

# Coquitlam

# For Committee

June 17, 2020

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To: City Manager

From: General Manager Engineering and Public Works

Subject: **Strategic Environmental Sustainability Plan Update – Internal Review and Public Consultation Results**

For: **Regular Strategic Priorities Standing Committee**

**Recommendation:**

That the Committee receive the report of the General Manager Engineering and Public Works dated June 17, 2020 entitled "*Strategic Environmental Sustainability Plan Update – Internal Review and Public Consultation Results*" for information.

**Report Purpose:**

This report presents an update on the process to develop the City's strategic Environmental Sustainability Plan, including a summary of work undertaken to date and an outline of the next steps in the process.

**Strategic Goal:**

The information discussed in this report supports the City's corporate strategic goal of '*Sustainable Services, Environment and Infrastructure*' and is an "A" priority in the 2020 Business Plan.

**Executive Summary:**

This report provides an update to the Committee on the development of the Environmental Sustainability Plan (ESP), which is intended to incorporate the City's various environmental goals and objectives into a cohesive strategy to help guide future decisions and support the long-term environmental resiliency of the community. The report describes the five themes included in the ESP and summarizes the results obtained through the internal feedback and public consultation processes. The report also highlights the upcoming stages in the process needed to complete the ESP.

POS

**Background:**

The idea to develop an environmental strategic plan was raised at the November 28, 2017 meeting of the City's Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC) during a discussion about the City's community and neighbourhood planning processes and the various plans that support these processes. Staff subsequently recommended developing a strategic ESP, which was endorsed by Council on February 25, 2019 as a "B" priority in the 2019 Corporate Business Plan and has since been elevated to an "A" priority for 2020.

On July 15, 2019 staff brought forward a report to Council which described the purpose, the proposed key theme areas and details of the approach to be undertaken by staff to develop the ESP. Since then, staff has completed an internal review process aimed at collating existing baseline information and identifying emerging trends and ideas, as well as conducting a series of public consultation sessions and an online survey.

**Discussion/Analysis:**

The City has implemented a wide variety of environmental initiatives across many departments and is a recognized leader in a number of areas. The purpose of the ESP is to incorporate the City's various environmental goals and objectives, and supporting programs and policies, into a single cohesive strategy that will provide a clear and flexible framework to help guide future decisions and ensure the long-term environmental resiliency and sustainability of the community.

During the internal review process, over 40 staff from across all City departments were engaged in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) exercise to help confirm the key themes for the ESP and to identify the City's current status in relation to these themes. The review process also included an inter-municipal survey to help gather information on the environmental planning and programs of four other similar municipalities within the Lower Mainland region. The information has been summarized and will be reviewed and used in conjunction with future phases of the project.

**Results of Internal Consultation**

**1. Themes & Structure**

During the internal staff workshops, participants shared their views on the proposed themes and structure for the ESP. The themes include: 1) Climate Action; 2) Built Environment; 3) Natural Areas, Wildlife and Habitat;

4) Water Management; and 5) Waste Management. Staff agreed the identified themes included areas of key focus for the ESP. A summary of the feedback received on the scope of the five themes is included in Attachment 1.

For all theme areas, staff identified the need to:

- a) improve tracking, monitoring and reporting of key performance indicators/targets/goals;
- b) strengthen operational consistencies across departments through alignment and coordination of related policies, strategies, plans, and regulations;
- c) collaborate across departments to implement initiatives and achieve goals;
- d) improve public and stakeholder education/outreach; and
- e) enhance inter-governmental collaboration.

## ***2. Inter-municipal Interviews – lessons learned***

The consultant team gathered information from four neighbouring municipalities to help the City better understand and learn from other municipalities in the Metro Vancouver Region who have engaged in similar strategic environmental sustainability planning processes. Key staff at the City of Surrey, City of New Westminster, District of North Vancouver and the City of Richmond were interviewed to seek their insights into the ESP process. Staff from these municipalities consistently identified the following as critical success factors:

- a) Obtaining public and broad stakeholder support for identifying and building on existing and planned strengths and assets;
- b) Setting clear goals and objectives for effective engagement, education and outreach;
- c) Developing implementable plans and policies from the outset which are outcomes or results-based; and
- d) Committing to integrate and align the ESP with existing plans, regulations and policies.

A more extensive summary of the feedback received through the inter-municipal interview process is included in Attachment 2.

### **3. Internal document review**

Staff have also reviewed a large number of existing City plans, strategies, bylaws and other documents (e.g. City Strategic Plan, Youth Strategy, PRC Master Plan, Transit-Oriented Development Strategy, Strategic Transportation Plan and Tourism Strategy) and found that many environmentally sustainable practices and policies are already firmly embedded in much of what the City currently does. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), targets, metrics, action steps and recommendations have already been identified and included in many of these documents. These elements will be compiled and reviewed by the project support team to confirm their continued relevance for inclusion into the draft ESP.

## **Public Consultation**

### **1. Consultation process**

The public consultation was held throughout October and November 2019 and was designed to reach a wide and diverse range of respondents using varied engagement methods. Staff used in-person outreach, traditional media, and social media including, but not limited to: print ads in the Tri-City News; posters throughout the community and at civic facilities; a project webpage ([letstalkcoquitlam.ca](http://letstalkcoquitlam.ca)); a YouTube video; an on-line survey; and Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The project webpage has now seen over 6500 page visits and the YouTube video has had over 350 views.

A total of 16 in-person consultation sessions were held that included seeking input from all of the City's advisory committees, two high schools, the Urban Development Institute, the Coquitlam Youth Council, the Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable and through pop-up events held at Poirier Sports and Leisure Centre, Salmon Come Home, Dogwood Pavilion, and the City Centre Library. During these sessions, attendees participated in a dot-mocracy exercise and were also asked to complete an on-line survey.

### **2. Survey results**

The response to the on-line survey was significant with over 1100 completed surveys and over 3400 comments. The survey included four questions and the responses from the public provided very detailed feedback to staff. Participants ranked the level of importance for 13 environmental topic areas (related to the five broader themes). Attachment 3 shows the rating of these topic areas with "waste management", "fish, wildlife, and habitat" and "watercourse protection" topping the list.

The second question asked participants to narrow their focus and prioritize only three topics the City should focus on. The top three choices from this exercise included: “sustainable transportation”, “greenhouse gas reduction” and “waste management”, as shown in Attachment 3.

Participants were also asked for one idea of how the City could advance each of their top three chosen topic areas and, further, how the City could help them achieve an environmentally sustainable lifestyle. These two free-form questions generated over 3,400 responses. Staff have aggregated and analyzed these responses and grouped them under each of the five project themes. The discussion below and Attachment 3 highlight the predominant, recurring comments and ideas staff received from the public.

#### **Climate Action**

Commonly recurring ideas included reducing greenhouse gases through sustainable transportation initiatives (electric vehicles, pedestrian/cycling infrastructure), considering alternative energy sources such as solar power and providing incentives to support climate action.

#### **Built Environment**

Participants identified sustainable transportation initiatives, including enhanced public transit routes and pedestrian/cycling infrastructure, as examples of the type of initiatives which would enhance sustainability in the built environment. Other suggestions included incentives to promote energy efficiency in new buildings and retrofits of existing buildings.

#### **Natural Areas, Wildlife and Habitat**

Many ideas were offered in support of enhanced development requirements for the protection of natural areas, tree retention and replacement requirements, as well as increased tree planting incentives for public and private properties.

#### **Water Management**

Participants supported the conservation of drinking water through increased enforcement of watering restrictions and improved education promoting water conservation. Concern regarding development near riparian areas and support for more enforcement and requirements related

to development near watercourses were also represented among the top ideas under this theme.

### **Waste Management**

Expansion of both curbside and depot recycling services, improvement to waste management operations, and more education/support for residents to manage their waste sustainably were the predominant ideas under this theme. Banning or limiting use of single-use plastics was also a recurring comment.

In terms of how the City could help participants achieve an environmentally sustainable lifestyle, the top responses including increasing and enhancing sustainable transportation options, providing a wider variety of options for recycling and reduction of single use plastics, and more education, communication and promotion (Attachment 3).

### **3. Demographic information**

Demographic information was collected during the survey and included postal code information, connection to Coquitlam, and age range. The choice of venues for the public consultation was designed to attract a wide range of age groups from across the City. Based on the postal code information provided by the participants, Attachment 3 shows that all areas of Coquitlam were represented in the survey. Staff compared the responses of the various age classes to the level of importance each group attributed to the topics and found a high degree of consistency existed across all age groups.

### **Next Steps**

The next stage of the ESP will be drafted starting in T3 2020 based on the results of the internal review, public consultation and feedback from Council. Staff will also provide an update to the Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Committee this fall.

The draft ESP will go through a second round of public consultation in early 2021 to gauge the level of public support for the draft Plan and to identify potential areas for refinement. Staff also intend to seek a third-party professional peer review of the draft ESP to confirm the plan includes the best practices and policies in environmental sustainability planning. After taking the results of the external peer review into account, staff then plan to

bring the draft ESP to Council for feedback in early 2021 with a final draft for Council's consideration in T2 2021.

**Financial Implications:**

Funding in the amount of \$150,000 was initially approved by Council as part of the 2019 budget process and approximately \$105,000 remains in the budget and is available to complete the project.

**Conclusion:**

The purpose of the City's Environmental Sustainability Plan is to incorporate the City's various environmental goals and objectives, and supporting programs and policies, into a single cohesive strategy that will provide a clear and flexible framework to help guide future decisions and ensure the long term resiliency and sustainability of the community.

This report provides a summary of the results of the internal review and public consultation processes undertaken to date, and outlines the next steps in the process to complete a comprehensive environmental sustainability plan for the City.



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Jaime Boan, P.Eng.

**Attachments:**

- 1: Summary Results – Theme Names & Structure
- 2: Summary Results – Inter-Municipal Interviews
3. Summary Results – Public Consultation Survey
4. PowerPoint Presentation: Strategic Environmental Sustainability Plan

This report was written by Caresse Selk, Environmental Project Manager and reviewed by Verne Kucy, Acting Manager Environmental Services.

### **Summary Results – Theme Names & Structure**

During the Internal Strategic Planning workshops, participants were invited to share input on the proposed five themes and the structure for the ESP. Overall, staff identified they generally supported all theme areas with the following suggestions subsequently summarized and considered by the Project Support Team.

**1. Ensure theme names are clear and understandable to the public. Include clear definitions and descriptions for each theme**

*The Project Support Team considered the two suggestions and concurred that adding descriptions and explanations was advised, along with sub topic areas for additional clarity.*

**2. Make Climate Action an overarching theme**

*The Project Support Team considered this suggestion and noting there is cross over among many theme areas (other examples include water, wildlife, waste, etc.), elected to maintain Climate Action as a distinct theme.*

**3. Split Built Environment into two themes - Buildings and Transportation**

*As the City already has official plans that cover the topics of buildings and transportation in depth, and this is not the intended focus of the ESP, the Project Support Team elected to maintain “buildings” and “transportation” as sub topic areas within the Built Environment theme.*

**4. Include “Parks” under Natural Areas, Wildlife and Habitat**

*The Project Support Team considered this suggestion and agreed that “parks and green spaces” should be a sub topic of the Natural Areas, Wildlife and Habitat theme.*

**5. Include liquid sanitary waste within the Waste Management theme.**

*The Project Support Team considered this suggestion; however, noted this would be out of scope for the Waste Management theme, which is intended to focus on solid waste and the related sub topic areas of reducing, reusing and recycling. As we develop the plan, liquid sanitary waste will be included in the Water Management theme and more information on liquid waste management will be collected including the public sentiment.*



### **Summary Results – Inter-Municipal Interviews**

The following list provides a summary of lessons learned from four other local municipalities that have undertaken strategic environmental sustainability planning.

- Support from residents, community groups, non-profit organizations, educational institutions and businesses is critical to developing and implementing environmental plans and policies;
- Develop a comprehensive Communications and Engagement Plan to help set clear goals and objectives for effective engagement and use a range of methods to reach people online and in-person;
- Work with community groups to identify, inventory and build on current strengths and assets (such as organizations, facilities, programs and services);
- Invest in public education and outreach, in particular with diverse community groups, to keep people informed and supportive of change;
- Provide regular planning and implementation updates, evaluations and reports throughout the process;
- Form inter-disciplinary working groups with diverse knowledge, technical expertise, skills and capacity to help develop implementation strategies;
- Develop strategic partnerships with senior levels of government and non-profit organizations;
- Educate and engage internal departments on the Plan through formal working groups, networks and regular meetings and communication;
- Integrate and align the Plan with existing plans, regulations and policies;
- Develop a Plan with implementable policies from the outset that are outcomes or results-based;
- Establish monitoring and evaluation triggers to help monitor, evaluate and report out on implementation;
- Ensure staff capacity and shared commitment across all departments to implement the Plan; and
- Allow sufficient time for a process that integrates research with public and stakeholder engagement

## **Results Summary – Public Consultation Survey**

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### **Background**

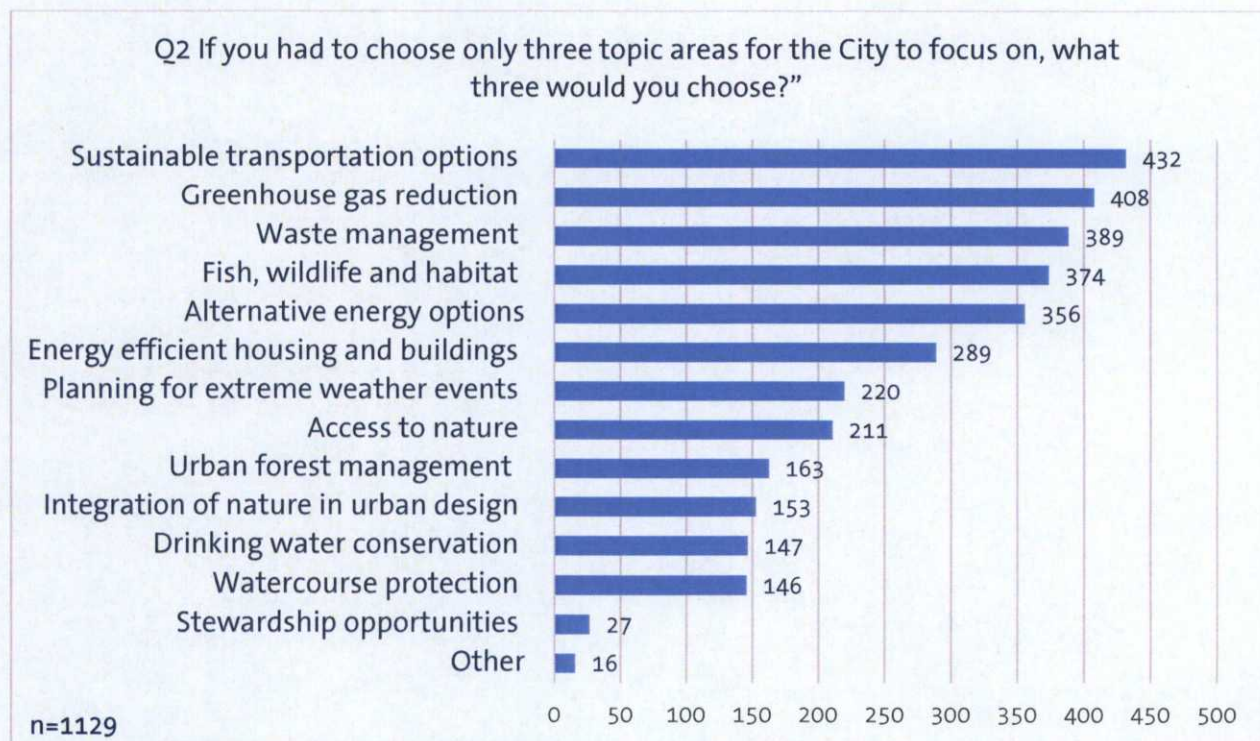
As part of the development of the strategic Environmental Sustainability Plan (ESP) a public consultation phase was undertaken through October and November 2019. An on-line survey was conducted as part of this process with the purpose of introducing the five project themes to the public and gathering input to guide the development of the ESP. 1129 participants completed the online survey and provided 3435 comments.

The survey included the following four questions;

1. To you, how important are each of the following topic areas?
2. If you had to choose only three topic areas for the City to focus on, what three would you choose?
3. Please provide us with one idea of how the City could advance \_\_\_\_\_  
(The survey asked for one idea for each of the three topics selected in question 2)
4. How can the City help you live a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle?

The survey also collected demographic information including age range, postal code, and connection to Coquitlam (live, work and/or play).

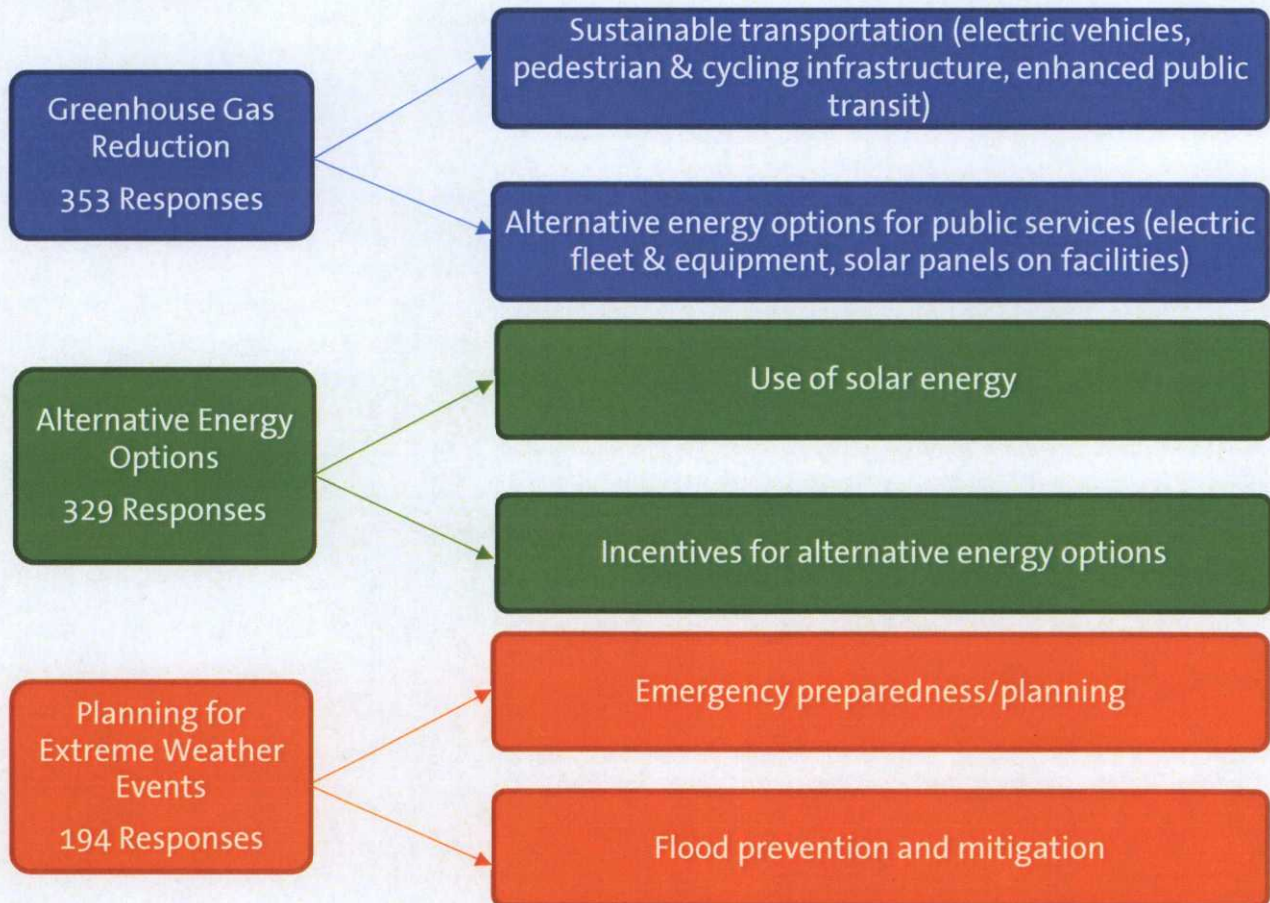
## Survey Results



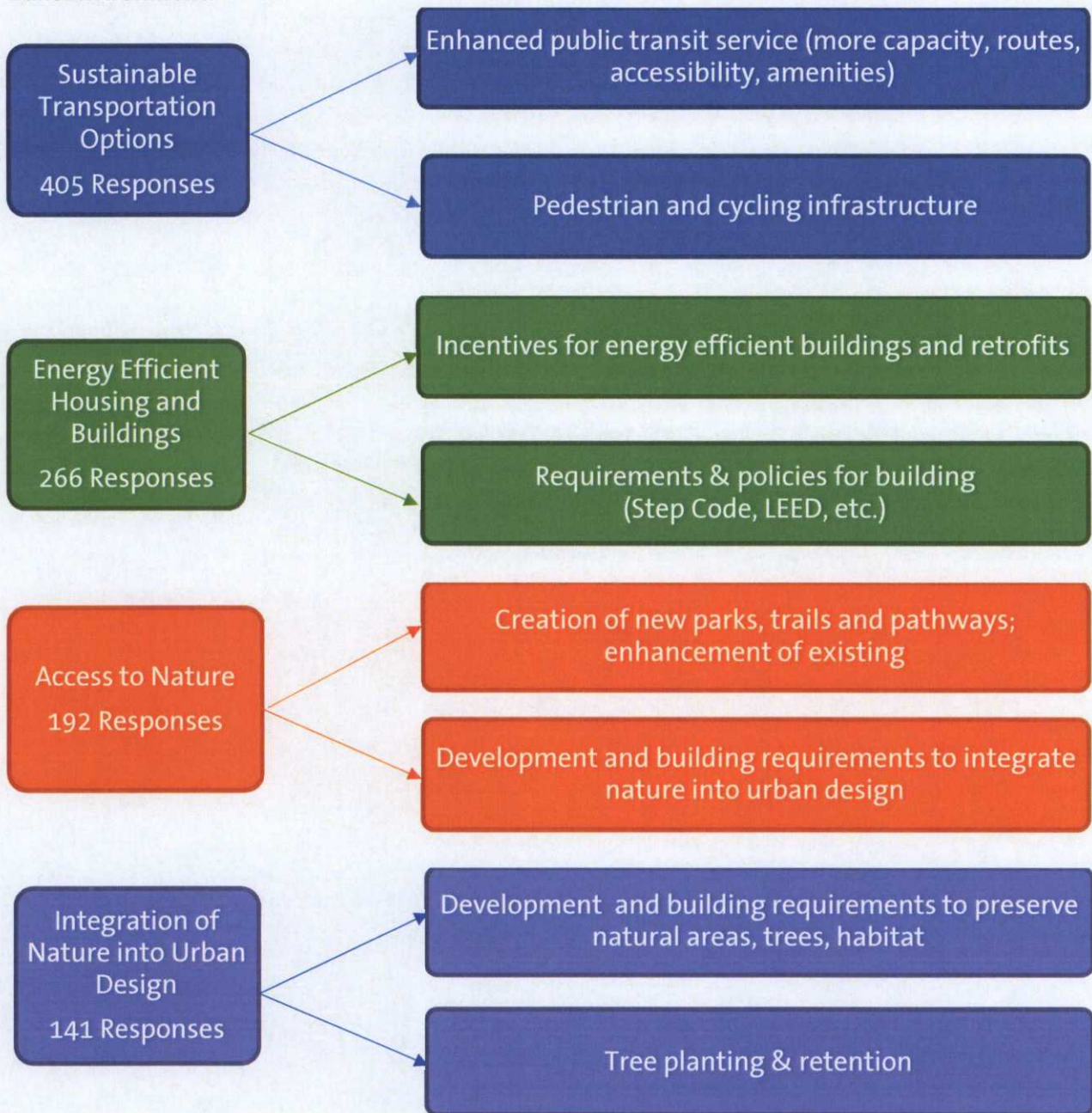


Q3 - The third question prompted participants to provide one idea of how the City could advance each of the three environmental topic areas previously selected in question two. There were 3062 responses provided in this section of the survey. Predominant and recurring feedback for each of the five themes of the ESP are summarized below:

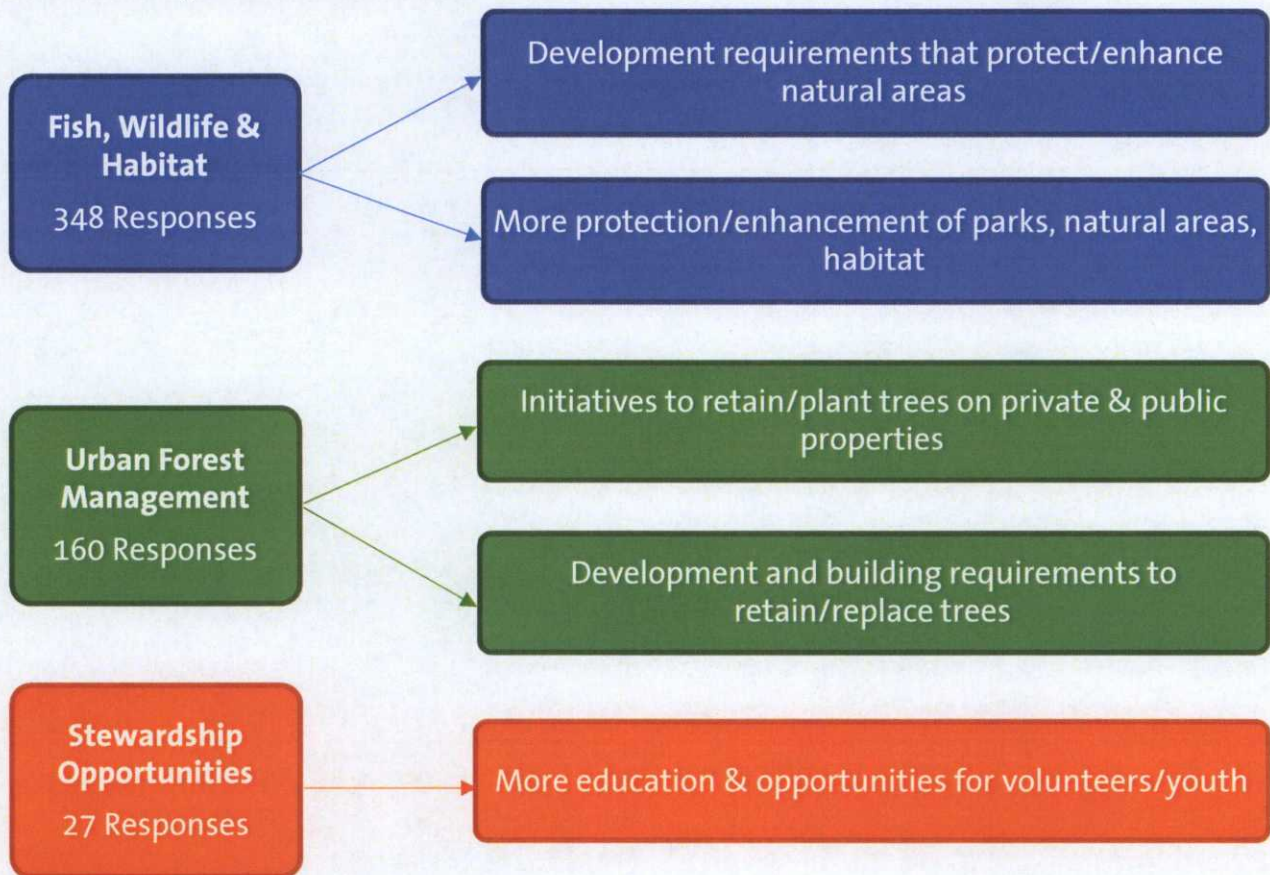
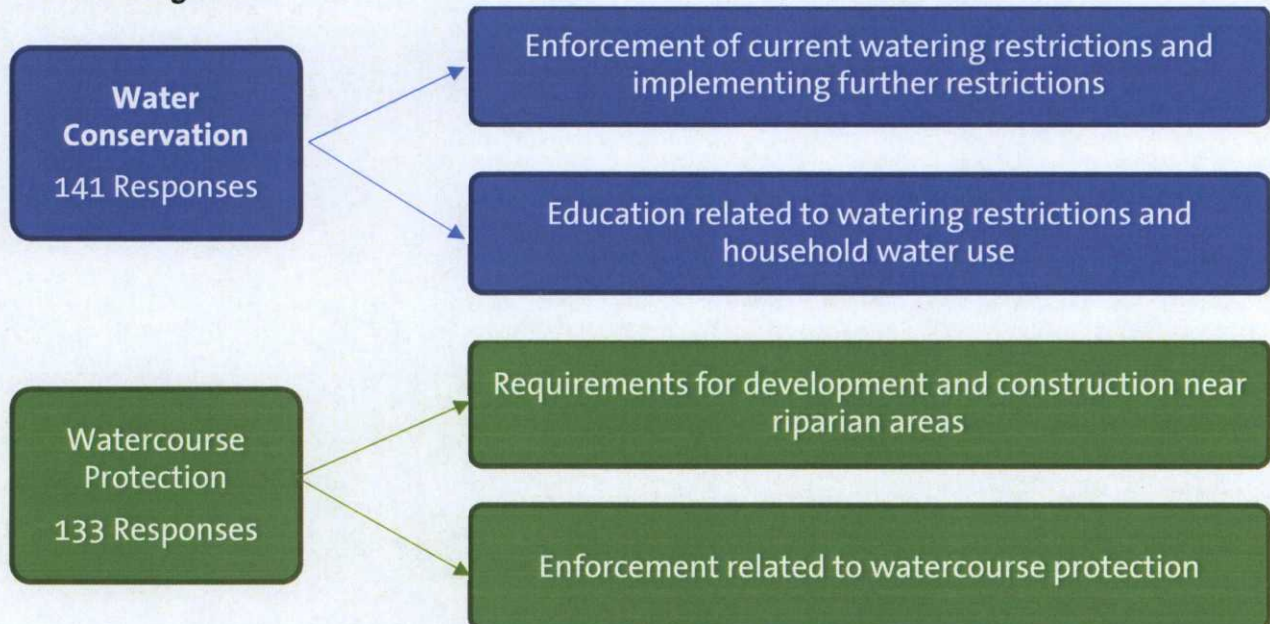
**Climate Action:**





**Built Environment:**

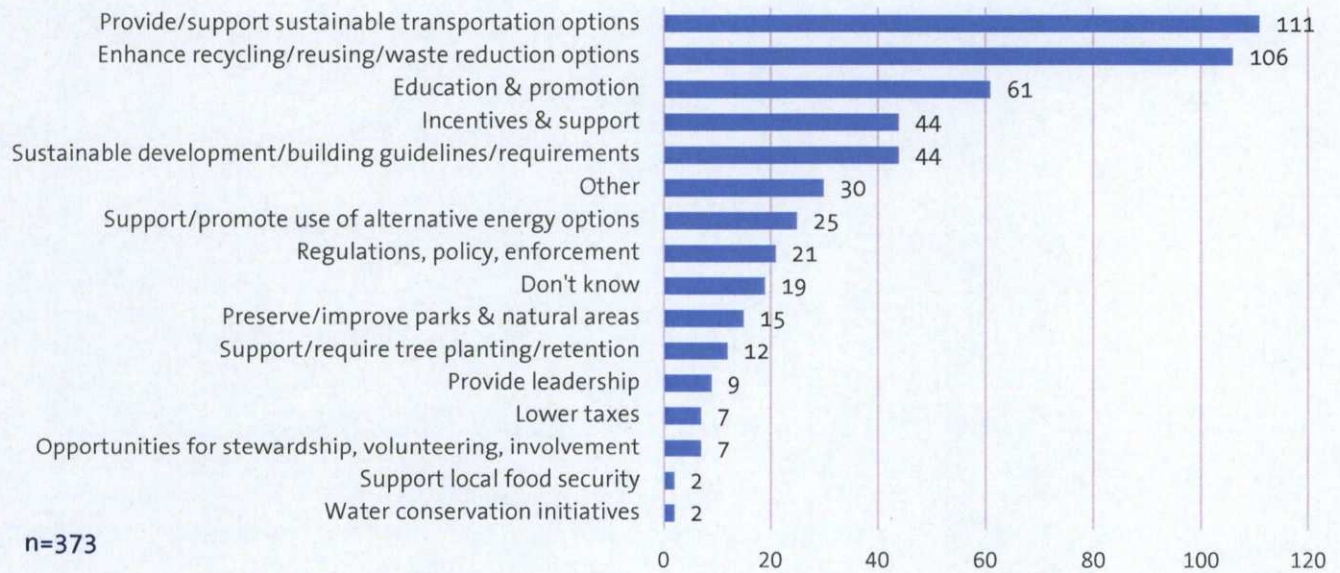


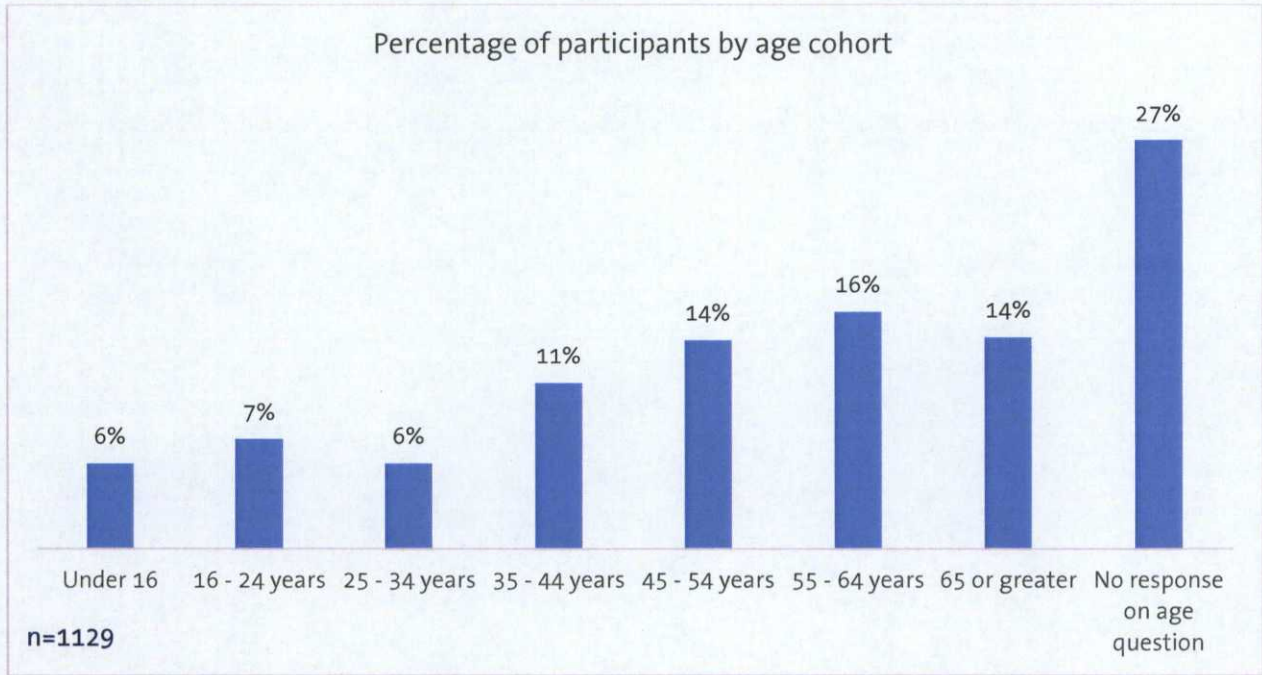
**Natural Areas, Wildlife and Habitat:****Water Management:**



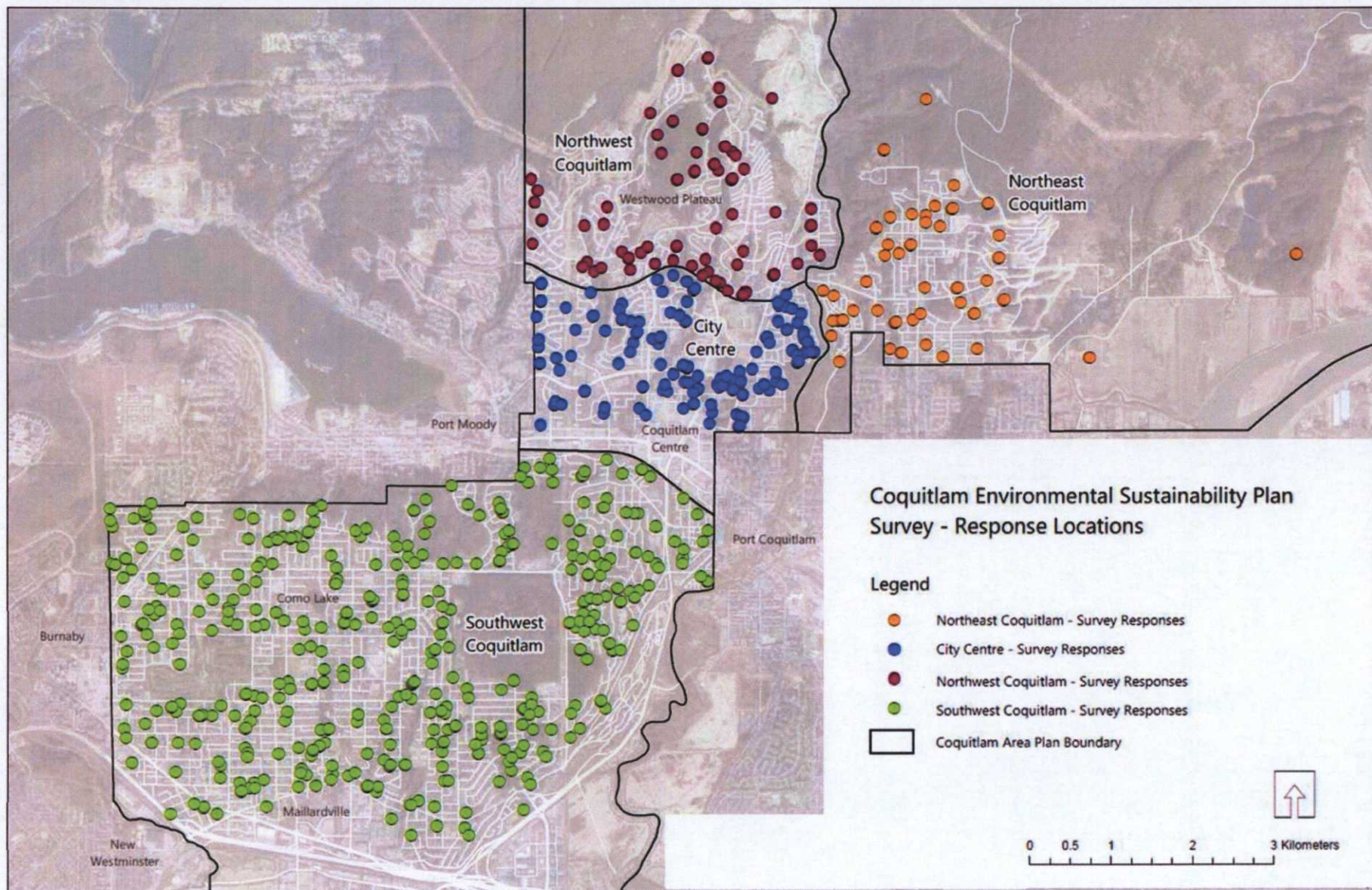
**Waste Management:**

#### Q4. How can the City help you live a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle?



**Demographics:**







# **Environmental Sustainability Plan Update**

## **Council Presentation**

June 25, 2020



Coquitlam

### ***INTRODUCTION***

- First raised in 2017 through the Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Purpose:
  - Incorporate existing environmental goals, objectives, policies and KPIs into a single cohesive strategy.
  - Provide a forward-looking plan to guide future decisions that support the long-term environmental resiliency and sustainability of the community



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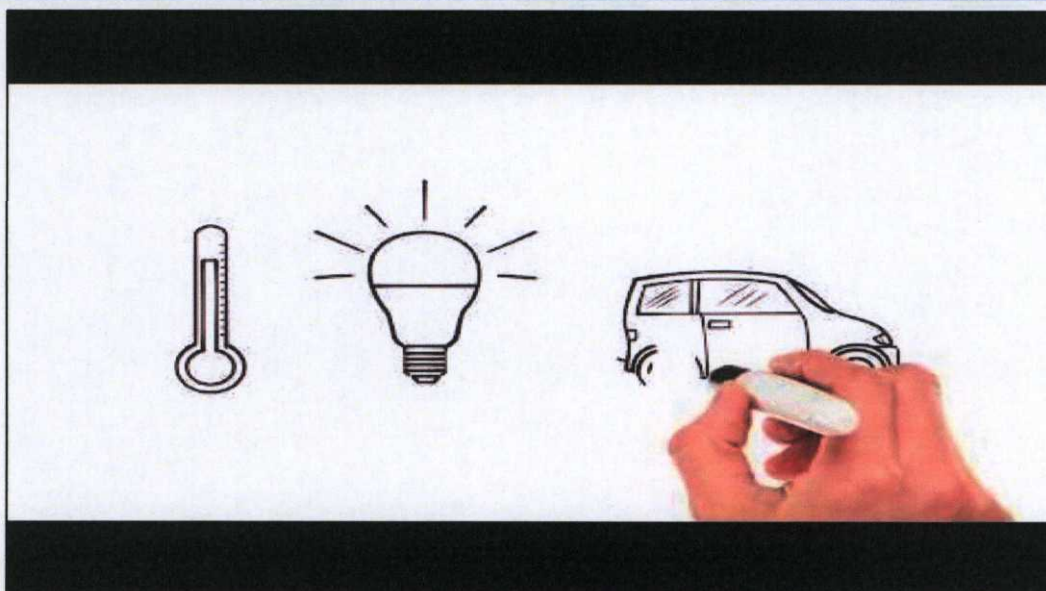
## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Align with and support other City plans
- Encompass a broad range of topic areas
- Engage key stakeholders
- Reflect the values and vision of the community
- Develop KPIs and targets
- Conduct a gap analysis and identify policies and actions for prioritization



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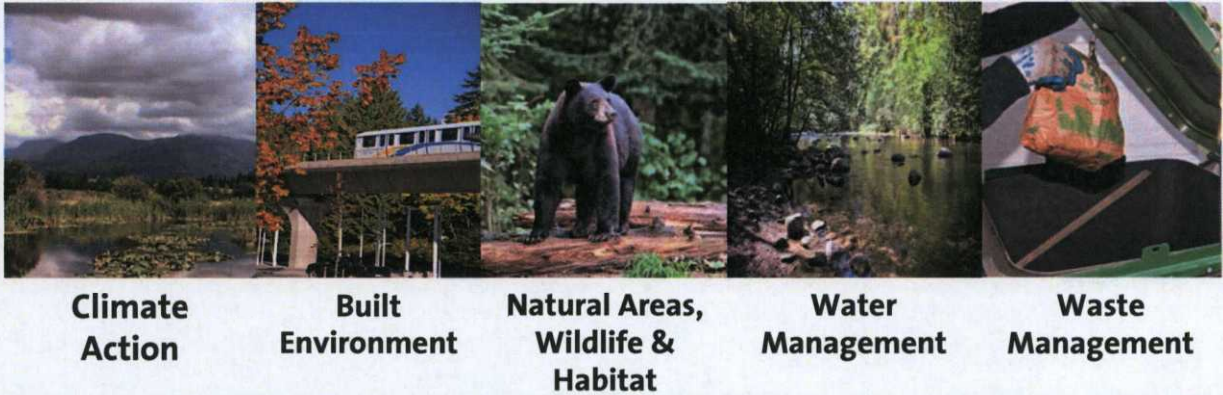


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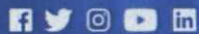
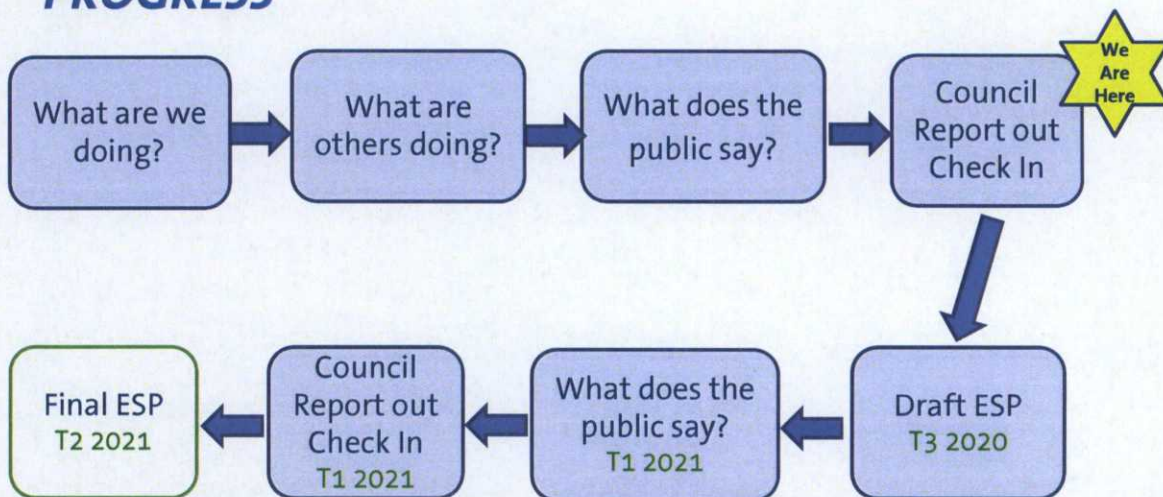
## THEMES



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## PROGRESS



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## INTERNAL REVIEW

### Goals:

- Understand Coquitlam's current environmental context
- Learn from the experience of others
- Inform future project phases

### Process:

- Inter-departmental staff workshops
- Inter-municipal survey
- Data compilation
- Document review / identify existing KPIs



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## INTERNAL REVIEW: Existing KPIs, Actions, & Targets

### Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023

- Waste volumes & diversion rates
- GHG reduction (corporate/community)
- Annual water consumption
- Number of parks & greenspaces/total park land area
- Kilometres of multi-modal transportation (new/total)
- Citizen satisfaction
- EV charging usage
- Trees planted on City property

### Draft Climate Adaptation Strategic Plan

- Number of days per year when drinking water restrictions must be adopted
- Number of urban trees reducing heat island effect

### Burquitlam-Lougheed Neighbourhood Plan

- Improve natural areas and wildlife corridors through new development infrastructure
- Incorporate designs that lower greenhouse gas emissions

### Strategic Transportation Plan

- Transportation mode share – **increase use of transit, walking and cycling to 30% of all trips by 2031**
- Sidewalk coverage and pedestrian walkability
- Bike routes and greenways (number of kms)

### Parks, Recreation and Culture Services Master Plan

- Park acquisition (**1.15 ha per 1,000 residents**)
- Equitable park access (**10 minute walking radius/resident**)

### Youth Strategy

- Enhance outdoor volunteer opportunities (trail building and park hosting)
- Pilot new youth leadership committees such as environmental/sustainability
- Explore potential for new outdoor youth experiences (nature activities and adventures)



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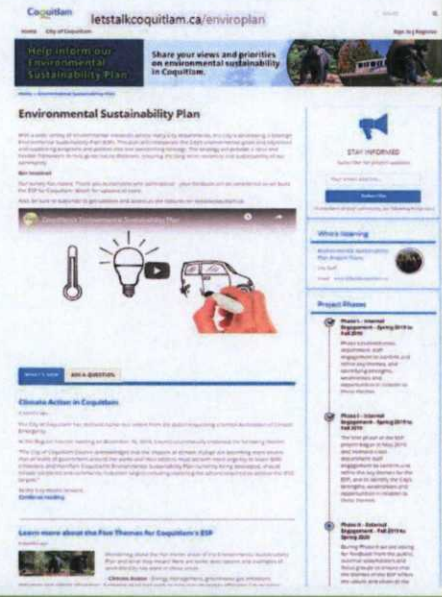
## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### Goals:

- Public and stakeholder input and priorities

### Process:

- External focus groups and “pop-up” events
- Project webpage: [letstalkcoquitlam.ca](http://letstalkcoquitlam.ca)
- Web-based survey
- Data compilation / summary



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## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### In-person (16 groups/233 responses)

- Advisory committees
- High schools
- Pop-Ups
- Stakeholder groups

### Web-based

- Project webpage (>6,500 page visits)
- YouTube video (349 views)
- Online survey (1,129 completed, 3,435 comments)

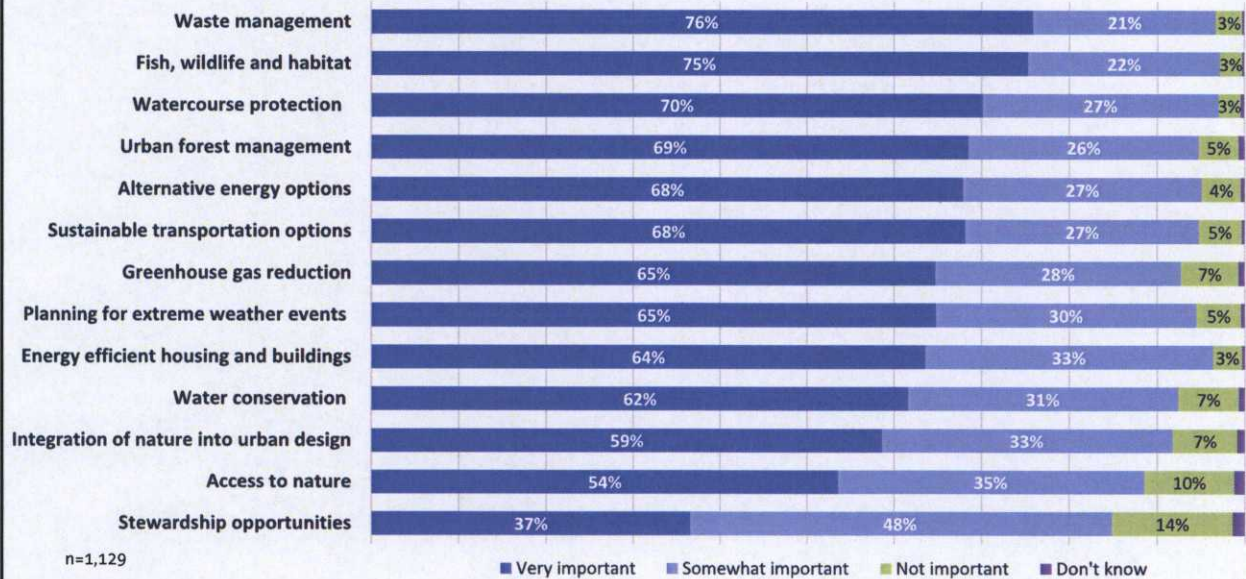


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## SURVEY RESULTS – Q.1 To you, how important are the following topic areas?

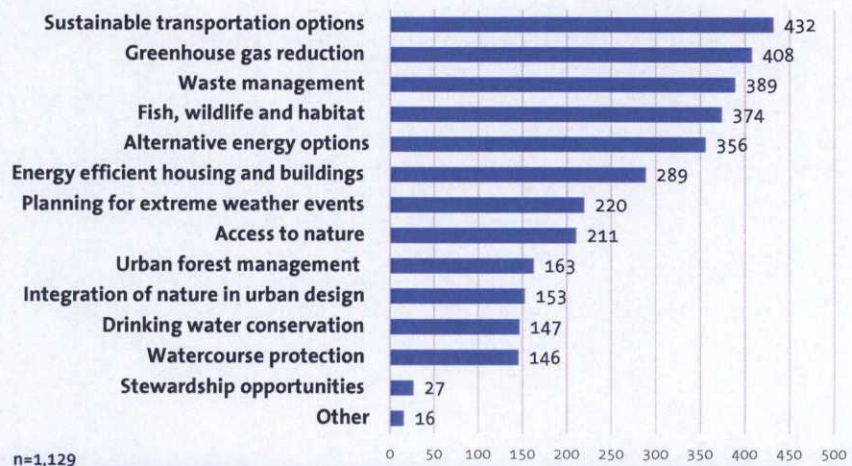


## SURVEY RESULTS–Q.2

If you had to choose only three topic areas for the City to focus on, what would you choose?

### Highest support for:

1. Sustainable transportation
2. Greenhouse gas reduction
3. Waste management

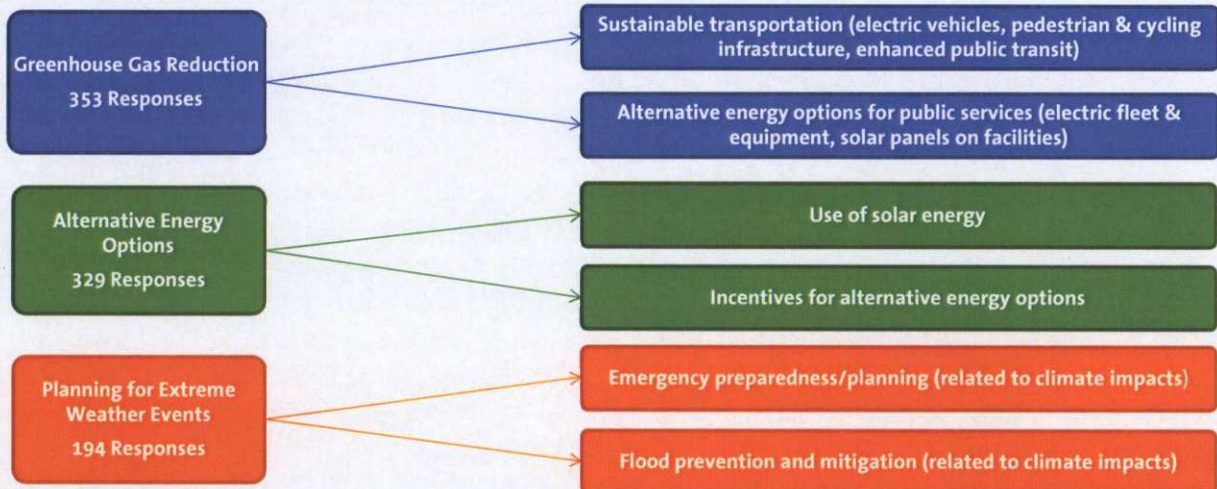


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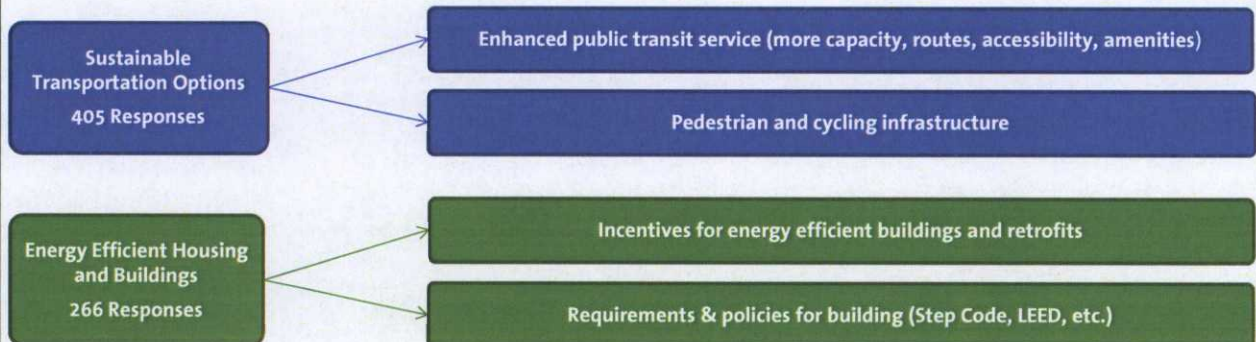
## SURVEY RESULTS–Q.3 Climate Action



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## SURVEY RESULTS–Q.3 Built Environment



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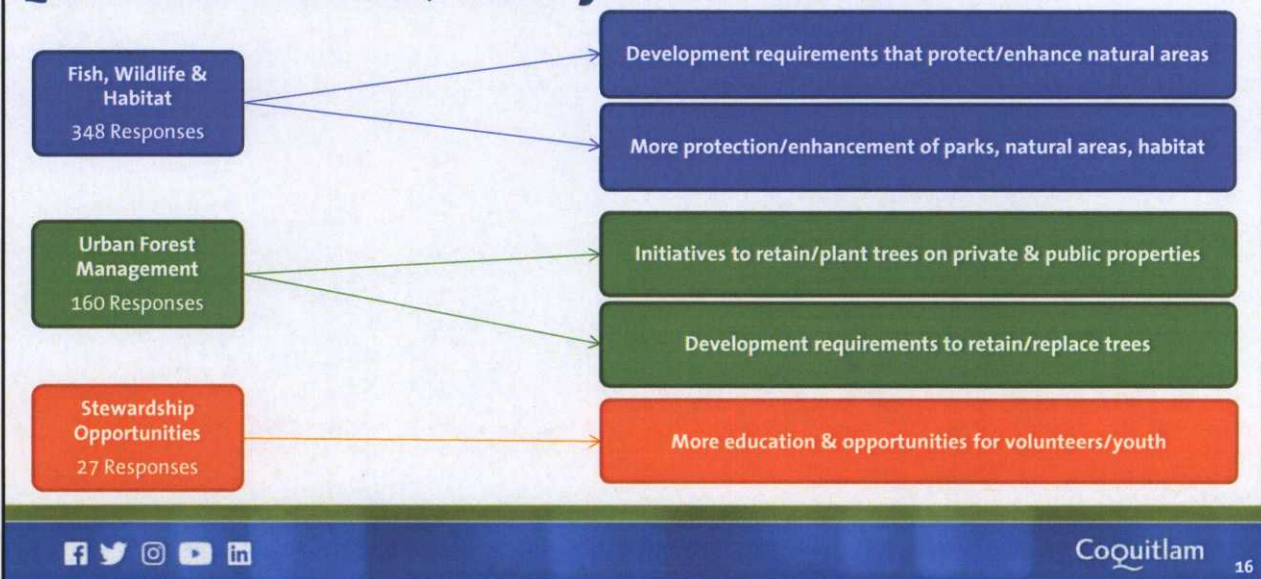
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## SURVEY RESULTS–Q.3 Built Environment

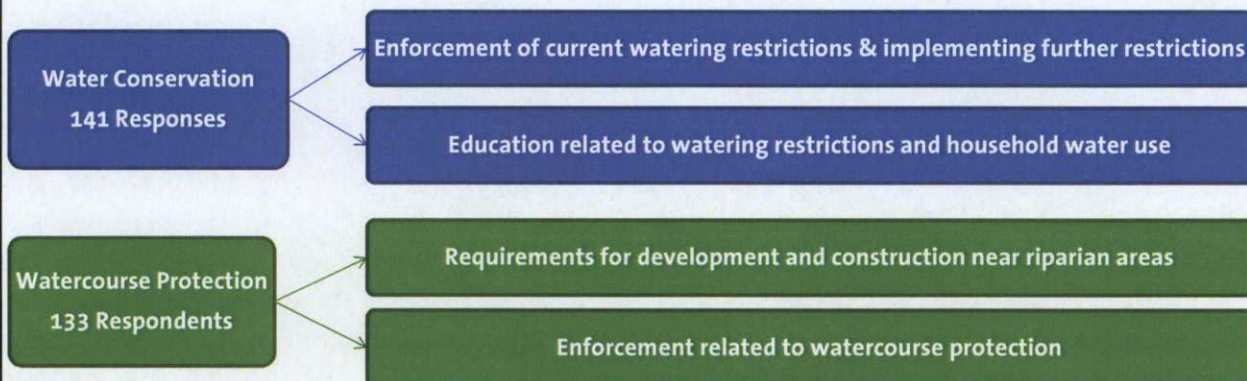


## SURVEY RESULTS – Q.3 Natural Areas, Wildlife and Habitat





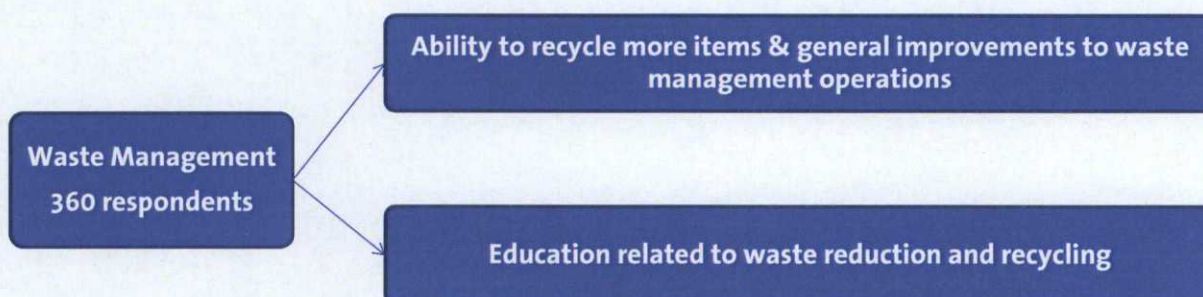
## ***SURVEY RESULTS–Q.3 Water Management***



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## ***SURVEY RESULTS–Q.3 Waste Management***



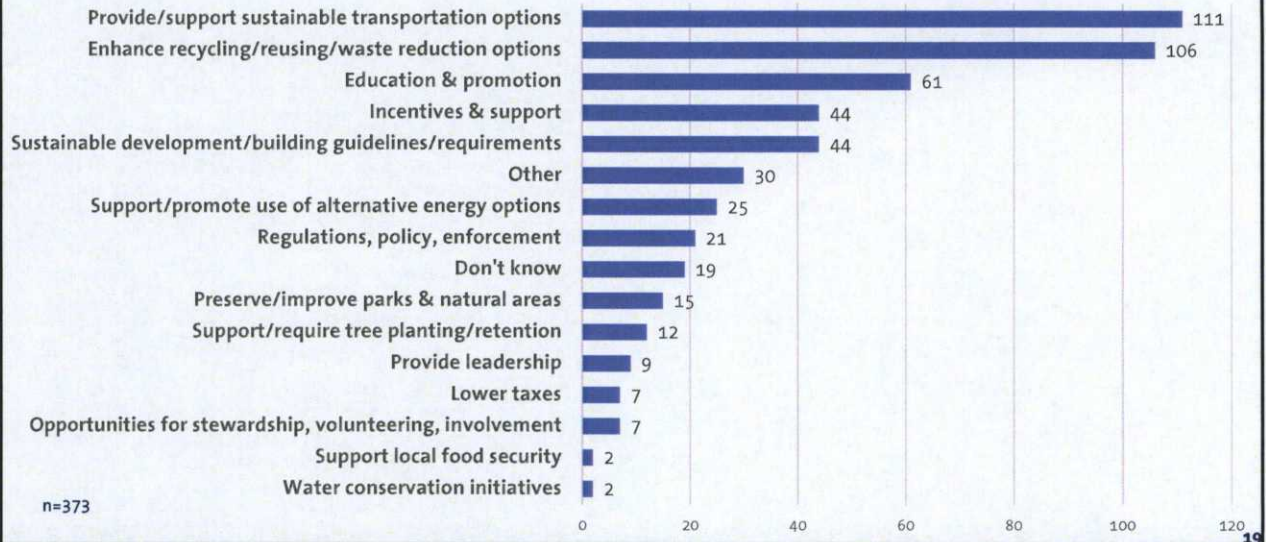
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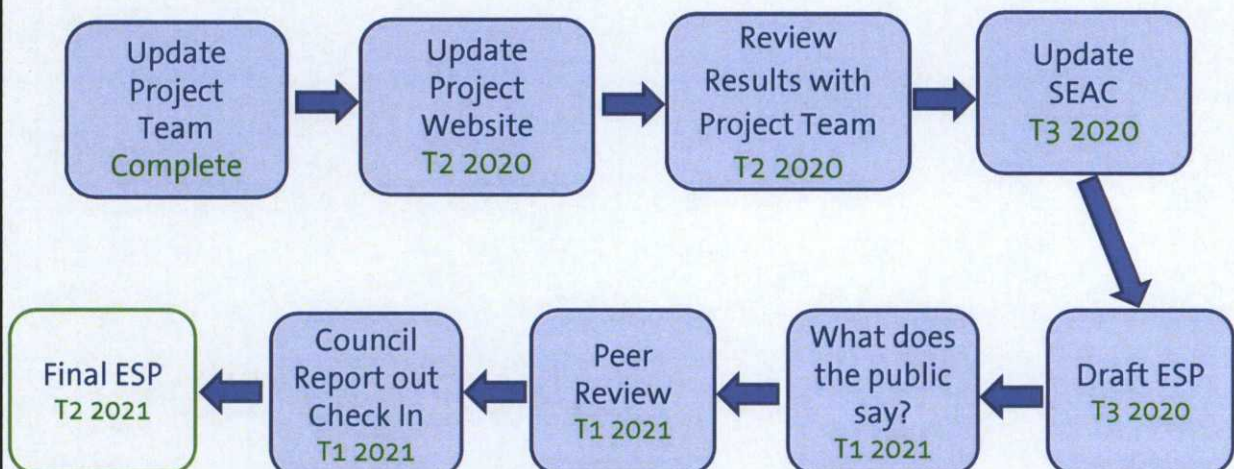


## SURVEY RESULTS– Q.4

How can the City help you live a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle?

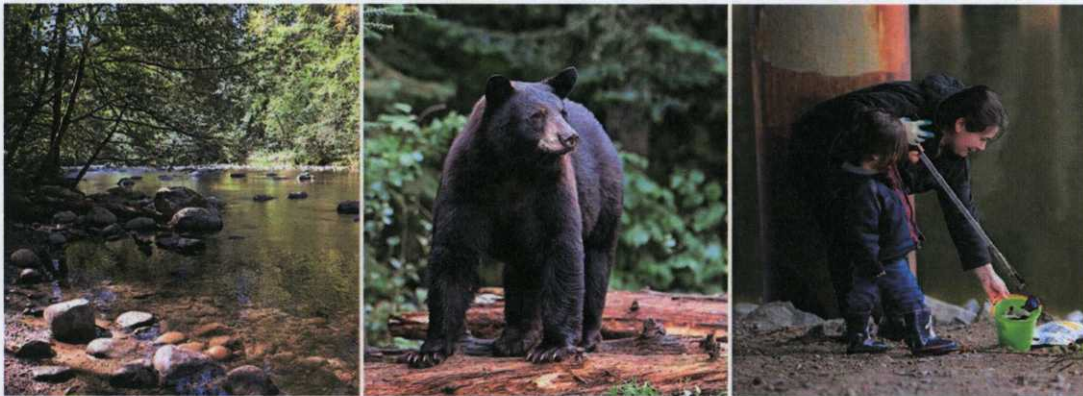


## NEXT STEPS





# QUESTIONS?



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