



## Report to Council

### From the Office of Councillor Steve Milani

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Date: October 28, 2020  
Subject: Columbaria in Pioneer Memorial Park

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#### Purpose

For Council to consider adding columbaria to Pioneer Memorial Park, effectively creating the City's first cemetery.

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#### Recommendation

**THAT staff be directed to report back to Council with the costs and implications of designing, installing, and maintaining columbaria at Pioneer Memorial Park as recommended in the report dated October 28, 2020 from the Office of Councillor Steve Milani regarding Columbaria in Pioneer Memorial Park;**

**AND THAT staff report back with pricing options and implications of installing and maintaining a memorial wall and a scattering garden in the same location.**

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#### Background

For decades, Port Moody residents have been asking the City to provide a place where they can lay their loved ones to rest upon passing. Adding columbaria to Pioneer Memorial Park is being proposed to satisfy this community need.

#### Discussion

The City of Port Moody has never had a place to lay the dearly departed to rest, forcing residents to do so outside of the city. It is for this reason the addition of columbaria is proposed for Pioneer Memorial Park. Columbaria is the plural form of columbarium which is a wall, room, or building with niches that stores cremation urns. Local columbaria set in a memorial park can help offer a space that brings comfort to families as they struggle with their grief while remembering loved ones. It can provide a serene environment that people can visit on important occasions and time can be spent communing with a person dear to them that has passed. This deeply personal process can have many psychological benefits for those who have suffered a recent death in their family. Reading the inscribed plaques can also offer a look into local history. The following article offers a well thought out explanation of why cemeteries are important to communities for both personal and historical reasons: [The Importance of Cemeteries to the Community](https://feeandsons.com/blogs/blog-entries/1/Our-Blogs/8/The-Importance-of-Cemeteries-to-the-Community.html).<sup>1</sup>

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### Why a columbarium?

While a burial cemetery was considered when preparing this report, a columbarium was chosen as the current focus because it requires less space and fits with current trends. The following is a quote from a CBC article, "Over the past two decades, cremation has become the norm in Canada. According to the Cremation Association of North America, which uses data from provincial vital statistics departments, the cremation rate in Canada has risen from 48 percent in 2000 to 72 percent in 2018. And the association expects the rate will keep increasing over the next few years." There are many reasons for this change which are explained in the following linked article: [The cost of dying: How a spike in cremation rates is changing the funeral industry.](#)<sup>2</sup>

\*See Attachment #1 for examples of the Radium Hot Springs and the City of Courtenay columbaria.

\*See Attachment #2 for an example of custom columbaria in a park-like setting.

### Examples of other BC municipal-owned columbaria:

Radium Hot Springs, population 776: [Radium Columbarium](#)<sup>3</sup> (**Attachment #1**)

Town of Lake Cowichan, population of 3,226: [River's Edge Memorial Garden](#)<sup>4</sup>

Oliver, population 4,928: [Cemetery Services](#)<sup>5</sup>

Town of Osoyoos, population 5085: [Cemetery](#),<sup>6</sup> Times Chronicle Article: [Osoyoos Lakeview Cemetery](#)<sup>7</sup>

Whistler, population 11,854: [Pre-arranging a Columbarium Niche](#)<sup>8</sup>

City of Courtenay, population 25,000: [Cemetery Columbarium Scattering Garden](#)<sup>9</sup> (**Attachment #1**)

The District of West Vancouver, population 42,473: [Above Ground Columbaria Niche](#)<sup>10</sup>

### Typical Columbarium Fees:

City of Courtenay: [Cemetery Brochure](#)<sup>11</sup>

12" x 12" niche space: \$1,000 resident / \$1,800 for non-resident \$1000.00

Opening & closing: \$100 (\$150 weekends) \$ 100.00

Bronze plaque: \$ 475.00

(Resident) Total: \$1575.00

Town of Osoyoos: [Cemetery Fees](#)<sup>12</sup>

Single Niche (including granite cover, engraving not included) \$1417.00

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/costofliving/where-we-live-where-we-die-and-the-romances-we-read-in-between-1.5462205/the-cost-of-dying-how-a-spike-in-cremation-rates-is-changing-the-funeral-industry-1.5462235>

<sup>3</sup> <https://radiumhotsprings.ca/village-office/departments/columbarium/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lakecowichangazette.com/news/rivers-edge-memorial-garden-name-for-lake-cowichans-first-cemetery/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://oliver.ca/cemetery-services/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.osoyoos.ca/content/cemetery>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.timeschronicle.ca/state-art-columbarium-offers-new-burial-options-osoyoos-lakeview-cemetery/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.whistler.ca/services/cemetery-and-tributes/pre-arrangement-columbarium-niche>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.courtenay.ca/EN/main/city-hall/cemetery/scattering-garden.html>

<sup>10</sup> <https://westvancouver.ca/government/departments-operations/cemetery/above-ground-columbaria-niche>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.courtenay.ca/assets/City~Hall/Cemetery/cemetery\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.courtenay.ca/assets/City~Hall/Cemetery/cemetery_brochure.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.osoyoos.ca/content/cemetery#Fees>

Care Fund	\$ 158.00
Inurnment	\$ 169.00
Handling and Placing Granite Cover Plate	\$ 169.00
	Total: \$1913.00

City of Surrey: [Cemetery Services Fee Schedule<sup>13</sup>](#)

Single Niche: \$2020 for resident (\$2250 for non-resident)	\$2020.00
Preparation and placement	\$ 370.00
	(Resident) Total: \$2390.00

Scattering Garden: \$210.00 resident / \$295.00 non-resident	\$ 210.00
Preparation and Placement	\$ 240.00
	Total \$ 450.00

City of Coquitlam: [Cemetery Fees<sup>14</sup>](#)

Granite Wall Niche (Single - Holds up to two urns)	
Interment into wall with marker on wall, inscription not included	Total: \$3117.00
Interment (Fee to add additional urn at a later date)	\$ 430.00

Pioneer Memorial Park: [Park Website Link<sup>15</sup>](#)

Pioneer Memorial Park, located at 275 Knowle Street, is on the southwest corner of loco Road and Heritage Mountain Boulevard. The park was created as a result of a public referendum on the November 1999 municipal election ballot and was officially dedicated on October 14, 2000. The park area was at one time the location of several single-family homes. The park measures 1.1 hectares (2.7 acres) according to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2016. There are picnic tables and benches, a small gazebo, and lighting available at the park. Parking is available to the west of the park at the Recreation Complex.

Labyrinth Healing Garden:

The Crossroads Hospice Labyrinth Healing Garden is at Pioneer Memorial Park between City Hall and Crossroads Inlet Centre Hospice. The project was initiated in 2007 and involved the Parks and Recreation Commission which recommended that Council direct staff work with volunteers in the creation of the garden.

The Healing Garden brings life and beauty to Pioneer Memorial Park.

Within its 2,916 square feet, the garden features a single paved path, inlaid with 23 basalt stepping-stones and surrounded by more than 600 plants. Inspirational granite boulders, engraved with words like dignity, choice, and compassion, are stationed along the path and enhance the labyrinth experience.

Potential Challenges

- Talking about cemeteries means coming to terms with one's own mortality and is therefore not a comfortable topic of conversation for many.
- Several Staff would require training to perform interment as required.
- Through community consultation, City Staff may find that there are many residents in need of a niche and that the new columbaria may immediately become oversubscribed.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.surrey.ca/sites/default/files/media/documents/CemeteryFeeSchedule.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.coquitlam.ca/DocumentCenter/View/2164/Schedule-of-Fees-and-Charges-Cemetery-PDF>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.portmoody.ca/en/recreation-parks-and-environment/parks.aspx#Pioneer-Memorial-Park-and-Labyrinth-Healing-Garden>

## Conclusion

Pioneer Memorial Park is central and easy to get to from any part of the City. It is also close to transit. Site visits by Staff and maintenance would be simplified due to its location directly across from City Hall and near the City Works Yard. What makes this location even more appealing is that there is already a Labyrinth Healing Garden on-site and the word 'Memorial' is already part of its name, making it the perfect location for Port Moody's first cemetery.

## Other Options

### Option #1

THAT Staff identifies and reports back to Council with suitable locations for a columbaria style memorial cemetery within the City;

AND THAT Staff report back to Council with general costs and implications related to the installation and maintenance of columbaria, including pricing options for a memorial wall and a scattering garden.

### Option #2

THAT Staff conducts a survey to determine the level of community support for the creation of a columbarium or other style of cemetery within the City and report back to Council with the findings.

## Financial Implications

Staff time would be required to prepare a report back to Council if this initiative moves forward.

## Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Option #2 could be included in Civic Engagement Initiatives already planned for the coming update of the Official Community Plan (OCP).

## Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The recommendations in this report align with the following Council Strategic Plan 'Objective'.

Healthy City. "Provide local services and access to amenities for residents of all ages and abilities."

The recommendations in this report align with the following Council Strategic Plan 'Values'.

Respect. "We treat everyone with fairness, courtesy, and dignity."

Compassion. "We believe in kindness, caring, and helping others."

## Attachments

1. Columbarium Examples
2. Columbaria in Park