

# Cool City Challenge

Empowering Cities to Become Carbon Neutral by 2030

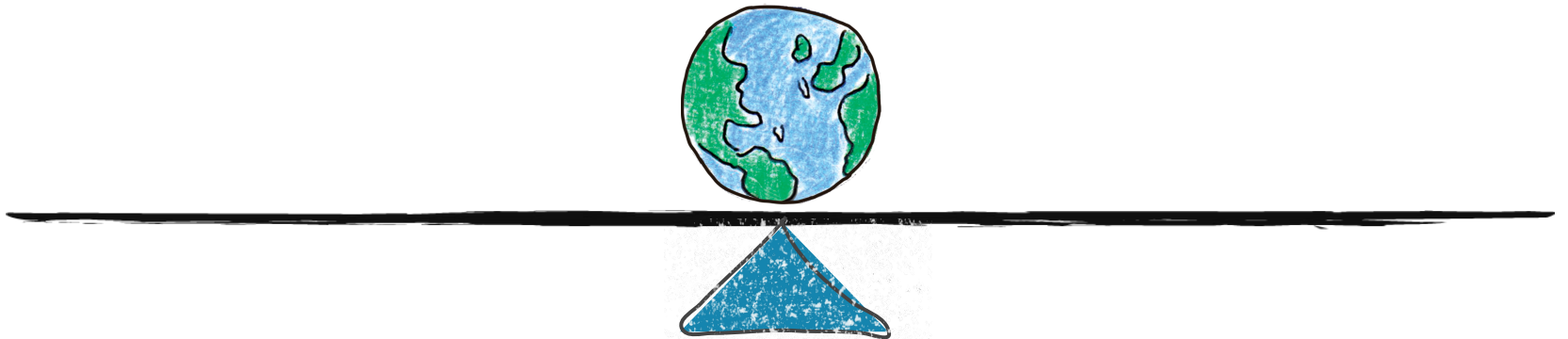


Climate Moonshot Scaling Strategy

An Initiative of  
Empowerment Institute  
Center for Reinventing the Planet

# What is the climate challenge?

Scientists tell us we have until 2030 to achieve rapid carbon reduction to avoid hitting irreversible ecological tipping points that threaten human viability on Earth.



Where can we get the most carbon reduction in the shortest period of time?



# Cities are a natural focal point

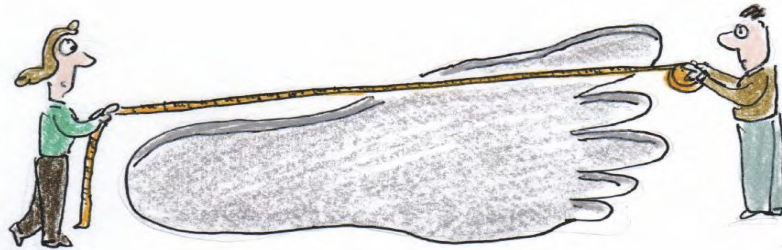
because they generate 70% of our carbon emissions and, with currently available solutions, can become carbon neutral.



And citizens are the natural starting point within cities because they represent 70% of city emissions AND they can mobilize an entire community.



# What solutions can create carbon neutral cities by 2030?

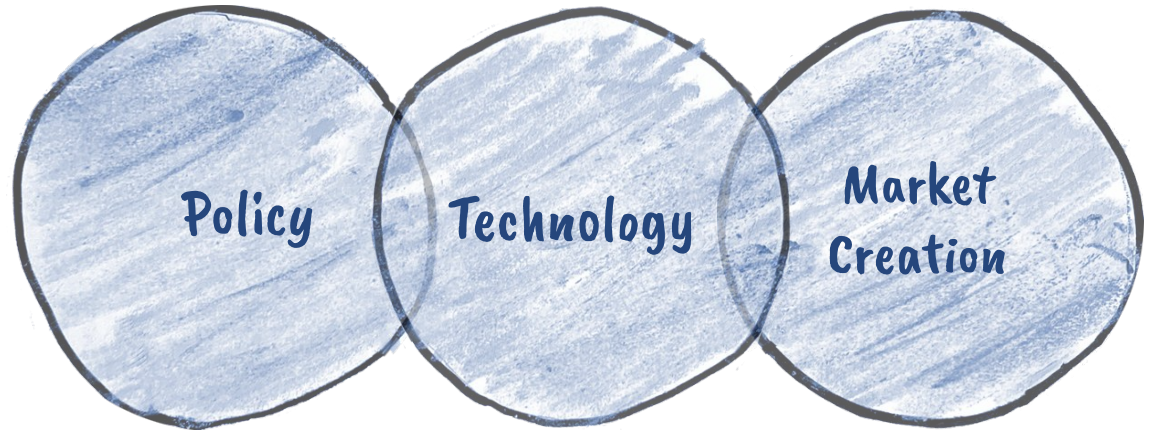




Top down climate solutions have had success, but are not sufficient in achieving substantial carbon reductions.



## Top Down Solutions



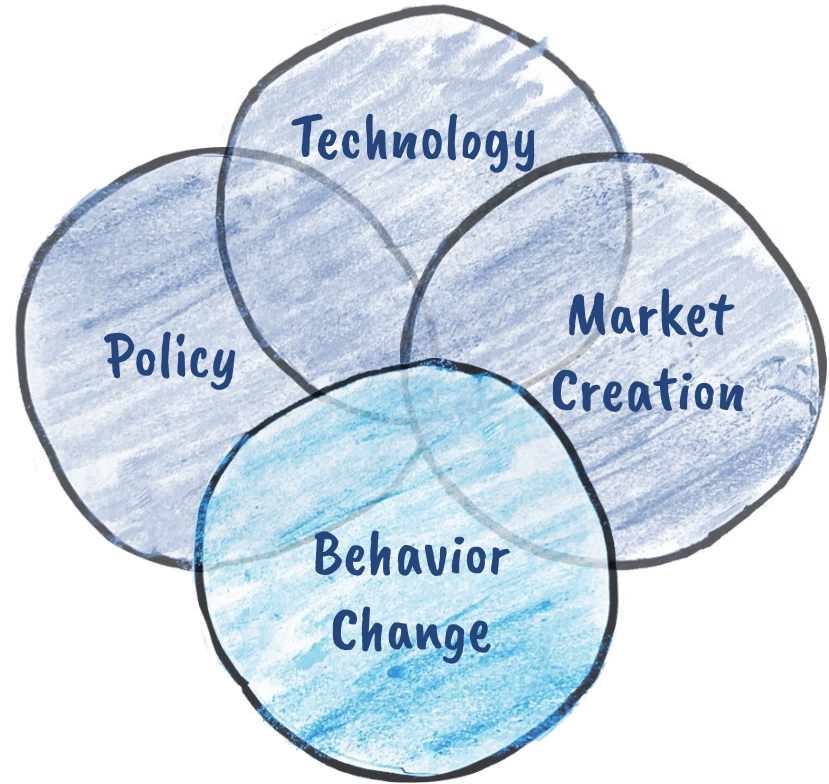
Bottom up  
climate solutions  
have also had  
success but are  
also not sufficient  
to achieve  
substantial  
carbon reductions.



Bottom Up Solutions

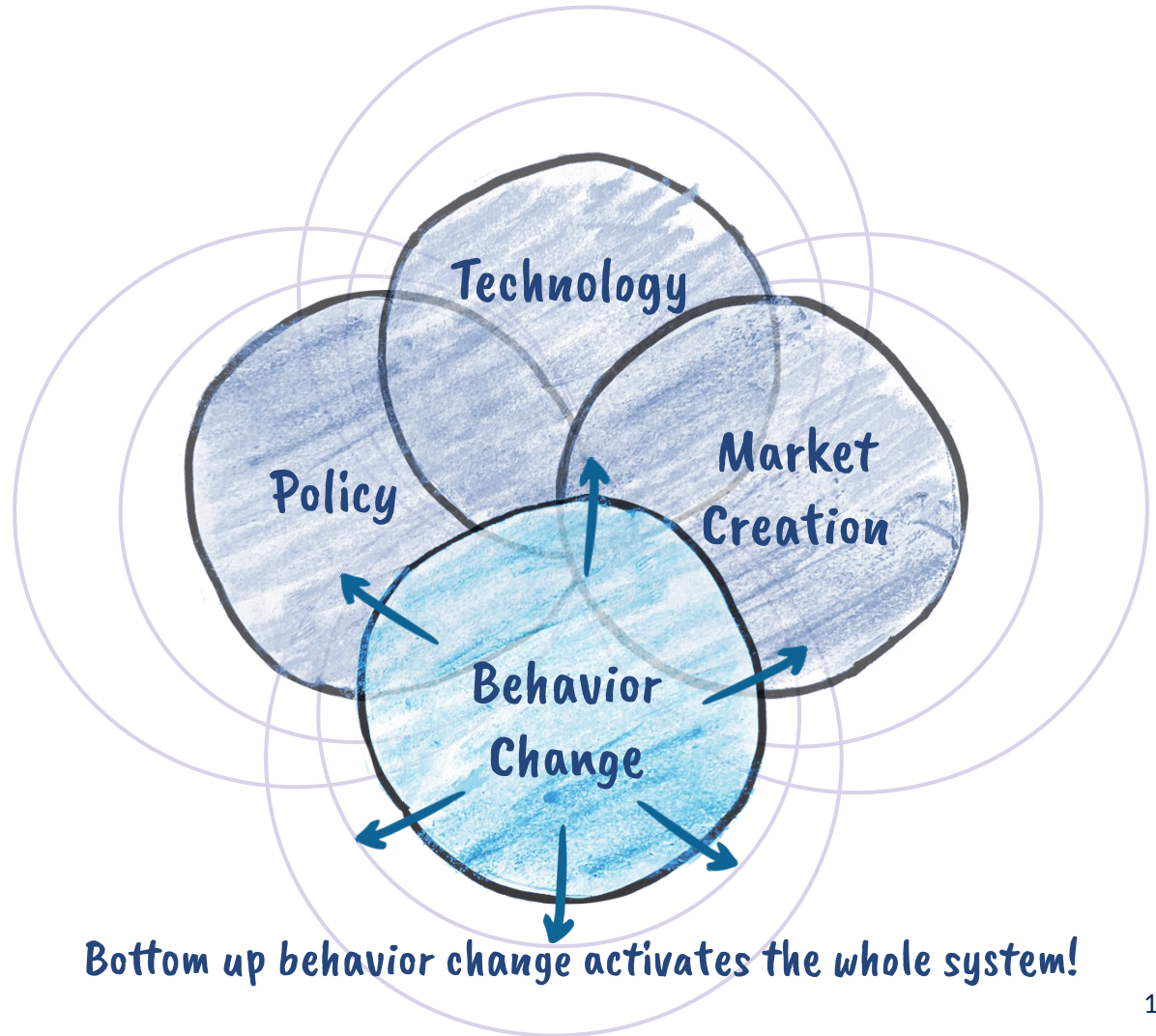


What if by combining top down and bottom up climate solutions we could create carbon neutral cities by 2030?



How do we  
activate this  
whole system  
climate solution?

The key is us,  
and our behavior.



So how do we  
empower citizens  
to change their  
behavior?

Enter the  
Cool Block  
Program!



Cool Block builds on Empowerment Institute's 40 years of behavior and social change experience with millions of people in hundreds of cities worldwide.

## Defining Empowerment:

Enabling people to envision and create what they want in their lives and their world.





## What is the Cool Block Program?



Block leader

Block-based teams of 5-8 households

Nine meetings over 4.5 months

Five Topics:

1. Disaster Resilience
2. Carbon Reduction
3. Water Stewardship
4. Neighborhood Livability
5. Empowering Others

What enables  
behavior  
change?



- 120 Action Recipes
- Peer Support System
- Self Directed Meeting Guides
- Volunteer Coach
- Mobile Web Platform
- Integration of Local Resources



Why do  
people join?



## MEANING

"I want to create a better  
world for my children."



## COMMUNITY

"I want to know my neighbors"



## AGENCY

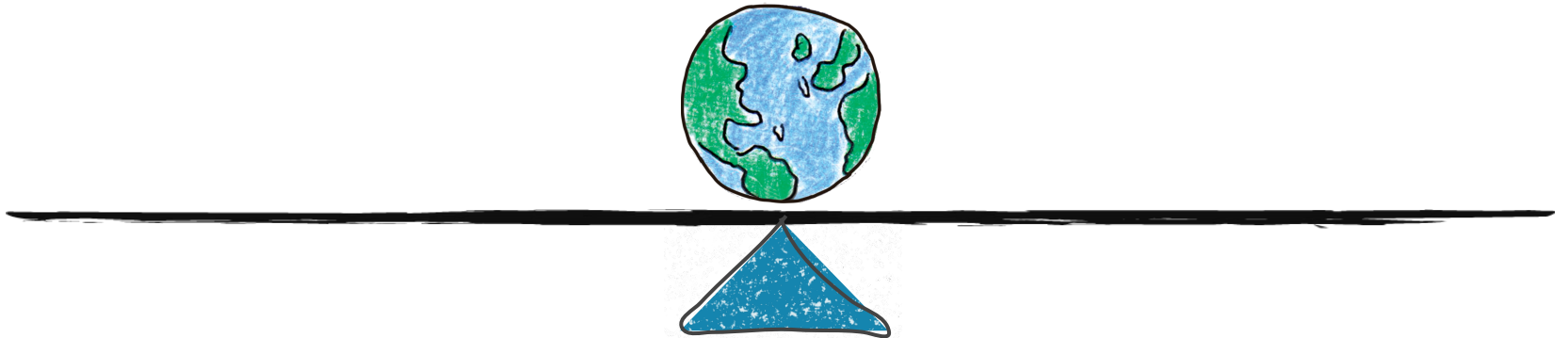
"I want to make a difference"

What results has  
**COOL BLOCK**  
achieved so far?

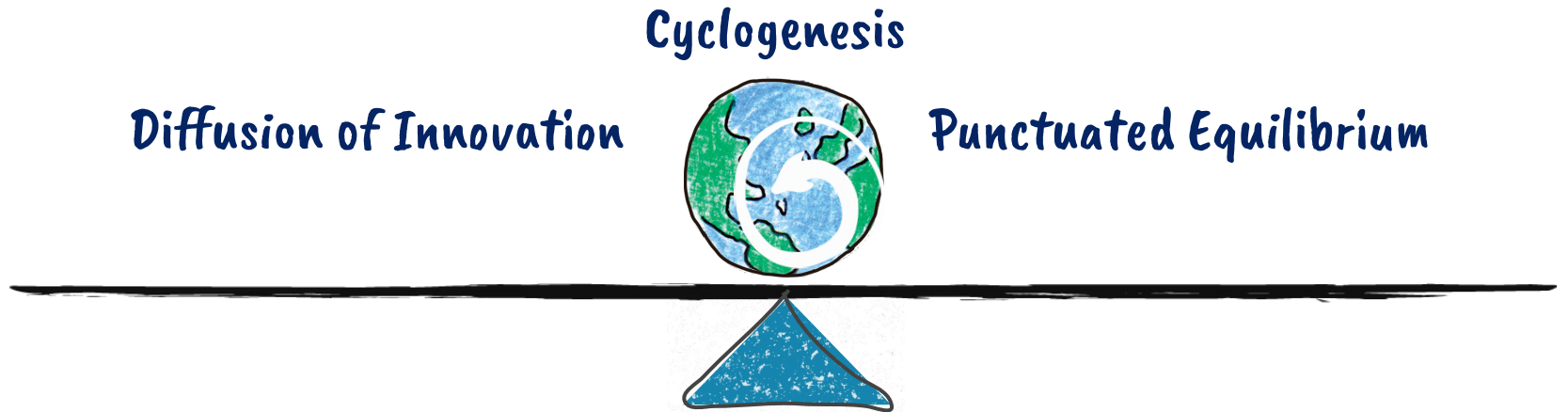


- ✓ **8 CA CITIES ENGAGED** - Palo Alto, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Mountain View, Santa Barbara, Isla Vista, Irvine and Petaluma
- ✓ **325 Cool Blocks**
- ✓ **5,000+ participants**
- ✓ **31% CARBON REDUCTION** per household
- ✓ **25 ACTIONS TAKEN** per household
- ✓ **45% PARTICIPATION** in program through neighbor-to-neighbor recruitment process

But can we really change fast enough to  
create carbon neutral cities by 2030?

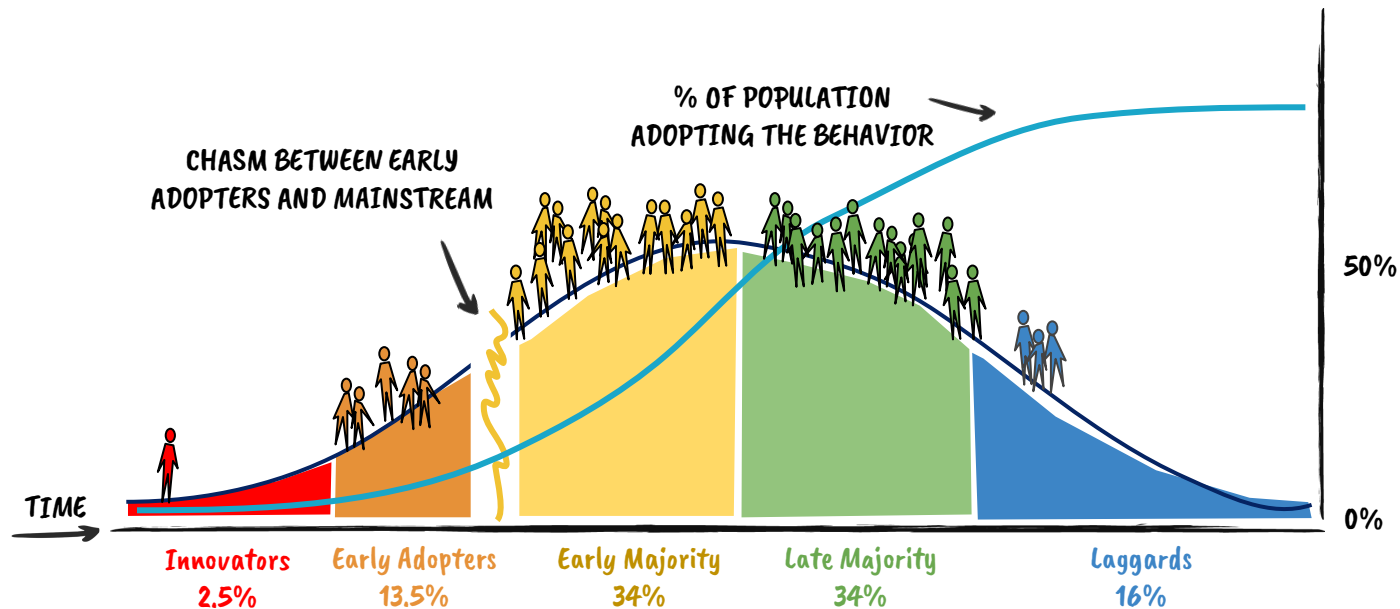


# The science of tipping points shows us how:

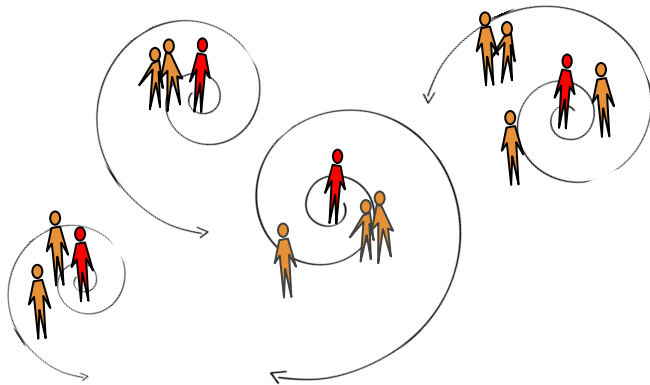


# Diffusion of Innovation shows how new ideas spread

Only 15% of people need to shift for large scale change to occur

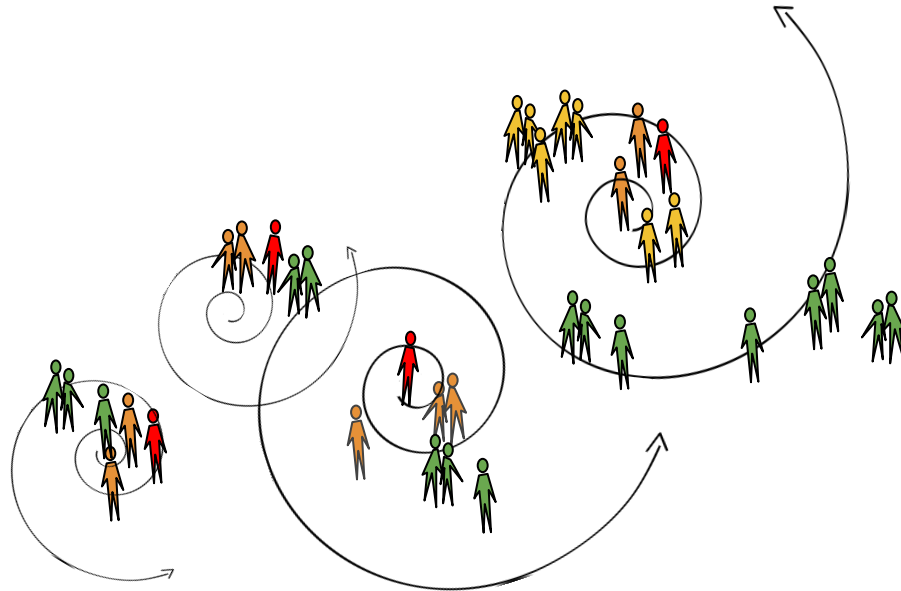


# Cyclogenesis shows how hurricanes form...

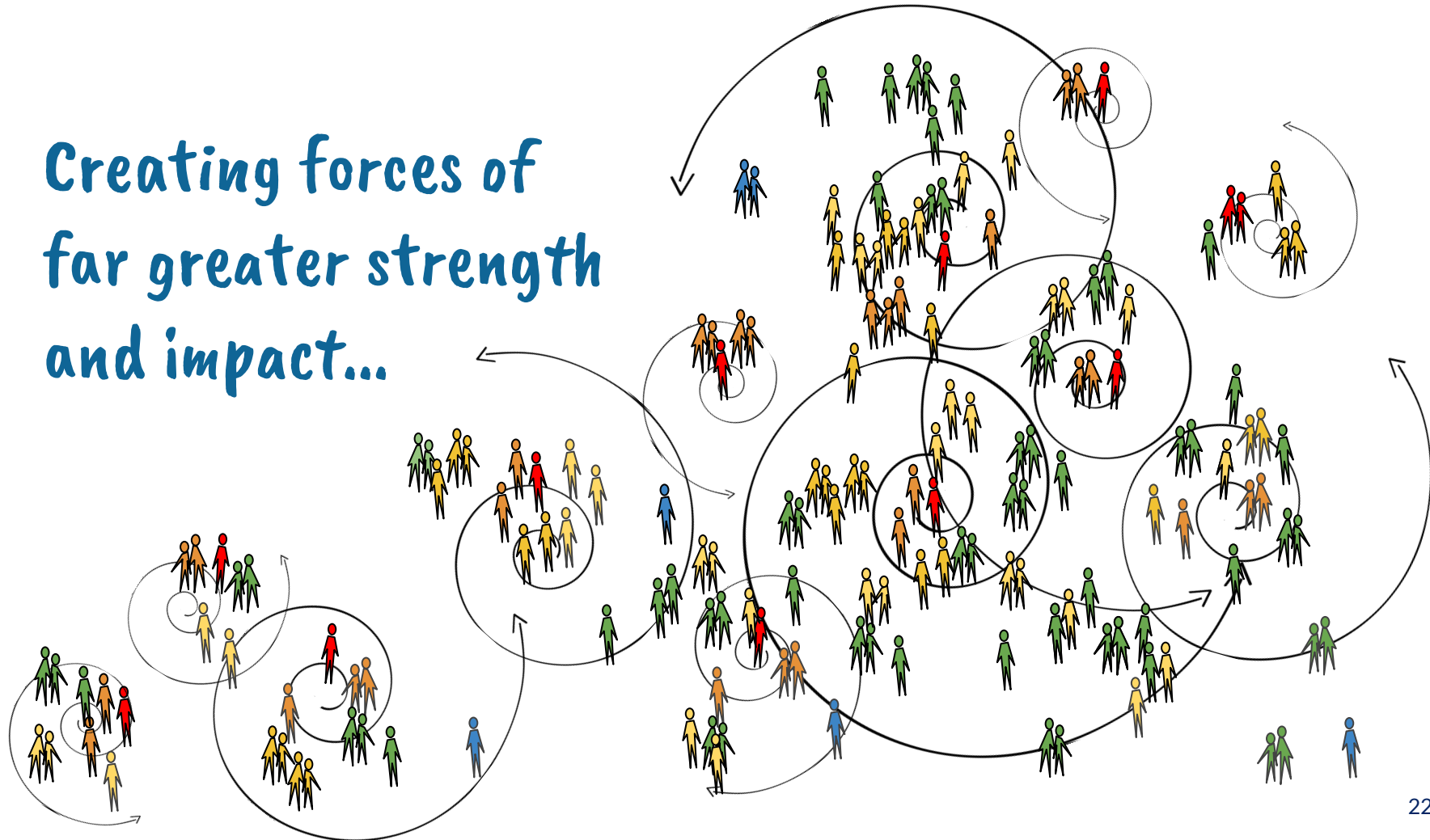




As smaller vortices  
combine and expand...



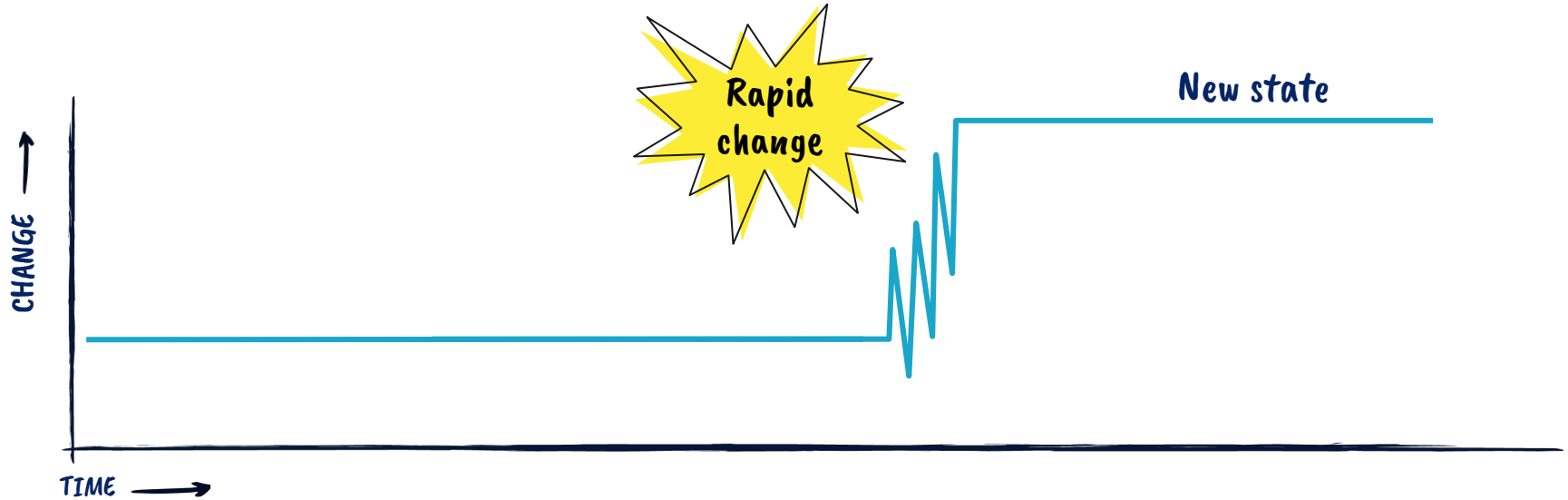
Creating forces of  
far greater strength  
and impact...



Punctuated Equilibrium is an evolutionary process whereby stable systems



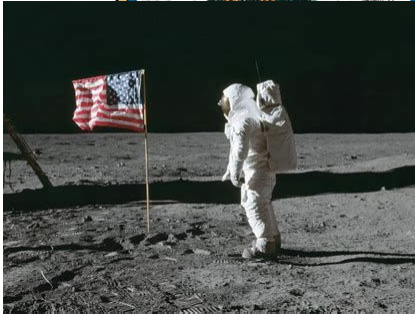
**Punctuated Equilibrium** is an evolutionary process whereby stable systems can shift radically when faced with an extinction threat



**Abrupt climate change is threatening our extinction.  
Activating our intelligence, creativity and will allows us to  
respond at the speed and magnitude of change needed.**



# We've done it before. We can do it again!



1961 - 1969



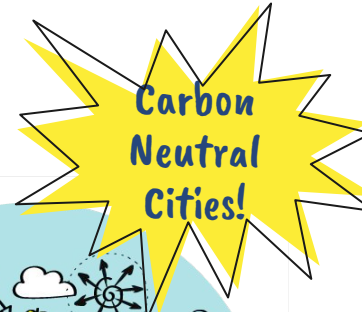
*Longing won't bring him back sooner...*

**GET A WAR JOB!**

SEE YOUR U. S. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION

1941 - 1945



2022 - 2030



# How will COOL BLOCK help cities become carbon neutral by 2030?



# COOL BLOCK



CLIMATE ACTION CAPACITY



BLOCK



# COOL NEIGHBORHOOD



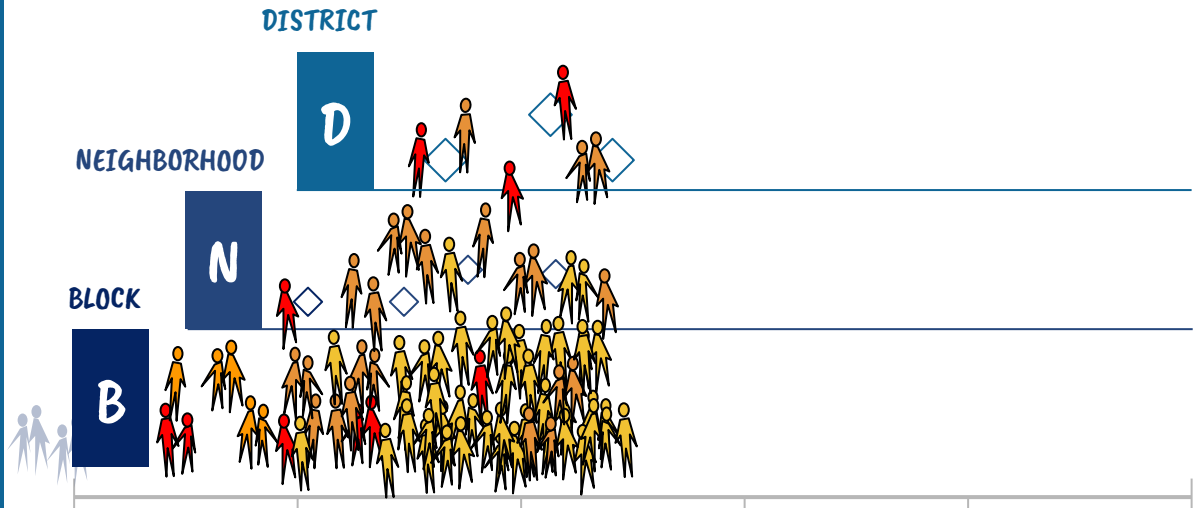
CLIMATE ACTION CAPACITY



# COOL DISTRICT



CLIMATE ACTION CAPACITY

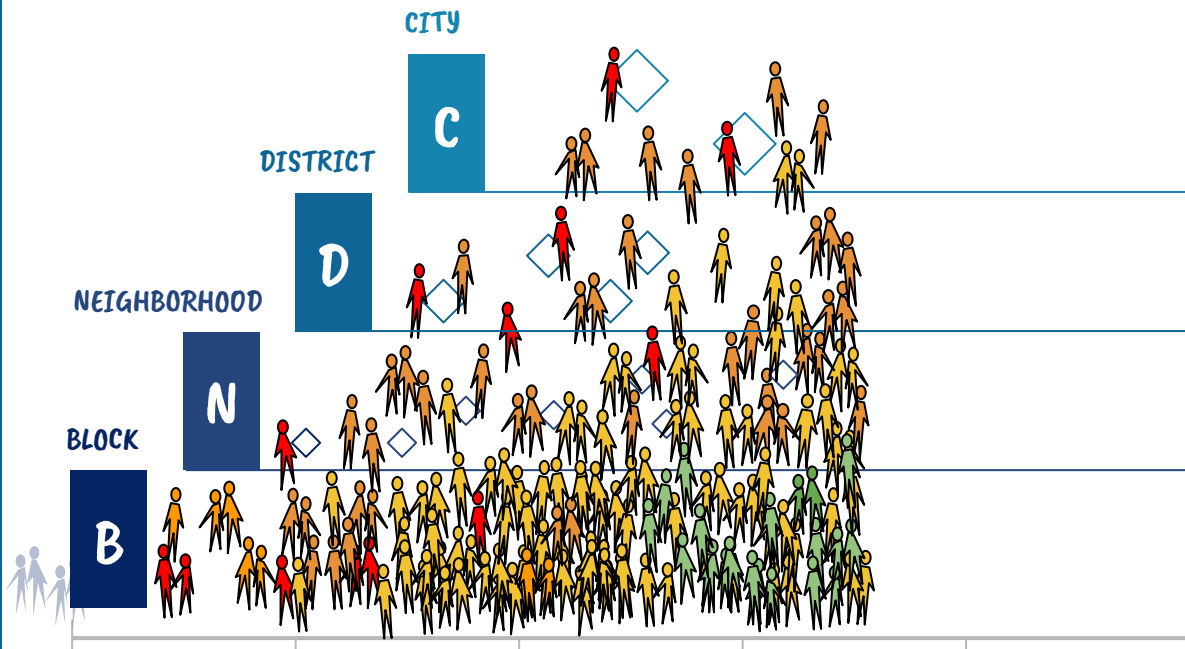


# COOL CITY



CLIMATE ACTION CAPACITY

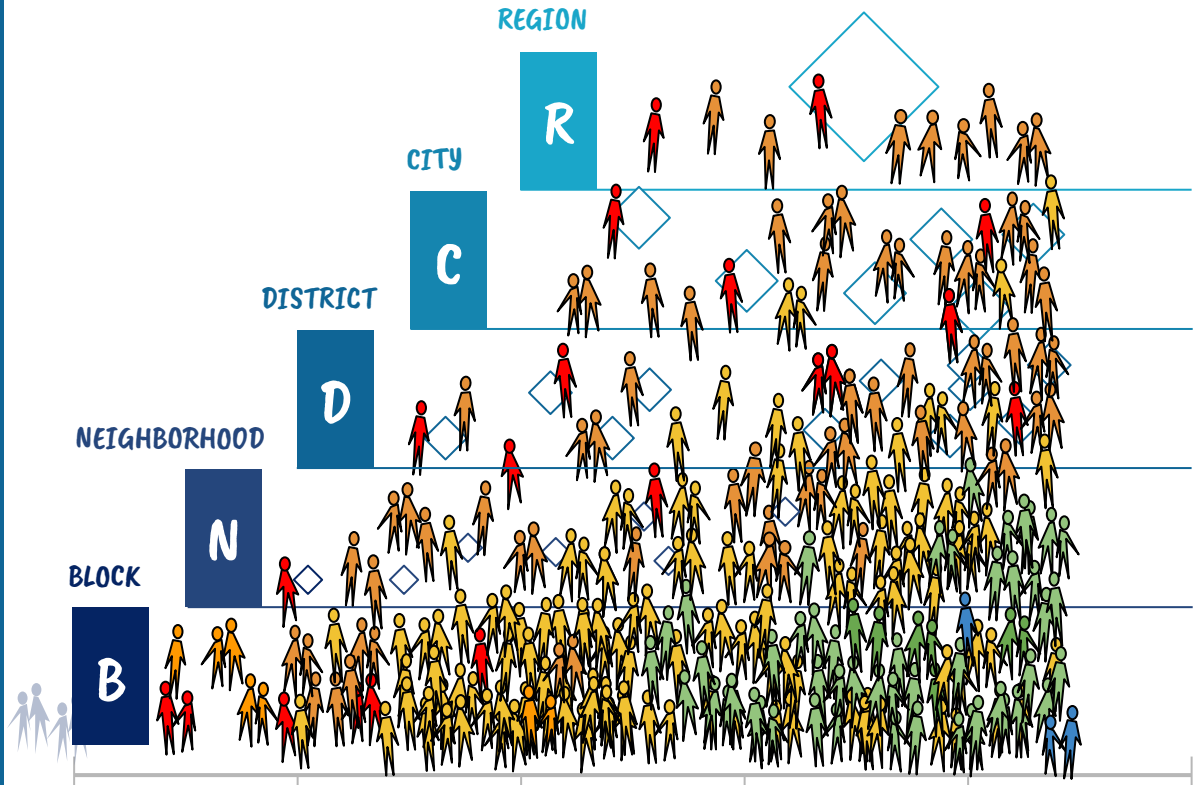
COOL CITY = minimum of 400 Cool Blocks



# COOL REGION



CLIMATE ACTION CAPACITY

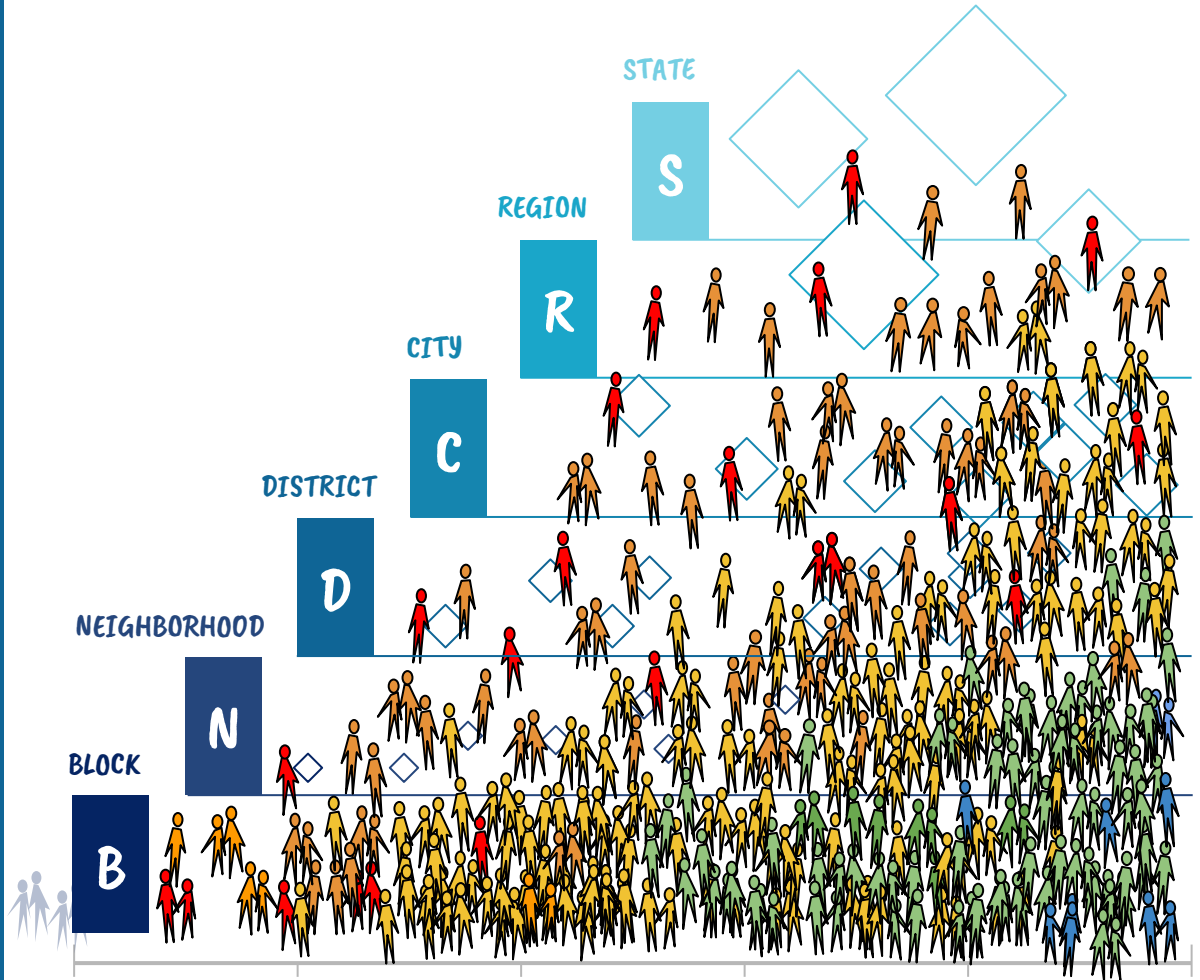




COOL STATE



CLIMATE ACTION CAPACITY



# How does it work?

Let's look at transit - the biggest contributor to a city's carbon footprint.



## Household choices start the transformation :

- ✓ Walk more
- ✓ Bike more
- ✓ Share rides
- ✓ Switch to EVs & E-bikes
- ✓ Use public transit





*These top down investments drive more behavior change, activating a virtuous cycle.*



## Fewer car trips

- ✓ Require less parking
- ✓ Free up space for parks, housing, public spaces
- ✓ Enable higher density and walkability
- ✓ Promote active lifestyles and improved health



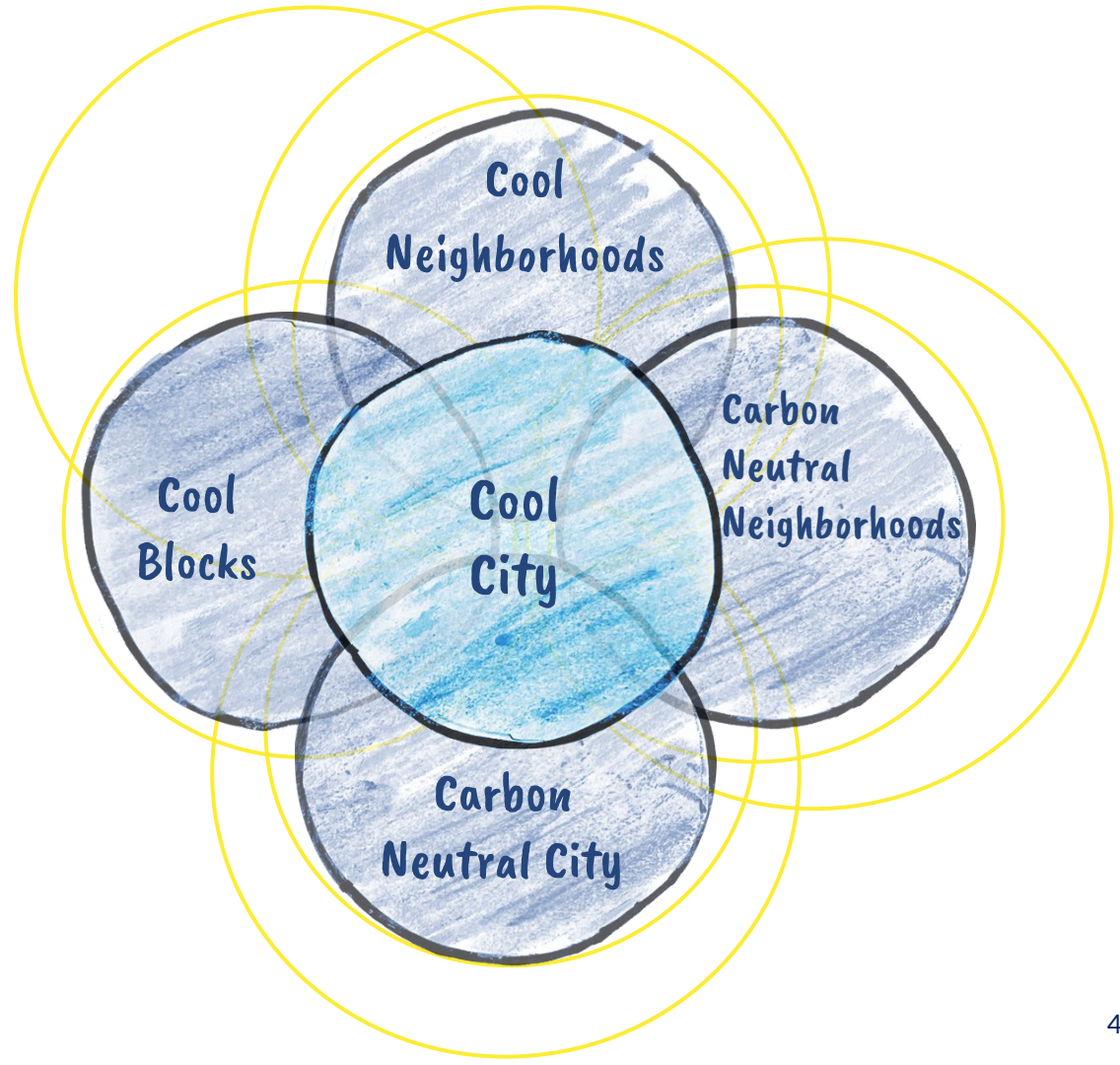
*This whole-system climate solution can drive the transformation of multiple community systems because they're all interconnected.*

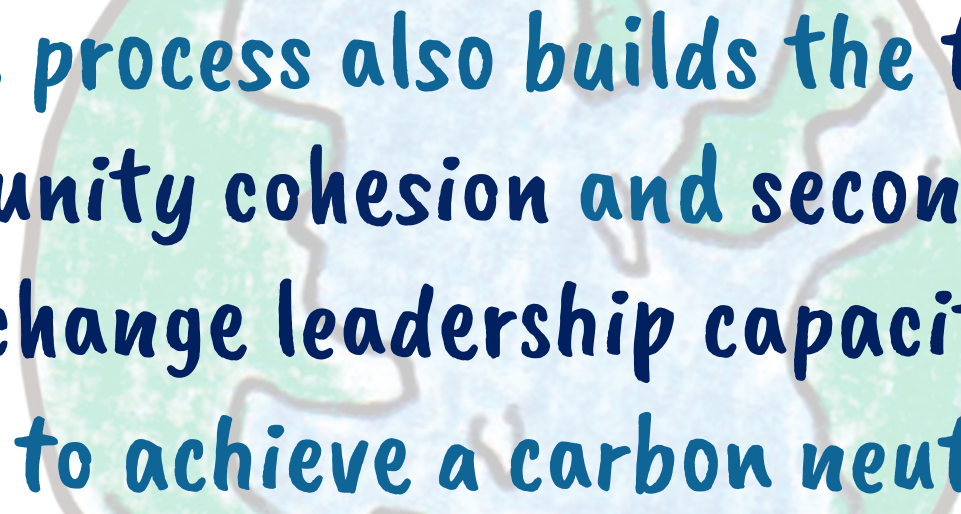




How does this translate into a carbon neutral city?

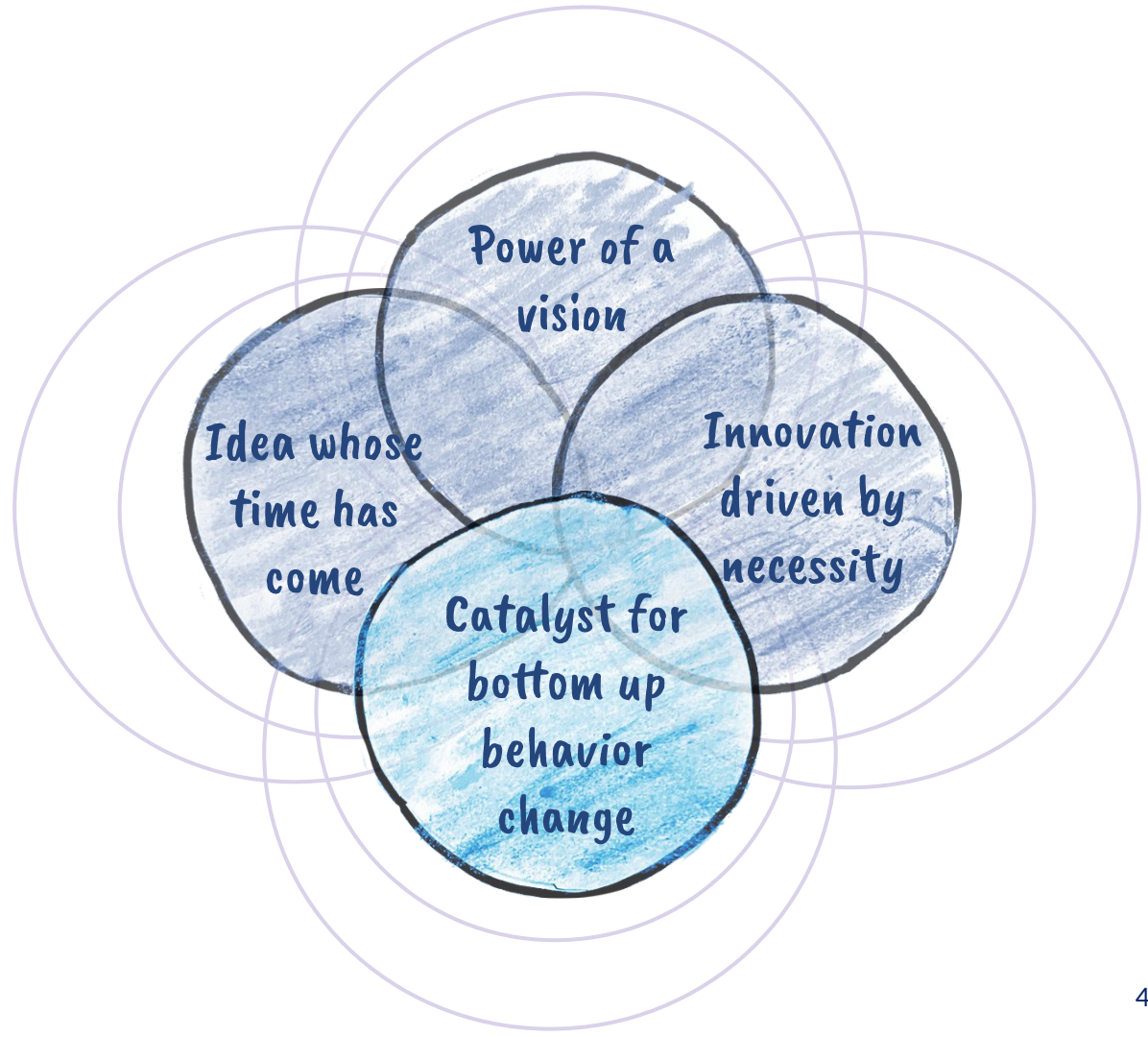
Cool Blocks evolve into Cool Neighborhoods which evolve into carbon neutral neighborhoods and scale citywide.



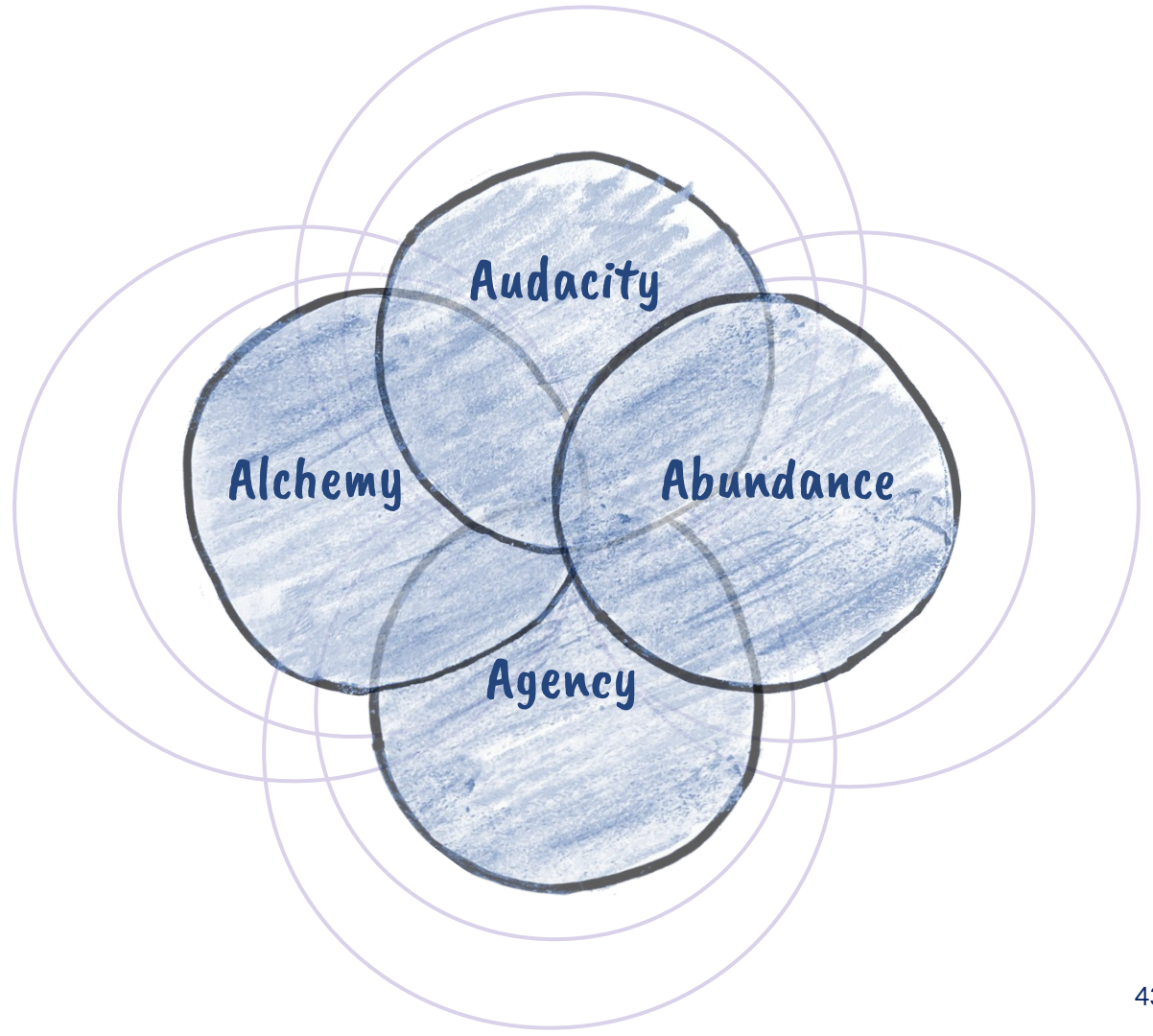


**This process also builds the trust,  
community cohesion and second order  
change leadership capacity  
needed to achieve a carbon neutral city.**

We have the  
key ingredients  
necessary to  
empower people  
to rapidly  
change



And the key  
moonshot  
beliefs required  
to lead change  
at this  
extraordinary  
pace and scale





## Selected California to lead the way in scaling carbon neutral cities by 2030...

- Urgency because of multiple climate disruptions
- Deeply rooted environmental ethos
- Political will as expressed in bold legislation
- Cities committed to carbon neutrality
- Funding to invest
- Policy, technology and innovation know-how
- Ambitious carbon neutrality goal



What is the scaling mechanism  
for creating carbon neutral  
cities by 2030 across California  
and the world?

## Cool City Challenge Moonshot Climate Action Plan (MCAP)



# Cool City Challenge MCAP Roadmap

## Strategy, tools and methodology

- Cool Blocks > Cool Neighborhoods > Carbon Neutral Neighborhoods = 70% of city carbon footprint
- Cool Blocks and Cool Neighborhoods create economic driver + social pressure for carbon neutral businesses = 30% of city carbon footprint

“Cool Block is an exemplary how-to guide for local communities to make a significant impact on climate change.” — CA Governor, Gavin Newsom



# Cool City Challenge

## 2022 — Pilot Phase

- Partnership with Los Angeles, Petaluma and Irvine to pilot the moonshot climate action plan scaling systems.

## 2023 — Demonstration Phase

- Develop 3 city partnerships to implement the moonshot climate action plan.

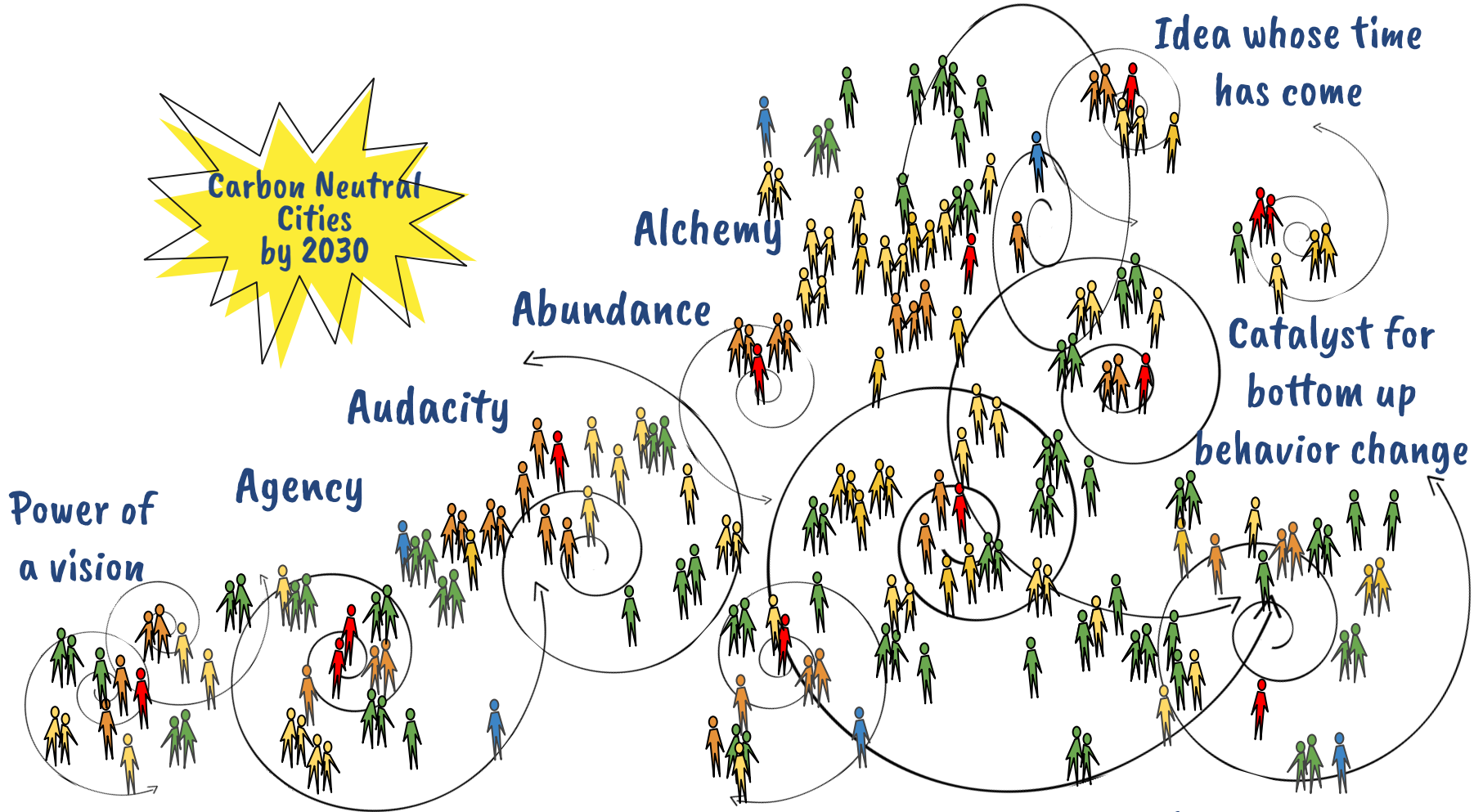
## 2024-2026 — Scaling Phase

- Develop partnerships with up to 100 cities to implement the moonshot climate action plan.

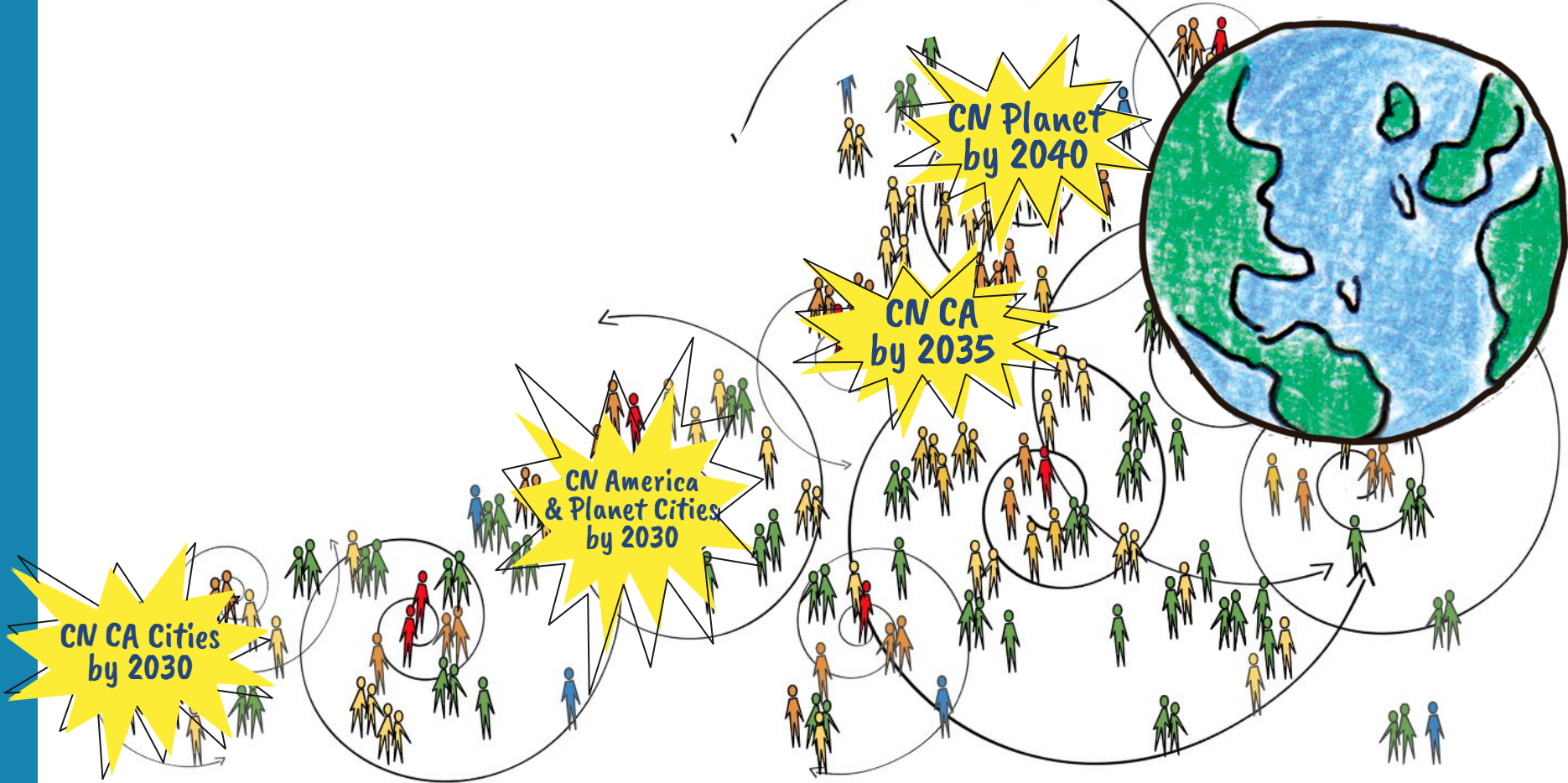




**Carbon Neutral  
Cities  
by 2030**



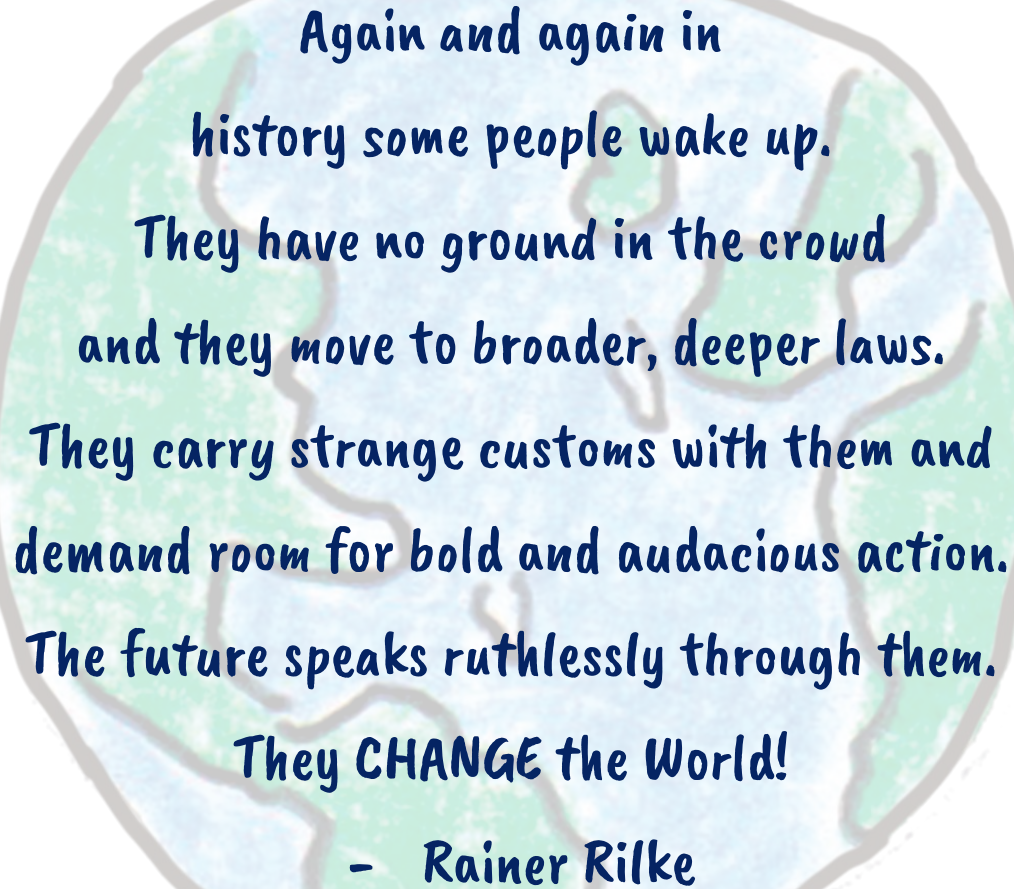
**Innovation driven by necessity**



# How does the Cool City Challenge fit into the UN Sustainable Development Goals?

1. Disaster Resilience
2. Carbon Reduction
3. Water Stewardship
4. Neighborhood Livability
5. Empowering Others





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 Rilke



For further information:  
<https://coolcity.earth>