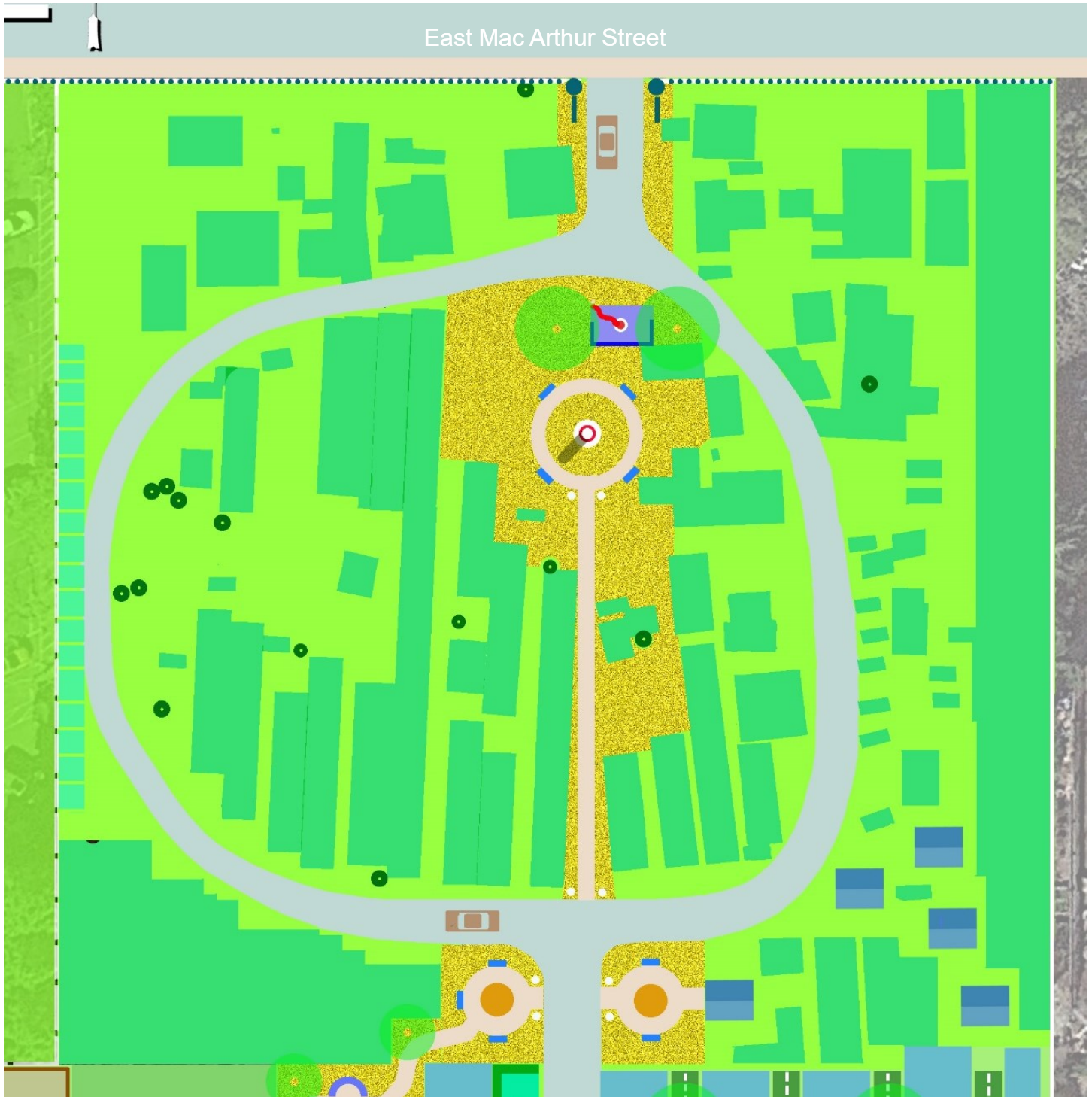
Develop premium hedge and bench estates along this roadway.

Infill this dead-end roadway to create a cremation garden with trees and walks. Provide pull-in parking for 2 cars.

Infill the existing walkways between the raised beds with raised, double-depth, pre-installed crypts and tree plantings. (see concept diagram on page 24).

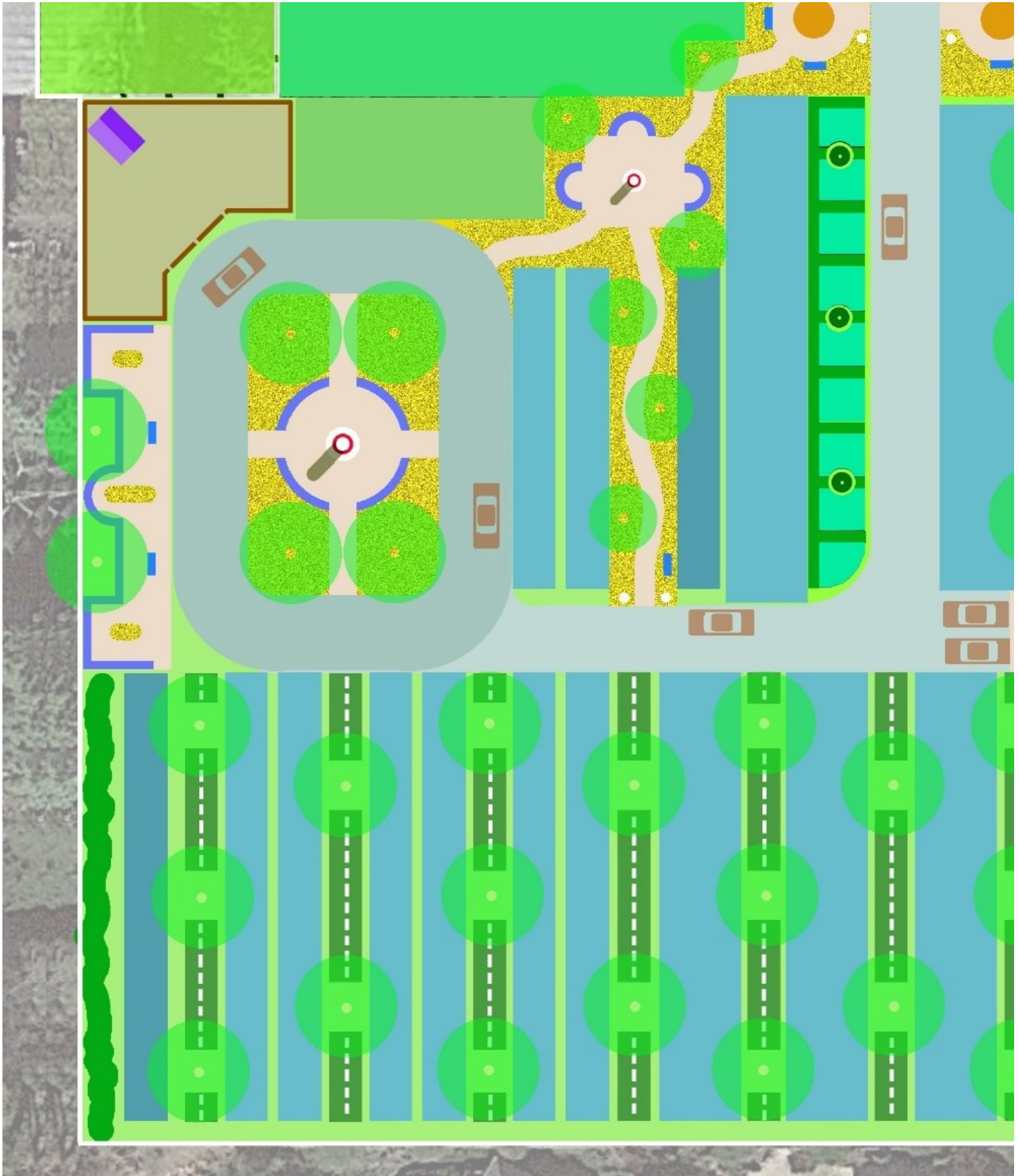


Valley Cemetery - Historic Cemetery Full Body and Cremation Infill and Enhancements



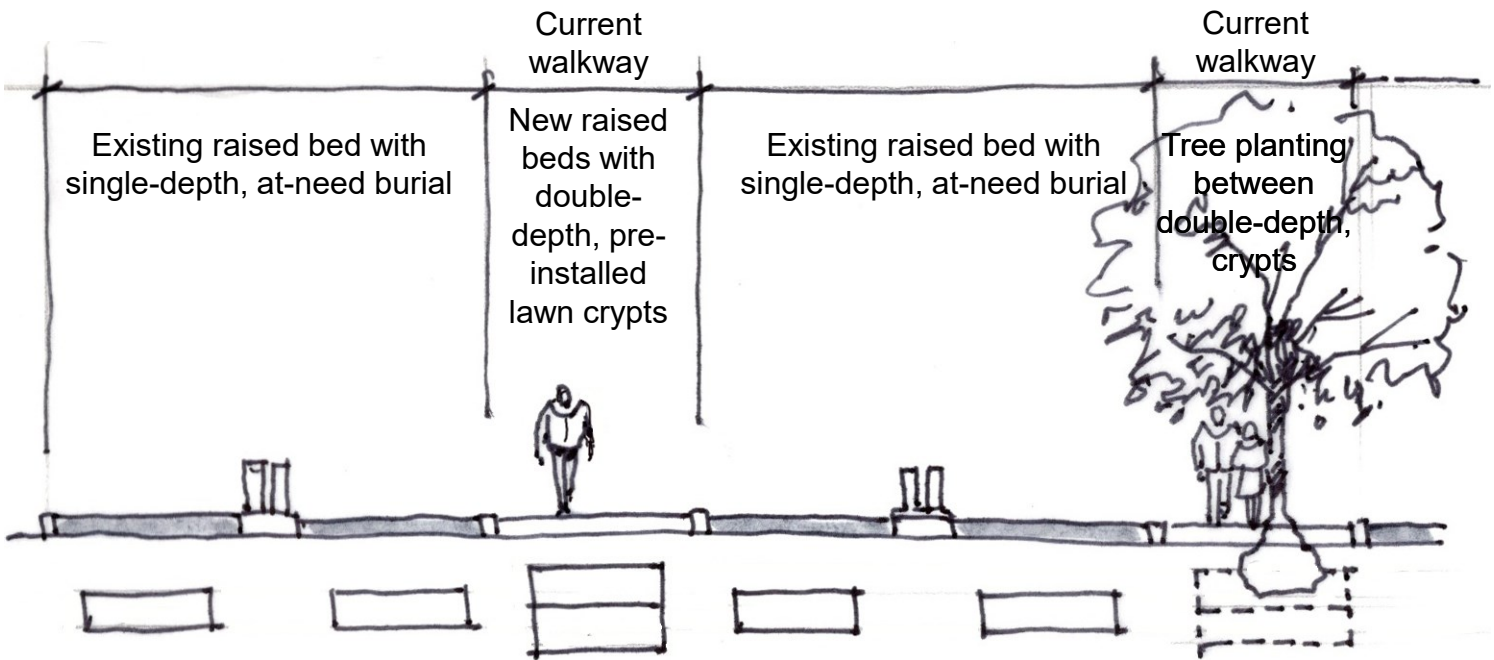


Valley Cemetery



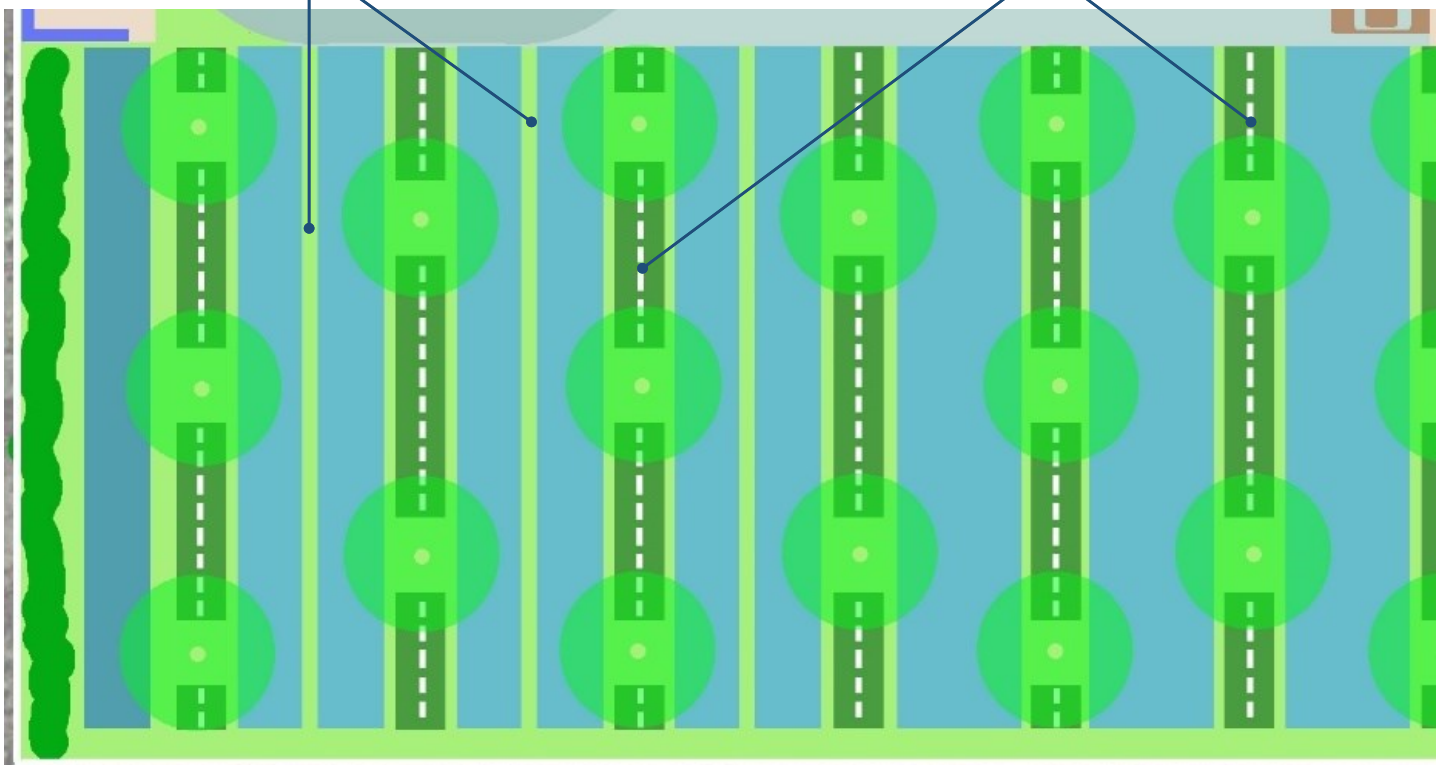


Valley Cemetery Raised Bed Infill with Double-depth, Pre-installed Lawn Crypts



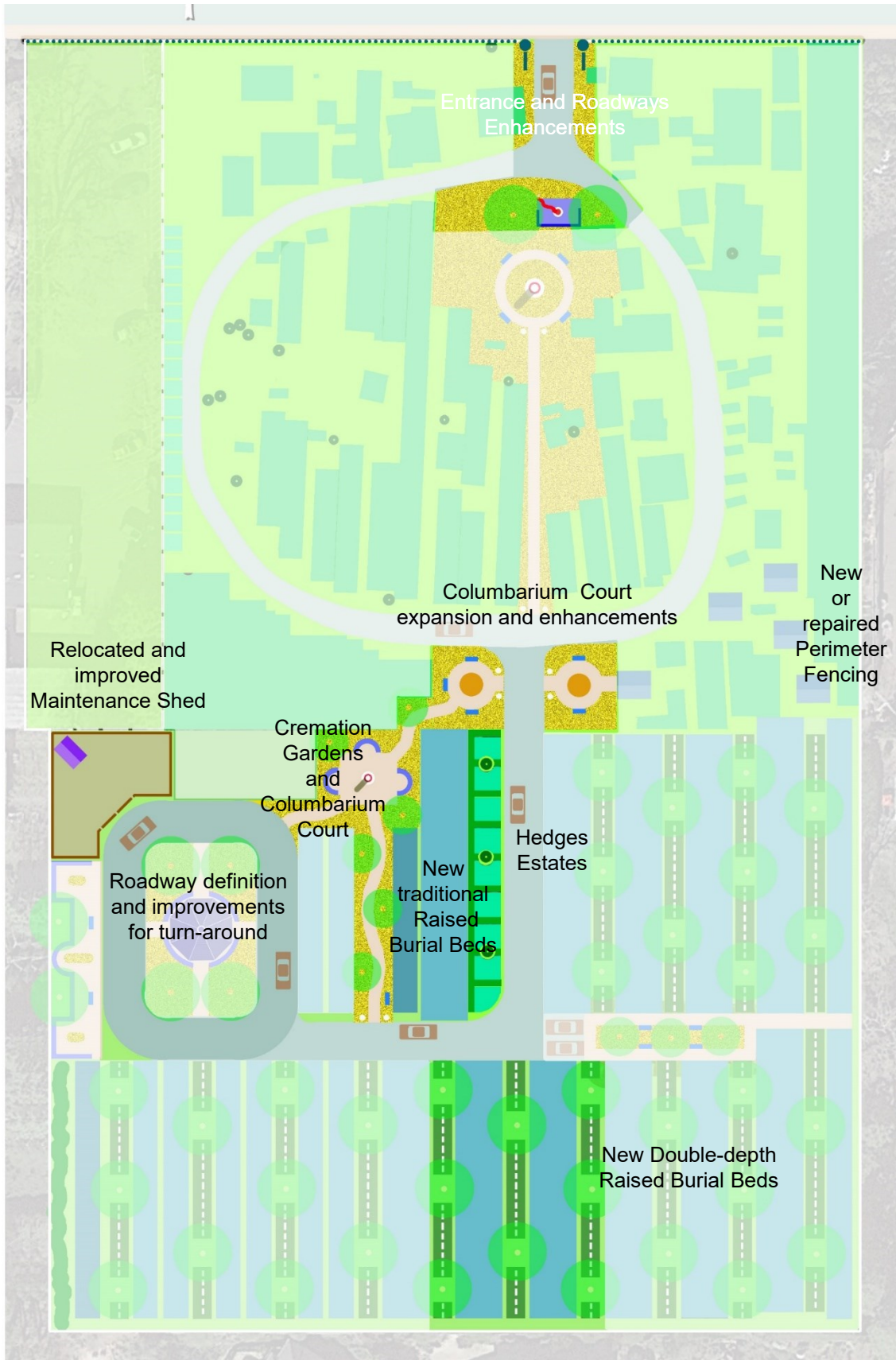
Existing raised bed with single-depth, at-need burial

New raised beds with double-depth, pre-installed lawn crypts and trees





Valley Cemetery 5 Year Development Horizon





Sonoma Cemeteries
Estimates of New Burial Capacities
Mountain Cemetery

- 872 Mausoleum Crypt spaces
- 724 Full Body burials in double-depth ground burial
- 120 Baby Land spaces
- 232 Cremation Niches by old mausoleum
- 1405 Cremation inurnments in garden settings
- 4000 Niches in indoor buildings
- 700 Columbarium Niches in courts between niche buildings
- 288 Cremation spaces in North Cremation Courts

1,716 Full Body Burials
6,625 Cremation Burials

Mountain Total 8,342 +

Note: Many additional opportunities exist to add cremation features in small available spaces as needed in the future.

Veterans' Cemetery

- 451** Full Body Double-depth Lawn Crypts
- 800** Columbarium Wall Niches.

Veterans' Total 1251 +

Note: There are substantial opportunities for additional Cenotaph memorialization features throughout the Veterans' Cemetery

Valley Cemetery

- 886** Full Body burials
- 1,930** Niche and Inground Cremation spaces.

Valley Total ,2816 +

Note: Available spaces within the historic cemetery may be substantial. Accurate subsurface exploration is needed to determine the limits of unburial land within the historic section. Many additional opportunities exist to add cremation features in small available spaces as needed in the future.

Total Future Interments = 12,408 +



Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Based on observed market potential, analysis of the development opportunities of each of the existing cemetery properties, and a commitment from the City of Sonoma for operational support, it is recommended that the City of Sonoma **continue to offer and expand cemetery facilities and support services** for both full body and cremated remains. Recommendations for expanding, enhancing, and managing the three cemeteries include:

1. Create a **separate Cemetery Department with full-time staff** to:
 - a. Develop **new facilities for full body, in-ground or mausoleum interment.**
 - b. Develop **new facilities for in-ground and niche cremation interment.**
 - c. Upgrade **cemetery software to fully digitize the record keeping and sales contract management.**
 - d. Establish **Marketing and Sales** strategies for staff and operationals.
 - e. **Create landscape and maintenance** strategies for each cemetery.
2. Upgrade **marketing materials** in cooperation with local funeral homes.
 - a. Develop **new brochures** (handouts) for the Cemetery office, funeral homes, service clubs and trade associations.
 - b. Advertise **in newspapers and local publications.**
 - c. Target **pre-need sales** for families.
 - d. Create a new, **independent website** for the City cemeteries only.
3. Establish **Training Programs** for:
 - a. Inventory options, services and operational details of each cemetery location
 - b. Cemetery office management and family counseling
 - c. Software and record keeping
 - d. Sales and marketing
 - e. Operations and maintenance
4. Conduct **Special Events**
 - a. Celebrate all major and local holidays
 - b. Historical and seasonal tours, concerts, classes, and performances
 - c. Special interest speakers
5. Establish **efficient internal organization and communication systems** with City management.



Columbarium and Cremation Options





Cremation Courts and Gardens



Dave Hepburn

Jack Goodnoe – Cemetery Planning and Design

EDA Land Planning

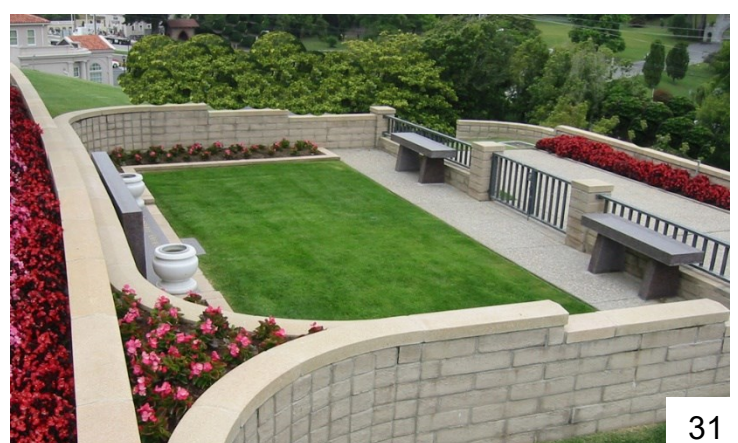


Committal Shelters and Cremation Structures





Walled, Hedge, and Bench Estate Lots



Dave Hepburn

Jack Goodnoe – Cemetery Planning and Design

EDA Land Planning



Cenotaph Memorials



Dave Hepburn

Jack Goodnoe – Cemetery Planning and Design

EDA Land Planning



Veteran's Cenotaph

