
APPENDIX M

PROJECT NEWSLETTERS

FIVE

FIVE HISTORIC CEMETERIES.
FIVE TEAM PARTNERS.
FIVE COMMUNITY MEETINGS.
HUNDREDS OF STAKEHOLDERS.
ONE MASTER PLAN.

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN CEMETERY MASTER PLAN

Issue 1, May 2014



Next Community Meeting
Thursday, June 26, 2014
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Northwest Recreation Center
2913 Northland Drive
Austin, TX 78757



Master Plan Kicks Off

The City of Austin held the first community meeting for the Cemetery Master Plan on Wednesday, April 30, 2014, at the Austin Public Library’s Carver branch in East Austin. The master plan project, which officially began in March, will include a total of five meetings as part of an extensive community outreach and engagement effort.

The April 30 meeting was well-attended, with nearly 50 participants from various neighborhoods and several community organizations. PARD project coordinator Kim McKnight welcomed everyone and introduced City staff. Attendees learned about the project plan, met the consultant team, and provided feedback, including questions and comments. The next meeting will be held on June 26 at the Northwest Recreation Center. Everyone is invited to attend and participate.



What is a Master Plan?

The term *master plan* is commonly used by city planners to describe a document that provides a long-term framework for future activity. The word *master*, in this context, indicates that the plan is comprehensive and that it includes the community’s goals for itself as well as a clear plan for achieving them. Master plans often assemble large amounts of data, which are then organized into a format that make them easy to use.

The process of creating a master plan includes consulting with the public, particularly those *stakeholders* who have a strong interest in the project or who are likely to be affected by the project results. Master plans also solicit the opinions of experts and include their recommendations.

The purpose of the Austin Cemetery Master Plan is to provide the City with guidance for the preservation and development of the five historic municipal cemeteries by examining the condition of the cemeteries, establishing goals for the cemeteries, and providing an Implementation Guide to meet those goals.

Master plans are designed to evolve over time, as conditions change. Rather than simply prescribing a solution or direction, the Austin Cemetery Master Plan will include guidelines to help the City as new opportunities or challenges arise in the future.

Contents

The Austin Cemetery Master Plan will include:

- The history of all five city-owned cemeteries
- Inventory and condition assessment of all above-ground features
- Preservation and conservation analysis and recommendations
- Site analysis and complete landscape plan for each cemetery
- Going-forward plan for addressing policy and funding concerns
- GIS database and maps
- Survey, condition assessment, and recommendations for the treatment of cemetery trees

Meet the Project Team



Mason Miller
AmaTerra Environmental, Inc.
Project Manager
GIS Mapping, Archaeology



Laura Knott
John Milner Associates, Inc.
Principal Investigator
Landscape Architecture



Steph McDougal
McDoux Preservation LLC
Historic Preservation Consultant
Research, Public Engagement



Davey Tree Service
Tree Survey



Help for Cemetery Trees

Arborists and GIS mapping pros team up to create a database of locations and conditions of cemetery trees

It's no secret that Austin was hit hard by the severe drought that began in 2011. The Texas A&M Forest Service estimated that more than 5 million urban trees were lost due to drought — either directly or because they became more susceptible to disease or infestation as a result of drought-related stress. Live oak and red oak trees are also threatened by a contagious disease called oak wilt.

In order to assess the health of the trees in Austin's municipal cemeteries, a team of arborists and analysts are working together to create a GIS (Geographic Information System) database and maps that show the locations and conditions of many of these trees. Individual trees larger than two inches in diameter (in open areas) or more than eight inches in diameter (in forested areas) are

tagged and numbered, and any health condition, damage, or threat is recorded. The team is also mapping the location of stumps where dead or diseased trees have already been removed. Once all of that information is entered into a database, maps can be generated to help Austin's Urban Forestry staff identify issues and prepare treatment plans to preserve cemetery trees.

Fast Facts about Tree Surveys

- ☼ The numbered tags used to identify trees for the cemetery tree survey are attached with special aluminum nails that will not hurt the tree or damage a saw if the tree has to be removed later.
- ☼ A tag *does not* mean that a tree has been marked for removal.

- ☼ Surveyors are recording more than 10 attributes for each tree, including species, health, and diameter. To speed up their work, arborists use a special "diameter at breast height" or DBH tape, which measures circumference and automatically converts it to diameter.



- ☼ The surveyors are using highly accurate GPS systems to record the locations of trees within 8–20 inches of accuracy. Standard GPS units are only accurate to about 40 feet.



Recognizing & Protecting Historic Cemeteries

It's easy to become confused by the many different ways that historic cemeteries can be officially recognized. And only one of these historic designations protect the cemeteries.

Some of Austin's municipal cemeteries are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and as Historic Texas Cemeteries, and two are protected as City of Austin Historic Landmarks and. Historical subject markers from the Texas Historical Commission are also found in some Austin cemeteries.

It is possible for a cemetery to be officially designated as "historic" at the state, local, and/or federal levels. Some of these designations provide mostly recognition, while others include regulatory oversight by a government agency. Each type of historic designation has its own specific implications for the property owner (in this case, the City of Austin). This article will explain the different ways that historic cemeteries can be recognized and, in some cases, protected for future generations.

The National Register of Historic Places

A listing on the National Register of Historic Places recognizes, but does not protect, a historic place.

In order to be listed on the National Register, someone must prepare a nomination form that documents the reasons why a cemetery is *historically significant*. The National Park Service, which manages the National Register, defines significance as:

- A. Association with events that contributed to the broad patterns of our history
- B. Association with the lives of people who are significant in our past
- C. Containing monuments, artworks, buildings, or landscapes that are good representatives of their style or period or are works of a master designer, artist, or craftsman

- D. Having yielded or being likely to yield information important in prehistory or history, such as material culture or social history

Several other special criteria are used by National Register staff at the Texas Historical Commission to evaluate and justify the significance of historic cemeteries.

While this may seem complicated, historic preservation specialists and other historians have the training and knowledge to successfully complete the research necessary to prepare National Register nominations.

Oakwood Cemetery and Oakwood Cemetery Annex are already listed on the National Register.

The Master Plan project will include much of the background research needed to help prepare National Register nominations for Austin's historic cemeteries in the future.

(continued on next page)

Historic Texas Cemeteries

The Texas Historical Commission recognizes burial grounds with the Historic Texas Cemeteries (HTC) marker. Over time, some cemeteries — especially smaller graveyards in rural areas — may become difficult to locate. The HTC program is designed to make sure that present and future owners of the land adjacent to the cemetery are aware of its existence.

If a cemetery is approved for the HTC designation, the applicant is required to record an official Declaration of Dedication with the county clerk's office, which transfers with the sale of the property. The HTC designation does not restrict the property owner's use of the land adjacent to the cemetery or the operation of the cemetery itself. A cemetery designated as an HTC may display an official HTC marker. Austin Memorial Park and Oakwood Cemetery are currently designated as Historic Texas Cemeteries.

Texas Historical Markers

Another, separate Texas Historical Commission program uses historical "subject" markers to commemorate people who made lasting contributions to the State of Texas, community organizations, or businesses, and to recognize events that changed the course of local or state history. Some of these markers are found within cemeteries. For example, Oakwood Cemetery contains historical markers at the grave of Susanna Dickinson, who (with her infant daughter) was one of the only two survivors of the Alamo, and at the grave of Major William "Buck" Walton, who served as the Texas attorney general.



Which marker is which?
This medallion only appears
on Historic Texas Cemetery
markers, not subject markers.

City Historic Landmarks

The City of Austin's historic preservation ordinance makes it possible for the City to preserve and manage historic properties through zoning overlays. It has used this authority to designate Oakwood Cemetery and Oakwood Cemetery Annex as City Historic Landmarks. As a result, before any new construction or changes can be made at Oakwood or Oakwood Annex, the City Landmarks Commission must approve the project.

Since most burial plots have been sold and few new internments are taking place at Oakwood or Oakwood Annex Cemeteries, the types of changes likely to be requested are relatively few. Restoring or rehabilitating the 1914 Chapel building, fences, or gates would require Commission approval, as would changes to infrastructure, such as the drainage channel or roadways.

Ordinary maintenance and repair activities do not require approval by the Landmarks Commission.

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Assistant Directors:

Kimberly McNeeley

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Project Coordinator

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We Want You! to Participate in the Master Plan Process

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- ✿ Sign up to receive this newsletter via email, or look for it at your local library, community center, or senior center. Share it with your friends and neighbors.
- ✿ Sign up for the Austin Cemetery Master Plan email list to get up-to-the-minute information right in your inbox. To subscribe, send an email to Kim.McKnight@AustinTexas.gov.
- ✿ Participate in Speak Up Austin! Surveys: COMING SOON!
- ✿ Visit the Austin Cemetery Master Plan website at <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/cemetery-master-plan>
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Issue 2, June 2014



Next Meeting

Saturday, August 23, 2014

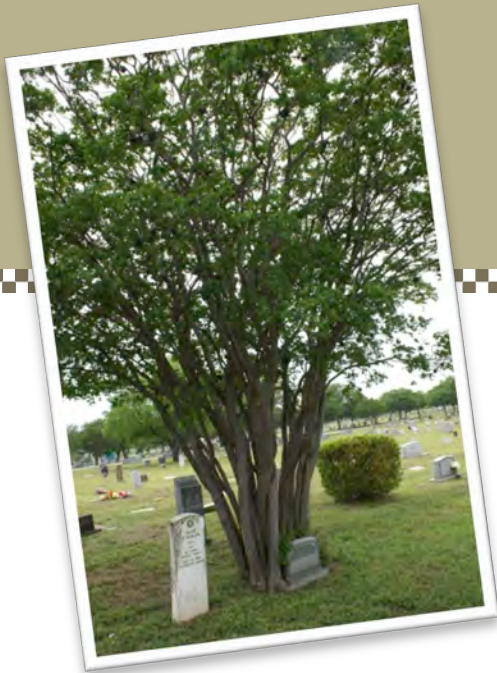
10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Austin Public Library, Ruiz Branch
1600 Grove Blvd., Austin, TX 78741

Making Progress

The Cemetery Master Plan team continued to be hard at work and ended the month of June with the project’s second community meeting. At the meeting, project manager Mason Miller, from AmaTerra Environmental, reported that both the cemetery tree survey and GIS digitization and mapping are nearly completed. The conditions assessment of all five city-owned cemeteries, generally — and the assessment of grave markers specifically — is also nearly done. **Historical landscape architect Laura Knott, from John Milner Associates, will report on her findings at the third community meeting in August.** Historic preservation consultant Steph McDougal has completed interviews with 25 stakeholders and is currently preparing questions for a community-wide survey, planned to launch via Speak Up Austin, also in August.





Cemetery Trees Update

Initial Findings from the Tree Survey

A total of 4,578 trees were inventoried in Austin’s city cemeteries this summer, consisting of 53 different species. Despite that diversity, more than half (57.5%) were live oaks, crape myrtles, or cedar elms. Just four other species — ligustrum, pecan, ashe juniper, and post oak – made up another 23.6% of the total number of cemetery trees.

Some highlights of the tree survey include:

- ✿ Austin Memorial Park Cemetery (AMP) has both the most trees and the greatest variety. It is the only cemetery with more evergreens than deciduous trees.
- ✿ Plummers Cemetery has the largest number of a single species per acre, with more than 50 cedar elms in a single acre.

✿ Oakwood Cemetery Annex has both the least tree coverage and the smallest variety of trees.

✿ Evergreen Cemetery has more dead trees still standing than other cemeteries, but also the largest live oaks, on average.

Additional findings about the conditions of cemetery trees (and other resources) will be presented at the August 23 meeting.

Ball Moss: A Symptom, Not A Cause

Ball moss is a plant (not actually a moss) that attaches itself to trees, fences, and monuments in Austin’s cemeteries. It is a relative of Spanish moss and pineapple. Contrary to popular belief, ball moss is not parasitic; it does not take any nutrients or water from the trees to which it is attached.

Sometimes, a tree’s interior branches die from a lack of sunlight. The dead interior branches creates a perfect environment for ball moss, which prefers a shady, humid environment. A large colony of ball moss can become heavy and cause dead branches to break.



Anyone concerned about a specific tree should call 311 to report their concern. For more information about ball moss, please visit <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=1264>.

Government Grave Markers

The U.S. Government began providing grave markers for its veterans in the 1800s. These became standardized after the Civil War. In all, 15 different types of markers have been issued since then.



The first grave markers for veterans were simple wooden boards, erected for those soldiers who died at frontier posts. Only after the Civil War did the U.S. government establish national cemeteries. Soon, it became clear that wooden markers (which had to be replaced every few years) were not a long-term solution to marking veterans' graves. The first design for a marble or stone headstone was unveiled in 1873. It included a grave number, name and rank of the soldier, and his home state. Originally, graves of the unknown dead were marked with a simple stone block, but after the original headstone design was updated in 1903, all graves – of both known deceased and unknown – were marked with the same design: a stone slab, 39 inches high, 12 inches wide, and four inches thick, with a rounded top. Later, Confederate graves were marked with a similar stone, with a pointed top.

After World War I, the “General” design was adopted for all graves except those from the Civil and Spanish-American wars. The General marker was made of American white marble and measured 42 inches long, 13 inches wide, and four inches thick. The inscription was expanded to include the soldier's regiment, division, and date of death. A religious symbol (a Latin cross or a Star of David) was also allowed, for the first time. In 1941, granite was approved as an option for military headstones.

Many veterans were buried in private cemeteries, some of which only allowed surface markers, so in the 1930s, a flat marble or granite marker was authorized. A bronze version was approved in 1940. These markers were intended to be placed flush with the ground.

A Buddhist symbol (the Wheel of Righteousness) was approved as an option in 1951.

The types of veterans' markers remained unchanged for several decades, but in 1994, upright granite headstones were re-introduced. Most recently, a 2001 law allowed the Veterans Administration to furnish a government marker for the grave



of a veteran who is buried in a private cemetery, even if the grave is already marked with a private marker. As a result, some graves now include VA markers as footstones.

Genealogy in the Graveyard

Genealogy – tracing the history of a family – often brings researchers to a cemetery, where grave markers and family plots can provide helpful information. However, some methods of capturing that information can cause damage to grave markers. Here are some useful tips to get that information safely.

1. Don't put anything on a grave marker to improve readability.

Using chalk, shaving cream, or other substances to highlight inscriptions can abrade the surface of the stone and (especially in the case of shaving cream) leave behind substances that attract dirt and bacteria.

The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training has studied this extensively and recommends using a car sun shade or a mirror to bounce light at an angle onto a grave marker, which can make the inscription easier to read. Wetting the stone with plain water also can improve the readability of the inscription.

2. Take photographs, not rubbings.

Digital photographs are easy to take and (other than the cost of the camera) inexpensive. A close-up photo of a special feature or inscription can make those details even easier to read or decipher. And photography does not harm the marker's surface.



Light reflected onto an inscription

3. Clean only when absolutely necessary and then only if you know what you are doing.

Grave markers can be damaged by well-meaning people who use household cleaners and other inappropriate products to remove soil, stains, and biological growth.

It is generally safe to use a soft brush to remove loose dirt, leaves, etc., or a small amount of plain water in a spray bottle. Beyond that, please only clean grave markers for your immediate family, or – for others – only if you have permission to clean and you have received instruction about safe methods and cleaning agents from a credible source, such as the Texas Historical Commission or Save Austin's Cemeteries.

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Issue 3, July 2014



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Saturday, August 23, 2014
10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
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Conditions Report

Join historical landscape architect Laura Knott on Saturday morning, August 23, when she will present the current conditions of Austin’s five municipal cemeteries. Ms. Knott and landscape designer Christina Osborn, from John Milner Associates, Inc., have spent the summer evaluating each cemetery’s vegetation, infrastructure, site plan, and other above-ground elements. According to Ms. Knott, “Although some issues are common to all five cemeteries, each cemetery is unique.” Although the team will not be discussing specific recommendations at the August meeting, they will be available to answer questions. Have a question, concern, or comment that you’d like to see included? Send your questions or comments in advance of the meeting to Kim McKnight at (kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov).





Technology in the Cemetery

Cities around the United States are using cemetery cell phone tours and other technology tools to share their history.

Imagine visiting one of Austin’s historic cemeteries and pausing at a kiosk to dial a number on your cell phone. After entering a code, you hear an introduction to the cemetery’s history and the surrounding neighborhoods. You are then prompted to walk to a nearby grave and dial the code found on a small marker nearby. As you walk, you can listen to music; once you enter the code, you hear the story of the person

buried there, their accomplishments and contributions to the community. The tour is self-paced and includes a dozen such stops.

Tours like these are being used in historic cemeteries all over the United States to share the history of the community and its influential people. The tours and other heritage tourism programs are often created by non-profit organizations formed to help preserve the cemetery, in cooperation with the municipal government.

Similar programs use QR codes. These special barcodes (shown here) can be placed on signs near selected graves, When scanned with smartphones, QR codes connect the user to an informative web page associated with the person buried there.



Accessible signs featuring QR codes and historic photos are already being used in Oakwood Cemetery, as part of an program sponsored by Save Austin’s Cemeteries.

We Need Your Help!

The Cemetery Master Plan team is currently working to identify historically significant people buried in each of the municipal cemeteries. **You can be a part of this effort by letting us know who is or was important to your community!** What do we mean by “historically significant”? That definition is, in many ways, up to you.

We want to include all people who made important contributions to the Austin community in general, as well as to individual neighborhoods, organizations, etc. Artists, writers, musicians; educators, religious leaders, community organizers; and women and men of influence – whether or not they held official positions – are all worthy of recognition in the master plan.



Please share any information about people in your community by writing to Steph McDougal at steph.mcdougal@mcdoux.com or P. O. Box 1556, Kemah TX 77565.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

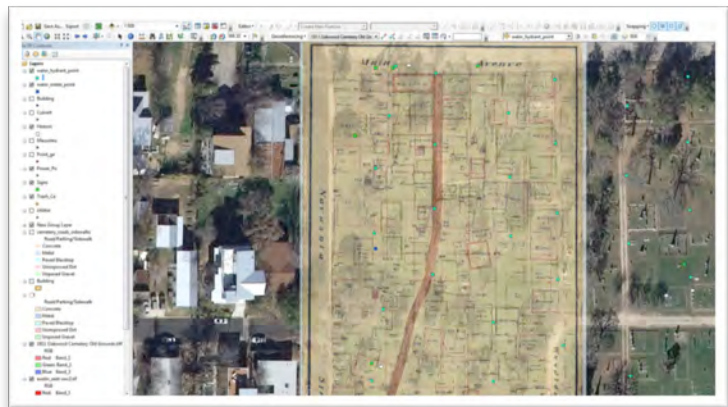
An introduction to the mapping and analysis tool

One of the most exciting parts of the Cemetery Master Plan so far has been the creation of digital maps for each of the five municipal cemeteries. Geographic Information Systems (GIS, for short) is a tool that analyzes data to tie non-geographic information to a geographic location. The resulting maps allows users to visually identify patterns that would be difficult to see otherwise. Let's look at an example.

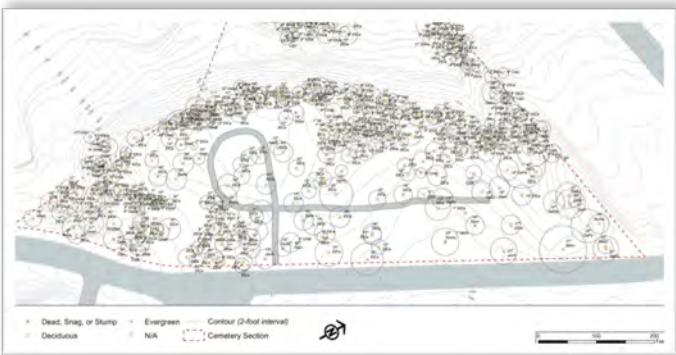
The Cemetery Master Plan team is assembling all of the existing data from sources such as the Travis County Appraisal District, boundary maps, an earlier tree survey, historic aerial photographs, and U.S. Geological Survey maps. They also generated new data, including the new tree survey and the location of infrastructure items such as irrigation system sprinkler heads, pipes, and faucets. In the image below, an historic map of Oakwood Cemetery is laid over satellite photography.

Tree ID	Species	DBH	Health	Notes
1001	Live oak	12"	Good	
1002	Live oak	10"	Good	
1003	Live oak	14"	Good	
1004	Live oak	11"	Good	
1005	Live oak	13"	Good	
1006	Live oak	15"	Good	
1007	Live oak	12"	Good	
1008	Live oak	10"	Good	
1009	Live oak	14"	Good	
1010	Live oak	11"	Good	
1011	Live oak	13"	Good	
1012	Live oak	15"	Good	
1013	Live oak	12"	Good	
1014	Live oak	10"	Good	
1015	Live oak	14"	Good	
1016	Live oak	11"	Good	
1017	Live oak	13"	Good	
1018	Live oak	15"	Good	
1019	Live oak	12"	Good	
1020	Live oak	10"	Good	
1021	Live oak	14"	Good	
1022	Live oak	11"	Good	
1023	Live oak	13"	Good	
1024	Live oak	15"	Good	
1025	Live oak	12"	Good	
1026	Live oak	10"	Good	
1027	Live oak	14"	Good	
1028	Live oak	11"	Good	
1029	Live oak	13"	Good	
1030	Live oak	15"	Good	

The table above includes data about the size, health, and species of trees in Plummers Cemetery. With GIS, we can turn that data into a map that looks like this:



In another example (below), the team was able to show the relationship between the irrigation system at Evergreen Cemetery and the health of trees there.



Although the City of Austin maintains GIS data sets and maps to track land use all over the city, this information was incomplete, unavailable, or not located in a single place for the five municipal cemeteries.

With this GIS database, the City of Austin will have a useful tool to assist in planning and management activities in the future.

You Talk; The Project Team Listens

For the past several months, the Cemetery Master Plan team has been talking with people throughout the community about this project and their goals for it. A group of 25 stakeholders shared their opinions on a variety of topics through one-on-one telephone interviews with project consultant Steph McDougal.

Interviewees were Austinites from all over the city, who represent many different demographics and interest groups. They included family members and descendants of the deceased, community and religious leaders, members of Save Austin’s Cemeteries and other community groups, neighbors who live near the cemeteries, and cemetery-related professionals.

Questions focused on long-term needs and goals for the cemeteries, community engagement, and programming/activity concepts.

When asked about goals for the master plan and the cemeteries in general, interviewees’ responses fell into three categories: the master plan must be implemented; it must incorporate input received from citizens; and it must result in the improved appearance of the cemeteries.

Additionally, people had specific concerns about maintenance, the condition of features within the cemeteries, and the need for signage. Most people agreed that all five cemeteries must be treated equitably, but opinions were split on the use of cemeteries for cultural activities or programming. Several people suggested that Oakwood, Oakwood Annex, and Plummers would be more appropriate for such activities than Evergreen or Austin Memorial Park, which are still quite active in terms of ongoing interments.

Ms. McDougal collected a total of 40 pages of comments from interviewees, which have been shared with the project team and the City. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Going forward, information provided by stakeholders will be used to develop one or more surveys of the entire Austin community, to be delivered through SpeakUpAustin. Look for more information on the City and project websites (<http://austintexas.gov/department/cemetery-master-plan>) and (<http://www.austincemeteryplan.com>) and in the August Cemetery Master Plan newsletter.

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- ✿ Participate in Speak Up Austin! Surveys: **COMING SOON!**
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- ✿ Share your input and feedback with Kim McKnight (PARD Project Coordinator):
 - Email kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov
 - Call 512-974-9478
 - Send a letter to PARD, Attn: Kim McKnight, P.O. Box 1088, Austin, Texas 78767-1088
- ✿ Call the Austin 3-1-1 line and share your opinions.





The City of Austin Cemetery Master Plan

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10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Ruiz Branch, Austin Public Library
1600 Grove Blvd.

Learn more at www.cityofaustin.org/parks

City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department

P.O. Box 1088, Austin, Texas 78767-1088

FIVE

FIVE HISTORIC CEMETERIES.
FIVE TEAM PARTNERS.
FIVE COMMUNITY MEETINGS.
HUNDREDS OF STAKEHOLDERS.
ONE MASTER PLAN.

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN CEMETERY MASTER PLAN

Issue #4, August 2014



Next Meeting

Monday, November 3, 2014
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Zilker Botanical Gardens
2220 Barton Springs Road

Speak Up, Austin!

Two community surveys are now online and ready for your input! The Cemetery Master Plan team is seeking your opinions on two topics.

The first survey (online at <http://speakupaustin.org/surveys/potential-programming-in-city-cemeteries>) seeks to learn why and how often people currently visit the cemeteries. Having more people in the older cemeteries, especially, can deter crime and vandalism, as well as build awareness and support for their care.

Survey #2 (online at <http://speakupaustin.org/surveys/burial-options>) is about burial options. As cremation and natural/green burial become more popular, the City might consider creating spaces in one or more cemeteries for different interment alternatives.





Programming and Policies

November 3 meeting to focus on actively engaging the community in the cemeteries and their upkeep

Throughout the development of the Master Plan, the consultant team has spoken with members of the community about ways the City of Austin can encourage citizens to become more aware of the city cemeteries and to actively support programming that brings people into the cemeteries, especially the older cemeteries (Oakwood, Plummers, and Oakwood Annex) where only a few people are buried each year.

The November 3 meeting will include information about:

- ✿ Best Practices from around the United States, including what the Master Plan team has learned from other cemeteries with a proven track record of success.
- ✿ Partnership opportunities with other City departments, non-profit organizations, and schools and universities.

✿ Revenue and funding sources that can supplement City budgets.

Many people have strong feelings about these topics. The Master Plan team is working diligently to find a balance between many competing (and sometimes conflicting) priorities and needs.

To make your feelings heard, call the Austin 3-1-1 line or send an email to Kim McKnight at kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov.

Rules and Regulations

In October 2013, City Council directed the Cemetery Manager to conduct a public engagement process to evaluate cemetery rules, particularly those related to grave ornamentation, and to develop a policy that would be sensitive to personal and cultural expressions of grief while enabling appropriate maintenance activities and compliance with health and safety laws.

Consulting firm Smith|Associates led a series of four meetings with members of the community, conducted stakeholder interviews, and solicited input through Speak Up Austin. In total, they collected more than 2,900 unique comments from 282 individuals. Based on that information, the firm drafted a set of proposed revised rules. That information has now been



provided to the Cemetery Master Plan team, which will use it as a basis for making recommendations as part of the Master Plan. Look for more information about this at the November 3 Master Plan meeting!

Resetting Grave Markers

One of the most common tasks in cemetery preservation and conservation is the resetting of grave markers that have shifted or fallen. Here's what it takes to perform this task safely and appropriately.



Resetting grave markers is one of the most common preservation tasks in a cemetery. A variety of factors can cause grave markers to tilt or fall over.

In Austin, most of the cemeteries are located on land where the soil has a high clay content. (The soil at Evergreen Cemetery is a bit more sandy.) This causes shifting of markers over time, as the ground contracts and expands based on the amount of moisture in it. Drought conditions have exacerbated this problem.

Other factors that impact grave markers include trees planted too close to the marker, which displace the marker over time as they grow; vandalism; impact from vehicles, especially near roadways; and subsidence of the soil over or near gravesites.

Not all tilted grave markers should be reset, since the act of resetting can cause the marker to be damaged. In general, only the

most severely tilted markers (or those that have fallen over entirely) should be reset.

Grave markers that are made of stone generally weigh between 150–180 pounds per cubic foot. A simple granite marker that measures 24" by 12" by 8" (1.5 cubic feet) could weigh as much as 270 pounds. Many markers are much larger and heavier, so safety is an important concern.

The task of resetting may require a new foundation or the leveling of an existing foundation. Lifting a marker requires the use of a hoist and straps (never chains or cables) rated for the weight of the stone to be reset.

Cleaning, stabilization, or other repairs may be required at the same time. Both resetting and this additional work should be performed or overseen by a conservation professional. Staff or volunteers can provide valuable assistance, but training is

essential for the safety of both people and markers.

Due to the number of markers in Austin's city cemeteries that are tilted or fallen, the Cemetery Master Plan will include the team's recommendations for prioritizing markers for resetting,



as well as guidance for how the City might undertake an ongoing program.

It is important to realize, however, that no matter what the City does, some grave markers will always be tilted. That is just the nature of a cemetery – the ground moves, and so do the grave markers.

Preparing for Emergencies

One of the topics to be covered in the Cemetery Master Plan is emergency/disaster preparedness. Luckily, the Cemetery Conservation staff at the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training have created guidance on this topic. (More at www.ncptt.nps.org.)

1. Document current conditions of all cemetery resources: grave markers, monuments, trees, and cemetery buildings, structures, and infrastructure.

Knowing what is where, and what condition things are in, provides a baseline against which damage can be measured. The City of Austin is already well positioned with photographic and historic records of all five historic cemeteries, thanks to ongoing work by City staff, the Texas

2. Address problems and mitigate risks in advance.

A thorough assessment of current conditions also can help to identify risky conditions, so that the City can deal with those before they become major problems, or at least monitor issues until they can be addressed.

3. Secure cemetery records (hard copies and digital).

Burial records, deeds, maps, etc. should be protected from fire, water, and windstorms. This can include storage in waterproof, fire-safe filing cabinets as well as the backup and remote storage of digital files.



Downed tree, photo by David Fine/FEMA

4. Train staff for disaster/emergency response.

Everyone needs to be prepared before a problem or event occurs. This includes not only determining what tasks must be completed, but also what tools, supplies, and equipment will be needed. Staff should know how to take emergency action in the event that an individual needs to turn off gas, electrical power, or water mains.

5. Get to know the experts.

Help is available from professional associations, disaster response companies, and other groups that specialize in dealing with disasters and emergency situations. The City can proactively make those contacts and even sign up for help before help is ever needed.

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Issue #5, September 2014



Next Meeting

Monday, November 3, 2014
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Zilker Botanical Gardens
2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin



Programming

The fourth Community Meeting for the Cemetery Master Plan project is coming up, and consultant Steph McDougal will be on-hand to present a draft concept for determining what types of educational and/or recreational programs should be allowed in Austin’s municipal cemeteries. For the past several months, citizens have provided feedback on this issue through stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and the current SpeakUpAustin! community survey. Thanks to everyone who has provided input! Common threads running through much of the feedback received include support for quiet individual activities that are unlikely to disrupt a peaceful atmosphere, as well as group activities that focus on education and history and are conducted in a respectful way. To learn more, please plan to join us on November 3.





Birds of a Feather

Cemeteries can provide good places to see feathered friends in the city

Bird watchers, get out your notebooks. Austin’s municipal cemeteries, particularly Oakwood and Oakwood Annex, are well-known birding spots.

The city is located on North America’s Central Flyway, one of four major migration routes used by birds all year long, although primarily in the spring and fall. Large trees, such as those found in and around Austin’s

cemeteries, may provide attractive resting places for migratory species, particularly in the springtime.

Across the United States, many cemeteries welcome birding enthusiasts, whose hobby tends to require quiet observation by individuals rather than noisy groups.

Birders who would like to visit cemeteries are encouraged to use

common sense and courtesy. For example:

- ☼ Park in designated parking areas or on roadways, rather than pulling off into the grass. Do not park so as to block funeral processions.
- ☼ Do not use grave markers as tables or chairs.
- ☼ Move away from funeral services; give mourners and visitors space and privacy.

Don’t Forget to Speak Up, Austin!

The SpeakUp Austin! website provides a way for the City of Austin to gather feedback from citizens. Now through November 1, two cemetery-related surveys are available for your input.

The first survey, “Potential Programming in City Cemeteries”, seeks to learn more about whether

and how the Austin community currently interacts with the five historic, municipal cemeteries.

The second survey, “Burial Options”, seeks to learn about Austin residents’ opinions about the many interment options that are available today, including cremation and green burial.



Click on over to speakupaustin.org/surveys to participate!



What's required for Perpetual Care?

“Perpetual care” doesn't apply to markers or monuments. So who is responsible for resetting gravestones, and which markers have to be reset? Let's look at the applicable laws.

Many citizens who are concerned about the care and maintenance of grave markers, particularly those that have tilted or fallen or which have experienced damage or deterioration, believe that “perpetual care” includes resetting grave markers.

That is not the case, although Texas laws do govern who is responsible for this activity.

Perpetual care cemeteries have established a permanent fund for maintenance. A portion of the sale of each grave plot is placed into the perpetual care fund; in theory, enough money should be in the fund so that the interest income that it generates.

Perpetual care cemeteries are regulated by the Texas Department of Banking. It is important to note that “perpetual care” as defined by Texas law refers only to the maintenance of the cemetery grounds and mausoleums, *not grave markers*.

The maintenance of grave markers is not required or regulated by the State as part of the laws regarding perpetual care.

However, the Texas statute governing perpetual care cemeteries does not apply to cemeteries owned by the state or a city or county. Those **non-perpetual care cemeteries** are regulated instead by the Texas Funeral Service Commission.

The laws enforced by that agency state that a municipality must maintain a public cemetery “in a condition that does not endanger the public’s health, comfort, safety, or welfare.” This includes leveling or straightening (but not repairing) markers or monuments.

Because of the large number of markers in Austin’s municipal cemeteries that potentially could be reset, the Cemetery Master Plan team is developing criteria for prioritizing the resetting of grave markers, with the highest priority

based on an imminent threat to public safety – the likelihood that a marker could fall on a person.

The law also stipulates that a city may accept a donation, of an amount set by the city to be held in trust, that would fund the perpetual care of a grave or burial



lot, including a family plot, to keep it in “first class condition”. The City of Austin does not have a way to do that today, but that could be something to consider.

In the meantime, the Cemetery Master Plan team continues to investigate different approaches for dealing with this issue. Stay tuned!

Cemetery Sustainability

Over the past decade, sustainable development — humans living in productive harmony with our natural environment — has become a goal for many cities, including Austin. Here are some ways in which cemeteries can support a sustainable community.

1. Landscape management and design

Sustainable landscape designs incorporate plantings and landscape elements that minimize the need for watering and chemical fertilizers, especially important in Central Texas.

2. Soil and water quality

Due to the breakdown of burial vaults over time, chemicals used to embalm or preserve the bodies of the deceased can leach into soil or nearby water sources. Chemical-free and/or non-toxic burial options can minimize pollution and prevent such contamination.

3. Wildlife habitat conservation and diversification

Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester, New York, was established in 1838 as America’s first municipal Victorian cemetery. Today, it is a certified wildlife habitat that supports a wide variety of animal, bird, and insect species. Plants provide food sources and shelter; water sources include both a natural spring and a fountain; and volunteers have added (and



continue to manage) bluebird boxes and nesting boxes for owls.

4. Reduced use of resources

According to author Mark Harris, “Each year, we divert enough metal to construction of caskets and lining of some burial vaults to completely rebuild the Golden Gate Bridge, and enough concrete for burial vaults to create a two-lane highway running halfway across the country, all for a short period of preservation.” Harris, who promotes natural burial options, notes that sustainable cemetery and burial practices save money for both families and cities.

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THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN CEMETERY

Issue #6, October 2014



Next Meeting

Saturday, January 24, 2015

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

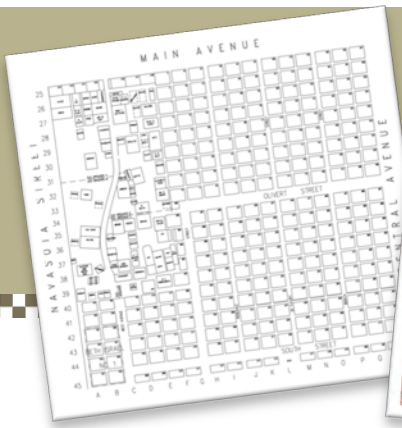
Austin Public Library, Carver Branch

1161 Angelina St, Austin, TX 78702

Cemetery Rules

Cemetery Master Plan team member Steph McDougal will take over the next phase of the development of cemetery rules. The first phase of the rules revision process was completed this summer, when consultants from Smith/Associates met with and gathered input from the public. McDougal will combine Smith/Associates' data with the comments received through the Cemetery Master Plan process, summarize those findings, and present them in a report to the City, along with a review of best practices from around the United States, recommended criteria to be used by the City to evaluate possible solutions, and a few examples of alternatives that balance the many different (and often conflicting) positions held by different members of the community. During the final phase of the rules project, the City will use McDougal's findings and recommendations to determine how best to draft/adopt revised rules.





Entering the Home Stretch

The Cemetery Master Plan team outlines its plan for completing the project.

After spending the spring and summer months completing research and fieldwork, the Cemetery Master Plan team is spending the fall analyzing the data collected, summarizing their findings, and developing recommendations. As this project moves into the winter months, the team will begin to share their recommendations with and gather feedback from the community.

The remaining project schedule is expected to proceed as follows.

- ✿ December 1–12: Preliminary concepts made available online.
- ✿ Early January: Master Plan draft made available online.
- ✿ January 24, 2015: Team presents the draft master plan to the community.
- ✿ January–February: Collect and incorporate public comments.
- ✿ March: Bring Master Plan forward to committees, boards, commissions, and Council.

The additional work related to the cemetery rules process will take place concurrently with the development of the Master Plan.

Your input and feedback is very important! The community has been a valuable partner in this process so far. Please continue to share your ideas, suggestions, questions, comments, and concerns with Kim McKnight at kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov or 512-974-9478.

Sacramento's Adopt-a-Plot Program

One of the challenges facing many historic cemeteries today involves the graves of persons whose families may have died out or dispersed to the extent that it becomes difficult to find a living person who has an ownership interest in the gravesite.

One cemetery in Sacramento, California, may have a solution.

The Old City Cemetery Committee, Inc.'s "Adopt A Plot" program encourages volunteers to research the history of the people buried in the "adopted" gravesite, share that information with the Committee, and commit to maintaining and beautifying the gravesite for a minimum of two years. Only approved plants (and no trees) can be planted.



Potential adopters must apply for the program and are not allowed to clean or repair grave markers without prior permission.

It is an interesting concept! Let us know what you think.



American Cemeteries Over Time

The evolution of the American cemetery can be seen in Austin's historic city cemeteries.

In early colonial America, families buried their dead at home, in churchyards, or in town burial grounds. People in the agricultural South, living on farms and plantations spread far apart, were more likely to establish small family cemeteries on their own property or nearby in wooded or sheltered areas.

In 1831, Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was opened, ushering in the "rural cemetery movement." This concept involved creating a public graveyard outside of the town boundaries, in a park-like setting with winding paths and artistic monuments.

Since these cemeteries were designed to be peaceful and beautiful, they became popular places for families to spend a Sunday afternoon, perhaps with a picnic lunch. Often, committees of volunteers would maintain and beautify these cemeteries.

Oakwood Cemetery, formerly known as the Austin City Cemetery, was established in 1839 and is an example of the

rural cemetery movement, which continued through the 1800s.

Oakwood Cemetery also embodies the characteristics of an Upland South folk cemetery, including examples of that cemetery type in its pioneer, transitional, and modern phases. These cemeteries can be identified by their site on a hill, "feet to the east" grave orientation, plantings, grave markers and decorations, and grave tending practices.

Plummers Cemetery was established in the late 1890s and privately owned until the City acquired it in 1951. Less is known about this site, but initial research and the presence of many handmade grave markers and family plots indicates that it is also an example of an Upland South folk cemetery in the "transitional" phase between pioneer and modern sites.

Evergreen Cemetery, established by the City of Austin in 1926, is also an example of the modern Upland South folk cemetery.

Starting in the early 1900s, the City Beautiful movement became popular. This was a type of landscape planning that emphasized a formal design with symmetry along two axes. The Oakwood Cemetery Annex, which opened in 1917, was designed in this way.

Modern memorial parks began to become popular around 1920, when Los Angeles' Forest Lawn Cemetery popularized the idea of flat, flush markers for easy maintenance. By then, the ornate statues and markers placed on graves in the Victorian era had gone out of style, and grave markers (along with the cemetery industry itself) had become more standardized.

Advances in technology allowed monument makers to more easily carve and inscribe granite, and that stone quickly surpassed marble for use in grave markers.

Austin Memorial Park Cemetery was started as a private profit-making venture (in 1927) and only later sold to the City.

Cremation: Increasingly Popular

Cremation is a funeral practice that has been used for thousands of years. In olden days, this involved placing the body of the deceased on a funeral *pyre* (made of combustible materials) which would then be burned in order to reduce the body to minerals (“ashes”). A few Americans — members of George Washington’s staff — are known to have been cremated this way in the 1790s.

Although cremation was almost entirely replaced by burial for hundreds of years, it became common again starting in the 1870s, in both Europe and the United States. The first cremation chamber to be replicated widely was invented by a Professor Brunetti in Italy, who exhibited it in Vienna in 1873.

The first American crematory was built by Dr. Julius Lemoyne in Washington, Pennsylvania, in 1876. A few years later, a Dr. Corey was cremated in Italy; his sons, returning to Buffalo, New York, with his ashes, established a public crematorium and brought Italian craftsmen and materials there to build it.

Modern cremation uses both thermal and mechanical means to reduce the body to gases and minerals. The ashes are often scattered or placed in an urn or other container, which may be buried or placed in a special building constructed for this purpose, called a columbarium.



Today, nearly half of all Americans choose to be cremated, and in some states, more than 70% of residents choose this option. Some reasons for the increasing interest in cremation include the lower cost as compared to traditional burial, a greater acceptance among some religious groups, and the growing mobility of Americans, which places many people far from cemeteries where their loved ones would otherwise be buried.

Due to the increasing interest in cremation, the City of Austin’s Cemetery Master Plan team is considering a variety of options for the interment of cremated remains. More information, and the team’s recommendations, will be included in the Master Plan.

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FIVE COMMUNITY MEETINGS.
HUNDREDS OF STAKEHOLDERS.
ONE MASTER PLAN.

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN CEMETERY MASTER PLAN

Issue #7, November 2014



Next Meeting

Saturday, January 24, 2015
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Austin Public Library, Carver Branch
1161 Angelina St, Austin, TX 78702



Recommendations!

A first look at the Master Plan team’s preliminary recommendations for the treatment of each cemetery are now available online at austincemeteryplan.com. These include brief descriptions of activities that could be undertaken at each cemetery. While the draft Master Plan, to be presented in January, will provide a detailed explanation of these recommendations, PARD cultural resources specialist Kim McKnight and the Master Plan team seek initial feedback on these concepts now.

Please visit the Cemetery Master Plan website, review the information for each cemetery in which you have an interest, and let us know what you think! Kim McKnight welcomes your telephone calls and emails. Kim.McKnight@austintexas.gov • 512-974-9478





Speak Up Austin! Survey Results

The community provides feedback on natural burial options.

This fall, the Master Plan team asked for your feedback through the Speak Up Austin! online survey tool. More than 300 people completed each survey.

One survey asked about natural burial options. The concept of “natural” or “green” burials has become more popular in recent years. Natural burials reduce the environmental impacts of traditional burial, including chemicals used in embalming, steel and hardwoods used in caskets, and the energy required to make concrete vaults.

The Master Plan survey found that almost all respondents were aware of and interested in these options. Specifically 73.6% were in favor of the City offering the interment of cremated remains in a columbarium, and 79.5% were in favor of the City offering the following options.

- ☆ A **hybrid burial ground**, where remains can be buried with or without a vault.
- ☆ A **natural burial ground**, which prohibits the use of vaults, vault lids, concrete boxes, slabs, or

partitioned liners where remains are placed during burial, as well as embalming with toxic chemicals; all burial containers must be biodegradable, and grave markers are limited to preserve the natural look of the area.

☆ A **conservation burial ground**, which has all of the same requirements as Natural Burial Grounds, but with the addition of a conservation easement or deed restriction held by a government agency or non-profit conservation organization.

New Trees in Old Stumps

Did you know that it’s possible to plant a new tree where one previously grew, without first grinding the old stump? The process starts by encouraging a stump to decay, by drilling holes into the stump and filling them with a mixture of compost, topsoil, and fertilizer. The holes are re-filled as needed and the stump is kept moist during dry periods.

After 1–3 years, if decomposition is well advanced, the stump will be ready to re-plant. Hand tools are used to create a hole in the decaying wood, big enough to plant a new tree.

The new tree should be relatively small and fit into the hole in the stump with at least 6–8 inches of space around the rootball. Soil is added around the roots.



Image courtesy of the *National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.*

For more information:
<http://www.nps.gov/oclp/Clippings.pdf>



National Register Eligibility Update

Oakwood Cemetery and the Oakwood Cemetery Annex are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Master Plan team investigates the possibility of nominating the other three city cemeteries.

One component of the Master Plan includes an evaluation of potential historic designations, including listing on the National Register. However, cemeteries generally are not listed on the National Register unless they meet very specific requirements.

A cemetery first must qualify for the National Register on the basis of significance in one of the following areas: (A) association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; (B) association with significant persons; (C) that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or (D) that have yielded or are likely to yield information in history or prehistory.

A cemetery may be listed on the National Register if it meets at least one of these requirements and derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.

Oakwood Cemetery is listed on the National Register under Criteria C for art and architecture; Oakwood Cemetery Annex is listed under Criteria C for art and landscape architecture.

In November, master plan team member Steph McDougal met with Gregory Smith, the state coordinator for the National Register of Historic Places program at the Texas Historical Commission, to visit Plummers Cemetery and Evergreen Cemetery and discuss their potential eligibility for the National Register.

Informally, Mr. Smith suggested that the most historic section of Evergreen Cemetery (Section A) may be *potentially* eligible based on the importance of the people buried there to the East Austin community during segregation, as well as on the basis of the many handmade grave markers in that section. (It is common for only the most historic section of a cemetery to be nominated to the Register, as the presence of too many modern grave markers can detract from a burial ground's historic integrity.)

Similarly, Plummers Cemetery may be *potentially* eligible as an example of a rural African American folk cemetery with many handmade grave markers.

Ms. McDougal also has asked Mr. Smith to provide a formal determination of eligibility for Austin Memorial Park Cemetery.

Substantial research will be required to prepare any future nominations to the Register.

Grass in Graveyards

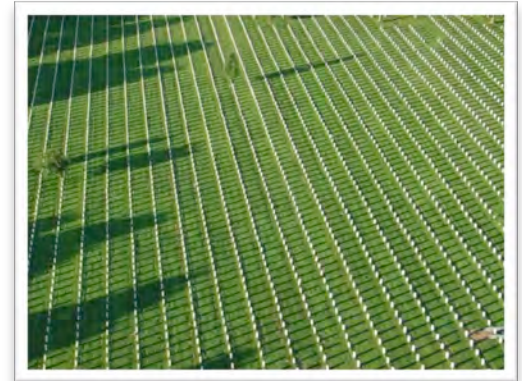
One of the most common complaints heard by the Master Plan team has to do with grass. Although many people understand that the City of Austin must abide by water restrictions during times of drought, we also are used to seeing images like that of Arlington National Cemetery (right), with its lush, manicured lawn. So, what is realistic to expect in Austin's historic city cemeteries? Here are a few things to consider.

1. Lawns were originally cultivated by the royal families of Europe.

Lawns were status symbols for French and English aristocrats who used sheep and goats (or servants with scythes) to keep the grass manicured. Wealthy landowners in Colonial America continued this practice, but lawns did not become commonplace throughout the United States until the 20th century.

2. The American lawn is a relatively new concept.

The Gardening Club of America (established in 1913) actively promoted the idea of a lawn with only one type of grass, kept uniformly mowed and weed-free. Unfortunately, English grasses did not do well in the U.S., and native grasses did not create a nice lawn. The type of grasses used to plant lawns today were developed for golf courses between 1915–1930. Lawns really became popular after World War II, thanks to the development of suburbs and chemical herbicides.



Lawn at Arlington National Cemetery

3. Historically, it was disrespectful to allow grass to grow over graves.

Until the 20th century, graves and burial grounds were traditionally “scraped” or “swept clean” to remove grass. Tending to graves in this way was a regular family and community activity that continued the relationship with the deceased. Later, this practice evolved to include the use of stone or concrete slabs, or paving over individual graves or entire family plots, as seen in all of Austin's city cemeteries.

The Master Plan team is exploring alternatives to traditional lawn grasses that would reduce the need for irrigation, as well as mowing and trimming in Austin's cemeteries. Some of the native grasses and groundcovers being considered are being grown at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's test gardens.

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✿ Attend one or more community meetings. The meetings are being held in various locations around the city and on different days and times, so that as many people as possible can attend. The next one will take place on **Saturday, January 24, 2014** from **10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.** at the **Austin Public Library, Carver Branch at 1161 Angelina Street.**

✿ Sign up to receive this newsletter via email, or look for it at your local library, community center, or senior center. Share it with your friends and neighbors.

✿ Sign up for the Austin Cemetery Master Plan email list to get up-to-the-minute information right in your inbox. To subscribe, send an email to Kim.McKnight@AustinTexas.gov.

✿ Visit the Austin Cemetery Master Plan website at <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/cemetery-master-plan>

✿ Share your input and feedback with Kim McKnight (PARD Project Coordinator):

- Email kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov
- Call 512-974-9478
- Send a letter to PARD, Attn: Kim McKnight, P.O. Box 1088, Austin, Texas 78767-1088

✿ Call the Austin 3-1-1 line and share your opinions.





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There's Still Time ...

... to share your feedback on the Master Plan team's preliminary recommendations. Visit austincemeteryplan.com to view brief descriptions of activities that could be undertaken at each cemetery.

Comments on the preliminary recommendations can be submitted through December 23, 2014.

The draft Master Plan, to be presented in January, will provide a detailed explanation of these recommendations, and you will have plenty of additional opportunities to comment on the draft Master Plan.

Please visit the Cemetery Master Plan website, review the information for each cemetery in which you have an interest, and let us know what you think! Kim McKnight welcomes your telephone calls and emails.

Kim.McKnight@austintexas.gov • 512-974-9478





Our Final Meeting

What you can expect on Saturday, January 24

During 2014, the Cemetery Master Plan project has included four community meetings — one every two months — during which Master Plan team members have met with members of the public to present findings and recommendations and gather your feedback.

In January 2015, we will meet one final time before the draft Master Plan is taken forward to various boards, committees, commissions, and City Council for final approval.

The draft will be available online prior to the meeting for your review. Kim McKnight will send an email blast to the Cemeteries mailing list to let you know that the draft plan has been published.

The meeting is scheduled to last two hours, which is not enough time to go over everything in the draft Master Plan. Instead, the team will present the highlights of the plan during the first hour and then spend much of the meeting gathering your feedback.

In order to have as much time as possible for feedback, we will take only a few questions during the presentation portion of the meeting. Please save your comments for the feedback portion of the meeting.

We will have a station for each cemetery during the feedback portion of the meeting. Team members will be on hand to answer questions and collect your comments and questions!

How to Share Your Feedback

If you have comments, concerns, questions, suggestions, input, or feedback on the draft Cemetery Master Plan, you will have plenty of opportunities to make your voice heard!

☼ Attend the January meeting, if you can. Share your comments verbally or in writing while you're there. Feel free to bring

notes that you've prepared ahead of time, or use the feedback forms provided at the meeting. Team members will write down any comments that you share verbally.

☼ Send email to Kim McKnight at kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov. While the draft plan will be online for a couple of months, we would appreciate getting your comments as soon as possible!



☼ You may also call Kim at 512-974-9478.

☼ Forgot something or thought of it later? That's okay! Continue to stay in touch. Your participation in this process is valuable and will contribute to the Plan's success.

Reviewing the Draft Master Plan

Whether you're interested in one cemetery or all of them, whether you have a lot of time to read and comment or just a little — here are a few ideas for how you might participate in the review process.



Once the draft Cemetery Master Plan is published online for your review, you will have plenty of time to read it and comment. The draft plan will remain online during January and February, as well as while it is being presented to city officials in March-April for their review and adoption.

However, it would be most helpful to the Master Plan team if you could review the draft and submit any comments and questions as quickly as possible, so that we can make revisions before taking the plan forward to boards, commissions, and Council. Having your comments by the end of February would be much appreciated.

We encourage you to read the entire draft Master Plan, but we understand that some of the information may not be pertinent to you. We will divide the draft plan document into chapters, available online as downloadable PDF documents so that you can focus on the parts that interest you most. You will need the free Adobe Reader to view the PDFs, and we'll provide a link to that.

The draft of the City of Austin Historic Cemeteries Master Plan is going to be a pretty large document. While your feedback on the entire plan is welcomed and encouraged, we recognize that you might have a limited amount of time to review. If that is the case, the Master Plan team suggests the following strategy:

1. Start with the **Preservation Treatment Approach** and **General Management Guidelines**. These sections will provide a basis of reference for the rest of the report.
2. Each cemetery will have its own chapter, devoted to existing conditions, treatment recommendations, etc. Read the chapter for **each cemetery** that interests you.
3. Review the **Funding and Partnerships** section, which includes information about programming in the cemeteries.
4. If you have time, review anything else that interests you.
5. Share your questions and comments with us!

Here are some suggestions for providing feedback that would be especially helpful.

- ✿ Let us know if your comments are about the plan overall or about a specific part of the plan.
- ✿ Tell us where to find the information that you're talking about. Refer to chapter names, section titles, page numbers, etc.
- ✿ If you are or are not in favor of something, please explain why.
- ✿ Be as specific as possible.

Many of you have been part of the community engagement effort for this project from the beginning, but that is not a requirement to provide feedback! Even if you are brand-new to the Cemetery Master Plan project, we want to hear from you.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this project so far, and thanks in advance for continuing to see this through to the end. Your participation is so important, and so appreciated! We look forward to all of your questions and comments.

What's Next?

After the project team receives comments and makes revisions to the draft Cemetery Master Plan, Kim McKnight will begin bringing the plan forward for review by a number of boards, committees, and commissions before it is presented to City Council for final review and adoption.

At most, if not all, of these presentations, you will have the opportunity to participate in the public hearing portion of that meeting. We encourage everyone who is interested to attend these meetings and will publish a schedule of meetings as soon as that is established.

So far, we are planning to present to the following groups:

- ✿ Land, Facilities, and Programs Committee of Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) Board
- ✿ Historic Landmarks Commission
- ✿ PAR Board
- ✿ Planning Commission

After presenting to the Planning Commission, we will make all final revisions, based on comments received from these groups, and then present to City Council.



Don't forget that you can also contact the city officials shown in the box below to (we hope) express your support for the Cemetery Master Plan.

As you probably know, many topics involving the cemeteries have generated passionate responses and a large number of strongly held opinions, which often are diametrically opposed to one another. The project team recognizes — as we hope you do — that this Master Plan will be necessarily full of compromises. However, we hope that everyone has had the opportunity to make their voice heard, and that we have incorporated as much of your feedback thus far as possible.

Again, thank you for taking this journey with us!
 ✿ The Cemetery Master Plan team

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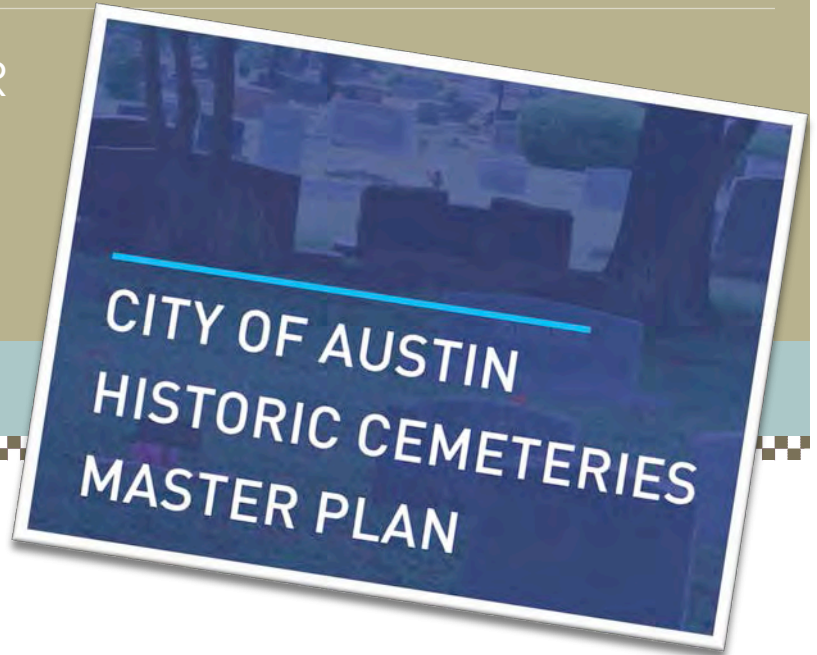
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Issue 9, January 2015



THANK YOU!

From the entire Cemeteries Master Plan team to everyone who has participated in this process, our sincere thanks. We could not have done it without you!



Completing the Master Plan

This is the second-to-last newsletter for the City of Austin Historic Cemeteries Master Plan project! By the time you read this, the project team will have published the draft master plan for public review and feedback. The fifth and final community meeting will have taken place (on January 24) to present the draft treatment plans and priorities. PARD cultural resources specialist and project manager Kim McKnight will be making plans to present the draft master plan to boards, commissions, and eventually City Council. In this newsletter, you'll find a recap of the draft master plan. We look forward to your comments!





General Management Guidelines

Many of the Master Plan team’s recommendations apply to all five cemeteries. They are presented in this section.

The following are general guidelines regarding the treatment of the five historic cemeteries:

- Maintain significant features of the historic cemeteries in good condition. Repair all condition issues identified as areas of concern in order of priorities detailed in subsequent chapters of this plan.
- Base all work involving historically significant features on documentation discovered through primary and secondary sources as described in the rest of

the master plan. If further documentary evidence is discovered subsequent to the final publication of this plan, append it to the plan and include it in considerations for treatment.

- Document all alterations to historically significant landscape features through “before and after” drawings and photographs.
- Use the latest technologies, including GIS, GPS, remote sensing, and new archaeological methodologies, such as ground penetrating radar, in order to

locate and identify landscape features, such as unmarked graves.

- Ensure that any construction, demolition, or maintenance activity that involves ground disturbance is monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Involve archaeologists in early planning for new projects.

Detailed recommendations are given for wayfinding, care of historic trees and shrubs, preserving historic grave markers, irrigation, and more.

Preservation Treatment Approach

To determine the best course of action for the cemeteries, the master plan team evaluated four options for treatment: preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. The team determined that **rehabilitation** is the appropriate choice. This approach allows for protection of the historic character of these

cemeteries and their resources, while carefully addressing the need for conservation work, enhancement of interpretive opportunities, improved circulation, cemetery services expansions, and the replacement or addition of visitor amenities. Such work is necessary to preserve historic cemetery features, but also



serves to increase public interest and generate funding sources for conservation work. It allows for project-based preservation, restoration, or reconstruction projects if needed and supported by documentation.



Adaptive re-use of the drainage channel at Oakwood as a bioswale planter is an option.

Existing Conditions and Treatment Recommendations

Austin's five historic cemeteries need attention in a number of areas. Our multi-year treatment plan includes a prioritized project list for each cemetery.

Top “Priority One” projects for each of the cemeteries — to be completed in 1–2 years — are listed below. Additional Priority Two and Priority Three projects are listed in the master plan as well. *Please note that most of these projects are not funded at this time.*

Oakwood Cemetery

- Replace shade trees.
- Limit vehicular access on unpaved driveways with removable bollards.
- Divert some area stormwater before it reaches the concrete drainage channel.
- Locate and map unmarked graves.
- Survey grave marker conditions and prioritize for repair/conservation/resetting.

Oakwood Cemetery Annex

- Replace boundary fence with metal picket fence.

- Survey grave marker conditions and prioritize for repair/conservation/resetting.

Plummers Cemetery

- Locate and map unmarked graves within the cemetery and surrounding area.
- Protect the cemetery from vehicle accidents by adding native stone boulders along Springdale Road.
- Limit vehicular access to the grassy paths in the cemetery with removable bollards.
- Survey grave marker conditions and prioritize for repair/conservation/resetting.
- Document, stabilize, and preserve unique works of art and craft.

Evergreen Cemetery

- Develop new cemetery entrance on Tillery Street with visitor kiosk, parking space, and accessible restroom.

- Remove existing restroom and associated utilities once new restroom is in place.
- Organize 12th Street signage into one unit.
- Replace shade trees.
- Survey grave marker conditions and prioritize for repair/conservation/resetting.
- Move maintenance yard.

Austin Memorial Park Cemetery

- Renovate cemetery offices.
- Replace chain link fence along Hancock Drive.
- Design and construct new cemetery sign between the entrance gate piers.
- Develop kiosk with historical and wayfinding information.
- Create wayfinding signs within the cemetery, including new names for the cemetery drives.

Policy and Funding Recommendations

The Master Plan includes policy and funding recommendations in 10 areas. Here are very brief summaries of each section.

Regulations and Laws: Combine code enforcement with public-private funding partnerships in a future City ordinance to address deteriorated grave sites that present a threat to public health or safety.

Cemetery Oversight: Consider collaboration with PARD’s History, Art, and Nature Program; Oakwood Cemetery, Oakwood Annex, and Plummers Cemetery should be managed as historic sites with educational programming. Establish a Cemetery Advisory Committee to provide specialist-level review of Certificate of Appropriateness applications to support the Landmarks Commission’s COA review process.

Emergency Preparedness: Develop a cultural resources emergency/disaster plan, following best practices developed around the United States.

Historic Designations: Pursue listing on the National Register of Historic Places for Evergreen Cemetery, Plummers Cemetery, and Austin Memorial Park Cemetery; Historic Texas Cemeteries designation for Evergreen and Plummers.

Grave Ornamentation: The rules process is proceeding separately, but will be brought forward concurrently with the master plan.

Funding and Revenue: Move Oakwood Cemetery, Oakwood Annex, and Plummers Cemetery out of the Enterprise Fund and into the General Fund. Partner with Save Austin’s Cemeteries to raise money for cemetery projects.

Partnerships and Programs: Develop strong partnerships with non-profit organizations and local schools to research, document, and interpret Austin’s history through its historic cemeteries.

Programming and Tourism: Promote cemetery tourism, as well as educational and recreational (leisure) programs. Establish a process by which the Cemetery Advisory Committee can review, approve, and manage co-produced programming.

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Mayor and City Council

Austin City Hall
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Mayor Steve Adler

City Council Members:

- Ora Houston – District 1
- Delia Garza – District 2
- Sabino “Pio” Renteria – District 3
- Gregorio “Greg” Casar – District 4
- Ann Kitchen – District 5
- Don Zimmerman – District 6
- Leslie Pool – District 7
- Ellen Troxclair – District 8
- Kathie Tovo – District 9
- Sheri Gallo – District 10

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Master Plan Adoption Process

The final phase of the Master Plan process is the presentation of the draft master plan to various City boards, commissions, and City Council.

At most, if not all, of these presentations, you will have the opportunity to participate in the public hearing portion of that meeting. We encourage everyone who is interested to attend these meetings, and we will publish a schedule of meetings as soon as that is established.

So far, we are planning to present to the following groups:

- ✿ Urban Forestry Board
- ✿ Land, Facilities, and Programs Committee of Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) Board
- ✿ Historic Landmarks Commission
- ✿ PAR Board
- ✿ Planning Commission

After presenting to the Planning Commission, we will make all final revisions, based on comments received from these groups, and then present to City Council.

Please note that the Rules and Regulations Update process will take place concurrently, but will be brought forth in conjunction with the master plan.

If you have additional feedback on the plan, please contact Kim McKnight (PAR Project Coordinator):

- Email kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov
- Call 512-974-9478
- Send a letter to PAR, Attn: Kim McKnight, P.O. Box 1088, Austin, Texas 78767-1088

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The City of Austin Cemetery Master Plan

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