

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA

REPORT NO. CSD-2024-0001

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
COUNCIL**

February 7, 2024

**SUBJECT: KESWICK CEMETERY MASTER PLAN AND PIONEER CEMETERIES
MANAGEMENT PLANS**

1. RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council receive Report No. CSD-2024-0001, prepared by the Community Services Department, dated February 7, 2024, concerning capital improvements proposed at the Town's municipally owned cemeteries;
2. That Council receive and endorse in principle the Keswick Cemetery Master Plan, dated October 30, 2023, prepared by LEES & Associates Consulting Ltd, subject to annual budget deliberations;
3. That Council receive and endorse in principle the Pioneer Cemeteries Management Plan dated October 18, 2023, prepared by LEES & Associates Consulting Ltd., subject to annual budget deliberations;
4. That staff report back with updated user fee by-laws related to recommendations outlined in the Keswick Cemetery Master Plan and Pioneer Cemetery Management Plan.

2. PURPOSE:

That Council receive and endorse in principle the Keswick Cemetery Master Plan and the Pioneer Cemeteries Management Plan. Staff are seeking Council's receipt and endorsement of these plans with the understanding that Staff will make recommendations to move forward with a selection of priority capital improvements outlined within the plans through the 2025 budget deliberation process.

3. BACKGROUND:

The project to improve the Town's municipally owned cemeteries effectively began in 2019 when Council, through business cases 20-OI-12 and 20-OI-13, approved the development of an updated master plan for Keswick Cemetery, and a new management plan for the Town's pioneer cemeteries (Resolution Nos. C-2019-0659 and C-2019-0660).

Keswick Cemetery is an active cemetery located at 565 Varney Road in Georgina, Ontario. The Town acquired the property in the 1990s with the intent to provide full cemetery services to the residents of Georgina. A master plan for Keswick Cemetery was finalized in 2001 to provide a vision and roadmap for future investment at this facility. Over the years, deviations from the 2001 master plan have led to the introduction of several site alterations that did not adhere to the original plan. This updated master plan will serve as a comprehensive roadmap for the phased development of Keswick Cemetery over the next 25 years.

Municipalities are required under the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act (2002) to provide a minimum level of care for cemeteries which have been abandoned or where there are no ancestors able to maintain the properties. Over the recent years, several pioneer cemeteries have come to be maintained by the Town. These cemeteries are now in various states of disrepair, particularly the 200-year-old Mann Cemetery, located at 166 The Queensway North, Georgina (formerly known as the Sprague Cemetery).

While the Town has coordinated grass cutting and light landscaping at these properties, many of the grave markers have been compromised by extensive vegetation, vandalism, weathering, and settling of soils. It was determined that the Town's pioneer cemeteries needed a management plan containing expert analysis and recommendations to return these sites to a state of better repair. Cooke's Cemetery, an active cemetery with a pioneer cemetery section, was included in the scope of the Pioneer Cemeteries Management Plan project. Staff opted to include Cooke's cemetery in the analyses to holistically assess the Town's municipally owned cemeteries between both contracts

Staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop a new master plan for Keswick Cemetery on November 25, 2022. The contract was awarded to LEES & Associates Consulting Ltd. (LEES & Associates) on February 16, 2023.

Staff issued an RFP to develop a management plan for the Town's pioneer cemeteries on February 8, 2023. The contract was awarded to LEES & Associates on April 24, 2023.

4. ANALYSIS:

Keswick Cemetery Master Plan

LEES & Associates conducted a master planning exercise for Keswick Cemetery to identify recommended improvements needed over the next two decades and beyond. The resulting master plan provides the framework for the Town to make informed decisions on the future development of the cemetery. The master plan includes the following key deliverables:

- Geotechnical investigation to inform the cemetery concept design and future site development
- Cemetery demands-needs analysis to estimate capacity and future land needs
- Cemetery products & service review with price benchmarking study
- Cemetery concept design
- Capital works program with phasing plan
- Class 'D' rough order of magnitude construction cost estimates for all recommended site works

Keswick Cemetery offers most services below regional averages. Increasing fees in the near future is advisable for alignment with neighboring communities and improving operational cost recovery. Keswick Cemetery also offers fewer interment options than comparable Canadian cemeteries.

LEES & Associates recommends expanding services to include green burials, family columbaria, estates, vessels, ossuaries, and more scattering gardens, as well as consideration of additional support services like rentals, arrangements, and graveside services. Green burial zones have been included in the cemetery concept design in Phases 1 and 3. Expanding other service offerings as recommended by the consultant will also be considered in future phases of work.

LEES & Associates recommends introducing a broader array of memorialization options (e.g., engraved boulders, plaques on memorial structures, monuments, etc.) as potential low-cost, easily implementable drivers for revenue. The Town currently has the highest cremation rate in the York Region and increasing memorialization offerings will aim to capture that market.

The Class 'D' cost estimate for all capital improvements identified in the Keswick Cemetery Master Plan is 5.7M excl. HST:

Location	Class 'D' Project Budget Estimate
Phase 1	\$700,000
Phase 2	\$1.1M
Phase 3	\$3.9M
TOTAL	\$5.7M

The need to develop new cemetery inventory was identified by the consultant early in the master planning process. Staff already have approval for one new columbarium and one new foundation wall through business case #24-CI-CS-03.

Pioneer Cemeteries Management Plan

The scope of work for the management plan included five (5) sites:

- Mann Cemetery (166 The Queensway North)
- Cooke’s Cemetery (272 Pefferlaw Road)
- Baldwin Cemetery (160 Baldwin Road)
- Johnston’s Cemetery (Recently purchased parcel located at 264 Pefferlaw Road [Part 5, 65R-16564])
- Sheppard Cemetery (No address. Located south of Boyer Road between the Queensway North and Woodbine Avenue)

In consideration of the factors that led to the condition of these properties, the new management plan includes the following key deliverables:

- Recommendations for preservation of cultural heritage
- Maintenance plan with schedules to maintain sites in a state of good repair in perpetuity
- Site schematics depicting recommended capital improvements at each site
- Capital works program with phasing plan
- Class ‘D’ order of magnitude construction cost estimates for all recommended site works
- Annual operating budget estimates to maintain each site
- A generalized list of onboarding tasks and best practices that should be followed when a ‘new’ pioneer cemetery comes under Town management

The Class ‘D’ cost estimate for all capital improvements identified in the Pioneer Cemetery Management Plan is \$336,000 excl. HST:

Location	Class ‘D’ Project Budget Estimate
Mann Cemetery	\$91,000
Cooke’s Cemetery	\$67,000
Johnston’s Cemetery	\$31,000
Baldwin Cemetery	\$86,000
Sheppard Cemetery	\$61,000
TOTAL	\$336,000

5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

“Delivering Service Excellence” – Ensuring cemetery facilities and assets are professionally managed and operated. Active and pioneer cemeteries must meet the needs and expectations of residents of Georgina.

6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:

The financial and budgetary impacts for all capital improvements recommended in the reports are summarized above. Staff will return to Council for approval through the 2025 budget deliberation process prior to activating any phases of work proposed in the management plan. The plans will serve as a framework to guide all future capital improvements at the Town's cemeteries for the foreseeable future. Subsequent phases of work and recommended capital improvements will be brought for council approval through the annual budget deliberation process in accordance with the plans.

Staff may reprioritize, remove, or make adjustments to the recommended improvements in the capital work plans, recognizing that the needs of the Town's municipally owned cemeteries are dynamic.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:

These projects included public consultation elements throughout the planning process to provide the community with a formal opportunity to weigh-in on future work at the Town's municipally owned cemeteries.

Community engagement efforts included separate online public surveys for Keswick Cemetery and the pioneer cemeteries; an in-person site tour of the five (5) in-scope pioneer cemeteries, and a public information workshop at the Georgina Historical Society's Harvestfest on September 16, 2023. The feedback from the engagement effort is summarized in each report and has informed all recommended improvements.

8. CONCLUSION:

Staff recommend that Council receive and endorse in principle the Keswick Cemetery Master Plan and the Pioneer Cemeteries Management Plan. Staff will return to Council through the 2025 budget deliberation process to activate capital improvements outlined in plans.

APPROVALS

Prepared By: Courtney Rennie
Senior Project Manager, Parks and Open Space
Community Services

Reviewed By: Bob Ferguson
Manager, Parks Development and Operations
Community Services

Reviewed By: Stefan Hordatt
Manager, Capital Projects
Community Services

Recommended By: Steve Lee-Young
Director, Community Services

Approved By: Ryan Cronsberry
Chief Administrative Officer
Office of the CAO

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Pioneer Cemeteries Management Plan

Attachment 2: Keswick Cemetery Master Plan