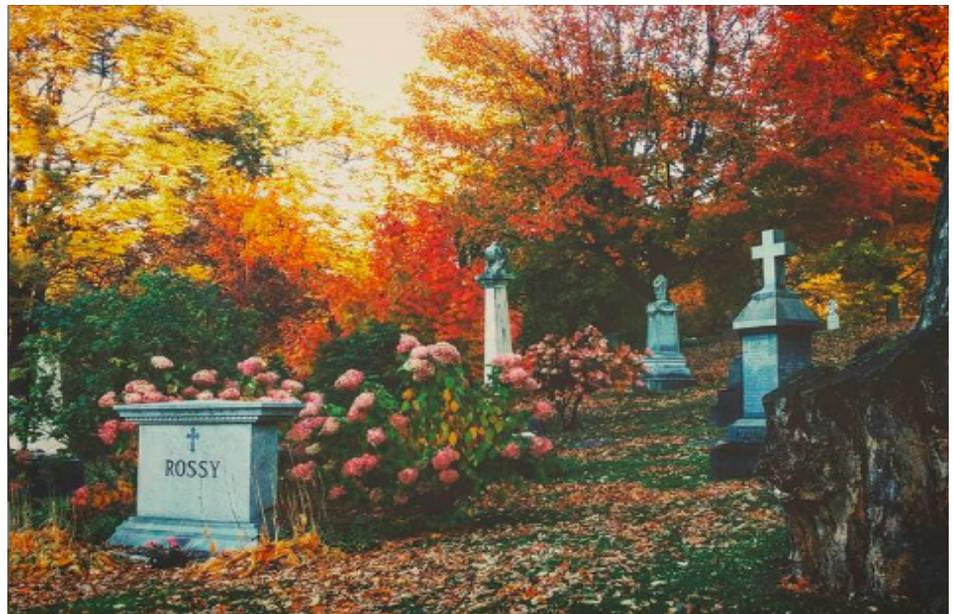


# CANADIAN URBAN CEMETERIES



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Exploring uses for the living in  
spaces for the dead

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research has demonstrated cemeteries have great potential to act as a form of green space for public use. Despite this potential, urban cemeteries in North America are often excluded from urban and green space planning strategies. In addition, cemeteries have limited official use and purpose for urban residents beyond the traditional purposes of interment and mourning. This study aims to determine if planning documents in Canadian cities account for how cemeteries are being used by the public. In doing so, city planning documents are analysed for their degree of inclusion of cemeteries, and selected cemeteries in Canada are examined to determine how they are being used by the public. The study reveals that cemeteries are usually mentioned in city planning documents, but they are not consistently treated as multi-purpose sites to be used by the public. The social media analysis reveals that in each of the seven cemeteries analysed, all are being used by members of the public for many different purposes. Therefore, it appears that city planning documents do not necessarily account for how cemeteries are actually being used. There is an apparent opportunity for Canadian cities to address this gap in planning, with this research promising to contribute to the discussions.

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# CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

Urban green space is considered a critical part of sustainable cities and healthy communities. There are many urban green space typologies, all of which serve different functions and provide different values and benefits to urban residents. Urban green space is recognized for providing significant benefits for urban residents, including mental and physical health, recreation, and aesthetics (Van Leeuwen, Nijkamp, & De Noronha Vaz, 2010). Urban green spaces, especially those located in compact cities, are being threatened by increasing rates of urbanization and land scarcity (Breuste, Artmann, Ioja, & Qureshi, 2020). There is a growing need to ensure the quality and quantity of green space in urban areas is protected and enhanced to continue providing and improving benefits for urban residents.

One form of green space often overlooked is urban cemeteries. As relatively accessible, large, green areas in cities, urban cemeteries offer great potential as a form of green space. Urban cemeteries have the potential to act as multi-purpose spaces to provide wider public usage than just interment and memorial (Quinton & Duinker, 2019). Despite their potential, urban cemeteries are often excluded in urban and green space planning and have limited official uses, beyond the traditional purposes of interment and mourning (Basmajian & Coutts, 2010). As cities continue to expand and increase in density, cemeteries could play a more significant role as a form of urban green space.

There is significant research outside North America on the uses of cemeteries and their potential to serve other purposes beyond interment and mourning. Much of this research is conducted in places where cemeteries receive greater consideration in urban planning and policy (Evensen, Nordh, & Skaar, 2017; Grabalov, 2018; Skår, Nordh, & Swensen, 2018). However, in Canada and the United States, there is limited research on

urban cemeteries, especially in terms of examining their daily usage and their wider role as a form of green space. In particular, there is limited research on how the public uses urban cemeteries in Canada and therefore what purposes they currently serve. These knowledge gaps may become increasingly problematic, as cities continue growing in density and green space becomes increasingly important to provide and difficult to preserve.

This study explores a) the extent to which urban cemeteries are included in city planning strategies in Canadian cities and b) the extent to which urban cemeteries in Canada are currently used for purposes beyond interment. By examining the current use of cemeteries in Canada and the inclusion of cemeteries in city planning documents, this study helps address a knowledge gap. This research may be of interest and beneficial to planners, policymakers, cemetery managers, and the general public.

## 1.2 Research Questions

1. Are Canadian urban cemeteries included in city planning documents, and if so how?
2. Are Canadian urban cemeteries currently being used as multi-purpose spaces beyond interment, and if so how?
3. To what extent do municipal city planning documents account for how cemeteries are currently being used by the public?

## 1.3 Canadian Cemeteries Context

### **Historical Context**

The long history of Canadian cemeteries begins with Indigenous burial grounds, some of which are dated as thousands of years old (Blair, 2005). Indigenous burial grounds and graves are the places where Indigenous peoples buried their dead, often along with personal and sacred materials (Blair, 2005). Indigenous burial grounds and gravesites have been displaced and disrupted by colonizers since their arrival. Settlers from Europe – including antiquarians and anthropologists – gathered buried remains from Indigenous

burial grounds, including bodies, skulls, and sacred materials (Atalay, 2006). Remains were collected, studied, and put on display against the will and desire of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous burial grounds do not usually contain headstones and monuments, meaning they are often difficult to identify. Most ancient Indigenous burial grounds are overgrown or have been buried due to changes in the landscape. As a result, burial grounds are often uncovered by accident during construction or development. Blair (2005) notes “In some cases, burial grounds have been paved over, or built upon or even flooded, sometimes even when the lands being developed were known to contain Aboriginal remains” (2).

The beginning of European cemeteries in Canada began when European settlers arrived in the 1600s. A summary of the main burial trends from then to now is summarized in Figure 1.

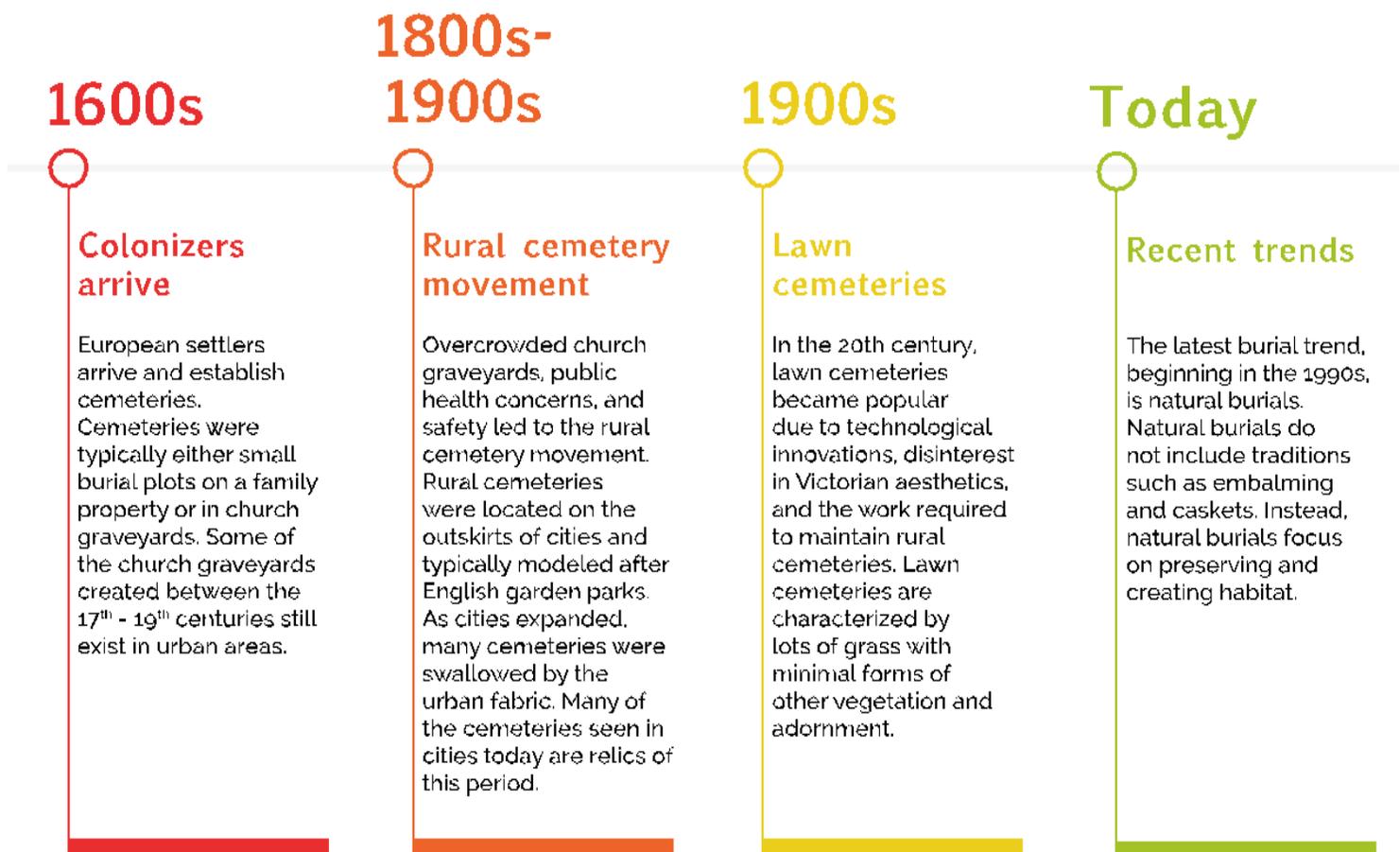


FIGURE SEQ FIGURE \\* ARABIC 1. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL CEMETERY TRENDS IN CANADA FROM COLONIZATION ONWARDS

(Sources: Rugg, 2000; Hall & Bowden, 1986; Quinton & Duinker, 2019; Rugg, 2006; and Hockey, Green, Clayden, & Powell, 2012)



## Management/Ownership

Cemeteries in Canada may be owned and managed by different levels of government, private organizations/companies, churches, synagogues, or families (Quinton & Duinker, 2019). This is very different than urban parks in Canada which are typically owned and managed by the municipality. Funding for cemeteries may come from plot sales, donations, perpetual care funds, or government budgeting if the property is government-owned. Many municipal cemeteries are managed within Parks and Recreation departments alongside other green spaces. These two types of properties are managed differently, with traditional parks managed for public use and recreation and cemeteries managed to inter human remains, promote plot sales, and preserve historical-cultural value (Quinton & Duinker, 2019).

Urban cemeteries lack a larger management strategy or framework to guide their use and purpose (Quinton & Duinker, 2019). The use of cemeteries and their role in cities is typically dependent on management decisions on a site-by-site basis. In some cities, there are strategies and guidelines that apply to all municipally owned cemeteries.

## 1.4 Project Overview

This document comprises six chapters. The first chapter introduces the research topic, the problem statement, the importance of the research, the research questions, contextual information for Canadian cemeteries, as well as my personal biases and approach to the study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on green space, cemeteries, and the role of city planning for cemeteries. Chapter 3 offers an overview of the methodology, including site selection, document analysis, and social media analysis. Chapter 4 summarizes the findings from the document analysis and social media analysis. Chapter 5 discusses themes that arose in the research findings and how these themes overlap with the literature. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the document by re-visiting the research questions, discussing areas for future research, and providing recommendations.

## 1.5 Bias & Approach

As someone who spends significant time in natural landscapes, places a high value on green spaces in the urban environment, and believes in maximizing urban space to benefit public use, I approached this research with the following biases: green spaces in urban areas are highly valuable and should be enjoyed by all urban residents. The value of these landscapes and their potential benefits are supported by the literature, but my biases must be recognized and acknowledged in how I approached this study.

Cemeteries are a site of great sensitivity and significance. I understand there are considerable issues and opposing views involved in studying their use as a public space. Other views and potential conflicts arising over public use of cemeteries are acknowledged and discussed in this study, where relevant. I have approached this study with respect and understanding that cemeteries hold tremendous emotional value and significance.

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# CHAPTER 2 — LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Green Space

### **Green Space Definition**

Cities can be viewed as being composed of grey and green space. Green space is considered open spaces with some form of vegetative cover and grey space is considered impermeably built-up infrastructure (Swanwick, Dunnett, & Woolley, 2003). Green space exists in many formats, including city parks, gardens, sports fields, nature strips, green roofs, domestic gardens, institutional grounds, cemeteries, urban agriculture, and conservation reserves (Hunter & Luck, 2015).

This research recognizes the difference between formal green space and informal green space, highlighted by scholars such as Mahmoudi Farahani & Maller (2019) and Sikorska, Łaszkiwicz, Krauze, & Sikorski (2020). Sikorska et al. (2020) differentiate between these two concepts: formal green space is that which is formally designated by municipal governments as part of their cities' official green space, whereas informal green space is that which is not included in cities' spatial planning documents. Examples of typical informal green spaces include street greenery, vacant lots, golf courses, and cemeteries (Sikorska et al., 2020). Informal green spaces are still often used by the public to access green space, especially if there is an under-provision of parks. Informal green spaces may take over the role of parks for the public, even if the space is not managed or planned for a public purpose (Sikorska et al., 2020).

### **The Benefits and Value of Green Space**

Urban green space is essential for urban ecosystems and offers one of the few opportunities for city dwellers to interact with nature (Bertram & Rehdanz, 2015). The value

and benefits of green space are often referred to as ecosystem services, which may be defined as the benefits people obtain from ecosystems (Dickinson & Hobbs, 2017). Ecosystem services may be broken up into environmental, economic, and community benefits (Breuste et al., 2020). The environmental and economic benefits of urban green space are immense and widely studied, but they are beyond the scope of this project and will not be discussed in depth. The benefits of green space relevant to this study are the community benefits, or the anthropogenic value, derived from seeing, using, and experiencing green space. The community benefits of green space are also referred to as cultural ecosystem services (Dickinson & Hobbs, 2017).

Significant research has demonstrated green space contributes to the psychological and physical wellbeing of city residents. Dickinson & Hobbs (2017) compile a list of the cultural ecosystem services derived from green space: spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation, and aesthetic experiences. Bertram & Rehdanz (2015) state green space cultural ecosystem services include tourism, recreation, physical and mental health, aesthetic appreciation, inspiration, education, and spiritual experiences. Formal green spaces, namely parks, are sometimes recognized as providing more ecosystem services than informal green spaces (Sikorska et al., 2020). In particular, formal green space provides more opportunities for recreational use and therefore provides more community benefits (Bertram & Rehdanz, 2015).

According to Breuste et al. (2020), the benefits of green space are defined by the users of green space. The benefits and values users associate with green space must be included in decision-making on green space use, purpose, structure, and management. The study by Swanwick, Dunnett, & Woolley (2003) reviewed studies that focus on the importance of green space for the urban environment. Factors they found important in researching green space included the role and value of green spaces and attitudes of users and non-users of these spaces. In researching the role and importance of urban green space they looked at the ways green space is used and by whom, what users want from green space, what green spaces currently provide, and the benefits they bring to the

quality of life for people. These studies indicate that how the public values and uses green space is a critical aspect of researching and managing green space.

## **The Multiple Functions of Green Space**

Green spaces typically serve multiple functions. The different functions of green space are frequently linked to ecosystem services, as in the different functions of green space are related to the ecosystem services it provides (Breuste et al., 2020). Multi-functionality is a key aspect of green spaces and city planning; having multi-functional green spaces is an important driver for strong communities and urban sustainability (Breuste et al., 2020). Traditionally, formal green spaces – such as parks and squares – provide the most community-oriented functions, namely recreation, social encounters, and experiencing nature (Breuste et al., 2020; Sikorska et al., 2020). There is increasing demand to promote multi-functional green spaces through careful planning to maximize the benefits of urban green spaces. A key aspect of this is promoting other types of green space (beyond formal green spaces like parks and squares) to provide multiple functions.

For the remainder of this study, the term multi-function will be used to describe green spaces that serve multiple functions for the community (provide multiple cultural ecosystem services). Use of the term will not include environmental or economic functions. In addition, the term multi-purpose has a similar meaning to multi-function and will also be used throughout the study.

## **Green Space Concerns**

In recent decades, land use changes and urbanization have caused a dramatic reduction of natural vegetation (Forman, 2014). This is especially true for urban landscapes, where maintaining green space may be weighed against residential, commercial, and other infrastructure demands. These pressures are often resulting in the loss of green space (Swensen, 2018). Cities that are most in demand of urban green space are those that are large and dense (Forman, 2014; Taylor & Hochuli, 2017). Forman (2014) states when compared to smaller cities, larger cities are especially lacking green space. Not only is the quantity of green space an issue, so is accessibility. In large cities, green spaces are less abundant, buildings are farther from parks, and per person, the average distance from

home to a park is further (Forman, 2014). Hunter & Luck (2015) find several green space characteristics impact the social value of green space: quantity, quality, accessibility, recreational use (types of use and visitation rates), management, and political/financial considerations. Therefore, the trends associated with urbanization – decreasing quantity, quality, and accessibility – are diminishing the social value of green space. This could limit the extent of benefits urban residents derive from green space.

An additional concern is certain types of green spaces are frequently left out of the green space narrative (Breuste et al., 2020). Efforts to protect, enhance, preserve, improve, and expand green spaces typically focus on the most formal types of green space, particularly parks. In the face of urbanization pressure, neglecting to account for the values and uses of other forms of green space is highly problematic. One type of green space that is often not accounted for and neglected in planning strategies is cemeteries.

## 2.2 Cemeteries

A cemetery may be defined as a “burial ground, especially a large landscaped park or ground laid out expressly for the deposition or interment of the dead, not being a churchyard attached to a place of worship” (Rugg, 2000, 260). The plot size and design of cemeteries are incredibly versatile, with sizes varying from small historical graveyards to larger modern cemeteries. They typically contain vegetated and hardscaped elements. Studies of vegetation in cemeteries show high plant diversity, but more recent cemetery trends – lawn cemeteries – have lower ecological diversity (Forman, 2014; Loki, Deak, Lukacs, & Molnar, 2019). Built elements and hardscapes may include paths, roads, chapels, crematoria, or monuments (Quinton & Duinker, 2019). There is normally some type of boundary fence or hedge surrounding the site (Rugg, 2000). Cemeteries may also have amenities such as water fountains, bathrooms, garbage cans, and benches, especially in cemeteries that are large or newer (Quinton & Duinker, 2019).

### **Cemeteries as a Form of Green Space**

The primary purpose of cemetery design is to meet the need of interring the dead (Nordh, Evensen, & Skår, 2017). Designing cemeteries that are green and attractive has mainly been to honour the deceased and serve mourners (Skår et al., 2018). Although designed to serve the needs of interment and mourning, cemeteries may be considered a form of green space that could potentially serve multiple purposes and uses. Interest in the role of cemeteries as a form of green space can be seen in a growing body of literature looking at cemeteries in relation to biodiversity (Loki et al., 2019), psychology (Nordh et al., 2017), green space management (Woodthorpe, 2011), planning (Basmajian & Coutts, 2010), exercise (Lai, Scott, & Sun, 2019), and future urban development (Swensen, 2018). A number of these studies have found similar benefits associated with cemeteries as Dickinson & Hobbs (2017) found associated with green space (spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation, and aesthetic experiences). As demand for urban space grows and green spaces are at risk of decreasing, urban cemeteries may increasingly shift from being just sites for interment to multi-purpose spaces that serve urban residents as a form of public green space (Skår et al., 2018).

## **Cemeteries as Multi-Purpose Spaces**

The use of cemeteries as multi-purpose spaces has been a growing area of interest in the last 15 years. The majority of studies looking at current and potential uses of cemeteries have been conducted in Europe, with a particular focus in Scandinavian countries (e.g., Evensen et al., 2017; Grabalov, 2018; Nordh et al., 2017; Skår et al., 2018). Many of these studies have been conducted in places where cities' policy and planning support and encourage the use of cemeteries by the public.

Several studies have focused on how cemeteries are currently being used by the public, demonstrating the potential ability and demand for cemeteries to serve multiple functions. Studies conducted in Oslo, Norway (Evensen et al., 2017) and Edinburgh, Scotland (Lai et al., 2019) interviewed cemetery visitors regarding their use and perception of cemeteries. Their results are insightful in understanding the possible uses and value of cemeteries for the public. Evensen et al. (2017) found cemeteries in Oslo are used for a

range of activities such as reading, picnicking, walking, cycling, sunbathing, education, photography, dog walking, and drinking and drug use. Users said some of the reasons for visiting the cemeteries include peacefulness, aesthetics, cultural heritage, nature, good maintenance, a place for reflection, and to show respect. Lai et al. (2019) identified popular reasons for visiting two cemeteries in Edinburgh, including dog-walking, using as a through route for walking, pushing strollers, and sitting on benches. Users commented on the aesthetic value of the cemetery, noting their appreciation of the green setting, the design of the pathways, the flowers/plants, and the adornments. Also, visitors noted the wide range of potential uses in the site: walking, cycling, flying drones, and a place to eat/drink.

Several authors argue increasing urbanization and land scarcity means urban cemeteries must transition to serve multiple community purposes (Allam, 2019; Basmajian & Coutts, 2010; Skår et al., 2018). Skår et al. (2018) argue cemeteries' primary purpose should be a burial ground and their secondary purpose should be a public green space for reflection, recreation, and cultural encounters. Allam (2019) discusses concerns over the ethics and morality of cemeteries that occupy large spaces of land in urban areas where there is a high demand for housing and economic development. They argue maintaining cemeteries in these situations is only ethically and morally viable if the site serves other functions that suit the living, such as sites for attraction, recreation, and profit-making investments.

Another demand for cemeteries to function as multi-purpose sites is to provide cemeteries with greater long-term viability. Woodthorpe (2011) finds for cemeteries to be sustainable into the future, one of the key strategies forward is for cemeteries to diversify and be promoted as green spaces. The cemetery they examine in England began promoting itself as "both a provider of bereavement services and a wider local community resource for education and recreation" (267). A critical component of ensuring long-term viability is financial security. The article by Davies & Bennett (2016) outlines the financial difficulties of cemeteries: "Once full, the permanency of cemeteries limits their ability to generate new revenue and fund long-term maintenance. For many cemeteries, once they have reached capacity they often fall into disuse and become abandoned" (103). Several

cemetery managers state one way to ensure cemeteries' commercial viability would be to encourage visitors to see cemeteries as more than a space for burial and cremation (Woodthorpe, 2011). There is a need for cemeteries to transition from just sites of interment and mourning to multi-purpose spaces with wider community functions. Without this transition, cemeteries may be more at risk of financial insecurity, and face difficulties with maintenance and upkeep, disuse, and neglect.

There are very few studies looking at urban cemeteries in Canada. The primary exception was conducted by Quinton and Duinker (2019). The purpose of this study was to look at Canadian cemeteries' provision of ecosystem services by comparing and contrasting them with urban parks. Cemeteries were found to be different from urban parks in their consideration as public spaces, impact on real-estate value, historical/cultural value, and funding and management goals. Despite these differences, cemeteries were found to be well-suited to provide cultural ecosystem services like recreation, human health, restoration, and aesthetics. Quinton and Duinker (2019) argue the value of ecosystem services in cemeteries means they should be studied and managed as green spaces with uses beyond those of burial and mourning. The findings and argument provide evidence for the value of cemeteries and their potential as multi-purpose spaces in Canada.

## **Issues with Multi-Purpose Cemeteries**

There are significant issues to consider when imagining cemeteries as multi-purpose spaces. The complex nature of cemeteries means there are barriers and complications for wider usage. Issues may include public perception, restrictions on acceptable activities, accessibility issues, and conflict between increased usage and degrading the character of the cemetery. Basmajian & Coutts (2010) argue one of the primary barriers for cemeteries to accommodate additional uses is public perception related to deeply rooted cultural practices and religious beliefs. Studies, such as that done by Skår et al. (2018), show some people believe cemeteries should not be used for any purpose other than as a burial site and it is inappropriate for other functions like recreation. Although visitors in the study by

Skår et al. (2018) mention different reasons for visiting the cemeteries, they also identified activities they believed would be unacceptable, such as biking, loose dogs, sunbathing, and picnicking. Woodthorpe (2011) highlights the conflict that arose when an English cemetery began promoting itself as a venue for education and recreation. Some visitors and mourners raised concerns that purposes associated with recreation and education contradicted the use of the cemetery as a place for the dead and the bereaved. Evensen et al. (2017) argue cemeteries have potential as multi-purpose spaces, but only certain uses are likely appropriate.

The limit of what is appropriate may be influenced by public opinion, but cemeteries also normally have rules in place to restrict certain activities. In municipalities across Canada, different bylaws dictate permissible activities, such as rules regarding picnicking, dog-walking, children, sports, and specific hours of operation (Quinton & Duinker, 2019). The rules governing cemeteries are typically done on a site-by-site basis and a larger framework is lacking.

Accessibility is an important consideration for the use of cemeteries. One question is whether the public views cemeteries as private spaces for mourning or community assets for wider usage? Swensen (2018) found cemeteries are viewed as both public and private. Uncertainty about whether or not cemeteries are public or private can act as a barrier for public use, as people do not know whether they are allowed to use the site and what they are allowed to do in it. Many people interviewed by Skår et al. (2018) viewed the cemetery as a community asset, but some were skeptical about opening up this type of green space for common use. Currently, not all cemeteries are public in an official sense, which likely means there are conflicting interests if they become more multi-purpose and open to the public. In terms of physical accessibility, questions arise regarding location, design, gates, and safety (Quinton & Duinker, 2019). Cemeteries are likely to continue having significant accessibility issues if they are not planned or managed as a space for public use (Skår et al., 2018).

Finally, increasing accessibility and usage of cemeteries could be detrimental to the unique character of cemeteries themselves (Skår et al., 2018). The people interviewed by

Skår et al. (2018) said they liked the calm atmosphere when there were not too many visitors. This creates a challenge in allowing people to use cemeteries without compromising the primary purpose that serves mourners and a place of respect. It also raises the issue of increasing use potentially leading to increased risk of damage to graves and other valuable existing infrastructure (Quinton & Duinker, 2019). These features are key to the distinctive character of cemeteries and require preservation.

The issues that arise when cemeteries are treated as multi-purpose spaces are complex and important. Many of these issues are related to a larger problem: there is a lack of an overarching framework and planning strategy for cemeteries. Without a strategic planning framework, it is difficult to make cemeteries truly multi-purpose for public use. Numerous authors argue there is a need for cemeteries to be included in city planning strategies. Including cemeteries in city planning would help guide the use of cemeteries and the purposes cemeteries could or should serve.

## 2.3 Cemeteries & City Planning

### **Planning Green Space**

City planning strategies and policies impact many important aspects of community life, including urban green space (Berke & Godschalk, 2009). Planning documents are often used to address and implement green space planning decisions (Arendt, 1999). Community plans (or municipal development plans) typically include objectives and policies related to green space. These are often supported by more comprehensive green space strategies, such as green space, open space, or park plans (Arendt, 1999). These documents often guide the protection and creation of green spaces, as well as determine what the purpose of different types of green spaces are, such as nature preservation, recreation, etc. Planning documents have traditionally focused on formal green spaces, namely parks, with informal green spaces receiving much less recognition in planning strategies (Sikorska et al., 2020).

Breuste et al. (2020) state that although there is extensive research on the benefits of urban green space, the benefits of green space are not well integrated into city planning, design, and management. They argue the benefits and values of green space, especially the benefits and values defined by the users, must be included in decision-making and planning.

## **Planning Cemeteries**

Most cities lack an overarching framework for cemeteries and do not consider cemeteries in city planning strategies (Basmajian & Coutts, 2010). Numerous studies identify the lack of attention given to cemeteries in city planning documents and argue cemeteries need to be better included in planning (Basmajian & Coutts, 2010; Davies & Bennett, 2016; Harker, 2012; Klaufus, 2018). Within the literature, there seem to be two distinct needs for planning to account for cemeteries: planning for future needs of cemetery space/interment (Basmajian & Coutts, 2010; Harker, 2012) and planning for the use of existing cemeteries (Skår et al., 2018; Swensen, 2018).

Lai et al. (2019) believe reconsidering cemeteries as urban green spaces could significantly influence policy-making, especially in deciding the location and design of cemeteries. Skår et al. (2018) and Allam (2019) discuss cities that have actively turned cemeteries into formal green spaces, which are acknowledged for adding green space benefits related to cleaner air, space for recreation, possibility to generate revenue, and encourage proper management and maintenance of cemeteries. In imagining cemeteries as formal green spaces, these studies argue that cemeteries should support public use. Some studies mention particular cities that have actively engaged with cemetery planning, promoted it as a form of green space for public use, and integrated it into wider green space planning. For example, Basmajian & Coutts (2010) mention Atlanta and Baltimore, and Quinton & Duinker (2019) mention Copenhagen. Further studies that explore these examples are needed.

Authors argue that cemeteries must be included in planning strategies to act as multi-purpose spaces. Basmajian & Coutts (2010) discuss why cemeteries must be

considered in urban planning to be better integrated into communities. They argue policy, management, and municipal governments are needed to support a move to fully allow cemeteries to function as multi-purpose spaces (Basmajian & Coutts, 2010). Harker (2012) argues planners “are in a unique position to instigate change in contemporary burial practice” (156). They state cities should have the foresight to include cemeteries in their community plans, which would bring cemeteries back into the mainstream of local planning and civic cultures. Other ways planners could influence cemeteries include policy incentives, permits, comprehensive land use plans, zoning ordinances, and environmental regulations. For example, tools like conservation easements could ensure cemeteries are accessible to the public (Harker, 2012).

Many of the potential issues associated with multi-purpose cemeteries may be addressed if cemeteries are better integrated into city planning. Swensen (2018) argues that to overcome the conflict between public and private, cemeteries must be made officially public through policy. By formalizing cemeteries as a form of green space, guidelines for purpose and public use can be made clearer. This clarification would help users understand the role of the cemetery as a public space and what activities are permitted. Detailing what activities are permissible and where they're permissible may help mitigate issues arising over conflicting use. In addition, Swensen (2018) states the historical and ecological value of cemeteries means they should be interconnected with other green spaces in green network planning. By acknowledging cemeteries' ecological and historical value, and using planning to protect and enhance it, cemeteries may be better positioned to maintain these values and their unique character while serving multiple functions. Similarly, Spar et al. (2018) state that by positioning cemeteries within urban planning, cemeteries can benefit from “approaches that include their diverse qualities and functions as green urban spaces for recreation and cultural encounters” (378).

## 2.4 Summary

The literature demonstrates the immense value urban green space provides for urban residents. Green spaces that serve multiple functions are particularly beneficial for urban residents. The literature states cemeteries may be considered a form of green space. Numerous studies have explored how cemeteries are used by the public, demonstrating the ability of cemeteries to function as multi-purpose spaces. Most of this research has been conducted in cities where policy and planning support the use of cemeteries by the public. Further research reveals that in other places, particularly North America, cemeteries are not adequately accounted for in city planning. Cemeteries in North America are usually not officially public and don't have official purposes beyond interment and mourning. Authors argue that for cemeteries to be truly public and fully function as multi-purpose spaces, they must be formalized through policy and planning. Formalizing cemeteries as multi-purpose spaces would help ensure they can support public use and maintain long-term viability. In addition, including cemeteries in city planning strategies may help address and mitigate some of the many issues associated with multi-purpose cemeteries.

## CHAPTER 3 — RESEARCH METHODS

To answer the research questions, I used a mixed-methods research approach: document analysis and social media analysis. The documents analysis intends to address research question 1:

1. Are Canadian urban cemeteries included in city planning documents, and if so how?

The social media analysis intends to address research question 2:

2. Are Canadian urban cemeteries currently being used as multi-purpose spaces beyond interment, and if so how?

The two research methods together are intended to address research question 3:

3. To what extent do municipal city planning documents account for how cemeteries are currently being used by the public?

This chapter will first discuss the site selection for the study. Next, the document analysis and social media analysis methodologies are described.

### 3.1 Site Selection

This study considers four Canadian cities with large populations, high density, and that represent a geographic spread across Canada. As described in the literature review, cities with the greatest demand for urban green space are large and have a high population density (Forman, 2014; Taylor & Hochuli, 2017). Therefore, it is anticipated that high-density cities would experience the greatest pressure to widen the usage of cemeteries to provide space for public use. The study cities are Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary (Table 1).

TABLE 1. DETAILS OF SELECTED CITIES (STATISTICS CANADA, 2019)

Population Centre	Province	Population	Land area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population density (per km <sup>2</sup> )
Toronto	Ontario	2,731,571	630	4,334.4
Montreal	Quebec	1,704,694	365	4,662.1
Vancouver	British Columbia	631,486	114	5,492.6

<b>Calgary</b>	Alberta	1,239,220	825	1,501.1
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Within each city, one to two cemeteries were selected to examine more closely. Cemeteries were selected based on their location (being in the highest density areas and/or near residential or commercial areas), having a significant number of social media posts (minimum 100), and ensuring cemeteries in the same city were not too close to each other (located in separate neighbourhoods). Seven cemeteries were selected in total (Table 2). There is only one cemetery in the City of Vancouver, hence only one cemetery was selected for Vancouver. Further details for each of the cemeteries is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2. DETAILS OF SEVEN SELECTED CEMETERIES

City	Toronto		Montreal		Vancouver	Calgary	
<b>Cemetery</b>	Mount Pleasant Cemetery	York Cemetery	Mount Royal Cemetery	Le Repos Saint-Franco is d'Assis	Mountain View Cemetery	Union Cemetery	Queen's Park Cemetery
<b>Open for interment?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Ownership</b>	Mount Pleasant Group (not-for-profit corporation)	Mount Pleasant Group (not-for-profit corporation)	Mount Royal Cemetery Company (not-for-profit corporation)	Le Repos Saint-Franco is d'Assis (not-for-profit corporation)	City of Vancouver	City of Calgary	City of Calgary
<b>Year opened</b>	1876	1948	1852	1916	1886	1890	1940
<b>Number of burials</b>	168,000+	Unsure	200,000	250,000+	145,000	21,200	65,000+
<b>Size (hectares)</b>	83	69	66	69	43	19	55

## 3.2 Document Analysis

A document analysis of municipal planning documents was used to determine to what extent cemeteries are included in the cities' regulatory framework in each of the four study cities. The literature review informed this choice of methodology. The literature review discussed the importance of including cemeteries in municipal planning and providing direction/support for multi-purpose cemeteries. The literature review also noted the

importance of green space management and planning to account for how those spaces are actually being used by the public.

For each city, the documents examined included municipal development plans, secondary plans (if they existed for the areas the selected cemeteries were located in), and any relevant recreation plans, green space plans, open space plans, or park plans. These documents are the primary guides to land use and urban policy for urban green space. It is expected these documents are most likely to show the extent that cemeteries are included in planning strategies and how they are included. Twelve documents were included in total (Table 3). All documents are secondary data and were found on each city's website and were publicly available.

Each document was examined to see if and how cemeteries were included. To initially determine the extent of cemetery inclusion, an examination of references to cemeteries was conducted. Each document was manually scanned to find references to cemeteries. The search function was used to look for the terms 'cemetery', 'cemeteries', 'graveyard', and 'graveyards'. There was no mention of graveyard or graveyards in any document. If a document did not mention any of the key terms, no further analysis or exploration was conducted. For the remaining documents, all mentions of the key terms were further analysed.

Documents containing reference to the keywords were thoroughly read and scanned for key themes informed by the literature review. These themes focused on cemeteries being considered a form of green space, the purpose/use of cemeteries, and the value of cemeteries. If reference was given to the use, purpose, or value of cemeteries, the reference was marked as 'cemetery-based' or 'cemetery-related'. Cemetery-based references were those specifically applicable to cemeteries. For example, a policy that applied only to cemeteries. Cemetery-related references were those that applied to cemeteries but were more broadly applicable. For example, values and policies that applied to green and open spaces as a whole (including cemeteries) or to an entire neighbourhood (where cemeteries were located).

TABLE 3. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

City	City plan	Secondary plan	Other relevant planning documents
<b>Toronto</b>	City of Toronto Official Plan (2019)	N/A	Parkland Strategy: Growing Toronto Parkland (2019) Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2019)
<b>Montreal*</b>	Montreal Master Plan (2004)	Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan (2009)	N/A
<b>Vancouver</b>	City of Vancouver Regional Context Statement (2013)	Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision (2005)	VanPlay: Vancouver's Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan (2018) Greenest City Action Plan (2015)
<b>Calgary</b>	City of Calgary Municipal Development Plan (2009)	Erlton Area Redevelopment Plan (1985)	Open Space Plan (2002)

\*These were all the plans/documents in Montreal I could find, there is a chance I've missed something that's only published in French.

## Limitations

Two primary limitations arose during the document analysis. The first limitation was documents written in French with no copies translated to English. This issue arose with the documents from Montreal, where the Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan was only available in French. The Google translate function was used to translate the text, but there is a possibility I missed relevant information or misinterpreted something in the findings. In addition, if a document was only available in French, there is a chance I did not find it when looking for relevant planning documents.

The second limitation was an inability to find and use a consistent coding or another framework for analysing the documents. Initially, I planned on coding the planning documents, but this was not a useful technique due to the drastic differences between the documents. When I began trying to code the documents, I realized it wasn't feasible based on the wide spectrum of differences between each cities' documents – they were too different to use the same coding method and have a uniform approach.

### 3.3 Social Media Analysis

To obtain an idea of the reasons people visit urban cemeteries in Canada, and therefore the purposes the cemeteries are serving, a social media analysis was conducted. Photographs from Instagram, together with their corresponding text descriptions and comments, were collected and analysed. The literature review noted that in researching green space, it is important to examine the attitudes of users and non-users of these spaces. Users' uses and values of green space are key for decision-making. The document analysis aimed to examine the experiences of people using cemeteries.

Social media is a growing data source for research and a source of rich open-access data on the topic of this study (Grabalov, 2018). According to Laestadius (2016), research involving Instagram and other social media platforms is well suited to small data and data thickening approaches, as they often contain a combination of visual imagery, captions, hashtags, and comments. This combination of information yields rich and highly interpretable data, which complements a qualitative methodology.

Of the social media platforms, Instagram had the largest amount of data for geo-tagged posts in Canadian urban cemeteries. The seven study cemeteries were widely featured on geo-tagged Instagram posts. I manually conducted the social media analysis for each of the seven cemeteries. Due to the scope of the project and the feasibility of time, a maximum of 240 posts was looked at for each cemetery. For cemeteries with a large number of posts, I analysed the first 20 posts for each month in 2020. This strategy was chosen to ensure I was able to look at posts throughout the whole year. For cemeteries with fewer posts, I either looked at all the geo-tagged posts (if less than 240) or the most recent 240 posts (typically spanned 2-3 years).

The material from Instagram was categorized to determine the most popular representations of purposes for visiting the cemetery. I grouped the posts into seven

categories and 28 subcategories related to the purpose suggested by the post ( ). These categories were based on findings from the literature and others that arose during the data collection process. There was a varying level of certainty in determining the activity in each post. Some posts explicitly stated the purpose in the caption or the picture, whereas others were somewhat or entirely unclear. When I could not determine a purpose for visiting, posts were classified as 'Unknown', and posts that were irrelevant and incorrectly geo-tagged were marked as 'Unrelated'. Some purposes for visiting cemeteries were specific, easily identifiable activities such as walking, bird watching, or visiting a grave. Other purposes for visiting were more based on the feeling or appearance of the site, such as the site's aesthetics or peacefulness. For these posts, the users did not indicate what activity they were doing but did allude to an appreciation of some aspect of the site. This appreciation indicated a certain type of intent or desire for visiting the site but did not indicate a specific activity.

Some categories and subcategories were fairly broad and somewhat ambiguous, namely 'Photography', 'Natural aesthetic', 'Ornamental Aesthetic', and 'Posing'. Unless a more concrete purpose was apparent, all posts with a comment or hashtag to do with photography (e.g., #photography, #photo, #filmphotography) were put under the 'Photography' subcategory. Although captions and hashtags associated with photography may indicate these users visited the cemetery for photography, the posts ranged drastically in terms of quality and content. Many people who used this hashtag likely had a different primary reason for visiting, such as walking or visiting a grave. Other posts were clearly professional photographers as indicated by the quality of the photo, hashtags such as #professionalphotographer, or descriptions of the type of camera being used (indicating a level of professionalism). This may indicate the actual purpose of visiting the cemetery was to conduct photography. Unless a more concrete purpose was apparent, 'Natural aesthetic' was used to categorize all posts that commented on the natural beauty of the site and/or an appreciation of the nature. Unless a more concrete purpose was apparent, 'Ornamental aesthetic' was used to categorize all posts that commented on the ornamental aesthetic (graves, monuments, architecture, etc.) of the site and/or an

appreciation of the ornamentality there. Finally, unless a more concrete purpose was apparent, 'Posing' was used to categorize all posts showing someone posing in the picture (including selfies). These photos were typically very 'staged' looking, indicating the person was purposefully posing in the cemetery for whatever reason.

TABLE 4. PURPOSE FOR VISITING CEMETERY (DETERMINED BY INSTAGRAM POST)

Category	Subcategory	Union Cemetery	Queen's Park Cemetery	Mount Royal Cemetery	Le Repos Saint-Francois d'Assis	Mountain View Cemetery	Mount Pleasant Cemetery	York Cemetery
Exercise	Walking							
	Jogging							
	Cycling							
	Walking with dogs							
	General exercise							
Holidays/ ceremonies	Remembrance Day							
	Halloween							
	All Souls Day							
	Other events/occasions							
Aesthetics	Natural aesthetics							
	Ornamental aesthetics							
Artistic	Photography							
	Posing for photos							
	Filming							
	Making art							
	Writing							
Miscellaneous leisure/ recreation	Reading							
	Education/history							
	Reflection/peace/ meditation							
	Bird watching							
	Tourism							
	Kids playing							

	Other							
Memorial	Visiting graves							
	Funeral							
	Other commemoration							
Irrelevant	Unknown							
	Unrelated							

## Limitations

There were several limitations associated with the social media analysis:

- If a single user posted frequently, it could skew the data. For example, there were some instances where one person posted 5-15 photos in a row, all with similar captions. If this user's posts were all subcategorized as 'Photography', it ended up skewing the results towards that subcategory. One users' posts for York Cemetery were not included for this reason.
- The purpose indicated by the Instagram post did not necessarily show the users' actual purpose for visiting the cemetery. For example, a user may have posted about bird watching when their original purpose for visiting the cemetery was to visit a grave.
- I assume that users are more likely to post certain types of content. For example, due to the sensitivity of more traditional purposes for visiting a cemetery (those categorized as 'Memorial'), users are less likely to post when visiting for memorial-related purposes. The data I collected likely emphasizes more varied purposes and does not reflect the true ratio/number of people visiting for memorial purposes.
- People geo-tagging cemeteries on social media represent only a limited portion of the population visiting cemeteries. Therefore, solely looking at Instagram posts does not reflect the total population visiting and using cemeteries, such as people without smartphones and people who don't use social media.

- Finally, the social media analysis was a very subjective process. Many posts could have fallen under multiple categories, and I used my judgement to determine which was the most concrete or primary purpose.

# CHAPTER 4 — RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings chapter summarizes the findings from the document analysis and the social media analysis. The results are organized by methodology, which first examines the document analysis results and then the social media analysis results. Some of the results are summarized with tables and graphics. The tables and graphics are complemented by descriptive text to provide further detail and context.

## 4.1 Document Analysis Results

### Overview

The document analysis demonstrated city planning documents differ substantially in their inclusion of cemeteries. Across the 12 planning documents included in the document analysis, nine included at least one reference to cemeteries (Table 5). The City of Montreal's Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan had the most cemetery references with 38 and the City of Vancouver's Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision had the second most with 28.

Seven documents included cemeteries in their discussion of green space and/or classified cemeteries as a form of green space. Several plans distinguished between different types of green space, which sometimes indicated what each type of green space should be used for. The plans differed drastically in this regard. Some plans identified cemeteries as a form of green space to be used for certain services or institutions with no mention of public use (e.g., City of Toronto Official Plan). Other plans included cemeteries as a form of recreational green space along with parks and sports fields (e.g., City of Calgary Open Space Plan).

Five documents referred to the value of cemeteries. Three of these documents had cemetery-related references and the other two had cemetery-based references. Six

documents referred to the use or purpose of cemeteries for the public. Two of these documents had cemetery-related references, two documents had cemetery-based references, and two documents contained references to cemetery-based and cemetery-related public use. Six documents included policies applying to cemeteries. Two documents included cemetery-related policies and four documents included cemetery-related and cemetery-based policies.

The document analysis demonstrated that having a high-frequency of keywords – more mentions of the word ‘cemetery’ or ‘cemeteries’ – did not necessarily mean the document integrated and planned for cemeteries in a meaningful way. This is most apparent with the Erlton Area Redevelopment Plan, which mentions cemeteries 14 times, making it the fourth highest number of references. Despite this, there was no mention of the value, purpose, use, potential, or planning of cemeteries. The references were to individual cemeteries, primarily to describe their location and zoning classification. There is little meaning to be derived from this document in terms of cemetery planning. On the other hand, some plans with few references to cemeteries contained significant integration of cemeteries into their planning strategies and discussion. This was largely due to cemetery-related discussion that applied to green spaces or a neighbourhood that was inclusive of cemeteries.

Of all the cities' planning documents, the City of Calgary's Municipal Development Plan and Open Space Plan were the most inclusive of cemeteries. The plans, especially when viewed together, clearly describe how cemeteries are included in planning strategies and priorities, including a statement for the purpose cemeteries serve.

The following is a summary of each document's inclusion of cemeteries, including key relevant clauses and policies. This is intended to illustrate the differences in inclusion between each document and highlight how planning documents included (or didn't include) cemeteries' value, purpose, use, and the general intentions for these sites.

**TABLE 5. DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SUMMARY**

Document name	Mention of cemeteries?	Number of mentions	Discussed as a form of green space?	Mention value or benefits of cemeteries?	Mention use or purpose of cemeteries to the public?	Policy action cemeteries
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**CANADIAN URBAN CEMETERIES**

City of Toronto Official Plan	Yes	8	Yes	Unclear	Unclear	No Yes
Parkland Strategy: Growing Toronto Parkland	Yes	1	Yes	Biodiversity, community capacity, improving accessibility and connectivity with other green space	May provide passive recreation	No No
Parks and Recreation Master Plan	No	--	--	--	--	--
Montreal Master Plan	Yes*	7	Yes	Scenic, historic, and heritage values	Enable public access Recreation and tourism	Yes Yes
Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan**	Yes	38	No	Heritage, nature/environment	Enhance views for the public Education and tourism	Yes Yes
City of Vancouver Regional Context Statement	No	--	--	--	--	--
Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision	Yes	28	Yes	Recreation, beauty, and refreshment	Enhance for public use, make viewpoints more accessible	Yes Yes
Greenest City Action Plan	No	--	--	--	--	--
VanPlay	Yes	1	Yes	No	No	No No
City of Calgary Municipal Development Plan	Yes	6	Yes	Individual well-being, community well-being, biodiversity, storm-water management, air conditioning	Provide public recreation, offer public access, opportunities for cultural enjoyments and artistic pursuits	No Yes
Open Space Plan	Yes	27	Yes	No	Passive uses, such as walking for pleasure, bicycling, walking tours, nature observation and historical research	Yes Yes
Erlton Area Redevelopment Plan	Yes	14	No	No	No	No No
This colour indicates cemetery-based						
This colour indicates cemetery-related						
*Mention of cemeteries in this document is in reference only to 'major' cemeteries (namely Mount Royal Cemetery and Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, but there are 6 included on the map in total).						
**This document is entirely in French with no English version. There is a chance something has been missed or misinterpreted.						

## City of Toronto Official Plan

The City of Toronto Official Plan (2019) includes cemeteries under the *Parks and Open Space* designation as well as within the definition of *cultural heritage landscapes*. For a summary of policies that apply to cemeteries refer to

The plans' discussion of the *Green Space System* includes cemeteries. According to the plan, "the *Green Space System* is comprised of those lands with a *Parks and Open*

*Space Areas* designation which are large... [and] have significant natural heritage or recreational value" (231). The plan recognizes private open space as part of this system. The *Green Space System* provides numerous benefits: habitat for flora and fauna; natural heritage features; sustaining the natural environment and providing ecosystem services; providing landscapes for reflection, contemplation, and appreciation of nature; improving human health; providing passive and active recreation; providing environmental education; and offering tourism and entertainment destinations. Because cemeteries are included in the *Green Space System*, the value and benefits discussed here seem to apply to cemeteries.

The definition of *cultural heritage landscapes* includes cemeteries. The bulk of chapter 3.1.5. Heritage Conservation is devoted to preserving and protecting these heritage features. Because cemeteries are included in the *cultural heritage landscapes*, much of the discussion regarding heritage conservation is cemetery-related. This includes policies for heritage conservation, some of which apply to all or certain cemeteries ( ).

Chapter 4 Land Use Designations further breaks down what the '*Parks and Open Space Areas*' designation means. The areas included in this designation are shown on several maps, which break the categories into *Natural Areas*, *Parks*, and *Other Open Space Areas*. Within these 3 designations, cemeteries are classified as *Other Open Space Areas*. The plan outlines:

- *Natural Areas* will allow for "compatible recreational, cultural and educational uses and facilities..." (4-11);
- *Parks* will be "used primarily to provide public parks and recreational opportunities" (4-11); and
- *Other Open Space Areas* will be used primarily for golf courses, cemeteries, and open spaces associated with other specialized uses and facilities.

This breakdown seems to contradict some of the earlier discussion for the *Green Space System* and lands designated as *Parks and Open Space Areas*, which implied certain values and purposes applied to all land included under *Parks and Open Space Areas*. This breakdown in Chapter 4 between the differences in *Natural Areas*, *Parks*, and *Other Open*

*Space Areas* makes it unclear what benefits of the *Green Space System* apply to places that fall under the *Other Open Space Areas* designation, like cemeteries.

TABLE 6. CITY OF TORONTO OFFICIAL PLAN: SUMMARY OF POLICIES THAT APPLY TO CEMETERIES

2.3.2. Green Space System Policy 1*	Actions will be taken to improve, preserve and enhance the <i>Green Space System</i> by a) improving public access and enjoyment of lands under public ownership; b) maintaining and increasing public access to privately owned lands, where appropriate; c) restoring, creating and protecting a variety of landscapes.
3.1.5. Cultural Heritage Landscape Policy 14	Potential and existing properties of cultural heritage value or interest, including <i>cultural heritage landscapes</i> and Heritage Conservation Districts, will be identified and included in area planning studies and plans with recommendations for further study, evaluation and <i>conservation</i> .
3.1.5. Cultural Heritage Landscape Policy 15	The development of neighbourhood heritage initiatives will be encouraged to promote an understanding of local history and how our neighbourhoods and open spaces have evolved.
3.1.5. Cultural Heritage Landscape Policy 43	Potential <i>cultural heritage landscapes</i> will be identified and evaluated to determine their significance and cultural heritage values. <i>Significant cultural heritage landscapes</i> will be included on the Heritage Register and/or designated under either Part IV or Part V of the <i>Ontario Heritage Act</i> .

\*Because it is not entirely clear if all the benefits and values associated with the *Green Space System* apply to *Other Open Space Areas*, this policy may or may not apply to cemeteries.

## Parkland Strategy: Growing Toronto Parkland

The City of Toronto's Parkland Strategy: Growing Toronto Parkland (2019) contains one mention of cemeteries. The reference is regarding types of green space that are not parks: "Toronto's parks system is supplemented by a range of other public and private outdoor places like school yards, cemeteries, hydro corridors, and privately-owned publicly-accessible open spaces (POPS). These do not replace the need for public parks but provide other opportunities for Torontonians to access greenspace" (19). Further, the document mentions these open spaces largely offer passive recreation opportunities, where public access and use are sometimes enabled through partnerships, agreements, or easements with the city. These outdoor spaces are said to enrich the parks system and contribute to biodiversity, community capacity, and improve accessibility and connectivity. The discussion of these spaces, including the value and use of them, is cemetery-related as it applies broadly to all the various green spaces.

## Montreal Master Plan

The majority of discussion regarding cemeteries in the Montreal Master Plan (2004) is set in the context of discussing the Mount Royal area of Montreal. The area is a major green space that includes two very large and important cemeteries: Notre-Dame-des-Neiges and Mount Royal Cemetery. The plan states enhancement of Mount Royal must consider the diversity and various components of its landscape: memorial, heritage, natural and archaeological sites, public and funeral art, woods, and bird sanctuaries.

Objective 11 in the plan is 'Enhance Mount Royal, the island character and other major features of the City's identity'. This section includes discussion and policies applying to two of the main cemeteries in Montreal ( ). The plan notes that Mount Royal provides scenic, ecological, recreational, and tourism value that is immeasurable to the city. Because cemeteries compose a major part of this area, these values are cemetery-related.

Action 11.3 ( ) in this chapter applies to the green spaces in Montreal as a whole. The plan recognizes the importance of protecting private green spaces due to their contribution to Montreal's green network. Included in this are Montreal's largest cemeteries, where the scenic, historic, and heritage values must be preserved. One of the implementation measures for Action 11.3 is to "Develop agreements with Montréal's large institutions and cemeteries ensuring that they preserve the landscape elements of their sites and enable public access to their green spaces" (124).

The plan includes a land use classification for major cemeteries, which is *Major green space or waterside park*. A description of this land use category is "Areas reserved for green or natural spaces of City-wide importance or located on a riverbank, as well as major cemeteries" which includes "Major and metropolitan parks, Nature parks, Public areas, Nature reserves, Public riverbanks and islands, Major cemeteries, Golf courses, Casino, business and complementary services public facilities" (198).

**TABLE 7. MONTREAL MASTER PLAN: SUMMARY OF POLICIES THAT APPLY TO CEMETERIES**

Action 11.1.	Preserve the character of Mount Royal and its predominance in the urban landscape.
Action 11.3.	Preserve and improve Montreal's green network.

## Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan

The vast majority of the City of Montreal's Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan (2009) and the included policies is relevant for the cemeteries in Mount Royal. The most relevant policies and references are included under Objective 2.1 Protect and Promote ( ). The plan's inclusion of cemeteries is focused on protection and conservation because of cemeteries' heritage value. There is a focus on the importance of the archaeology and ornaments in the cemeteries: "Mount Royal has the largest concentration of works of art and commemoration in Montreal. Distributed mainly over the territory of cemeteries, institutions and Mount Royal Park, these sculptures, monuments, busts and works of contemporary art reflect our history and our values; they are open to contemplation and help to shape our environment" (38). There are numerous cemetery-related policies to promote Mount Royal to visitors and users ( ). These policies indicate a desire to have people using and visiting the site for various purposes (the policies mention education and tourism specifically). The policies include enhancing the views from the cemeteries for the enjoyment of the public, further demonstrating the desire for these sites to be used as public spaces for varied purposes.

There is no discussion of cemeteries as a green space. The plan does mention cemeteries' values in terms of sustainability and the natural environment: "Among the institutions established on the mountain, cemeteries represent places whose unique heritage value derives as much from the sustainability of use as from their particular landscapes... By their location in the heart of the mountain, their large area, the forest areas they contain and the diversity of plants that grow there, cemeteries play a major role in the conservation project for natural environments" (53). The plan notes the importance of contributing to biodiversity and sustainability objectives, whilst preserving the heritage landscape.

TABLE 8. MOUNT ROYAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN: SUMMARY OF POLICIES THAT APPLY TO CEMETERIES

2.1.1. Protection and Enhancement Regimes	2.1.1.1. Measure 3 - Publicize and enhance the observation points offering interior views of the mountain, in particular in consultation with cemeteries.
	2.1.1.3. Measure 1: Complete the inventories of works of art and commemoration, including works of art and funeral commemoration, specifying their condition and threats to their integrity.
	2.1.1. Measure 2: Develop an action plan for the protection, maintenance, restoration and enhancement of works of art and commemoration of the historic and natural district of Mount Royal, in particular the particularities of the corpus of works of art and commemoration of cemeteries.
2.1.2. Large Institutional Groups	2.1.2. Measure 2. Support and contribute to the preparation of inventories of heritage belonging to cemeteries and to the design of action plans for their protection, maintenance, restoration and enhancement. Measure 3. In consultation with the cemeteries, promote the establishment of works of commemoration, taking into account the landscape qualities and limiting the mineralization of surfaces
2.3.1. Promote, Publicize, and Raise Awareness	2.3.1.1. Measure 4. Support the managers of institutional properties, and more particularly those of cemeteries, in the development of effective and judicious signage methods allowing the enhancement of their points of interest (for example: historical figures or monuments, landscaping, etc).
	2.3.1.2. Measure 1. Increase the accessibility of information relating to elements of interest on Mount Royal, by means of various communication tools (leaflets, brochures, website). Measure 2. Continue to support institutional and associative partners in their educational and dissemination activities relating to Mount Royal, and support new initiatives in this area. Measure 3. Continue to put in place information aimed at dissuading behaviors that have a negative effect on the mountain (for example: mountain biking, distribution of food to animals, gathering plants).
	2.3.1.3. Measure 1. Continue to support institutional and associative partners in their education and dissemination activities among school clients, and support new initiatives in this area. Measure 2. Doubling over five years the number of elementary and secondary students reached by programs to raise awareness of Mount Royal's heritage. Measure 3. Increase the accessibility of information relating to the elements of interest of Mount Royal, by means of various communication tools adapted specifically to young people (leaflets, brochures).
	2.3.1.4. Measure 1. Continue the development of tools promoting Mount Royal and its heritage to tourists. Measure 2. Develop indicators on the use of Mount Royal Park by tourist clients.

## Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision Plan

The City of Vancouver's Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision (2005) sets broad directions for the future of the Riley Park neighbourhood. Riley Park is home to the only cemetery in the City of Vancouver – Mountain View Cemetery – and the Community Vision Plan includes significant discussion regarding the cemetery and policies related to it.

The background discussion on parks in the neighbourhood reveals the Community Vision's view on cemeteries: "Parks are very important for recreation, beauty, and

refreshment. RPSC is fortunate to have a variety of park spaces, including Queen Elizabeth Park... Nat Bailey Stadium, Cambie Heritage Boulevard, Mountain View Cemetery, a naturalized park area at Oak and 37th, and more conventional play grounds and play fields" (69). This indicates the document views the cemetery as a form of park space. The plan also notes Mountain View Cemetery is "an important public open space" in Riley Park and further enhancement of the site should benefit residents in the area and visitors (70).

Policies for parks in the community ( ) focus on improving parks for public use. Some of the public's ideas to enhance the cemetery include planting memorials instead of markers; encouraging park-like elements in the cemetery; revamping the area around the WW1 memorial; encouraging historical preservation by having walking tours of the cemetery and restoration of grave markers; establishing tree identification tours, and; encouraging community involvement in the space while being sensitive to memorial park use. These ideas from the public reinforce the notion that Mountain View Cemetery is perceived as a community space that is important for both memorial and other purposes. The other cemetery-related policies are all based on improving park space for the public, which would also improve the cemetery for public use and enjoyment. Some of the more specific ideas from the public include improving lighting at night for safety; enforcing the dog-leash regulations in Mountain View Cemetery; providing bags for dog owners; having more garbage cans in the cemetery; making the view across Mountain View Cemetery more publicly accessible; and providing benches and rest areas in areas with a view. Compared to the other documents analysed for this study, the Community Vision Plan has the most specific and clear interventions for improving a cemetery for public usage. Because the plan included comments from the public, this document also shows a clear desire from the public to use and access this site.

Direction 32.3	Enhance Mountain View Cemetery as a public space.
Direction 32.4	Improve safety in and around parks.
Direction 32.6	Control dogs in parks and public places.
Direction 32.10	Preserve views.

## VanPlan – Vancouver’s Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan

The City of Vancouver's VanPlay (2018) document includes an inventory and analysis of the park system in Vancouver, which contains one mention of cemeteries. This single reference is found in the definition/clarification of the term for green space: "These are green areas that are not formally recognized as parks and/or are owned by the City or other lower mainland jurisdictions, such as Pacific Spirit Park, Central Park in Burnaby or Mountain View Cemetery" (40). This definition is included to differentiate between green space and parks. Because this plan is focused on parks and recreation, not including cemeteries in the analysis implies cemeteries are not prioritized as a space for recreation.

## Calgary Municipal Plan

Although the City of Calgary Municipal Development Plan (2009) does not have a high-frequency of keywords, cemeteries are clearly and explicitly included in the document and green space planning strategies. The plan contains several cemetery-related policies ( ). Cemeteries are included in the definition of *open space network*: "Comprises current and future land and water areas offering public access. These areas may include features such as wetlands, sports fields, grasslands, plazas, cemeteries, neighbourhood parks, utility corridors and stormwater management facilities" (32). The network is composed of three open space categories: *Recreational Open Space (ROS)*, *Environmental Open Space (EOS)*, and *Alternative Use Open Space (AUOS)*. Of these categories, cemeteries fall under *ROS*. The definition of *ROS* is: "Lands that are acquired or dedicated to provide areas for public recreation, such as but not limited to, sports fields, neighbourhood parks and cemeteries" (32). This classification places significant emphasis on leisure and recreation in reference to cemetery use.

In discussing open space typologies and their value, the document includes a table listing open space types, examples, and the associated values. Within this table, Queens Park Cemetery is listed as an example of a "patch" open space type. This open space type

is associated with numerous community and environmental benefits: individual well-being, community well-being, biodiversity, storm-water management, and air conditioning.

TABLE 10. CITY OF CALGARY MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: SUMMARY OF POLICIES THAT APPLY TO CEMETERIES

2.3.4. Policy a	Provide a high-quality park and open-space system to meet the varying needs of Calgarians.
2.3.4. Policy e	Protect and promote large-scale landscaped and open-space areas that define neighbourhoods and local topography and enhance Calgary's river valley park system.
2.3.4. Policy f	Protect the basic function of city parks and public open spaces, and prevent parkland conversion to other uses.
2.3.4. Policy n	Locate and design public gathering areas within parks and public open spaces to optimize sun exposure during midday hours.
2.3.4. Policy o	Ensure that all public parks, open spaces and amenities are fully accessible and promote public safety.
2.3.4. Policy q	Ensure that all parks, open spaces and amenities are located and designed in accordance with principles of universal access and barrier-free design.
2.3.4. Policy s	Design parks and open spaces to provide opportunities for cultural enjoyment and artistic pursuits.
2.3.4. Policy t	Develop and maintain open spaces, parks, recreational, sport and cultural facilities to provide for active recreation and passive recreational needs that are appropriate for all age groups and abilities.

## Calgary Open Space Plan

The City of Calgary Municipal Development Plan often refers to and builds off the Open Space Plan (2002). The Open Space Plan categorizes open space the same way as the Municipal Development Plan, with cemeteries classified as *Recreational Open Space (ROS)*. Cemeteries are significantly featured in the Open Space Plan and have a dedicated subsection within the *ROS* section which includes several cemetery-based policies ( ). The definition given for cemeteries is “Publicly owned and administered land base for burial and memorial purposes, developed as landscaped passive parkland” (94). The plan states the primary purpose of the cemetery land base is for cemetery services but incorporated secondary uses include non-conflicting passive recreation (walking, cycling, nature observation, and heritage research), heritage landscape conservation, and environmental health. It also mentions that cemeteries offer walking tours through partnering organizations that focus on tracing the historical trends of memorial and highlight historically important persons. Of all the documents reviewed in this study, this is by far the clearest and most explicit statement outlining the purpose of cemeteries.

TABLE 11. OPEN SPACE PLAN: SUMMARY OF POLICIES THAT APPLY TO CEMETERIES

Cemeteries Policy 1	Cemetery lands are first and foremost for cemetery purposes but are suitable for a variety of passive recreation uses. Any new cemetery lands should be designed to accommodate appropriate multiple uses such as regional pathway connections to the edge of the site, internal walking trails, nature appreciation and view points for aesthetic landscapes.
Cemeteries Policy 2	Cemeteries should contribute to the environmental health of the city through significant greening and canopy cover.
Cemeteries Policy 3	New cemetery lands should not be located in the river valleys.

## Erlton Area Redevelopment Plan

Although the City of Calgary's Erlton Area Redevelopment Plan (1985) mentions cemeteries multiple times, it is not in a very meaningful or substantial way. There are multiple cemeteries in this area and the plan primarily refers to them on maps, when discussing zoning types, or to use as points of reference when describing the location of something else. There is no discussion of cemeteries' value, use, purpose, or as a form of green space.

## 4.2 Social Media Analysis Results

### Overview

The quantity and the content of Instagram posts differed significantly between the seven study sites. Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Toronto had the highest number of geo-tagged posts. Union Cemetery in Calgary had the lowest number of geo-tagged posts. Figure 2 shows the category distribution for all the social media posts in all seven cemeteries combined. The category with the greatest number of geo-tagged posts was 'Aesthetics', the second greatest number of posts were in the category 'Artistic', and the third greatest number of posts were in the category 'Exercise'. The subcategories with the greatest number of posts were 'Natural aesthetics', 'Photography', 'Unknown', and 'Walking'. These categories and subcategories had a significant number of posts for nearly every cemetery. Most cemeteries had a lot of 'Natural aesthetic' posts related to seasonal changes, particularly autumn. The 'Memorial' category, which consisted of more traditional purposes

for visiting a cemetery, was only the fifth most common category. Other subcategories with a substantial number of posts included 'Walking with dogs', 'Jogging', 'Events/special occasions', and 'Bird watching'. Posts subcategorized as 'Other' included: a CBC radio interview, dancing, hanging out with friends on blankets, skateboarding, mixing music, geocaching, and working. Refer to Appendix A for the social media analysis data.

The results of the social media analysis demonstrated the public is using cemeteries for a wide variety of purposes. Many of these purposes are similar to those that are supported by parks or other types of green space: exercise, recreation, leisure, etc. The captions included in the social media posts contained diverse, insightful qualitative data. Users' captions often noted their appreciation of cemeteries and the values they associated with cemeteries. In addition, captions and comments sometimes alluded to the complex nature of cemeteries and the uncertainty of using them as a public space.

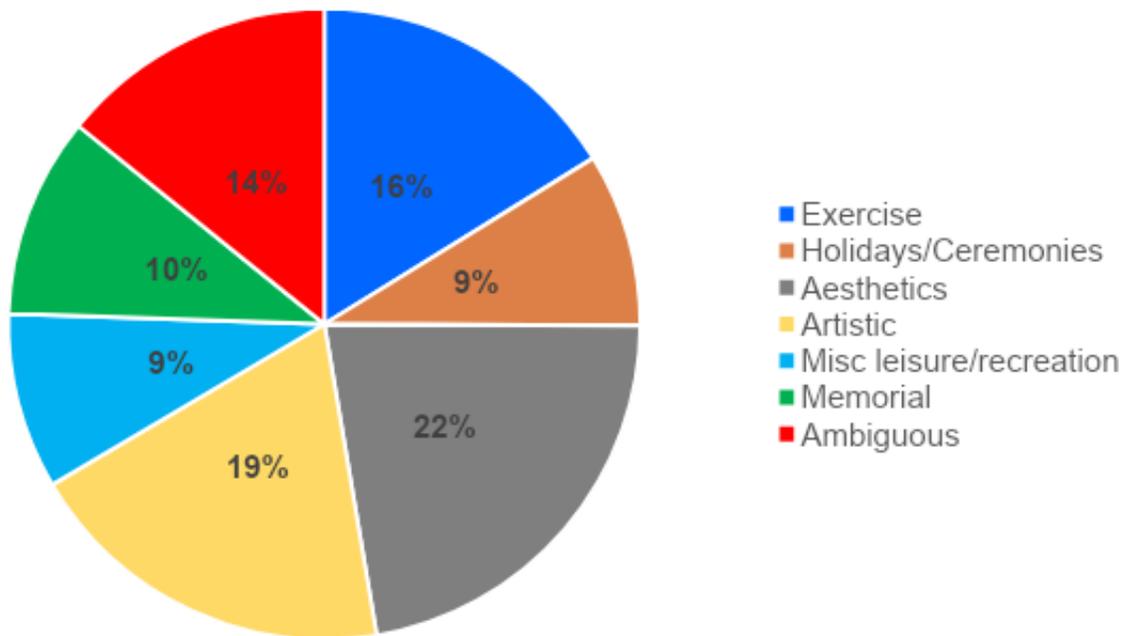


FIGURE SEQ FIGURE \` ARABIC 2. PURPOSE FOR VISITING CEMETERY, ACCORDING TO INSTAGRAM POSTS FOR ALL CEMETERIES COMBINED



## Union Cemetery (Calgary)

The category with the greatest number of posts in Union Cemetery was 'Holidays/ceremonies' (32.6% of posts) (Figure 3). The majority of these posts were subcategorized under 'Other events/special occasions'. This was due to a large number of posts for an annual event – Equinox Vigil – held in the cemetery on the autumn equinox (Image 1). This event is organized by the Calgary arts community and includes a wide variety of art installations and storytelling. One user commented on the event:

**When your Saturday night is best spent in the cemetery decorated with beautiful art... this year's equinox vigil dedicated to the experience of grief, loss, and honouring the deceased. Such a liberating project.**

The second most popular category was 'Aesthetics', making up 20.7% of posts. Union Cemetery had the second highest percentage of posts subcategorized as 'Education/history' amongst the cemeteries. This included several posts describing historic graves, with captions including descriptions and the history of the person buried. It also included several posts commenting on guided walking tours through the cemetery. Union Cemetery had the second highest percentage of posts subcategorized as 'Making Art'. Overall, there was a low number of posts categorized as 'Exercise'. Only 3.7% of posts fell into the 'Memorial' category. A final point of interest was multiple posts showing people bringing their cat to the cemetery, either to walk on a leash or to play in the grass.

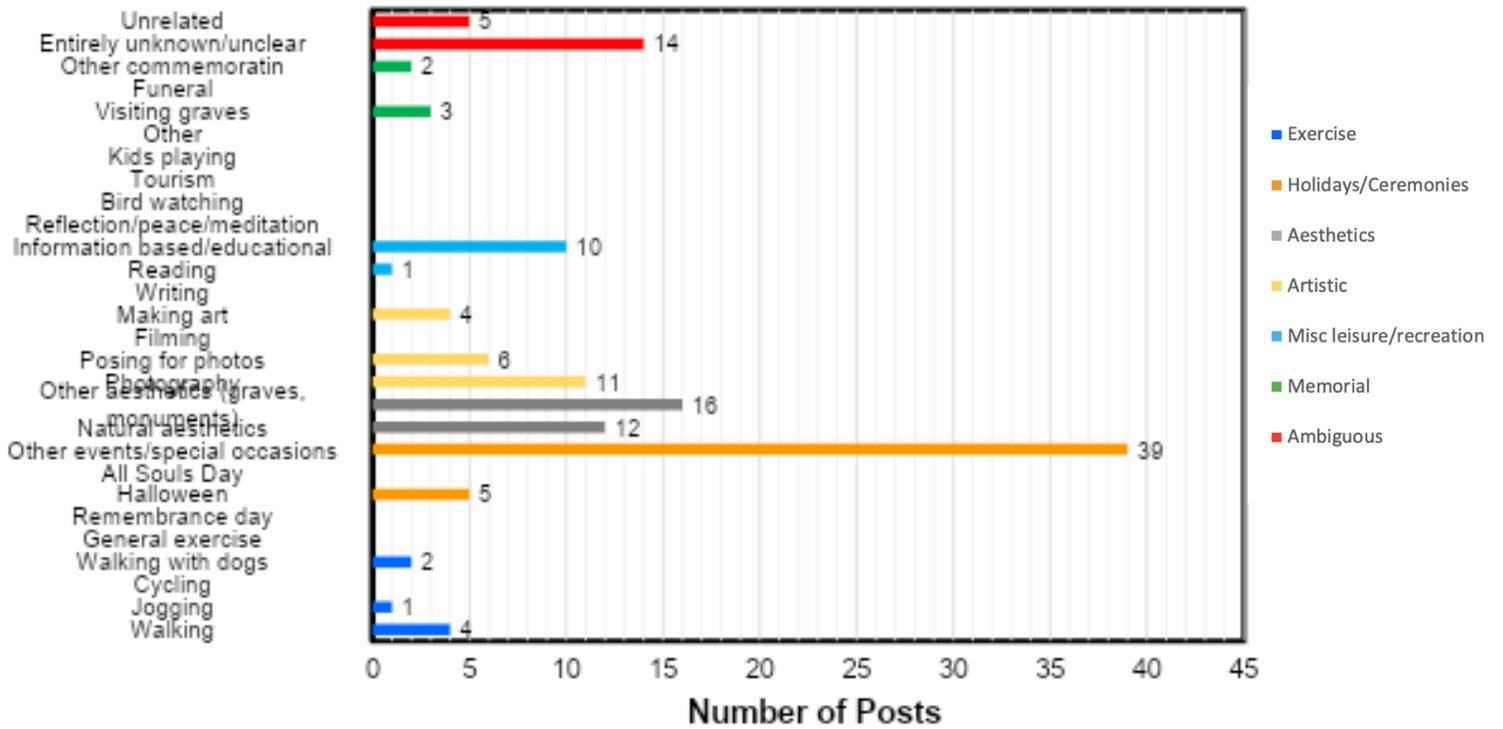


FIGURE 3. UNION CEMETERY: INSTAGRAM POSTS ORGANIZED BY PURPOSE SUBCATEGORIES



Caption: "Tonight at 6, see beautiful art installations, live music, poetry, dance, and shrines created by professional artists at the Equinox Vigil in Union Cemetery"

IMAGE 1. POST FROM UNION CEMETERY IN CALGARY FOR THE EQUINOX VIGIL  
 (Category: Holidays/ceremonies;  
 Subcategory: Other events/special occasions)

## Queen's Park Cemetery (Calgary)

The category with the greatest number of posts in Queen's Park Cemetery was 'Memorial' (20.8% of posts) (Figure 4). This was the second highest percentage of posts categorized as 'Memorial' amongst the cemeteries. The second most popular category was 'Exercise' (18.2% of posts). One user commented on their walk that day:

**This is my favourite place to frequent at the moment. It's quiet and I look forward to reading here when it warms up! Also had a nice walk this afternoon.**

Queen's Park Cemetery had the second highest percentage of posts categorized as 'Miscellaneous leisure/recreation' (13.6% of posts). Within this category, 'Bird watching' was the primary subcategory (Image 2). This category also included four posts for walking tours, which were subcategorized as 'Education/history'. This site had the highest percentage of posts subcategorized as 'Reflection/peace/meditation', which included users commenting on the peace, solitude, and tranquility of the site. One user described her appreciation for this aspect of the cemetery:

**Do you find Graveyards depressing? I find this one very peaceful and I visit it often.**

Union Cemetery had the greatest number of posts subcategorized as 'Remembrance Day', which included posts showing a variety of Remembrance Day commemoration events.

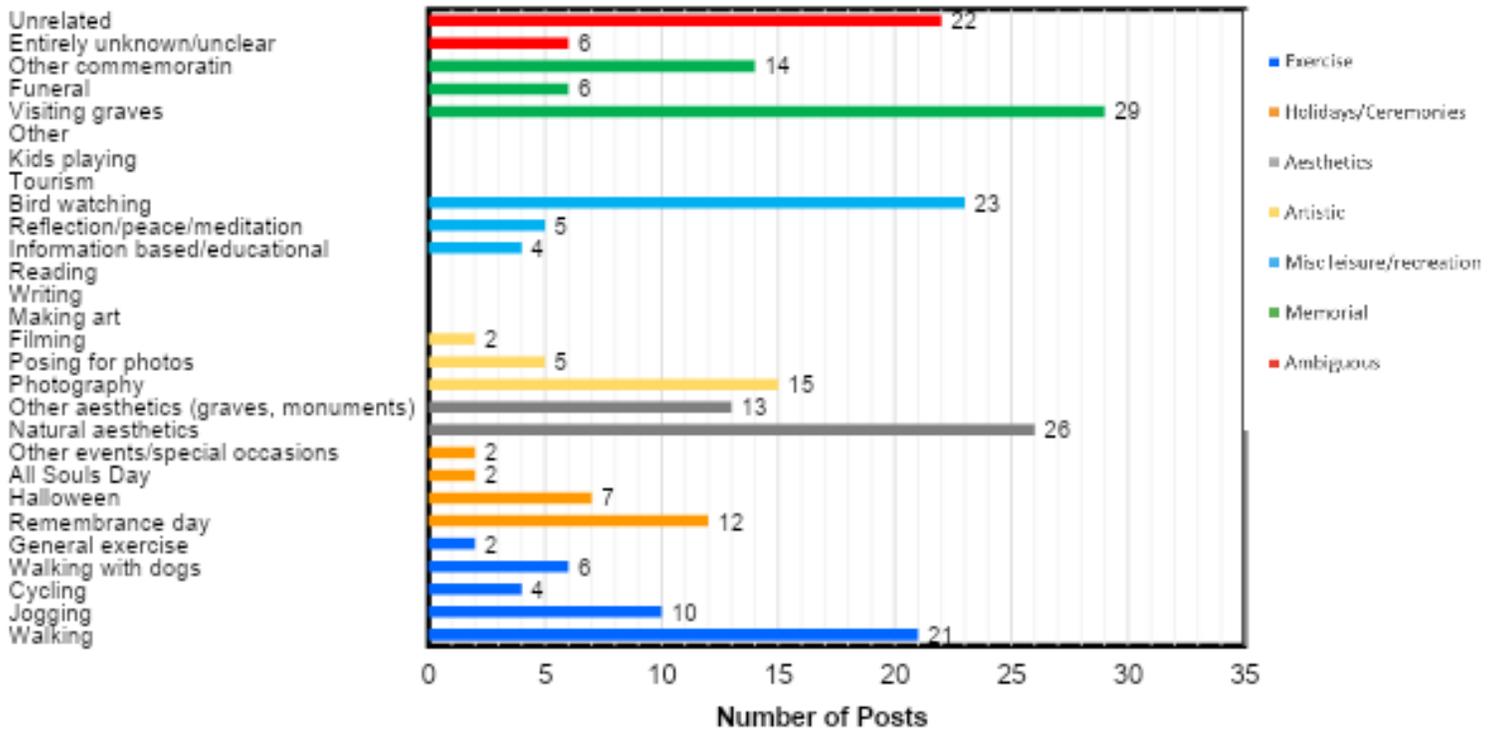


FIGURE 4. QUEEN'S PARK CEMETERY: INSTAGRAM POSTS ORGANIZED BY PURPOSE SUBCATEGORIES



...y see them that close up!"

IMAGE 2. BIRD WATCHING POST FROM QUEEN'S PARK CEMETERY IN CALGARY

(Category: Miscellaneous leisure/recreation; Subcategory: Bird watching)

## Mount Royal Cemetery (Montreal)

The category with the greatest number of posts in Mount Royal Cemetery was 'Artistic', which made up 26.9% of posts (Figure 5). This cemetery had the highest percentage of posts in this category. The majority of these posts were subcategorized as 'Photography'. Mount Royal Cemetery had the highest percentage of posts subcategorized as 'Education/history' (16.1% of posts). A small number of users posted frequently with information related to genealogical studies and the history of gravestones (Image 3). These posts typically included an image of the gravestone, a long caption discussing the life of the person buried, and secondary images showing historical records and information related to that person (e.g., paperwork related to time spent in the war, birth certificate). In addition, several users posted images of and information about famous graves, including Leonard Cohen's. Mount Royal Cemetery had the second highest percentage of posts subcategorized as 'Walking'. One user described some of her observations on her walk through the cemetery:

**Today during my walk on Le Mont Royal and cemetery I witnessed a woman leaning against a tree—her touching the bark—a shadow from a branch overhead lined her face—an expression of peaceful content on her face—social distancing can make for beautiful moments.**

Only 5% of posts were categorized as 'Memorial'.

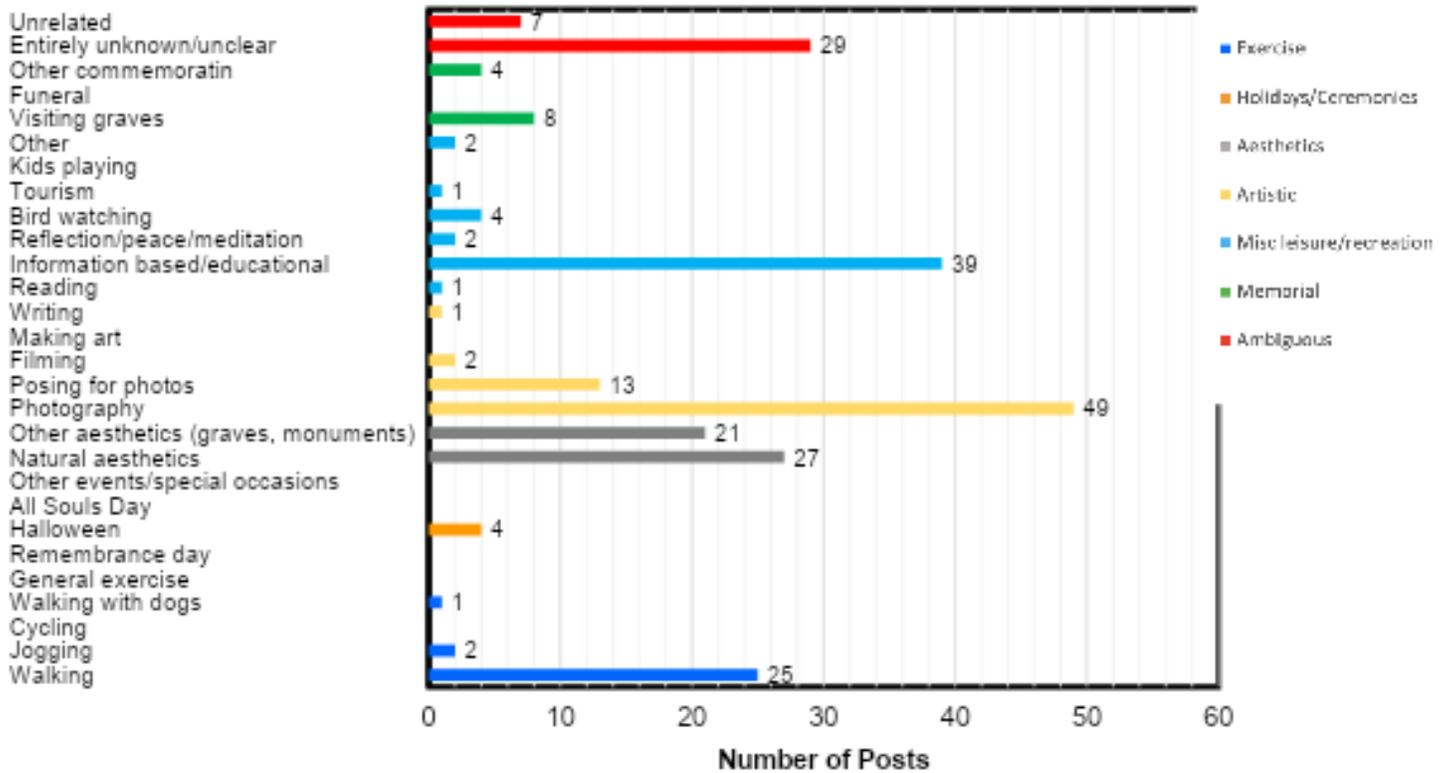


FIGURE 5. MOUNT ROYAL CEMETERY: INSTAGRAM POSTS ORGANIZED BY PURPOSE SUBCATEGORIES



Caption: "Cenotaph of gunner Edgar Hyman Goldstein, 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade, Canadian field artillery, ww1, born March 28 1886, killed in action on August 15 1917 Son of Jacob and Ida Goldstein, Westmount, Montreal. He was single and employed as a credit man....."

IMAGE 3. POST FROM MOUNT ROYAL CEMETERY IN MONTREAL. THE SUBSEQUENT PHOTOS IN THE POST SHOWED WAR RECORDS FOR THE BURIED INDIVIDUAL (Category: Miscellaneous leisure/recreation; Subcategory: Education/history)

## **Le Repos Saint-Francois d'Assis (Montreal)**

The category with the greatest number of posts in Le Repos Saint-Francois d'Assis was 'Aesthetics', which made up 36.8% of posts (Figure 6). This cemetery had the highest percentage of posts in this category. The majority of these posts were subcategorized as 'Ornamental aesthetic', which primarily consisted of a handful of users who regularly posted their favourite graves and monuments (Image 4) 'Memorial' made up 12.9% of posts, which primarily consisted of posts subcategorized as 'Visiting graves'. 'Exercise' made up only 9% of posts. Only 2.5% of posts were categorized as 'Miscellaneous leisure/recreation', which is tied with Mountain View Cemetery for the lowest number of posts in this category.

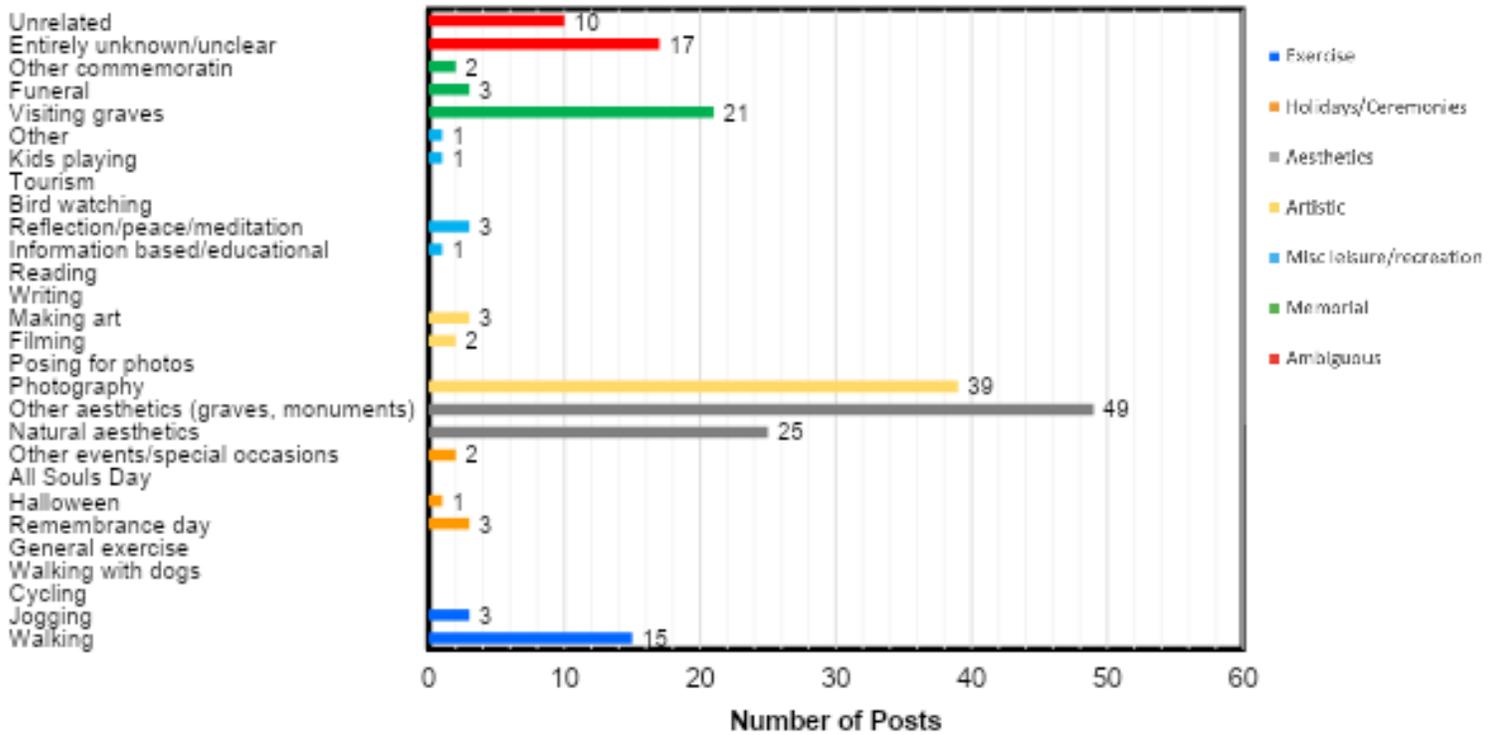


FIGURE 6. LE REPOS SAINT-FRANCOIS D'ASSIS: INSTAGRAM POSTS ORGANIZED BY PURPOSE SUBCATEGORIES



Caption: "Another angel that I captured during my visit to the cemetery and he looks like this!"

IMAGE 4. POST FROM LE REPOS SAINT-FRANCOIS D'ASSIS IN MONTREAL FROM A USER WHO REGULARLY POSTS ABOUT STATUES AND GRAVESTONES (Category: Aesthetic; Subcategory: Ornamental aesthetic)

## Mountain View Cemetery (Vancouver)

The category with the greatest number of posts in Mountain View Cemetery was 'Aesthetics', which made up 26.7% of posts (Figure 7). This cemetery had the second highest percentage of posts in this category. Most of these posts were subcategorized as 'Natural aesthetic' (Image 5). One post in this subcategory included the caption:

**The colours of Autumn in full display. One of the best areas in Vancouver to see Fall colours is Mountain View Cemetery**

'Exercise' also had a large number of posts (18.8% of posts). Mountain View Cemetery had the second highest percentage of posts categorized as 'Holidays/Ceremonies'. The high number of posts in this category was largely due to a large number of posts for 'All Souls Day'. Only 2.5% of posts were categorized as 'Miscellaneous leisure/recreation', which is tied with Le Repos Saint-Francois d'Assis for the lowest number of posts in this category. Only 4.6% of posts were categorized as 'Memorial'.

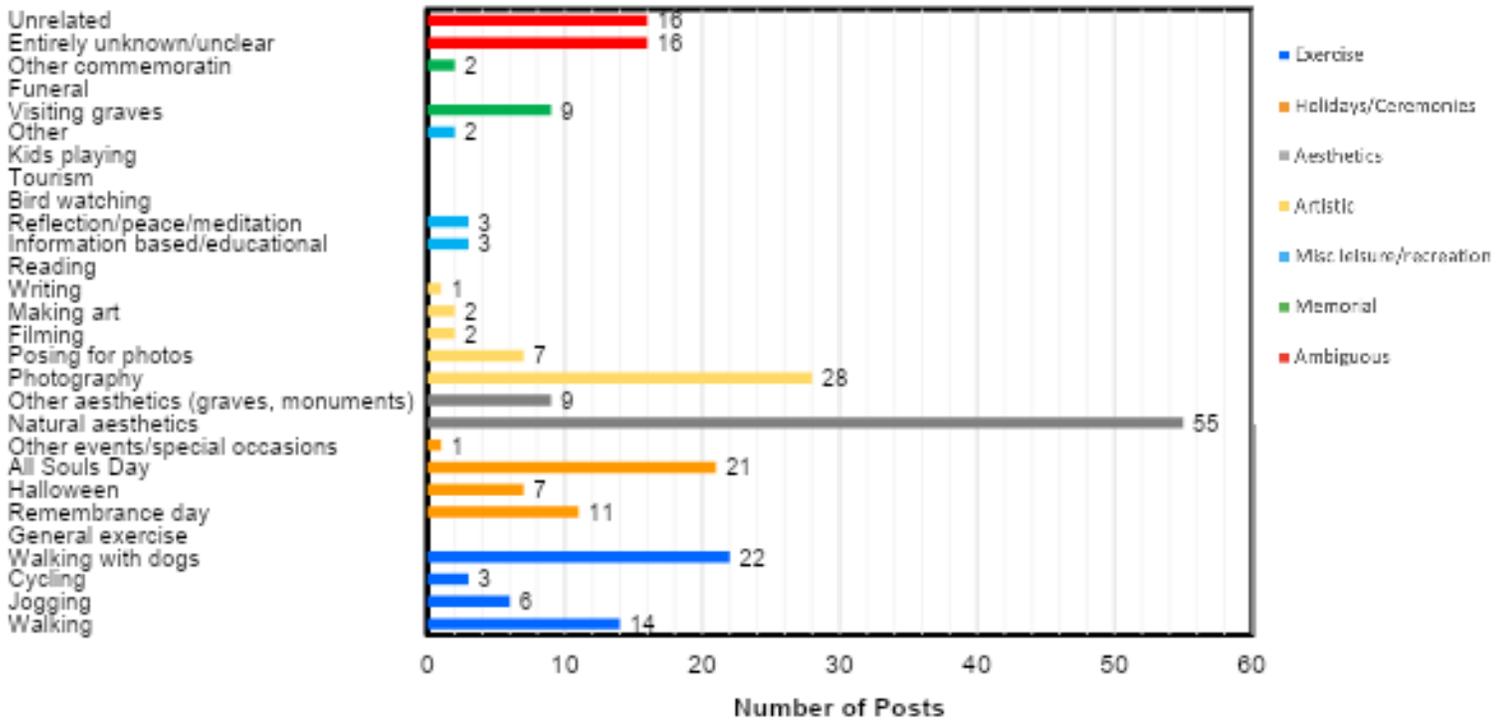


FIGURE 7. MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY: INSTAGRAM POSTS ORGANIZED BY PURPOSE SUBCATEGORIES



Caption: "Fall colors at its peak"

IMAGE 5. POST FROM MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY IN VANCOUVER COMMENTING ON THE FALL COLORS (Category: Aesthetic; Subcategory: Natural aesthetic)

## Mount Pleasant Cemetery (Toronto)

The category with the greatest number of posts in Mount Pleasant Cemetery was 'Exercise', making up 31.8% of posts (Figure 8). This cemetery had by far the highest percentage of posts in this category. 'Walking' was the primary subcategory out of these posts, but there were also several posts in 'Walking with dogs' (Image 6), 'Jogging' and 'Cycling'. One user commented on being part of a walking club and another user discussed why they enjoy running in Mount Pleasant Cemetery:

**What's my current fav place to run? That's easy...my answer would be early mornings in Mount Pleasant Cemetery! Why? It's peaceful. It feels like my own private training route. There are plenty of animals to see... This view!**

The category with the second greatest number of posts was 'Artistic' with 24.2% of posts. The vast majority of these posts fell under the 'Photography' subcategory, which had the highest percentage of posts for this subcategory amongst the cemeteries. Mount Pleasant Cemetery had the lowest percentage of posts in the 'Aesthetics' category. In addition, 'Miscellaneous leisure/recreation' and 'Memorial' both had low percentages of posts (3.3% and 2.8% respectively).

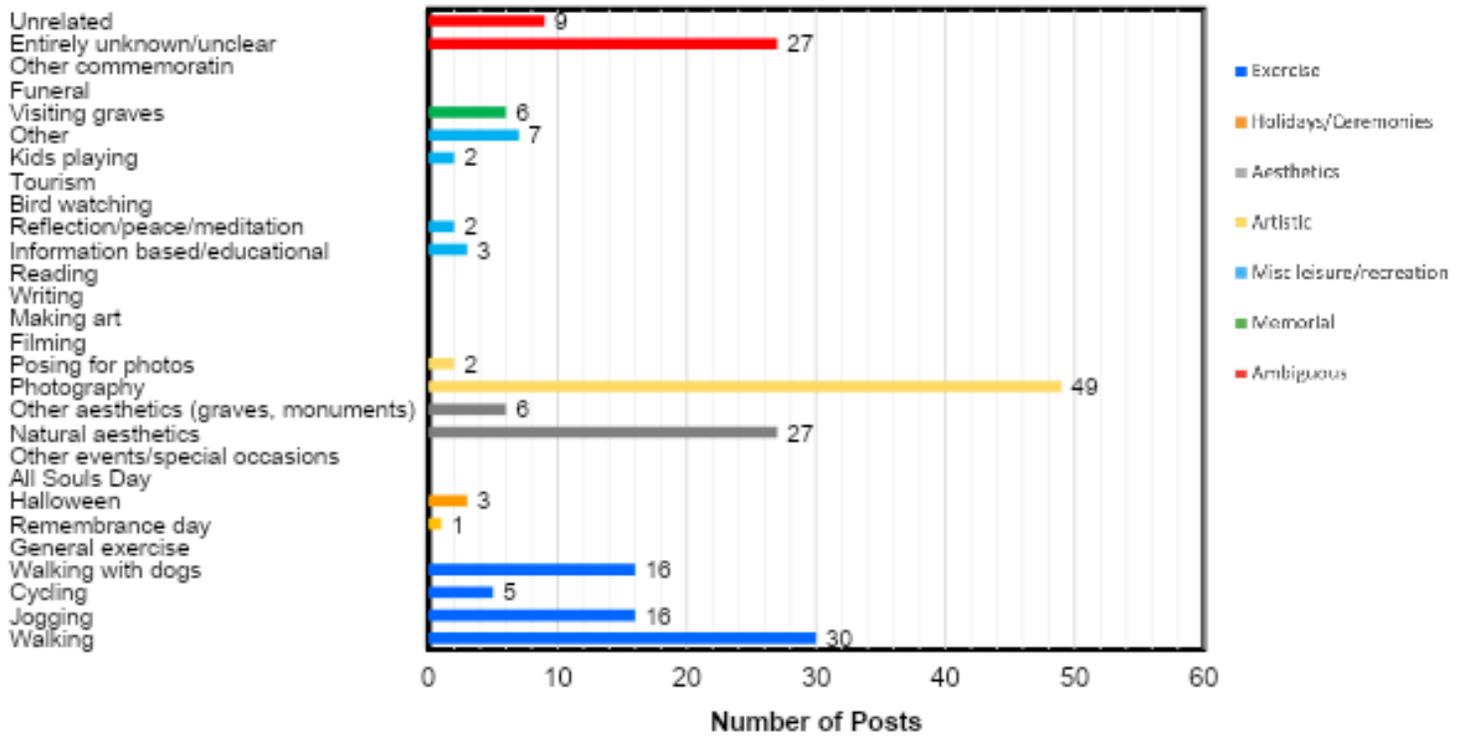


FIGURE 8. MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY: INSTAGRAM POSTS ORGANIZED BY PURPOSE SUBCATEGORIES



Caption: "Easy walk for pups today"

IMAGE 6. POST OF 'STROLLING' THROUGH MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY WITH DOGS  
 (Category: Exercise;  
 Subcategory: Walking with dogs)

## York Cemetery (Toronto)

The category with the greatest number of posts in York Cemetery was 'Memorial', making up 21.5% of posts (Figure 9). This cemetery had the highest percentage of posts in this category, with 'Visiting graves' being the primary subcategory. The category with the second greatest number of posts was 'Aesthetics', making up 19.9% of posts. One post in 'Natural aesthetics' commented on the scenery:

**Never knew cemeteries were this nice. I guess there is beauty after death.**

One post in 'Ornamental aesthetics' commented:

**There are a number of impressive monuments, but this one caught my eye today. I love the Mesopotamia vibe.**

Posts in the 'Artistic' category made up 18.8% of posts, which were predominantly subcategorized as 'Photography' but also included several posts subcategorized as 'Making art'. Several posts in the 'Miscellaneous leisure/recreation' focused on the grave of Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna of Russia who was the youngest sister of Tsar Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russia (Image 7). One user's posts were not included in the data collection for York Cemetery. Starting in about April 2019, someone began geo-tagging a massive number of posts to York Cemetery (sometimes over 60 posts in a single day). Overall, there were thousands of posts from this user. Due to the drastic way this would skew the data, their posts were not included.

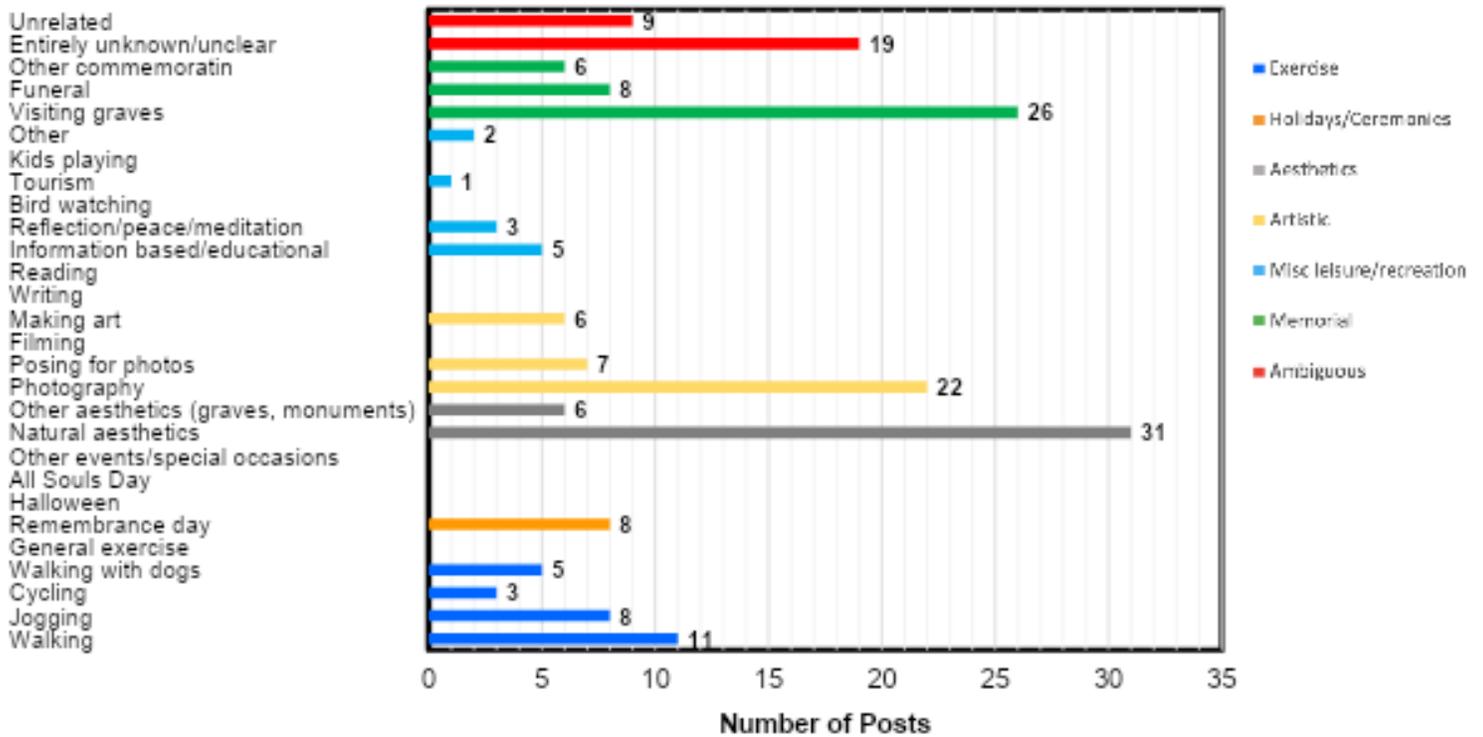


FIGURE 9. YORK CEMETERY: INSTAGRAM POSTS ORGANIZED BY PURPOSE SUBCATEGORIES



Caption: "Finally got to see the final resting spot for the last Grand Duchess of Russia - Czar Nicholas' youngest sister - buried in Toronto!!!"

IMAGE 7. POST FROM YORK CEMETERY IN TORONTO OF SOMEONE VISITING A FAMOUS GRAVE (Category: Miscellaneous leisure/recreation; Subcategory: Education/history)

## 4.3 Summary

The results of this study reveal the ways cemeteries are included (and not included) in planning documents often does not reflect how cemeteries are being used or appreciated by the public. Most planning documents mention cemeteries and most documents consider cemeteries a form of green space. Beyond this, the degree of inclusion for cemeteries varied widely. Overall, of the 12 documents, only six referenced the purpose or use of cemeteries by the public, and only five referenced the value or benefit of cemeteries. Many of these references were cemetery-related, applying to green spaces or a whole neighbourhood.

On the contrary, the social media analysis revealed the public is using cemeteries for many different purposes and seem to significantly value cemeteries. When planning documents did include values associated with cemeteries, they were similar to those identified by users in the social media analysis (see Chapter 5 - Discussion).

# CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on themes arising from my research findings and the literature. The main goal of this discussion is to consider primary areas of alignment and difference between the regulatory planning framework (as seen in the document analysis) and the experiences of users (as seen in the social media analysis). The discussion follows similar themes to the literature review, focusing on the topics of green space, value, and purpose. The following discussion will first look at the conceptualization of green space and multi-purpose spaces. Next, I will discuss how the value and purpose of cemeteries are considered in the regulatory framework versus experienced by the public. Finally, I discuss the need for cemeteries to be included in planning strategies to mitigate issues and ensure cemeteries can provide use, value, and benefit to the public.

## 5.1 Cemeteries as a Green Space

Most definitions of green space in the literature were consistent in classifying or including within the definition. Although cemeteries might technically be considered a form of green space, the degree to which they are included in green space planning is highly variable. More formal types of green space – i.e., parks – are the priority for green space, open space, and recreation planning (Sikorska et al., 2020; Swanwick et al., 2003). The inclusion of less formal types of green space is highly dependent on a cities' priorities and perception of green space (Swanwick et al., 2003). All of these arguments were supported by findings in the document analysis.

The document analysis showed cemeteries are generally, but not always, viewed as a form of green space in city planning documents. Although seven of the 12 documents referred to cemeteries as a form of green space in some way, what this meant in terms of planning inclusion differed drastically. For some cities, cemeteries were treated and planned for in a similar way to parks (e.g., Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision). For

others, although cemeteries were mentioned as a form of green space, it was solely to differentiate them from parks and more formal green spaces (e.g., Parkland Strategy and VanPlay). In some cases, this served to distinguish cemeteries from other forms of green space intended for public use and recreation. This differentiation indicated cities did not view, support, or prioritize cemeteries as a space for public use.

In undertaking this research, I anticipated that if cemeteries were considered a form of green space within city planning documents, they would be treated as multi-purpose spaces for the public. According to the literature, green space planning is typically focused on formal types of green space and green space that is planned for public use. Therefore, if cemeteries were included within the green space narrative in a planning document, it was expected they would be planned for similarly to other forms of green space. This was not the case in the findings for this study. If a document included cemeteries as a form of green space, it did not necessarily mean the document supported the public use of cemeteries. Therefore, an important distinction was identified between cemeteries as a form of green space and cemeteries as a space for public use.

## 5.2 Purpose

### **Purpose of Cemeteries According to Document Analysis**

The literature review included several studies that argue for cemeteries to be treated as multi-purpose spaces (e.g., Allam, 2019; Basmajian & Coutts, 2010; Lai et al., 2019; Skår et al., 2018). They also argue cemeteries must be included in planning strategies for cemeteries to support public use. An important part of the document analysis was examining how city planning documents indicated (or didn't indicate) the purpose and role of cemeteries for the city.

The document analysis found only six out of 12 documents included reference to the use or purpose of cemeteries. Other than Calgary's Open Space Plan, documents did not use the term "purpose" or "function". Some documents indicated what the site could be

used for or intentions of site use. The Calgary Open Space Plan explicitly states the purpose of urban cemeteries: the primary purpose is for cemetery purposes, the secondary purposes are for passive recreation, heritage conservation, and environmental health. Interestingly, this is very similar to the purpose recommended by Skår et al. (2018) who state the primary purpose for cemeteries should be burial and the second purpose should be a public green space used for recreation, reflection, and culture. Although the Calgary Open Space Plan is the only plan that provided an explicit purpose for cemeteries, several other plans mention these sites can be used for active and passive recreation. In classifying cemeteries as *Recreational Open Space*, the Calgary Municipal Development Plan indicates the use of cemeteries for public recreation. Similarly, the Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision discusses Mountain View cemetery as a type of park and is focused on public use.

Some documents contained only vague cemetery-related references to purpose and use, and others contained no reference at all. Some plans were confusing in whether or not cemeteries should or could be used by the public, particularly the City of Toronto Official Plan. Overall, the purpose of cemeteries was not widely accounted for in city planning documents. According to the literature, this is problematic. For cemeteries' longevity and to be integrated into the community, cemeteries must be planned for as multi-purpose spaces.

## **Purpose of Cemeteries According to Social Media Analysis**

In the social media analysis, Instagram posts were classified based on the purpose of visiting the cemetery according to the post. This revealed many different purposes for visiting each cemetery. Although most city planning documents did not specify if cemeteries could/should be used by the public, cemeteries in all cities were shown to be used for multiple purposes. The types of purposes found in the social media analysis aligned with studies from other cities looking at public use of cemeteries. As noted in the literature review, Evensen et al. (2017) found users' reasons for visiting the cemetery included peacefulness, aesthetics, cultural heritage, nature, good maintenance, a place for

reflection, and to show respect. Similar reasons for visiting were demonstrated by the social media posts in this study. Grabalov (2018) found the most common activities in cemeteries according to social media posts were: walking, walking dogs, visiting graves, cycling, jogging, picnic, children's games, and reading books. Many of these were some of the most popular activities found in this study.

The cemeteries analysed in this study appear to play an important role for the public. They are used for a wide variety of purposes, many of which are similar to those supported by parks. Due to the lack of meaningful inclusion in city planning documents, many of the cemeteries may be considered informal green spaces. According to Sikorska et al. (2020), informal green spaces may fill the role of public parks, even if the space is not planned for a public purpose. To a certain degree, this seems to be the case for some of the cemeteries in this study.

The literature argues cemeteries need to be planned for as multi-purpose spaces to serve the wider community. In this study, only half the planning documents referred to the public use of cemeteries, yet all cemeteries were shown to have a widespread and significant public use. Therefore, it appears cemeteries may act as multi-purpose spaces for public use regardless of the regulatory framework. This suggests that inclusion in planning strategies is less important than the literature indicates for cemeteries to support public use. On the other hand, some of the issues and complications associated with multi-purpose cemeteries may only be remedied through larger-scale planning and direction. This is further discussed in the Recommendations section.

## 5.3 Value

### **Historical Value of Cemeteries**

The literature review highlighted the historical and cultural value of cemeteries as being different than other forms of green space (Quinton & Duinker, 2019). Quinton & Duinker (2019) argue the ornaments and graves in cemeteries are critical to cemeteries' character.

Several planning documents similarly highlight the importance of cemeteries for their historical, cultural, and heritage value. In particular, the City of Toronto Official Plan, Montreal Master Plan, and Mount Royal Enhancement Plan tend to focus on cemeteries as a heritage and historical landscape. Important historical features of the sites include memorials, funeral art, archaeology, and other ornaments. Some of the planning documents include policies focused on preserving, protecting, and enhancing the historical aspects of the sites. Other plans, namely the Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision and Calgary's Open Space Plan, encourage historical preservation by educating the public with walking tours of the cemeteries.

The social media analysis also demonstrated the importance of the historical value of cemeteries. The social media posts showed high interest in the history of the cemeteries, particularly with the historic graves of people of interest or significance. Several posts from both cemeteries in Calgary showed people attending walking tours to learn about the history of the site. In addition, although 'Ornamental Aesthetic' was categorized in terms of aesthetic posts, many of the posts in this category were strongly related to themes of history and heritage. These posts focused on an appreciation of the graves, memorials, and ornaments found in cemeteries. This appreciation aligns with the historical value discussed in planning documents.

As identified in the literature review, one risk of increasing public use of cemeteries is the ornaments, graves, and other existing infrastructure may be at higher risk of damage. Prioritizing preservation and protection of these cemetery features is important for maintaining their character. Therefore, the types of objectives, policies, and strategies found in some city planning documents are the type needed to preserve the heritage value of these sites whilst accommodating public usage.

## **Ecological Value of Cemeteries**

Although not the focus of this research, the literature review touched on the importance of green space generally, and cemeteries more specifically, for their ecological value in urban areas (Loki et al., 2019). Several planning documents in this study reflect these findings

from the literature. By including cemeteries within green space designations, some of the environmental values and benefits of green space included in planning documents were cemetery-related. The Mount Royal Enhancement Plan is the only plan that mentions the ecological value of cemeteries specifically, saying cemeteries have an important role in biodiversity and sustainability objectives.

The social media analysis revealed a deep appreciation for the environmental aspects of the cemeteries. The majority of these posts were categorized under 'Natural aesthetics', where users commented on their appreciation of some aspect of the site's nature or natural beauty. Users often commented on the vegetation, wildlife, greenness, changing seasons, sunrises/sunsets, and views. People's appreciation of nature in cemeteries is important, but the posts also reveal the high environmental quality of many of these sites. In particular, posts showing the flora and fauna in cemeteries were indicative of the environmental value found there. Posts showing wildlife in the cemeteries included coyotes, squirrels, deer, foxes, skunks, and birds. Some cemeteries had many users visiting for bird watching. The bird watchers in Queen's Park Cemetery noted rare sightings of different types of birds. Generally, the users posting on Instagram demonstrate a deep appreciation for the site's environmental value. Strategies and policies to protect and enhance green space for its environmental value, such as those found in some of the planning documents, would benefit the environment of cemeteries and allow them to continue providing this value for the public.

## 5.4 A Need to Include Cemeteries in Planning?

The literature indicates that for cemeteries to fully function as multi-purpose spaces, they must be integrated into city planning strategies and supported by policy, management, and municipal governments (Basmajian & Coutts, 2010; Harker, 2012). Although this study indicates cemeteries are used as multi-purpose spaces without the support of wider planning strategies, it is expected that it would still be beneficial for city planning to be more inclusive of cemeteries and treat them as multi-purpose spaces. Swensen (2018)

argues a site can only become public in a real sense if it is made official through policy. Although cemeteries are already being used for multiple purposes by the public, without being formally public spaces, there is a higher chance of conflicting use of the site and other issues as identified in the literature.

Several issues with multi-purpose cemeteries were identified in the literature review, including conflicting use, accessibility, uncertainty about allowed activities, and long-term viability (financial and otherwise). This study was unable to explore these issues in depth through the chosen methodologies. It is expected that some, if not all, of the issues identified in the literature review are relevant for the cemeteries included in this study. One of the ways to mitigate these types of issues is to plan for cemeteries as sites for public use.

One issue with multi-purpose cemeteries identified in the literature is accessibility (Quinton & Duinker, 2019). Some of the planning documents reviewed in this study include policies for improving access to green space. Some of these policies are applicable to green spaces as a whole and apply to cemeteries. The City of Calgary Municipal Plan has the most targeted accessibility policies, which include using principles of universal access and barrier-free design and ensuring green spaces provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Having these types of policies that apply to all green spaces including cemeteries helps improve physical accessibility barriers. In addition, public understanding of if cemeteries are public or private and what are acceptable activities in cemeteries is an accessibility issue. Cemeteries are not always viewed by the public as open spaces that are publicly available/accessible (Skår et al., 2018). If the public is unsure about their right to be in a cemetery and what they are allowed to do there, they may be uncomfortable or uncertain about using the space. Targeted policies and strategies to inform the public of their right to use cemeteries and what they can be used for would be beneficial.

The literature also discusses the importance of cemeteries being multi-purpose to ensure long-term viability and financial security. A key aspect of this is ensuring cemeteries have a way to generate revenue, which might be possible for cemeteries that serve

multiple functions. The document analysis raised some ideas that may prompt revenue-generating opportunities for the cemeteries. The primary example was the City of Calgary promoting the historical value of cemeteries through walking tours. This is one example of a use where a fee could maybe be charged to generate revenue. Another idea that arose in the social media analysis was people using the cemetery for filming. In Mountain View Cemetery, one user commented that filming was happening for the Netflix show Riverdale. If cemeteries act as a set location for filming, they could have fees to generate revenue. Generally, having cemeteries that serve functions such as education and tourism may provide revenue-generating opportunities. City planning documents did not discuss the potential of generating revenue from green spaces, but some documents did discuss improving access to green space for tourism and education.

Finally, including cemeteries within planning strategies may allow cemeteries to support multiple purposes while mitigating conflicting uses and ensuring sensitivity towards the traditional purposes of cemeteries. Several planning documents alluded to the difficulty of having cemeteries function as public spaces whilst maintaining the sites' unique character and heritage value. In the Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision, public input mentions wanting to encourage more community involvement while still being sensitive to memorial park use. When noting the use of cemeteries for recreational purposes in the Calgary Open Space Plan, it states the site should be used for passive recreation that is "non-conflicting." These types of statements reflect the sensitive nature and approach needed when using cemeteries for multiple purposes. If cemeteries are being used by the public but are not being planned for as public spaces, there are fewer opportunities to mitigate conflicting uses. One comment on an Instagram post highlights this potential conflict:

**How does the cemetery work? Can I run down this road just as a dude out for a long Saturday morning run? Or is that not very appropriate?**

Comments such as this indicate uncertainty about what the cemetery can be used for and what might be inappropriate. The following excerpt from Skår et al. (2018, 379) provides examples of how various uses can be promoted, while still being appropriate and respectful to the space:

**Strolling or relaxing on benches does not need to be in opposition to a quiet and respectful atmosphere if the visitors know where they should go or sit down. More than warning signs, positive signs for walks, enough benches, clear footpaths, hedges for zones between public and private areas, all of these are part of an effort to promote citizens to visit cemeteries without disturbing those who visit the graves. Lights, enough ports and welcome signs at the gates should all contribute to this, and were measures mentioned by the interviewees.**

Planning measures and policies can help ensure public uses do not conflict with the traditional purposes of the site. The cemeteries looked at in this study are being used as multi-purpose spaces. Without strategies and policies to balance various uses of the site, there is likely greater potential for issues to arise over conflicting uses.

## 5.5 Summary

The key finding from this study is the apparent gap between the regulatory framework regarding cemeteries and the experiences of the general public. The regulatory framework did not consistently acknowledge, value, or plan for cemeteries as multi-purpose spaces, whereas each cemetery was found to be valued and used by the public for multiple purposes. But, when a planning document did discuss the value of a cemetery, it aligned with the values indicated by the public. This study suggests that counter to arguments in the literature, city planning strategies may be less important for influencing whether or not cemeteries function as multi-purpose spaces. Nonetheless, it is important for municipalities to account more thoroughly for cemeteries and to integrate them in their planning documents. Such integration will ensure cemeteries continue to provide multiple

functions, support their longevity and viability, and mitigate issues related to multi-purpose cemeteries.

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# CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

## 6.1 Revisiting the Research Questions

### **1. Are Canadian urban cemeteries included in city planning documents, and if so how?**

Most city planning documents referenced cemeteries at least once. The degree of inclusion varied substantially between documents. Seven documents mentioned cemeteries being considered a form of green space and six documents referenced public use of cemeteries. Mentioning cemeteries as a form of green space was sometimes done to simply differentiate alternate forms of green space from parks. Five of the documents referred to the value of cemeteries. Of the references to value, purpose, green space, and policies applicable to cemeteries, about half were cemetery-based, and about half were cemetery-related.

### **2. Are Canadian urban cemeteries currently being used as multi-purpose spaces beyond interment, and if so how?**

Yes, Canadian urban cemeteries are currently being used as multi-purpose spaces beyond interment. The social media analysis showed people were using each cemetery for a wide range of activities from painting, to walking their dogs, to bird watching. Posts also demonstrated people valued the site for its natural environment and the ornaments and graves. Posts that indicated an appreciation of these qualities did not necessarily show what activity people were conducting but did indicate why they might choose to visit the site. Each of the cemeteries was also used for traditional purposes, including visiting graves and commemoration. This demonstrates each cemetery was able to serve traditional purposes related to interment and memorial while also supporting uses for the wider community.

### **3. To what extent do municipal city planning documents account for how cemeteries are currently being used by the public?**

In general, city planning documents do not account for how cemeteries are actually being used by the public. The degree to which cemeteries are viewed as multi-purpose spaces in the planning documents also did not reflect the extent they are being used by the public. Some documents specifically identified cemeteries for providing opportunities for recreation, passive recreation, education, or tourism. Others did not mention cemeteries at all, did not mention public use of cemeteries, or did not clearly indicate the use and purpose of cemeteries. The diverse ways the public is using cemeteries is not reflected in city planning documents.

## 6.2 Recommendations

Based on the documents reviewed in this study, municipal governments should look to the City of Calgary as a reference point for meaningful integration of cemeteries into city planning documents. The City of Calgary provides a strong example for including cemeteries in planning by: classifying cemeteries as a form of green space, clearly allowing and promoting cemeteries for public use, identifying the unique value of cemeteries, and including an intentional purpose statement for cemeteries,.

Table 12 summarizes recommendations to improve cemeteries for public use. These recommendations are addressed to municipal governments and planning departments. The key recommendation of this study is to officially recognize cemeteries as public spaces. Planning documents should include cemeteries as a form of green space, promote them as sites for public use, and acknowledge their historical and ecological value. The remaining recommendations, those at the small and medium scale, offer additional measures to mitigate issues associated with multi-purpose cemeteries. These issues need to be addressed for cemeteries to function as multi-purpose spaces long-term while minimizing potential issues and conflicting uses. Examples of relevant policies and best practice from the documents reviewed in this study are included for certain recommendations. Some of the small and medium scale recommendations could also be implemented by management on a site-by-site basis. This would also improve cemeteries'

ability to support public use, but it is considered preferable to implement them as part of wider city planning strategies.

TABLE 12. RECOMMENDATIONS

Scale	Recommendation	Example
Small Scale	Use signage and share information about public use of the cemetery (e.g., indicating acceptable activities, welcome signs) to help people feel comfortable using the site.	Policy from Mount Royal Protection & Enhancement Plan: "Support the managers of institutional properties, and more particularly those of cemeteries, in the development of effective and judicious signage methods allowing the enhancement of their points of interest (for example: historical figures or monuments, landscaping, etc)". Policy from Mount Royal Protection & Enhancement Plan: "Continue to put in place information aimed at dissuading behaviors that have a negative effect on the mountain (for example: mountain biking, distribution of food to animals, gathering plants)".
	Install benches, garbage cans, and other amenities to improve the site for public use.	
	Clearly indicate distinct private and public parts of the cemetery (if applicable) to mitigate conflicting uses.	
Medium Scale	Implement revenue-generating activities (e.g., guided walking tours, spaces/sites to be rented for certain events) to help secure the financial viability of the site.	
	Improve accessibility to ensure the site is used by people of all ages and abilities.	Policy from City of Calgary Municipal Development Plan: "Develop and maintain open spaces, parks, recreational, sport and cultural facilities to provide for active recreation and passive recreational needs that are appropriate for all age groups and abilities".
	Create walking paths and networks to support some of the most popular public uses (walking, dog walking, exercise).	Policy from Calgary Open Space Plan: "Any new cemetery lands should be designed to accommodate appropriate multiple uses such as regional pathway connections to the edge of the site, internal walking trails, nature appreciation and view points for aesthetic landscapes".
Large Scale	Ensure cemeteries are included in city planning documents and strategies, including:	
	Treat cemeteries as a form of green space and include cemeteries in green space planning (therefore having green space policies and strategies apply to cemeteries).	Definition of recreational open space from Calgary Municipal Development Plan: "Lands that are acquired or dedicated to provide areas for public recreation, such as but not limited to, sports fields, neighbourhood parks and cemeteries".
	Acknowledge cemeteries' unique value as well as the values it shares with other green spaces. In particular, acknowledge the ecological and historical value of cemeteries.	
	Allow cemeteries to be used as multi-purpose spaces and promote them for public use.	Direction from Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision: "Enhance Mountain View Cemetery as a public space." Implementation measure from Montreal Master Plan: "Develop agreements with Montréal's large institutions and cemeteries

ensuring that they preserve the landscape elements of their sites and enable public access to their green spaces."

## 6.3 Opportunities for Further Research

This study helps to identify several opportunities for further research. Most generally, there is a lack of research in Canada on urban cemeteries. Further research should be done to look at the use of cemeteries in Canada as well as the relationship between urban planning and cemeteries.

Several important factors that would likely impact the role and value of cemeteries as multi-purpose spaces were not accounted for in this study. Research on the impact of these factors would be highly beneficial in understanding the role of cemeteries as a form of green space and multi-purpose space. One of these factors is proximity and provision of other green spaces. Proximity and accessibility to green space, such as parks, could significantly influence if cemeteries are used by the public as a form of green space. Another factor is whether the site is open for interment. All the cemeteries included in this study were open for interment. It would be interesting to compare between sites that are open and closed for interment. The literature indicates that sites closed for interment are less likely to be controversial for public use, implying that cemeteries closed for interment might be even better suited to act as multi-purpose spaces.

This study did not explore the impact of ownership/management on cemeteries. The ownership and management of cemeteries are likely to have a large influence on the easiness and likelihood of integrating cemeteries into planning strategies. For example, municipal cemeteries may be easier to include and develop guiding policies and strategies for than privately owned cemeteries. It would also be beneficial to research how ownership/management decisions and regulations impact the cemeteries' ability to function as multi-purpose spaces.

Using other methodologies to research similar topics would be highly beneficial. To better understand the public's use and perception of cemeteries, further research should

use methods such as surveys, interviews, and participant observation to engage more thoroughly with the public. In addition, to understand the inclusion of cemeteries in city planning and the use of cemeteries, further research should focus on engaging with planners and cemetery managers.

Finally, the degree to which city planning documents influence the use of cemeteries as a multi-purpose space remains unresolved. These spaces seem to be already functioning as multi-purpose spaces with or without planning document inclusion. It is expected that inclusion in planning would help to mitigate issues associated with multi-purpose cemeteries, but further research is needed. Researching international precedents may provide a valuable opportunity to understand how other jurisdictions utilize and manage their cemeteries. This could potentially inform and enrich Canadian practices.

## 6.4 Final Thoughts

Cemeteries are a valuable asset to cities. The nature of cemeteries provides them with a unique landscape and atmosphere that is different from other forms of green space. This value should be utilized and leveraged to ensure benefits for urban residents. To ensure cemeteries maintain their unique character and continue supporting public use, city planning strategies need to further include and account for cemeteries.

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Category	Subcategory	Union Cemetery	Queen's Park Cemetery	Mount Royal Cemetery	Le Repos Saint-Francois d'Assis	Mountain View Cemetery	Mount Pleasant Cemetery	York Cemetery
Exercise	Walking	4	21	25	15	14	30	11
	Jogging	1	10	2	3	6	16	8
	Cycling	0	4	0	0	3	5	3
	Walking with dogs	2	6	1	0	22	16	5
	General exercise	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Holidays/ ceremonies	Remembrance Day	0	12	0	3	11	1	8
	Halloween	5	7	4	1	7	3	0
	All Souls Day	0	2	0	0	21	0	0
	Other events/occasions	39	2	0	2	1	0	0
Aesthetics	Natural aesthetics	12	26	27	25	55	27	31
	Ornamental aesthetics	16	13	21	49	9	6	6
Artistic	Photography	11	15	49	39	28	49	22
	Posing for photos	6	5	13	0	7	2	7
	Filming	0	2	2	2	2	0	0
	Making art	4	0	0	3	2	0	6
	Writing	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Miscellaneous leisure/ recreation	Reading	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Education/history	10	4	39	1	3	3	5
	Reflection/peace/ meditation	0	5	2	3	3	2	3
	Bird watching	0	23	4	0	0	0	0

CANADIAN URBAN CEMETERIES

	Tourism	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Kids playing	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
	Other	0	0	2	1	2	7	2
Memorial	Visiting graves	3	29	8	21	9	6	26
	Funeral	0	6	0	3	0	0	8
	Other commemoration	2	14	4	2	2	0	6
Irrelevant	Unknown	14	6	29	17	16	27	19
	Unrelated	5	22	7	10	16	9	9
Total posts		135	236	242	201	240	211	186

# APPENDIX A – SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS