
Guaje Pines Master Plan

County of Los Alamos

Park and Recreation Board
September 11, 2025



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Context and Purpose

Guaje Pines Master Plan

- A comprehensive roadmap for improvements and long-term stewardship of Los Alamos County's only public cemetery.
- Developed through extensive community engagement, site analysis, and national best practices.
- Goal: ensure Guaje Pines continues to serve residents with dignity, functionality, and beauty for decades to come.

Urgency & Context

- Development Priorities: Developed inventory approaching critical thresholds: columbaria niches exhausted in < 1 year, casket graves in < 2 years.
- Without expansion, service gaps are imminent as Baby Boomers reach peak mortality.
- Community survey: strong preference for cremation, though casket burials remain important.

Master Plan Objectives

- Balance Capacity: expand both casket and cremation options while maintaining beauty and serenity of site.
- Phased Development: immediate, intermediate, and long-term flexibility. Preserve Flexibility
- Enhance Amenities: circulation, landscaping, gathering spaces, and memorial features.

Operational Improvements

- **Financial Framework:** Grow the Perpetual Care Trust Fund, conduct biennial reviews, clarify costs, and consider a capital reserve.
- **Pricing & Finance:** Adjust fees modestly (3–5%), explore three-tier pricing, honor veterans/first responders with discounts
- **Maintenance:** Strengthen turf and tree care, protect high-traffic areas, add mulch collars, rotate marker upkeep, and redesign the maintenance yard.
- **Indigent Burials:** Formalize an indigent program with clear eligibility, a public-facing portal, dedicated burial space, and an annual remembrance.
- **ADA Accessibility:** Add accessible parking near the restroom, correct restroom hardware, regrade walkways/curbs at priority areas
- **Programming & Community:** Pursue arboretum accreditation, expand passive/educational programming, add interpretive features, formalize volunteer events,
- **Image & Identity:** Inspiration from Memorial Rose Garden, integrate symbolic plantings, commemorative art, and cohesive site identity.
- **Governance & Operations:** Consolidated management, improve signage and accessibility, and introduce customer satisfaction surveys.



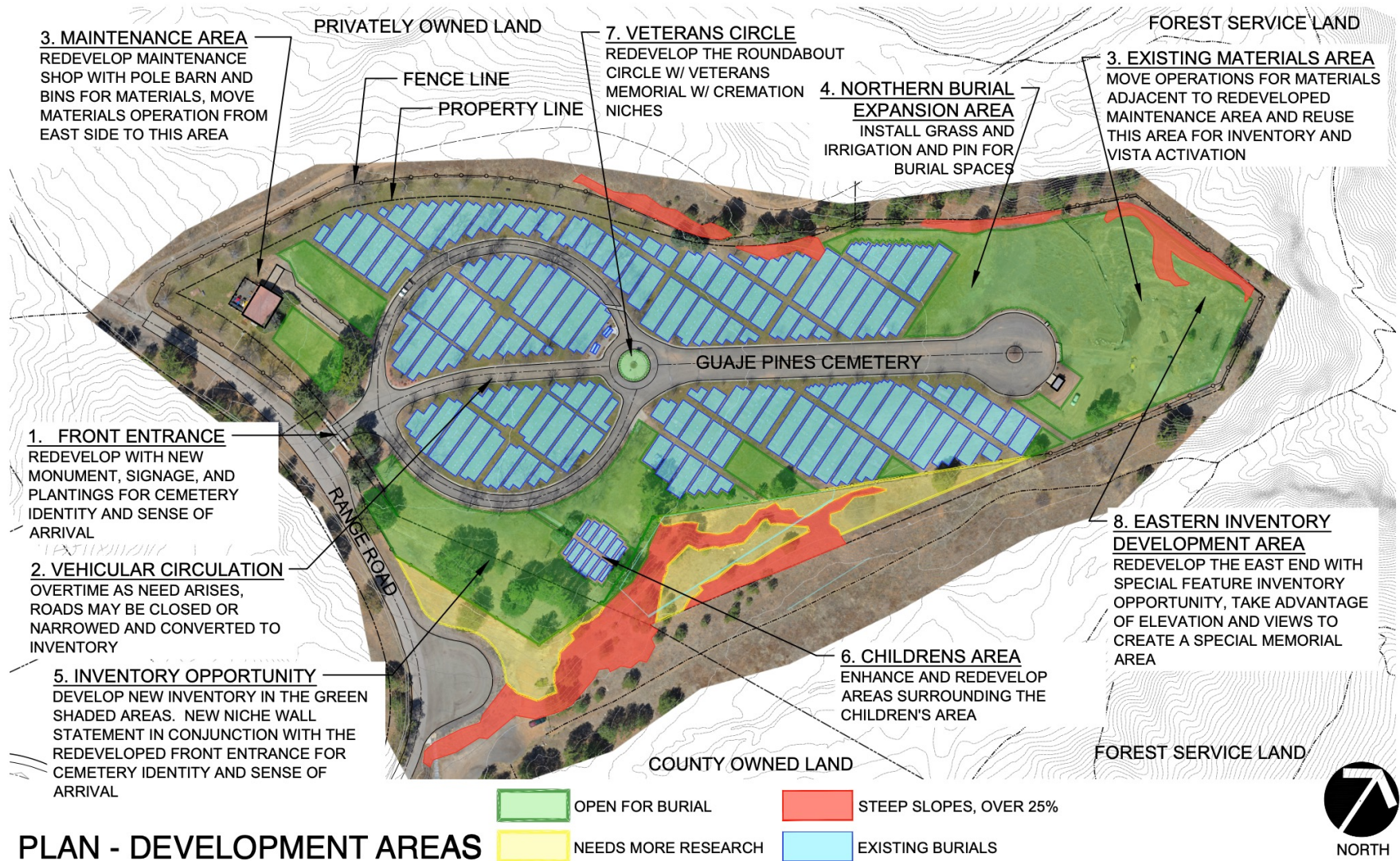
Capacity Snapshot

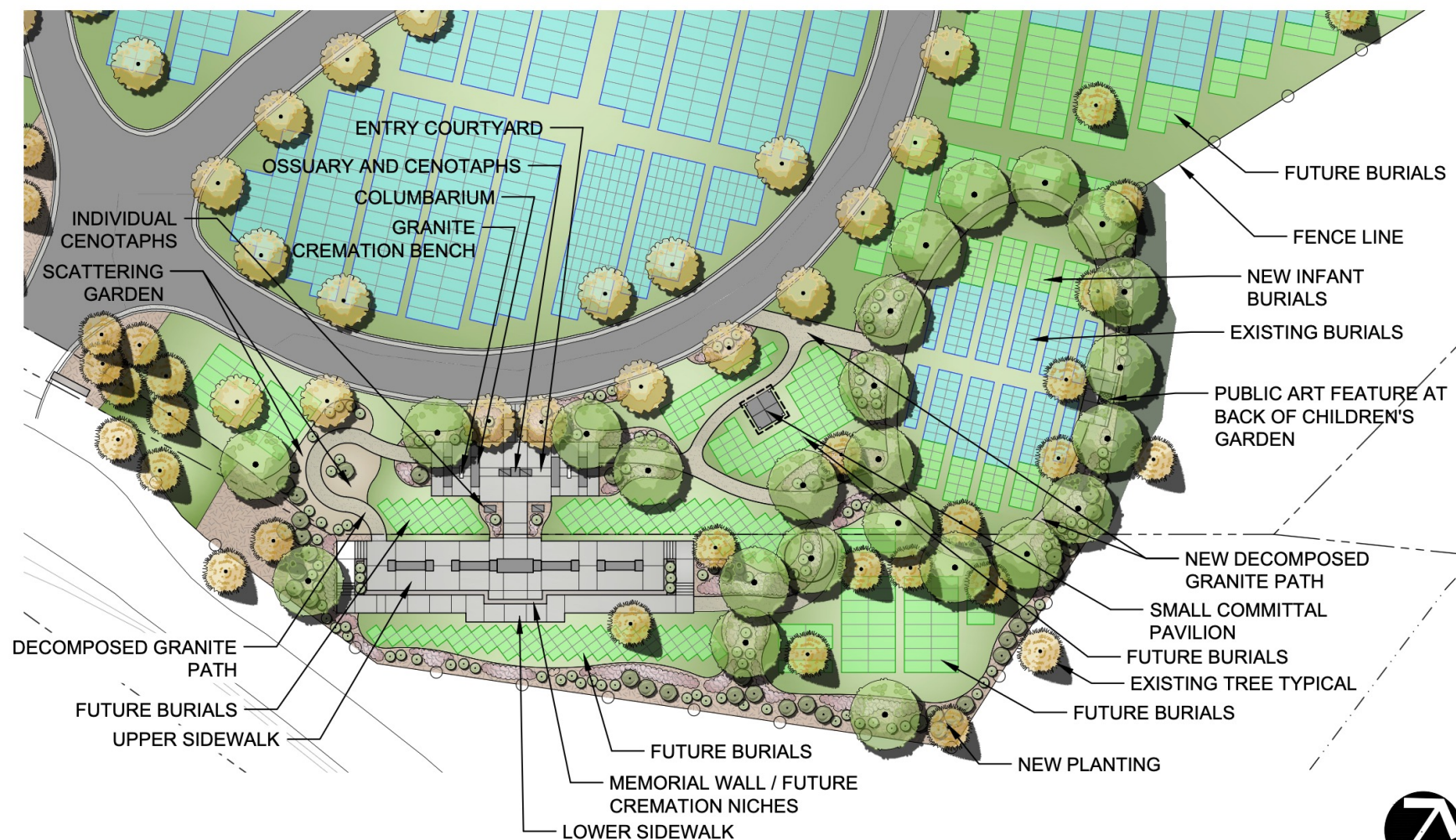
Strategic expansion needed to avoid service gaps.

Scenario	Category	In-Ground Casket	Columbaria	In-Ground Cremation	Total Cremation Options	Total Burial Units
Current Developed Inventory	Units	88	16	729	745	833
	Useful Life	2.3	0.7	45.6	19.6	10.8
Readily Developable Land (Historic Mix)	Units	1,300	160	1,100	1,260	2,560
	Useful Life	33.3	10.0	50.0	33.2	33.2
Master Plan Recommendations	Units	1,320	2,400	1,620	4,020	5,340
	Useful Life	33.8	109.1	101.3	105.8	69.4

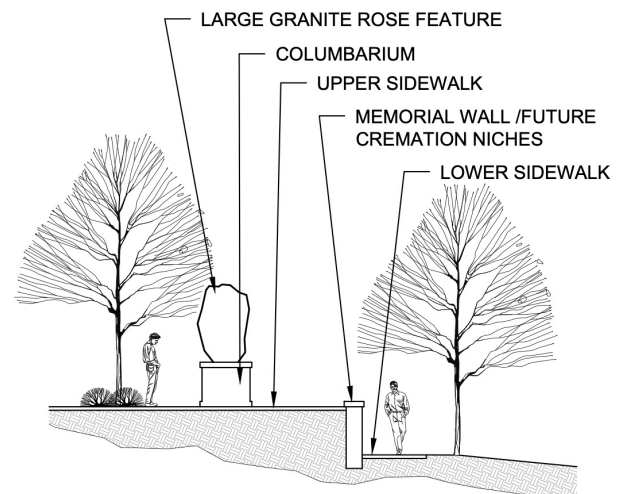
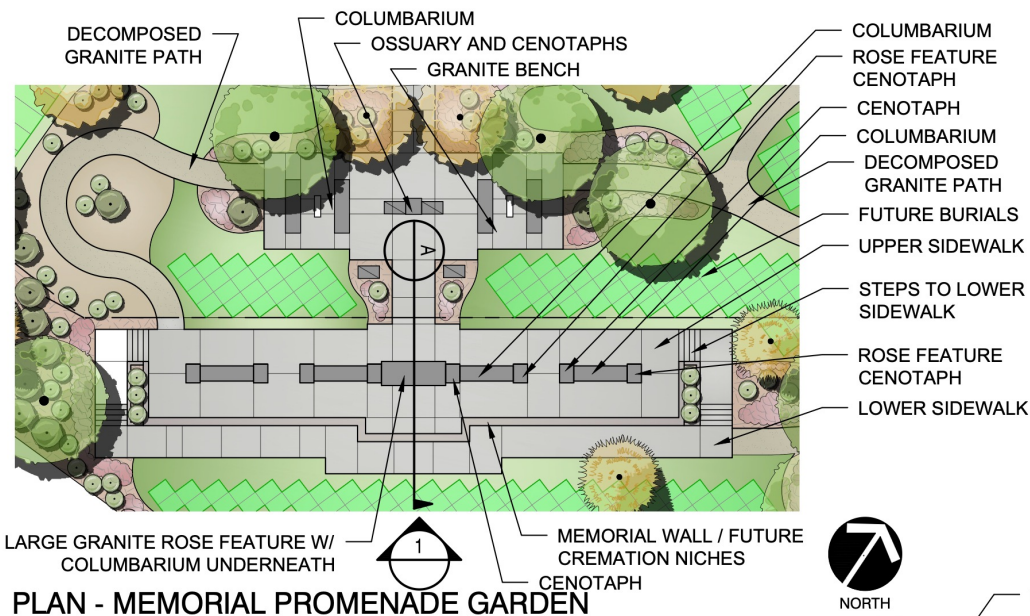
Capacity Strategy and Planning Principals

- Balance Capacity Maximization & Aesthetics
- Phased Growth (Immediate, Intermediate, Long-Term) that preserves flexibility
- Amenity Integration (landscaping, circulation, visitor experience)
- Community Survey
 - Top Priorities: Preserve and Enhance Historic Features, Enhance overall aesthetics, new burial and cremation options
 - 75% indicated very important to continue to offer burial space

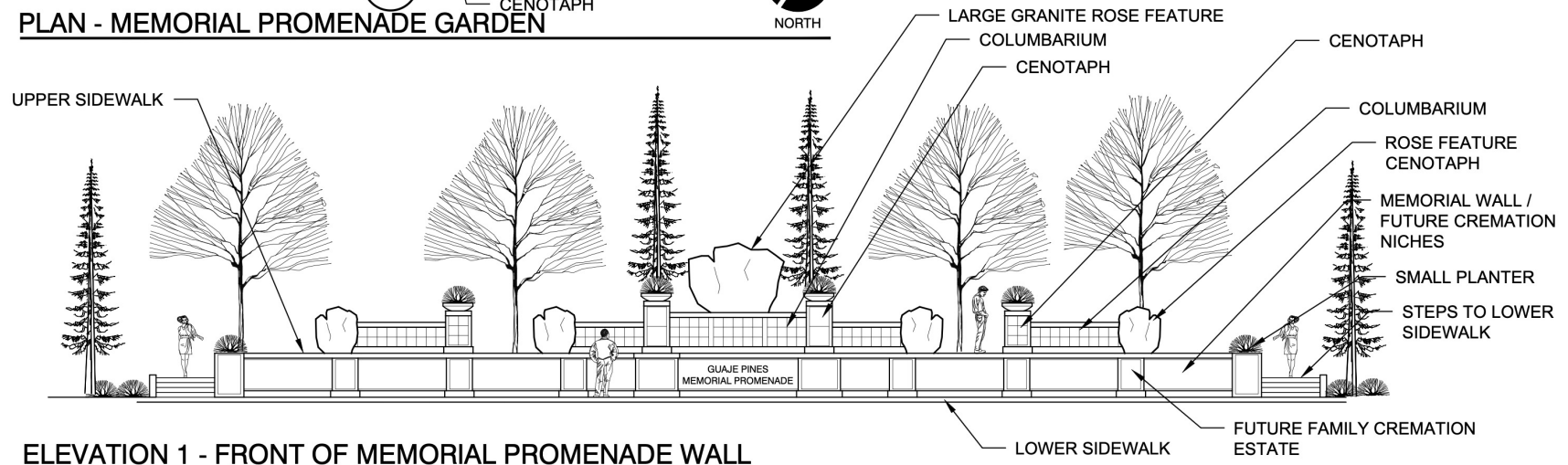




PLAN - WESTERN INVENTORY DEVELOPMENT AREA

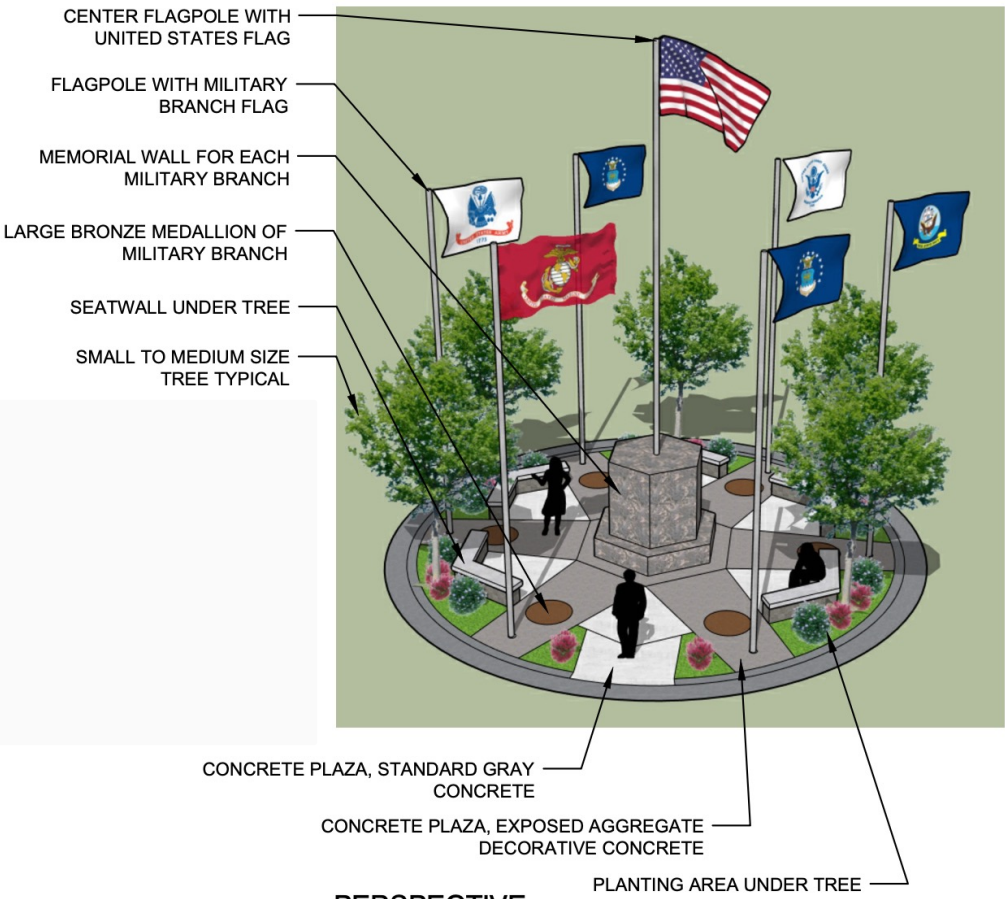


SECTION A - MEMORIAL PROMENADE GARDEN





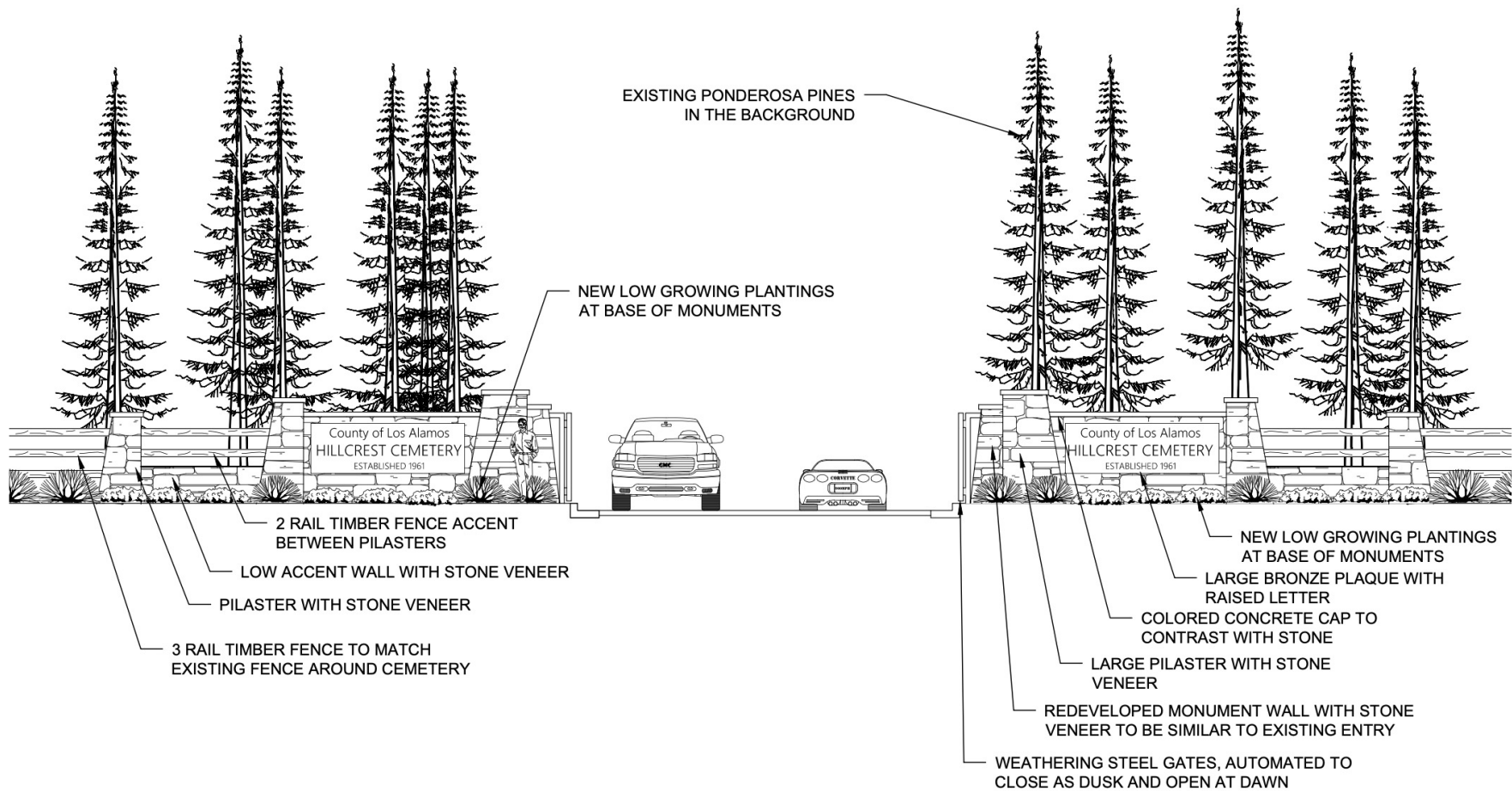
Honor Courts



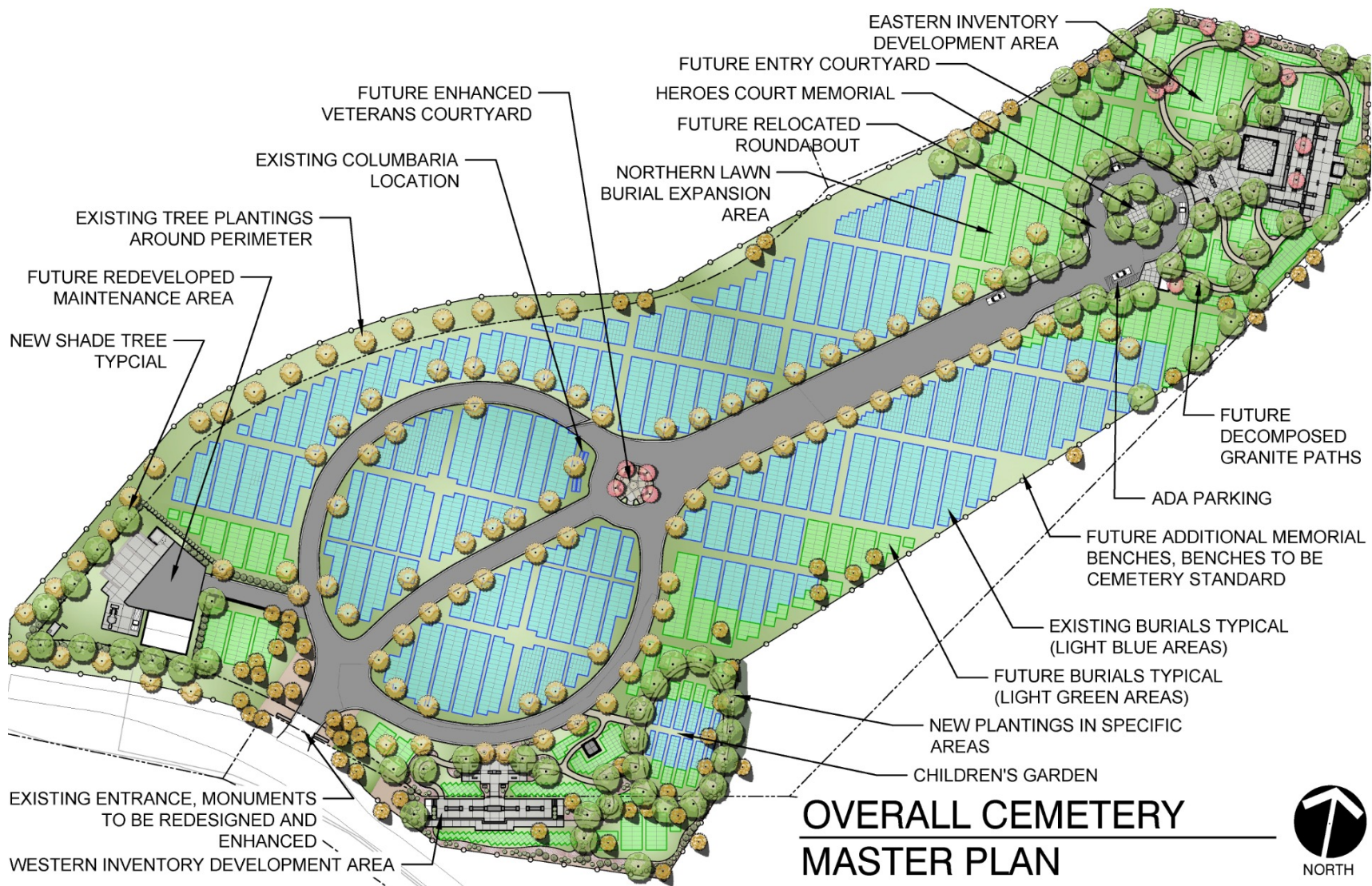
PERSPECTIVE



PERSPECTIVE



ELEVATION 2 - MAIN ENTRANCE



Proposed Capital Budget

Phase	Major Project Areas	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Immediate (1–3 yrs)	North Lawn Burial Expansion; Children’s Area Enhancements; Western Inventory Forecourt; Maintenance Area Upgrades; Tree Work & Survey; Irrigation Improvements, Directional Signage, Tree Work	\$528,000	\$1,057,000
Intermediate (4–10 yrs)	Honor Court Improvements; Entrance Landscaping; Children’s Public Art; Eastern & Western Expansion; Scattering Garden; Tree & Landscape Improvements	\$966,000	\$2,054,000
Long-Term (10+ yrs)	Maintenance Building & Landscape; Entrance Reconstruction; Western In-Fill; Eastern Forecourt, Pavilion, Memorial Wall & Niches; Sidewalk Expansion	\$1,834,000	\$3,419,000
Total		\$3,328,000	\$6,530,000

Implementation Approach

Phased Roadmap

- Provides an achievable, step-by-step approach.
- Allows flexibility to adapt to funding, input, and operational experience.

Key Implementation Strategies

- Leverage in-house capacity to reduce costs.
- Prioritize high-visibility and essential projects early.
- Coordinate with other civic infrastructure for maximum impact.
- Adapt design treatments and materials over time.

Outcomes

- Expands burial space to meet urgent needs.
- Preserves and elevates visual quality and sense of place.
- Adds meaningful community amenities.
- Strengthens the cemetery's role as both a place of remembrance and a valued public asset.



Appendix

Proposed Capacity by Development Areas

Development Area	In-Ground Casket	Columbaria	In-Ground Cremation	Total Cremation Options	Total Burial Units
North Lawn Expansion	260	-	-	-	260
Western Inventory Development	260	700	270	970	1227
Eastern Inventory Development	400	700	550	1250	1650
In-fill	400	1,000	800	1,800	2,250
Total by Type (Units)	1,320	2,400	1,620	4,020	5,340
Average Sales (2020-2024)	39	22	16	38	77
Useful Life (years)	34	109	101	106	69

Capital Budget By Development Area

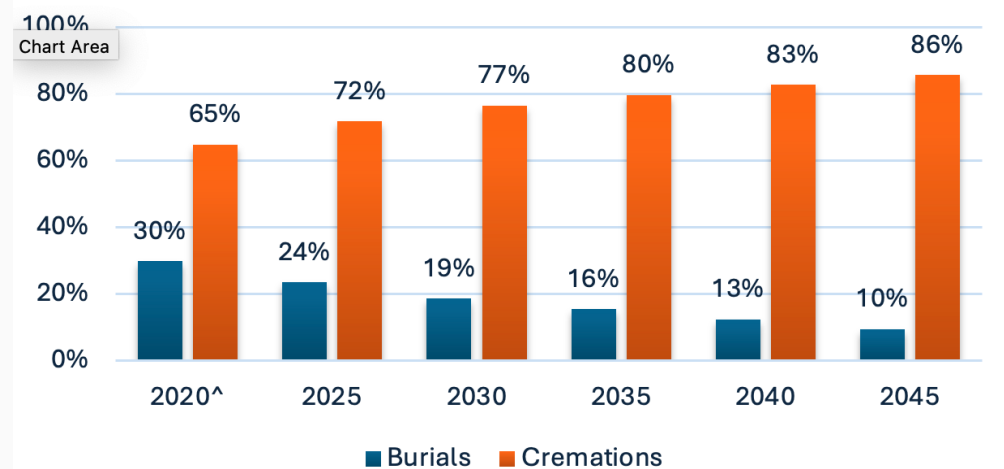
Development Area	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Eastern Inventory Development Area	\$ 1,190,000	\$ 2,340,000
Western Inventory Development Area	\$ 885,000	\$ 1,816,000
General	\$ 357,000	\$ 664,000
Honor Court Circles	\$ 252,000	\$ 585,000
Entrance Improvement	\$ 217,000	\$ 377,000
Maintenance and Operations Area Improvements	\$ 357,000	\$ 566,000
Children's Area Enhancements	\$ 56,000	\$ 143,000
North Lawn Burial Expansion Area	\$ 14,000	\$ 39,000
Total	\$ 3,328,000	\$ 6,530,000

Disposition and County

County Deaths: 2024

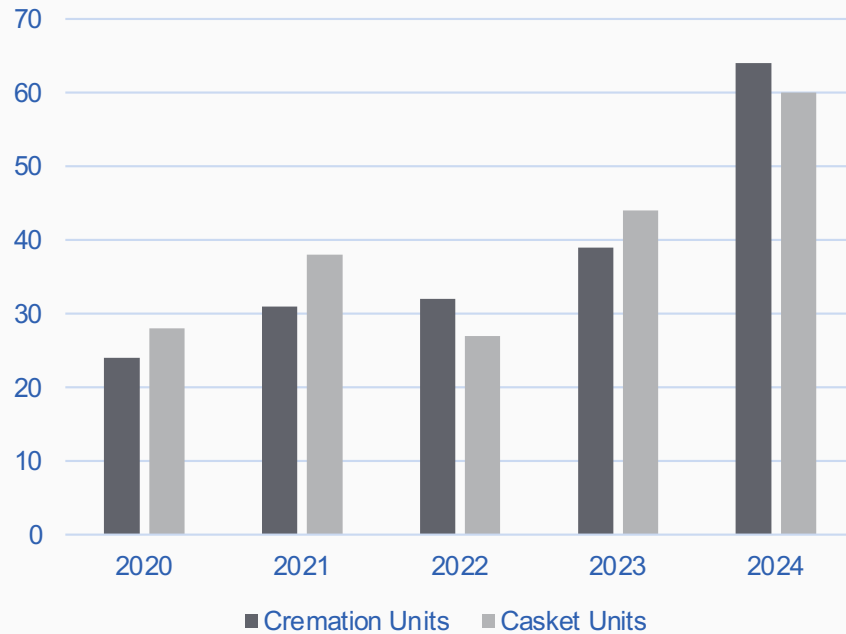
County	Deaths (2024)	Population (2024)	Crude Death Rate (%)
Los Alamos	144	19,444	0.80%
Rio Arriba	528	39,876	1.33%
Taos	393	34,405	1.21%
Santa Fe	1,524	155,956	1.02%
Sandoval	1,457	155,936	0.94%

Projected New Mexico Disposition

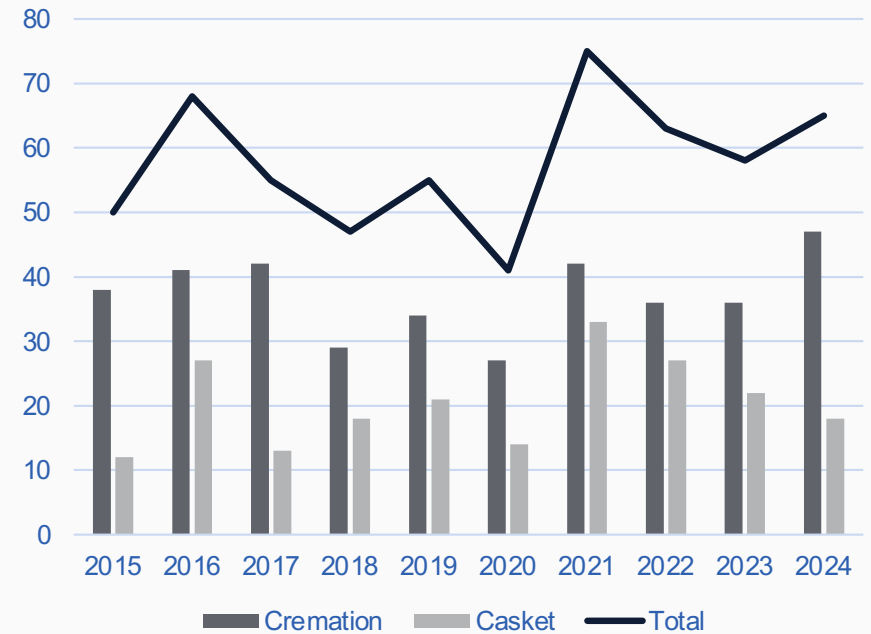


Sales and Activity

Annual Interment Unit Sales (2020–2024)



Annual Burial Data (2015–2024)



Community Survey: Results

Who Responded

- 90% Los Alamos residents
- 75% age 55+
- 53% intend Guaje Pines to be their final resting place

Visitation

- ~30% visit often/regularly
- ~70% visit occasionally or rarely

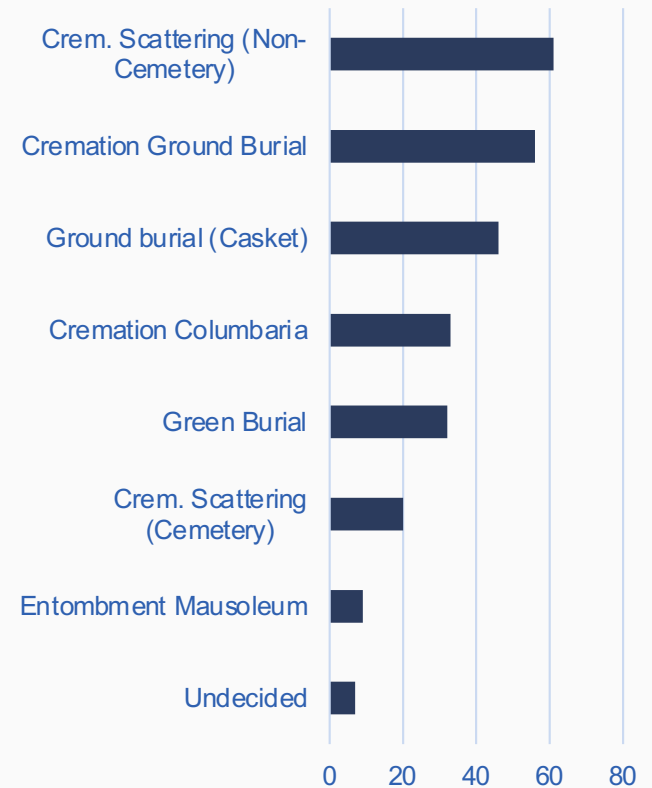
Priorities

- 75%+ say expanding burial space is *very important*
- Preserve historic features & enhance aesthetics
- Expand cremation options and tree canopy

Preferences

- Strong preference for cremation (scattering, columbaria, in-ground)
- ~36% still value traditional casket burial

Survey Results: End of Life Preferences



Community Survey: Master Plan Priorities

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Preserve and enhance the Cemetery's historic features	36.00% 54	33.33% 50	15.33% 23	10.67% 16	4.67% 7	150
Enhance the overall aesthetics of the cemetery	31.29% 46	29.93% 44	18.37% 27	12.93% 19	7.48% 11	147
Introduce new burial offerings	28.48% 43	25.17% 38	15.23% 23	11.26% 17	19.87% 30	151
Develop more cremation burial options	22.37% 34	38.82% 59	11.84% 18	9.87% 15	17.11% 26	152
Increase the tree canopy at the Cemetery	22.82% 34	28.19% 42	23.49% 35	12.08% 18	13.42% 20	149
Enhance natural resources and habitat for wildlife	22.45% 33	24.49% 36	16.33% 24	17.69% 26	19.05% 28	147
Include additional seating and rest areas	21.77% 32	24.49% 36	27.89% 41	13.61% 20	12.24% 18	147
Improve wayfinding (informational kiosks, maps, publicly available mapping)	20.81% 31	32.89% 49	20.81% 31	12.75% 19	12.75% 19	149
Introduce additional memorial and tribute offerings	16.55% 24	26.90% 39	24.83% 36	13.79% 20	17.93% 26	145
Enhance bicycling and walking infrastructure (connect to trail system)	12.24% 18	14.29% 21	24.49% 36	16.33% 24	32.65% 48	147
Improve vehicular circulation (roads and parking) and condition in the Cemetery	12.41% 18	17.24% 25	22.76% 33	23.45% 34	24.14% 35	145



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Sloane Consulting Group is a nationally recognized firm serving cemeteries, funeral homes, and related organizations in 43 states and abroad. We are experienced managers and operators as well as consultants, with expertise spanning every aspect of cemetery and funeral management: strategic planning, fundraising, financial modeling and accounting, sales, operations and appraisals. Our team prioritizes practical and actionable approaches, ensuring organizations not only plan effectively but also implement sustainable solutions that drive financial health, operational efficiency, and long-term community impact. Our team combines generational industry expertise with modern, data-driven process improvements to deliver sustainable growth, financial stability, and community impact.



CivisWorks, led by Greg Graham, ASLA, brings nearly three decades of experience in landscape architecture and project management for cemeteries, parks, and trails nationwide. The firm delivers full-service design solutions — from conceptual design and master planning to construction documents — supported by advanced tools such as AutoCAD Civil 3D, Land F/X, and 3D modeling. With a strong focus on cemetery planning, parks, trails, and site infrastructure, CivisWorks has completed projects across the Mountain West and Southwest, including master plans, circulation design, irrigation systems, grading, planting, and ADA accessibility.

Contact: Stephanie Sloane | stephanie@lfsloane.com