



Regional Planning Committee Meeting Date: July 10, 2009

To: Regional Planning Committee

From: Christina DeMarco, Division Manager, Policy and Planning Department
David Hocking, Division Manager, Corporate Relations

Date: June 30, 2009

Subject: **Regional Growth Strategy Consultation Program Results**

Recommendation:

That the Board receive for information the report dated June 30, 2009, titled "Regional Growth Strategy Consultation Program Results".

1. PURPOSE

This report summarizes the consultation program and the input received on the Regional Growth Strategy.

2. CONTEXT

In February 2009, the Board released the Draft Regional Growth Strategy for public consultation. The Board requested that municipalities provide initial comments by April 8, 2009 and final comments by May 22, 2009. The public component of the process began on April 15, 2009 and finished by the end of May. Throughout April, May, June and July Metro Vancouver staff has had meetings with member municipal councils to discuss and resolve issues raised by those municipalities. If additional correspondence or submissions are received, staff will forward them to future committee meetings and continue to post them on the website.

At its June 4, 2009 Regional Planning Committee meeting, the committee received a report and presentation on preliminary outcomes of the public consultation process. The committee endorsed a recommendation for a report on the results of the public and municipal consultation, as well as an amended timetable for providing a new Regional Growth Strategy, and this recommendation was adopted by the Board at its June 26, 2009 meeting.

This report provides a summary of the activities undertaken for the consultation program, and an overview of the main themes. A separate report on the July Regional Planning Committee agenda provides all of the submissions, comments and notes collected during the consultation program. All materials are available on the Regional Growth Strategy webpage:

<http://www.metrovancover.org/PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT/STRATEGY/Pages/default.aspx>.

2.1 Overview of the Public Consultation Process

The objectives of the consultation and communication program were to:

- Foster public understanding of the purpose of a regional growth strategy and demonstrate how Metro Vancouver 2040 fits within Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Framework
- Discuss key regional policies and seek public comment.

A number of consultation activities were undertaken, including public meetings, and outreach to stakeholders, First Nations, municipalities and other "affected local governments".

Weekly consultation updates were distributed through existing Corporate Relations databases. External list serves for professional associations and organizations with an interest in planning issues as well as environmental and sustainability blogs were updated weekly. Event information emails were also forwarded to various community associations, business and special interest groups.

Public meetings

Twenty meetings for members of the public were organized. These included eight evening meetings held sub-regionally and three evening meetings at the request of individual municipalities, four regional forums, three breakfast meetings and two focus groups.

Meeting Locations (and Geographic Area Represented)	Date (2009)	Participants
Evening Meeting Vancouver (Vancouver)	April 22	38
Regional Forum Surrey (Surrey/Delta/White Rock)	April 23	47
Evening Meeting Maple Ridge (Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows)	April 29	70
Regional Forum Burnaby (Burnaby/New Westminster)	April 30	19
Evening Meeting White Rock (White Rock)	May 5	4
Breakfast Meeting Vancouver (Vancouver)	May 6	69
Evening Meeting Burnaby (Burnaby/New Westminster)	May 7	12
Breakfast Meeting North Vancouver (North Shore)	May 13	11
Evening Meeting Langley (Langley City and Township)	May 13	22
Evening Meeting Richmond (Richmond)	May 14	14
Evening Meeting Surrey (Surrey/Delta/White Rock)	May 19	9
Regional Forum Vancouver (Vancouver)	May 20	126
Evening Meeting North Vancouver (North Shore)	May 20	10
Evening Meeting Port Coquitlam (Northeast)	May 21	48
Focus Group (all areas represented)	May 25	49
Focus Group (all areas represented)	May 26	48
Evening Meeting Township of Langley (Township of Langley)	May 26	16
Breakfast Meeting Surrey (Surrey/Delta/White Rock)	May 27	16
Regional Forum West Vancouver (North Shore)	May 27	35
Evening Meeting District of North Vancouver (District of North Vancouver)	May 28	12

In addition to these meetings, New Westminister and Delta hosted their own public meetings.

Evening Meetings

The format for the eight sub-regional meetings was as follows:

- a ten-minute video which provided an overview and context for *Metro Vancouver 2040*;
- presentations on the draft Strategy's content and a review of municipal feedback structured according to three cross-cutting themes: Shaping the region, Supporting a sustainable economy and the Environment
- facilitated group discussions on each theme focused on specific policy proposals within the themes, followed by electronic voting on the level of agreement with the proposals
- presentation and discussion on governance options followed by electronic voting.

The municipal evening meetings followed the same format, but with a question and answer period replacing the facilitated group discussions because that approach was more appropriate for the smaller number of attendees. There were 255 people who attended the evening public meetings.

Regional Forums

Four regional forums were held, one each in the South of Fraser, the Central Northeast, the North Shore and Vancouver. These forums followed the format of Metro Vancouver's regular *Future of the Region Sustainability Dialogue* series. They were delivered in partnership with Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade throughout the region. Sessions were moderated by Peter Holt and Rafe Mair. Four panelists were invited to provide five minute presentations following the screening of the *Metro Vancouver 2040* video. Participants were then invited to engage in a dialogue with the panelists and each other, providing comments and asking questions. The panelists were:

- Rob Barrs, Principal, HB Lanarc Consultants Ltd.
- Gordon Price, Director, SFU City Program
- Gordon Houston, Captain, and formerly President and CEO of the Vancouver Port Authority
- Michael Geller, President, The Geller Group
- Michael Goldberg, Professor and Dean Emeritus, Sauder School of Business, UBC.

Panelists were invited to critique *Metro Vancouver 2040* from their various areas of expertise. They provided additional recommendations and thoughtful considerations for participants to explore further throughout the session. Attendance at the regional forums was 227 participants.

Breakfast Meetings

Metro Vancouver's *Sustainability Community Breakfasts* are a series of Vancouver-based monthly meetings in support of the Sustainable Region Initiative. One of the regularly scheduled sessions was devoted to supporting the consultation on *Metro Vancouver 2040*, and two additional breakfasts were held on the North Shore and in Surrey.

The format for the breakfasts was similar to that for the evening meetings, though slightly compressed to take into account the early morning schedules of attendees. The agenda included all of the elements of the sub-regional evening sessions except that the facilitated discussions were replaced by a question and answer period, and the expression of opinion on the draft Strategy was through feedback forms. There was an electronic voting system for the governance question only. The three breakfasts were attended by 96 people.

Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus groups was to address concerns that participants of public consultation meetings may not accurately represent the broad public, since attendees are self-selecting, and may over-represent those who have specific interests. To correct for this potential bias, the focus groups were recruited using techniques that generate a random group of individuals that approximately represent the demographic and geographic structure of the region.

The content of the focus groups was identical to the evening public meetings so that the results of the voting from the two types of meetings could be compared. The focus groups sessions were attended by 97 people.

Web

The Public Consultation Series was highlighted on the Metro Vancouver Home page in the "What's New" section. From the Home page visitors could click once and enter the Public Consultations page. On this page they could pull down a full schedule of meetings, register, submit feedback, view a printable PDF of the Regional Growth Strategy Brochure, or link to the detailed Regional Growth Strategy page.

Advertising

Print

A weekly print advertising campaign began the week of March 26, 2009, with the placement of full page ads in the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province* advertising the *Deciding Our Future Spring Series* which included the dates and venues of public consultations for the Regional Growth Strategy, Zero Waste Challenge and Liquid Waste Management. Sub-regional meeting notices were placed in each of the Community newspaper groups – Vannet and Black Press. Two ads were placed in *24 Hours* – one full page back cover and another inside half page. Ads have run in the regional Ethnic newspapers – *Ming Pao*, *Tsing Tao* and *Epoch Times*.

The Regional Growth Strategy's first meeting coincided with this year's Earth Day, April 22, and an ad was placed in the *Vancouver Sun's* two-part "Green Living" supplement highlighting the event. Electronic banners were purchased on *Georgia Straight.com* April 20-May 4 and May 11-25. An electronic banner was purchased for the Earth Day newsletter to subscribers of the *Business in Vancouver's Green Living Magazine*.

Radio

April 23 - A series of Public Service Announcements (PSA) ran on CBC Radio 1.

April 28-30 - A series of 15-second ads ran on CKNW morning and afternoon drive times.

May 5 - CBC PSA.

May 6-7 - A series of 15-second ads ran on CKNW morning and afternoon drive times.

May 12-14 - A series of 15-second ads ran on CKNW morning and afternoon drive.

May 18 - May 21 - A series of 30-second ads News 1130.

Earned Media

Media Advisories were sent out to all print, radio and television media in advance of all Metro Vancouver 2040 public consultation meetings, to encourage media to cover the meetings or request interviews with Metro Vancouver spokespersons. Since March, there have been more than 30 published stories about the draft growth strategy in *Canwest* and *Black Press* chain community newspapers and in the *Vancouver Sun*.

Major stories included:

- April 21 - CKNW live interview and phone-in calls with Regional Planning Committee Chair Derek Corrigan and CAO Johnny Carline (Thirty-minute segment on CKNW's Bill Good Show).
- April 23 – CBC AM live interview and phone-in calls with Regional Planning Vice-Chair Darrell Mussatto and Metro Vancouver CAO Johnny Carline (Sixty-minute segment on CBC's Almanac Show).
- June 11-18 – *Georgia Straight* full page story by Charlie Smith.

Consultation with Municipalities

In February, Metro Vancouver forwarded the draft Regional Growth Strategy to all member municipalities, invited them to provide key issue comments by April 8, 2009 for inclusion in the consultation process, and more detailed comments by May 22, 2009. Metro Vancouver staff also offered to attend municipal council meetings to provide a presentation, answer questions and receive comments on the regional growth strategy. Submissions were received by all municipalities by the April deadline. As of the date of this report, ten municipalities provided letters or reports with additional detailed comments. In addition to receiving input, Metro Vancouver staff has attended several municipal council meetings to discuss issues in detail and these meetings will continue through July.

The full submissions are available on the website. A very considerable amount of time was spent by all member municipalities in preparing and deliberating on their submission. The municipal submissions fully document the areas of support, comment and concerns. Much of the overall vision, goals and strategies of the draft are supported. However there were several areas of concern as identified in the section below.

Consultation with other “affected local governments”

The *Local Government Act* requires that the regional growth strategy be forwarded to “affected local governments” for acceptance. In Metro Vancouver’s case, in addition to the member municipalities, the regional growth strategy must also be accepted by the two adjacent regional districts of Squamish-Lillooet, and the Fraser Valley, and by the TransLink Board. The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District reviewed the draft; they indicated support for the policies outlined in the draft strategy and also indicated that they wish to continue to participate in the development of the strategy. The Fraser Valley Regional District also responded and provided support for a number of areas of the strategy, however, they also commented on a number of areas that they wished to see included in a revised draft of the Regional Growth Strategy. TransLink’s submission noted the linkages with their long-range transportation plan, indicated general support for the draft strategy and expressed a willingness for staff to continue to work together to ensure the draft strategy and TransLink’s plans reflect the mandate of each agency.

Consultation with First Nations

First Nations were given the opportunity to participate in the consultation process according the Metro Vancouver Board approved three-step process. Letters were sent to all affected First Nations, with follow up telephone calls and then registered letters. No comments have been received to date.

Consultation with Groups, Organizations and Agencies

The draft Regional Growth Strategy was forwarded to regionally-based groups, organizations and agencies. Metro Vancouver received submissions from 28 groups. The submissions reflected the mandate of the organizations which submitted them, and also provided a number of suggestions to improve the plan. These suggestions will be considered by staff when developing the next version of the draft strategy.

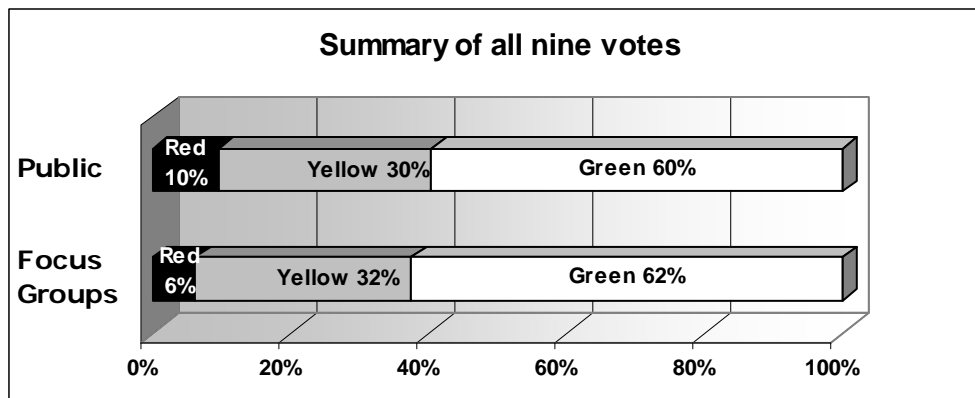
2.2 Results of the Public Consultation Program

As described above, the public meetings were organized by themes, and the discussion was structured around questions related to the theme. Participants were asked to vote electronically as to whether they supported the concepts outlined in each theme. The participants were asked to vote in the following manner:

- Red: Indicates “Stop. Do not proceed with this proposal”
- Yellow: Indicates “Proceed, but I have additional comments/concerns/questions”
- Green: Indicates “Go ahead – support for this proposal”.

The use of colour signals was meant to provide an indication of the level of support for the various proposals and the questions were designed to stimulate discussion and debate at the public meetings.

The results of the voting at the public meetings and at the focus groups are very similar. Taking the aggregate of the votes from the subject matter questions (e.g. urban containment, agriculture, housing, etc.), there is clear support for the directions of the strategy, with approximately 60% of people indicating that Metro Vancouver “go ahead” with the proposals. About 10% of the public voted “Red” for the proposals, which was slightly higher than the focus groups. This can be explained by the self-selecting nature of those who attended the public meetings. The results of the voting for the public meetings and the focus groups are provided below. A full list of the comments made by participants at the public meetings can be found on the website.



There are three themes that emerge from reviewing the results of the public meetings, and reviewing the comments submitted by the municipalities:

1. Urban Containment Boundary/Agriculture/Rural

The public supported the Urban Containment Boundary and the need to protect agricultural lands at the regional level. The municipalities expressed support for both of these concepts as well, but noted concerns with the amendment process for lands within the Agriculture area, which require both Agricultural Land Commission review and Metro Vancouver Board review. There was support for the rural designation as long as municipalities could determine the nature of rural residential development.

2. Employment Distribution Policies

The public overwhelmingly supported the protection of industrial lands for industrial purposes, and also showed supported directing commercial uses to Urban Centres, and discouraging major commercial development outside of Urban Centres. However, these issues raised the most objections from municipal members. Potential “interference” in a member municipalities’ ability to attract new jobs and tax base is the main reason for objections to the proposed policies. Almost all municipalities supported the need to protect industrial land, but most did not agree with the proposed implementation.

Many municipalities suggested that industrial lands be identified as a “reference only” in the Strategy and recommended implementation remain at the local level.

There are concerns about seeking Board consent for amendments to industrial area boundaries as well as concerns about the impact of the proposals on existing zoning rights. Others suggest that the term “industrial” be expanded to “employment” to allow municipalities more latitude in the location of economic activities. Others suggested that the definition of industrial need only minor adjustment to be acceptable.

The clarity of proposals on the present and future role of the Industrial/Commercial areas is mentioned by several municipalities. Some suggestions are made that high density development should take precedent over industrial uses where rapid transit stations are located in industrial areas.

It was also noted that the Strategy did not identify new sources of industrial land supply and that more could be done to intensify the use of existing industrial land. The challenge for the revised Strategy is to craft a solution that continues to make best use of industrial areas, promote jobs in accessible locations across the region and also advance all other regional goals of a transit-oriented, compact region.

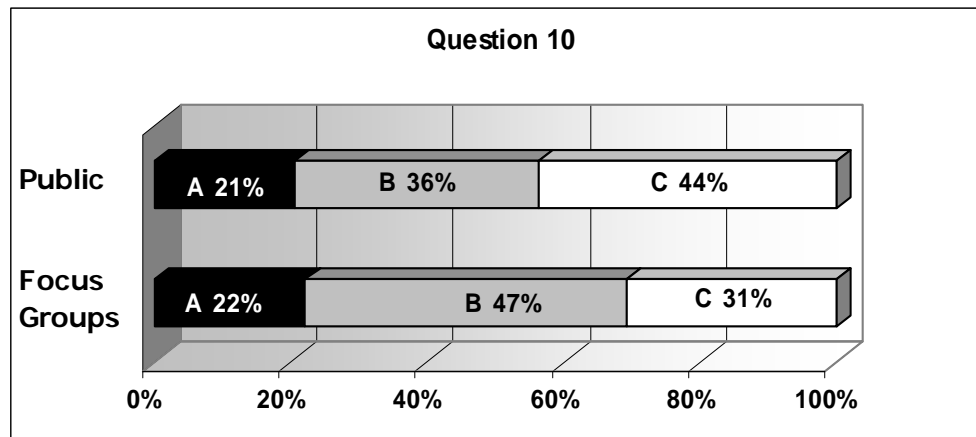
3. Plan Implementation

The public and focus groups were also asked to indicate their level of support with respect to implementation of the strategy. Both the public and the focus groups indicated about the same level of support for option A, the goals-based plan, approximately 20%. About 36% of the public chose option B, and 44% chose option C. The focus group results were slightly different; with more choosing option B (47%) than C (31%). These results indicate that both groups reject a “vision and goals only” plan, with about 80% preferring a stronger regional strategy.

Many municipalities indicated that in general, they have concerns about the regulatory nature of the draft strategy and Board involvement in land use matters. The amendment process proposed in the draft would add time to the development process, where changes would affect regional interests defined in the Plan. Municipalities also commented that the requirements for Regional Context Statements were too numerous. It was evident in many of the submissions that the amending formulas for changing land uses were not well

understood by all municipalities. The subsequent discussions with individual municipalities have clarified the process. In some cases, this has resulted in more support for the proposed implementation mechanisms.

Question: What level of authority is needed to achieve these goals?



- A. Set out a **vision** and **goals** for regional development but municipalities can interpret the vision as they wish.
- B. Set out a **vision** and **goals, guidelines** on how to achieve the goals, and **some regionally defined boundaries**. Municipalities *can interpret some* policies, but must comply with others subject to Metro Vancouver acceptance.
- C. Set out a **vision** and **goals, policies** on how to achieve the goals and **regionally defined boundaries**. Municipal plans are *required to comply* subject to dispute resolution as set out in the *Local Government Act*.

2.5 Next Steps

At the Board meeting of June 26, 2009, the Board approved a revised process and timeline for completing a new draft of the Regional Growth Strategy. Staff will prepare a revised Draft Regional Growth Strategy for committee review in the early fall. The draft will be developed through review of the submissions, and through continued discussions with municipal councils and staff, and other stakeholders. Once a draft is complete, it will be forwarded to the Regional Administrative Advisory Committee (RAAC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for comment. It will then be forwarded to the Regional Planning Committee for consideration and the Metro Vancouver Board.

3. ALTERNATIVES

None presented.

4. CONCLUSION

This report outlines the consultation process undertaken for the draft Regional Growth Strategy, and summarizes the key results of the input. Through this process, feedback was received from member municipalities, adjacent regional districts, non-profit groups, business organizations, community groups and other governments and their agencies. There was also an extensive public outreach component.

Overall support in principle for the goals and strategies is clear from municipalities and the public and government agencies. However, there are three areas where there is divergent opinion and that require further discussion and policy work between Metro Vancouver and member municipalities. The first is the issue of amendments for the Urban Containment Boundary and the Agriculture area. The second is the issue of employment distribution policies and the location of commercial and industrial development. The third area is of implementation, with the public favouring strong implementation mechanism while many municipalities express concern about intrusions in municipal land use planning authority. The Board will need to weigh the pros and cons of the different styles of regional planning implementation and determine how best regional goals can be secured, while recognizing the benefits and trade-offs at the municipal level.

Staff has indicated a number of areas where adjustments to the Draft Strategy could be made. Staff will continue to visit meet with member municipalities, review the input and bring forward a revised draft Regional Growth Strategy in the fall of 2009.

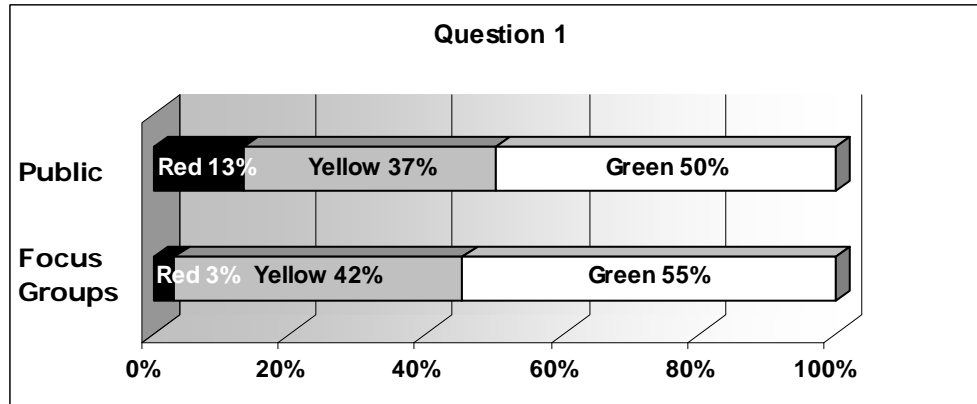
ATTACHMENT

Results of Electronic Voting at Public Meetings and Focus Groups (eRIM doc. #004946575).

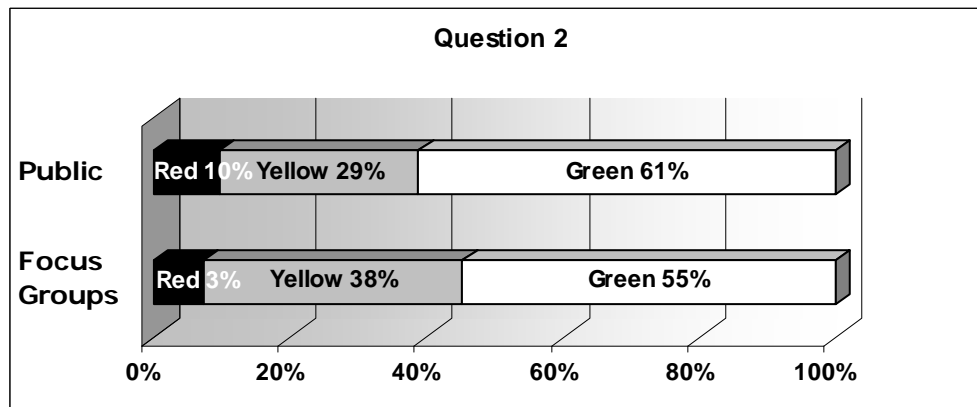
5.2 ATTACHMENT

Results of Electronic Voting at Public Meetings and Focus Groups

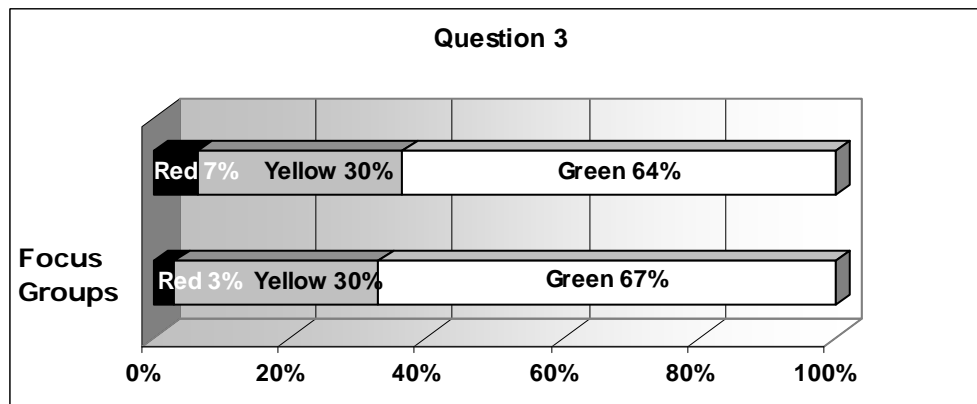
Question 1: Do you support the establishment of an Urban Containment Boundary?



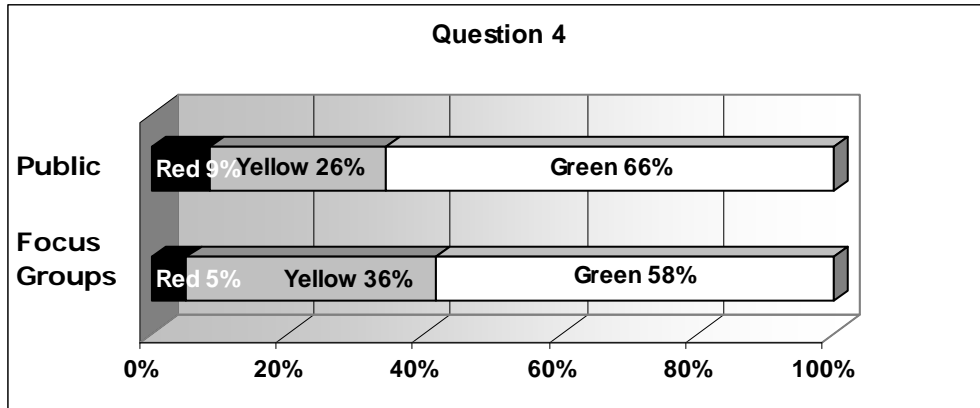
Question 2: Do you support focusing housing and job growth within Urban Centres and along Transit Corridors?



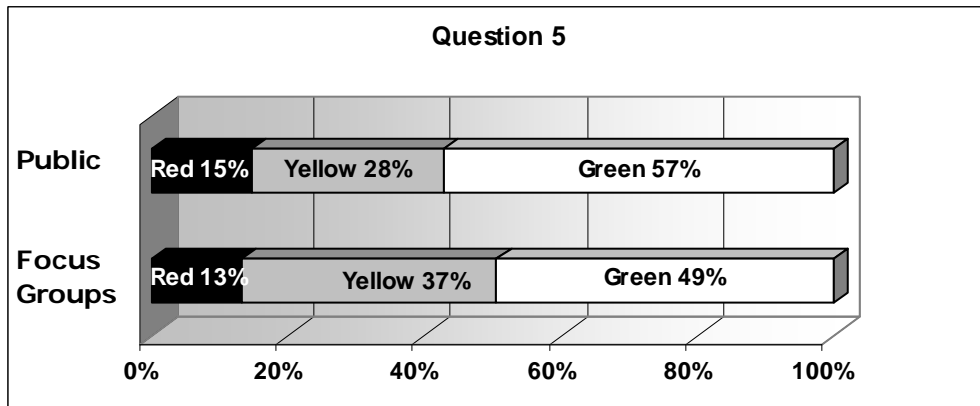
Question 3: Do you support encouraging housing diversity and affordability?



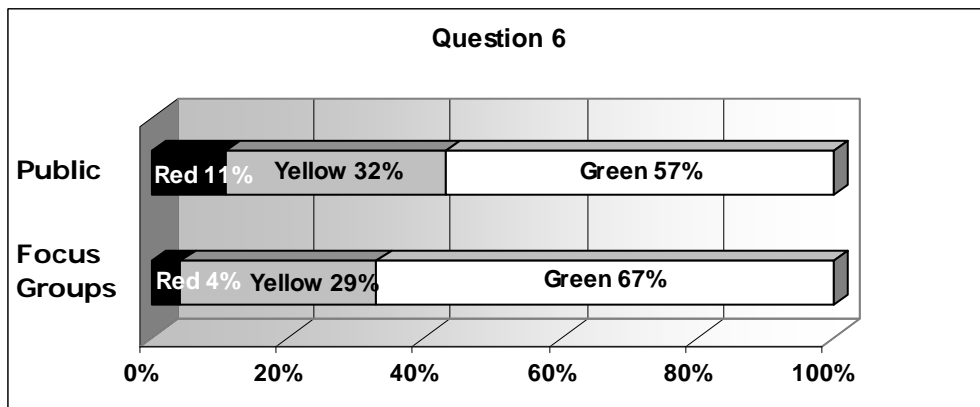
Question 4: Do you support the connection of land use and transportation – reducing vehicle use and shifting more trips to transit, cycling and walking?



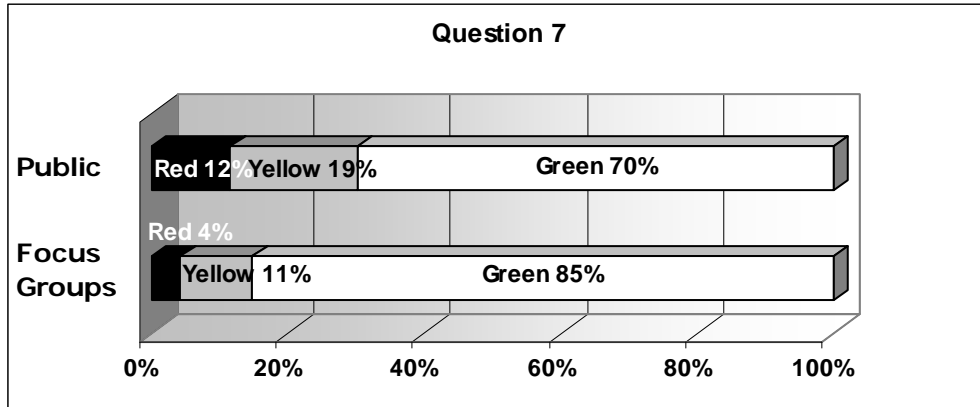
Question 5: Do you support encouraging commercial uses in Centres and discouraging major office/retail employment generators outside of centres and transit corridors?



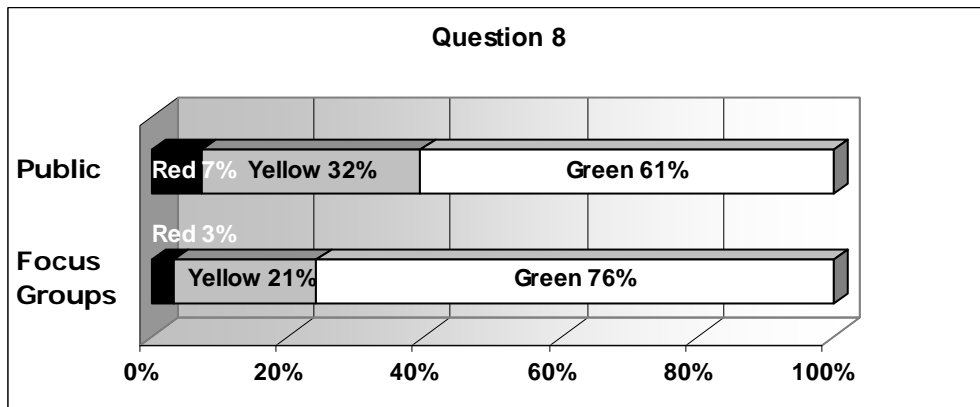
Question 6: Do you support the protection of Industrial lands for production, distribution and repair uses, and discourage conversion of these lands for office/retail and other non-industrial uses?



Question 7: Do you support the protection of agricultural lands through a regional designation and encourage active farming?



Question 8: Do you support protecting natural assets primarily through a regional Conservation/Recreation designation?



Question 9: Do you support reducing greenhouse gas emissions by focusing growth in centres and transit corridors?

