

# TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

## Town Cemetery Master Plan



Developed by  
Hillsborough Cemetery Committee  
Adopted 05/24/2018

## **Background**

In the mid-19th century, Hillsborough was running out of space in the town's only public graveyard, the Old Town Cemetery, located at the corner of North Churton and West Tryon streets. Adjacent land near that graveyard was not available. In 1871, a new town cemetery was created at 200 East Corbin Street by the town commissioners on a property where bodies already had been interred.

Today, the Hillsborough Town Cemetery is the largest cemetery in Hillsborough, with more than 3,200 burials and all plots purchased. The cemetery and its monuments contain a reflection of the lives that make up the historic fabric of Hillsborough — from mayors and other important political figures to military war veterans and families. The Town Cemetery is a place of reflection and memories.

## **Cemetery Management**

The Hillsborough Town Cemetery is an active cemetery with all plots sold. Although the town does not sell plots, existing owners may transfer plot ownership and burial rights. In the event of a transfer, staff must research plot ownership and prepare legal documentation, including an affidavit releasing the town from liability if an error has been made due to inaccurate records. Town records of plot ownership are incomplete due to transfers taking place without town knowledge and a fire in the 1960's or 1970's that burned many records. The town retains paper records including deeds, maps and ledger books. The map records are often incomplete or inaccurate regarding the grave plots physical location in the cemetery and useful information in the historic ledger books is limited.

## **Maintenance**

The Town Cemetery is owned and maintained by the Town of Hillsborough. The Hillsborough Cemetery Committee, a volunteer advisory board which was formed in 2014, works to maintain and preserve the town's three cemeteries. The committee has hosted a series of volunteer workdays to maintain the Town Cemetery grounds, clean gravestones and record the inscriptions. Numerous volunteers have attended the workdays. During the workdays, gravestones were cleaned and restored using appropriate methods and under the guidance of Cemetery Committee members who received training from Dean Ruedrich, a historic preservation consultant and cemetery specialist. Dean Ruedrich was also contracted by the town to repair damaged gravestones in the Town Cemetery.

The grounds are maintained by Town of Hillsborough staff and contractors. Mowing operations occur weekly during the growing season and as needed throughout the rest of the year.

## **Cemetery Rules and Regulations**

### Flowers and ornaments

The town may remove any plant that hinders cemetery maintenance. It also may remove floral designs, flowers or any plants as soon as they deteriorate. Decorative items, including flower vases, may not be placed on the ground around gravestones between March 1 and Nov. 1 due to grounds maintenance. Citizens may place small flags in the ground around gravesites during Veterans Day and Memorial Day weeks.

### Purchase of burial rights

The fee for a burial plot — whether for interment or cremation — is \$500 for a town resident at the time of purchase and \$1,000 for a non-resident. Fees are subject to change. A certificate of burial right, identifying the owner and the lots and plots, will be issued. No plots are available for sale currently.

### Rights of owners

The owner of a certificate of burial right may use the designated spaces as a place of burial for any person the owner chooses, provided that the purchase regulations are not violated. Upon the owner's death, all rights pass to the heirs, legatees or devisees.

### Speculation prohibited

Burial rights may not be sold or exchanged for profit or gain. Burial rights may not be acquired at an in-town rate for the intended burial of an out-of-town resident.

### Burial procedure

Burials and the opening of graves may take place only by a licensed funeral director or the director's employees under town supervision. The town must be notified one workday in advance of any funeral for which a grave will be opened. Marking of graves prior to opening will be done to the town's specifications and in the town's presence. The town does not provide this service on weekends or on holidays that fall on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. No grave will be opened less than 5 feet to the bottom except for cremations. All graves must be level with surrounding areas. Each burial plot is limited to one of the following:

- Interment of one human body.
- Interment of one human body and one cremation urn.
- Interment of up to four cremation urns.

### Monuments and markers

Monuments and markers must be placed under town supervision. Markers must be made of a marble or granite base and may be up to 52 inches in length by 18 inches wide for a double marker and 28 inches in length by 16 inches wide for a single marker. All markers in zones 7 and 9 must be flat and level with the surrounding ground.

### Gravesite maintenance

Funeral homes are responsible for gravesite maintenance during the first six months after burial. If a grave space sinks below surrounding ground, erodes or becomes a problem due to lack of proper restoration or stabilization, the town will notify the responsible funeral director to request corrective action within 10 days. The Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining gravesites after the six-month period. For more information, see the Hillsborough Code of Ordinances, Section 13-21: Burial Procedure.

### Monument repair

If a monument becomes unsafe, unsightly or in need of repair, the plot owner is responsible. The cemetery administrator handles exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

### Monument removal or defacement

Under General Statute 14-140, it is a misdemeanor to remove, break or deface any monument

### Disruptive activity

Motor vehicles of any kind may be driven only on the main roads and avenues provided in the cemetery. Equipment necessary for grave preparation or monument setting are allowed.

No unleashed dogs, horses or other animals are allowed in the cemetery, and no animals are allowed to run at large.

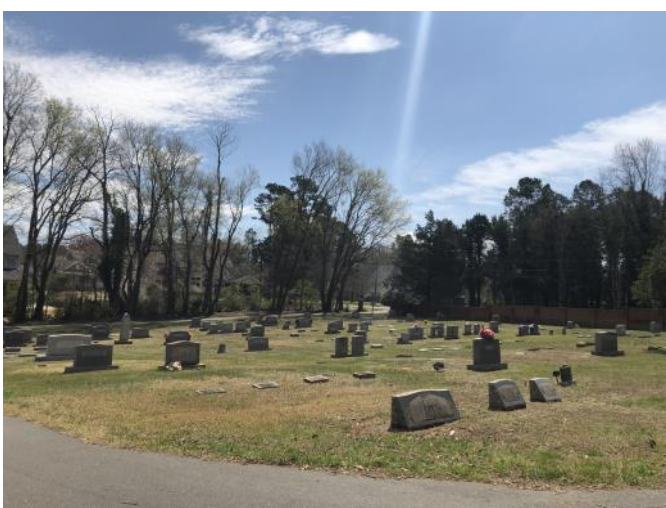
No one may post or attach any bills, posters, placards, pictures or any form of political or commercial advertising within the cemetery.

The following pages include photos of the Town Cemetery grounds taken in 2018.

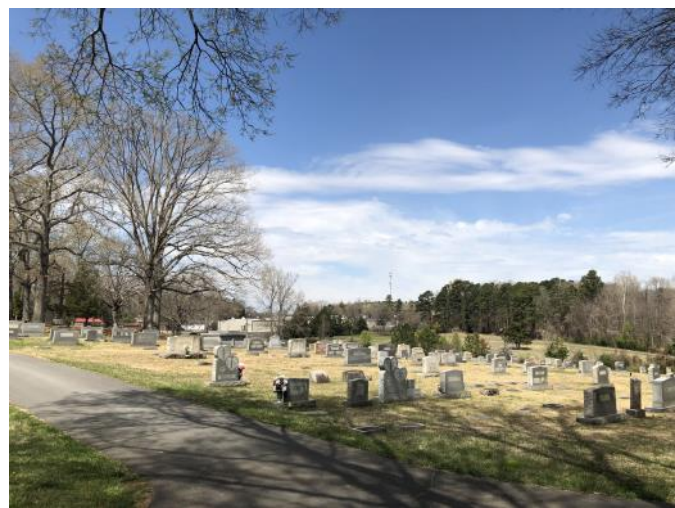
Photographs of Town Cemetery



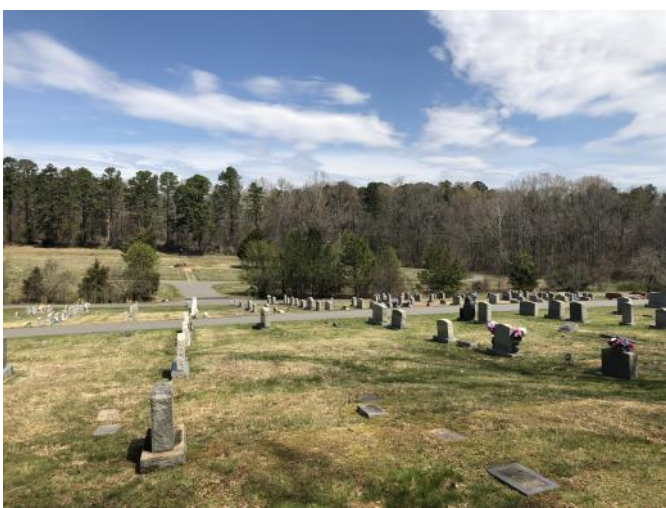
Entrance to Town Cemetery from East Corbin Street



View of Town Cemetery Zone 2



View of Town Cemetery Zone 3



View of Town Cemetery Zones 1 and 3



View of Town Cemetery Zone 9



View of Town Cemetery Zone 4

Photographs of Town Cemetery



Brick wall at Town Cemetery entrance



Detail of deteriorating portion of brick wall



Detail of deteriorating portion of brick wall



Cemetery regulation signage



Detail of chain link fence on west property line



Kudzu growing in stream buffer

Photographs of Town Cemetery



Fountain



Brochure holder



Deteriorating signage in Town Cemetery



Broken gravestone in need of repair



Broken gravestone in need of repair



Stream in town cemetery

## Recommendations

In 2018, the Hillsborough Cemetery Committee, in coordination with the Public Space Division, developed a list of recommended improvements for the Town Cemetery. The recommendations are detailed below and are intended to guide future spending decisions.

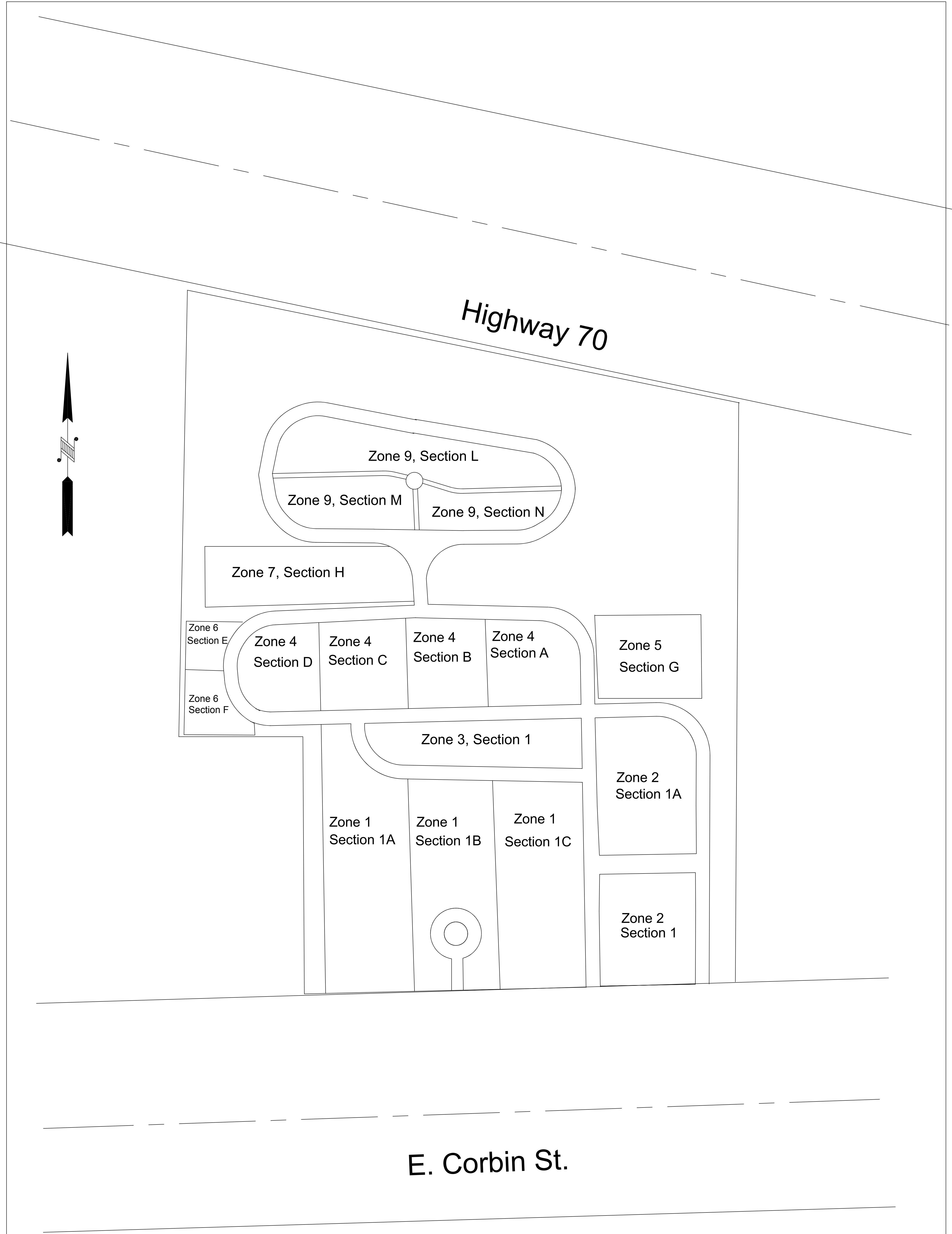
- Repair the deteriorating portions of brick wall along East Corbin Street
- Replacing the chain-link fence with black aluminum fencing
- Remove invasive species (kudzu, privet, etc.) from stream area
- Perform stream restoration in coordination with Stormwater Division
- Add plantings around fountain
- Protect and retain existing trees and consider adding trees in areas that do not compromise gravesites
- Add an interpretive sign explaining the history of the cemetery near the entrance from East Corbin Street
- Add benches in the approved style-Urbanscape 'Butler' bench
- Install a dog waste station near the East Corbin Street entrance
- Conducting a survey of cemetery property and plots
- Invest in cemetery management software that tracks exact location of plots and ownership
- Scan paper records into electronic files
- Update online burial search to list more data for the public as it is acquired and corrected
- Maintain the town website and Town Cemetery brochure with updated information and maps

## Implementation Priorities

The implementation priorities are as follows:

1. Repair and preserve gravestones (100 years or older)
2. Repair cemetery infrastructure (brick walls, road ways, etc.)
3. Add benches and a dog waste station
4. Remove invasive species (kudzu, privet, etc.)
5. Add recommended landscaping and amenities
6. Add recommended signage
7. Replace chain link fencing with aluminum fencing
8. Conduct property survey

The following pages includes a map showing the Town Cemetery zones and a map rendering noting the location for recommended improvements.



STATEMENT OF DISCLAIMER:

THIS OVERVIEW EXHIBIT MAP OF NEW TOWN CEMETERY IS PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES, ONLY, AND IS A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF A HISTORICAL MAP, PROVIDED BY THE TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH TO SGROI LAND SURVEYING, PLLC. THEREFORE, SLS IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOCATION OF THE SECTIONS, OR THE PLOTS AND NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM. FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH.

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REV DATE:	



**Town Cemetery**

