

# Kitchen Table Conversation Report

**Name of Group/Organization:** Lethbridge College Ecosystem Management Students

**Conversation Topic:** Environmental Resources

**Number of people in Conversation:** 8

**Date:** November 4, 2016

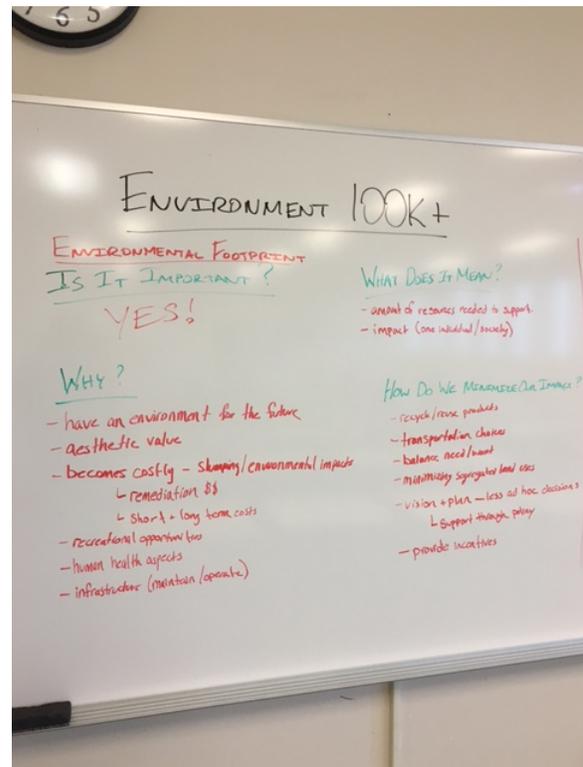
**Describe your Conversation:** On November 4, 2016, Perry Stein and Andrew Malcolm, Community Planner with the City of Lethbridge facilitate a 100K+ Kitchen Table Conversation about environmental resources with student from Lethbridge College studying Ecosystem Management. The Planners began with a presentation about the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, and the City's efforts to become compliant with the Regional Plan. Students were given the opportunity to ask questions and learn more, before the formal Kitchen Table Conversation began.

The focus of the KTC was on environmental resources, and focused on values (i.e., why do we value this particular environmental resource), and on how we as individuals and policy makers can minimize our impacts on environmental resources.

There was consensus in the group that value of environment protection extends into social and economic benefits. As well, that there are no shortage of actions we can take as individuals to minimize our impacts. However, identifying policy actions to minimize negative environmental impacts is often more difficult.

**Question 1:** Why is it important to minimize our environmental footprint, and how do we do so?

- We want to have an environment in the future
- The environment has aesthetic value
- It becomes costly not to
  - E.g., slumping and other environmental impacts are expensive to remediate
  - Need to understand short and long term costs and benefits
- Recreational opportunities
- Need to consider human health
- Infrastructure is expensive (maintenance and operational costs), so it should be optimized
- We can...
  - Recycle/reuse products
  - Make wise transportation choices
  - Balance needs and wants



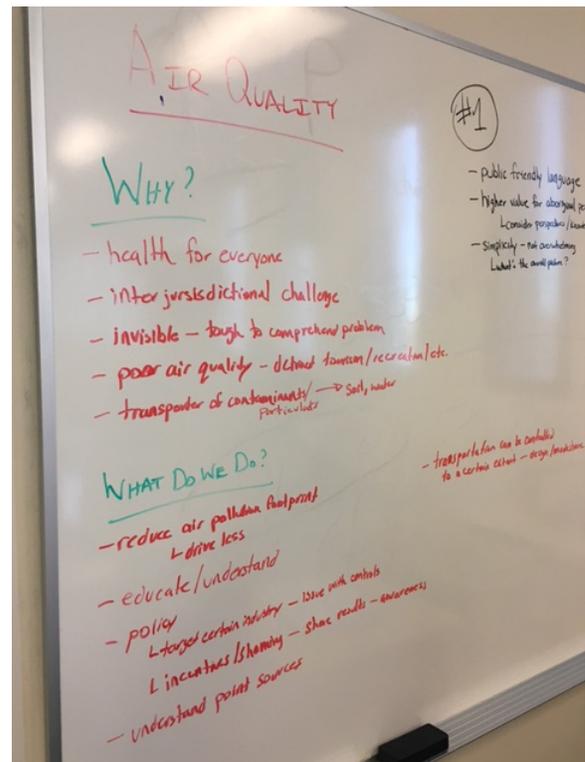
- Minimize the segregation of land uses (more mixed use development)
- Need a vision and plan—do less ad hoc decision-making
  - Support vision through policy
- Provide incentives

**Question 2:** Why is it important to protect water quality and quantity, what threatens water quality and quantity, and how do we protect water quality and quantity?

- It provides us with life
- We need to consider the downstream effects on our neighbours (we are just borrowing water)
- Water gives our City its identity
- Industrial processes require water
- The agricultural industries surrounding Lethbridge require water
- Water quantity and quality are threatened by...
  - Groundwater contamination
  - Extreme water events (floods and draughts)
  - Dilution
  - Diminishing flows
  - Non-source pollution
  - Erosion/sedimentation
  - Aquifer depletion
- We can...
  - Make personal efficiency choices
    - Landscaping
    - Watering
    - Washing cars
  - Use policy
    - Provide incentives (e.g., xeriscaping)
  - Educate / shame people

**Question 3:** Why is it important to protect air quality, and how do we do so?

- Everyone's health depends on air quality
- There is an inter-jurisdictional challenge with air
- Air is invisible and so hard to comprehend problems with air quality
- Poor air quality can detract tourism and recreational values
- Air can transport airborne contaminants and deposit them on water and soil
- We can...
  - Reduce air pollution footprint by driving less



- Educate / understand
- Policy
  - Target certain industries
  - Provide incentives / shaming (by showing air quality measures)
  - Awareness
- Understand point sources
- Control, to a certain extent, transportation through design

**Question 4:** The current version of the City of Lethbridge's Master Plan (the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan / Municipal Development Plan) contains environmental policy language in certain key areas. Are there areas that are not considered currently that should be?

- Wildlife (fragmentation / corridors)
- Biodiversity
  - Create natural habitats
- Land use fragmentation
- More on waste management
- Stormwater management
- Invasive species
- Tree diversification
- Restoration / remediation
- Multi-purpose lands / efficiency
  
- There are opportunities to collaborate with experts when writing these policies

**Question 5:** Any additional comments?

- Use public-friendly language
- Place a higher value for Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK)
  - Consider Indigenous peoples, perspectives, knowledge
- Be simple—don't overwhelm
- Ensure we know what the overall picture / outcome is supposed to be