

Kitchen Table Conversation Report

Name of Group/Organization: City of Lethbridge Youth Advisory Council

Conversation Topic: Open Conversation about Lethbridge and our Future

Number of people in Conversation: 10 (6 YAC Members and 4 Youth Advisors)

Date: November 10, 2016

Describe your Conversation: On November 10, 2016, Perry Stein, Community Planner with the City of Lethbridge attended a regular meeting of the Youth Advisory Council to host a Kitchen Table Conversation. Over the course of nearly an hour and a half, members of the Council and youth advisors provided their perspectives on Lethbridge, in terms of: what we do well as a City, where we have room to improve as a City, and what the next 10, 20, 30 years of future community growth could look like. Participants were asked to ground their comments and reflections in the experiences and needs of Youth.

There was a great deal of agreement among the conversation participants around what we tend to do well as a community, and also around where there are gaps in terms of service provision. Conversations about imagining the future of Lethbridge were also fairly consistent.

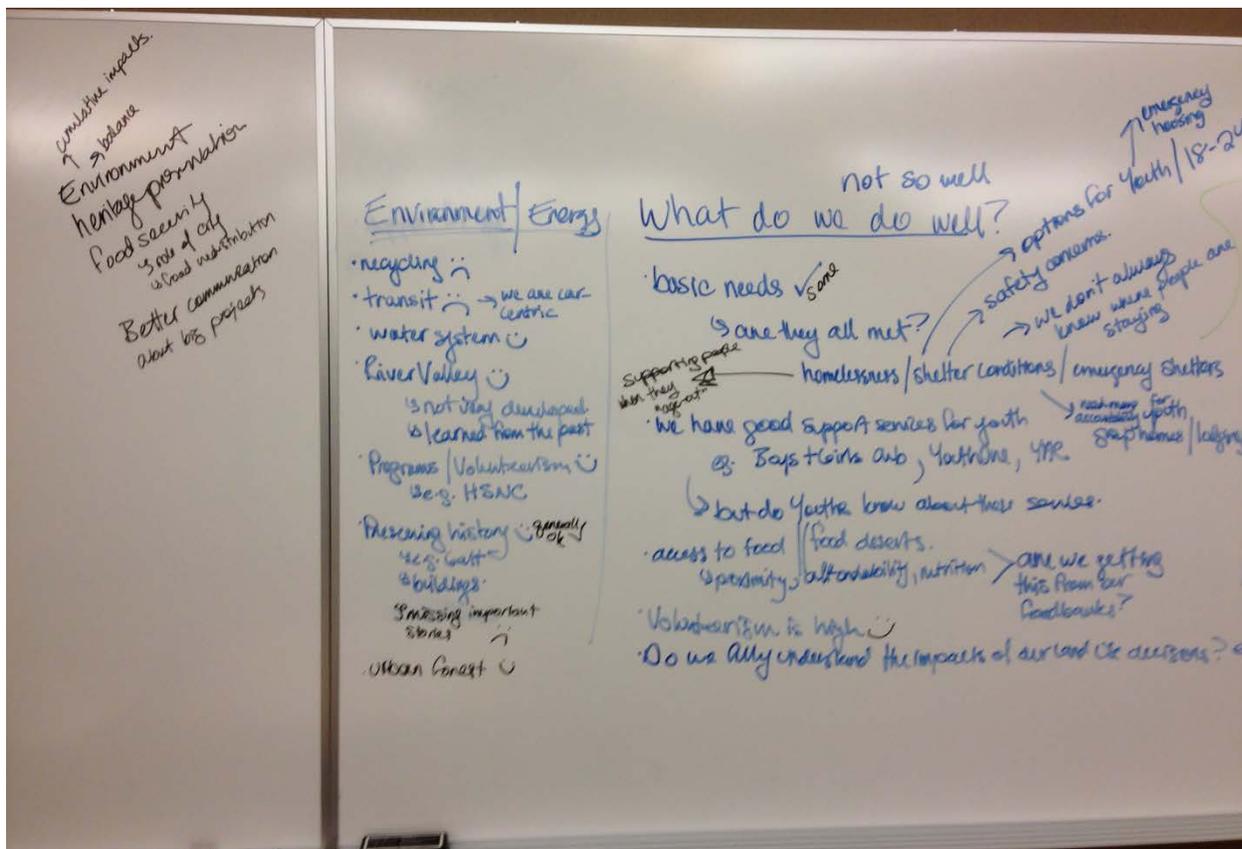


Figure 1 City of Lethbridge Youth Advisory Council Kitchen Table Conversation. Every conversation was not captured word for word – the focus was on main themes.

Question 1: From the perspective of Youth, what do we do well as a Community, and in what areas is there room for improvement?

- Some of our basic community needs are being met, while others are not.
 - Sure we have good drinking water and the lights turn on but...
 - We need to improve:
 - The living conditions of the homeless
 - Shelter conditions (there are safety concerns)
 - Emergency shelters / housing
 - Options for youth aged 18-24 who “age out” of the system
 - Supports for Aboriginal women who are transitioning into the community (from living on-Reserve to in the City)
 - Need more accountability for services being delivered to Youth (e.g., Group Homes / Lodging)
- We do have some really great youth services and advocates in the City: e.g., Boys and Girls Club, YouthOne, YAC... But do youth in the City know about these services? Especially youth who are new to the City
- Food Security
 - Not everyone in the City is food secure: in terms of access and affordability of nutritious food
 - Are we getting this from our food banks? Not enough information right now to be able to answer this.
- Volunteerism in Lethbridge is high, which is great
- Question: do we fully understand the environmental impacts of our land use decisions? (e.g., filling in coulees to build roads/bridges)
- Lethbridge lacks youth appropriate entertainment and leisure options—opportunities for youth to connect, meet people, be with peers
- Parks and Recreation offerings in the City are good
- Libraries: need more, bigger; libraries could be playing a bigger role in the City in terms of acting as community hubs
 - We need a Northside Library
- We do well at commemorating certain events as a City (e.g., Canada Day, Remembrance Day)
- Recycling ☹️ we need curbside recycling
- Transit ☹️ we are a car-centric City
- Access to clean drinking water 😊
- River Valley 😊 we have done well as a city to protect the river valley from large scale development; a lesson learned from our past
- Programming and volunteerism around the environment 😊 e.g., Helen Schuler Nature Centre
- Preserving our history 😊 ☹️ we have been able to preserve some of the stories which are important to us as a City, but have not captured others
- Urban forest 😊

Question 2: From the perspective of Youth, thinking about 20 years from now, **describe** your neighbourhood and City.

- Lethbridge is a mosaic
- Our local narrative begins with the founding of the City in 1906: we need to tell a more fulsome and accurate history
- We have a diversity of housing: Lethbridge currently has too many segregated neighbourhoods
 - We need to start mixing
 - Neighbourhoods should be mosaics
- Everyone should be welcome (and feel welcome) everywhere
- We combat NIMBYism by realizing that we share a collective “backyard”
- We have more welcoming heritage > celebrating diversity > be open to discussions pre-settlement
- History shouldn’t be housed... it should be visible and used
 - History should be: community-based, more interpretation, more tourism opportunities
- Lethbridge will definitely be bigger in 20 years, we hope by then it shows its diversity
- Healthy people, healthy environment
- Less Walmarts, more libraries
- We need a larger airport
- Housing: some of the group wanted to be living downtown in 20 years, others wanted to be living in a house in the suburbs
 - Why downtown? Near the action, activities; can drive less; convenient; use public transit
 - Why the suburbs? Secluded; privacy; less noise; space; backyard; garden; scenery
 - Why can’t we start to see Downtown as a residential neighbourhood **and** as a commercial neighbourhood
- Need to ensure we keep green spaces as we grow and densify
 - Need to make sure park amenities are designed for and attract all people and users
 - We are going to need more rec facilities—perhaps smaller ones spread throughout the City
- We need to increase transit service
 - Perhaps more transit options... should we bring the tram back?
- Need more colour and diversity of housing types in our neighbourhoods—less “cookie-cutter” homes
- 3rd River Crossing
- More events here to attract people here from other cities (tourism draw)
 - Performing arts centre
- Promote more local food / groceries ... tackle food insecurity
- How do we better support Indigenous women and girls?
- How do we better support youth who age-out of the system?