

## 1. Why this issue? Where did it come from? General background.

**Historic Significance:** Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery (formerly Layman's Cemetery), established in 1853, is the only cemetery in Minnesota listed as an individual landmark on the National Register of Historic Places; it is also a Minneapolis landmark (see Page 10). This cemetery, which is non-sectarian and ethnically diverse, is also the oldest surviving cemetery in Minneapolis. It was renamed Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery in 1928 to honor the Minnesota and Minneapolis pioneers and soldiers buried here.

In the 1920s, the cemetery was in a state of disrepair because no perpetual maintenance fund was ever established and other cemeteries in and around Minneapolis were receiving more burials because they were considered more fashionable. In the spring of 1925, a group that included the Grant Army of the Republic, Sons of the Revolution, the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.), and the National Society of Colonial Dames formed the Minneapolis Cemetery Protective Association (M.C.P.A.). They began to organize to save Layman's Cemetery as an important site of the early history of Minneapolis and lobbied the City of Minneapolis to take over the cemetery as a memorial to the pioneers and soldiers of Minneapolis.

In May 1927, the Minneapolis City Council voted to purchase Layman's Cemetery, implement improvements, and rename it Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery to commemorate the city's first settlers and war veterans (see Page 6 and 11). As part of the commemoration many improvements were made including the construction of the ornate steel and limestone fence built along Lake Street and Cedar Avenue. The steel and limestone fence is 1,953 linear feet and contains 67 sections.

**Fence Restoration:** The portions of the Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery fence that were not rehabilitated in 2010-2011 are in poor condition and are in need of substantial repair. Those sections that have not been repaired have failed paint, rust of varying levels (from surface rust to rusted out sections), missing, bent, or broken pickets, and inadequate structural support that creates bent pickets during freeze-thaw cycle. In addition, the limestone pillars are in need of repointing and waterproofing.

The Pioneers and Soldiers fence rehabilitation project is a \$1.4 million dollar project. The restoration project includes restoring the fence's steel elements and repointing the fence's limestone pillars. Due to the project cost and not having all funds initially in place, the fence restoration project was broken into phases.

Phase I and II, which were completed in May 2011, restored 15 of the 67 sections (22 percent) including the main gates and the gates along Lake Street (see Page 7-9). The non-gate sections that were chosen for Phase I and Phase II were those that were in the worst condition.

Phase III is scheduled to begin in November 2011 and be completed by July 2012. It is proposed to restore 11 additional sections (see Page 6). After Phase III is completed 39 percent (26 sections) of the steel fence elements will be restored.

To date, \$502,500 has been secured for the project. This amount covers the expenses for Phase I through III. The money secured for the project has come from a variety of sources. The City of Minneapolis appropriated \$250,000 as part of the 2006-2010 five-year capital improvement committee (CLIC). Outside sources have contributed \$252,000 for the project. The Minnesota Historical Society through their state grants-in-aid program has awarded a majority of outside funding. The fence restoration project has received three state grants totaling \$235,500. In addition, Friends of the Cemetery, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the cemetery has donated \$18,800 to the City of Minneapolis to assist with this project. Friends of the Cemetery has received donations from hundreds of individuals and businesses since starting the Adopt-A-Picket fundraiser in 2009. The nonprofit's goal is to raise \$100,000 for the project.

An additional \$970,000 is needed to restore the remaining 61 percent of the steel fence (41 sections) as well as repointing of the limestone pillars. The construction cost per fence section is approximately \$14,000 (\$574,000). The repointing work is estimated at \$201,500. Additional costs include, architectural review, project management, and general overhead.

2. Does this require statutory change, or is this something the City already has the authority to do?

The proposed work does not require a statutory change. The City Council has the authority.

3. Possible partners or opposition?

CPED-Planning, Public Works, and Property Services has been working collaboratively to seek funding for and carry out restoration of the historic fence.

Friends of the Cemetery, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery, has been a financial supporter of the cemetery. Since 2009, Friends of the Cemetery has donated \$18,800 to the City of Minneapolis for the fence restoration project as part of their Adopt-A-Picket fundraiser. The goal of the Adopt-A-Picket fundraiser is to raise \$100,000. The money raised from Friends of the Cemetery has come from hundreds of donors.

As previously mentioned, The Minnesota Historical Society/State Historic Preservation Office has been an incredible financial partner. The Minnesota Historical Society has granted the City of Minneapolis three grants totaling \$235,500 in the past three years.

The National Trust of Historic Preservation and American Express have also been financial partners for this project. Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery competed in the 2011 Partners in Preservation competition. Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery requested a grant for \$125,000 as part of this effort. A decision will be made the week of November 7 on the amount Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery will receive for their participation.

The Pioneers and Soldiers Fence Restoration Project received a 2011 Minneapolis Heritage Preservation award from Preserve Minneapolis. It has also received considerable state-wide attention in the media. The completed fence restoration project will show the private sector that the City of Minneapolis leads by example in historic preservation by choosing to repair rather than replace important historic elements. A completed fence restoration project will also provide a real-life example and inspiration for other groups caring for cemeteries which do not have a perpetual maintenance fund in place and are looking to make improvements that are costly.

#### 4. What will be the benefit or implications to the City?

The City and the general public will benefit with the rehabilitation of the steel fence in three major ways:

- 1.) The fence will improve safety inside and outside of the cemetery. Since the fence is in poor condition, it is unstable in some parts. The combination of the fence's poor condition and the high pedestrian traffic along Cedar Avenue and Lake Street creates a potential hazard. In addition, the poor condition of the fence has at times encouraged graffiti and vandalism of the property. Restoration of the fence will reduce the interest in graffiti and vandalism.
- 2.) The fence will also restore additional pride to this highly-visible landmark located on a commercial corridor. The fence is a major focal point for the 34,000 vehicles and tens of thousands mass transit riders (LRT and busses) that pass by the cemetery on a daily basis. In addition, the restoration of the fence will be a great complement to the Lake Street reconstruction and streetscaping project currently taking place.
- 3.) The restoration of the fence will serve as a recent example of the strong historic preservation spirit that has been part of this cemetery since the 1920's. The efforts to preserve the cemetery in the 1920's and 1930's is partially what makes this an important historic resource. Rehabilitation of this fence will help continue the historic legacy of the cemetery.

5. If you have any additional supporting documents, please send them to me no later than **Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup>** so they may be published in time.

***Community Engagement:*** The Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery, in addition to serving as a place of remembrance to friends and family buried in the cemetery, it serves as a historic community asset for the nation, state, and the city. The cemetery is open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from April 15th through October 15th, and holds a number of community events throughout the year, thanks in large part to the Friends of the Cemetery. The events include:

- Family Day remembrance
- Memorial Day remembrance
- Historic tours, including tours that are part of the City of Minneapolis Heritage Preservation walking tour series.

- Music events: On October 8, 2011, more than 1,500 people visited Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery to experience an open house weekend that featured a concert by two rising stars in the local independent music scene, Jeremy Messersmith and Lucy Michelle and the Velvet Lapelles. A majority of the visitors to the cemetery were first time visitors.

In addition to the community events, the cemetery also serves as a research facility with vast copies of records of those buried at Pioneers kept in the cemetery office building. The intended long-term use of the property is to maintain all of the current programming, as well as to increase the public awareness of this national and local treasure through additional events.



## Before and After Images Phase I and II

Figure 1: Lake Street Gate: Before Restoration



Figure 2: Lake Street Gate: After Restoration



**Figure 3: Fence Section: Before Restoration**



**Figure 4: Fence Section: After Restoration**



**Figure 5: Lake Street Section: Before Restoration**



**Figure 6: Lake Street Section: After Restoration**





## Layman's Cemetery

Individual Landmark

*Pioneers & Soldiers Memorial Cemetery*



1936



2006

**Address:** 2925 Cedar Avenue

**Neighborhood:** [East Phillips \(Neighborhood.asp \)](#)

**Construction Date:** [1853 \(Construction\\_Date.asp \)](#)

**Architect:** Undetermined

**Architectural Style:** Undetermined

**Historic Use:** [Religious - Cemetery \(Religious\\_uses.asp \)](#)

**Current Use:** Religious - Cemetery

**Date of Local Designation:** 2006

**Date of National Register Designation:** N/A

**Area(s) of Significance:** Social history; significant persons and groups

**Period of Significance:** 1853-1942

**Historic Profile:** Layman's Cemetery, or Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery as it is more commonly known, occupies a 27-acre site in south Minneapolis. Founded in 1853 on land adjacent to the farmstead of Martin Layman, it is the oldest surviving cemetery in Minneapolis. The cemetery is the sole surviving churchyard-style frontier cemetery in the city, as characterized by closely spaced graves arranged in a generally rectilinear pattern, and it is the final resting place of nearly 20,000 pioneers, veterans and immigrants. It contains the graves of some of the first settlers of the city, many of whom made major contributions to local history; soldiers and veterans of the War of 1812, the Dakota Conflict, the Civil War, the Mexican American War, the Spanish-American War, and World War I; mid to late nineteenth century European immigrants, early African American citizens and transposed abolitionists. Notable individuals buried in the cemetery include Philander Prescott, Charles W. Christmas, and William Goodridge. In 1925, a group began to organize to save Layman's Cemetery for its historical importance. The group's effort is recognized as early, local attempt at historic preservation.

### Photo Credits:

1936, A.F. Raymond, courtesy of The Minnesota Historical Society

2006, Minneapolis CPED

### Works Cited:

"City of Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Registration Form," 2005.

**Figure 1. Pioneers and Soldier Cemetery Location**



Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery: Map Created circa 2006

**Figure 2. Cemetery Fence Description**



Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery: circa 2007