

# Residents feel 'cheated' by plan to turn S.W. golf course into high-end housing

## Revised plan presented for Shaw-Nee Slopes Golf Course

BY SUZANNE WILTON, CALGARY HERALD APRIL 13, 2010 8:10 AM



Dwight Blix, wife Mary Lyn, and Jill Davidson look over the renderings of the development plans for Shaw-Nee Slopes in Calgary, Alberta on April 12, 2010.

**Photograph by:** Leah Hennel, Calgary Herald

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Bitter, angry, cheated.

These words summed up the reaction of nearby residents to the revised development plan for the Shaw-Nee Slopes Golf Course, which would be replaced by up to 1,600 single-family homes, townhouses and multi-family units.

Developer Geo-Energy Enterprises, which bought the course last summer, held an open house Monday, hoping to highlight what it called refinements to the development plan, such as the preservation of nearly 90 per cent of mature trees and the addition of water features and green space.

But many who attended left even more upset than they were already, vowing to mount a vigorous fight against the developer.

A community meeting has been organized already for Wednesday night at a neighbourhood church, where it's expected a battle strategy will be mapped out.

"It's going to be pretty hot, pretty highly contested," said resident Joe Tanyi, who has concerns about everything from lost views to increased traffic.

"It's highly emotional for all of us. We feel cheated," added the retired Calgarian, who bought in the area without realizing that one day the golf course could be sold and redeveloped.

Like it or not, the fairways and greens that make up the 58-hectare site north of James McKeivitt Road S.W. and west of Macleod Trail are gone, at least figuratively if not soon literally.

But what exactly the prime piece of land bordering Fish Creek Provincial Park will look like in the future is less certain.

Geo-Energy Enterprises applied to the city earlier this year for rezoning. Its development proposal is being reviewed by city staff.

The Geo-Energy Enterprises plan could come before the planning commission as early as this fall, with construction starting in 2012.

The project's senior planner, Les Humphrey, said efforts were and are being made to address some concerns of the community.

He argues the development will raise property values in the area, including those for homes that now line the course.

"They are not coming in there to build tacky little boxes," said Humphrey, pointing out the developer has built million-dollar homes in Springbank Hill and intends all its housing to be higher end in the southwest Shawnee Slopes community.

Unusual development proposals include estate single-family homes closer to Fish Creek Park and cluster housing, which would be built as bare-land condominiums to maximize the amount of green space between and surrounding the houses. The higher density -- four-to five-storey buildings -- would be kept closest to the LRT.

Humphrey said the area would boast several parks and pathways that would be available for everyone to access, not just those who hold a membership to the golf course.

"What used to be a privilege of the few can now be enjoyed by everyone," he said.

That's little comfort, however, to those who paid a premium for a golf course view.

"We bought specifically here because it was backing onto the golf course and Fish Creek Park," said Don Davidson, who along with his wife retired to Calgary from Ontario in 2004. "I feel violated. Terribly disappointed."

Residents in neighbouring communities have different concerns, and want to know what will happen to traffic; the routes in and out of the area are already congested.

The developer's transportation engineer said a traffic study has been done and a report submitted to the city for review. But its contents were not made available at the open house and won't be until the city critiques various plans for improvement.

Robert Fenton, vice-president of the neighbouring Millrise Community Association, predicts an additional 1,500 cars will be added to an already clogged Macleod Trail. He was frustrated no one would tell him what plans there are to deal with more traffic.

"There's an argument this could affect people all the way to Bridlewood and Somerset," said Fenton, who was "encouraged" that the developer agreed to have someone meet with his association to discuss concerns.

"I just want to know what sort of traffic studies have been done and the volumes," he said. "If it's done and submitted, turn it over."

"The public has a right to know."

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