

**Jason Makansi, Pearl Street**

**Title:** Motivating - and Monetizing - behavior Changes Through the Carbon IRA Framework

**Abstract:** The Carbon Individual Retirement Account (IRA) is a simple, powerful concept to change people's responses to climate change: Reward behaviors that reduce individual carbon footprint by converting the avoided carbon into funds deposited in a retirement account. The Carbon IRA converges on several structural barriers with existing carbon reduction solutions. First, by creating a long-term, permanent reward that postpones gratification, it overcomes the historical problem of consumer engagement fluctuating with energy prices in the market. Second, it addresses the nation's anemic retirement savings rates, especially for young people burdened by college debt. Third, it is a non- or bipartisan approach politically, rooted in consumer choice, a carrot, not a stick. Finally, it does not require government intervention (although it could be assisted by it); private companies can implement Carbon IRA as part of their corporate sustainability programs and human resource options. Implementing a Carbon IRA program requires little new technology. Apps are available to monitor and track carbon reduction behaviors, such as use of mass transit, commuting by bicycle or walking, renewable electricity consumed, etc. However, it does require that program administrators identify which behaviors will be rewarded and develop standards or guidelines for determining the value of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent avoided carbon. Prices in the carbon markets may not be the best metric, or at least not currently. Presentation will introduce the Carbon IRA concept, provide simple examples of carbon reduction behaviors and how they can be monetized over a lifetime (or working careers), describe characteristics of early adopter companies, and update progress with cultivating a beta demonstration site.