



# Capital Development Committee

## Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

### FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION REQUEST

**Department of Military and Veterans Affairs**

**Veterans Memorial Cemetery Administration Building Expansion,**

**2027-002**

**Restroom/Honor Guard Building, Columbaria**

#### Project Status

This is a new, never-before-requested project.

**Table 1  
Prioritization**

Prioritized By	Priority	Notes
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs	1 of 1	
Office of State Planning and Budgeting	22 of 47	Not recommended for funding.

**Table 2  
Prior Appropriation and Request Information**

Fund Source	Prior Appropriation	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28	Future Requests	Total Costs
CCF	\$0	\$2,211,493	\$0	\$1,798,199	\$4,009,692
CF	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,211,493</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,798,199</b>	<b>\$4,009,692</b>

**Table 3  
Itemized Cost Information**

Fund Source	Prior Appropriation	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28	Future Requests	Total Costs
Land Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$236,620	\$0	\$200,600	\$437,220
Construction	\$0	\$1,716,400	\$0	\$1,497,000	\$3,213,400
Equipment	\$0	\$136,000	\$0	\$0	\$136,000
Miscellaneous	\$0	\$17,164	\$0	\$14,970	\$32,134
Contingency	\$0	\$105,309	\$0	\$85,629	\$190,938
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,211,493</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,798,199</b>	<b>\$4,009,692</b>

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Department of Military and Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Memorial Cemetery Administration Building Expansion, Restroom/Honor Guard Building,  
Columbaria

2027-002

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## Program Plan Status

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Approved Program Plan: Yes

Date Approved: April 23, 2025

FCI: 75

## Project Description/Scope of Work

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The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) is requesting state funds for a two-phase project to make several improvements to the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Grand Junction to better accommodate visitors; provide additional space for employees and volunteers; and increase cemetery capacity. Specifically, the project:

- remodels the 1,000-GSF Administration Building, and constructs a 700-GSF addition to the building to accommodate growing staff and volunteer populations. The addition will feature two offices, a break area, and storage space;
- remodeling two public restrooms to meet accessibility and gender neutral requirements;
- constructs a 400-GSF building featuring two publicly available, unisex bathrooms and space for 20 to 30 honor guard members. The space will be heated and air conditioned to provide a comfortable space for the honor guard to gather and prepare for funeral services, and utilities will be extended about 500 linear feet from existing infrastructure to serve the new building;
- refurbishing the Administration Building and new 400-GSF building; and
- constructs two double-sided columbaria and five-to-six single-sided columbaria. A columbarium is a room or building with niches for storing funeral urns.

This year's request for Phase 1 renovates and constructs the addition to the Administration Building, and constructs the restroom/honor guard building; Phase 2, set for FY 2029-30, constructs the columbaria.

**Cost assumption.** The DMVA Construction and Facilities Management Office prepared the project's cost estimates based on similar projects undertaken by the department. These include a FY 2014-15 project that constructed new columbaria and burial vaults, expanded the maintenance shop, and paved the driveway at the cemetery; and a FY 2018-19 project that constructed new columbaria and improved the waterways at the cemetery. The project accounts for inflation at a rate of 10.0 percent to 2027, and complies with the Art in Public Places and High Performance Certification program requirements.

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**Table 4**  
**Project Schedule: Phase 1**

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Design	June 2026	June 2027
Construction	August 2027	August 2028
Equipment	September 2028	September 2028
Occupancy	October 2028	October 2028

\*Overall project completion: April 2031

## Project Justification

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The department says the project's improvements are needed to accommodate the needs of visitors, volunteers, and a growing staff, and to provide additional capacity for veteran interment.

DMVA explains that, when the cemetery opened, it had a staff of three, which has grown to eight state employees and two interns, driving a need for additional space to conduct work activities, and to meet privately with grieving families. A 2023 report prepared by a third-party architect/engineer established the basic parameters in terms of space needs, functionality, and spatial relationships that provides the basis for the Administration Building remodel.

DMVA says the new, 400-GSF building is necessary to accommodate the public and honor guard volunteers. The cemetery grounds are open to families seven days a week, and the grounds have no publicly available restrooms outside of normal business hours. Staff frequently cleans up excrement left by those visiting outside of business hours, which the department says is not only unsanitary but also inappropriate for hallowed grounds. Further, services are conducted about 200 yards away from the Administration Building and its current public restrooms, which often leads to service attendees missing all or parts of the services to access the bathrooms, sometimes in uncomfortable or inclement weather. The new bathrooms will be more accessible to the site of the services.

The cemetery hosts 20 to 30 honor guard members who perform military honors for all veteran interments. These volunteers range from 20 to 85 years of age and can spend up to six hours a day conducting these services. The new building will provide a comfortable space for these honor guard members to gather before and between services, prepare, and stay out of the weather.

Finally, DMVA reports that the columbaria constructed under the FY 2018-19 project are at 70 percent capacity, and all columbaria capacity is projected to be full in June 2032. The additional columbaria constructed under the project is expected to provide capacity until 2045.

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## Program Information

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The 31-acre Grand Junction Veterans Memorial Cemetery opened in September 2002, and is intended to be a dignified final resting place for veterans and family members. The cemetery includes memorial walks on either side of a creek running through the grounds, and the landscaped areas for in-ground interments are characterized by trees, shrubs, and other plantings, which provide spaces for individual reflection. DMVA says the cemetery conveys the appreciation of the people of Colorado to its veterans.

The cemetery is Colorado's only state veterans cemetery as defined by the federal Veterans Administration. To be buried at the cemetery, a veteran or spouse must be a Colorado resident, which prohibits the department from applying for certain federal grant funding. DMVA says federal reimbursement per interment does not cover costs to provide long-term capacity or future expansion.

## Source of Cash Funds

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The project is not funded from cash sources.

## Operating Budget

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The department calculates that, starting in Fall 2028, the addition of 1,100 GSF of space will increase utility costs at the cemetery by \$3,200 per year.

## Staff Questions and Issues

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1. Why is there a three-year gap between project phases?