

## Report to Council

<b>Report Title:</b>	Scattering Gardens in Walkerton Cemetery Follow-Up		
<b>Prepared By:</b>	Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer		
<b>Department:</b>	Finance		
<b>Date:</b>	April 28, 2026		
<b>Report Number:</b>	FIN2026-15	<b>File Number:</b>	C11FIN, S09
<b>Attachments:</b>	N/A		

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### **Recommendation:**

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number FIN2026-15 - Scattering Gardens in Walkerton Cemetery Follow-Up, prepared by Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, and in doing so approves the following;

Internment Option 2

Location Option 3

And further approves staff advancing plans for a Scattering Garden including updated to the Cemetery By-law, undertaking required public consultation, preparing and submitting a revised cemetery plan to the Bereavement Authority of Ontario for approval and record keeping, and obtaining detailed cost estimates to support budgeting and implementation in 2027.

### **Report:**

#### **Background:**

Staff brought forth Report Number FIN2026-08 for information, in response to a Notice of Motion requesting an exploratory review of scattering gardens within Brockton's municipal cemeteries. That report provided general information, examples from other municipalities, and an overview of considerations associated with introducing this type of interment option.

Following that review, Council indicated an interest in further exploring the opportunity. This report builds on the earlier work and is intended to guide Council through the key decisions required to determine whether and how a scattering garden could be implemented within Walkerton Cemetery.

## **Analysis:**

The purpose of this report is to present implementation options in a clear and practical way, while identifying the specific areas where Council direction is required. These decisions will shape the design, operation, and long-term planning of a potential scattering garden.

The creation of a scattering garden will be dependent on a few Council decisions. In summary, the decisions related to this report for adding a scattering garden are as follows:

1. Confirmation for staff to move forward with this project
2. Purchase of Interment Rights or Scattering Rights
3. Location

## **Interment Approach**

As outlined in the previous report, there are two primary approaches to administering interments within a scattering garden. The choice between these models will influence how the space is used over time, how capacity is managed, and how fees are structured.

### **Option 1: Interment Rights**

Under this model, individuals purchase interment rights to a defined portion of the scattering garden, similar to a traditional burial or cremation plot. This provides families with a designated space and a greater sense of permanence. Once interment rights are sold, that space is no longer available for future use or resale.

While this option may appeal to families seeking a clearly identified location, it is more land-intensive and limits the long-term capacity of the garden. It would also require additional considerations within the Cemetery By-law, including how many interments may be permitted per space and how capacity is tracked and managed.

From a financial perspective, this option would typically involve a higher upfront cost to families, as it includes the purchase of the interment rights in addition to any opening and closing fees. At a minimum, pricing would need to include the mandatory Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) fees for Care and Maintenance and license administration, which are currently \$30 each. Beyond these required fees, the municipality would need to establish a market-based rate for the interment rights themselves, which would likely be comparable to cremation plot pricing in surrounding municipalities.

This approach may also require a larger initial footprint for the garden or future expansion planning to accommodate ongoing sales.

### **Option 2: Scattering Rights (Staff Recommended)**

Under this model, families purchase the right to scatter remains within the designated garden, rather than acquiring rights to a specific plot of land. The garden functions as a shared space, allowing for multiple interments without assigning exclusive ownership of any particular area.

This approach offers greater flexibility in how the space is used and maintained over time, and supports a more efficient use of land. It also simplifies long-term planning, as capacity is not tied to individually sold plots.

From a cost perspective, this option is generally more accessible. At a minimum, fees would include the two mandatory BAO charges of \$30 each (Care and Maintenance and license administration), resulting in a base cost of approximately \$60. In addition to these required fees, the municipality would establish a per-interment fee. While there is no prescribed rate, comparable municipalities such as Owen Sound use a cremation interment fee as a benchmark, which is \$426.36 for 2026. This provides a reasonable reference point for establishing a local fee.

Overall, this model provides a lower-cost option for families while allowing the municipality to manage the space more sustainably.

### **Summary for Council Consideration**

The key distinction between these options is whether the garden operates as individually allocated space (Interment Rights) or as a shared space (Scattering Rights).

The Interment Rights model provides a more traditional approach with defined spaces but requires more land and higher costs. The Scattering Rights model offers greater flexibility, lower costs, and more efficient long-term use of the garden.

### **Location Considerations**

Several potential locations within Walkerton Cemetery have been reviewed. Areas closer to the cemetery entrance were considered but are not recommended due to their proximity to the road and adjacent school. These locations may not provide the level of quiet and privacy that is appropriate for interment activities.

As a result, staff have focused on locations further within the cemetery that offer a more suitable setting. Within these areas, three options have been identified.

#### **Option 1**

The first option is a smaller, more contained garden. This approach would be appropriate for a modest initial implementation; however, it offers limited opportunity for expansion. If additional capacity is required in the future, it would likely necessitate the development of a separate second garden rather than a simple extension of the existing space.

#### **Option 2**

The second option introduces a longer garden layout that could incorporate walking paths and a more open design. This approach allows for a more natural setting and creates opportunities for additional features, such as benches or tree memorials. It also provides greater flexibility for future modifications or expansion.

### Option 3 (Staff Recommended)

The third option builds on this concept and offers the greatest level of long-term flexibility. In addition to accommodating a scattering garden with pathways and landscaping, this location would allow for future integration of columbarium units and estate niches. Planning for this now would help avoid disruption to existing features elsewhere in the cemetery, including mature trees, and would support a more coordinated and efficient use of space over time. While a new columbarium is not anticipated for several years, incorporating this consideration into the current planning process would allow for more intentional development and budget alignment.

Based on these considerations, staff recommend the third location option as it best supports both current needs and future planning.



### Design and Future Planning



The final design of the scattering garden will depend on Council's direction regarding both the interment approach and the selected location. Design elements may include pathways, landscaping, and opportunities for memorialization such as benches or trees. Should Council wish to include these features, a formal policy would be developed to guide their implementation and ensure consistency.

In addition, if a larger, multi-use location is selected, the design can incorporate space for future cemetery features such as columbariums and estate niches. This would allow the municipality to plan proactively rather than reactively as demand evolves

## **Conclusion and Recommended Direction**

Should Council wish to proceed with the addition of a scattering garden within Walkerton Cemetery, staff recommend an approach that supports both immediate needs and long-term flexibility.

From a location and design perspective, Options 2 and 3 are best suited to accommodate a larger, linear garden with walking paths. These options allow for a more open and natural setting while also creating opportunities to incorporate additional features such as benches and tree memorialization. This approach provides families with more choice and enhances the overall function and experience of the space.



Of the locations reviewed, Option 3 is recommended as the preferred location. It offers the greatest flexibility for future planning, particularly in accommodating existing trees and minimizing disruption to established features within the cemetery. In addition, this location provides the opportunity to proactively plan for future cemetery needs, including space for three to four additional columbarium units and the potential development of estate niches. While these features are not immediately required, incorporating them into the overall layout at this stage allows for more coordinated long-term planning and efficient use of resources.

From an operational standpoint, staff recommend adopting the scattering rights model for interments. This approach supports more efficient use of land, provides a lower-cost option for families, and simplifies long-term maintenance and capacity management.

The overall cost of developing a scattering garden will depend on several factors, including the size and layout of the garden, the selected location, and whether the project is implemented in phases. At this stage, without confirmed direction from Council, it is not possible to provide a detailed cost estimate. Once direction is established, staff will be able to refine the scope of the project and obtain accurate pricing.

In addition to the physical development of the garden, staff recommend that a formal policy be developed to guide memorialization options, including benches and tree plantings. This will ensure consistency, fairness, and clarity for families wishing to participate in these programs.

Upon confirmation of Council's direction, staff will proceed with the necessary next steps. This will include updating the Cemetery By-law, undertaking any required public consultation, preparing and submitting a revised cemetery plan to the Bereavement Authority of Ontario for approval and record keeping, and obtaining detailed cost estimates to support future budgeting and implementation.

## **Brockton's Community Goals:**

The content and recommendations in this report support advancing the priorities to **Build a Better Brockton** in one or more of the following areas: **Heritage, Culture, and Community, Quality of Life, Municipal Governance, Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment, and/or Economic Development.**

## **Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:**

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective?  
N/A

At this stage, detailed cost estimates cannot be finalized, as the overall scope of the project will depend on Council's direction. Costs will vary based on the size and complexity of the garden, the selected location, and whether the project is implemented in phases. Costs will be incorporated within the 2027 budget.

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## **Respectfully Submitted by:**



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

## **Reviewed By:**



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer