

Kitchen Table Conversation Report

Name of Group/Organization: Martha's House Resident Council along with Efficient Land Use Community Liaison Group Member Kevin Cowan (Member at Large).

Conversation Topic: Efficient Land Use

Number of people in Conversation: 13 (8 residents and 5 staff)

Date: August 14th, 2016

Describe your Conversation: On August 9, 2016, I met with members of the Martha's House Resident's Council to complete the Efficient Land Use tabletop exercise. There were 8 residents and 5 staff members who participated and provided feedback. The Council represents the interests of 134 residents living in a 118 unit independent living condominium located in the London Road Neighbourhood at 950 14 St S, Lethbridge.

Conversation 1: *What do we do well in Lethbridge? In what areas do we need to improve?*

- There is a strong volunteer base that supports a variety of activities in the city;
- Great parks such as the Japanese Gardens and Henderson Lake;
- We need to increase accessibility to these parks for those with disabilities – wheelchairs, walkers, etc.;
- Sidewalks are not always wheelchair friendly;
- We need more bathroom facilities in parks, trails and in the downtown.

Conversation 2: *How has our community changed in the past 10, 20 or 30 years? What trends have you noticed?*

- Our immigrants are changing. It used to be people largely from European countries. Now we are seeing people from all over the world – more Middle Eastern, East Asian, African;
- There is more traffic in the city. It's disappointing to see buses run with few riders.
- Not forward thinking when building new roads – new roads don't seem to be able to handle the increasing capacity;
- Parking continues to get worse downtown. There is a lack of parking downtown even though our shops have moved to the periphery of the city.

Conversation 3: *What do the next 10, 20 or 30 years hold for our City? Are we ready for those changes?*

- There will be a 3rd bridge to the west side. Hopefully it will be less steep;
- Those neighbourhoods with only single access will have better access;
- There will be more public washrooms – perhaps self-cleaning;
- More waste bins downtown, in the neighbourhoods and parks – perhaps solar powered trash compacting;
- More leisure centres;
- Speed limits around seniors' facilities – there are speed reduction zones next to parks and schools, seniors crossing the streets move pretty slowly

Conversation 4: *What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of our neighbourhood?*

- Martha's House is a community of approximately 135 seniors living in the London Road neighbourhood;
- London Road is centrally located, close to stores, the hospital, medical clinics, a pharmacy and a florist;
- We are close to schools – we have a program running where young children come to Martha's House to practice their reading;

- There is significant noise from 13th street and 10th street – loud trucks and cars;
- There used to be “Quiet Hospital Zone” signs. This would be appropriate outside of seniors buildings;
- Bylaws should be enforced – noise, unkempt homes with derelict vehicles, etc.;

Conversation 5: *How important is it to minimize the city of Lethbridge’s footprint. When you think about it from an individual perspective or a community perspective does your view change?*

- Lethbridge needs to fill-up/go-up;
- New and replacement buildings should observe architectural flavour of older neighbourhoods – there are new “boxy” homes going up;
- Commercial/residential mix is good for neighbourhoods – corner stores, small shops, services such as barbers;

Conversation 6: *What ways can our city support the minimization of its urban footprint, considering the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats? (Examples: increase residential density in our neighbourhood; increase residential and commercial densities by reducing parking requirements; promote mixed-use development (residential and commercial in same building))*

- Greater density is important – many shops could nicely accommodate apartments overhead
- Concerned that greater density will increase traffic along 13th street;
- We need to get people to use public transportation;

Conversation 7: *Do you support the idea of residential densification in your neighbourhood (number of people in an area of land)?*

- Densification is fine. We need to focus on community.
- Neighbourhood and neighbourhood pride is important;
- People need to get out of their houses;
- It’s great to see summer block parties – the sort of party where everyone brings something to eat;
- Parks are important with accessible sidewalks to those parks;

Conversation 8: *What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of residential densification?*

- Again we agree with densification, but not at the expense of community – neighbourhoods are all about people;
- Too much noise, too much traffic is not good.

Conversation 9: *Do you believe your neighbourhood offers opportunity to “live, work, shop, and play” within close proximity?*

- Unfortunately we have seen places of employment close;
- There is a lack of shopping – if people are going to live in the London Road and downtown areas we need more shops including another grocery store.
- Lethbridge isn’t very big for most. Seniors especially appreciate convenience.

Conversation 10: *Which component of “live, work, shop, and play” do you feel is most missing from your neighbourhood?*

- Work and shopping.

Conversation 11: *What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of having “live, work, shop, and play” within close proximity?*

- Ease of independent living for seniors. It’s important to have different services available close by Martha’s House.

Conversation 12: *Do you support the idea of a mix of housing types (single detached, suites, duplexes, townhouses, apartments, etc.) in your neighbourhood?*

- Affordability is important in this neighbourhood – there needs to be a mix of housing types;
- Make sure you consider architectural controls;
- High density housing may affect the feeling of community. We need to know our neighbours;
- We need to ensure traffic doesn't become a problem;
- The hospital parking garage doesn't seem to have solved the parking situation in our neighbourhood.

Conversation 13: *What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of living in a neighbourhood that has a mix of housing types?*

- A mix of housing types is not a problem. The side effects of density are more concerning.