

**Report to Council**

**Report Title:** Scattering Gardens in the Walkerton Cemetery  
**Prepared By:** Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer  
**Department:** Finance  
**Date:** March 10, 2026  
**Report Number:** FIN2026-08 **File Number:** C11FIN, S09  
**Attachments:** Resolution 26-05-04 – Scattering Gardens Cemetery Request

**Recommendation:**

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number FIN2026-08 - Scattering Gardens in the Walkerton Cemetery, prepared by Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, for information purposes and provides staff the following direction related to implementation of a future Scattering Gardens \_\_\_\_\_

**Report:**

**Background:**

Staff were provided noticed of motion to provide an exploratory review of a scattering garden in Brockton municipal cemeteries.

Currently, the Brockton cemeteries provide a number of options for interments to occur: full interments within a plot and cremation interments within a plot or a columbarium niche. Staff have noticed an increase in the number of cremation interments in comparison to full interments, as shown in the table below, which shows the last six (6) years.

Year	Full Interments	Cremation Interments
2025	11	19
2024	15	19
2023	11	22
2022	17	35
2021	10	14
2020	12	15

## **Analysis:**

### **What is a Scattering Garden and how does it work?**

A scattering garden is generally found within a local cemetery, which offers a quiet place for family to scatter the remains of their loved ones. Typically, once a family requests a time for this interment, staff would prepare the garden area with a hole approximately 2-3 feet in length or a 1x1 ft square and a few inches deep for the family to spread the ashes. Once completed, the family or staff would rake the dirt back over, and then staff would return the gardens back to their previous state with mulch and the like.

### **Updating the By-law**

The process for permitting a scattering garden would be the same as reported in Report PW2022-13, as an amendment to the Brockton Cemetery By-law 2022-132 would be required. Staff would also take the opportunity to address some housekeeping items. As part of the amending process, there are several steps that need to be taken before the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) approves the amended by-law, including public consultation and consultations with the BAO.

As a proposed timeline, if it is the will of Council to approve a Scattering Garden within the Walkerton Cemetery, the By-law could be completed by mid 2026, the BAO approval for the repurpose of the previously approved plot lands could be completed by Fall 2026. From here, it will be up to Staff to come up with a landscaping plan for installation in beginning of 2027, pending funding approval.

Adding a scattering garden would require a slight change to the current practices, however it would be minimal. Staff would be required to keep record of everyone who is scattered, which is the same as all other interments that occur within the cemetery.

### **Memorialization**

Memorialization can take many forms but usually is one large monument where family can engrave names or add plaques with the name, date of birth and death, however the specifics on what is permitted would be addressed through the by-law. How memorialization is done is not limited to any one method, however, once implemented, this would be the only method for those choosing to scatter to maintain consistency.

### **Fees**

With scattering gardens, there are two different ways that can be used for the fees: purchasing interment rights or purchasing scattering rights.

#### **Option 1: Purchase Internment Rights**

With any purchase of Interment Rights, an individual would be purchasing the rights to scatter within a specific section, like a plot, within the gardens this also means that the section would not be able to be resold or reused in any way. This is the more expensive option for the families and land consuming option for the municipality.

## Option 2: Purchase Scattering Rights

The other option, which would be recommended by staff, is the purchase of scattering rights, in which the family does not receive rights to a specific section but are granted the right to scatter within the gardens. The fee for this ranges from \$62 (City of Kawartha Lakes) to \$600 (City of Hamilton) depending on the cemetery and usually includes the two (2) \$30 mandatory fees as per the BAO – one for license renewal and one for Care and Maintenance. The closest comparison is the City of Owen Sound, who uses their cremation interment rate, which for 2026 is \$426.36.

This fee schedule would be considered once the by-law review is completed and added to the Fees and Charges By-law.

### **Potential Locations**

A scattering garden can be added to the Walkerton Cemetery with minimal impact. Staff would recommend that only the Walkerton Cemetery is considered for a scattering garden. There are a few free spaces within the Walkerton Cemetery that could be considered as shown to the right. Though, Staff would not recommend placing it in the #3 location to ensure there is room to expand the Columbarium's.

The other Brockton cemeteries would require Archaeological Assessment - stages 1, 2 and 3, to confirm the location of burials within any section, as many of the cemeteries that Brockton has inherited over the years are incomplete with their records and do not have official maps. Staff note, with the recent changes to the Archeological Standards from the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, it is unlikely that staff would be permitted to study a portion of the lands instead of the entire parcel.

In past consultations with the Bereavement Authority of Ontario, Staff have confirmed with the BAO that, while possible to add a scattering garden to other cemeteries - including the abandoned cemeteries, they would require the Archaeological studies, as part of the approval process, to show that the gardens and pathways are not overtop of an existing grave.

With this in mind, staff do not recommend adding a scattering garden to any cemeteries, other than Walkerton Cemetery, due to the significant costs associated with the archaeological studies required.

### **Maintenance and Long-Term Planning**

As with any garden, regular garden maintenance: weeding, mulching and watering would be required at regular intervals. Currently, the lawn maintenance for the Walkerton Cemetery takes 7 days from start to finish. Consideration towards a horticultural student or cemetery student would be ideal to ensure the current service level is maintained.

There would be no capacity issues, if the recommended fee schedule, option 2, would be chosen by council.



## Strategic Action Plan Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance N/A

## Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

There are no financial implications associated with this report at this time. However, should Council wish to proceed with this proposal, staff time for updating the by-law and consultations with the BAO will be required as well as a plan for landscaping, installation and maintenance will need to be considered at a later date.

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## Respectfully Submitted by:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

## Reviewed By:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer