

The Whitehorse Strategic Sustainability Plan

DIVERSE LOCAL ECONOMY

CULTURAL IDENTITY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

THRIVING ENVIRONMENT

EQUITY

LEADERSHIP

EDUCATION



Growing a Sustainable Whitehorse





Gas Tax Fund
Fonds de la taxe sur l'essence

Federal gas tax funds at work in your community.
*Les fonds de la taxe fédérale sur l'essence à l'oeuvre
dans votre communauté.*



Growing a Sustainable Whitehorse

September 2009

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Letter from the Mayor

Dear Resident

I'd like to welcome you to the City of Whitehorse's Strategic Sustainability Plan. As our city continues to attract new residents, businesses, and infrastructure, the need for a long-term strategy to respect our environment, values and lifestyle while accommodating new growth is clear.

In the following pages you will learn about the principles of sustainability that the City of Whitehorse values and the actions we are and will be taking as our community moves towards being a sustainable community.

Our Strategic Sustainability Plan is a strategy that was developed by our community for our community in 2007 and creates a vision that will guide us over the next 50 years. It considers our economy, our identity, as well as our environment and it will be up to us to ensure that the Whitehorse we all have chosen to call home thrives as a sustainable community into the future.

Thank you for joining us on what is proving to be an exciting journey.



Bev Buckway.
Mayor, City of Whitehorse

“Sustainability means living within the Earth’s Limits. It means living in a world where feeding people does not necessitate polluting ground water and coastal shorelines. Where transporting people and goods does not mean polluting our air and changing our climate. Where heating our homes and powering our industries does not require vast amounts of polluting fossil fuels. **Sustainability means doing things better – not doing without.**”

David Suzuki, Foreword to Sustainability Within a Generation 2004

The Process

How was the Strategic Sustainability Plan developed?

2005 – Government of Canada signs the Gas Tax Agreement, which provides funding from federal gas tax revenues to Canadian municipalities to be used in capacity building, planning and infrastructure.

2006 – The City of Whitehorse and Yukon Government agree to work together on gas tax funding and projects.

2007 – The City of Whitehorse develops its Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP), which lays out its priorities for sustainable projects to be funded by gas tax. In December, the Yukon Government Review Committee approves the City's ICSP.

2007 – As part of its ICSP, the City decides to develop a seven year Strategic Sustainability Plan as a guiding vision to ensure the municipality moves towards a sustainable future. To ensure that this was an open and engaging process that would result in a “living” document, the City engaged local residents in developing this Plan.

October 2007 – The City hosts a four day Sustainability Charrette to drive the creation of the Strategic Sustainability Plan.

December 2008 – City Council approves and adopts the Strategic Sustainability Plan.

2009 – Implementation of the Strategic Sustainability Plan begins, as initial key targets are met. Monitoring and reporting on progress of the Plan is ongoing through the Whitehorse See-It site. (online at whitehorse.ca)

Charrette Background

The City of Whitehorse held a Sustainability Charrette in October 2007 at the Mount McIntyre Recreation Centre. The purpose of a Charrette is to bring together City staff, experts in key subjects, and local residents in a comprehensive planning process to envision the future together.

The Sustainability Charrette was a key part of developing the Strategic Sustainability Plan. Over four days of workshops and visioning exercises, principles of sustainability were developed, and issues and action items were identified. These sustainability principles were used to guide the strategies and actions that became the Strategic Sustainability Plan, which can be found online at whitehorse.ca. This document is a summary of the Plan. On the following pages you will find the principles (the “roots” of the tree) of sustainability, as well as the strategies and actions that will guide the City into the future as a sustainable community.

Key Initiatives

1995 – Joined Partners for Climate Protection Program

2002 – Endorsed Kyoto Protocol with other Municipalities

2002 – Official Community Plan emphasizes sustainability

2004 – Local Action Plan to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

2005 – Whitehorse Moves and Transportation Showcase and Road Diet

2007 – Whistle Bend Sustainable Neighbourhood Design (award winning)

2007 – Developed Integrated Community Sustainability Plan for gas tax funding

2008 – Strategic Sustainability Plan adopted by City Council

2008 – Feasibility Study of District Heating System in Whistle Bend

2008 – Developed Comprehensive Zoning for the new neighbourhoods of Takhini North, Stan McCowan, Ingram, and Whistle Bend

2009 – Developing Climate Change Adaptation Plan with local partners

2009 – Energy efficiency amendments to Building and Plumbing Bylaw

2009 – City-wide composting and waste diversion program

City of Whitehorse Vision and Values

The City of Whitehorse hosted a visioning session in May 2007 to identify what the vision for the City of Whitehorse is. This vision and the following values were reconfirmed during the Sustainability Charrette.

“Whitehorse will be a well planned self sustaining community that is a leader in energy conservation and innovation that maintains and conserves wilderness spaces for future generations. Whitehorse will continue to strive for a better quality of life that is reflected in its vibrant economy and social life.”

May 23, 2007, Community Value and Visioning Session, Hi Country Inn

Whitehorse Residents Value a Sense of Community

Whitehorse has a small town feel and yet offers many larger city services. People are friendly and involved in the community. There is a high level of community involvement. Residents value the uniqueness of our community and celebrate the diversity of our people.

Whitehorse Residents Value Their Quality of Life

Whitehorse is a safe community that offers a balanced lifestyle. Residents of Whitehorse value the opportunities to be challenged in their work and recreate nearby. We value the intergenerational mix of our population, access to health care and the educational opportunities available.

Whitehorse Residents Value the Natural Beauty and the Closeness to Nature

The Yukon River runs through Whitehorse and our city is surrounded by mountains. Our residents value the nearby access to the wilderness. Residents value the wildlife, green spaces and trails in our neighbourhoods and the connections to other neighbourhoods. We value clean air and clean water.

Whitehorse Residents Value Leadership

Whitehorse has world class recreational, cultural and educational facilities. We are leaders in business, science, culture and sports. We are proud of our accomplishments and support innovators and new ideas.

Whitehorse Residents Value the Contributions of First Nations

The Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwach'an Council have Final and Self Government Agreements. We value the First Nations' culture, traditions and governments. We value and respect their stewardship of the land. Whitehorse residents value the participation and contribution of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwach'an Council and their people.

Whitehorse Residents Value our Vibrant Arts and Cultural Community

Whitehorse residents are proud of our heritage and the numerous community events and celebrations that we enjoy. We value and support our many artists. We celebrate their unique and diverse works and performances. We value the cultural facilities, which attract outside artists to perform and exhibit in our city.

Whitehorse Residents Value Local Businesses

Whitehorse residents value the ability to shop locally and support local businesses. Whitehorse residents are proud of Whitehorse/Yukon based businesses.



“The future is not some place that we are going, but one that we are creating. The paths to it are not found but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.”
– Anonymous

Principles

These are the seven principles that guide the City of Whitehorse's Strategic Sustainability Plan. Each Sustainability Principle provides a basis from which the City of Whitehorse will make decisions for the future. Each principle is also a theme for specific strategies and actions for the City over the next seven years.

THRIVING ENVIRONMENT: Stewardship of the natural environment and recognition of its intrinsic value and importance for quality of life.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Decisions on development, land use, infrastructure, energy and transportation shall be integrated to minimize our ecological footprint.

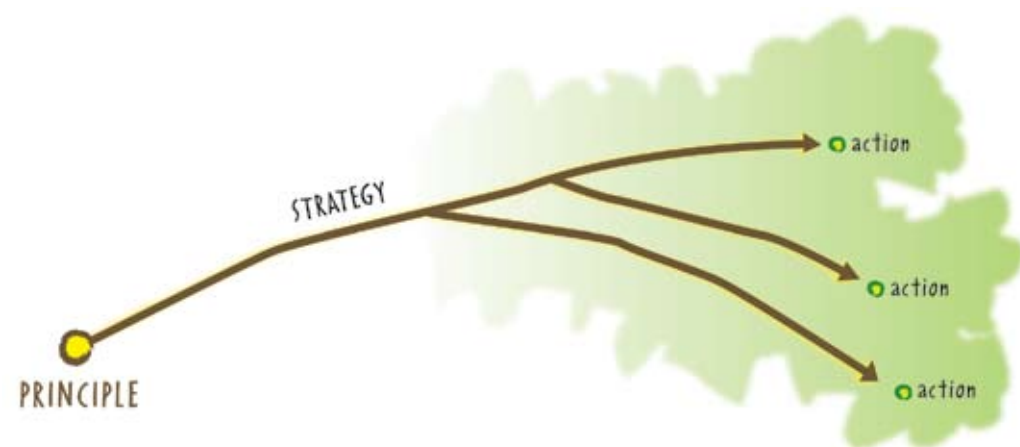
LEADERSHIP: Long-horizon community leadership true to our principles of sustainable development and global responsibility.

DIVERSE LOCAL ECONOMY: A vibrant, diverse local economy that encourages self-sufficiency uses resources efficiently and creates inter-generational wealth.

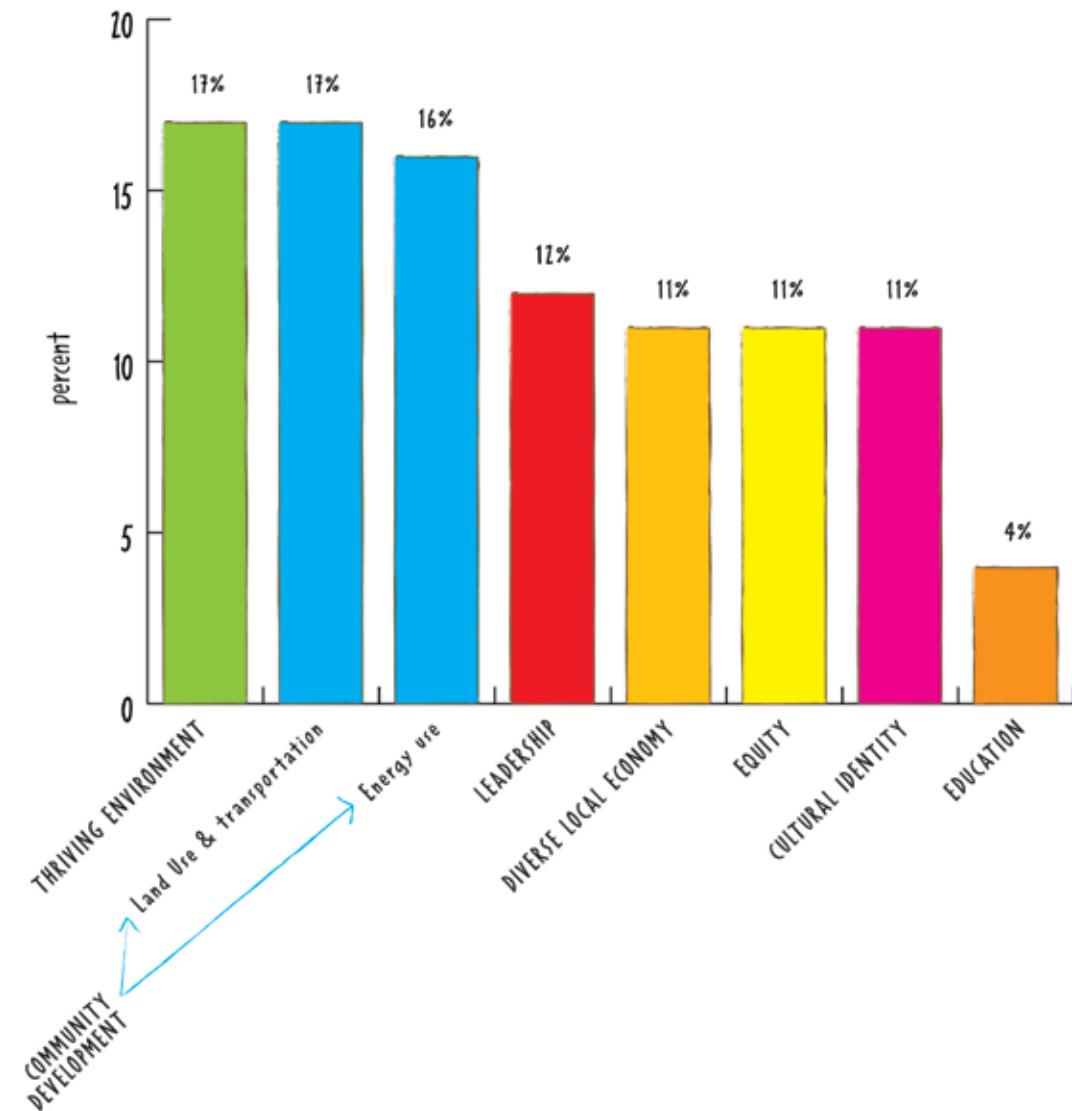
EQUITY: Value equity, fairness, and inclusiveness in our community relationships.

CULTURAL IDENTITY: We celebrate cultural diversity that strengthens the uniqueness of our northern community.

EDUCATION: Empower every generation to entrench sustainability in education with the benefit of shared northern knowledge.



During the Sustainability Charrette, participants rated their priorities as follows:



Strategic Sustainability Plan 2015

See if the City of Whitehorse is reaching our targets by visiting the City of Whitehorse website at www.whitehorse.ca (go to Sustainability Plan See-it™.)

The Whitehorse Strategic Sustainability Plan

- Support YTG in the development of air quality standards
- Continue anti-tiding policy
- Improve emissions standards for City buses

Improve air quality

- Explore a District Heating System (DHS)
- Decrease fossil fuel use for new City buildings
- Support alternative energy sources

Diversify renewable energy production

- Develop a baseline of Whitehorse energy use
- Implement energy efficiency requirements in bylaw
- Reduce energy demand required by City infrastructure

Improve energy efficiency

- Ensure the OCP is based on the sustainability principles
- Promote flexible & affordable housing
- Ensure the City is operating in an open & transparent manner

Ensure a sustainable community

- Develop flexible design standards & land use regulations that are appropriate to the needs of the citizen while ensuring sustainable development
- Develop incentives to promote change towards a sustainable community

- Use existing climate change studies in decision making
- Develop local climate change adaptation plan

Provide flexible & appropriate zoning regulations

- Facilitate partnerships with arts & culture community
- Directly support local arts & culture community and artists

Improve transportation

- Improve public transit system & increase ridership
- Continue traffic calming
- Increase pedestrian & bicycle transportation options

ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION

Ensure infrastructure is adaptive to climate change

- Support arts & culture
- Foster community spirit & identity
- Promote active living

Promote tourism

- Support local food production
- Promote a sustainable economy

- Support local agricultural initiatives
- Ensure agricultural use is provided for & permitted in the OCP & Zoning Bylaw

- Develop plans to focus economic strategies & promote sustainable development

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- Implement the water & sewer study
- Meet or exceed YTG standards
- Create a green space plan

Protect water resources

- Protect & use green space
- Solid waste action plan
- Implement green procurement policy
- Achieve community waste targets

Achieve Zero Waste

- Ensure all City public buildings are universally accessible by 2015
- Achieve universal design through bylaws, regulations & partnerships
- Ensure public transit is accessible

- Encourage childcare facilities in residential and commercial zones
- Increase access to healthcare facilities and promote healthy lifestyles
- Continue to develop programs to ensure affordable access to City facilities
- Promote diversity & quality of life in City workforce

Meet basic human needs

- Develop partnerships
- Reorganize City administration structure to deliver sustainable services
- Engage all citizens & cultures in community planning

Integrate participatory planning & decision-making

- Develop an effective information sharing & communication plan by 2010
- Integrate sustainability in City practices
- Incorporate best practices in City operations
- Increase & develop education programs that promote sustainability
- Develop an information sharing plan

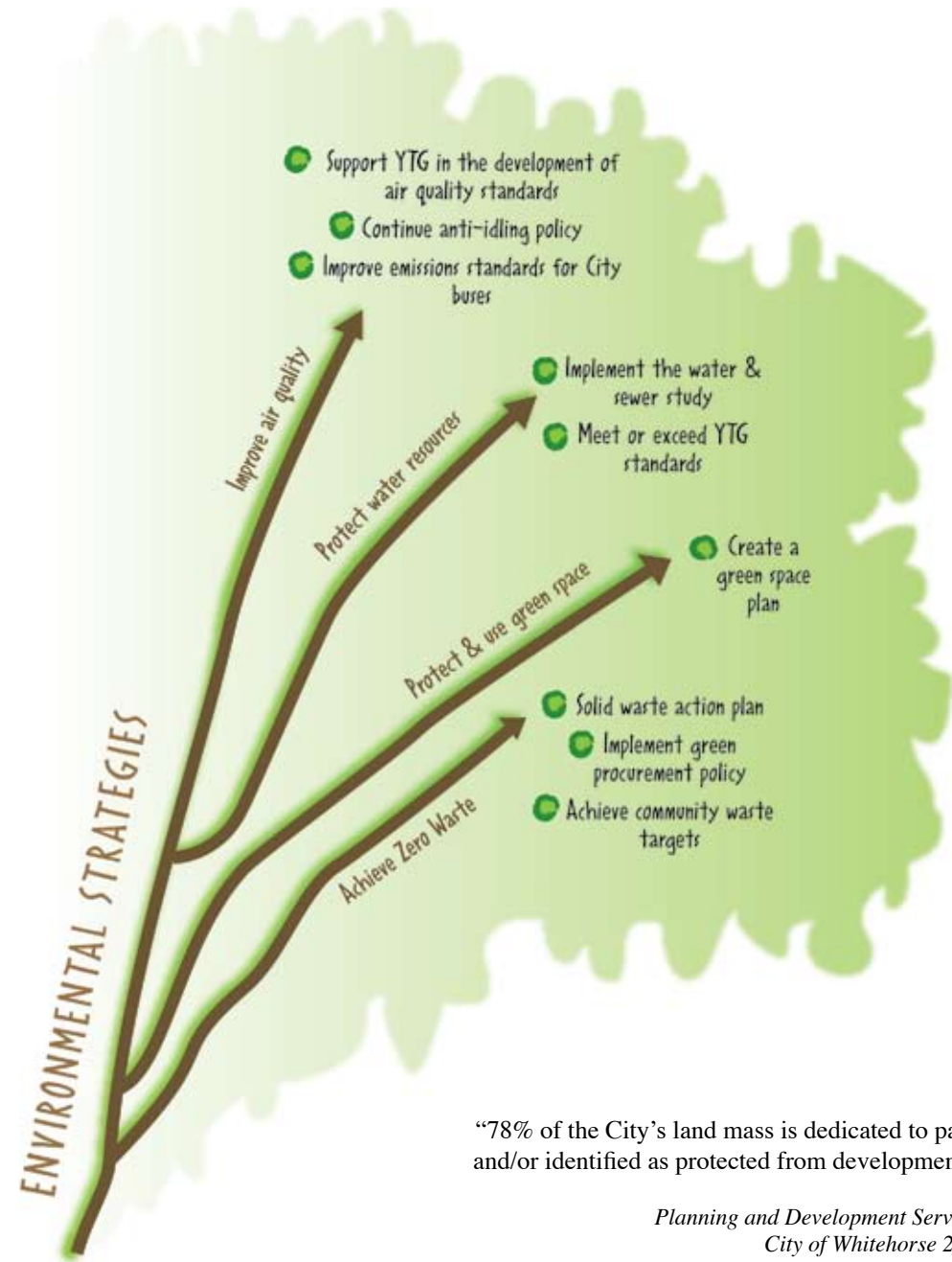
Promote sustainability education

- City becomes leader in sustainability
- Share northern knowledge



Principle **Thriving Environment**

Stewardship of the natural environment and recognition of its intrinsic value and importance for quality of life.



“Canadians are among the highest users of water in the world, using twice as much per capita as the average European. Despite emerging threats to water security such as climate change, pollution and increasing urbanization, most Canadians do not consider water quantity an issue. Because of our relative abundance of water, conservation is seen as a well-intentioned activity, but not a necessity.”

Polis Project on Ecological Governance, UVIC 2006



“Whitehorse residents value our closeness to the wilderness. Residents value the wildlife, green spaces and trails in our neighbourhoods and the connections to other neighbourhoods. We value clean air and clean water.”

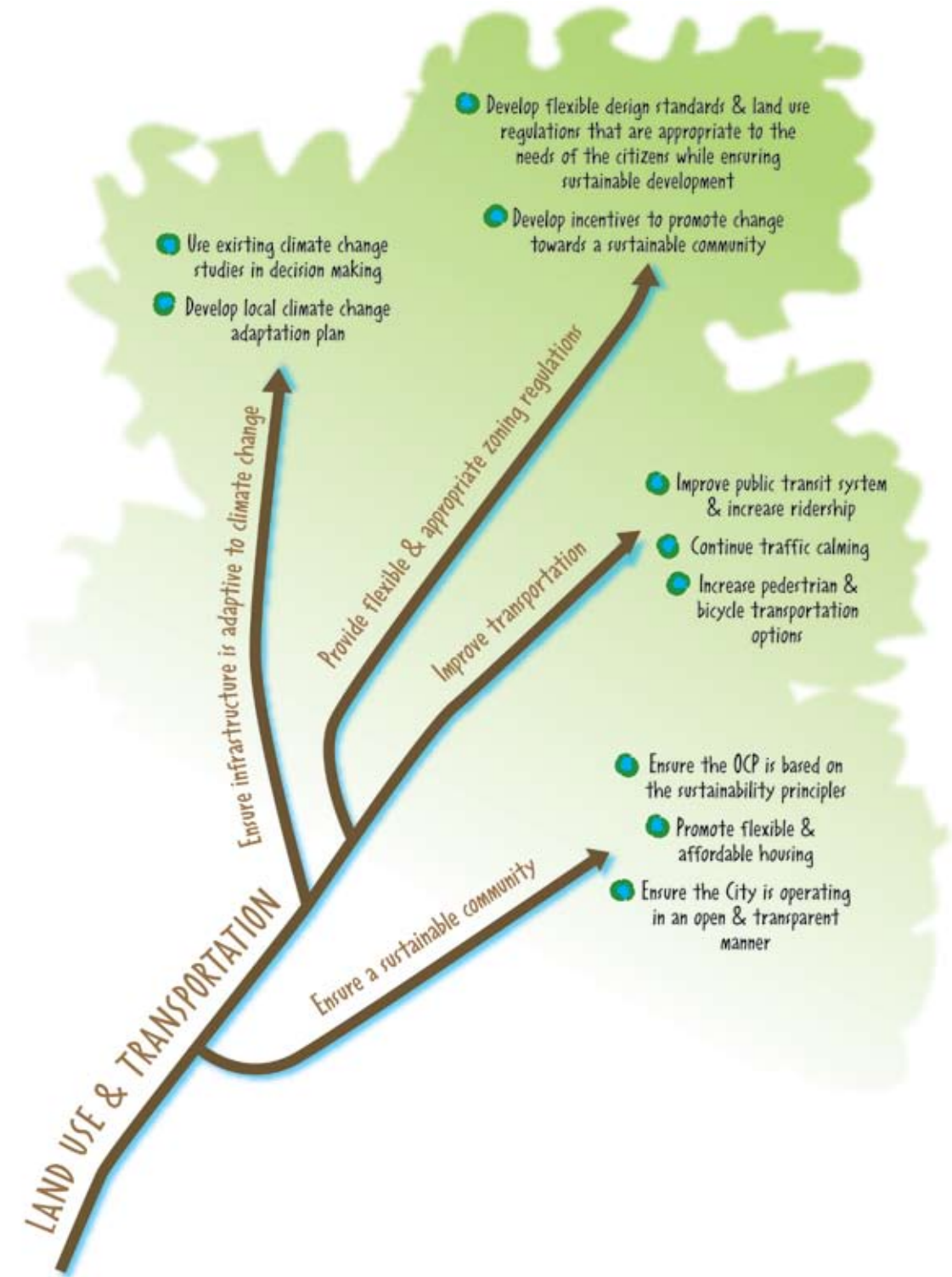
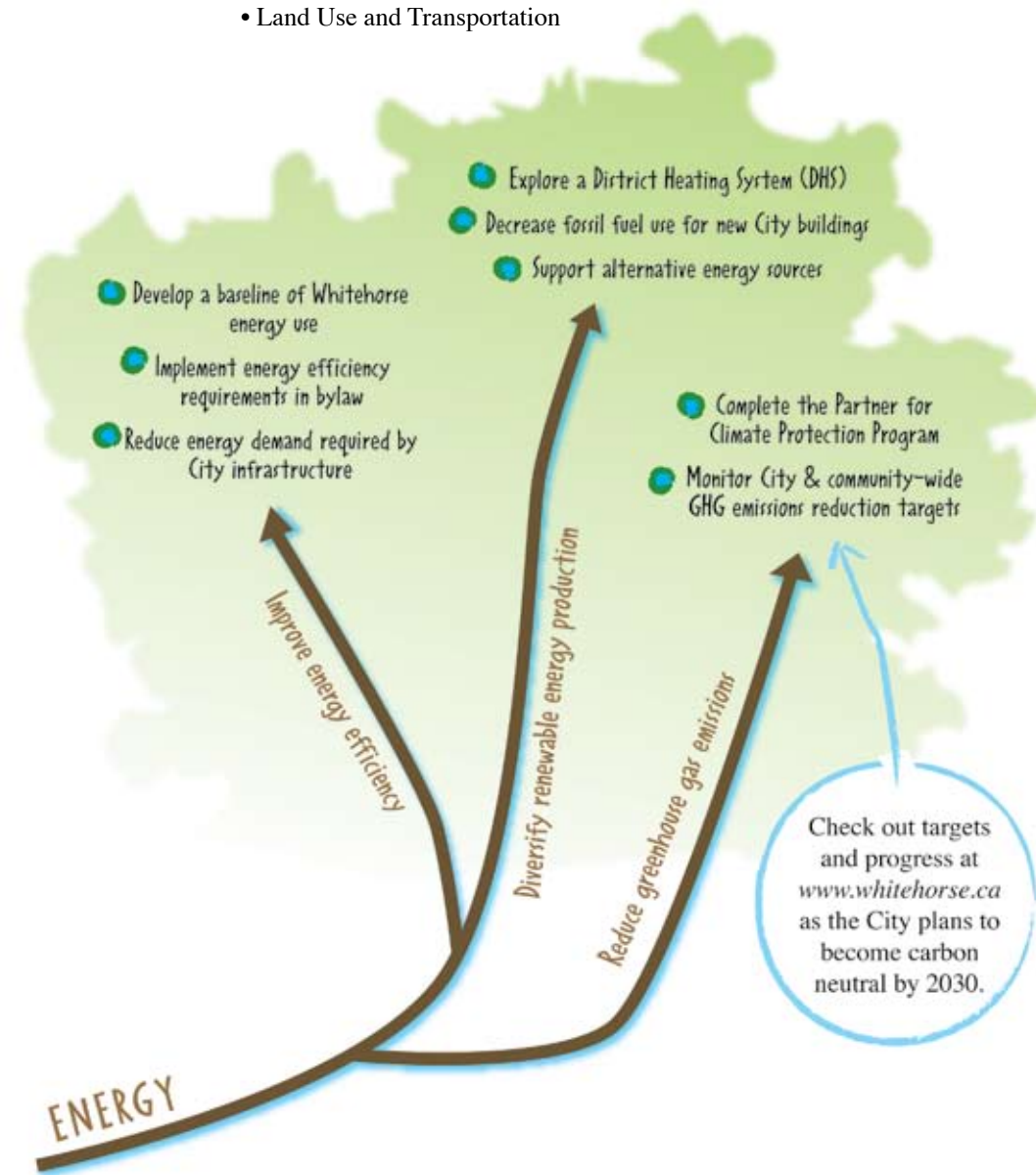
May 23, 2007 Value and Visioning Session

Principle Community Development

Decisions on development, land use, infrastructure, energy and transportation shall be integrated to minimize our ecological footprint.

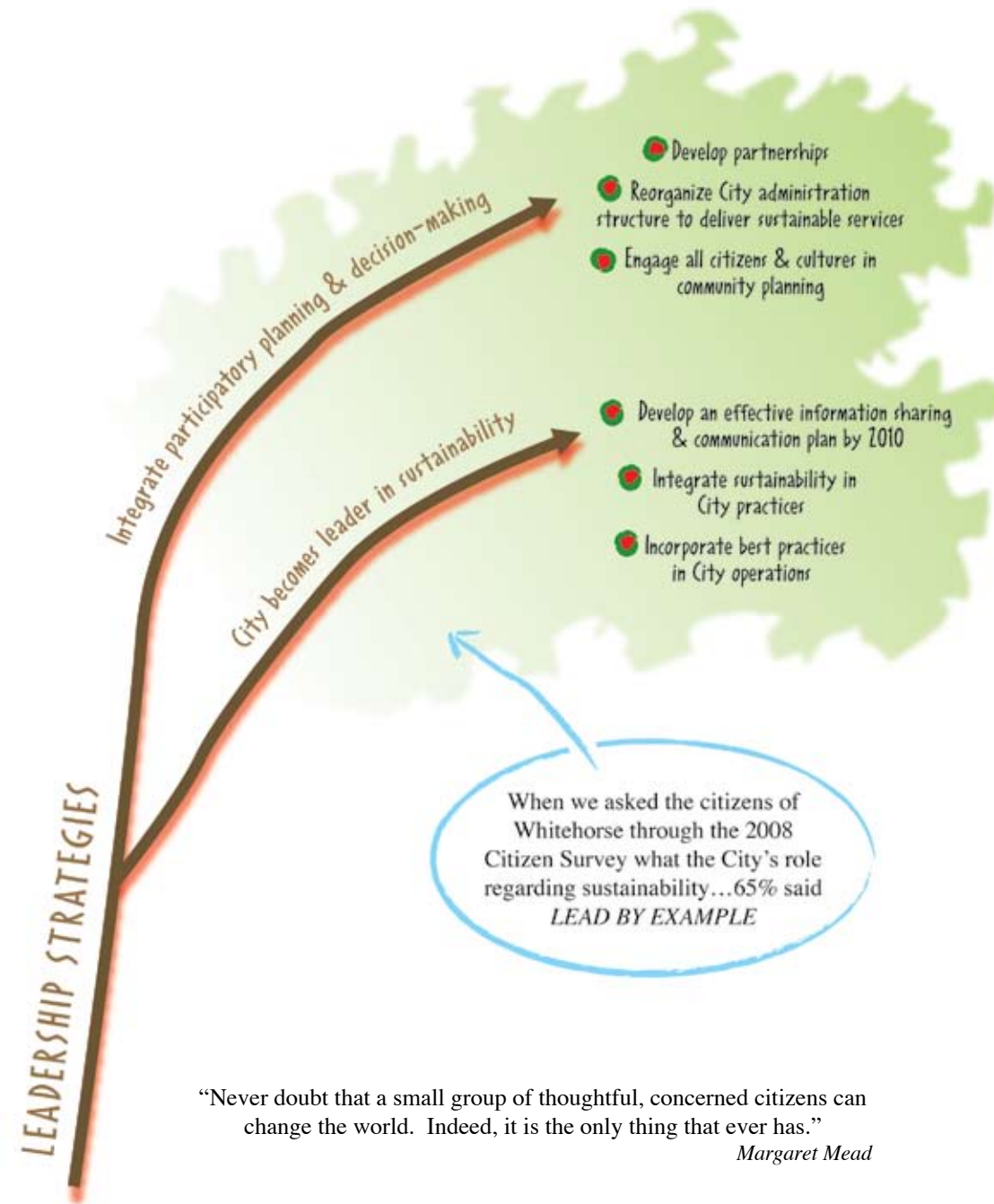
This principle was divided into two themes at the Charrette as the scope of community development is large. The themes became:

- Energy
- Land Use and Transportation



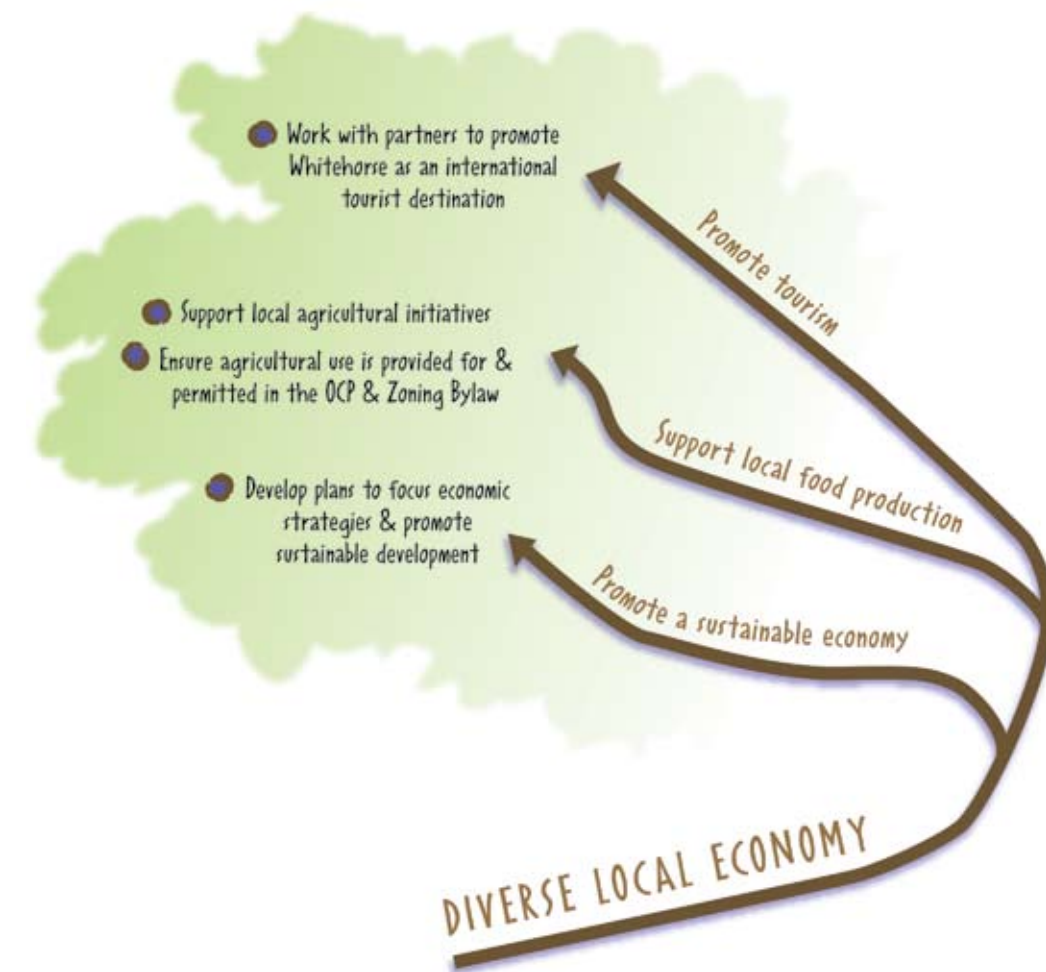
Principle Leadership

Long-horizon community leadership true to our principles of sustainable development and global responsibility.



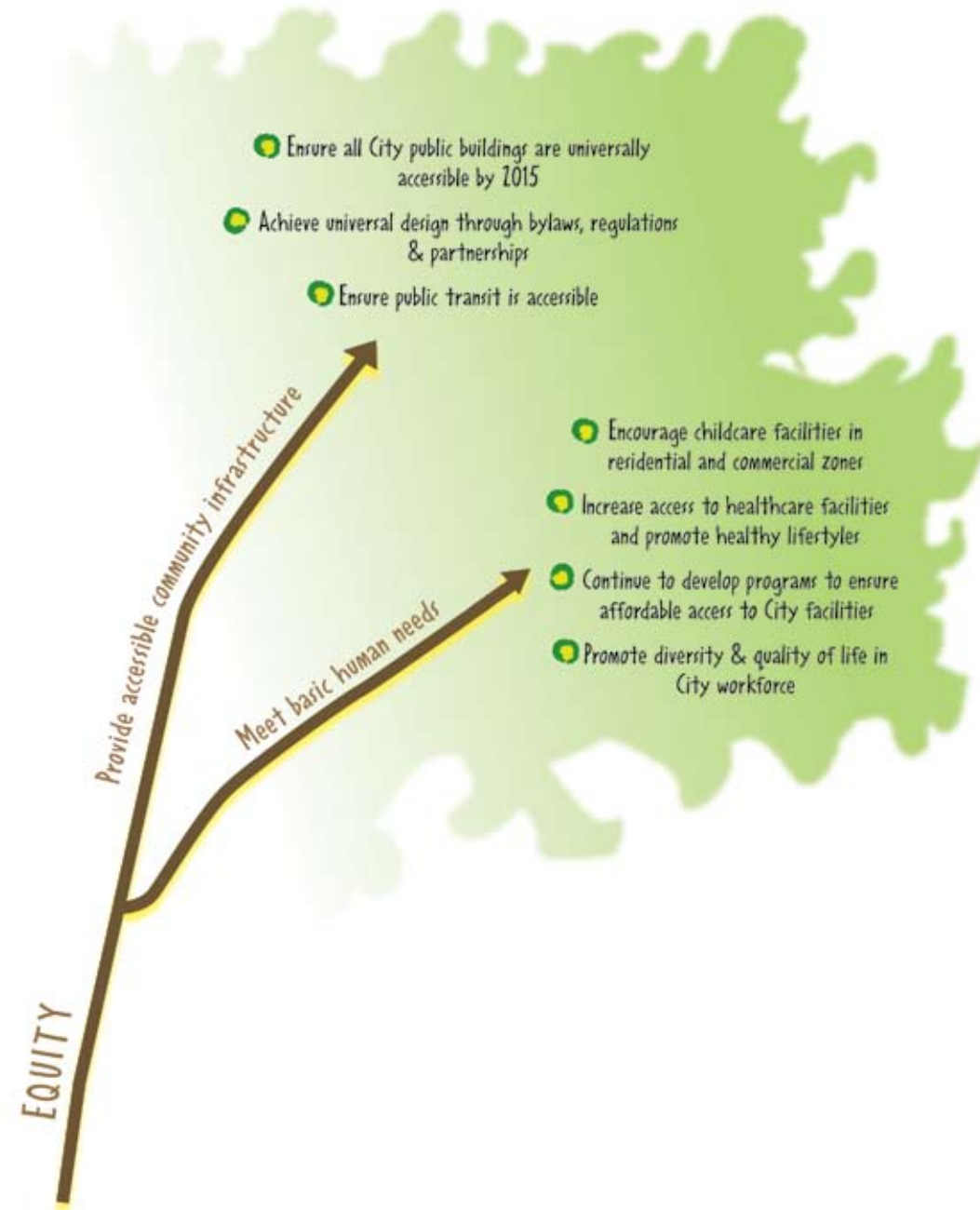
Principle Diverse Local Economy

A vibrant, diverse local economy that encourages self-sufficiency uses resources efficiently and creates inter-generational wealth.



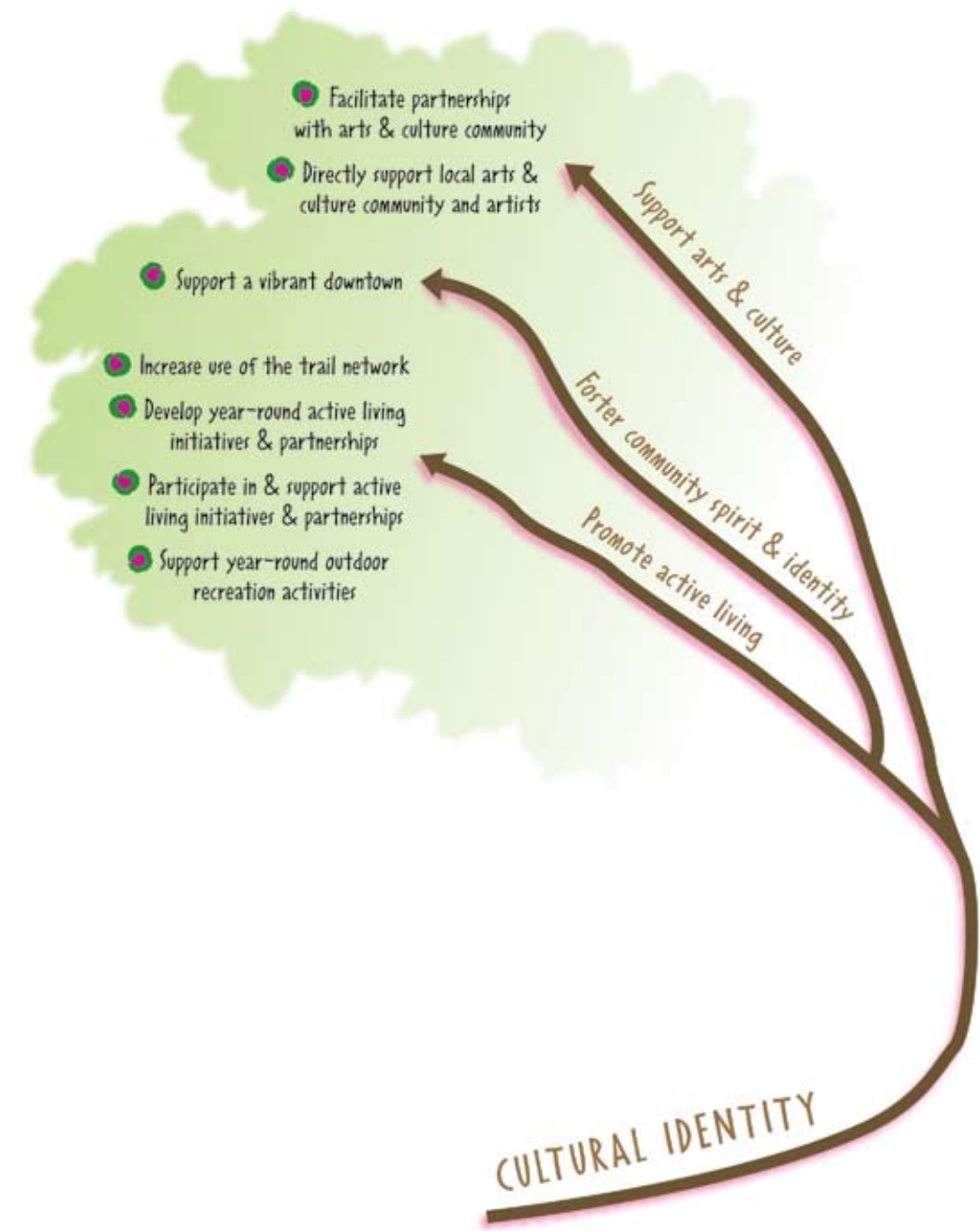
Principle Equity

Value equity, fairness, and inclusiveness in our community relationships.



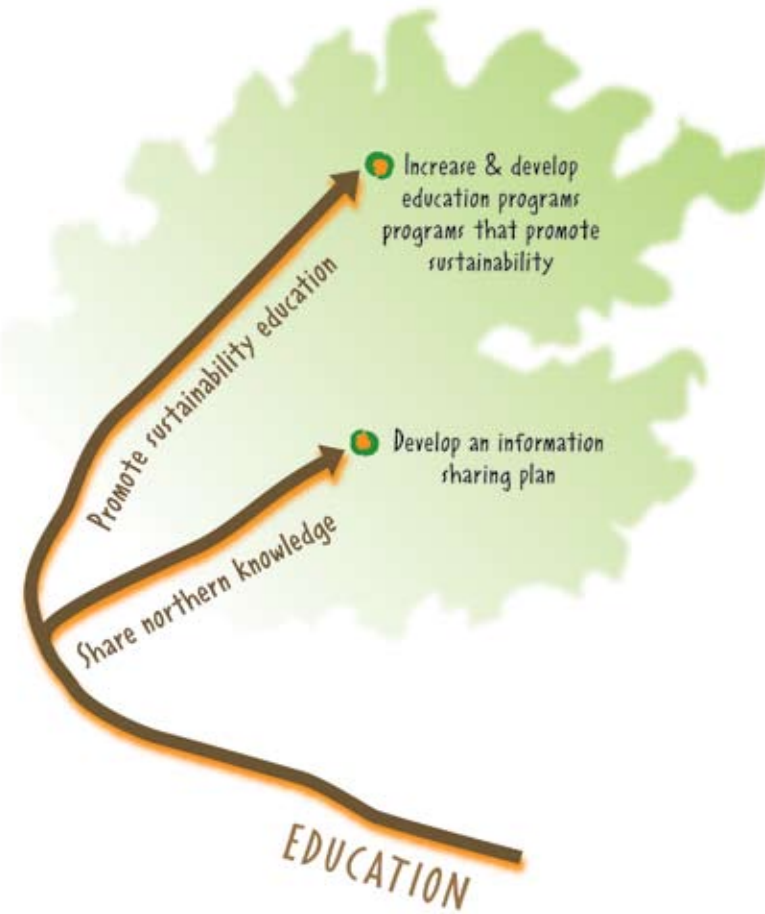
Principle Cultural Identity

We celebrate cultural diversity that strengthens the uniqueness of our northern community.



Principle Education

Empower every generation to entrench sustainability in education with the benefit of shared northern knowledge.



Implementation

The City of Whitehorse is committed to being a sustainable community. Many of the strategies are in place and being implemented. You can follow the progress on the City's website at www.whitehorse.ca.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is all our responsibility as citizens of Whitehorse to ensure we are making sustainable choices. The City of Whitehorse will lead our community through implementing this plan. The City of Whitehorse can only make legislative and policy changes to those areas of municipal jurisdiction that are handed down to the City through the Yukon Government Municipal Act.

Partnerships

It is the City's goal to continue to engage all our partners as we grow our sustainable community. Our partners include the federal, territorial and first nation governments. Our partners also include the many non-governmental organizations that play a significant role in our community as well as our business and educational communities.

Together we will make this happen.



