Envisioning a Memorial Garden
What we heard...

The City of Richmond conducted public engagement to gather feedback on the proposed Community Memorial Garden. Engagement activities took place in May and June 2025, and included open houses, online participation, workshops and surveys.

This report summarizes who participated and the key themes, preferences and concerns that emerged.

Participation Highlights



5 Open Houses

- Drop-in style with staff in attendance (multiple languages supported)
- 5 different locations throughout Richmond



Community and Project Partner Workshops



Online Engagement Let's Talk Richmond

1400+ visitors

220 surveys completed

Language Accessibility:

- English and Traditional Chinese materials
- Staff available in English, Mandarin and Cantonese at open houses
- Let's Talk Richmond translation available in 14 languages

Outreach Channels:

- News release to local media (English and Traditional Chinese)
- Posters, pull-up banners and postcards (English and Traditional Chinese) at Parks, Recreation and Culture facilities across the City
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, BlueSky) and e-newsletter, digital transit shelter ads and LetsTalkRichmond direct notifications.

Engagement Goals

Engage the Community:
Gather diverse community input through various engagement methods (open house boards, surveys, and pop-up events) to assess support for and gather feedback on the Community Memorial Garden project.

Clarify Project Vision:
Ensure the community understands the memorial garden's purpose, design options, interment and memorialization services, and potential programming through clear, accessible information and visual materials.

Foster Interested Party Collaboration:
Facilitate productive discussions with internal (City staff) and external interested parties (funeral homes, religious organizations, etc.) to identify potential operational needs, responsibilities, and community service expectations.

Collect Actionable Feedback:
Utilize surveys and direct interactions to gather specific community preferences, concerns, and ideas to guide the project's design and service offerings, ensuring it meets the needs of a broad audience.

Promote Inclusive Participation:
Create accessible opportunities for a wide cross-section of the community to participate in the engagement process, ensuring that all voices are heard and contribute to shaping the final project outcomes.

Key Findings

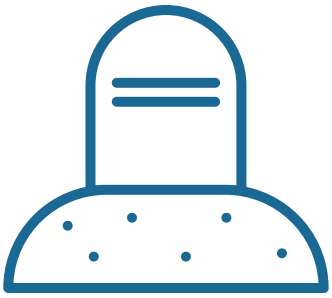
Common themes that emerged throughout the engagement process included:



A **majority of community members** support a memorial garden in Richmond.



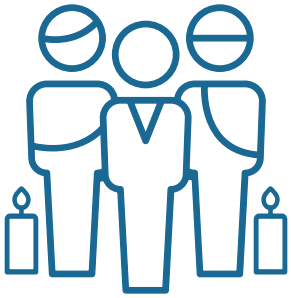
Providing a **serene** and **respectful environment** dedicated to the remembrance of loved ones **is a vital civic service** that is **long overdue** in Richmond.



Environmentally friendly interment and memorial options were important to many participants.



There is **community interest** in having a **dedicated place to scatter cremated remains** on the Fraser River.



Community members highlighted the importance of **accommodating diverse cultural practices and preferences**.



Community members **favour naturalized areas** in which to memorialize their loved ones.



Land use priorities and Richmond's **high water table** were identified as concerns.

It would be a wonderful option to have a memorial garden in Richmond, where we have lived and have memories.

Our lost souls are a part of our rich history, those who have helped build our community.

Survey Results

Who Answered the Survey

220 online and printed surveys completed

65% of respondents were **55 years** old or older.

> *A memorial garden should be a place of remembrance only [...] land is too valuable to use for more conventional forms of burial and interment.*

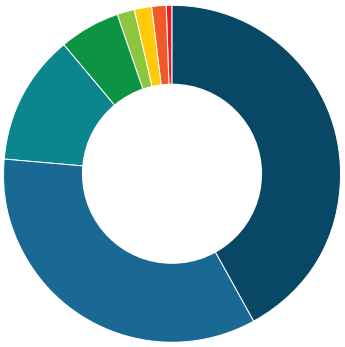
My relationship to Richmond is (select all that apply):

- 95% - Live in Richmond
- 45% - Family that live in Richmond
- 35% - Work in Richmond



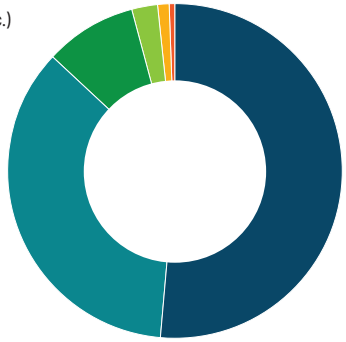
I identify with the following religions (select all that apply):

- 44% No religious affiliation
- 36% Christianity
- 13% Catholicism
- 6% Buddhism
- 2% Indigenous Spirituality
- 1.5% Judaism
- 1.5% Islam
- 0.5% Hinduism



Which ethnicity do you most relate to (select all that apply):

- 52% European (British, Ukrainian, Italian, etc.)
- 36% - East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.)
- 9% Southeast Asian (Filipino, Vietnamese, Thai, etc.)
- 2.5% South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, etc.)
- 1% - Latin American (Mexican, Brazilian, Colombian, etc.)
- 0.5%Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)



Support and Usage

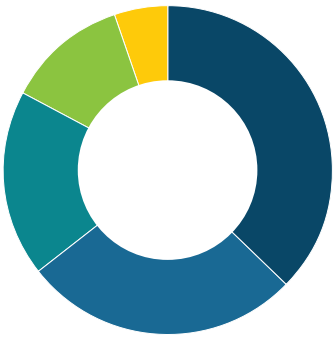
In general, my level of support for the CIty of Richmond offering a Memorial Garden is:

- 51% Strongly supportive
- 19% Strongly opposed
- 15% Somewhat supportive
- 9% Neutral
- 7% Somewhat opposed



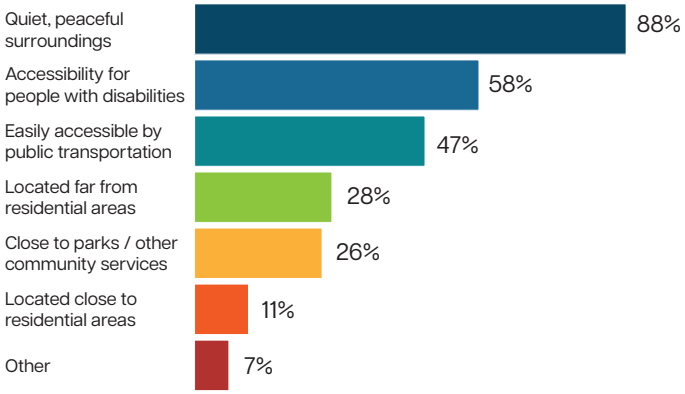
If the City of Richmond develops a Memorial Garden, the likelihood that my immediate family and/or I would use its services is:

- 37% Highly likely
- 27% Somewhat likely
- 18% Highly unlikely
- 12% Neutral
- 5% Somewhat unlikely

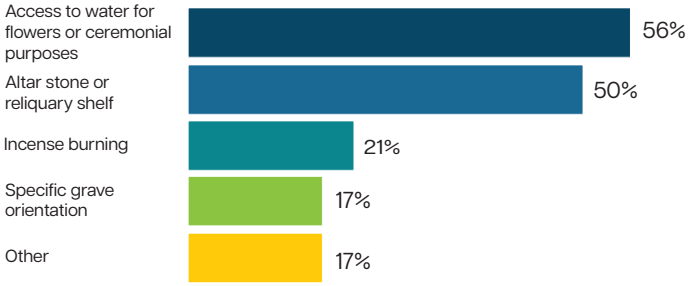


Location and Needs

The following factors are most important to me when considering the location of a Memorial Garden (select all that apply):



The following would best accommodate my, or my family's needs (select all that apply):



Ranking Amenities and Features



Places to sit, rest and contemplate **46%**



Visitor washroom facilities **42%**



Mature trees and attractive flower and plant beds **38%**



Walking paths for passive recreation **27%**



Structure for outdoor shelter from elements like a gazebo **25%**



Gathering / celebration space **22%**



Wide range of interment options **22%**



Building for services and events **21%**

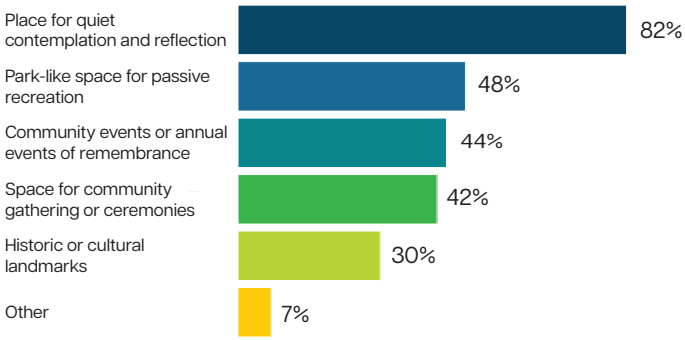


Specific area for memorials, public art, etc. **17%**



Water features (e.g. fountains and pond) **16%**

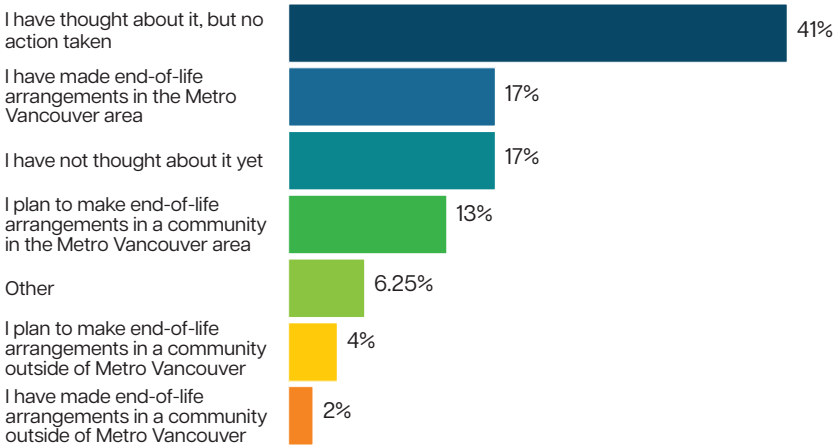
I would be motivated to use a Memorial Garden in Richmond that includes the following (select all that apply):



Richmond

End-of-Life Planning

My current end-of-life plans are:



> *Should be far away from residential and commercial area due to sensitivity about deceased in our Chinese culture.*

I would consider the following burial and memorialization options for my end-of-life plans (select all that apply):



Memorial wall: an inscription or plaque placed on a wall or stone **51%**



Scattering garden: a dedicated garden for scattering remains **49%**



In-ground cremation burial: cremated remains buried in-ground with marker **45%**



Columbarium niche: cremated remains interred in an individual niche or columbaria **40%**



Terramation: human remains are transformed into soil by composting **39%**



Green burial: interment in a biodegradable casket without embalming **33%**



Mausoleum: above-ground building used to house caskets and/or cremation urns **21%**

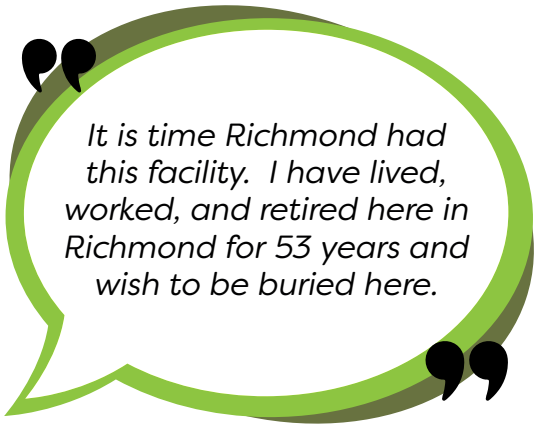


Casket burial: casket buried in an in-ground plot with headstone / marker **18%**

Community Feedback and Potential Uses

Key Insights

- **66%** of respondents expressed support for the City offering a memorial garden, while **25%** opposed it and **9%** were neutral.
- If a memorial garden were developed, **64%** said they would likely use its services, while **23%** said they would unlikely use it, **11%** were unsure.
- If a loved one were memorialized in Richmond, **47%** said they would visit several times a year, **17%** said they would visit at least monthly and **3%** said they would only attend the internment or service.



Concerns raised during engagement

- Availability of suitable land and concerns over the location.
- Whether interment or only memorialization should be offered; including differing views on burials and ash scattering.
- Whether a memorial garden is a priority compared to other community
- Suitability considering Richmond's high water table for burial and potential flooding risks.
- The City's role compared to private sector providers, including cost and budget considerations.
- Site security, including concerns related to vandalism, safety, and the management of the site.

Next Steps

Next steps will include identifying and evaluating potential Memorial Garden sites. Should a site be approved by Council, next steps would include site analysis, planning and design to determine proposed amenities, a follow-up engagement process, and selection of a preferred operating model.