

I am Crown Hill Cemetery.
You are my future.



Tomorrow's
Crown Hill
needs you today.



An institution of Crown Hill's size, scope, civic prominence, and enduring cultural significance needs a long-term plan to assure that its historic assets remain vital parts of the Indianapolis landscape for generations to come. Until 2015, Crown Hill had not developed a comprehensive plan devoted to assessing and funding its preservation, restoration, and enhancement needs.

With the formulation of **Tomorrow's Crown Hill**, that historic preservation master blueprint becomes a reality, crafted in conjunction with outside expertise provided by the architectural firm of Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf and its consulting partners.

Tomorrow's Crown Hill considers the cemetery's place in its community and its neighborhood, as well as among the institutions that form a vital part of its geographic area, including schools, neighborhood associations, community centers, houses of worship, museums, and development groups. The plan incorporates the community's answers to a focal question: "How can we demonstrate and expand the vitality and relevance of Crown Hill to new audiences?"

For generations, Crown Hill Cemetery has served as a repository of Indianapolis history, heritage, leadership, and as the final resting place of loved ones and memories. More than 80% of Indianapolis' founders are buried at Crown Hill. Its roll of honor includes a U.S. President, three U.S. Vice Presidents, and legions of public servants, along with the honored dead of every war from the Revolution through today.

Indianapolis' original City Cemetery stood seven blocks south of modern-day Monument Circle. Gradually, with the addition of new tracts of land to City Cemetery, Greenlawn Cemetery emerged as a 25-acre burial ground. By 1863, Indianapolis had outgrown Greenlawn. Crown Hill arose as the answer to Indianapolis' need for burial space befitting a growing metropolis.

Founded as a non-profit institution by 30 civic leaders, Crown Hill was designed as a park-like cemetery—for both the living and the deceased—by Frederick Chislett, a pioneer of the rural cemetery movement. Beginning with 274 acres situated seven miles from town, Crown Hill has more than doubled in size over its first century and a half, and now lies entirely inside the city's boundaries. At 555 acres, it includes 25 miles of roads.

An aerial photograph of a historic cemetery. In the lower center, a red brick church with a prominent steeple stands next to a large, ornate stone archway that serves as the entrance. The surrounding landscape is filled with trees displaying vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. A winding road or path is visible on the left side of the image. The overall scene conveys a sense of historical preservation and seasonal beauty.

I preserve
and celebrate
heritage.



I offer relevant experiences to all.

Along with the steady stream of people who travel to Crown Hill to celebrate loved ones interred here, the cemetery welcomes more than 7,500 **visitors** each year for educational programs. These programs include themed tours for adults, historic or tree-focused events for school children, and private tours for individuals and small groups. Annual cultural events such as holiday concerts attract a regular following.

In addition to events programmed and presented by Crown Hill staff, the cemetery seeks to attract new **partners from the community**, including arts groups, educational institutions, and cultural organizations. These partnerships will help the cemetery fulfill its long-term mission of bringing new audiences to Crown Hill and expanding the cemetery's collaborative opportunities.

Crown Hill's roster of events demonstrates its broad, deep **relevance** to new audiences and reaffirms its role as a community asset to neighborhood residents, businesses, schools and universities, and other civic connections in its geographic area.

One immediate and pressing goal of **Tomorrow's Crown Hill** lies in formulating a detailed, thorough, actionable assessment of the cemetery's many assets, including their physical condition, their current and long-term needs, and a prioritized action plan for preserving and restoring these historic treasures.

In the past, the Crown Hill Heritage Foundation has undertaken fundraising campaigns to target specific restoration projects, such as restoring the Gothic Chapel and repaving the cemetery's roads. At the same time, the cemetery's management company has made regular repairs and upgrades.

These piecemeal strategies leave Crown Hill without a longitudinal plan. Instead of assuring the ongoing viability of the cemetery's portfolio of assets, it finds itself forced to engage in a string of large fundraising efforts that cover specific needs and leave others unaddressed.

Formulating **Tomorrow's Crown Hill**, a phased long-term plan, gives Crown Hill a full sense of its needs and facilitates the development of the donor base necessary to meet them.

**I am many places
with many needs.**



I cherish my
neighbors.



Building an expanded base of support—both financial and in terms of personal involvement—means that Crown Hill must find new ways to transform the community into its own community. Because of what it is and what it does, Crown Hill is locked into its neighborhood, more so than perhaps any other type of large institution with a large physical presence.

In the cemetery's early years, the land around it consisted of agricultural acreage. Bit by bit, the city has grown up to and beyond Crown Hill's grounds, splitting them with a major thoroughfare in the form of 38th Street (once Maple Road). Parts of Crown Hill's neighborhood struggle with crime, housing blight, and poverty. **Tomorrow's Crown Hill** embraces the cemetery's neighborhood and contributes to its efforts to lift itself up from its troubles. In partnership with neighborhood initiatives and groups, Crown Hill can help lead the way toward a revitalized Midtown that celebrates major employers and provides enriched local experiences for residents.

To accomplish these goals, Crown Hill must innovate new programming, find ways to integrate its “borders” into community solutions, and become part of the answer to the need for community amenities.

In many ways, Crown Hill's neighborhood sees the cemetery from outside its borders, as strangers looking in rather than as part of the "family" that celebrates and enjoys this urban green space. For many people who live in the area, Crown Hill is a place they drive past, one they visit perhaps only for expressions of grief. To encourage its neighbors to look at the cemetery as a destination for other purposes, Crown Hill must help them redefine how they view it.

Many people identify cemeteries only as places for the dead, not as places of vital importance to the living. Others come to Crown Hill for cultural events, to learn about history, to experience the beauty of trees and flowers, to walk the grounds and marvel at the sculptural art of memorial monuments and the architectural beauty of family mausoleums. To help potential visitors transcend their view of Crown Hill as "just a cemetery," Crown Hill must help them see the value in its many other possibilities.

Through **Tomorrow's Crown Hill**, expanded partnerships with local civic and arts groups will help the cemetery redefine its image in the eyes of those who view it narrowly.



I welcome
everyone.

My landscape
defines me.



Inside the I-465 beltway, Crown Hill serves as **Indianapolis' largest green space**, an urban oasis with more than 4,100 inventoried trees in extensive wooded areas. These trees represent 110 distinct species, exceeding the collections of many arboreta, or tree-focused public gardens.

Established in 2011, the **ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program** applies criteria established by The Morton Arboretum of Lisle, Illinois, in partnership with organizations including the American Public Gardens Association, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, the Global Trees Campaign, and the North American Plant Collections Consortium. Accreditation denotes a facility that meets internationally recognized standards of professionalism at one of four progressively demanding levels, based on the size and function of the organization and its tree collection.

The Crown Hill Heritage Foundation plans to apply for **Level II ArbNet accreditation**, which requires at least 100 kinds of trees growing as specified in a documented arboretum plan. Level II certification also includes professional development and management of an arboretum collection through the work of employees and volunteers. It further specifies that a qualifying facility conduct an enhanced schedule of public events and programming focused on trees.

Assuring Crown Hill's extended viability beyond a piecemeal approach to individually fundraised project fulfillment means expanding the cemetery's ability to engage new donor populations.

As critical as project-based efforts have been in addressing specific cemetery imperatives, the overall strategy of raising money as needed does not take into account the importance of developing an overall plan that covers all needs and foresees potential emergencies. Crown Hill's current donors are critical to any fundraising effort on the cemetery's behalf, but broadening the cemetery's financial appeal is vital to securing its survival as a community asset.

Tomorrow's Crown Hill includes an endowment component that helps the cemetery break the cycle of need/fundraise. The endowment will help provide a floor that secures the base of support for individual projects that come out of **Tomorrow's Crown Hill** and its process of evaluating assets for future restoration.

I earn new support.



Please join
Tomorrow's
Crown Hill.



We hope you're reading this because Crown Hill is important to you. You know its grounds, its landmarks, its roads, its trees. You know how important its green space is to its neighborhood and its city. You understand that a cemetery can be much more than a place to remember and grieve. You've opened your heart to Crown Hill and become involved with its preservation.

We invite you to join us in the efforts involved in **Tomorrow's Crown Hill**. Whether you feel drawn to the need to connect Crown Hill with its neighborhood or want to support a strategic, phased restoration plan, we're confident that you'll connect with this initiative in ways that you find meaningful to support.

We thank you for your past gifts and ask you to consider helping Crown Hill embark on its rightful path to lasting relevance. You can help us make a real difference in Crown Hill itself, in its role as a civic partner, and in the lives of all who come in contact with this priceless community asset.

Your gift to **Tomorrow's Crown Hill** is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



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www.CrownHillFoundation.org