Town of Christiansburg

Sunset Cemetery Master Plan

2014

Town of Christiansburg

Sunset Cemetery Master Plan

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Section 1 – Executive Summary

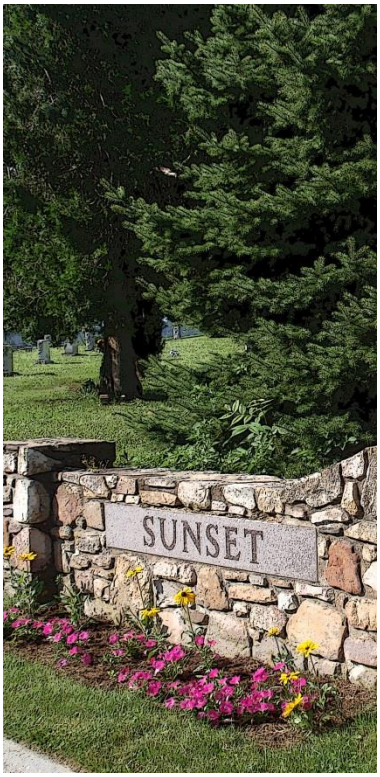
Sunset Cemetery is a visible record of the Town of Christiansburg's rich history. Unlike the town, the cemetery boundary and landuse has essentially remained unchanged since 1891. In March 2008, the Town of Christiansburg took ownership of the cemetery. Since that time, the Town Council appointed a sub-committee to prepare a long-range master plan for the cemetery. There are three purposes of the plan: 1) evaluate potential scenarios for the undeveloped sections of the cemetery, 2) identify improvements to the existing grounds, and 3) to develop an action plan. The Committee reserves the right to amend the plan as needed.

Currently, less than 25% of the 34-acre cemetery property is undeveloped. The town has a concept for continuing traditional in-ground burial; however, additional scenarios were evaluated as a component of this plan. Scenario development focused on:

- Going Up: Evaluating the potential incorporation of mausoleums and columbariums
- Inexpensive Alternatives: Evaluating potential scatter gardens and biodegradable urns
- Community atmosphere: improving the cemetery grounds and property boundary

The Cemetery Advisory Committee identified several potential improvements to the existing grounds including: historical and wayfinding signage, improving the aesthetics of the property boundary, creating a website, enhancing the existing entrances and office space, adding seating and landscaping that could be dedicated in memoriam, and constructing a new committal service shelter and columbarium infrastructure. Strategies to address improving the existing grounds are identified in Section 4 of this plan.

The Town of Christiansburg understands the ongoing commitment that will be required by citizens to maintain the existing grounds; however, the Town needs to evaluate the longevity of useful life and overall value to the community. If the Town takes no action, the projected life span of the cemetery is around 100 years and only provides space for approximately 4,000 burials. Through the Master Plan process, the Committee identified strategies to extend the cemetery's useful life by nearly three-fold and provide permanent disposition for over 20,000.



Section 2 – Introduction

2.1 The Study Area

The purpose of the Sunset Cemetery Master Plan is to identify potential scenarios for the undeveloped sections of the cemetery, identify improvements to the existing grounds, and to develop an action plan. The Study area encompasses the grounds and associated property of the Sunset Cemetery. The Cemetery is located in the southern part of Christiansburg and is surrounded by single family residential property. The map below illustrates the study area for this plan.

Map prepared by the New River Valley Planning District commission, 2013. Sources: U.S Census Bureau 2010 Block level data. VGIN Imagery 2011.

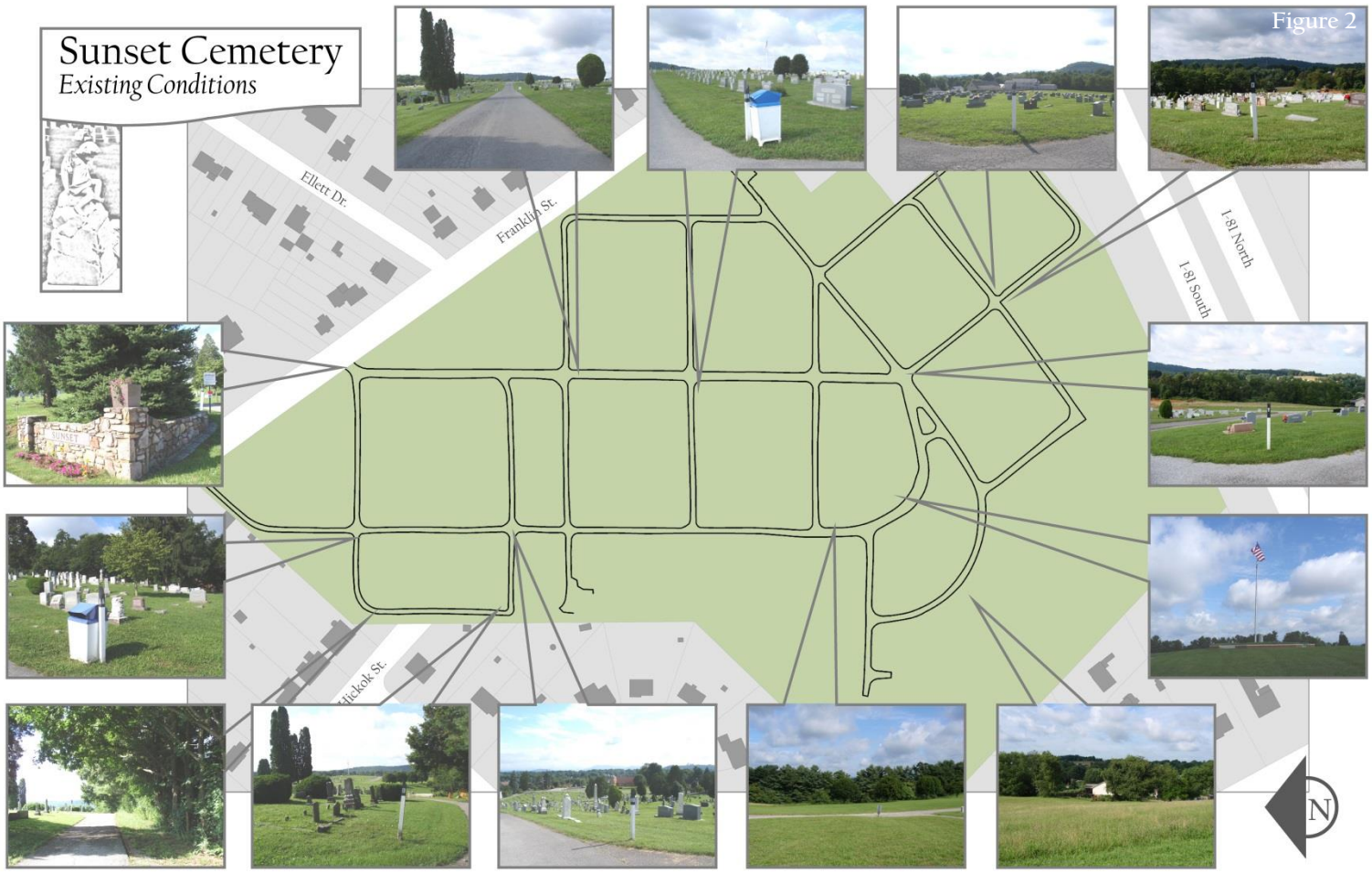
2.2 Existing Conditions

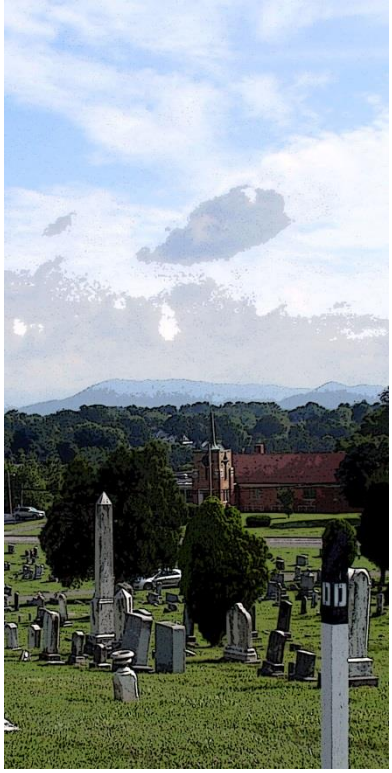
The Christiansburg Cemetery Company purchased Sunset Cemetery from Dr. Joseph Edie in 1891. Originally, the cemetery was established as a for-profit company and the stockholders were paid with a free grave plot. In 1914, the company dissolved to become a nonprofit corporation. The non-profit Board of Trustees remained active until the Town took over cemetery management in 2008.

Sunset Cemetery is rich with history. In 1808, a duel resulting in the death of two men occurred on property now owned by the cemetery. The event contributed to duels being outlawed in Virginia. One of the murderous "Black Sisters" of 1910 is buried in an unmarked grave. In addition, many prominent Christiansburg residents are buried in Sunset Cemetery including judges, mayors, Council members, attorneys, business leaders, and educators.

Today Sunset Cemetery is in relatively good condition, with the exception of general maintenance needs (buildings, roads, landscaping, etc.). In addition to addressing maintenance concerns, the cemetery has nearly sold all of the remaining plots in open sections.

The Cemetery Advisory Committee also identified a need to improve the overall grounds aesthetics and boundary including: the entrance sign, fence along property boundary, landscaping, trash receptacles, and seating.





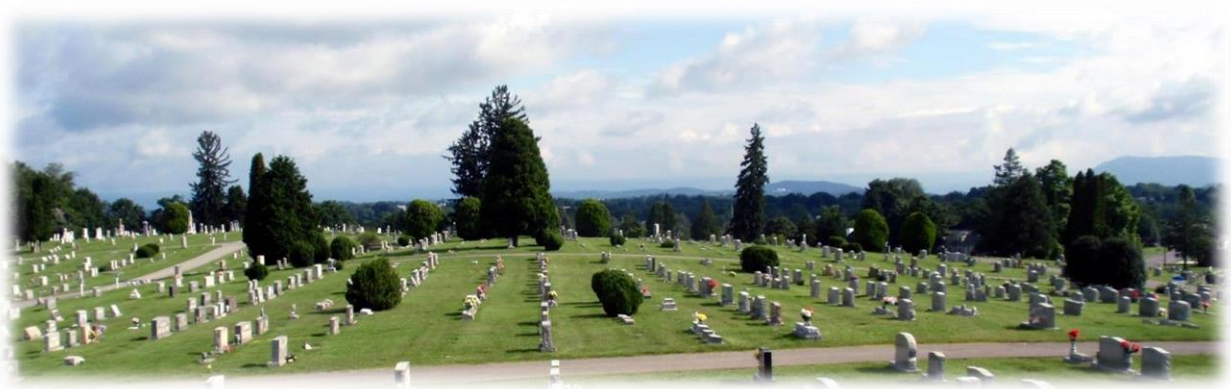
Section 3 – Planning Process

3.1 Visioning & Goal Setting

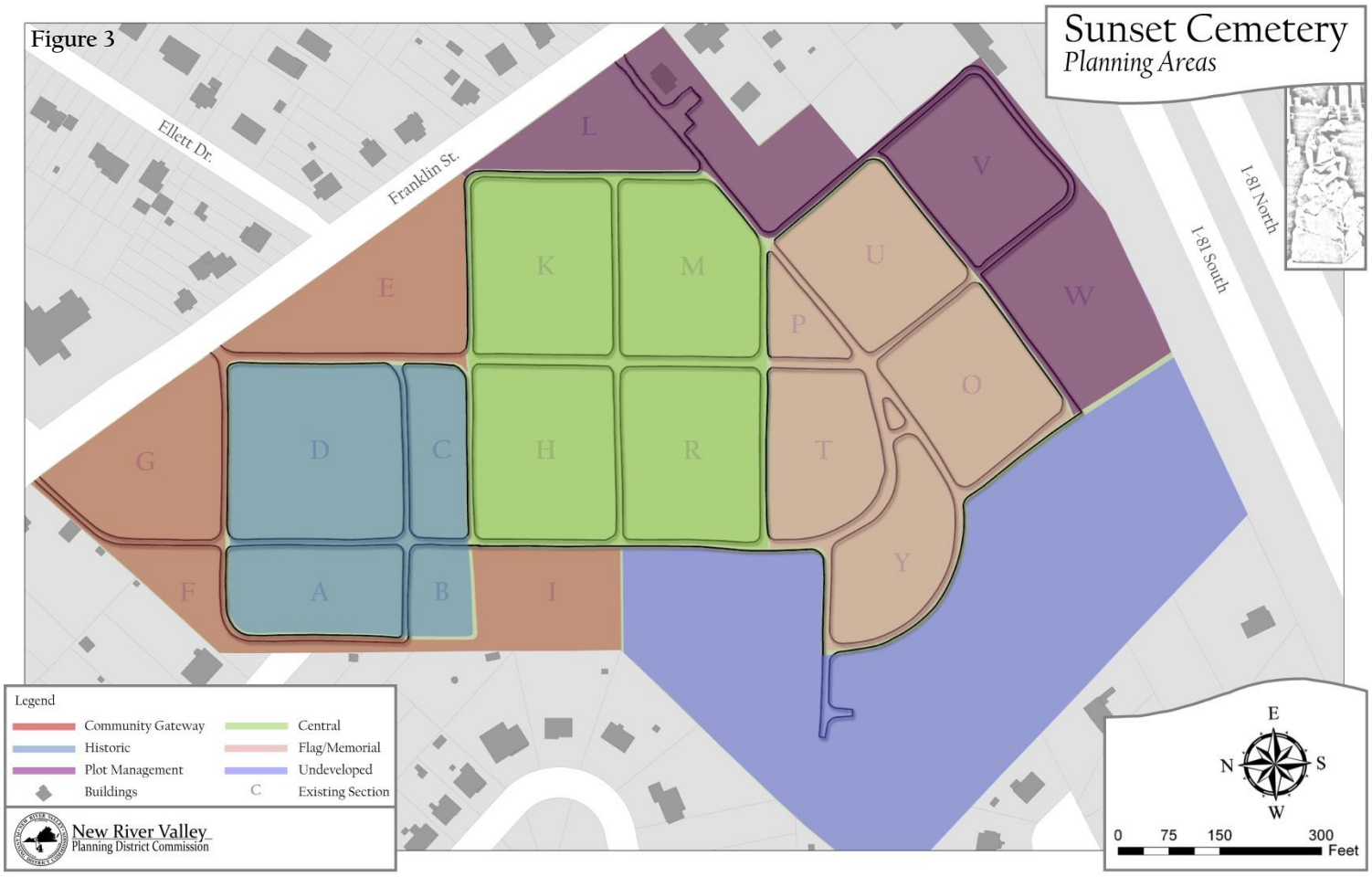
The planning process was led by a sub-committee of the Town Council. Designated as the Cemetery Advisory Committee, the group consisted of two council representatives, five appointed citizen representatives, a representative from a local funeral service, and town staff. To begin, the Committee reviewed the cemetery's existing conditions and identified the following vision statements:

1. Create an inviting, beautiful, and peaceful space that is accessible to local residents and visitors.
2. Preserve the cemetery's history; plan for lasting, respectful, and culturally appropriate final arrangements for the dead.
3. Effectively maintain the grounds and provide equitable and proper services.

Although aspirational and not readily measurable, the vision statements articulate broad deliverables for the overall cemetery master plan. Each vision statement captures and integrates ideas provided by participants on the Cemetery Advisory Committee. The Vision statements are further circumscribed by goals and strategies for specific areas of the cemetery.



Secondly, the group divided the cemetery into six unique planning areas and established specific goals & objectives for each area. Planning areas were established by grouping existing sections (A, B, C, etc.) that were completed in similar eras and that have similar needs. The map below illustrates the six planning areas evaluated in this master plan. Section 4 provides recommendations for each area.



3.2 Local Input

On August 25, 2014, the Town of Christiansburg hosted a public meeting at the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Public Library. In order to maximize public input, a mid-day (1-3 pm) and a late afternoon (4-6 pm) meeting was held. A total of 13 participants attended the meetings, as well as WSLS, Channel 10 News Reporter, Bethany Teague. A news report ran that evening, immediately following the conclusion of the public meeting sessions.

In general, meeting participants were pleased with the draft Master Plan. A few meeting participants provided some additional comments and suggestions on page 42, in the Attachments.

Section 4 – Recommendations

Notice: this section is intended to assist the Cemetery Advisory Committee with decisions concerning potential improvements and/or investments in Sunset Cemetery. The recommendations shown are for planning purposes only and may require additional planning and/or engineering professional services. All recommendations are drawn to scale and cost estimates reference the utilized source of information.

4.1 Policy & Management Strategy

Similar to other cemeteries across the nation, Sunset Cemetery is not self-sustained. Currently, the cemetery costs over $160,000[1] annually to operate and only earns $100,000 (sale of lots + burial charges + interest on perpetual funds). The cost for plots does not adequately cover ongoing maintenance needs or improvements, but how does Sunset Cemetery compare? The table below compares Sunset Cemetery's price points to other cemeteries in Virginia:

Table 1

Cemetery	Sunset Cemetery	Westview Cemetery	Mt. Hebron Cemetery	Fairmount Cemetery	Roselawn Mem. Gardens	Fair View Cemetery
Locality	Christiansburg	Blacksburg	Winchester	Bedford	Christiansburg	Roanoke
Ownership	Municipal	Municipal	Non-Profit	Municipal	Private	Not-for-Profit
Plots/Spaces	$700-$800	$750 Residents $1,500 Non-Res	$1,100-$1,250	$1,080	$795-$3,100	$1,000-$1350 $110-$135 Perpetual Care
Openings/Closings	$700 - $900	$500 - $650	$1,175	$500 -$750	$795 - $1,695	$1,295
Cremations	$300 - $500	$200 - $275		$420 - $660	$325-$800 gr.	$600
Cremation Niche	NA	NA	$1,200	$1,000-$1400	NA	$2,395-$7995
Memorials	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Bench Estates: $1,500-$4,300

[1] 2014 Sunset Cemetery operating budget, excluding capital

The price point of plots seems similar to other cemeteries in Virginia. So, would increasing the price of plots have a significant impact on closing the $60,000 shortfall? At the current burial rate (around 80 dispositions per year), the cemetery could reach potential build-out in less than 100 years. Creating burial options, in addition to traditional in-ground burial, has the potential to extend the longevity of the cemetery. Furthermore, creating burial options could extend the non-public dollar revenue stream. The table below evaluates traditional plots and columbarium against varying dispositions per year:

Table 2

Dispositions per Year	Projected Useful Life in Years - Models: 4,000 Traditional Plots + 16,000 Cremains					
	70% Plots / 30% Columbarium		60% Plots / 40% Columbarium		50% Plots / 50% Columbarium	
	Traditional Plots	Columbarium & Cremains	Traditional Plots	Columbarium & Cremains	Traditional Plots	Columbarium & Cremains
80	71	250	83	250	100	250
100	57	200	67	200	80	200
125	46	160	53	160	64	160
160	36	125	42	125	50	125

*Note: Columbarium & Cremains Activity estimated at 100% of Rate after Traditional Plots are maximized

During the planning process, the Committee evaluated the existing price points of services, discussed cost saving strategies in roadway maintenance, and identified the need to diversify service options to prolong the useful life of the cemetery. Key takeaway points that need to be included in future policy and management discussions include:

- Although a cemetery-wide price increase may not be warranted, incorporating a sliding scale for premium or preferred plots may effectively increase non-public revenue.
- The cemetery currently has 1.82 miles of roadway that could be converted to traditional plots, multipurpose paths, or landscaped areas – alleviating potential annual maintenance costs of $2,867 per 0.10 miles.
- The addition of columbarium facilities could significantly increase the cemetery's longevity by more than three-fold (71 years vs 250 years).
- Constructing a committal service shelter could create a primary service location and create an opportunity for a new office or multi-purpose facility – potentially creating additional revenue for facilitating services and activities.

Sections 4.2 through 4.7 identify specific goals, strategies, and potential improvements for each of the six planning areas.

4.2 Community Gateway Area

The Community Gateway Area includes sections E, F, G, and I. The planning area accounts for approximately 70% of the cemetery's road frontage, two out of the three entrances, and around 30% of the overall boundary bordering residential areas. The Community Gateway Area also includes the primary entrance sign to the grounds.

The Gateway Area currently has three main issues that the Cemetery Advisory Committee would like to address:

- Improving the main entrance
- Integrating signage to help visitors navigate the grounds and facilities
- Improving the property boundary aesthetics

<u>Community Gateway Area Goals & Strategies:</u>

Goal 1: Improve & Define Entrance
• Rehabilitate the existing main entrance sign • Incorporate new landscaping and architectural accents
Goal 2: Incorporate Wayfinding & Historical Information Signage
• Construct a grounds map at each entrance • Incorporate signage depicting historical events and people • Add wayfinding signage for vehicles and pedestrians
Goal 3: Improve Property Boundary Aesthetics
• Plant perennial, low maintenance trees and plants that complement the historical design of the cemetery • Develop seasonal planting beds that could be sponsored annually • Construct architectural style fence
Goal 4: Evaluate Vehicle & Pedestrian Traffic Improvements
• Identify roadways that support core traffic flow movements • Evaluate the need for potential traffic calming measures

Sunset Cemetery

Community Gateway Area

Ellett Dr.

Franklin St.

Deciduous Trees

Flowering Trees

Welcome Kiosk

Enhance Entrance

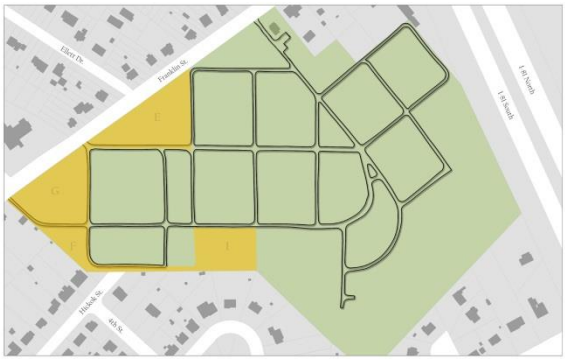
Convert to Multipurpose Trail

Memoriam Seating

Landscaped Property Boundary

Pathway Connector

Potential Water Connection



Planning Area

0 75 150 300 Feet

4.3 Historic Area

The Historic Area includes sections A, B, C, and D. The planning area is located in the north-west quadrant of the cemetery and contains the oldest plots in the cemetery. Sections A and B directly abut the property boundary and are visible from neighboring residential properties. The craftsmanship of the headstones is reflective of the late 19th century.

The Historic Area currently has three main issues that the Cemetery Advisory Committee would like to address:

- Preserving unique craftsmanship
- Integrating historical storytelling
- Improving the property boundary aesthetics

Historic Area Goals & Strategies:

Goal 1: Preserve and Restore 19th Century Craftsmanship
• Restore damaged and/or deteriorating headstones • Remove vegetation that is potentially hazardous and/or aesthetically displeasing • Incorporate new landscaping
Goal 2: Incorporate Historical Storytelling
• Incorporate signage depicting historical events and people • Incorporate technology for smartphones and web-based applications • Construct/restore pathways for self-guided walking tours
Goal 3: Incorporate Wayfinding Signage
• Add wayfinding signage for vehicles and pedestrians
Goal 4: Improve Property Boundary Aesthetics
• Construct new fence for screening • Plant indigenous and low maintenance trees for screening • Plant and/or replace flowering and vibrant deciduous trees • Create a bike/pedestrian connection to Hickok Street

Sunset Cemetery
Historic Area

Ellett Dr.

Franklin St.

Memoriam Seating

Convert to Traditional Plots

Multipurpose Trail

Flowering Trees

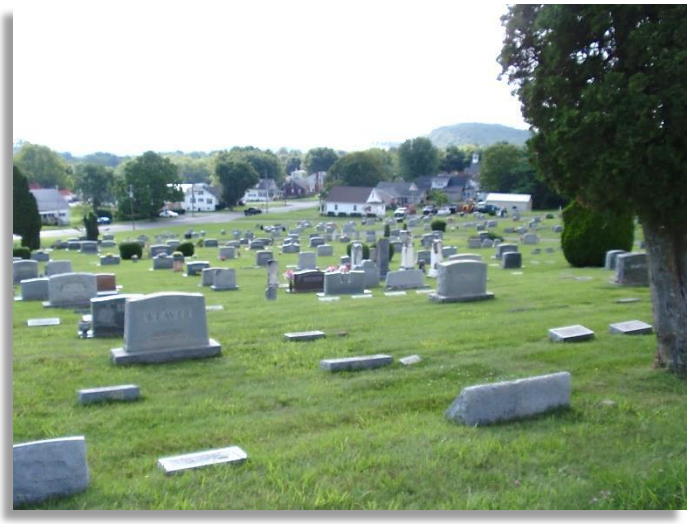
Deciduous Trees

Planning Area

0 75 150 300 Feet

4.4 Plot Management Area

The Plot Management Area includes sections L, V, and W. The planning area accounts for approximately 30% of the cemetery's road frontage, one of the three entrances, and around 30% of the overall boundary. The Plot Management Area also includes the cemetery's main office.



The Plot Management Area currently has four main issues that the Cemetery Advisory Committee would like to address:

- Improving the main office
- Improving the desirability of plots for sale
- Integrating signage to help visitors navigate the grounds and facilities
- Improving the property boundary between I-81 and the cemetery grounds

<u>Plot Management Area Goals & Strategies:</u>

Goal 1: Improving Existing Structures and Assets
• Restore or reconstruct existing main office structure • Construct formal parking area • Incorporate landscaping and seating in sections V and W • Create an interactive map, beginning with the most recent sections first
Goal 2: Incorporate Wayfinding & Historical Information Signage
• Construct a grounds map at the entrance • Incorporate signage depicting historical events and people • Add wayfinding signage for cemetery navigation
Goal 3: Improve Property Boundary
• Plant perennial, low maintenance trees and plants that complement the historical design of the cemetery • Develop seasonal planting beds that could be sponsored annually
Goal 4: Evaluate Vehicle & Pedestrian Traffic Improvements
• Identify roadways that support core traffic flow movements • Evaluate the need for potential traffic calming measures

Sunset Cemetery
Plot Management Area

Enhance Entrance

Improve Parking Area

Welcome Kiosk

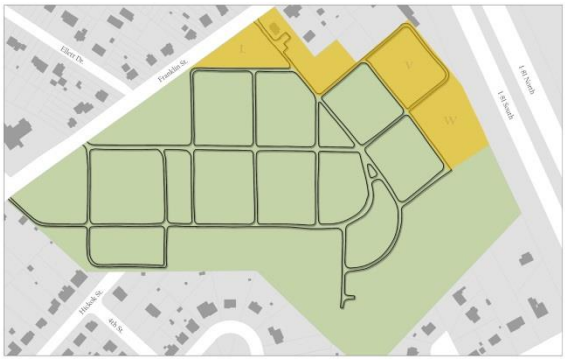
Traditional Plots

Memoriam Seating

I-81 Screening

Traditional Plots

Convert to Multi-purpose Trail

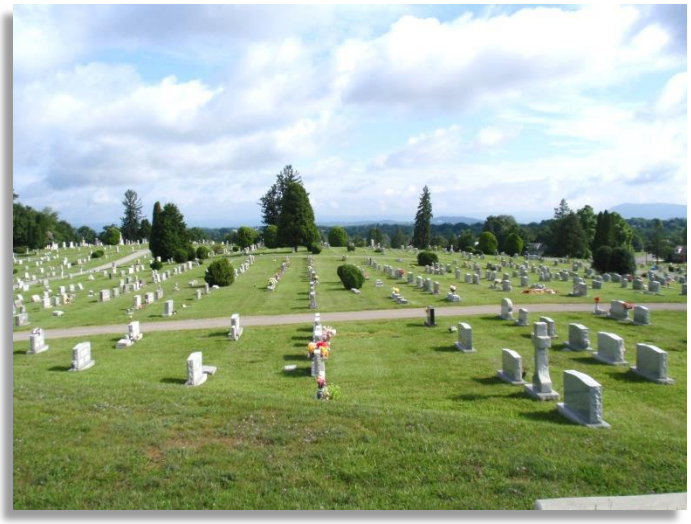


Planning Area

0 75 150 300 Feet

4.5 Central Area

The Central Area includes sections H, K, M, and R. The largest of the planning areas, the Central Area is surrounded by and borders the other five planning areas. Consisting of four nearly equally sized rectangles, the Central Area is relatively symmetrical and offers the least undulation of all six planning areas.



The Central Area currently has three main issues that the Cemetery Advisory Committee would like to address:

- Creating focal points that engage visitors
- Reducing traffic speed along north-south corridors
- Incorporating wayfinding signage

Central Area Goals & Strategies:

Goal 1: Creating Focal Points that Engage Visitors
• Incorporate new landscaping and architectural accents (fence, lighting, etc.) • Incorporate signage depicting historical events and people • Provide seating
Goal 2: Reducing Traffic Speed
• Narrow corridors • Evaluate the use of speed humps or textured pavement at pedestrian crossings
Goal 3: Incorporating Wayfinding Signage
• Add wayfinding signage for cemetery navigation

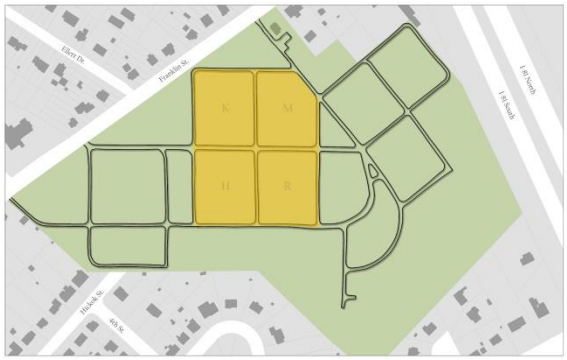
Sunset Cemetery
Central Area

Franklin St.

Flowering Trees

Deciduous Trees

Memoriam Seating



Planning Area

0 75 150 300 Feet

4.6 Flag/Memorial Area

The Flag Area includes sections O, P, T, U, and Y. The Flag Area is currently the focal point of the cemetery. An American flag rests on the highest crest of Sunset Cemetery and features a small memorial for military veterans who made the supreme sacrifice. Approximately half of the roadways and parking areas are paved and the other half has a gravel surface.

The Flag Area currently has three main issues that the Cemetery Advisory Committee would like to address:

- Preserve and improve the Flag Memorial
- Provide non-traditional burial plots and memorialization structures
- Accommodate pedestrians

<u>Flag/Memorial Area Goals & Strategies:</u>

Goal 1: Preserve & Improve the Flag Memorial
• Pave the parking area • Enhance lighting
Goal 2: Provide Non-Traditional Burial Plots
• Construct columbarium structures • Identify in-ground ash burial sites • Construct ash scattering garden
Goal 3: Accommodate Pedestrians
• Construct pathways • Add seating

Sunset Cemetery

Flag/Memorial Area

New Parking Lot

Flowering Trees

Deciduous Trees

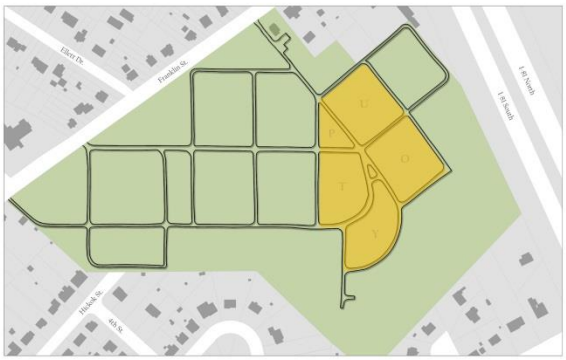
Multipurpose Trail

Memoriam Seating

Traditional Plots

Ash Garden

Columbarium



Planning Area

0 75 150 300 Feet

4.7 Undeveloped Area

The Undeveloped Area is located in the southwest quadrant of the cemetery. The area includes approximately 30% of the property boundary and is not yet divided into separate sections.

Preliminary engineering plans were prepared in 2001. If the plan were implemented it would increase the number of available traditional burial plots and expand the roadway network.

The Undeveloped Area currently has three main issues that the Cemetery Advisory Committee would like to address:

- Expanding burial options
- Opening new sections
- Accommodating funeral services

<u>Undeveloped Area Goals & Strategies:</u>

Goal 1: Expand Burial Options
• Construct outdoor columbarium niches • Construct in-ground urn interment section • Construct scattering garden
Goal 2: Open New Sections
• Complete interior roadway network • Divide undeveloped area into individual sections • Explore opportunities to connect to Town water system
Goal 3: Accommodate Funeral Services
• Construct a new building that can accommodate all services

Sunset Cemetery
Undeveloped Area

Ash Garden

Columbarium

Committal Service Shelter

Columbarium

Traditional Plots

New Roadway

Multipurpose Trail

Columbarium

Traditional Plots

Traditional Plots

Traditional Plots

Flowering Trees

Deciduous Trees

Evergreens

Potential Water Connection

Planning Area

0 75 150 300 Feet

Section 5 – Implementation

5.1 Action Plan

The following action plan identifies investments, potential return on investments, and a multi-phased cemetery redevelopment plan. Prior to evaluating potential investments, the Cemetery Advisory Committee reviewed and acknowledged an existing budget shortfall. In addition, the Committee evaluated potential projects that yielded either a return on investment or added value to the community. Potential projects and investments included:

- Historical and wayfinding signage
- Improving the aesthetics of the property boundary
- Creating a website and supporting interactive map
- Enhancing the existing entrances and office space
- Adding seating and landscaping that could be dedicated in memoriam
- Constructing a new committal service shelter and columbarium infrastructure

Section 4.1 outlined the existing budget shortfall of around $60,000 annually. The existing shortfall excludes capital investments such as equipment purchases and roadway maintenance. Capital investments over the last three years have averaged nearly $70,000 per year[2]. Roadway maintenance, for the 1.82 miles of pavement, is estimated around an additional $50,000 per year[3]. The existing $60,000 annual shortfall could more than triple to $180,000 per year – in order to keep the grounds in pristine condition.

[2] Town of Christiansburg Budget Worksheet, Year Ended 6/30/2014, Exhibit 7, page 125: $6,000 (2012) + $108,000 (2013) + $93,000 (2014) = $207,000 for three years or $69,000/yr.

[3] Victoria Transport Policy Institute. *Transportation Cost and Benefit Analysis II*, Section 5.4.3, Operations and Maintenance for: routine maintenance, snow removal and equipment maintenance: 0.10 miles estimated at $1,267.20 per year + replacement cost of $32,112 (20 years) = $2,872.80 per 0.1 miles per year maintenance or $51, 997.68 for 1.82 miles per year.

The Cemetery Advisory Committee evaluated strategies to address the existing and forecasted budget shortfall. The first strategy involved evaluating potential changes to the cost of services. The table below provides an overview of existing and potential revenue based on existing services. If sales slowly increased at a rate of 5% every five years, the total number of sales would need to double in order to significantly contribute to the existing budget shortfall.

Table 3

	Sales per Service			Projected Revenue per Year			
	Traditional Burials	*Cremains Burials*	*Plots Sold*	*2013*	*2018*	*2023*	*2028*
Current	76	4	36	$91,300	$95,865	$100,658	$105,691
Potential Increase	95	5	45	$114,125	$119,831	$125,823	$132,114
	120	6	56	$143,350	$150,518	$158,043	$165,946
	155	8	72	$185,000	$194,250	$203,963	$214,161

*Note: 95% Burials, 5 % Cremations at Rates: $800 Plots, $800 Openings/Closings, and $425 Cremains Burial.
Future Revenue forecast assumes a 5% rate increase every 5 years

The second strategy involved evaluating potential investments and opportunities. The table below provides an overview of potential investments, typical lifespan, and the potential "break-even" point. Each investment compliments the overall vision of the Cemetery.

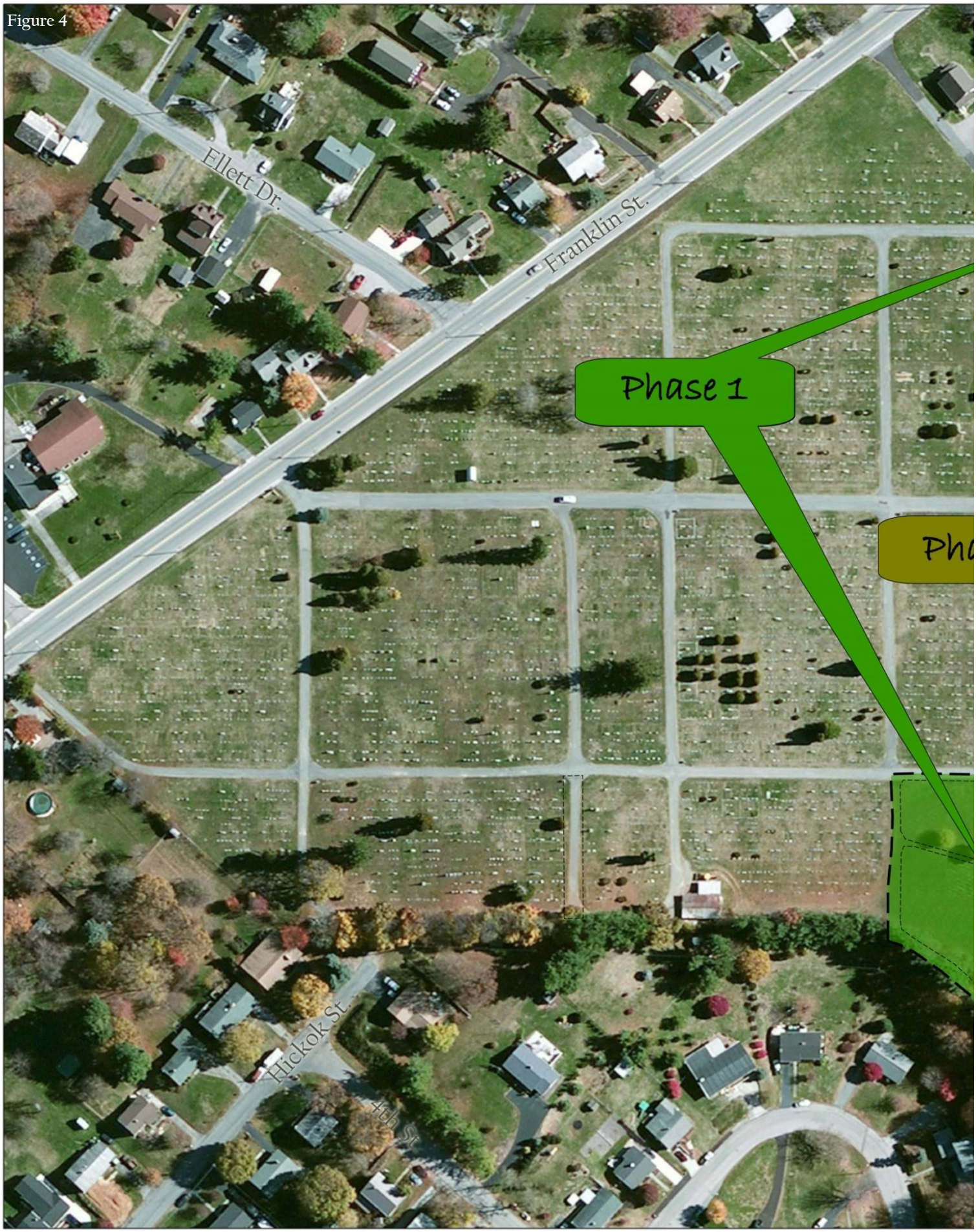
Table 4

Potential Investment	*Initial Cost*	*Typical Life (Years)*	*Potential Return*	*Break-Even/Return*
Committal Shelter	$100-$250 per square foot[4]	50 - 80 yrs[5]	Rent for Services Dual-purpose as Office Dual-purpose as Chapel	Construction: 2,000 sf = $200,000 - $500,000 Need to generate additional: $4,000 - $6,250 per Year
Columbarium	$200 -$325 per niche[6]	80 - 110 yrs	Price point: $625 - $2,000 per niche 16,000 Potential Niches: $10,000,000 - $32,000,000	Construction: $3,200,000 - $5,200,000 % Pays for Construction: $200 - $325 @ $600 = 33% - 54% $200 - $325 @ $2,000 = 10% - 16% Could generate additional: $60,000 - $240,000 per Year
Memorialization	Investment by Community	Ongoing	Benches, signage, walkway stones, landscaping, etc.	Set Annual Target/Theme: $5,000 - $20,000 per Year
Pavement	$16,000 per .05 miles	20 yrs	Circulation for visitors Premium plots Neighborhood walking	Current: 1.82 Miles Replacement: $582,400 Annual Maintenance: $23,000 Need to generate additional: $52,000 per Year

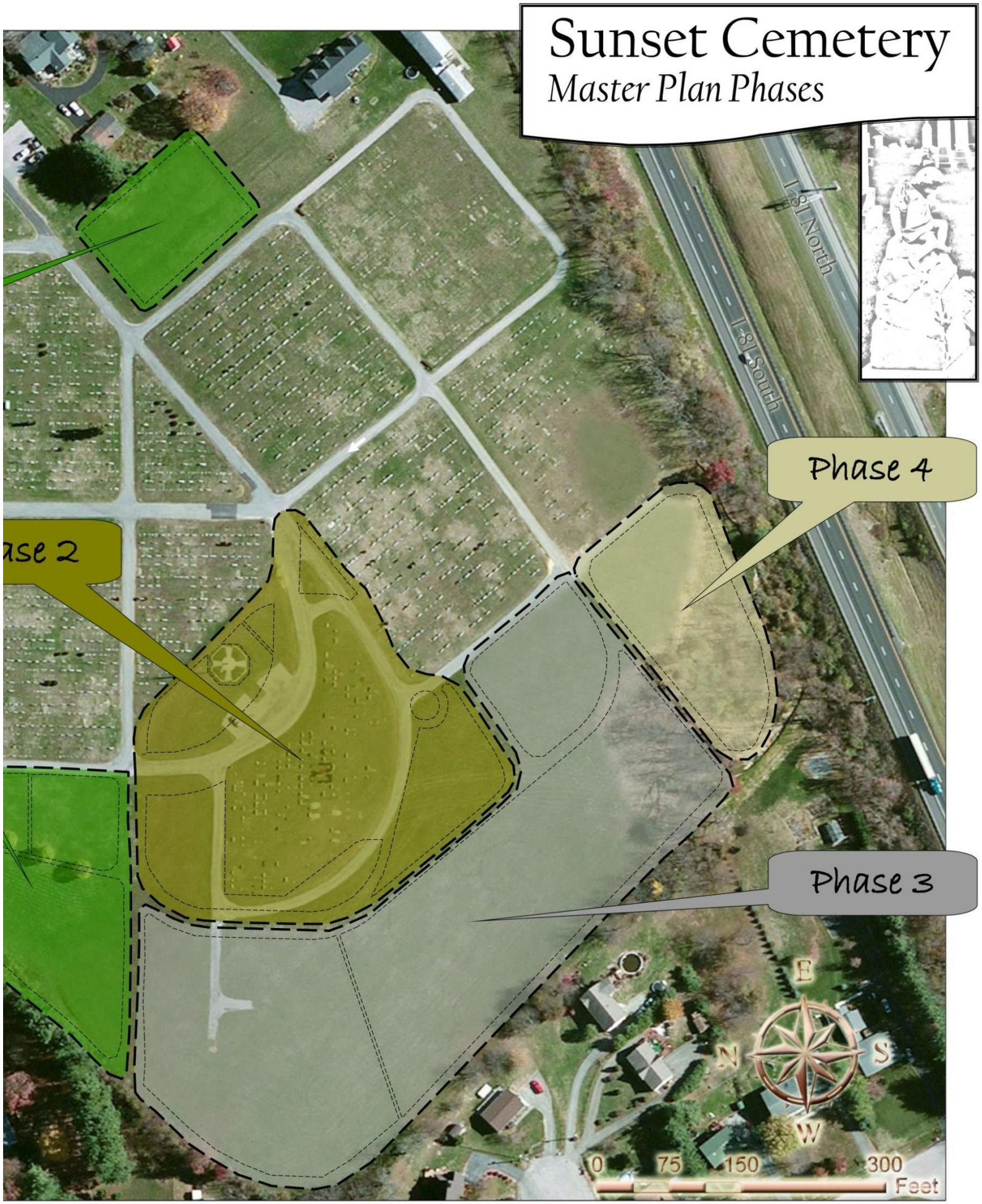
The next section illustrates a conceptual phased Action Plan developed by the Committee.

[4] U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Cemetery Components. Retrieved from: http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/grants/shelter.asp
[5] Retrieved from: Retrieved from: http://www.costmodelling.com/downloads/BuildingComponentLifeExpectancy.pdf
[6] U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Cemetery Components. Retrieved from: http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/grants/columbarium_cremain_burials.asp

Figure 4



Map prepared by the New River Valley Pla
U.S Census Bureau 2010 Block



NNING DISTRICT COMMISSION, 2013. SOURCES:
LEVEL DATA. VGIN IMAGERY 2011.

Figure 5

Map prepared by the New River Valley Plan
U.S Census Bureau 2010 Block

Sunset Cemetery
Master Plan Phase 1

NNING DISTRICT COMMISSION, 2013. SOURCES:
LEVEL DATA. VGIN IMAGERY 2011.

Figure 6

Map prepared by the New River Valley Plan
U.S Census Bureau 2010 Block

Sunset Cemetery

Master Plan Phase 2

NNING DISTRICT COMMISSION, 2013. SOURCES:
LEVEL DATA. VGIN IMAGERY 2011.

Figure 7

Map prepared by the New River Valley Plan
U.S Census Bureau 2010 Block

Sunset Cemetery

Master Plan Phase 3

NNING DISTRICT COMMISSION, 2013. SOURCES:
LEVEL DATA. VGIN IMAGERY 2011.

Figure 8

Map prepared by the New River Valley Plan
U.S Census Bureau 2010 Block

Sunset Cemetery

Master Plan Phase 4

NNING DISTRICT COMMISSION, 2013. SOURCES:
LEVEL DATA. VGIN IMAGERY 2011.

5.2 Investment Plan

The following estimates are based on the Section 5.1 Action Plan illustrations for each phase:

Phase 1 Estimate

Investment	*Qty.*	*Cost per Unit*	*Total*
Enhance Main Entrance	2	$10,000	$20,000
Flowering Trees	15	$120	$1,800
Deciduous Trees	15	$80	$1,200
Evergreen Trees	4	$80	$320
Pavement Convert to Trail	825 ft.	$4	$3,300
Multipurpose Trail	950 ft.	$12	$11,400
Committal Service Shelter	1	$350,000	$350,000
Columbarium Facility	2000 niches	$275	$550,000
Traditional Plots Earthwork	750 plots	$10	$7,500
Engineering & Surveying	1	$100,000	$100,000
		Totals:	$1,045,520

If the Traditional Plots and Columbarium niches are priced at $850 each, the Town would need to sell 44.7% of the plots and niches to recoup all Phase 1 costs. An additional 2,000 columbarium niches can be added within the Phase I development area. Once constructed, the niches could recoup the initial investment once 32.4% of the niches were sold.

Phase 2 Estimate

Investment	*Qty.*	*Cost per Unit*	*Total*
Enhance Flag Memorial	1	$10,000	$10,000
Flowering Trees	23	$120	$2,760
Deciduous Trees	12	$80	$960
Evergreen Trees	71	$80	$5,680
Pavement Convert to Trail	1600 ft.	$4	$6,400
Multipurpose Trail	950 ft.	$12	$11,400
New Road/Parking	1	$60,000	$60,000
Ash gardens	2	$15,000	$30,000
Columbarium Facility	4000 niches	$275	$1,100,000
Traditional Plots Earthwork	250 plots	$10	$2,500
Engineering & Surveying	1	$75,000	$75,000
		Totals:	$1,304,700

If the Traditional Plots and Columbarium niches are priced at $850 each, the Town would need to sell 36.1% of the plots and niches to recoup all Phase II costs. An additional 4,000 columbarium niches can be added within the Phase 2 development area. Again, the break-even point would be at 32.4%.

Phase 3 Estimate

Investment	*Qty.*	*Cost per Unit*	*Total*
Flowering Trees	20	$120	$2,400
Deciduous Trees	16	$80	$1,280
Traditional Plots Earthwork	2500 plots	$10	$25,000
Engineering & Surveying	1	$50,000	$50,000
		Totals:	$78,680

If traditional plots are priced at $850 each, the Town would need to sell 3.7% of the plots to recoup all Phase 3 costs. An additional 4,000 columbarium niches or 600 infant traditional plots could also be added within the Phase 3 development area.

Phase 4 Estimate

Investment	*Qty.*	*Cost per Unit*	*Total*
Traditional Plots Earthwork	500 plots	$10	$5,000
Engineering & Surveying	1	$15,000	$15,000
		Totals:	$20,000

If traditional plots are priced at $850 each, the Town would need to sell 4.7% of the plots to recoup all Phase 4 costs. Once Phase 4 is complete, the Town may need to consider redeveloping underutilized pavement into additional space for disposition.

5.3 Conclusion

After the cemetery reaches capacity, the Town will become responsible for annual maintenance needs without the benefit of revenue generated from sales. The 2014 Master Plan provides information to assist the Town with investment discussions. With existing sections approaching capacity, the Town needs to decide how to best utilize the remaining undeveloped sections of the cemetery. The next step involves working with the community to determine:

- Plan implementation: the estimated cost for potential improvements shown in this plan is $2.5M. Implementing the plan could extend the longevity of the cemetery's useful life from 75 years to around 300 years. The Town could capture a larger percentage of cremains burials, potentially generating an additional $25,000 per year. In addition, the Town could collect fees for utilizing the Committal Service Shelter that could generate an additional $27,500 per year. In order to recoup initial construction costs, the Town would need to sell approximately 2,900 plots and niches; however, ongoing maintenance may increase the overall annual budget needs for the cemetery.

- No action: the 8.45 acres of undeveloped area can accommodate an estimated 4,000 traditional plots. Maximum capacity could be reached in less than 100 years. Factoring in operating and capital costs, the Town would continue to lose an estimated $180,000 per year or $18M over the course of its estimated life span.

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Attachments

Plan Contributors

- Alice Jones, Cemetery Advisory Committee
- Ann Carter, Cemetery Advisory Committee
- Adam Carpenetti, Town of Christiansburg
- Brad Mecham, New River Valley PDC
- David Battreall, New River Valley PDC
- Eddie Trump, Funeral Service
- Elijah Sharp, New River Valley PDC
- F. Spencer Hall, Cemetery Advisory Committee
- Jonnell Sanciangco, New River Valley PDC
- Kevin Byrd, New River Valley PDC
- Kevin Poff, Town of Christiansburg
- Pamela Hale, Cemetery Advisory Committee
- R. Cord Hall, Christiansburg Town Council
- Rex Germany, Cemetery Advisory Committee
- Steve Huppert, Christiansburg Town Council

Map prepared by the New River Valley Plan
U.S Census Bureau 2010 Block

Sunset Cemetery
Master Plan 2014

NNING DISTRICT COMMISSION, 2013. SOURCES:
LEVEL DATA. VGIN IMAGERY 2011.

2014 Report

Existing Conditions

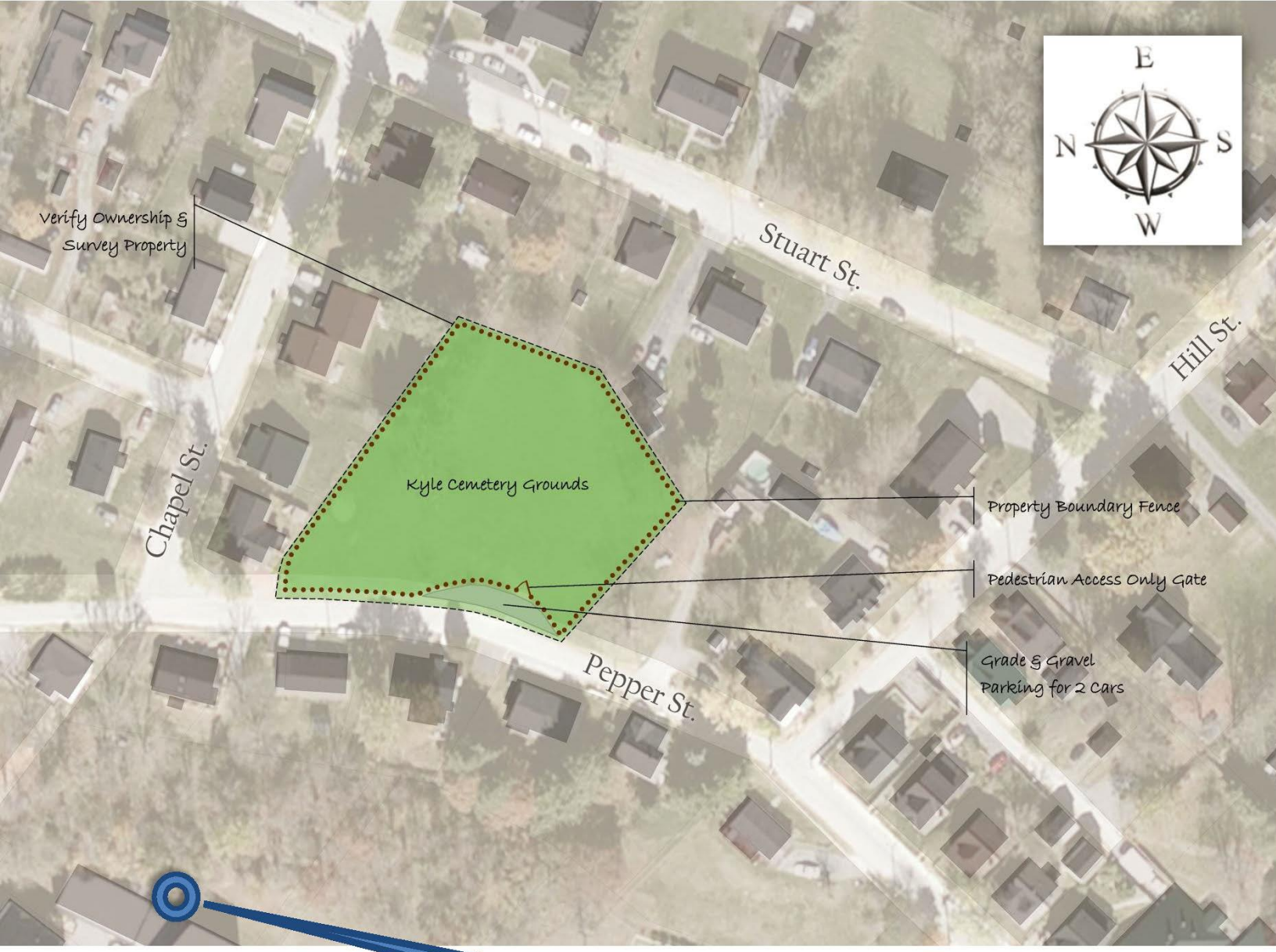
According to FindAGrave.com, Kyle Cemetery is also known as the Old Methodist Burying Ground and the Tallant Cemetery. There are 24 known graves in the cemetery, each dating back to the late 1800s and the early 1900s. The property boundary is not clearly marked and the plots are not easy to locate. The earliest known burial was in 1831 and the last known burial was in 1946.

The property has changed hands over the years and has recently been left to the Town for maintenance needs. Most of the head stones are damaged or overgrown with vegetation. In addition, adjacent property owners use the cemetery to store personal property and as a secondary access to their homes. Stones, which were once erect, now lie flat. Others are sheared in half due to weathering elements.

As a 19th – century cemetery, Kyle Cemetery is located near the center of town. Remaining inactive for the last three generations, the cemetery is no longer maintained by a religious institution, community organization, or private entity. The grounds occupy land within a moderately dense residential neighborhood.

Although the grounds haven't been utilized in recent years, the Town has an opportunity to incorporate Kyle Cemetery into their public cemetery inventory. The town also recently acquired Sunset Cemetery, which could reach capacity in less than 100 years. Combining both cemetery's undeveloped areas may generate supporting revenue to maintain both sites for years to come.

This report identifies a few strategies to begin reestablishing this historic site.



Recommendations

Strategy 1: Establish Boundaries

- Research and verify ownership of property
- Survey property

Strategy 2: Enhance Grounds

- Construct a fence along the property boundary
- Grade & gravel existing bank to provide sufficient parking for 2 cars
- Install a pedestrian only gate at the cemetery entrance

Strategy 3: Prepare for the Future

- Locate existing grave sites (potentially utilize ground penetrating radar)
- Identify undeveloped areas
- Develop long-term master plan

Implementation

The following section identifies potential investments and a multi-phased cemetery redevelopment plan. Understanding that Kyle Cemetery currently does not provide any revenue, the redevelopment plan focuses on the conservative strategies outlined in the previous section. A potential phased approach may include:

Timeframe	Task	Who	Cost	Benefit(s)
Phase 1 (1-2 years)	Verify ownership	Town Staff	$0	Identify responsible party
	Survey property	Contractor	$1000	Delineate boundary
	Develop/record revised plat	Contractor	$2,500	Update public records
Phase 2 (2-4 years)	Construct property fence	Town Staff	$15/ft.	Prohibit alternative uses
	Parking for 2 cars	Town Staff	$700 (gravel)	Accommodate visitation
	Install pedestrian access gate	Town Staff	$250	Restrict access
Phase 3 (4-6 years)	Locate existing graves	Town/RU	Unknown	Undeveloped areas + student project
	Develop plan for undeveloped areas	Contractor	$10,000	Sell plots
	Reset head stones	Community Org.	Unknown	Restoration

Public Comments

Add benches! Pave existing roads. Improve the elevation change at the entrance near office!

August 25th, Public Meeting Recorded Comment

If a columbarium replaces the shrubs that the Craft family donated, how would those families access it? I have a plot next to that space and walk over graves to get to it. Many more would need to do the same if no pathway was designated

August 25th, Public Meeting Recorded Comment

I have 5 spaces in Lot Y, located on the back lower side next to the dirt/gravel road. Would like to see that road paved. Also concerned about walking trails, would this bring bikes and skateboards from kids when there is no one in the office on duty? Concerned about damage to headstones.

August 25th, Public Meeting Recorded Comment

I would like to thank all the members of the committee for serving the town's citizens in this way. I would also like to compliment the committee in planning for the future.

First the positives: 1) I like the idea of additional landscaping improvements and screening. They will definitely enhance the cemetery. I trust that some of the landscaping will also be screening the dumpster. The Town has an ordinance that requires dumpsters to be screened from view of public streets, but yet the Town is not in compliance with the cemetery's dumpster. 2) Laying out the free space for additional plots is needed and having those spaces be aligned to face east is appropriate in keeping with tradition. 3) I agree with the need for a columbarium. I would encourage the committee to start out on a small scale initially, and build additional columbarium space only as the demand arises. 4) The additional parking near the flagpole would be beneficial. 5) The Ash Garden sounds like it may be a useful addition if it can be constructed with minimal cost; yet I have not heard anyone mention that it would be useful to have one.

My concern: I am concerned with the proposal to convert some of the existing road system into traditional plots and multipurpose trails. The present road system seems to work fine and is convenient. Having lived in front of the cemetery for twenty years, my observation is that the majority of visitors are senior citizens. It would be difficult for many of them to have a longer walk to visit their loved one's grave. Walkers, bike riders, and cars co-exist on these roadways now and I do not see a reason to change that. I know that it has been several years, but I learned to ride my bike on those roadways and always felt safe there. I would urge the committee to very carefully consider any changes to the existing roads and not to make any hasty decisions in this regards.

September 7th, Public Comment received by e-mail