

---

## CITY OF KELOWNA

### MEMORANDUM

---

**Date:** September 5, 2006  
**File No.:** 6430-05  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Director of Planning and Corporate Services  
**Subject:** Results of Regional Consultation and Actions for a Sustainable City  
REPORT PREPARED BY: KARLY HENNEY

---

#### RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the results of the 'FUTURE OK' 4-week regional public consultation on sustainability that ran from May 25 to June 25, 2006;

AND THAT Council endorse retaining the [www.futureok.ca](http://www.futureok.ca) website as a measure for continuing to engage regional stakeholders;

AND THAT Council direct staff to form a Sustainability Working Group to report back by February 2007 with a strategy for how to improve the sustainability of City actions.

#### BACKGROUND

At Council's Inaugural meeting on December 5, 2005, Mayor Shepherd announced the goal for our region to become a recognized leader in sustainability by 2008. The idea for a regional consultation evolved as a first step to a 'made in the Central Okanagan' approach. This spring, City staff teamed with consultants<sup>1</sup>, the Regional District, and community stakeholders to co-design and deliver a 4-week broad public consultation on sustainability.

The overall goal of the consultation was to develop a stronger mandate for action towards a sustainable Central Okanagan. Sub-objectives were to build public consensus, momentum, and a will for positive change for sustainability; then, to develop a community vision of sustainability to guide that momentum. A collaborative planning approach was used with local government staff, stakeholders and citizens co-designing the consultation - a process which builds capacity for future actions.

To deepen and broaden public support, multiple methods for citizens to participate were provided. The website [www.FUTURE OK.ca](http://www.FUTURE_OK.ca) was launched on May 25<sup>th</sup>, with an online poll that ran for four weeks. An all-day facilitated workshop called the Citizen's Forum on Sustainability was held on Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at the Grand Okanagan Hotel & Conference Centre.

---

<sup>1</sup> Holland Barrs Planning Group Inc., Wellspring Facilitation & Planning Inc. and the Insight Group.

## RESULTS

The project engaged approximately 1,900 people (120 citizens at the Citizen's Forum and the remainder online). Both the location of residence and the age ranges of participants match regional demographic information, which indicates the initiative was successful at reaching a broad range of citizens across the region.

### Summary of Findings

#### Online Poll

The online poll asked citizens to identify the top two aspects of the Central Okanagan they would like to sustain. Citizens overwhelmingly said 'green space' (23%), followed by 'water quality/quantity' (14%) and then, 'environment' (11%).

When asked what the top two things people see as negatively affecting Central Okanagan sustainability, the most frequent responses were 'transportation' (18%), 'development' (10%), and 'infrastructure' (7%).

Transportation-related responses were in the top five most frequently cited answers for both what people want to sustain and what is negatively affecting our sustainability, which indicates that this is a priority concern in the region. The poll also indicates there is strong support for local government taking action for sustainability. The challenge of ongoing community engagement is highlighted in the poll results by the fact that just less than half of poll respondents said they would like to continue to be involved in consultations and projects related to sustainability in the Central Okanagan.

#### Citizen's Forum

The facilitation technique used at the Forum is called 'World Café', which is a dialogue-based approach to linking small group conversations with large group discussion. The goal is to engage people in meaningful conversations in multiple small groups, which provides cross-fertilization of ideas and allows overall themes to emerge.

Five reoccurring topics for *what* citizens identified as priorities for sustainability were recorded from the process:

1. **Create clustered and complete communities** that are land efficient, mix uses so people can 'live, work and play' in proximity, and create communities that include diverse ages, incomes and ethnic backgrounds.
2. **Improve transportation** options and reduce reliance on single occupant vehicles.
3. **Provide more affordable housing** options.
4. **Strive for higher standards for development** in terms of 'greener' buildings and designs that enhance community.
5. **Foster clean / local / green business.**

Similarly, there were predominant themes for *how* citizens think sustainability should be implemented:

1. **Action!** More action overall for sustainability.

2. **Public education to develop a sustainability ethic.** Teach citizens about regional sustainability and how they can take action as individuals for positive change.
3. **More and meaningful public engagement.**
4. **More local government accountability.** Greater transparency for people to see the link between consultation results and government actions and assigning responsibility for greater accountability.

## DISCUSSION

The 'FUTURE OK' consultation can be described as a first step in a more coordinated and participatory approach to regional sustainability. Sustainability planning is a cyclical process that involves moving from consultation to reporting to actioning to monitoring in rotation. The region will advance more quickly toward sustainability the more participation in the process from local government, community groups, business and citizens.

The Regional Sustainability Committee has supported the consultant's short term recommendations to retain the FUTURE OK branding and the website for Okanagan Sustainability. The website will require resources to be an effective communication tool for consultation, reporting and monitoring on progress. The next step, regionally, is to develop a workplan for engaging regional stakeholders on the priority actions identified by FUTURE OK.

The City has supported regional sustainability by jointly initiating FUTURE OK. Another component for regional sustainability is for individual municipalities to undertake their own initiatives based on citizen priorities. The poll and the Forum both identified more local government involvement and accountability for sustainability as main concerns for residents.

The City has adopted many policies and programs which contain sustainable elements over the years. However, a comprehensive approach to enhance sustainability is lacking. This would include a definition and agreed principles to guide sustainable decisions, greater internal awareness of sustainability initiatives, and a process to systematically monitor and improve the City's progress towards community sustainability.

To investigate options for improving the sustainability of City actions and operations, the concept of a Sustainability Working Group emerged. This would be a 5 - 6 person interdepartmental team that would research and report back to Council on recommendations for creating a sustainable City. Specific tasks that the working group would carry out include:

- Identify a definition for a sustainable city applicable to Kelowna;
- Identify principles for sustainability to guide decisions and actions;
- Prepare an inventory of existing policies and initiatives that support sustainable principles and identify areas for improvement;
- Examine governance models and mandates for sustainability in other cities; and
- Make recommendations based on the review.

The Sustainability Working Group would aim to report back to Council by February 2007.

## CONCLUSION

The FUTURE OK broad public consultation identified citizens' priorities for creating a sustainable Central Okanagan. Without any prompts, the online poll identified green space, water, environment and transportation as issue areas for citizens. The Citizen's Forum

provided a further opportunity for meaningful conversations about issue areas which generated more complete ideas about sustainability. This is where citizens identified the importance to the community for transparency and accountability for local government.

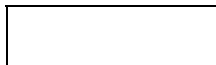
A regional strategy for engaging stakeholders is being prepared, which considers the timing of parallel community sustainability initiatives, including the Public Policy and the Environment Forum hosted by the North Okanagan Labour Council (September 15 & 16), the SustainAble Communities Conference (November 22 & 23), the Okanagan Partnership's 'Okanagan Quest' valley-wide visioning project, and ongoing work by the tri-district Okanagan Water Stewardship Council. Regionally, the City can support and utilize the FUTURE OK branding and website as a two-way communication and education tool for the community.

In response to FUTURE OK citizen feedback, the City can take its own actions toward sustainability. Many City policies and initiatives which include elements of sustainability already exist. However, incorporating sustainability into everyday actions and operations is not done in a comprehensive and coordinated way. Other jurisdictions including Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Toronto and UBC Vancouver have adopted a corporate sustainability ethic and mandate, including an internal governance framework to address long term social, environmental and economic consequences. A staff Sustainability Working Group can report back with recommendations for the City to advance sustainability and be a regional and national leader.

Signe K. Bagh, MCIP  
Manager, Policy/Research/Strategic Planning

KH/kh

Approved for inclusion



Mary Pynenburg, MRAIC, MCIP, B.Arch., M.PI

5.1 Director of Planning & Development Services, dated September 5, 2006 re:  
Results of Regional Consultation and Actions for a Sustainable City (6430-05)

Final Report available on Internet - [www.futureok.ca](http://www.futureok.ca)