

Article Number 9

RESOLUTION - DESIGN PROCESS OF CREMATORY AT WESTVIEW CEMETERY

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Article

To see if the Town will vote to adopt a resolution to begin the design process of a crematory at Westview Cemetery; or act in any other manner in relation thereto.

Description

This request is for a vote of town meeting to request that staff include a design appropriation for a crematory at Westview Cemetery in the upcoming FY2026 budget.

Motion

That the Town is urged to

- a) develop a budget and timeline for the design and construction of a crematory addition to the existing Westview Cemetery building and present it at the next Annual Town Meeting in Spring 2025
- b) include a design appropriation in the FY2026 budget

Overview

This presentation will cover four main points:

1

Cremations continue to increase throughout the US

2

Cremation offers a more economic option to our residents

3

There is an increasing local need for a crematory

4

A local crematory will afford all residents an equitable right

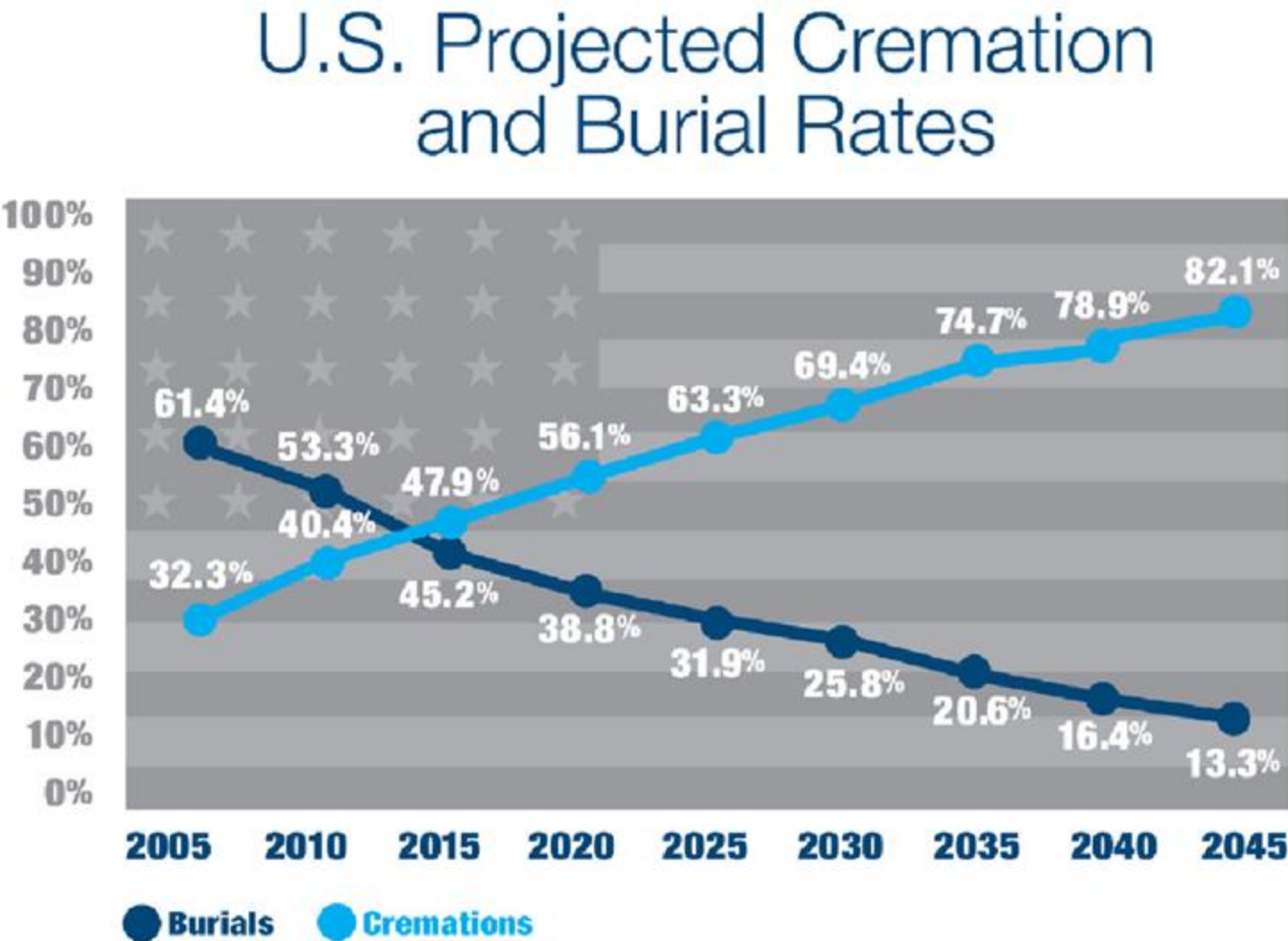
Cremation rates continue to increase nationally at an average of ~1.5% annually

Data Source: 2024 National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) Cremation and Burial report, July 2024

U.S. CREMATION AND BURIAL TRENDS

In 2015, the national cremation rate surpassed the casketed-burial rate for the first time in U.S. history.

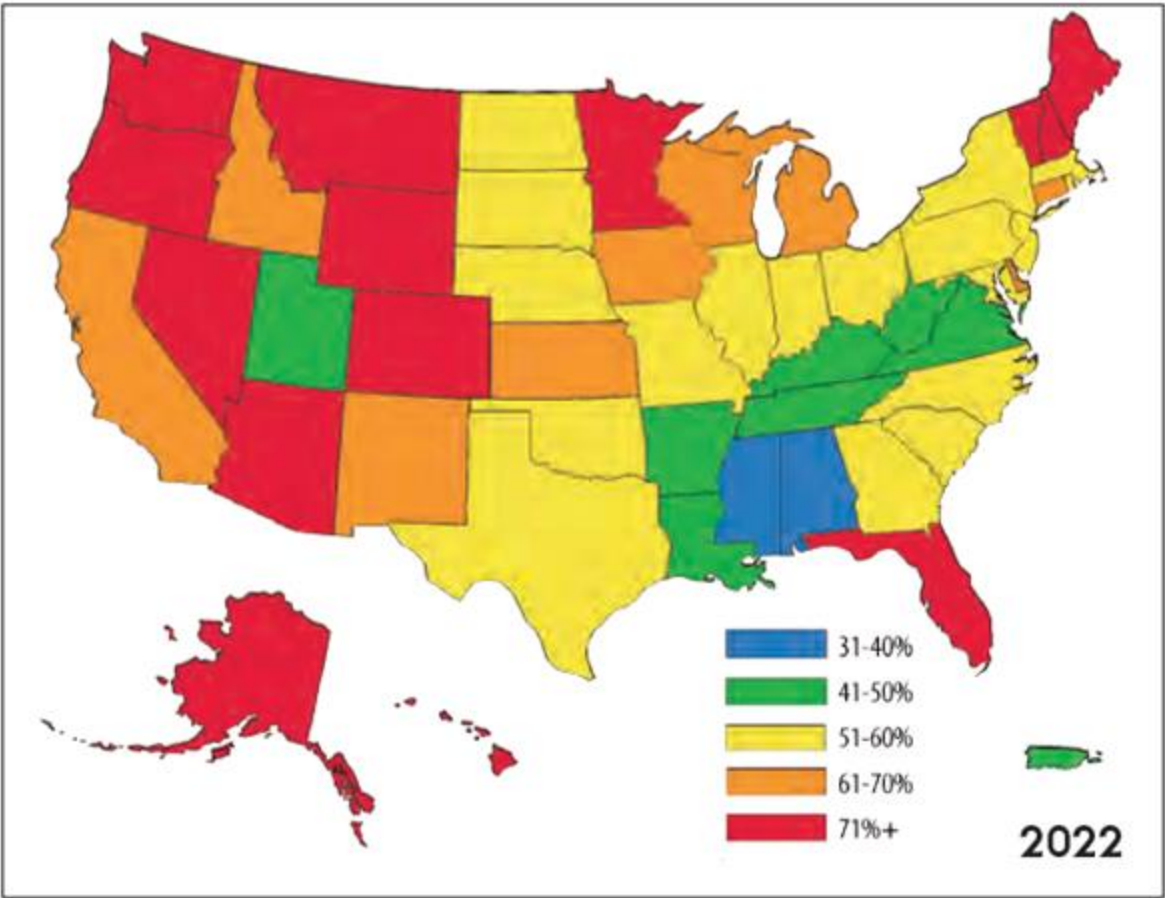
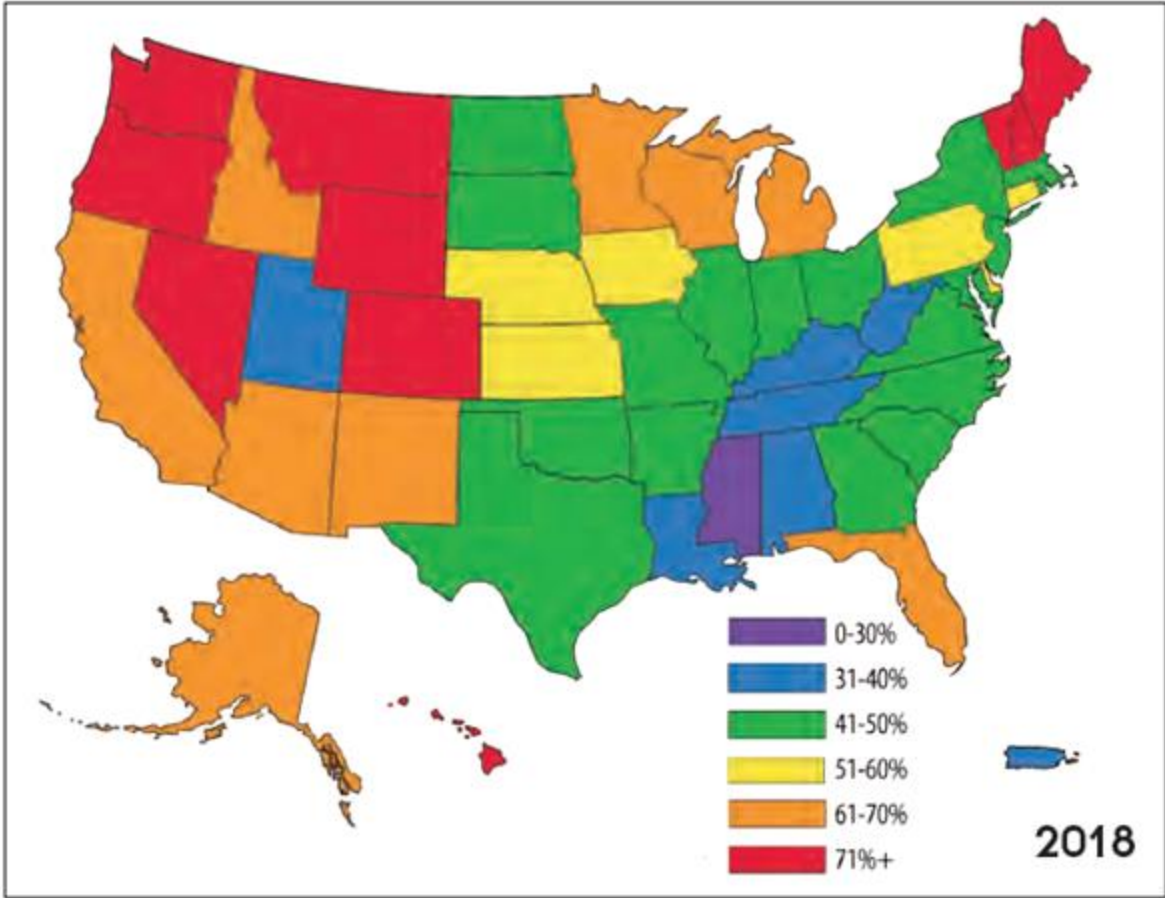
Overall, the annual rise in the percentage of cremations, and the corresponding decline in the percentage of burials, has followed a relatively steady pattern nationally, averaging about 1.5% per year in most U.S. states.



Cremation rates continue to increase nationally at an average of ~1.5% annually

Data Source: 2022 Cremation Association of North America (CANA) report

Percentages of Cremations in the States/Provinces for 2018 and 2022

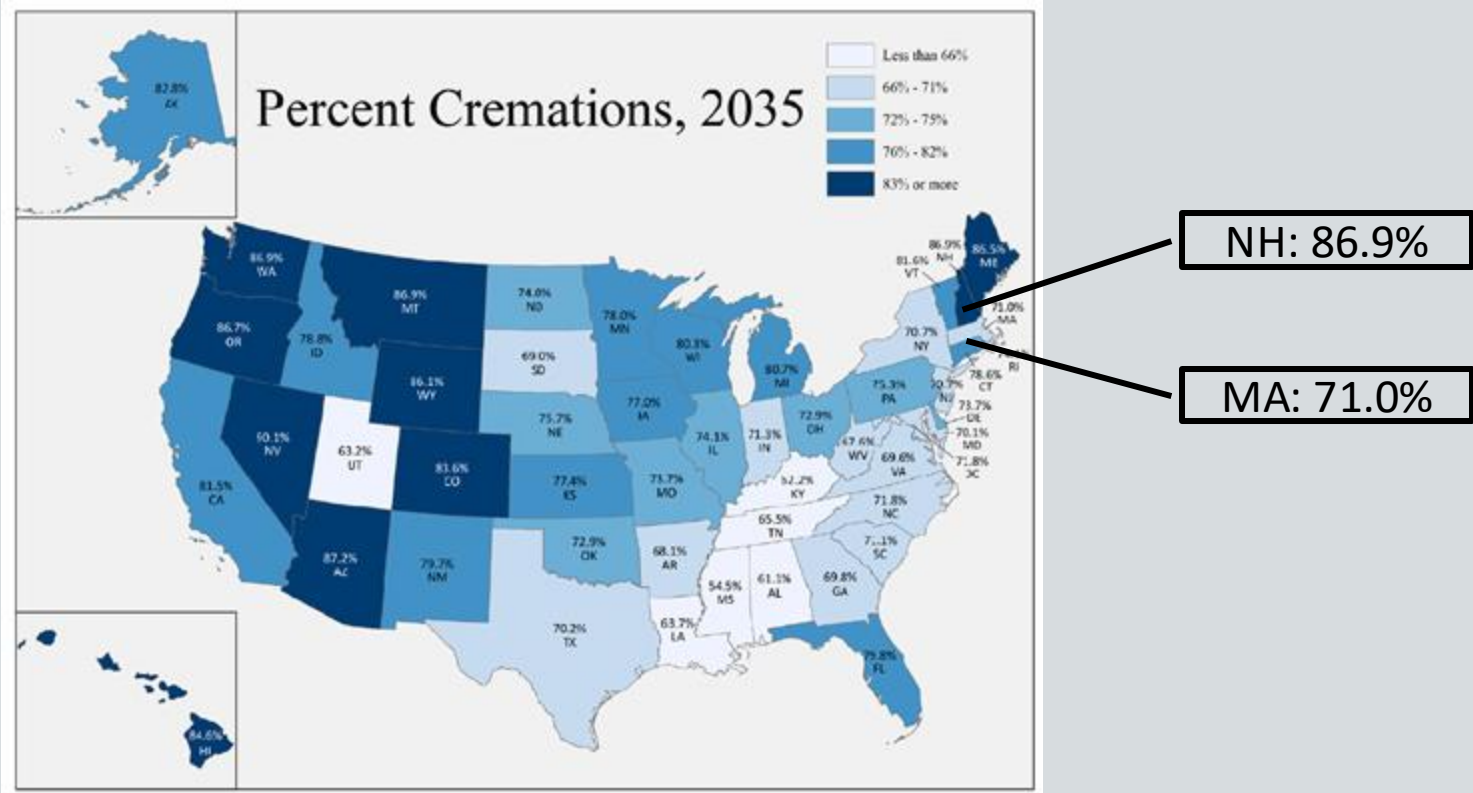


Cremation rates continue to increase in Massachusetts and are projected to reach ~65% by 2030 and >70% by 2035

1

Data Source: 2024 National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) Cremation and Burial report, July 2024

	BURIALS							CREMATIONS						
State	2020	2024	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2020	2024	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Massachusetts	40.2%	34.5%	33.1%	26.7%	20.7%	16.9%	13.7%	51.5%	55.9%	57.5%	64.6%	71.0%	74.9%	78.0%
New Hampshire	19.9%	17.1%	16.5%	13.5%	10.5%	8.4%	7.0%	77.5%	80.4%	81.0%	84.0%	86.9%	89.0%	90.5%



Cremation costs are approximately 25% cheaper than burial costs

Data Source: 2024 National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) Cremation and Burial report, July 2024

NFDA 2023 General Price List Burial- and Cremation-Related Charges

Selected GPL Funeral Goods and Services		2023 Median Charges
Adult casketed funeral with viewing and ceremony followed by burial (vault not included)*		\$8,300
Immediate burial (container provided by family)		\$2,995
Immediate burial (container provided by funeral home)		\$3,720
Adult casketed funeral with viewing and ceremony followed by cremation**		\$6,280
Direct cremation (container provided by family)		\$2,645
Direct cremation (container provided by funeral home)		\$2,750
Metal burial casket		\$2,500
Rental casket		\$1,095
Alternative cremation container		\$160
Urn		\$295

Source: © 2023 NFDA GPL Study. The next NFDA GPL Study will be conducted in 2025.
Median = amount at which half of the figures fall below and half are above.

Total costs for cremation are significantly less expensive in the Greater Boston area

Data Source: Preliminary research by our group

	Casketed Burial	Cremate + Burial	Cremate + Columbarium	Cremate + Scattering	Data from local MA cemeteries websites
Cost of Grave	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	-	-	Costs range from \$3,000-\$100,000
Cost of Casket	\$\$\$\$	-	-	-	Costs range in the thousands of dollars depending on the type
Cost of Burial	\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$	-	-	Average costs are ~\$3,000
Cost of Cremation	-	\$\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$	Average costs are ~\$500
Cost for Witnessing	-	-	-	\$\$\$	Average costs are ~\$250
Cost of Urn	-	\$\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$	Average costs are ~\$500
Cost of Urn Niche	-	-	\$\$\$\$	-	Costs range from a \$2,000 to \$20,000
Cost for Scattering	-	-	-	\$\$\$	Average costs are ~\$500
TOTAL COST	\$\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$	

Cremation rates continue to increase in Lexington

Data Source: 2023 Capital Improvement Project request for Columbarium

Justification/Benefit:

Due to the rising number of cremations, an option for interring urns has been requested by many residents. Currently urns are interred in traditional burial plots. Construction of a columbarium will provide an option for urns while freeing up traditional burial plots for regular body burials. This will provide a more efficient use of space and meet the needs of those choosing cremation.

- 2024 Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$50,000 for design
- Estimated construction cost \$450,000 targeted for 2026

We have resolved to make Lexington a “truly equitable community

Data Source: https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8300/Systemic-Racism-Resolution_2020

Town of Lexington Motion Special Town Meeting 2020-2

ARTICLE 8

SYSTEMIC RACISM RESOLUTION (Citizen Petition)

Resolved:

That the Town:

- a. consider racial and other equity impacts in all decisions and planning processes in order to work toward dismantling systemic racism and white privilege;
- b. take action to integrate racial equity tools and concepts into routine operations and policy-making;
- c. build capacity to collect, interpret and act on data related to inequities, particularly those related to health, housing, education, policing, representation, and economic and environmental justice; and
- d. develop and implement a comprehensive racial equity plan with public input, to include staff training, hiring practices, and public education;

all with the goal of making Lexington a truly equitable community.

(09/21/2020)

We have resolved to make Lexington a “truly equitable community”

Data Source: https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8300/Systemic-Racism-Resolution_2020

We recognize that the Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist communities are minorities in our town. A local crematory will be a significant benefit for these residents and families since their faith requires “witnessed cremation”. Many of our residents would like to have their last rites in the town that they have called home for decades. This is not very different than wanting to be buried in the town that one has lived in throughout their life. In addition, a local crematory might benefit other economically disadvantaged residents as well.

In these communities, post cremation, the ashes are either taken 3 miles out to sea and scattered or taken back to India to be scattered in rivers or oceans over there. They are rarely kept in a columbarium.

Massachusetts crematories offering “witnessed” cremation near Lexington

Data Source: Indian Circle for Caring USA Inc. (ICC)

4



Puritan Lawn Memorial Park Cemete...
4.3 ★ (23)
Cemetery [+ Note](#)



Rural Cemetery & Crematory
4.3 ★ (13)
Cemetery [+ Note](#)



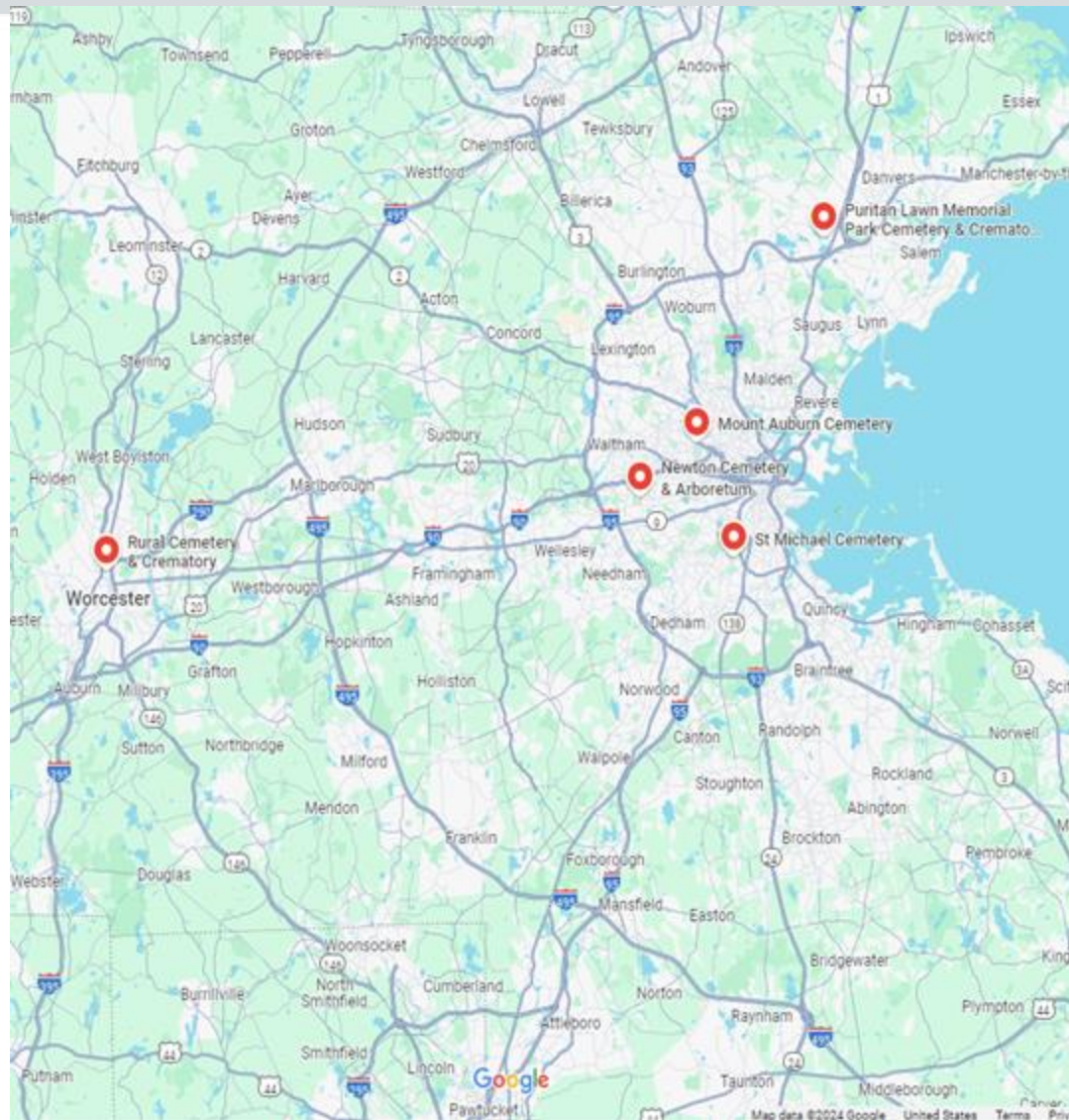
St Michael Cemetery
4.8 ★ (12)
Cemetery [+ Note](#)



Newton Cemetery & Arboretum
4.3 ★ (29)
Cemetery [+ Note](#)



Mount Auburn Cemetery
4.8 ★ (314)
Cemetery [+ Note](#)



Currently families are traveling long distances (mainly to New Hampshire due to availability and costs) to perform these rites.

Motion

That the Town is urged to

- a) develop a budget and timeline for the design and construction of a crematory addition to the existing Westview Cemetery building and present it at the next
- b) Annual Town Meeting in Spring 2025 include a design appropriation in the FY2026 budget

THANK YOU!