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## Dynamic land occupancy and use UMQ releases survey findings

The Québec Union of Municipalities has been working on the issue of dynamic land occupancy and use for several years now. In December 2006, our board of directors adopted a land occupancy action plan proposed by the caucus of local municipalities and titled "Action plan for land occupancy in Québec: A viable future for our province."

For the UMQ, land occupancy is more than just a concept. It's a way to allow all citizens and residents, old and young, urban or rural, make the best possible use of the territory where they live and develop their full potential.

On December 18, 2008, in response to UMQ demands, the premier of Quebec appointed a minister responsible for land occupancy.

To help inform the new minister, the UMQ conducted a survey of its members last March on which guidelines should take priority in a future land occupancy policy and on eventual pilot projects that might be put in place to generate greater economic growth in all areas of Quebec.

For the UMQ, dynamic land occupancy must be part of a long-term strategy for sustainable development. It must also translate, in the short term, into activities that will stimulate job creation and develop innovative projects for growth.

The UMQ survey was conducted among the municipalities that are members of our five affinity caucuses: large cities, metropolitan communities, regional cities, rural municipal centres and local municipalities

The survey's objective was to validate and confirm:

1. The major UMQ guidelines for a future land occupancy policy
2. Priorities for government intervention
3. Suggested implementation process

### Key findings

All respondents (100%) believe that rural and urban complementarity should be fundamental in any future land occupancy policy.

98% of our respondents think one of the priorities for government intervention should be to vary and adapt government policies and programs according to local and regional realities.

**For 100% of our respondents, diversification of municipal revenue streams is also a priority. This goes hand in hand with the principle of subsidiarity.**

Our respondents are also clearly in favour of:

- Emphasis on innovation and a competitive advantage for business
- Support for deployment of the ACCORD strategies to create niches of excellence
- Stronger municipal sector leadership in implementing local development initiatives based on concerted action by motivated local stakeholders
- Provisions for a trained workforce

87% of our respondents hope that studying ways to adapt government programs will be the starting point for the following ministers and their departments:

Economic Development, Innovation and Exports  
Transport  
Employment and Social Solidarity  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food  
Natural Resources and Wildlife  
Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks  
Immigration and Cultural Communities

Our respondents also suggested that the ministries of Health and Social Services, Education, Recreation and Sport, and Tourism be added to this list.

89% of our respondents agreed that the UMQ should develop cooperative projects among municipalities. Such projects should seek economic complementarity and should be based on regional niches of excellence in order to promote dialogue on and development of regional systems for innovation, and to encourage stronger ties between social and economic stakeholders in the rural and urban sectors.

In May, UMQ president Robert Coulombe, mayor of Maniwaki, presented our survey and its findings to Vice-Premier Nathalie Normandeau, who is also minister of Municipal Affairs, Regions and Land Occupancy. She agreed to carefully read the survey report, and complimented Mayor Coulombe for his contribution to the social and economic development of Quebec's regions. The assistant deputy minister responsible for land occupancy, Linda Morin, was also present at this meeting.

***If you have any questions about this issue, please feel free to contact our special consultant to management, Josée Maryse Sauvageau, at 514-282-7700 extension 285, or email [jsauvageau@umq.qc.ca](mailto:jsauvageau@umq.qc.ca).***

Source:

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