

Community-based Drug Strategy

What We Heard

Public Workshops - October 10 and 11, 2018

Presentation to Lethbridge City Council by
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Workshop intentions

The purpose of the workshops were to

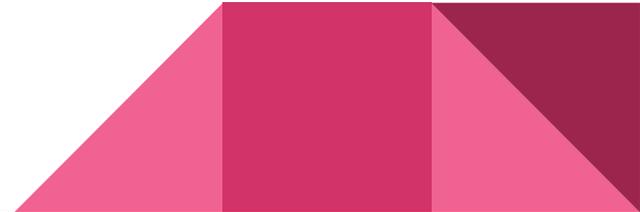
- Encourage citizens to share their experiences surrounding the drug crisis
- Learn the impacts of the crisis on citizens
- Understand the critical issues for resolution
- Discover citizen's view of solutions to the crisis



Workshop outcomes

At the end of the meeting, the goal was to have citizens

- Share their concerns
- Hear the concerns of others
- Realize that they are not isolated in their concerns



Workshop format

On October 10 and 11,

- Four public workshops were held
- Each was about 2.5 hours in duration
- Capped at 80 people (including volunteer facilitators)
- Pre-registration requested, walk-ups welcomed when space was available



Participation

Wednesday, October 10 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm	72 participants	8 tables	
Wednesday, October 10 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm	57 participants	7 tables	
Thursday, October 11 1:00pm - 3:30 pm	75 participants	8 tables	
Thursday, October 11 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm	84 participants	8 tables	
Total participants	288		

Workshop process

Welcome

The City Manager gave a brief welcome. The room facilitators set the context of the workshops and shared the guidelines for participation

Experience Sharing

Table facilitators helped participants explore their perspective on events and happenings in Lethbridge surrounding the drug crisis since 2015.

Table Discussions

Table facilitators helped participants explore their perspective on the impacts of, the issues related to and solutions for the drug crisis.

Analysis & Reporting

Immediately after workshops, results were documented for future reference. Room facilitators analyzed results for the “What We Heard” report.

Interpreting the results

The following results are what we heard from participants

- Analyzed for common themes using a tagging process
- Weighted by number of mentions
- Every effort to remain true to what we were told

We have reported the most frequently mentioned topics but Council is reminded that this is a qualitative, not statistical exercise

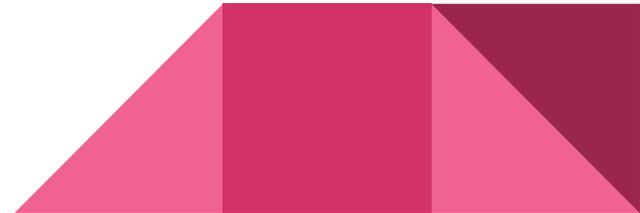


Responding to the results

We encourage Council to recognize that results

- May represent facts **or** perceptions
- Should not be misconstrued as immediately “right” or “wrong”
- Deserve careful consideration before responding, acting

Perhaps, the first question to ask is **“Why might we be hearing this?”**



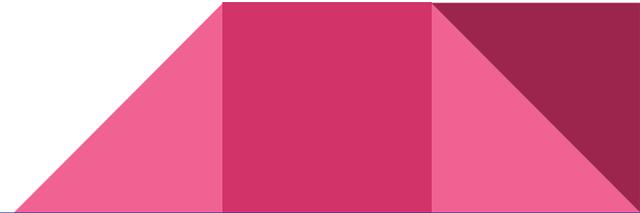
Impacts on citizens

Participants cited the following impacts (# of mentions)

- Emotional impact (68)
 - Loss of or impact on business (43)
 - Decrease in safety (38)
 - Cost and resources required to deal with the crisis (25)
 - Increase in crime (22)
 - Needle debris (21)
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More about emotional impacts

- Fear about personal and/or community safety
- Helplessness at the overall situation
- Sense of loss for what used to be
- Undesirable changes to, sense of divisions in community



Issues to resolve

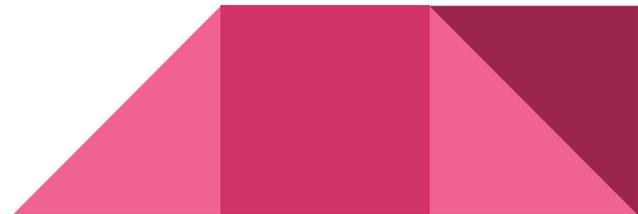
Participants identified the following issues for resolution (# of mentions)

- Lack of services for those suffering addiction (47)
- Lack of law enforcement and prosecution (27)
- Perceptions of the drug crisis (23)
- Lack of accountability (18)
- Root cause not understood or addressed (15)



More about service issues

- Lack of integrated services (multi-service, single location)
- Lack of detox, rehabilitation, education services
- Questions about the effectiveness of current services
 - Waiting lists, navigating “the system”
 - Questions about the overall harm reduction approach
 - Questions about how the SCS delivers its services



Solutions

Participants suggested the following solutions (# of mentions)

Enforcement and the justice system (44)

- Enforce the law (23)
- Focus enforcement on drug trafficking (9)
- Justice system needs to offer stiffer penalties for drug trafficking (9)

More services, integrated & consolidated (40)

- Wider variety of recovery support
- Integrate services for better results
- Consolidate services into a single delivery location



Solutions (cont'd)

- Establish or expand facilities (34)
 - Deliver better, more education (32)
 - Close, change, relocate Supervised Consumption Site (22)
 - Involve the community (19)
 - Collaborate with stakeholders (17)
 - Examine best practices (16)
 - Improve access to housing (15)
 - Unique ideas (30)
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More about unique ideas

Participants mentioned a range of unique solutions:

- Community leadership, 'safewalks'
 - Not giving up on people
 - Considering urban design solutions, green space, park design
 - Solutions need to be broad enough to cope with 'the next drug'
 - Two comments questioned impact of cannabis
 - One comment suggested that racism and discrimination needed to be acknowledged
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Insights from facilitators

As the workshop facilitators, we noticed voices missing

- The Indigenous community
- Users of Supervised Consumption Site
- Emergency services, law enforcement

Ironically, participants saw collaboration among stakeholders and involving the community (especially the Indigenous community) as solutions to the crisis.



Insights from facilitators

Whether actual or perceived, we heard about a lack of coordination among stakeholders including agencies, government and community groups.

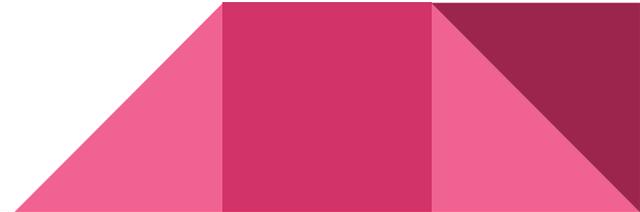
We also heard that some participants want to be involved in solutions and are unsure about how to become involved.



Opportunities for Council's consideration

There are important opportunities for Council to

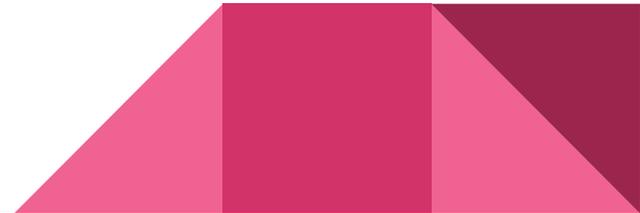
- Build relationships within the community and between key stakeholders
- Overcome fear and helplessness by involving citizens in solutions
- Develop capacity and resilience in the community to address this crisis (and future ones)



Tactics for Council's consideration

Council and the City can play an important role in relationship building

- Involve community members and the grassroots in the strategy development
- Address perceived coordination among stakeholders in the strategy
- Continue to build collaborative relationships with Indigenous community
 - Continue public engagement to engage those missing in the Phase 1 process
 - Invite Indigenous leadership to help develop the strategy



What's next?

Phase 1 - Include users of supervised consumption site

- Piggy back on work of Community Social Development (CSD), Nov 20 'lived experience' workshops
- Interview SCS clients, Nov 20

Phase 1A - Engage Indigenous community (parallel process Nov/Dec)

- Work with Friendship Centre, Blood Tribe
- Lethbridge College, University of Lethbridge

Phase 2 - Strategy session: proposed for November 26 & 27

Phase 3 - Terms of Reference: possibly December 17

