



imagineCALGARY Structures Review July 2007

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imagineCALGARY Structures Review – July 2007

In July, the imagineCALGARY Transition Team arranged for a review of the structures that were agreed upon at the June 7, 2007 imagineCALGARY Partners meeting. The objectives of this review were to:

- Receive an external view and feedback on the structures
- Discuss ideas on how to further refine the structures
- Begin the development of a successful transition

This document is a synthesis of the comments provided by reviewers in written submissions, individual meetings and group discussions.

Summary

There were 5 general areas that the review focused on:

1. Developing an overall mindset focused on sustainability
2. Discussing the structures themselves
3. Ensuring the Committees work for the members involved
4. Creating an effective process for the Committees
5. Questions to consider going forward

Developing an overall mindset focused on sustainability

Going forward, it will be important to develop a mindset amongst the Partners that focuses on creating the future that is laid out in the imagineCALGARY Plan. This will create more productive change than a traditional problem-solving approach. Building on this mindset, the principles of systems thinking will help Partners discover connections within the community and help to empower action towards a more sustainable future.

Structures

The structures that the Partners created were uniformly praised as an excellent start to creating broad action and awareness towards the imagineCALGARY Plan. At this point, there is work to be done in refining the objectives of each Committee. The Committee members that get involved need to be the ones to develop this in order to create ownership and commitment to the workplans that are developed. There was discussion that potentially a Committee might be missing – one focused on monitoring, evaluation and feedback. This is something for the Partners to consider.

Ensuring involvement in imagineCALGARY works for Committee members

While Committee members will primarily be representatives of organizations, these individuals need to feel that involvement in imagineCALGARY is a worthwhile endeavor. In creating processes for the Committees, an important focus must be on creating both personal and professional development opportunities for those involved.

Creating an effective process

Getting the Committees off to a good start is important. Hearing from leaders in the community will help to solidify commitment to working on imagineCALGARY. This should be built into the kick-off of the Committees and continually communicated going forward. imagineCALGARY Committees should ensure that processes reflect the values of the imagineCALGARY Plan and be designed to maximize commitment of both individuals and the organizations they represent.

Questions going forward

There are key questions to answer as the development of the imagineCALGARY Committees progresses. Many of them relate to the points made above, but additional areas include decision-making and how to obtain profile for imagineCALGARY.

The Reviewers

Sheila Carruthers

Sheila is the Team Leader with CSR Strategies Inc., a Management Consulting firm specialized in communications and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Sheila combines her professional studies and work in industries spanning from international banking to the Diplomatic Corps. with experience gleaned from more than ten years managing two major Canadian charitable (grant-making) foundations. Sheila is a Certified Management Consultant (CMC) and holds an MBA specialized in Communications Management & Public Relations. She is an Advisor for MBA learners attending Royal Roads University and teaches a course on CSR in the University of Calgary's Continuing Education Faculty as part of its Public Relations Management Certificate Program. Awarded the Alberta Centennial Medal, for her "outstanding contribution to the province of Alberta", she sits on two local nonprofit Boards: International Association for Business Communicators (IABC), Calgary chapter and CentrePoint. Sheila is also an active professional member of the Canadian Association of Management Consultants (CAMC), co-moderates the CSR Calgary Yahoo chat-line, is a member of Bow Valley College's External Relations Advisory Committee and its Campaign Cabinet, a member of the Institute for Nonprofit Studies at Mount Royal College's Advisory Committee, and volunteers with Scouts Canada, Chinook Region.

Nancy Close

Nancy Close, Trustee for Wards 11 and 13, was first elected in the 1999 by-election. Wards 11 and 13 are located in southwest Calgary. As a Trustee, Nancy was instrumental in the development of the Calgary Board of Education's governance model, which earned the 2007 Conference Board of Canada's national award for excellence in governance.

Nancy 's involvement in public education started early in her children's lives and, she says, will continue long after their graduations. For a number of years Nancy was on the executive of the Calgary Association of Parent and School Councils and was an active member of the advocacy group SPEAK (Support Public Education - Act for Kids).

Nancy continues to care deeply about equal opportunity and student success and believes that a strong public education system is a critical part of a strong community. "It is important that we work together to ensure that every student be provided with the opportunity for the best possible education and hope for the future", she says. In addition to role as trustee, Nancy sits on the Board of Directors of Sage Theatre, a local professional theatre company.

Bob Doppelt

Bob Doppelt is executive director of the Center for Watershed and Community Health, a sustainability research and technical assistance program affiliated with the Institute for a Sustainable Environment at the University of Oregon. Doppelt also a principal with Factor 10 Inc., a sustainability change management consulting firm. He is the author of *Leading Change Toward Sustainability: A Change Management Guide for Business, Government and Civil Society*.

Gwendolyn Hallsmith

Gwendolyn Hallsmith is the Director of the Department of Planning and Community Development in Montpelier Vermont. She is also the Executive Director of Global Community Initiatives. Gwendolyn has over 25 years of experience working with municipal, regional, and state government in the United States and internationally. She has served as a Municipal Manager, a Regional Planning Director, Senior Planner for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy Resources, the Deputy Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and as an international specialist on sustainable community development. Her international experience has included work with the United Nations

Environmental Program, the United Nations Development Program, the Institute for Sustainable Communities, the International City/County Management Association, the Academy for Educational Development, and Earth Charter International. For the past few years, she has been a divinity student at the Andover Newton Theological School, and has served as the pastor of the United Federated Church in Williamstown, Vermont. She is very interested in the links between our wisdom traditions, spirituality, and work on the community level.

Jane McRae

Jane McRae is the Program Director of the International Centre for Sustainable Cities PLUS Network program. She has extensive experience as Project Manager of citiesPLUS, Canada's winning entry in the World Gas Conference's sustainable urban design competition in 2003. The PLUS Network built on this successful urban design project and has created a worldwide network of cities engaged in long-term urban planning for sustainability.

Ms. McRae has a background in sustainability issues, communications, education, and project management. Jane's prior work has included developing and managing environmental education programs for ESL students, managing sustainable development communications in the energy sector, and sales and marketing in the computer industry.

Thinking about governance

Factors That Will Influence the Governance Structure – Bob Doppelt

When reading the document I wondered if the orientation of key people, networks and organizations that must be engaged if imagineCALGARY is to succeed has been analyzed? A positive point of reference will be vital to the success of imagineCALGARY. Let me explain what I mean.

Psychological wellbeing cannot be explained simply as the absence of distress, just as good health cannot be described as the absence of illness. In the same vein, being sustainable cannot be explained just as the mere absence of unsustainable practices. Stated in a different way, imagineCALGARY will not succeed by merely eliminating unsustainable thinking and activities. Eliminating a negative does not necessarily produce a positive. In fact, it often produces unexpected outcomes that make it even more difficult to attain the desired ends. To succeed, imagineCALGARY must help people embrace a positive vision of change.

For the past sixty years or more western psychology has focused on what's wrong with human beings. Treatment seeks to reduce or eliminate malevolent behavior. Significant progress has been made through this approach in understanding, treating and preventing mental disorders. Similarly, the fields of organizational and community development have primarily focused on analyzing, overcoming and avoiding dysfunction in organizational leadership, planning and execution. This focus has been helpful to numerous institutions and communities.

However, these approaches have also produced unintended consequences. They have failed to study what goes right with people and their organizations and committees, why things go right, and how to enhance those good qualities. Because the focus is on pathology, a disease model of human nature has come to dominate. At the core, people are seen as inherently fallible, weak, and consequently controlled by their external circumstances. To me, this view of the world has permeated western civilization to such an extent that today, many individuals, organizations and communities see themselves as victims, at the mercy of bad people or conditions they had no role in creating and cannot influence. What is the culture of Calgary--how do the majority of people view this issue?

If the pathology mental frame is correct, then perhaps all that imagineCALGARY can do is to make conditions less bad and try to continually eliminate the flaws in the thinking and behavior of people and organizations in the community. Indeed, until recently the primary focus in environmental management was to minimize pollution and reduce ecological damage--that is, make bad things a little less bad.

However, if one looks at humanity through a systems lens, the pathology view of the world fails to pass muster. It is clear anyone with just a little reflection that humans have flaws but they also have innate positive qualities and strengths. Everyday you can see people showing kindness, giving of themselves, and putting their lives on the line for others. Sometimes we each behave poorly. Yet, other times we each think and act in positive ways. In short, human goodness and excellence are just as prevalent in the world as pathology. Thus, the pathology worldview, while important and helpful, focuses on just half of the equation.

Unfortunately, the pathology view promoted by traditional psychology as well as organizational and community development has constrained efforts to examine how the positive attributes of human beings come about, or how they can be explicitly enhanced. Research emerging in the past ten years

in the new fields of positive psychology, neuropsychology and brain plasticity, and appreciative inquiry, however, has demonstrated that constructive traits of individuals, organizations and communities can be cultivated and expanded, just as dysfunctional patterns can be treated. Not only does nourishing positive qualities help people think better, feel happier and behave more responsibly toward others and the environment, it also seems to diminish and even eliminate many problems or pathologies.

This new information has important implications for sustainability programs.

a) First, it suggests that the type of vision, purpose and goals imagineCALGARY adopts will have a significant influence on its performance. By this I do not mean "vision statements." I'm talking about the gut level sense committee members and citizens get about what they are striving to achieve, and what will be different as a result of their collective efforts. The vision and goals of imagineCALGARY are a good start. But the real key will be to help people understand, in their gut, what imagineCALGARY is about. Do the people involved with imagineCALGARY believe, in their gut, that they are striving to make things less bad or make undesirable things (like greenhouse gas emissions or other pollutants) go away, or do they truly see themselves and the program as striving to bring entirely new products, services, and ways of living into being? How do community members see the orientation of the program?

b) Connected to the above is another implication, having to do with the overall orientation of the effort. Two ways exist to approach situations: "problem solving" and "creating." These outlooks are fundamentally different. Problem solving seeks to make something unpleasant go away. The vision is negative, focused on elimination. Creating, on the other hand, strives to bring something new into existence. The vision is positive, focused on invention.

When your thinking is focused on solving problems, the basic question you ask is "How do I make this obstacle go away?" You begin with a canvass already full with shapes, figures and conundrums. Your thinking focuses on devising intricate ways to characterize the obstacles, identifying alternative way out of your difficulties, and applying the most effective "solutions." If you are lucky, the problem you have targeted may disappear. However, as I mentioned, eliminating what you don't want rarely gets you closer to what we do want. Often, you end up with something as bad, or more troublesome, than your original problem. Even worse, the never-ending exertion demanded by problem solving deflects our attention away from what you really want. After one problem is "solved" another appears, leaving you running as fast as you can but rarely getting anywhere because you forgot where you ideally wanted to go.

The bottom line is that with sustainability initiatives, my experience and research shows that you simply can't resolve most troubles through problem solving. Problem solving fails to help us attain what we want to achieve because it focuses on removing constraints within the existing system. In ecological and human systems, structure drives performance. The way policies, programs, technologies, communication mechanisms and the like are designed and linked together determines how social systems function. Removing bottlenecks within a system may create more efficiently, but it does not change the basic structure of the system. If the underlying structure remains the same, similar types of problems will continually emerge.

Creating, on the other hand, is an entirely different beast. When an organization or program creates, they start by envisioning what they ideally want and remain focused on achieving that end throughout the process. The key question in a creative process is, "What do I ideally want to bring into being?" Painters begin with a blank canvass and writers begin with a blank sheet of paper. Similarly, creating starts not by thinking about how to remove impediments or improve the existing system by 10 percent,

but by imagining how an ideal system would look, absent of the constraints imposed by existing structures. Current reality is important, but only as a way to know how far you are from your desired end.

All this is to suggest that the orientation of the people involved with imagineCALGARY and the way they approach the plan will be the key to long-term success. Is imagineCALGARY focused on making unsustainability go away, or creating new ways to live and work and new goods and services that benefit everyone?

c). This leads to the third implication, which has to do with committee and citizen education and training. Rather than focusing education and professional development solely on clean energy technologies and other sustainability practices, a powerful way to enhance the capacity to adopt a path toward sustainability is to build upon the cognitive patterns committee and community members exhibit when they think and respond effectively to issues that affect the climate, natural environment and social welfare. That is, identify and build upon the group's cognitive strengths rather than just trying to eliminate its weakness.

One way this can be accomplished is by establishing forums in which organization and team members describe situations when they addressed the environment and social welfare issues in positive, constructive ways. Engage people in a discussion aimed at teasing out the thought patterns, beliefs, and assumptions that led to those effective outcomes. Then, discuss how the group can continually build upon those cognitive patterns. For example, discuss how the tangible and intangible aspects of the committee and community structure can be altered to facilitate the continual display and expansion of the positive thinking and behavioral patterns. Appreciative Inquiry may be helpful here.

We all know that people tend to get what they focus on. When the orientation of a sustainability initiative, at its core, is negative, aimed at controlling or eliminating bad things like unsustainability, participants will tend to think and behave in negative ways. Since no one liked negative things, people will lose motivation. When the point of reference is positive, focused on creating new, constructive and exciting outcomes, group members will be much more inclined to think and act affirmatively and constructively, and they will remain motivated and engaged.

Creating ownership – Gwen Hallsmith

Ownership is one of the key elements of any type of social change. If people don't own the strategy, it isn't going to happen. One of the main reasons multi-stakeholder groups like imagineCALGARY convene in the first place is so that the people who have to make the changes are the people designing them. In my notes on the document you sent, I've made a few suggestions for ways in which some additional stakeholders can be involved, but more work is needed by someone more familiar with the city.

The important elements of change and development are: planning (vision, goals, targets, strategies), resources (money, staff, materials), power (leadership, political will, participation), capacity building (training, collaboration, commitment), implementation (initiatives, project management, execution), monitoring & evaluation, communication, and ongoing management. The committees you have established have many of these functions, but there are a few which could be supplemented.

The Structures

“You already have a good structure here. Don’t overdo it.”

- Sheila Carruthers

Generally, the feedback on the structures was positive. There were two prominent themes related to the discussion on the structures presented:

1. Each Committee needs to be further refined in its goals and objectives.
 - This work should be done by the Committee members themselves. The structures at this point have enough clarity of purpose to begin, but it will be up to the Committee members to work together to develop the specific direction, the 2008 workplans and the details of how these should be executed. This will lead to longer-term commitment from individuals and their organizations.
2. Committee structure
 - There was a lot of discussion of around hierarchical-versus-flat structure during the review. The consensus among was that given the nature of imagineCALGARY and the broad level of commitment and action that it requires, the flat nature of the imagineCALGARY structures are appropriate. The prominence of hierarchical structures lead people to gravitate to them as they are what people are used to, but aren’t best served to move action on the imagineCALGARY Plan.

Within a more flat structure, there are issues to be addressed such as – ensuring action across a dispersed group of actors, maintaining coordination amongst those actors and demonstrating progress.

In his book *Leading Change Toward Sustainability*, Bob Doppelt outlines the “Seven Blunders of Sustainability”. The first and most serious of the seven blunders is that patriarchal thinking leads to a false sense of security. According to Doppelt, “it creates an addiction to the directives of higher authorities and an abdication of personal responsibility.” In their current form, the imagineCALGARY Committees are meant to address this concern. With 44 Partner organizations to date, these structures need to encourage action by these independent organizations toward a shared direction in the imagineCALGARY Plan.

As an extension of this conversation, reviewers discussed whether imagineCALGARY should become a new, legal organization. The general consensus was that at this point, creating an imagineCALGARY organization would not be the most effective way to move forward. Laird Hamilton, an Edmonton-based lawyer who works with governance issues with organizations, described “Contracts of Affiliation” as an effective method for organizations to work together. In discussion, his view was that this would be a useful way of organizing imagineCALGARY. Issues of how to deal with money must be addressed and the imagineCALGARY team is investigating options currently.

There was discussion that potentially a Committee might be missing – one focused on monitoring, evaluation and feedback. This Committee could work with Partners to find ways to measure their progress, figure out how their actions are contributing to the overall goals and targets of imagineCALGARY, and pass the information along to the other committees. This is an issue that the Partners can discuss for consideration going forward.

Connecting the Committees – Gwen Hallsmith

To use more insight from a whole systems approach, there are a few practices and structures that can guide the relationships between the committees. When other systems are designed, especially complex systems, the designers try to insure what is known as equivalence in the way the system works. The principle of equivalence acknowledges the mutual importance of all the parts of the system on some level, even if the relative importance varies.

For example, in the Space Shuttle Challenger, the big powerful fuel tanks obviously had a lot more impact on the distance the ship would go, and managing the dangerous fuel inside was a top safety priority. But the humble O Ring, not a big, dangerous, and high-impact part, turned out to be as important as the fuel tanks for the mission's successful completion. So the principle of equivalence means that you need to find new ways for the O Rings of the world to have a voice.

You have already designed the committees to have some interlocking parts, which helps insure this equivalence, when you've asked members of each of the committees to serve on the Steering Committee. It can be increased, participants willing, by having cross-representation on all the committees, and by asking members of the Steering Committee who were not on the other committees to serve there as co-Chairs.

Another way to help insure equivalence is found in the way you manage the meeting discussions, decision-making, and elections. Practicing what is known as the Consent model, or Sociocratic decision-making can help insure that each committee member has a voice. This is especially important when youth are involved in otherwise adult ventures. There is some literature available on this, but it always helps to have some training because it does require that people change some of their assumptions about how they function in groups.

Making it work for the individuals involved

"It's really all about the people who are involved. They are the ones who will make this work."

- Sheila Carruthers

An important string of discussion was based around ensuring that being involved in the imagineCALGARY Committees is an opportunity for the individuals involved to develop – both personally and professionally. This is an important frame to use as we develop the orientation to start the Committees and as we develop the processes of how these Committees will operate and evolve. Key points from the review:

- The individuals that are coming forward and participating on these committees aren't volunteering; they're being paid by their employer. It's a social/community contribution and should be positioned and recognized as such
- In order for the organization to be willing to put these people at the table though, imagineCALGARY will have to address the WIIFM (what's in it for me) factor:
 - For the organizations – it's an ability to contribute to their community; it's a chance to have first cut at the work; it's a chance to receive profile
 - For the individuals involved it's leadership development; community contribution; professional development

- Put a memorandum of understanding into place with the organizations that you access or those that are providing resources to you (human or otherwise), so that there are clearly laid out expectations and deliverables on both sides.
 - Make the objectives small and therefore manageable. Also, this way if things aren't done for some reason, progress can still occur.
- Need to constantly reward the most active folks
- Treat individuals on the Committees like VIPs.
- Have an early discussion of what they/imagineCALGARY is looking for
- Its important to establish a good process from the beginning because it will net you enthusiasm, appreciation and professionalism
- See if individual's imagineCALGARY involvement can be integrated into their performance reviews

Getting the structures up and running

“Leadership is the most important first step. Build this into your launch of the Committees.”

- Jane McRae

Reviewers discussed some of the next steps to think about – how to launch the Committees and what considerations should go into developing the processes for the Committees.

Kicking things off - thoughts

- Leadership is crucial - pick ½ a dozen influential Partners in various areas; non profit, business, government to stand up and declare their intention to participate/contribute
- Have Partners deliver the message to other Partners
- Ensure the actions of the Committees are measurable/understandable
- The focus should be on getting charged up and excited. After a group session, follow up with folks individually.
- This needs a large group orientation
- Try to understand how the actors can relate to each other
- Need to understand Committee members' unconscious ideas of what alignment means and to have tolerance for other viewpoints. Need to explore what is beyond the boundaries of tolerance. In the end, this is more efficient as a group process.

Process considerations

- Start building their replacements from the outset – it creates more traction within each organization, but it also provides for a much more robust succession planning.
- Set schedules well ahead of time
- Need for strong facilitation. This is essential to keep the process moving.
- Going forward, try to build training into the regular meetings
- Their work with their home company will come first when push comes to shove
- With that in mind, set meetings that bridge personal and professional time (breakfast meetings, lunchtime meetings, end of the day meetings)
- Need a note-taker managing the action and information happening at meetings
- Ensure recognition (i.e. a letter from the Mayor/other significant individual)
- Need to establish varied channels of communications
 - Whatever is happening, it is communicated at a high level

Developing a workplan

The development of a Workplan, related resources and ensuring a coherent approach to creating action on imagineCALGARY. Two steps are needed: Ends-planning and Committee aligning.

Ends-planning: At the start of each fiscal year each Committee should engage in an "ends-planning" process. This involves looking out 5-10 years into the future and deciding where they want to be in the ideal at that time, then moving backwards from there to the closest approximation to the ideal that can be achieved in a year or so. Identify the staff and other resources needed to attain the closest approximation to the ideal that year, then repeat the process at the end of the year. The ideal vision should never be attained. Each time you attain the closest approximation to the ideal and begin the ends-planning process again the ideal should look altogether different. This is because you will have learned a great deal.

Committee Aligning: Each Committee should complete the ends-planning process and then each of the Committees should come together to merge, adjust and align their annual goals, resource needs. To achieve alignment each Committee should answer questions: a) What will it deliver this year to help imagineCALGARY achieve its vision and goals? b) What does each Committee need and expect from other Committees in order to produce its promised deliverables?

The deliverables each Committee says it will produce should include clear and measurable outcomes, budgets and resource needs. This information should be shared with all other Committees leading to an iterative process of learning and exchanging ideas on how resources can be best provided. The goal should be to help each Committee understand what others are doing and what others need of them to produce their deliverables

Key Questions to answer going forward

Decision-making

To be effective, a decision-making process must have clarity on two key issues; the type of decision being made, and the role each person and each element of the organization will play in making decisions. Clarifying the type of decisions allows each person involved and each committee to get clear about their level of involvement in the decision making process. Deciding on the specific roles each person/committee will play clarifies the level of influence they will have. It is always best to clarify these issues up front. This needs to be done. Additionally, the mechanism of how to make the decision needs to be determined.

Media & Profile

Keep in mind, that a launch may not be as important as the effort to continually keep the program in the public's eye. Performing a regular series of high profile symbolic events, giving awards and in other ways keeping the program in the public eye will be critical to success. With this in mind, the media should also play an important role – it's a way to reach people who might be outside of the more social channels. More resources may be required to connecting with media. The Communications Committee could look at a variety of methods to achieve media profile. Gwen described one model of Edutainment that's being done in many parts of the world – creating real TV shows that use drama as a way to illustrate the importance of, for example, preventing AIDS, or using birth control, or reporting child and spousal abuse, or reducing our carbon footprint.