



Calgary River Valleys champions and engages the public in the protection, appreciation and stewardship of Calgary's rivers, creeks, wetlands and watershed resources.

We are the voice of our rivers.

February 25, 2015

Attn: Heather Dybvig

Planning, Development & Assessment
City of Calgary

Re: Highland Park Land Use Amendment and Outline Plan Application

Dear Ms Dybvig,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on the Highland Park Land Use Amendment and Outline Plan Application.

Members of Calgary River Valleys have reviewed the proposal and ask that you consider the following comments:

1. Observations: The lands proposed for redesignation and development are primarily a creek and creek valley which have functioned to carry water flows from a considerable watershed to the west. We are advised that the drainage area is in excess of 15 sq km of mainly developed communities. The valley is also a natural repository for ground water flows from the more immediate surrounding district. The lands have been used for many years as a golf course and have provided an important element of open space amenity for the development of the local residential communities of Highland Park and Greenview.

The creek has been channelized and vaulted to provide some protection for the former golf course but under high flow events the lower valley does flood and the valley is the obvious overland flow corridor and retention area that protects adjacent developments.

Members note that the City owns a 30m wide utility corridor through the centre of the valley. We understand that Municipal Reserve remains owing from past subdivisions of adjacent lands and that an earlier motion of City Council has directed that the Municipal Reserve should be taken and remain in Highland

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Park. There should also be Environmental Reserve relative to the Creek and springs.

2. Concerns: The development proposals would build the main service vehicle carriageway directly over the lower and historic creek bed and meander belt. The proponent landowner proposal does not recognize the creek and floodplain although the proposed 3 to 4 meters of fill appears to be an obvious attempt to defeat or reduce the flooding potential and would likely have other adverse impacts. We understand this creek, bed and shore does exist and should be respected (see Public Lands Act Excerpt below). See attached map of the City of Calgary compiled by the Surveys and Mapping Branch, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Government of Canada, 1958.

Section 3 of Public Lands Act states:

3 (1) Subject to subsection (2) but notwithstanding any other law, the title to the beds and shores of
(a) all permanent and naturally occurring bodies of water, and
(b) all naturally occurring rivers, streams, watercourses and lakes,
is vested in the Crown in right of Alberta and a grant or certificate of title made or issued before, on or after May 31, 1984 does not convey title to those beds or shores.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (1), a river, stream or watercourse does not cease to be naturally occurring by reason only that its water is diverted by human act. RSA 1980 cP-30 s3;1984 c34 s3

3. Opportunities: All members and associates responding to our report / request for information have noted that this Highland Valley is a natural continuation of the Confederation Park Corridor (formerly known as Centennial Creek Ravine) which serves communities to the south (see attached air photo). A first priority for higher and better use of these lands would be to preserve all or most of this valley a park, as floodway and for at least some interception, retention and pre-treatment of stormwater. Such uses would provide desirable open space for existing communities which currently have less than the standard of 10% open

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space and would better encourage and provide quality of life amenities to justify more build-out, density and intensity of use in the inner city.

If the full valley cannot be utilized as suggested above then consideration should be given to consolidation of City owned lands, Municipal Reserve and Creek Environmental Reserve to the lower valley. Within the consolidated lands in the valley bottom, connection to open storm ponding areas should be required for this development to ensure a more natural and optimal functioning of the valley while maintaining a significant regional parkway corridor connecting Confederation Park to the Nose Creek Valley.

4. Other Comment: Calgary River Valleys is an original participant in the Imagine Calgary process, there are elements agreed to through Imagine Calgary which should be incorporated into any significant development within the inner city to better ensure that the existing adjacent communities more closely provide the “complete communities” environment.

We understand this proposal is being reviewed internally within the City of Calgary. Calgary River Valleys would like the opportunity to discuss the proposal with the City Planning team. To ensure a more robust assessment we request the City consider the following in the review of the proposal:

- Provide cross sections of the Valley in its natural state and post development sections demonstrating the extent of the proposed infilling of the Valley.
- Within the cross sections, include subsurface elements as well (storm pipe, utilities, road bed etc) and building massing.
- Locate and identify all springs and wetlands within and adjacent to the proposed lands.
- CRV suggests the City consider future potential for daylighting or partial daylighting of the creek. Partial daylighting can increase stormwater capacity, provide for improved water treatment, provide wildlife habitat and provide pleasing water features in a community. By allowing the infilling and paving of the valley bottom, the potential for any of this restoration work would be lost. Although there may be limited potential for immediate daylighting (or partial daylighting) of this buried tributary to Nose Creek, consideration for future improvements should be given.

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- CRV suggests City departments consider the property of the Highland Park Golf Course as a part of a larger drainage system flowing to Nose Creek. Upstream of this location the City of Calgary is pursuing restoration and daylighting activities. Restoring this drainage in one location, and filling it just downstream seems counterproductive.
- Develop a study of opportunities for consolidation of City owned lands, Municipal and Environmental Reserve to optimize natural functionalities, water quality, flood control and open space amenity.

We would appreciate being advised on any further decision on this matter. Calgary River Valleys is prepared to participate in future consultation processes. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

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Sincerely,

Steve Meadows, President, Calgary River Valleys

Bill Morrison, Chair, Watershed policy and Planning Committee, Calgary River Valleys



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