

Powering Possibility: Provincial and  
National Collaboration

# Social Change is Difficult, Change Across Scale Moreso

“ human endeavors are systems...we tend to focus on snapshots of isolated parts of the system. And wonder why our deepest problems never get solved. ” ~ Peter Senge

# Social Change is Difficult, Change Across Scale Moreso

- Key social issues exist in a complex system of systems
- We try to observe a thread running from ones' own practice as a changemaker, through community, municipality, province and onto structural, systemic level realities at the national level
- Aligning change efforts across scale means linking each level in appropriate ways

“If you’ve been to, worked with one community, you might partially know one community” ~ ABCD Wisdom

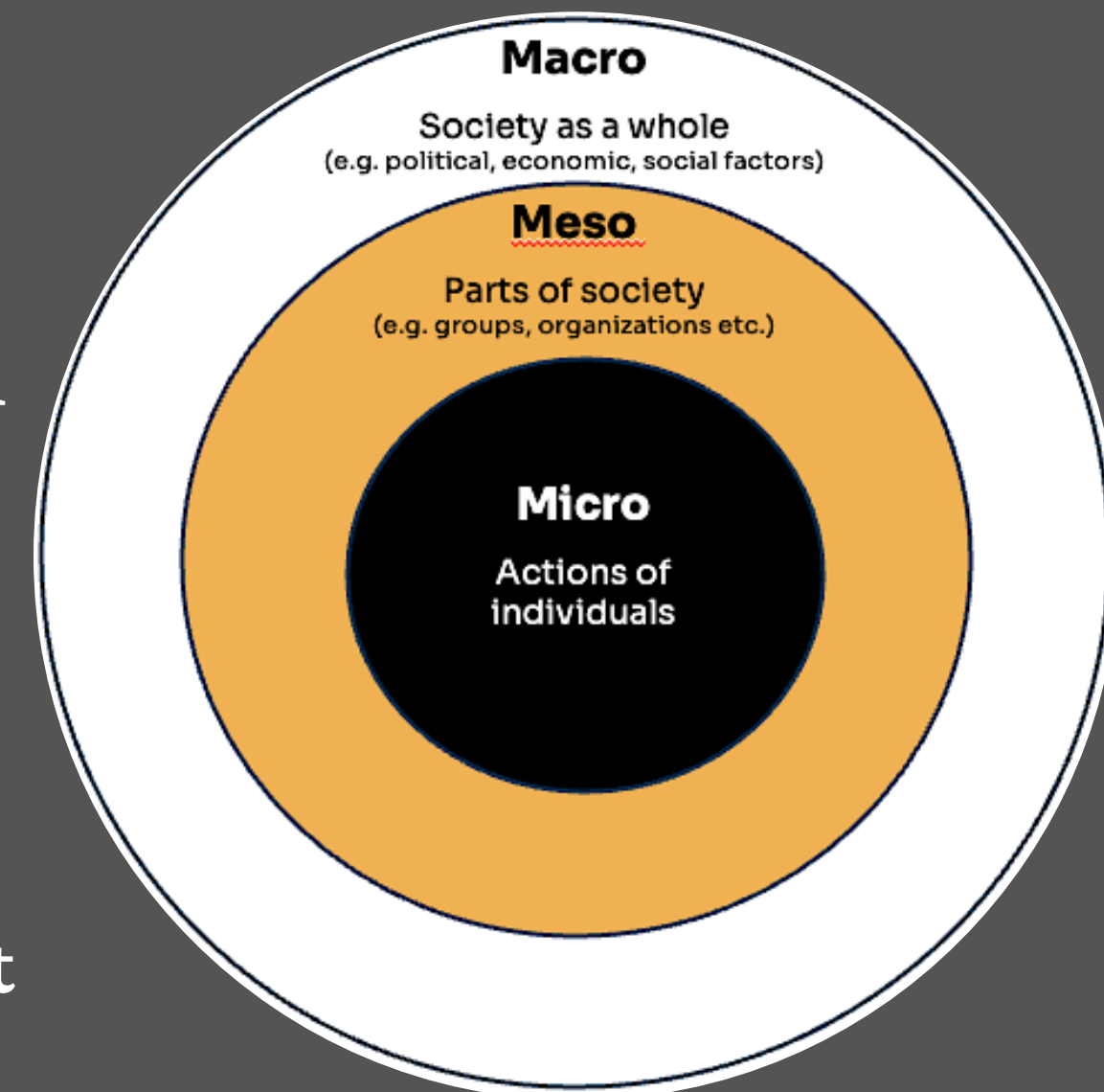


# Framing Change Efforts at Different Scales

**Micro/Me** – My own agency over my practice. I control this scale

**Meso/We** - Negotiate the meso together at the local/provincial levels. Governance is consensus driven, inclusive and focused on innovation, knowing across difference and responsiveness to community.

**Macro/Us** – Collaboration becomes collective voice. Advocacy, networking and consent-based governance animate this scale. It asks for compromise toward the greater good.



Conceptually, what does this look like?

### From Programs → Ecosystems

- Not just delivering services, connecting them via relationships and aligned strategy (Common Agenda)
- Bringing multiple actors and their flows of value into sync

### Infrastructure Matters (The Backbone)

- Local: Org coordination hubs, collaboratives, multisectoral collectives
- Regional: Tamarack Networks for Change
- National: Policy efforts and financial architecture → systemic shifts

## Relationships are Core Infrastructure (collaboration moves at the speed of trust)

- Trust, communication, shared learning
- Often more important than formal structures

## Scaling is Different to Replication

- Local models can adapt, as lived expertise creates immediate learning feedback loops
- Regional networks share this learning and build common patterns through sensemaking, measurement and critique
- National systems sustain and innovate enabling conditions and help to surface effective levers

# Framing Change Efforts at Different Scales

**This yields three connected layers of a social system**

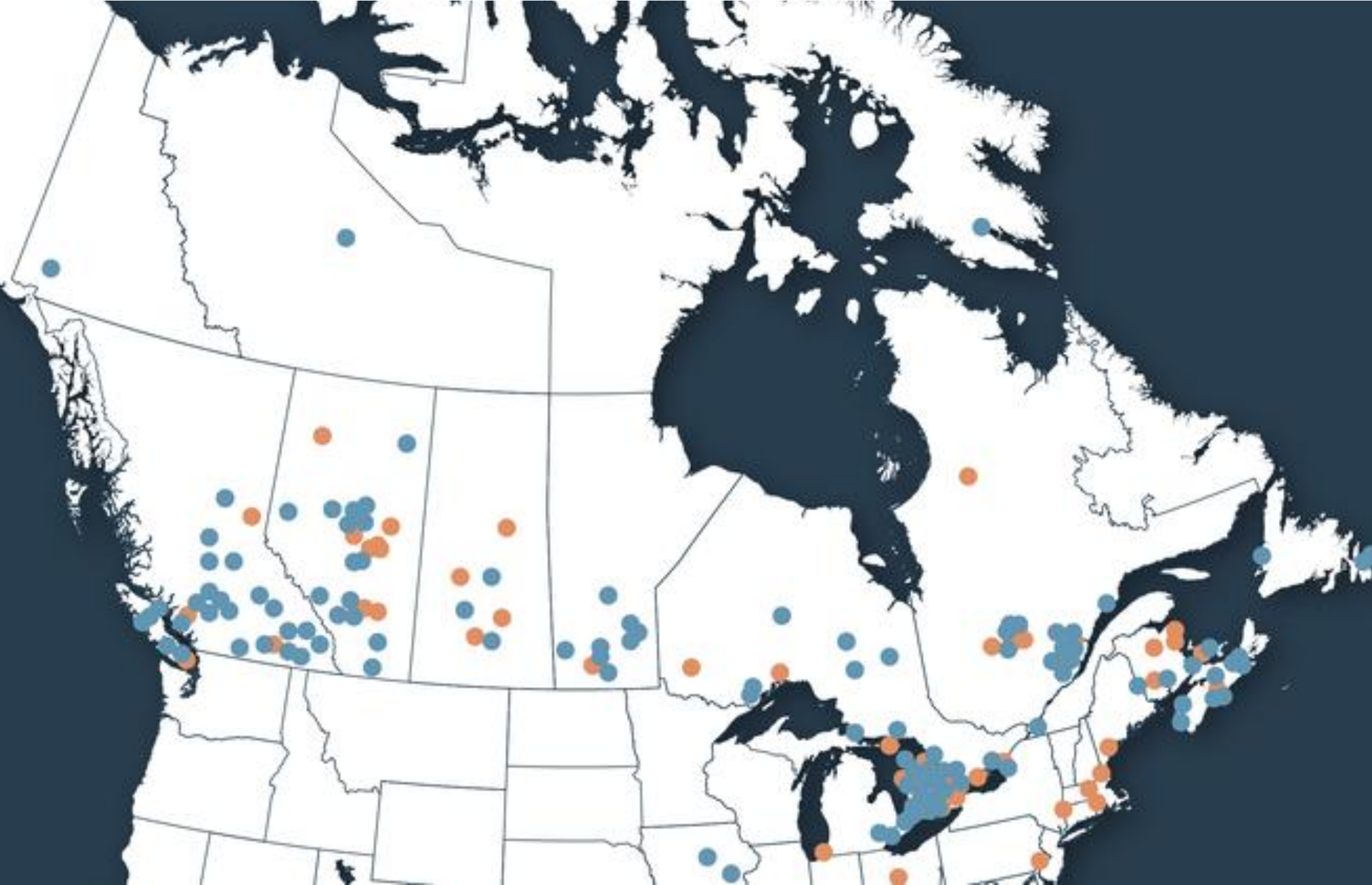
Local: relational density (who is connected, who is missing?)

Regional: learning systems (how does knowledge travel, who controls it?)

National: enabling conditions (what structures and policies support emergence and synchronicity?)



## WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?



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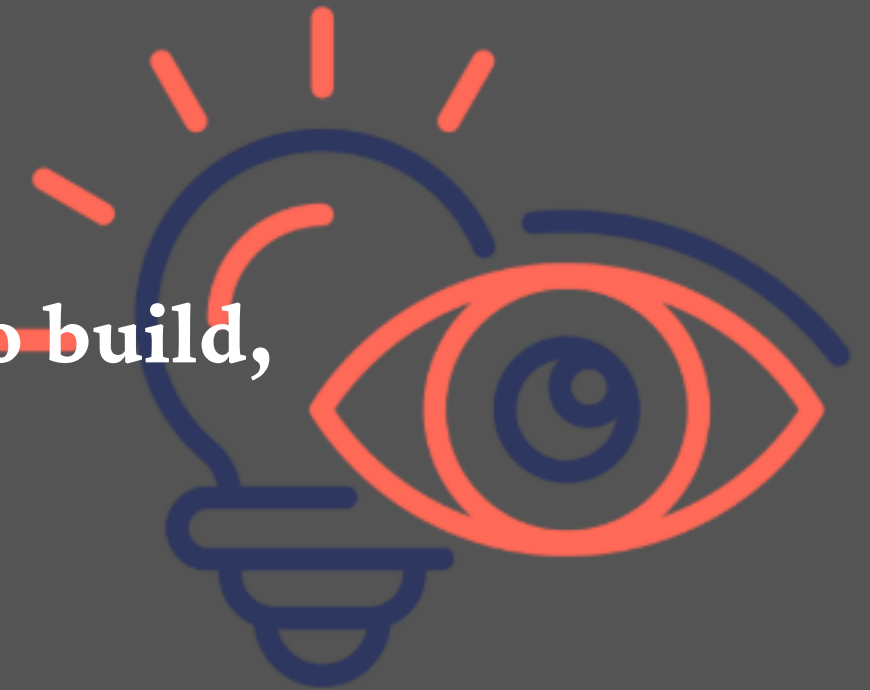
- Networks for Change
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# Calgary's Housing Success: Reversing Rental Cost Increases

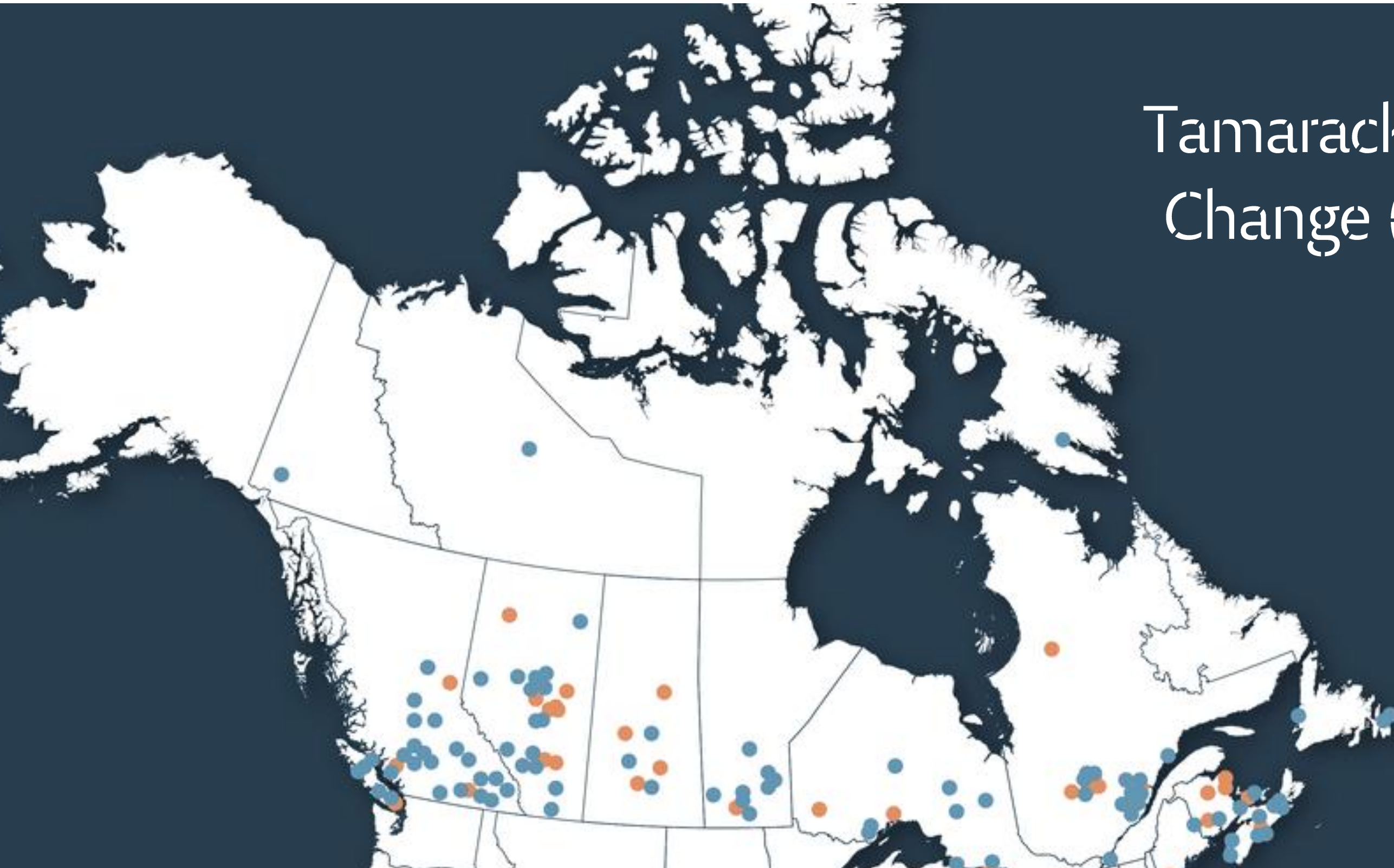


# Reversing rental increases through coordinated effort at scale



- **Calgary faced a rapid increase in housing costs, coupled with a sharp decrease in supply, 2021 – 2023**
- **Coordinated efforts at the community, municipality and provincial levels brought vacancy levels from a low of 1.4% to 4.9 in 2024**
- The city has made it easier for both non-profit and for-profit sectors to build, and developers have expanded their supply.
- The province has increased funding.
- Community organizations have provided critical research & data, advocacy, and support for new policies.



# Tamarack Institute: Networks for Change (Vibrant Communities)



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-  Networks for Change
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# Networks for Change – Weaving Change Efforts Together at Each Level

Tamarack supports 180 local collaboratives that bring together multisectoral partners and lived/living expertise to develop and lead place-based, multi-strategy community plans.

Local collaboratives are supported through four issue-based Networks for Change in Canada and the US: Communities Ending Poverty, Communities Building Belonging, Communities Building Youth Futures and Community Climate Transitions.

# Building and Sustaining a Place-Based Movement Ecosystems

## Building

- Creating a shared narrative
- Expanding the stakeholder base
- Centering lived experience
- Organizing field-level convenings
- Celebrating key milestones
- Engaging media and journalists

## Sustaining

- Codifying a methodology
- Capturing and disseminating learnings
- Hosting communities of practice
- Consulting, coaching and training

# Connecting and Weaving a System of Systems

## Connecting

- Creating shared definitions
- Developing shared metrics
- Collecting, analysing and sharing data, both 'numbers and narratives'

## Weaving

- Developing policy recommendations
- Augmenting government staffing
- Sub-granting to collectives
- Developing financing solutions

## What Can We Learn From This?

Navigate power dynamics to incorporate perspectives of people with lived experience

Tamarack has been deliberate about inviting people with lived experience to join leadership roundtables but has found that power dynamics often stifle the impact of their contributions.

Tamarack has amplified the voices of those with lived experiences as the critical, central expertise that enables adaptation, localization of changemaker tools (tinkering is important), and creation of ecosystems of change through relationality and trust.



## What Can We Learn From This?

### Incentivize funder involvement in the initiative

Tamarack maintains a practice of involving funders in the initiative beyond their direct financial contribution by encouraging participation in initiative convenings and organizing a community of practice where funders can share knowledge and develop expertise. Funders become part of the story, rather than just reporting on the story.



## What Can We Learn From This?


### Experiment with data and measurement - developmental evaluation

Finding that traditional forms of evaluation do not suffice to measure and improve complex community change, Tamarack has *also* embraced experiments with developmental evaluation. Real-time processing of information and “sense-making” of the feedback that distinguishes developmental evaluation from other forms of evaluation enables us to constantly fine tune adaptation at each level of scale



**THANK YOU 😊**

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