

Community + Council Conversations Northwest Event March 13, 2024 Summary Report

Background and Overview

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. On March 13, 2024, the Northwest event was held for residents of Brocklehurst, Tranquille and Batchelor Heights. The event was hosted at the Sports Centre Lounge at McArthur Island Sport and Event Centre, from 6:00 to 8:30 pm.

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. Afterwards, Council was able 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.

Event Summary

Approximately 38 members of the public attended. The breakdown of neighbourhoods represented was:

- 52 % Brocklehurst
- 16 % North Kamloops
- 13 % Batchelor Heights
- 19 % Other

Key Themes:

Safety and Security

What can we do better?

- Better communications around advocacy efforts and what's being done to address social issues.
- Develop solutions for increasing feelings of personal safety.
- Reinvest and promote the Block Watch program.
- Work towards combating graffiti and vagrancy.
- Investigate validity of statistics and data provided by the province in regards to homelessness and shelters.

What should we advocate for?

- Province of BC – Prioritization of medical calls, and increased service for BC Ambulance to allow Kamloops Fire Rescue to respond to fire-related calls instead of medical calls.
- BC Housing – advocate for housing for the working population.
- Province of BC – Elimination of safe space for drug use and remove decriminalization.

Governance and Service Excellence

What can we do better?

- Invest in the proper repair of infrastructure, and coordinate resources during maintenance projects through strategic project planning.
- Investigate the use of natural grasses instead of xeriscaping or lawns.
- Invest in infrastructure to be resilient to climate-related events (flood, fire, drought).

Livability and Sustainability

What can we do better?

- Revisit water restrictions, especially for those using drip irrigation.
- Invest in connectivity through active transportation facilities such as bike lanes and sidewalks.

- Address traffic flow issues through Westsyde Road and Ord Road intersection.

What should we advocate for?

- BC Transit – transit service expanded to include Ord Road.
- Province of BC – seek clarification on the retrofitting regulations and how the power grid will handle the increased load.

Economic Health

What can we do better?

- Ensure desification and single-family development are balanced.
- Continue to host these public engagement events annually or semi-annually.
- Ensure long-term planning with projects.

What should we advocate for?

- Broaden Venture Kamloops mandate to focus on retention of existing businesses.

In summary, the most prevalent themes of this meeting were:

- More strategic alignment and planning regarding major City projects and investments with a diligent focus on prudent, strategic spending.
- Invest in Block Watch and expanded CSO program to increase neighbourhood safety.
- Traffic and pedestrian/cyclist safety, expanding active transportation facilities.
- Revisit and communicate changes to water restrictions in response to drought.
- Advocacy on Healthcare, Housing, Homelessness, CleanBC regulations, 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

Governance and Service Excellence

- Infrastructure
 - o Replace Ord Road before any new developments (pedestrian safety) (2)
 - Concerns re: previous flooding in area
 - Disruption of wildlife in area – would like City environmental study
 - o Financial reserves for infrastructure (are we ready for climate events eg: drought)?
 - o Better system for fixing potholes (repair road correctly) (1)
 - o Sidewalk for Desmond Road – lots of seniors (1)
 - o Make the best use of resources when making repairs (Strategic project planning) (2)
- Asset Management
 - o Natural grasses better than rocks or xeriscaping
 - Consider maintenance and how to clean it

Economic Health

- Food trucks – vibrancy, events, more – zoning?
- Host these meetings semi-annually
- Ensure densification and single family development are balanced
- Third bridge crossing (2)
- Ensure long term planning in projects
- Connect projects together
- Solicit community support/financial opportunities for projects (ie: fundraising to support capital \$)

Advocacy:

- Organics should go to local facility/compost – TNRD? TTES?
- Broaden Venture Kamloops mandate to focus on broader business development versus just economic development – easier to retain businesses than to attract new ones (1)

Livability and Sustainability

- Trial to allow dogs at McArthur Island (on leash)
- Bike lanes “to nowhere” – no connectivity (1)
- No enforcement of behivelike parking in bike lanes (Lethbridge area) (1)
- Toting healthy community but major drug crisis = unhealthy community (3)
- Increase/better traffic flow through Batch/Westsyde/Ord Rd intersection (longer lights for Ord/Batch) (4)
- Aggressive initiative to retrofit homes – how will the power grid handle it? What is the long-term plan? (4)

- Revisit the repercussions for people who are saving water using drop irrigation (3)
- Is the CCAP part of the OCP – will affect residents if so
- Why the push to reduce carbon dioxide so drastically – focus more on pollution reduction
- 3rd bridge crossing off Summit Connector (5)
- How are new watering restrictions being advertised with no paper?
- Bright LED lights on residential streets – can they be toned down?

Advocacy:

- Add transit route to Ord Road.

Safety and Security

- Continued collaboration amongst interest holders regarding emergency management
- Work towards combating graffiti and vagrancy
- Balancing rights of individuals (right to housing vs right to safety) (2)
- Communicate to citizens on advocacy efforts (1)
- What are Council and RCMP doing to address crime in the downtown and north shore?
- Plans for opening/advocating to reopen a treatment centre on Tranquille Road (mandatory treatment)
- Communication from CSOs on how files are being handled
- Personal safety
 - o feeling unsafe in our own neighbourhoods (4)
 - o feeling like a prisoner/oppressed (1)
 - o Changing behaviours to feel safe
 - o Taking extra precautions
- Chronic behaviours: drug use (1), homelessness (1), chop shops
- Build community watch/block watch
 - o Concerns of personal safety
 - o Age of population of areas impacted
- Review of Ord Rd Dangerous Goods Route before development goes in
- School safety – flashing crosswalk at Parkcrest and sidewalk at Holt and Parkcrest

Advocacy:

- Provincial (Ministry of Health) re: BC Ambulance service – make more effective. KFR shouldn't be responding to health calls. (Priority of calls) (3)
- Equity of service calls between ambulance and KFR (1)
- Evaluation/reporting on Car40 – is it working? (2)
- Investigate validity of statistics re: homelessness and shelters
- BC Housing – advocate for housing for the working population
- Ministry of Health – illicit drug crisis, availability of naloxone
- Why are taxpayers paying for KFR and RCMP to administer naloxone? (6)
- Services provided and lack of housing to suppose those accessing them

- Need Council to fight for change to feel safer in own neighbourhood
- Change in response to 911/non-emergency calls – lack of action/response
- Call for help has been going on for years to Council and there is no change
- Involuntary admission for mental health and drug recovery (3)
- Elimination of safe space for drug use (remove decriminalization) (3)
- Review catch and release system