



imagine

LETHBRIDGE

COMMUNITY LEADERS FORUMS

APRIL 24, 2024

MAY 29, 2024



SUMMARY REPORT

DRAFT 180624

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Vision: “To make Lethbridge the healthiest city in Canada in which to live, thrive, and age well.”

Imagine Lethbridge is a grassroots organization that evolved from discussions on community health and well-being. It emerged in early 2020 amidst challenges like the ‘safe injection site,’ homelessness, and the Covid-19 pandemic. The organization adopted the Doughnut Economy model, aligning with the City of Lethbridge’s Municipal Development Plan. Doughnut Economics envisions an economy operating within ecological and social boundaries, ensuring everyone’s basic needs are met. It promotes social equity, environmental sustainability, and community resilience through local solutions and community-led initiatives.

Without change, social inequality will persist, basic needs will remain unmet, and reliance on personal vehicles and urban sprawl will harm the environment. The current economic system will continue damaging the planet. The vision of a caring community inspired participants. The potential for a sustainable city balancing people’s and the environment’s needs offers hope. Collaborative efforts to make Lethbridge a model of the Doughnut Economy excite the community.

The **Imagine Lethbridge – Our Journey Continues:** Together Building a Healthy Thriving City – Forums brought over 60 community leaders together to chart a different course for our city’s future as we enter the 21st Century. To live the vision and guided by the Doughnut Economy model (Raworth 2017), the Forums aimed to review our learnings and discuss new possibilities using this framework in our efforts to fulfill the vision.

FORUM OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Forums was to review learnings and introduce the Doughnut Economics framework to support the vision and the WHO Healthy Cities model, and gather insights from diverse stakeholders in the community. The sessions were held on:

- **April 24, 2024, at CASA with 36 attendees.**
- **May 29, 2024, with 24 attendees.**

The Participants included: Policy makers, organizations, not-for-profits, agencies, networks, and citizens, including Mayor Blaine Hyggen, City Councillors Jenn Schmidt-Rempel and Belinda Crowson, and Jerry Firth, Alberta Community Development officer.

SHIFTING SYSTEMS TO OUR PREFERRED FUTURE

Through a facilitated discussion, the participants identified a vision by 2050 that includes:

- Meeting everyone’s basic needs with quality care and services.
- Access to nature, green spaces, and basic services in every neighborhood.
- Reduced income gaps and achieved food security.
- Integrated support systems addressing the drug crisis
- Embracing diversity and respecting ecological limits
- Multimodal transportation and vibrant neighborhoods, and
- Collaborative efforts understanding global impact.

At the conclusion of the Forums, the participants through the Participant Evaluation identified the following critical steps to move “Imagine Lethbridge” forward. These include 4 priority areas including:

Education, Communication, Leadership, Community Awareness and Mobilization. These are further described in the next section of the report.

By following these recommendations by the Community Leaders, the Doughnut Economy model and ongoing consultation with the leaders, residents and collaborative partners, “Imagine Lethbridge” can create a sustainable, inclusive, and thriving community, achieving the vision of making Lethbridge the healthiest city in Canada.

CRITICAL STEPS TO MOVE “IMAGINE LETHBRIDGE” FORWARD

To move “*Imagine Lethbridge*” forward and embrace the Doughnut Economy, the critical next steps identified by the Community Leaders at the Forums are as follows:

EDUCATION

1. ***Provide Opportunities for Education***
It’s important to educate more people about the Doughnut Economy. This can be done through workshops, seminars, and public forums where everyone can learn about its principles and benefits.
2. ***Continuous Education***
Keep educating the community about the Doughnut Economy. Regular efforts to inform people will emphasize its benefits and potential impact on the community.
3. ***Expose Possibilities***
Show people the practical applications of the Doughnut Economy. When they see how it can be used in real-life situations, they will be more inspired to act.
4. ***Engage Schools and Youth***
Extend the sessions to school districts and incorporate teachings about the Doughnut Economy into high school curricula. Educating the younger generation ensures long-term commitment and understanding.

5. ***Share Learnings***
Enhance the sharing of successes and learnings so far. Transparency and collective progress are key to building a strong community foundation.

COMMUNICATION

1. ***Promotion and Publicity***
Use social media, local media, and community events to raise awareness and engage more people. Promoting the Doughnut Economy will help more citizens understand and support it.
2. ***Market the Initiative***
Actively market the initiative to attract more participants and raise awareness. Effective marketing can help spread the word and garner more support.

LEADERSHIP

1. ***Connect Interested Leaders***
Bring together leaders who are interested in system change. Collaborative efforts and shared goals can lead to more effective and unified actions.
2. ***Incorporate Feedback***
Listen to the community’s feedback and incorporate it into actionable priorities. Building a cohesive team and moving forward with purpose is essential.
3. ***Implement Action Plans***
Translate ideas into action by developing and executing plans derived from discussions and sessions. Action is the key to making progress.
4. ***Community Leader and Government Support***
Gaining the commitment of community leaders and local government is crucial. Their endorsement can help champion the initiatives and make them more widely accepted and effective.

5. **Secure Municipal Support**

Work to get the municipal council on board. Their support can prioritize Doughnut Economy principles in local governance and policy-making.

6. **Cultivate Political Will**

Work on building political will and support to drive policy changes. Incorporating Doughnut Economy Principles within governance structures can lead to lasting and meaningful change.

3. **Host Open House Events**

Create opportunities for all citizens to participate in discussions about the Doughnut Economy. Open house events can foster broader engagement and understanding.

4. **Identify Community Champions**

Find and engage community champions who are passionate about the vision. Their enthusiasm and dedication can help drive the initiative forward.

5. **Improve Transportation**

Focus on enhancing transportation infrastructure. Better access and mobility can support more equitable opportunities for all community members.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND MOBILIZATION

1. **Broad Community Engagement**

Ensure inclusivity by hosting sessions that engage all segments of society. Broad participation can lead to more diverse perspectives and stronger community support.

2. **For-Profit Involvement**

Encourage businesses to get involved. When companies collaborate on projects that align with the Doughnut Economy principles, it can create powerful change and support sustainable practices.

By following these steps identified by community leaders, **"Imagine Lethbridge"** can create a sustainable, inclusive, and thriving community that embraces the principles of the Doughnut Economy. These recommendations for action will inform the overall strategy to implement the Doughnut Economy as the framework to achieve the vision of a Lethbridge as the healthiest city in Canada.



The Doughnut Economy:

A twenty-first-century compass. Between its social foundation of human well-being and ecological ceiling of planetary pressure lies the safe and just space for humanity. - Raworth (2017)

