

## **Kitchen Table Conversation Report**

**Name of Group/Organization:** City of Lethbridge Waste and Recycling Department Staff

**Conversation Topic:** General/Growth/Land Use

**Number of people in Conversation:** 6

**Date:** March 3rd, 2017

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**Describe your Conversation:** Staff from the City of Lethbridge's Waste and Recycling Department got together to have a conversation around the future of growth and development in Lethbridge as it approached a population of 100,000.

The conversations were based on the staff's individual perceptions/opinions and although agreement was found in a number of situations do not reflect the opinions of the department or the City of Lethbridge. Conversations were focused on what Lethbridge has done well and where it can do better, as well as current and future trends in development.

### **Conversation 1: *What do we do well in Lethbridge?***

- Use the River Valley for a main source of recreation.
- A family oriented community with great activities, events, buildings, and programs for the whole family.
- Sport and recreation including facilities and the support to attract major tournaments and events for people of all ages.
- A diverse economy and employment – this provides the opportunity for many of the other areas we do well in
- “Small town feel” with the ability to still go to big city venues such as museums, galleries, sporting events, etc.
- Opportunities to be involved in volunteering
- Maintaining infrastructure – we have a fantastic situation that is night and day to other municipalities, especially the condition of our roads.
- Post-secondary institutions and their growing influence in the community
- Safe community
- A grounded community based on foundational knowledge and ways of life that positions us well for sustainable living.
- Great cultural resources
- Big enough, Yet small enough – growth is inevitable but we cannot lose this aspect of the life of our citizens we must retain the benefits that come along with being smaller.
- Galt Gardens as a great central communal area that is taking strides in the right direction.

### **Conversation 2: *What are some areas where Lethbridge could improve in?***

- Share and communicate what is going on in our community. Too often you hear about a great event after its already happened.
- Respecting our First Nations
- Understanding the difference between the vocal minority and the silent majority when it comes to big decisions in our community.
- Respectful dialogue around disagreement and different perspectives. Are you upset about a decision? Let's talk about it, put both perspectives on the table, and figure things out.
- Engagement and communication to a broader population of Lethbridge residents – get more residents engaged in their community.
- Continue to develop Downtown – this is truly the heart of our city
- Include, engage, support, and empower vulnerable populations in our community

- Attract human capital – how do we retain young talented people in our community?
- Showcase Lethbridge more – let others know what a wonderful place it is
- Improved employment opportunities for the highly educated and improved employment conditions for the less educated. Create a community that supports both.
- Retaining post –secondary students
- Address the “gaps” in connecting with the community to be more welcoming. Often individuals 23-30 find it difficult to meet like-minded people and create friendships and relationships because of a perceived “clique” environment.

**Conversation 3:** *Based on the neighbourhood classifications, what type of neighbourhood do each of the individuals around the table currently live in?*

- Central Areas: 3
- Mature Areas: 1
- Established Areas: None
- Developing Areas: 1
- Outside of City: 1

**Conversation 3:** *What are the pros/cons of each neighbourhood classification?*

<b>Neighbourhood Classification</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<i>Central</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Walkability to destinations</li> <li>- Convenient access to amenities</li> <li>- Diversity of housing, people, and neighbourhood aesthetics (e.g. gardens, rocks, natural vegetation, etc. all found in front yards not manicured lawns).</li> <li>- Mature trees</li> <li>- Parks – high functioning</li> <li>- Proximity to river valley</li> <li>- Sense of community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perceptions on degradation</li> <li>- Properties can be expensive to buy and upkeep</li> <li>- Transient/negative users</li> <li>- Old infrastructure</li> </ul>
<i>Mature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large amounts of parks and good sizes</li> <li>- Large lots with small homes (adds to the green space)</li> <li>- Old and unique homes</li> <li>- Great sense of community in that these seem to be the best neighbourhoods to promote kids playing outside (street hockey).</li> <li>- Safety</li> <li>- Aesthetically pleasing</li> <li>- Feel of “Pleasantville” through established social norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Furthest away from commercial. No local corner stores and no big box.</li> </ul>
<i>Established</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Similar to mature in many ways</li> <li>- Parks and pathways for recreation purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Car-oriented with focus on driving and garages (often large dominating double front).</li> </ul>

<p><i>Developing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Consideration for parks and access to them for all ages and abilities</i></li> <li>- <i>Seems to better integrate commercial into neighbourhoods</i></li> <li>- <i>Storm ponds and proper infrastructure to deal with weather events</i></li> <li>- <i>Unique “bumping spaces”</i></li> <li>- <i>Family focused</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Inadequate focus on density/sprawl. Not all parts of every neighbourhood need to be dense with small lots. Focus hubs of density.</i></li> <li>- <i>Long wait times for development to complete, especially commercial and amenities that really build community. These seem to be the last things in, so although you live in a new area you don't get a sense of community for 10-15 years. Speed up development timelines by opening less new communities. Establish “community” early including promoting neighbourhood associations from the beginning.</i></li> </ul>
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**Conversation 4:** *In a community that promotes “live, work, shop, and play”, what aspects of development do you feel are currently missing that the city should focus on attracting and/or supporting in the future?*

**Live**

- Housing affordability – there does not seem to be the option for “basic” anymore. Every builder in every new community seem to be trying to upstage one another and with infill and redevelopment existing neighbourhoods only support luxury homes not basic – NIMBY.
- Build community centers at the beginning of new neighbourhoods so residents have somewhere to go as soon as they move in. The cost could be recovered through all lot prices.
- Tiny home community – something similar to a mobile home park but with small lots for tiny homes.
- Housing for young professionals and singles – something targeted to youth (much like we target senior living.
- Make better or more efficient use of our large park spaces, rather than just large areas of grass think of adding some park amenities.
- More opportunities for winter based recreation and gathering. During the winter months there is currently very few outdoor spaces which promote positive activities. (e.g. an outdoor park space/cafe with gas heaters and tables).
- Pursue opportunities for new neighbourhoods to be built “off the grid” making use of solar, wind, and other renewable energy sources.
- Native species planting in public and private spaces. These species should be more readily available and promoted within the community.
- Promote the growing of food in the community, both for people and for pollinators. Community gardens and better use of landscaping and planter boxes in public areas for “usable” vegetation.
- The need for more than just one community “hub”. Currently Downtown seems to be the only focus, with crossings developing this might be a second. Opportunities along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, former north side Safeway site, former south side Sobeys site, and former north side Save-On foods site.