

# Developing Scenarios for Tamarack’s Ten Year Strategy

Working Document for Liz, Lisa, Paul and Mark

May 11, 2020

## A. INTRODUCTION

This document is an internal working document for use by Liz, Lisa, Paul and Mark to think about, discuss and write up strategies for Tamarack in different future scenarios for community-based action to address poverty and other complex issues in Canada over the next ten years.

## B. THE SCENARIOS

The following four scenarios are organized around the different ways that Canada might come out of the other side of the Pandemic.

Old Equilibrium	Scenario A – Snap Back & Adaptation	Paul Born
New Equilibrium	Scenario B – a Progressive Dream Scenario C – a Regressive Nightmare	Lisa
New Disequilibrium	Scenario D - The Long Emergency	Liz

The scenario descriptions are imperfect, written to reflect the very broad scenarios of what Canada might be post-Pandemic based on Mark’s ‘Uncertainty’ visual. Ideally, we would have simply used well crafted and thought through existing scenarios on this topic, such as the Zukunftsintstitute Corona Effect write up, but given the group liked the version I created, I had to crank about some more fulsome description to make it work based on what I had. So, again, they are imperfect, but the best I could do for the moment based on several key sources (see end of this document). Check them out for insight.

The challenge is to determine how Tamarack would define its mandate, priorities/strategies, governance and business model in each scenario.

The following section provides an initial description of each scenario, informed by scenario work already been done by different organizations, and adjusted. It is a work in progress.

Your mission is to:

1. Read your scenario understand (and elaborate a bit if you like) to understand it.
2. Answer the key questions at the end of each scenario drawing on the board materials and April 21 meeting notes (see <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/en-ca/tamarack-2030>)
3. Share your responses with the team by 5 PM, Thursday the 21st.
4. Mark will summarize the responses over the weekend.
5. We will meet the last week in May to review, discuss and upgrade and determine next steps with the board.

## SCENARIO 1: SNAP BACK & ADAPT

In the scenario, the Covid-19 virus is contained by late 2020/early 2021 thanks to effective government containment measures and the possible arrival of an effective vaccine. Canadian society is tired and bruised but relieved that its 'all over' and proud of their collective response. There is a powerful urge to get back to normal as quickly as possible and begin repairing the damages left by the Pandemic.

In this scenario, the urge of Canadians to return to the old equilibrium is shaped and limited by the following Pandemic induced realities:

- An initial burst of reconnecting between groups but tempered with a collective caution of meetings in large groups (e.g. weddings, concerts, large workshops) and in contained spaces (e.g. restaurants), with a variety of semi-permanent public health measures that restrict such connections; the volume of on-line interaction for work and social life decreases substantially, but it continues to stay well above pre-Pandemic levels – it is here to stay.
- An increased attention to supporting groups whose vulnerabilities were revealed and/or amplified through the Pandemic: e.g. youth unsure of their futures, seniors with inadequate service and natural supports and essential workers (e.g. institutional care, groceries, etc.).
- A greater appetite for reformist measures that address systemic frailties - e.g. basic universal income, food supply chains, seniors care – and shock-proofing various systems for future disruptions.
- A pan-Canadian economy that is part of the global pattern of recession and adaptation and includes:
  - uneven sectoral recovery, with some sectors struggling mightily (e.g. travel, tourism, restaurants, bars clubs) and others rebounding quickly (????)
  - a substantial increase in the number of unemployed, under-employed and precariously employed workers
  - variable regional manifestations of recession and recovery (e.g. Alberta versus New Brunswick)
  - hollowed out urban cores as many service businesses have declared bankruptcy and the arrival of new entrants limited by weak consumer spending and measures/aversion to being in groups.
- A great deal more social insight and empathy of the poverty experience – given more people have experienced it or know someone that has - and greater pressure to deal with the structural reasons underlying poverty and greater appreciation for the 'entangled' nature of factors related to poverty (e.g. global trade, food security, energy systems, etc.).

- A non-profit sector that is quite beat up, consolidated/smaller, and is divided by those that are focused primarily on surviving and those that are seeking transformation and thinking big; a philanthropic sector were more demands and fewer resources, and an activist senior levels of government with big ambitions, large debt loads, and an urge for ‘big solutions’.

In this scenario, community-based actors perceive Tamarack’s mission and platform as more needed than ever. However, the organization must adapt to the new landscape in a variety of ways: (1) ensuring its priority areas and supports are relevant and ‘in demand’ by its constituency who may now expect ‘more’ from the organizations (e.g. change management, mergers, leadership on key policy changes), (2) a greater emphasis on virtual – versus face to face -- supports and (3) a need to adapt its business model to reflect the fact many organizations will have folded and those that remain will be very resource constrained.

### Worksheet

The Questions		Your Answers (Bullet Points are Fine)
Mandate	1. What is the unique contribution that Tamarack can play in this scenario? 2. What are some of the key principles/value that drive the organization? 3. What does success look like?	
Priorities/Key Strategies	4. What are the organization’s priorities in this scenario? (Name 5)	
Business Model	5. What is the organization’s business model in this scenario? 6. What are the mixes and sources of revenue in this model? 7. How big or small is the revenue? 8. Other?	
Governance Model	9. What is that is governance structure in this model? 10. Who are the members? 11. Other	
Conditions	12. What are the conditions that will allow Tamarack and its work to thrive in this scenario?	

### SCENARIO 2: A PROGRESSIVE DREAM

In Scenario 2, countries struggle to contain the virus and the global economy suffers from repeated shutdowns over the next 36 months. The effects from the disruption are deep and broad enough that it has created a tipping point for the existing political, economic and social systems in Canada. There is no chance to return to the ‘old normal’ even though many deeply desire it, but enough stability for a ‘new normal’ or ‘equilibrium’ to emerge.

In the scenario, the public and collective response to the disruption and its effects are largely but not entirely -- ‘progressive’: Canadians are committed to addressing fundamental challenges in the area of inequality, climate change and democracy and to being ‘better than normal’. It includes the following features:

- A greater communitarian or collective identity emerges with a sense that “we are in this together”
- A strong emphasis on personal ‘safety’ with assertive – but not over-reaching - government measures to manage social interaction (e.g. event size, airport screening) and general compliance and buy-in from the Canadian public
- A greater number of unemployed/underemployed/precariously employed people struggling to maintain a sustainable livelihood, which creates the insight and empathy required to create the movement/support to push through large scale social reforms: e.g. basic annual income
- More opportunities and appetite to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels towards more resilient, low-carbon, energy systems (e.g. Federal New Green Deal, an oligopoly of Canadian-based energy companies committed to transition measures, etc.)
- An enormous burst of innovation and restructuring as organizations, institutions and communities must find ways to adapt – sometimes radically – to new and dynamically shifting environments
- A ‘renaissance’ of progressive community-based action (aka “communities as the new superpower”) as a response to three distinct, mutually reinforcing factors:
  - the difficulty of managing the scale and complexity of adaptation from ‘central’ governments creates more pressure and opportunity for local action
  - a renewed post-Pandemic desire to build connections, relationships and social capital at the local level
  - a powerful need to develop more local and resilient communities, less strongly coupled with non-local systems (e.g. more regionally oriented food systems, energy systems, etc.)
- A mismatch between the increase in community-based responses and the public, and limited public, philanthropic and earned revenue opportunities to support those responses due to large amounts of public debt, smaller endowments, and constrained organizational budgets.

In this scenario, Tamarack’s twenty years of work makes it a “go-to” intermediary for supporting progressive community-based responses. However, its incumbent advantage is only

temporary as there is flood of new entrants at the local, provincial and national level eager to fill the new space in a variety of inter-related areas (e.g. food security, neighborhood energy systems). This means that Tamarack will eventually need to ‘compete’ for community attention and resources and/or commit to building entirely new niches, capabilities and revenue models.

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## SCENARIO 3: A REGRESSIVE NIGHTMARE

Scenario 3 is embedded in the same general dynamics of Scenario 2: countries struggle to contain the virus and the global economy suffers from repeated shutdowns over the next 36 months. The effects from the disruption are deep and broad enough that it has created a tipping point for the existing political, economic and social systems in Canada. There is no chance to return to the ‘old normal’ even though many deeply desire it, but enough stability for a ‘new normal’ or ‘equilibrium’ to emerge.

Unlike Scenario 2, however, the public and collective response to the disruption is largely ‘regressive’ yet with plenty of pockets of ‘progressive’ responses. It includes the following features:

- A sustained economic recession – even depression – where once robust economies seem unable to recover – leaving high levels of structural unemployment/underemployment/precarious employment – and a concentration of economic power in large corporations

- A clear shift from a ‘big team’ collective /communitarian ethic in the country towards hyper-local, private and domestic spheres – and an increase in ‘us-and-them’ thinking
- A strong emphasis on ‘safety’ with assertive – but often over-reaching - government measures to manage social interaction (e.g. surveillance chips) with weak compliance – even resistance - from the Canadian public
- A growing distrust of traditional and large public, private and philanthropic institutions as they are perceived to be ineffective, slow and too distant to be relevant in a post-Pandemic world
- A systematic process of ‘re-localization’ of major systems (e.g. food, energy, education) in order to increase resilience, but often dominated by larger oligopolies and often without adequate public regulation and oversight – which leads to exploitation (e.g. safety, worker rights, monopolies, etc.)
- An expansion in the number of ‘utopian’ communities, with some focused on progressive ideals (e.g. socially connected, democratic, ecologically sensitive) and others that are more like ‘gated communities’

In this scenario, Tamarack is a ‘shining light’ for progressive organizations who operate at the local level. In fact, because the stakes are higher, Tamarack stakeholders expect much more from the organization in the areas of thought leadership, support and ‘leaning into’ policy change. At the same time, the overall constituency for Tamarack’s work is smaller than it was pre-Pandemic and the organizational/public/philanthropic resources required to support the organization smaller and more regional – less national – in nature.

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**SCENARIO 4: THE LONG EMERGENCY**

In Scenario 4, the countries of the world experience wave after wave of Pandemics over 36 months and the global economy suffers from repeated shutdowns. The effects from the disruption are deep and broad enough that it creates multiple tipping point for existing political, economic and social systems in Canada. These are amplified by ecological events associated with climate change (e.g. floods, storms, fires, droughts, species extinction). We have entered the age of the ‘long emergency’: it is constant disequilibrium for the next decade.

In the scenario, there is a dramatic increase in locally based responses and leadership. Senior levels of government – and other centralized sectoral institutions – are unable to respond quickly and effectively enough to address all the challenges satisfactorily and local actors feel compelled to fill the breach. The de-globalization of trade means that economic and social systems become more regional in nature (e.g. a proliferation of new meat processing plants in every region, close to home tourism, etc.), which creates opportunity for innovation and change. Communities literally become ‘the new superpower’.

Yet, this growing movement to ‘go local’ is diverse, ever evolving and often polarized, marked by extra-ordinary examples of positive social, economic and ecological transformation as well as negative examples of tribalism and ecological myopia for the following reasons:

- A sustained cautiousness about the safety of physical connections and an unevenly embraced emphasis on ‘safety’ with an unevenly useful mix of effective public measures and societal compliance
- A constant process of economic adaption characterized by:
  - dramatic structural changes in Canada’s energy sector, agricultural industries, housing markets and transportation systems
  - sustained high levels of structural unemployment/underemployment/precarious employment
  - a great deal of innovation in new economic areas adapting to the new realities (e.g. food systems, housing models, energy systems)
  - a decline in various types of non-essential consumption (e.g. restaurants, vacation, movies, extra car)
  - an increase in ‘home economics’ and the barter economy
- A rapid shift in the share of private wealth as economic power is concentrated in the hands of the top wealth earners – and a corresponding decrease in public or

common wealth due to lower levels of taxation, decreased housing values and lost savings and investments

- Emerging shifts in settlement patterns, including a greater number of people moving to rural areas, a trend of forgotten-disconnected-hard to service suburbs, and the invention of new urban models (e.g. urban agriculture, micro-power generation, etc.).
- A fracturing of the national sense of identity and communitarian enterprise and an amplification of regional differences – which makes it more difficult to get alignment on pan-Canadian issues (e.g. health care, energy transition, trade agreements) and reinforce Provincial and local institutions.
- Dynamic and always changing political leadership at all levels of government fuelled by a frustration with the inability of political systems to solve issues and the pressure to respond quickly to new events and challenges.

In this scenario, Tamarack begins the ten-year journey with a solid platform for supporting progressive community-based action. However, the scale and complexity of the challenges faced by communities means that the organization must continually adapt its priorities and capabilities in order to respond to the needs demands of communities and funders. Similarly, the increasingly constrained resources of community-based actors, government agencies and philanthropic organizations means that the as well the organization must adapt – perhaps continually - its structure, size and revenue to survive and flourish.

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Governance Model	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. What is that is governance structure in this model?</li> <li>10. Who are the members?</li> <li>11. Other</li> </ol>	



Conditions	12. What are the conditions that will allow Tamarack and its work to thrive in this scenario?	
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## SOURCES

Three Potential Futures for Co-vid: <https://www.statnews.com/2020/05/01/three-potential-futures-for-covid-19/>

The Corona Effect: [https://www.zukunftsinstitut.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/White\\_Paper-The-Corona-Effect-Zukunftsinstitut.pdf](https://www.zukunftsinstitut.de/fileadmin/user_upload/White_Paper-The-Corona-Effect-Zukunftsinstitut.pdf)

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-pandemic-isnt-a-black-swan-but-a-portent-of-a-more-fragile-global-system>