

Community + Council Conversations Southwest 2 Event January 24, 2024 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 third of these meetings took place on January 24, 2024 for the Southwest neighbourhoods of Upper Sahali, Lower Sahali, Southgate, and Thompson Rivers University.

Event Summary

Approximately 38 members of the public attended the meeting that took place at the Coast Kamloops Hotel & Conference Centre from 6:00–8:30 pm.

The breakdown of neighbourhoods represented was:

- 32 % Lower Sahali
- 13 % Upper Sahali
- 5 % Knutsford
- 50% Other (Downtown, Sagebrush, Rose Hill, West End, North Shore, Guerin Creek, Aberdeen, Gleneagles, Brock, 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?

- Review best practices from other municipalities regarding safety, security, and homelessness.
- Listen to business owners, provide more public education, and lead by example in relation to many issues including interacting with the unhoused, fire-smarting our community and managing outdoor work during days of extreme smoke and heat.
- Focus on active transportation safety with more/better walking and cycling routes, safer bike storage options in commercial areas, and a 40km residential speed limit with better enforcement.
- Prioritize crime prevention and graffiti cleanup including options for better bylaw enforcement and penalties, with more Community Service Officers if needed.

What should we advocate for?

- Drug rehabilitation, sober living supports and decriminalization.
- More law enforcement and stricter penalties with a court system to fix catch and release.
- Action on the housing crisis.

Governance and Service Excellence

What can we do better?

- Better communications around city spending and debt with more opportunities for public input earlier in decision making processes.
- Get more value out of partnerships by having interest groups fund a larger share of big-ticket items.
- Review residential waste collection to make the process simpler for residents and more cost efficient with potential opt-out options for residents.
- Consider alternative communications avenues to fill the gap left by the local newspaper including support for a potential regional newspaper or the introduction of community bulletin boards.
- More transparency and accountability regarding the salaries of senior staff.

What should we advocate for?

- Significant interest in advocating for health care system improvements including attracting nurses and doctors and improving cardiac care.

Livability and Sustainability

What can we do better?

- Several specific sites identified for active transportation improvements to make travel safer and more accessible including the development of new paths, better lighting on existing paths, traffic calming, and signal optimization.
- Prioritize Lower Sahali for greenspace, playground, and small community centre development as it is lacking safe spaces for kids to play and people to gather.
- Encourage more housing development with a priority on mixed density, student, and affordable housing, while actively enforcing bylaws/managing unregistered suites.
- Actively engage the community on spending and initiatives related to climate action and provide more communication about sustainability goals and planning along with more education about actions residents can take.
- Take action to revitalize areas like Frontage Road.

What should we advocate for?

- Improved transit reliability and service including possible free transit for youth (BC Transit).
- Fix the Red Bridge.
- Clarity on the Retro-Fit Building Code.
- Improvements to recycling systems and services (Private Partners).

Economic Health

What can we do better?

- Consider climate efficiency and sustainable innovations in all new city development. i.e. Investigate waste to energy opportunities (biomass, waste, etc)
- Encourage more home-based businesses through zoning/bylaw updates and potential incentives or exemptions for first time business owners.
- Prioritize fiscal responsibility, debt reduction, and consultation with residents before adding new debt.
- Demonstrate financial risk preparedness in the event of potential external challenges such as climate change or significant changes to market conditions/local jobs/industries.

What should we advocate for?

- Push back against cost downloading.
- Investments to support entrepreneurship.
- More regional collaboration on economic development (less competing).
- Increase/Change fire prevention practices for private-crown land (i.e. edge of Juniper).

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

- More communication and public consultation on major City projects and investments with a diligent focus on prudent, strategic spending
- Traffic and pedestrian/cyclist safety
- Investment in play/gathering spaces (Parks, Playgrounds, community center) especially in Lower Sahali
- Advocacy on Healthcare, Housing, Homelessness, and Crime

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

- Transportation/Active Transportation
 - Reduced Speed Limits PLUS traffic calming infrastructure in all residential neighbourhoods. More green boulevards, native plant bumpouts, benches, friendlier streets.
 - Pedestrian safety and improved/more bike lanes in lower Sahali (2)
 - TRU connectivity to AT plan (1)
 - Better accessibility from Bestwick stairs to hospital (Bike Rail)
 - Bike lanes between lower sahali and TRU Its very dangerous right now – there needs to be a lane for bikes and for pedestrians on McGill
 - Accessibility from lower Sahali to Downtown
 - Lighting improvements – need brighter LEDs
 - Install traffic calming measures
 - Traffic signal optimization – specifically Columbia street
 - Traffic calming – consider 40km speed limit (1)
 - Need for increased pedestrian safety at Summit and McGill
 - Consideration of scramble crosswalks
- Parks
 - Lower sahali is the only Kamloops neighbourhood without a public playground
 - Improve greenstone park (6)
 - No safe place for children to play in high density areas
 - Playground/community garden/courts/Tot lot (no dead zone)(3)
 - Restoration of natural areas and use of native species (3)
 - Neighbourhood backyard garden co-op (1)
 - Champion on Council or staff to help re-invigorate “Bee City”
- Housing
 - Better livability = more mixed density housing in all neighbourhoods. I fully support more multi-family housing in my neighbourhood.
 - Illegal suites and lack of enforcement leaves money on the table as there’s uncollected revenue especially for non-principal residences
 - Management of unregistered suites to ensure they pay their fair share – enforcement
 - TRU – need to ensure they have enough housing so students have safe place to stay (also advocacy)
- Sustainability
 - The CCAP engagement process showed that 90% of residents view climate change as a somewhat or very serious problem. Please consider accelerating it!
 - 10 minute city type of planning – can we have votes on these decisions? (3)
 - 10 minute city “not a bad place to live” or “Marxist dystopian prison” CHOICE

- More engagement like this on plans like Climate
- Combine documents online into one PDF instead of multiples (for certain city plans)
- Is it climate sustainable to ship organics to Princeton?
- What is City Council's definition of 'sustainability'? note: a true and concise definition, no word salad please.
- I'd love to see the city co-ordinate retrofit info-sharing sessions for residents and possibly facilitate bulk buys
- I'm really interested in seeing Kamloops strengthen our climate action. Our plan calls for 80% by 2050 – other municipalities are now passing plans for net zero by 2050.
- Teach people how to compost for use on their yards (2)
- Fund more education regarding glass recycling – teach best practices for cleaning to avoid significant water use
- Need to lead to innovate, not follow – things that work in other places may not be best here.
- Concerns over investments in climate policy
- Need more transparency in decision making (ex: compost bins) (1)
- Zero waste initiative – share sheds
- I'm interested in green burial but there's nothing currently available. Is this something that could be prioritized? (Fits with reducing GHG goals)
- Culture/Recreation
 - Performing Arts Centre – consider positive investment aspect, attractions for doctors and professionals etc. and tourism.
 - Mini/low-cost community centre for gathering
 - Concerns that the City has promised an Arts Centre but may build more sports stuff again. (1)
- Frontage Road Revitalization
 - Want beautification and a feeling of pride in the community but feel that governments keep passing the buck on making simple changes to many properties because of the conflicting priorities in gentrifying vs maintaining affordability

Advocate

- Fix the Red Bridge
- Transit advocacy – need fleets that operate in all our weather conditions
- More transit hours
- Free public transit for up to 18 year olds – this is an equity issue and has a host of co-benefits
- Bus Route Numbering (7 via Bestwick vs 7 via Battle are very different routes – use a new number)
- Zero waste – centralized recycling of special items – plastic, lightbulbs, batteries, metal, etc. currently have to go to several stores
- 2024 Retro-fit Building Code – how are the 2% per year of Kamloops homes going to be selected for costly renovations to meet this new code? How is it funded and why are we forcing through choice of 2% (6)

Safety and Security

- Crime (6)
 - Get to know your neighbour education and encouragement
 - Youth, seniors safety and security
 - Walking in neighbourhoods
 - Personal property
 - Tourist perception/concerns
 - Concerns of not being able to walk downtown/parks
 - No longer going places to support businesses
 - Understanding/identifying crime vs. homelessness
 - Graffiti cleanup
 - Review best practices/policies of other municipalities (Osoyoos) regarding safety, security, homelessness (5) and graffiti
 - Increase Community Service Officers (1)
 - Bylaw enforcement (2)
- Homelessness
 - City to lead by example with their education campaigns
 - Educate on how to interact with unhoused people on sidewalks, etc.
- Transportation
 - Improved walking and cycling routes around schools
 - A safe downtown is one where bikes can be securely stowed.
 - Bike lane improvements/infrastructure
 - Over/underpass fears – vulnerable population
 - Cycling concerns (Summit and Whiteshield) re: speed and function of the path
 - Recommend 40 km residential zones and speed enforcement
 - Safety on our roads: Let's make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians too – not only focus on cars.
 - Bike routes fit for 8 – 80 year olds to use!
 - Secure bike parking options
- Firesmart Requirements (2)
 - Cedar hedges
 - City park cleanups
- Home safety – cold heat with move to electric
- Nuisance calls – can we charge per offence call (KFR/RCMP/Ambulance)
- Business Inquiry – What's working and what's not
- Shoreline cleanups
- The City should be a leader in ensuring a safe working environment for outdoor workers. Is it safe to ask staff to labour outside during days of extreme smoke conditions?

Advocate

- Crime (1)
- Safe drug supply is not working, need more rehabilitation options (2)
- Columbia hotel social housing – concerns about proximity to houses
- Risk/awareness of housing crisis and municipal impacts
- Realization of known concerns
- Management of properties
- Drug use/decriminalization
- Court – catch and release
- Government mandated power grid – power outages and power saving infrastructure
- Housing affordability and stability, fulltime housing availability for homeless
- Increase police enforcement (1)
- Rehabilitation/sober living supports (1)
- Policing dispatch – 911 -> KFR -> Ambulance -> RCMP (1)
- Pay per offence system
- Evaluation of rights are unequal
- Consequences for property damage
- Commercial vehicle traffic within city limits (2)
 - Excessive speed, dangerous driving, use of engine breaks
- Tons of evidence that gas stoves cause health issues especially for kids. Get rid of gas stoves for new builds.
- Courses on pedestrian safety for students and newcomers

Governance & Service Excellence

- Debt/City Spending/Build Kamloops (2)
 - Need better communication about why we go into debt and how we determine if it is the right thing to do, and what other options the City considers (3)
 - Concerns around big new ticket items for debt
 - The City should be doing more to push partners and key stakeholders to fundraise and contribute more to the costs of big projects. Less burden on taxpayers.
 - Look at measures to keep the city in budget (just like households do)
 - Art Centre and referendum vs. spending on other things (3)
- Public Engagement
 - Not enough people engaged so plans are based on small groups of people
- Residential Curbside Collection (1)
 - The bins for compost cost over 8 million
 - Its not a great program
 - Why are we shipping organics out of town
 - Why was the Organics program not voted on

- What goes where, when, (whole system) is too complicated and poorly communicated (2)
 - Should have better options for glass
 - Should have an opt-out option for residents
 - Need more transparency in decision making (ex: compost bins) (1)
- Active Transportation costs (1)
 - Summit Drive Pedestrian Overpass is a waste of money and too close to McGill Intersection. TRU should foot the bill.
 - We are spending a lot of money on active transportation pathways that are being used less and less due to social safety concerns.
 - I used to dislike the summit overpass idea but I've come to support it. There is just no way to make that Summit/McGill intersection safe. Just build it.
- Local Newspaper (1)
 - KTW was a major loss. Why didn't the City fight to keep it or work to merge with other municipalities for a regional paper?
 - How will the City fill the communications gaps
 - What will people line their organics bins with?
 - City Maintained Community bulletin board
- City Salaries
 - Management Salaries have increased substantially from 2020-2022
- Climate
 - Our city received awards for our climate plan. Let's make sure we have the funds in our budget to reach ALL of the CCAP goals.
 - Good governance is leadership on decarbonization of City assets and activities. Let's inspire others by showing how it can be done! Set a target date for the decarbonization of the entire City vehicle fleet.

Advocate

- Advocate against "highest and best use" style of taxation on property (which has been a trend in other jurisdictions)
- Health Care System Improvements (6)
 - More walk-in clinics
 - Attracting nurses and doctors (2)
 - Lack of cardiac care (2)
 - Remove red tape (barriers) to recruitment (ex: vaccination status) (3)
 - Hire back all fired healthcare staff at hospital

Economic Health

- How to connect people/businesses re: training
- Investigate waste to energy opportunities (biomass, waste, etc)
- Encourage more home-based businesses (1)

- Zoning
 - Expand on professional services
 - Incentive or exemption for 1st time business owners
- City fiscal responsibility
 - Hiring freeze
 - Reduce debt
 - Concerns about spending money on a PAC (i.e. \$ Million for design before a referendum?)
 - Concerns about amount of dollars being spent... About potentially being over budget when people are already feeling strapped and worried about paying property taxes
 - Concerns that the City is not prepared for potential major external impacts on taxation like the loss of a local industry (ex: the pulp mill)(1)
- Climate and the Economy
 - All new buildings with BUILD KAMLOOPS should be 100% net zero so we don't increase our municipal GHG emissions
 - Climate change inaction will end up costing Kamloops more than investing in timely mitigation
 - Maintain Peterson Creek Park using citizen volunteers – an educational opportunity
 - Bee City
 - Explore community-level district energy systems, especially in areas where there is redevelopment at scale.
 - Green corridors – through our neighbourhoods, streets laneways, pathways that serve as active transportation routes that are heavily treed and cool during summer

Advocate:

- Concerns regarding cost downloading from other governments
- Provide resources and money for residents who want to start or grow local businesses (Especially post COVID)
- Increase/Change fire prevention practices for private-crown land (i.e. edge of Juniper)
- More regional collaboration on economic development (less competing)
- City or regional partnerships to utilize biomass for energy creation (1)
- Cement supply chain local developers like Kelson or Lafarge?
- Advocate for shoe repair businesses in town – good for waste reduction/sustainability