

# Final ReNewTown Project Conference

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics,  
February 11th and 12th, 2014

**Grzegorz Węclawowicz**

## **The strategy challenge for post-socialist cities of Central Europe, concepts and theory *versus* practice**

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## **Plan of the presentation:**

- Key messages and slogans – evolution**
- The post-socialist context**
- Strategy aim and building plans**
- The formulation of: a mission, a vision, the main strategic objectives and its hierarchy**
- Conclusions: practical and theoretical**



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**July 2011**

The problems of city districts with socialist burden are affecting not only its inhabitants, but also overall city image and economy performance.

The urban areas with socialist burden can become attractive places to live and work in.

ReNewTown aims to break down the negative stereotype of the post socialist space and reveal its hidden potential.



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### January 2012

## Together for Velenje

- Attractive neighbourhoods
- Building bridges between people and their hometown
- Renew your city
- Chance to make change
- New colours for old walls



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### January 2012

## Reinvent Hnúšť'a

### Museum of Socialist Curiosities

- know your past in the future
- reinvent your past
- bringing the past into the future



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**January 2012**

## **Prague 11 (Jižní Město) for SMEs**

Creativity for SMEs

- the best direction for changes

Local business centre

- we move ahead citizens

Centre for SMEs in Prague

- breaking stereotypes and building bridges



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### January 2012

#### **ARTzona in Kraków**

- free to join, free to make a difference
- urban renewal inspired by art
- changing communities through art and urban renewal

**Creativity** - the best direction for changes



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## Key messages and slogans (6)

### July 2012 (data base)

- Too many mistakes are unnecessarily repeated.
- There's a better way.
- Learn from ReNewTown and take up measures which have proved to be successful!



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### January 2013

ReNewTown – the best direction for change:

- Re-built,
- Re-create,
- Re-vitalise,
- Re-ajust



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**February 2014**

**Development Strategy**

**for:**

**re-invention or at least reshaping of  
post-socialist cities as competitive and  
attractive place for living**



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# Strategy aim and building plans (1)



## **Part I, Diagnosis**

The post-socialist context

## **Part II, Guiding policy**

The mission, vision, main strategic objectives

## **Part III. Towards coherent actions**

Conclusion:



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# New phenomena which have shaped post-socialist urban space - the 1990's perception

According to G. Węclawowicz (1992,1996):

1. The return of the market mechanism
2. The changes in the ownership
3. The shift of control over space from central to local levels



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# **New phenomena which have shaped post-socialist urban space - the 1990's perception**

According to G. Węclawowicz (1992,1996):

4. The radical increase in the number of actors competing for particular locations in urban space.
5. The changing rules of spatial allocation from political to market criteria.
6. The transformation of employment structure and the formation of a new social structure.

# **New phenomena which have shaped post-socialist urban space – after 2004 enlargement**

Except globalisation and EU integration issues

**Lack of explicit urban policy at the national levels and the local levels**

**Gradual modernisation and revalorisation of space**

**Shift in demographic behaviour (depopulation, migration,**

**Search for new functional role**



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## Strategy aim and building plans (2)

**TDS addresses policy makers, officials at all levels of government, social scientists, and above all resident organisations, whose ordinary citizens wish to be actively involved in the improvement of their living environment.**

**TDS provides a set of alternative possibilities or actions which could be selected as “main priorities” in trying to deal with particular problems identified in specific city.**



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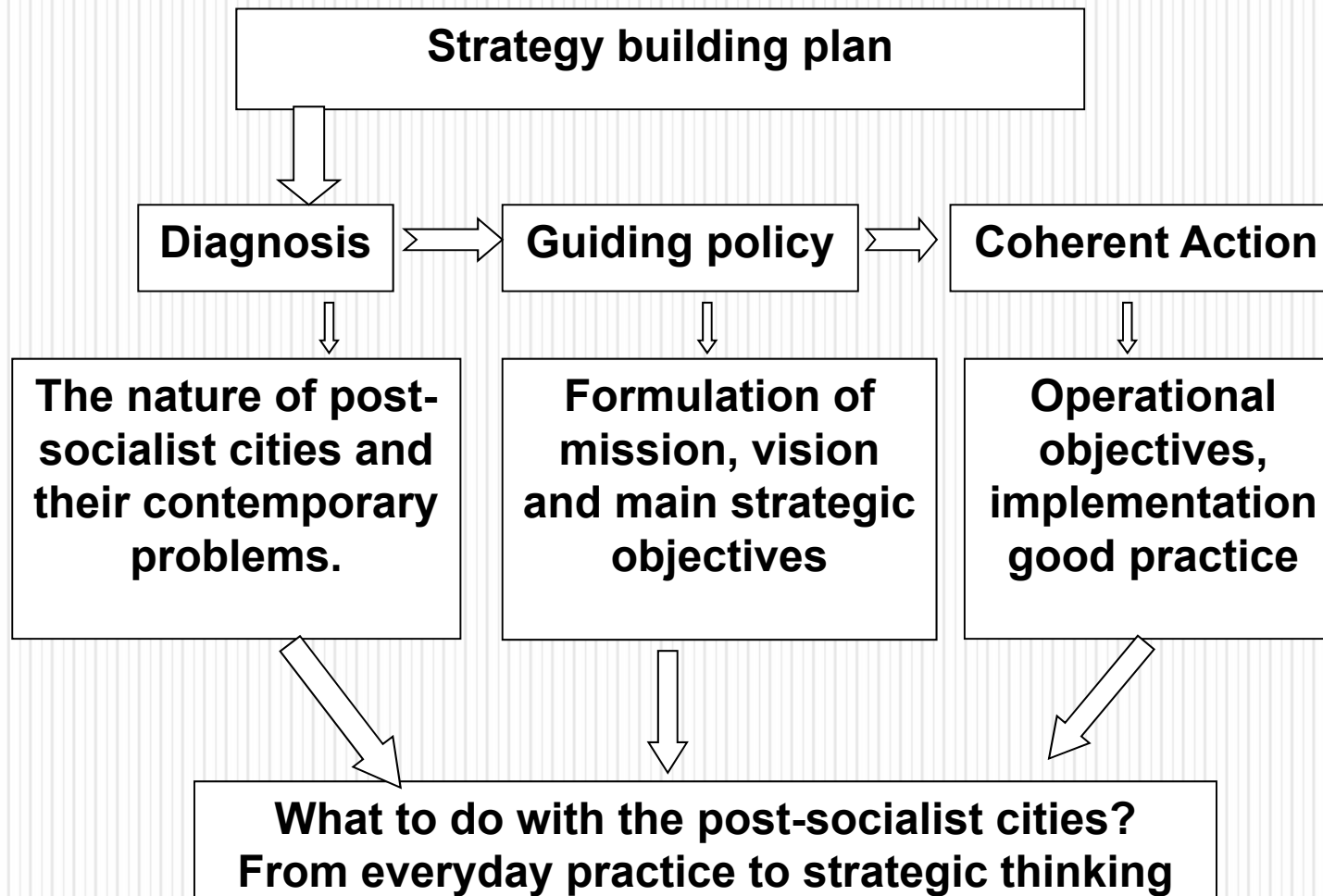


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# Strategy aim and building plans (3)





## The formulation of a mission and a vision

**The mission:  
“to achieve much better living condition”**



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## Mission, vision, main strategic objectives (2)

**The vision is an expression of what the post-socialist districts and cities should look like in decades to come.**

**“The post-socialist cities and their districts should be attractive for their inhabitants, offering modern infrastructure and thriving, sustainable economic bases, comparable to other leading European cities, and having well governed and well organised urban communities with endogenous potential for dynamic future development”**



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## The main strategic objectives and its hierarchy

**Formation of a civil society  
and expansion of human capital**

**Expanding and improving economic activities**

**Improving the quality of landscape and housing**

**Ensuring that development is sustainable and  
energy is used efficiently**



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## **Formation of a civil society and expansion of human capital**

**The two key elements of this objective can be viewed as preconditions, to a large extent, for successful realisation of the other remaining strategic aims.**



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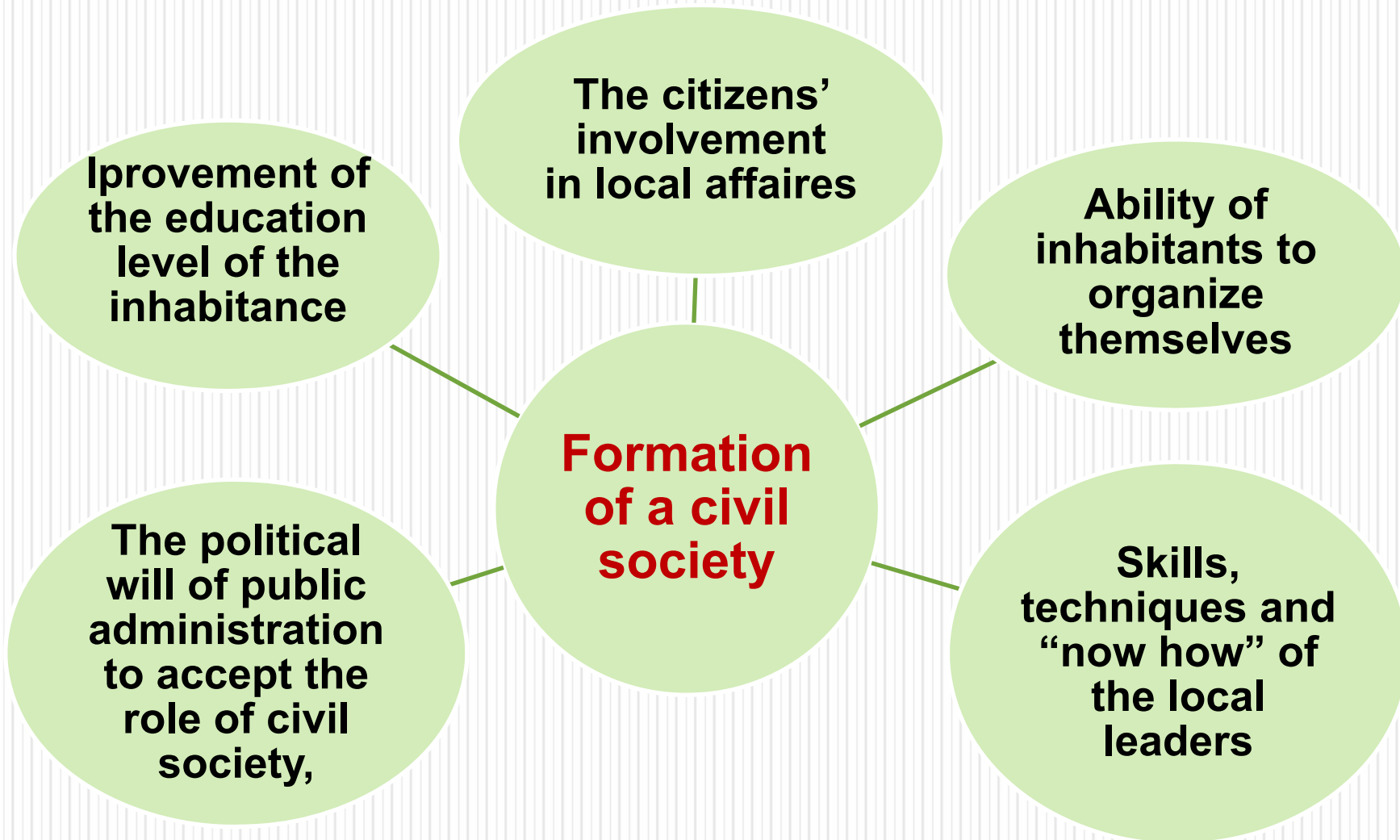
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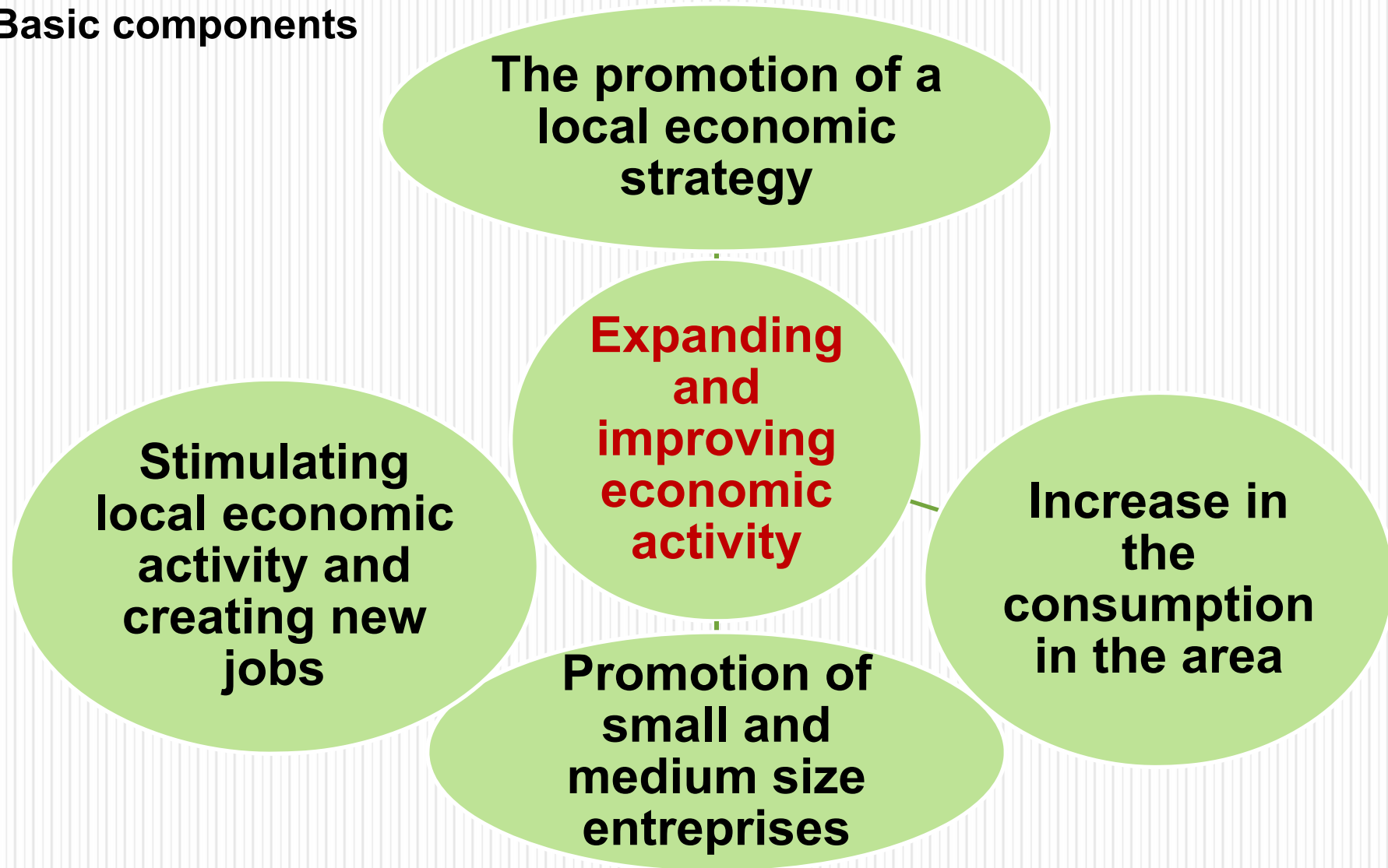
# Mission, vision, main strategic objectives (5)

## Basic components



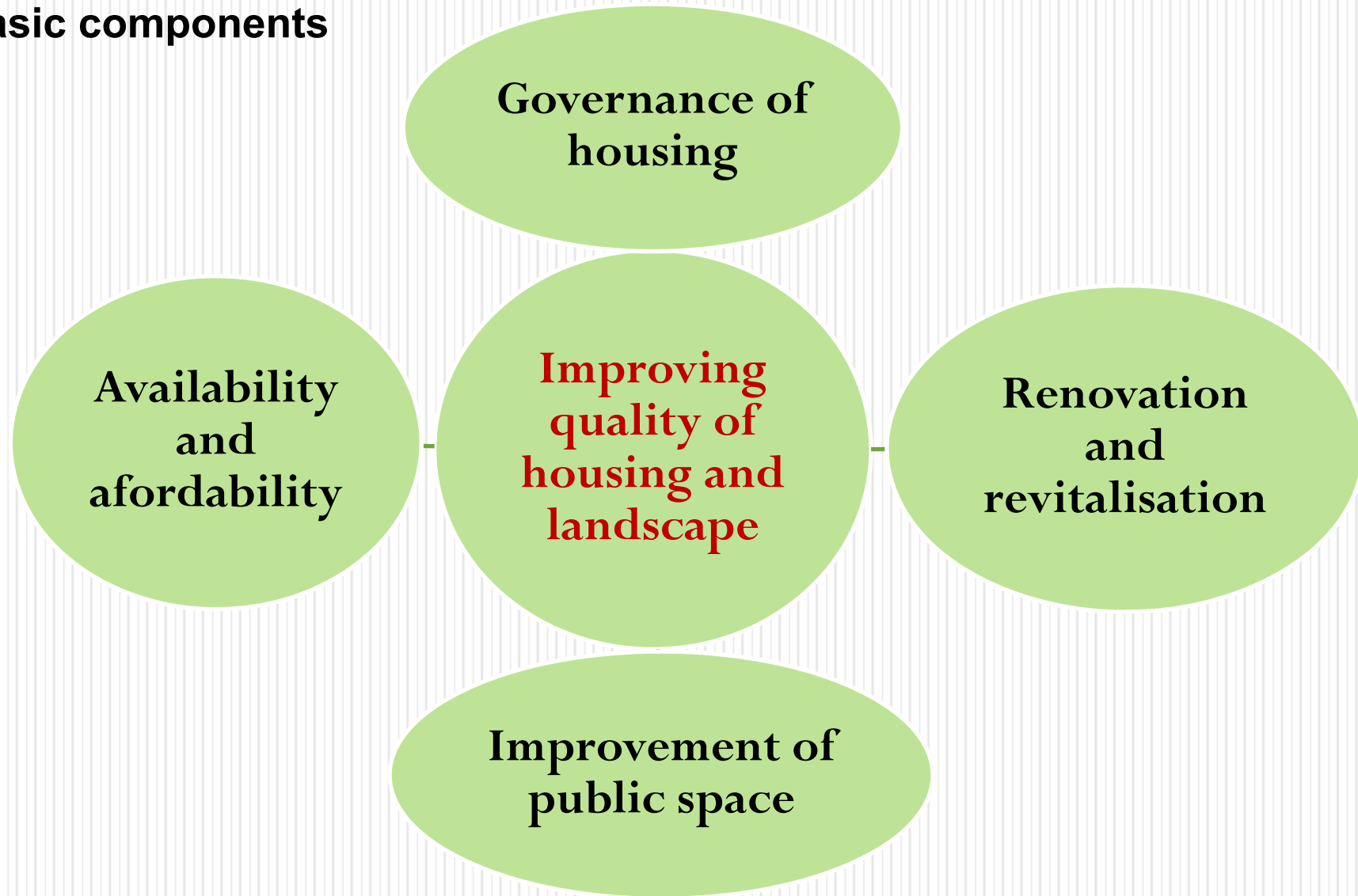
# Mission, vision, main strategic objectives (6)

## Basic components



# Mission, vision, main strategic objectives (7)

## Basic components



## **Ensuring that development is sustainable and energy is used efficiently**

**According to definitions used by the OECD and UN,  
sustainable development *“meets the needs of the  
present without compromising the ability of future  
generations to meet their own needs”*.**

### **Basic components**

**The problem of reducing the carbon footprint of  
cities by energy efficiency and safety**



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## Conclusion.



**What to do with post-socialist cities?**



**From practices to strategic thinking.**

## The most important challenge



**Making urban areas less vulnerable to political, economic and environmental changes**

### Conclusions:

**There is no standard strategy for solving the place-based problems of urban areas**

**Post-socialist urban space needs various strategic perspectives at appropriate spatial levels which can probably be articulated best in the form of long-term development plans.**

### Conclusions:

**The dominant neo-liberal approach to the role of local government at a district or city level needs some consideration.**

**In general, the application of market theory to the functioning of local communities remains too radical because local governments cannot be treated like markets, particularly in the European context.**



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## Conclusions: practical and theoretical

**It is possible to form a coalition between citizens, local and external investors and local authorities in order to shape cities**

(according to urban regime theory - Stoker 1998)

**Local authorities should adopt proactive models of governance for improving the cohesion of local society and social collaboration that take account of the wide range of socioeconomic 'spill-over' or 'externality' affects noticeable in their city.**



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## Conclusions: practical and theoretical

**National urban policy should be formulated as a guide for local government at sub-regional or urban scales as well as for those in government administration, the business community and any relevant social and non-governmental organizations.**

**The final outcome of the strategy should be a shift from “low aspiration space” to “high aspiration space”; yet, transferring problems to another part of the city should be avoided.**



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The digital version of  
"Transnational Development Strategy for the Post-  
Socialist Cities of Central Europe" available on:

[www.renewtown.eu](http://www.renewtown.eu)

**Thank you for your attention !**

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