



# Scenario Planning

## **Scenario Planning at CKUA Background Information**

CKUA's 2005 - 2008 strategic plan was constructed using fairly traditional planning processes, tools and participants. For the 2009 - 2012 plan, however, scenario planning was proposed as a foundational process and with its characteristic willingness to try new things, the organization agreed to try this approach that was a little more 'out of the box'.

This appendix provides an overview of:

- What scenario planning is;
- CKUA's approach to scenario planning; and
- The results of the scenario planning process at CKUA.

### **Overview of Scenario Planning**

- Scenario planning is a strategic planning tool that helps an organization to think of the future in non-traditional ways. It stretches thinking beyond what one knows, or can tangibly imagine today. It is a tool for asking "what if" in a disciplined and insightful way. It helps organizations think about the uncertainties of the future, and then deliberately and thoughtfully contemplate potential strategies to manage in the face of those uncertainties. It could be described as a tool for facilitating a strategic dress-rehearsal of the future.
- Scenario planning is not about predicting the future, but rather about exploring plausible futures and then preparing strategies for success in those possible contexts.
- Scenarios are tools for taking a long view in a world of great uncertainty. They form a method for articulating different pathways that might exist tomorrow, and finding appropriate movements down each of those possible paths. Scenario planning is about making choices today with an understanding of how they might turn out.<sup>1</sup>
- The benefit of scenario planning derives from its focus on anticipating the future, and correspondingly enhancing an organization's ability to contemplate, and prepare responses for, that future. In other words, the benefit is not from creating the most accurate forecast of the future, but rather from making the most robust decisions about the future.
- Scenarios are designed to stretch thinking about the opportunities and threats that the future might hold, and to weigh those opportunities and threats carefully when making both short-term and long-term strategic decisions. They help to create a platform for strategic conversations by exploring how complex, external factors could create very different environments that an organization might need to manage within.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Schwartz, Peter. 1996. *The Art of the Long View*. Doubleday, NY.

<sup>2</sup> Scarce, Diana and Fulton, Katherine. *What If? The Art of Scenario Thinking for Nonprofits*. 2004. Global Business Network.

- The process of scenario planning is guided by three overarching principles:
  - Looking beyond the timeframes of usual planning horizons to peer farther into the future.
  - Viewing the future from an 'outside-in' perspective by contemplating possible changes in the external environment and consciously thinking beyond the current reality.
  - Expanding the peripheral vision of an organization by considering multiple perspectives and diverse voices.
- As they unfold, scenarios are stories about the future, each describing a unique, plausible future. The stories are not prepared at whim, but rather around thoughtfully articulated plots that describe relevant characteristics of a future environment. They are more art than science, and the discussions they ignite are more valuable than the reliability of their plot lines.
- The test of good scenarios is not whether they accurately describe the future, but whether they help an organization to learn, adapt, and take effective action.
- As Peter Schwartz, cofounder of GBN commented,
 

*Anyone can create scenarios. But it will be much easier if you are willing to encourage your own imagination, novelty, and even sense of the absurd – as well as your sense of realism.*
- Typical steps in a scenario planning process include the following:
  1. Identification of a focal issue or question
  2. Identification of the key factors and driving trends relevant to the focal issue
  3. Ranking of key factors and driving trends (by importance and uncertainty)
  4. Creation of plot scenarios (from the most important/most uncertain factors)
  5. Development of stories for each scenario
  6. Identification of implications for each scenario
  7. Construction of strategies for each scenario, and selection of strategies for the upcoming planning cycle
  8. Identification of signposts (indicators)

### **Scenario Planning at CKUA**

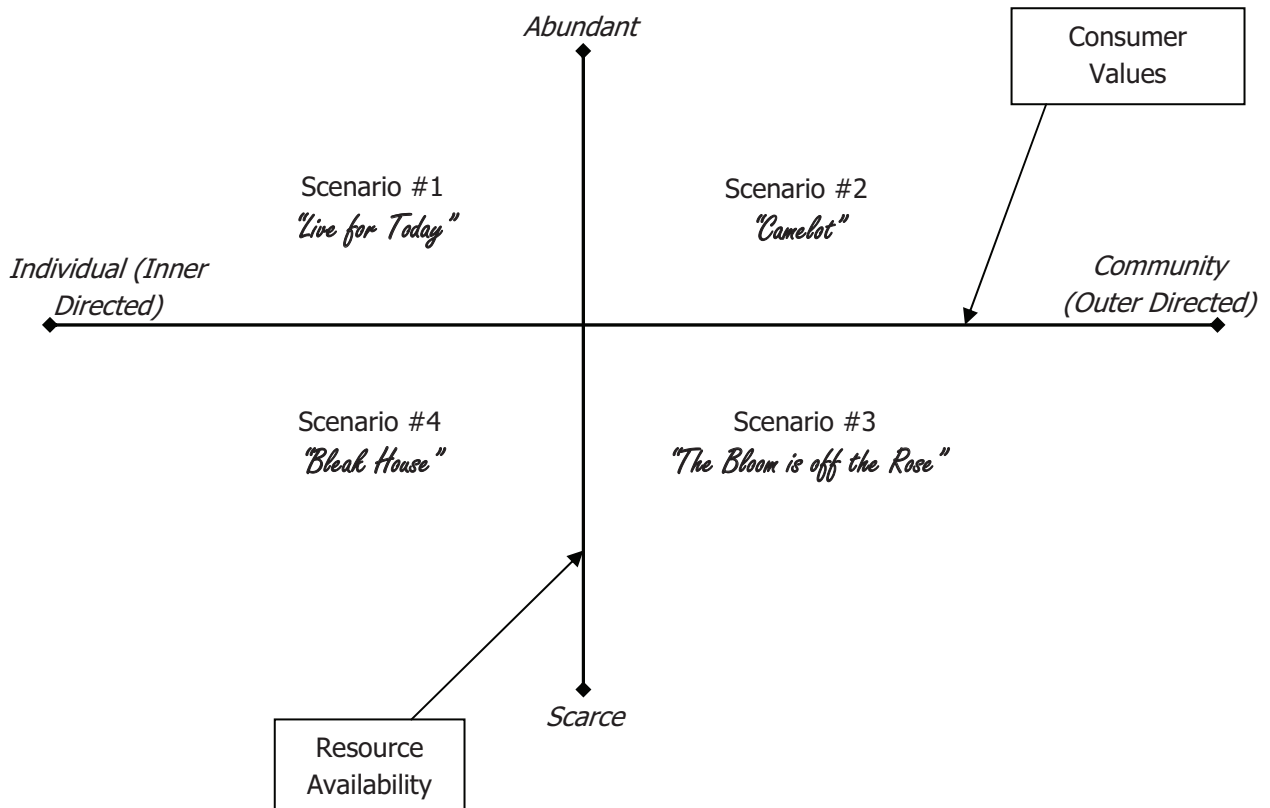
With a balance of structure and flexibility, the typical scenario planning steps mentioned in the preceding section were adopted by CKUA.

1. The focal question for CKUA was: *"What strategies should CKUA employ to honour our vision and remain a viable organization into the future?"*
2. To support the identification of key factors and driving trends, from a multitude of diverse perspectives, a total of 92 Albertans were interviewed in March/08 (using a mixture of focus groups, triads and one-on-ones). Participants included an eclectic mix of internal and external voices:
  - CKUA staff/contractors
  - CKUA volunteers and chapter members

- Current and prior board members
- Thought leaders
- People from across Alberta
- Young adults (under 25)
- CKUA listeners and non-listeners
- Artists, environmentalists, economists, politicians, business people, futurists, and 'everyday joes'

The Planning Committee (comprising representatives from CKUA staff, board, and external participants) synthesized the results of the interviews into 45 driving forces.

- At a board retreat in May/08 the 45 driving forces were reviewed, discussed, challenged, collapsed and prioritized to determine the two forces that were most important and most uncertain with respect to CKUA's focal question. It was agreed the top two driving forces were:
  - Consumer Values
  - Resources
- Plotting the top two driving forces onto two orthogonal axes resulted in four quadrants from which four discrete scenarios were created. The Planning Committee fleshed out the plot-lines for these four scenarios, including a descriptive name for each.



5. In the summer of 2008, four volunteers from the Planning Committee wrote the stories for the resulting four scenarios, and these were reviewed and improved by the full Planning Committee.
6. Implications, broadly and for CKUA specifically, were developed by the Planning Committee.
7. In October/08 a joint management-board retreat was held to review each of the four fleshed-out scenarios. Participants were asked to:
  - Familiarize themselves with each scenario, and *deeply imagine* living in each.
  - Reflect on the focal question for CKUA, for each scenario;
  - Identify potential strategies or actions CKUA could take to capitalize on a desirable future, or mitigate a negative one;
  - Identify if any potential strategies or actions are valid across all scenarios.
  - Consider the different strategic choices that would need to be made, specifically where potential strategies were divergent across scenarios.

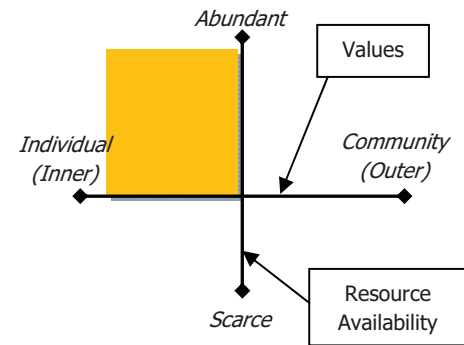
Rich conversations, incited by rigorous questions, and fuelled by tactical as well as values-based challenges, created an environment with depth and breadth of strategic thought. Trade-offs and potential areas of compromise were identified, as were areas of strategic overlap. Discussions were concluded, and strategies finalized, at a follow-up management-board retreat in January/09.

8. A preliminary view of signposts was created in January/09, though this remains to be fleshed-out and finalized.

The pages that follow provide a summary of CKUA's scenario 'working papers'. For the purposes of this appendix, footer-labels have been added for ease of reference.

- **Section I - The Scenario Stories:** These stories include a description of what the world would look like in each scenario, an overview of how that kind of world might come to be, and an identification of the potential implications of that world for society in general as well as for CKUA specifically.
  - #1 – Live for Today
  - #2 – Camelot
  - #3 – The Bloom Is Off the Rose
  - #4 – Bleak House
- **Section II – Scenario strategies for:**
  - CKUA's Current Strategic Plan
  - #1 – Live for Today
  - #2 – Camelot
  - #3 – The Bloom Is Off the Rose
  - #4 – Bleak House
- **Section III – One-page scenario summaries of:**
  - Main characteristics of each scenario
  - Key implications of each scenario
  - Strategies for all scenarios
- **Section IV – Possible signposts**

**CKUA – Scenario #1**  
**“Live for Today”**  
(Abundant/Individual)



**The World in 2018**

One might say this is a story of success taken to an extreme; the good-life on steroids. There are riches in abundance, but yet there does not appear to be a sense of satisfaction. Here, the 'me' overrides the 'we' and people, businesses and governments are on a continual quest for more power, more money ... more stuff. Despite the abundance and success, there is an over-arching sense of apathy. Some have raised an interesting question about the implications of having too much money.

The economic boom Alberta experienced in 2006 has retained its momentum for over a decade. Anyone who wants employment can find it, with wages continuing to be extreme (ridiculous, many say). Immigration and in-migration continue, and still the labour supply does not quite meet the province's demand. Twenty years ago high-school students took a year off to back-pack across Europe and have a life adventure before entering university; now students elect to work in the oil patch when they leave grade 12, and stumbling into big money, most do not return to the classroom.

With money to spare, people can afford to be hyper brand-idolizing consumers; designer labels, Über-boutiques, and gratuitous customization are the norm. People express their individuality through their purchases with an, "I shop therefore I am" manifesto. Lifestyles are very much 'in the moment' with lots of travel, spending and conspicuous consumption. While deriving personal pleasure from spending is important, the visibility of spending is equally valued, maybe even more so. Individualism is a luxury, a status symbol, and an indication of success.

Oil and gas exploration and refining continue to dominate the economy and Alberta is a logistical hub similar to Belgium and Holland. This creates opportunities for logistics firms, software developers, and expansion of a logistics hub in Red Deer - home for the province's newest International Airport, linked by high speed rail to Edmonton, Calgary, Red Water, Fort McMurray, Saskatoon and Regina.

The over-the-top state of the economy has repercussions on the environment. Not that people don't care, but with such a boom going on they choose to believe there will be enough money to fix any problems that might be created – so why inconvenience themselves now? With a 'live for today' philosophy permeating their activities, work, recreation and investments, why get stressed about the future? Certainly there are those who do have an environmental consciousness, and they demonstrate their concern by purchasing carbon credits, and using their wealth to pay premiums for green products. For everyone else, green is bought, not believed, with the majority of environmental efforts being superficial and purely for show.

Previous investments in medical technology continue to pay dividends and make Alberta a centre for medical research. In fact, in an ironic twist to the rampant environmental degradation taking place, the province has become a leader in 'environmental illness research'. Private, fee-for-service health care flourishes in this climate. Actually, privatization has become the economic modus operandi in nearly every sector, as the government sees the rise of personal wealth as an opportunity to make individuals more and more responsible for their own quality of life.

Driven by the desire for more 'stuff' families are double-income and have at least two cars, and given a continuation of urban sprawl, convenience trumps environment with respect to personal transportation - cost is not an issue, and environment is not a motivator. Communications technology is cheap and almost universally accessible, with hardware practically disposable as people strive to have the latest coolest toys. The belief that money can buy health, happiness and security is pervasive, and self-indulgence is the consumer modus operandi.



This self-indulgence extends to the family. The significant transfer of wealth from the previous generation means that children are indulged with the latest toys and trinkets. Elite K-12 educational academies flourish while the government, taking the concept of personal responsibility to the extreme, cuts back on funding to public education. This decline in public investment for social benefit leads to a greater divide between the self-indulgent upper middle class and the small numbers of socially, technologically and economically disadvantaged.

This is a consumer-oriented, pay-as-you-go society. Success is judged by materialistic measures.

### **How It Happens**

Global geopolitical forces conspired to put Alberta in the catbird seat. First, the USA turned its eyes north to Alaska and Alberta for energy security following its ill-fated attempt to secure oil supplies for itself from the Middle East, particularly from Iraq. The US government pushed for oil and gas development in the Alaska Arctic region and a safe, secure pipeline through Canada to markets in the continental USA. Second, Alberta became increasingly alienated from central Canada and forged closer economic and political links with British Columbia, Saskatchewan and the Pacific Northwest. This region rapidly became an economic powerhouse. The US government encouraged Alberta's calls for greater autonomy and covertly funded Alberta's successful campaign for 'sovereignty-association' with Canada. British Columbia, seeing itself isolated from the rest of Canada, joined the Western Alliance, as did Saskatchewan, which needed investment to further develop its oil sands.

Looking back closer to home, what appeared to be bouts of 'disjointed incrementalism'\* were actually parts of a much larger grand plan for privatization across nearly every sector of the Alberta economy. In 2008 the Stelmach government announced it would eliminate health-care premiums by January 1, 2009. Pitched as an initiative to save the average family \$1056 each year, the idea was well received. As it turned out, by removing any sense that people may have had about being 'entitled' to government-funded health services, the move was simply designed to help pave the way for privatized health-care. After all, how could Albertans complain about health services being taken away, when in fact citizens weren't making any contributions to such services? The demise the nine regional health authorities and subsequent creation a single Alberta Health Service board was a signpost picked-up only by the astute and the suspicious. 2008 was clearly the thin edge of the wedge for the shifting of responsibility from governments, to individuals and the free-market.

2008, was also the year of a federal election nobody wanted, and a year history would describe as a tipping-point for Western sovereignty. Bucking party niceties, Stelmach arrogantly flipped-the-bird at any hint that brethren in the rest of Canada should benefit from the province's black riches; the Lloydminster Summit planted seeds of collaboration between Alberta and Saskatchewan; and 'friendly' oil-sands visits from interested, wealthy Americans created new north-south alignments.

Laissez-fair regulation and ongoing privatization in other sectors gave rise to an almost ubiquitous 'user pay' approach to everything from education, recreation, leisure services and social services. Those who could afford this approach applauded the government efforts to reduce its role in society, but the disadvantaged became increasingly marginalized and frequently ignored.

The ongoing strength of the energy sector increased personal wealth and provided opportunities for wealth to be spread more broadly. Albertans, and the thousands migrating here, found the money abundant, and the living easy – though newcomers arrived to take full advantage of the situation, without any intention of actually making Alberta 'home'. With abundant personal wealth and less government support, people become more individually focused, self-reliant, and self-centred.

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\* Disjointed Incrementalism is when people work with limited and simplified knowledge, to reach acceptable, compromise choices ('satisficing'), rather than pursue 'maximizing' or 'optimizing' strategies in which one particular objective is fully achieved.  
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O88-satisficing.html>.



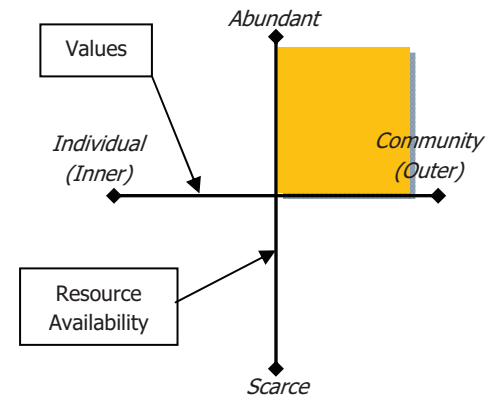
## Broad Implications

- Western society, particularly in Alberta, is described as shallow, fickle and insecure, driven by trend consciousness, immediacy and living in the moment.
- Alberta holds energy consumers hostage, and has a puffed-up sense of importance, and is even less concerned about the opinions of others. Critics describe the predominant mindset in Alberta as "Texan", a reference to Alberta's go-it-alone, gunslinger style of operation.
- There is a growing gap between the rich and poor, which could create a technological divide. Those who with wealth have access to technology that is cheap, easily accessible, and not limited to spatial or temporal constraints. Those without wealth, the disenfranchised are excluded due to lack of public investment in education.
- Individualism is the underlying principle that governs relationships. Individual responsibility for oneself – from health care to wealth accumulation to experiencing the arts underscores everything in Alberta's worldview.
- Regard for the environment is superficial rather than motivated by concern for sustainability. Many people are 'green to be seen'; they choose to buy green products and services because it is fashionable, not because of an underlying belief in sustainability.
- CBC will be among the many entities that are privatized; there is no social commitment to national public radio.
- The increasingly market-driven economy stimulates competition - people have a plethora of choices, and ample funds to afford them.
- People will donate where they receive tangible personal benefit, and for many this means 'public' acknowledgement of their expenditures.
- Regulation is more laissez faire; more market-driven.

## Implications for CKUA

- Investment in new technology will likely be required. With a digital format, will our terrestrial transmitters be scrapped?
- Potential exists for CKUA to negotiate strategic alliances with NPR and PBS.
- Broadening of audience means potential broadening of vision/mandate re: "Albertan".
- Likely requires a shift in funding models. Consumption behaviour will favour more of a user-pay approach for listeners. Government funding will be non-existent.
- 'Conspicuous donation' mirrors conspicuous consumption. Charitable behaviour will bring success to capital campaigns where donors can attach their name for conspicuous giving; operational campaigns may be a tougher sell unless they provide a visible return for donors (perhaps CKUA could consider selling carbon credits to donors).
- In response to the prevalence of 'individual designer' values, CKUA on-air announcers could become celebrities and deliver speciality programs on site at the donors' venues (e.g. TDM broadcasting "Mulligan Stew" live from the Hotel McDonald at a wedding).
- Both staff and volunteers expect to be compensated for their talent, knowledge and experience. As a result, CKUA's operating budget must increase to keep pace with these rising expectations.
- Shifts (perceived and real) away from CKUA's grassroots culture could create accusations of 'selling our soul' for corporate success. Staff turnover could be high while things re-settle into a new organizational style/approach.
- Despite the capabilities afforded by technology, how much time and energy will people put into building their own playlists? They will likely pay for convenience.

**CKUA – Scenario #2  
“Camelot”  
(Abundant/Community)**



**The World in 2018**

Imagine a world where everybody is comfortable, where they feel like they have 'enough'. It's a place where people want to contribute to the continual building of community. There is a high level of cognitive surplus\*. Spiritual and artistic endeavours are very much on the individual and collective agenda. Government and business are in synch and there is a genuine respect for the environment to ensure a sustainable future for everyone. This is a world where people feel, and are, empowered.

In Alberta, there is a strong sense of local pride and people are committed to the province as a place to call home. Sustainability, balance and quality of life are key concepts. There is economic growth, but not at the expense of the environment or other members of society. Renewable energy sources have replaced oil and gas as the pre-dominant source for most energy needs. Alberta's economy is diversified and not dependant on any one sector.

Technology is affordable and easy to use, and fosters information sharing and community connections that cross geographies. Newspapers, books, CD's and DVD's have been largely replaced with virtual equivalents, and people download what they want when they want it. Libraries and post-secondary education are available on-line, and therefore are much more accessible. For the aged, these new virtual tools facilitate life-long learning, as failing eye-sight and loss of hearing are no longer barriers for receiving information. For others without English language skills, the tools offer similar advantages in connecting them with information and communities previously beyond their reach. Although not by conscious design, technology has become a great social leveller.

Culturally, the province has attracted an abundance of immigrants who are not just here to make money, but to build a life. They have woven various aspects of their ethnic backgrounds into the fabric of the province. This diversity, along with the quest for artistic endeavours, fuels an expression of many different types of art forms and music that were previously not represented, or were underrepresented, in Alberta. The old 'red-neck' Alberta has evolved into a very cosmopolitan Camelot.

The 'new urbanism' concept of city planning is the norm, and has reduced the geographic footprints of Edmonton and Calgary. People have an appreciation for 'connectedness', and value/expect responsible-minded municipal development. Multi-family housing (condos, duplexes, town homes) see fantastic results, and architecture of all kinds (residential and commercial) is beautiful, creative and LEEDS certified. Families manage with one car as a result of increased environmental consciousness, wider use/availability of public transit, and living in closer proximity to things needed for enjoying daily life.

Politically, Alberta's Liberal party enjoys a majority government, with the Green Party forming the opposition.

This is a tolerant, content, respectful and balanced society. Success is utopian 'comfort' - people are wealthy enough; corporations are big enough; social-agencies are resourced enough; wealth is shared enough; the environment is cared for enough.

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\*Cognitive Surplus describes all the free-thinking time that society has access to; time in the brains of its citizens that isn't getting used for specific tasks. "Think TV watching time, but doing something other than watching TV" (per Clay Shirky, May 11/08)



## How It Happens

On the home-front, the “Spirit of Alberta” cultural plan introduced in 2008 by the Stelmach government was successful in raising awareness, stimulating interest and generating support for arts and culture. Correspondingly, it was also a catalyst for more ‘liberal’ thinking within the province, and was one element in sowing seeds for a new government. While it took the provincial Liberal party a few years to regroup after the departure of Kevin Taft, re-group they did! Its new leader, reflecting the temperament of the times and labelled ‘*Alberta’s Trudeau*’, captured the respect not only of card-carrying Liberals, but also of right-leaning Conservatives who had been growing increasingly frustrated with Alberta’s Conservative reign.

South of the border, in 2008 Bill Gates began his soap-box speeches for capitalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Replacing (or perhaps updating) Adam Smith’s notions of capitalism, Gates challenged organizations to engage in ‘creative capitalism’, where they would deliver profits *and* support the poor. Travelling around the world, Gates appealed to the most powerful corporate and social leaders, presented at economic forums and conferences, and relentlessly appealed for organizations to improve the lives of those who did not benefit from market forces. His foundational premise, that capitalism only really worked for those who could pay, was hard to ignore, and so his message gained increasing acceptance.

On the global stage, the East, primarily led by China and India, aggressively emulated the economic models and lifestyles created and perfected in the western world, though with tactics the west considered unethical and environmentally irresponsible (hypocritically ironic, in hindsight). Technology, like Twitter, delivered ‘of the minute’ updates to give the average western citizen insights into these injustices. Grassroots activists, through the power of blogs, social networking and other online tools, clearly pointed out that western consumption patterns were a root cause of the problem (a la *The Story of Stuff*).

Though not immediate (it took a few years for changes to manifest on Bay Street and Wall Street), in a mass, grassroots, ‘denormalization’ response, North America and Europe went anti-consumer in a big way – shunning corporations with business practices viewed as unethical or unsustainable. In order to be successful, big-box retailers, multi-nationals and dollar-stores discovered they needed to broaden their philosophies and align their corporate, social and environmental platforms (and genuinely, not superficially) – though some don’t learn this lesson quickly enough.

The conspicuous and gratuitous consumption of the previous decade was replaced with a more responsible consumption model. With less need/tolerance for cheap goods from China, entrepreneurs and local producers found opportunity, and in turn created employment. Local businesses grew, and people agreed to pay more for products made by companies embracing high levels of sustainable production, and subscribing to ‘triple bottom line’ accounting practices. As people reduced consumption, but spent the same amount, a sustainable level of economic growth was generated. This period marked the growth of the “Ethical Consumer”. As mandated by the public, governments also worked to the triple-bottom line.

This anti-consumer backlash led a majority in the western world to ‘walk lightly on the earth’, and that drove the aggressive development of renewable energy and sustainable living practices. People started to see themselves, and their role in the world, less in terms of being a consumer and more in terms of being a citizen and community builder. Not that people abandoned their desire for wealth creation, but rather that they demanded responsible growth from their investment portfolios; economic/environmental trade-offs were consciously and respectfully balanced.

Meanwhile, around the world, people searching for a better quality of life and those who had the means to immigrate, looked towards the west not as a ‘land of opportunity’ but as a ‘land of sustainability’. For Alberta, this fuelled an influx of immigration of a certain type of individual, someone who wanted something more than just the pursuit of wealth, or who had already accumulated ‘enough’ wealth. This type of person was interested in spiritual or artistic endeavours, and making a contribution to society.



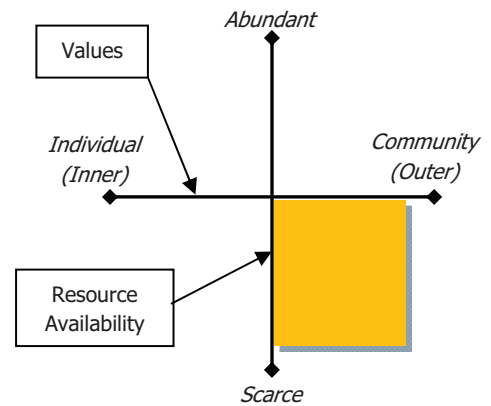
## Broad Implications

- Digital technology is widely available, cheap (or free) and pretty much everyone is conversant with it. Access is wireless, ubiquitous and portable; software is open-source.
- Living and doing business in an environmentally sustainable way is the norm. Corporations will decide to be “big enough”.
- ‘Local’ becomes more relevant. People desire and value locally produced items and services because they are ‘of the community’.
- Urban environments flourish, as people desire to live in close proximity.
- Increased government funding for arts and culture.
- Philanthropy (time and money) flourishes, and planned giving could be the primary charitable tool for boomers.
- There will be increased information and disclosure, driven by regulatory requirements and consumer expectations (Where are products made? What’s in them? How much are employees paid? Etc.)
- Times are good, people are happy, stresses are lower; this period will see an increase in birth-rates.
- Generational differences will exist, but will not be sources of unusual tension; people will get along with one another.
- Burgeoning arts community. People will go out and enjoy live music. Artists will be plentiful and audiences will have the cash and the ‘social’ inclination to get out and enjoy.

## Implications for CKUA

- The funding model could potentially change on two fronts: elimination of ad revenue so the station can be completely commercial free, and increased donation revenue making one (or both) campaigns unnecessary.
- Additional funds could mean CKUA has more resources to things it can’t right now (e.g. more/better news coverage, documentaries etc).
- The increased appreciation for arts and culture may mean a broadening of mandate and/or geographic coverage for CKUA.
- Could be more competition from start-ups in community radio as more people have the time, money and desire to produce/distribute their own content; barriers to entry are low. Likely the overall pie will get larger though (i.e. competition will not be ‘expensive’ for CKUA).
- CBC will be flourishing – could be a potentially competitive situation, or if they ‘stay on mandate’ it could be complementary situation.
- As people have more time to donate, volunteers might play a greater role in running the station, and these volunteers might take on more responsibilities.
- Fair and equitable regulation provides CKUA the opportunity to accomplish its goals in a supportive regulatory environment.
- Greater ethnic representation and programming on CKUA, reflecting Alberta’s cultural diversity.
- Will an increased appetite for live music mean people will listen to the radio less, and/or for different reasons?
- In an on-line, on-demand world, will the value/uniqueness of the CKUA library be diminished or enhanced? Would we become a public resource, like a library?

**CKUA – Scenario #3**  
**"The Bloom is Off the Rose"**  
 (Scarce/Community)



**The World in 2018**

The implosion of the North American economy was a surprise to no one, and while many feel the worst is over, all agree the recovery period will not be a speedy one. In Canada, the hardest hit was the once booming Wild Rose province of Alberta; clearly now the bloom is off the rose. Ironically, the tar-black gold that now fuels the only significant source of industry for the province, is also the bane of existence for many others, most notably tourism. In the global vernacular, 'Alberta' is synonymous with 'dirty', and in a world ever-more environmentally conscious, the label is potent. The few Albertans who can still afford to travel have adopted the American custom of feigning a foreign nationality while abroad.

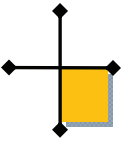
Reduced consumption and making do with what you have is not only the new norm, it's a necessity. People have resigned themselves (though with a quiet resentment) to accept the fact that it may be quite a while before they can again afford a lifestyle chasing the latest shiny new thing. Consumer goods manufacturers have shifted gears accordingly, since the belt-tightening means nobody can afford their 'planned obsolescence'. The only corporations who are holding their own are the discount giants. Markets have shifted toward small, local business. As a result of mounting economic strains, regulatory grips have been tightened on both sides of the border.

The Conservative government is still in power provincially, and the opposition party remains an ineffective place-holder. While nobody is accused of corruption, fiduciary negligence appears an apt description of the politics of the day. Government services have been cut, and the pressure on social agencies is enormous.

Within our borders, the sense of camaraderie and community has reached new heights. Although times are tough and resources tight, people have learned that sharing rather than hoarding is a better policy. Community leagues are experiencing a resurrection, and people actually know their neighbours. On the home-front, there are more single-income families (due to job scarcity), with income-earners supporting both children and aging live-in parents. However, despite their ability to manage day-by-day, people are restless. At the local Tim Hortons, people talk about the good old days when there was a 'Help Wanted' sign in every storefront window.

The sense of community has one dramatic generational fracture; teens who lived their elementary days as the beneficiaries of the good life, a very comfortable living, and lots of 'stuff', are now having to do without. Equipped with neither the experience nor the maturity to cope, this is a resentful cohort, tight with their e-peers, but angry and disenfranchised with the society that let this happen to them. Blogging and social networking have become sophisticated venting platforms, and the virtual reality software "My Former Life" provides youth with a platform for escape.

This is a frustrated society. Success is defined as the ability to get by 'OK'; sharing scarce resources with family and community, and doing what is necessary to be as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.



## How We Get There

2008 was a year of marked volatility with as many optimistic views of the future as pessimistic. Oil prices, exchange rates, the stock market and housing prices all rose and fell with a discomfoting randomness, and on the whole consumers were confused (and perhaps in denial). In retrospect, all the signs were there to warn people to start to change their lifestyles, reduce consumption, and manage their spending (debt), but at the time there were perhaps just too many conflicting indicators – and after all, we were in Alberta!

By the middle of 2009 the rising costs of fuel were felt in everything, “unleashing a huge wave of inflation that washed away disposable incomes”. At the same time, the shrinking (sinking) American economy dried up our primary export market, and the newly elected US government was able to use the situation to create a much more protectionist platform in Washington. At home, businesses were forced to cut-back services, lay-off staff, increase prices (where they could), and unfortunately for many, close their doors.

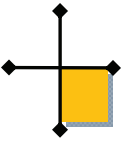
Partially driven by rising transport costs, and partially out of desire to support businesses in the local community, people started to embrace the idea of the ‘100 mile diet’. Farmer’s Markets became even more popular, though people were less willing/able to pay premiums for organic produce. With similar catalysts, trades involved in helping extend the life of goods experienced a warm renaissance (e.g. shoemakers; repairmen).

Through the down-turn the tar sands were able to provide Alberta with income, but it felt like ‘hooker’ money. Attempts by the government and industry to convey an environmental consciousness were called to task, world-wide, as nothing more than green-washing. As a direct result, 2010 marked the beginning of a stunning nose dive for the province’s tourism industry.

Ironically, the global affront that seemed to pit Alberta against everyone else, banded folks together into more tight-knit local communities; among their peers, people created safe-havens from the finger-pointing. Community mindedness was also fostered as neighbours exchanged services and favours, and generally lent a helping hand wherever one was needed. In parallel, community leagues returned to vogue, offering children the opportunity to get together to play something other than video games.

Boomers, finding cracks in their nest eggs right when they were preparing to leave their jobs and enjoy a cushy retirement, continued their employment (where they could), and dishearteningly sold their vacation property.

Faced with the new experience of having to do without, a stark shift from the affluence of their youth, the resentful Millenials (teenagers) ‘take to the e-streets’ to protest. This marks the beginning of a generational split within an otherwise community-oriented environment.



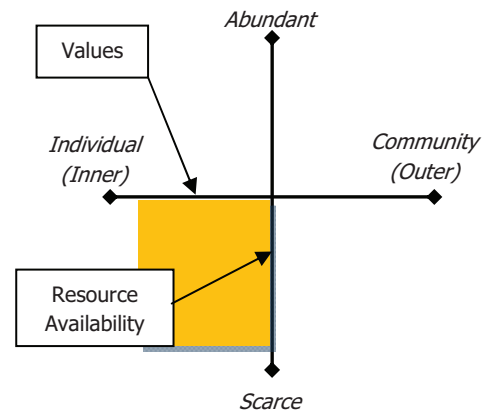
## **Broad Implications**

- More environmentally conscious consumers (reuse; reduce; recycle) for economical reasons, and for the benefit of the community. Greater use of public transit.
- More emphasis on the local environment/community; on how things impact the home scene.
- Expenditures are pragmatic and 'needs based'. Luxury goods or 'want' items are an infrequent treat. People do more of their own gardening, canning, DIY jobs, etc.
- People are hungry for information and looking for leadership.
- International economies have experiences similar to the mortgage crisis in the US, and feel the impact of the American recession.
- People will give more time than money, and will support what they believe will strengthen the community. Giving will go to family first, then community.
- With fewer resources, but not necessarily fewer problems, this scenario may be one with considerable innovation and creativity, lead by local entrepreneurs.
- Polarization of the U-20 demographic creates restlessness within the community that is generationally driven; this is an angry and volatile group.
- The CBC is running with stripped-down operations, though in these hard times people seem to be appreciating the ideal of our nation's broadcaster.
- While the pace of technological change has certainly slowed and disposable incomes have shrunk, people are still connected electronically, though with tools and toys that are a few years old.

## **Implications for CKUA**

- People will be looking for information from a trusted, unbiased source.
- This might be a good time for back-to-basics for CKUA – relying on the strength of the grass-roots movement that saved the station once before.
- From a donation perspective people will have less to give, but there may be growth in the number of people who choose to give what little they can to support their 'community'. People may also opt to give time instead of money.
- Technologically, and from an infrastructure perspective, CKUA will need to make-do and keep things running with routine preventative maintenance and, MacGyver repairs.
- The advertising model that used to underwrite commercial media has pretty much crumbled.
- Musicians are more activist and protest-oriented, kind of like in the 60's and 70's. They value a non-commercial outlet for their messages.
- The volunteer-oriented reality may create an increased need for strong and wide-spread Chapters.
- CKUA will likely find this scenario a comfortable one. We know this environment of scarce resources but strong community; it has been home to us before.

**CKUA – Scenario #4  
"Bleak House"  
(Scarce/Individual)**



**The World in 2018**

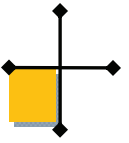
After nearly two decades of almost embarrassing prosperity, Alberta today has the air of Dickens' famous novel. It is a sullen, desperate place where few have anything, and no one shares what little they may have. Life here is about survival of the fittest, a post-Katrina style disaster culture full of needs that can't be met. Young people, without much hope, but with the advantage of their youth, use it to prey upon the old and weak. Government, or what's left of authority, is about iron-fisted enforcement, not assistance.

This is the dark ages revisited. The environment has been trashed - people strip, steal, exploit or abuse it however they feel they must to survive. Food, shelter and safety are everyone's top priorities. Health care has deteriorated to triage. Disease and crime are rampant; people feel helpless, angry and restless – a dangerous concoction.

Escape is not an attractive option. Highways, transport and infrastructure have all crumbled and there's no place to escape to; life is no different elsewhere and every jurisdiction demands a national or provincial passport anyway. Nomads are not welcome, especially if they present a different culture or accent, so people tend to ply survival skills close to home. Even the Internet for those few who can still rig up access to it, is useless given it's so tightly controlled by government and mostly unreliable due to crumbling networks. Electrical shortages and brown-outs mean most technologies like radio, television and cell phones work only intermittently; regardless, few people even own such things.

The only solace may be the occasional busker, despite their bleak, cynical songs or street theatre, offered for pennies or scraps. Nonetheless, artists it seems are survivors. The only other light is the fact there's so much need that human ingenuity thrives, as people invent and jury-rig contraptions to alleviate their own suffering to whatever extent possible.

This is a desperate, vulnerable society. Success is surviving.

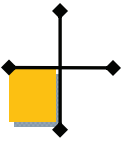


## How We Get There

This hardship was the culmination of years of neglect and negligence by government and big business, coupled with a worsening political crisis in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Russia. The war in Afghanistan, China's occupation of Tibet, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ongoing fighting in the Middle-East, and Russia's invasion of Georgia, and the implosion of the US economy were but a few of the early signals. In 2011, ongoing tensions saw Russia close off oil pipelines carrying most of Europe's oil at the same time as a coordinated Al Qaida attack demolished several Saudi and Iraqi pipelines.

The US economy, propped up for years by government over-spending, was in fact mired in debt because of ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran, and bail-outs from the sub-prime fiasco. Despite massive efforts by the US Federal Reserve to boost money markets, the 2008 financial crisis saw investor confidence un-recoverably spooked, and over the following years the turmoil mounted. Actions by central banks around the world were unable to change the momentum. When China and Saudi Arabia called-in their loans, fearful of the worsening global political crisis, the US economic system sputtered and essentially stopped. Before long, the financial crisis in the west spread to other economies and within months, a global economic depression had descended like birds in a Hitchcock movie.

With no place to sell oil, wheat and other raw materials and commodities, and few buyers with money to pay for them, Alberta had no fuel for its economic engines. Layoffs mounted, bankruptcies soared and a province and a people that had lived very high on the hog for so long were in no position to cope with sudden and severe hardship. A tailspin into the heart of darkness had begun.



### **Broad Implications:**

- Environmental degradation; to survive people do whatever they need to do to it, and take whatever they need from it. Society has moved down to the lower rungs on Maslow's hierarchy.
- Intense apathy toward others, people have nothing left to give and survival is paramount
- It's a dangerous, hard place and authorities are heavy handed. Government has little to offer and is about enforcement more than assistance.
- Global infrastructures crumble. Telecommunications is in tatters, and what's left is tightly controlled and monitored (think China). Few people can access technology independently.
- Health care is virtually non-existent and disease is rampant.
- Zero economic growth, zero philanthropy.
- Everything is scarce. Some people may have room for a backyard garden, but they need to police it at night to stop thieves from stealing food.
- Generational differences are exaggerated. Young prey on the old; the elderly and the infirm are considered wasters of limited resources.
- There's a general sense of frustration and anger, but it's controlled as much by people's sense of cynicism and hopelessness as by authority.
- People are so focused on their own needs and vulnerabilities, there's less thought or desire for news of the world or for entertainment.
- Despite the hardship – perhaps because of it - ingenuity happens. Some people manage to jury-rig receivers that can actually pick up AM radio signals.
- CBC radio is scaled back to essentially a Toronto-based national emergency network with basic news and canned music. Private radio all but disappears since there's little money to be made with it.

### **Implications for CKUA**

- CKUA is government controlled (taken over as an emergency service). Correspondingly, its terrestrial network is largely intact – at least in major centres.
- Programming consists of government announcements, news and music.
- CKUA has six paid staff (pay has been significantly reduced) and another dozen or so volunteers who run the place – many of them often sleep and live right in the building. Though they are essentially paid government employees, people still appreciate what they provide.
- It's like the former 'dark days' of CKUA, except without the grass roots support to help get out of it. It's more of a solve it yourself reality with lots of Neil Lutes style black-market resourcing, horse-trading and politicking.
- Survival for CKUA is largely contingent upon government support.
- Internet presence has little value since few can access it and terrestrial radio is a cheap and easy technology to maintain. Radios can be built almost literally from scraps of wire, so people still have and use them.

## ***CKUA - Original Radio.***

# Many Acknowledgements

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*\*Members of the CKUA Planning Committee*