



WHAT WE HEARD

Summary of Community Environmental Feedback



Date: June 13th, 2011



Introduction

The City of Leduc is developing an Environmental Plan intended to provide the City direction in environmental management and practices within the municipality. Extensive public consultation has been conducted to help the City of Leduc understand the priorities and concerns of Leduc residents. The following provides a summary of the consultation conducted and the comments provided by residents.

Consultation Activities Related to the Environmental Plan

A number of public consultations have been conducted that have related to environmental management and priorities. Not all of them were directly linked to the Environmental Plan project itself. Any consultation that has occurred within the last year that has directly addressed the environment or included discussion on environmental themes has been included in the comment summary. This includes the following consultation events and activities:

Municipal Development Plan Metroquest Results

As a part of the public outreach for the new Municipal Development Plan, the City of Leduc used technology called Metroquest. This included an online survey and an interactive kiosk that was placed at the Leduc Recreation Centre for a 5 month period in the fall of 2010. Over 1800 responses were catalogued using this system. There were many questions related to the long term growth of Leduc and what people felt were key priorities for Leduc's long term prosperity. One of the results that related to environmental planning was that overall respondents listed air quality as their first priority in long term development of Leduc. Other key priorities listed that related to the environment included 'smaller eco-footprint, maintaining agricultural land, walkable neighbourhoods, and lower carbon emissions.

City Visioning Session

This event is a one day session held bi-annually. Any resident or business owner in the City of Leduc is welcome to attend. The event consisted of several presentations followed by attendee focus groups facilitated by members of the City of Leduc staff. Each group focused on two main topics and addressed others as time allowed. The environment was identified as one of the main topics for two of the focus groups. The following key themes were identified in the environmental discussions:

City as a Leader

The people who attended the sessions on environment clearly articulated that they wanted the City of Leduc to model positive action and behavior related to environmental management. They also want more information on what they can choose to do on their own properties to reduce their environmental impact and information on the demonstrated benefit of actions taken. A task force focused on

education and marketing was proposed, to be made up of a combination of volunteers and City staff.

Land Use Density

Attendees were concerned about the use of high value agricultural land for housing and wanted to see more density in Leduc to offset the need to expand on farmland.

Construction Standards

Attendees felt that construction standards were not creating the most efficient housing and that homeowners were not well informed on what could be done during construction to improve their home's efficiency. Concerns with the inspection process were also discussed. They wanted to see higher construction standards in Leduc and suggested providing a rebate program for developers that built to higher standards.

Sound Attenuation

It was recommended that the City get up to date, accurate data on noise levels and issues to help inform Council's advocacy efforts with Alberta Transportation and Edmonton International Airport.

Waste Organics

The public noted that any curbside organics program needed to be well communicated, have a strong education component that included education for homeowners and schools, and have a fairly tight implementation timeframe. They expressed a strong preference for the program to be voluntary rather than compulsory. They also suggested allowing people to put out more waste for additional fees and providing rebates to those that put out less waste.

Air Quality Data

It was suggested that the air quality issue should be dealt with strategically as part of the City's environmental planning efforts. Considerations should include mechanisms to get better data on air quality in the City of Leduc through the provision of monitoring.

Backyard Composter Questionnaire

The City of Leduc has conducted a questionnaire on environmental priorities, which included a draw for a backyard composter. Over 500 people provided comments as a part of this questionnaire. It asked residents to identify their top four environmental issues that respondents felt should be the focus for City of Leduc's new environmental priorities. The priorities identified on the questionnaire were:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Protect agricultural land/smaller eco-footprint
- Improve water quality in Telford Lake
- Reduce water consumption

- Protect trees and natural areas
- Reduce waste, recycling more
- Minimize light pollution
- Minimize noise pollution
- Clean air

The questionnaire also provided space for respondents to identify additional initiatives. The questionnaire was provided in several contexts, including a version online and in the Civic Centre atrium, at the Home and Leisure Show, at the Community Visioning Session, and directed to City of Leduc staff online.

Overall, respondents rated waste and recycling as their most important priority, which was closely followed by protecting trees and natural areas. These two priorities were the stand-outs with over 400 responses each, but all the other priorities had over 200 responses if light and noise pollution are taken together. This identifies that respondents have interest in a wide variety of environmental initiatives, but their first priorities are on waste and projection of natural areas.

	GHG	Small eco-footprint	Telford Lake	Water USe	Trees & Natural Areas	Waste/ Recycling	Light Pollution	Noise Pollution	Clean Air
Staff Online Survey	11	16	17	20	31	35	6	11	7
Open House Survey	29	35	22	30	49	57	9	21	33
Public Online Survey	28	54	39	46	78	83	18	34	32
Home & Leisure Show Survey	35	57	47	39	91	97	18	36	59
Community Visioning Session Survey	1	3	1	0	4	4	0	2	1
Survey left in City of Leduc Atrium	112	147	113	110	215	221	42	72	123
Total Responses	216	312	239	245	468	497	93	176	255

The staff survey responses fell into the following key themes:

The City of Leduc is doing a good job already

A few responses indicated that the City of Leduc was already taking strides to address the environment and managing resources effectively.

The City of Leduc needs to increase density and manage growth

Many respondents identified that they wanted to see more restrictive growth management policies applied as relates to land use. This included many identifying a preference for higher density, both downtown and for the community overall.

Respondents also identified that they wanted to limit sprawl on agricultural lands and to reduce the use of pesticides in the community. One respondent also identified concern with building construction standards and wanted the City to develop all municipal facilities under the LEED green building program.

The City of Leduc needs to promote alternative transportation

Comments provided by staff respondents identified that they wanted to see promotion of biking to work through education and expansion of bike-friendly facilities. They also identified that fleet vehicles should be right-sized to their intended use as they felt many staff vehicles were too large for their intended use. They also identified that they wanted to see telecommuting and working from home to be more actively promoted for City staff.

The City needs to do more to manage waste

Respondents identified that staff needed to set a good example. Opportunities to reduce waste at work were identified, including double-sided printing, turning off lights to reduce wasted energy, and provision of recycling and composting receptacles in the workplace. In general, staff felt there needed to be more facilities city-wide that would make recycling and composting easy for people to do. They also identified that education was needed to help encourage people to reduce the waste they produce. One respondent focused on pet waste, and identified that enforcement was needed in public parks and the multi-way to make the city cleaner.

The City of Leduc should promote alternative energy

A few respondents identified that the City of Leduc should consider integrating alternative energy in new and existing municipal development, including technology like heat recovery systems and geothermal systems.

The responses provided by the public largely mirrored the themes identified in the staff survey responses. Comments from the open house survey include the following themes:

The City of Leduc is doing a good job already

A few responses indicated that the City of Leduc was already taking strides to address the environment and managing resources effectively.

The City of Leduc needs to increase density and manage growth

Many public respondents also identified that they wanted to see more restrictive growth management policies applied as relates to land use. They also identified a preference for intensifying land use in the community, which ranged from promoting infill in existing areas to an outright ban of single family development over the responses. Respondents identified that the Leduc needs more trees, and that could be done by creating a forest donation program for businesses. Respondents also identified wanting more outdoor community spaces geared for families, including future

development of Telford Lake, and that they wanted the City to require developers to build parks and open spaces upfront before housing was completed. Respondents also identified that they wanted the City to work with the Edmonton International Airport to reduce air and light pollution.

The City of Leduc needs to promote alternative transportation

Comments provided by the public also identified that they wanted to see more promotion of alternative transportation such as bikes and busses. Comments included enhancing existing bus provision, including enhancing the existing C-line. They also identified wanting dedicated bike lanes, with some even requesting covered bike and pedestrian facilities. One respondent identified wanting more access for pedestrian across Highway 2. Some respondents also identified that financial interventions were required, with examples including an incentive program or a large vehicle tax.

The City needs to do more to manage waste

The public identified that they wanted to see more efforts made to reduce community waste. Many identified support for a curbside compost program to be developed in the City. They also identified that they wanted a City program to subsidize homeowner composters and rain barrels. One respondent requested that the recycling program be made mandatory for apartment buildings. Several respondents wanted more education on how they could reduce waste, including information, incentives, and contests. One respondent identified that they supported a plastic bag tax to be imposed by businesses to consumers using a plastic bag.

One respondent did identify that they did not feel new action needed to be taken on waste, citing higher costs as a concern.

The City of Leduc should promote alternative energy

Public respondents identified that the City should consider areas to promote alternative energy systems, including pursuing methane capture at the landfill. They also identified a preference for wind and solar power to be incorporated into the community and that an incentive program should be put in place to encourage residents to choose electric lawn care devices.

Other

There were a few additional comments that did not fit the themes above. They included encouraging people switch to plant based diets by having meat and dairy free Mondays, developing a city-wide cost benefit analysis to understand the costs or savings of going green, and that the City use local food when catering events. One respondent identified that the City needed to ask the public what they need and listen to their responses, and one respondent favoured an anti-idling program.

Environmental Plan Public Consultation

The consultation for the Environmental Plan was held over three days through three different events – a public open house, a staff open house, and a follow-up public meeting. The consultations had a total of 76 attendees. A brief description of each event follows. The cumulative comments from all three events have also been summarized below.

Environmental Plan Public Open House

The City of Leduc held a public open house specifically for the Environmental Plan project on May 3rd from 4-8pm in the Civic Centre Atrium. Notices about the public open house were emailed to anyone who has previously provided contact information about the project and through the Chamber of Commerce email lists, identified on electronic street signs, and advertised in the Leduc Rep. Anyone who had previously identified wanting to be contacted about the environmental sustainability planning process and provided a phone number were also called to be individually invited to the open house. A total of 26 people attended the open house.

The open house provided information about the existing condition of the environment in Leduc, including existing programs. It also included additional information about the C-Line. There was opportunities for attendees to speak to City of Leduc and project staff about questions they had, or to identify comments about what they wanted to see in an environmental plan. There were also comment sheets available to provide written comments. A total of BLANK residents attended the event.

One of the boards provided gave attendees the opportunity to identify their most important environmental priority. The priority areas identified were waste, water, energy, climate change, land, air, and noise. There was also paper available for attendees to identify an alternative priority. Waste was clearly the most important priority of attendees, but the other priorities were all selected as priorities also, indicating that attendees saw importance in all of them. No additional priorities were identified by attendees.

Environmental Plan Staff Open House

The City of Leduc held an open house specifically for staff on May 4th from 11-2pm in the Civic Centre Atrium. Notices about the staff open house were emailed to staff and circulated through word of mouth. A total of 25 staff and an additional 5 residents attended the event.

The format of the open house for staff was identical to the format used for the public event the day before.

Environmental Plan Public Meeting

The City of Leduc held an open house follow-up public meeting with the public for the Environmental Plan project on May 5th from 7-9pm in the Civic Centre Atrium. Notices about the public meeting were emailed to anyone who has previously provided contact information about the project and through the Chamber of Commerce email lists, identified on electronic street signs, and advertised in the Leduc Rep. Anyone who had previously identified wanting to be contacted about the environmental sustainability planning process and provided a phone number were also called to be individually invited to the public meeting. A total of 20 people attended this event. The meeting was intended to provide follow-up on the open house and communicate the attendees comments from that meeting. There was a second opportunity for attendees to provide comments. All comments provided reflected those that were provided at the previous open house.

The comments provided at all three events fit within the thematic areas identified. They can be characterized as follows:

Waste

Attendees identified that the volume of waste going to the landfill needed to be reduced. Methods to reduce waste cited by attendees including a mandatory curbside organics program, working with developers to reduce construction waste, providing blue bins for recycling to reduce the use of plastic bags, and providing education on existing waste programs as well as other ways people can reduce waste at home. They also identified concerns with a compost program causing unpleasant smell in the community, which they wanted to be addressed before rolling out a mandatory program. They also identified that they want education materials to be paperless, and that they felt that the current recycling program is working well.

Water

Attendees identified that they wanted to see the City of Leduc promote water conservation. Methods to do so included a City rain barrel program for homeowners, promote low water landscaping, provide education on watering lawns more effectively, and considering opportunities to re-use greywater. They also identified either a reduction or outright ban of pesticides to reduce groundwater contamination and potential impacts on human health. Wetlands were also identified as being important as a part of the stormwater system. One respondent also identified that low water landscaping be well planned to ensure that it stays attractive and well-maintained in appearance.

Energy and Climate Change

Attendees identified that they wanted the City of Leduc to promote energy reduction, including reducing dependence on electricity generated from coal as well as using low tech solutions, such as promoting outdoor clotheslines in summer months. They also identified that building energy should be considered, and some felt that more could have been done to do so in the development of the Leduc Recreation Centre.

Land

Attendees identified that they wanted the City to be more compact in future to reduce vehicle use, but that compact development must also ensure that fire and safety concerns are addressed. They also identified wanting expansion to the C-line and expansion of the multi-ways. They wanted green space preserved throughout the City, the promotion of community gardens and other urban agriculture activities to be promoted, and more trees to be planted throughout the community. They also supported a pesticide bylaw to manage pesticides more effectively.

Air, Noise, and Light

Attendees felt that the City needed to do more to understand what the current air quality is and how it is affected by the airport and highway in Leduc. They also identified that construction standards should be changed to address light pollution, including areas with commercial/residential interfaces.

Plan Implementation

Attendees felt that the City has a key role to play in providing leadership to the community on environmental responsibility. This leadership will help to support the second critical component in attendees opinion, which was identified as education. They identified that education was needed on existing actions the City is already taking on the environment, as well as environmental actions residents can take. They identified that residents were proud of what Leduc has already done to improve the environment, and that they are willing to invest in the environment themselves within reasonable limits. Grants and alternative financing should also be explored to help the community achieve positive change in its environmental priorities.