



GENERAL SERVICES

CITY OF DURHAM

Cemeteries Project Updates

October 2, 2023



- Introduction to the City Managed Cemeteries
- Expansion Projects Update - Beechwood
- Sustainable Burial Options - Reimagining City Cemeteries
- Future Projects



GENERAL SERVICES
CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC





Maplewood Cemetery

- Established 1872
- 120 Acres, 37 undeveloped
- Original grid layout of 88,000 burial spaces
- Opened as a segregated cemetery
- Location of administrative and maintenance facilities



GENERAL SERVICES
CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC





Beechwood Cemetery

- Established 1924
- Slightly under 24 acres
- Historically African-American public cemetery
- Original grid layout of 14,000 burial spaces
- Est. 3 acres currently under development for expansion



GENERAL SERVICES
CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC



Expansion Projects - Beechwood

Columbarium Garden

- 3-4 niche modules
- 65-75 niche spaces
- Inviting landscape design
- Development of new section “Z” (50-60 spaces)
- Est. completion date – June 2024



GENERAL SERVICES
CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC



Expansion Projects - Beechwood

Southwest Corner Site Expansion

- Clear/improve triangular shaped site
- New infrastructure (Bridge/Road)
- 330 new traditional burial spaces
- 50-60 Sustainable burial spaces
- Est. completion date – June 2024



GENERAL SERVICES
CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @[CityofDurhamNC](https://www.instagram.com/CityofDurhamNC)





Beechwood Cemetery Durham, North Carolina



LKC → **Columbarium Garden**
December 2022  Columbarium Plan
Successful Cemetery Modernization

REIMAGINING CITY CEMETERIES UPDATE

CITY OF DURHAM | GENERAL SERVICES DEPT.



GENERAL SERVICES
CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC





“ ”

Create equitable, innovative, dignified, sustainable, environmentally friendly burial options as well as education access to all city cemeteries.



SURVEY AND FEEDBACK FROM LISTENING TOUR

1. 87% Interested in GNB options

Residents want options and some plan to switch from traditional to GNB due to education access.

2. 72% Interested in ongoing education

Residents stated they want community events, talks, and programming around GNB and cemetery-focused community programming. Being able to use cemetery space for events and learning about those on the land.

3. 88% Want Ash Scattering Gardens

Cremation is on the rise and residents want places to memorialize loved ones. Residents stated Maplewood ash scattering garden would be an ideal place for beautification and enhancement. Allocating other spaces locally is also preferred.

4. 90% Agreement for Y2 GNB Project Extension

"We want to do more engagement with you and integration is rushed or falls short of what the community needs."

5. 25% of people surveyed knew about GNB

Only a handful of residents knew about GNB options. None of which were people of color. There is an access barrier to eco-friendly cemetery options to BIPOC.



Y1 GREEN/NATURAL BURIAL PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

341 surveys completed by Durhamites

Diverse demographics of Durhamites completed surveys across community engagement events offering insight and feedback on green/natural burial interest and ash scattering gardens.

Over 100 hours researching green/burial best practices and sample policies

Researched best practices, talked with Green Burial Council, and analyzed hybrid landscapes providing inclusive and green/natural burial friendly verbiage to local policy.

210 Diverse touchpoint emails and calls discussing green/natural burial collaboration

Initial touchpoint emails and calls to integrate into community conversations and survey community needs around cemeteries, burials, and green/natural burial education.



3 Funeral homes on board for green/natural burial implementation (and counting)

Fisher Funeral Home, Hall-Wynn Funeral Home, and Ellis D. Jones Funeral Home on board for providing green/natural burial packages to Durhamites.

33 Community engagement events spreading the word of green/natural burials

Events ranged from health fairs, poetry slams, Juneteenth, artist talks, community strategy sessions, and death cafes.



ADDRESSING BARRIERS WITH A GREEN/NATURAL BURIAL ECOSYSTEM

Green/natural burial friendly policy

Revising policy to allow green/natural burials into city cemeteries.

Funeral home participation

Collaborating with local funeral home providers to offer green/natural burial packages to Durhamites.



Refrigeration and transportation alternatives

Durhamites wanting personalized touches and may not want funeral home participation. We have refrigeration and transportation of body services available outside funeral home assistance.

Death doula access

Durhamites wanting a Death Doula to assist with grief counseling, paperwork, and body preparation will have access to Death Doulas in the area.

Funerary arts collective and listserve

Residents can use local artists to help with various funeral arrangements. The goal is to have a local shroud maker, wicker coffin maker, poets, botany artists, and others be accessible for green/natural burial offerings.



GENERAL SERVICES
CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC





CITY OF DURHAM

BEECHWOOD WILL BE A HYBRID CEMETERY

- Over 30 new gnb plots at Beechwood (Maplewood in the future)
- Funeral Home Strategy documents
- Incentives TBD
- People wanting to change traditional plots to gnb plots



GENERAL SERVICES
CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC





CITY OF DURHAM

FEEDBACK

The goal is to work alongside our local funeral home providers adding green/natural burial options to listed services. We will offer verbiage for websites and education, product information, incentives to help with GBC certification/additional expenses, and access to someone on the GBC committee. If you have any feedback that will be greatly appreciated.



GENERAL SERVICES

CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC



Future Cemetery Projects

- Green Natural Burials (GNB) – Hybrid Approach
- Facility GNB Certifications
- Cemetery Landscape Enhancements
- Cemetery Ordinance Revisions
- Continued Cemetery Staff Trainings
- Continue Maximizing PlotBox/Discover Ever After

<https://durhamnc.discovereverafter.com/>



GENERAL SERVICES
CITY OF DURHAM

919.560.4197

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC

