



Hey Clayton, let's chat about community.



CLAYTON COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

DATE: Tuesday, October 2, 2018

TIME: 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm

LOCATION: Clayton Heights Secondary

Conversation Notes



Thank you for participating in Clayton Community Conversations on October 2, 2018. Your voice is integral to the change you want to see in your community.

We asked you to participate in group conversations around five questions. The following is a summarization of those conversations. Please feel free to share this feedback within your community circles.

Please contact us at clayton@uwlm.ca with your comments, additions or amendments.

QUESTION 1

What are the unique experiences of special populations living in Clayton? (i.e.: children, youth, families, others)

Clayton has its own community culture. It is a family oriented community with a focus on young children. Schools are the heart of this community. It is accepting and diverse, and there is a strong awareness of helping others - yet there is a lack of contribution from the community. There is a desire for better integration with segments of the population that are not yet represented (people with disabilities, first responders, lower income families, newcomers to the community, ESL for non-English speaking residents). There is a sense that supports and outreach programming have not kept up with population growth. There is only one licensed childcare operator but many unlicensed, family childcare operators. Walkability is important to most residents (especially the seniors' population) and more sidewalks are needed for improved accessibility and safety.

There is a need for more community engagement opportunities and programs for youth. A space for youth and the broader community to become more active and enjoy year-round indoor/outdoor activities (basketball, tennis, skateboarding) is much desired. There is only one soccer field in Clayton (and it is always busy). Youth want regular hangout places in the summer. Youth also want to be able to walk to these facilities. They want more programs that open up opportunities for community engagement and they want activities that will interest them (technology, art photography). The "Project Equal" leadership style of programming could be incorporated into the new Community Centre. People want creative opportunities for youth leave their legacy in the community (planting trees, building Little Libraries).

There is a lack of support for youth transitioning from elementary to high school and there seems to be no support for early teens. Youth feel a mentorship program to help students better communicate with seniors will be helpful. Sometimes intentionally starting conversations with people we meet on the street can have long-term positive effects on community culture.

Sidewalks are much needed in order for seniors to feel mobile. Many feel that the voices of seniors are not heard in the community and they want ways to engage seniors in community. There is also a lack of activities for seniors.

People feel there needs to be a social aspect within the community. They want activities that are tailored to age groups. A walking group; a fun-fare for the whole community; competition-style events (Intermural tournaments, the Clayton Cup, the Amazing Race) are a few ideas.

Shannon Park is noted as a community asset.

QUESTION 2

What ideas do you have for making Clayton a better place to live?

The community wants more engagement opportunities and activities for seniors such as games, seminars on relevant topics, mentoring programs and community dinners (Christmas). Seniors have a wealth of life stories, knowledge and skills (gardening, sewing, and cooking) that could be shared with youth through school visits. Youth suggested doing random acts of kindness for seniors (day trips or sending flowers, cards, small gifts). This could be a great way to introduce United Way's Acts of Local Love initiative.

People see a need to bridge gaps in the community – residents want a way to connect with each other through organized activities such as block parties, community clean up days and movie nights. One idea is to organize a version of the “Welcome Wagon” where current neighbours welcome new neighbours (dropping by with a plate of home-made cookies, small gift baskets). Youth also suggested a similar idea of “buddying up” with new youth residents. They would like to see more mixed aged events for young children, youth, adults and seniors would be welcomed. Current neighbours could also reach out to new non-English speaking neighbours to connect them with people in the community who speak their language and who are able to acquaint them to amenities and services within the community.

People generally like the idea of promoting local events (Farmers Markets, movie nights) and supporting local Clayton small businesses over big box corporations: meet for coffee at the local coffee shop instead of big corporate owned coffee houses, using the local caterer (Centric) for school events. They feel it needs to be easier for local businesses to partner with schools to create and promote local events.

People like the idea of a central online space (a website) to post all community activities and promote a list of volunteer opportunities in Clayton. Youth could engage a younger audience through social media platforms and actively post positive stories. Promote local love by wearing “I ♥ Clayton” t-shirts.

People like the idea of creating a community group to lobby various levels of government on behalf of Clayton residents. The Leadership program could be used more affectively to get people to volunteer. Residents want to see a more independent, self-sufficient Clayton by keeping activities local instead of traveling to other communities. They also want to promote the new Clayton Community Centre by involving the community (including youth) to come up with ideas for programs that will launch when it opens and actively promote new programs via social media.

When asked about what would make Clayton a nicer place to be, residents expressed a desire for more smoke-free, cell phone-free areas, additional year-round sports facilities, play-boxes in parks, making parks more youth-friendly and more useable year-round (with turf fields) and sidewalks throughout the community.

QUESTION 3

What is already great about living in Clayton?

People like that Clayton is in a central location, close to stores (Langley), highways and entertainment options. This sentiment is echoed by those who chose to move here from other parts of the Lower Mainland and beyond, as well as youth who have grown up here.

They like that there are lots of parks which are utilized to dog walking and strollers. The community feels like it has “breathing space”, that it is “very green”, and is walkable.

People feel that the community is clean, quiet, safe, and family oriented, reinforced by seeing young families in the public spaces. It’s the kind of place where you can ‘feel safe sleeping with your windows open’ or sending your kids outside to play with neighbours or on their own to a friends house. Several parents feel it reminiscent of how they grew up.

Youth feel like their school was a hub for their activity. There is more for young kids to do and they feel safe exploring the area (even at night). From their interactions with youth from neighbouring communities (through sports and volunteering), Clayton youth feel that their community has a ‘good reputation.’

People like the diverse nature of the community both in terms of age and economic strata. There is a feeling that this is a community where someone ‘can be different, and be accepted as different.’ People feel like Clayton is a place where you know your neighbors (“if you broke your leg you could ask a neighbor to go to the grocery store for you”).

People like that Clayton is a growing community – it is a “blank slate” and is open to all kinds of possibility. Clayton is a place to “create new opportunities”. Clayton could “influence the world”.

QUESTION 4

What are some of the challenges about living in Clayton?

There are challenges about living in Clayton but the community is also quick to provide possible solutions. The lack of overall infrastructure for such a dense and growing community echoed in almost all groups, this further adds to challenges with parking, transit, and the need to leave the community to access recreation, services and support.

People feel that parking is a huge issue with so many single homes being used for multiple rentals. Many people feel they do not want to leave their homes at night for fear they may lose their parking spots. The issue of parking is also highlighted in on-line and in-person confrontations between residents. Dog waste is also highlighted as significant a on-line issue.

Transit is a significant challenge as people need to leave the community to access recreation, arts and services. Often times people and youth in particular have to take three different buses to get to these services and that transit is infrequent in the neighbourhood.

A lack of community identity and connectedness to each other is a significant challenge for Clayton. People feel they don't always know their neighbours, and are either too busy to connect with each other or don't know the avenues to do so. Some people feel they don't have a central location to go to where they can meet people and build connections. People did report that the green space in Clayton during summer and warmer months is a great place to connect but once fall and winter people tend to stay indoors. There is general sentiment around the need for more Clayton community events.

The youth in Clayton feel they do not always have somewhere to go and hang out, making it difficult for them. Some youth use local businesses as a socialization place. Older adults also feel they too have nowhere to go to meet other older adults, socialize or connect and this leads to a sense of disconnection to the community.

Communication is a big challenge for Clayton. How do we get the word out about all the great things, community events, and ways to meet your neighbours? In relation to communication people feel there is a significant amount of negative discourse on-line on the Clayton Facebook pages, and perhaps a lack of willingness to get involved in participating positively in community life. Some youth feel they get a bad reputation on-line and "are painted with the same brush if a youth does something wrong".

Petty crime is a challenge and there is a perception that it is growing and getting worse. There was discussion about car break-ins and stolen household property. They are concerned that many of these crimes are not being reported to the police.

QUESTION 5

What is Clayton's community identity?

People identified the current Clayton community as very family oriented, someone said that Clayton was mostly "dogs and strollers". They reported that there is lots of green space and beautiful playgrounds. They felt though that most of the amenities were geared towards young families and aren't growing with the community as kids' age and with more families moving in. They described Clayton as "busy, dense, crowded lack of parking, amenities and some crime."

Some people felt that as a community Clayton was kind, polite, welcoming, clean and safe. While others reported that it was hard to get to know your neighbours and that many people in Clayton didn't know their neighbours.

People felt that Clayton was seen as a temporary place to live or a starter place for people wanting to get into the market with a condo or townhouse but not stay. One person said that "people are hesitant to put down roots here".

People did report that they felt some sense of community identity was being built but that it was happening in small places like townhome complexes or cul de sacs.

There was a general feeling that it was the same people showing up at all the community events and it is a challenge to get people out. People reported that the community events tend to be for one demographic, those families with young children. They also commented that the community embraces holidays like Halloween and Christmas and does a good job of showing their community spirit.

When asked about a future vision or aspirations for their community, people wanted Clayton to be a welcoming place where everyone feels at home. A place that welcomes everyone and where everyone feels at home. An active place with people interacting with each other all over the community. A place where kids are playing, youth are gathering and all people are coming out to socialize.

People talked about what they want more of for Clayton. They want more neighbourly warmth and connections. They want more intergenerational events and a signature event that makes Clayton unique from neighbouring communities. They want more events that include youth, single parents, grandparents and older adults.

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