



Subject: Scattering Garden

Report Number: RCP 24-043

Department: Recreation, Culture and Parks Department

Submitted by: Margaret Puhr

Meeting Type: Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 24, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

THAT report RCP 24-043 titled "Scattering Garden" be received as information.

BACKGROUND

The following resolution was passed at the April 22, 2024 Town of Tillsonburg Council Meeting:

Motion - Councillor Spencer - Scattering Garden

Resolution # 2024-196

Moved By: Councillor Spencer

Seconded By: Councillor Luciani

WHEREAS there are many cemetery options and personalized memorials for those choosing cremation; and

WHEREAS A cremation garden offers a peaceful final resting place, as well as a place for friends and family to remember and reflect for generations to come; and

WHEREAS A scattering garden is a designated area in a cemetery where cremated remains are meant to be scattered.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff provide a report to the Parks, Beautification and Cemeteries Advisory Committee on the feasibility of a scatter garden at the Tillsonburg cemetery.

Carried

Additionally, the recently Council approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan also identified researching the option for scattering gardens, on pages 101 – 103.

DISCUSSION

In Ontario, cremains can legally be scattered in a wide range of public places including provincial parks, crown lands and on private property. Some municipalities have created areas for scattering in cemeteries by establishing sites where human ashes can be scattered for a fee. The scattering of cremains is regulated by Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) and must be registered with BAO. Cemeteries can choose to have a community scattering garden or private family scattering gardens.

The nearest municipalities to Tillsonburg with scattering gardens operating currently are London (Mount Pleasant Cemetery) and two sites in Kitchener (Williamsburg Cemetery and Woodland Cemetery). Both Brantford and Norfolk are in process of creating their own Cemetery Master Plan and will be inviting public input on scattering gardens to the plans.

Selecting a scattering garden can be an economical and environmentally friendly option for families. It also offers a permanent resting place, unlike scattering at a private location such as a cottage. Typically, during the scattering, staff will ceremonially pull back the mulch, scatter remains on top of earth and then rake the mulch back over remains. The upkeep is relatively simple, mulch is preferred as the cremains alter the pH levels of soil otherwise, making it unsuitable for many plants with exception of some perennials.

Kitchener has the following criteria for scattering:

- A charge \$300 plus HST per scattering, Care and maintenance contribution is \$30 per scattering
- They complete in-ground cremation interments all year, but scattering and ossuary interments are seasonal, June 1st to November 1st when there isn't snow and or frost.
- Have families sign an additional document (beyond the sales contract) stating that they recognize and agree scattering interments are "forever irretrievable"
- A bronze name plaque can be added to the large boulder adjacent to scattering garden

The Mount Pleasant Cemetery fee for scattering is \$615.00 per person; a small bronze plaque may be attached to a central monument containing the name, year of birth and year of death.

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Both London and Kitchener cemetery operators indicated that actual scatterings amount to approximately 2% of burial activity. They also report unauthorized scattering activity as a common occurrence.

The idea of designated scattering area at the Tillsonburg cemetery has been discussed in the past, with the support of funeral directors and the Tillsonburg Horticultural Society.

Staff is developing plans to include a scattering garden as part of the larger vision for what is now being called the "Memorial Walkway."

This concept involves more than just the garden. The plan includes the installation of a new driveway around the Tillson plots, additional parking, and a paved walking trail that would wind through the wooded area south and east of the main office. The scattering garden would be an integral part of this larger vision, which may also include a columbarium or two, as well as some family columbaria.

CONSULTATION

This report was prepared in consultation with cemetery operators in London, Kitchener, Brantford, Norfolk, the Manager of Parks and Facilities

FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Recommendation PCT 26 proposes \$90,000.00 in the first 3 years for the implementation of scattering gardens.

The average number for London and Kitchener scattering garden is approximately 2% of all burials. The total number of burials in Tillsonburg in 2023 was 172 and in 2022 – 157, therefore following the trend, we can anticipate to have 2 – 3 scatterings per year. \$30 is the minimum amount needed to put in the care and maintenance fund as prescribed by BAO. [Care and Maintenance Calculator - Updated - Bereavement Authority of Ontario \(thebao.ca\)](https://thebao.ca). Provided that Tillsonburg Scattering Fee would be approximately \$300.00, the total annual revenue is expected to be under \$1000.00.

CORPORATE GOALS

How does this report support the corporate goals identified in the Community Strategic Plan?

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- Lifestyle and amenities
- Customer service, communication and engagement
- Business attraction, retention and expansion
- Community growth
- Connectivity and transportation
- Not Applicable

Does this report relate to a specific strategic direction or project identified in the Community Strategic Plan? Please indicate section number and/or any priority projects identified in the plan.

Goal – Within the community, Tillsonburg will strive to offer residents the amenities, services and attractions they require to enjoy balanced lifestyles.

Strategic Direction – Provide an expanded, accessible network of parks and trails.

Priority Project – N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A