CITY OF GREENBELT
25 Crescent Road
Greenbelt, MD 20770

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA

OCTOBER 20, 2025
7:30 PM

I. WORK SESSION

1. Work Session — Cemetery Presentation

   Suggested Action:
   1. Introductions — 10 minutes (7:30-7-40 p.m.)
   2. Consultant Presentation - 15 minutes (7:40-7:55 p.m.)
   3. Council Discussion — 60 minutes (7:55–8:55 p.m.)
   4. Questions and Answers — 15 minutes (8:55 9:10 p.m.)
   5. Other Items — 15 minutes (9:10–9:25 p.m.)

Greenbelt Cemeteries Master Plan Flowchart

The following flowchart is the recommended steps that the City of Greenbelt should take to create a sustainable historic cemetery preservation program in order to restore Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries:

Establish a Cemetery Maintenance Team

Before anything, the City of Greenbelt needs to establish the Cemetery Maintenance Team. The core professional maintenance team for the historic cemeteries will likely come from the Greenbelt Public Works Department. Members of the team will need to know or have the willingness to learn landscaping and monument preservation techniques. The following must be established:

1. Who specifically will take on maintenance?
2. How large will the Cemetery Maintenance Team be? At least two staff are required.
3. How will cemetery maintenance be fit in with the other tasks of the Public Works Department? Are additional hires needed?
4. What resources do they currently have?
5. What resources do they need? From supplies to special cemetery preservation specific training
6. How will the financial requirements be met?

Establish the Seasonal Routine Maintenance Schedule

The first task of the Cemetery Maintenance Team is to establish a seasonal routine maintenance schedule. Documentation is essential to the preservation of a cemetery. Regular inspection of the cemetery to monitor changing conditions of monuments, manmade elements, and natural elements, should be implemented at all three cemeteries.

A quarterly schedule is recommended in order to keep track of impacts seasonal change will have on markers, fences, and signage, among other built structures, at all three cemeteries. The Cemetery Maintenance Team should be able to document current conditions as well as identify issues that require immediate or future attention, such as the ongoing maintenance of new site features, such as interpretive signage, monuments, and ease of access.

Trees, shrubs, vines, weeds, grass, and decorative plantings should be inspected during the routine seasonal inspection. Based on the results of the inspection, seasonal clean-ups should follow as appropriate based on the conditions at each site. Seasonal landscape inspections should note the following:

Table 1. Landscape Inspection Tasks.

Trees	• Inspect condition of trees, including need for pruning, removal of damaged, dead, or unstable limbs and branches • Assess need for fallen leaf removal
Shrubs	• Inspect condition of shrubs, including need for pruning and identification and removal of dead shrubbery
Vines/Weeds	• Assess the need for removal of weeds • Assess the need for removal of vines or pruning of overgrown vines
Decorative Plantings	• Inspect condition of decorative plantings and other graveside plantings
Grass	• Assess condition of grass lawns and establish mowing frequency schedule • Assess need to replant/reseed grass lawns

A written record of seasonal routine maintenance results should be kept by the Cemetery Maintenance Team. This will also assist in tracking progress on the overall cemetery preservation plan and can track the condition of built and landscape features that may not require immediate attention.

As repair needs are identified over time, the Cemetery Maintenance Team should refer to guidance outlined in the Maintenance Plan section of this document, which lists both routine and special repair needs that meet current cemetery preservation standards based on guidance from the National Parks Service (NPS).

Make Critical Site Repairs and Improvements

The survey of Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries in the Summer of 2025 documented current conditions and through that was able to determine two improvements to prioritize at each cemetery – restoration or establishment of foot paths and fencing. These two elements were chosen because without reliable, equitable access and established boundaries at each cemetery, additional restoration and programming cannot take place.

Each location has slightly different needs to repair their footpaths and fencing, which is outlined in the Recommendations for Capital Improvements section of this report.

Repatriate Removed Grave Markers

All removed markers from Hamilton Cemetery should be returned to as near their original location as possible. First, broken markers should be put back together with an appropriate epoxy adhesive (see Gravesite Maintenance). Second, the markers need to be relocated to a new location at Hamilton Cemetery as part of a new display. The new display should avoid implying that the markers are in their original location and marking a burial. A new display can be designed by a special committee or by a commissioned artist or designer.

Install New Interpretive Signage and Monuments

After cemeteries are easily accessible and have reinstated their grave markers, new interpretive signage should be installed at each location. Using research compiled in this document, the City of Greenbelt can design interpretive signage at each cemetery that details the history of the Turner, Hamilton, and Walker families and what the area that would become Greenbelt was like in the late18th and early 19th centuries.

Consideration should be given to installing new monuments at each cemetery to publicly note the presence of unmarked graves at these sites and to honor the enslaved people that labored on the properties owned by the Turner, Walker, and Hamilton families. The Greenbelt Reparations Commission should have a large presence in deciding the look and location of each monument.

Establish Heritage Programming

Once the physical sites and updated interpretive signage is installed, Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries are able to be included in heritage programming both within the City of Greenbelt and within the wider region. Possibilities to be promoted include self-guided tours, events and

memorials, and establishment of an adopt-a-cemetery program to get public interest groups involved with the long-term care and maintenance of these historic sites.

Maintenance Plan

Maintenance of historic cemeteries involves the upkeep of both monuments and landscape features. The following maintenance plan has been written as a quick-reference guide to establish standards in the future maintenance and upkeep of Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries.

The NPS has identified two major types of condition that have the potential to negatively impact the features found in historic cemeteries: natural conditions and human-driven conditions. Natural conditions that grave markers are exposed to includes rain, sun, sleet, snow, hail, humidity, wind, and fluctuations in temperature. Human-driven conditions that cemeteries are exposed to include lack of maintenance, inappropriate repairs, exposure to pollution, soluble salts from fertilizers and deicers, and vandalism, including graffiti.

Both natural and human-driven conditions cause and/or accelerate the weathering process. Different materials weather at different rates with some being more durable than others. Ultimately, weathering will happen to materials found in cemeteries no matter what.

In *Preservation Brief 48: Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries*, the NPS notes the following actions that can cause accelerated weathering in common cemetery materials:

> Water, in liquid, solid or vapor form, plays a critical role in the deterioration process. Most grave marker materials are porous, and moisture from precipitation, ground water, or frequent landscape watering can enter the pore system. If temperatures drop below the freezing point, water in interior pores, joints and cracks freezes, and its increased volume often applies internal pressure, resulting in damage to the grave marker such as cracks or spalling.
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> Ferrous metals are particularly vulnerable to water-related deterioration. Iron increases in size when it corrodes, sometimes as much as 20 percent. As the corrosion process proceeds, the ferrous metal eventually weakens. When embedded within concrete or masonry materials, the corroding iron often causes cracks and spalls in the masonry.
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> Microorganisms such as algae, fungi, and lichens may affect grave markers. Microorganisms hold in moisture and some produce acids. With acid-sensitive materials such as limestone and marble, the result is surface erosion. Sometimes the organisms use the material as a food source, dissolving minerals in the stone and attacking the cellular structure of wood. Wood is especially vulnerable to fungi, algae, and other microorganisms when its moisture content is above 25% (U.S. National Park Service 2016).

Protecting historic monuments in outdoor environments requires solutions that work with the nature and characteristics of the unique materials and conditions affecting each monument. The following section contains guidance on the maintenance and preservation of specific cemetery elements including grave markers, site features, and the cemetery landscape.

Gravesite Maintenance

Grave markers are the most distinctive features of any cemetery. Other site features include plot markers, curbing, fencing, plaques, and other manmade commemorative elements. While the grave markers are typically the most prominent features, the non-marker site features contribute a great deal to the historical character of the cemetery, and their preservation and ongoing maintenance should be considered on an as-needed basis.

Maintenance activities for headstones includes regular inspections, cyclical and prioritized maintenance work (such as cleaning and repairs), and annual reports and budgeting to ensure continuous maintenance and improvements as needed. Some maintenance activities are appropriate for volunteer and affinity groups, such as inspections and site cleanup. Other activities are best conducted by preservation professionals, such as the cleaning of damaged or unstable surfaces and repair work.

The remediation and prevention of conditions that may affect the safety and endurance of a cemetery's features should be the highest priority of a cemetery maintenance plan. Maintaining the condition of grave markers, roads, trees, and other site features on a regular basis is the best way to prevent dangerous conditions.

All three historic Greenbelt cemeteries, despite their differences, have the same prioritization of gravesite maintenance activities, outlined in the table below:

Table 2. Maintenance Priorities.

Activity	Priority Level	Recommended Frequency
Regular inspections to identify potential emerging issues on site.	High	Regular cemetery inspections should be conducted on a quarterly seasonal schedule (i.e.: spring, summer, fall, and winter). Additional inspections should be conducted following major weather events, such as hurricanes.
Repair and return headstones to their original sites and implement a repair cycle	High	Extant headstones require immediate repair and stabilization interventions prior to other activities listed in the preservation plan can take place.
Lawn and vegetation maintenance, including monitoring of trees and tree limbs, to keep headstones and other site features clear and to mitigate potential fall hazards.	Medium	Lawn and vegetation maintenance should be conducted according to seasonal needs, with more frequent (ex: weekly) mowing in the spring and summer months and less frequent mowing in the fall and winter months (ex: semi-weekly and monthly). Tree conditions should be assessed in recommended quarterly cemetery inspections and following all major storm events. Remediation of adverse conditions should occur as soon as possible following identification.
Ongoing maintenance of roadways to provide clear transportation paths for visitors.	Medium	Roadway maintenance should be conducted according to seasonal needs with an emphasis on snow removal in the winter months and vegetation pruning in the spring and summer months.

Periodic cleaning to remove heavy soiling from stable headstones.	Low	Periodic cleaning of soiled markers from stable headstones need not be conducted more frequently than every five to ten years.

Repairs

The extant headstones at Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries were damaged in the past and require immediate repair intervention if they are to be returned near their original sites. Repair treatments are typically undertaken on an as-needed basis. The need for repairs will be continuously informed by the quarterly site inspection schedule. Potential repairs include repointing mortar joints, patching and filling cracks or losses, joining broken stones, and resetting leaning and fallen stones.

Because of the complex nature of repairing historic masonry materials, the following activities should only be performed by trained professionals with experience in repairing historic masonry. Professionals with experience in working in historic cemeteries are preferred. Select employees from the City of Greenbelt's Public Works Department, who will be overseeing the majority of maintenance of the three cemeteries, could be enrolled in cemetery preservation courses and/or workshops.

Repointing

There are no historic brick monuments in Hamilton, Turner, or Walker Cemeteries. This section is provided in the event that brick is chosen for any newly constructed fencing or monuments at any of the three cemeteries. Just like historic brick masonry, new brick masonry requires the same maintenance of mortar joints to prevent water intrusion and potential damage from freeze-thaw cycles.

Selection of mortar materials and repointing should generally be performed by a mason or architectural conservator. Special care must be taken to identify the appropriate mortar mix for repointing masonry. Mortar that is too hard or too strong for the adjacent masonry unit can cause accelerated deterioration.

Resetting

There are opportunities for resetting monuments in Hamilton and Turner Cemeteries. All markers associated with Hamilton Cemetery require resetting since they were all removed in 2022. The gravestone belonging to Thomas P. Turner now found in the interpretive signage at Turner Cemetery could be reset in place, but the bottom half of the marble tablet is missing. Were they to be reset, they could not be put in their original locations due to a lack of documentation at the time of their removal.

There is no present need for resetting monuments in Walker Cemetery, which consist of a modern cement monument installed by the DAR in 1988 and a flat plaque marking the grave of Isaac Walker located at ground level.

Resetting grave markers is a complex operation which involves lifting a monument, leveling or otherwise adjusting its foundation, and replacing the monument in an upright position. This type of

work should only be carried out by trained professionals as improper technique can result in damage to grave markers and injury to those performing the work.

Filling and Patching

Six out of eight markers associated with Hamilton Cemetery have experienced significant breakage and previously were reconstructed using cement. The bottom half of the Thomas P. Turner headstone is missing. No cracks or breaks were observed at the monuments at Walker Cemetery.

Hairline cracks are common in historic grave markers and when gone untreated can result in full breaks. Hairline cracks that develop only need to be monitored. Larger cracks deteriorate more rapidly and may be repaired by filling with grout or epoxy that takes care to match the existing masonry material.

A common repair for masonry elements with missing pieces or severely damaged areas is patching with a cementitious material similar to mortar or stucco. Care must be taken to select an appropriate material for the surface being repaired and to match the color and texture of the surrounding area. Selection of an inappropriately hard material in relation to the marker material, such as a Portland cement, will result in weathering.

Another option for restoring large missing areas of stone is the dutchman repair. Dutchman repairs cut away the damaged area and a new piece of stone matching in color and texture is spliced in. In cases where the broken portion of stone is present, a conservator can reattach the stone method using pins and grout.

Filling, patching, dutchman, and pinning type repairs should only be executed by a trained mason or conservator.

Protective Treatments

There are few materials found in Hamilton, Turner, or Walker Cemeteries that require protective treatments at this time. A summary of options is provided in the event that materials such as wrought iron, cast iron, bronze, or other metal or masonry surfaces are used for new monuments, fencing, signage, or other decorative elements.

Wrought and cast iron typically require application of protective coatings on a regular basis. Protective coatings and treatments are intended to stabilize corrosion and/or protect metal, wood, and stone surfaces from water, pollution, and other contaminants such as graffiti. The application of protective treatments to masonry surfaces should only be conducted by or in consultation with an architectural conservator. Waxing bronze elements or repainting previously painted iron or wood elements may be carried out by trained volunteers or professionals.

Wax coatings are used on bronze markers and monuments. Rust-inhibiting primers and paints are used on iron surfaces such as fencing and gates. While the patina that forms on bronze surfaces, as seen on the DAR monument at Walker Cemetery, has protective properties, iron-containing surfaces must be protected with a coating to prevent rust, which expands and can deform iron members and stain adjacent stone surfaces.

Clear water repellants are occasionally used to protect surfaces both from water infiltration and graffiti. Masonry materials are porous, therefore surface treatments must permit water vapor

transmission to allow the material to "breathe." An inappropriate surface treatment will trap moisture within the porous structure of masonry materials, resulting in damage to the stone surface below the coating. The NPS notes that a wide range of water repelling treatments, including wax, acrylic, and epoxy resins, have been used on masonry surface but that silane and siloxane treatments are the most successful. Silane and siloxane treatments penetrate below the surface to form bonds with the silicate minerals found in stone.

Graffiti does not appear to be an ongoing issue at any of the three cemeteries and therefore application of clear water repellent treatments is not recommended at this time. Should issues emerge, site stewards should engage a masonry conservator to develop specifications for treatment of frequently affected monuments, which should be performed by a conservator or contractor with historic masonry experience.

Consolidation treatments, such as ethyl silicate polymers, can be used to bind unstable masonry surfaces such as those exhibiting severe signs of sugaring or sanding. These treatments must be applied and considered with care because they are not reversible and require laboratory and on-site testing to ensure successful results. The high associated costs are typically only considered for especially significant monuments and markers. This is not a treatment recommended for any markers found at the three cemeteries at this time.

Cleaning

A biennial cleaning is typical for a well-maintained cemetery to prevent heavy build up. Gravestones are cleaned to remove soiling, staining, and biological growth such as moss and algae. In keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, cleaning historic surfaces should begin with the gentlest possible methods and products. Improper products and techniques will result in damage to historic materials. Care must be taken to ensure proper identification of grave marker material, soiling type, and proper methods when designing cleaning programs. In general, routine cleaning can be undertaken by non-professionals, such as the City of Greenbelt Public Works Department or a volunteer group, provided they are operating under methods informed by trained professionals. More complex cleaning operations such as heavy soiling, stain, or graffiti removal should be undertaken by trained professionals.

Conditions which could be improved by surface cleaning, including the presence of atmospheric soiling and biological growth, were the most commonly observed. Biological growth was observed most frequently at Turner Cemetery, as most of the unaffiliated raw stone markers have lichen or moss growing on them that could be gently removed. The more traditional markers found at all three cemeteries Regular cemetery inspections should monitor the need for cleaning based on observed accumulation of soiling or biological growth over time.

Prior to cleaning, stones should be inspected for conditions that may be exacerbated by cleaning. Even gentle methods can damage severely deteriorated stones. Stone monuments exhibiting cracking, flaking, blistering, or delamination need stabilization before they can be safely cleaned. Severely deteriorated stones should be assessed by a conservator or masonry specialist prior to undertaking any cleaning or repair.

Plain water rinsing and gentle cleaning with a soft-bristled brush is the gentlest method of cleaning available. Most instances of soiling can be removed with low pressure washing from a garden hose or a hand pump garden sprayer at a low-pressure setting using municipal water sources.

Moss, algae, fungus, lichen, or other biological growth can be removed from stones with a stiff plastic scraper, which is non-abrasive. Biological inhibitors, such as D/2 Biological Solution, may also be used. The NPS National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) has studied the efficacy of cleaning products and recommends biocidal cleaners that contain quaternary ammonium compounds. The study provides the following guidance:

> Biocidal cleaners which contain quaternary ammonium compounds, like D/2 Biological Solution manufactured by Sunshine Makers (Cathedral Stone® Products, Inc.), Enviro Klean® BioWash® (PROSOCO, Inc.), Modec MDF-500 or other cleaners, are preferred products for cleaning marble headstones. This class of cleaners is effective at removing biological growth and general soiling in the field. While all cleaning methods alter the surface to some extent, these cleaners should not harm the stone. It is important to follow the manufacturer's recommendations for dilution ratios and dwell rates. It is important to know that marble cleaned with biocides should continue to lighten over the next few days. The advantage of a biocidal cleaner is that it helps remove a wide range of soiling including biological growth (Striegel and Church 2011).

Non-professionals can be instructed in proper application of D/2 Biological Solution and similar compounds by following the manufacturer's instructions and taking care to ensure that any surface treated is stable prior to application.

No abrasive materials should be used in the cleaning of masonry surfaces. This includes hard or stiff plastic or wire bristle brushes. Brushes used for cleaning elements in the cemetery should be soft nylon or natural bristle brushes. Likewise, high pressure water washing should not be used to clean historic masonry elements as it can cause damage. Low pressure options include garden hose or with a brush and bucket. Cleaning must only be performed at air temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit and should remain so for at least 24 hours after to avoid the risk of damage from freezing.

Stains and soiling that is not easily removed with plain water washing can be removed with a mild washing solutions. Specifically formulated solutions are available for purchase. Care should be taken to select products formulated for use on masonry that do not contain or contribute to the formation of soluble salts, which can cause or exacerbate existing damage to stone surfaces.

According to the National Park Service's *Preservation Brief 48: Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries*, chemical cleaners, including acids, alkalis, detergents, and organic solvents, have advantages and disadvantages. The Brief advises the following:

> Acids dissolve the interface between the stain and substrate while alkalis allow for longer dwell periods but must be neutralized. Some detergents are near-neutral in pH (neither acidic nor alkaline) and easier to rinse.

Before selecting or using a chemical cleaning agent, the manufacturer's Safety Data Sheet (SDS), available with the product and online, should be reviewed. The SDS provides information about the product's composition, including identified hazards, proper handling and storage, disposal, and required personal protective equipment. Once a chemical cleaning product has been selected, the manufacturer's instructions should be followed. Before undertaking large-scale cleaning, it is always advisable to undertake small-scale tests (approximately 6" x 6"areas in discrete locations), and then waiting several days before assessing the results (U.S. National Park Service 2016).

Chemical cleaning is used to remove metallic stains and other contaminants such as old coatings and graffiti. For severe staining, poultice cleaning is useful as it extends contact time with the cleaner. A poultice is a mixture of clay or other inert material, such as paper pulp, and a cleaning agent. The mixture is applied to the surface and allowed an extended dwell period. The chemical cleaner dissolves the stain and the clay draws the stain out to the surface. When using a poultice, it should be applied just beyond the stained area and covered with polyethylene. The best practice is to leave the treatment on the surface for 24 hours and then remove the polyethylene cover and allow the poultice to continue drying. Once the poultice is dry, the mixture is then collected, and the surface is thoroughly rinsed. For some stubborn stains, the application may need to be repeated (U.S. National Park Service 2016).

At all three Greenbelt cemeteries, simple cleaning with water or with mild, special formulated cleaners like D/2 Biological solution can be undertaken by non-professionals. Mild cleaning should be sufficient for most of the needs at Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries. Use of more complicated chemical cleaners should only be conducted by trained masonry professionals with experience working on historic materials. Many chemical products require neutralization prior to application. Stain removal executed by inexperienced practitioners can result in uneven coloration, staining, salts deposits, and in the worst cases can irreversibly damage historic masonry materials.

Graffiti Removal

No instances of graffiti were noted in the survey of Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries. Security procedures, outlined in the Security Protocols section of this document, should be followed to continue to limit instances of graffiti within the cemeteries. Regular inspection of the cemeteries will inform any instances of graffiti, which should be promptly addressed if it occurs.

Water soluble graffiti cam be removed with water and a towel or soft bristled brush. The NPS recommends frequent rinsing to avoid smearing or spreading the graffiti pigment onto unaffected areas of the surface being cleaned.

Non-water-soluble graffiti may be removed with the use of organic solvents or commercially available graffiti removal products. Care must be taken to select products that will not cause damage to the historic surface. Removal of spray paint and other difficult to remove substances may require consultation with a conservator for effective and safe removal.

Landscape Maintenance

Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries are typical of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century American burial custom in the mid-Atlantic and Southern plantation economies, where the wide dispersal of settlement necessitated family burial grounds located on the plantation, as opposed to denser regions of the country that supported church-associated burial grounds. “They were usually established on a high, well-drained point of land and often were enclosed by a fence or wall.” (NRB 41, Page 4). All three of these cemeteries were only ever used by the families that established them and as such, changes to the landscape mostly included the spreading of invasive periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), which was a common cemetery ground cover in the nineteenth century, and maturation of trees.

Landscape maintenance is an important facet of preventative maintenance of a burial ground. Maintaining ornamental shrubs, mature trees, plantings and other vegetation is important because they impart a particular character to the setting of a cemetery. At the same time, these features must be managed to prevent overgrowth from damaging markers, fencing, and other human-made features.

Seasonal Clean-Up

Following the routine seasonal inspection, the cemetery grounds should be cleaned to remove fallen leaves, branches, and trim back overgrowth and maintain intentional plantings. It is highly likely that there will be landscape maintenance to complete each season.

Mowing

Hamilton, Walker, and Turner Cemeteries do not currently possess traditional seeded lawns seen in modern cemeteries but still contain rustic grass and low-lying vegetation. As a part of their restoration, it may be desired to seed the cemeteries with grass. Overgrown grass can create a wet environment that encourages the growth of moss, lichens, and algae, which cause the accelerated deterioration of common cemetery materials. During the summer months, mowing may need to occur weekly. Mowing and landscape maintenance can be among the highest costs in historic cemetery management.

Careless mowing can cause damage to both low-lying and upright gravestones and markers if equipment makes contact with these features. Smaller push mowers should be used for grass maintenance within Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries to avoid contact with delicate features. A minimum blade height of four inches is recommended. The NPS provides the following guidance:

> Best practices include using a smaller, push mower between particularly sensitive features, and outfitting riding mower decks with protective bumpers. Low-cost options include using fire hose padding or a foam swimming noodle. Additional damage is caused by riding over low stones or coping, especially when the blade height is set low. If rolling over these features is unavoidable, many riding mowers have a hand-control adjustment to temporarily raise and lower the blade height (U.S. National Park Service 2016).

Edgers or string-trimmers may damage monuments when the trim line makes contact with soft stones, such as marble. NPS recommends “using the lightest trim line and angling the trimmer

head towards the ground will help reduce damage if the trimmer hits unintended targets. Consider hand trimming around the most significant, fragile features" (U.S. National Park Service 2016).

Fertilizers introduce corrosive salts to grave markers, which can be damaging to historic materials. Due to potential for damage to the cemetery's markers and other low-lying masonry, fertilizer should not be used on any of the cemetery grounds.

Weeding

The use of herbicides to clear vegetation from the base of monuments is not permitted. These products may introduce salts to the environment that can enter the pores of masonry units, resulting in damage.

Tree Maintenance

Trees lend character to the setting of the three cemeteries and are valued by the wider Greenbelt community. Mature trees may drop limbs after storm events and dead and damaged trees may likewise pose damage to cemetery features and visitors.

The NPS recommends that all trees in historic cemeteries be inspected at least every five years. The City of Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Trees (https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/224/Advisory-Committee-on-Trees) and the City Horticulturalist have the expertise to comment on and assist in the care of trees found at Hamilton, Turner, and Walker cemeteries.

Nuisance and Invasive Animals

The survey of the three cemeteries did not note activity from burrowing animals such as gophers, groundhogs, or moles. Burrowing animals create holes that can become tripping hazards for visitors or, if located too close to monuments, cause sinking or leaning. Continued monitoring for evidence of burrowing activities at the cemeteries can take place during the quarterly seasonal inspections of the sites.

Large numbers of the invasive Spotted Lanternfly were noted in the woods near Hamilton Cemetery. The spotted lanternfly poses a threat to the health of flora where they are found. The spotted lanternfly was first identified in Maryland in 2018. They feed on sap from trees such as tree of heaven, black walnut, red maple, silver maple, weeping willow, among at least 70 other hosts. Spotted lanternfly feeding is known to stunt plant growth, reduce crop yields, and cause damage. The Maryland Department of Agriculture has extensive guidance on suggested removal tactics for spotted lanternfly: https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/pages/spotted-lantern-fly.aspx

Roads and Footpaths

For the installation of new roads and footpaths within the cemeteries, porous/permeable materials are preferred because they allow water to infiltrate the ground, reducing flooding risk. The condition of roads and footpaths should be inspected seasonally for damage, deterioration, and kept clear of debris. Repairs should be scheduled as needed.

Snow Removal/Salt

Deicing salts are not recommended for use near historic masonry materials because they enter the porous structure, causing surface damage. Fortunately, existing markers at all three cemeteries are not near paved roadways that could be treated with deicing salts in the winter. Salting should

be avoided in areas that could be contaminated by runoff from melting snow and ice. Care should be taken to avoid replacing or relocating cemetery monuments near areas that will need salt treatment for safety in the winter.

Site Use Protocols

Visitors must be provided with guidance to ensure respectful engagement with the cemeteries. Visitor engagement is beneficial because it increases awareness of the value of the historic site. At the same time, site stewards should take measures to ensure that events held at the cemeteries do not cause damage.

All three cemeteries are particularly small and lack any significant open space to host large groups. Special events with food service or performances are not likely appropriate because they require too much space.

Rules that individual visitors should follow when visiting the cemeteries include:

1. Do not sit, stand, climb, or rest bodies or personal items on cemetery features, which includes graves, trees, and shrubs, among other site elements
2. Do not collect or remove objects, fixed or otherwise, from the site without supervision from a site steward
3. Do not make etchings of historic markers
4. Do not dig into the ground
5. Vandalism, littering, collecting or removing objects from the cemetery is prohibited by law and should be reported to local law enforcement or cemetery management
6. Taking rubbings from or applying chalk or other materials to grave markers can cause damage and is prohibited. Informal photography, sketching, and note taking is encouraged.
7. All persons are prohibited from damaging trees, shrubs, or plants, or defacing monumnets on cemetery property.
8. No advertising or solicitation is permitted on cemetery grounds. No signs or notices are allowed to be placed on cemetery property except as approved by management.
9. Dogs must be on-leash and dog owners must clean up after dogs.
10. Feeding wildlife is prohibited.
11. No parties, organize gatherings, or events of any size are allowed without advance arrangement or approval.
12. Filming or photography for commercial purposes requires an advance permit
13. The maximum speed limit is 5 MPH
14. Vehicles must remain on designated roadways. No idling vehicle engines are permitted
15. Please do not block roadways while being mindful of the presence of headstones in close proximity to the side of the road
16. Parking on grass is prohibited
17. Bicycle riders must stay on roadways and park bikes in designated areas.
18. Drugs, alcoholic beverages, and illegal substances are prohibited
19. No firearms are permitted except in the case of military funerals or ceremony with prior authorization
20. Littering or dumping is strictly prohibited
21. Cemetery management is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

22. Cemetery hours are from sunup to sundown. Any person found on the grounds outside of open hours will be considered a trespasser and may be subject to prosecution.

Site stewards may create a system for approving special events to be held at any of the cemeteries to ensure appropriate and preservation-minded use of the site. For example, a site steward should be notified and approve of a group of citizens wanting to host a cemetery clean up day or a memorial service. Regulations that events held at any of the cemeteries include:

1. Avoid loud or inappropriate music
2. Zero tolerance for offensive speech or messaging
3. Photography and filming for non-personal use should require advance approval from cemetery management

Special events held at the cemeteries must have the following:

1. A sanitation plan to address how waste from the event will be removed from the site
2. A safety plan, especially in terms of walkways. Turner Cemetery is particularly hazardous with its lack of formal paths within the cemetery and the low-lying raw stone markers can be a tripping hazard

The availability of parking at each cemetery varies widely. Off-site parking is recommended at any cemetery during any special event that may draw more than one or two vehicles to the properties. On-site parking is limited at Turner Cemetery, which additionally must share space with the active Greenbelt Cemetery. Parking at Hamilton Cemetery is available on the street near Greenbelt Homes, Inc but requires a long walk down a gravel driveway through the Greenbelt Community Gardens. A site to establish one or two closer parking spots could be identified. Parking accessibility at Walker Cemetery is presently the least challenging, due to the cemetery's location next to a office building with a large paved lot.

Security and Vandalism

All three cemeteries experienced issues with vandalism in the mid-20th century. Vandals are responsible for breaking the markers from Hamilton Cemetery. In an effort to prevent markers from further damage, all historic markers from all three cemeteries were removed from their original context. During survey, there were no signs of vandalism at any of the cemeteries, despite the general lack of surveillance or security infrastructure currently in place.

Though concerns about vandalism are presently low, there are a number of interventions that can help secure the cemeteries while keeping them broadly accessible for the Greenbelt community. An opening hours schedule should be established – dawn-to-dusk is typical for cemeteries. Signage displaying cemetery rules and etiquette may be installed. Gates that are locked at dusk create another deterrent. Finally, motion-activated lighting or security systems, such as trail cams, may also deter would-be vandals.

Recommendations for Capital Improvements

The following are recommendations for improvements to the sites of Hamilton, Turner, and Walker Cemeteries. Based on the condition of each of the three cemeteries that were observed and through coordination with the public, the following priorities emerged:

- accessibility to the general public
- visibility of the sites themselves with improved boundary marking and clear demarcations
- accuracy in storytelling and conveying the whole American story

Each site is different, and each site needs different levels of improvement in each of the categories presented in this chapter. Improvements are organized from

Walking Paths

Restoring and maintaining the walking paths to each cemetery is essential in providing equitable access to each of these places.

In order to maintain the natural setting, natural, porous materials are preferred for new walking paths. Concrete or asphalt are not recommended. Firm, stable, and slip-resistant yet natural materials to consider would be granite chips, gravel, wood chips, or packed dirt.

Once improved, the condition of walking paths will need to be monitored during annual inspections.

Hamilton Cemetery

The gravel path to Hamilton Cemetery is shared with drivers accessing the Greenbelt Community Gardens. At the time of survey in July 2025, surveyors had no instances of sharing the drive with cars when traversing the path on foot from Hamilton Place on a weekday. At the end of the drive, if taking a car, it is unclear where visitors should park. The recommendations for Hamilton Cemetery are as follows:

- Monitor the existing gravel drive during annual inspections, maintain as needed
- Establish a parking area – space for one or two cars – at the end of the drive specifically for cemetery visitors

Turner Cemetery

The Greenbelt Cemetery property can accommodate a single car to park almost directly next to Turner Cemetery, making it the easiest to access among the three historic cemeteries. Walking path restoration is not recommended or needed at Turner Cemetery because the condition of the site is already accessible.

Consideration should be given to holding a traffic study at the driveway into the property shared by Greenbelt Cemetery. From a driver's perspective, the driveway appears suddenly and traffic patterns along Ivy Drive may result in sudden stops that are ultimately hazardous to pedestrians approaching Turner Cemetery on foot or by bike.

Walker Cemetery

The walking path to Walker Cemetery is in poor condition and requires the most immediate attention out of the three historic cemeteries. The lack of maintenance of the path up to Walker

Cemetery is a significant barrier for people aiming to access the cemetery. The recommendations for Walker Cemetery paths are as follows:

- Inspect the current pathway up the hill to Walker Cemetery and consider whether Greenbelt Public Works should re-grade and restore the existing pathway or create a new one

Figure 1. Slab steps built into the landscape like in the example above is one possibility to address slope change along the traditional path up to Walker Cemetery. (Source: https://pixabay.com/photos/woods-steps-forest-green-park-1305800/)

Fencing

Fencing is essential for marking the boundary of and providing security to a cemetery. Fencing at each cemetery is different and each will require different treatments. The condition of existing and new fencing will have to be monitored during annual inspections and repairs planned accordingly. Ideally, the same style of new fencing will be installed at each location to keep the aesthetics and designs consistent amongst the properties.

Figure 2. Wooden Pickett-style fencing. Wood should be painted, as paint is a protective layer. (Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gothic_Picket_Fence.jpg)

Figure 3. Split rail style wooden fencing. (Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rustic_fence_in_winter_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1111684.jpg)

Hamilton Cemetery

Hamilton Cemetery lacks any sort of fencing or boundary marking, and it is unclear today where the cemetery is. The boundary of the cemetery is noted on historic USGS 7.5-minute quad maps. Using this, the boundary of Hamilton Cemetery should be marked and fenced in. This will prevent confusion for forestry and agricultural activities surrounding Hamilton Cemetery. The recommendations are as follows:

- Use the coordinates in the survey inventory to determine the four corners of the cemetery and bound off with stakes and rope or flagging tape
- There will likely be landscaping needs or trees – take care to remove vines and trip hazards and aim to leave ground cover and trees within the cemetery boundary
- Install a low height fence and consider both aesthetics and durability when choosing the material – a wooden picket-style fence would be the most attractive choice, but will degrade faster and require more maintenance than a chain link metal fence.

Turner Cemetery

Fencing at Turner Cemetery bounds along only the south and west ends of the plots and is made of wooden stakes and sisal rope. The existing Turner Cemetery fencing should be replaced and fully bound in the cemetery. The recommendations for Turner Cemetery are as follows:

- Use coordinates in the survey inventory to determine the four corners of Turner Cemetery and bound off with takes and rope or flagging tape
- Remove and replace existing boundary and replace with new fencing – match to what is decided for Hamilton Cemetery

Walker Cemetery

The fence that marks the boundary of Walker Cemetery is in the best condition out of the three locations. The chain link fence was installed by descendants of the Walkers. The chain link fence is in good condition and still retains use life – replacement for only aesthetic purposes should be avoided. Recommendations for Walker Cemetery are as follows:

- Monitor the condition of the chain link fencing at Walker Cemetery during the annual inspection.
- Plan to replace with material compatible with what is chosen at Turner and Hamilton Cemeteries when existing fence begins to fail structurally.

Historic Grave Marker Restoration

Headstones that had been previously removed from their respective cemeteries should be returned to as close as possible to their original locations. Considering that the original location of each of the headstones was not recorded prior to their removal, the design and placement of the repatriated headstones should be nearby yet not placed in a way that implies the presence of a burial.

Hamilton Cemetery

The headstones formerly at Hamilton Cemetery were becoming compromised and were removed from their wooden sign and placed into storage at Greenbelt Public Works, where they are in stable condition. The goal should be to return the stones to Hamilton Cemetery.

A new housing structure should be designed and installed at Hamilton Cemetery to hold these. There is opportunity for the City of Greenbelt to commission an artist to create a design or hold a contest for design ideas for how to display the Hamilton Cemetery grave markers.

Turner Cemetery

The headstone belonging to Thomas P. Turner is currently in good condition and remains uncompromised in its wooden sign case at Turner Cemetery. This signage and the marble tablet marker within should be monitored during Turner Cemetery's annual conditions assessment.

The raw stone markers within the fenced area of Turner Cemetery are delicate features. Efforts should be made to keep the grounds clear of leaf litter so as to keep the markers as visible as possible to visitors within the bounds of the cemetery.

Walker Cemetery

There are no headstones removed from Walker Cemetery that need to be returned. The condition of the DAR memorials placed at Walker Cemetery should be monitored during Walker Cemetery's annual conditions assessment. When the monument begins to fail, the DAR likely should be consulted on the aesthetics and content of its replacement.

New Monument Building

Consideration should be made in erecting compatible monuments to honor burials at these cemeteries that are unmarked. Each cemetery displays signs of unmarked graves. These may belong to white family members whose markers have gone missing or to the Black enslaved people that labored on the properties owned by the Hamilton, Turner, and Walker families.

In the absence of historic-age grave markers for these populations, consider adding a new stone monument engraved with the known names, birth and death dates (if known) to a new stone monument. It is recommended that new monument building to honor this past should be heavily guided by the input and expertise of the Greenbelt Reparations Commission.

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signage includes the signs used to locate the cemeteries. All three cemeteries are decently marked, featuring wooden signage painted brown with white lettering. This is consistent with signage and branding around Greenbelt, which takes inspiration from 1930s Art Moderne and National Parks Service aesthetics.

Because there is not a historic signage style that would have been used at any of the cemeteries, it is recommended that signage remain consistent with City of Greenbelt branding. The wooden signage is likely to degrade and should be monitored at all three cemeteries during their annual inspections. Signage should be replaced and updated at the cemeteries concurrently with upgrades to signage at other City of Greenbelt maintained properties.

Information Signage

There are two types of information signage to be installed at each cemetery - signs designed to display site use protocols and cemetery etiquette and historical interpretation signage.

Site Use Signage

Signs detailing site use protocols should be installed at each cemetery location. Temporary yard signs can be used until a more permanent solution is made. The content of the signs should be focused on letting visitors know who to contact in case there are issues to report (Figure 4 and information regarding opening and closing times (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Suggestion Box with Signage at Oakwood Cemetery, Raleigh, NC. (Source: Carolyn Gimbal, JMT)

Figure 5. Yard Sign style example at Oakwood Cemetery, Raleigh, NC. (Source: Carolyn Gimbal, JMT)

Historic Interpretive Signage

Interpretive signage needs to be installed at Walker Cemetery and Hamilton Cemetery first because neither of these locations have any historic interpretation. Only Turner Cemetery has any interpretive signage about the cemetery and the Turner family. The Turner Cemetery interpretive sign should be redesigned to be consistent with what will be installed at Walker and Hamilton Cemeteries.

Greenbelt Historic Cemeteries Master Preservation Plan

City Work Session #1

October 20, 2025

Tonight's Agenda

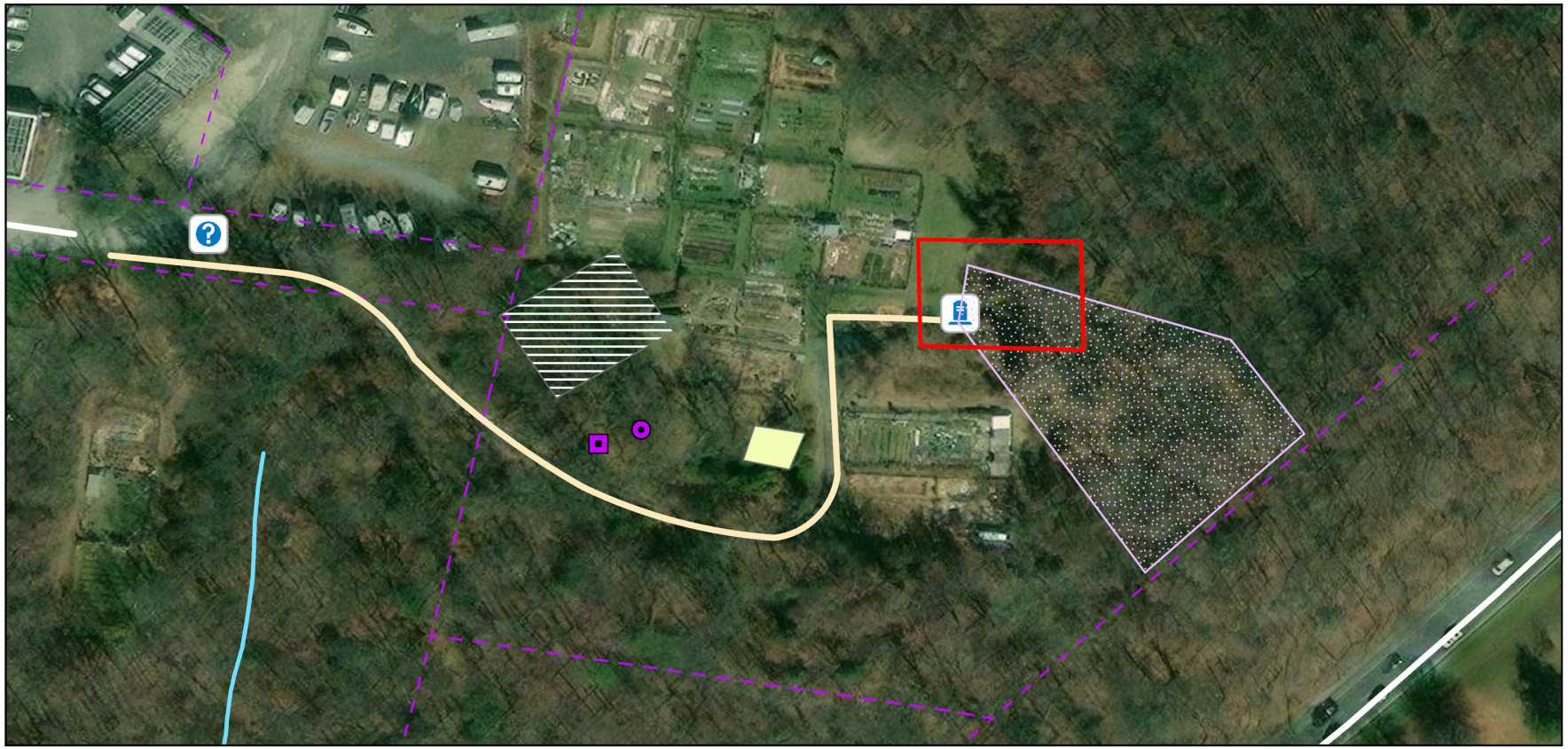
- Share Survey Results and Condition Assessment
- Review Proposed Maintenance Plan
- Question and Comment Session

Survey Results

Hamilton Cemetery

Hamilton Cemetery

Hamilton Cemetery, Hamilton Place, Greenbelt, Maryland
Current Site Plan



House Footprint ca. 1944 (Gone)

Outbuilding Footprint ca. 1938 (Gone)

Periwinkle Ground Cover

Hamilton Cemetery Boundary

Round Depression

Stone Lined Square Depression

Cemetery Information Signage

Wayfinding Signage

Pathway to Cemetery

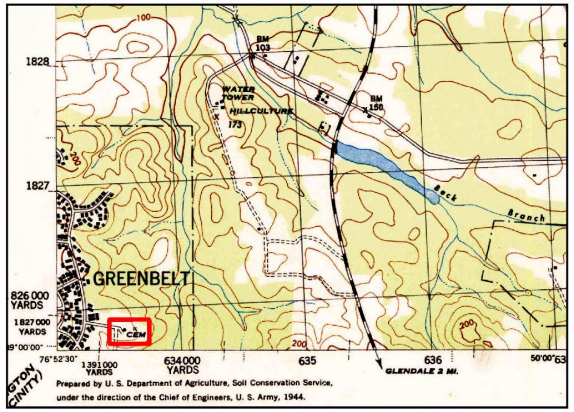
Stream

Parcel Boundary

0 25 50 100 Meters

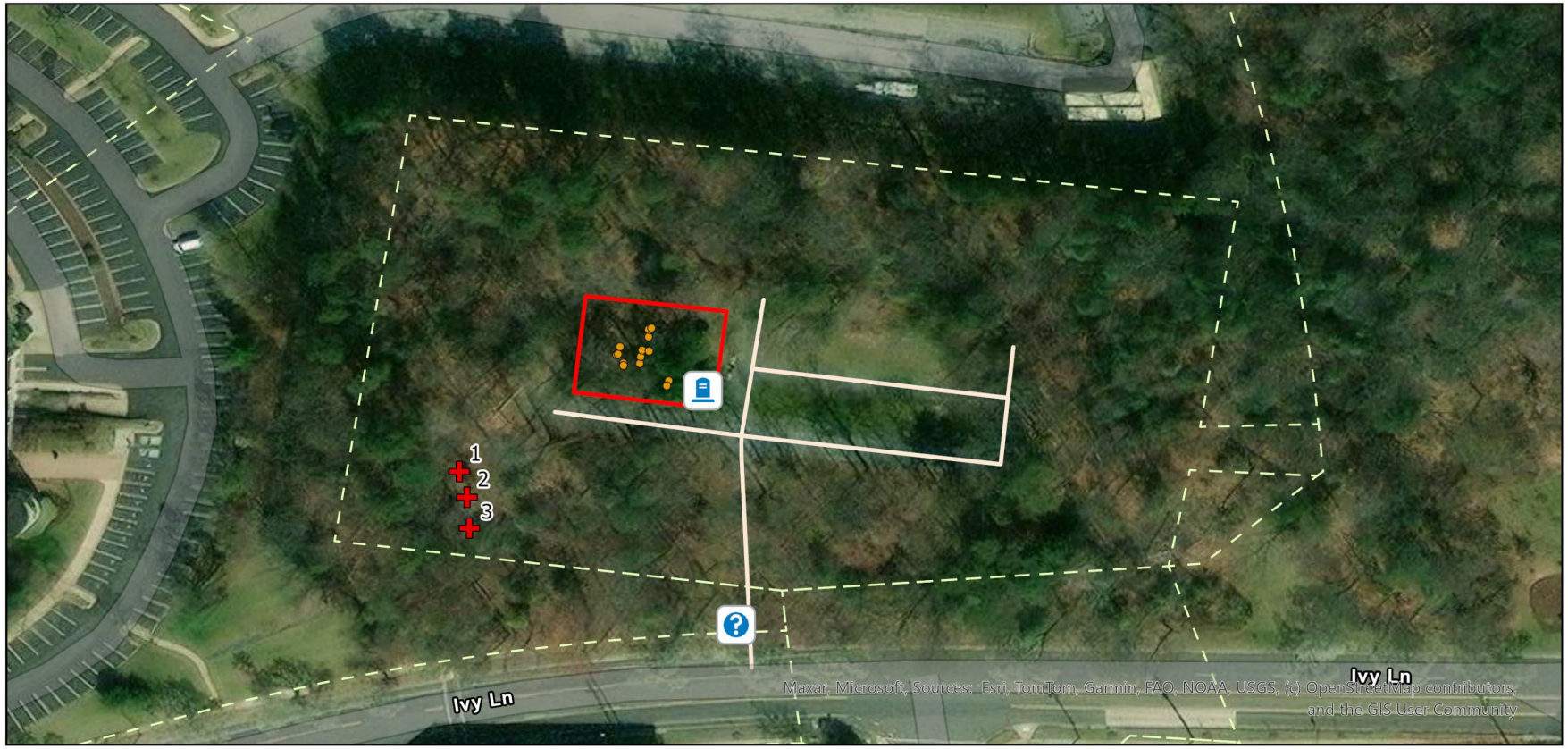
0 125 250 500 Feet

N



Turner Cemetery

Turner Cemetery, Ivy Drive, Greenbelt, Maryland
Current Site Plan

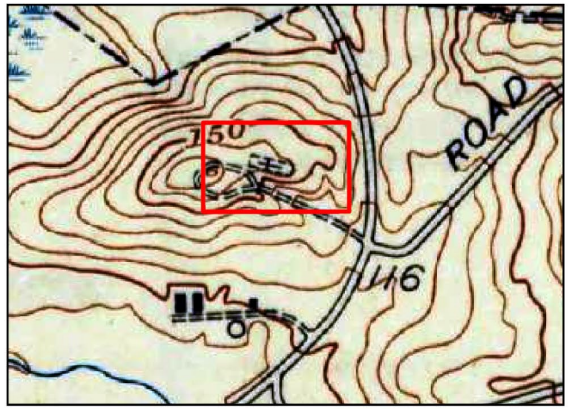


- Stone Markers (15)
- Cemetery Information Signage
- Depression
- Wayfinding Signage
- Driveways
- Turner Cemetery Boundary
- Parcels

0 24 48 96 Meters

0 112.5 225 450 Feet

N



Walker Cemetery

Walker Cemetery, Walker Drive, Greenbelt, Maryland
Current Site Plan

DAR Monuments
Depression
Wayfinding Sign
Picnic Area
Pathway to Cemetery
Streams
Walker Cemetery Boundary
Parcels

0 18.75 37.5 75 Meters

0 87.5 175 350 Feet

N

What About Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR)?

- Best suited for fields – cemetery terrain is wooded
- Equipment cannot maneuver around sensitive features
- Typically only used when graves may be disturbed by new construction

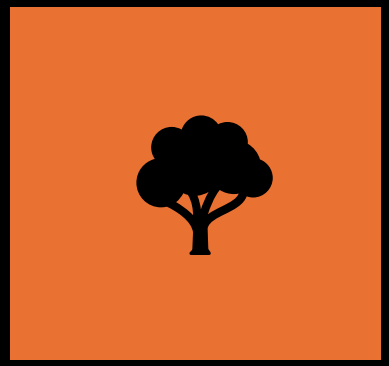
Case Study

GPR Results

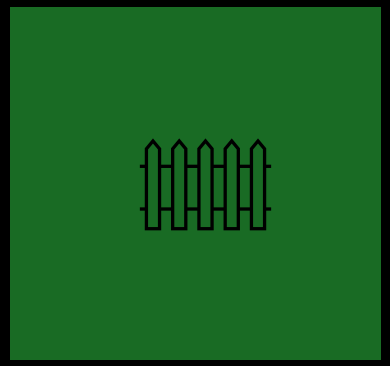
GPR Ground-Truthing

Proposed Maintenance Plan

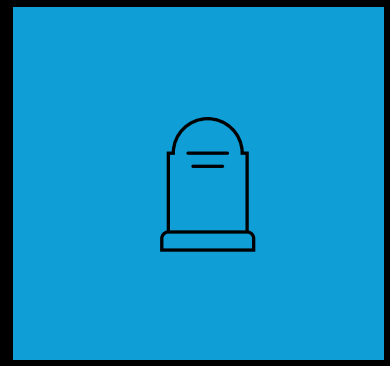
Cemetery Maintenance Team



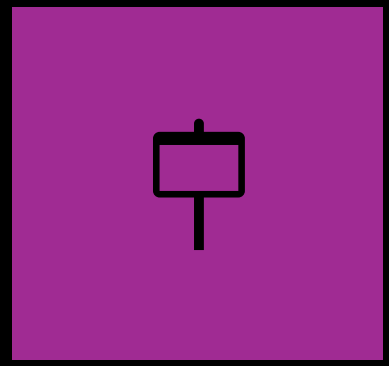
Seasonal Maintenance



Critical Repairs



Repatriate Markers



Signage and Monuments

Heritage Tourism

Establish a Cemetery Maintenance Team

1. Who are they?
   - Professionals - Greenbelt Public Works

2. What do they need to succeed?
   - Training
   - Dedicated Budget

Establish Seasonal Routine Maintenance Schedule

Attribution: Kolforn (Wikimedia)

- Gravesite Inspection
- Manmade Site Inspection
- Landscape Inspection

Make Critical Site Repairs and Improvements – Foot Paths

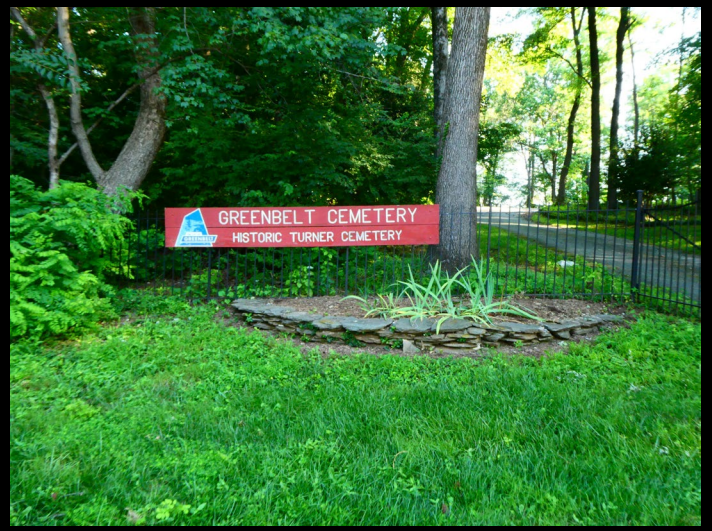
Make Critical Site Repairs and Improvements - Fencing

Attribution: Tuluallen (Wikimedia)

Attribution: Neil Parker (Wikimedia)

Repatriate Removed Grave Markers

Install New Wayfinding Signage



Install New Interpretive Signage

- Cemetery Rules
- Historic Information

Install New Monuments

"Slave Memorial - detail - Mount Vernon - 2014-10-20" by Tim Evanson, CC BY-SA 2.0

Establish Heritage Programming

- Self-Guided Tours
- Special Events and Memorials
- Adopt-A-Cemetery

"2006 Workshop for Monument Builders of North America, Savannah, Ga." by NCPTT Media, CC BY-NC 2.0

Questions and Comments?

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