

# Shifting the participation threshold: How leveraging Connected Mavens in a community can spur behavior change

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Research Into Action

## CBSM pilots in Los Angeles County

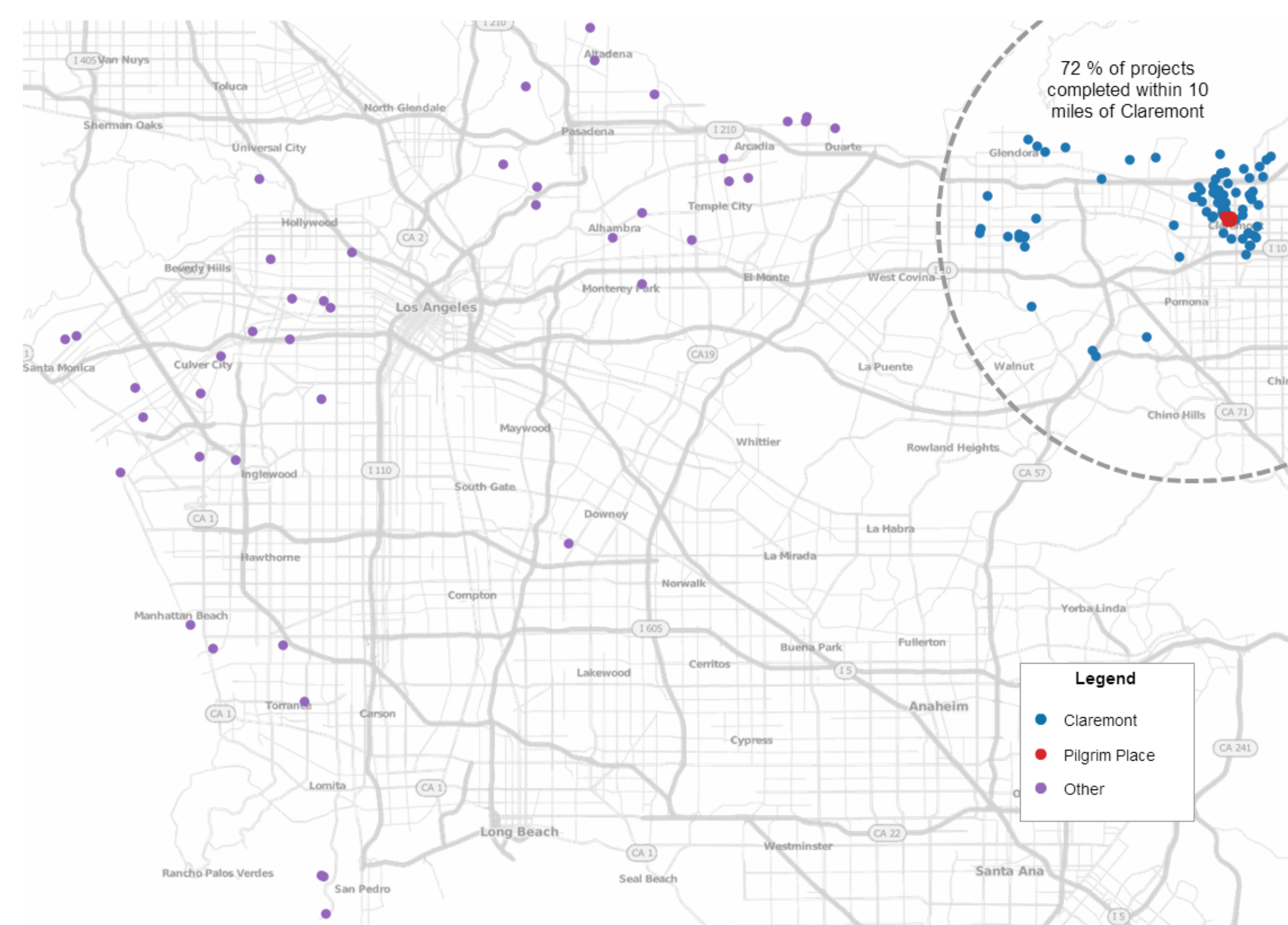
In 2010, Los Angeles County and its grant partners received \$30 million from the U.S. Department of Energy as part of the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program. The grantees used these funds to develop a variety of pilot programs, including three that sought to leverage the credibility of community-based organizations to promote Energy Upgrade California, a relatively new whole-house retrofit program. These pilots were loosely organized around the principles associated with Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM), and experienced a range of success.

One of these CBSM pilots partnered with several established local organizations already engaged in promoting comprehensive home upgrades. This pilot was able to leverage existing relationships within a progressive community and tapped into an influential hub in the network.

The Energy Champions pilot was designed to tap trusted and connected individuals within established communities such as churches, schools, and environmental groups, and have these “Energy Champions” spread the word about the benefits of program participation.

Within the Energy Champions pilot, one community, Claremont, successfully leveraged the pilot. It did so because it built upon an established local program and tapped a central hub in the local whole house upgrade community.

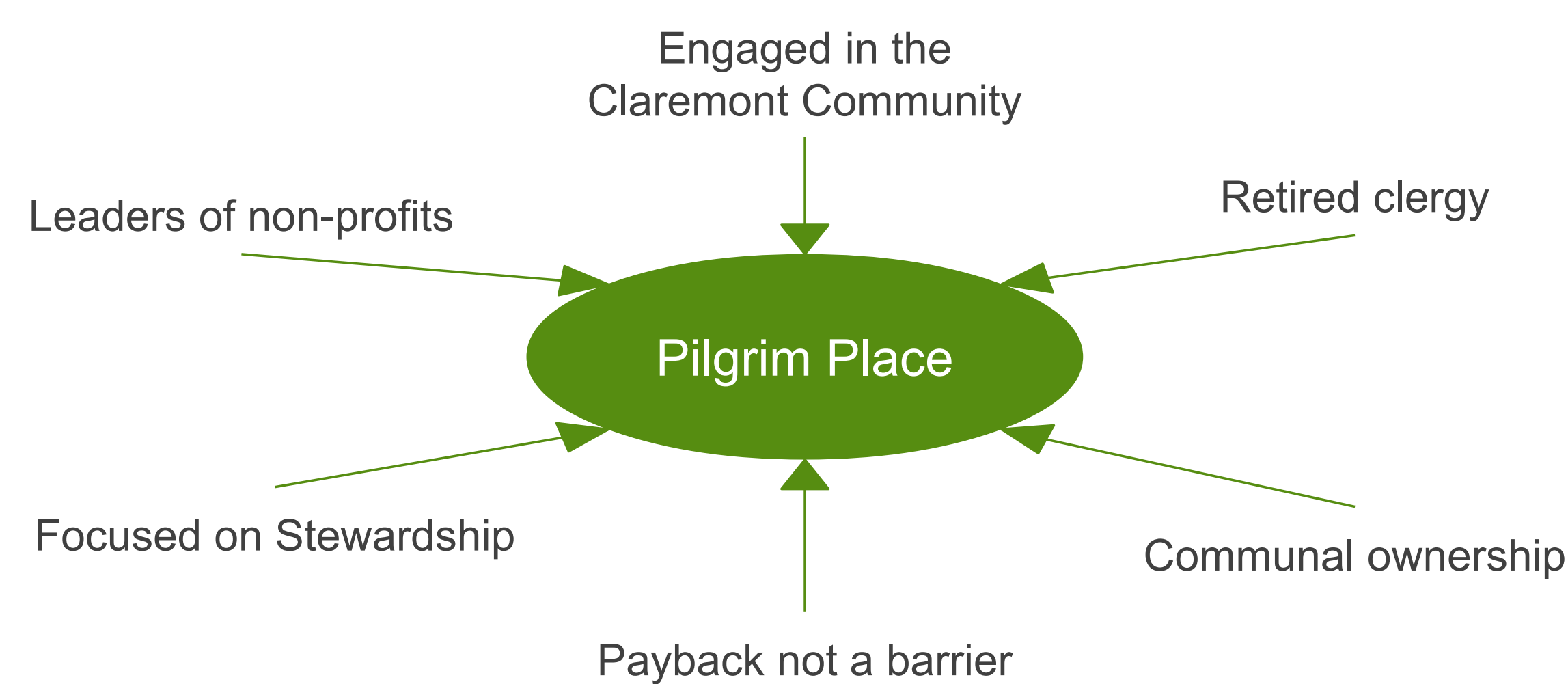
The figure below shows the geographic placement of pilot participants. Almost three-quarters of participants were within 10 miles of the city of Claremont.



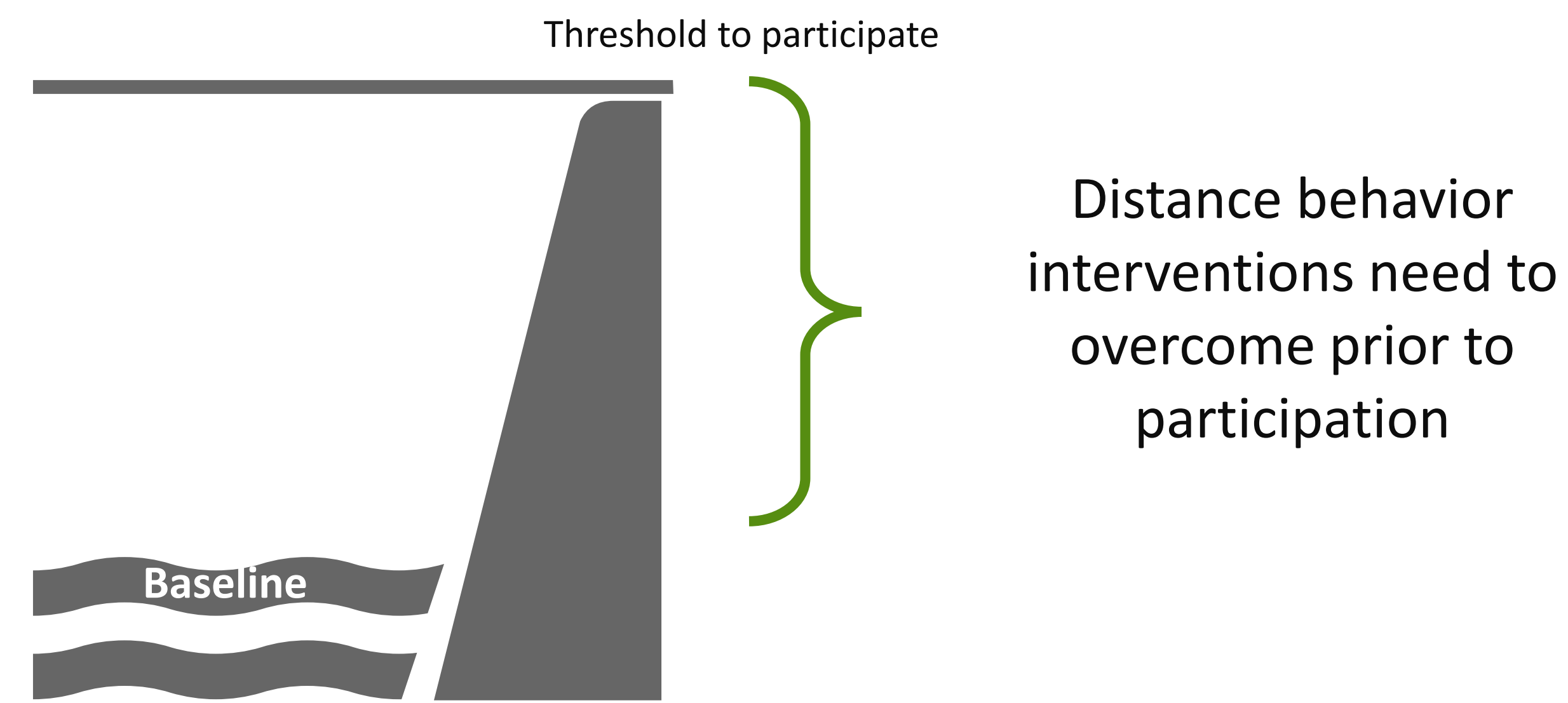
The figure above maps participant locations for the Energy Champions pilot in LA County. Over a quarter of total participants, and almost half within Claremont, came from the Pilgrim Place retirement community. The dispersal of the remaining participants illustrates the participation density within the city of Claremont is unusually high.

Pilgrim Place residents are retired community service workers, for those who worked religious or charitable organizations. Pilgrim Place became involved in program because several residents were active members of Sustainable Claremont. Several of these individuals were involved in the design and construction industry and had an interest in home performance. These Pilgrim Place residents brought the idea of upgrading the Pilgrim Place homes to the staff of Pilgrim Place. Staff decided to use pilot incentives to offset the cost of upgrades and facilitate upgrading every home on their campus over time (expecting it might take about five years). Some Pilgrim Place residents currently occupying single-family homes upgraded their homes with their own funding; the remainder of the housing stock is being upgraded by the Pilgrim Place association as the units become vacant.

Pilgrim Place staff stated that residents are not typical “homeowners.” First, Pilgrim Place residents do not own their homes. Second, residents are retired clergy and spent their careers in community service. Many residents have a strong sense of community, high environmental awareness, and a desire to take actions to help reduce climate change. Pilgrim Place staff described working closely with Sustainable Claremont to plan their upgrades. Rather than keeping the incentives earned through the pilot, Sustainable Claremont shared the incentives with Pilgrim Place, which used their portion of the pilot incentive to fund additional projects on their campus.



## What you need to pass the decision-making threshold



## Using a Connected Maven can decrease the distance between uncertainty and decision

This CBSM pilot found and supported an established community network. The established network increased awareness and created a social environment where energy upgrades were visible and desirable.

Individual interventions can decrease the distance between a homeowners “resting rate” and the “decision threshold”, but at a household level rather than a community level.

A connected maven, bolstered by pilot funding and an established local program, can decrease the decision making distance even further – raising awareness at a community-level and making it easier for a homeowner to choose to participate.

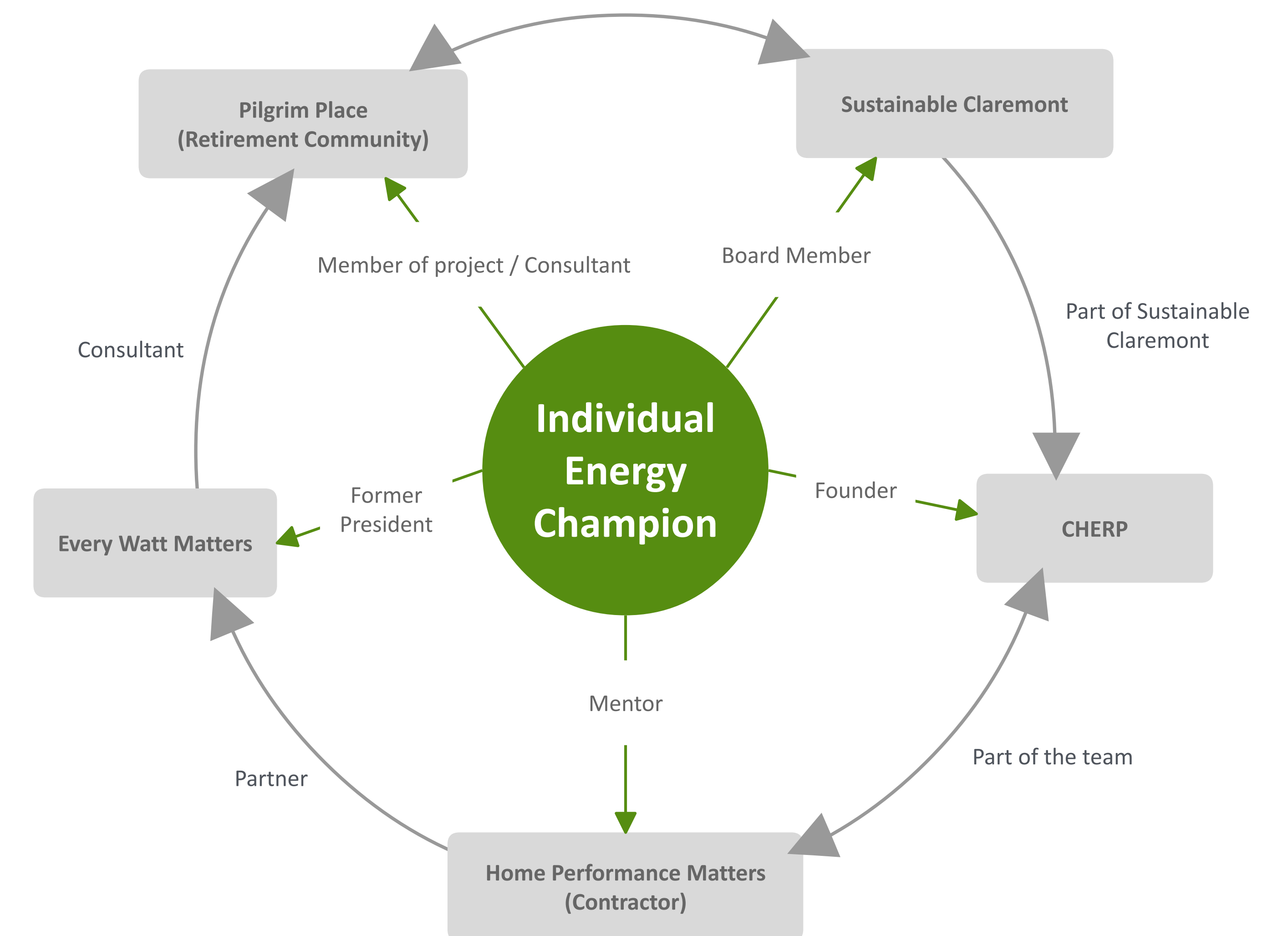
## Claremont had a Connected Maven

### Community Network Content Analysis Methodology:

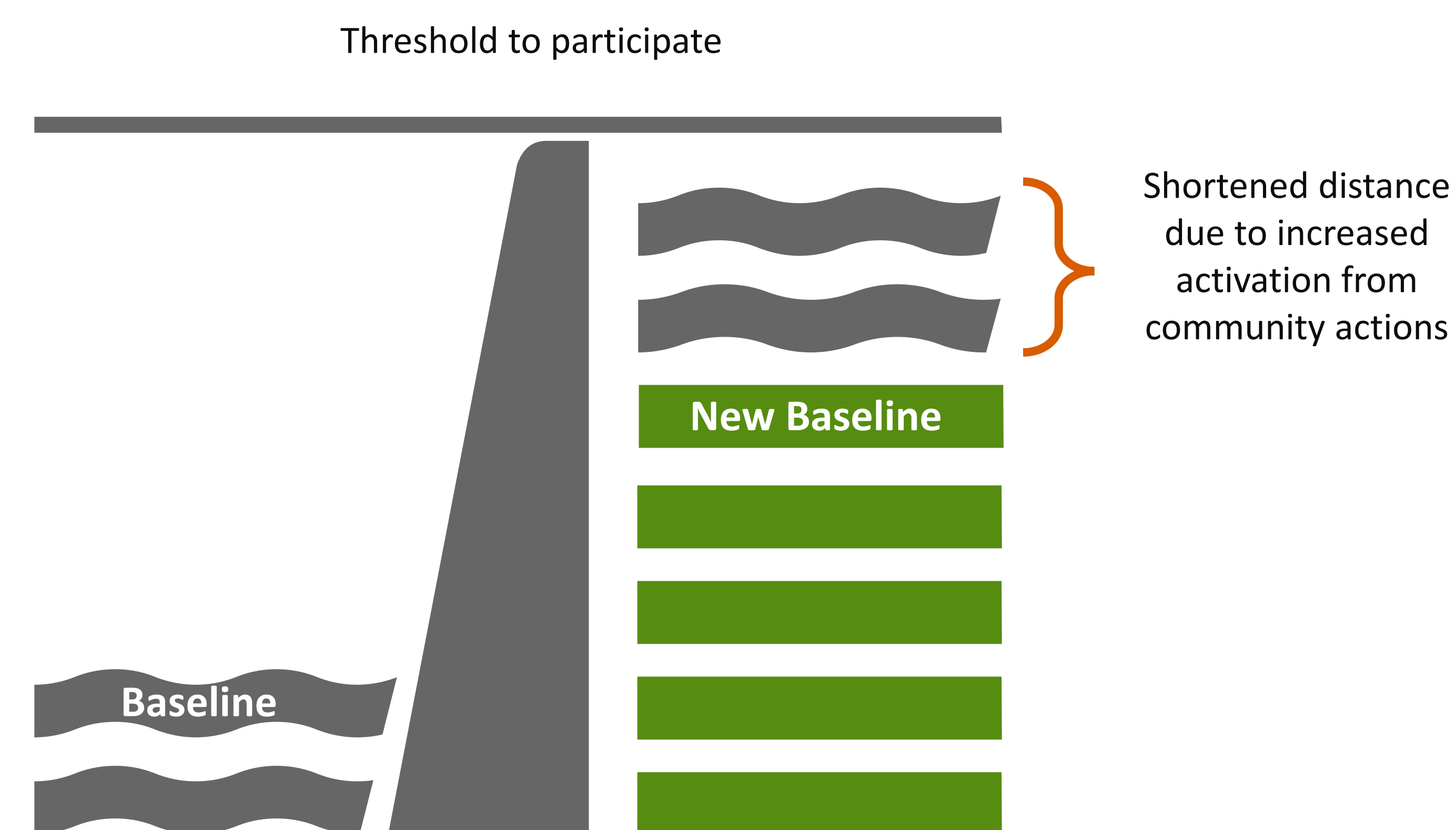
The evaluation team reviewed websites from the top five Energy Champions and the top five contracting firms associated with the pilot. We then used a snowball sampling technique and followed associated links from the Energy Champions and contractor websites. Our content analysis, combined with our in-depth interviews, uncovered key individuals, organizations, and geographic areas that drove the majority of pilot participation.

### The Connected Maven

The influence of individuals willing to champion energy efficiency and home energy upgrades is visible in the performance of Sustainable Claremont and Pilgrim Place. Evidence indicates that one key individual was critical to spurring program participation in Claremont. This individual champion played key leadership roles in Sustainable Claremont and CHERP, and had considerable influence with Pilgrim Place and Home Performance Matters, one of the leading whole house contractors in Claremont. This individual’s ability to connect many organizations, provide information, and spur behaviors such as participation in the Energy Champions pilot provide evidence that he is a “connected maven”.



## Connected Mavens decrease distance



## How to find the Connected Maven in a Community

- Conduct content analysis of target board members or community organizations within your community to identify useful Connected Mavens.
- Focus recruiting and support resources on organizations that are invested in engaging their constituents through events and one-on-one interactions and gauge how often prospective participants carry out these types of activities.