



Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery Fence Restoration

Minneapolis Bonding Priority #3

Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery Fence Restoration: Project Overview

The City of Minneapolis is requesting \$1.029 million to help complete the \$2.584 million fence restoration project that will help protect the public face of this landmark, significant to the State of Minnesota. Pioneers and Soldiers, originally known as Layman's Cemetery, was established in 1853. It is the oldest surviving cemetery in Minneapolis, the final resting place for over 20,000 individuals, and one of the few surviving features from the city's first period of settlement. This local Minneapolis landmark is also the only cemetery in Minnesota listed as an individual landmark on the National Register of Historic Places.

Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery is significant for its role in the social history of Minnesota. The cemetery is ethnically diverse and contains a cross section of early Minnesotans whose efforts contributed to the early development. In addition, the Cemetery contains the graves of soldiers from the War of 1812, Civil War, and Spanish-American War.

In 1928, the City of Minneapolis took over ownership due to the cemetery's poor condition and has continued to manage the property. Unfortunately, a perpetual maintenance fund was never established when it was privately owned. This, coupled with limited room for new burials, makes the ability to raise revenue for capital improvements, like the fence restoration project, challenging if not impossible without outside funding.

Scope:

There are three parts to the project:

1. Completely restore the 1,953 linear foot historic steel and limestone pillar fence that lines Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery on Cedar Avenue and Lake Street;
2. Install a new fence along 21st Avenue South to compliment the Cedar Avenue and Lake Street fence (currently there is a chain link fence); and
3. Install a water proofing system at the top of the historic limestone pillars to help protect the fence and pillars.

The cemetery is open April through October. Thanks to the work of the nonprofit organization Friends of the Cemetery, thousands of people visit the cemetery annually.

The fence restoration project will completely restore the highly visible public face of the cemetery and restore a greater sense of pride and ownership of this important Minnesota landmark. It will have an enduring value by protecting the final resting place of those that helped build and found this state and fight in this country's wars.

Funding:

Total project cost = \$2,584,000
Total state contribution so far = \$504,188
Total city contribution so far = \$1,000,000
Total other contributions so far = \$70,000
Request to state for bonding = \$1,029,000

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