



# Systems Thinking in Calgary

Centre for Sustainable Community Development  
Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
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**Presenter:**  
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**Manager, imagineCALGARY Transition**  
**The City of Calgary**

calgary.ca | call 3-1-1



THE CITY OF  
**CALGARY**

# Mayor and Council Leadership



***“As our city continues to grow and prosper, it’s critical for us to define a shared vision – a vision that focuses on maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for everyone in and around Calgary.”***

**Mayor Dave Bronconnier**

# Peer Learning



<http://www.plusnetwork.icsc.ca/>

# PLUS network Cities

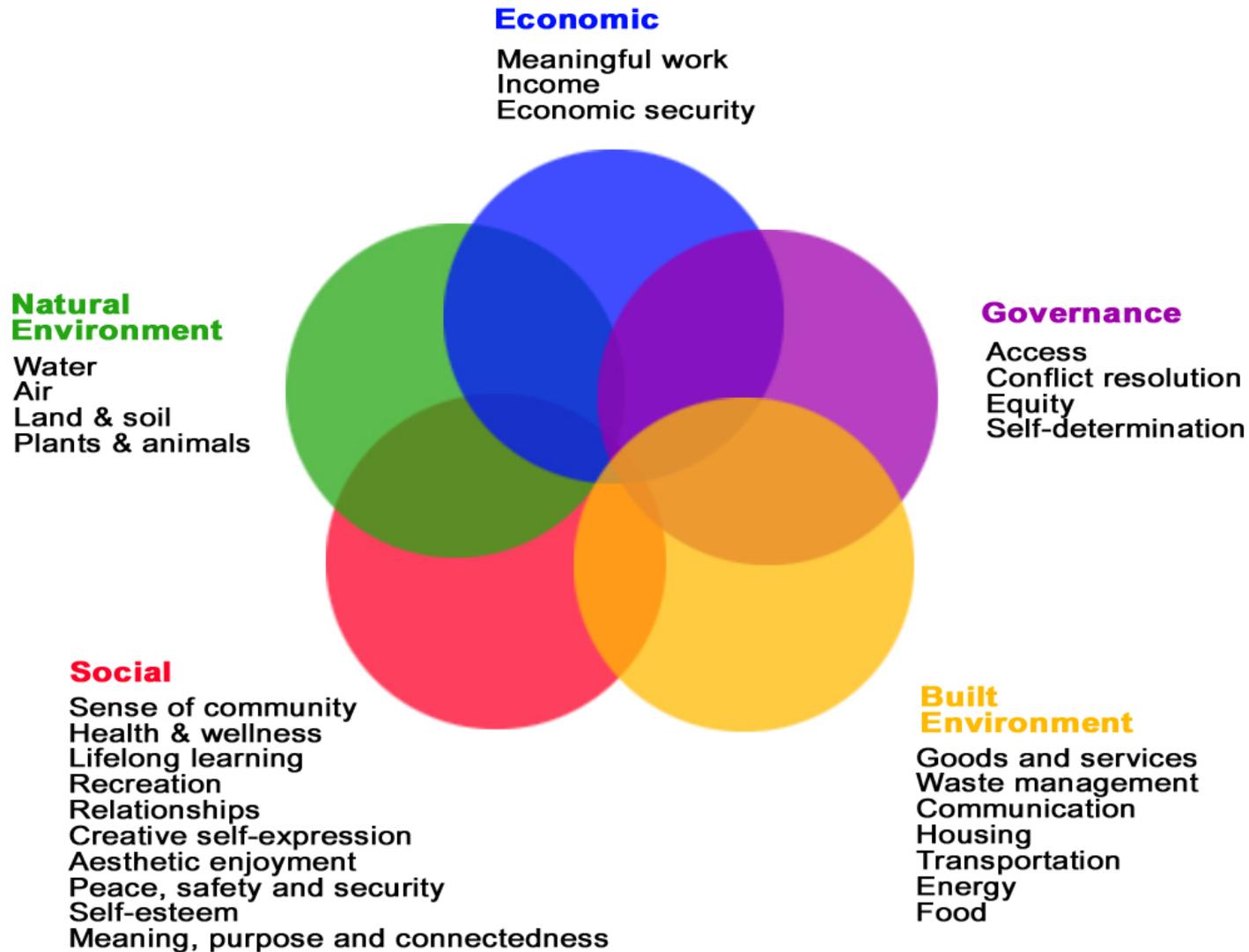


## Strategic thinking vs. strategic planning

According to Liedtka (98) **strategic thinking** differs from [strategic planning](#) along the following dimensions of [strategic management](#):

|   | <b>Strategic Thinking</b>   | <b>Strategic Planning</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Vision of the Future</b>                     | Only the shape of the future can be predicted.  | A future that is predictable and specifiable in detail.   |
| <b>Strategic Formulation and Implementation</b> | Formulation and implementation are interactive rather than sequential and discrete.   | The roles of formulation and implementation can be neatly divided.  |
| <b>Managerial Role in Strategy Making</b>       | Lower-level managers have a voice in strategy-making, as well as greater latitude to respond opportunistically to developing conditions.  | Senior executives obtain the needed information from lower-level managers, and then use it to create a plan which is, in turn, disseminated to managers for implementation. |
| <b>Control</b>                                  | Relies on self-reference – a sense of strategic intent and purpose embedded in the minds of managers throughout the organization that guides their choices on a daily basis in a process that is often difficult to measure and monitor from above. | Asserts control through measurement systems, assuming that organizations can measure and monitor important variables both accurately and quickly.                           |
| <b>Managerial Role in Implementation</b>        | All managers understand the larger system, the connection between their roles and the functioning of that system, as well as the interdependence between the various roles that comprise the system.  | Lower-level managers need only know his or her own role well and can be expected to defend only his or her own turf.  |
| <b>Strategy Making</b>                          | Sees strategy and change as inescapably linked and assumes that finding new strategic options and implementing them successfully is harder and more important than evaluating them.   | The challenge of setting strategic direction is primarily analytic.   |
| <b>Process and Outcome</b>                      | Sees the planning process itself as a critical value-adding element.  | Focus is on the creation of the plan as the ultimate objective.   |

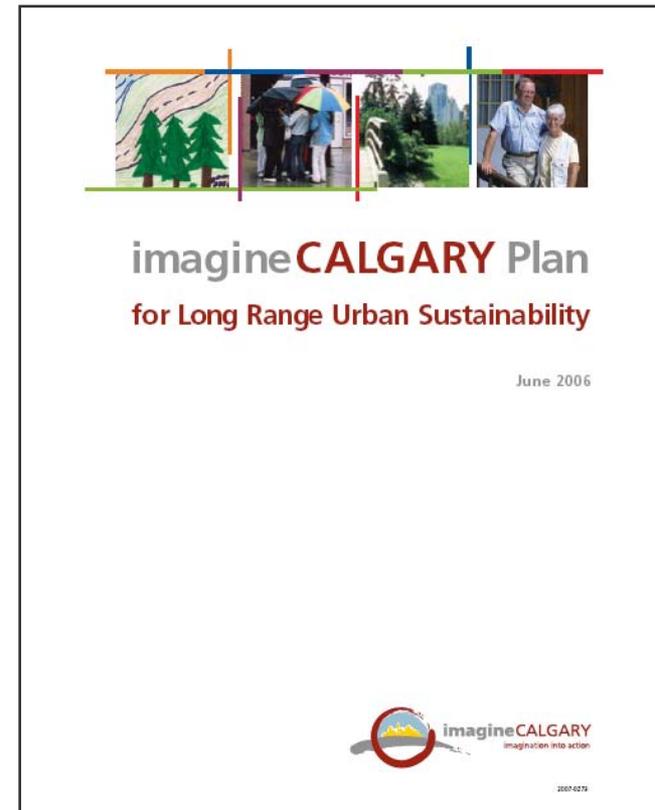
# Community Systems

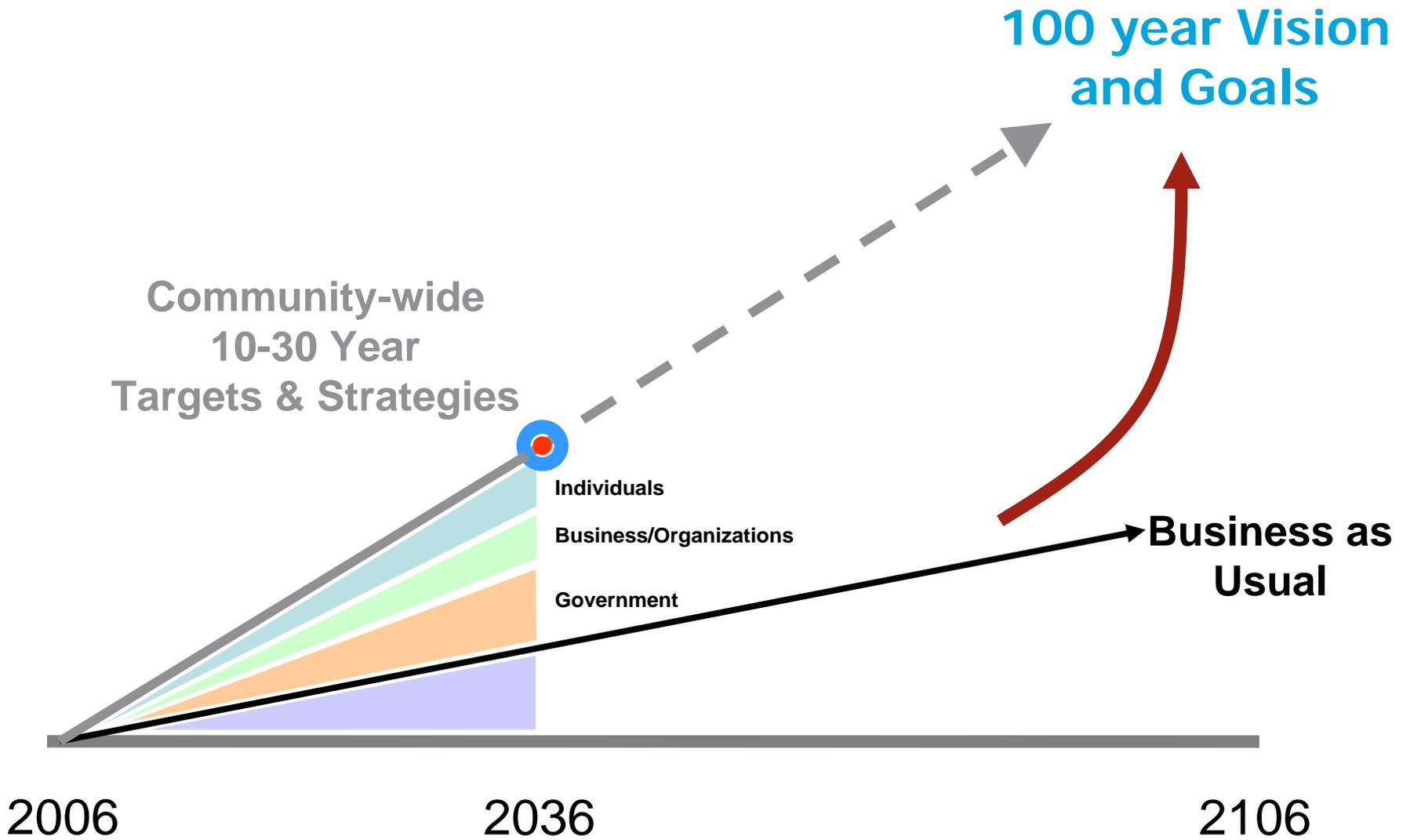


# imagine**CALGARY** Plan

## A Long Range Urban Sustainability Plan for Calgary

- A “citizen mandate” for the future of the community
  - 100 year Vision and Goals
  - 10- 30 year Targets and Strategies
- 
- Awarded 2007 FCM-CH2M Hill Award for Sustainable Community Planning
  - Awarded 2007 Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Municipal Sustainability - Innovator Communities Award





# imagineCALGARY Partnership

## imagineCALGARY Partners commit to...

### 1. Declaring *ACTION*

Evaluate your organization's mandate and work against the applicable Targets in the imagineCALGARY Plan.

### 2. Sharing your progress

Attend the annual imagineCALGARY community conference and share your accomplishments, lessons learned, and aspirations with other imagineCALGARY Partners and the community.

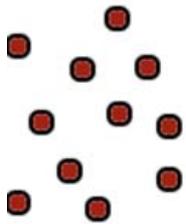
# imagineCALGARY Partners



[www.imaginecalgary.ca](http://www.imaginecalgary.ca)

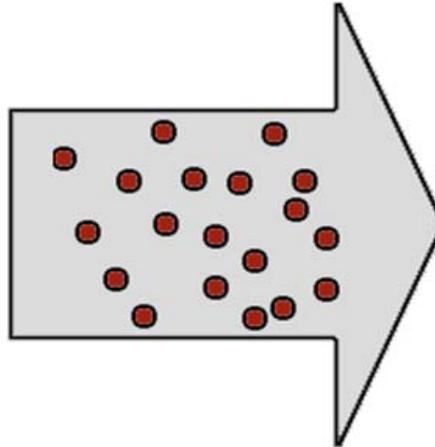
# “samepagedness”

Creating a more sustainable future by working towards the imagineCALGARY Plan while building the capacity of each Partner organization to achieve their mission.



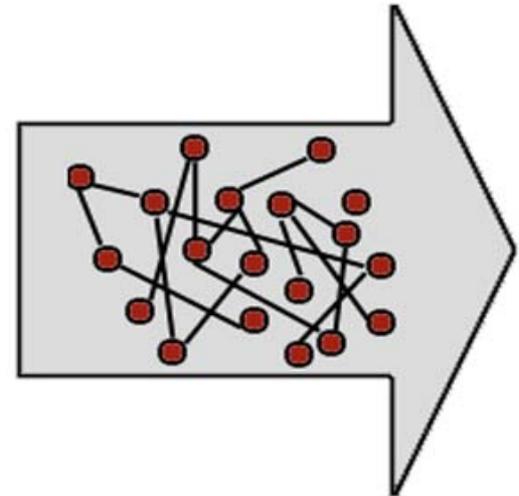
**Before  
imagineCALGARY**

Working mostly on their own to achieve an undefined long term vision



**Community  
Partners**

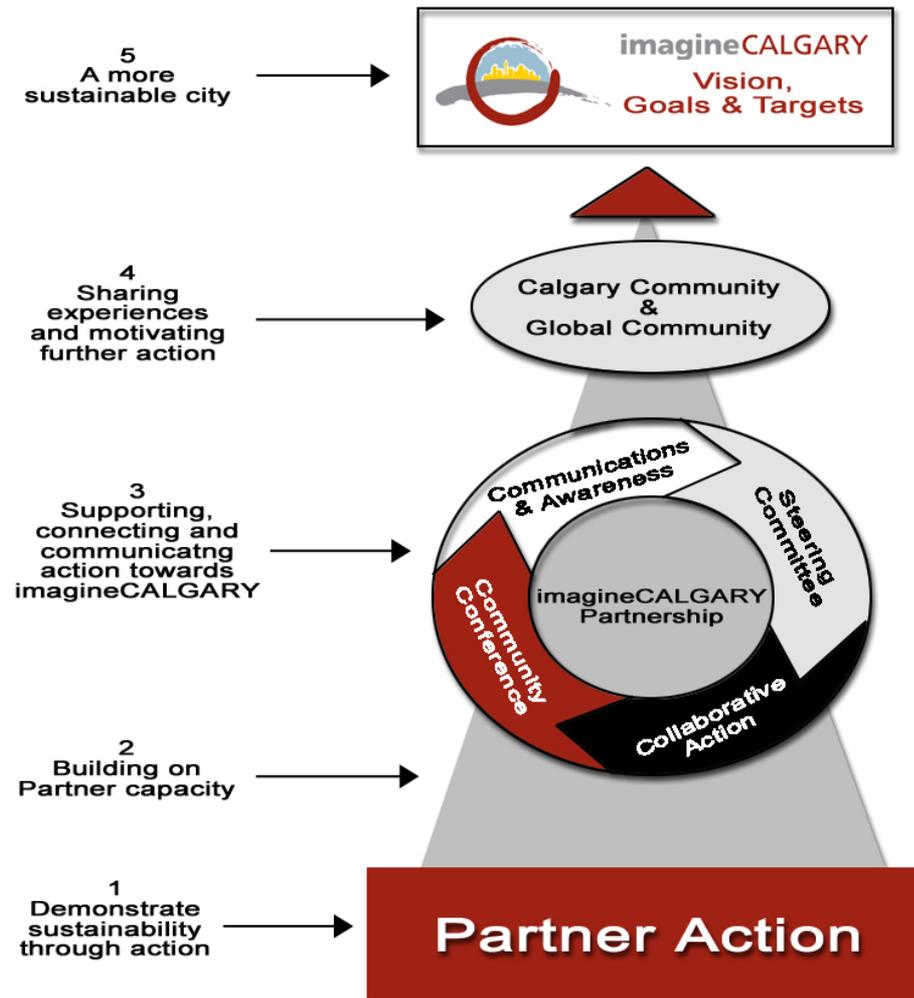
Working individually toward a common Vision - The imagineCALGARY Plan.



**iC Partnership  
Structures**

Enabling progress toward The Plan by iC partners by working together.

# imagineCALGARY Partnership



# The City of Calgary's Role

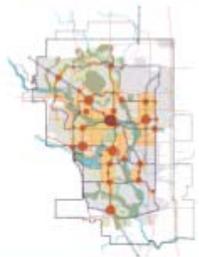
- Transitioning from  
imagineCALGARY *leader* to  
imagineCALGARY *Partner*

- **Integrated Land Use & Mobility Plan**
- **Builds off of 11 Sustainability Principles for Land Use & Mobility - derived from imagineCALGARY**
- **Using scenarios to develop understanding of different choices**

Dispersed scenario



Compact scenario



Hybrid scenario



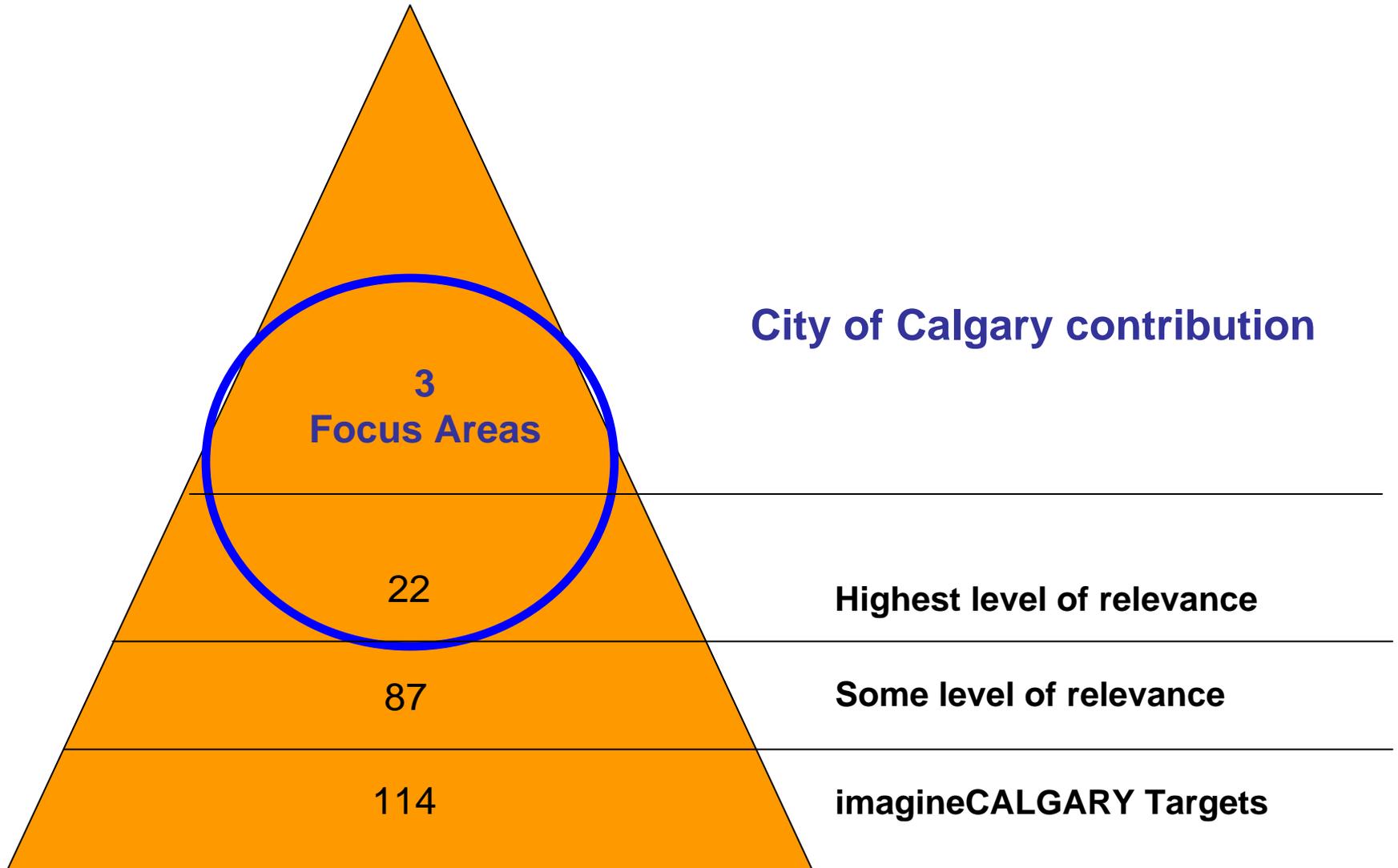
**plan | it | calgary**  
 Integrated Land Use and Mobility Plan

Where do we grow from here?

calgary.ca | call 3-1-1

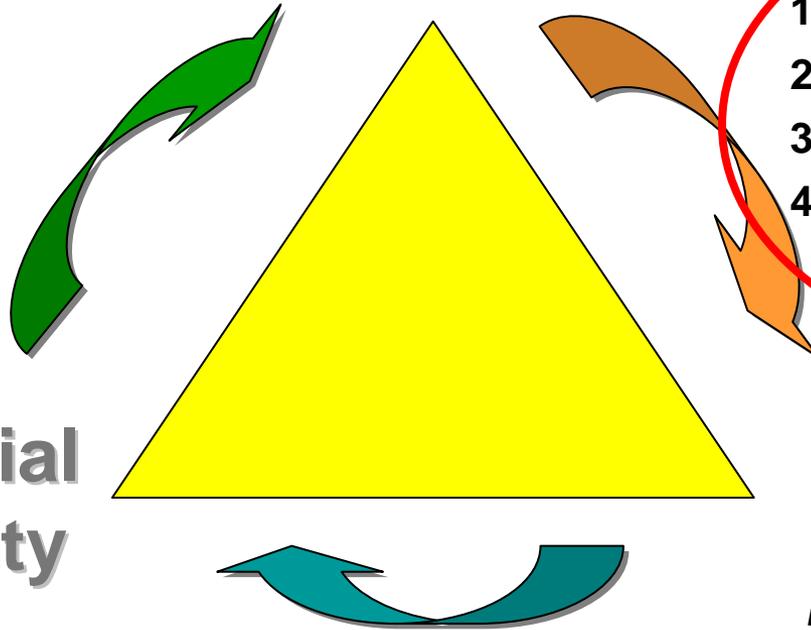
the city of CALGARY

# The City of Calgary's Sustainability Priorities



# 2009-2011 Council Priorities

A great city for everyone



1. Community well-being
2. Sustainable environment
3. Prosperous economy
4. Smart growth and mobility choices

**Financial  
capacity**

8. Sufficient operating revenue
9. Long-term capital funding

**Sustainable  
corporation**

5. Healthy, sufficient workforce
6. Safe, reliable infrastructure
7. Effective, efficient services

# 2009-2011 Business Plan Guidelines

- A 3 year contract between Administration and Council that integrates with the budgets.
- Outlines how the Administration proposes to address Council's goals and priorities and emerging issues.
- Business Plan Guidelines directed Departments to represent The City's commitment to imagineCALGARY through incorporation of The City's Sustainability Priorities

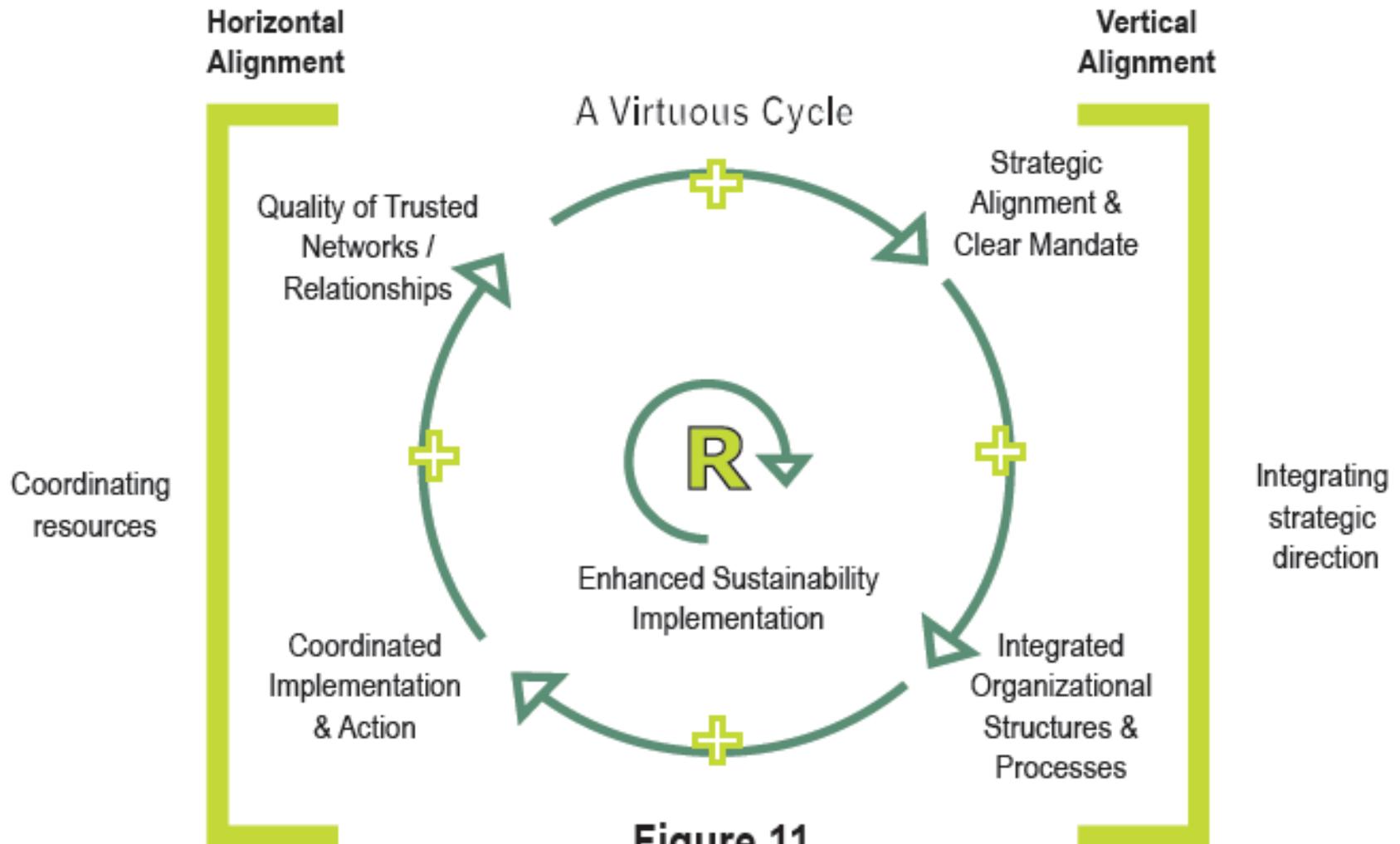


**Building The City of Calgary's  
Organizational Capacity for  
Achieving Sustainability**

*October 2008*



# Organizational Assessment



# Focus for New Office of Sustainability

Policy  
Establishing the “Ends”

Strategy  
Bridging the Ends and the Means

Resources  
Establishing the “Means”

Integrating strategic direction

Monitoring performance and reporting on progress

Coordinating resources

# Adaptive Learning Paths

Adaptive learning paths are rough, broken: even when pursued with discipline, dedication, intelligence & resourcefulness

Are we there yet?

level of mastery & achievement

reality of effort

plateau fatigue

"set-back"  
discouragement

rough start

time & effort

