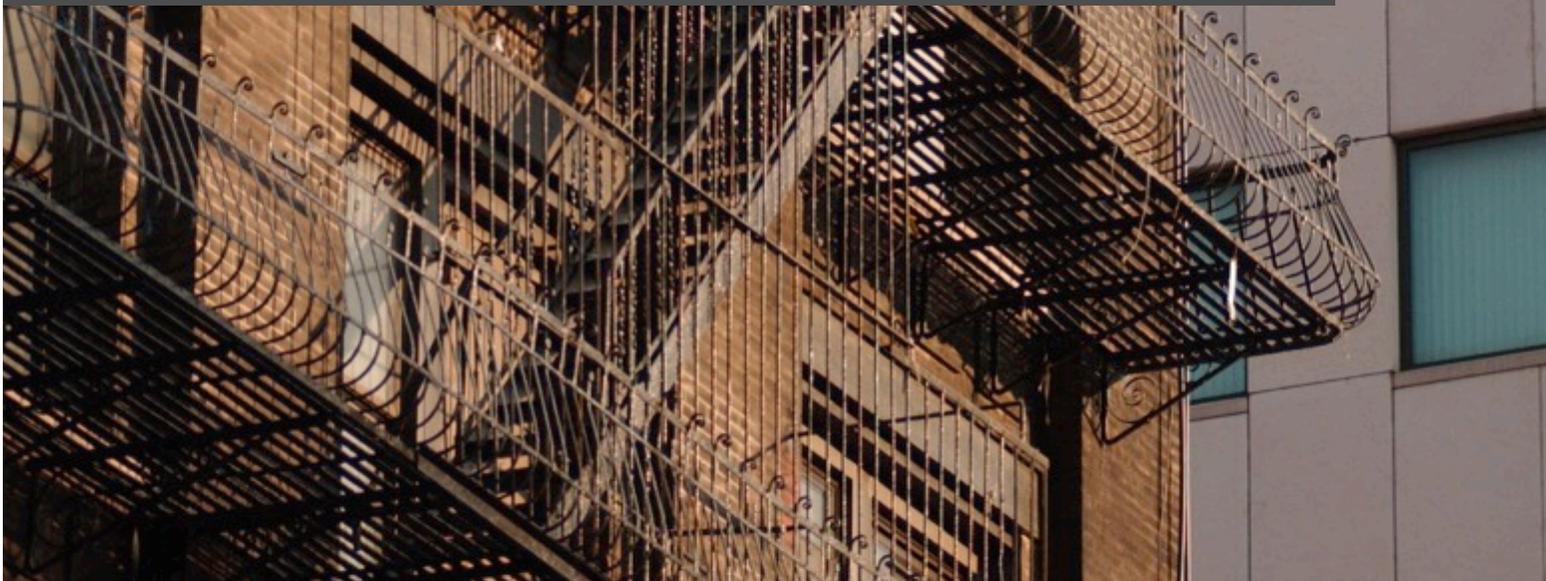


# e<sup>-</sup>LAB LEAP MEETING NOTES

June 8-9, 2015

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2317 SNOWMASS CREEK ROAD | SNOWMASS, CO 81654  
[WWW.RMI.ORG](http://WWW.RMI.ORG)



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is a synthesis of notes and activities from the June 8-9 e-Lab Leap Initiative Meeting, a change lab launch event held in New York City. The convening partners were Rocky Mountain Institute, the Office of the Governor of the State of New York, the New York State Department of Public Service (NYDPS), the Energy Efficiency for All Coalition,<sup>1</sup> the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance, and other critical stakeholders.

e-Lab Leap seeks to co-create a clean energy future that empowers and improves the lives of low-income households and communities using a social change lab model. A change lab is a proven method to catalyze transformation by working with a committed and diverse range of stakeholders using cutting-edge group process to develop a shared understanding of a complicated issue, and build the capacity of key actors to innovate, collaborate and lead long-term change.

The convening question that shaped the meeting was, “how can we empower and improve the lives of low-income households and communities in a clean energy future?” Within this context, the meeting objectives were:

- To develop a shared sense of the current situation for low-income households and communities in New York and begin to identify the key leverage points for making meaningful change
- To help existing efforts in New York move faster and also identify new efforts to move forward that empower and improve the lives of low-income households and communities in a clean energy future
- To develop and refine the plan for working together as a group and take the Leap Initiative forward

In total, more than 50 stakeholders attended representing over 40 different low-income and consumer advocates, environmental groups, community-based organizations, federal, state, and local government entities, housing authorities, utilities, regulatory agencies, foundations, financiers, and distributed energy resource (DER) service providers.

## MEETING OVERVIEW

### DAY 1 - JUNE 8

During the first day of the meeting, participants focused on building relationships and developing a shared sense of the current situation for low-income households and communities in New York. By the end of the day, participants had started to identify how they could work together and use a change lab (e.g. e-Lab Leap) to their benefit. Participants also identified key leverage points e-Lab Leap could use to create meaningful impact.

Activities on the first day included:

- Meeting introduction
- Sharing of individual perspectives on the current situation of low-income energy issues
- Assessing leverage points in New York for making meaningful impact using systems thinking methods
- Discussing existing/current initiatives and issues
- Developing a better understanding how participants could work together within a Change Lab

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<sup>1</sup> THE MEMBERS OF THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR ALL COALITION ARE: ASSOCIATION FOR ENERGY AFFORDABILITY, THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL, PACE ENERGY AND CLIMATE CENTER, THE CENTER FOR WORKING FAMILIES, WEST HARLEM

## DAY 2 - JUNE 9

The second day began with facilitators further detailing the change lab model, and describing New York State's broader energy plan, Reforming the Energy Vision (REV). Then, participants rapidly prototyped initiatives—both new and in support of existing efforts—to carry forward the work of e-Lab Leap.

Activities on the second day included:

- A more detailed discussion on the function of a change lab and e-Lab Leap
- A panel discussion on the REV proceedings
- Creation and feedback on six e-Lab Leap initiatives using LEGO Serious Play
- Presentations on initiatives and commitments from participants on the 6 initiatives, as detailed in the section below
- Discussion on next steps for e-Lab Leap

## SIX PROPOSED LEAP INITIATIVES

### 1. REVITALIZE

This initiative seeks to leverage the goals of REV and its specific opportunities, such as demonstration projects, to create community-generated, clean energy plan that bring economic and environmental justice to all members of the community.

The initiative team recognized that there is the perception that REV is doing nothing to address social injustice; while REV has sought unprecedented input from the public, communities feel that they are not being reached or heard sufficiently through the process, or that there are adequate protections in place that will protect them from predatory actors taking advantage of a rapidly changing energy landscape. There is a perception that demonstration projects, for example, are being implemented in communities without their partnership or perceived benefit. REVitalize is therefore an effort to come up with an inclusive process that addresses current process deficiencies, balancing a market-oriented approach with community protections, engagement, and ownership, utilizing REV as a vehicle to drive a new paradigm of projects that empower and benefit communities.

Next steps for this team include surveying the landscape, prioritizing potential pilot communities for this process, identifying funds for an initial study, and initiating stakeholder engagement.

### 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INITIATIVE

The idea for this group came from the observation that the New York Department of Public Service (DPS) and the Governor's Office have seen more turnout and input from communities in REV meetings and its various related initiatives (REV+) than at any other point in recent memory. But meanwhile, community groups feel that they are not being sufficiently reached or heard from through these processes, and that even tracking the effectiveness of community engagement is very challenging. A different form of community dialogue is very much needed.

Therefore, the intended outcomes of this group are to drive more effective engagement, participation, and communication between government agencies and stakeholders, including:

- Better cooperation among agencies reaching out to the public on similar issues associate with REV
- Greater engagement and understanding of low-to-moderate-income stakeholders of state energy sector reforms
- Better alignment and buy-in on initiatives and proceedings
- More effective communications channels between New York State (NYS) and local low-to-moderate-income groups
- Increased efforts to ensure communities understand REV and its purpose

- Low-to-moderate-income customers are empowerment empowered to establish a low carbon future, and benefit from low carbon future
- Low-income and environmental justice organizations are satisfied with decisions and that they feel their voices have been heard
- Local and state governments with connect on REV+ issues
- Formal comment processes (and all existing communications channels) are augmented in meaningful ways
- This initiative/initiative team establishes itself as a convener for a multi-stakeholder processes as there is a need for such a convener

The next steps of this initiative include process mapping (understanding what conversations are happening, between who and at what level, and what are the venues for conversation), stakeholder mapping and outreach (paying particular attention to stakeholders who aren't currently part of the conversation), identifying initiative champions and "backbone" organizations, clarifying the specific topics of focus, establishing modes of communication for the initiative team, and conducting initial team meetings. In addition, the initiative team will work to identify and connect to existing processes, initiatives, and coalitions as well as to broaden participation in existing proceedings.

### 3. DER OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

Prior to eLab Leap, the REV Track 1 Order instructed the Consumer Advocate staff at the DPS to work with low-income advocates, utilities, and other stakeholders on the question of how distributed service platform (DSP) providers (e.g. utilities) would create programs to provide access to DERs in communities where the market (service providers) failed to provide those services (most likely in low-income communities). This question is to be answered in the soon-to-be-required Distributed System Implementation Plans (DSIPs) that will detail utilities' multiyear spending and operations.

This initiative proposes to begin work with the aforementioned stakeholders to inform utilities to file their DSIPs. Also, it hopes to ensure that the services proposed by utilities will be the best possible for the communities impacted. In the short term, this should provide some clarity as to the form of utilities' DER programs in underserved markets before DSIPs are filed.

Through the initiative, DPS will host stakeholders and utilities at a technical conference to discuss potential opportunities for DERs in low-income communities. Afterwards, DPS will solicit straw proposals from utilities on their internal plans for providing DERs and other services to underserved markets. These straw proposals will then be available for public comment and improvement through a stakeholder engagement process.

The next steps for this initiative include holding a technical conference with stakeholders and utilities to establish criteria for a low-income component in DSIPs, then issuing a straw proposal on these criteria and coordinating with utilities to establish their own stakeholder process.

### 4. COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECT

This initiative began with two different ideas: 1) a community energy efficiency and DER blitz model targeting a whole neighborhood and 2) a research demonstration and deployment project combining WAP, LIHEAP, and utility projects to implement DER and weatherization. These two ideas were eventually melded into the resulting project, which has two key tenets:

- The neighborhood blitz model is employed to deliver holistic and complete services at once and at scale. One example would be a program, managed by the utility, that "blitzes" an entire neighborhood; that is, enters a neighborhood fully equipped to conduct and implement holistic and complete energy efficiency, weatherization, and DER audits, retrofits and upgrades in a very short time period.
- Funding is allocated by pooling existing resources for these individual efforts to maximize the impact of these available resources. The group identified that there are many state and federal funding sources that are currently used in piecemeal, and at times in competition (e.g., HEAP vs. WAP). This initiative would attempt to pool funding contributions from these various funding sources (perhaps even unlikely sources

such as funding for mold mitigation) to reduce individual program costs and maximize the impact of the available funding (hence the blitz model).

The next steps for this group include coordination with several other initiatives to explore synergistic and/or overlapping objectives. In addition, the initiative team identified the need for preliminary market research, buy-in from key state leadership and agencies, refinement of the characteristics of a target neighborhood, and a review of specific possible funding sources as critical next steps.

## 5. A GUIDE TO ENABLE COMMUNITY-OWNED, LOCAL LMI MICROGRIDS

Community ownership of resources in the future market shaped by REV is still a developing concept even amongst the many groups in attendance at the Leap meeting. This initiative emerged from this idea that community ownership--especially within the REV framework--is still uncharted territory.

Several concepts for the initiative were discussed in the early stages of its development, including:

- Creating an entity that coordinates funding/ DER development/member acquisition to help streamline what is otherwise a very complicated process
- Improving the customer experience for community individuals and households
- Training a trusted community “energy manager” to help individuals and households navigate their energy choices
- Piloting a community ownership model in a low-income neighborhood

Piloting community ownership was widely supported by group members, but given the resources available and the challenges of creating a pilot, the group settled on a more realistic initiative to create a guide enabling community-owned local microgrids in low-income communities.

As a “living document” the guide is intended to help communities who are interested in pursuing community-owned, local microgrids to understand the decisions they need to make, and help determine an effective course of action. Specifically, the guide would provide:

1. Case studies of successful community microgrid projects
2. A description of the choices made by communities who have successfully undertaken or who are currently undertaking similar projects. What decisions and actions did these communities take, in what order, and what were the resulting impacts? What pitfalls should others try to avoid?
3. Decision-tree(s) of key questions to answer and suggested steps to take, tailored for different community types
4. Ongoing updates to share new ideas/developments as communities test the usefulness of the guide

The initiative would have a Phase 2 to reinforce the living nature of the document. The guide’s publishers would partner with communities to test and update the guide, creating a feedback loop where the guide is updated on an ongoing basis.

The next steps for the initiative team (in addition to hosting an initial team meeting and recruiting Leap participant involvement) include identifying potential communities who will want to use the guide, interviewing communities who have lessons to share, and researching potential business and adoption models that could be helpful to describe in the guide.

## 6. LEAP LAB STRATEGY

Past and current efforts in New York have had good intentions to help low-income households meet their energy needs. Yet, they have fallen short and have largely been unable to address a long list of barriers including lack of information and awareness of opportunities, insufficient capital availability, and a tendency to develop pilots without a roadmap to enable scaling.

There is a need to develop a new approach. Right now, there may be a collective vision for how to address these challenges among key stakeholders, but there hasn’t been a forum to crystalize what exactly that vision is. As

we move forward, it will be critical to develop a shared understanding of the problem, and define pathways for achieving the vision.

eLab Leap can help harness the thoughts and ideas of stakeholders and connect these ideas to others, and provides a powerful feedback mechanism to ensure projects don't go off course and perpetuate a pattern of developing piecemeal solutions that can't or won't scale.

eLab Leap is intended to help take conceptual ideas and turn them into real projects. We recognize the process will not always be straightforward, and acknowledge the need to experiment, test ideas, and then iterate. To keep us on course, we will conduct thorough evaluation using rigorous quantitative data and metrics, and qualitative feedback from those in the communities we are working with. Ultimately, our hope is that this change model approach can make the barriers easier to address and help achieve the vision to empower and improve the lives of low-income households and communities.

Next steps for the initiative team include sharing notes from the Leap's first meeting (this document), continuing to develop understanding of the problem, communicating what's occurring in the eLab initiatives before the next meeting, and developing a framework for metrics and identifying and beginning to collect data against these metrics.

## NEXT STEPS

1. **Hosting your first team check-in:** For each initiative, please set up time with your team within the next couple of weeks (approximately one month after the eLab Leap meeting). If your team needs help setting up the call, RMI will be happy to provide support.
2. **Scheduling the next eLab Leap meeting:** RMI will be reaching out regarding preferences for dates and locations (we guarantee that the next venue will have good acoustics). Right now, we aim to have the next meeting in October 2015. The meeting is intended to maintain momentum, refine our portfolio of initiatives, and deepen our work together.
3. **Scoping out an eLab Leap Accelerator:** As mentioned during the meeting, RMI has worked with a diverse set of projects from around the country using the [eLab Accelerator model](#) with great success. RMI is exploring options to hold an Accelerator style meeting for low-income energy projects in New York, and will begin to identify candidate projects and project team members.

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# INTRODUCTION

This document is a synthesis of notes and activities from the June 8-9 e-Lab Leap Initiative meeting. It contains no name attribution of participants, but may refer to organizations and is therefore suitable for dissemination beyond meeting participants. While RMI has edited content to ensure conciseness and clarity, the editors paid special attention to maintain the original meaning of anything quoted. Quotes and comments of participants were captured to the best of note taker's abilities.

## WHAT IS E-LAB LEAP

e-Lab Leap seeks to co-create a clean energy future that empowers and improves the lives of low-income households and communities. e-Lab Leap uses a social change lab model to catalyze transformation by creating an ongoing platform to foster innovation, learning, leadership, and capacity development. The change lab methodology is designed to facilitate and support meaningful change. Key tenets include:

- Working with a committed and diverse range of stakeholders who represent a “microcosm” of the system that needs to change. Focus is given to inviting “unlikely allies” to the table as well as the more obvious groups with a stake in the issue.
- Using cutting-edge group process that works across all levels of the system and recognizes that change needs to occur at the individual, team, organization, and system levels.
- Developing a shared understanding across the stakeholder group of the current situation, and opportunities to shift and improve the system.
- Empowering key actors to innovate, collaborate, and lead change by supporting them to continue to work together and learn in order to develop solutions.

The e-Lab Leap Initiative is starting in New York, in partnership with Rocky Mountain Institute, the Office of the Governor of the State of New York, the New York State Department of Public Service, the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance, and the Energy Efficiency for All Coalition<sup>2</sup>. The initiative initially focuses on driving change in New York because there is a critical need (32 percent of all households are considered low-income), and significant opportunities exist to influence/align with broader regulatory transformation initiatives like New York's Reforming the Energy Vision (REV). Experiences and lessons learned in New York will inform a refined approach that can be scaled to other locations nationally.

## JUNE 8-9 E-LAB LEAP MEETING

The June 8-9 e-Lab Leap meeting was a launch of a social change lab in New York, convening partners and critical stakeholders in the low-income space. The convening question that shaped the meeting was, “how can we empower and improve the lives of low-income households and communities in a clean energy future?” Within this context, the meeting objectives were:

- To develop a shared sense of the current situation for low-income households and communities in New York, and begin to identify the key leverage points for making meaningful change
- To help existing efforts in New York move faster, and also identify new efforts to move forward that empower and improve the lives of low-income households and communities in a clean energy future
- To develop and refine the plan for working together as a group, and take the Leap Initiative forward

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<sup>2</sup> THE MEMBERS OF THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR ALL COALITION ARE: ASSOCIATION FOR ENERGY AFFORDABILITY, THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL, PACE ENERGY AND CLIMATE CENTER, THE CENTER FOR WORKING FAMILIES, WEST HARLEM ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION, ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY PARTNERS, AND THE GREEN AND HEALTHY HOMES INITIATIVE.

In total, 51 stakeholders attended representing over 40 different low-income and consumer advocates, environmental groups, community-based organizations, federal, state, and local government entities, housing authorities, utilities, regulatory agencies, foundations, financiers, and distributed energy resource (DER) service providers.

The broader goals of the two-day meeting were to begin to build trust and relationships between participants (the focus on day one), develop a shared sense of the current situation for low-income households and communities in New York, and begin to identify the key leverage points for making meaningful change. Day two focused on understanding the change lab model, and developing initiatives—both new and in support of existing efforts—to carry forward the work the eLab Leap.



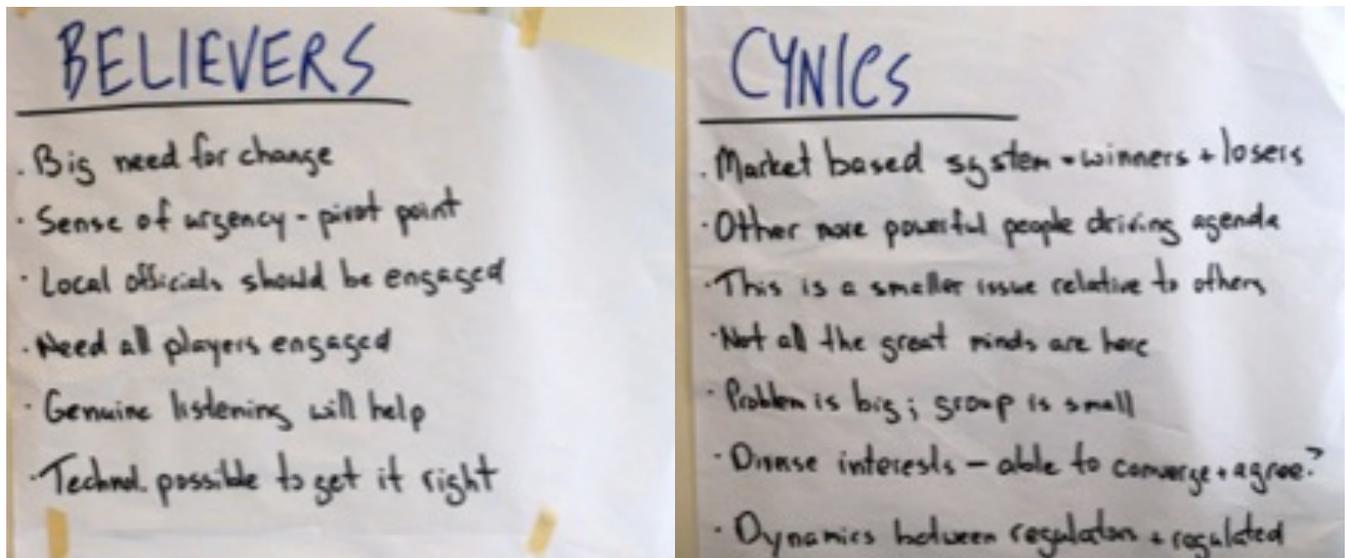
# DAY 1 – JUNE 8

## AGENDA

Welcome by convenors
Surfacing meeting expectations
Perspectives on the current situation of low-income energy issues
Learnings from the dialogue interviews
Employing systems thinking to assess leverage points in New York for making meaningful impact
Paired discussion
Employing systems thinking to assess leverage points in New York for making meaningful impact (continued)
Open space discussion: Existing/Current initiatives & issues
Purpose of the Lab #1
Check out

## SURFACING MEETING EXPECTATIONS

As an introductory exercise, participants were assigned as either “believers,” who wholeheartedly believed in the success and necessity of the social lab convening, or “cynics,” who were skeptical that the lab could have any success. Cynics and believers then paired up and debated their positions. Afterwards, volunteers presented their partner's argument (so believers presented the cynics' arguments, and vice versa).



## PERSPECTIVES ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF LOW-INCOME ENERGY ISSUES

Next, participants described the object they brought<sup>3</sup> and why they chose it as a representation of the current reality of the system connecting low-income communities and energy. Together the objects helped to paint a clear picture of the opinions and perceptions in the room. Summary of perspectives

- **Several utility bills:**
  - “There are various components of my bill. There are numerous charges but their meanings are confusing. Added together, all these small charges are really a lot of cents per kWh.”
  - “Seeing this bill makes me think, ‘who can not pay?’ it is \$140 in spring with no heat, no air-conditioning... that is really high.”
  - “This is the difference made by my company on a bill. First it was high, now it is low.”
- **Necktie:** “We don’t have to wear a tie today; I appreciate the dress code. Dress codes are similar to a screen that inhibits work between stakeholders.”
- **Brick fragment:** “This is a historical relic: a piece of infrastructure that is crumbling. It demonstrates the need to really address infrastructure such as housing before working on other things.”
- **Lock:** “I’ve been in a lot of similar meetings, seen a lot of studies, heard a lot of talk, but never seen a scalable solution; that is, something to unlock the lock. That is what I want to see.”
- **Financing applications:** “This folder contains loan applications, such as those to install solar.”

<sup>3</sup> AS A HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT LEADING UP TO THE MEETING, PARTICIPANTS WERE ASKED TO “BRING AN OBJECT THAT YOU FEEL REPRESENTS THE CURRENT REALITY OF THE CHALLENGE WE’RE TRYING TO ADDRESS AND BE PREPARED TO DESCRIBE WHY YOU CHOSE THAT OBJECT. THE OBJECT SHOULD BE SOMETHING YOU HAVE AT YOUR OFFICE OR YOUR HOME (PLEASE DON’T BUY ANYTHING), AND THE DESCRIPTION MATTERS MORE THAN THE OBJECT ITSELF. FOR EXAMPLE, SOMEONE COULD BRING AN OLD DICTIONARY BECAUSE THEY THINK ‘DEFINITIONS ARE CRITICAL.’”



- **Magazine featuring ice melting in the arctic:** “This article shows how rapidly change is occurring; it brings home a sense of urgency.”
- **Sweater:** “The information that I receive is asset base (saving money, building info, etc.), but what I really want to get to is consumer behavior.”



- **Financiers and low-income households both** operate on razor thin margins, and are thus vulnerable to shocks.”
- **Sand:** “It represents time but also something that is not yet formed but could become something beautiful like a sand castle. It came from Normandy Beach (it contains a certain element of tragedy, or gravitas).”
- **Mobile hotspot:** “Represents the promise of technology, but also its limits. We must be very careful to avoid thinking one-size-fits-all, or one thing solves all.”
- **Headphones:** “In order to solve problems, we need to listen.”



- **Mobile power pack:** “This represented state of the art only three years ago and is now already obsolete. This also represents the potential of storage.”
- **Hot potato:** “This issue seems to be a bit like a hot potato: the financiers say ‘if we only had supporting policy,’ and the policy folks say, ‘if we only had appropriate regulation,’ and the regulators say... etc.”
- **Earplugs:** “These can intentionally block noise and be used to not listen, but you can also take them out to really hear.”
- **Picture of NY:** “This is a characterization of load. I had a professor who said, ‘Tell me what the load is and I’ll tell you how to design the system.’ It’s important to realize changes in load will impact design decisions.”
- **Bowl:** “It is empty, filled with nothing. It represents one, a beginner’s mind, we all should come in to this thinking we know nothing and, two, the interconnectedness of everything.”
- **Slate:** “It has a history of development of Louisiana on the back. A state that is successful, but built on the back of slaves.”
- **Soccer ball:** “In soccer there are two paradigms: pick-up soccer and organized soccer. One has a lot of barriers to entry, the other doesn’t. I hope the system we try to create is more like pick-up soccer, no barriers to entry.”
- **Globe:** “This represents some of the broader implications of what we are talking about today.”



- **Paperweight:** “It distorts what you see. Workforce development changes people’s perspective on the world around them. Some people have a vision instilled at an early age. Some see college, others see prison and the system.”



- **Sand timer:** “Time is critical for our situation from a macro and micro level. The clock is ticking from climate change, but also, how do we change consumer behavior so that low-income consumers think about their bills more?”
- **Map of Brooklyn:** “Every time I come here, I realize the huge challenges we have to navigate the city.”
- **Flowbag:** “You have to test every widget. Gadgets can be really beneficial, but they must be tested, verified, and calibrated.”



- **Adapter** “I can’t work here without it... we all need an adapter to work.”
- **External hard drive:** “It’s filled with a lot of knowledge and data, but without anything to plug in to it’s insular and not worth a lot.”
- **Keys:** “Each key represents one of the great convenings currently under way in NY.”
- **Heavy puzzle piece:** “All pieces are essential but together it’s a heavy lift; it is a big puzzle we



are putting together. Pieces will come together through the collaboration of the group.”

- **Sandy Beach city recovery agenda:** “How to recover from Sandy, a number of recommendations.”
- **Zero:** “Through zero net energy, our affordable housing can get there and show the way.”
- **Beach rock:** “The push and pull of waves made rock the perfect shape, just like we hope the push and pull of our efforts will have the perfect result.”
- **Big Book of Exercises:** “It’s a symbol of optimism, there are many things we could do. But, at the same time, it’s hard to maintain commitment and put them all together in a way that works for ourselves.”
- **Scale** “We have to weigh heavy issues when discussing low-income energy issues.”



- **Cup in wrapper** “It seems to have been a staple of hotels forever; there has to be a better way, but it’s never been upgraded because there’s always something else to do.”
- **Photographs** “These photos channel the likely consequences of climate change on the younger generation. As the saying goes, ‘the best time to plant a tree was 25 years ago. The second best time is today.’”



- **Connector:** “Unless we connect low-income communities to energy distribution and to the conversation, then winners will continue to be winners and losers be losers.”
- **Red Sox hat:** “Being a fan in New York is not without its challenges. We’ve always worked in silos to help fix energy crisis, but we have to work together and it takes a lot teamwork.”
- **Legos:** “They fit together like the perspectives around the room fit together to make better policies for New Yorkers.”

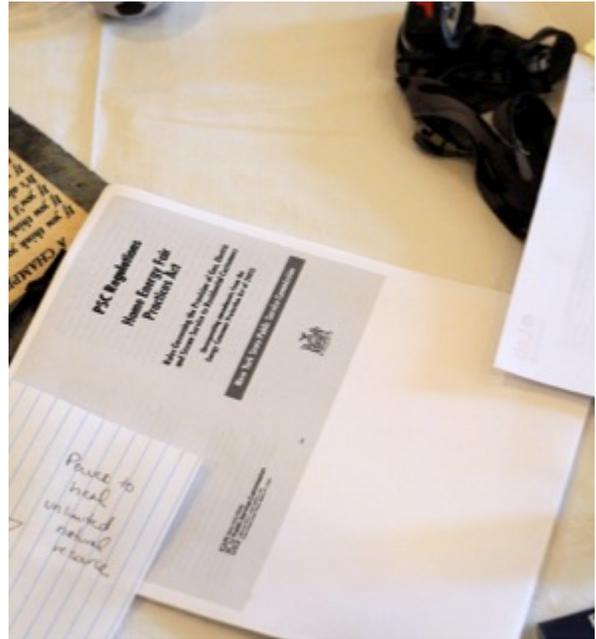


- **Testimony:** “It’s a draft, it can change. We are trying to create solutions that change from the bottom up and middle out.”
- **Fact pack:** “The issue alone takes 24 pages to describe. This is not an empty space.”
- **Hawaiian rock** “It’s a reminder that as we work in New York, other states are looking to us as a

model. The pan-African diaspora need to come together to work on problems with allies.”

- **Subway ticket:** “A system funded with public money, invested in for public benefits. Some will never see it, or fully utilize it, but it connects us all and provides great social benefit.”
- **Metaphorical box** “Need to think outside of the box and trust ourselves to create new systems, not accelerate climate change but improve.”
- **No. 6 oil** “A smart policy got rid of No. 6 oil and had tremendous positive consequences for health while creating jobs. I would love to see inefficiency on a shelf instead of on the street, as well.”
- **Coffee and tea:** “How do you build relationships? Sit down and share a drink.”
- **Home energy fair practices act:** “It reminds us to think of project oversight.”
- **Head lamp:** “It’s old, and barely works but it is expensive to replace so I keep it around.”
- Several smartphones:
  - “We have computers in every pocket now. This lowers the cost of technology.”
  - “Technology is always changing; this used to be new and cool. Just like restructuring is always happening, but change is not occurring for low-income folks.”

- **Steam valve for house** “REV is focused just on the electric grid as well as other efforts, but heat is a huge issue, if not the biggest issue.”
- **Chinese symbol for trust** “Trust is so critical for a community to make change. Also, trust is a global issue, things we discuss go beyond this room.”



## TAKEAWAYS FROM PERSPECTIVES

Participants gave their reactions to the presented perspectives based on the questions: What do you see and what do you feel as you look at these? What might you not have seen before?

- There is a wealth of experience in the room
- Real reasons for optimism
- Chances for personal engagement
- A sense for creativity and innovation but also significant barriers between participants
- We have despotic interests represented but also shared universal desires
- We should think about providing safety and comfort
- Don't forget about heat



## EMPLOYING SYSTEMS THINKING TO MAKE MEANINGFUL IMPACT

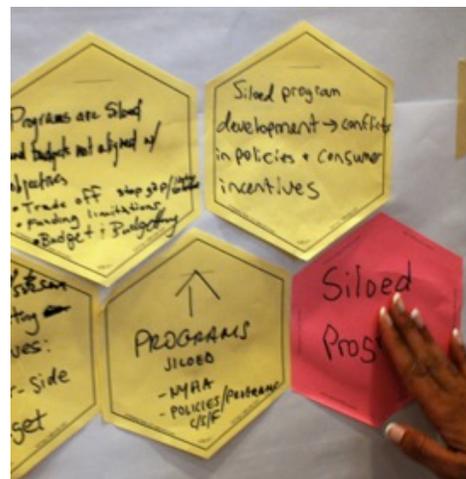
The next few sessions focused on developing a shared understanding of the situation in New York regarding low-income and energy by learning, then applying a systems thinking approach.

Moderators explained systems thinking using the Seashore Mode<sup>4</sup>, which represents four levels of understanding:

1. **Events:** What just happened? Like newspaper headlines; limited info about the system at the event level of observation. In the Seashore Model, a single wave impacting the seashore is an event.
2. **Patterns/trends:** What trends have there been over time? A series of events. In the Seashore Model, a series of waves impacting the seashore over time is a pattern.
3. **Structures:** What has influenced the patterns? What are the relationships between the parts? “The way things are,” including physical constraints, policies, rules, governance systems, universities, etc. In the Seashore Model, the seabed, the moon and its gravitational influence, etc. are elements that influence the waves impacting the seashore.
4. **Mental models:** What assumptions, beliefs, and values do people hold about the system? What beliefs keep the system in place? Things like “career is the most important piece of our identity, healthy food is too expensive, rest if for the unmotivated, etc.” In the Seashore Model, a belief that ocean waves are the manifestation of an ocean deity’s favor could be a mental model that provides context to waves impacting the seashore.



Systems thinking theory posits that deeper understanding at the structural and mental model levels can uncover leverage points for transformative change.



<sup>4</sup> ANOTHER COMMON GUIDE FOR SYSTEMS THINKING IS THE ICEBERG MODEL:  
[HTTP://WWW.NWELI.ORG/ASSETS/ICEBERG-EXAMPLE.PNG](http://www.nweli.org/assets/iceberg-example.png)

## PATTERNS AND STRUCTURES

Participants worked in small groups to identify key patterns and structures they observed in the system. The groups reported out five key patterns and structures in plenary. Volunteers from plenary then clustered the patterns and structures identified by the small groups. The following were the resulting clusters:

### 1. Systemic barriers

- a. Strong feeling that there is a constructed system of oppression (evidenced by the accessibility to jobs, available levels of pay, etc.) that works against low-income households
- b. There is an overreliance on top-down decision making by individuals that may exacerbate systemic barriers
- c. Paternalistic decisions are made by the few in power “in the best interest” of low-income households creating distrust, distortion, and limited participation

### 2. Market based barriers to serving low-income consumers

- a. The market is struggling with its role and the priorities of businesses and business models in serving low-income communities
- b. There are financing challenges specific to low-income customers
- c. Corporations are profit-centric
- d. Low-income households are vulnerable to exploitation, as demonstrated by predatory ESCOs
- e. Financing is seen as an answer, although in many cases it is a cause of problems

### 3. Lack of trust

- a. There is a lack of confidence in non-utility providers
- b. The planning system is opaque; the utility system favors large volume users; minorities/indigenous marginalized; low-income people don't trust landlords, utilities, contractors, and ESCOs; communities don't trust the state to really change things
- c. Concern for change has led to an uncertainty of whether to distrust or embrace REV

### 4. Passionate and dedicated people are working in this space

- a. There are many passionate, curious, dedicated people working on many different issues

### 5. Siloed programs

- a. Programs develop in silos leading to conflicts in policies and consumer incentives
- b. Programs are siloed and budgets do not align with objectives
- c. Tension between demand-side interventions (payment assistance) and supply-side interventions (efficiency)
- d. Conflicting Incentives to consumer-sided budgeting

### 6. Need for education

- a. Market knowledge and consumers/installers programs
- b. Massive need for more effective LMI education and community engagement

### 7. Size and complexity hinders action

- a. Complicated systems; lack of transparency in government decision making; exclusionary practices; Change is difficult with legal, technical, and social complexity



- b. The scale and scope of issues is overwhelming and paralyzing; where to start?
- c. Level of resources is never enough so reforms only tinker
- d. Low-to-moderate-income issues vary by sector and geography; gas/oil, upstate/downstate, urban/rural
- e. Low-income sector is extraordinarily diverse

**8. Un-holistic and aging infrastructure**

- a. Green/grid improvements: energy creep; climate change; dirty infrastructure that is aging and needs replacement; liberalization of sector; lack of expertise; tech creating opportunity
- b. Deferred maintenance in cash-strapped buildings trumps energy retrofits (and timing)
- c. Disrepair: deferred maintenance; aging buildings need upgrades; health; more pressing issues to address; lack capacity to improve
- d. Lack of holistic approach; environmental justice; health; climate change
- e. Aging, dirty polluting
- f. Need for repair and need to do it in a smart, green way that benefits low-income

**9. Limiting bureaucratic processes**

- a. The decision making process is dysfunctional. Decision makers are not representative of the larger community; exclusionary
- b. Historically, decision making processes are defined by regulators and the real needs of low-income customers don't always get addressed
- c. Changing political/social cycles prevent long-term engagement, solutions, and learning from our mistakes
- d. 20th century bureaucracy for 21st century energy challenges
- e. The impact of multifaceted uncertainty (policy, regulatory, political, definitions, etc.)
- f. Policy choices and processes are resource limited and often inefficient. Rushing to find solutions leaves ideas and people out
- g. Lack of flexibility, lack of reaction, siloed

**10. Lack of common language to talk about issues**

- a. Energy poverty under defined
- b. Lack of/need for common metrics to define progress
- c. No consensus has emerged around "non-energy benefits"
- d. Definition of clean energy does not line up between groups

**11. Lack of effective community engagement**

- a. Difficulty to truly engage and represent low-income communities in decision making
- b. Finding right pathways to community engagement and collaborative problem solving
- c. Emerging cooperative instincts, yet gaps and lack of cohesion remain
- d. Frustration over inability of stakeholders to engage and communicate effectively
- e. Lack of engagement in the market itself, in decision making, and with consumers
- f. Lack of understanding on what's going on with REV

**12. Continued unaffordability**

- a. Low-income people can't afford bills and have less access to capital, energy costs are increasing, incomes are unequal, and low-income people have a larger energy burden
- b. Costs/burdens threats to low-income residents, communities, and providers
- c. There has been a failure to address major issues until the situation reaches a crisis point, which leads to bad results
- d. Bills continue to be unaffordable even with current efforts
- e. Need for temporal element





## PAIRED DISCUSSION

Following the clustering exercise, participants chose someone perceived to be completely opposite to themselves (socio-economic status, job function, life-experience, political position, etc.), then went for a walk to reflect on the conversation in the meeting thus far. They considered two questions: why do we need to be here together, and what can we do together that we cannot do separately? Participants then volunteered key takeaways.

- Silos at the state level are true, so we need to work to break them down
- We can be frank about lack of diversity in advocacy and decision making positions
- There is a real need to listen instead of just talking
- Even though the organizations attending differ greatly, we share core values about low-income customers
- Energy efficiency might be complicated, but it one consideration out of many and may just add to the complexity

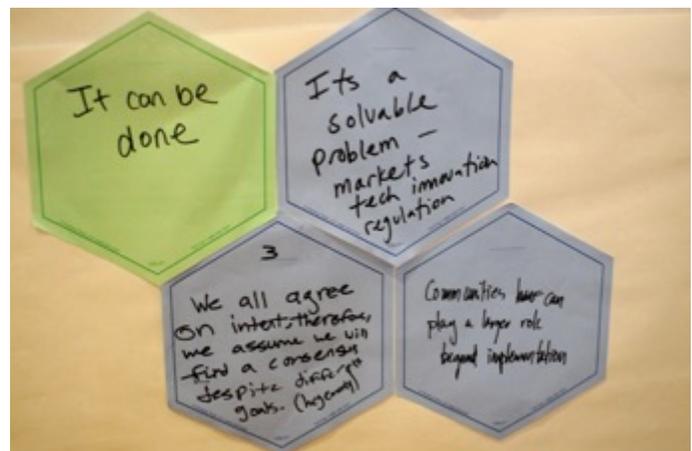
## MENTAL MODELS

Participants arranged themselves into new small groups to identify mental models underlying the structures and patterns that they had previously identified. Participants were instructed to write these as a quote (e.g., “engineers rule the world.”) The groups reported out five key mental models in plenary. Volunteers from plenary groups then clustered the identified patterns and structures. The following are the resulting clusters:

- 1. The costs of change are greater than the benefits**
  - a. Don’t break up Ma Bell (fear/reticence to change the status quo)
  - b. Reliability trumps all other concerns
- 2. The current utility model must change**
  - a. Technology will solve all problems
  - b. Utility infrastructure is outdated and on the verge of failure
  - c. Electricity (utilities) is a commodity versus a service (or public good)
  - d. The evolution towards distributed generation/DER is inevitable
- 3. It (transforming the status quo) can be done**
  - a. It’s a solvable problem. Markets, technology, innovation, and regulation are all levers we can use
  - b. We all agree on intent, therefore we assume we will find a consensus despite different goals
  - c. Communities can play a larger role beyond implementation
- 4. Tick, tick, tick...**



- a. Climate change means REV is now or never
  - b. Status quo thinking keeps us in our comfort zone, e.g. rearranging the chairs on the Titanic
  - c. We agree on the urgency (of climate change) but leave dramatic change off the table
- 5. Government as a solution**
- a. Government involvement is essential for good low-to-moderate-income outcomes
  - b. Government can solve problems
  - c. Top-down, one-size-fits-all
  - d. The government should step in when/if the market fails
  - e. Government has all of the answers and the power to implement
  - f. The lack and nature of regulation is the driver of the energy system
- 6. Government is imperfect**
- a. Government can't respond quickly enough to address emerging issues; government actions are suspect/won't benefit me
  - b. Displacement of responsibility/blame from levels of government leads to frustration and mistrust
- 7. Market as solution**
- a. Liberalization and market transformation will solve all
  - b. Greatest number of observations under the "but"
  - c. Concerns about carve outs in low-income communities because of market failures
- 8. But...what about low-income?**
- a. The cost of REV may be more than business as usual
  - b. Market approach within the neoliberal framework
  - c. Thinking the market will create solutions assumes low-income will benefit and capital markets don't favor high income
  - d. Prevailing suspicions about unfettered market based approaches in CBOs
  - e. The market does not serve low-income, which perpetuates poverty
- 9. "They" need "our" help**
- a. Low-income vs. market rate issues are different; the poor will always be the poor; there will always be poor people
  - b. Marginalized populations aren't capable of helping themselves
  - c. Low-income people need "our" help
  - d. Renewable energy/energy efficiency is too expensive for low-income households



- e. The definition of low-income is understated/outdated
- f. Clean energy is not a priority for low-income people

**10. Community engagement is already working**

- a. The low-income advocacy infrastructure is necessary, adequate, and effective
- b. The general approach to top down not inclusive vs. community needs a voice and involvement

**11. ...If you believe the hype**

- a. A window dressing of public engagement



**OBSERVATIONS FROM THE GROUP ABOUT OUR THINKING**

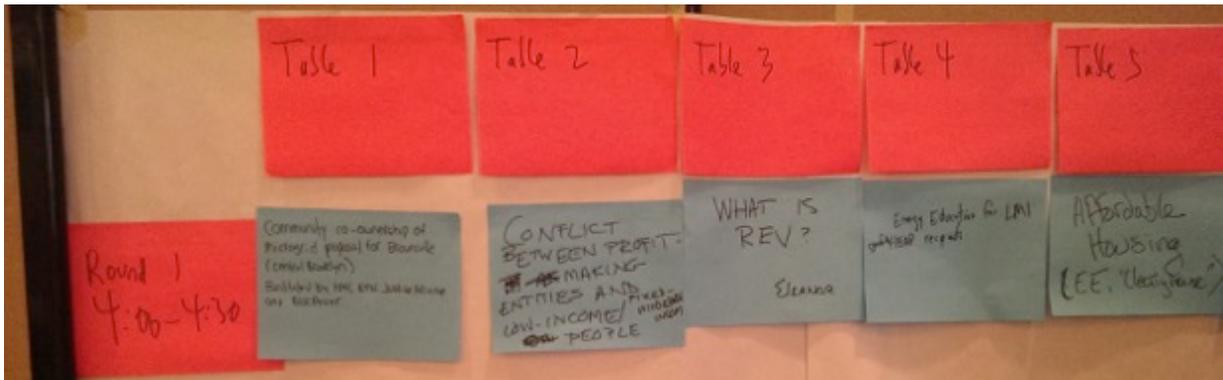
To close out the systems thinking sessions, participants were asked to share their observations on the mental models they put together.

- “There are conflicting mental models. Can they be reconciled?”
- “Mental models are government and systems focused, and not buildings and infrastructure focused.”
- “Mental models are focused on problems and not solutions.”
- “Ways of thinking are ingrained; it will take some time to change the thinking.”
- “We refuse to accept the status quo, and we are not satisfied. We must do something to change.”
- “We are part of the infrastructure that advocates on behalf of communities; we are not actual community members. We think problem-focused, not solutions-focused.”
- “(REV is) a statewide proceeding, not a New York City proceeding, yet there is a downstate bias.”
- “A better predictor of the position you take is where you work. A government worker would defend government programs. A private sector worker takes the private sector points of view about basic underlying assumptions of the proceeding.”
- “There’s a huge amount of smarts and experience. If not us, then who?” (Also, a follow-on point about the tension in that statement)
- “There’s an ambiguity. We are talking about mental models without attributing who has the mental model. I am questioning the exercise a little bit.”
- “Whenever there is a big task at hand, it brings about a certain amount of fear and anxiety.”
  - “People are fearful that they are more like the mental models than they care to be.”
  - “Believing too much in the stuff you want to believe in, escape route if it fails.”
- “There is a reason there are more problems than solutions. We are all playing a role, and we all speak the script of our role. Everyone is sticking to their normal script, which makes it difficult to have a genuine conversation. What is actually genuine discourse?”

- “There is a lot of conflict in mental models in what people are expressing as their reality. This shows us out of the gate the challenges we face because people have different belief systems. Lot of circling the wagons and not a lot of productivity.”
- “All four communities must collaborate to find solutions (government, for profit, nonprofit, etc.)”

## OPEN SPACE DISCUSSION: EXISTING/CURRENT INITIATIVES & ISSUES

Open space was provided for dedicated breakout sessions on the issues participants most wanted to discuss. In this session, individuals offered to host conversations about a current initiative, issue, or question in order to capitalize on attendee’s experience and expertise, and to further observe and understand the current situation/system while addressing identified needs.



### HOSTED TOPICS

- **Community co-ownership of microgrid proposal for Brownsville (Central Brooklyn):** This discussion is around making the idea of co-ownership into something real. The group sought great ideas and great conversation.
- **Conflict between profit-making entities and low-income people:** Too often the profit driven nature of the market is in conflict with low-income needs, but simultaneously utilities can benefit from a better understanding of how to serve the needs of low-income customers through better engagement. Perhaps the healthcare industry reform will provide a good example.
- **What is REV?:** There is an ongoing expressed need for a better understanding of the various initiatives, timelines, processes, etc. under REV. This breakout session focused on discussing the basics of the REV process and the need to have ongoing and intensified community participation. It also provided a roadmap of REV processes.
- **Energy education for LMI HEAP recipients:** Energy education is important for HEAP recipients.
- **Affordable housing “clearinghouse”:** There is a gap between funding opportunities and the needs of affordable housing managers. For example, HPD and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) energy efficiency capitalization requirements don’t work well together. This breakout session focused on exploring how to overcome this gap, perhaps through a clearinghouse approach that helps guide affordable housing managers through the bureaucracy of various funding opportunities.
- **Community-led climate solutions/clean energy resiliency:** Exchange of ideas on how to fund resiliency initiatives; are communities exchanging ideas?
- **Time variant pricing-- options for affordable multifamily buildings under REV:** Time variant pricing and location based pricing are an absolute requirement for the success of REV
- **Data -- what is needed to drive this change/how it can help:** There are a lot of ways to use data, some are easy and popular, some are hard and contentious
- **Workforce:** Support for business development and workforce development are important for this segment of the market

- Developing long-term local expertise and leadership in low-income communities: Information and knowledge sharing is important, but it hasn't gotten very far
- **Microlevel -- buildings:** Buildings can best benefit from incentives for holistic problem solving
- **Using social service infrastructure to address LMI energy issues:** County government Social Services departments have a high number of critical touch points with LMI individuals and households. These touch points could be good opportunities to educate LMI households about energy issues and DER opportunities, and encourage customer participation in DER programs. We discussed holding community nights to recruit participation from multiple LMI households at a time.
- **Did we/could we discuss public ownership of DERs:** New York decided to prioritize innovation and market approaches (consciously or unconsciously), what public or quasi public things like community choice aggregation we can bring into REV?
- **Financing solutions for LMI:** The group spoke a lot about the movement towards third party ownership model, leasing for efficiency, have transformed the solar market, has been around for larger builds, slow to gain traction but gaining momentum for smaller buildings, smaller projects. Gave specific examples of third party financing models being employed in Chicago and their applicability in New York
- **Large-scale deep energy retrofits, health benefits and workforce development:** Deep penetrating retrofits provide a good opportunity to merge with health benefits. We should not forget about the rest of state, not just focus on New York City.
- **Community shared solar:** There are several initiatives already implementing community shared solar in New York. However, there are barriers that have limited the participation of low-income households and communities. This breakout session explored what community shared solar is, identified key barriers to involvement, and solicited feedback from session participants on potential opportunities to overcome these barriers
- **The definition of LMI:** If we could get past resource constraints and statutory definitions we could serve more people and have better impact.

## PURPOSE OF THE LAB #1

After getting some initial exposure to the lab process, participants answered the following questions in one sentence on a sheet of paper. The answers were synthesized and presented the next day.

1. What is possible by working collaboratively in this way?
2. What do I hope this lab will enable me to do?

## CHECK OUT

In plenary, participants reflected on the lab so far. They answered two questions: What are we (the lab team) doing well that we need to keep doing (+/plus)? What do we need to do better tomorrow ( $\Delta$ /delta)?

+	$\Delta$
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulated complexity of situation</li> <li>• Getting to know each other</li> <li>• Coming together</li> <li>• Duration of activities</li> <li>• Being engaged</li> <li>• Different backgrounds</li> <li>• Awesome &amp; cool!</li> <li>• Connecting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify critical path steps</li> <li>• Let personal influence</li> <li>• Connect to REV+ (more concrete)</li> <li>• Network stay together, next steps</li> <li>• How to influence REV</li> <li>• Speak clearly and loudly!!!</li> <li>• Clarify where we are</li> <li>• Less selling/official</li> <li>• Soap box? Tell our truth</li> <li>• More active facilitation</li> <li>• Hear missing interests</li> </ul>

# DAY 2 – JUNE 9

## AGENDA

Check in
Purpose of the Lab #2
REV Q&A panel
Possible Lab initiatives to deal with the challenge: Open space
Possible Lab initiatives to deal with the challenge (continued)
Team presentations and feedback
Next steps
Check out
Closing comment

## CHECK IN

To check in for the day’s meeting, participants responded silently on the question, “What’s becoming clearer to me?” After a short discussion with neighbors following the journaling exercise, participants reported their responses to the group popcorn style.

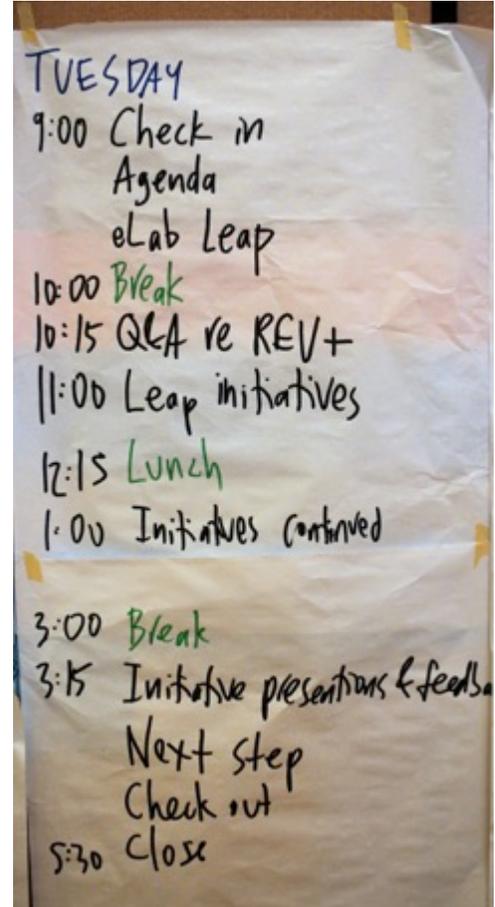
- “Gratified that in check out the agenda was adjusted; it's clear that this is a creative, iterative process. We might now be more comfortable with each other, and this should create fertile ground for brainstorming.”
- “Skeptical will we be doing more than talking today. Less people here, is that indicative of people's perceptions on Leap? Are people so skeptical they didn’t show up for day two?”
- Someone pointed out that the affordable housing building owners/operators were not in the room (with the exception of NYCHA). “That is a huge stakeholder group that needs to be involved.” It was pointed out by someone in response that those groups were approached for inclusion, but they were unsure/unable to commit two full days to something they didn’t really understand.
- There were a number of questions on the initiatives mentioned in the agenda. “Where are those coming from, what are they in relation to the convening question?”

## PURPOSE OF THE LAB #2

In this session, the nature of a change lab was further explored, and the practical application to eLab Leap.

### Change lab: Approaching our work together differently

Through RMI’s work on eLab, we have learned that if we want to make progress on our most complex challenges, we need a new approach.



From	To
Fixing symptoms or effects	Addressing structural or root causes
Making recommendations on paper	Developing solutions in practice
Relying on experts or authorities	Involving all key stakeholders
Learning then doing (policy preceding implementation)	Learning by doing (policy arising from implementation)
Implementing one chosen solution	Iteratively incubating, prototyping, and managing a portfolio of promising solutions
A once-off project	A stable and growing platform that delivers results over the short, medium, and long term

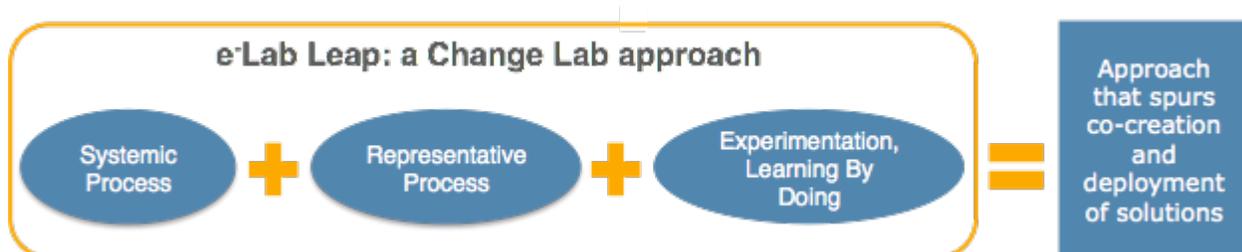
Transforming systems is ultimately about transforming relationships

- Bringing together stakeholders from across the whole system—not just the usual professionals
- Looking for leverage across the whole system—not only within particular silos
- Learning what works through disciplined experimentation in practice—not only planning on paper
- Creating results more effectively by working together—not just individually
- Importantly, building a platform and the capacity to enable stakeholders to work in this unconventional way

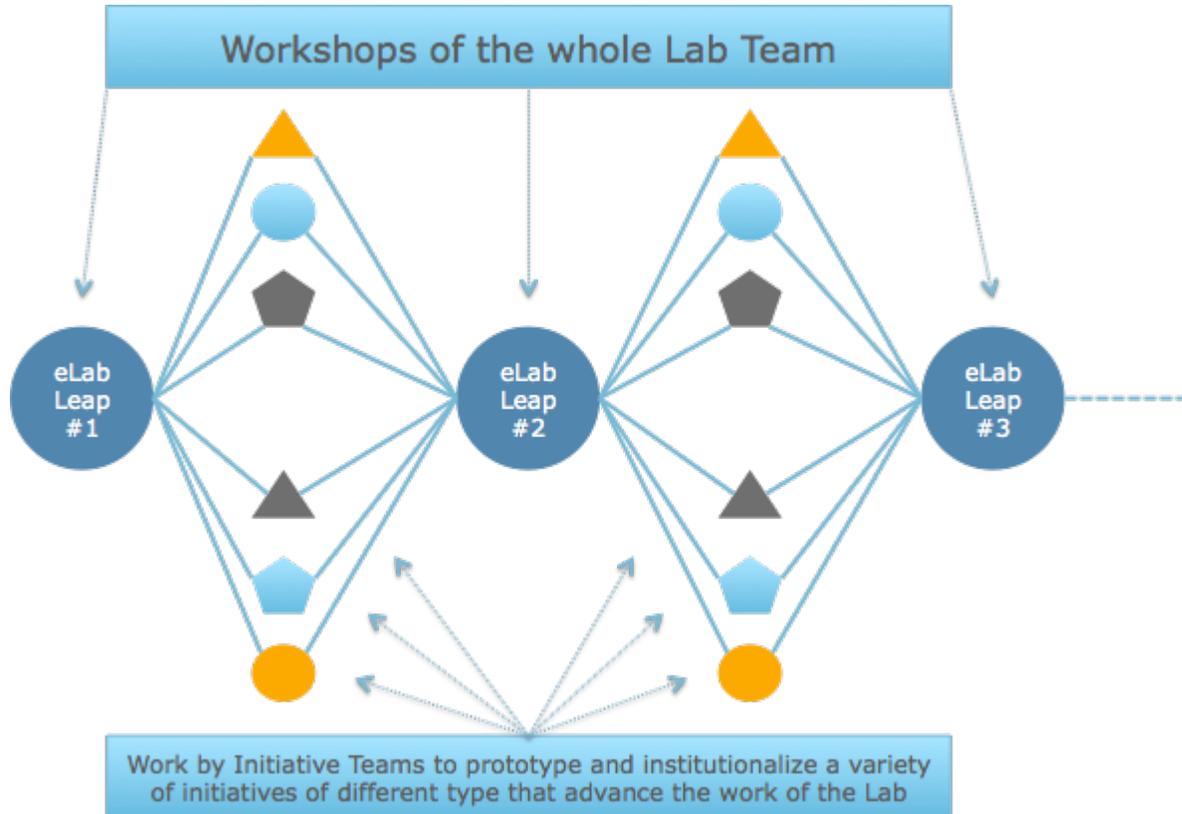
A change lab approach takes a systematic, participative, and creative and experimental approach

- Complex problems, such as addressing climate change or addressing the needs of low- income communities, are made up of three types of complexity:
  - Social
  - Dynamic
  - Generative
- Solving complex problems requires a process that addresses each type of complexity:
  - It must be systemic rather than piecemeal
  - It must involve stakeholders rather than rely only on authorities and experts
  - It must be creative and experimental rather than simply replicating existing best practice

e-Lab Leap: A growing platform that delivers results over the short and long term



A lab takes on a rhythm. It will bring participants together as a whole group, foster the development of initiatives through a systemic, representative, and experimental approach, and then drive prototyping of these initiatives by convening smaller teams in between large team meetings, potentially institutionalizing those initiatives. This rapid-cycle prototyping is a core principle to developing initiatives within the lab structure.



After this overview, thoughts and observations were solicited from the group. Comments included the following:

- “I have seen some demo and pilot projects that were individually very successful, but withered on the vine. A question we should be very aware of is how do we sustain those projects, and how do we bridge them?”
- “Honoring your mistakes and learning from them is critical; there has to be a lot of errors in an experimentation culture. The only bad thing is not learning from them. There has to be feedback between error and experiments.”
- “We are talking about a lot of initiatives and projects going forward. We are in the middle of a complex and ongoing process (REV, etc.). ‘Relationships,’ congenial and adversarial, are all in process as we speak because of the structures we are embedded in. Thinking about other structures for these relationships might not be able to affect the processes already in motion.”
- “There are fundamental disagreements on policy questions. We have different resources and expertise on these issues. Who has the capacity and resources to drive initiatives are very different. The processes that are more likely to wither on the vine are the ones from organizations with fewer resources. That’s counter to the reason that brings us here in the first place.”
- “I would like to challenge a few assumptions that drove some previous comments: ‘people are not telling the truth’... do not presume people are not telling truth, rather, some people have incomplete knowledge. Success is only not just a project that comes to conclusion. Rather, some success is establishing relationships with people that you typically wouldn’t partner with. Defining success is very critical... just because something withers, doesn’t mean it was a failure.”
- “In this room we represent people who report to someone. We can’t all carry water on our own. At minimum, we can come to conclusions similar to the previous comment, where we can be aware in the positions where we are operating, there is a reason for the opposite position.”
- “I was all about change in a big bureaucracy with people pushing against change; blocking the process. This [eLab Leap] is a model for change. What we are proposing is critical, action items and then testing them in the real world.”

## SYNTHESIS OF DAY 1 RESPONSES REGARDING THE PURPOSE OF A LAB

At the end of Day 1, participants answered the questions, “What is possible by working collaboratively in this way?” and “What do I hope this lab will enable me to do?” that the RMI team then synthesized in the evening. The results are reviewed here:

### What is possible by working collaboratively in this way?

- Coordinated advocacy and messaging
- Accurately identifying the needs of the industry
- Strength in numbers
- Shared accountability
- Transformative change (through cross-sector collaboration)
- A bold vision for a clean, resilient, beneficial electricity system
- Genuine, trustworthy relationships
- Convergence on impactful and specific actions
- A better (best!) use of government resources
- Destruction of silos (Incorporation of multiple — and not the usual — perspectives)

### What do I hope this lab enables me to do?

- Engage others in a democratic, participatory process
- Find the best possible partners. Be the best partner!
- Enlist the private sector
- Test ideas through live projects and real-life experiments
- Accurately understand the problem (in greater depth and breadth)
- Exchange resources (\$, people, knowledge) for greater impact
- Hear diverse perspectives
- Ensure my project and org’s work is impactful
- Collaborate between communities to scale grass-roots ideas
- Effectively design DER programs for low-income (in a REV world)
- Change people’s lives for the better

After explaining the purpose of e-Lab Leap, the group again reviewed the above responses from the previous day. Below are the comments from this review:

- “What we discussed previously reinforces/complements the purpose of the social lab as we just outlined it. It is really encouraging to see the synergy between what we can get out of the lab and the purpose of the lab itself.”
- “Clarity of “truth telling”... Although we might not always have perfect information, we must be our most vulnerable self in an environment where it is inherently risky, that is, in the e-Lab environment.”
- “We stated a benefit of the lab would be an exchange of resources; this really pulls it together for me. We all share a concern for low-income customers in the state no matter what organization we work for. We should focus on what we can do, not on what we can’t do. We need to look for the others in the room who can help us with any ideas that come through, so that we can form relationships to help make it happen. We need to focus on that, not on our differences.”

## REV+ Q AND A

To better inform participants on NY ongoing REV process and the various proceedings under its umbrella, New York State leaders answered questions in a panel format.

## QUESTIONS AND PANELIST ANSWERS

- **Can you distinguish REV from the broader energy strategy of the state?**

- People think about REV as the regulatory proceeding, but now we refer to the entire state plan as REV. We haven't figured out the specifics, and that is why we are asking for demonstrations. There will be an increased focus on low- and moderate-income (LMI) and continued funding.
- *Important:* Although there is some emphasis on markets in REV, there are specific exceptions to continue incentives around programs for LMI. We are not pulling funding for Green Jobs Green New York (GJGNY). Weatherization stays funded. Our general approach is: how can we build off of what we already have?
- **Which specific aspects of REV address the convening question?**
  - In the Clean Energy Fund, there are components directly attributed to low-income
  - The proceeding has directions for staff to assemble ideas on how to effectually engage with low-income customers and their advocates. Staff is required to bring forward possible ways to engage low-income in DER. The state will probably have to set up a working group with commenting parties. Develop a proposal for the Commission's consideration.
  - Demonstration projects currently scheduled for the 25th.
    - There have been comments that the language is impenetrable and vague.
    - *Response:* Not written in engineering speak, and you can get involved. There are 24 more days to get involved and pilot ideas, so please do so.
- **Overview of REV:**
  - On June 15, 2015 > State's Energy Plan
  - Filings can be found on [www.dps.ny.gov](http://www.dps.ny.gov)
  - State Energy Plan Review Board meets June 15th, and (probably) will adopt the draft energy plan. The plan will set targets, but mandates will have to come through other means like regulations, executive order, etc.
  - The straw proposal for track 2 will be proposing a cost of carbon for resource planning and ratemaking
  - July 1 is deadline for utilities to file demonstration projects
  - The way you search the DPS website is by case number. See the case numbers in the above slide.

## Reforming the Energy Vision 14-M-0101

REV at the PSC as part of the state energy vision overall

PSC Framework Order issued February 2015

On July 1, 2015:

Market Design & Platform Technology Working Group first report

Staff straw proposal on ratemaking issues

Staff proposal on benefit/cost analysis

Staff proposal on PSC oversight of DER

Utilities file demonstration projects

## REV +

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Community Choice Aggregation 14-M-0224  
Community Net Metering 15-E-0082  
Clean Energy Fund 14-M-0094  
Dynamic Load Management (DR) Tariffs 14-E-0423  
Distributed Energy Resources Oversight 15-M-0180, 15-M-0127  
Large-Scale Renewables 15-E-0302  
Low Income Affordability 14-M-0565  
Net Metering 14-E-0151

- **What standards or frameworks for community engagement will REV propose for utility demonstration projects?**
  - Demonstration projects are not coming from an interagency task force.
  - These are ways to implement a REV-like future, all being done in partnership with community or private sector entities. Anyone who has an idea can advance one. Like we said, we don't exactly know what the future looks like, but this will help to give us an idea.
- **Once an idea has been identified, will the affected communities have the opportunity to suggest changes?**
  - We will learn more about new business models and structures from proposed plans and explore revenue models to advance clean energy. This will be done in partnership with utilities and with communities. The first round of demonstration projects is underway, due by July 1, but this is a long process. The government is truly trying to test new models, to try new things until they do figure out what works best in terms of design and regulations. Once these questions are answered, then we can figure out how to implement system-wide.
- **Comment: It's been hard for people to get involved, and when they do others have a head start on them with project ideas, etc.**
  - Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus - another REV demonstration project. Basic services are all in a cluster. Developed buildings rehabilitated from old buildings. It is a very positive example. For electricity, need to bring load to that area. That's a good example of getting a head start.
  - Initiative idea: how do we develop community based demonstration projects?
- **Where are buildings and building owners in REV's vision? Are they customers or providers? This will help offer opportunities for them to help LMI customers.**
  - The opportunity for demand response and DERs is significant, although the vision is not final. Building is a key sector. We may be missing some people in the room today. Opportunity is around value proposition for participants in the building sector.
  - For example with NYCHA there is a tremendous opportunity to save load. That is their value proposition.
  - We are in first stage, the opportunity will evolve and become more creative as we get to later stages
- **Comment: The first level of response is at the neighborhood level. We fear that newly created microgrids in affluent neighborhoods will go off the grid and raise costs for everyone else.**
  - To what degree are there requirements for labor standards (all of these programs are economic development policies as well as energy policies, there is a long history of negotiating labor standards but that hasn't taken place)?

- Leasing models may allow developers to not adhere to public works standards in regards to labor. But, individual demonstration projects can consider certain labor standards as a specific part of their plans.

## GENERAL COMMENTS FROM NON-PANELISTS

- *Comment:* New York Power Authority (NYPA) is looking to be a co-investor to demonstration projects. We are aggressively stepping forward to put balance sheet into the game. We can provide funding if we can find partners.
- *Comment:* Low-income tax credits - Annual qualified allocation plan. This is a state planning process with opportunities for public comment. Can put you in touch with process and how it works. There are opportunities for federal funds, opportunities for public input.
- *Comment:* Labor and hiring. Please expand on extent to which BASE suggestions have been considered in demonstration projects. Have you considered the suggestions?
  - There is a formal set of practices, don't have hiring practices and environmental justice built into practices. If demonstration projects want to include these practices/components that dimension would be of interest to the commission but it must be included in the proposed plan.
  - One initiative in LMI working group is workforce development opportunities.

## IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE LEAP INITIATIVES

The next few sessions focused on identifying and developing possible Leap initiatives, based on the groundwork laid by the lab (trust building, developing common understanding, etc.). Fundamentally, the group agreed:

*Initiatives: work we are going to do together. Together doesn't necessarily mean everybody, or that we all agree. Unanimity is not required. This is about helping each other, learning, advancing. What is worth working on together in the months ahead? What could we do together that would be useful, that we couldn't do otherwise?*

The group established the following criteria to evaluate potential initiatives:

- Impact: If we could do them successfully, they could make a difference to our convening question.
- Leverage: We think that a small strategic effort could make a big difference. This requires a real understanding of how things work.
- Do-ability: Is it feasible and do we have the capacity to do it?

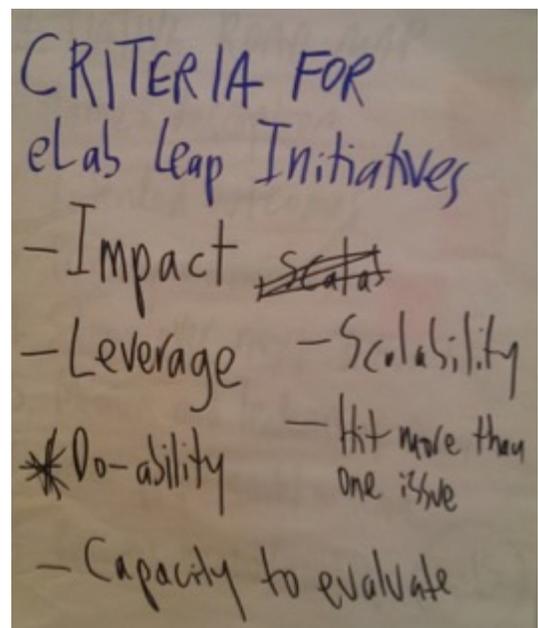
The group added some additional criteria for consideration, including:

- Capacity to evaluate
- A discernable timeline; some sense of a beginning, middle, and end (associated with do-ability)
- Scalability
- Ideas that may hit more than one issue (pervasiveness)

## INITIATIVE PITCHES

Individuals gave a short presentation of an initiative they felt the group should work on as part of the lab.

- Working on shared renewables initiatives program for low-income customers and housing
- Leverage technical and financial models to allow for community-owned infrastructure



- Comparison between status quo and potential impact of distributed energy resources, sophisticated rate structures, etc. that might be possible through REV on low-income programs
- Provide low-income households with healthy homes and provide career pathways through deep energy retrofits on a large scale
- Developing a community-based microgrid that also includes NYCHA facilities and may have a deep retrofit
- Tracking metrics like energy burden, energy poverty, etc. on low-income households. Using tools for resource allocation
- Developing a community advisory council to provide better input to the state's energy strategy
- Develop DER opportunities for low-income communities
- Improving opportunities for low-income communities and environmental justice organizations on policy and demonstrations
- Creating Leap lab strategy; who should be involved, who leads, fund projects, etc.
- Establish a communications network between low-income stakeholders and policy makers
- Renewable energy for community based organizations campaign to partner with Posigen to implement a significant solar project for a target low- and moderate-income community
- Creating a locally-controlled resilient energy system in an environmental justice community; look at just relationships between partners
- Neighborhood district plans
- How do we ensure REV empowers low-income communities to ensure equity and improves lives
- Develop community designed REV demo projects, first step towards community choice aggregation 2.0
- Community energy managers - empower local leaders to guide their communities on energy issues such as REV
- Research demonstration and deployment project combining Weatherization Assistance Program, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and utility projects to implement demonstration projects
- Neighborhood blitz efficiency DER project

After the group heard all ideas, participants were asked to self-organize into the groups that they most wanted to work with and “vote with their feet,” to sit at the table with their new team. Teams were asked to share the topic/title of what they have agreed to work on together. Participants were invited to shift to the team they most want to work with if they wanted to do so having now heard the final descriptions.

1. REVitalize
2. Public Participation Initiative
3. DER Opportunities for Low-Income Communities
4. Community Energy Project
5. A Guide to Enable Community-Owned, Local LMI Microgrids
6. Leap Lab Strategy

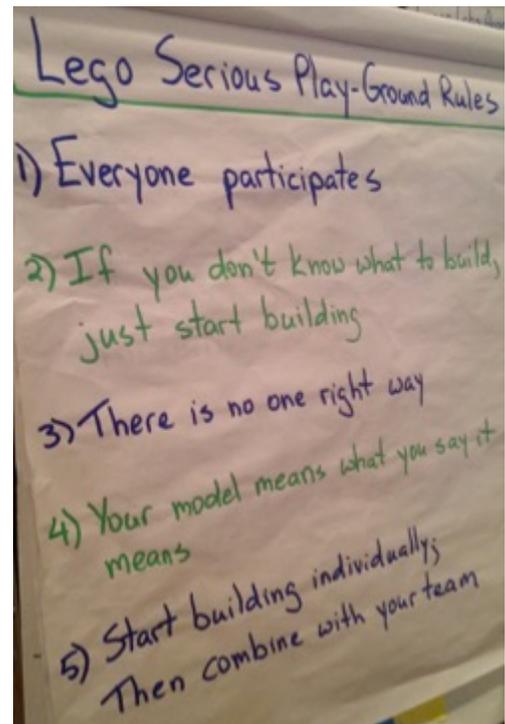
## LEGO

Next, the group built a common understanding on proposed initiatives before further development using Lego Serious Play (LSP).

Ground rules included:

1. Everyone participates
2. If you don't know what to build, just start building
3. There is no one right way to build
4. Your model means what you say it means
5. Start building individually; then combine with your team

Why LSP? Oftentimes complex problems--and solutions--become easier to envision when someone is forced to create a physical



representation, in this case with LEGO pieces representing different elements of the initiatives being proposed. Similarly, it is helpful for others to see a physical object to better understand an explanation, creating a shared understanding. Teams started by first building what they envisioned their initiative to be.

In the second round, the teams discussed their individual models before constructing one model per team, incorporating elements from everyone's individual models.

After the second round, the team presented their model to another team who gave feedback on their model in the form of coaching questions. The teams then switched, to allow for mutual feedback.



In the third round, the team incorporated the feedback they received to refine their model, with instructions to use fewer LEGOS. Below is the LEGO model created by the Public Participation Initiative group along with the narrative describing their model.



### NARRATIVE OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INITIATIVE LEGO MODEL

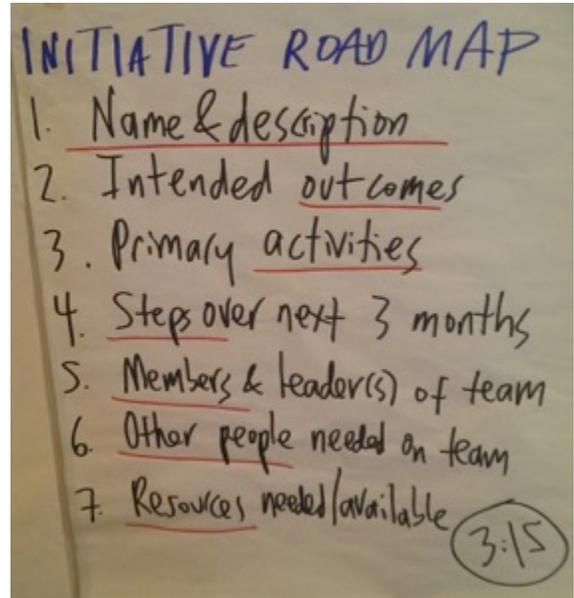
- The intention of the Public Participation Initiative is to create better cooperation and engagement between state authorities involved in REV (DPS, the Governor's office, etc.) and community organizations.
- Promoting better cooperation and engagement requires communication between the State and the many community stakeholders, thus the **LEGO model includes a bidirectional bridge of communication** so the State can inform the community and the community can provide feedback.
- Other communication channels also exist **in the form of other bridges in the model**. These bridges represent efforts such as meeting style sessions, blogs from opinion leaders, and others.

- The many LEGO people at the feet of the bridges represent the perspectives and opinions of the many stakeholders--including financiers, project developers, utilities, and others--being received and accounted for.
- The greater purpose of the initiative is to create better outcomes for the communities the State's energy plan will affect, and to improve the broader energy system.

### INITIATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The next session focused on developing a road map for each team's initiative. Deliverables for the session, created through team discussion, included:

1. Name and description
2. Intended outcomes
3. Primary activities
4. Steps over the next 3 months
5. Members and leader(s) of the team
6. Other people needed on the team
7. Resources needed/available



### FINAL PRESENTATION

For final presentations, each team assigned a spokesperson to present their initiative to the entire group using the roadmap they had co-developed.

Each team had a brief period of time to present, during which the floor was open to group to provide feedback or offers of support (time, resources, involvement, etc.) using sticky notes.



## E-LAB LEAP INITIATIVES

### 1. REVITALIZE

This initiative seeks to leverage the goals of REV and its specific opportunities, such as demonstration projects, to create community-generated, clean energy plan that bring economic and environmental justice to all members of the community.

The initiative team recognized that there is the perception that REV is doing little to address social injustice; while REV has sought unprecedented input from the public, communities feel that they are not being reached or heard sufficiently through the process, or that there are adequate protections in place that will protect them from predatory actors taking advantage of a rapidly changing energy landscape. There is a perception that demonstration projects, for example, are being implemented in communities without their partnership or perceived benefit. REVitalize is therefore an effort to create an inclusive process that addresses current process deficiencies, balancing a market-oriented approach with community protections, engagement, and ownership, utilizing REV as a vehicle to drive a new paradigm of projects that empower and benefit communities.

Description	A community-generated, clean energy plan that leverages REV to bring economic and environmental justice to communities
Intended Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community governance structure</li> <li>• Energy plan incorporating DERs</li> <li>• Good paying, sustainable, job creation (“just transition”)</li> <li>• Non-energy benefits (NEBs) including health and safety, reduced recidivism, indirect jobs, etc.</li> <li>• Sustainable financing plan</li> </ul>
Primary Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop stakeholder network               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Build on base of grassroots organizations</li> <li>◦ Identify local leadership structures</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Conduct statewide needs assessment to set parameters and priorities (based on needs &amp; ROI)</li> <li>• Collect baseline data</li> <li>• Implement pilot project</li> </ul>
Steps Over Next 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey the landscape</li> <li>• Prioritize potential pilot communities</li> <li>• Identify funds for study</li> <li>• Initiate stakeholder engagement (via focus groups w/community leaders?)</li> </ul>
Resources Needed/Available	<p><b>Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical assistance</li> <li>• Funders/investors</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYSERDA</li> <li>• NYPA</li> <li>• Foundations</li> <li>• NGOs (Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI), GCP)</li> </ul>
Feedback/Offers of Support	<p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would communities actually own/control assets?</li> <li>• Include other infrastructure upgrades (water, broadband, etc.)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder network should work as much as possible w/existing networks</li> <li>• Sounds like a social impact bond for energy and other benefits (health, jobs, etc.)</li> <li>• What about immediate action to learn? Is there a threat of learning, then doing, undermining experimental nature of lab initiatives?</li> <li>• County governments collect lots of data on LMI folks</li> <li>• Who is going to build the stakeholder network?</li> <li>• Consider “hiring” the Leap project to do this</li> <li>• Please get the owners involved. You may need them once plans are to be executed</li> <li>• Are the DERs cost effective?</li> <li>• Could utility scale renewables be part of a pilot?</li> <li>• How would energy efficiency be incorporated?</li> <li>• Would this focus on environmental justice (EJ) communities or would it deliver EJ benefits to communities targeted?</li> <li>• Having the Erie County Aggregation entity involved would be a great idea</li> <li>• Identify the specific elements that are being tested - smaller chunks. Consider an experimental approach prior to pilot - “stress test” / failsafe, iterate to learn</li> </ul>
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## 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INITIATIVE

The idea for this group came from the observation that DPS and the Governor's office have seen more turnout and input from communities in REV+ initiatives than at any other point in recent memory. But meanwhile, community groups feel that they are not being reached or heard sufficiently through these processes, and that even tracking it all is very challenging. A different form of driving engagement with communities is needed.

### Potential names for this group include:

- Bi-Directional Bridge of Dialogue
- Bi-Directional Communications Network with Low-Income and Environmental Justice Participants in REV+
- Building the Bridge: An enhanced and more effective communications infrastructure between NYS and local communities/stakeholders
- Creating a Clean New York for All: A communications network to inform the public and solicit feedback for REV+

Intended Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better cooperation among agencies reaching out to the public on these issues</li> <li>• Greater engagement and understanding of LMI stakeholders of state energy sector reforms</li> <li>• Better alignment and buy-in on initiatives/proceedings</li> <li>• More effective communications channels between NYS and local LMI groups</li> <li>• Communities understand REV and its purpose</li> <li>• LMI empowerment to establish a low carbon future, and benefitting from low carbon future</li> <li>• Low-income and environmental justice stakeholders satisfied w/ decisions, feel their voices have been heard</li> <li>• Connecting local government with state government on REV+ issues</li> <li>• Formal comment processes (and the augmentation of existing communications channels in meaningful ways)</li> <li>• This group/initiative establishes itself as a convener for multi-stakeholder processes (there needs to be such a convener)</li> </ul>
Primary Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bidirectional dialogue (not just “outreach”)</li> <li>• Workshop sessions</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town-halls</li> <li>• E-communications</li> <li>• Regional processes</li> </ul>
Steps Over Next 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One possible sequence:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stakeholder mapping</li> <li>○ Outreach to stakeholders</li> <li>○ Identify champions and “backbone”</li> <li>○ Identify specific topics of focus</li> <li>○ Establish modes of communication, cadence, and calendar</li> <li>○ Conduct initial meeting(s)</li> <li>○ Identify and connect to existing processes, initiatives, and coalitions</li> <li>○ Broaden participation in existing proceedings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Resources Needed/Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Potentially additional staff for some orgs to participate</li> <li>• Public comment/aggregation portal</li> <li>• Local capacity building</li> </ul>
Feedback/Offers of Support	<p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must emphasize local multi stakeholder process to be effective</li> <li>• Who pays for this to be done well?</li> <li>• What learning/briefing will be helpful to all participants?</li> <li>• What does the invitation look like? How to make it compelling?</li> <li>• More specifics needed on proposal</li> <li>• Tap into capacity of Green Jobs - Green NY CBO network</li> <li>• Are you willing to pay for participation?</li> <li>• Be explicit on the owners’ perspective (you may need owners to implement the results)</li> <li>• Public participation means the publics’ views are truly listened to, and lead to visible impact (instead of going through the motions to allow people to speak)</li> <li>• People identified to participate in this effort could be the same as the DER participation for low-income communities</li> <li>• Connect with Green Jobs - Green NY Working Group for LMI to identify lessons learned</li> </ul>

### 3. DER OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

Prior to e-Lab Leap, the REV Track 1 Order instructed the Consumer Advocate staff at the Department of Public Service (DPS) to work with low-income advocates, utilities, and other stakeholders to answer the question of how distributed service platform (DSP) providers (e.g. utilities) would create programs to provide access to DERs in communities where the market (service providers) failed to do so (most likely in low-income communities). This question is to be answered in the soon-to-be-required Distributed System Implementation Plans (DSIPs) that will detail utilities’ multiyear spending and operations.

This initiative proposed to begin work with the aforementioned stakeholders to informing utilities to file their DSIPs, and ensure that the services proposed by utilities will be the best possible for the communities impacted. In the short term, this should provide some clarity on utilities’ DER programs in underserved markets before DSIPs are filed.

Through the initiative, DPS will host stakeholders and utilities at a technical conference to discuss potential opportunities for DERs in low-income communities. Afterwards, the DPS will solicit straw proposals from utilities

on their internal plans for providing DERs and other services to underserved markets. These straw proposals will then be available for comment and improvement through a stakeholder engagement process.

Description	Develop DER opportunities to be filed in utility DSIPs, which include DER programs and services available to low-income customers/communities including energy efficiency, demand response, community solar, etc.
Intended Outcomes	The plans should include provisions to avoid redundancies and an assessment of benefits and costs.
Primary Activities	<p>Convene a stakeholder process to gain perspectives and inform the development of DSIPs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement of communities/customers,</li> <li>• DER ownership</li> <li>• DER financing</li> </ul>
Steps Over Next 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tech conference with stakeholders and utilities to establish criteria for a low-income component in DSIPs</li> <li>• Issue a straw proposal on criteria</li> <li>• Utilities would establish their own stakeholder process</li> </ul>
Other People Needed on Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer advocates and communities</li> </ul>
Resources Needed/Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Load constraints</li> <li>○ Demographics</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Financing mechanisms</li> <li>• Shareholder input/ideas</li> </ul>
Feedback/Offers of Support	<p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include non-energy benefits in evaluating proposed utility DSIPs.</li> <li>• What are regulatory barriers to microgrids? DPS/PSC should be stakeholders.</li> <li>• Can energy efficiency be incorporated into distributed generation?</li> <li>• How will this process be accountable to stakeholders?</li> <li>• Do we understand fully who community stakeholders are?</li> <li>• Who owns DERs in LMI communities? What models around community ownership?</li> <li>• What happens if the stakeholder process is unsuccessful?</li> <li>• What does the opportunity mean in terms of outcomes?</li> <li>• How will this be done in time to provide info to DSIPs? How will you private sector can/won't work?</li> <li>• How is this any different from the usual DPS process?</li> <li>• Who should be on utility stakeholder process group?</li> <li>• Who will be the intervenors?</li> <li>• How will a utility know when it must step in?</li> <li>• Get more clarity on target audiences and how you will get feedback/engage them</li> <li>• Please include the owner perspective. You need the owners to make the necessary improvements to the premises.</li> </ul>

#### 4. COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECT

This group began with two initiative ideas: 1) A community energy efficiency and DER blitz model targeting a whole neighborhood, and 2) A research demonstration and deployment project combining Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and utility projects to implement DER and weatherization. These two ideas were eventually melded into the resulting project, which has two key tenets:

- The neighborhood blitz model is employed to deliver holistic and complete services at once and at scale. One example would be a program, managed by the utility, that “blitzes” an entire neighborhood; that is, enters a neighborhood fully equipped to conduct and implement holistic and complete energy efficiency, weatherization, and DER audits, retrofits and upgrades in a very short time period.
- Funding is allocated by pooling existing resources for these individual efforts to maximize the impact of what is currently available. The group identified that there are many state and federal funding sources that are currently used in piecemeal, and at times in competition with each other (e.g. HEAP vs. WAP). This initiative would try to pool funding contributions from these various funding sources (perhaps even unlikely sources, such as funding for mold mitigation) to reduce individual program costs and maximize the impact of the available funding (hence the blitz model).

Description	Demonstration projects that holistically deliver integrated DSM services (energy efficiency, renewables, DER, etc.) in LMI communities coordinating available funding resources (CEF, DOE, LIHEAP, utilities, private funding, etc).
Intended Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation (numbers, rates, etc.)</li> <li>• Cleaner resources</li> <li>• Reduced emissions</li> <li>• Increase affordability</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction</li> <li>• Maximize impact of available resources</li> <li>• Positive health and local economy impacts</li> </ul>
Primary Activities to develop initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify possible barriers</li> <li>• Identify necessary stakeholders</li> <li>• Identify potential funding sources</li> <li>• Develop program design</li> <li>• Decide on delivery mechanism</li> <li>• Identify “communities”</li> </ul>
Steps Over Next 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market research</li> <li>• Get buy-in from key state leadership</li> <li>• Identify types of communities</li> <li>• Market segmentation</li> <li>• Identify specific possible funding</li> <li>• Identify timeframes</li> </ul>
Other People Needed on Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPS</li> <li>• Governor’s office</li> <li>• OTDA</li> <li>• Community partners</li> <li>• Utilities</li> <li>• Service providers</li> <li>• Local government</li> </ul>

<p>Resources Needed/Available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding (coordinated)</li> <li>• Data             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Technical</li> <li>○ Social</li> <li>○ Economic</li> <li>○ Regulatory</li> <li>○ Legal</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Implementers (contractors, doers, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p>Feedback/Offer of Support</p>	<p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lot of similarities to REVitalize... perhaps consider consolidating</li> <li>• Can you provide more specifics? The descriptors are very general. Can you target a location?</li> <li>• How do you decide who the “right” CMI communities are?</li> <li>• Market research should include EJ/health indicators</li> <li>• How are you considering payment assistance vs. clean energy investments?</li> <li>• Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) should be part of team - data provision</li> <li>• Focus on mapping/targeting of community first.</li> <li>• Is it really a “program” or an activity/approach within existing programs?</li> <li>• What’s the process for deciding service providers?</li> <li>• How do you decide which communities to target?</li> <li>• DER projects that are not formally connected to pending financing or planning decisions seldom have an impact</li> <li>• Why do you need DPS?</li> <li>• Is the scope of the project limited by funding or something else?</li> <li>• Please include the owner’s perspective; the landlords will be needed in order to implement the new energy systems.</li> <li>• Maximizing the resources that you aggregate for the project does not maximize the impact of the resources.</li> </ul>

## 5. A GUIDE TO ENABLE COMMUNITY-OWNED, LOCAL LMI MICROGRIDS

Community ownership of resources in the future market shaped by REV remains a developing concept, and is somewhat unclear even amongst the groups in attendance at the Leap meeting. This initiative emerged from the idea that community ownership--especially within the REV framework--is still uncharted territory.

Several initiative concepts were discussed in the early stages of its development, including:

- Creating an entity that coordinates funding/ DER development/member acquisition to help streamline what is otherwise a very complicated process
- Improving the customer experience for community individuals and households to feel simple, unfettered, and easy
- Training a trusted community “energy manager” to help individuals and households navigate their energy choices
- Piloting a community ownership model in a low-income neighborhood

Piloting community ownership was widely supported by group members. But, given the resources available to the group and the challenges of creating a pilot, they settled on a more realistic initiative to create a guide enabling community-owned local microgrids in low-income communities.

The intention of the guide—envisioned as a living document—is to help communities interested in community-owned, local microgrids to understand the decisions they need to make, and help determine the actions they need to take. The guide would provide:

1. Case studies of successful community microgrid projects
2. A description of the choices made by communities who have successfully undertaken, or who are currently undertaking similar projects. What decisions and actions did these communities take, in what order, and what were the resulting impacts? What pitfalls should others try to avoid?
3. Decision-tree(s) of key questions to answer and suggested steps to take tailored to different community types
4. Ongoing updates to share new ideas/developments as communities test the usefulness of the guide

The initiative would have a second phase to reinforce the living nature of the document. The guide’s publishers would partner with communities to test and update the guide, creating a constant feedback loop.

Description	A “living document” to guide communities who are interested in community-owned, local microgrids to understand the decisions they need to make, and help determine the actions they need to take. In Phase 2 the initiative would partner with communities to test and update the guide.
Intended Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a guide of suggested steps and questions</li> <li>• Develop curriculum</li> <li>• Recruit membership</li> </ul>
Primary Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct primary and secondary research around             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Communities who are seeking to undertake local microgrid projects</li> <li>○ Communities who are have already embarked on similar projects</li> <li>○ Potential business and adoption models that will help communities succeed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Draft and publish the guide</li> <li>• Carry out an outreach plan that incorporates input from communities to ensure the guide is a useful (and utilized) tool</li> </ul>
Steps Over Next 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host a follow-up call with members of the Leap discussion group to determine whether and how to proceed, and immediate next steps</li> <li>• Recruit individuals to participate on the project team (Leap discussion group)</li> <li>• Identify potential communities who will want to use the guide</li> <li>• Interview communities who have lessons to share             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify communities who have undertaken similar projects</li> <li>○ Identify questions to ask those communities</li> <li>○ Conduct interviews and document answers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Research potential business and adoption models that could be helpful to describe in the guide.</li> </ul>
People Needed on Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBOs</li> <li>• DER developers</li> <li>• PACE</li> <li>• NYPA</li> <li>• NYCHA</li> <li>• RMI</li> <li>• RAP</li> <li>• NYSERDA</li> <li>• Utilities</li> <li>• Funders (uncertain whether foundation, government, or other)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFF/LMI housing advocates and operators</li> </ul>
Resources Needed/Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding</li> </ul>
Feedback/Offers of Support	<p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is community ownership of local DERs a critical part of this project, or will the guide address other potential community engagement models?</li> <li>Where does public ownership fit in the notion of community?</li> <li>Is the guide only for microgrids, or will it address communities who seek high adoption of DERs as well?</li> <li>How many projects do you want to see by 2020?</li> <li>New business and adoption models may be needed, and some of those models may not yet be invented. Will the guide take a stab at proposing new models?</li> <li>Is there any presumption of ratepayer resourcing of this idea? Why should they pay for years of exploitation? (sp: exploration?)</li> <li>Who specifically will the guide be written for? What action do we want readers to take?</li> <li>In what medium will this guide be published?</li> <li>How to best animate the contents of the guide? Workshop? Training? Train the trainers?</li> <li>A useful part of the guide may be connecting readers/potential adopters to experts, network, you</li> <li>Training (as placement strategy)</li> <li>Work with NYSERDA and NYS Community Partnership program to develop and promote guidance</li> <li>Very much in line with new NYSERDA approach to developing enabling tools and resources to build capacity</li> </ul>

## 6. LEAP LAB STRATEGY

Past and current efforts in New York have had good intentions to help low-income households meet their energy needs. Yet, they have fallen short and have largely been unable to address a long list of barriers including lack of information and awareness of opportunities, insufficient capital availability, and a tendency to develop pilots without a roadmap to enable scaling.

There is a need to develop a new approach. Right now, there may be a collective vision for how to address these challenges among key stakeholders, but there hasn't been a forum to crystalize what exactly that vision is. As we move forward, it will be critical to develop a shared understanding of the problem, and define pathways for achieving the vision.

eLab Leap can help harness the thoughts and ideas of stakeholders and connect these ideas to others, and provides a powerful feedback mechanism to ensure projects don't go off course and perpetuate a pattern of developing piecemeal solutions that can't or won't scale.

eLab Leap is intended to help take conceptual ideas and turn them into real projects. We recognize the process will not always be straightforward, and acknowledge the need to experiment, test ideas, and then iterate. To keep us on course, we will conduct thorough evaluation using rigorous quantitative data and metrics, and qualitative feedback from those in the communities we are working with. Ultimately, our hope is that this change model approach can make the barriers easier to address and help achieve the vision to empower and improve the lives of low-income households and communities.

Intended Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop projects and implement them (&gt;5 years)</li> <li>• Build an active and diverse committed working group</li> <li>• Conduct outreach beyond working group (education and success stories)</li> <li>• Develop framework for planning and evaluation (with metrics)</li> <li>• Cultivate community leadership</li> <li>• Achieve success against defined metrics</li> </ul>
Primary Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop understanding of the problem</li> <li>• Develop metrics, identify and collect data, translate to digestible case studies</li> <li>• Recruit and educate stakeholders re. REV</li> <li>• Develop communications strategy and create a platform for engagement</li> <li>• Conduct matchmaking between concepts and funders and financing</li> <li>• Ongoing assistance to community implementation (project analysis “tiger teams”)</li> <li>• Help make New York energy projects more inclusive</li> <li>• Issue reports on what’s been done</li> <li>• Project analysis “tiger team”</li> </ul>
Steps Over Next 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share notes from first meeting</li> <li>• Continue to develop understanding of the problem</li> <li>• Communicate what’s occurring in e-Lab initiatives before the next meeting</li> <li>• Develop framework for metrics and identify and begin collecting data</li> </ul>
Members and Leader(s) of Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rocky Mountain Institute</li> <li>• Natural Resources Defense Council</li> <li>• PACE</li> <li>• Environmental Defense Fund</li> <li>• 11th Hour Project</li> <li>• Current e-Lab Leap partners</li> </ul>
Other People Needed on Team	<p>Additional people to include in meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilities</li> <li>• ESCOs</li> <li>• Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY)</li> <li>• Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)</li> <li>• CEOC</li> <li>• Citizen Local Power</li> </ul>
Feedback/Offers of Support	<p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where will the funding come from?</li> <li>• More clarity on who will do this, and who are the key partners</li> <li>• I agree metrics are cool</li> <li>• Create community leadership development</li> <li>• Please include all upstate communities</li> <li>• Seems to be overlap among projects, connective tissue. How can we converge?</li> <li>• How does this differ (add up) from work already conducted by other state agencies/organizations?</li> <li>• Need to be sure to communicate with participants on all initiatives and overall strategy happens soon and often</li> <li>• TWU Local 101, IBEW local 3, Utility workers, Local 1-2, Align, BCTC/BTEA, Milano at the New School, the Progressive caucus could all be helpful.</li> <li>• Analyzing strategy iteratively seems time and date intensive</li> </ul>

## Group observations

Participants, having heard all presentations and observing initiative displays, were asked to make general observations.

- **On initiative workload and synergy**
  - “There are some similarities between initiatives that might help reduce the workload; we should look at integrating some of the initiatives.”
  - ““There are some tasks within initiatives that are the same (e.g. stakeholder outreach). We could really break these out as separate work streams that are relevant to all initiatives. We should be asking ourselves, ‘what are the work areas of synergy?’”
  - “Why would communication channels already established not be relevant to these initiatives?”
  - “It seems like a lot of work; I would love to be involved in several initiatives, but it would be a little too much.”
  - “There is some similarity between issues that could be overlapped; perhaps someone combines it, articulates it for group?”
- **On initiative characteristics**
  - ““There is a great deal of idealism; this is wonderful, a good starting place. There has been some sensitivity to intellectualism in this space. Terms like ‘thought leaders,’ for example, can sound elitist. But I believe intellectualism is a critical need for these projects.”
  - “These initiatives are a product of us working together to understand issues, and to connect with each other.”
  - “Three of the five (excluding the lab strategy initiative) were talking about community microgrids - they have a flavor of REV demonstration. I believe there is a fit there.”
  - “To be representative of the nature of a change lab, does Leap need to be less REV-centric?”
- **On lab action**
  - “This meeting has teed up and created a pathway for these issues to be furthered; we have to figure out a way to continue it.”
  - “Having a pivot point, like these initiatives, for people to come in and out of a lab invigorates activity.”
  - “We need to consider blind spots. Where does ‘public’ fit in the definition of community? The development of public infrastructure in distributed energy resources, for example:
  - ‘Doing these projects in low-income communities, is there a tension we need to flesh out between utility ownership and public ownership?’
  - ‘Resource conservation - private money? This conversation needs to be had around capacity to fulfill funding. It goes beyond a dollars and cents conversation.’”



## NEXT STEPS

In preparation for closing, RMI identified and briefly discussed several immediate next steps. These included:

1. Hosting your first team check-in: For each initiative, please set up time with your team within the next couple of weeks (approximately one month after the eLab Leap meeting). If your team needs help setting up the call, RMI will be happy to provide support.
2. Scheduling the next eLab Leap meeting: RMI will be reaching out regarding preferences for dates and locations (we guarantee that the next venue will have good acoustics). Right now, we aim to have the

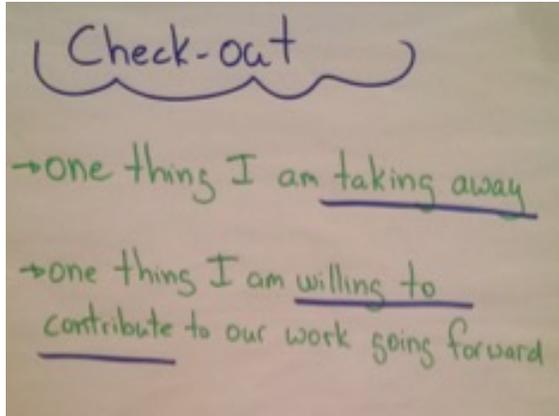
next meeting in October 2015. The meeting is intended to maintain momentum, refine our portfolio of initiatives, and deepen our work together

3. Scoping out an eLab Leap Accelerator: As mentioned during the meeting, RMI has worked with a diverse set of projects from around the country using the eLab Accelerator model with great success. RMI is exploring options to hold an Accelerator style meeting for low-income energy projects in New York, and will begin to identify candidate projects and project team members.

## CHECK OUT

The closing session of the meeting was a final checkout, where anyone in the room could answer the following questions:

*“What is one thing that I am taking away from our work so far, and one thing that I am committing to contribute to our work going forward?”*

One thing I am taking away from our work so far	One thing that I am committing to contribute to our work going forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Appreciation of the diversity and creativity of the people of New York.”</li> <li>• “A level of success; we came here hoping that selfishly (our) initiatives could be refined, advanced, and we met that to some extent.”</li> <li>• “When (RMI) began to talk about this idea, I thought New York was a tough crowd; I was unsure about this approach, but have seen that it works. It is unique, special.”</li> <li>• “Seeing a broad group of people and organizations focused and engaged.”</li> <li>• “I met new people, and I relish that.”</li> <li>• “There are a lot of different perspectives, but there is commonality. There is a common objective.”</li> <li>• “I was surprised by how much we accomplished. I got great feedback and expressed interest on community owned microgrids.”</li> <li>• “How little interest there has been in cost and cost effectiveness. If we keep cost as low as possible, everyone will be benefitting. The premise is that all solutions are cost effective. I would hate for a community to make a huge investment and be stuck paying for it.”</li> <li>• “Really amazing, targeted sense of groups and stakeholders. The scientific method was employed, we came out with common goals. With support, we can accomplish these tasks.”</li> <li>• “Thankfulness for the partnership opportunity.”</li> <li>• “Appreciation of the group”</li> <li>• “There is so much interest in trying to use microgrids and DER to empower LI communities. In the office, you are by yourself, but it is exciting to know there are others who</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I am willing to contribute whatever is necessary.”</li> <li>• “Willing to contribute blood sweat tears.”</li> <li>• “(We) have a lot of technology in distance learning programs, and can offer to help connect people.”</li> <li>• “Offer whatever I can; be a part of steering committee, or any other way I can help”</li> <li>• “My role as a contact and conduit to others.”</li> <li>• “Money and a geeky ear. Also, a high-level perspective and info on other projects and approaches.”</li> <li>• “Additional cooperation and positive energy.”</li> <li>• “Willing to contribute work on the process and e-Lab.”</li> <li>• “Can help out however.”</li> <li>• “Notes, hosting another meeting, gathering additional people that we feel necessary, etc.”</li> <li>• “I will host a phone call to discuss our initiative further.”</li> <li>• “Funding assistance as appropriate.”</li> </ul> 

<p>want to work on these issues.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “People see the problem; I appreciate how people come at the problem differently.”</li><li>• “I spent time thinking about energy systems and came away with a renewed sense of how ahead NY is.”</li><li>• “Interesting and worthwhile process... gets you into creative process.”</li><li>• (We need to keep in mind the) notion of full benefit accounting, full cost account; there are lots of issues, quantifying externalities, etc., not considered in traditional economic analysis.”</li></ul>	
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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Unilever Case Study: One resource mentioned during the course of the meeting was a case study on a Reos process applied to the development of a Sustainable Food Lab with Unilever.