CITY OF VANCOUVER

OCTOBER 2025

## Mountain View Cemetery

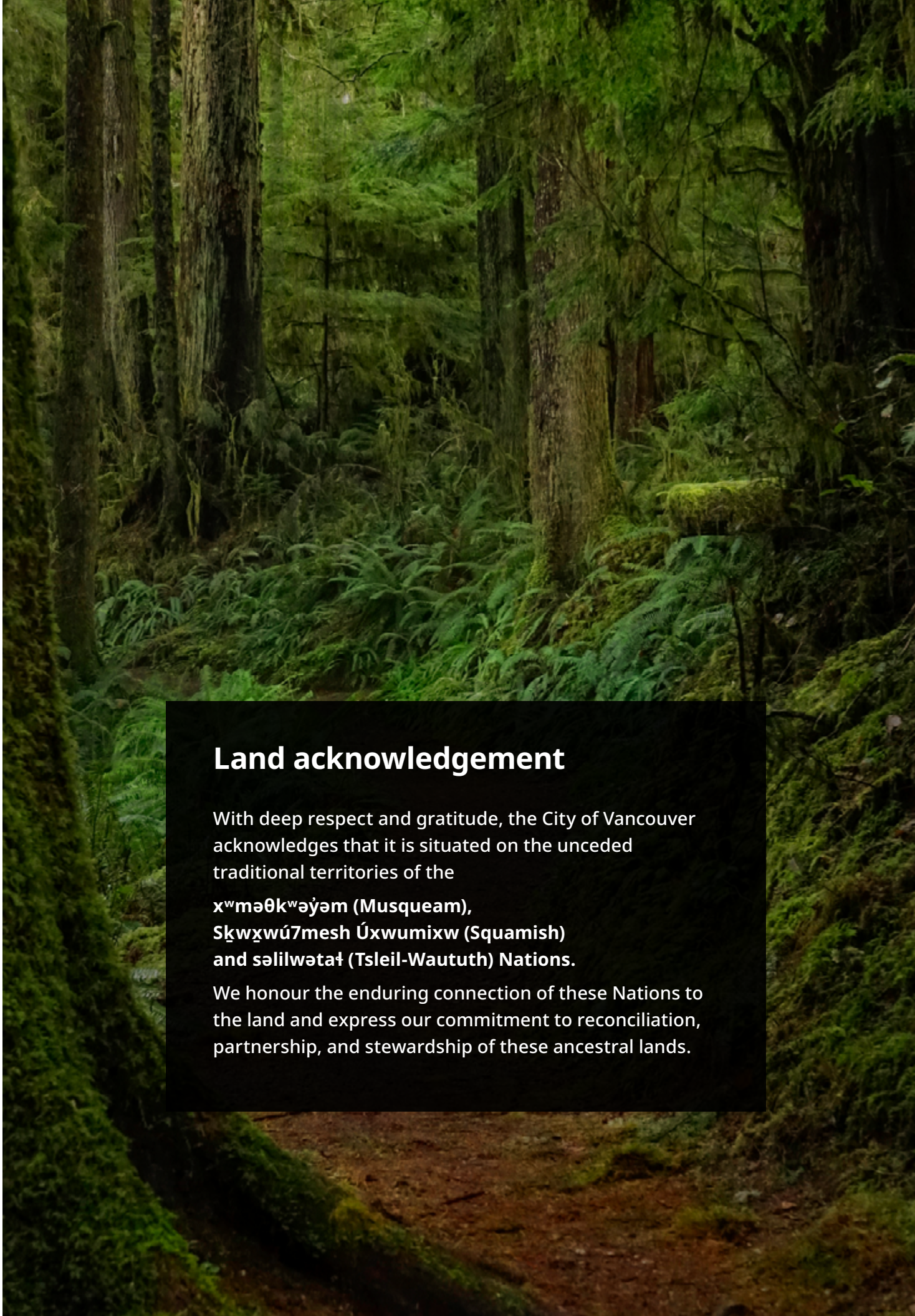
# Perimeter Strategy Update



# Introduction

Mountain View Cemetery (MVC) is Vancouver's only cemetery – a sacred and civic space serving as a place of remembrance, heritage and reflection. Guided by a 100-year Master Plan adopted in 2000, MVC has committed to remaining an active public cemetery providing interment options and preserving its historical character while enhancing accessibility, safety and the visitor experience.

In recent years, increased visitation, aging infrastructure and evolving accessibility standards prompted the City to undertake a comprehensive review of the cemetery's perimeter. The review aimed to ensure that MVC continues to serve families and the public with dignity, safety and care, now and into the future.



## Land acknowledgement

With deep respect and gratitude, the City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the

**xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.**

We honour the enduring connection of these Nations to the land and express our commitment to reconciliation, partnership, and stewardship of these ancestral lands.

# Overview of the MVC Perimeter Strategy Work

In 2022, the City initiated a review of MVC's perimeter considering  accessibility, heritage preservation and operational needs. A consultant was retained to assess the site and provide recommendations. These recommendations guided the City's planning, alongside community feedback, accessibility standards and technical analysis.

- **Inventory and Assessment:** All perimeter edges and entrances were documented and evaluated for condition, accessibility and alignment with MVC's guiding principles.
- **Design Guidelines:** A set of guidelines was developed to ensure consistency and accessibility across the site.
- **Accessibility Review:** This work was informed by an independent review from the Rick Hansen Foundation's 2021 assessment.
- **Public Engagement:** Community feedback was gathered in 2023, with a focus on proposed changes to hedges, fences and entrance points.
- **Costing and Prioritization:** Recommendations were grouped by complexity, urgency, and cost to support phased implementation.



# Focused Analysis:
# Prince Edward Street Entrance

## Background

The Prince Edward Street (PES) entrance, located between 31st and 33rd Avenues, was a key focus of the perimeter review due to long-standing accessibility, safety and preservation concerns.

## Existing Conditions and Options Assessed

The Prince Edward Street entrance path is narrow, uneven, and below today's accessibility standards. Its poor alignment and deteriorating surface cause visitors to step off the path and walk over nearby gravesites, raising concerns about safety and respectful use.

### To address these issues, several options were evaluated:

#### Option 1: Upgrade the existing PES entrance

This would involve widening the path and improving accessibility. However, due to the entrance's limited width (1.2 metres) and its proximity to gravesites, any upgrades would risk disturbing gravesites. This option was deemed not feasible.

#### Option 2: Create a New Entrance on 31st Avenue

This option presented the greatest cost and complexity from both accessibility and safety perspectives, primarily due to the absence of an existing public sidewalk along the cemetery's 31st Avenue perimeter.

#### Option 3: Upgrade and formalize the temporary entrance at 33rd Avenue

The recommended approach is to permanently close the PES entrance and upgrade the temporary entrance at 33rd Avenue. This alternative offers a wider, unobstructed path that meets accessibility standards and avoids impact to gravesites.



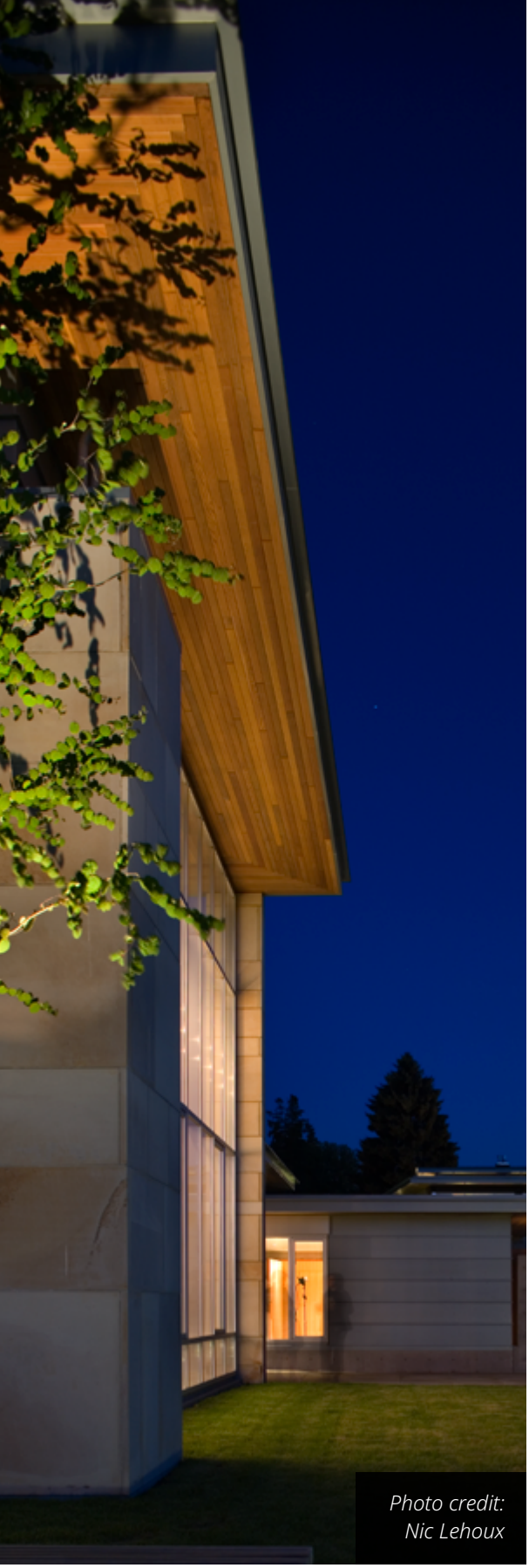


*Photo credit: Nic Lehoux*

## Summary of Public Engagement

In February 2023, the City launched a public engagement process aimed to gather public feedback on enhancing the cemetery's entrances, fences and hedges while preserving the cemetery's cultural heritage. Key themes included:

- **Stakeholders we heard from:** Less than 15% of respondents indicated they own space in MVC, 80% indicated they often/always use the cemetery as a nature/green space and 20% indicated they often/always visit specific graves.
- **Desire for Access:** Residents valued the PES entrance for its convenience and connection to the cemetery as a 'green space'.
- **Concerns About Heritage:** Some opposed hedge removal and entrance closure due to perceived loss of character.
- **Support for Accessibility:** Many supported upgrades that improved access for all users.

Through this engagement, it was clear that MVC is a cherished space for the respondents, with varied uses. Dog walking, jogging, meditation, and remembrance were all cited as core uses of this space. The MVC Perimeter Strategy is grounded in an evaluation of current site conditions, guided by current design and accessibility standards, operational constraints, with phased implementation.

Read the full public engagement summary: Mountain View cemetery perimeter plan engagement summary (PDF, 1.6 MB)(External link).

# What We Learned

The planning process for the Mountain View Cemetery Perimeter Strategy revealed several important insights that shaped the final direction.

## Balancing accessibility with site integrity

Improving accessibility is a City priority, but not all areas of the cemetery can be modified without compromising its heritage or disturbing burial sites. At the PES entrance, the path is only 1.2 metres wide and directly borders graves, making it impossible to upgrade without relocating interred remains.

## Community input added valuable context

Public engagement confirmed that Mountain View Cemetery serves many roles beyond its primary function as a cemetery. It is a valued green space, a quiet walking route and a place for reflection and remembrance. Many visitors use the cemetery regularly for walking, dog-walking and nature appreciation. The feedback highlighted a strong desire for respectful access, with emphasis on maintaining the cemetery's sacred character while supporting its role as a community space. These insights helped guide decisions.

## Design consistency improves the visitor experience

A more unified perimeter design, using consistent fencing, entrance materials and signage, will enhance wayfinding, safety and the cemetery's respectful atmosphere, while preserving its historic character.



# Key Decisions

## Closure of the Prince Edward Street entrance

Due to its narrow width and proximity to graves, the PES entrance cannot be upgraded to meet accessibility standards. The City is committed to preserving the integrity of burial sites and this entrance will be permanently closed.

## Advance Option 3: Upgrading the 33rd Avenue entrance

The temporary entrance at 33rd Avenue will be upgraded and made permanent.  This option offers a fully accessible, unobstructed entrance that has already been well used by visitors and provides a more feasible and cost-effective solution than the other options considered.

## Entrance spacing remains adequate

The MVC Perimeter Strategy recommends pedestrian entrances be spaced no more than 500 metres apart. With the closure of the PES entrance, the cemetery's entrance spacing continues to meet this standard, ensuring safe and inclusive access for all visitors.

## Supporting public safety

City Engineering staff have identified the existing PES stairs as potentially misleading as they do not provide an accessible route to and from the cemetery and sidewalk. Their removal is under review to further support accessibility and legibility of the perimeter.





# Next Steps

The City and MVC will begin implementing upgrades in phases based on availability of resources, timing of adjacent projects and other operational factors. The first project will include the permanent closure of the Prince Edward Street (PES) pedestrian entrance and upgrading of the 33rd Street entrance.

Looking ahead, we will identify other areas of the cemetery perimeter that are priorities for further investment as part of annual capital budget planning. These efforts are part of our ongoing commitment to preserving Mountain View Cemetery as a respectful, accessible and welcoming space for all.