

## **Community + Council Conversations Core Event – Businesses & Residents February 29, 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 February 29, 2024, two meetings were held for the Downtown and North Shore, one focused on business concerns from 1:00 to 3:30 pm, and one for residents, from 6:00 to 8:30 pm. Both events were held at the Kia Lounge at Sandman Centre.

Both events 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. Ten forms were collected between the two events 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 - Business

Approximately 38 members of the public attended the business-focused meeting. Of those 38 attendees, 66% represented businesses, and 34% were residents.

### Key Themes:

#### Safety and Security

##### What can we do better?

- Expand the CSO program to 24/7 operations, with patrols, especially during the early morning hours.
- Review downtown parking and step up enforcement.

##### 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.
- Electric vehicles, including bikes and buses, and their strain on the power grid and the danger they pose to health and safety.

#### 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.
- More transparency and accountability regarding the City's debt load, budget and funding, especially in regards to the proposed Centre for the Arts.

##### What should we advocate for?

- More law enforcement and stricter penalties with a court system to fix catch and release.
- Drug rehabilitation, sober living supports and mandatory treatment.

#### Livability and Sustainability

##### What can we do better?

- Review the availability and operations hours of public washrooms.
- Actively engage the community on the Build Kamloops program and investigate opportunities for mixed-use facilities and densification.

##### What should we advocate for?

- Partner with the School District to further expand and utilize the joint use agreement for recreation facilities.

- Investigate a multi-use space with daycare services included.

## Economic Health

### **What can we do better?**

- Significant concerns with the rising costs of doing business, from taxes, to Build Kamloops, to the cost of security and property crime.
- More transparency and accountability regarding the City's debt load, budget and funding, especially in regards to the proposed Centre for the Arts.
- Reduce barriers and increase support for childcare.

### **What should we advocate for?**

- More daycare and childcare funding
- \$10/day childcare for all
- Budget transparency in other levels of government and investigate the costs of 'downloading'.

## **Event Summary - Residents**

Approximately 64 members of the public attended the resident meeting. The breakdown of neighbourhoods represented was:

- 21 % North Shore
- 14 % Downtown
- 11 % West End (including Powers Addition/McIntosh Heights)
- 10 % Sagebrush
- 8 % Other

## **Key Themes:**

### Safety and Security

#### **What can we do better?**

- Focus on active transportation safety with more/better walking and cycling routes, sidewalks, and a 40km residential speed limit with better enforcement and traffic calming measures.
- Bylaw enforcement with regards to speeding and traffic safety, snow clearing and parking.
- Significant concern regarding open drug use and the relation to property crime, theft, and vandalism – could more CSOs help?

#### **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.
- LED lighting in residential neighbourhoods – lights are too bright.

## 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.

### **What should we advocate for?**

- Significant interest in the safety issues regarding the Red Bridge and the Highway 5 intersection with River Road, both under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

## 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.
- Review the effectiveness of the drought-response water restrictions and how changes could be made to support gardens and growing of food. The restrictions should be clearly communicated to residents.

### **What should we advocate for?**

- Clarity on the CleanBC plan.
- With densification and population growth, there needs to be expansion within the school system as well, and specifically a catchment school designated for Downtown.

In summary, the most prevalent themes of these two meetings were:

- More communication and public consultation on major City projects and investments with a diligent focus on prudent, strategic spending
- Expanding the Community Services program to a 24/7 operation
- Traffic and pedestrian/cyclist safety
- Enforcement of existing bylaws regarding parking, traffic enforcement, social issues, and snow removal, and improve the response process.
- Advocacy on Healthcare, Housing, Homelessness, CleanBC regulations, and Crime

To learn more and view upcoming events, visit [LetsTalk.Kamloops.ca/CommunityConversations](https://LetsTalk.Kamloops.ca/CommunityConversations).

## Appendix A: Full transcription of comments with prioritization dots\*

\* Noted in parenthesis

### Business Session:

#### Economic Health:

- Why are commercial taxes so much more? Can we equalize the mill rate? (4)
- Concerns for rising costs for businesses (security, cameras, landscaping, extra staff time, fixing damaged infrastructure) (1)
- Sidewalks on frontage roads (for mobility and safety) (4)
- Supports for childcare
  - o Amenity contribution charges
  - o Need a strong voice for childcare
  - o Including childcare with affordable housing projects
  - o Short-term property tax exemptions for childcare projects (3)
  - o Look at/research other funding models
- Learn to properly repair potholes (1)
- Fence north-south, don't bridge Summit east-west (ped bridge) (1)
- Public knowledge/education re the debt load for the City and educate the public what Build Kamloops could cost per household
- Need improvements in permitting and process for new business
  - o Better tracking of new/renewing/closures
- Competitive advantage – we are not affordable, no doctors, no housing so its hard to attract businesses
- Budget process – supplementals need to be more transparent and equitable, not enough info to make decisions (2)
  - o Annual, transparent, report back of budget and project variances
  - o What are measures and metrics of ROI
  - o GAP Analysis
  - o Who is doing what and why
  - o What are the long-term plans? Are there things the city isn't doing?
  - o Need year over year comparison (ie: sharing the provisional budget more with council and the public, not just internal)
- Overall cost of doing business is so high: businesses closing because taxes, wages are increasing

#### Advocacy:

- Schools and daycare funding (we need more as Kamloops grows) (1)
- More \$10/day daycares
- Budget transparency and fund from other sources (3)

- The city should stay in their "lane" re: jurisdiction and then advocate for better actions from other levels of government rather than increasing budget

## Livability and Sustainability

- Build Kamloops
  - o Multi-use facility (2)
  - o Densification in new ways (ie: like the NY Chelsea pier) (1)
  - o Housing with community services and recreation/sport
  - o Look to clean up the city before inviting visitors
- Review of washroom facilities in public areas with consideration for people with disability or families with children being able to access (often locked, inconsistent hours)

## Advocacy:

- Partnership with SD73 to develop other components on school properties – rec facilities, housing, arts and culture (2)
  - o Schools/facilities underutilized
  - o Strengthen the joint use agreement
- Multi-use space with childcare – neighbourhood hubs

## Safety and Security:

- What dollars are being spent by the City on dealing with social issues (downloading) (1)
- Enforcement and/or review of the bylaw regarding camps on riverbanks
- Fuel mitigation and fire risk (is the fuel mitigation work damaging the eco system and/or causing a fire risk?)
- Emergency response if power grid fails? (2)
  - o Overloaded grids = fire hazard = threat to life and safety
  - o Inability to add more EV chargers due to overloaded grid
- EVs, E-bus, E-bikes are fire hazards
- Downtown parking and enforcement (2)
- 'Homeless communities' – what can we do about them? (1)
- Parking variances with new builds – who decides who gets a car?
- Keep global agencies and UN out of local politics (11)
- Smart meters on homes and businesses affect health and environment (5)
- What is the future of Stuart Wood? Safety of the playground (3)
- Safety of all playgrounds in core neighbourhoods
- Review of social agencies – what happened? (1)
- Re-instill pride in our community
- Vulnerable population/social housing and the accountability of their clientele (2)
- CSO assistance with public/private property

- Consistency of reporting and response
  - Understanding of response – when and why
- Personal safety
  - Request of details for files (weapons, violence)
  - Need help to move people off of properties
  - Cleanup responsibility
- Security (1) day and overnight
  - Damage/fire
- Livelihood – concerns of continuing business with damage/theft/lack of customers
- Sharing message of what has/hasn't occurred with social housing
- Visual appearance of West Vic and Downtown – clean it up
- Expand CSO service to 24/7 (specifically 2-8am) (3)
  - Street triage 708am in business areas like West Vic
- If paramedics are increased, streamline KFR and expand education
- CAP team – increase training levels, ambassadors program intent still needed, they need vehicles for transportation
- New East BIA starting to be voice of collective in area – expand the CAP team to the East
- Street triage to find supports and services full time and increase from current level
- Outreach needs to be case managing, not just leaving things be

## **Advocacy:**

- Drug use on private property
- Can our power grid support our community (2)
- More rehabilitation space vs. safe spaces (1)
- E-buses = fire hazard
- EV risks to human health (2)
- Globalization vs local governance
- Rights of taxpayers should be considered over criminals and the unhoused (5)
- CP fence (what happened with the grant?) (1)
- West Vic security (3)
- RCMP change of policy/process of handling open drug use
- Safe injection sites/inhalation sites
- Change in court system (1)
- Housing First (4 pillars) – missing enforcement, recovery, education
- Support services associated with future and current shelter/supportive housing
- For improvement with paramedic service so KFR isn't responding to medical calls (highest and best use of KFR)
- Chamber and BIABC are putting policy for social housing (10 conditions) for best practices – community interface management aka how are operations shared out to business and other community (1)

## Governance and Service Excellence

- Sewage plans for Ord Road
- Avenues downtown with no street lights or sidewalks (1)
- Council prioritization
- Homelessness in our neighbourhoods and safety – causing damage and people don't feel safe (1)
- Governance of TNRD/COK, representation, looking out for citizens – who is monitoring? (3)
- Are people being bussed into Kamloops?
- Comparing Surrey situation to North Shore – safe drug supply
- How can Council be more accountable to voters? (3)
- Public to determine giving elected officials raises (and staff)
- Ord Road speeding, need more enforcement for safety, or warning/flashing/speed signs
- Concerns over 7 million going into planning for the PAC – this money could be going to other issues. (8)
- General feeling of not being listened to
- Heavy trucks on Mission Flats Rd

## Advocacy:

- Need for foster care
- People leaving criminal system taking drivers licensing here
- Effectiveness of the safe drug supply
- Jail system – what happens when people leave the criminal justice system
- Safety – newcomer drivers' licenses
- TNRD – plan for regulating housing sustainability

## Residents Session:

### Safety and Security

- Speed zones and enforcement (6)
  - o 30km in park zones
  - o Buses speeding (2)
- Street/homeless people are lacking things to do
- Fires lit by homeless
- Multiple interface fires (east end of downtown/Strathcona) (1)
- Street population – safety of public
  - o Housing
  - o What's the plan? (1)
- Blocking in cars when snow plows pass, creating large berms
  - o put snow on street sides where people don't have homes
  - o Seniors can't clear the snowpiles



- Downtown intersection snow piles are too high
  - End of cul-de-sacs get higher piles
- Lack of downtown sidewalks and infrastructure is old and need updates (2)
  - Difficult for older population and those with mobility needs
  - Need sidewalks by schools
- Volume of traffic around school area is too high for area and roads (1)
  - Air quality testing needed (1)
  - Change streets to one way to better merge flow in and out
- Theft and vandalism
- Police response concerns – night patrols
  - People gone by the time police arrive (1)
  - Need regular patrols (1)
  - Observing drug deals on regular and no apparent investigation of reports
  - Open, visible drug deals
  - Open use when shelters close/people leave to us (Stuart Wood)
- Road condition of alleys, not plowed or maintained (3)
  - Homeowners not maintaining and adding yard debris and waste in alley. Rubbish removal, bylaws enforcement
- Inconsistent bylaw enforcement re: parking/good neighbour bylaw (1)
- Alternate community salutation and funding for helping neighbours that can't remove rubbish
- Cats – outdoors the don't make good neighbours and owner don't keep them in their own yard
- Lack of consistent responses to reports in the app
- Yellow street and parking marking is not maintained
- Existing infrastructure can't handle influx of development, traffic volumes too high for roads (2)
- How are we supporting neighbourhoods and people that live there (safety) when new multi-housing comes in (ie: people reintegrating with violent or disturbing tendencies)
- Pesticide use – city use, how can residents say they don't want it in their area
- Enforcement of bikes on sidewalks especially downtown – signage/communications of where to ride and where not to
- Camera registry
- Homeless encampments along the river and damage to riprap area (12)
- Encampments growing – can we explore other options
- Clean up plan by city for once camps move (lots of debris left behind)
- Parking downtown and enforcement
  - Lack of action by CSOs
  - Issues with safety, driving and walking)
- Private property crime and drug use
- Uptick in crime and social issues
- Traffic speed/pedestrian safety (specifically along Columbia street with school kids)
- Pedestrian safety in intersections
- Biohazard re: public defecation
- Availability of public washrooms and hours of operation seasonally (3)

- Removal of public seating downtown
- Sidewalks – no safe connections/mobility issues (4)
  - o Should be included with all roads
- Enforcement of bylaws re: snow and parking
- Car-centric attitude – what about other modes of travel (1)
- Safety and security should be first priority, always
- Include greenspace/playspace with densification/infill
- Deer – nuisance in all areas
- Explore cooperative housing options
- Availability of sharps disposals (needle exchange program?)
- More Car40 and outreach workers (3)
- CSOs 24/7 (2)
- LED lights are too bright/directional
- Laneway maintenance for safety (4)
- Speed bumps in alleys
- Zoning (mixed)
- Connection (MUP) from Sagebrush to Peterson Creek
- Sidewalks should not just be through LASI program
- Continue installing audible crosswalks through city and increase the volume
- CSO assistance with traffic enforcement
- Reduce residential speed to 40 km/hr in all areas of city
- Business and personal safety
  - o Accountability of agencies/organizations (2)
  - o Theft/vandalism increase – patrols needed (3)
- Improved access to Peterson Creek for all 4 seasons, accessibility
- Snow clearing – improved windrow clearing of paths (no sidewalk streets) for pedestrian safety

## **Advocacy:**

- Need new legal framework to compel people to and through treatment (4)
- Homelessness – what's the plan? Show the plan? (1)
- Transit – training staff to better assist with mobility needs, especially for comfort and safety (1)
- Work with SD73 and RCMP on better management of student traffic and safety
  - o Strategic planning of school
  - o Catchment of schools instead of “preferred school”
  - o Better enforcement
- RCMP – increase patrols at night and people feel unsafe keeping businesses open at night
- Advocate for air quality testing in neighbourhoods that is paid for by government.
- Free transit
- Harm reduction/complex care and recovery (1)

- Sidewalk connectivity in neighbourhoods to support accessibility
- Nobody using the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave bike lane
- With climate change, is Riverside Park skating facility required? (1)
- Accessibility to swimming lessons
- Sidewalks needed at 7<sup>th</sup> + 11<sup>th</sup> Aves
- Improved access to Peterson Creek from Sagebrush for all seasons
- Update to Overlander Pedestrian bridge, or construction of separate pedestrian/cyclist facility
- Bike storage needed
- Improved connectivity and improved multi use paths around Summit (from Downtown to TRU)
- Bike path on Mackenzie from Fortune to Mac Park
- Better Connectivity from Royal to Tranquille
- New developments built too close to street – no setback – no space for cyclists/pedestrians/residents with disabilities.
- PAC with NO referendum
- Another pool on the north shore
- Urinals on a timer system to reduce water waste
- Shower facilities use too much water
- Over developing rec facilities – not leaving passive space for people with disabilities
- Water restrictions
  - o Is there a better way to deal with the restrictions (5)
  - o How do we plant native plants that don't use as much water
  - o The trees weren't watered in McDonald Park but they were in Riverside
- Can't handle the electrical grid – what is the plan? (3)
- Lacking sidewalks on north shore and how will sidewalks be funded in future
- Recreational facilities for wider demographic – not just for children (1)
- Concern with the shift to densification but no adequate parking (ie: PAC) (3)
- Issue with very bright street lights in Sagebrush area – why wasn't the neighbourhood association contacted? (3)
- Stuart Wood?
- LED lighting too bright
- Speeding (13)
  - o West end park areas
  - o North Shore school zone
  - o Concerns about general safety
  - o Concerns about city vehicles (management, garbage, utility)
  - o Cost issues with traffic calming (why are neighbourhood associations asked to pay?)
  - o More traffic calming/appropriate calming
- Traffic Intersections
  - o Crosswalk review/placements (8ths & Columbia)
  - o Aggressive driving
  - o Pedestrian awareness
  - o Traffic light function/timing

- Pedestrian Safety
  - o Improved bus stops/curbing
  - o Sidewalks in busy areas/review sidewalk priorities (particularly in west end, 100 W Battle) (3)
  - o Speedwatch – education and stricter enforcement
- More areas for sitting/rest on streets
- Benches on residential streets too – could be a neighbourhood partnership (3)
- Safety on 9<sup>th</sup> Ave at Lloyd George, people walking on road, need sidewalks – more lighting also needed (1)
- Windrows can be way too big (1)
- Great consideration near schools?
- More bike lanes, especially at arteries, but don't remove existing roads (2)
- Dog path bags – better quality or compostable?
- Need more recycling depots on north shore and downtown
- Sagebrush has lots of traffic re: KSS, Lloyd George, KS for Arts, etc, - Traffic calming needed
- Water restrictions
  - o One day drip irrigation is not feasible for growing produce
  - o Can there be flexibility for food/gardens? (5)
  - o Early education
  - o Be strong on enforcement
  - o Fire and drought balance
  - o Program like Firesmart?
  - o More info on updates, people are frustrated
- Heritage homes and trees – consideration of cultural relevance, conservation and maintenance in the context of densification, zoning, form and character, accessibility
- LED lighting too bright (3), not consulted

## **Advocacy:**

- More transit in the west end
- No catchment school in the downtown core (need one)
- Significant densification planned on north shore with no planned school expansion
- No future school sites planned for downtown (1)
- Less 5G towers (2)
- Province: mandatory retrofitting – can there be more flexibility like incentives, how do we address affordability (7)
- SD73 – downtown catchment school (5)
- Province – concerns about electrical grid, banning gas stoves, CleanBC plan
- More beds – recovery centre (3)
- Elimination of safe supply (2)
- More outreach workers
- Review/discussion of shelter/supportive housing locations (1)
- Creation of safe spaces for recovery (4)
- BC Hydro residential lighting too bright (1)

- Affordable and accessible housing (1)

## Governance and Service Excellence

- Monetary donations to neighbourhood associations – partnerships/info sharing, lots of requests for emails since demise of newspaper(1)
- Use private investment into these building (BK?) (3)
- External review of City staffing \$ (1)
- Grant writer:
  - o Need a general strategy
  - o Neighbourhood associations to work with grant writers, they are great labourers. They need assistance/training on how to get info out there (ie: Facebook)
- Use \$s towards doctors (7)
- Springhill Creek – riprap
  - o Does not like the plans and funds for this project
  - o No public consultation
- Need more CSOs – dogs in parks (2)
- We need things like PAC and daycares to draw doctors (1)
- Transparency, breakdown of SOFI reports and city budget oversight (1)
- Has had positive experiences dealing with City staff and employees
- Mac Park – no enforcement of bylaw re: dogs
- How to learn about upcoming projects – communications and flyers
- Accountability/transparency
- Few closed Council meetings
- Put “labels” on closed meetings
- Listen more to other’s opinions (ie: specialists/more informed/different views)
- More public input/referendums
- Vote on more things
- Can public have more unput on strategic planning and goals (1)
- TRU overpass
  - o Don’t think it’s a good use of money (3)
  - o A barrier would work to deter jaywalking
  - o Fence the length of the median
  - o City could share the advocacy issues to start a letter sending campaign
- Danger of the Red Bridge
- PAC: (4)
  - o Not good timing to spend \$7 million + \$120m
  - o Referendum
  - o Raised taxes are breaking residents
  - o Property taxes/cost of living
  - o Belts need to be tightened
- Pro-PAC: (2)

- It's the way to go
- Will bring in lots of people

## **Advocacy**

- The Red Bridge needs to be maintained (4) – options to deter heavy traffic
- River Street & Hwy 5 is dangerous, no visibility (1)
- Partner with residents in lobbying efforts