

State Veterans Cemetery, Tri-Cities Update



April 8, 2025

As we move through the 2025 Legislative Session we are pleased to report that the \$500,000 identified in the Governor's proposed Capital Budget for the pre-design of the Tri-Cities Veterans Cemetery was included in the Senate and House versions of the Capital Budget. The pre-design phase is key to expanding burial services in southeastern and central Washington, where the federal VA identified a need for a medium-sized cemetery. This is good news as legislators move toward the next step and assign members to a conference committee to negotiate differences in other areas of the budget. Having funding in all 3 versions of the budget at this stage is certainly a good indication that the project will also be included in the final Capital Budget. We will continue to monitor and share additional information should anything change.

As mentioned in the January update, the pre-design allows us to continue studying parcels that can support the cemetery, including the type of material that is below the surface, water tables, and other important factors. It is also crucial for identifying availability of water rights and costs for the land and required improvements. Once this is complete, we will have an accurate estimate to share with Legislators and the Federal VA to secure construction funding.

Recently, we had the opportunity to meet with leaders in the City of West Richland to talk about the privately owned parcel within the city limits. We also continue to learn more about the parcel owned by the City of Richland including requirements for land improvements and infrastructure. Availability of water and requirements for site development are the main focus of the conversations as both parcels have attributes that make them unique.

We are currently evaluating both parcels based on site considerations when establishing a State Veteran Cemetery. The following are site selection standards:

- Proximity-as close as possible to the most densely populated.
- Size-50 years of internments.
- Shape-boundaries, undivided by roads or easements, shape.
- Accessibility-accessible by highway.
- Utilities & Water-availability of public utilities (electricity, water, sewer, gas, cable/data lines). All cost of infrastructure needed to develop site (accessibility, roads, land development).
- Surrounding land use-noise, environmental impacts. Consider current and future projects.
- Soils-soils should be quality which will provide adequate topsoil for growing turf. Able to construct roads and buildings. Location of water table to allow internments.
- Topography-relatively level to rolling terrain. Sufficiently sloped to enable drainage

- Aesthetics-pleasant view and quality vegetative cover.
- Restrictions to development-cultural/historic/archaeological elements, utility easements, rights of way. Flood zones.
- Site suitability and acceptability-Soils testing; well and water quality; historic and archaeological land use; cultural resources; flood plains, wetland, and endangered species; land use and public access; utilities; hazardous waste; corrective action agreement.

The 2025 Legislative Session will adjourn on April 27 at which time we hope to be sharing another update that funding for the pre-design has been secured and we are putting out a request for proposals to accomplish this work.

Thank you for your ongoing support and please let us know if you have questions moving forward by sending a message to CemeteryTri-Cities@dva.wa.gov.