

# Theory of Change

- Democracy as a technology (explain the lens)
  - Analyze it as a technology - it has downsides!
  - what would it mean to make democracy a more useful technology for individuals? What would that look like?
  - pull from hacknight talk
- Explain the behaviourist lens —> the equation. Assume that people have motivation - anyone on the street could give you a rant!
  - We create an alternative to apathy
- What are the downsides of democracy not being adopted apart from voting? Well, it's not representative, nor is it high fidelity!
  - It being representative doesn't take that many people - do the stats math! ~12K people needed for a great sample of the City
- Why municipal? Because it is directly tangible - everyone has valid opinions on what should happen in THEIR neighbourhood
- Politicians and staffers aren't good or bad - they follow incentives! So we need to make giving their residents what they want the properly incentivized thing to do.
- Fundamentally, democracy has not been updated in 1000s of years - we have the opportunity to change that, alongside many similar efforts around the world, for Toronto and beyond.
- We believe that if we make democracy a more useful and usable technology for effecting change for Toronto's more engaged residents, then our city's actions will far better reflect its residents' wishes.
- We think the data to do so already exists - we just need a better interface.
  - Lay out said data
- Adoption curve explanation
  - How many people from each group would need to be users to have a tangible effect, and how they cascade into each other - use virality coefficients!

- Sources to unspool:
  - Incremental vs fundamental advantage
  - Donella Meadows - what are the more powerful parts of a system to change? Where is there more leverage?
  - Buckminster Fuller on building new systems to make old ones obsolete
  - Cold Start Problem - start with a tool that is useful to individuals, only build on top of a network once you have one
- Why a civic tech project, as opposed to working inside government or a company?
  - **Why Not Inside Government**
    - with no malicious intent implied - governments have relatively little incentive to hold themselves accountable! We should be able to develop features that any given incarnation of the City's government would find uncomfortable.
    - As well, with all or almost all of the data we need either currently available or accessible through collaboration with fine folks such as those at [OpenDataTO](#), and with funding not being a core issue for this project, we're able to build without the downsides of the bureaucracy that comes with operating one of North America's 5 largest cities.
    - With that said - everything we are building is completely open source! If this project is copied/upgraded by the City - as was the case with <https://openparliament.ca/> , a similar project on the federal level - that would be a wonderful thing 😊
  - **Why Not A For-Profit Company?**
    - In a word - incentives! For-profit companies, even when run by the most virtuous folks, have a mandate (eventually) to make a profit to keep existing. The three common models for this are advertising, selling data, and paying for the product. Advertising incentivizes dark patterns separate from the tool's use, selling data in this case is clearly unethical, and charging users money for access to their own democracy is also ethically dicey.
    - We want our incentives to be as aligned as possible with those of our users and with democratic accessibility.
    - Michael Sandel point on things changing value when valued by the market
    - There are less ethically corrupting funding models that can be explored in the future, such as selling access to an API to more easily access open data. But this project's primary mandate is not and will never be profit, and its structure should reflect this.
  - **Why/How A Civic Technology Project?**
    - Speed, adaptability,
    - We have the talent - it just needs to coalesce, and it already has!

- Demonstrate this via who we have working on this project in the first 2 months of its existence
- The “Open Source” + community ethos align well with a democracy-centric project
- Does not preclude us from getting funding/incorporating as a non-profit - but it allows us to be highly judicious with the funding/donation sources we accept!
- Mechanics:
  - [How We Collaborate](#)
  - [How We Resolve Conflict](#)

Potentially link out the hacknight UX of Democracy YouTube video!