



WHAT WE HEARD **REPORT**

Cemtery Master Plan, Phase 2 Engagement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rocky View County is developing a Cemetery Master Plan to guide the long-term operation and expansion of the Garden of Peace Cemetery and ensure it continues to meet community needs over time. Phase 1 engagement focused on cemetery use, accessibility, burial preferences and general resident feedback on the current cemetery. Phase 2 incorporated those suggestions into a draft expansion concept. This was then shared back with the public for final review, focusing on the overall design, key features, and how well it reflected community values. Throughout both phases of engagement, 709 people visited the website and 63 survey submissions were received.

PHASE TWO ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

Public Participation:

From October 24 to November 26, 2025, residents were invited to share input through an online survey and at a public open house. The survey received 32 responses, with most participants identifying as Rocky View County residents and a small number from the City of Calgary and surrounding area. An open house was held on November 5, 2025, at the Garden of Peace Chapel with 15 attendees, and the project team also met with community organizations to discuss the draft concept and answer questions.

Overall Sentiment:

Most participants expressed positive views of the expansion concept and shared that it reflects what they value in a cemetery and aligns well with the character and values of the community. Residents highlighted the curvilinear layout, central water feature, extensive trees and plantings, and the inclusion of green burial areas and diverse burial options as key strengths.

Key Priorities & Concerns:

Participants asked the County to consider more parking and clearer, safer access at the entrance, additional green and natural burial options with an emphasis on native plants and woodland areas, and more pathways so visitors do not need to walk over graves. Concerns were also raised about traffic, and participants suggested special considerations such as dedicated spaces for veterans, continued support and visibility for infant and pregnancy loss areas, culturally appropriate burial areas, and ensuring the cemetery functions as a quiet, park-like space for walking and contemplation.

KEY FINDINGS

Q1: What is your first impression of the Cemetery Expansion Concept?

Respondents: 32

Response Option	Percent	Count
Positive. The concept reflects what I value most in a cemetery.	71.90%	23
Mostly positive. I would like to see a few changes.	21.90%	7
Neutral. I am undecided.	0%	0
Negative. The plan does not meet my needs.	6.30%	2

Overall Sentiment:

Most respondents had a positive first impression of the expansion concept, with the majority saying it reflects what they value in a cemetery and just over one-fifth saying they are mostly positive but would like to see a few changes. A small minority indicated that the plan does not meet their needs.

Q2: How well do you feel this concept reflects the character and value of the community?

Respondents: 31

Response Option	Percent	Count
Very well	80.60%	25
Neutral	12.90%	4
Not at all	7%	2

Overall Sentiment:

Most respondents felt the expansion concept reflects the character and values of the community very well, while a smaller group were neutral and a minority felt it does not.

KEY FINDINGS

Q3: What do you like about the cemetery concept?

Respondents: 27

Theme	Indicative Quotes
Natural, landscaped, and park-like setting (58%)	<i>"I like the symmetry of the plan. The water feature will also be nice to hold the cemetery together as one."</i> <i>"Green burial options. Places for folks of many faiths. Country feel."</i>
Pathways, movement, and accessibility (38%)	<i>"Connection with nature, the pathways."</i> <i>"Pathways and expanded cremation garden area(s) so that it is more park-like."</i>
Continuity with existing cemetery and future capacity (31%)	<i>"It looks to be a balance of what is existing and adds a second access. Nicely laid out."</i> <i>"Provides more area, forward thinking to develop now. Shows Rocky View citizens and others that it will be viable for many years."</i>

Overall Sentiment:

Participants said they liked the concept's natural, park like setting, including trees, lawns, and a central water feature that helps tie the cemetery together. Many also appreciated the network of walking and biking paths, gathering areas, and circulation that make it easier to move through the site and spend time with loved ones. A number of respondents valued that the design respects the existing cemetery's character while adding new space and access, demonstrating that the cemetery will continue to serve Rocky View County and surrounding communities into the future.

KEY FINDINGS

Q4: What do you not like about the cemetery concept?

Respondents: 24

Theme	Indicative Quotes
Need for more sustainable and “green” burial options (33%)	<i>“Green/Natural burial areas should fill a larger area as this is considered a more natural way of burial as opposed to cremation or embalming.”</i> <i>“Would like to see a focus on native plants/trees and more resources directed toward green burials.”</i>
Accessibility, parking, and visitor convenience (30%)	<i>“I would like there to be more parking options... that way people don’t have to walk so far to visit a site.”</i> <i>“More pedestrian pathways. I hate to walk over graves to visit my loved ones.”</i>
Location and proximity to other areas (25%)	<i>“There are literally no cemetery options for people west of Calgary toward Bragg Creek... Why is there nothing out here?”</i> <i>“Like so many things, those of us in Division One are a long way away... We pay premium taxes yet we are but an afterthought in the general scheme of Rocky View.”</i>

Overall Sentiment:

Concerns focused on practical issues such as parking supply, walking distances, traffic, and the existing entrance, along with requests to reconsider how space is allocated between cremation and green burial areas. Some respondents also noted that the proposed location may not serve all County residents equally, particularly those in western communities.

KEY FINDINGS

Q5: What features or amenities interest you the most (cremation garden precinct, seating, memorial walls, etc.)?

Respondents: 19

Theme	Indicative Quotes
Natural landscaping and green burial options (37%)	<i>"Landscaping—natural elements reflecting the Rocky View natural landscape, rather than being too far cultivated."</i> <i>"Gardens, native and woodland plantings, green burial."</i>
Cremation and memorial features (26%)	<i>"Columbarium with a small area to gather for outdoor burial service... Memorial wall would also be great."</i> <i>"Cremation garden, seating and pathways. Pleased to see the introduction of green burial areas."</i>
Seating and walking paths (21%)	<i>"Lots of walkways - I assume lots of places for visitors to sit and reflect."</i> <i>"Connecting walking paths, cremation gardens."</i>

Overall Sentiment:

Feedback was generally positive toward features emphasizing nature and visitor comfort. Respondents showed strong interest in natural landscaping, green burial options, cremation gardens, memorial walls, seating areas, and walking paths that create a peaceful, inclusive environment reflective of Rocky View's landscape.

KEY FINDINGS

Q6: What else would you like the County to consider about the Garden of Peace Cemetery Expansion and/or the Cemetery Master Plan?

Respondents: 12

Theme	Indicative Quotes
Natural burial expansion (33%)	<i>"A larger area for Natural burials"</i> <i>"Providing space for those who want their remains to feed the earth... with native flowers and trees planted on top so my body becomes part of the ecosystem."</i>
Parking and facilities expansion (25%)	<i>"Slightly bigger parking for a big funeral or something"</i> <i>"If a larger funeral home with more seating, and an area where you could have a tea would be VERY beneficial."</i>
Specialized areas and low-profile markers (25%)	<i>"In other jurisdictions, I have found it to be very fitting to have an area dedicated to military veterans, that would be nice." *</i> <i>"Signage for Pregnancy & Infant Loss - at the cemetery as well as on the road to the cemetery." *</i>

* Both of these features, a designated veterans area and signage for Pregnancy and Infant Loss, currently exist within the cemetery.

Overall Sentiment:

Respondents offered additional considerations for the cemetery expansion and master plan, emphasizing expanded natural burial options, improved facilities for larger gatherings, and specialized areas to better serve diverse community needs. Many also advocated for low-profile markers and rural aesthetics to maintain an open, peaceful environment integrated with the natural landscape.

KEY FINDINGS

Q7: Please identify your place of residence.

Respondents: 30

Response Option	Percent	Count
Rocky View County	93.00%	28
City of Calgary	7.00%	2
Other	0%	0

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who participated in public engagement on the Garden of Peace Cemetery Expansion and Cemetery Master Plan.

Your input and perspectives will directly inform the County's next steps. Administration will present to Council in 2026 with the results of the engagement and a recommendation based on feedback.

