

Neighbourhood Strategy Leaders Community of Practice

Municipal Case Studies

Deepening Community

RE-IMAGINING CITIES | RE-ENGAGING CITIZENS



TAMARACK
INSTITUTE



Lethbridge, AB

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History

- **2008:** *Towards a Brighter Future*, a Framework for Social Policy and Strategic Priorities
 - Lead to the development of a formal Municipal Social Policy
- **2010:** Community and Social Development (CSD) Committee received City Council approval of one-time funding for social policy initiatives, including building welcoming and inclusive community and *building friendly neighbourhoods*
 - This funding set the stage for 2012-2014 planning of **social policy initiatives**
- **2014:** *Beyond Your Front Door* neighbourhood initiative started as a demonstration project
 - Research-Based – increased social isolation (neg. effects) > increased social engagement and inclusion (pos. effects)
 - Focused on citizen engagement toward building welcoming and inclusive neighbourhoods in Lethbridge
- **2016:** Neighbourhood Development Coordinator position formally established (city position)

Key Players

- City of Lethbridge
 - CSD Committee (supportive collaborates – Vibrant Lethbridge, CMARD, Youth Advisory, Developmental Assets)
 - Neighbourhood Development Coordinator
 - Cross-departmental support
- A prominent recognition that community development happens only when the community is engaged and participating
 - Council of Lethbridge Neighborhoods
 - Neighbourhood Associations
 - Neighbourhood Boosters
- Cross Sectorial and Leveraged Support
 - Community Organizations (i.e., United Way)
 - Business Sector (i.e., Developers)
 - Funders
- Inter-municipal support (i.e., Tamarack: Neighbourhood Strategy Leaders CoP)

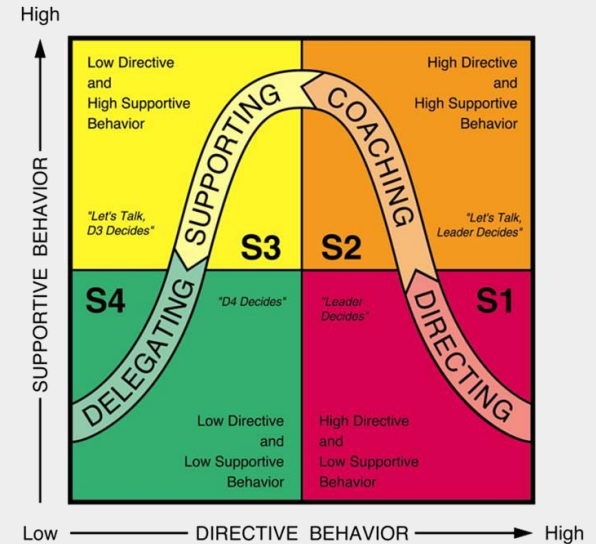
Leadership

- City of Lethbridge, through CSD, has taken the lead in the neighbourhood development movement in Lethbridge
 - Community & Social Development Committee (Standing Committee of City Council)
 - **Neighbourhood Development Coordinator**
 - Cross-Departmental support (growing)
- Community groups with a specific neighbourhood development focus
 - **Council of Lethbridge Neighbourhoods**
 - **Neighbourhood Associations**
 - Neighbourhood Boosters
- Community Organizations
 - United Way

Leadership

Situational Leadership Model

- Adapting an organizational management model for community development
- SL refers to when the leader must adjust her/his style to fit the development level of the community group (s)he is trying to lead.
- Development level is based on what is referred to as maturity, or “the **capacity** to set high but attainable goals, willingness and ability to take responsibility for the task, and relevant education and/or experience of an individual or a group for the task.” –Hersey and Blanchard (1977)
- Leadership Process: Start by leading from the front (direct) to help “generate capacity,” then move to provide “community ownership” by leading from the side (coach/support) then the back (delegate –or empower and entrust).



Goals

INITIAL

- Promote connected, healthy, and safe neighbourhoods.
- Fulfill the overall goals of, and support CMARD
- Support sustainable efforts in neighbourhood development
- Reduce NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) in our neighbourhoods
- Promote citizen engagement and participation in “welcoming and inclusive” neighbourhoods
- Provide reports of progress and success to the community through the CSD Committee and City Council

DEVELOPING

- Promote engaged, welcoming and inclusive neighbourhoods
- Provide support to neighbourhood groups in their development
- Support neighbourhoods in being resilient and relevant
- Support the development of localized and meaningful neighbourhood spaces
- Reduce effects of NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) in our neighbourhoods while increasing opportunities for social inclusion

Importance

There are significant benefits to promoting a strong sense of community:

- Having strong support networks and relationships has a positive impact on our health
- Connected neighbours lead to individual and community well-being: feeling safe; being engaged; and having an overall sense of belonging
- Opportunities to socialize helps create emotional bonds between people and their community
- Connected neighbourhoods are the vehicle for social change
- Community is the core to happiness

(FCSS Neighbourhood Development Overview, 2012)

“The quality of our lives is affected by the conditions that exist in the area captured by the view from our front door.”

Parada, Barnoff, Moffatt, & Homan, 2011

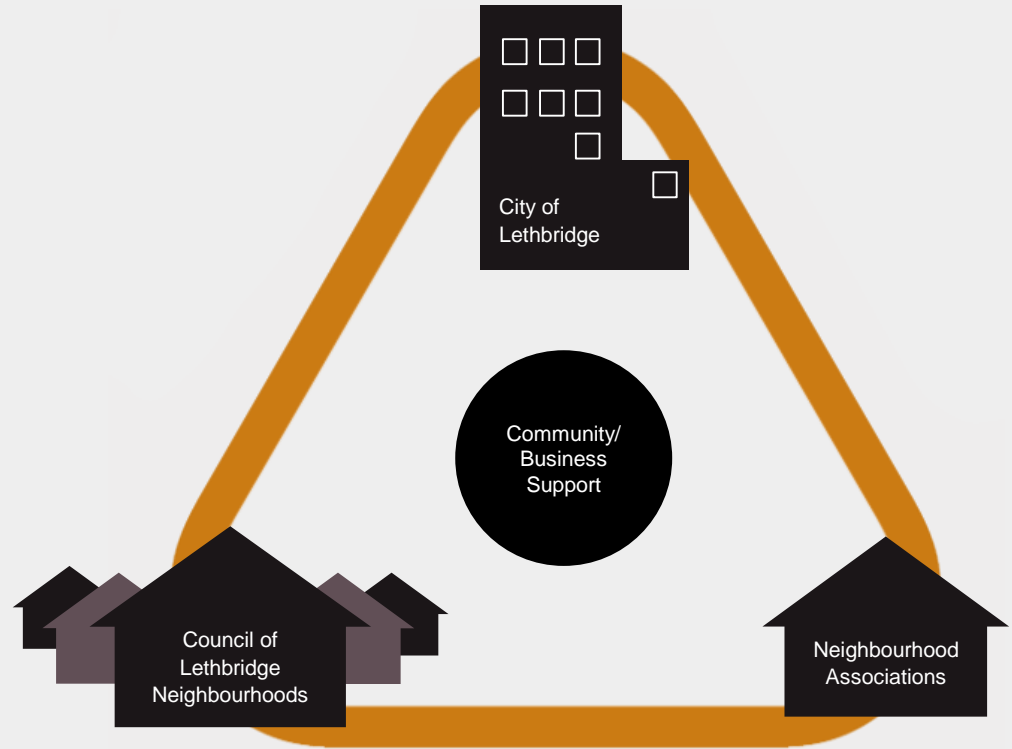
Resident Engagement

- Paramount to development efforts
- Celebrating Community: Fun, Friendly, Food
 - Neighbour Day
 - Block Parties and other celebrations
 - Bumping Spaces (i.e., community gardens)
- Social Media (Facebook and Twitter)
- Traditional media and local magazine
- Invitation Walk About
- Community Connections
- Neighbourhood Association AGMs



Framework

- Social Policy Framework
- Research-based practices / best-practices
- Asset-based approach (i.e., ABCD)
- Ternary Model
 - Partnerships and Collaborates



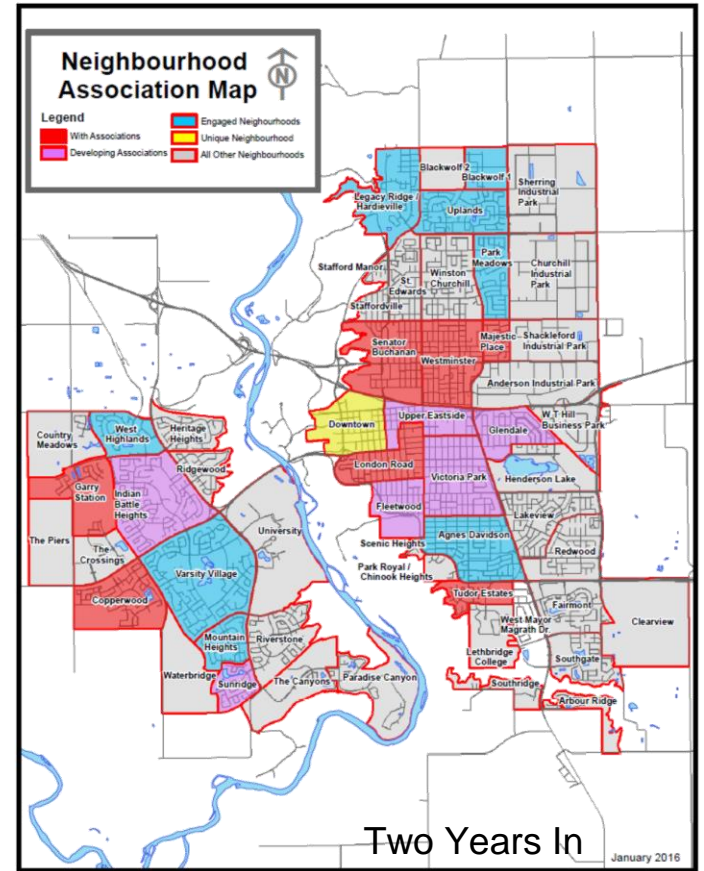
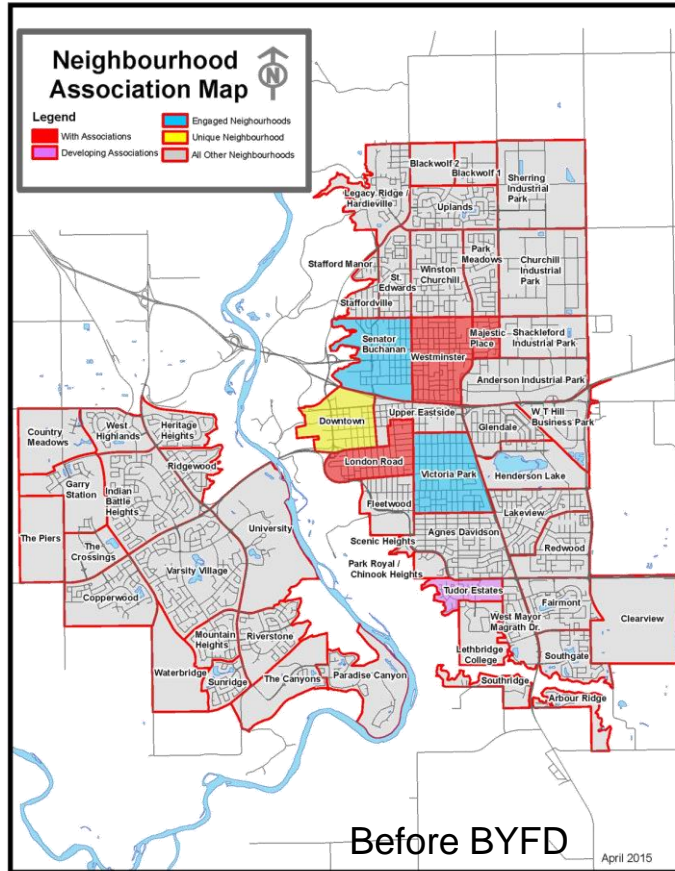
Key Learnings

- Community development often occurs faster than the speed of bureaucracy (working through the red tape)
- Focus on the social infrastructure of neighbourhoods adds depth to neighbourhood development
 - Social infrastructure informs physical infrastructure (visa versa)
- Significant interest from individuals to create a stronger sense of community and belonging in their community
 - In an growing city, developing beyond a “small town”, citizens seek a greater sense of place and local identity
 - However, social isolation and other social issues remain a serious concern
- Neighbourhoods as platforms to address social issues – social isolation and its negative effects, issues of discrimination, poverty, child development, etc.
- Importance of the process of resiliency and relevancy for neighbourhoods

Successes

- Growing community interest in: neighbourhood development, neighbourhood identity, sense of community in neighbourhoods, neighbourhood organizing (grassroots)
 - Emerging and developing Neighbourhood Associations
- Development of Council of Lethbridge Neighbourhoods (Umbrella Support Network for NAs)
- Increased City support (Council and management) – cross-departmental support
- Partnerships and collaborations with community groups and businesses
- Neighbourhood spaces, programs and events (accessible/inclusive)
- Engaged participants on social media
- Strong support from local media (i.e., Lethbridge Living magazine)

Successes



Challenges

- Creating opportunities for welcoming and inclusive neighbourhoods (long, winding road)
- Engaging citizens in community life, specifically socially isolated and disconnected individuals
- Finding grassroots leadership (at neighbourhood level)
- Support multiple neighbourhoods from one city position
- Fitting a community development model into a bureaucratic model
- Risk of City Council vision changing / decrease in City support
- Limitation of resources

What's Next

- Develop a formal Neighbourhood Strategy – cross-departmental and community guided
- Development of neighbourhood spaces (i.e., community gardens, little free libraries, neighbourhood bulletin boards)
- Continued support for development of neighbourhood groups and Council of Lethbridge Neighbourhoods
- Establish a neighbour recognition program