

Kitchen Table Conversation Report

Name of Group/Organization: South Saskatchewan Regional Plan First Nation Sub Table

Conversation Topic: Indigenous Heritage

Number of people in Conversation: 6

Date: November 23, 2016

Describe your Conversation: On November 23, 2016 Community Planners from the City of Lethbridge were asked to present the City's Traditional Knowledge and Use Assessment as part of their South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Compliance Initiative, to the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan First Nation Sub Table. The Sub Table is a group of technicians representing 12 of the 13 First Nations with interests in the South Saskatchewan Region, as well as staff from the Government of Alberta representing the different implementation projects of the Regional Plan. The City of Lethbridge has also been an active participant on the Sub Table since shortly after its creation in 2015.

The focus of the presentation was to share with the Sub Table the City's interpretation of the Regional Plan, including our compliance obligations, and our approach to building relationships with neighbouring Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy through a collaborative exploration of Indigenous Traditional Land Use.

After the presentation, members of the Sub Table were invited to provide feedback to City of Lethbridge Staff, and were guided by three overarching questions.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- 1) HOW DO WE INCORPORATE TEK AND TLU INTO URBAN OUTCOMES? (E.G., IN PARK AND NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN)
- 2) WHAT ARE SOME IDEAS OF FURTHER WAYS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL?
- 3) WHERE CAN TEK AND TLU LIVE ON IN OUR COMMUNITIES, PHYSICALLY AND IN TERMS OF KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS?

Below is the feedback that was provided by Sub Table participants:

- The media can be a powerful tool for education and awareness
- Organize field visits for City residents and staff to learn firsthand about Traditional Ecological Knowledge
 - For example, visits to Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park or Head Smashed-in Buffalo Jump
- First Nations (signage and information) seems to be an after-thought in Lethbridge, in particular in the River Valley
- Need to understand how we are all shaped by our landscape
- Get away from telling just cliché stories about the Blackfoot and the Buffalo
- Why do we use the name Whoop-up for our annual fair and for a major roadway
 - This name is reflective of a very dark and sad time in the history of the Blackfoot. We should be choosing names that celebrate and honour.
- The River Valley is a cultural landscape. Can the City designate it as one?
- More naming: schools, parks, playgrounds
 - But don't forget to tell the stories behind the names
- People have different perceptions of how to interact with historic sites—need to find a balance and include education on proper protocol
- We need to get away from a perspective that reinforces “us and them”, and towards a collective appreciation for history

- First Nation signage, and more informal links to the pasts through: sign boards, public arts, signs at the entrance to the City etc.
- Reach the parents by educating their children at school and on the land
- Incorporate audio into site interpretation to introduce people to the Blackfoot language and to ensure the longevity of oral traditions and language
- Create higher profiles for certain sites
- Naming (or re-naming) of certain events / places (e.g., Whoop-up Days or Whoop-up Drive)
- There is significant tourism potential connected to Indigenous heritage
- More involvement with the schools and curriculum
- Fort Whoop-up location is a good place for a cultural centre
- The Galt Museum and Archives is doing good work and should be recognized
 - Providing people with a tangible connection to their past
- A cultural centre could be a valuable hub in the network of regional tourist sites (e.g., Waterton, Head Smashed-in, Writing-on-Stone)
- Need to create on-going economic opportunities for First Nations peoples, not just seasonal work
- Heritage can help create pride among young Indigenous peoples
- Need to remember: “There was life here before”
- Ensuring a healthy ecosystem is the most basic way to recognize and protect Inherent and Treaty Rights
- Think about Indigenous Heritage as not being isolated sites, but as a network or a cultural landscape
- Family Centre Society Centre in West Lethbridge may be a good place to incorporate findings from the TKUA study
- Provide / create more immersive cultural experiences
 - Not just words on a screen or plaque
 - Bring in the 5 senses
 - Make an emotional connection