# Creating a Smart Growth Strategy for New Hampshire: *Balancing Economy, Environment, Transportation, and Housing*

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# Agenda

- Brief Overview of the New Hampshire Smart Growth Initiative
- Case Study Exercise
- Overview of Framework
- Outline of Steps and Tools/Techniques to Apply Framework
- Discussion of Challenges and Opportunities
- Comments & Questions



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# Situation & Complication

## Situation

New Hampshire is the fastest-growing state in New England, with a (fractional) rate of population increase that far outstrips that of Massachusetts, Vermont, and the other states in the area (in fact, it ranked 8th nationally in population growth percentage). It is also a state with relatively little in the way of zoning regulations or state government influence on growth. Population growth has been accompanied by increasing sprawl, reduction in open space, skyrocketing traffic congestion, and conversion of what was previously green space into developments.

## Complication

New Hampshire is a politically fractious state, with large numbers of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. It is also a state with a strong tradition of popular support for limiting the power of government and giving private property rights precedence over public concerns. As a result of the way New Hampshire has grown and of its political fragmentation, the conflict over growth has often involved heated emotions and, sometimes, lawsuits.



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# Key Questions

- Is there common ground between people of different political persuasions?
- Can a strategy be developed that addresses the concerns of businesspeople, environmentalists, transportation and housing advocates?
- Can recommendations be developed that have the support of leaders across the political spectrum?



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# Smart Growth Initiative: Context & Objectives

## Context

Working under the auspices of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the largest and most respected community foundation in New Hampshire, we have convened a group of leaders in the business, community, environmental, transportation, housing, and political arenas to create an action plan for smart growth in New Hampshire.

Using a systems thinking-based, facilitated process, the group met in March and will meet another 9 times over the next 10 months to look at each area impacted by growth and to develop consensus recommendations for how to address growth issues while balancing economic, environmental, transportation, and housing concerns.

## Objectives

1. Develop a shared understanding of the complexities of the system and the chronic issues facing New Hampshire regarding growth
2. Identify key leverage points within the system
3. Clarify a future shared vision to create a new reality
4. Make recommendations to shift the system based on leverage points
5. Build shared commitments to position key leaders and organizations for implement & realization of new future reality



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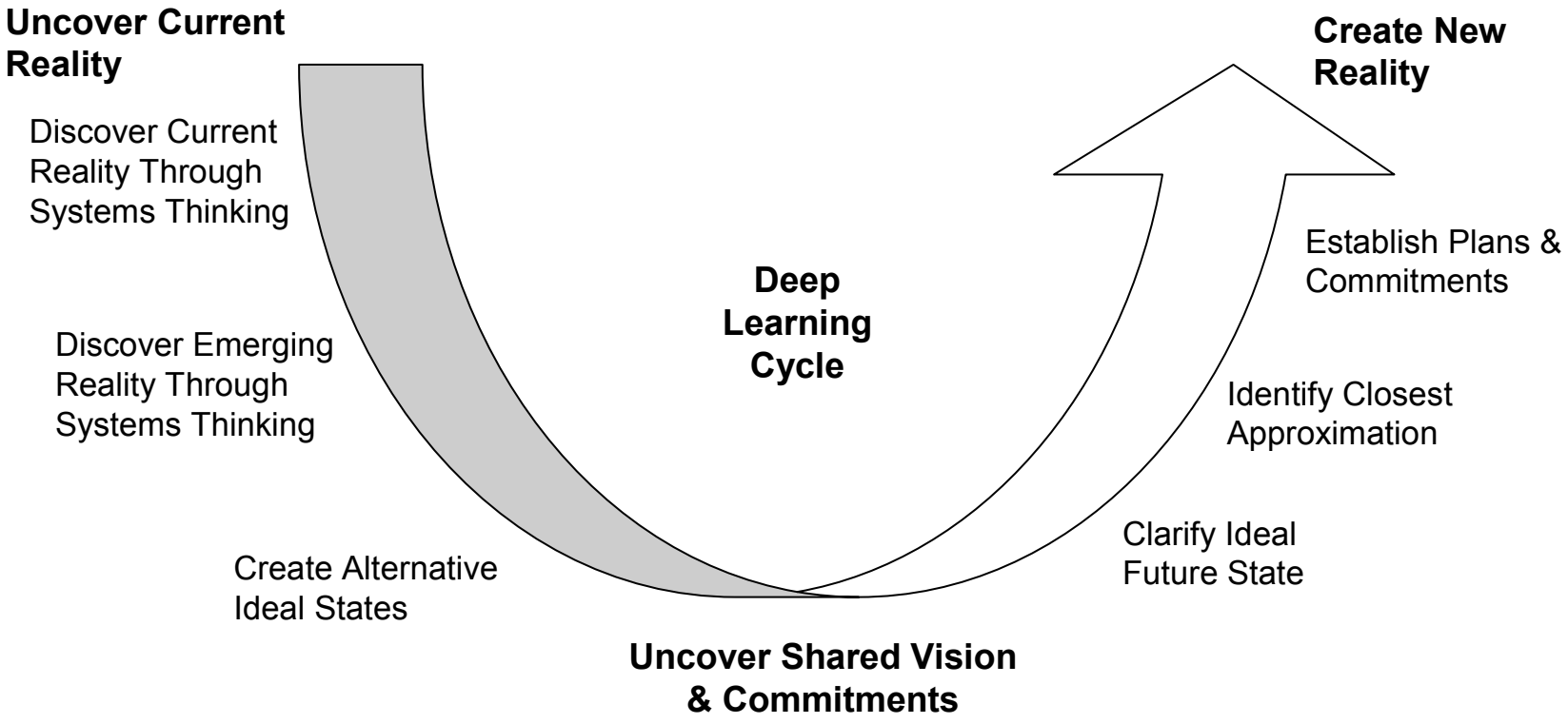
# Strategic Learning Framework: Learning Cycle

The Deep Learning Cycle fosters a more systemic, holistic learning experience and builds a shared vision regarding the commitments a team or community would like to make to create a new future.



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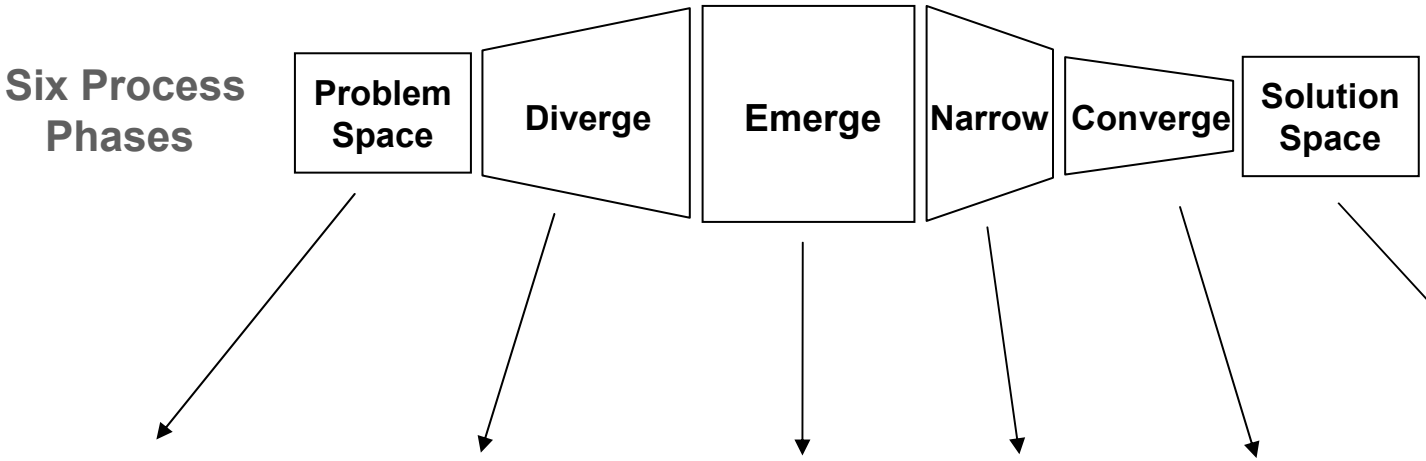
# Strategic Learning Framework: Process Steps

The six process phases entail 12 steps that provide the strategic roadmap for a team or community to travel from the beginning of a project to the end.




Step 1: Build Community

Step 2: Set Context & Rules

Step 3: Explain Characteristics of System & Define Problem

Step 4: Uncover Patterns & Systemic Structures

Step 5: Creatively Think & Clarify Future Visions

Step 6: Uncover Emerging Patterns and Structures

Step 7: Dialogue to Build Shared Understanding & Commitments

Step 8: Organize Shared Understanding and Commitments

Step 9: Clarify Ideal State & Identify Closest Approximation

Step 10: Build Agreement using Closing Tools

Step 11: Identify Resolution

Step 12: Establish Action Plan & Commitments



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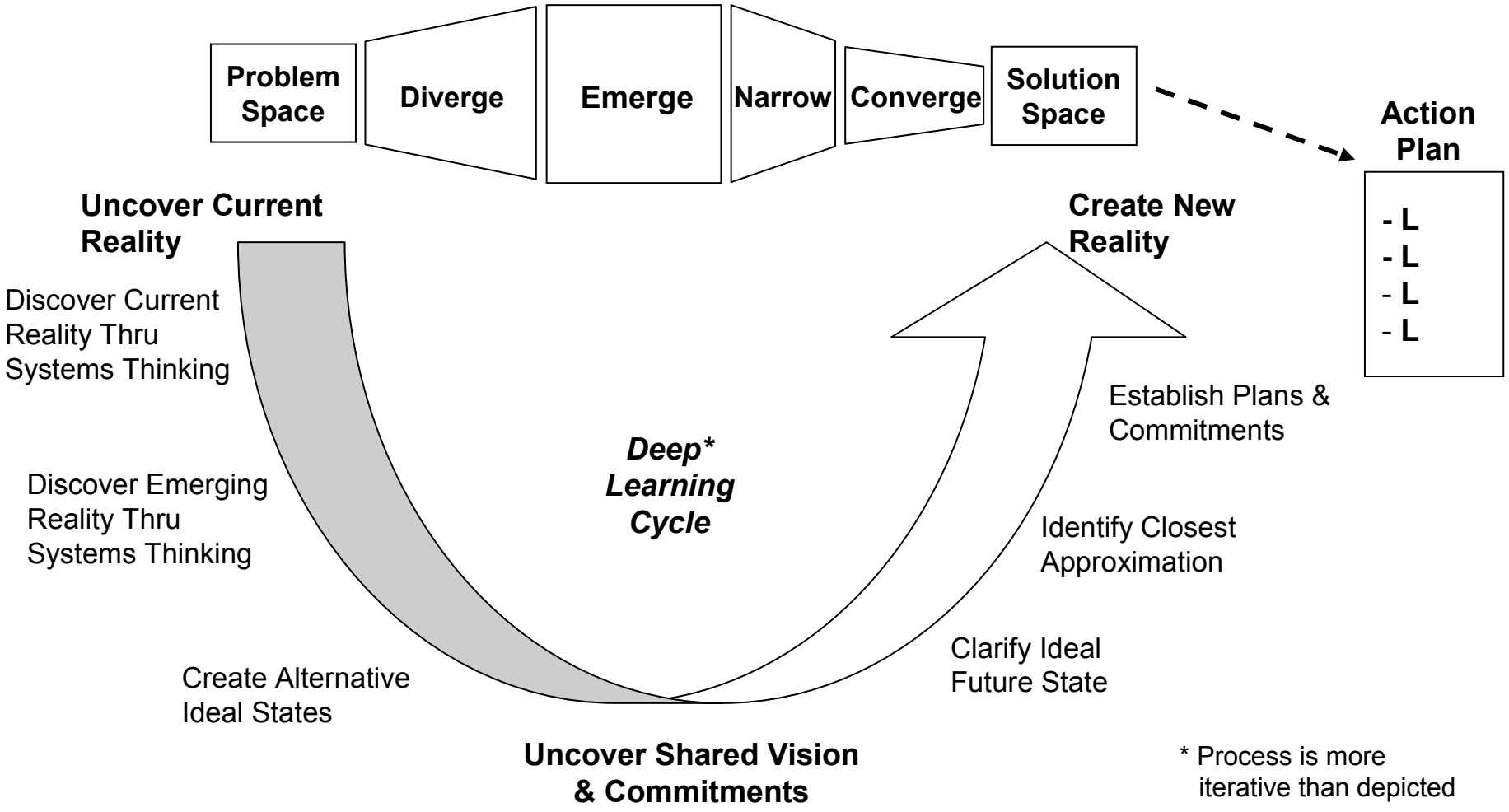
# Complete Strategic Learning Framework




* Process is more iterative than depicted



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# Application Steps & Tools/Techniques

## Steps

1. Build Community
2. Set Context and Rules
3. Explain Characteristics of a System and Define Problem
4. Uncover Patterns and Systemic Structures
5. Creatively Think & Clarify Future Visions
6. Uncover Emerging Patterns and Structures
7. Dialogue to Build Shared Understanding & Commitments
8. Organize Shared Understanding and Commitments
9. Clarify Ideal State & Identify Closest Approximation
10. Build Agreement using Closing Tools
11. Identify Resolution
12. Establish Action Plan & Commitments

## Key Tools & Techniques

- Guiding Rules
- Community Building
- Brainstorm
- Creative Thinking
- Scenario Planning
- Casual Loop Diagram
- Left-Hand Column
- Ladder of Inference
- Skillful Discussion
- Dialogue
- Combining
- Multi-vote (e.g., N/3)
- Closing Tools (e.g., Negative Poll, Three-Steps to Agreement)
- Primary & Secondary Research Guidelines
- World Cafe



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