



www.oregonmetro.gov

Metro Pioneer Cemeteries

Metro serves 1.5 million people who live in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties and the 25 cities in the Portland metropolitan area.



Metro takes steps to respectfully, responsibly manage pioneer cemeteries

The very things that make pioneer cemeteries so fascinating – a long history, hand-written records, thousands of graves – also make them challenging to manage. Since taking over Multnomah County’s cemeteries in 1994, Metro has learned a lot about caring for these special places and the people who bury loved ones there. With review from independent experts, Metro has analyzed its business practices to ensure that the pioneer cemetery program is responsible, respectful and sustainable.

Improved record-keeping

Old, partially legible records and difficult-to-read maps have been stored electronically so Metro staff are aware of purchases – no matter how long ago they happened. Soon, specialized cemetery software will improve business and sales practices and better serve customers.

Better inventory of available graves

Earlier estimates suggested that nearly 9,000 gravesites were available at Metro’s pioneer cemeteries. By sharpening its examination, Metro learned that it has closer to 4,300 gravesites – about 20 years of inventory. More importantly, this closer look prompted Metro to responsibly close Lone Fir, Multnomah Park and Gresham

Contact Metro
Metro Regional Center
Pioneer Cemetery Program
600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232
503-797-1709
cemeteries@oregonmetro.gov

About Metro

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy, and sustainable transportation and living choices for people and businesses in the region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges and opportunities that affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to providing services, operating venues and making decisions about how the region grows. Metro works with communities to support a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Together, we're making a great place, now and for generations to come.

Stay in touch with news, stories and things to do.

www.oregonmetro.gov/connect

Metro Council President

Tom Hughes

Metro Council

Shirley Craddick, District 1
Carlotta Collette, District 2
Carl Hosticka, District 3
Kathryn Harrington, District 4
Rex Burkholder, District 5
Barbara Roberts, District 6

Auditor

Suzanne Flynn

Pioneer cemeteries to new sales as the graves are either already owned or occupied. All existing sales will be honored, but Metro does not want to “oversell” and compound any mistakes of the past.

Revised soil management protocols

Metro stepped up its practices for handling excess cemetery soil and required the contractor who opens and closes gravesites to follow prescribed procedures. An independent and well-respected expert analyzed the changes and reported to Metro councilors that they meet – and in many cases exceed – industry practice.



Stronger system to find owners of historically sold graves

Working with partners in the cemetery industry, Metro helped pass state legislation creating an easier, more responsible way to notify people about gravesites that were historically sold, but never used – and, when appropriate, to reclaim them. New processes require greater notification and outreach, and have the opportunity to reach more people who may have claim to a historically sold plot.

Cleaner cemeteries

Metro posted notice on Memorial Day that items not specifically allowed on gravesites will be removed beginning

November 2012. This keeps the cemetery operations running efficiently and the cemeteries safe, clean and attractive for the thousands of families who follow Metro policies.

Forward-looking business plan

A new, forward-looking business plan describes priorities for responsibly managing Metro's 14 pioneer cemeteries. Raising fees to mid-level market rates and increasing contributions to perpetual care funds will make the program financially sustainable – now and well into the future.

Cremation garden at Lone Fir

As part of the business plan, an elegant cremation garden will be designed and installed within Lone Fir's natural park like setting. This will meet not only the high customer demand for Lone Fir, but also the demand created by the nearly 70 percent of Pacific Northwest customers who elect cremation over full-body burials. After examining the success of this installation, Metro will consider offering cremation options in other pioneer cemeteries as funds and space allow.

New advisory committee

A new Cemetery Advisory Committee will be established to guide and support the program, analyze best practices in the industry, provide new ideas and innovation, and help Metro to continue responsibly and respectfully serving the people of our region.

Visit Metro's website to learn more about the 14 pioneer cemeteries they manage

www.oregonmetro.gov/cemeteries.