

Community + Council Conversations

North Event

November 23, 2023

Summary Report

Background

Council has adopted a bold, outlining their strategic priorities to make Kamloops a safe, vibrant, and resilient community. These priorities--Safety and Security, Governance and Service Excellence, Livability and Sustainability, and Economic Health--include areas of focus and key performance indicators that will guide Council's decision making. Council wants to hear residents' feedback on the plan; what's working well, and where Council should focus more effort.

To provide an opportunity for residents voice their opinions, concerns, and frustrations to Council, the City is hosting six neighbourhood meetings and one virtual meeting. The second of these meetings took place on November 23, 2023, for the North neighbourhoods, including Westsyde, Rayleigh, Heffley Creek, and Noble Creek.

Event Summary

Approximately 70 members of the public attended the meeting that took place at the Dunes at Kamloops golf course from 6:00–8:30 pm. The breakdown of neighbourhoods represented was:

- 74.6% Westsyde
- 5.6% Rayleigh
- 2.8% Heffley Creek
- 2.8% Noble Creek
- 14% Other (North Kamloops, Brock, South Shore, Unspecified)

The event began with a brief “open house”, which allowed Council to mix and mingle with attendees. This was followed by a presentation from a third-party facilitator on Council's strategic plan, outlining how Council has organized and prioritized their areas of focus. Attendees then had the opportunity to share their neighbourhood concerns and potential solutions with Council in a world café format, at tables representing each of Council's strategic priorities.

At each table--Safety and Security, Governance and Service Excellence, Livability and Sustainability, Economic Health--residents were asked to provide input on:

- What can we do better?
- What should we advocate for?

Following the 30-minute table discussion, a table host reported back to the room on the key themes they heard in each area and attendees had the opportunity to add to the input and discussion. Once this part of the session was over, residents were asked to use sticky dots to prioritize issues or themes that were important to them. The night concluded earlier than scheduled, which allowed Council to continue to mingle with residents.

Attendees were also provided with an option to fill out a paper form to request follow-up from staff or Council regarding their concerns or questions. Five forms were collected and forwarded on to the appropriate contact.

City staff facilitated the round-table discussions, captured key themes and ideas, and reported the key themes back to the broader group. Those key themes are documented here, with a full transcription attached in Appendix A.

Key Themes:

Safety and Security

What can we do better?

- Prioritize traffic safety, including traffic calming, safety initiatives for transit, cyclists and pedestrians, speed enforcement, and improving sightlines.
- Prioritize sidewalks, especially in school zones.
- Develop and educate residents on emergency egress plans for both Rayleigh and Westsyde.

What should we advocate for?

- Improved turning lanes from Highway 5 into Rayleigh (MOTI).
- More schools and better planning to keep classrooms within capacity, as well as within neighbourhoods (School District).
- Increase availability and affordability of housing for seniors and younger generations (Provincial and Federal Government).

Governance and Service Excellence

What can we do better?

- Communicate progress on City plans and strategies.
- Transparent reporting on grants, funding, reserves, taxes etc.
- Prioritize public engagement opportunities.

Livability and Sustainability

What can we do better?

- Invest in a community centre or space for residents to create social connections or seek reprieve.
- Increase programming and operational hours at Westsyde Pool.
- Seek more opportunities for lacrosse, pickleball and skateboarding, whether in Westsyde or at the Tournament Capital Ranch.
- Invest in more active transportation opportunities, specifically bike lanes and paving the Westsyde dike.
- Investigate options for water restrictions, especially for growing food.

What should we advocate for?

- Improved transit reliability and service (BC Transit).

- Improved highway safety and access (MOTI).

Economic Health

What can we do better?

- Connect big picture growth with intentional planning and partnerships, ie: balancing facilities, recreation opportunities and amenities with development.
- Remove barriers for building permits and provide clarity in zoning regulations, allow for inclusive zoning and parking variances.
- Support and prioritize local farming and agriculture.
- Engage the public when developing City plans.

What should we advocate for?

- EV grid and heat pumps – how will the City plan for the grid and the cost to electrify? (BC Hydro)
- BC Step Code
- Housing Supply Act and Bill 44
- Clean BC targets

In summary, the most prevalent themes of these communities were:

- Traffic and pedestrian/cyclist safety.
- Better connectivity through increased transit and active transportation connections.
- More recreation opportunities through increased programming and hours at Westsyde pool, the addition of a community center in Westsyde or supporting additional sports like lacrosse, pickleball and skateboarding.
- Transparent and frequent reporting on City plans, funding, grants, reserves and opportunities for engagement.
- Emergency planning and egress routes.

What We Learned

City staff had a few takeaways that will be considered moving forward. First, the meeting was underrepresented by communities other than Westsyde, indicating that location is very important for attendance. Secondly, similar to the Southeast event, the table sizes were too large to facilitate effective conversations. After the large turnout at the Southeast event, the City opted to include two extra engagement staff to host two additional tables, but it was still not ideal. Additional tables and staff will be considered for the next meeting.

The next event will be held on January 24, 2023 at the Coast Hotel and Conference Centre for the Southwest neighbourhoods of Sahali, Thompson Rivers University, and Southgate.

To learn more and view upcoming events, visit LetsTalk.Kamloops.ca/CommunityConversations.

Appendix A: Full transcription of comments with prioritization dots*

* Noted in parenthesis

Livability and Sustainability

- Westsyde pool operations (3)
- Maintain Westsyde pool
- Upgrade Westsyde Road (1)
- End the lawn obsession and toxic stormwater runoff
- No restrictions on water use for food growing (2)
- Involve/consult TteS on bringing back native vegetation
- Native gardens – work with Kamloops Naturalist Club on nature-based solutions
- If our city is to attract families for tournaments it would be nice to have great bike paths and infrastructure
- Cold weather heat pumps (1)
- Sidewalk in front of schools
- Fire hall in Rayleigh
- How many 5G towers are there in Westsyde? Are they safe? Reports on this?*
- Protected bike lanes
- Advance planning so kids can have a neighbourhood school
- Pedestrian friendly spaces and bike racks so we can frequent your lovely businesses
- Step it up with the Step Code – we can't afford poorly constructed homes losing heat
- EBikes and EVs - will the grid be able to handle the charging of them all? *
- Fun safe zones around schools
- Paving Westsyde dyke (3)
- Safety lane @ Petro Canada turning south
- Left turn back into Rayleigh is a danger when there is a train (3)
- Skate track in Westsyde (2)
- 15 minute city?
- Ways to meet others in the community/community connections to combat isolation
- Bus shelters and benches because we wait a long time for cancelled buses
- Starting in 2024, will 2% of homes be required to retrofit? How many homes is that? (3)
- Where will the next pool and arena be?
- Lack of a community centre
- More parks
- More inclusive playgrounds
- Will the city be divided into zones?
- Joint use agreements with SD73 (ie: courts at David Thompson)
- Maintain private transit ability in cars/trucks
- Westsyde pool has bad hours and closes too much
- More reliable transit service (Rayleigh)

- Transit access / Rayleigh route stops north of Rayleigh now
- Hop on hop off bus system (3)
- More public transit, frequent and reliable
- Walking paths
- Why is there no seniors centre?
- Rayleigh TCR was supposed to be another McArthur Island – What happened? Only accessible by vehicle
- Pickleball courts at TCR
- Multi bike path
- Future bike paths
- Bike lanes/paths – reduce car use
- Bike path to Rayleigh and TCR
- Transit access to Rayleigh
- TCR only accessible by vehicle
- Bike paths please

Advocacy

- BC Transit: more access and more reliability to Rayleigh and north end of Westsyde
- MOTI: Bike lane to Noble Creek (3)
- School District: planning so kids can attend neighborhood schools (1)

Safety and Security

- Safety concerns re: homeless in north Kamloops and coming out Westsyde on bikes and stealing stuff
- Inclusive Recreation space
- Rayleigh elementary sidewalk is buckled
- Safe space for teens
- Snow Clearing
 - Accessibility (Westsyde Rd and Hamlets)
 - Increase clearing
 - Wheelchair ramps and access
 - Sidewalks need to be plowed more frequently
- Emergency
 - Exit routes (Westsyde and Rayleigh) (6)
 - Westsyde Emergency drills
 - What is the plan?
 - Cedar hedges
 - City Parks have unsafe brush in Rayleigh
 - CN brush piles

- Bill 31 – new emergency management act lowers the bar for government to declare an emergency, gives more power to government. Will measures overstep our individual rights?
To travel
- Housing
 - Density
 - Requirement to speed up process
 - Follow up with increased transit routes/schedule to support density
 - Development services to facilitate a rapid approval of small multi-unit dwellings on current single-family dwelling properties
 - More frequent bus service
 - Fast housing development such as prefab coach houses etc
- Homelessness
 - Vandalism to transit stops
 - Increase RCMP presence
 - Concerns of property crime
 - Private property vandalism
 - Park security
 - Increasing housing supply (supportive, shelters)
 - Youth concerns (congregations, troubled youth)
 - Graffiti
 - Are there any plans to create a facility to help the homeless with mental health and drug and alcohol issues
- Traffic
 - Shoulder/ped facility past the Dunes
 - Truck Route
 - 8th Street & Ord Rd mini merge (1)
 - Speed (5)
 - Traffic calming/roundabouts (1), around school zones
 - Increase RCMP/Speedwatch presence
 - Speed limits in residential areas of Westsyde- unsafe for kids to bike to Westsyde pool and ump track, unsafe for pedestrians (1)
 - Safe street/Safer school pilot expanded to all schools
 - Traffic control (2)
 - More lighting along active transportation connections
 - Enforce speed limits (4)
 - Why is there no bus pullout on Westsyde MUP, traffic is horrendous
 - Making left hand turns onto Westsyde Rd – too many fences and hedges go right to the sidewalk making visibility poor
 - Intersection of Overlander and Westsyde Rd – since left turn block at Canco, causes chaos for large truck and vehicles exiting
- Seniors Centre (4)
 - Need place to meet, play and socialize (currently using schools, etc)

- Dancing, cards, fun
 - Inclusive of every kind of person of a certain age
- Pool (7)
 - Availability: hours of operation, when are things open? Recruitment – need lifeguards and staff
 - Replace activities for kids with new items when they get removed
 - Programming for youth and kids to engage them at the pool
 - Swimming lessons
- Pathways/Biking (4)
 - Pave the dike (2) – surfacing (2), redesign, need unified surfacing instead of inconsistent surfaces (1)
 - Extend path all the way through community
 - Needs to be wide enough all the way
 - Safe shoulder, pedestrians need to be safe
 - Big truck on road = truck route/dangerous for pedestrians (2)
 - No sidewalks past the Dunes
 - Future bike paths (1)
 - More bike racks
 - Bike path to TCR/Rayleigh
 - Walking paths/pedestrian facilities
- Facilities
 - Expansion of TCR (pickleball)
 - Lack of community centre (2)
 - Dedicated lacrosse space
 - Inclusive playgrounds
 - Programming at pool
 - Pool hours (2)
 - Skateboard track in Westsyde (4)
 - Pickleball (2) – proper courts, safe surfaces
- Beautification (1)
 - Resurfacing at tennis courts
 - Boulevard beautification (1)
 - Deal with weeds
 - Boulevard maintain by homeowners (good neighbour bylaw enforcement)
 - Alternative water/drought management strategies
 - Fire mitigation – no dumping of refuse around town
- Will drive be able to handle the EV load (3)
- Free affordable indoor space for extreme weather reprieve (smoke, heat) for physical and mental
- Fostering community/neighbourhood connections – gathering/social space
- Advocacy
 - Provincial Building Code

- EV (1)
- BC Building Code (Heat Pumps, Mandatory Retrofits (5)
- Heating our homes with a heat pump in the winter is unrealistic and too expensive (2)
- Change from gas to electric? Mandatory retrofits, housing (2)
- Transportation
 - Rayleigh merge lanes
 - 2 merge lanes needed for traffic heading south from Rayleigh (1)
- BC Housing
 - Senior living
 - Stop housing seniors with people with mental health issues
- Smart Technology**
 - Privacy
 - Cell towers
 - Individual rights to privacy
 - Cameras and how data is collected and shared
 - 5G towers – have studies been done on the safety?
- Transit
 - No information
 - More frequent service
 - Handi dart – better sharing of how to use and scheduling
 - Traffic calming for transit
 - Bus benches

Accountability/Governance

- Westsyde needs a community centre
- When City needs a vote on capital spendings voters remember!
- Transparent grant reporting ie what grants we were successful on
- Community eng. #3 Words Available and thus informing decisions must actually happen
- Improved reporting on funding of projects
- More infographic reporting (ie project cost breakdown showing grant vs reserves vs taxation) (1)
- Is the 25% water rate increase because we took on NCIS?
- Truth and Reconciliation: Are there other views points to truth?
- More public communication in how to find asset management plan etc
- In depth reserve reporting
- Further note disclosure in financial statements (ie: AR balances)
- Love the “Where the Money Goes”
- Is it true there is \$1.8 million in unpaid parking fees?
- Sewer system for Rayleigh to join to Westsyde and Karingdale
- Governance: ranked ballot
- Service Excellence: at whose cost – private business, make employees pay, not taxpayer
- Keep doing community engagement, those at are, appreciate it.

- How is infrastructure planned for growing community? It feels like permits issued and no plan for more traffic, etc, ie: safety exits
- Community Engagement needs to be more than online surveys (1)
- Water spending should be equitable in terms of taxation
- **Financial accountability**
 - Stop spending money on staff and nice to haves (4)
 - More/better communications, with infographs and charts, grant reporting, reserve reporting, project funding reporting
 - More referenda and public engagement
 - Remove red tape and communication barriers
 - Communicate successes and results – use more direct mail or partner with local grocers etc for community bulletins
 - Do more engagement
- Planning:
 - Better communications
 - More advanced notice about things like tax increases
- Why is T&R a priority? (1)
- Elevating relationships with urban indigenous not just band leaders
- Westsyde volunteer firefighters replaced by paid staff (9)

Economic Health

- Where will homes be built? (growth)
 - Protect the ALR (food security concerns) (3)
 - Land and inventory analysis
- Connecting big picture growth with intentionally planning and partnerships, community partners, neighbourhoods
 - Ie: no community centre in Westsyde (3)
- Playgrounds – inclusive playground retrofits
- Sharing roads
- Balancing new amenities like bike lanes with current roads
- Zoning – density and permitting, parking variances
- Mandatory inclusive zoning (policy to mandate affordability) (1)
- Building maintenance bylaw
- Support manufacturing

Growth management

- How to control development with housing supply act and bill 44 zoning changes?
- More signage and notification around development
- Sustainable vs development? (1)
- Heat pumps can consume up to 600% more energy than current natural gas – EV charges - how with the city financially plan for the electrical upgrade needed? (2)

- With CleanBC targets of zero emissions, how will the City electrify this? Specifically funds – tax??? (2)
- Financial cost of time of use billing from BC Hydro will be far greater than the current natural gas heating – how does young family deal with this and will there be fixed rates?

Advocacy

- School district (2)
 - School site planning
 - Capacity
 - Land in Westsyde for new schools?
 - Don't want to be bussing kids elsewhere
- Railway
 - Rayleigh access
 - Highway access unsafe (long lineup down Hwy 5 when there is a train)