



Heartland
Community Commons

What We Heard

Report to the Community

February 2023

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Report Overview

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Project Overview

- How it Started
- Partner Organizations
- What is the Heartland Community Commons?
- Project History



How it Started

The idea for the Heartland Community Commons began when a local employer, Inter Pipeline, asked for help to create a nonprofit daycare that would offer extended-hours childcare for shift workers living in and near Fort Saskatchewan.

Soon, there were more organizations at the table. Then someone asked, "how can families who use the daycare access other services while they are there?"

Those early conversations grew into the Heartland Community Commons, a collaboration of multi-sector partners working together to coordinate services in a community hub, the Commons.



Partner Organizations

We are grateful to the following community leaders who joined the conversation and have given their time and expertise to explore the **Big Idea** that is the Heartland Community Commons:

- ABC Head Start Society
- BGC Fort Saskatchewan
- Bridge Church
- Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society
- Fort Saskatchewan FCSS
- Fort Foundation
- Inter Pipeline

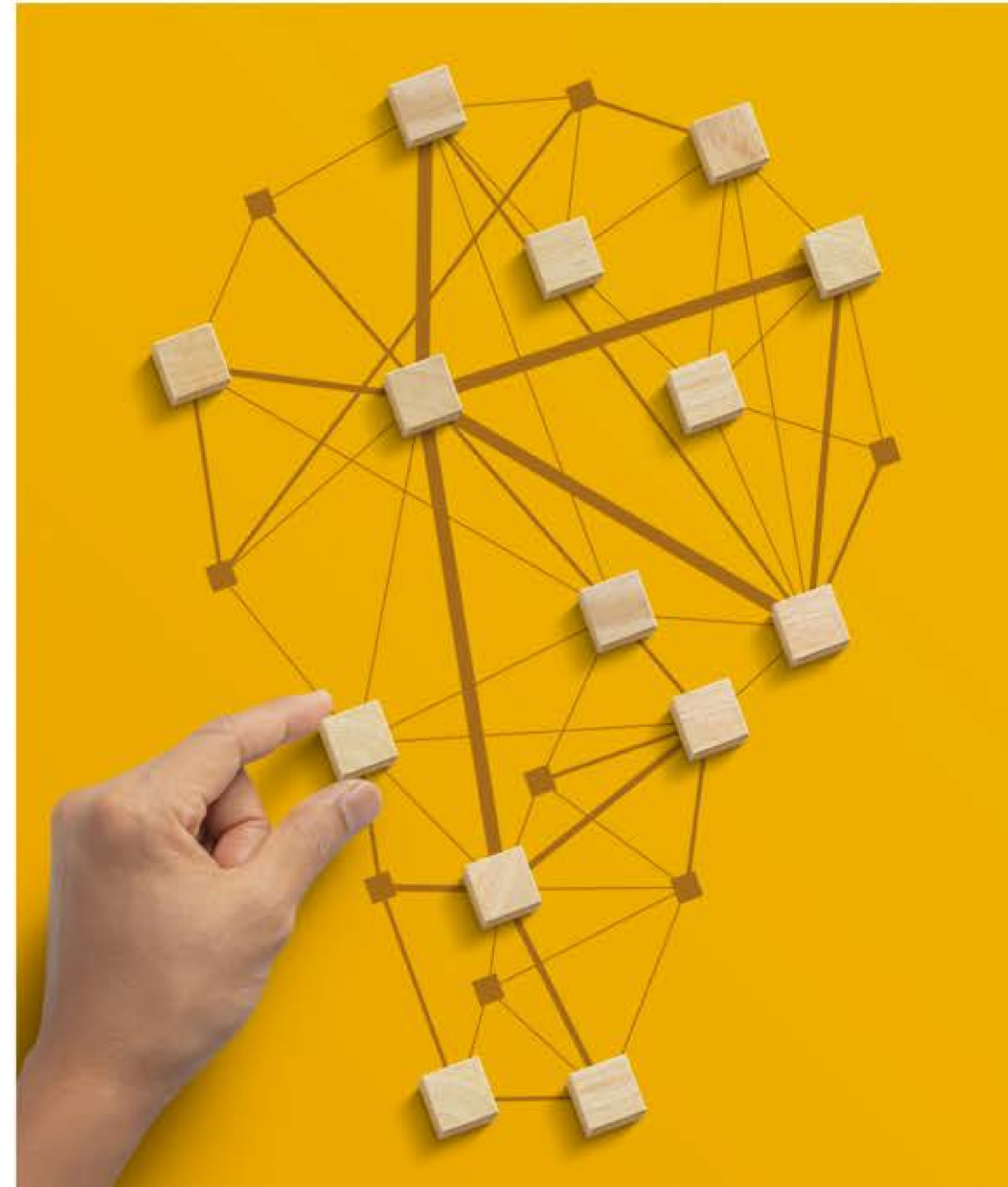


What is the Heartland Community Commons?

We are working together to create a Commons: a community hub that brings together several services into a shared facility and as an online resource/referral service.

With a non-profit daycare at its center, we will connect families to services located within the Commons and throughout the community.

The Commons will allow organizations with unmet space needs to work together to create efficiencies and share resources while providing seamless services. The HCC will link people to other existing hubs in the community.





Project History

A look back at how the Heartland Community Commons started will help us move forward together.

Project History



- Inter Pipeline reached out to Families First, looking for daycare options to meet the needs of shift workers.
- Families First involved ABC Head Start because they already had non-profit daycare spaces in Fort Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, funding changes meant these spaces were later lost.
- Other industry employers (Dow, Shell, etc.) were approached to see if they were interested in the project. They expressed interest in funding something that provided more than childcare: the idea of the "commons" was born.
- FCSS and BGC become involved with the project.

- Space was found in the old mall and negotiations began, including plans for leasehold improvements.

- Spring 2020 - COVID-19 pandemic begins. Project paused; eventually mall space let go.

- In addition to changes required by pandemic health measures, several partner organizations experienced turnover in key positions, funding cuts, and/or changes in their mandates.



Project History



- Bridge Church became involved in the project.
- ABC Head Start and Bridge Church provided funding to hire a grant writer to complete the Civil Societies Grant application.
- 2021 - Civil Societies grant received to fund the HCC for two years (April 2021-March 2023) to complete a strategic plan, public engagement, preliminary design work, and a business and sustainability plan.
- Project Manager hired.
- Fort Foundation became involved in project.



- Extensive public engagement conducted with both external and internal stakeholders (April 2022-April 2023).
- Heartlandcommons.ca website launched.

Project History



- Bridge Church leads the search for a facility and identifies the Square One Building as a potential home for the HCC.
- Fall 2022 - Architect engaged to complete preliminary design concept of the Square One building based on partner feedback.
- 2023 - Business and Sustainability Plan created to guide the HCC into its next stage.





Public Engagement Approach

- Engagement Objectives
- Engagement Goals

Engagement Objectives

- Engage & energize internal stakeholders
- Solicit feedback from community to inform proof-of-concept process
- Assist in determining community needs
- Raise awareness about project
- Build & enhance relationships between HCC and its internal and external stakeholders



Heartland
Community Commons



**What would make
our community a
better place to live?**

**What does our
community need?**

Share your ideas!

www.heartlandcommons.ca



Engagement Goals

- Identify barriers and potential solutions
- Create engagement opportunities for participants to provide meaningful input
- Implement an open, transparent and respectful process
- Provide convenient and accessible involvement opportunities
- Communicate how input will be used





What We Did & Who We Talked To

- What We Did
- Social Media
- Who We Talked To: Internal Stakeholders
- Who We Talked To: External Stakeholders





What We Did

Internal Stakeholders

- Partner Questionnaire, April 2022
- Partner Workshop, May 26, 2022
- Confidential Partner Interviews (6), July-August, 2022
- Governance Workshops, Nov 2022 & Jan 2023

External Stakeholders

- Public Engagement Events:
 - Family Festival, June 4, 2022
 - Fort Saskatchewan Public Library, July 28, 2022
- Agency interviews (11), July-September, 2022
- Social media posts, ongoing





What We Did & Who We Talked To

Social Media

We used social media to raise awareness about the Heartland Community Commons. Connect with us on Facebook and Instagram (@heartlandcc).



IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO FIND HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

I'm looking for housing my family can afford.

I'm so anxious all the time.

I might have to quit my job because I can't find childcare in the evenings.

I don't know where to find help.

WHAT Postpartum Supports WOULD HELP YOU?

Help for the Holidays

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE:

- 24/7 distress line: 780-482-HELP (4357)
- Suicide prevention: 1-833-456-4566
- Family Violence Info line 24/7: 310-1818
- Crisis Addiction Help Line: 1-866-332-2322 (toll free within Alberta)
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
Text: 6868686 Chat: www.kidshelpphone.ca
- Seniors abuse helpline: 780-454-8888
- Mental Health Help Line: 1-877-303-2642 (toll free within Alberta)
- Healthlink: 811 Find a service: 211

Heartland Community Commons

Looking for indoor play spaces?

We want to know!

Heartland Community Commons

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS CHALLENGE

Phone or video call a loved one.	Pick up some litter and throw it away.	Tell a child why you are proud of them.	Post a positive quote on social media.
Make a donation to a charitable cause.	Mail a postcard to a friend.	Hold a door open for someone.	Run an errand for someone.

Are you a senior?

We want to hear from you!



Who We Talked To

Internal Stakeholders: HCC Partners

Confidential partner interviews provided space for concerns to be voiced.

Addressing these concerns helped shape the forward direction of the

Heartland Community Commons and guide governance conversations.

- ABC Head Start Society
- BGC Fort Saskatchewan
- Bridge Church
- Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society
- Fort Saskatchewan FCSS
- Fort Foundation



Families First Society
FORT SASKATCHEWAN



Fort Saskatchewan





Who We Talked To

External Stakeholders

- Alberta Heartland Primary Care Network
- Bridge Youth Hub
- Careers Under Construction
- Community Adult Learning & Literacy Society (CALLS)
- Fort Saskatchewan Food Bank
- Fort Saskatchewan Public Library
- Fort Saskatchewan Restorative Justice
- Pioneer House Club 50
- RCMP
- Robin Hood Association
- Members of the Public



What We Heard

- Key Themes
- Community Gaps and Needs
- Strengths, Opportunities,
Barriers & Bridges
- Space Needs





Key Themes

Four key themes emerged as we talked to stakeholders:

1. Enhance & support, not duplicate

Fort Saskatchewan has many organizations already doing excellent work to improve the lives of community members. With many organizations experiencing funding and staffing challenges, it is crucial that the HCC focuses on providing services that fill service gaps to enhance and support existing services and avoid duplication.





Key Themes

2. Impact of Pandemic

In addition to having to adjust services due to public health measures, several organizations experienced turnover in key positions, funding cuts, and/or changes to their mandates. Many organizations are still regrouping and figuring out what services look like now, which makes identifying current service gaps challenging.

3. Community-wide Referrals

Some organizations have effective referral services, while others struggle to figure out who to call to help clients, especially post-pandemic as many agency mandates have changed. One need identified is an updated social service directory - a gap the virtual Commons can help fill.



Key Themes

4. Need for Clear Roles and Governance Structure

Several internal stakeholders expressed a need to clarify roles and responsibilities and create a governance structure for the Heartland Community Commons.

- Who decides which organizations are included and what are the criteria?
- What agreements, policies, and procedures are in place to protect the partner organizations if one of the partners can no longer participate in the HCC?
- What policies and procedures will be used to deal with various situations (every organization has a different lost child protocol, for example)?



Community Gaps & Needs

We heard about challenges that members of our community are facing:

- Childcare that meets the needs of shift workers, as well as short-term, drop-in childcare options (i.e. for people to attend programs and go to appointments).
- Indoor play space.
- Mental health supports, especially ongoing therapy for complex needs.
- Postpartum supports, including new moms groups and support for postpartum depression.



What We Heard





Community Gaps & Needs

- More affordable housing, including second stage housing, transitional/bridge housing and supportive housing options.
- Additional capacity to support families experiencing domestic violence, including supports for men.
- Community poverty supports (note: a Building Bridges sub-group has received a Civil Societies grant to work in this area to further assess needs).
- Ability to access services and supports outside regular business hours.



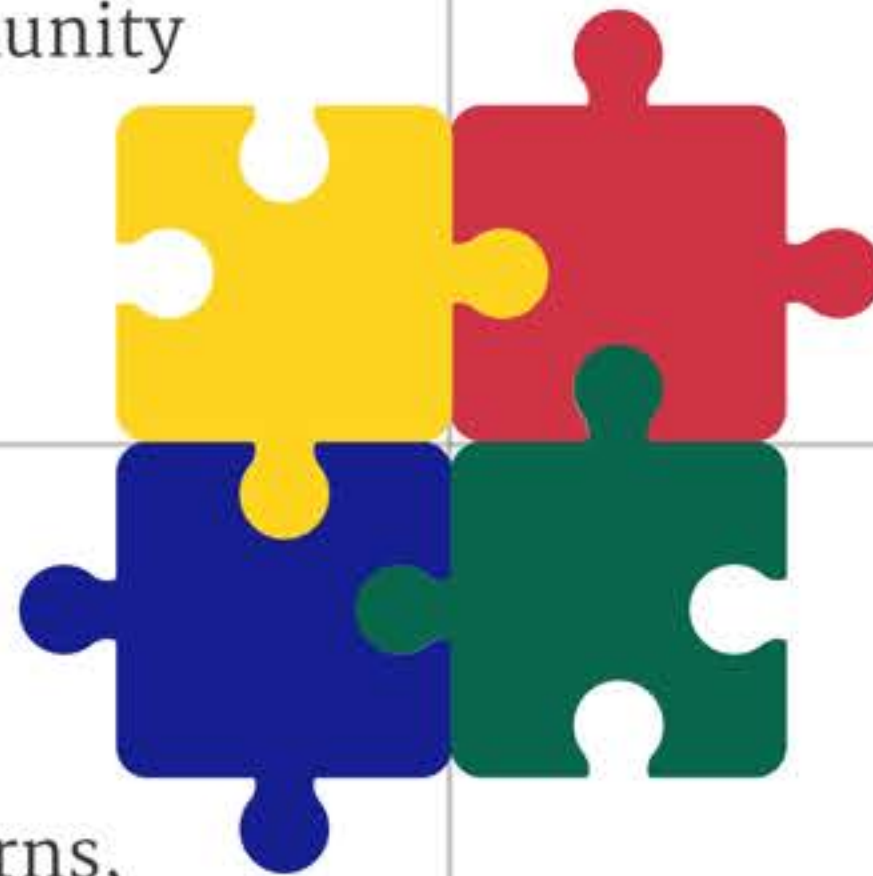


Strengths

What the partners bring to the project and other community assets.

Opportunities

What we can do together to enhance our Commons and our community.



Barriers

The fears, concerns, and obstacles that could stand in our way.

Bridges

How we can work together to overcome our collective barriers.

Strengths

- An ethos of compassion and a commitment to help people was universal among the internal and external stakeholders who provided input.
- Enthusiasm from the general public for the Heartland Community Commons concept.
- The colocation/community hub plus virtual model provides many opportunities for creating efficiencies, sharing resources and providing seamless services.
- Strong foundation of existing community services to build on.

What We Heard



Anything
is Possible

Opportunities

- Colocation provides many opportunities to create efficiencies, share space and resources, and provide seamless service, especially for organizations that are actively seeking space:
 - Shared reception, photocopiers, etc.
 - Mini case conferences and soft hand-offs.
- Several organizations have stated they would consider moving into the HCC in the future or that they would be interested in providing services and programs in the HCC.
- Local organizations can provide guidance:
 - The Bridge Wellness Hub for Youth can share learnings about the challenges of creating and sustaining a community hub, colocation, and developing policies and procedures;
 - The Food Bank has recent experience developing a new facility.
- A new building has significant fundraising potential.
- Leverage the virtual Commons to include additional organizations, create a digital directory, reach rural residents, and provide after-hours services.

What We Heard





Barriers

Concerns and fears about:

- Lack of a governance structure and role clarity
- Competition for resources
- Potential duplication of existing services
- Operational funding (post-Civil Societies grant funding)
- The perceived impact of having a church as one of the partners
- Is the "Heartland" label misleading? What region will the Commons serve?

Transportation issues:

- Consider bus routes and parking when choosing a location.
- Consider bus routes & schedules when planning programs
- How will the HCC serve rural residents unable to travel into Fort Saskatchewan?



Bridges

- Develop a continuum of support and involvement; move away from an in-or-out model of participation.
- Provide opportunities for organizations to participate in the virtual Commons.
- Create a clear governance structure to guide decision-making and policy development.
- Build a framework that allows organizations to share space and collaborate effectively while maintaining independence and autonomy.
- Leverage the strengths of each organization.
- Engage in transparent dialogue and create space to talk about concerns, hopes and fears .





Space Needs for the HCC

The following space needs were identified and are being incorporated into initial facility plans:

- Space for large group programs, including Church services
- Classroom space
- Programming space
- Meeting space
- Office space for staff
- Outside space, including play space and community gardens
- Snoezelen room (sensory room)
- Consultation/Counselling rooms (private entrance)
- Teaching kitchen
- Opportunities to share spaces and resources, including a reception area, photocopiers, staffroom, etc.
- Keep space flexible so it can be adapted to changing needs.



Next Steps

The Heartland Community Commons is using what we heard from our community to inform the following actions:

1. Scope Study & Fit Test

- An architect has completed preliminary drawings of what the HCC could look like and how the various elements can work together.

2. Business & Sustainability Plan

- A Business and Sustainability Plan is being created to guide the HCC into its next stages.

3. Recruit New Partners

- The HCC is looking for additional partners who have unmet space needs as well as those who can serve the virtual commons.





Scope Study & Test Fit

Reimagine Architects were contracted to do preliminary design and costing work based on the Square One building, which is under consideration for purchase by Bridge Church.

Input from the first phase of our engagement efforts became part of the design process.

The drawings that follow show one vision for how several organizations could work together collaboratively in the Heartland Community Commons, over three levels, with the daycare placed conveniently on the ground floor.

The entire report will be made available soon.



2.1 Main Floor Proposed Scheme



▲ 3D plan view of possible main floor scheme

MAIN FLOOR SUMMARY

The newly reconfigured barrier free entrance opens into a large, common lounge space which is available to all tenants in the building.

As with all floors, the central washrooms have been demolished and enlarged to accommodate current barrier free requirements.

Reimagine notes that an thorough code review is recommended to ensure that the building will meet today's standards.

Childcare Spaces

The main floor (as well as the extended addition shown on the following pages) has been largely allocated to children's programming. Included on the main floor:

- After school care
- Daycare
- FCSS Indoor Playground (in the addition)
- Common Lounge Space
- Common Meeting / Workshop Space
- Community Laundry Facilities
- Bookable, multi-purpose space

2.2 Second Floor Proposed Scheme



▲ 3D plan view of possible second floor scheme

SECOND FLOOR SUMMARY

The second floor has been largely designated to leasable tenant spaces. This proposed scheme includes:

- Four leasable tenant spaces of varying sizes and requirements.
- Common spaces available to the building:
 - Lounge Space
 - Private phone booths / zoom rooms
 - Meeting Spaces
 - Touchdown workstations

2.3 Third Floor Proposed Scheme



▲ 3D plan view of possible third floor scheme

THIRD FLOOR SUMMARY

The third floor has been allocated in its entirety to Bridge Church. This proposed layout includes the following areas: (in addition to the enlarged, barrier free washrooms)

- Reception Area
- Multipurpose room
- Worship space
- Children's breakout area
- Common Lounge space
- Office suite including:
 - Designated meeting room
 - Private office
 - Coworking zone



Thank You!

Our gratitude to all of the individuals and organizations that provided input into our engagement process.

Thank you for sharing your insights and wisdom. We look forward to continuing to work with you to improve services to our community.



Contact Us



Heartland
Community Commons

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