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**REIMAGINING**  
A NEW FUTURE  
FOR THE FORMER  
HIGHLAND GOLF COURSE

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WHAT WE HEARD

PHASE ONE

JANUARY 2014

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PARTICIPATORY MAPPING AT THE *REIMAGINING* CLUBHOUSE.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Fall of 2013, a comprehensive engagement and communications process was developed to involve the residents of Highland Park and surrounding communities in planning a new future for the former site of the Highland Golf Course. During a period of four weeks, from November 4 to December 2, the Intelligent Futures team hosted the initial phase of engagement for the *reImagining A New Future for the Former Highland Golf Course* project. Using a variety of targeted communications and engagement strategies, *reImagining* focused on raising awareness of the proposed redevelopment of the former golf course site, and encouraging citizen input into planning possibilities.

During this first phase of the process, the *reImagining* response included:

- 101 participants who attended engagement sessions at the former golf course clubhouse
- 450 unique visitors to the *reImagining.ca* website
- 27 sounding board submissions
- 23 Twitter followers
- 10 Facebook “likes” and 23 Facebook “shares”

From all participant groups combined, we heard 353 responses to the question “How could the redevelopment of the former Highland Golf Course improve life in the community?” From these 353 responses, eight distinct themes emerged:

- Parks and Recreational Activity
- Traffic
- Stormwater Management
- Commercial Development
- Property Value
- Housing
- Design
- Community Values

Discussion on parks and recreational activity, traffic, housing and stormwater management stood out as the most prominent issues during this phase of engagement. Some of the most commonly heard feedback from these four themes includes:

- *“Traffic is already congested, the side streets can’t handle any more traffic.”*  
Many indicated that they don’t want to see through-fare access to the site between 44th Ave. and 40th Ave. and 3rd St. and Centre St. Participants hope to see potential traffic bottlenecks on roads surrounding the former golf course addressed.
- *“I would like to see a continuation of the Confederation Park pathway system.”*  
Many participants hoped that a large amount of green space would be maintained.
- *“Like to see a senior complex; so many people would like to stay in the area.”*  
In addition to seniors housing, a prominent theme was the variety of opinions in the community’s desire for affordable housing.
- *“[Stormwater] from 4th Street pools to well over a metre in depth at the intersection of 44th Avenue NW, completely overwhelming the existing sewers.”*  
Other areas directly on the property were described as ‘flood zones’.

Overall, each of the eight themes is important to the outcome of the project. The community shared a range of ideas and perspectives, and was very constructive in voicing their concerns — and also their hopes for a positive impact resulting from this development.

This feedback has informed the development concepts that have been created for Phase 2 of engagement, scheduled from January 23rd to February 10th. Along with the technical work of the project team and information gathered from City of Calgary Administration, these initial concepts will respond to what was heard during this first phase and will be the focus of conversation with the community.

## ABOUT THE PROCESS

In May 2013, the former site of the Highland Golf Course in northwest Calgary was sold to a partnership headed by Maple Projects Inc.

With planning for the site in its early stages, Intelligent Futures was contracted to develop a comprehensive engagement and communications plan for the project. The goal was to ensure area residents were aware of the sale of the site and the potential for future development, in addition to providing an opportunity for the public to share their ideas on how the development could best benefit Highland Park and the surrounding areas. The *reImagining* process has been initiated by Maple Projects and is intended to actively engage with the community before a formal application is made to the City of Calgary for review.

## SECTION 1: TALKING TO THE COMMUNITY

*reImagining: A New Future for the former Highland Golf Course* is a comprehensive engagement process coordinated over three distinct phases. The initial phase ran from November 4 to December 2, with area residents sharing their feedback online, via telephone and email, on a community sounding board, and at the engagement centre established at the former golf course Clubhouse.

In Phase 1, the focus was on generating awareness about the potential redevelopment and asking for feedback on our key question for this phase of the discussion:

*“How could the redevelopment of the former Highland Golf Course improve life in the community?”*

The following infographic highlights the various approaches to engagement and communication that were used during this phase of engagement.

# OUR FIRST PHASE OF ENGAGEMENT

## HIGHLIGHTS



## ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS



## HOW PEOPLE COULD SHARE THEIR IDEAS

- REIMAGINING CLUBHOUSE · physical**  
 Project hub for the engagement process that was open for 44 hours during the month of November.
- REIMAGINING.CA WEBSITE · digital**  
 Online project hub. Launched at the beginning of the process, with 4874 views through December 3/13.
- OUTDOOR SOUNDING BOARD · physical**  
 A 24-hour information and feedback board located at the Highland Park Community Centre.
- FACEBOOK · digital**  
 Sharing information about the engagement process and accepting input until December 2/13.
- PROJECT TELEPHONE LINE · physical**  
 Providing an opportunity to share views with project team.
- TWITTER · digital**  
 Sharing information about the engagement process and accepting input until December 2/13.

## HOW WE SPREAD THE WORD

- CANADA POST MAILOUT**

Project info cards were mailed to each household within a 1.5 km radius of the site.
- E-NEWS UPDATES**

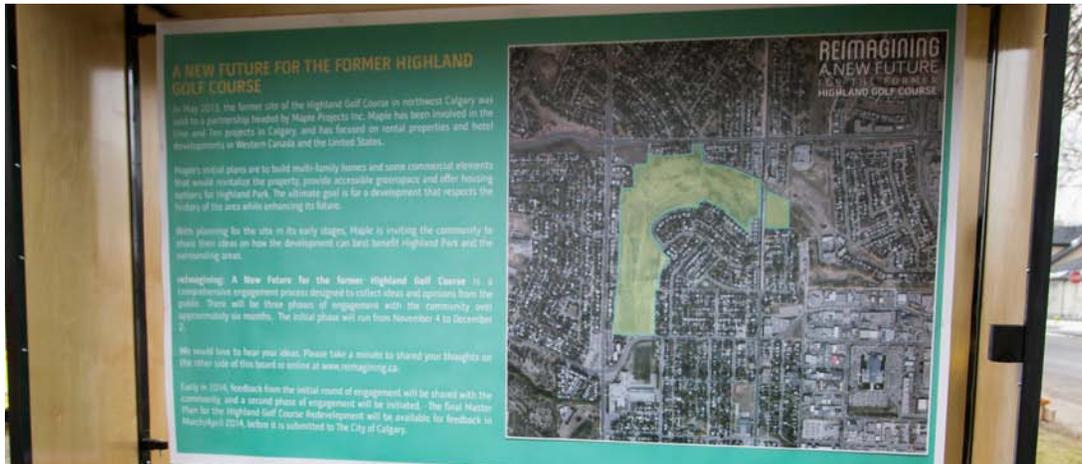
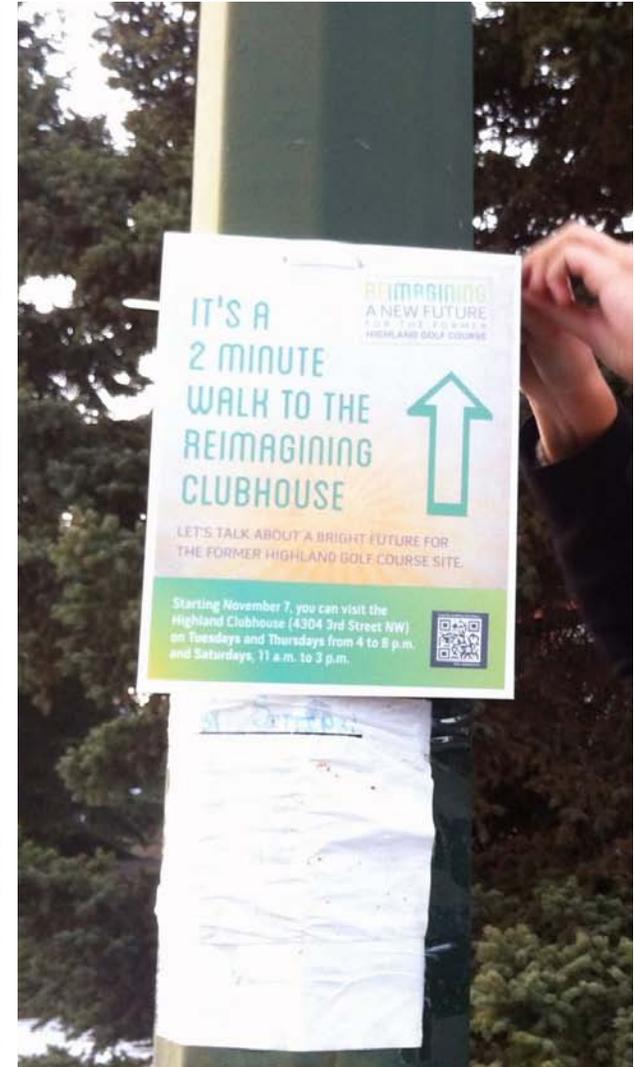
5 E-News updates were sent to participants detailing phases and involvement opportunities.
- WALK YOUR CITY SIGNAGE**

Directional signage alerted neighbourhood residents of nearby engagement opportunities.
- DOOR KNOCKING**

The project team door-knocked on November 28 to increase project awareness.
- COMMUNITY NEWSLETTERS**

Ads and articles in the December issues of the Highland Park and Thorncliffe/Greenview newsletters.
- TEMPORARY SIGNAGE**

Information signs were placed along major roads during Phase 1.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PARTICIPANTS AT THE CLUBHOUSE; TEMPORARY SIGNAGE; 'WALK YOUR CITY' DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE; OUTDOOR SOUNDING BOARD; COMMUNITY DOOR-KNOCKING.

## SECTION 2: WHAT WE HEARD

### PHASE 1 FEEDBACK

As described earlier, the first phase of feedback focused on one key question:

*“How could the redevelopment of the former Highland Golf Course improve life in the community?”*

The intent of this question was to provide an open-ended opportunity for the community to share their ideas and viewpoints on what matters most to them. By using the same question for each engagement technique, consistency was maintained.

The *reImagining* public engagement process would not have been possible without the generous support of the residents of Highland Park and surrounding communities. Their efforts to share their vision, concerns and hopes for the future development are greatly appreciated, and have been of tremendous value in the progression of the planning process.

The following outlines the community input obtained during this phase of engagement.

### KEY THEMES

The responses to our Phase 1 question were categorized to highlight key themes. All 353 responses fell into one of the following eight overarching themes:

- Parks and Recreational Activity
- Traffic
- Stormwater Management
- Commercial Development
- Property Value
- Housing
- Design
- Community Values

Each theme has several sub-themes to properly reflect all the comments heard during engagement. The following infographic provides a summary of the themes and references the geographical location of the feedback (where applicable).

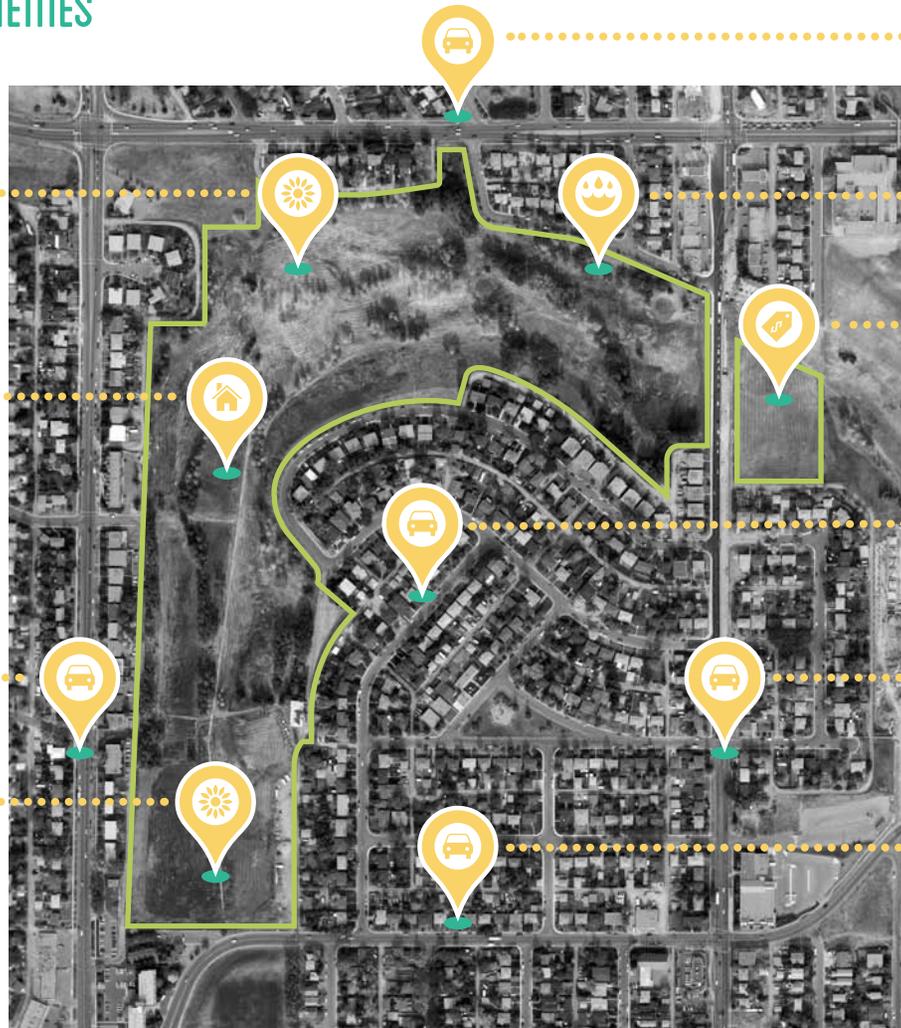
# WHAT WE HEARD: KEY THEMES

Maintain as much green space as is possible

Interest in housing accommodating seniors

General traffic concerns

Connection linking Confederation Park to Nose Creek



General traffic concerns

Questions about how stormwater will be handled

Interest in new/high quality commercial development. Some don't want to see new commercial.

No vehicle access through the residential core of community

General traffic concerns

General traffic concerns



Community wants development to be high quality



Concerned how this enhances quality & character of the area



## PARKS & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY

Parks and recreational activity was a prominent focus of discussion. The community hopes for this space to maintain its historic legacy of providing green space for Highland Park residents. Visions for how this legacy could be preserved emerged in four sub-themes:

- Extend the Confederation Park/Queen's Park pathway through the site
- Maximize green space in the development and maintain existing trees
- Incorporate a host of recreational amenities
- Create pedestrian and cyclist connectivity through the site

### Notable Quotes:

- *"I would like to see a continuation of the Confederation Park pathway system and extend it down to Nose Creek."*
- *"I am hoping considerable green space can be preserved, along with many of the mature trees."*
- *"The greatest loss to the community as a whole with this project is the loss of green space. Maximizing the green space available to the community in this project is paramount."*
- *"Sports fields."*
- *"Dog park."*
- *"It would definitely be great to have a bike/walking path through the neighbourhood, that would make for a much nicer commute than along 4 St. given the proximity to downtown, access to transit routes and car-2-go it seems likely that people could live there without a car and want a walkable neighbourhood."*



## TRAFFIC

The conversation around traffic, particularly traffic access, appeared to be of the greatest concern to the community, especially for those who live in the immediate area surrounding the site. The issue for these residents was the potential of local roads being connected to the new development. Residents are worried about future capacity of the residential streets. Those living between 44th Avenue and 40th Avenue and 3rd Street and Centre Street felt they will be the most affected by new traffic and are hoping to prevent any access points into the site from these roads. Participants from surrounding neighbourhoods like Thorncliffe, Greenview and Highwood expressed concern about increased traffic pressure on the road surrounding the former golf course. There was also some mention of parking, which was categorized under the traffic theme.

### Notable Quotes:

- *"No access off 43rd Ave.; in winter it is one-lane due to car parking on both sides."*
- *"Concerns about increased traffic on 40th and Centre Street."*
- *"No additional traffic on 43rd Ave."*
- *"Not becoming a 'cut-through' community for traffic."*
- *"Ensure adequate parking available (underground) for multi unit dwellings."*
- *"Traffic is already congested. The side streets can't handle any more traffic."*



## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Given historic flooding in this area, many participants shared their experiences of what flash flooding has done to the site in the past. Many offered advice on how to alleviate such pressures. Additional input included the idea of removing and naturalizing the major storm sewer that was installed through the site in the 1980s.

### Notable Quotes:

- *“Open underground stream vault to create a pond.”*
- *“On site drainage and filtration.”*
- *“Make creek visible and part of the development.”*
- *“ [Flood water] from 4th Street pools to well over a metre in depth at the intersection of 44th Avenue NW, completely overwhelming the existing sewers.”*



## COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

There was a variety of responses from the community in terms of feedback on commercial development. In some instances there was a strong desire for more commercial land use, while other residents were opposed to new commercial space in the neighbourhood. Those who were in favour are seeking access to more restaurants, coffee shops, markets and other food and beverage retail. In addition, some mention of office and retail shopping was heard in this theme.

### Notable Quotes:

- *“The redevelopment could also address some issues that the community lacks: commercial-grocery store, coffee shops, etc. Placing these at key locations can encourage people to walk or cycle within their community.”*
- *“No more retail needed (a strip mall and stores surrounding whole area).”*
- *“Coffee shop, market, restaurant, retail.”*
- *“We don't need more concrete parking lots or even more commercial development, there is so much around us now!”*
- *“Community friendly retail and services.”*
- *“High quality restaurant (see 4 Spot on 4th Street as great example).”*

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## PROPERTY VALUE

Property values were raised many times within other themes including parks and recreational activities, housing and traffic. However, some participants mentioned their views on this directly.

### **Notable Quotes:**

- *"Want to see property values go up."*
- *"In the interest of current property owners and the developer, the project should be targeted to a young professional, upscale, higher-income demographic. Development has opportunity to set the direction of all Highland Park development for next decade. If the owners decide to cater to a lower demographic, the "lower income" rental complex stigma will lead this development to become exactly as it is described."*
- *"Market value housing that 'elevates' the area."*

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## HOUSING

The housing conversation produced a great deal of discussion during the first phase of engagement. There appears to be a significant interest in housing that accommodates seniors, as a number of residents who have been in the community for many years are interested in downsizing but remaining in Highland Park.

There was a range of discussion on affordable housing within the development. The project team explained that the intent at this stage is for the development to be market housing. Many participants raised the issue of affordable housing. Those who were against having affordable housing options outnumbered the responses of those in favour of affordable units by a factor of three times.

### **Indicative Quotes:**

- *"Affordable housing for new families, seniors, singles."*
- *"Market value housing."*
- *"No low income or rental housing."*
- *"I see a lot of young families moving into this area as their first housing purchase and it seems like this could be a great opportunity. I think having a certain percentage of the development be supported housing for lower income families would be a good idea."*
- *"NO low income...this community has had more than its fair share of rehabilitation clinic/homes, etc. Need to attract families with children."*
- *"I accept that Highland Park is a mixed neighbourhood, but there are already far too many renters living here."*
- *"A mix of housing (multi-family, single-family, condo., etc.)."*
- *"Would like to see a seniors complex; so many people would like to stay in the area."*

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 **DESIGN**

The responses surrounding design came up through two sub-themes: community design and building design. Community design topics primarily suggested high-level complete community features like walkability, access to different land uses, and creating social connections through design. These comments also point to many local precedents of good community design. On the other hand, building design comments addressed specific physical features like height and aesthetics.

**Notable Quotes:**

*"Love to see a Garrison Woods feel to it with Brownstone type condos with boulevards."*

*"Develop similar to new area of Bridgeland."*

*"A combination of residential and commercial would... allow for community to develop more naturally than in suburbia."*

*"Low impact design."*

*"Build in a style consistent with the age and heritage of existing community."*

*"No high-rises."*

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 **COMMUNITY VALUES**

There is a realization among participants that the new development could change the face of Highland Park. Many people see the potential to create a more vibrant place for residents, while others are concerned about losing the existing character. The facets of community discussed by participants can be boiled down to the following four sub-themes:

- Having continued engagement and involvement during the planning process
- Maintaining community character
- Considering community culture
- Providing community services and infrastructure

**Notable Quotes:**

*"Sensitive intensification interface with existing residents."*

*"Community centre."*

*"Be transparent."*

*"Diversifying the community (inclusion)."*

*"Have a meet with the developer session."*

*"Building or facility that can be used by community."*

*"Land swap with under utilized public land elsewhere."*

## SECTION 3: LOOKING AHEAD

Overall, each of the eight themes is important to the outcome of the project. The community shared a range of ideas and perspectives and was very constructive in sharing their concerns — and also their hopes for a positive impact resulting from this development. During the process, the project team heard both praise for the engagement efforts and skepticism about its legitimacy.

Moving forward, the reImagining team will continue to provide multiple venues for the community to provide input and will continue to listen to the community — both in what is being said about the project and how the engagement is unfolding.

### NEXT STEPS

The feedback received during Phase 1 of the engagement process has supported the development concepts that have been created for Phase 2 of engagement, informing the technical work of the project team and the information gathered from City of Calgary Administration. These initial design concepts will be offered for additional community input from January 23rd to February 10th, providing the focus of conversations with the community.

Upon completion of this second phase of engagement, Intelligent Futures will review what we heard from the community about these initial concepts and will continue to support the project team's technical work to narrow down the proposed development to one refined concept. From there, we will return to the community for feedback, highlighting where community input has directly impacted the final concept choice and where community input could not be incorporated, due to technical, policy or financial constraints. This refined concept will be the focus of the third round of engagement in March-April 2014.

