

**Meeting Date:** 02/06/2020

**Report Type:** Discussion



**Youth, Parks, &  
Community Enrichment  
Report**

915 I Street, 3rd Floor  
[www.CityofSacramento.org](http://www.CityofSacramento.org)

**Title:** Historic City Cemetery Preservation Assessment

**Location:** City Historic Cemetery

**Recommendation:** Informational

**Contact:** C. Gary Hyden, Special Projects Manager, (916) 808-1949, and Andrew Macvicar, Cemetery Manager, (916) 808-1196, YPCE

**Presenter:** C. Gary Hyden, Special Projects Manager, (916) 808-1949, YPCE

**Department:** Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment

**Division:** City Cemetery

**Dept ID:** 19001315

**Attachments:**

**01 Description/Analysis**

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Submitted By: C. Gary Hyden, Special Projects Manager

Approved By: Mario Lara, Director

Signature:

## Attachment 01 – Description/Analysis

### Issue:

#### Background

The Historic City Cemetery was established on December 3, 1849. A Cemetery Master Plan was adopted by the City Council on December 11, 2007. On November 5, 2014, the Cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, with significance designation at the state and local level as follows:

*“The site is eligible under Criterion B at the national level of significance for its association with cemetery benefactor Margaret Crocker and as the gravesite of multiple Sacramentans of transcendent importance for whom there is no other surviving property associated with their productive lives. The site is eligible under Criterion C at the state level of significance as an example of Victorian era “rational” cemetery planning, similar to other 19th century “rural” cemetery plans but following a rectilinear plan instead of an irregular one, and as an assemblage of significant examples of funerary architecture, statuary and landscape design. The property meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration B because the moved properties have achieved significance in their own right, Criteria Consideration C because the individuals nominated are persons of outstanding importance with no other extant property, and Criteria Consideration D because it draws its significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, age, distinctive design features, and association with historic events.”<sup>1</sup>*

To better manage the Cemetery and its considerable historic resources, the City developed an Operations and Assessment Study. The study took over two years to complete; City staff, consultants with subject matter expertise in historic landscapes and cemetery operations, as well as a technical advisory committee consisting of community stakeholders, participated in the effort which was finished in April of 2019. Since that time City staff has been implementing the recommendations of the study. One of the key recommendations that have been implemented are the hiring of a Cemetery Manager and updating the management of volunteers which assist with maintenance of the various gardens and landscapes areas.

The Cemetery contains extensive landscaping with native plants and roses. The rose garden was planted in the early 1990’s and has been recognized as a “public garden” by the American Rose Society. There are three established gardens at the Cemetery, the rose garden located throughout the Cemetery, the native plant garden, and Hamilton Square. Each plot or grave site is landscaped, and those plants require regular weed removal and plant pruning. There are also arbors that were erected which have climbing roses which also need regular maintenance.

#### Preservation Assessment

As part of the Operations and Assessment Study implementation process, the City hired a conservator to develop a Preservation Assessment and 5-Year Preservation Plan that specifically addresses the treatment of the Cemetery’s historic and cultural artifacts, which are primarily the monuments within the burial plots.

The following is a summary of the goals and recommendations made in the Preservation Assessment and 5-Year Preservation Plan. The entire document is available to the public on the YPCE website at the following address:

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<sup>1</sup> National Register of Historic Places Program, Sacramento City Cemetery, Reference Number 14000889

<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/ParksandRec/Parks/Specialty-Parks/City-Cemetery>

### Preservation Plan Goals

- To implement preservation best practices.
- To reconcile the “concepts of the Cemetery as an outdoor museum and garden [as] a key part of the future of the Cemetery”
- To alleviate horticultural practices that are detrimental to the preservation of the historically significant features.
- To utilize the Preservation Assessment and the recently completed Historic City Cemetery Operations and Assessment Study for potential grant applications.

### Preservation Plan Recommendations

1. As a designated historic site and registered national landmark, all practices at the Historic City Cemetery are to be in compliance with the following guidelines:
  - - *Secretary’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*
  - - *American Institute for Conservation Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice.*
2. Incorporate these standards and codes into City Ordinance 2002-020 (especially section 12.68.070 Maintenance by City Cemetery Staff), the Cemetery Manager’s Job Description, the Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment Department (YPCE), all other City departments related to the cemetery, and all other organizations contributing to maintenance and preservation of the cemetery.
3. Implement the recommended action items presented in *Appendix A 5-Year Preservation Plan* of the Preservation Assessment report. The 5-Year Plan is intended as a guide to indicate priorities via sequencing, with highest priorities to be accomplished sooner, while remaining priorities can be achieved as feasible; e.g. as resources become available.
4. The 5-Year Preservation Plan can be coordinated or integrated with the Cemetery Master Plan. In general, action items can be phased to reflect priorities as follows:
  - a. **Phase I** Planning, Policy, and Management Updates, Security Improvements
  - b. **Phase II** Site Features Survey Documentation and Conceptual Cost Estimating
  - c. **Phase III** Fundraising and Grant Writing
  - d. **Phase IV** Training and Implementation.

### Conclusion

This Preservation Assessment and 5-Year Preservation Plan, along with the previous Cemetery Operations and Assessment Study, provide a much-needed augmentation and refinement of existing Cemetery policies and procedures. These documents, along with existing City code and the approved Cemetery Master Plan create a complete structure for the management and restoration of the unique cultural and historical resource that is the City Historic Cemetery.

**Policy Considerations:** The City of Sacramento considers the Historic City Cemetery a park facility. Providing and effectively operating parks and recreation facilities is consistent with the

City's strategic plan to enhance livability in Sacramento's neighborhoods by expanding park, recreation, and trail facilities throughout the City.

**Economic Impacts:** Not Applicable

**Environmental Considerations:** This report concerns administrative activities that do not constitute a "project" as defined by the CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(2).

**Sustainability:** Not Applicable

**Rationale for Recommendation:** in late 2016, the Director of YPCE assigned staff to conduct a City Historic City Cemetery Operations and Assessment Study to analyze existing conditions and develop recommendations for improvements to YPCE's management of the Cemetery. Implementation of the recommendations of that study is underway. The Preservation Assessment and 5-Year Preservation Plan is an important addition to the existing study. Therefore, staff is providing this information report to Parks and Community Enrichment Commission as an update.

**Financial Considerations:** Not applicable

**Local Business Enterprise (LBE):** Not applicable