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**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"  
**Date:** 12/14/2023 6:47:53 PM  
**Subject:** Memo re: Mountain View Cemetery – Public Engagement – Perimeter and Entrances  
**Attachments:** DCM - ACCS - GM - Memo (Council) - Mountain View Cemetery - Public Engagement – Perimeter and Entrances (2023-12-14).pdf

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Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

Attached please find a memo which provides a preliminary update on the Mountain View Cemetery public engagement process related to the cemetery perimeter and entrances, with a focus on the Prince Edward Street and 32nd Avenue entrance. A few key points:

- The 1998 Vision Plan and 2000 Master Plan for Mountain View Cemetery (MVC) included significant input from neighbouring residents. Nearby residents have a strong regard for the cemetery as their neighbourhood green space. While all Vancouver taxpayers and residents are stakeholders of the cemetery as a citywide service and asset, the adjacent neighbourhood have been traditionally viewed as a unique and key stakeholder group.
- In February 2020, MVC entered in to a 5-year contract with the Federal Government to renovate 7,373 military markers in 2 Fields of Honour. Work began in October with removal of the hedge along that edge, erection of a construction fence and closure of a concrete pathway from the midpoint of that block through the military area and into the cemetery.
- Most recently in June 2023, a letter was sent to Council by a neighbour with concerns about the Prince Edward Street entrance.
- Funding to develop a long-range Perimeter Plan for the cemetery was included in the 2015-2018 Capital Budget. When completed, this plan will provide a long-range schematic document to guide the cemetery and inform the public as to what the outer edges of the cemetery would be (hedge, fence, visually transparent or opaque) as well as where entrances (vehicle and pedestrian) could or should be maintained, created or closed. Work started in 2022 and the draft Plan is almost complete and expected to be finalized very early in 2024.
- The MVC perimeter and entrance public engagement process was intended to collect feedback for consideration in development of the final plan.

If you require further information, please feel free to contact me and we will provide response through the weekly Council Q&A.

Best,  
Sandra

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*The City of Vancouver acknowledges the unceded homelands of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əjəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Sel̓wí7wítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.*

## MEMORANDUM

December 14, 2023

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC  
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office  
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Sandra Singh  
Deputy City Manager  
General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Mountain View Cemetery – Public Engagement – Perimeter and Entrances

RTS #: N/A

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### PURPOSE

This memo provides a preliminary update on the Mountain View Cemetery public engagement process related to the cemetery perimeter and entrances, with a focus on the Prince Edward Street and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue entrance, which has been an active topic of community outreach to Council.

### BACKGROUND

#### Community Context

The 1998 Vision Plan and 2000 Master Plan for Mountain View Cemetery (MVC) included significant input from neighbouring residents. Nearby residents have a strong regard for the cemetery as their neighbourhood green space. While all Vancouver taxpayers and residents are stakeholders of the cemetery as a citywide service and asset, the adjacent neighbourhood have been traditionally viewed as a unique and key stakeholder group.

As a citywide serving asset and a fee-funded service, there are other stakeholder groups that the cemetery also considers in planning. These stakeholders include groups such as cemetery rights holders (grave owners), friends and family members of those buried in the cemetery and numerous religious, fraternal, genealogical, historical, military, and other organizations with an

interest, and other residents of Vancouver generally. Some of these other stakeholder groups include taxpayers and residents who do not live nearby and some of the groups also make significant financial contributions to the cemetery.

### Recent Works

In February 2020, MVC entered in to a 5-year contract with the Federal Government to renovate 7,373 military markers in 2 Fields of Honour. Work on this restoration project commenced in the Horne 2 Field of Honour on the east side of Prince Edward Street between 31<sup>st</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenues. It began in October with removal of the hedge along that edge, erection of a construction fence and closure of a concrete pathway from the midpoint of that block through the military area and into the cemetery.

In this same year, the cemetery replaced a failing stairway at Fraser Street and 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue with a new stairway. In November, a neighbour raised a formal concern about accessibility at this renovated entrance with specific reference to the lack of a ramp and wheelchair access. This concern was escalated to Legal Services.

In 2021, REFM initiated a consultant to complete an accessibility audit of MVC. A Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) report was completed in November. The report contains minimum and suggested requirements for accessibility and opportunities for improvement across the cemetery.

In December 2021, MVC engaged a consultant team to initiate design work on the second phase of the Master Plan implementation. The resulting plan will guide the interment and other improvements across the cemetery from 2024 to 2040.

In September 2022, the City's Public Engagement team was engaged to work with MVC to seek input from stakeholders for consideration in the creation of a plan to guide changes to the cemetery perimeter and entrances as part of the long-term work to improve the cemetery environs. The MVC perimeter and entrance public engagement process was launched in February 2023 and closed in March.

In June 2023, a letter was sent to Council by a neighbour with general concerns about the management of MVC and the re-establishment of the Prince Edward Street entrance. Staff are aware that there are others in the neighbourhood who share concerns about cemetery entrances. A memo was sent to Council that provided background on MVC and pedestrian and recreational use.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Perimeter Plan Development

Funding to develop a long-range Perimeter Plan for the cemetery was included in the 2015-2018 Capital Budget, and pace of the work has been impacted by staffing capacity. When completed, this plan will provide a long-range schematic document to guide the cemetery and inform the public as to what the outer edges of the cemetery would be (hedge, fence, visually transparent or opaque) as well as where entrances (vehicle and pedestrian) could or should be maintained, created or closed. Work started in 2022 and the draft Plan is almost complete and expected to be finalized very early in 2024.

It is important for Council to be aware that the topic of the cemetery environs and perimeter are not always simple matters. Previous projects at MVC related to tree planting, tree removal, hedge removal often resulted in a range of feedback from the neighbours – most negative, but some supportive. The cemetery had also been experiencing persistent vandalism to the cemetery perimeter by people who were determined to establish access to the cemetery from the adjacent neighbourhood by cutting openings in the chain link fence or damaging the hedge. Further, most of the access-related damage to the cemetery fence and hedge have been in places where the entry point resulted in pedestrians walking a path on top of people's graves. Cemetery staff would repair the damage only to have the repaired fence or hedge re-vandalized.

Accordingly, the work on a perimeter plan is timely and of high relevance for sustained operations.

### Perimeter Plan: Public Engagement Process

The MVC perimeter and entrance public engagement process was intended to collect feedback for consideration in development of the final plan. While the primary stakeholder group for the cemetery are people and families with interment spaces, for this perimeter plan study, the primary stakeholder group consulted was the neighbours because the perimeter most impacts their usage. Postcards were hand delivered by staff to residences across from the cemetery. Signs were also posted within the cemetery to provide opportunities for others to participate as well.

The engagement included schematic drawings of existing and planned perimeter treatments and a map showing where the treatments were being proposed. A separate map for entrances indicated existing entrances to be improved, possible new entrances and informal entrance that would be closed due to interference with existing graves. The entrance of concern at Prince Edward Street was highlighted as being considered for closure with potential for an alternate entrance located around the corner on 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave.

In addition to the interactive maps, the engagement also included a brief survey to collect information on the proximity of respondents, their frequency of visits to MVC and their type of use or activity in the cemetery.

### Preliminary Survey Feedback

There were 4 main areas with strong feedback:

#### *The cemetery as green space*

MVC is an important green space especially for neighbours. The reopening of the cemetery, increases in interment activity, and changing nature of the typical cemetery activity has resulted in more frequent overlap as noted by cemetery field staff and families of people interred at the cemetery. The current preference for cremation has changed the typical interment service. The lack of funeral cars, fewer people, and less formal attire seems to result in some services being less obvious to some cemetery visitors, particularly those using the cemetery for recreational purposes. As the cemetery continues to become more active in its core activity as a sacred place for interment and commemoration, maintaining this balance will continue to be a focus of communications and neighbourhood relations.

### *Dogs in the cemetery*

Along with use of the cemetery as a green space comes the presence of dogs. Almost one-third of respondents indicated they used the cemetery often or always to walk their dog and noted their use of leashes and being responsible for picking up after themselves. More than half of the respondents indicated they never use the cemetery for dog-walking and expressed that it is disrespectful for dogs to be present in the cemetery.

### *The perimeter plans*

The overall plans for the cemetery perimeter were well received and will be primarily implemented as proposed. In one section, neighbours expressed concerns about potential tree planting shading neighbouring backyards. The trees are intended to screen internal views from within the cemetery of the neighbouring alley and garages, enabling a peaceful respite for mourners from the busy urban environment.

### *The Prince Edward Street pedestrian entrance*

Most nearby residents expressed a strong desire for more entrances throughout the cemetery perimeter. A desire to see the Prince Edward Street entry at the Horne2 Field of Honour re-instated after construction was the most frequently noted response.

The cemetery operational and service concerns with this entrance attempt to consider the pedestrian patterns from the previous 20 years resulting in damage to active grave sites, the restoration work being completed in this area, accessibility concerns regarding entrance changes made in 2020 at 31<sup>st</sup> and Fraser Street and the standards set out in the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC).

The previous concrete path in this area – while not the full width available – showed clear evidence of pedestrian and/or bicycle wear on the adjacent graves. Widening the hard surface of the path to the maximum available between the adjacent graves (1200 mm) may reduce the adjacent wear but that width does not meet the requirements in the RHFAC (1500mm minimum and 1800 mm preferred). Engineering staff also recently contacted the cemetery about the stairway from the sidewalk to the Prince Edward Street curb with concerns about encouraging pedestrians to enter a street mid-block with no crossing. This stairway was implemented by Engineering in 2010 when the sidewalk was installed along this block and was an independent decision of Engineering Services.

An opportunity does exist for an alternate entrance 200m from this location (approximately 70m west of Prince Edward Street on the north side of 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue). This placement would allow direct access from a sidewalk, 50m closer to a corner curb ramp, with curbside parking, access to the sidewalk with no stairway and directly into the cemetery at a 6000 mm wide paved entry point. In the public engagement this alternative elicited respondent feedback related to traffic and decreased safety. While 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is busier than Prince Edward Street there may exist some engineering controls or traffic calming that could be included to mitigate these concerns.

Recognizing that the survey results confirmed high interest in maintaining the Prince Edward Street access, staff will explore options for how to implement a widened pathway that allows access into the cemetery for the local neighbours but does so in a

manner that ensures protection of directly adjacent grave sites. Because this entrance and its pathway would not meet accessibility standards, an additional entrance would need to be implemented as well, likely the identified opportunity on 33rd. As an operational matter, a formal decision on a Prince Edward Street entry will be made by the General Manager and communicated to the neighbours before the end of Q1 2024.

An appendix is attached with photos and maps of the Prince Edward portion and other areas.

## **NEXT STEPS**

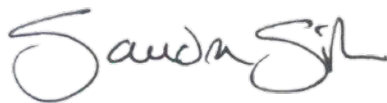
Final review of the public engagement summary report is underway, and it is expected to be released on the Shape Your City site before the end of January 2024.

The final draft of the Perimeter Plan is almost complete awaiting the decision on the Prince Edward Street entrance and is anticipated to be made public by the end of Q1 2024.

## **FINAL REMARKS**

The MVC Perimeter Plan will identify and guide changes that will be implemented over the next phase of development at the cemetery. Sharing the plan will identify the work for current and future cemetery families, neighbours, and stakeholders.

If Council requires further information, please feel free to contact me directly at [sandra.singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:sandra.singh@vancouver.ca) and we will provide response through the weekly Council Q&A.



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## APPENDIX A

### Aerial of MVC overlaid with graves

- ✔ Existing entrance to Retain/improve
- ✘ Unofficial/vandalized Entry to be closed (grave interference)
- ⚠ Temporarily closed Safety hazard (awaiting repair)
- ❓ Possible new entrance
- PE Prince Edward St entrance



HORNE2 Field of Honour: east side of Prince Edward St. between 31<sup>st</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenues

2009

Informal access through hedge

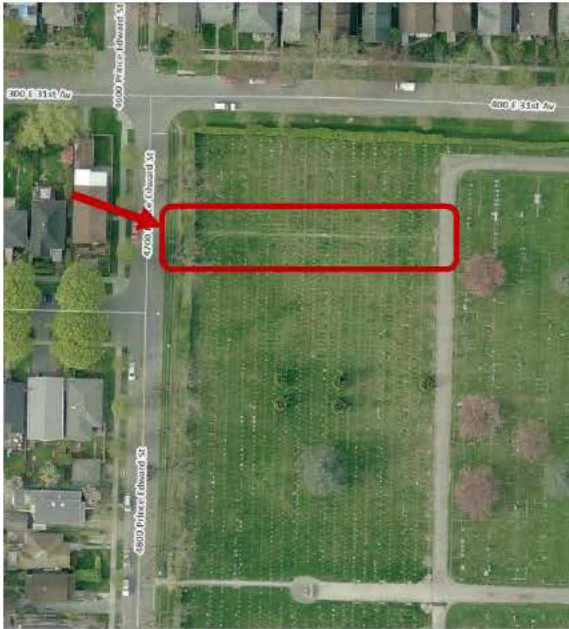


2014

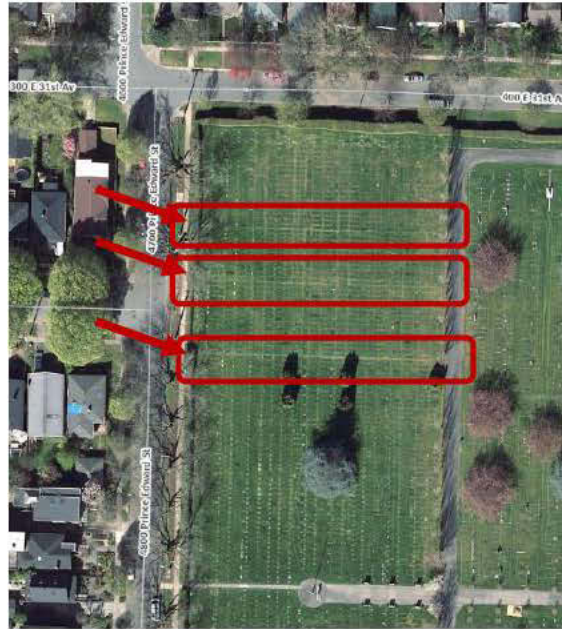
more informal access around fence



Pathway across military graves

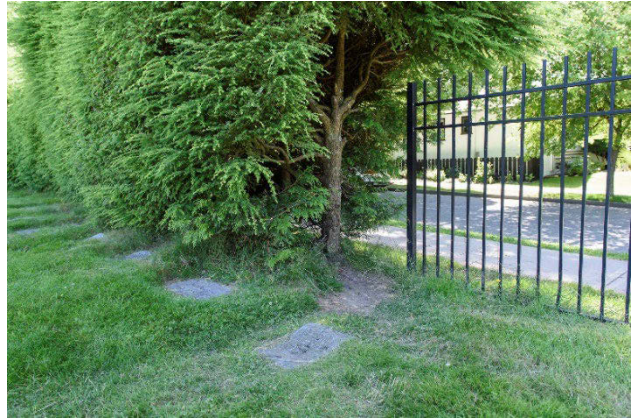


3 pathways across military graves





**HORNE2 Field of Honour:** Conditions in 2020 (prior to redevelopment)





ABRAY North Field of Honour: east side of Prince Edward St. between 33<sup>rd</sup> & 34<sup>th</sup> Ave.

2014

Informal access through hedge



2022

informal access closed



Path across military graves



no more path across military graves



Fraser and 31<sup>st</sup> Entrance

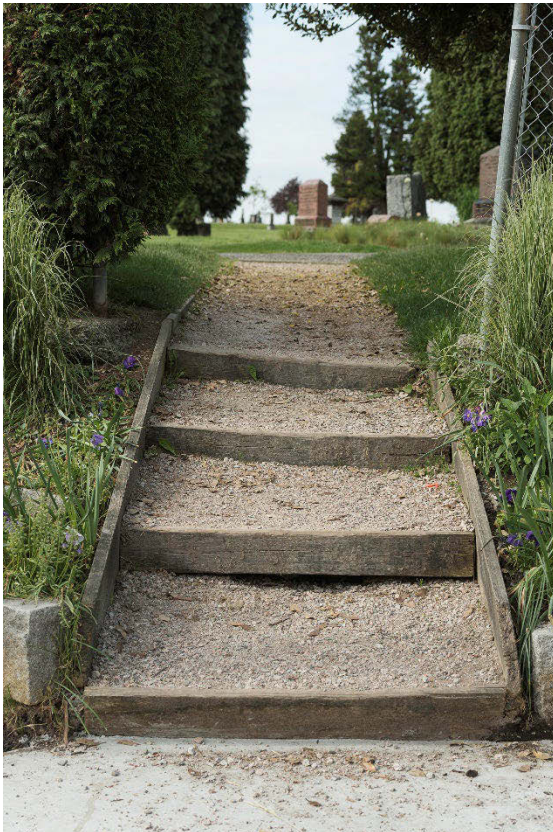
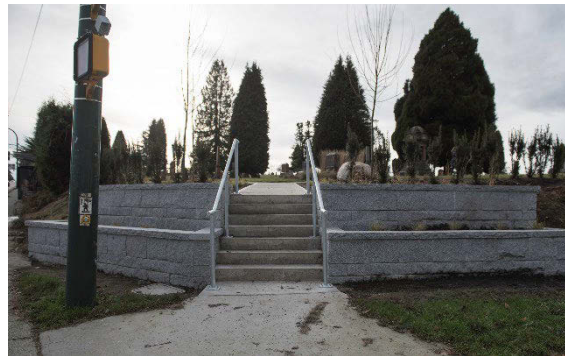
2017

Gravel stairs with wood risers



2021

concrete stairs with railing





Other unofficial/vandalized entrances and attempts by MVC to close them





# Mountain View Cemetery (MVC) Perimeter Plans

Published December 14, 2023



# About the MVC Perimeter Plans

Mountain View Cemetery (MVC) is developing a plan for changes and improvements to its entrances, hedges and fences over the next several years. The objective of this initiative is to preserve the culture of Vancouver's only cemetery while considering the relationship with the surrounding community. The changes to the entrances, hedges, and fences will be designed to allow public access, while protecting the existing graves.

Map of project area



## Project timeline





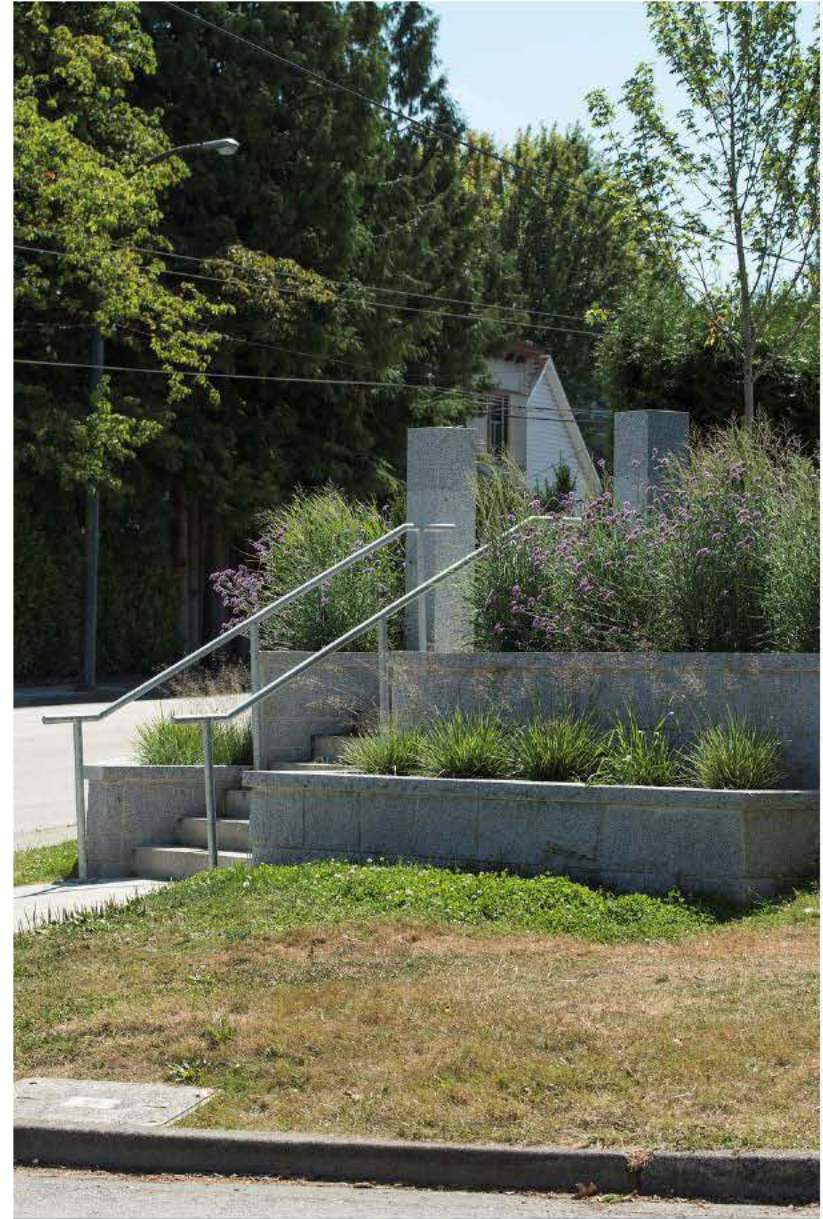
# About MVC Perimeter Plans engagement

Between February 22 and March 17, 2023 the City of Vancouver engaged neighbours of Mountain View Cemetery and visitors on:

- Proposed changes to hedges, fences and the cemetery perimeter
- Proposed changes to cemetery pedestrian and vehicle entrances

## Outreach:

- We used a variety of methods including postcards delivered to 500+ neighbouring residences, onsite signage and social media notifications on the City of Vancouver and MVC Facebook pages.



During the engagement period, we reached people through a variety of methods:

- Surveys (376 responses)
- Interactive maps:
  - MVC entrances map (62 contributors)
  - MVC hedges and fences map (16 contributors)
  - 65 different contributors, placing 162 pins
- Links to related documents
  - Prince Edward at 32nd (116 downloads)
  - Perimeter Condition and Plans (81 downloads)
  - 2000 MVC Master Plan (68 downloads)

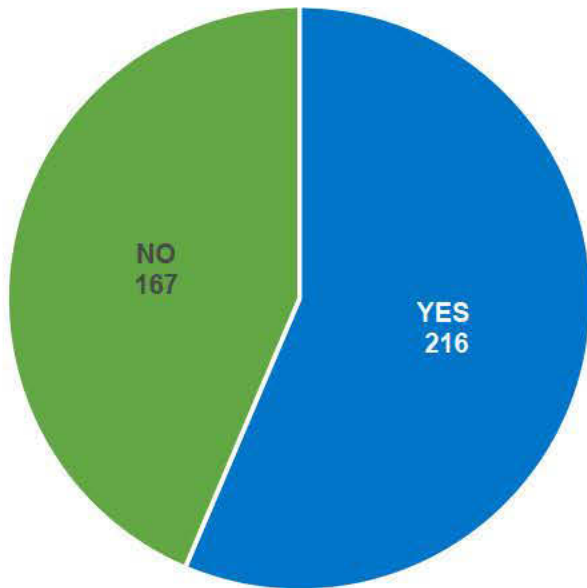
All project content was made available on [Shape Your City](#) (2,496 visits).



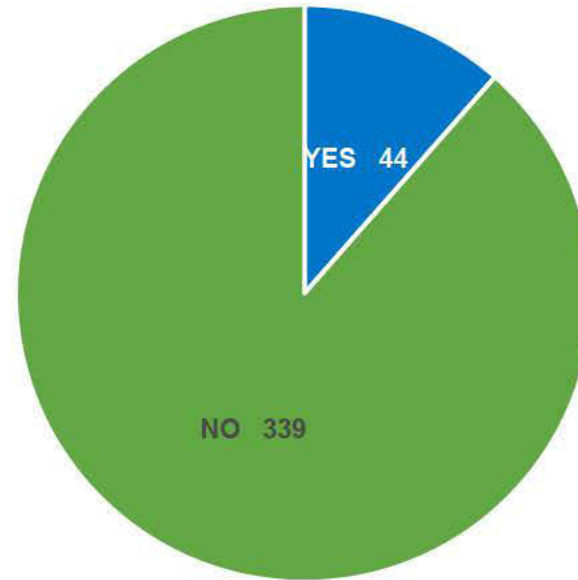


## Relationship to MVC

I have a friend/relative in MVC

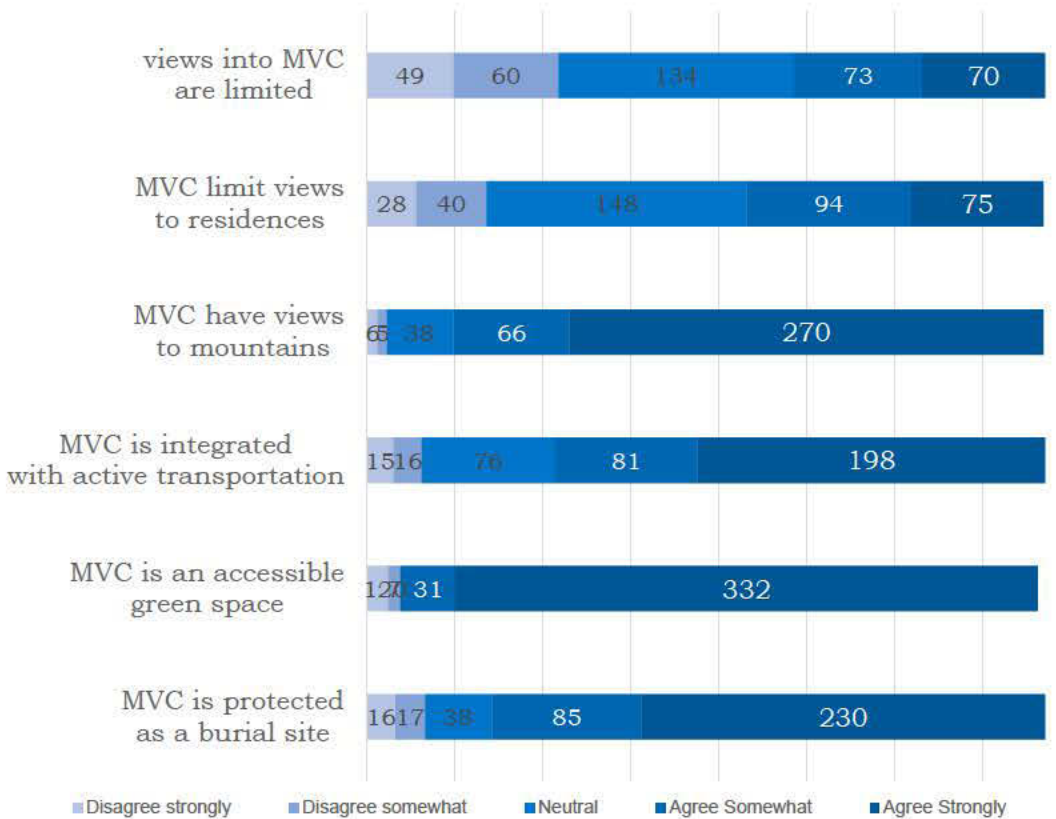


I own space in MVC



Since reopening to the sale of space in December 2008 the cemetery has sold more than 6,894 interment sites to more than 2,332 client families and completed more than 6,820 new interments. The survey notification primarily targeted immediately adjacent residents with hand-delivered post cards. No direct measures were employed to reach other grave owners and other stakeholders.

## It is important to me that...



### Summary

37% agree views into the cemetery should be limited, 28% disagree

44% agree views to residences should be limited, 18% disagree

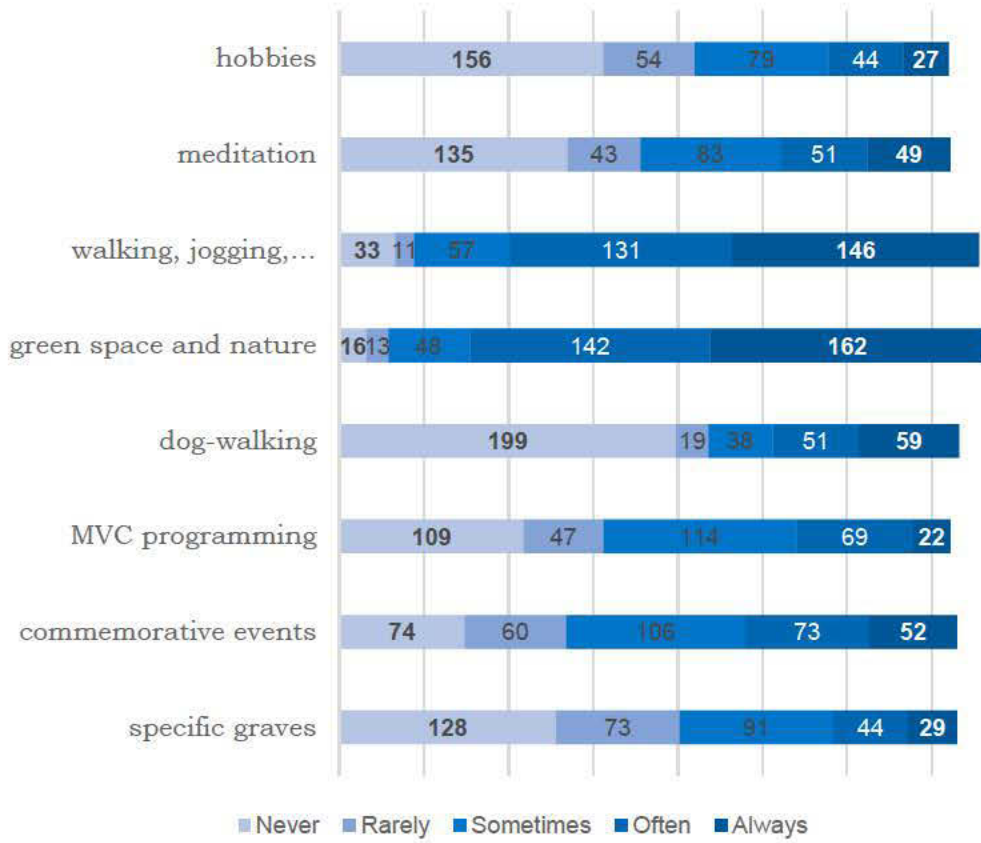
87% agree MVC should have views to the mountains

72% agree MVC should be integrated with active transportation

95% agree MVC is an important accessible green space

82% agree it is important that MVC be protected as a burial site

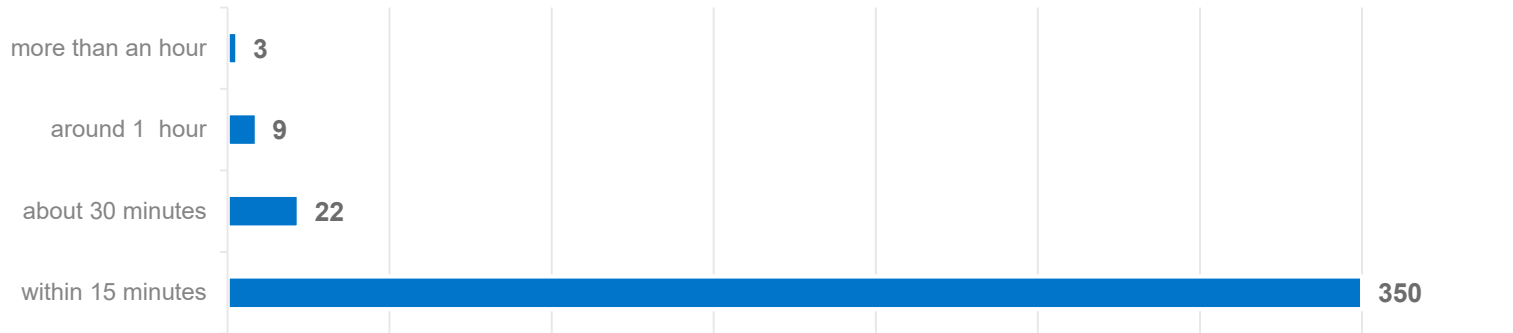
### I visit MVC for...



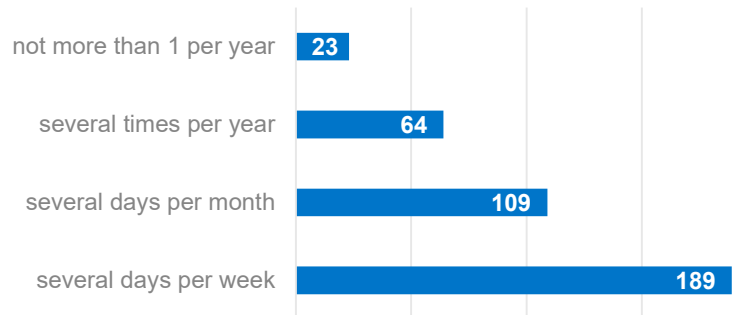
NEVER/ RARELY		OFTEN/ ALWAYS
58%	Hobbies	20%
49%	Meditation	28%
12%	Walking, Jogging...	73%
8%	Nature/Green Space	80%
60%	Dog Walking	30%
43%	All Souls & Programming	25%
37%	Commemorative Events	34%
55%	Specific Graves	20%

## Proximity and Frequency of Visits

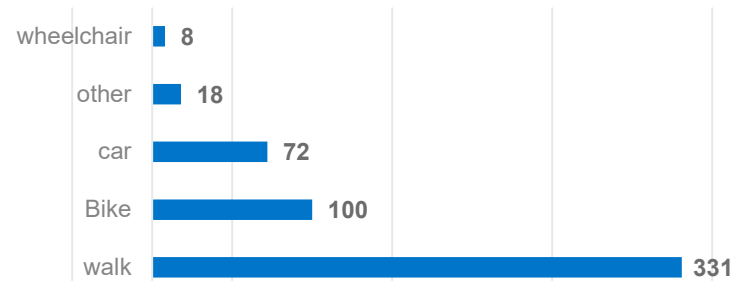
### How close to MVC do you live?



### How often do you visit?



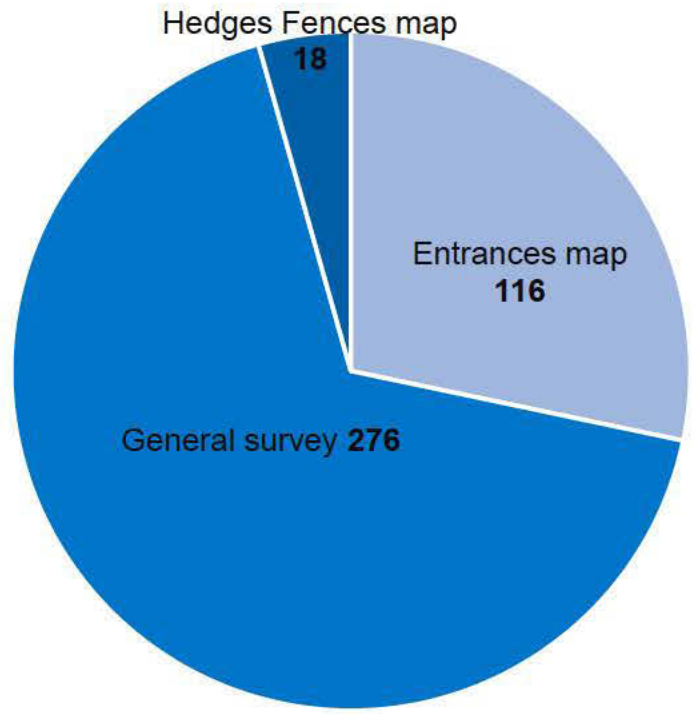
### How do you travel to MVC





## Comments

Source of the comment



Comments referencing...	# of responses
...more entries	98
...Prince Edward St. entrance	87
...perimeter	72
...public/green space	65
...safety	41
...other concerns	41
...respect	30
...accessibility	23
...dogs	22
...trees	20
...support for work so far	15
...notification/communication	11
...matters for other City departments	11
...waste of space	10
...bad management	9
...tax payer rights	7
...filming	4

## ...about the Prince Edward Street entrance

Please keep the MVC access at 32nd street and Prince Edward open. This is our usual entrance. It is important that we enter from a quiet road

I strongly disagree with the closure of the west entrance on Prince Edward. There should be more entrances not fewer...

want war memorial graves protected and no entrance restrictions

The entrance on Prince Edward helps facilitate getting into the cemetery. I'd still use the cemetery the same amount regardless, I'd just have to walk farther to get into the cemetery.

While I understand the need to protect graves, moving the entrance to a more remote area would make safety and access worse for people. The Prince Edward entrance needs to be kept.

Having a Prince Edward St. entrance here is very important to utility of the cemetery as green space.



The Prince Edward Street Entrance at the Horne2 Field of Honour is highly valued by many respondents. Recent work on other entrances has highlighted a focus on accessibility. The width of this Prince Edward entrance (1200mm) is not able to meet the requirements in the 2021 Rick Hansen Foundation accessibility assessment (1500mm min. – 1800 mm). Further consideration and a direction from Senior staff and City Council will inform the future of this access point.

## ...about the perimeter

Do not put up the new fence. Blocking people's backyard from getting sunlight affects people's ability to grow food and to have sun in their backyard.

would be nice to see some greenery along the new metal fencing

I also appreciate the idea of creating open sightlines into and out of MVC on all of the quieter residential side streets. Using wrought-iron and picket fencing will beautify both the street-scape and MVC.

I agreed with the chainlink fence changing to a picket fence but I don't agree to put tall columned trees. Sun blocking trees deter melting snow and summertime sun blocking trees don't enable to us to plant sun loving flowers to our side. So no tall trees!!

Having this opened up with picket fencing either side... allows for safer visibility in and out of the cemetery for visitors and neighbours alike.

I don't think super high/dense hedges are nice. They create an unwelcoming ambiance and shrink the space experientially. Smaller, non-continuous ones would be better, especially if made of native plants.



The general plan for the perimeter was well received and will be primarily implemented as proposed. Edges along neighbouring side or backyards will prioritize blocking internal views from the cemetery. Shading concerns from trees will be a secondary concern.

## ...about the cemetery as public green space

I very much appreciate the efforts to maintain MVC as a green space that respects the cemetery. Access points as they currently exist are perfect.

I use MVC regularly as a walking route between Fraser and Main Street. There needs to be consideration for pedestrian flow across and through the cemetery, otherwise this will be done unofficially causing more harm to graves.

In my experience there has always been some level of "tension" among the various ways in which MVC is used by the public. I believe that the primary focus should be on respectful use of MVC as a place of remembrance by the living. The key is respectful use of the space...

As a taxpayer, I support the care and maintenance of the Mountain View site. I believe neighbourhood access should be preserved and enhanced for respectful interaction with the neighbourhood. This does not include off-leash dogs, sports and other inappropriate activities.

The cemetery is the largest green space in the neighbourhood. People should be welcomed there.

Why do you think people create informal entrances? This will continue to be a problem if you don't provide reasonable access to all sides of the cemetery.

All entrances should be accessible for all (wheelchairs, etc.).

While the cemetery's primary purpose is a burial ground, it is so much more than that to the residents of Vancouver...



The cemetery is used as a green space by many. Since reopening in 2008 the cemetery continues to become more active in its core activity as a sacred place for interment & commemoration. Maintaining this balance will be ongoing.



## ...about dogs

...there has been an increase of dog walkers not respecting the sacred nature of the cemetery

When did MVC become a dog park? I can't believe that when I come to visit the graves of both my parents' and brother's...

...ensure that the cemetery is a respected space for gravesites, without dogs running free all over them

...it is a very popular place for locals to walk their dogs (which I do on a daily basis)

Please consider having an off-leash linear dog park here. Outside the fence.

...it is a very popular place for locals to walk their dogs (which I do on a daily basis)



We have heard from many who feel strongly about dogs in the Cemetery and understand concerns from many different viewpoints. At this time, the cemetery will continue to allow dogs and ask Animal Services to maintain/enforce leash and clean-up requirements for dog owners.



## How will public engagement be used?

- The input from the public engagement will be used by the consultant team and cemetery staff to review and update the draft Perimeter Plan
- Decisions related to all entrances will be reviewed and approved by senior department staff
- The final Perimeter Plan will be published on the Shape Your City project page by March 2024
- The Perimeter Plan will be used to guide future perimeter projects at the cemetery

## What happens next?

- The first project to be completed will be the west edge of the Horne Field of Honour – Prince Edward Street between 31<sup>st</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenues.
- Remaining projects will be prioritized and a funding plan developed to initiate work over the next several years.
- The scope, scale and timing will be dependent on funding, operational considerations and timing of other related work within and around the cemetery.