

REQUEST FOR DECISION

Subject: 2025 Community Conversations Annual Report

From: Bill Given, Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared by: Bree-Anna Gaboury, Project Coordinator
Lisa Riddell, Community Development Manager

Reviewed by: Christopher Read, Director of Community Development

Date: December 9, 2025



Recommendation:

That Committee receive the Community Conversations Annual Report for information.

Alternatives:

That Committee direct Administration to bring forward additional information on any items of interest in the Community Conversations report to a future Committee meeting.

Background:

On September 21, 2021, Council approved the [Community Conversations Policy \(A-105\)](#) which outlines Council's commitment to meaningful resident engagement to ensure that municipal services and programs remain responsive to changing community needs. In February 2023, a revised Policy A-105 was adopted by Council, directing Administration to narrow the scope of conversations to focus on the life-stage focused conversations.

From January to December 2025, 26 life-stage focused Community Conversations took place, with the following breakdown of attendance in 2025 compared to 2024:

Life Stage	Year	Breakdown by quarter and type of participant									Annual Total
		Jan. to March 2025			April to June 2025			Sept. to Nov. 2025			
		MOJ	Non MOJ	Total	MOJ	Non MOJ	Total	MOJ	Non MOJ	Total	
Adults	2024	12	16	28	8	11	19	9	19	28	75
	2025	10	19	29	8	15	23	10	20	30	82
Seniors	2024	10	20	30	11	14	25	10	24	34	89
	2025	6	22	28	10	17	27	9	24	33	88
Early Childhood & School Age	2024	15	13	28	12	12	24	13	26	39	91
	2025	11	15	26	10	11	21	11	25	36	83

Discussion:

At the time of this report, there are 35 groups, agencies, and organizations represented at Community Conversations with 67 unique participants in total (many agencies have more than one representative). Participants at community conversations discussed many items impacting the community – when grouped into thematic areas, the below priority areas emerge:

- Housing
- Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing
- Community Belonging & Rebuilding Connections
- Food Insecurity
- Employment, Income Support and Economic Recovery
- Youth Mental Health & School Engagement
- Seniors' Needs
- Transportation and Accessibility
- Disaster Preparedness
- Displaced Residents

It is important context to note that Community Conversations collects resident and community group feedback, and that information is used to inform community actions in response. Programs, services, funding, etc. have and will continue to be shaped by the information brought forward at Community Conversations. This response is community-wide, including the Municipality of Jasper and all partners.

Strategic Relevance:

- Take proactive steps to reduce the risk of people becoming vulnerable and respond when they are vulnerable.
- Promote and enhance recreational and cultural opportunities and spaces
- Enable and facilitate events that provide opportunities to increase community connections.
- Embrace our growing diversity
- Leverage and create opportunities for greater inclusion.
- Communicate and engage with residents
- Welcome the expertise, innovation, creativity and commitment of community members, groups, and associations
- Entrust our staff to develop healthy relationships with the people they serve.

Inclusion Considerations: Community Conversations is a forum to discuss the changing needs of Jasperites with particular focus on groups who may be at risk of exclusion. Many participants at Community Conversations are organization and agency leaders who serve, in part, groups at risk of exclusion.

Relevant Legislation:

- [Policy – A-105 – Community Conversations Policy](#)

Financial: The costs to carry out Community Conversations are within the 2025 operating budget.

Attachments: The Community Conversations Interim Report is attached.

Community Conversations Annual Report - 2025

The Interim Report presented in July 2025 covered January to June 2025. This Annual Report emphasizes input from September – November 2025. Prepared and submitted by: Bree Anna Gaboury and Lisa Riddell

Introduction:

The second half of Community Conversations in 2025 continued to provide an essential forum for collaboration across sectors in the ongoing aftermath of the wildfire that impacted the community in July 2024. Community Conversations remains a vital space for agency and organization leaders to share insights, highlight emerging challenges, and explore solutions that respond to the dynamic needs of the Jasper community.

During this period, discussions increasingly reflected the compounded pressures of the wildfire recovery, seasonal economic fluctuations, housing and rebuild challenges, mental health needs, and the evolving circumstances of newcomers and temporary foreign workers. Creative programs, services and initiatives continue to be co-designed through these conversations, ensuring that local responses are coordinated, community-informed, and adaptive.

Jasper's rural and remote context presents both distinct challenges and unique strengths. By maintaining a community-focused and person-centered approach, Community Conversations ensures that collaborative initiatives are responsive to residents' lived realities, fostering social connection, and shared wellbeing across the community.

Membership:

Here is a revised member list as of December 2025. There are 35 member organizations/agencies and 67 individual participants:

- Alberta Health Services - Homecare
- Alpine Summit Seniors' Lodge
- Brain Care Centre
- Community Futures West Yellowhead
- Crisis Team Society Jasper
- Ecole Jasper Elementary School
- Ecole Desrochers
- Friends of Jasper National Park
- Grande Yellowhead Public School Division
- Government of Alberta - Alberta Supports
- Hinton Wellness Program
- Jasper Community Habitat for The Arts
- Jasper Community Team Society
- Jasper Employment Centre
- Jasper Minor Sports
- Jasper Municipal Library
- Jasper Museum
- Jasper Recovery Coordination Centre
- Service Canada
- Jasper Seniors' Society
- L'Association Canadienne Française de l'Alberta, Régionale de Jasper
- Mettra Pharmacy
- Municipality of Jasper – CAO office
- Municipal Council
- Municipality of Jasper – Community Development
- Municipality of Jasper – Fitness & Aquatic Centre
- Municipality of Jasper – Outreach Services
- Municipality of Jasper – Settlement Services
- Parks Canada – Engagement Officer
- Parks Canada - Indigenous Relations
- Pursuit Jasper Banff Collection
- Recovery Alberta – Addictions & Mental Health
- Red Cross
- Western Alberta Regional Victim Serving Society
- Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women
- Individual Jasperites x 7

At Community Conversations, participants share evolving resident needs and identify opportunities for coordinated action in response. An analysis of all trends and opportunities raised during 2025 highlights the

thematic areas listed below. The percentages reflect how often each topic was mentioned across Conversations held from September to November 2025, offering insight into which issues surfaced most consistently and where community concerns are currently most concentrated.

1. Housing & Affordability – 18%

- Housing remained the most frequently discussed issue, with residents, service providers, and employers all reporting persistent challenges related to affordability, availability, and the pace of the rebuild.
- Many expressed frustrations over permitting timelines, particularly as the winter season approaches.
- Rising rental prices continued to strain families, newcomers, and workers, creating instability for those relying on seasonal employment.
- Marmot Meadows interim housing generated reoccurring concerns, including insufficient transportation, low internet quality and a lack of winter plug-in access for vehicles.
- Seniors continued to face significant barriers in securing appropriate housing, with growing waitlists and a clear demand for more dedicated, age-friendly housing.

2. Mental Health, Stress & Burnout – 16%

- Mental health concerns were repeatedly emphasized, as many described increasing anxiety, pressure, and emotional exhaustion across the fall months.
- The combination of slow rebuild process, financial uncertainty, and winter approaching has led to heightened mental health strains for families, workers, and individuals living in interim housing.
- Teens experienced stress due to the teachers strike and the difficulty of re-establishing school routines afterward, which contributed to emotional instability and challenges related to focusing.
- Continuous reports of burnout due to understaffing and increased service demand.
- Service providers noted gaps in mental health support for parents and children, even as emotional wellness and spiritual programs received positive feedback from those who attended.

3. Economic & Employment Instability – 13%

- Businesses and workers faced fluctuating economic conditions, with some employers reporting lower-than-expected seasonal profits and many employers experiencing reductions in hours as winter approaches.
- Job losses and shifting work opportunities increased financial stress, leading to greater reliance on community supports and employment services.
- Changes to temporary foreign worker and permanent residency pathways generated significant anxiety among newcomers and employers, who anticipated labour shortages.
- Housing shortages continued to impact employers' ability to hire or retain staff, further compounding economic uncertainty.
- Service centres saw more folks seeking employment support, job-matching opportunities, and guidance on adapting to evolving labour market conditions.

4. Food Security & Basic Needs – 11%

- Demand for grocery assistance remained high throughout the fall, especially among families with school-aged children.
- The food bank continued to serve a consistently large number of households, many of whom required diapers, formula, and school snacks in addition to staple foods.
- Residents increasingly requested basic supports such as gas cards and recreation passes.
- Community meal initiatives and food-based programming played an essential role in meeting nutritional needs while also fostering social connection and reducing isolation.
- Service providers frequently highlighted that food programs were not only about access to meals but were also crucial touchpoints for community engagement and overall wellbeing.

5. Transportation & Accessibility - 10%

- Transportation challenges persisted across several groups, with shift workers, seniors and interim housing residents reporting difficulty accessing reliable and timely transit options.
- Residents in interim housing at Marmot Meadows continued to experience transit schedules that did not align with early-morning or late-night shifts.
- A desire for more accessible school bus service particularly for children who do not qualify under the Government of Alberta catchment rules was also raised.

6. Community Engagement & Social Connection – 9%

- Residents continued to show strong interest in accessible, low-cost programs that foster connection.
- Participation in structured programming for children and families remained high, which helped alleviate stress and provided stability.
- Intergenerational and multicultural programming was especially valued, helping to build connections between seniors, youth, newcomers and long-term residents.
- Although spiritual and wellness programs were positively reviewed by participants, many remained underutilized, suggesting potential barriers to attendance such as scheduling, readiness or awareness.
- Overall, community programs played a meaningful role in creating supportive spaces that help residents cope with ongoing recovery-related challenges.

7. Senior Wellbeing & Advocacy – 8%

- Seniors contributed to participate in community events in large numbers, demonstrating both a high demand for social engagement and the ongoing importance of senior-focused programming.
- It was consistently emphasized that there is a need for improved transportation, expanded housing options, and increased mobility and wellness programs for seniors.
- Seniors' dinners, movement programs and social gatherings played an important role in reducing isolation and strengthening community connection among older adults.
- Seniors also faced barriers related to affordability and accessibility, reinforcing the urgency of addressing long-term housing and service gaps for this demographic.

8. Staffing Shortages – 7%

- Many organizations reported ongoing staffing shortages, unfilled positions, and reduced operational flexibility, which has created added pressure for existing staff and volunteers.
- Seasonal employment patterns contributed to instability, with some workers experiencing inconsistent schedules and feeling overwhelmed during peak times.
- Reporting of staffing challenges affecting service delivery across sectors, from recreation programming to food security initiatives, contributing to longer wait times or reduced offerings in some cases.
- As staffing pressures intersected with rising community needs, organizations found themselves stretched, even while attempting to expand services or respond to emerging challenges.

9. Environmental Issues, Wildfire Recovery & Preparedness – 5%

- Residents and service providers continued to navigate wildfire-related recovery tasks such as soil remediation, construction delays, and property assessments, which contributed to ongoing stress.
- The slower-than-anticipated pace of rebuild and remediation work influenced both housing availability and emotional well-being, reinforcing the long-term nature of post-fire recovery.
- Environmental concerns remained relevant but were less frequently discussed than in previous months, as more immediate issues such as housing and mental health took precedence.