Inclusive Public Engagement as an Organizational and Community Value

City of Raleigh – City Council
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June 9, 2020

My understanding of what I am being asked to do

to facilitate a process that uses the collective –creativity, energy, talent, resources, wisdom, and **commitment** of the Council, our public servants, our community organizations and our residents **to inform the strategic evolution** of Raleigh's community engagement structure, activities, processes, systems.

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Do our current public engagement approaches reflect the demographics of our city?

- White: 58.45%
- Black or African American: 28.98%
- Other race: 4.67%
- Asian: 4.49%
- Two or more races: 2.98%
- Native American: 0.36%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.07%
- Renters 49%

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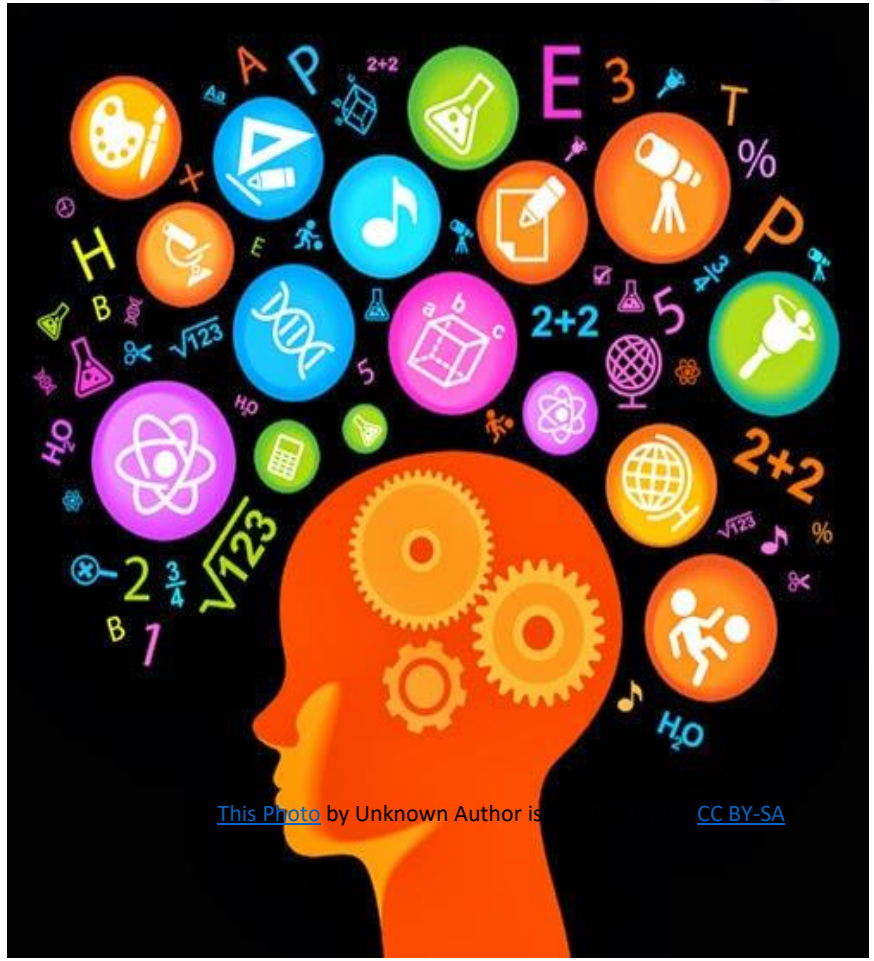
Citizens investment

To what are citizens entitled for the significant investment they make their government

- Access/Engagement
- Transparency/Quality
- Value
- Stewardship
- Responsiveness
- Accountability

Invisible Work

For every act of creativity



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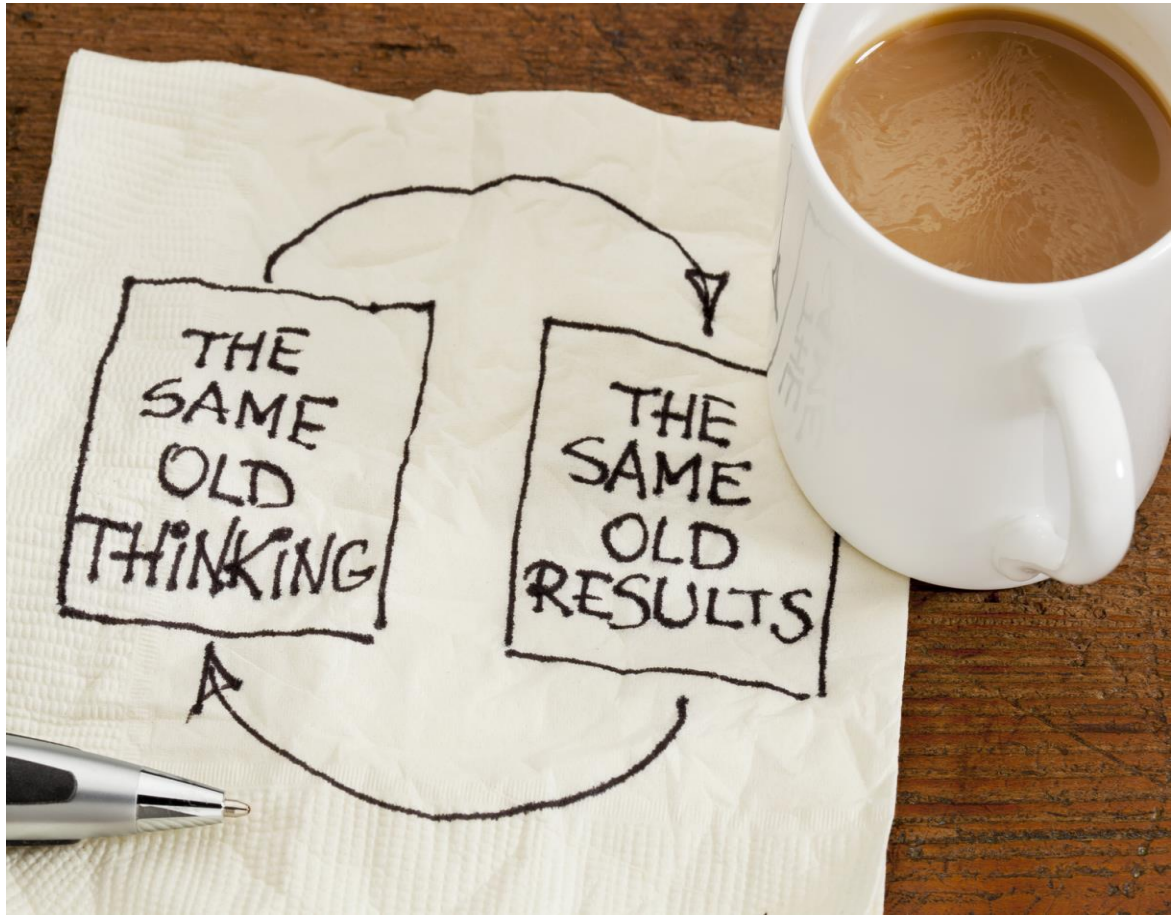

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THERE IS AN ACT OF DESTRUCTION

Raleigh

When our community is at its best

- Celebrating
- In laughter
- Playing
- Responding to crisis or catastrophe
- Coming to each others' aid

- Engaged in experiences with their cultural tribes
- Doing service/Volunteering
- Worshiping
- Collective Grieving
- Community pride

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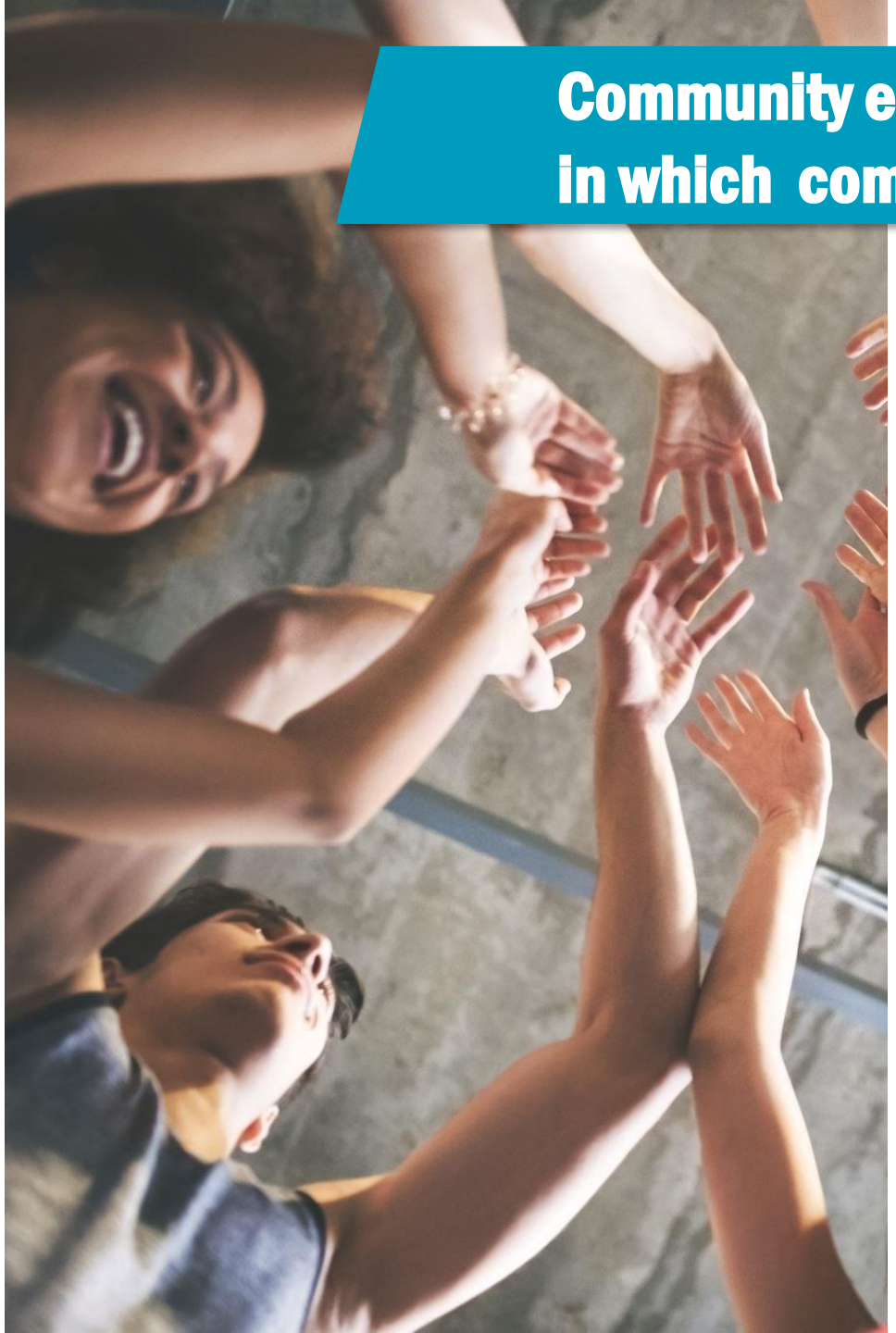
Do we believe…?

- Community engagement as an investment – not an expenditure
- Residents extend our senses. Their daily activities and the places where they work and play enables them to see, hear, touch and experience things government does not. 500,000 residents take in more information in a day than 7,000 employees possibly can.
- We are responsible for creating the next generation of “Big Citizens and Civic Stewards

Our charge ?

- …to create communities that reflect our commitment to an inclusionary, participatory democracy in which all citizens are engaged in the policy and budget decisions and in the design, delivery, and evaluation of programs and services, in order to create and sustain communities that are resistant to the kind of factionalization, splintering and segmentation that paralyzes democratic processes.
- When splintering and segmentation occur there is a tendency for residents to attach themselves to a segment or splinter and to become an advocate for a narrow constituency. Residents believe they would be better served serving themselves.



Community engagement is critical to building communities in which community members...

- Rise above their self-interest for the common good...
- Are mindful of the collective impact of their individual acts...
- Are constantly mindful of how their actions, good or bad, impact others...
- Extend their love, respect, trust, credibility, generosity, and philanthropy to those outside of their affinity groups...
- They look out for each others interest
- Behaviors are aligned with common values...

Capacity Building

Whenever people come together to do something new – something they have never encountered, initially their IQ invisibly drops, but their arrogance stays the same. Their arrogance blinds them to new challenges and possibilities. They rarely pause to understand what they need to learn in order to more forward.

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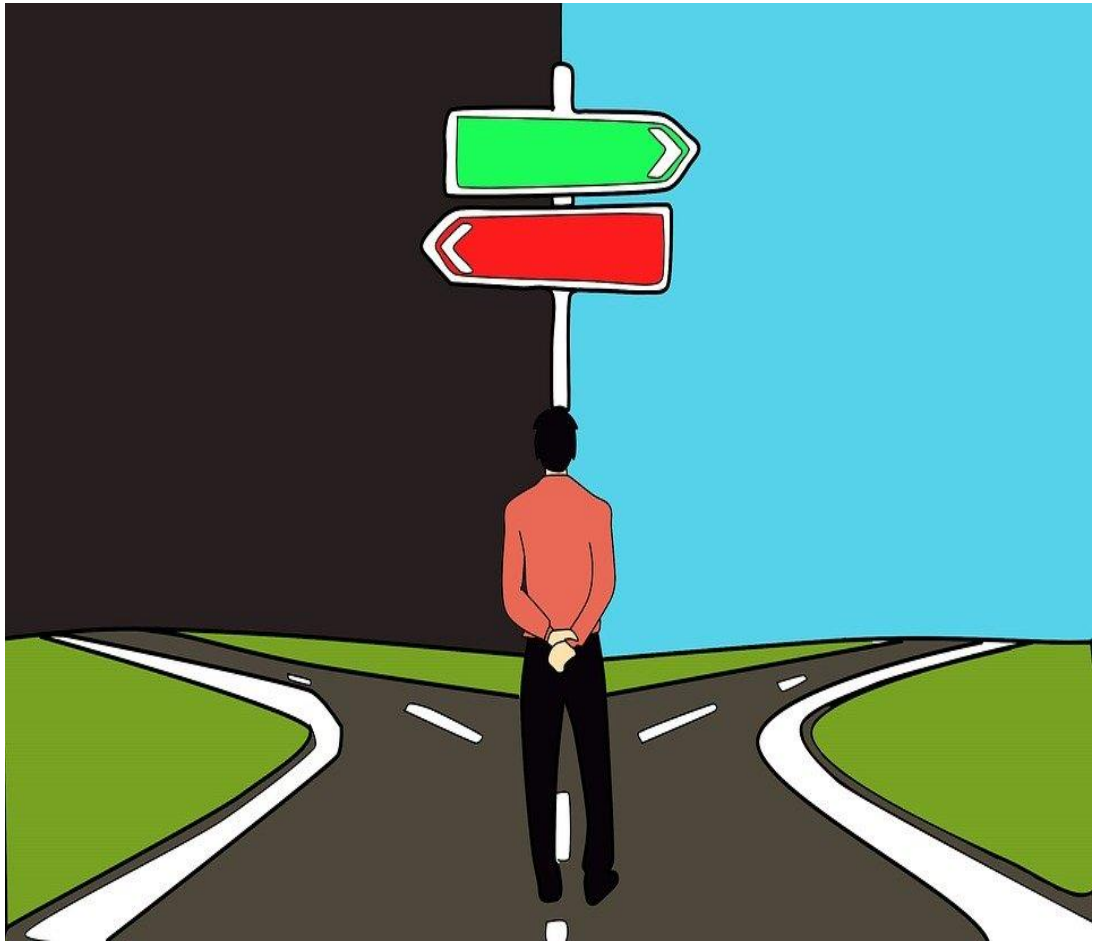
Engagement



There is a certain amount of disengagement that should be expected and is therefore acceptable

All citizens are free to engage.

If they elect not to, they should be expected to live with the consequences of their disengagement

What are citizen's' responsibilities? To…

- Vote
- Engage in an inclusionary, participatory, democracy, in which citizens
  have multiple opportunities to engage as citizens, partners, customers, and co-creators.

Residents as…

- Co-creators: “The Innovation System”
- Customers: Increasing the potency and capacity of the thousands of daily transactions between residents and their government
- Partners: Residents “appropriately” engaged in the design, delivery, evaluation and evolution of programs and services and in policy and budget activities
- Investors; Invest in their communities and have reasonable expectation of a return on that investment
- Big Citizens: Vote/participate/civic stewardship/volunteer/service projects/Youth engagement:
- Developing Young Citizens

Defining community engagement

- A legal obligation in the planning process?
- The process of building and sustaining important relationships?
- Gatherings to get info for policy, program & budget-making?
- The consistent 2-way flow of information between government and residents?
- The 1000’s of daily transactions that occur between residents and their government

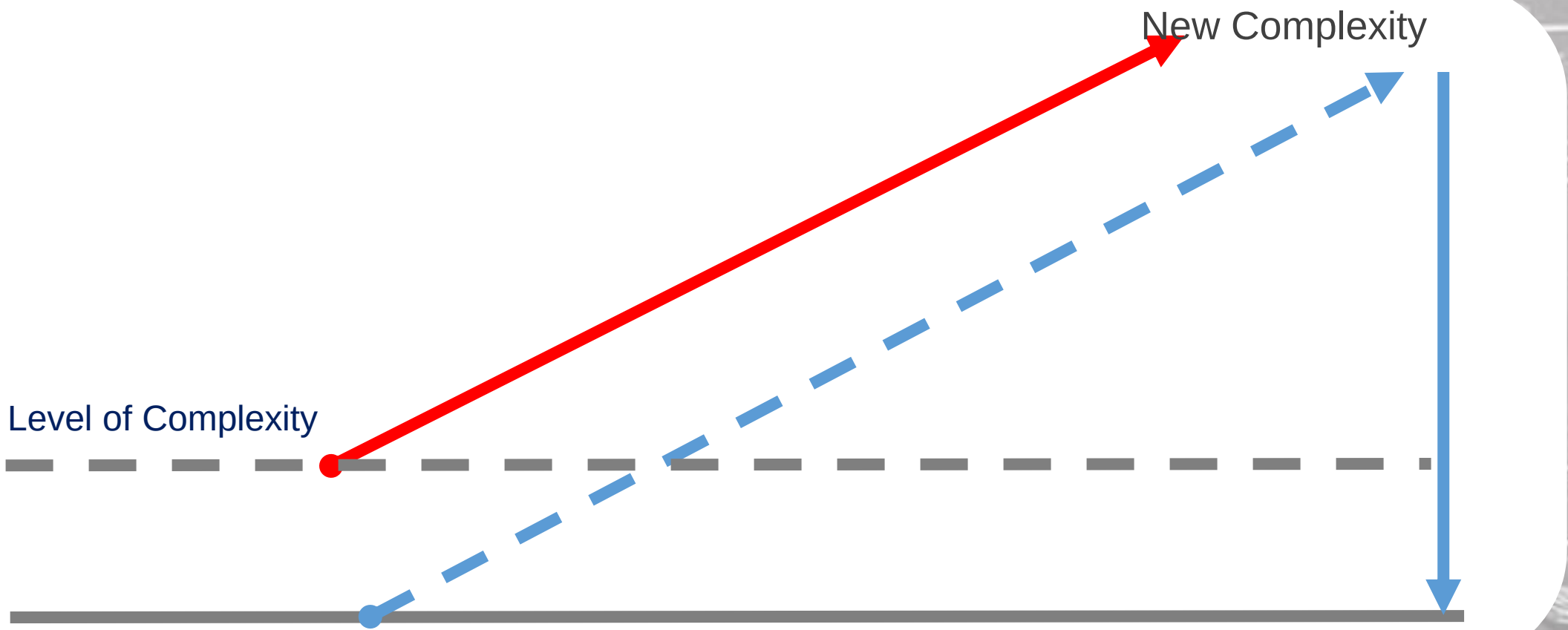
Defining community engagement

- Building and sustaining community, kinship, stewardship, and Community spirit?
- A vital component of the City's commitment to continuous learning.
- The constant flow of energy, information, knowledge, and resources between residents and their government?
- Harnessing an focusing the intelligence, creativity, and energy of the citizenry

Interests & concerns

- Zoning
- Environment & Ecology
- Affordable housing
- Access to transportation
- Economic development
- Jobs/Employment
- Education
- Quality of Life
- Health
- Youth Development
- Gentrification
- Arts & Recreation
- Education
- Parks
- Equity
- Safety nets for our most vulnerable citizens
- Crime & Safety
- Homelessness
- Traffic

Complexity



Skills – Habits – Beliefs – Assumptions – Predispositions
Systems – Traditional Ways of Doing Things

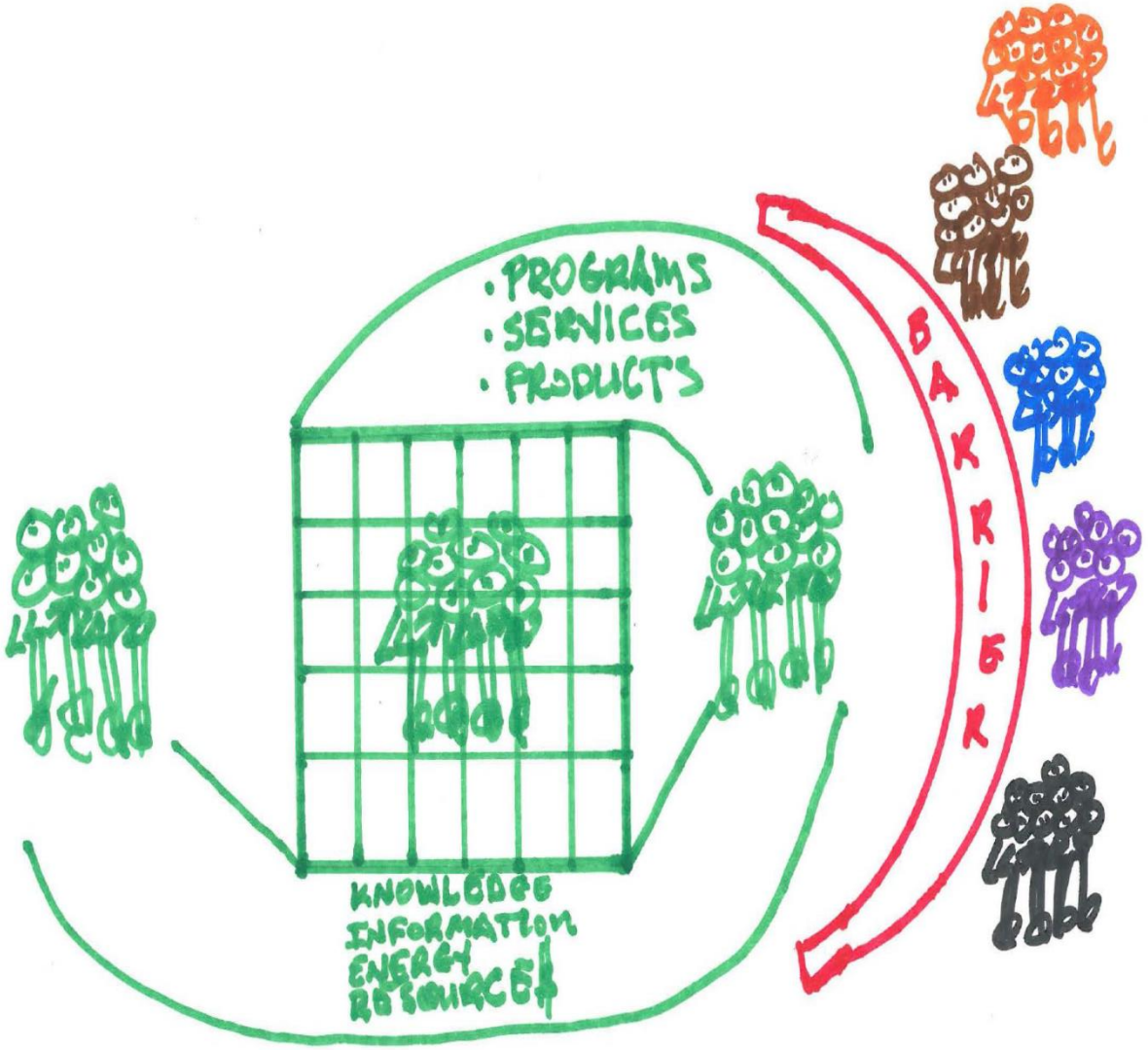
What happens when randomness and chaos emerge…

- Panic sets in when the mind succumbs to stress and fails to take inner information about an unexpected or threatening event germane to the threat or fails for similar reasons to take advantage of experience germane to the threat.

- Reversion to last learned behavior:

  Unable to reach an informed judgment on what to do next, we reach in our memories for what worked well before. (Gary Useem, The Leadership Moment)

The “green” people



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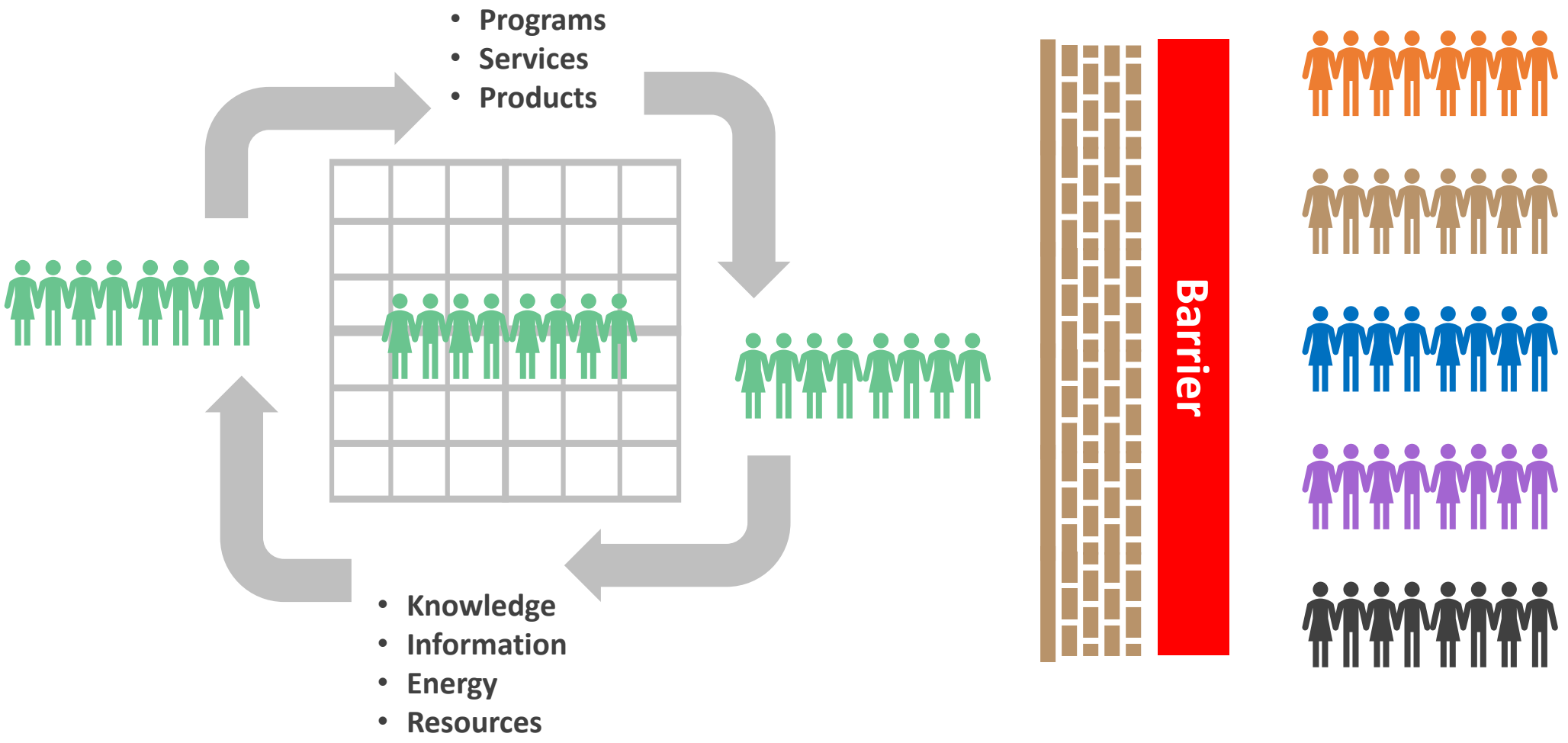
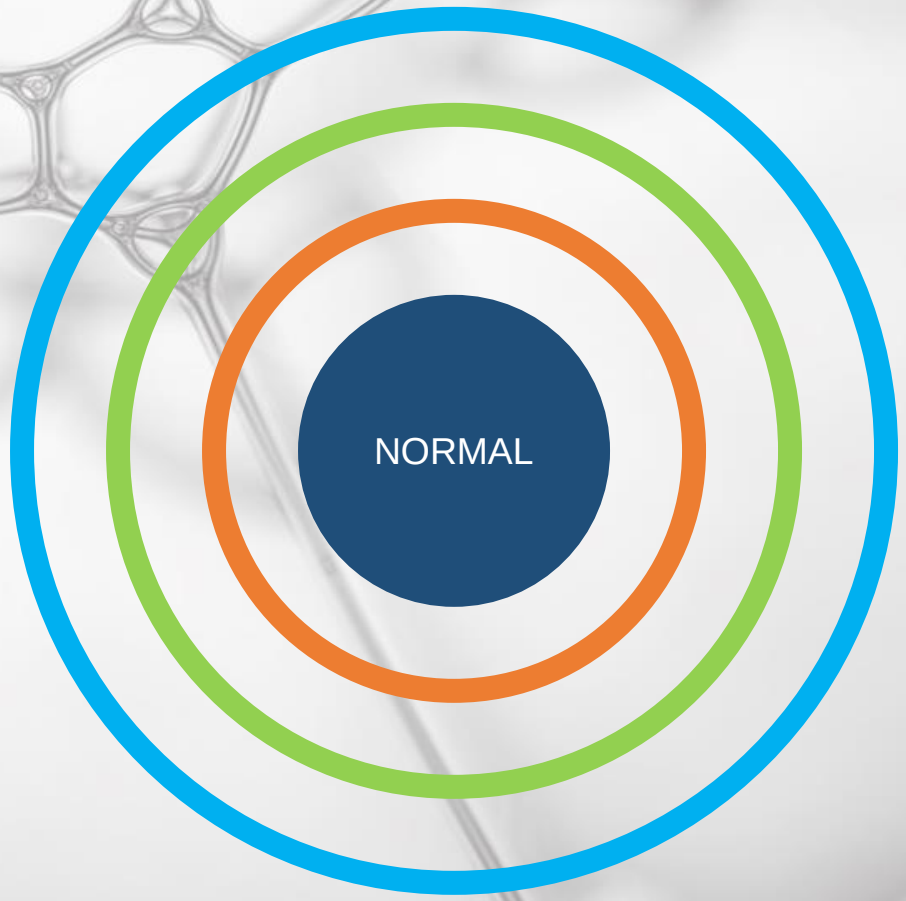
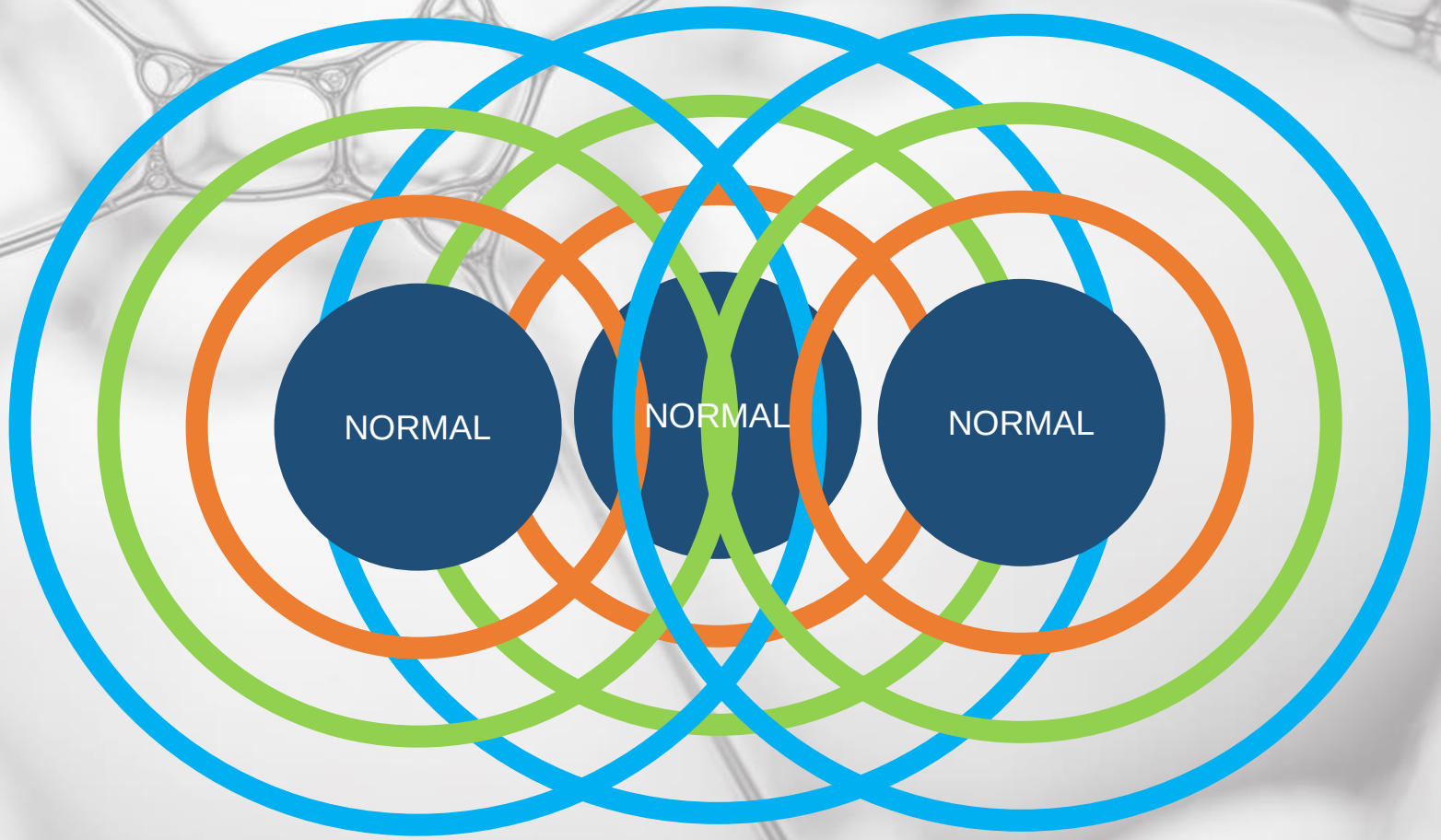


What is normal?



There’s no such thing as normal!



Race, ethnicity, class, and community engagement

White collar jobs requiring a significant investment of time, money and education, and the ability to negotiate through traditional systems

The Upper Class

The Middle Class

The Lower Class
Communities of Despair

Criminal Justice System

Institutionalized racism has created a culture of low expectations disproportionately populated by single women and people of color

Public Assistance System

Capacity Building

We have an obligation to have an in depth understanding of how race, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status , and other defining demographics impact community engagement and citizen stewardship

To design and implement activities that increase the engagement of marginalized citizens to city programs and services, inclusion in community and citizen engagement activities, and influence in decisions that impact this project.

The real problem with our community engagement is…

What those engaged said…

”There is a small group of people who do everything!”

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What those not engaged said

”There is a small group of people who do everything!”

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Three questions

1

- In a city where a good percentage of residents are satisfied and content, why would they get involved?

2

- How do we tap into the passion they have about issues that are relevant to them?

3

- When residents make choices about how they use their discretionary time they make a calculation of return on investment. How do we ensure that civic stewardship and community engagement give them a significant return on their investment

So many more choices than before!

Kinds of engagement

Negotiable	**Troubleshooting Episodic**
Project Planning Negotiable	**Sustained** **We can't just call on citizens when we need them. We must build Intimacy and trust**

Awareness / users framework

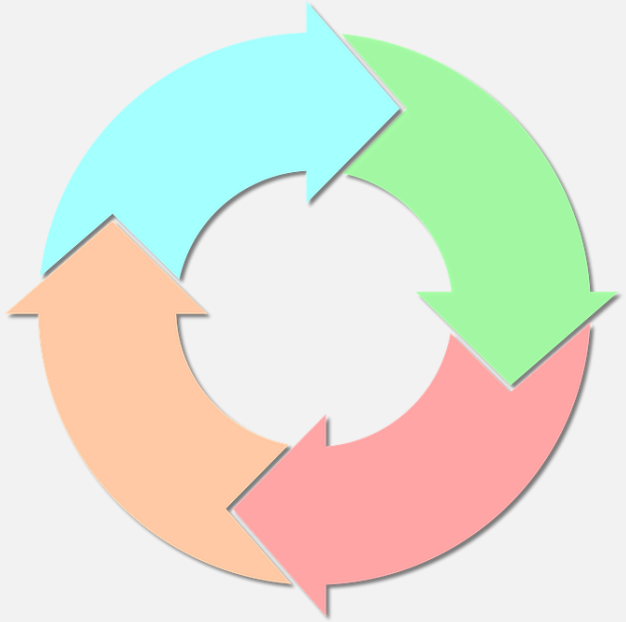
AWARE USERS

NON-AWARE USERS

AWARE NON-USERS

NON-AWARE NON-USERS

Process is a product!



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Process

Product

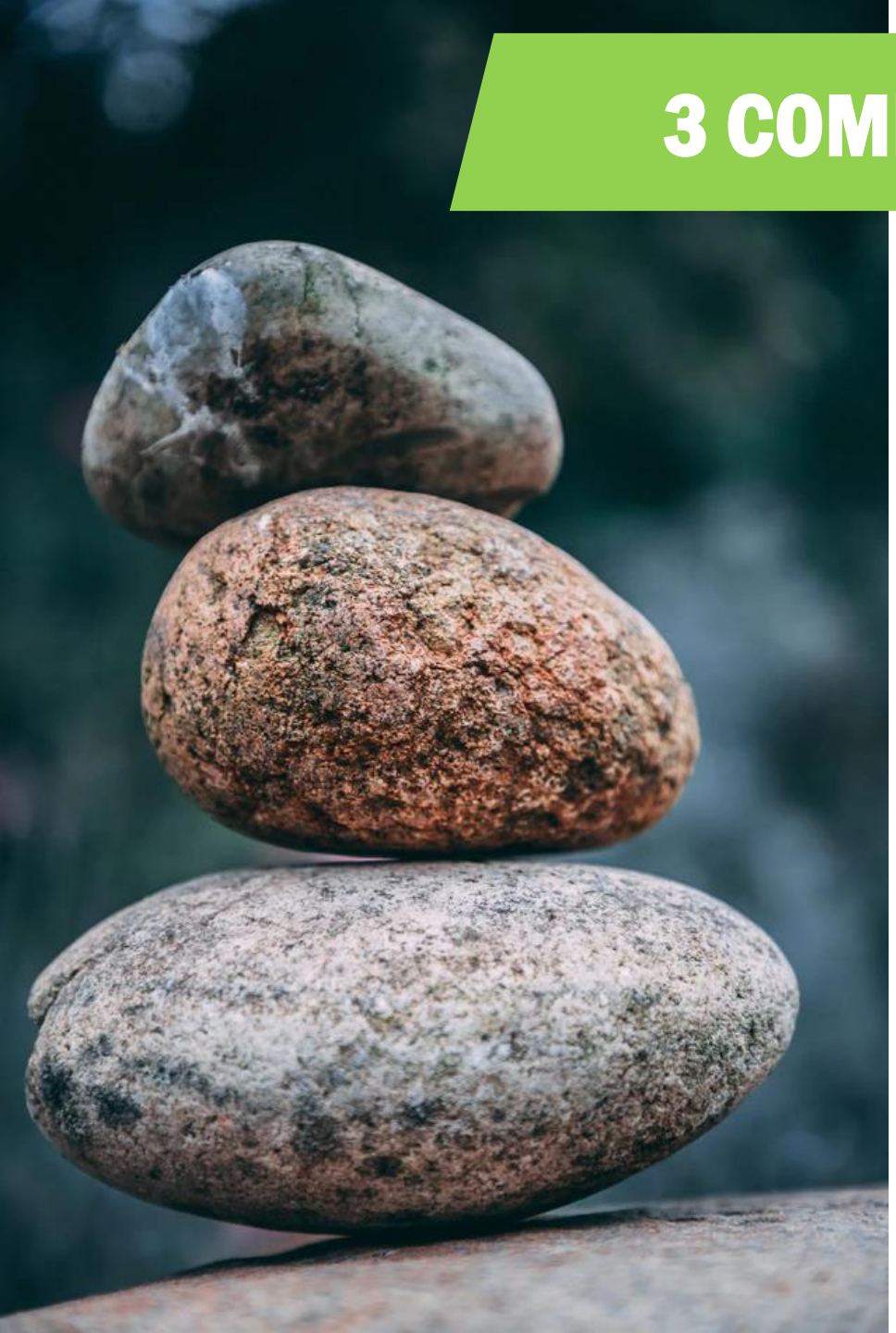
Tentative project sequence

- Forming the teams
- Preparing for the journey
- Facilitating capacity building for participants
- Conducting a stakeholder analysis
- Conducting an internal and external assessment
- Engaging the community
- A New Vision
- Recommendations to Council

Getting started right away

- Technical assistance to agencies and organizations currently engaged in community engagement work
- Community Welcoming
- Replacement for CAC’s
- Community Innovation Fund
- Youth Engagement – Creating “Big Citizenship”
- Creating opportunities for community service projects with an emphasis on youth service projects

Questions or concerns?



3 COMMONLY ACCEPTED REASONS

- To celebrate,
- To use their collective intelligence to solve problems, and
- To learn

Working with the laws of nature

- Diversity: it just is!
- Order: Diversity w/o order is unsettling
- Randomness: Sometimes stuff just happens
- Chaos: When stuff happens it creates new arrangements, realities, and challenges
- Adaptability: Learn or perish

THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Who is responsible for creating the next generation

“BIG CITIZENS?”

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FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

- Voluntarism
- Transactions
- Episodic
- Routine
- Strategic

FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

- Sequential

- Interagency

- Interdisciplinary