

# STAKEHOLDER VIEWS ON THREE RALEIGH CEMETERIES

William Vartorella, Ph.D., C.B.C.  
Craig and Vartorella, Inc.

## Introduction

Under the revised scope of work, Craig and Vartorella, Inc. believed the central issue to be addressed in the "Stakeholders' Focus Group" was the potential for sustainability of the historic cemeteries as part of the broader downtown and heritage tourism efforts. To this end, a series of open-ended questions were developed to attempt to ferret out what the stakeholders expect of the city, preconceived notions of the challenges and opportunities for historic cemeteries as a strategic asset in heritage tourism, and the potential for local consortial funding to support this strategic asset. A core issue is how the resource is valued and how they wish it to be presented to tourists, genealogists, and the public (e.g., the physical beauty of the cemeteries, maintenance levels, etc.).

Stakeholder groups would be probed to determine whether the creation of a new nonprofit can contribute to the broader heritage tourism/economic goals and objectives, how such a nonprofit might be conceived, stakeholder participation, etc.

A thorny issue is measuring the impact of the nonprofit initiative within the overall downtown development effort. An underlying theme would be of leadership and service, e.g., that while nonprofit board members have a fiduciary responsibility, the broader goal is giving and getting money for the sustainable development of the historic cemeteries.

Moreover, we planned to raise the issue of *donor fatigue* within the Raleigh community,

here meaning the competition from existing nonprofits for donor dollars and whether the Mission Statement of a new nonprofit would be capable of attracting both start-up monies and long-term support.

Simply stated, the goal is for the cemeteries to be part of the strategic arsenal of heritage tourism and economic development, rather than a static liability of maintenance. Getting the group to the point of understanding this dynamic and proffering solutions to the challenges and immediate projects has the potential of moving the stakeholders forward and gathering important intelligence for the funding analysis.

## Literature

Formal tourism studies related to cemeteries are scattered, scant, and sketchy—much like the fading memories and histories of the personas interred therein. Worse, there seems to be no systematic effort to *quantify* the value of a cemetery in terms of heritage tourism or for any kind of methodology to measure the number of visitors or to determine who is visiting a long-dead relative (genealogy, perhaps) vs. interest in art & architecture stylistic issues.

A specific cemetery may be a tourist destination (the Gettysburg battlefield or the burial site of "Elvis" come to mind), but most, frankly, are of a more personal nature. Even the term "cemetery" is a misnomer, as "Ground Zero" in New York City has achieved symbolic and consensual status as such for many, if not most, Americans.

Added into the mix is the spate of "New Age" aficionados, mystics, the rise of the Gothic Movement, and efforts by niche tourism (and Hollywood film) to capitalize on death and the macabre. Specifically, there is an effort underway to define "cemetery tourism" as part of a greater phenomenon called "Grief Tourism" (see, for example, <http://Grief-Tourism.com>). Essentially, "Grief Tourism" is a rather nebulous concept comprised of 1. Battlefield Tourism, 2. Cemetery Tourism, 3. Disaster Tourism, 4. Holocaust Tourism, 5. Prison Tourism, and 6. Thanatourism (an extreme form of grief tourism that involves the dark contemplation of death at the time of its occurrence).

The scholarship appears to originate with the researchers Malcolm Foley and J. John Lennon, who used the term "dark tourism" to describe "...the phenomenon which encompasses the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites" (Foley and Lennon 1996:198).

Tony Seaton (1996) coined a somewhat similar term in his article, "From Thanatopsis to Thanatourism: Guided by the Dark." He specifically includes travel to graves and monuments. Even earlier C. Rojek (1993) used the term, "black spots" to describe the attraction. Most recently Stephanie Yuill (2003) examined some of the dark tourism aspects in her thesis.

In Europe, tourism associated with cemeteries is perhaps better recognized. In 2001 the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe was organized to create a network "comprising . . . public and private organisations which care for cemeteries considered to be of historical or artistic importance." The goals of the organization include promotion, protection, restoration, and maintenance. To these ends the organization holds numerous workshops on such topics as the "Management of Significant Cemeteries," and "The Significance of Cemeteries in Society."

The Australian National Centre for History Education presents a somewhat similar view, explaining,

Today dark tourism is organized, promoted by governments in some cases and by private companies. It is fashioned by curators, historians and designers and is a global phenomenon - dark tourism is everywhere. It is part of the worldwide travel experience (<http://www.hyperhistory.org/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=767&op=page>).

While this group notes that cemetery visitation is part of "a fascination with the Gothic in popular culture," they also recognize that

Others go to read and learn from the inscriptions, or to see the work of local sculptors and architects - after all, in Europe architects designed and built *homes* for the living and the dead. And still others find that a cemetery can provide another view of the social history of a city or a region. Cemeteries might provide information about plagues or child mortality, about the experience of loss and grief in another age. (<http://www.hyperhistory.org/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=767&op=page>).

In the United States this interest is sometimes called "cemetourism," but is far less well developed than in Europe or Australia. The description offered in the Harrisburg, PA *The Patriot* (May 3, 2007) may be more typical. This article reports that the nonprofit Harrisburg Cemetery Association is offering package events

to hotels and restaurants to promote the history. They recently hosted a reception for local meeting planners in conjunction with the Bucks County Conference & Visitors Bureau.

The narrow truth may be that cemeteries are often afterthoughts in terms of heritage trails, perhaps focused on the odd Governor or Abolitionist laid to rest with great fanfare and decorum, later to be scuttled into history's footnotes.

### **Methodology**

Essentially, we followed a traditional focus group scenario in which key constituencies are assembled, presented with a core group of general questions, and then asked for "free association" style comments.

These comments are drafted onto a series of white sheets affixed informally to the wall in an "L" pattern to allow best viewing and proximity to focus group participants. We limited the time frame to two hours, with one brief break.

Moreover, we incorporated a SWOT marketing approach in which focus group members were asked to "shout out" tip-of-tongue thoughts on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) facing the cemeteries generally and the three cemeteries (City, O'Rorke, and Mt. Hope) in particular.

The effort was aided by serendipity in the form of satellite imaging of each cemetery provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. These three visual aids were posted adjacent to the SWOT and Key Constituency Expectations sheets and the "flip chart" list of core questions.

The typical standard operating procedure is for the client *not* to participate in the focus group or to be in the room. In an idealized setting (one-way mirror "surveillance"), the client is a "submariner" who

views the proceedings through windows (the "periscope") and has opportunities to suggest additional questions privately to the focus group facilitator during a break. Here, however, we found ourselves in more of an open forum, town-meeting style "focus" situation. While this may lead to a chilling effect on participation or create an "us-vs.-them" scenario, we did not perceive either problem in the current study.

### **Constituencies -- The Stakeholders**

Instead of a group of 12 or so individuals, there were 19 RSVPs and 26 attendees - a group much larger than traditionally used in these programs. This meant an adjustment to a more rolling-style focus group in which SWOT analyses by cemetery became difficult, and discussions became more "global."

Regardless, civility and task-orientation prevailed. A side observation might be that the players involved (the city, constituencies, etc.) do not perceive the issues as a zero-sum game (one loaf of bread, who gets it?) or as a pitched battle with entrenched ideologies or positions. This bodes well for future interaction and participation of all parties.

One of the overall successes of the effort was the diversity of participation (see Appendix 4). The groups may be characterized as:

**The Public Sector:** Department of Cultural Resources (Office of Archives & History), Raleigh Historic District Commission, North Central Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and the Central CAC.

**The Private Sector:** Carolina Monuments, Haywood Funeral Home, and an independent restorer.

**The Nonprofit Sector:** Preservation North Carolina, Raleigh City Cemeteries Preservation, Inc., Richard B. Harrison African American Library, Southern Wake Co. Genealogy Group,

Wake Co. Genealogical Society, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Wake County Historical Society, and the Olivia Raney Library.

**The Catholic diocese:** Perhaps best characterized as providing background perspective and historical insights

In short, a robust, representative group attended.

### **Organization**

With these challenges during the 2-hour session, we were still able to follow a play-book of sorts.

Questions fell into two broad categories. The first were probes - questions used to explore, uncover, and gain consensus on needs, preferences, and utopian desires.

There were "open" probes that attempted to elicit as many responses/opinions/ideas as possible, using the freedom to jump among the SWOT items as an incentive to participation. There were "directive" probes that permitted more limited "yes/no" responses. "Reflective" probes asked for more information, such as the history of a particular cemetery.

The second category might better be described as "presenting." Here, "features" were used to describe a particular cemetery, with a common facilitator follow-up similar to "so what?" "Benefits" attempted to gain insights into the constituency's conventional wisdom, preconceptions, and hidden agendas (if any) for outcomes.

### **The Presentation Cycle**

The first aspect was to establish a need. Here we set out some core questions on the easel to begin and end the session. This was followed by the SWOT analysis. Toward the end of the program there was what might be described as a

"proof section," during which time we sought to address and test underlying assumptions (neglected history, costs, etc.). Finally, there was a close to the program where we attempted to move toward concerted partnerships and joint efforts. The underlying goal of the close was to test reactions from constituencies throughout the discussion, test the waters for consensus, and next steps.

In terms of "dealing with concerns," the underlying goals included: probing for clarity, emphasizing to show we care ("excellent point: can you elaborate?"), present and underscore: meet the concern, and close to confirm the effectiveness of potential joint-ventures.

### **Questions**

As previously mentioned, the questions presented to the group were global in nature since it was not possible to be too specific with the time available. These questions were:

1. What do the groups expect of the city?
2. What are they prepared to contribute?
3. How do you want the cemeteries to look?
4. How should the cemeteries be funded?
5. Groups: how can we help?
6. How do cemeteries fit into downtown development?
7. How can cemeteries be preserved while increasing visitation; impact?

### **The SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats**

#### **Strengths**

1. Downtown location & people: the story of Raleigh, NC
2. Adjacent to two historical districts
3. Repositories of unusual art & sculpture (especially bronzes)
4. Mt. Hope is the only African-American cemetery still functioning in Raleigh

5. A cornerstone of the downtown renaissance
6. Genealogical data and destination

The stakeholders were focused on the use of cemeteries to assist in telling the story of the history of Raleigh, NC, with particular attention to their place within the various communities, the uniqueness of art, architecture, and landscape (including the rural beauty of Mt. Hope), the need to include cemeteries within the emerging downtown renaissance and historical districts, and the specific uniqueness of Mt. Hope in the narrative of the African-American experience.

What emerged as an unstated strength was the apparent willingness to use diversity and uniqueness to tie together the broader historical essence of Raleigh, NC.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. Multiple groups, multiple agendas
2. Failing foundations (monuments) and issues of past restorative efforts (workmanship)
3. City Cemetery: issues of perpetual care
4. Catholic cemetery/O'Rorke: rumors and misconceptions–
  - a. who is buried (African-Americans) at Catholic cemetery (223 people?)
  - b. what is the ongoing relationship with Catholic church (if any)
  - c. anyone living (public perception) who knew we had a Catholic cemetery

In nonprofit discussions, the topic of "ownership" often arises – here meaning the interest and *ability* for a formal group to take on the mission and fiscal responsibility of a particular project. While the stakeholders agree on a macro level, on a micro level there are differences of opinions, particularly on issues of

who is ultimately responsible for perpetual care and, frankly, to borrow from the vernacular, "Who is buried in Grant's tomb?"

The interface of myth, reality, and cultural sensitivity definitely comes to bear when discussing O'Rorke Cemetery and its Catholic and African-American burials. "Human dignity" requires a stringent effort to identify by name and location the diverse cultures and people buried here. Moreover, there is not a central vision of what constitutes restoration of the monuments—to which period, level, and aesthetic.

#### **Opportunities**

1. Heritage Tourism
2. Fit within City's Comprehensive Plan
3. Funding through economic income and accommodation taxes
4. Matching grant money; raise money and partner with the city on projects
5. Focus on irreplaceable art and architecture
6. "National Register" – recognition of sites and opportunities for donors
7. Potential for website(s) with GIS mapping and data-sharing
8. Mt. Hope – awareness raising of lost African-American history in Raleigh
9. Educational/lifelong learning opportunities
10. Incorporating cemeteries into historic trolley tours

Whether the heritage tourism involved is termed "grief tourism" or "ceme-tourism," the reality is the number of visitors involved is difficult to gauge – both in actual number of visitors and in economic impact.

A cemetery as destination in today's Web-interactive world may increasingly be a website with a satellite view (similar to the three visuals kindly provided by the city for the focus group), the opportunity to "drill-down" visually

to the stone marker level, with additional links providing a transcription, personal history, etc.

While U.S.-related studies are scarce, at best – and virtually all of those look very narrowly at specific cemeteries with little or no broader context – perhaps the best analogues come out of Australia. Simply put, the Australians note that one-third of all cemetery tourism is on weekends and the primary visitor is female.

For the sake of trend-related discussion (and that's what focus groups tend to examine – "trends" in stakeholder viewpoints), this means any inclusion of ceme-tourism in the City's Comprehensive Plan is a chicken-and-egg proposition.

Firstly, there are no baseline tourism visitation numbers for the local cemeteries. Secondly (and interrelated), this means there is no defined "Case for Support," such as using numbers for making the strategic argument for accommodation taxes and other kinds of tourism-related economic support. Thirdly, inclusion in the National Register, while laudatory, does not ensure that grant monies or even non-cash, in-kind support necessarily will follow.

"Irreplaceable art & architecture" will have to be surveyed, inventoried, and historically investigated. These may be resources for fundraising, but to get money, money will need to be spent for a significant survey led by trained personnel, plus volunteers.

"Partnering," whether with the city or other strategic entities (nonprofits, corporate or individual foundations, etc.), will depend upon the ability of the lead organization or agency to both give and get money. Also, cemeteries are both assets and liabilities from a funding perspective: they are a platform for consortial fundraising, but upkeep is perpetual (e.g., donor dollars don't "solve" a problem).

Lifelong learning and the ever-growing interest in who we are and where we have been (genealogy, etc.) may occupy a new sense of space and that space may be in cyberspace, rather than a city or rural cemetery.

In short, Opportunities may be narrower in fixed time and place than the groups are prepared to articulate – but they see Opportunities just the same.

### Threats

1. Vandalism, neglect
2. Heritage tourism focuses on acceptance (of mainstream viewpoints?)
3. Historic issues of intolerance underlie broader tourism
4. Legal framework & city issues
5. Downtown renewal/two-edged sword: threat to neighborhood communities via displacement
6. Mt. Hope is maximized, in terms of burial space
7. Safety issues at cemeteries
8. Money

Clearly, the most recognized threat is the lack of funding. This is manifested in issues of vandalism, neglect, safety, the need for public relations and education, burial space, etc. One example we used in the focus group discussions was the rough-guess cost to repair a box tomb in City Cemetery: \$2,000 to \$3,000 given the extensive damage. If we use very, very rough parameters, the cost to stabilize the three cemeteries could fall in the \$500,000+ range. Stakeholders recognized the cost, but were equally concerned about historical issues and how to present/interpret them for heritage tourists.

Another difficult issue was the need for and cost to subsidize some burials at Mt. Hope. Currently the costs are set at no higher than 70% of the average commercial rates in the community.

As noted by the group, the level of restoration/preservation seems to be a moving target, based upon views of beauty in the built and natural landscapes.

**Aesthetics: How do we want our cemeteries to "look"?**

1. Each cemetery has its own personality; "look"
  2. Stabilize each cemetery and then "restore"
- However,
1. To which historical period should restoration occur?
  2. What are the different materials and restoration challenges involved?
  3. How much will it all cost?

Clearly, the groups have much to consider before they formally weigh in on the issue of aesthetics.

A systematic stone-by-stone survey of each cemetery may be a first step, with specific participation of each stakeholder group coordinated by the experts conducting the survey.

**Points of View**

As part of the "Close," we together looked at the issue of "constituency." Specifically, whose role is it to deal with the huge issue of preservation and promotion of the cemeteries. There were two broad answers: "the city" and "groups."

City

1. Define role of Parks & Recreation, historic districts, commissions
2. Act as unifying force for cemetery groups
3. Incorporate groups into the revitalization plans
4. Establish priorities for each cemetery (*triage* approach)
5. Raise cultural awareness and sense of "urgency" for restoration/preservation

6. Incorporate cemeteries into the overall cultural tourism plan
7. Stabilize the grounds via more than a level of care typified by the use of a large rotary mower pulled behind a tractor; adequate personnel; security
8. Act as a point of contact for information
9. Promote cemetery restoration as a city project

Groups:

1. Emphasize that these are "our tax dollars" at work
2. Adopt an advocacy role
3. Develop role as nonprofit partner(s) with the city ("co-branding")
4. Bring more than just labor ("sweat equity"); have vision and access to "preservation expertise"; also, historic research and "connections/networks"
5. Work together to make the cemeteries a "destination" (heritage tourism)
6. Tap matching monies
7. Position projects as grassroots effort

**Downtown Development**

This is the "hidden persuader" - a difficult to identify coterie of opinion leaders (formal and informal), developers, contractors, soothsayers, and nay-sayers who have vested interests in economic outcomes adjacent to the cemeteries. Their agendas may be open or hidden; narrow or consortial, with long-term impacts.

Clearly, City Cemetery is in a neighborhood in transition, as houses are on transporters/haulers as this is being written. Moreover, Mt. Hope is on one of the greenway trails, which is definitely used as witnessed by our visit there.

The stakeholders identified a number of components, including

1. Green space

2. Proximity of historic districts
3. Importance of cemeteries to Raleigh's continuing "story"
4. Lifestyle changes = recreation changes = increased accountability
5. Cemeteries are not playgrounds and must be protected during this "transition period" for the City Cemetery neighborhood
6. Signage is an immediate issue, with implications for on-line website(s), etc.
7. Access to cemeteries is an issue as visitation rules = control

Simply put, while the turnout for the Stakeholders' Focus Group demonstrated serious interest in cemetery-related preservation and restoration issues, the broader concepts of long-term sustainability (and how to attain it) and the role of economic development (here meaning bricks-and-mortar urban landscape) remain elusive issues. Developers and contractors working within the various historic districts and greenscapes need to be part of the process - and soon.

### Recommendations

Stakeholders need to consider establishing a broad umbrella nonprofit group (501(c)(3) perhaps or equivalent) which can (1) serve as a voice of cemetery restoration and revitalization in Raleigh, (2) interface with the city and other governmental entities regarding joint ventures, heritage tourism, documentation of cemetery history, (3) serve as a contact point for interacting with developers and contractors, (4) advocate for the under-represented histories of the African-American experience, as well as early Catholic population in Raleigh, and (5) serve as a "fundraiser" for special projects and educational initiatives.

Stakeholders need to "institutionalize" the cemeteries into the broader heritage experience/folkways and historical trails of Raleigh using art & architecture (as well as important ancestors) to emphasize the

diversity and richness of the social fabric that has become the city and its neighborhoods.

Stakeholders need to involve formally the various veteran organizations and interest groups (Daughters of the American Revolution, etc.) as part of the overall beautification effort on historic holidays.

Stakeholders need to seek out strategic partnerships and alliances which lead to a network of donors, volunteers, and potential corporate joint venture partners. This will be crucial as the plethora of nonprofits in Raleigh means fundraising competition, "donor fatigue," and a hierarchy of which projects are deemed "important" in the public consciousness.

Stakeholders need to establish a cohesive, fundable, and evocative "Mission Statement" that embodies diversity, cultural richness, and the place of the cemeteries in both the artistic and social/historical fabric of Raleigh. Moreover, they must consider a Board of Directors that can both *give* and *get* money for specific projects and initiatives.



# THE FUNDING LANDSCAPE

William Vartorella, Ph.D., C.B.C.  
Craig and Vartorella, Inc.

## Introduction

In terms of funding, our assignment is to identify potential sources for

- ❖ immediate preservation needs, for example, landscaping, repair of stones - visible, easy-to-measure "returns" on donor investment,
- ❖ long-term needs that would help ensure a sustainable future, for example, maintenance and mowing - things that provide little return to donors and may be harder to fund except through taxes, and
- ❖ public education and consortial projects which, in part, may also provide sustenance for the broader maintenance issues.

As raised in the focus group, needs must be addressed through a sustainable hierarchy of values. Simply put, what is it about these particular cemeteries that make them part of the fabric of the history of Raleigh and how can they be translated into simple, affordable, easy-to-measure, fundable projects that focus on "access" issues (here meaning both physical access and access to information & data)? In addition, what are the potential sources of funding for such projects, complete with recommendations and initial donor "targets?"

This section of the study will articulate the types of specific projects that are more easily fundable (including potential donors and average grant amounts) and provide insights

into the costs affiliated with constructing a competitive grant proposal. It all comes down to a trade-off of time spent preparing proposals vs. potential returns, which includes providing the personnel to conduct, evaluate, and report project results to donors (foundations, corporations, etc.).

The approach below reflects both the focus group acknowledgment of the need for consortial projects and the reality that the consortial partner may need to be more prominent and capable of attracting support through its "brand equity" (here meaning public perception, visibility, past grant performance, etc.).

## Strategic Funding for Historic Raleigh Cemeteries

In terms of funding, nonprofit groups must accomplish two tasks. First, develop a "Mission Statement" (also known as a "Vision Statement") that details the specific goals & objectives of a recognized nonprofit (501(c)(3) or variation) and second, create a "Case for Support." This "Case Statement" provides urgent, compelling, and interesting reasons why an individual, corporate, or foundation donor would take ownership with the group in addressing a specific project or broader sustainable effort, such as cemetery conservation and preservation.

Moreover, the nonprofit group would need to recruit and develop a Board capable of "giving" and "getting" money. The oft-repeated expression, "Won't you join me in giving \$x to this project" is the most powerful opening

sentence in fundraising. A Board that is simply "advisory" traditionally has a difficult time achieving stated goals and objectives. One can buy "advice;" getting donors is an entirely different matter. Stated differently, people give money to people, not to ideas.

### **Federal and National Funds**

Simply put, current demands for "war chest" funds for Iraq and Afghanistan have put numerous "non-essential" programs at-risk, to say the least. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is an obvious potential source and does have a tradition of the unusual project (e.g., GIS satellite imaging for historical corridors). However, grants tend to be small (\$5,000) and have the added disadvantage of potentially funding "planning" or "implementation" - but usually not both phases.

"Education" is more of a priority, but Raleigh cemeteries would have to be put within a broader context, probably with a free public component (lectures, school groups, etc.). The "Catch-22" of such educational programs generally is on-site cemetery visits have an impact that may be translated into the need for more maintenance/preservation. Measurement also may be hard to track—both in terms of total public numbers (use of a history trail or the Historic Trolley Tours) and in increased maintenance attributable to tourism. Also, while such educational programs might allocate part of a grant award to preservation and maintenance, once the program ends (and, ideally, tourism continues) the City might potentially be faced with a greater sustainability challenge than the current status.

The Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation is a related possibility with up to \$10,000 per grant award. However, rehabilitation and repair of existing cemetery tombs and stones is beyond its purview.

Challenge grants, such as those of the National Endowment for the Humanities are

another possibility, with amounts ranging from \$20,000 to \$1,000,000.

National Park Service Certified Local Government funding administered through the State Historic Preservation Office has frequently been tapped by the approved governmental entities for survey projects and National Register nominations and, therefore, does not need specific discussion here.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Preserve America program and the Save America's Treasures program, initiated by Executive Order as a public-private partnership, now largely between the NPS and the National Trust, are already on the City's "radar." Again, these programs tend to be rather time-intensive in terms of paperwork preparation.

Separately, if we broaden our discussion to purely Federal grants, the chance of success is roughly 7%. Equally discouraging are the bookkeeping, reporting, and surveillance functions involved in Federal grants. Moreover, there is the whole issue of projects that get "approved but not funded," which is governmental language for Federal programs that become victims to budget constraints, changes in administration policies, etc.

It is fair to say that administering the grant may be as burdensome as the conservation efforts themselves. Plus, if there is follow-up surveillance at the end of the grant period, there are no guarantees that additional vandalism or "acts of God" might actually render the project only slightly better off than when an effort began. An additional aggravation is who handles and allocates the Federal money on a local basis. Here, the city might well be the consortial partner holding the purse strings - a scenario that neither the city nor the nonprofit might envision or enjoy.

Something else to be considered, best practices and best use of funds could mandate

an approach or nuance that neither the city nor the nonprofit anticipated or are prepared to implement. Also, Federal programs are rife with requirements of "matching money" - often in cash rather than in kind (which both corporations and foundations are more apt to allow). A federal grant, in short, might actually cost the city money.

### **Foundations and Corporate Donors**

Using both GrantScape software and Foundation Center resources, we created historical key word descriptors involving heritage tourism, cemetery(ies), preservation, conservation, heritage and historic trails, diversity (black, African-American, slavery, slaves, Reconstruction, North Carolina, Raleigh, etc.), and applied them to a selected subset of more than 14,000 private, corporate, and community foundations in the United States.

We went beyond the usual Fortune 500 companies to include some 2,000 of the top sources for corporate giving. We also paid attention to the 600+ foundations that provide grants of \$10,000 or more with specific focus on arts, culture, and the humanities.

We must note that the number of foundations is a constantly-changing number and the Mission and focus of these same foundations (including corporations) is also in flux. Foundations increasingly are taking advantage of "periods of reflection," which is foundation jargon for not providing grant support for any particular group of internal initiatives during a particular year. Also, the odd grant of extraordinary size is often a "trustee discretionary grant," which means that it was the turn of a particular trustee for a special allocation during a specific grant cycle. Plus, be advised that some industries or sectors (oil, for example) have had extraordinary profits and may be positioned for greater philanthropy than other sectors (witness the recent dot.com "bust").

What this means is, first, there is no definitive source (including the Foundation Center) of every single grant award during a particular quarter or year, second, no definitive source of who is funding what and when, and third, that past performance by a foundation or corporate entity has little predictive value of present or future funding.

With that said, we also surveyed the traditional North Carolina foundations and actually looked at every single one listed with GrantScape software.

For all sources we explored 56 "hits" for out-of-state possibilities and about 351 "hits" for North Carolina potential. A "hit" is a descriptor "capture" and is, therefore, not the total number of foundations with potential funding. A single foundation might have several descriptor "hits." We chose not to do an Internet search as each search engine uses a different search protocol and omits more than GrantScape software or Foundation Center materials.

One immediate result of this is that cemeteries are not on the traditional foundation or corporation's funding radar.

While the reason is not apparent from the "exclusionary" section of foundation profiles (e.g., "no grants for film projects, deficit spending, complimentary advertising," etc.), there may be some validity in the assumption that cemeteries are either privately-funded entities or supported by some governmental body. Anyone's hopes for financial support for mowing, pruning trees, repair of fences, so forth are quickly dashed.

There are glimpses of potential. For example, the George B. Henderson Foundation, Boston, gave under \$50,000 to support Boston's historic cemeteries and the Patrick and Anna B. Cudahy Fund, Milwaukee, allocated \$15,000 to "restore and preserve a mausoleum" recently.

On the North Carolina front, cemeteries were not part of the vision of foundation and corporate donors in terms of specifically-enumerated grants. Yet, in fairness, some of the language of the NC foundations regarding heritage preservation is so broad as to perhaps proffer some opportunity. What follows are opportunities heralded as "statewide" by donors, although each of them needs to be examined specifically.

The shorthand accompanying each may include a potential consortial partner (say, museums) and the high or average grant size ("average" is where one usually aims a proposal in terms of financial ease-of-fit). The commentaries that follow the "averages" are those of the author.

1. James E. And Mary Z. Bryan Foundation, Raleigh: special projects and matching grants; \$50,000 (high or average not specified); special projects offer the potential for the cemeteries to design something that addresses mutual interests (donor & foundation); "matching" might be translated as in-kind rather than cash (e.g., volunteer time at \$10/hr.).
2. North Carolina Community Foundation, Raleigh: historic preservation/conservation; \$40,000/high; range of grant support may lend itself to specific tomb reconstruction using an historical focus across cemeteries and specific historical period; in short, get conservation in place along with signage and interpretation
3. Earl Johnson, Jr. And Margery Scott Johnson Endowment Trust, Greensboro: donor activity primarily in Raleigh: education, the arts; \$35,000/high; potential opportunity might be to involve high school art students to catalogue and research specific stylistics of gravestones, tombs during a particular era.
4. CP&L Foundation, Raleigh: special projects; \$20,000/average; similar to #1 above, but with a different focus.

5. Martin Marietta Philanthropic Trust, Raleigh: museums and special projects; \$5,000/high; good chance for partnering with museum and exhibit schedule to include cemeteries in the overall mix of activities; possible affiliated lectures.

6. A. E. Finley Foundation, Raleigh: community development, research; \$5,000/average; City Cemetery is situated within and adjacent to historical districts which are undergoing "community development;" opportunity to partner with developers and Foundation to "research" and present a living history/tour document.

7. Trent Ragland, Jr. Trust, Raleigh: historic preservation; \$5,000/high; could tie into a founding fathers approach, perhaps with a diversity focus & affiliated preservation.

8. Raleigh Kiwanis Foundation, Raleigh: "youth"; \$5,000/high; probably scholarship aid, but always the potential for a community service component.

9. A. J. Fletcher Foundation, Raleigh: visual arts, unspecified average; unknown support level- begin with a meet-and-greet to see what's viable.

10. The Belk Foundation, Charlotte: cultural programs; \$30,000/average (?); goal here would be to work closely with local stores or the Foundation more directly on some very family-oriented project.

11. Brown F. Finch Foundation, Winston-Salem: museums; \$15,000/high; giving is statewide, but the museum-cemetery focus would have to mirror Foundation's Mission which may be difficult.

12. Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Winston-Salem: "diversity;" \$15,000/average (?); this is a strong, proactive Foundation of a group of Foundations with an historical interest; Rural

Cemetery Movement and Mt. Hope might be a strong case here.

13. Wachovia Foundation, Winston-Salem: museums, historic preservation, renovation projects; \$15,000/average (?); banks are traditionally the lead and strongest corporate donor locally; nonprofit may want to choose its bank carefully as such a bank could be a hefty partner. Traditionally, if you tap one bank for funding, others generally will not follow; same is true for other competitors within industries.

14. The Marion Stedman Covington Foundation, Greensboro: historic preservation, \$10,000/average (?); another statewide focus; you may want to develop a more omnibus proposal that would look at the historic context of cemeteries; Raleigh, Winston-Salem, Greensboro; the same applies for 15-17, below. While this approach is certainly good scholarship, it may not provide the immediate assistance that the Raleigh cemeteries so desperately require.

15. Alexander Worth McAlister Foundation, Inc., Winston-Salem: historic preservation; \$5,000 average.

16. Dover Foundation, Shelby: museums/restoration; \$5,000 average (?).

17. Reese Foundation, Hickory: historic preservation and conservation; \$4,000 average.

18. Foundation for the Carolinas, Charlotte: seed & matching funds; (?) average; excellent potential for grassroots thinking and creative matching funding.

In addition, the following companies (corporate headquarters listed) deserve review:

- ❖ American Express Foundation, New York, particularly its Cultural Heritage Program.

- ❖ Hampton Hotel's Save-a-Landmark Program (contact other hotel franchises in Raleigh and compare any potential opportunities).
- ❖ Bank of America Corporation, Charlotte: see Raleigh bank manager.
- ❖ Lowe's, Mooresville: see local for in-kind, then cash.
- ❖ Progress Energy, Raleigh: see contributions manager/committee.
- ❖ BB&T Corporation, Winston-Salem.
- ❖ Peace, Meredith College, and Rex Hospital are integral members of the Raleigh community. They do not, however, stand out as stand out as funders of heritage or cemetery projects. They may have an interest in specific plots, but that does not dramatically alter the funding landscape.

A final potential source are Japanese foundations and corporations. These groups are legendary for their support of heritage-related projects. Japanese corporations have strong views that essentially preclude them from consideration at the moment. They do not support "deficit" spending, demanding that projects be on sound financial footing. They typically require a demonstrated respect for ancestors and the fine fabric of history. They also require long-term support of a project once the donor exits. In short, until the nonprofit and city can address the conservation and maintenance issues long term (and, in particular, the vandalism, which is likely unfathomable in their culture), it is perhaps best to put these foundations well back in the list of potential donors.

Once the situation improves, particularly in O'Rourke and City cemeteries, Japanese funding may be possible. Mount Hope will likely present the earliest potential for

dialogue, as its beauty and potential for interpretation will likely resonate. However, a strong, diverse coalition of city and African-American leaders would be necessary to drive the project – and the project would have to be exceptional, high visibility, and success-specific with clear outcomes. Japanese-based foundations prefer consensus, which means that any project could not be “politicized” or seized hostage by any group.

A question has been raised concerning organizations such as Peace, Meredith College, and Rex Hospital. It is suggested that they are “large stakeholders” and part of the “funding landscape.” Two of these organizations were invited to the stakeholder meeting, but did not participate. It is therefore difficult to judge their interest. In addition, when their missions statements are reviewed we see no clear match. In fact, the Peace College website has no section on funding projects. In the case of the Rex Hospital Foundation, the mission statement is explicit: “the mission of The Rex Hospital Foundation is to raise funds to support and enhance the programs and services of Rex Hospital.” Review of the Foundation Funds page shows no programs in which the Raleigh cemeteries are an appropriate fit. These organizations, like every other institution, are looking for money themselves. The institutional overhead rates of most colleges and universities generally tend to fall in the 40+% range. What this means is that they, as partners, expect relatively large amounts of the sums that might become available.

To put foundation funding (and, in many cases corporate as well) in perspective, the average grant size (say, \$5,000) would cover such items as a modest lecture series (“Art & Architecture of Historic Raleigh Cemeteries” or “The African-American Experience: Burial Practices and Iconography from Reconstruction through the Rural Cemetery Movement”) or perhaps a field day for genealogists that could include some “demonstrations” concerning proper preservation techniques. In the second

case, part of the funds might actually be dedicated to the repair of, say, an important box tomb. The very real challenge here is determining which tombs and monuments are most important, weighing issues of “dire need” vs. historicity.

Also, one needs to keep in perspective that most manufacturers are interested in how a project meets their Mission/Vision Statements rather than that of a specific nonprofit. Plus, many manufacturers with a consumer focus are intent upon specific niche markets (males, 19 to 25, for instance, or Black female professionals, etc.). These parameters must be taken into consideration in developing a project that meets corporate donor needs. The use of a mentoring strategy is often an important first step, e.g., getting a corporate “mentor” to assist a nonprofit in accomplishing specific tasks (accounting is a good example). Traditionally, mentoring leads to in-kind support (tools, supplies, materials) and, finally, cash. It may be, however, that critical needs at the city cemeteries cannot wait for this long-term relationship to develop.

A final comment on grants: proposal writing can be arduous and costly in terms of time spent. The average, small Federal grant is usually estimated in the 100 to 150-hour range, simply for preparation time. A one-page grant proposal to a small family foundation (plus a simple budget) may take 10 hours, with the budget the main time-consumer. If one estimates the volunteer time at \$10 per hour (a rule-of-thumb standard), that equates to \$1,500 spent for a Federal proposal and \$100 devoted to a small one-page proposal. Experienced “grantwriters” usually charge in the \$35 to \$125/hour depending upon complexity and track record. Raising money quickly becomes expensive, especially as demonstrated in a Capital Campaign (see comments, below).

### **Individual Donors**

As noted above, project funding from foundation and corporate sources may be small

and, frankly, ephemeral. One time-gifts are common and cemetery upkeep is clearly not on any major foundation or corporation's radar unless there is a clear, urgent, compelling, and interesting Case for Support. The three Raleigh cemeteries need to look at context as a funding platform, with the city and some umbrella nonprofit working together to raise public awareness of the plight of the cemeteries and their importance in the broader historical and social fabric of Raleigh.

One caveat is that foundations and corporate entities have growing concern that states and cities are competing with small, fledgling nonprofits for funding for what many perceive as taxpayer services. A simple example is what used to be known as "state universities." These are now referred to as "state-assisted universities" as states seek greater involvement from individual donors, foundations, and corporations to underwrite education.

Moreover, the new nonprofit must be vigilant to not appear to be a shell organization through which the city can raise money for "essential services." Each and every grant proposal must be donor Mission specific, while providing public education, conservation, and repair within some legitimate context.

Individual donors, despite the "donor fatigue" of the constant onslaught of requests for cash in a capitol city, could prove the short-term salvation of the three cemeteries. We say "short-term" because a "long-term" sustainable effort would require an endowment.

First, let's look at individual donors. Conventional wisdom might be that the best targets are the families of those currently interred in the three cemeteries. However, best guess is that 65% or more (on average) of the three cemeteries do not have identifiable descendants ("donor constituencies") or, worse, have constituencies who may be shy about stepping forward for fear that they will be "assessed" some duty or tax related to renewed

upkeep. With the reconstruction of one of the box tombs at City Cemetery estimated at \$2,500 to \$3,500, this is a substantial amount for some previously long-lost descendant to pay.

Perhaps a better approach is to examine the current state of philanthropy in Raleigh. This would involve creating what is known as a "flat list," namely a list of individuals with a penchant for supporting historical preservation and a checkbook to match.

These individuals should be identified not only based upon interest and cash, but using three other key factors: commitment, clout, contacts. Simply, commitment is a long-term vision of the goals and objectives, needs and opportunities of the individual cemeteries. Clout is the recognition by others that Jane or John Doe has the ability to engender enthusiasm and commitment within the broader donor community. Contacts are others with the means, method, and mentality to give and get money.

### **The City Fund**

There is a cash account in the city denoted as "Cash - Cemetery Account." According to the David P. Erwin, CPA, Accounting Manager of the City of Raleigh, no funds have been deposited since at least 1997, although interest is posted each year. The current balance is \$8,015.09.

The fund is very small and we recommend that the principal be invested. If it could generate about \$400 a year, this sum could be used for special needs, such as hiring a consulting arborist or some other special project.

### **The Endowment Issue**

Once the nonprofit consortium (umbrella group) has a Board in place (ideally comprising the above donor type/demographics) and has at least a modest track record in raising awareness and money for specific cemetery projects, then is the time to

begin to think about "sustainability" through endowment. This continues to be a partnership, with the city responsible for general maintenance, mowing, improved security, etc. What the endowment would provide is an overall Mission/Vision of long-range planning, regarding conservation, preservation, and historical interpretation.

For the sake of discussion, let's say that the identified "flat list" through interviews and in consultation with experts decides that the endowment goal is \$3,000,000 and that the Board will raise 50% of the goal from the "flat list" before announcing the broader campaign. Here is where reality meets idealism. Different consultants will offer different scenarios. What follows is in very broad stroke and is for illustrative purposes only.

- ❖ To raise \$3,000,000 will require a lead gift of 10% or \$300,000. Ideally, two lead gifts of \$300,000 as the Board will likely decide to engage outside fundraising counsel to spearhead the campaign. Conservatively, the Capital Campaign will cost 10% of the goal-hence the \$300,000. Often, and ideally, a member of the Board will front the Campaign cost.
- ❖ Typically 90% of all the donations will come from 10% of the donors. If you had 100 donors, 10 of them would represent significant gifts.
- ❖ Oddball gifts of insurance policies, boats, cars, "artwork" (beware of artwork especially; discuss with your CPA and tax attorney first) may seem like cash, but rarely come in at "top dollar." Moreover, there's the very real question of "liquidity." You may have to wait a generation to see the money.
- ❖ Corporate matching gifts of individual employee donations are excellent at

filling in the top portion of any public commitment, but rarely equal lead gifts.

- ❖ The public component is traditionally last and is usually frustrating and time consuming. Moreover, the public may "wonder aloud" why public cemeteries are raising money through private sources for an endowment. ("What about our tax dollars-where will they now go?") If the public comes through with 10% - \$300,000, rejoice!

Assuming the goal has been raised in, say, three years, what does the \$3,000,000 really mean?

First, most practitioners assume that an endowment will generate roughly 5% annually (adjusted for robust and recessionary stock markets). That means \$150,000 annually available for repair and preservation. Remember that in our scenario the city still provides mowing, maintenance, security, etc. Allocated at \$50,000 per cemetery (to make our analysis simple), this would be just enough to fertilize and prune the trees in Mount Hope or City Cemetery, or perhaps complete repairs for one or two sides of the City Cemetery fence. In the context of immediate needs, the three cemeteries would overwhelm the return of the first year.

Plus, perhaps \$5,000 annually for each cemetery might be earmarked for a "Lyceum" series or art and architecture tour, etc. Again, increased visibility and use equates to increased wear-and-tear, part of which legitimately the city may not want to assume.

Second, there is the perplexing issue of donor-designated funds and wishes. Niche projects tend to become very donor-specific. Assuming that the most at-risk tombs and monuments are addressed initially, over time donor-dedicated monies may be perceived as a "slush fund" for other projects. "Donor beware."



Another potential threat is the public perception that the cemeteries are becoming self-sustaining and that city monies would best be used elsewhere ("Donor Flight"). This would lead to discussions of a second Capital Campaign. Donors may not be forthcoming. The cemetery nonprofit would likely look to foundations and corporations that provide endowment funding. Unfortunately, the few that might be interested (after seeing the successes of the cemetery nonprofit) will likely take a "Capstone" approach in which their monies are "last in" (hence, the term). Also, remember that the average U.S. foundation has assets of roughly \$1,000,000 which means only \$50,000 available annually for grants. Such grants tend to be in the \$2,000 to \$5,000 range. In short, a second Capital Campaign could be a nightmare.

What if the original Capital Campaign falls short? First, the umbrella group might end up with only 1/3rd of the needed endowment (say, \$1,000,000). This means that only \$50,000 would be available annually on a cemetery-rotating basis. The allocation of money annually – especially if a tree falls on a major monument in the non-designated cemetery that year – could become problematical. Second, a severe shortfall might mean the actual cost of the campaign is either not covered or becomes excessive (e.g., campaign fees and expenses are set at \$300,000 of a \$3,000,000 campaign, donor pledges don't materialize, campaign raises \$500,000 and is still legitimately billed \$300,000 or some negotiated amount).

Finally, there is the issue of nonprofit Board longevity. If we agree that cemeteries seem to percolate to the surface of public awareness once every 10 to 20 years, this may mean that Board cycles may be even less. Boards must be extremely careful in terms of attracting focused members, what are known as the 4-W's—the wealthy (money talks), the wise (bankers, CPAs, community leaders), the workers (usually women in nonprofit sector), and the worriers (a broad-based constituency,

here meant in a positive light). For each Board, a long-range planning and development subcommittee needs to be created that looks at overall financial opportunities (more endowment, in-kind contributions) and grants.

Clearly, in terms of an umbrella organization, Raleigh City Cemeteries Preservation, Inc. has taken formative steps consistent with our observations and the expressed needs of the Stakeholder Focus Group. However, it is extremely important that whatever emerges as the umbrella organization representative of all three cemeteries be diverse, multi-faceted in terms of expertise, and compatible with core city and historical constituencies. Building consensus early is crucial.

This is particularly true as a realistic timeline for foundation, corporation, or individual donor support is likely three years. We proffer this as Board recruitment and development, Mission Statement fine tuning, public participation, and a project priority list will likely take Year One. Year Two will consist of initial fundraising, ideally for projects spanning three years. Year Three would build upon this as a Case for Support for the broader issue of an endowment. "Endowment" traditionally entails retaining fundraising counsel, who spends a year interviewing Board members, re: creation of a "flatlist," securing lead gifts, putting in place a development and long-range planning committee, and preparing for the "silent phase." Year Four would be the "silent phase" during which 50% of the endowment goal would have to be raised to ensure success. Year Five would be the "public phase" of fundraising, with Year Six the collecting of pledges, and beginning in earnest the broader preservation and conservation.

Obviously, some project funding beginning in Year Two would address the most urgent and compelling of the monuments (assuming that a preservation plan is in hand and it is actually understood what the most

urgent and compelling needs are), but not mowing and maintenance.

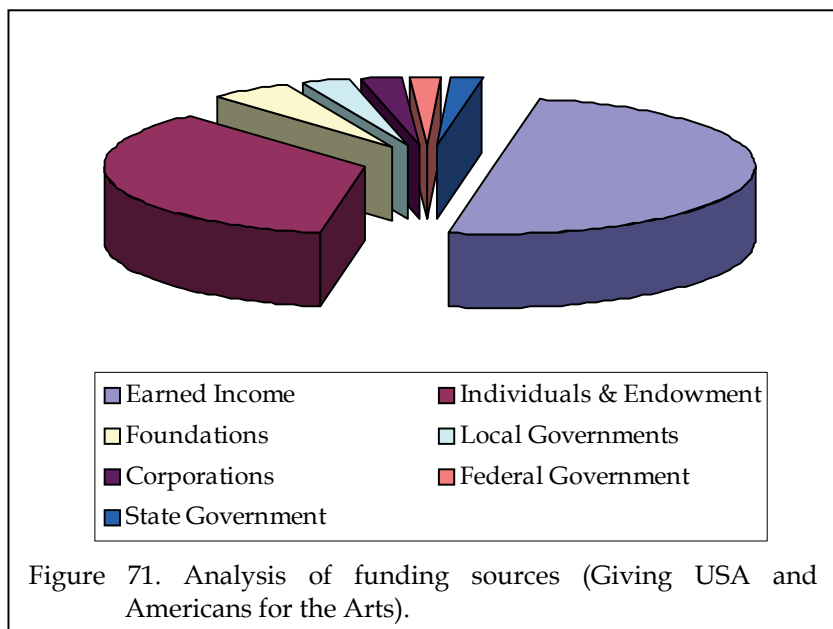
In short, beginning in Year Two through Year Five, the first phase of projects would be underway, plus some overlap concerning the initiation of an endowment thrust once progress is apparent. The nonprofit must not forget, as discussed above, that the Board must raise 10% of the goal for the cost of the Capital Campaign itself.

**Summary Comments**

The city cannot expect federal, foundation, or corporate support for maintenance & mowing.

category termed "earned income." This is a bit generic, but likely means everything from special events to sponsorships. The Foundation and Corporate support numbers (5% and 2.5% respectively) are consistent with a wide range of project categories and consistent with the assumptions we made for the present Raleigh study. Moreover, experience tells us that Federal and State (each 2%) support are going to be minimal, at best. What comes through clearly from the Giving USA and Americans for the Arts study is that an established nonprofit cannot realistically depend upon local governmental support.

An aggressive, focused umbrella nonprofit may, through programming and perseverance, attract foundation, corporate, and - especially - individual donor dollars that may, in part only, "rescue" some of the more historically important monuments under threat in the three cemeteries. It may provide important interpretive, educational, and awareness-raising functions for the three cemeteries.



The *Chronicle of Philanthropy* (May 17, 2007, p. 16) published an interesting chart produced by Giving USA and Americans for the Arts that has some relevance for the Raleigh cemeteries (Figure 71). While the analysis must be used very carefully as it clearly isn't a perfect fit, it nevertheless suggests that organizations designed for cemetery preservation can expect around 50% of their funding to come from a

A sustainable future for the three cemeteries can only be achieved through an endowment, perhaps as little as \$3,000,000 adjusted for inflation. As an endowment increases, expect city resources at other unsupported cemeteries to be stretched to the point at which the three endowed cemeteries may be asked to provide fee-for-services reimbursement for mowing and maintenance, thereby returning these cemeteries once again to an at-risk status.

**Recommendations**

**Create an umbrella, nonprofit Board comprising representatives from the three**

Raleigh cemeteries, plus ex officio representation by the city. Choose a memorable, "active" group name.

Board members should have commitment, clout, and contacts; the ability to give and get money. No advisors. Buy advice, if needed. Board terms should be staggered, with three years the ideal. An individual can be reappointed for one term, but would then have to rotate off the Board for at least a year. By "staggered," we mean that initial Board should consist of one, two, and three-year appointees. No one should be considered to be on the board "for life."

File for and achieve nonprofit status with the IRS. Make it easy for foundations, corporations, and individuals to give the group money and in-kind contributions. Engage an attorney specializing in nonprofit law. While tax-deductibility traditionally is not the primary reason a person or entity gives money to a nonprofit, it does enter into the broader donation equation.

Craft a Mission/Vision Statement that is evocative and people-oriented. It should be short (one page) and present a valid, urgent, compelling, and interesting Case for Support for both projects and endowment. Your Mission/Vision Statement is central to fundraising efforts and is the most reviewed document by many potential funders. If General Dwight D. Eisenhower could invade Europe based upon a one-page summary, the cemetery nonprofit should be able to draft something short as well.

Build consensus, develop constituencies of donors through public relations and outreach. The group and the cemeteries cannot remain "Raleigh's best kept secret."

Incorporate the three cemeteries into the historical trail/corridor efforts and seek inclusion for accommodations tax and other incentives, as deemed appropriate.

Begin the grant process with small, easy-to-measure projects. Initial donor targets are corporations and foundations in Raleigh or which have Raleigh as a specific part of the Mission/Vision statement. Projects will likely be on tight budgets, so combinations of mentoring, in-kind donations, and cash will be crucial. Donor recognition is imperative. Early focus may be on projects incorporating public lectures, genealogy, cemetery tours, art and architecture, diversity and folkways, and the challenges of preserving history. Later focus may be on the creation of a drill-down Internet site using GIS technologies, photographs of monuments and plots, interpretative discussions, links to other websites, etc. As pointed out in the Stakeholders Focus Group, the emphasis is ultimately global-local. To encourage and accomplish such, broadens the Case for Support and positions the nonprofit consortium for more active, successful fundraising.

Tap the small, relatively easier-to-get grants, first. This builds a track record of success. The old saying in fundraising by donors is "Who else is going to the party and what are they wearing?" (in other words, "who are the other donors and how much are they giving?")

Hold a donors' luncheon. This is a meet-and-greet for various foundation, corporate, and individual donors to see what the group is accomplishing and what its long-range goals and objectives are. This is not the time to ask for money. Be creative. Include developers and opinion-leaders. Have a consistent and unified message that goes back to Mission and Case for Support. This is also an opportunity to cultivate the "flat list" and to determine donor interests.

Seek out the strongest consortial allies possible for projects. In the case of Federal monies, attract a consortial partner who has an established institutional overhead rate accepted by Federal agencies. If you get the grant, you may be able to claim this administrative overhead rate on your next successful Federal grant. Moreover, you should

negotiate with the lead partner (the strong ally) for part of that overhead based upon the total office square footage, etc. that each of you brings to the project.

Establish an initial "war chest" from Board members. There is an immediate need for high-quality (but not "rich") brochures, letterhead, and so forth. You have to appear successful to be successful at fundraising.