

Kitchen Table Conversation Report

Name of Group/Organization: City of Lethbridge Planning Department

Conversation Topic: Efficient Land Use – Topics 1 and 4

Number of people in Conversation: 10

Date: July 29th, 2016

Describe your Conversation: Over the lunch hour the Planning Department gathered around two picnic tables in Kinsmen Park to participate in a conversation based on some of the guiding questions within the Efficient Land Use section. Conversations lasted the full hour where individuals discussed the neighbourhoods where they call home. The conversations were based on individual's perceptions of each neighbourhood and were based largely on the specific interest of urban planning and development. Consensus was not always found and there were conversations based around points of agreement and disagreement but this stimulated some good dialogue.

All in all the conversation highlighted the diversity of neighbourhoods within the City of Lethbridge and that every neighbourhood type has its own particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Further, the conversation demonstrated that not all individuals have the same view of what constitutes a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat within a neighbourhood or the larger city.

Conversation 1: Using the neighbourhood classifications list identify what neighbourhood type does each individual currently live in?

- Central Area = 3 individuals
- Mature Area = 1 individual
- Established Area = 4 individuals
- Developing Area = 1 individual

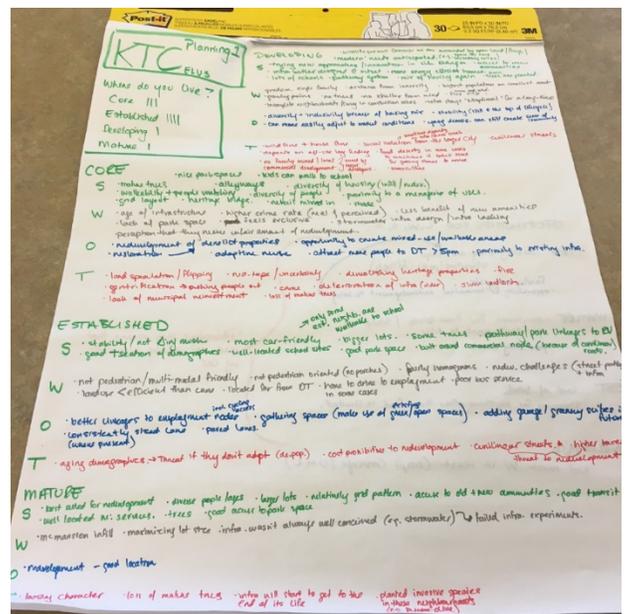


Figure 1 and 2 - City of Lethbridge Planning Kitchen Table Conversation in Kinsmen Park was captured by the conversation note-taker on a large poster paper. Every conversation was not captured word for word – the focus was on main themes.

Conversation 2: What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of each Neighbourhood type?

Central Areas

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Mature trees	Age of infrastructure	Redevelopment and restoration of derelict properties	Land speculation/Slum landlords
Walkability and People Watching	Higher crime rate (real or perceived?)	Adaptive reuse potential	Red tape/uncertainty
Grid street layout	Lack of park space	Opportunity to create mixed-use/walkable areas	Demolishing of heritage buildings
Heritage Buildings	Perception that they will receive unfair amount of redevelopment	Ability to attract more people that can live within walking distance to downtown	Old buildings with small setbacks risk for fire
Alleyways		Proximity to existing infrastructure and amenities	Gentrification – pushing people out
Kids can walk to school			Crime
Diversity of housing			Lack of municipal reinvestment
Proximity to a variety of uses			Loss of mature trees
Shade			Deterioration of infrastructure
Diversity of People			

Mature Areas

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Best suited for redevelopment due to larger lots	McMansion (very large) infill that maximizes large lots	Redevelopment due to good location and lot sizes.	Loss of character
Diverse people	Infrastructure wasn't always considered – a few failed experiments		Loss of mature trees
Larger lots	Lack of park space		Infrastructure will start to reach the end of its lifecycle
Most areas have grid streets	Perception that they will receive unfair amount of redevelopment		Large amount of invasive species planted in neighbourhoods (e.g. Olive)
Access to new and old amenities (geographically)			
Good access to transit			
Well located in regards to services			
Trees			
Good access to parks			

Established Areas

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Population and redevelopment stability – not changing as much	Not particularly pedestrian or multi-modal friendly	Better linkages to employment nodes e.g. cycling infrastructure.	Aging demographics
Good cross section of population demographics	Not pedestrian oriented (not many front porches or windows – garages take up most of frontage)	Consistent lane widths and paved make adding garage suites in the future a possibility.	Cost prohibitive to redevelopment
Most car friendly of all areas – wide streets, front garages and driveways, etc.	Fairly homogeneous building stock.	Make better use of large open green/park spaces.	Curvilinear streets threaten redevelopment potential
Well located school sites	Redevelopment challenges (street patterns and infrastructure)		Higher taxes
Bigger lots with some trees	Have to drive to employment and poor bus service		
Good park spaces	Located far from Downtown		
Built around commercial nodes (because of curvilinear road network)	Land use is less efficient than core areas.		

Developing Areas

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
New approaches and innovations in urban design	Predominantly single detached homes	Diversity and inclusivity because of increasing focus on housing mix	No family owned/local commercial developments as commercial is owned by major developers
Modern needs anticipated (space for cars, secondary suites, etc.)	Growing pains – arterial roads are not built right a way	Stability (still at the beginning of the neighbourhood lifecycle)	Social isolation from the inner city
Infrastructure better designed at outset	Distance from downtown	Young demographics that increasingly care more about “community”	Wildfire/House Fires
Lots of schools	No trees or very small.	Can more easily adjust to changing market conditions.	Monoculture of trees
Extensive pathway systems	No shelter from the wind		Curvilinear streets – although a push to return to grid
More energy efficient homes	Slow growth of neighbourhoods means living in construction for a long period of time		Food desert as in some cases far distance from grocery stores.
Access to new amenities			

Conversation 3: *Two part question; Do you believe that your neighbourhood type offers opportunity to “live, work, shop, and play” within close proximity if not which component of “live, work, shop, and play” do you feel is missing from your neighbourhood?*

Consensus with the group was that every neighbourhood type has a certain level of live, work, shop, and play some with more than others but in general Lethbridge’s smaller size means that most are easily accessible even if not located directly within your neighbourhood.