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Moscow Construction Leads to Tombstone Shortage in Siberia

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Vedyashkin Sergei / Moskva News Agency

Major public works in the Russian capital as part of the $2 billion "My Street" urban renewal program are leading to gravestone shortages in faraway Siberia.

Last week "My Street" was extended two years to 2020, with costs expected to balloon from $1.6 billion spent since 2015 to $3.5 billion.

Famous for the green-and-white construction fences strewn throughout central Moscow, "My Street" has gained infamy for sloppy and at times unnecessary construction work. Critics describe the project as part of a scheme to siphon off money to construction companies with ties to City Hall.

An investigation conducted by the news website Meduza revealed that Moscow's demand for granite has caused suppliers to divert deliveries from three funeral homes in Siberia and central Russia.

“Because of orders from Moscow, Ural granite workers behave rudely and have almost stopped taking orders for small lots of 300-400 square meters,” a Novosibirsk funeral home said.

To compensate for the shortages, granite imports from China and Ukraine have reportedly increased.

Meduza found that Moscow had spent more than 189 billion rubles ($3.2 billion) on street and park maintenance since 2010. Nearly half was spent this year alone.

Over the past 7 years, Moscow construction workers have laid almost 5.2 million square meters of pavement stones and 1.82 million square meters of granite sidewalks.

Laying granite sidewalks, including material and labor, costs more than a quarter of the entire urban renewal program.

More than 1,400 kilometers of concrete curbs and 1,100 kilometers of granite curbs have been laid over the same period, the outlet reports.

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