

August 7, 2021

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Comments regarding cemetery outreach and cemetery Q&A

Suggestions for organizations/types of organizations to reach out to with information about the Girdwood and Eagle River cemetery projects:

- Alaska Black Caucus, Health Committee
- Alaska Historical Society
- Alaska Native Birthworkers, Alaska Birth Collective
- Alaska Chapter: National Association of Social Workers
- Community councils
- Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other sites of religious services (I know Tommy has done a lot of this work – do we have a list of who you have already spoken to?)
- Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains
- Chaplain, palliative care, and social work staff at hospices and nursing homes
- Palliative Care Alaska Network
- Comfort Keepers Anchorage office
- Senior Voice newspaper

Other:

- Can we also send information to people? Like the Q&A plus a short cover letter?
- Are we making an ‘ask’ of people we share info with – or just letting them know this is going on? Asking them to write a letter, or support the bond, or??

Suggestions for the Q&A:

- ~~Why doesn't~~**Doesn't Girdwood already have a cemetery?** Girdwood had a cemetery, ~~but it that was displaced~~ closed? disturbed? damaged? ~~after/in the 1964 earthquake; remains-burials~~ were moved to the cemetery ~~iesy~~ in Hope ~~and~~ /Sunrise. Girdwood doesn't currently have a cemetery.

Commented [A1]: Not sure what is most accurate here?

- **Why does Girdwood need a cemetery?** Cemeteries provide a sense of history and permanence to the people who live here and for future generations of residents and visitors. Girdwood is a place that people think of as “home”, is a place that many people who don't live here love, and is a place that people have expressed and are expressing a desire to be buried or memorialized hereat. There is a great need for public cemeteries in the Municipality. It is estimated that the public portions of the Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery will be full in less than 7 years.

- **Where will the cemetery be located?** The Municipality's Heritage Land Bank offered several pieces of land, and the Cemetery Committee selected the site at MP.5 on Crow Creek Road, opposite the school bus turnaround. The site is undeveloped, mostly forested land.

- **What style-type of cemetery will this be?** The Girdwood Cemetery Committee and our engineering firm are dedicated to retain as much of the wild character of the current setting as possible. Forested areas will remain, alder meadows will be replaced with grass

Commented [A2]: Will it necessarily be the same firm from now until construction begins? Can we just say the Committee and the Muni, or something?

Commented [A3]: Is ‘replaced’ the right word? Are we really going to cut them down and plant grass? Or will we just cut alders as needed, which will then grow back with grass?

ssy meadows. Looping trails and paths will ~~lead to among~~weave between the various burial areas, sites, structures. ~~The structures that are~~ built will be consistent with our community's forested character; and grounds-keeping will be minimal and low maintenance.

The cemetery will be a quiet place for reflection, grieving, celebration, and honoring of the deceased. The cemetery will be an inclusive public space available to all religious denominations and spiritual communities.

The Girdwood Cemetery will offer a variety of types of burial and disposition of human remains:

- ~~“green”~~green or natural burials: green or natural burials are full body interments into the ground in a manner that does not inhibit decomposition. They do not include a vault, use non-toxic body preparation methods, and use containers made of organic materials, including shrouds. Green or natural burials protect worker health, reduce carbon emissions, conserve natural resources, and preserve habitat.
- conventional burials: conventional burials may include the use of burial vaults, burial containers made of non-organic materials, and bodies prepared using embalming chemicals
- ~~full body burial,~~burial and placement of cremains: the cemetery will include locations for cremains (cremated remains) to be placed buried, a columbarium structure for the placement of urns with cremains, as well as space-an area for cremains to be spread. All of these options will include a plaque or other marker to ~~Plaque or other markers will~~ commemorate those who are interred, placed or spread there.

- **Can I bury my pet at the cemetery?** The cemetery will not have an option for animal companion full body burial, but we are planning to have a pet-specific memorial garden where pet cremains can be spread. This component of the cemetery is still being planned.
- **How long will the cemetery last?** The cemetery will be able to accommodate burials for over 100 years. The site will be maintained and managed as a cemetery forever. ~~The cemetery will be able to accommodate burials for 100 year~~ s →
- **How much will it cost?** Our Schematic Design includes phasing multiple phases for construction (. The cost of phase 1 is approximately 4 million dollars and includes the majority of the infrastructure needed to open and operate the cemetery, around four million dollars paid for by an ~~. These funds will be secured through an~~ area wide bond.
- **How do we pay for this?** Cemetery services are an Areawide function of the Municipality of Anchorage. To build a cemetery, we will request a bond to be approved by Areawide voters in 2024. Eagle River is also currently working on a plan to propose a similar cemetery project, in which case the two groups will likely bond together, which will likely be more successful. ~~The two cemetery projects may be bonded together.~~

Commented [A4]: I made this up, but think it would be good to include something about this. There is nothing in our docs about this – unless I missed it? Can we say something like this here?

- **Who will manage the cemetery?** Cemeteries are managed by the [MOA-Municipality of Anchorage's Dept-Department](#) of Health. Snowplowing will be handled by Girdwood Valley Service Area.
- **Where can I find more information?** You can find more information about the cemetery and the Cemetery Committee on the Girdwood Board of Supervisor's webpage: <http://www.muni.org/departments/operations/streets/service/pages/girdwoodboardofsupervisors.aspx>
- **How can I get involved?** If you are interested in learning more or participating in ongoing planning for this project, please [XXX](#)

Commented [A5]: Attend a CC meeting? Write a letter of support for this project to your Assembly member? Etc?