



Strategic Plan

2015 - 2018

Updated September 2016

BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

GTECH stands for Growth Through Energy & Community Health. Across Allegheny County, we mobilize residents, local policy-makers, and like-minded organizations to transform vacant spaces into thriving places everyone can enjoy. By ensuring underutilized land serves the greater good, we improve the social, economic and environmental health of the whole community.

Changing an unjust environment requires investments in people, tangible actions and an iterative process that results in more opportunity for collective benefit.

As a result GTECH invests in a process that equips motivated people to help their communities create safe, verdant, resilient and livable places by:

- Increase growth opportunities for people and places through on the ground strategies
- Expanding a practice of innovation through research and application
- Increasing collective impact through cross sector collaboration
- Ensuring GTECH is a great place to work - and produces great work

Key Strategic Choices:

Over the course of the next three years GTECH seeks to help establish Pittsburgh as the most innovative and effective urban area in the county in transitioning under utilized land into opportunities for community health and resilience. The time for GTECH to focus and build from strengths, market position, staff capability, financial stability, and overall momentum is now. To that extent the following decisions are key to success.

- ***Continue a “Places and People” Focus.*** Distributing and developing individual and community capacity through education, technical and financial resources as well as customized partnerships. This will enable reinvestment in individuals and community networks to be inextricable from physical, place-based improvements.
- ***Target underutilized land as the starting point for a community health strategy.*** Transitioning under utilized, land use liabilities into community assets that derive from resident engagement, participation and ultimately ownership can foster increased social cohesion and preparedness to accelerate a range of complementary and compounding solutions to systemic challenges.
- ***Respect and be mindful of historical context - yet not be governed by it.*** Being aware, mindful, and proactive about addressing a history of racial injustice and environmental degradation by embracing diversity, inclusion and equal access to opportunity through all elements of the organizational function advancing a local environmental justice agenda.

- ***Investment in collaborative infrastructure is essential.*** Having learned from the development and incubation of *ReEnergize Pgh*, *Landforce*, *The Healthy Home Incentive Program*, the launch of *Lots to Love*, and participation in the *Environmental Finance Collaborative*, there are opportunities to advance the narrative “that it takes a village.” Strengthening cross-sector systems, policies, best practices and programs through multi-level collaboration and innovation remains essential to both achieve desired outcomes and maintain competitive advantage.

Areas to Target

Physical programming will continue to focus on vulnerable and distressed communities in Allegheny County and Southwestern PA with high levels of vacant land, blight, disinvestment and risk to exogenous shock. To this extent we will target places and partnerships seeking a balance of building community agency capacity as well as fostering new energy and participation among more networks.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Growth Through Energy + Community Health (GTECH) services communities throughout Allegheny County; successful in our ability to build lasting and mutually beneficial relationships while trialing innovative solutions and investing in those that live, work, and play in those communities. We work with people of all ages, with a specific focus on underserved/ under-served communities. In areas where we believe additional capacity and expertise is needed, we invest in partnerships and collaborations to fill that gap. This is a key value to GTECH.

In 2015, GTECH entered into an important phase of growth and development. With an annual budget of approximately \$1.3M, and a growing full-time staff of 10 with an additional 4 part-time support members and a network of over 75 community Ambassadors in our network, GTECH is at its highest peak of capacity. Building from a strong methodology, a culture of innovation, and an enduring orientation towards adaptation, the organization is well poised for growth.

Primary stakeholders include funders as investors of impact, and community partners as collaborators in solution design and execution. To this extent, some funders have geographic areas of priority, and some are focused on specific system change. Nonetheless, the last three years has seen significant turnover and evolution of funding interests. It is likely that the next three years will continue along that trajectory. Nonetheless, there is clear prioritization of collaboration, tangible, evidence based, community driven impact enabling a higher degree of inclusive innovation, and recognition that land use and environmental health are critical factors in the region’s revitalization efforts.

April 2017 will mark 10 years since the inception of GTECH. In that time, we have worked with more than 75 different communities throughout the region where we engaged thousands of people, tested and implemented a range of strategies and partnerships, addressing over 3M square feet of land across dozens of project sites, raised and reinvested over \$11M towards community revitalization and helped inspire, initiate and sustain multiple new initiatives and enterprises.

After 10 years of start-up, growth, and evolution, Founder and CEO Andrew Butcher, has initiated a departure drive transition process to exit the organization by early 2017 in an effort to cultivate new energy and leadership for the next chapter of organizational growth. As the organization is in the best position it has ever been in financially, operationally, and programmatically with a highly capable team, an engaged Board, a sound strategic framework, a clear role of leadership in the community, and multiple years of secured funding the time is right for a transition from founding leadership. The opportunity for reflection as well as a refinement of strategy to ensure continued resonance of GTECH's current capabilities and activities is reflected in the 2016-2018 strategic plan. **This document is an update to our strategic plan developed and released in 2015 and reflects what we have learned with the anticipation of new leadership.**

THEORY OF CHANGE

Persistent, interconnected environmental, economic, and social problems degrade the health of communities, perpetuate poverty and serve as barriers to community prosperity. We address these issues through a range of green, innovative, and place-based strategies that help communities and residents design, develop, and deploy market-driven solutions to transform existing environmental challenges into community assets.

People are products of their environment. In order to changing an unjust environment, we need to equip people with the resources needed to take action. That action generates energy and results in more action. Fusing tangible, incremental actions with an inclusive process that connects people to opportunity - creates a ripple effect and improves community health.

MISSION

To cultivate the unrealized potential of people and places by creating opportunities that improve the social, economic and environmental health of communities.

VISION

Thriving communities of engaged, empowered, and equipped individuals participating in the process of community betterment in order to transform wasted resources to valuable assets.

VALUES

- We value **collaboration** and believe that many partners are needed to make positive and lasting change.
- We value **social equity** and believe economic prosperity and community health are not mutually exclusive.
- We value **respect** and as a result we work *with* communities - not for them.
- We value **creativity** and view every problem as an opportunity - the journey is the destination.

- We value **catalytic strategies** so we advocate through action.
- We value a **market-driven approach** because long-term impact requires solutions that can be supported by demand.
- We value the **transfer of knowledge** and believe education & capacity building are vital to continued community success.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Distributing and developing individual and community capacity through education, resources, and partnership.
- Transitioning land use liabilities into community assets encouraging incremental and tangible improvements.
- Strengthening community development and environmental system policies, practices, and programs through multi-level collaboration and innovation.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN PITTSBURGH

There remains fragmentation of systems between intermediary organizations, direct service providers, and community-based organizations. Additionally, the Non-Profit sector is rapidly evolving. It depends increasingly on evidence and data but does not consistently provide operational funding to enable the work, instead incentivizes collective benefit and collaboration without defining successful outcomes.

Community partners have indicated an ongoing interest and commitment to tangible results that enable long term opportunities linked to a community planning process, and yet remain territorial with their work. Meanwhile, direct service providers are often asked to do more with less as the shared resources that are available become absorbed into broader regional initiatives as opposed to boots on-the-ground work.

ENVIRONMENTAL LANDSCAPE IN PITTSBURGH

There is an ongoing disconnect between the community development sector and traditional environmental partners who bring resources and expertise of their own to the table. Since 2013, the Pittsburgh Greenspace Alliance has come together to collectively address greenspace and environmental issues in and around Pittsburgh to improve economic and health conditions to many communities. In 2016 The Allegheny County Health Department's *Plan for a Healthy Allegheny* has identified the need for more coordinated environmental health awareness in vulnerable communities. Environmental agencies are also leading health initiatives, workforce programs, and providing a strong voice in advocacy of issues related to transportation, access to healthy foods, and infrastructure development. Issues in the environmental sector are not place specific, but rather systems that cross

every legal boundary and social demographic, adding a layer of complexity to coordination with community development efforts. Priorities related to climate change, community resilience, social equity and environmental justice underscore the need for cross sector, multi-organizational collaboration.

INTERMEDIARY LANDSCAPE

For nearly a decade, GTECH has been considered one of the many intermediary organizations that provide support, technical assistance, and resources to communities while providing recommendations and capacity to funders, policymakers, and municipal leaders. GTECH is unique in its position as a prominent resource in both the community development and environmental sectors in Pittsburgh, often bridging the gap between these two separate but related domains, while also facilitating direct on the ground project investments and interventions.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

As a function of GTECH’s Executive Transition Management Process (ETMP) an organizational assessment was conducted by surveying over thirty internal and external stakeholders to identify organizational and leadership strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The following is a compilation of the feedback to inform organizational planning, leadership development and the hiring of a new Chief Executive Officer.

STRENGTHS

- Staff is technically and diversely-skilled, dedicated, passionate, high-achieving, thoughtful, deliberate, cohesive
- Programmatic track record emphasizes innovation, collaboration, project implementation, and systems change
- There is growing leadership across the team and current team strength reinforced by a commitment to share power helping indigenous leadership have impact in their communities.
- Due to current strategy there is clear momentum with programming, partnerships, funding, and impact evaluation
- There is a high degree of operational effectiveness measuring impact with high financial management standards
- A broad spectrum of partners, funders, supporters and advocates enables effectiveness and unique relationships
- Organizational Leadership effectively balances vision and pragmatism, innovation and execution.

WEAKNESSES

- The organization largely does not reflect the communities it serves resulting in a potential and/or perceived deficit of cultural competency

- Staff compensation in proportion to the difficulty, strain, stress and challenge of the work (Low salaries = impediment to retaining talent)
- Communicating what GTECH is and what we do remains elusive and difficult to convey
- Funding restrictions may inhibit the necessary work to ensure strong relationships at a community level (lack of unrestricted funding)
- Those who lack prior knowledge of GTECH's work in community development and environmental fields may not understand or appreciate our work.
- Disconnect between facets of GTECH network: (Staff, board, SCC, Ambassadors, stakeholders, partners etc.).
- Challenge of balancing startup / scrappy / entrepreneurial culture with evolution towards a high performing, mature, and “planful” organization.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Integrating a new CEO with vision, knowledge, leadership experience, cultural sensitivity, with proven and clear fundraising capability
- Updated/upgraded messaging and “voice” to be more accessible, consistent and effective
- Through leadership transition new opportunities for innovation may be revealed and should be capitalized upon through business planning, revamped branding and increased cultural attentiveness.
- New programming and capacity (Regeneration, Community GSI, Tool Trailer,) will expand reach and depth of existing relationships
- Reinforce existing strategy via expansion of existing program offerings, (Green Playces, ReClaim Initiatives, Lots to Love) while refining and trialing social return on investment
- Collaboration and leadership advancing environmental justice and community health
- New staff expertise combined with existing staff expertise and team leadership

THREATS

- Departure of current leadership has potential disrupt organizational momentum and/or create identity confusion or even strain community trust.
- Distrust of "innovative" organizations in underserved communities combined with a lack of racial organizational diversity requires constant relationship management combined with successful program delivery and execution
- Historical “nimbleness” has potential to confuse stakeholders and/or be perceived as mission creep.
- Increased position and prominence results in increased competition with larger more established service providers and intermediaries.
- Staff retention amidst high stress, high demand and constrained pay as well as organizational mobility.
- The organization limits impact by regarding itself as a do-gooder and not as transformative force.
- Annual fundraising challenges and ongoing unrestricted and administrative burden resulting in an inability to establish an operating reserve.

2015-2018 STRATEGIC GOALS

Over the course of the next three years GTECH seeks to help establish Pittsburgh as the most innovative and effective city in the county in transitioning land-use liabilities into opportunities for community and environmental health.

GOAL 1: INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH FOR PEOPLE AND PLACES THROUGH ON-THE-GROUND STRATEGIES

Continue to balance tangible actions with longer term planning by investing in, and equipping individuals to target underutilized land as a starting point for community transformation in vulnerable places. This will result in an effort to expand GTECH’s current Neighborhood Scale Initiatives, Green Playces, and launch a focused Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategy, and maintain a pool of Resilient Generation Resources (technical assistance) to increase the balance of people and place-based activities.

Outcomes:

- Civically engaged and equipped residents participating in reclamation activities and broader community health agenda
 - *Impact:* Greater neighborhood connection
 - *Impact:* Reduced toxins in neighborhoods
 - *Impact:* Improved resident health (e.g., behavioral, physical, diet, trauma, social)
- Increased levels of strategically activated (programmed and maintained) green space and environmental health amenities
 - *Impact:* Improved access to clean and green spaces

Employ a broader definition and application of ‘land use liabilities’

While GTECH will continue to primarily work on vacant land, we recognize the need to address a variety of land use issues that may extend into other categories and are probably best described as ‘under utilized’ land rather than the narrower term ‘vacant’ which has a legal definition rather than a social one

Deepen expertise of the team in order to expand support for growing network of Ambassadors and partners

GTECH’s network of Ambassadors and partners are diverse and wide reaching. As a result, GTECH benefits from having an equally diverse team with a variety of skillsets. More specifically, the team is look to expand to incorporate backgrounds in public health, education, and evaluation.

Identify creative and continuous sources to fund program activities

While GTECH is primarily supported through philanthropic sources, the ability to diversity funding in new and creative ways is needed. Additional time will be dedicated to increase corporate fundraising as well as explore alternative finance models such as “pay for success” while increasing focus on securing multi-year and national grants.

<p>Indicators of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents engaged in physical activity • Enjoyment and use of green and usable new public spaces • Strong neighborhood relationships • New community dialogues • Pathways for education, training and employment 	<p>Measures of Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of volunteers and volunteer hours • # of people who access resources • # of communities working together • # of connections to employment, training, educational opportunities • # of parcels, total acreage, and % of total parcels • # of ongoing activated project sites
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GOAL 2: EXPAND PORTFOLIO OF INNOVATION THROUGH RESEARCH AND APPLICATION

GTECH has a history of innovation and creative problem solving that remains an important part of organizational identity and startup culture. Inspired by the act of discovery as much as the act of change making, GTECH strives to explore new and existing challenges for efficiency, increased impact, and future opportunity for growth.

Outcomes:

- GTECH is known for its ability to trial new strategies and effectively integrate new capability, activities, and support diverse partnerships. retaining the creative gumption of startup culture.
 - *Impact:* Increased local social capital enabling creative approaches to systemic problems
 - *Impact:* Products, processes and resources that connect dots and fill gaps
 - *Impact:* Increased capability to self sustain and make necessary organizational investments for growth
- Continued leadership in the community development and environmental sector by staying at the forefront of shared knowledge
 - *Impact:* New and unlikely partnerships developed to explore new innovations

Pilot new technology and processes developed from best practices

Learn through trialing new strategies, tools and resources keeps us current on applications and trends. GTECH will continue to develop and try new web-based applications and software, investing in IT.

Execute activities in untried ways, bringing in new partners in diverse sectors

Staying true to startup culture and roots, GTECH will work to expand public health connections, academic and research relationships, and public/private partnerships.

Measure, evaluate, iterate, publish lessons learned

GTECH will hold ourselves accountable in a consistent and transparent way, sharing externally for maximum benefit to others.

<p>Indicators of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People interacting with their environment to uncover new opportunities that others miss • Best practices in management used to make plans, organize projects, align resources, build relationships, monitor outcomes and provide team leadership. • Original ideas (venture, product or service) taken from new concept to prototype design to feasibility testing to the reality of potential launch. 	<p>Measures of Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of new programs • # of staff developed ideas that have resulted in new opportunities • # of partnerships developed • % of alternative funding sources • Establishment of a capitalization strategy for an operating reserve including risk/opportunity capital
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GOAL 3: INCREASE COLLECTIVE IMPACT THROUGH CROSS SECTOR COLLABORATION

Working at the intersection of the Community Development and Environmental Health Sectors, GTECH has fundamental orientation towards collaboration and a strong track record of facilitating, enabling and fueling multi-organizational, multi-sector initiatives often essential to achieve creative solutions to systemic problems.

Outcomes:

- Increased integration of community development and environmental systems
 - *Impact:* Bundled Services increasing scale and scope of appropriate interventions
 - *Impact:* Increased alignment of environmental justice and social justice agendas
- More people accessing information and participating in cross-sector initiatives
 - *Impact:* Increased efficiencies in execution of programming

Emphasize multi-organizational collaboration in all activities

GTECH will continue to identify appropriate partners on every effort, pulling from various networks and double down on shared services model.

Participate in conversations in community development, environmental, and other sectors as applicable

GTECH will retain a seat in at the table for multi-organizational conversations in relevant sectors. This includes the Pittsburgh Greenspace Alliance, Vacant Property Working Group, and others.

Apply the lens of community health to find common language

Recognizing health as a shared outcome allows for more opportunities for alignment and will help focus the conversation and activities when working with partners in other sectors.

Seek program and policy interventions to enable action on the ground

Understanding alignment at the top down level is as important as bottom up and so GTECH remains committed to work with decision makers and provide input from residents about what is needed on the ground and any potential barriers for those that should benefit from decisions.

<p>Indicators of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing problems reframed in new ways • New and diverse national funding • Continued partnership with public agencies such as PWSA, ACHD, and URA. • Increased usage and adaptation of technology and shared resources • Enhanced existing partnerships such as the EFC 	<p>Measures of Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy impacted through shared advocacy • # of partnerships developed • Advancement of shared resources and technology • Standardized evaluation framework and methodologies
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GOAL 4: ENSURE GTECH IS A GREAT PLACE TO WORK (AND/ IN ORDER TO) PRODUCE GREAT WORK

GTECH has a unique culture of collaboration, shared ownership, flexibility, and accountability. The blend of diverse backgrounds is brought together through a passion for the work and GTECH is intentional about enabling individual strengths.

Outcomes:

- Committed and passionate team members with a minimum tenure of 5 years
 - *Impact: Empowered, solution-oriented team*
- GTECH is a place where people feel supported and celebrated for their unique contributions
 - *Impact: Staff driven ideas inform new opportunities*
- Increased levels of process and operational improvements that enable evidence-based decisions

Provide opportunities for individual growth

Internally, GTECH will continue to provide opportunities for and encourage continued education, professional development, and pathways for growth.

Benchmark best practices and industry standards in Human Resources

GTECH is committed to HR process and standards, incorporating feedback, providing competitive pay and benefits, accountability and performance reviews.

Reaffirm commitment to becoming a diverse and inclusive organization

GTECH will broaden recruitment strategies, adapt policy and language to become more inclusive, and celebrate the success of individuals as well as the team.

Embrace role of critical and unique leadership

New messaging and website will assist in the presentation of GTECH as a dependable service provider, inclusive partner, known entity, with track record for success and impact, and strong financial position.

<p>Indicators of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data gathering methods with easily replicable surveys and studies are developed and utilized• Increased positive impact on individual and civic life• Interchangeable project teams of equal efficiency• Increased length of service with organization	<p>Measures of Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team is recognized for their contributions to the fulfillment of the Strategic Plan.• Customer service and community impact are regularly evaluated to ensure excellence.• # of feedback comments provided by partners
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