

Highlands Community League: New Community Centre Public Feedback Snapshot

The following summarizes feedback from Highlands community members at the public open house held February 20, 2018. This data does not represent a statistically valid sampling of the entire community; it is presented to capture major themes, comments and concerns regarding conceptual designs of the new facility and site revitalization.

A Quick Recap: How We Got Here

The conceptual designs presented in Feb. 2018 are the result of several years of consultation and surveys. Designs start from reflecting on conversations, feedback and an understanding of use of space - historic and projected. This informs the functional (or architectural) program, which in turn identifies the necessary site elements and relationship between them.

In spring 2014, the first community survey launched the HCL building and site revitalization project; survey results identifying key themes and project goals were presented at Sept. Community League Day. Since then, data has been collected from residents, 10+ leagues were toured and consulted, and HFRC regularly presented at HCL events to provide updates on project progress while continuing to collect input from stakeholders.



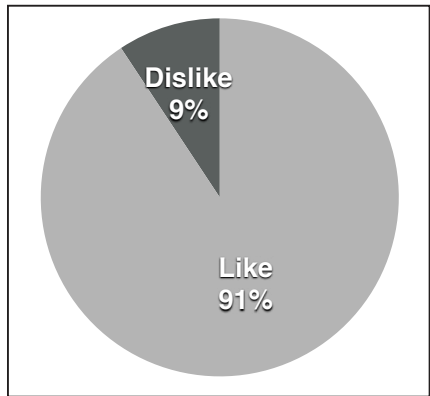
Summary Details

- Feb. 20, 2018 open house attended by 70+ people
- 20 written responses left at the meeting
- 27 messages posted to feedback board at meeting
- 42 responses to online survey – Feb. 20–27
- Total responses – 89

Top of the Response Waves

Reaction was generally positive and enthusiastic to the building plan and reconfigured grounds. Suggestions and concerns were also raised and several themes emerged.

Feedback regarding the master site and building plan for the new Highlands Community Centre (open house & online survey responses combined)



Like - 39 respondents (91% of 43 respondents)
Dislike - 4 respondents (9% of 43 respondents)
46 respondents only left suggestions/comments.
Sample size: 89 responses from the open house and online survey were collected; 43 chose to state their like/dislike of the conceptual designs.

What We Heard...



About Design & Functional Use of Space

Design - Reactions ranged from “awesome”, “great” and “inviting” to “dated” and “not in keeping with historical aspect of the neighbourhood.”

The big glass windows and the two separate multi-use rooms were well received. Lots of discussion about whether wood siding will stand up to the weather. Some folks really don't like the colour yellow, or chain-link fences. Need secure places to hang coats and leave boots. Hope the vestibule space has room for people to sit on chairs or couches. Vestibule space a big waste of space.

Sustainability - Energy saving measures applauded as well as water collection initiatives for the community garden and potential solar power generation in the future. Slab heating in the floor received support.

Seniors & Accessibility – One level building looks excellent for seniors and should attract more participation in activities at the hall. Outdoor space needed for seniors to sit and relax. Support for the planned drop off zone close to entrance.

Kitchen – Is it big enough? Some feel it's too small and potentially hard to maneuver through if the large room is divided by a movable partition to accommodate two different groups. A bigger kitchen would allow for community cooking classes. The kitchen isn't large enough for any on-site cooking, a problem with the existing building. A bar is needed; the pass-through from the kitchen won't handle the traffic, food and plating. If there's a portable bar, where is it stored?

Washrooms – Too few. Too many. Why not locate the special needs washroom closer to the multi-use rooms. That way, people who use canes and walkers won't have to walk so far. Washrooms are the first thing people see when entering the building from the parking lot. Is that good? Washroom access from the outside for community gardeners is welcomed.

Storage – Not enough. Too much.

About Site Amenities & Potential Programming

Rink/Skating – Some respondents desire a proper hockey rink with boards.

It's seen as a great attraction for children and their parents and takes advantage of cold winter weather. Should be more of a priority, not something to build later down the road.

Skating rink is an important part of the plan but is seen by some as being too far away from the skating change area in the centre of the building.

Need lockers or storage inside the building for skates, boots and coats.

Parking/Traffic - Concerns about the location of the parking lot entrance on 61st Street instead of existing access from 62nd Street. More traffic anticipated already on 61st Street from expansion of Highlands school. There is better access, with traffic lights, to 112th Avenue and 118th Avenue from 62 Street.

Parking seems sufficient and well placed. Great parking design, perfect for our community and a vast improvement.

Looks like there is ample parking. Parking lot is too big.

If the parking lot is placed between lawn bowling green and community garden in the new layout - and the building placed further north - then car lights at night wouldn't shine into neighbours windows. Parking lot would also be closer to Highlands Park.

Is there enough room for a dumpster truck to get in and out of the parking lot?

It's not so green on the 61st Street side of the HCL site with the new design.

Neighbours on 61st and 62nd Streets don't want people parking in front of their houses all the time.

Lawn Bowling – General support for the lawn bowling club and the greens but a few sharply worded comments about “anticipated” exclusive use of the smaller multi-use room and its storage by the bowlers.

Community Garden - There's concern the garden will occupy a key and highly visible spot on the grounds that could be problematic if interest wanes over the years, and that the garden/site will look desolate for a large amount of time throughout the year.

A parking lot near the garden makes more sense since most gardeners arrive by car.

Individual (boxed) garden plots are great.

Outdoor Space – An outdoor barbecue space gets support, whether it's for pub night or community events.

Some concern the plaza space isn't large enough. The patio space by the lawn bowling club should be available (and shaded) for people attending events in the 60-person room.

Tennis – Some support for including tennis courts on site; some say it's a dated sport. If combined with pickleball/badminton it could work and even be used for ball hockey.

Out of School Care – It would be great to see some kind of childcare in the building so it's used every day. Concern that childcare could tie up too much space throughout the day in the large multi-use space plus undercut local day care operators.



Next Steps

Input received during this concept phase of the project will be used to further inform the plan as we enter our Fundraising Phase. Adjustments to the design will occur in the Design phase of the project, once funding is secured. There will be more opportunities for the community to provide input as the project scope and site designs are refined.

Deep Dive

If you want to read all the comments from the February 20th open house and subsequent online survey, please visit: highlandscommunity.ca/league/hall-renewal/

More To Say?

Additional feedback welcome. Please leave your comments at: hfr@highlandscommunity.ca