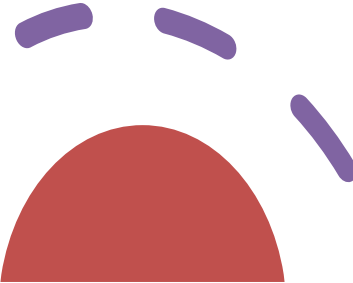


Measuring What Matters: Designing Metrics to Impact Transportation Systems in Communities

Shanna Ratner

Yellow Wood Associates

NCAP Annual Convention 2026



Objectives

1

Learn about
everyday measures.

2

Receive an
overview of You
Get What You
Measure (YGWYM).

3

Practice developing
a goal, an indicator,
and a measure.

Why measure

fuels continuous learning through reflection

creates new information and new patterns of information flow

captures results of risk & experimentation

can lead to new & unprecedented conversations, particularly with information gatekeepers

supports constructive self-organizing behavior

allows us to test our assumptions about the way the world works

helps us tell our stories



You Get What You Measure:

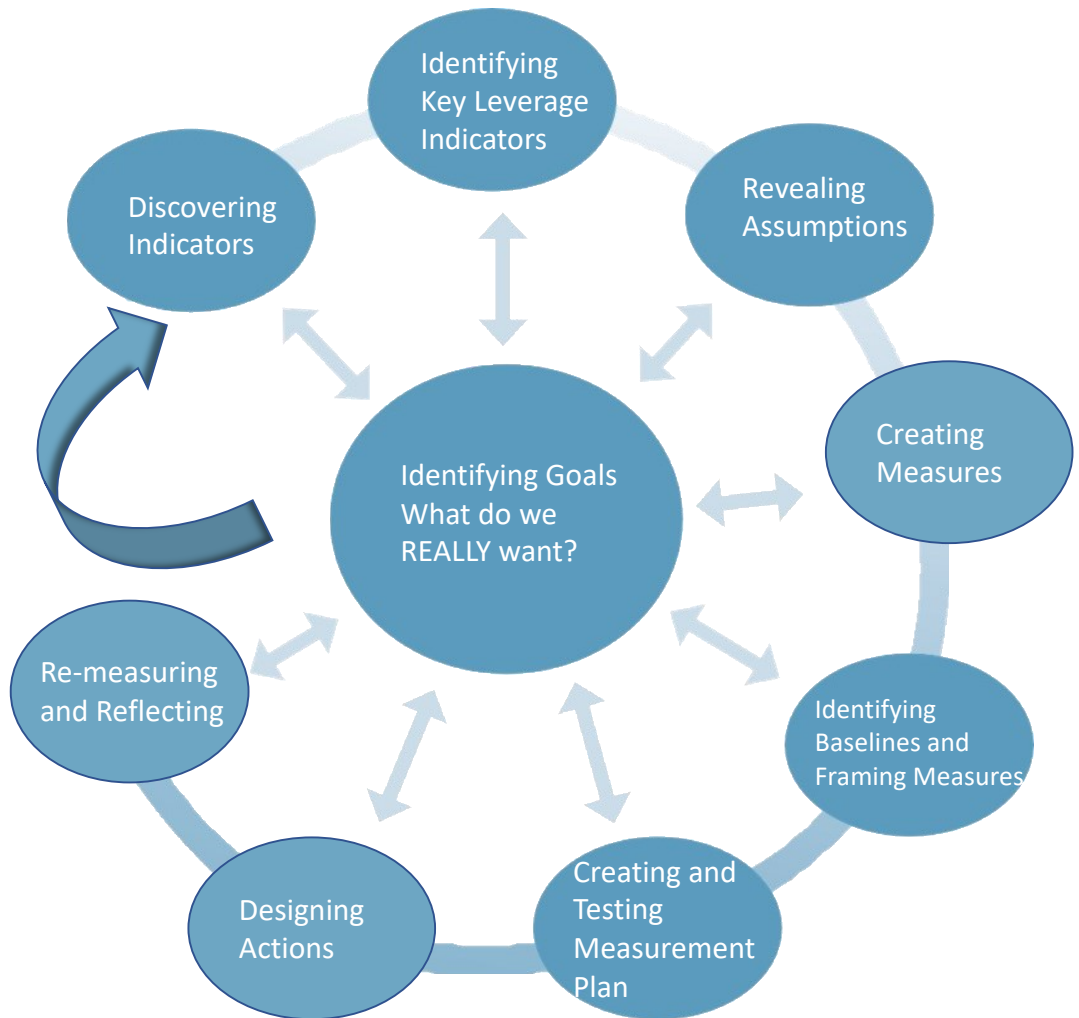
A values-based approach to strategic
planning and measurement

Exercise: Everyday Measurement

List 2-3 things that you count or measure as part of your daily life (not connected to work).

Share your work with those at your table (or sitting next to you) by having each participant pick one measurement off their list and describe what kinds of decisions or actions they take based upon the measurement.

Process Overview



Measurement Vocabulary

INDICATOR

An indicator is something that must be changed, or a condition that must be achieved, in order to claim that progress is being made toward a goal. Since goals are generally quite broad, there are many possible indicators that could suggest progress toward the goal.

A discussion of indicators is a discussion of values — it reveals how different people interpret the goal. Indicators are most powerful when created and agreed upon within the context of the community or organization where they have real meaning to participants.

GOAL

*A goal is a condition that you wish to achieve. A goal is not an action. It is not about doing or making; it is about **being**. Achieving a goal requires a change in the way your organization or your community looks, feels, and acts.*

For example, creating jobs is an activity; being a community in which everyone who wants a job has one is a goal. Goals are usually broadly stated. A well chosen goal should reflect what you really want, not what you think someone else, like a funder, wants to hear.

MEASURE

A measure provides a way to actually count or value the status of an indicator. For example, things may be measured in terms of “number of,” “percent of,” “quality of,” “frequency of,” or “rating of.” To track a measure over time, you must have a unit which defines what you are counting - inches, people, quarts, hours, etc., and a baseline which defines the value of the measure at some predetermined starting point in time.

ACTION

*An action (or intervention) is something you **do** in order to achieve your goal. The action should be defined broadly enough to involve people in a variety of different tasks and provide opportunities for participants who don't normally work together to do so.*

Successful actions build energy and produce spin-offs. They broaden our perspective and suggest new relationships and possibilities.

What is a Goal?

A goal is a condition that your organization wishes to achieve. It is not an action.

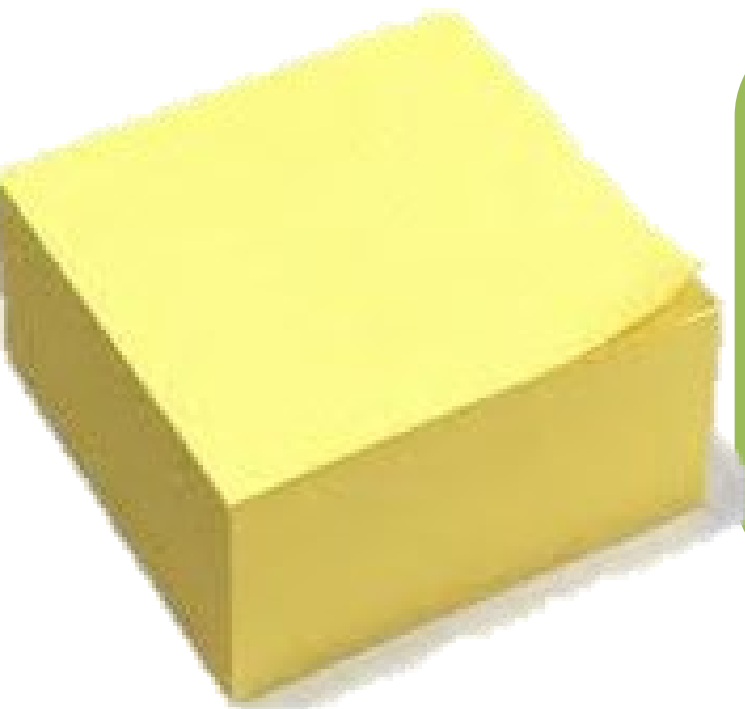
External goals refer to the conditions your organization wants to bring about in the world.

Internal goals refer to the conditions that need to be present within your organization to achieve your external goals.

It Starts with Goals

People in our community have access to the transportation they need to live a fulfilling life.

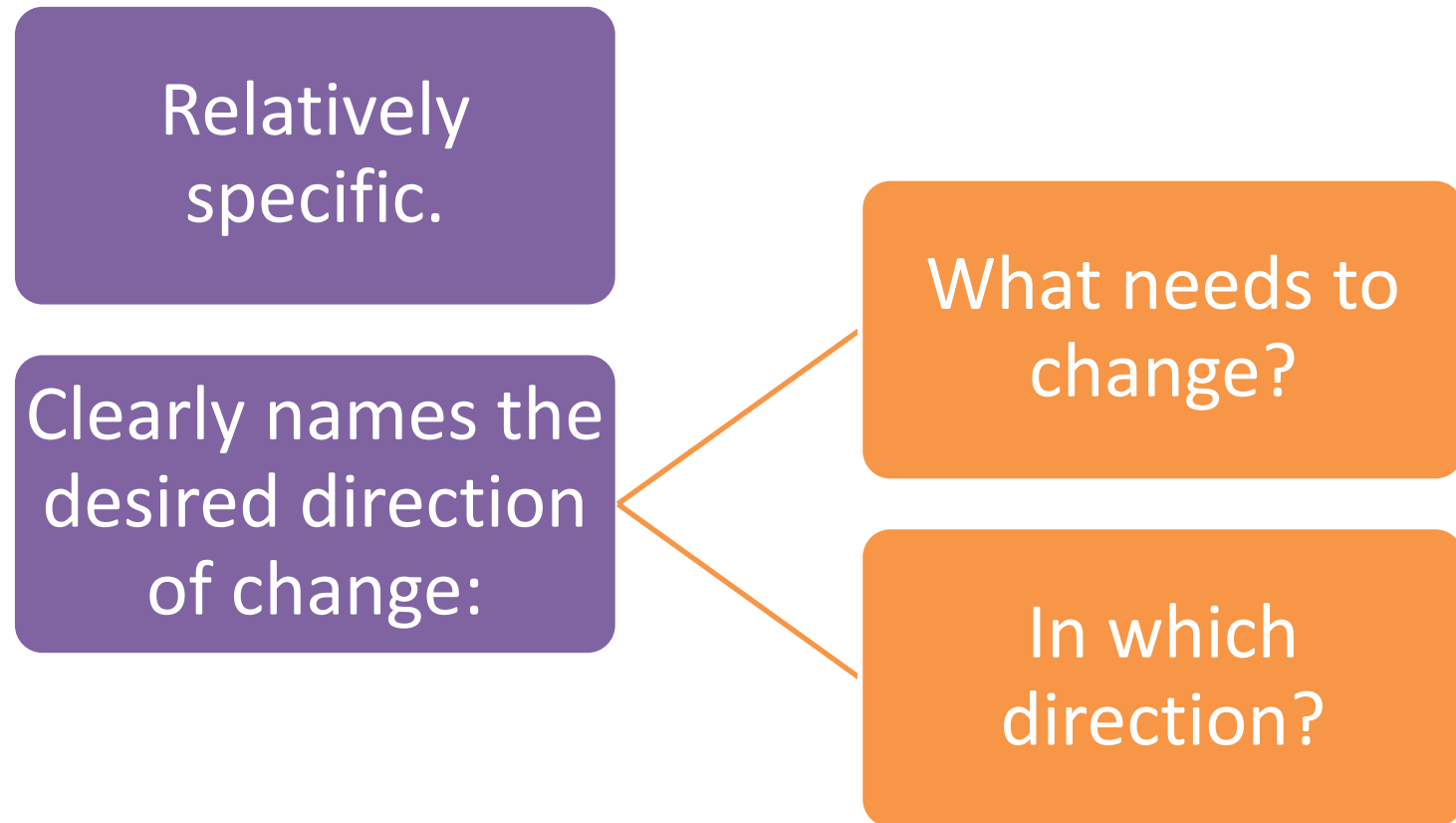
Indicators



An indicator is something that must be changed, or a condition that must be achieved, in order to claim that progress is being made toward a goal.

Sometimes we need more of something, sometimes less. Sometimes, we need to create something new that doesn't exist now, and other times, we need to remove existing barriers.

A good indicator ...





How to Write an Indicator

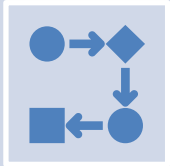
More of something

Less of something.

The presence of something
that doesn't exist yet.

The absence of something (a
barrier) that is in the way.

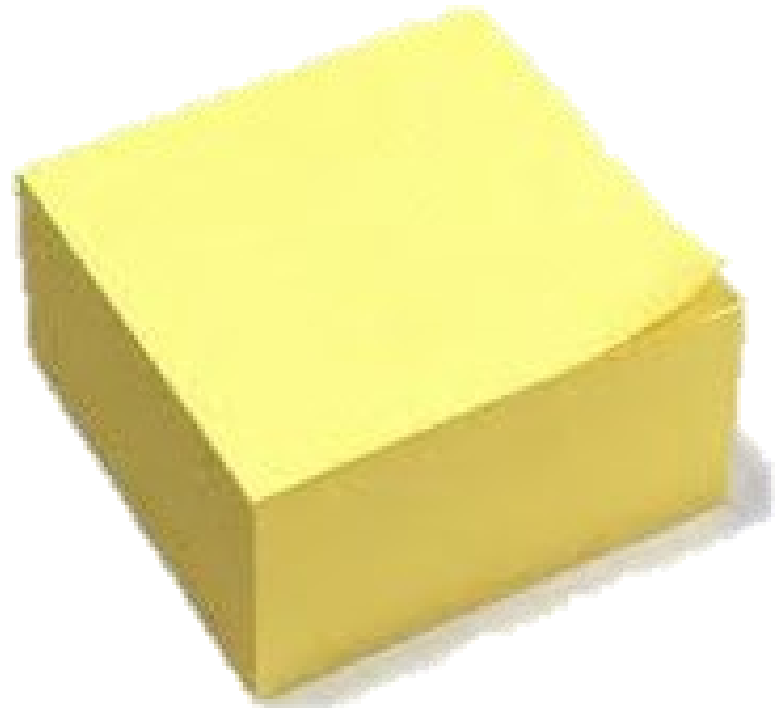
Exercise: Indicators of Progress

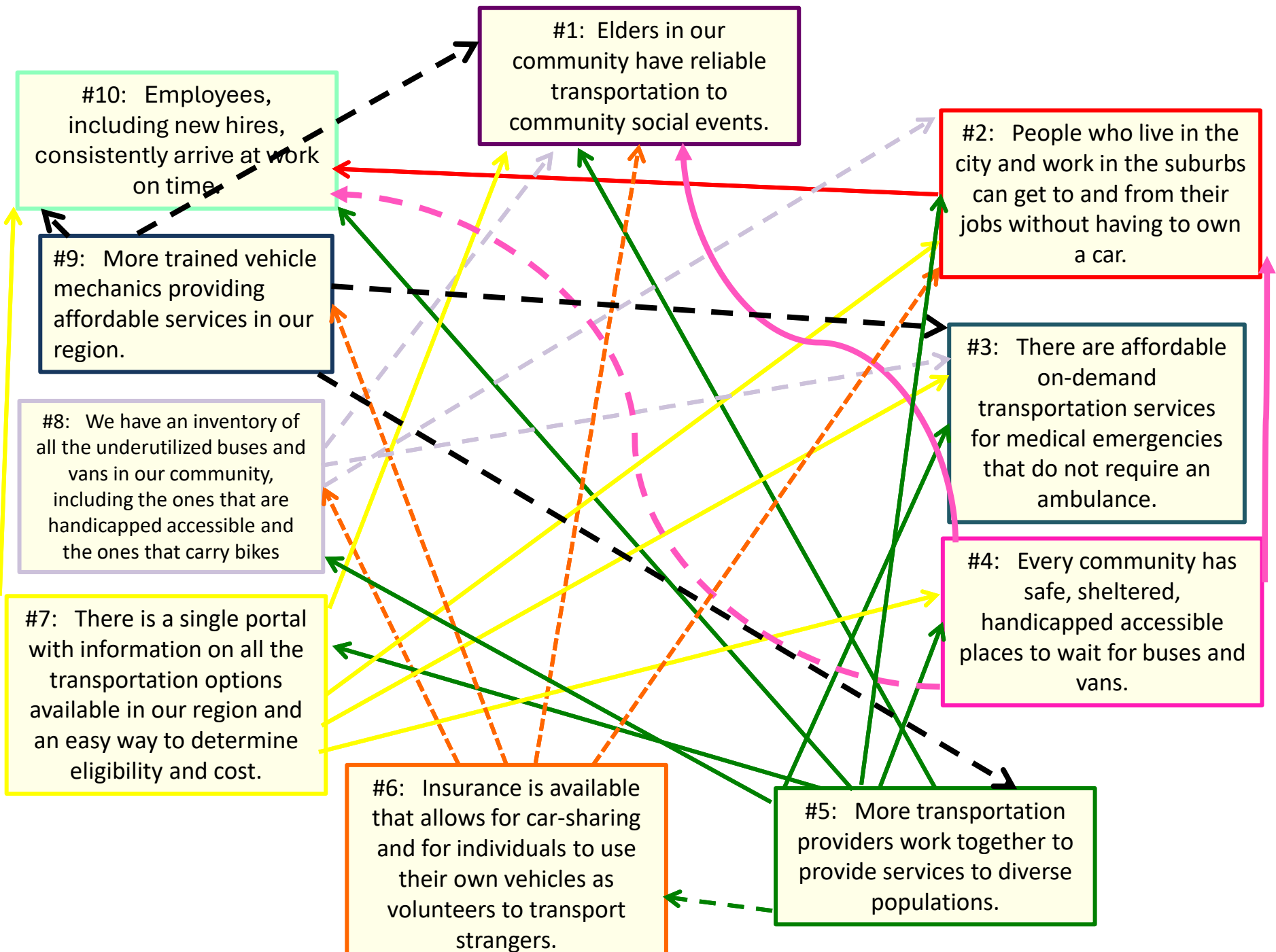


How will you know we are making progress toward this goal? What needs to change?



From the perspective of each of the constituents represented in the room, what would positive change toward this goal look like?





What does it mean?

#1: Elders in our community have reliable transportation to community social events.

#2: People who live in the city and work in the suburbs can get to and from their jobs without having to own a car.

#3: There are affordable on-demand transportation services for medical emergencies that do not require an ambulance.

#4: Every community has safe, sheltered, handicapped accessible places to wait for buses and vans.

#5: More transportation providers work together to provide services to diverse populations.

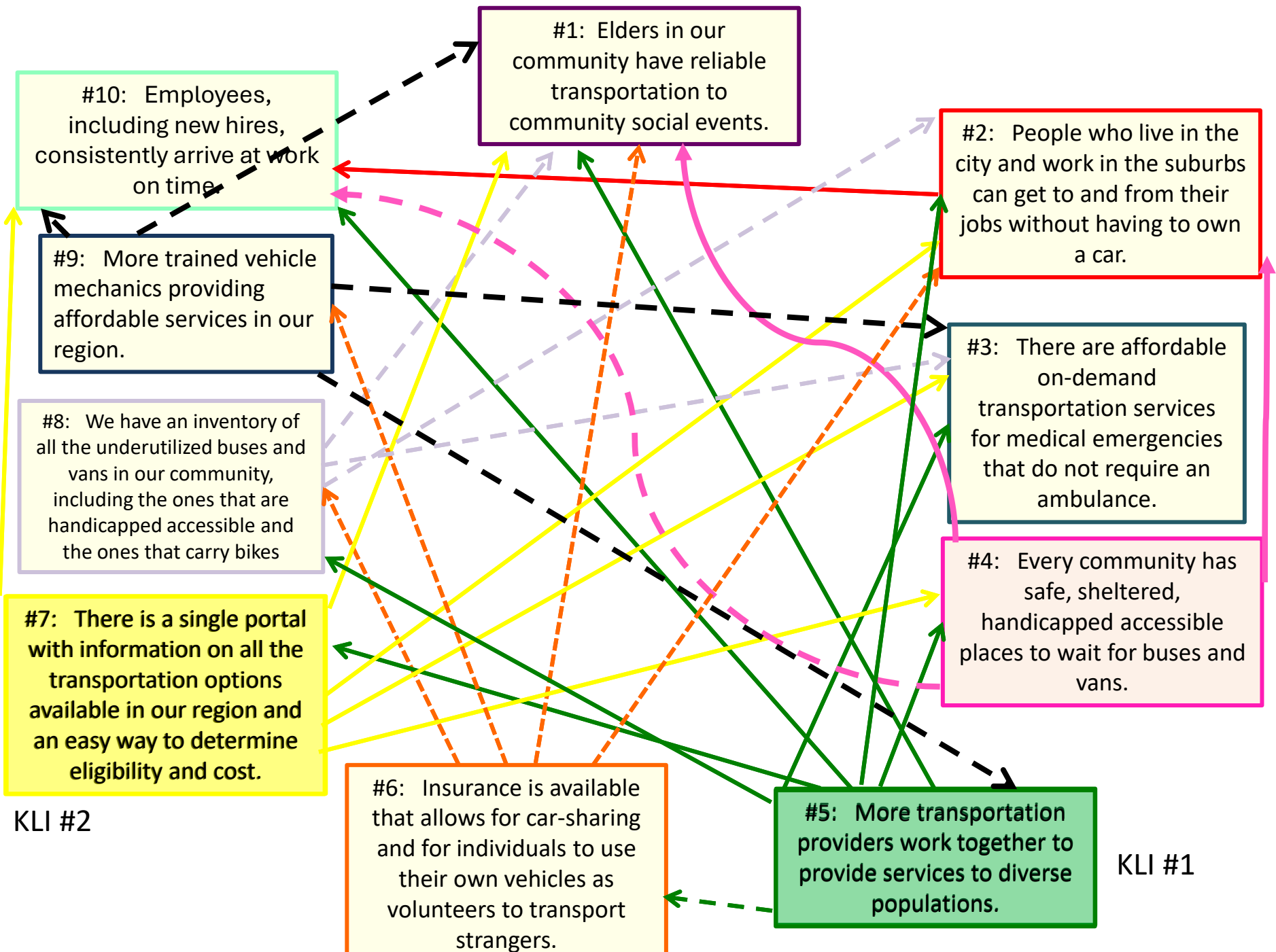
#6: Insurance is available that allows for car-sharing and for individuals to use their own vehicles as volunteers to transport strangers.

#7: There is a single portal with information on all the transportation options available in our region and an easy way to determine eligibility and cost.

#8: We have an inventory of all the underutilized buses and vans in our community, including the ones that are handicapped accessible and the ones that carry bikes

#9: More trained vehicle mechanics providing affordable services in our region.

#10: Employees, including new hires, consistently arrive at work on time.



#1: Elders in our community have reliable transportation to community social events.

#2: People who live in the city and work in the suburbs can get to and from their jobs without having to own a car.

#3: There are affordable on-demand transportation services for medical emergencies that do not require an ambulance.

#4: Every community has safe, sheltered, handicapped accessible places to wait for buses and vans.

#6: Insurance is available that allows for car-sharing and for individuals to use their own vehicles as volunteers to transport strangers.

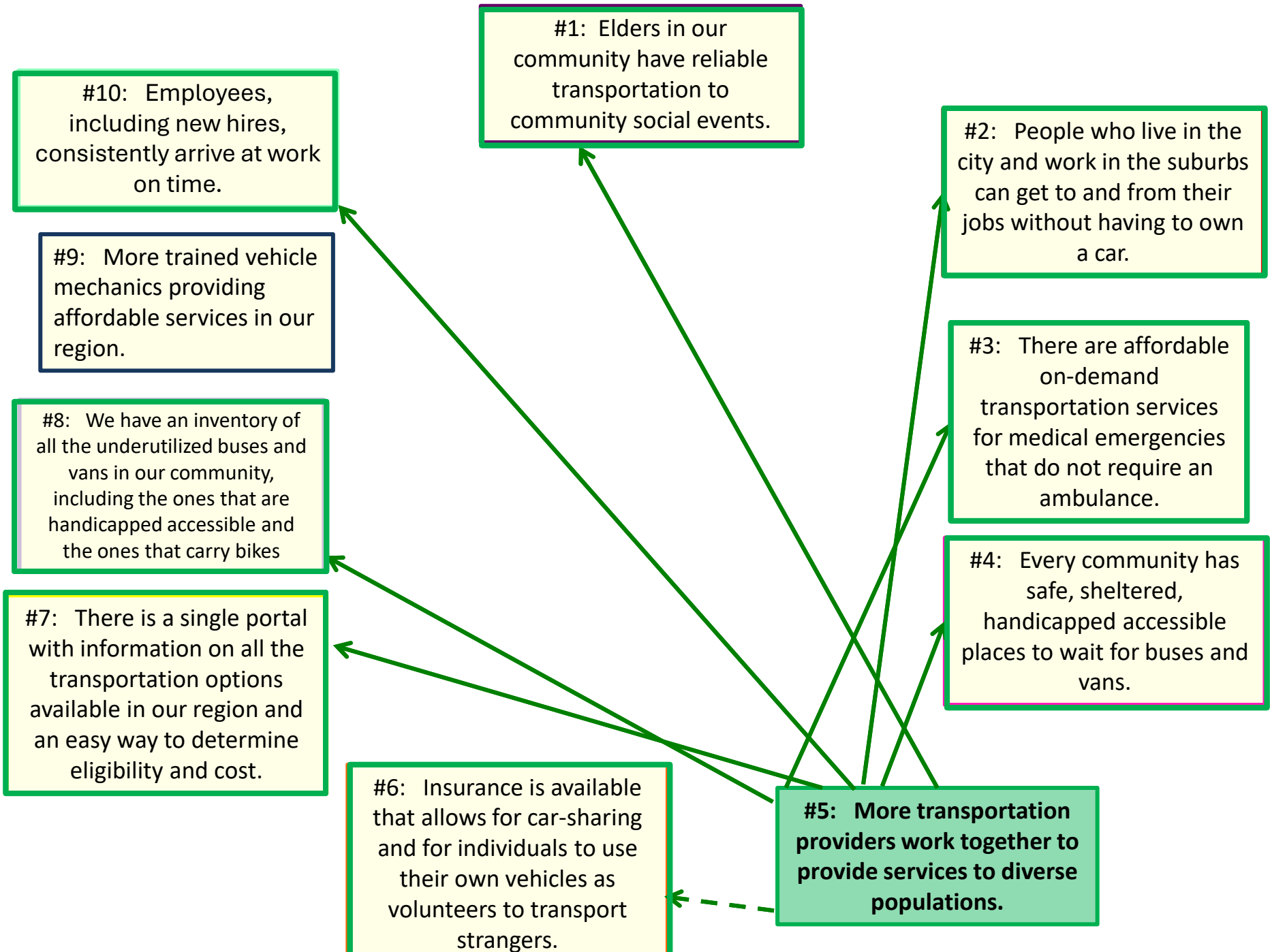
#5: More transportation providers work together to provide services to diverse populations.

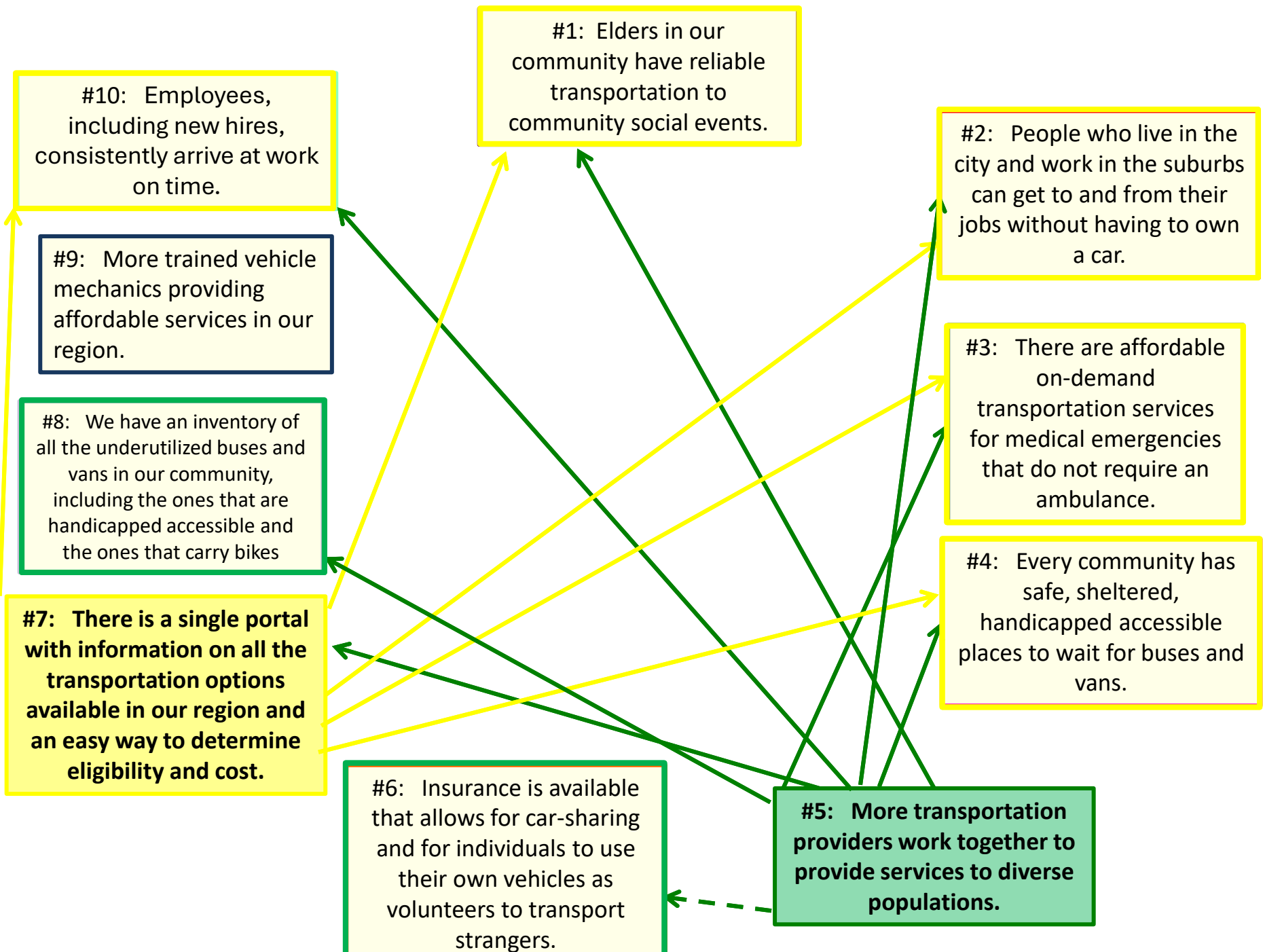
#10: Employees, including new hires, consistently arrive at work on time.

#9: More trained vehicle mechanics providing affordable services in our region.

#8: We have an inventory of all the underutilized buses and vans in our community, including the ones that are handicapped accessible and the ones that carry bikes

#7: There is a single portal with information on all the transportation options available in our region and an easy way to determine eligibility and cost.





#1: Elders in our community have reliable transportation to community social events.

#10: Employees, including new hires, consistently arrive at work on time.

#9: More trained vehicle mechanics providing affordable services in our region.

#8: We have an inventory of all the underutilized buses and vans in our community, including the ones that are handicapped accessible and the ones that carry bikes

#7: There is a single portal with information on all the transportation options available in our region and an easy way to determine eligibility and cost.

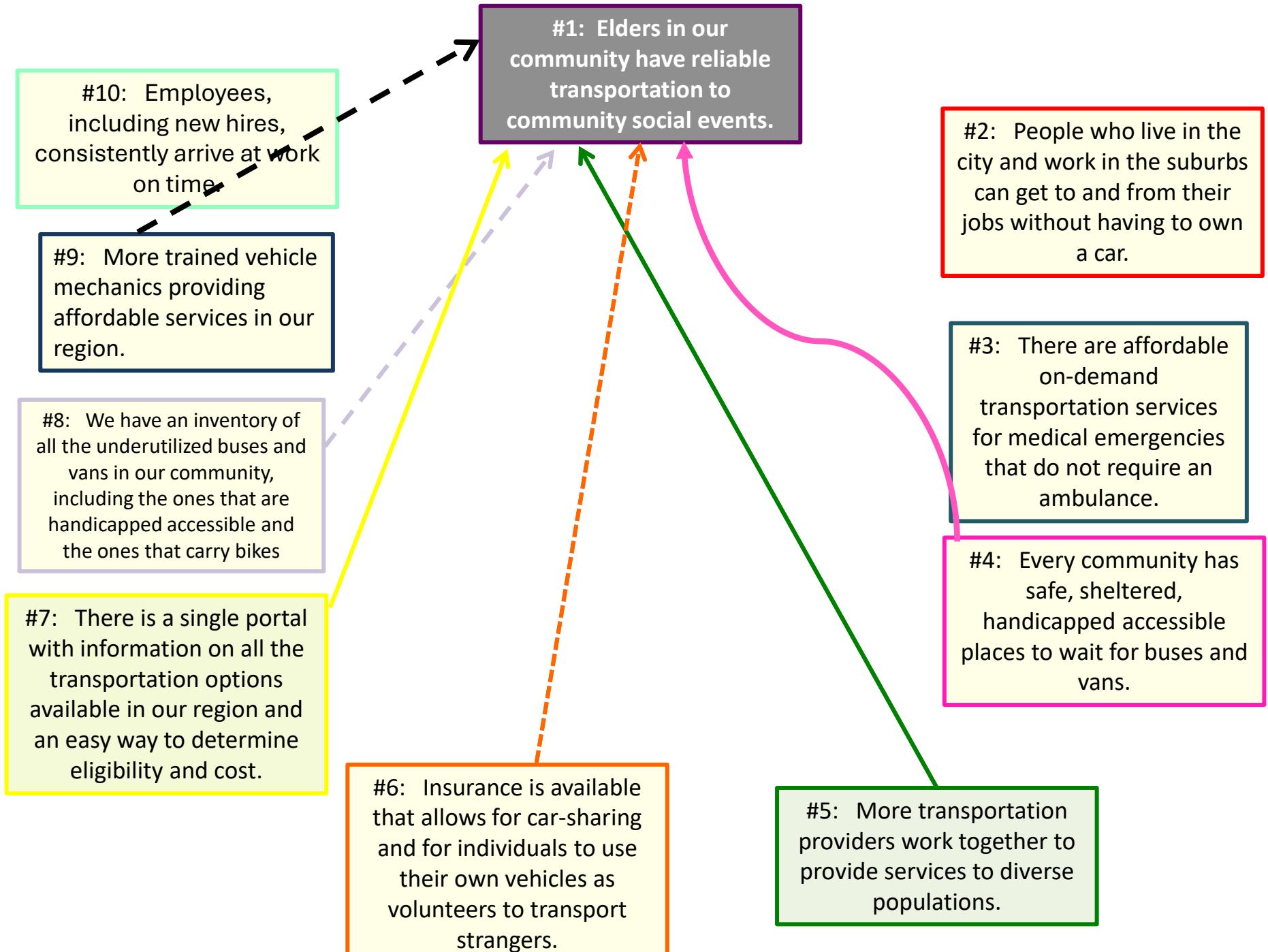
#6: Insurance is available that allows for car-sharing and for individuals to use their own vehicles as volunteers to transport strangers.

#2: People who live in the city and work in the suburbs can get to and from their jobs without having to own a car.

#3: There are affordable on-demand transportation services for medical emergencies that do not require an ambulance.

#4: Every community has safe, sheltered, handicapped accessible places to wait for buses and vans.

#5: More transportation providers work together to provide services to diverse populations.



Measures



A measure provides a way to actually count or value the status of an indicator.



For example, things may be measured in terms of “number of,” “percent of,” “quality of,” “frequency of,” or “rating of.”



To track a measure over time, you must have a unit which defines what you are counting -inches, people, quarts, hours, etc., and a baseline which defines the value of the measure at some predetermined starting point in time.

How to Develop Measures

1

Define the terms
in your key
leverage
indicator(s).

2

Determine the
unit of measure

3

Identify the
relevant baseline
and how you will
establish it

Exercise:

Key Indicator:

More transportation providers work together to provide services to diverse populations.

Definitions:

- Transportation providers:
- Diverse populations:
- Work together:
- Services:
- Provide services:

Unit of measure:

Baseline Measure

- It's the starting point of your story.
- It tells you about conditions as they exist today.
- The more you understand versus assume about conditions as they really exist, the better equipped you will be to come up with solutions that actually work.

Framing Measures: Based on Research

Framing measures illustrate the entire scope of the opportunity; targets identify the focus of your actions and what is possible and help define success; measures tell you if you are making progress toward your targets.



Framing measures have three elements:

1. A geographic frame

2. A time frame
(that allows you to
see trends over
time)

3. A plausible target
(based on research
into conditions in
similar areas)

Creating a Measurement Plan

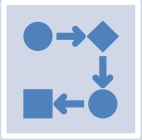
- Where will you get the information you need? (If you don't know for sure, be sure to consider several options. You may need to put together information from several different sources.)
- How will you get the information you need?
- Can you get the information in a way that encourages the behavioral change you are looking for?
- Who will collect the information? What measuring partners do you need?
- How much time do you expect it to take and/or what will it cost to collect the information?
- When will the information be collected? (Pay attention to seasonality, calendars of decision-making and other issues that may suggest preferred times)
- Who will analyze the information?
- Who will prepare it for use and be responsible for its use?
- How will it be used, by whom, and when? (Consider how the information you collect may factor into your action plans).

Action Plans and Measurement Plans

Action plans answer the question: What do we need to do to move our key leverage indicators in a positive direction?

Measurement plans answer the question: How are we going to know if we're making progress?

You Get What You Measure - Resources



Progress You Can See book



YouTube videos

For more information

Shanna Ratner

Yellow Wood Associates, Inc.

shanna@yellowwood.org

www.yellowwood.org

