



# THE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT NETWORK

A PLATFORM FOR  
BEHAVIOR CHANGE,  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
AND THE REINVENTION OF  
OUR CITIES

DAVID GERSHON  
EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE

**"IN MY DREAM THE ANGEL SHRUGGED AND  
SAID, IF WE FAIL THIS TIME, IT WILL BE A**



**FAILURE OF IMAGINATION.  
AND THEN SHE PLACED THE WORLD GENTLY  
IN THE PALM OF MY HAND."**

**– BRYAN ANDREAS**

**Why bother getting people to lower their carbon footprint? Is there not an easier way?**





# Ok, but how do we do it?



**A clue...**



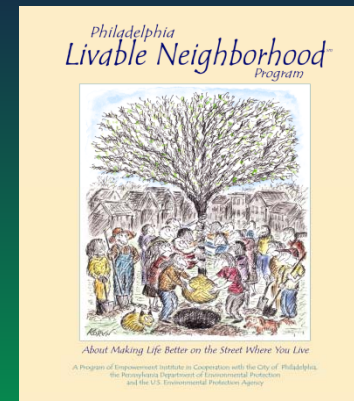
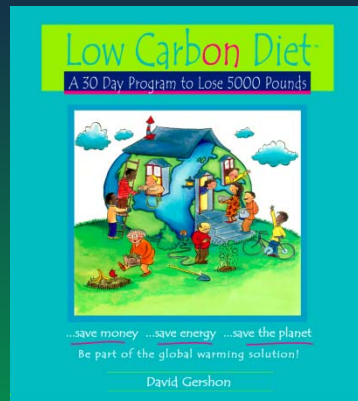
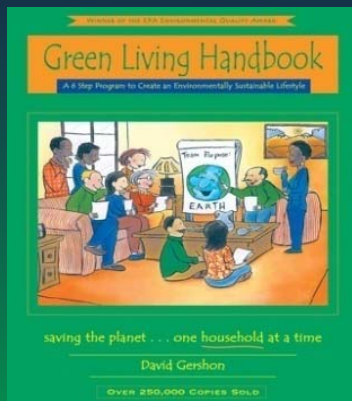
**One of every dozen people on the planet has a  
Facebook account.**

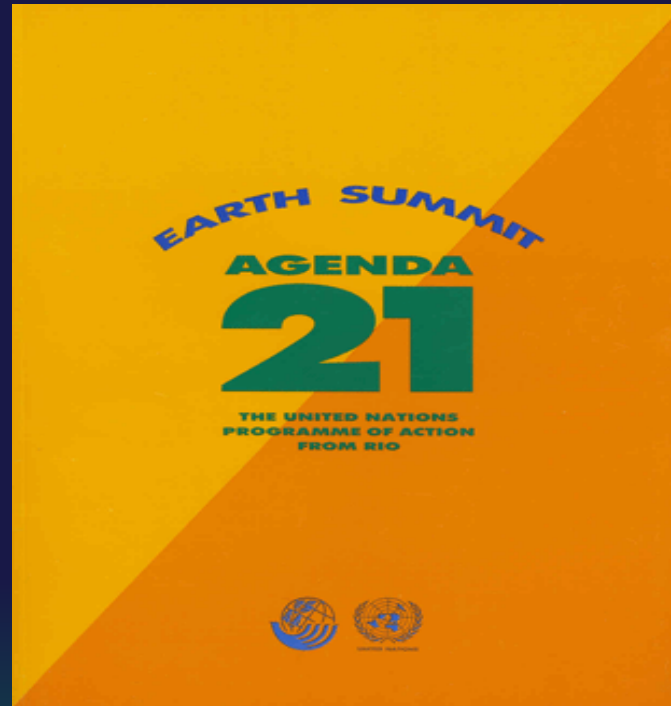


**More evidence...**

# How can we harness the evolutionary impulse for greater social connection to address the climate change crisis?

## A two decade journey into the possible...





**“The greatest cause of the deterioration of the global ecosystem is the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production of industrialized countries.”**



ASS

**Can a social engagement network help people adopt environmentally sustainable lifestyles?**

**Will they sustain the behavior change?**

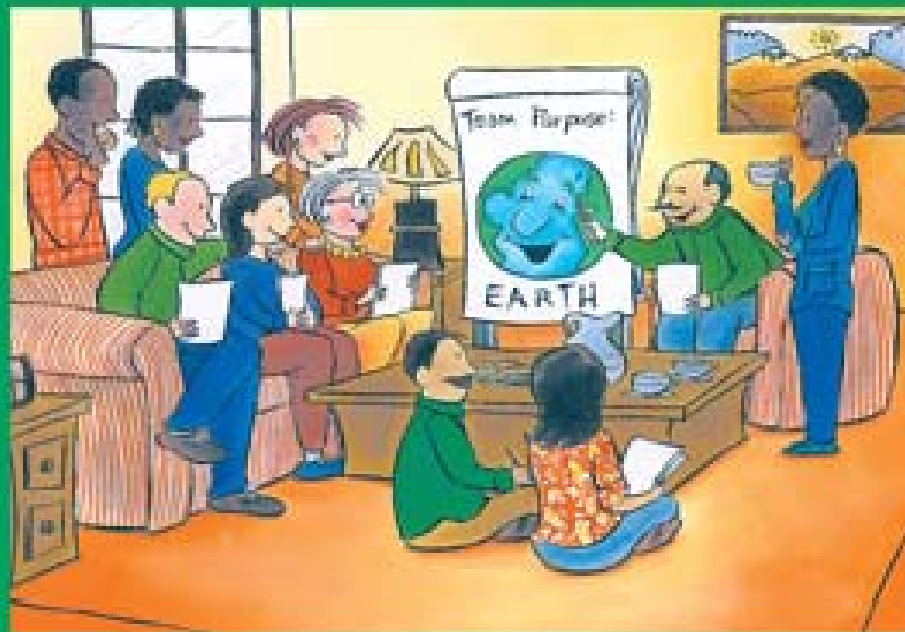
**Can we make the process replicable and scalable??**



WINNER OF THE EPA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AWARD

# Green Living Handbook

A 6 Step Program to Create an Environmentally Sustainable Lifestyle



saving the planet . . . one household at a time

David Gershon

OVER 250,000 COPIES SOLD

# RESULTS



**20,000** PEOPLE ACHIEVED THESE ANNUALIZED SAVINGS

**40% -- SOLID WASTE**

**32% -- WATER**

**14% -- ENERGY**

**8% -- VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED**

**15% -- CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS**

**\$255 SAVINGS PER HOUSEHOLD**

# LONG-TERM BEHAVIOR CHANGE SUSTAINED

“Unsurpassed in Changing Behavior”





## **NEIGHBORHOOD DIFFUSION**

**1. FOR SAKE OF OUR CHILDREN**

**2. GET TO KNOW NEIGHBORS**

**3. MORE LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOOD**

**25% BLOCK PARTICIPATION**

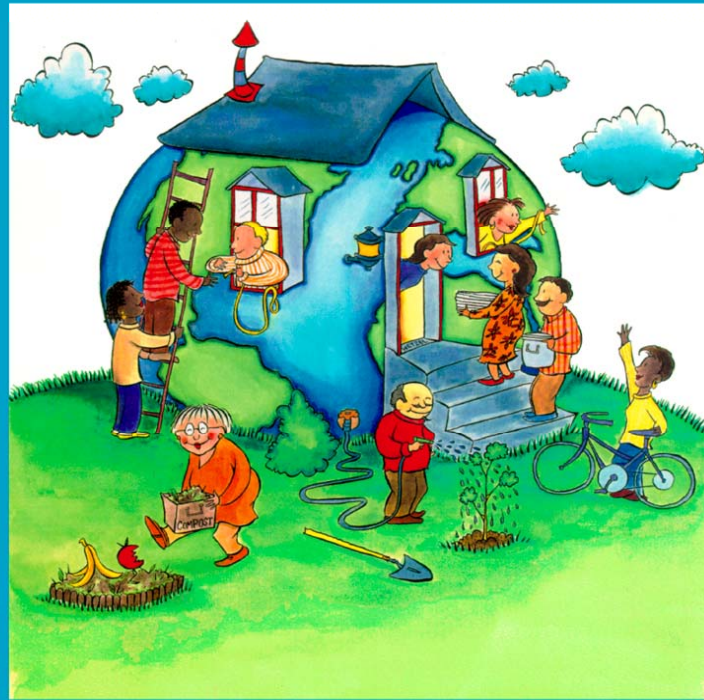


**Can the social engagement network help people  
adopt low carbon lifestyles?**



# Low Carbon Diet<sup>sm</sup>

A 30 Day Program to Lose 5000 Pounds



...save money ...save energy ...save the planet

Be part of the global warming solution!

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David Gershon

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# RESULTS

**PORTLAND PILOT AVERAGED 22% CO<sub>2</sub> REDUCTION PER  
HOUSEHOLD AND 41% BLOCK PARTICIPATION**

**1,500 HOUSEHOLDS FROM MCAN AND VT P&L  
AVERAGING 25% CO<sub>2</sub> REDUCTION**

**OVER 300 US COMMUNITIES USING THE PROGRAM**

**TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

**PROGRAM HAS SPREAD TO CHINA, JAPAN, KOREA,  
CANADA AND AUSTRALIA**



**Can we use social engagement networks  
to help people retrofit their homes?**



# SAN ANTONIO PILOT RESULTS



**27 ECOTEAMS CONSISTING OF 204 HOUSEHOLDS**

**16 ACTIONS PER HOUSEHOLD**

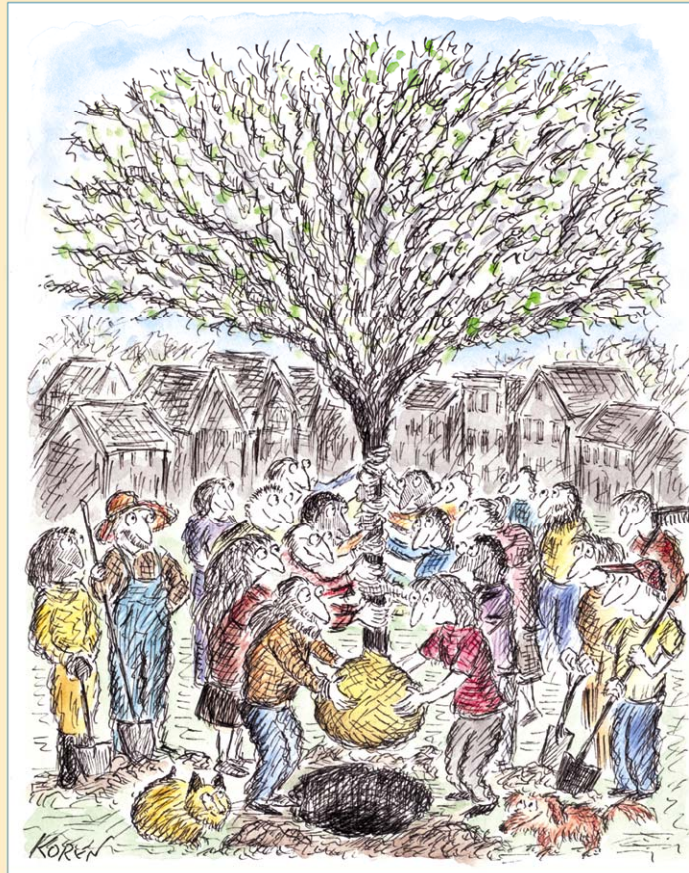
**41% TOOK ONE OR MORE RETROFIT ACTIONS**



**Can we use social engagement networks to create more livable neighborhoods, particularly in our inner cities?**



*Philadelphia*  
**Livable Neighborhood<sup>sm</sup>**  
*Program*



*About Making Life Better on the Street Where You Live*

A Program of Empowerment Institute in Cooperation with the City of Philadelphia,  
the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection  
and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

# PHILADELPHIA RESULTS



**101 BLOCK-BASED TEAMS FORMED**

**61% HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION PER BLOCK**

**3 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS AVERAGED  
PER BLOCK**

**25 CITY OR STATE SERVICES INTEGRATED INTO PROGRAM  
ENABLING A HOLISTIC DELIVERY PLATFORM**

**\$4,500 VOLUNTEER TIME CONTRIBUTED PER BLOCK**

# SOCIAL DNA SOURCE CODE



**RIGHT SIZE GROUP – 5 TO 8 HOUSHOLDS**

**EASE OF USE – ORGANIZED TOPICS AND ACTION RECIPES**

**GROUP TO TEAM – TEAM PURPOSE STATEMENT, TEAM LEADER,  
SHARED LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES**

**GROUP PROCESS PROTOCOL – PEER SUPPORT,  
ACCOUNTABILITY AND FEEDBACK**

**PERFORMANCE – STRUCTURED MEETINGS AND AGENDAS**

**95% COMPLETION RATE, SUBSTANTIVE BEHAVIOR  
CHANGE AND TEAM REPLICATION**

# THE ADJACENT POSSIBLE: THE PATTERN OF INNOVATION IN NATURAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS

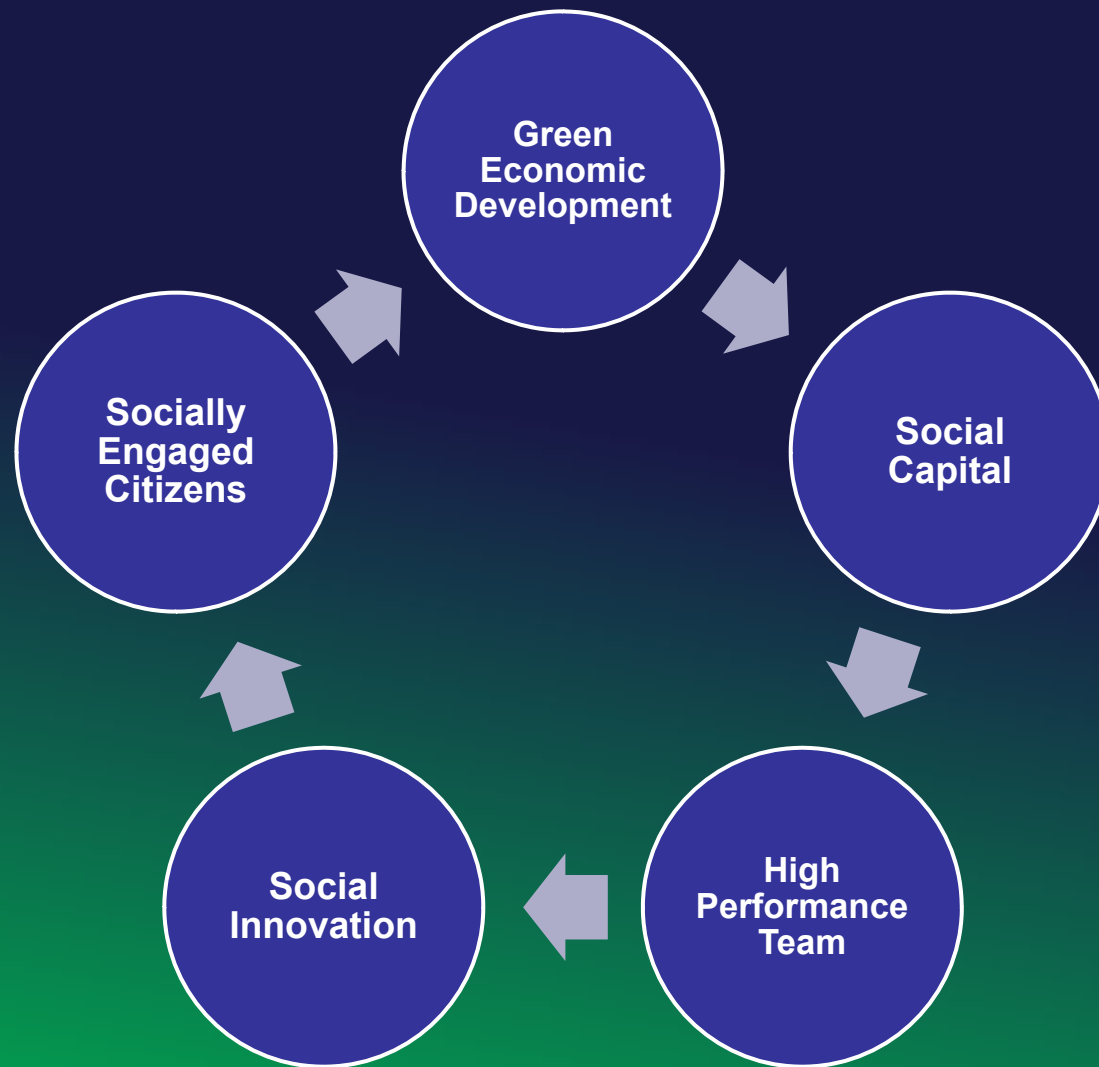
**“Think of a house that magically expands with each door you open. You begin in a room with four doors, each leading to a new door you haven't visited yet. These four rooms are the adjacent possible. The Path of Evolution is a consistent exploration of the adjacent possible.”**

**WHERE GOOD IDEAS COME FROM: THE NATURAL HISTORY  
OF INNOVATION – STEVEN JOHNSON**

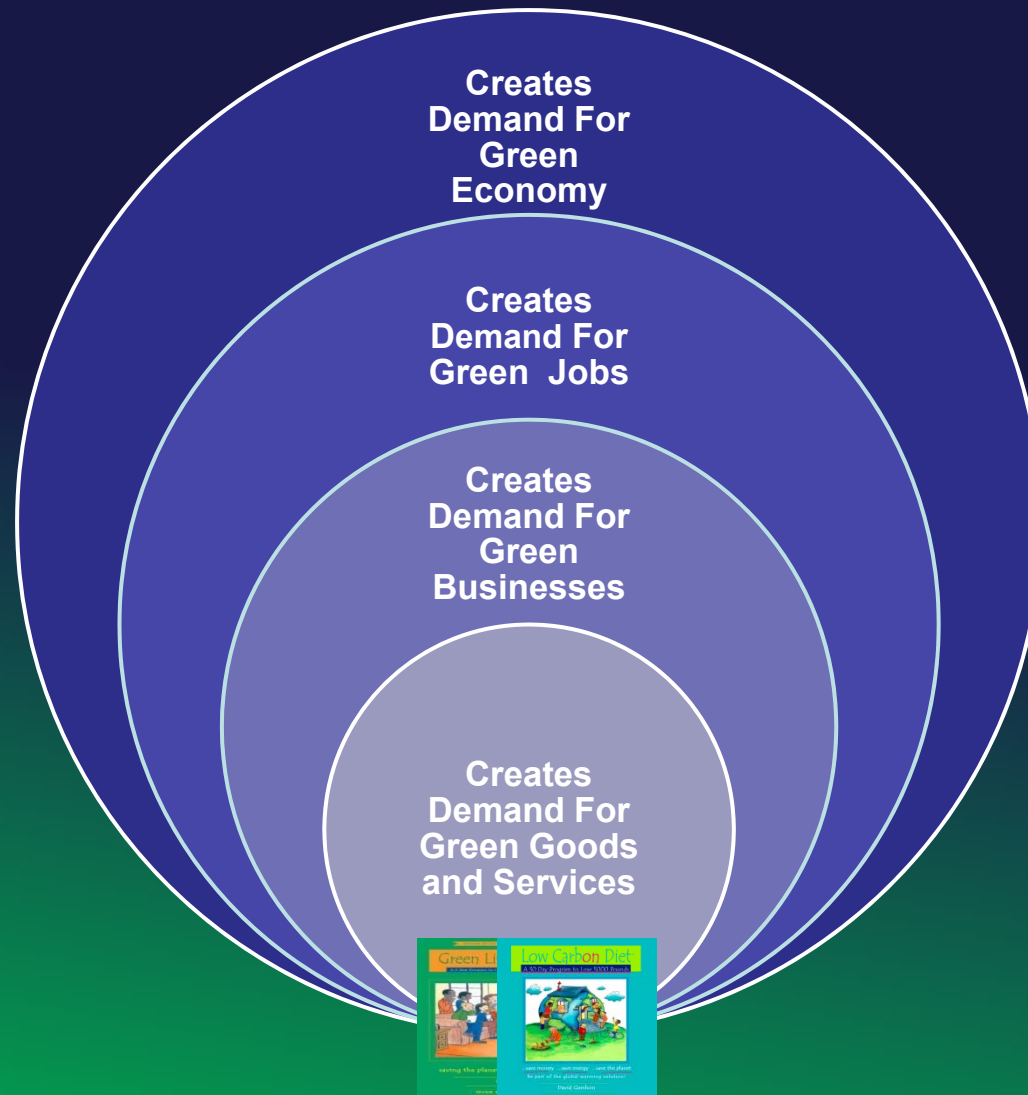




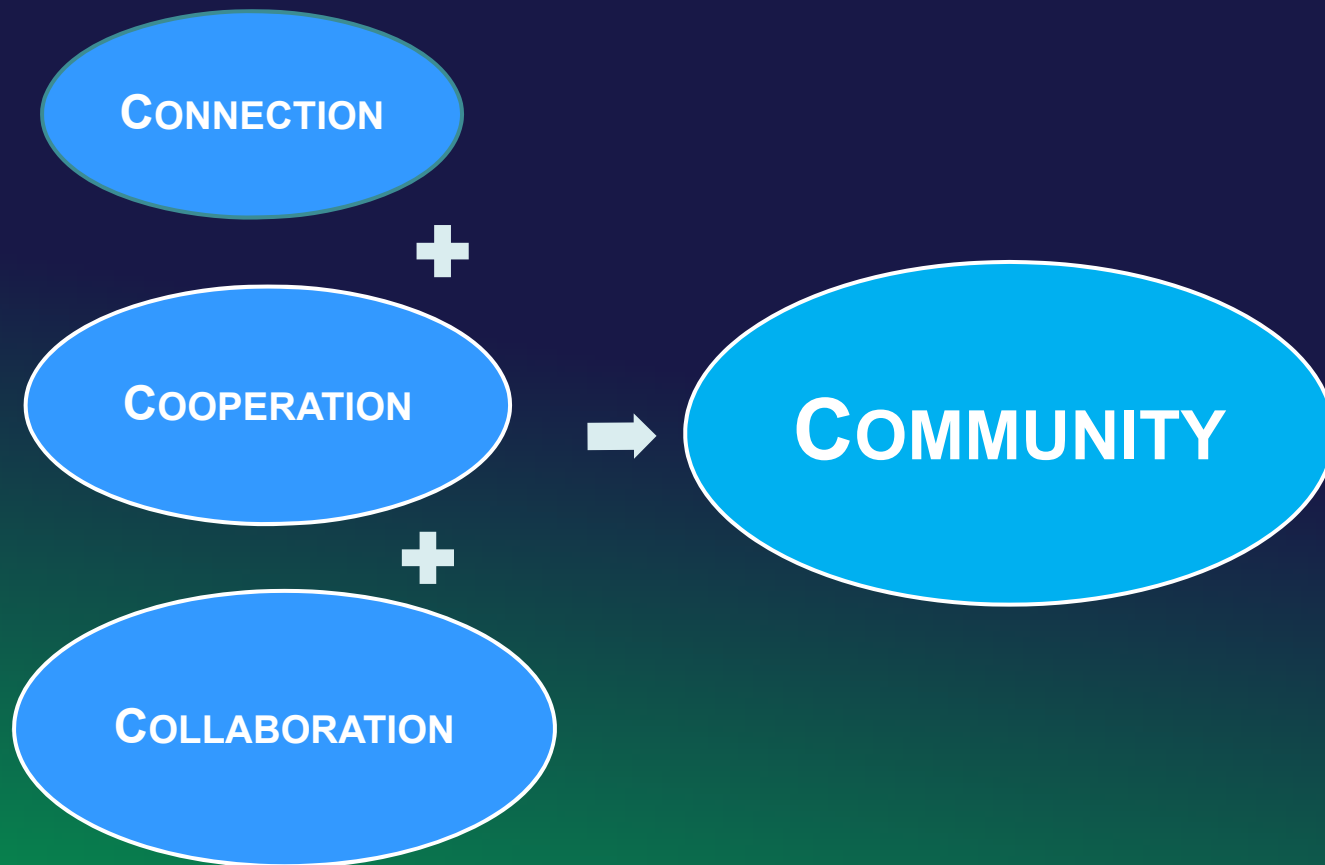
# AN EXPLORATION OF FIVE ROOMS OF THE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT NETWORK ADJACENT POSSIBLE



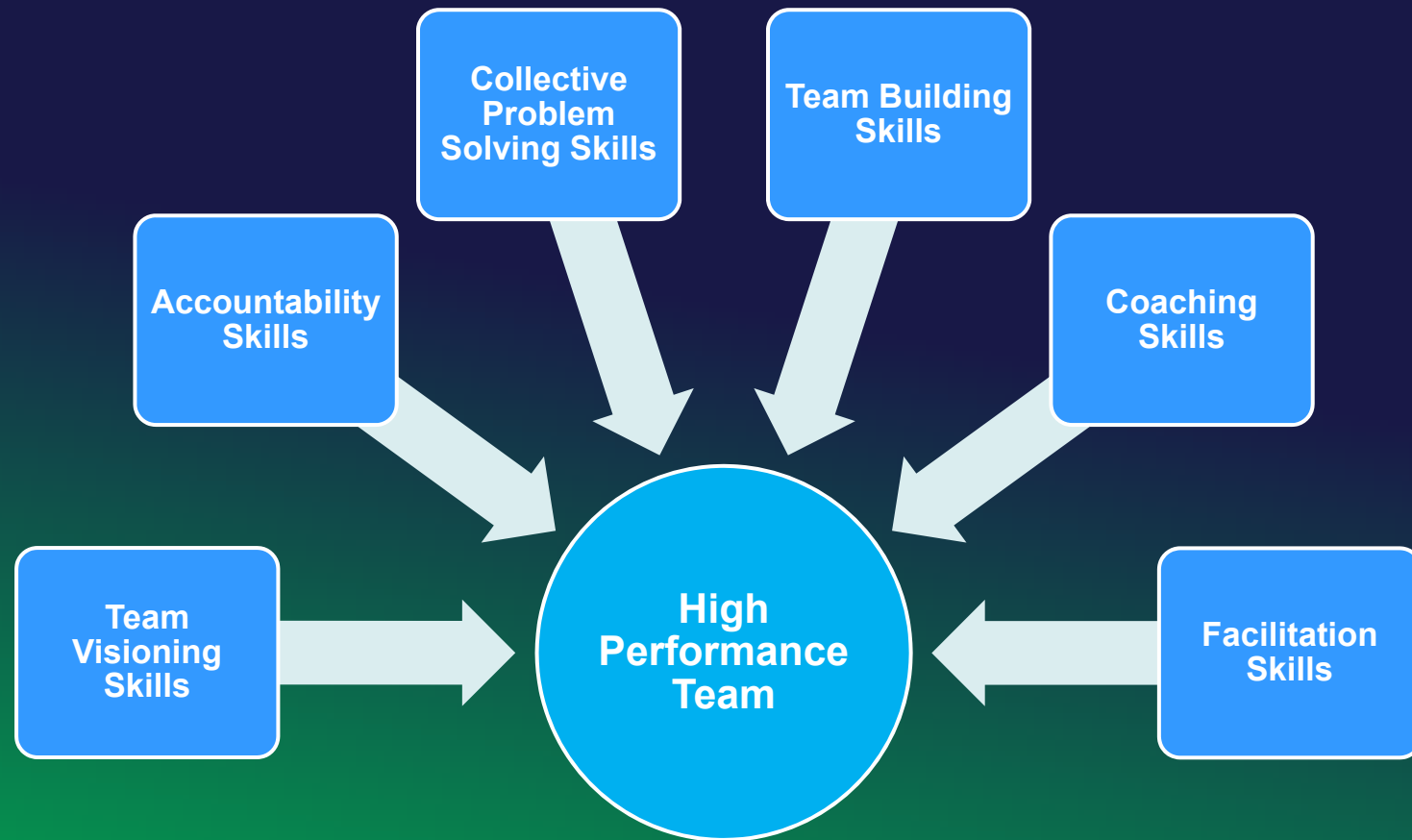
# GREEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



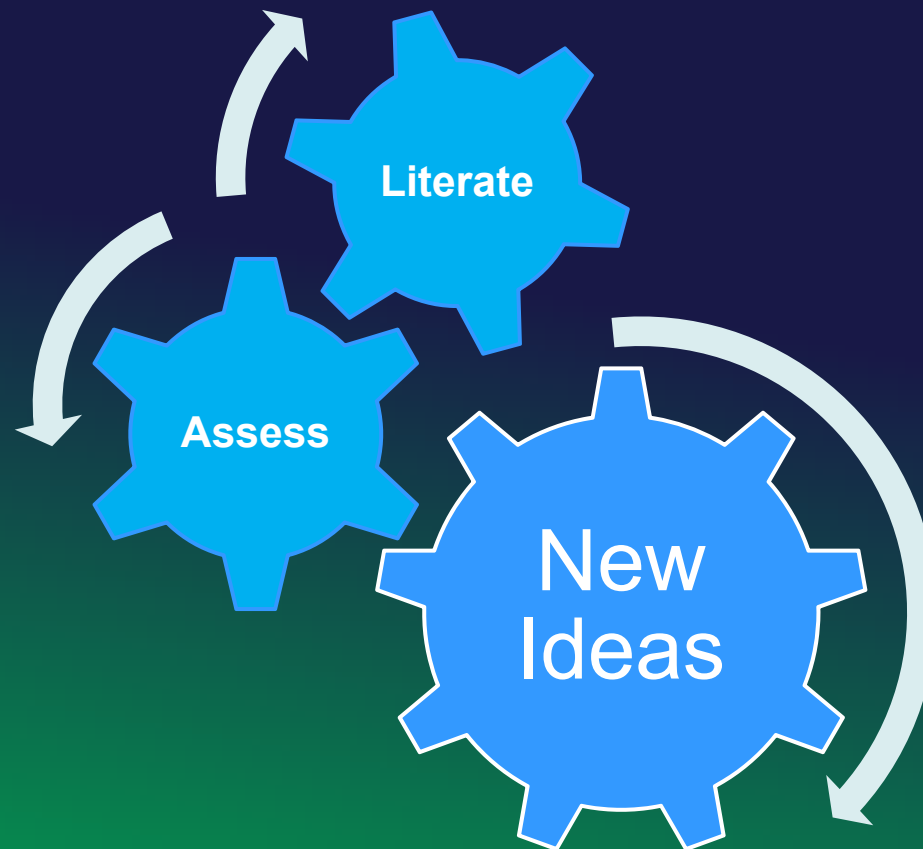
# SOCIAL CAPITAL



# HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM



# SOCIAL INNOVATION





# SOCIALLY ENGAGED CITIZENS

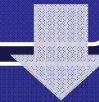
**Block Leader**

**Program Coach**

**Political Advocate**

**Social Entrepreneur**

**Civic Leader**



## **FURTHER ADVENTURES INTO THE ADJACENT POSSIBLE...**

**Can we take low carbon lifestyles to scale and create carbon neutral cities?**

**Can we build demand for a residential retrofit market?**

**Can we mobilize America's youth, universities and corporations to create low carbon communities?**



# An emerging vision of possibility for our cities...



**CITIZENS ADOPTING BEHAVIORS NEEDED TO FURTHER CITY'S AND  
PLANET'S SUSTAINABILITY AND LIVABILITY**

**NEIGHBORS ENGAGED BLOCK-BY-BLOCK IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF  
THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS**

**CITIZENS BUILDING CAPACITY TO FURTHER SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

**CITIZENS AND CITY GOVERNMENT COLLABORATING TO IMPROVE  
THEIR CITY**

**EMPOWERED CITIZENRY CONSCIOUSLY CREATING THEIR CITY ONE  
HOUSEHOLD AND BLOCK AT A TIME**

**“AGAIN AND AGAIN IN HISTORY SOME PEOPLE  
WAKE UP. THEY HAVE NO GROUND  
IN THE CROWD AND THEY MOVE TO BROADER,  
DEEPER LAWS.**



**THEY CARRY STRANGE CUSTOMS WITH THEM  
AND DEMAND ROOM FOR BOLD AND AUDACIOUS  
ACTION. THE FUTURE SPEAKS RUTHLESSLY  
THROUGH THEM. THEY CHANGE THE  
WORLD.”** RAINER MARIA RILKE





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