



CAPACITYCANADA

Rethinking Sustainability: Building What It Takes to Last

April 2026 Ideas Conference Keynote

From endurance to organizational capacity

Rethinking Sustainability



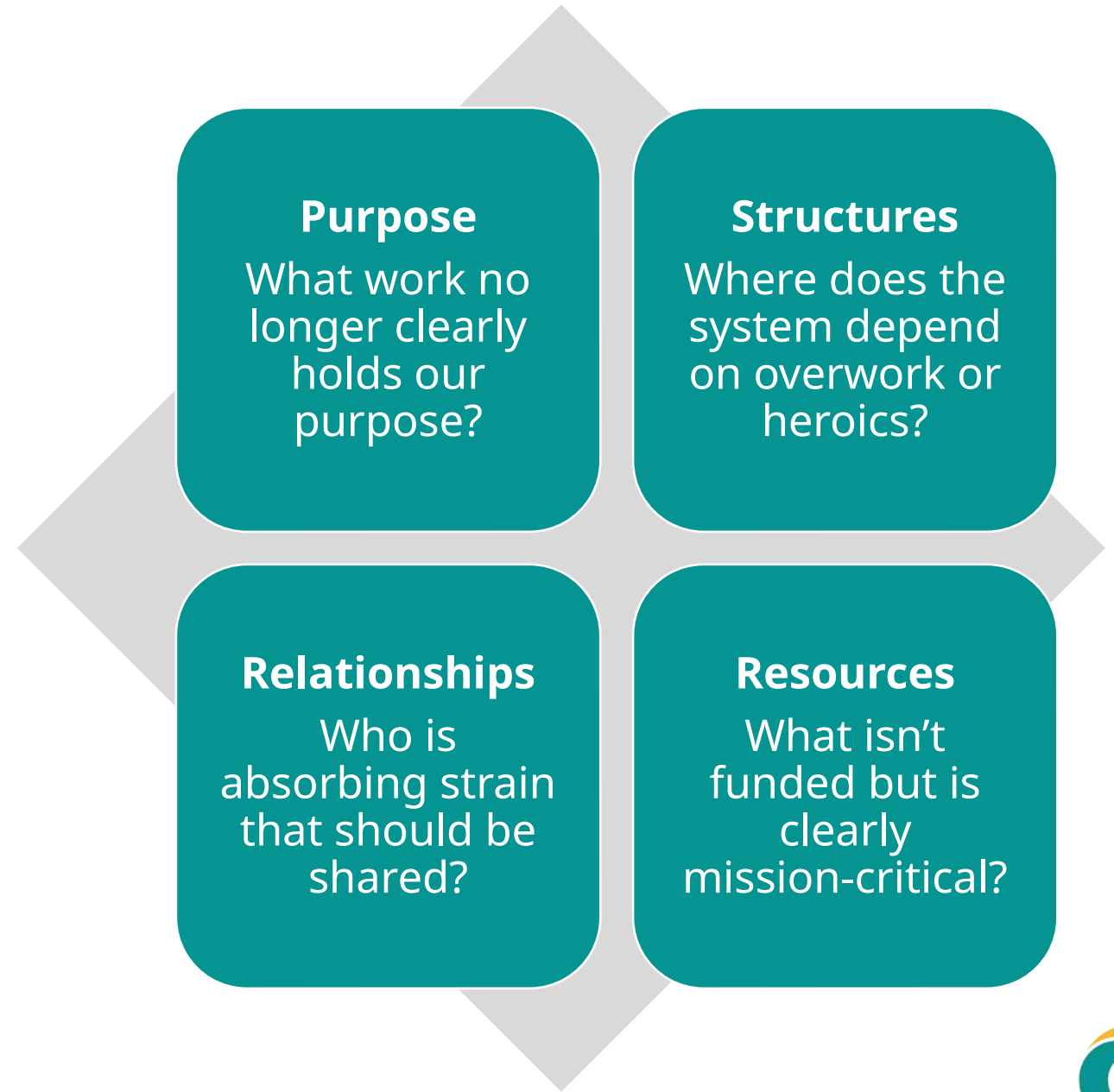
Opening Question



Where is commitment quietly compensating for missing capacity in your organization?



Sustainability Is a Capacity



Sustainability in Practice



Letting go to protect purpose

Sunsetting and merging work that no longer held mission clarity.



Designing for real workloads

Making hidden work visible and building recovery into the system.



Funding capacity to deliver

Paying for supervision, systems, and learning — not just outputs.

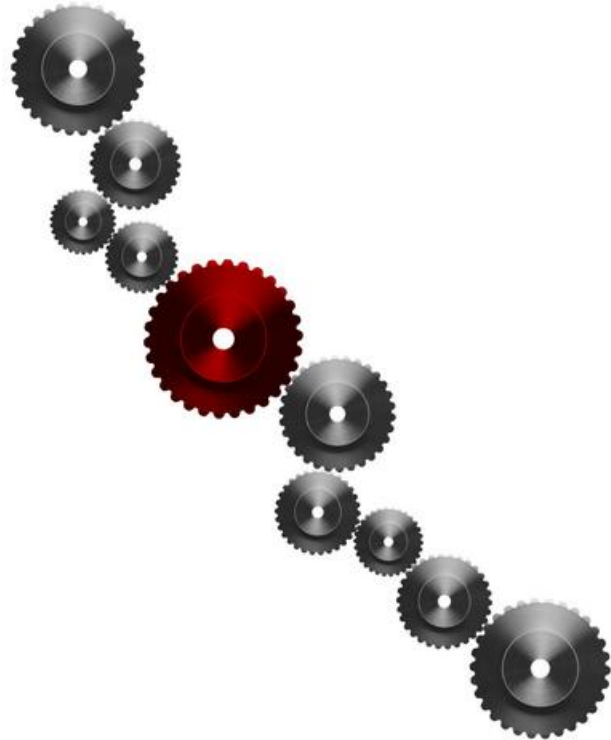


What These Stories Have in Common

- Sustainability eroded quietly before it became visible
- Commitment was compensating for missing design
- Redesign — not resilience — changed the trajectory
- Trade-offs became explicit
- Capacity was named and protected



From Organizational Stability to Adaptive Capacity



Reframing Sustainability

- Sustainability evolves from a static state to an active capacity to adapt and endure over time.

Adaptability Over Stability

- Emphasizing learning, responsiveness, and renewal is essential in changing environments.

Everyday Decisions Matter

- True sustainability depends on daily choices about work structure, resource allocation, and people support.

Investing in Capacity

- Focusing on strengthening capabilities prepares organizations for future challenges and lasting impact.



Some examples from Capacity Canada

Our Evolution



Sustainability Built Over Time

Started as Capacity Waterloo Region in 2009

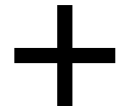
Intentional Investments in governance, partnerships and diversified support models

Sustainability: clarity of purpose, strong relationships and adaptive structures to scale capacity without losing organizational mission.



Partnerships That Strengthen Systems

Shared learning & trust built over time



Complimentary goals - Foundation and Nonprofit Alignment



Aligned partnerships can move beyond transactional funding to system-level impact

^L/_S **HALLMAN**
foundation

SCALABLEOPS
Finance • Human Resources • Fundraising





MatchBoard

Connecting Business and Nonprofits

- Business leaders are matched with nonprofits that align with their skills, interests, and leadership goals.

The Way It Works:

- Corporate employers enroll employees. Capacity Canada provides governance training and personalized support for effective board matching.

Fee-for-Service Sustainability

- Operates as a fee-for-service model leveraging governance expertise.

A Win Win Win Scenario

- Access to skilled board members
- Leadership growth and community engagement
- Aligning mission, market demand & organizational strengths



Final Thoughts

Rethinking Sustainability



From Resilient People to Sustainable Organizations

Designing Organizations That Endure

Limits of Individual Resilience

- Focusing on individual resilience can hide systemic issues and unfairly place responsibility on people.

Designing Sustainable Systems

- Sustainable organizations are designed to learn, repair, and renew continuously through feedback and adaptation.

Supporting People Through Systems

- Effective structures and policies help people perform their best work without chronic stress or sacrifice.

Achieving Lasting Impact

- By focusing on systems, organizations can create meaningful and enduring social impact beyond crisis management.



An Invitation to Lead for the Long Term

- What would we redesign if endurance was no longer rewarded?
- What capacity does our system most need right now?
- What small change could reduce hidden strain this year?





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Thank you

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