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Sunset Valley Golf Course Renovation Plan – A New Course for the Future

HIGHLAND PARK, IL, October 20, 2016 – Sunset Valley Golf Course will temporarily close on December 31, 2016 as it undergoes a major renovation slated for 2017. The planned renovation was classified as a priority capital improvement project outlined in the Park District of Highland Park GreenPrint 2024 10-year master plan. With a strong fall and early spring turf growing season, the course is expected to re-open July 2018. During the renovations, the Sunset Valley golf professionals will be operating the Highland Park Country Club golf course, so golfers will be able to book tee times with them at the Highland Park Country Club through December 31, 2017.

As approved, the new design will transform Sunset Valley into a distinctive course accommodating every level of golfer with unique features while addressing and correcting the necessary infrastructure improvements identified in the GreenPrint 2014 10-year master plan. The project includes a complete renovation of all tees, fairways, greens, and bunkers as well as the course’s overall infrastructure, drainage, and storm water management. A modernized clubhouse and outdoor space will also better serve golfers and residents.

Since 1920, Sunset Valley Golf Course has been a valued historic part of the community. However, the clubhouse built in 1956 and the course still features many of the original 1920 elements. During the district’s GreenPrint 2014 10-year master planning process, it was determined that Sunset Valley is in vital need of renovation in order to provide a long term golfing experience for the community. “The renovated course plan will provide Sunset Valley with a much needed facelift while paying homage to its long history as Highland Park’s hometown golf course,” said Liza McElroy, Executive Director for the Park District of Highland Park.

The most distinctive change in Sunset Valley will be the transformation of a virtually flat course to a course with changing topography achieved through strategically placed berms, swales and undulations...
at each hole. “The course will reflect a British Heathlands course design with an openness accentuated with strategic landforms, flowing masses of native grasses and groves of trees which harkens back to the character and aesthetic appeal of 1920’s era golf course architecture,” said Rick Jacobson, President of Jacobson Golf Course Design who heading up the Sunset Valley course design team. “The overall golf experience at the renovated Sunset Valley Golf Course will be enhanced by the risk / reward design philosophy applied and results in a variety of exciting shot options available to golfers of all abilities.”

Other distinctive features of the new course include, among others:

- Re-building all 18 greens to meet USGA specifications (currently none of the greens meet those specifications) to provide the highest quality putting surfaces
- Earthwork creatively shapes new landforms that visually define each hole while also improving storm water management
- Multiple tee complexes to create different course lengths and a variety in the angle of play to accommodate golfers of all abilities
- Cart path re-routing and additional curbing features facilitates functional golfer circulation
- Hole #4 - Will be the new “signature hole” with a larger lake and stone wall fronting the green to reshape the hole
- Hole #5 - Enhancement includes new green site framed by landforms planted with fescue
- Hole #12 - Expansion of the lake improves visibility of this beautiful water feature from the tee shot landing area
- Hole #13 - New green site lengthens the hole to provide a variety in length on par 4 yardages
- Hole #16 / #17 - Expansion of the lake improves golf hole strategy and aesthetics
- Hole #18 - New putting surface will connect with the putting green to create one large green providing a dual purpose

In keeping with the Park District of Highland Park’s long held tradition of engaging the community throughout a project, the Sunset Valley Resident Golf Advisory Committee has had an active voice and role in the design process through review and input meetings since the project began in March. “We are grateful to the Sunset Valley Golf Advisory Committee members for their hard work and thoughtful input,” said Cal Bernstein, Commissioner for the Park District of Highland Park and Board liaison along with Commissioner Brian Kaplan for the project. “Jacobson’s attention to detail and our committee’s commitment to the project will help create a truly exceptional golf facility and experience for Highland Park.”