

Balancing Power Between Community Members and Land Reuse Practitioners

Watch Webinar Recording
Meet your fulcrum potential!

October 29, 2025



CENTER FOR CREATIVE
LAND RECYCLING
RECLAIM. CONNECT. TRANSFORM.

GROUNDWORK
CHANGING PLACES
CHANGING LIVES

Center for Creative Land Recycling

(CCLR or “see clear”)

Our mission is to promote the sustainable, equitable and responsible reuse of underutilized and environmentally impacted properties. We educate, advocate, assist and convene stakeholders to revitalize communities through land recycling.

CCLR is U.S. EPA’s Technical Assistance to Brownfields Provider (TAB) for EPA Regions 9 and 10 including 8 states and numerous territories around the country.

Follow us on:



Center for Creative
Land Recycling



@land_recycling



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Center for Creative Land Recycling

(CCLR or “see clear”)

We meet you where you’re at in the redevelopment process and can help you every step of the way.

One-on-one and group TA opportunities!

Brownfield
Identification
and
Prioritization

Grants and Tax
Credits

Sample
documents
including RFPs,
Marketing
Sheets, and
other Grants

Contacts with
Federal, State
and Local
Content Experts





Groundwork USA

[Groundwork USA](#) is a national nonprofit that supports and strengthens grassroots efforts to build healthier, more resilient neighborhoods. We do this by working deeply with our network of place-based affiliates and by facilitating national peer-to-peer learning, technical assistance, and grantmaking programs for community-centered organizations nationwide.



Groundwork Network

The Groundwork Network is a national network of community-centered nonprofits working at the intersection of people, places, and systems to build healthier, more resilient neighborhoods



Claire Weston
Program Director
Center for Creative
Land Recycling



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Design Consultant
Center for Creative
Land Recycling



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Project Manager
Los Angeles
Neighborhood Land
Trust

Agenda



Intro and Framing

Power Mapping and the Fulcrum Concept

Activities, Strategies, and Tools for Success

The Nonprofit Perspective – LANLT

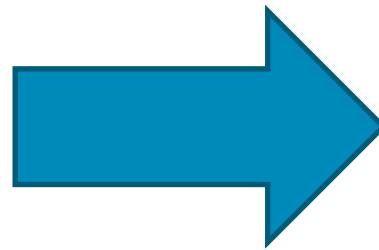
Discussion and Q&A

Defining the Challenge

Brownfield redevelopment and land reuse can be a complicated and drawn-out process.

If not properly engaged in the reuse process community members can feel:

- Uninformed
- Overlooked
- Sidelined
- Blindsided
- Ineffectual



Distrust

Misunderstandings

Conflict

Project Delays

Resident Displacement



The Role of The Nonprofit



*Nonprofit and community group land reuse leaders can play the role of **balancing the power** so that community members are **better equipped and empowered** to not just weigh in on brownfield redevelopment decisions but initiate or lead them.*

Goals for this Session

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.”

- Alice Walker

01.

Understand the **“Fulcrum” concept** – The role nonprofits can play in balancing power between community members and redevelopment practitioners

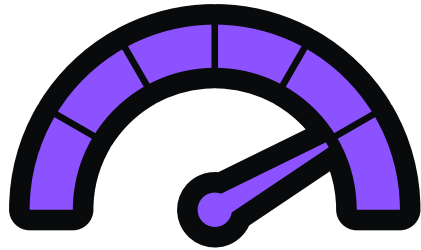
02.

Discover **practical strategies for bridging the gap** between community needs and decision-making authorities

03.

Learn how to **equip your community with the tools and knowledge** to make their voices heard throughout the redevelopment process

Power Mapping



Level of

INFLUENCE



Degree of

IMPACT

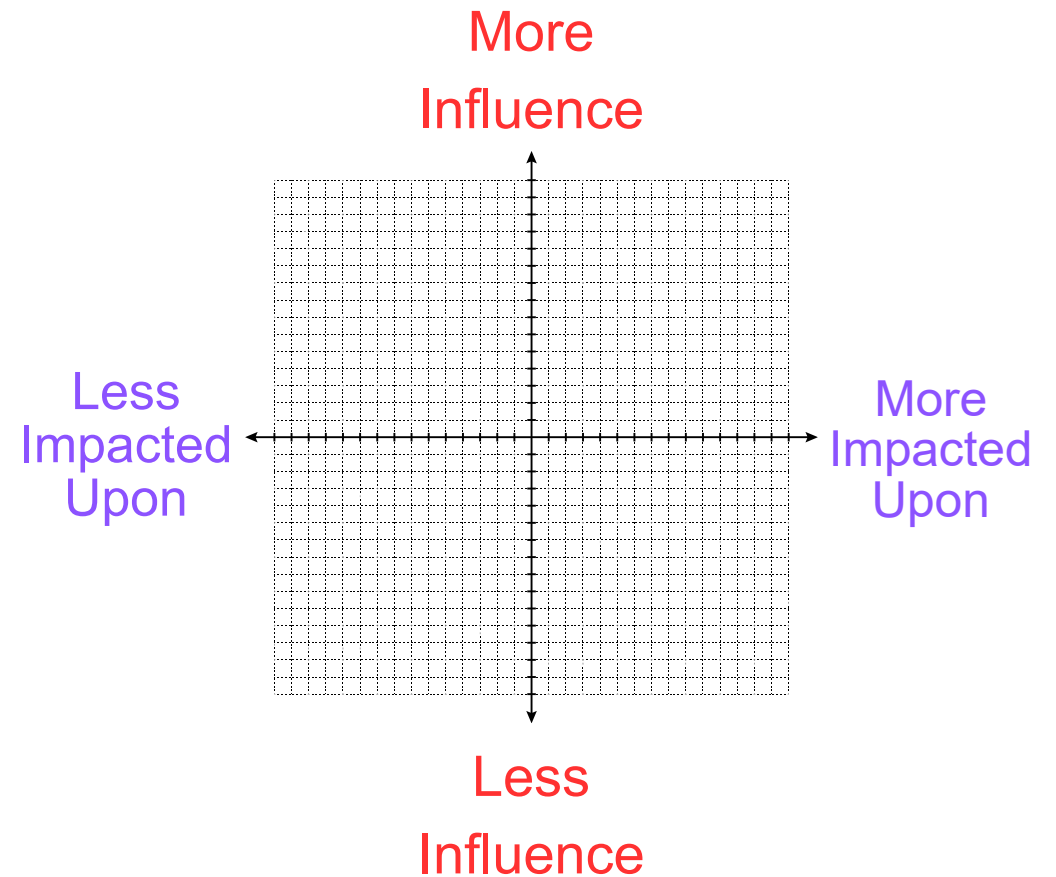
Power Mapping

Why Use It?

- 1. Understand Dynamics:** Identify who holds power and who is most affected
- 2. Plan Engagement:** Inform outreach and partnership strategies
- 3. Promote Equity:** Recognize and empower underrepresented stakeholders

Time to live power map in Miro!

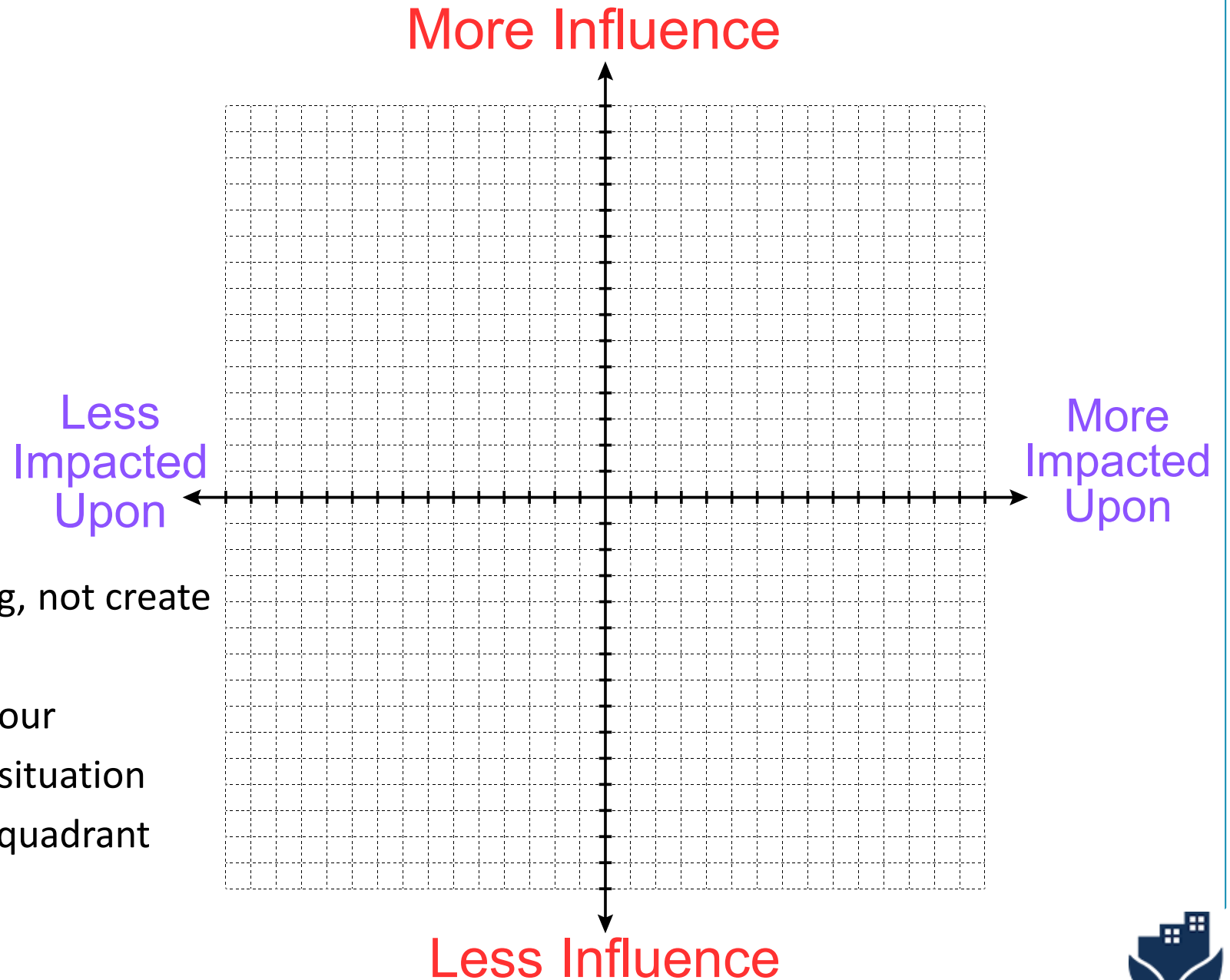
Click the link in the chat and add your stakeholders to the grid!



Power Map Grid

Important to Note:

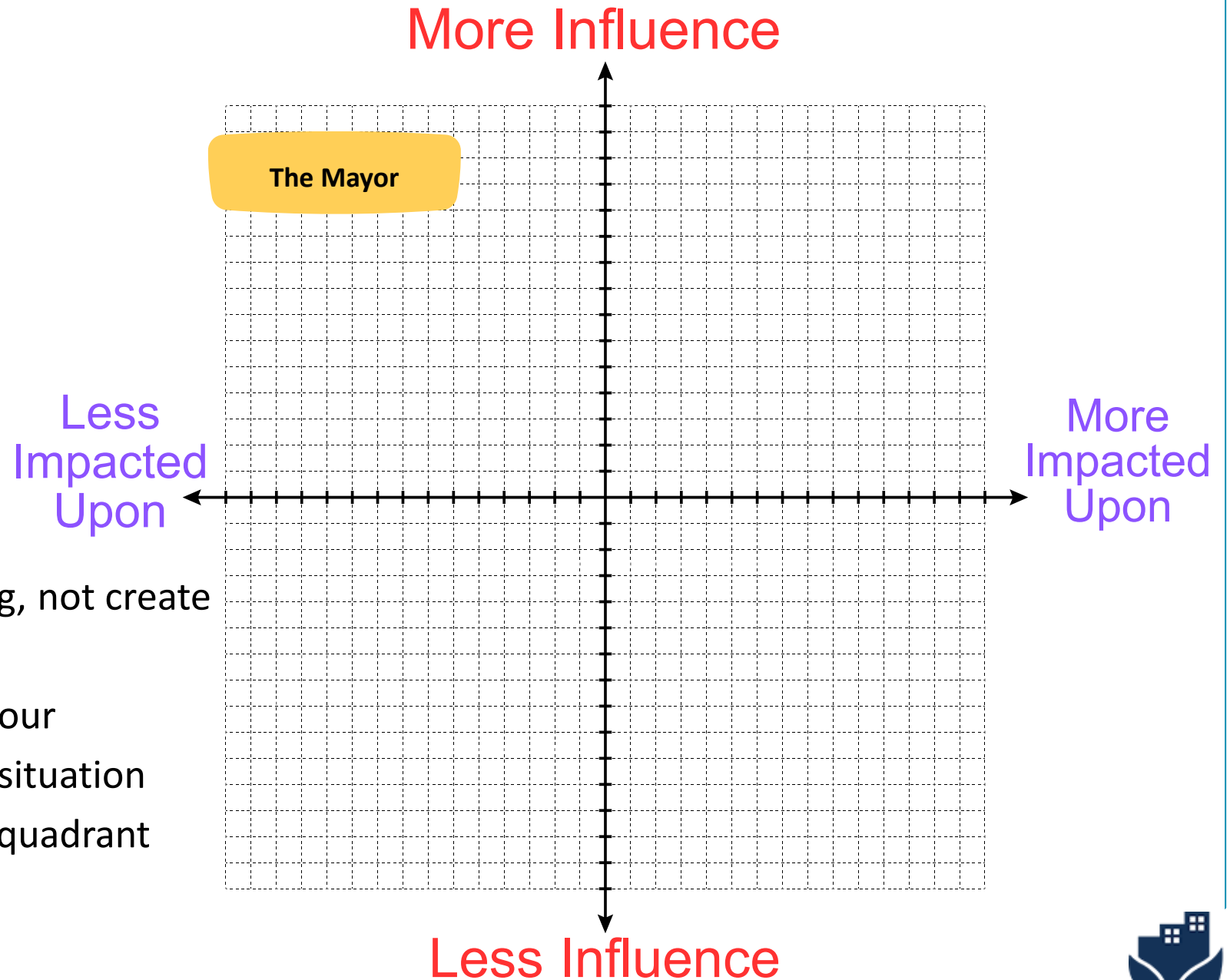
- The goal is to guide your thinking, not create a finished product
- There are no "right" answers—your interpretation depends on your situation
- Pay attention to the lower right quadrant



Power Map Grid

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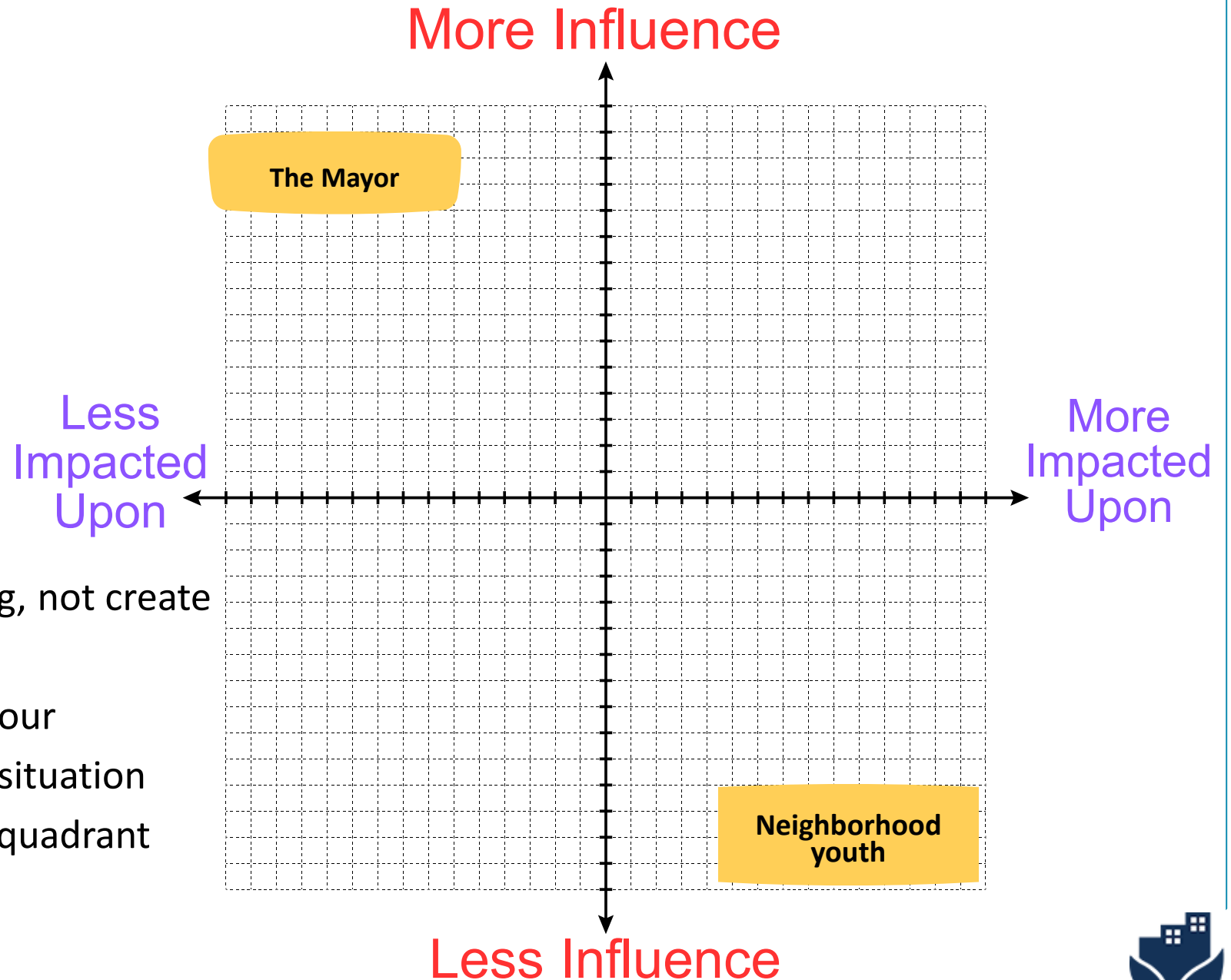
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Power Map Grid

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- The goal is to guide your thinking, not create a finished product
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BALENCING POWER - THE FULCRUM CONCEPT

Most Influential

Least Impacted

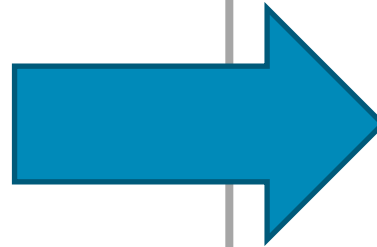
Most Impacted

Upon

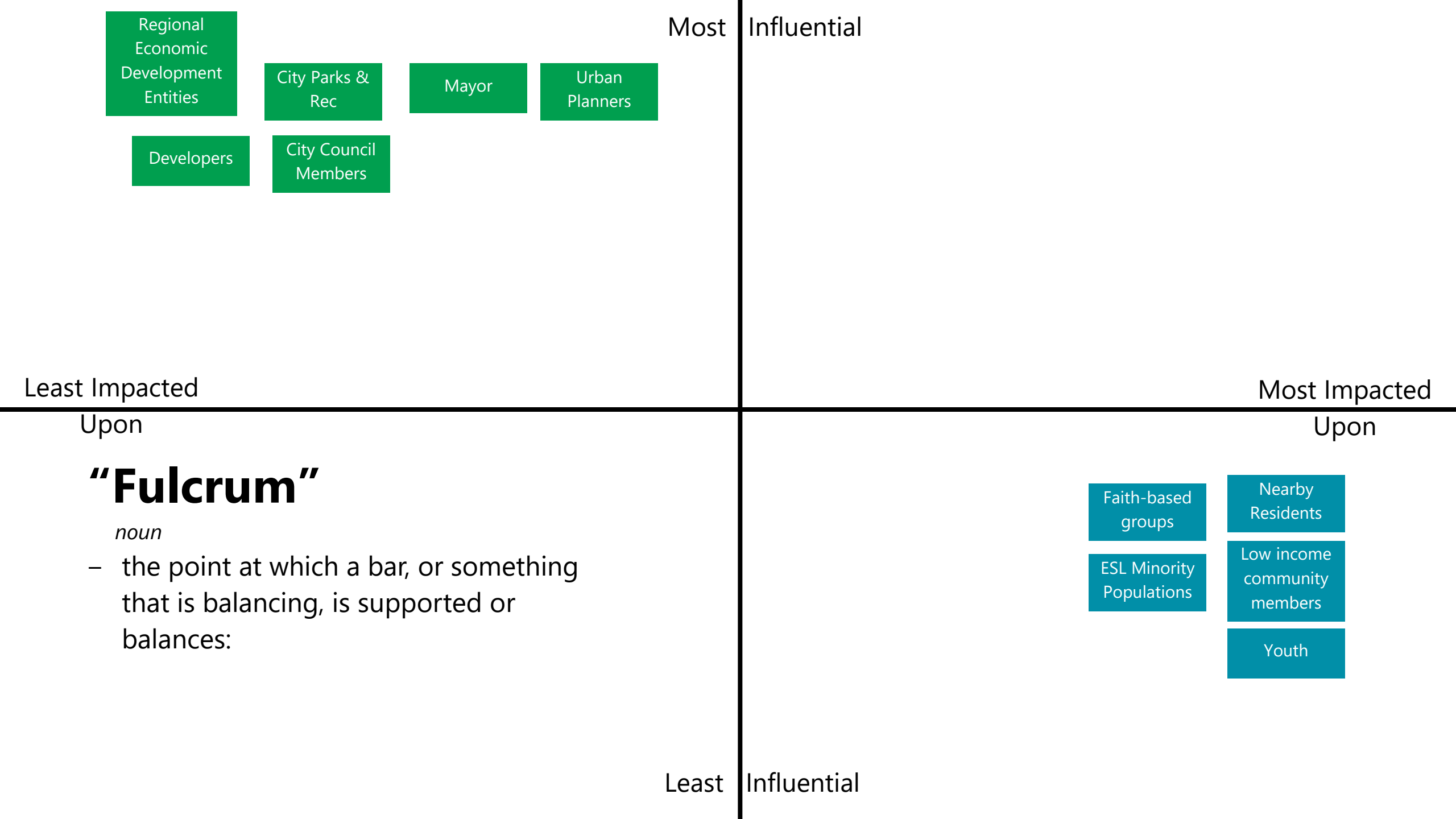
“Fulcrum”

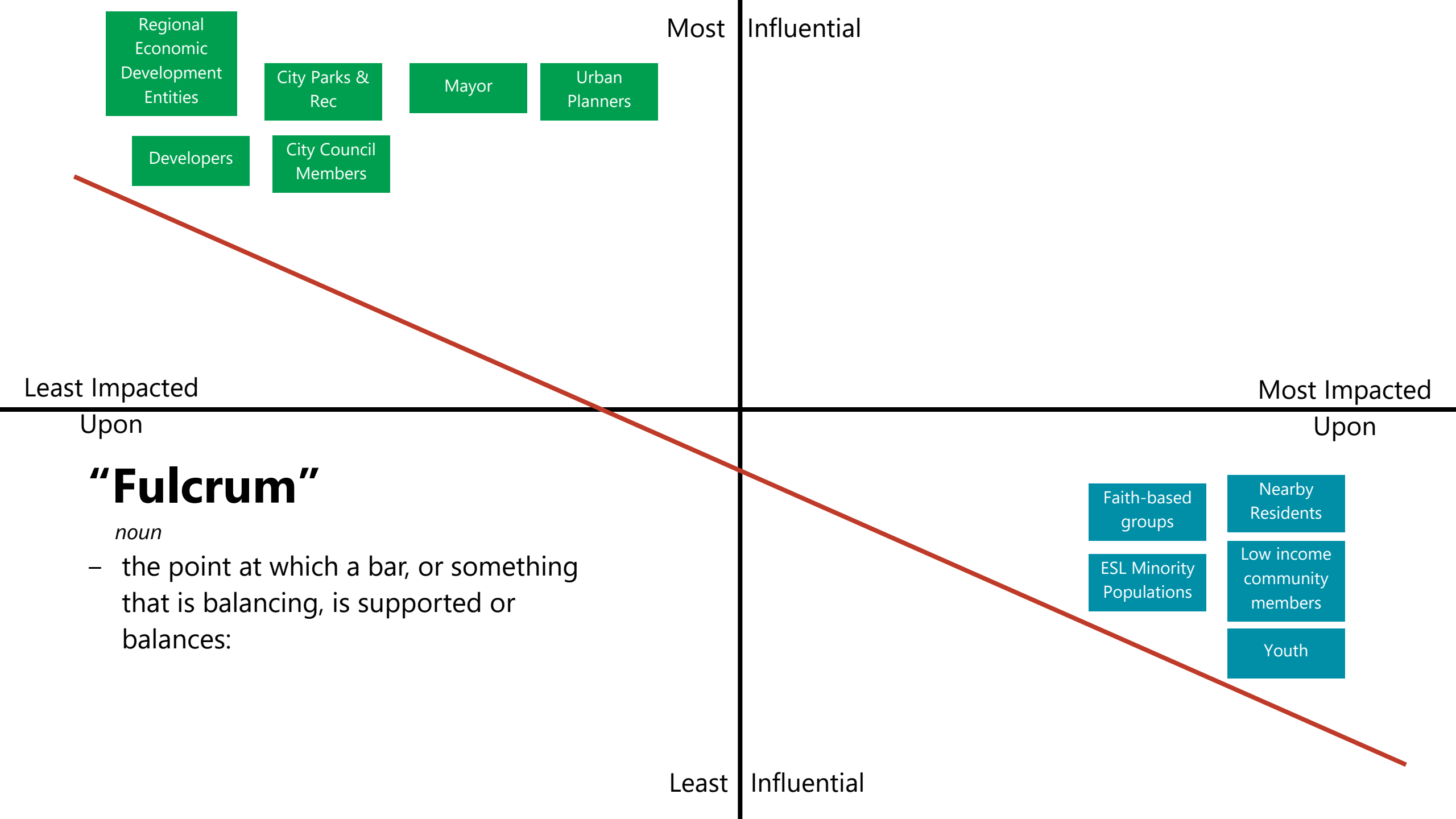
noun

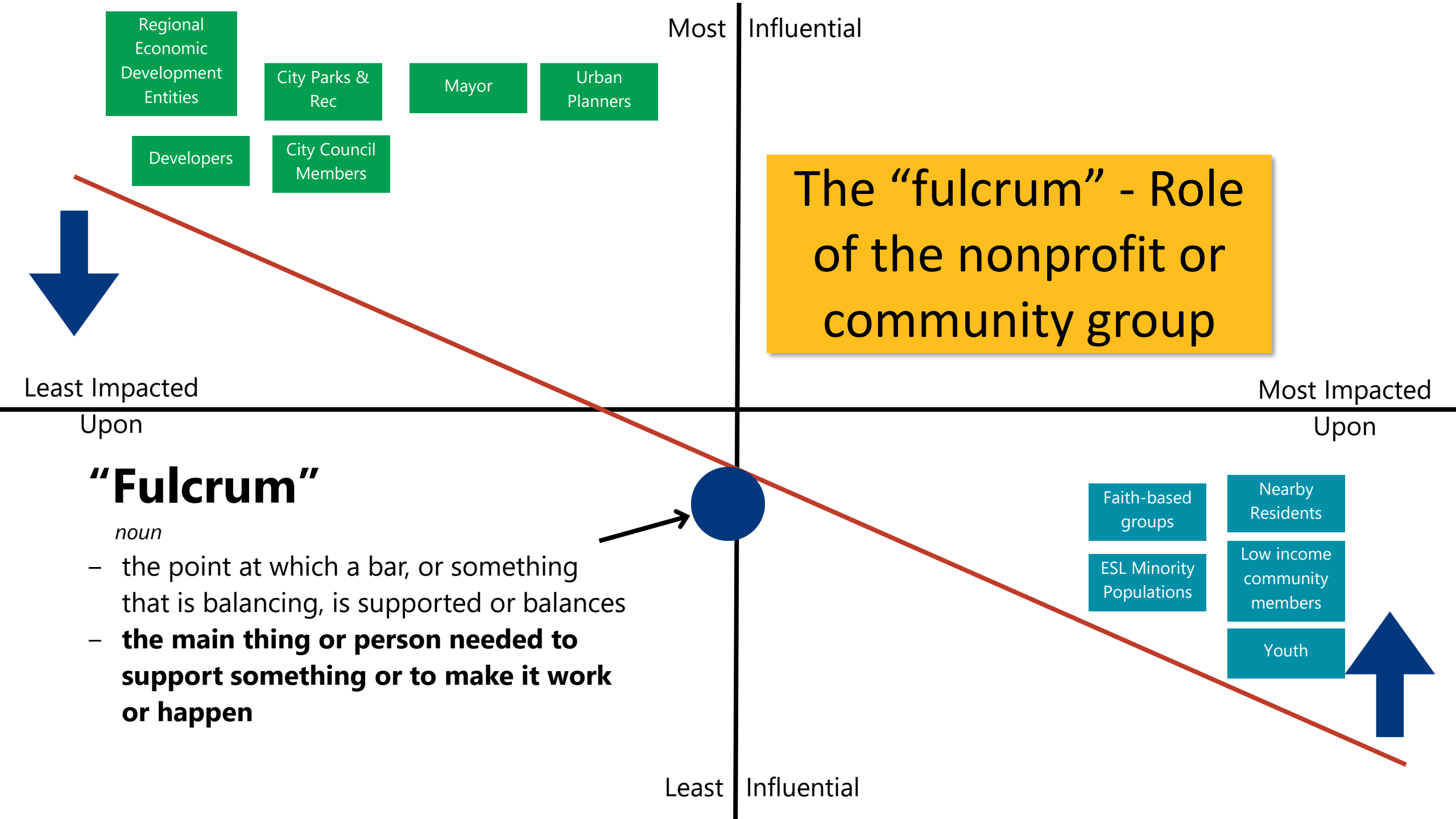
- the point at which a bar, or something that is balancing, is supported or balances:



Least Influential







Agenda



Intro and Framing

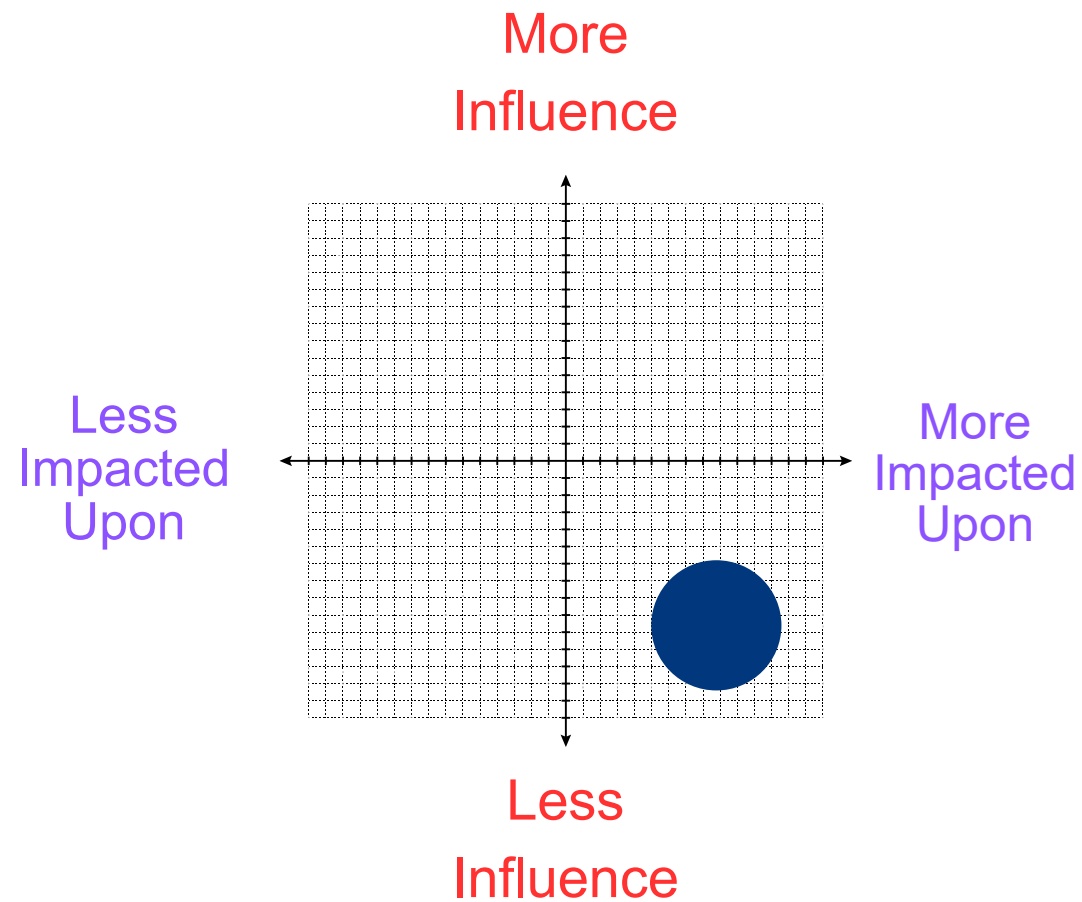
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City Hall



Scenario – Reuse Opportunity Slipping Away

Community-wide assessment.

An uncontaminated 3-acre brownfield owned by the City is rumored to be listed for sale.

- Population – 50,000
- Transforming into bedroom community
- Change is leaving some behind
- Local businesses struggling
- Non-professional services declining
- 75% of community is unaffected
- Lot is located in the poorest part of town
 - Least influence
 - Most impact



Scenario – Reuse Opportunity Slipping Away

Shifting economy has flattened tax revenue

- City is selling property to raise funds for capital improvements
- Might stimulate the local business economy, too, but that's TBD.
- Phase 1 Assessment completed
 - No contamination
 - But property is a nuisance
 - Illegal dumping
 - Tall grass
 - Loitering
 - Occasional encampments



Scenario – Reuse Opportunity Slipping Away

Nonprofit hears about the issue
Feels compelled to address it on the community's behalf
Talks with Mayor to validate the rumor
Gathers residents to hold a meeting



Becoming the Fulcrum

Step 1 *Get Clear!*

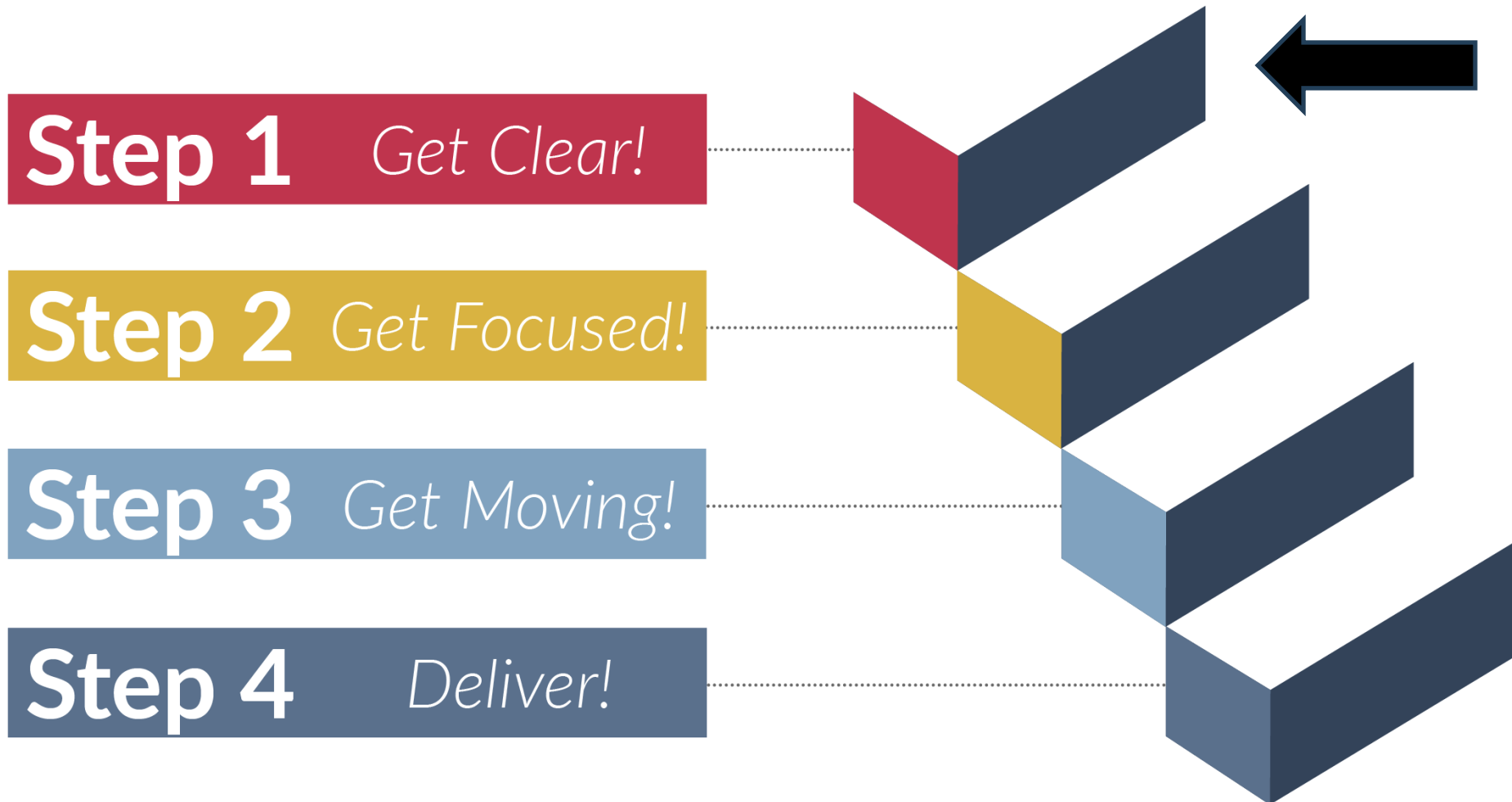
Step 2 *Get Focused!*

Step 3 *Get Moving!*

Step 4 *Deliver!*



Becoming the Fulcrum



Becoming the Fulcrum

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Develop information for both sides

Share information and prioritize needs

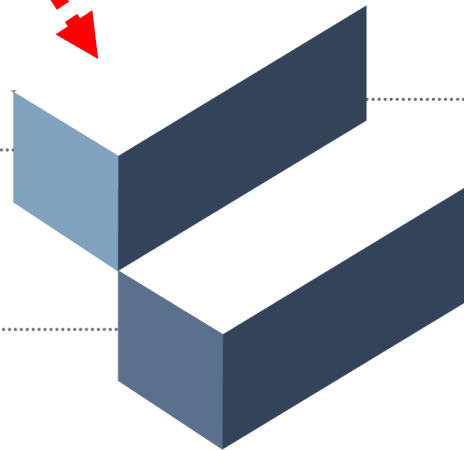
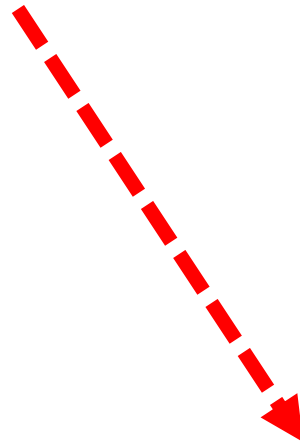
Negotiate & advocate

Actively participate in all stages of the decision-making process, monitor and report progress

Becoming the Fulcrum

Step 3 *Get Moving!*

Step 4 *Deliver!*



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*Get
Clear!*

Step 1 – Identifying Critical Information

The Information The Community Needs:

The Property

Site Boundaries, Conditions

Zoning Information

Active Process

The Information Everyone Needs:

The People

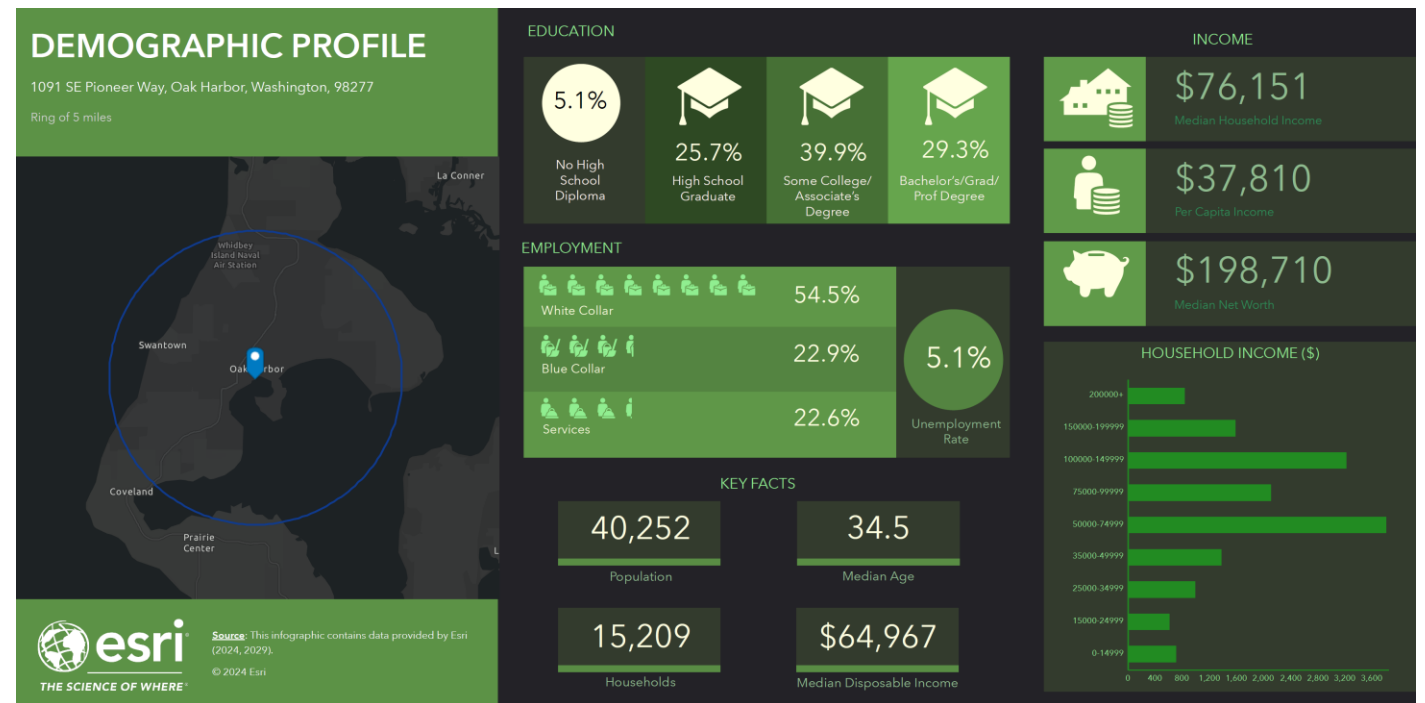
Socioeconomic information

The Area - Comparative Analysis

Infrastructure Gaps

Capital Improvement Plans

Service Issues



*Get
Clear!*

Step 2 – Meeting #1 with City Staff

Bring Information Needs to City Planning Dept

- *City Planner or Planning Associate*

Explain the situation, ask for information

- *We heard the property will be sold; we want to understand this better.*

Let them guide you

- Online resources, staff services

Identify the actual process that is, or will be, underway



*Get
Clear!*

Step 2 – Meeting #1 with City Staff

City Planning Department confirms there is an active case and process.

- Property needs to be rezoned prior to listing.
- Rezoning case in-development, scheduled for public hearings in 2 months.
- *Perfect timing! Deadline for comments is 6 weeks from now.*
- *Need to develop information within 1 month.*
- City offers to provide zoning, property boundary, and sitemap. But no demographic data immediately available. Check back in 3 weeks.



Step 2 – Meeting #1 with City Staff

Fulcrum asks for another meeting.

- Put it on calendar for 3 weeks from now.
 - *Don't let them simply email you their information report!*
- Ask them to also commit to a community meeting sometime within the next 4-6 weeks.
 - If they're unsure, give them a couple days.
 - If they don't respond, contact your elected representative.



Meetings = Momentum

The Fulcrum's real agenda: create meetings and generate new information.

Repeated meetings and regular streams of new information increases understanding.

Delivering it in a predictable schedule increases momentum and trust.

Keep your council representative informed!



*Get
Clear!*

Step 3 – Meeting #1 with Community

Fulcrum meets with Community

Summarizes meeting with the City

- City developing information
- Community will develop information, too
- Meeting with both groups in 4-6 weeks

Fulcrum solicits volunteers to begin information gathering

- Coordinates activities



*Get
Clear!*

New Information Must Be Truly New

No socioeconomic data? That's okay. Novelty matters more. And simplicity above all.

Walking Tours? Brownfield Inventories? Yes!
But be sure to do tours and inventories of *other* parts of town, too.

Cities want to see clear picture of the disparities.
Photos of streets vs streets, services vs services.



Data is crucial for influence

*Get
Clear!*

Step 4 – Community Provides Information

Examples of Great Information

Photos of area infrastructure (3-4 hours)

Brownfield inventories (4-8 weeks)

Surveys on missing public services (1-2 days)

Comment sheets re current services (1-2 days)

Videos of traffic conditions (1-2 days)

Review of current and past planning documents
for delayed implementation – especially capital
improvement plans (2-8 weeks)

Plans are promises!



*Get
Clear!*

Step 4 – Community Provides Information

The Fulcrum organizes the community to do the following:

- Take photos of the area's sidewalks, lighting, and streets.
- Take the same photos from the “nicer” part of town.
- Conduct opinion surveys on what people think is needed in the community.
- Take videos of traffic conditions.



*Get
Clear!*

Step 4 – Community Provides Information

The Community learns the following:

- Sidewalks and lighting are very poor in their neighborhood compared to the other parts of town.
- Opinion surveys show that people want a community space, a grocery store, and pickleball courts.
- Traffic is not really that bad.
- But bike lanes are needed; more cyclists here than any other part of town – yet bike lanes are in the “nicer” parts.



*Get
Clear!*

Step 5 – Meeting #2 with City

After 3 weeks, the City's information is fully developed and ready to review.

- Invite community leaders to join you.
- Outline the information the Community is developing, provide a small preview.
- Set up City/Community meeting.
 - Meeting is scheduled for the 7 days before the deadline for public comment on the rezoning.



Becoming the Fulcrum

Step 1 *Get Clear!*

Step 2 *Get Focused!*

Step 3 *Get Moving!*

Step 4 *Deliver!*



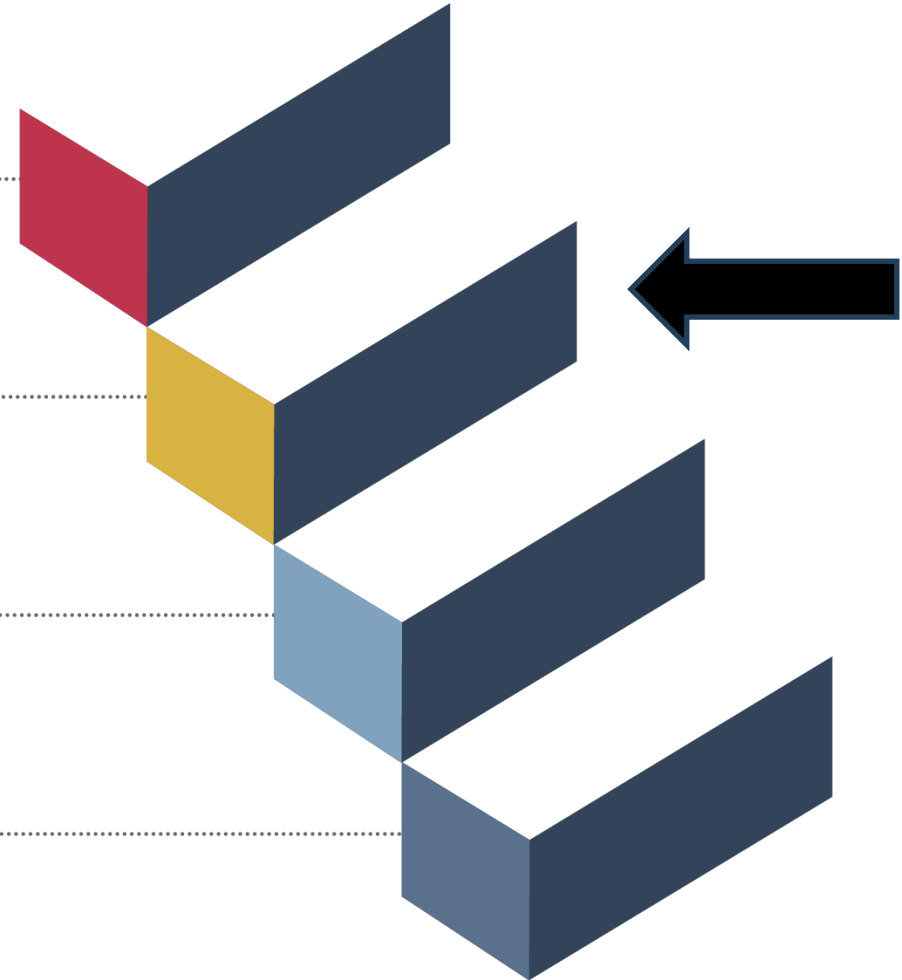
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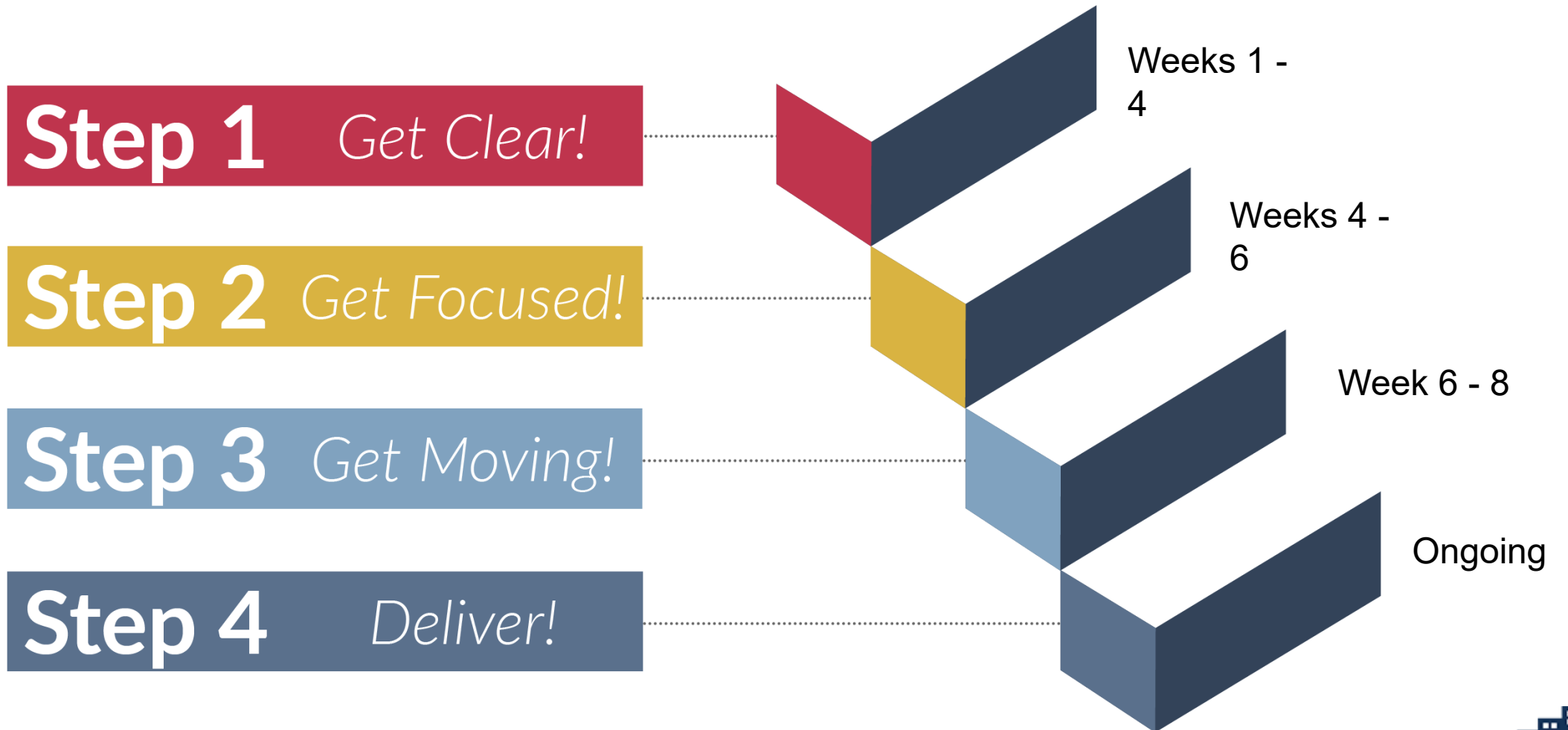
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Negotiate & advocate

Actively participate in all stages of the decision-making process, monitor and report progress

*Get
Focused!*

Step 6 – The Community Meeting

City and Community members hold meeting

Avoid “town hall” format!

City shares their information

Maps, site information

Process and next steps

Active and past plans

Community shares their information

All data on the issues they face

Include the concerns they invalidated!

Discuss next steps

Prioritization & Coordinated Public Comment



Step 6 – Community and City Meeting

After the meeting, the Community should understand ...

1. The current stage of the process (rezoning)
2. The available actions ahead (public comment)
3. The available space for adjustments, conditions, amendments to the City action

The City should understand ...

1. The Community concerns and needs
2. The real data that validates those things
3. The likely comments they'll receive (priorities in-development)



Step 7 – Develop Priorities

Now that the Community understands ...

1. The current stage of the process (rezoning)
2. The available actions ahead (comment)
3. The available space for adjustments, conditions, amendments to the action

The Fulcrum can help them ...

1. Sort their concerns into priorities
2. Write it all down into a simple, ordered list
3. Combine with the data to create a report that will serve as the public comment

If you don't prioritize, the City will!

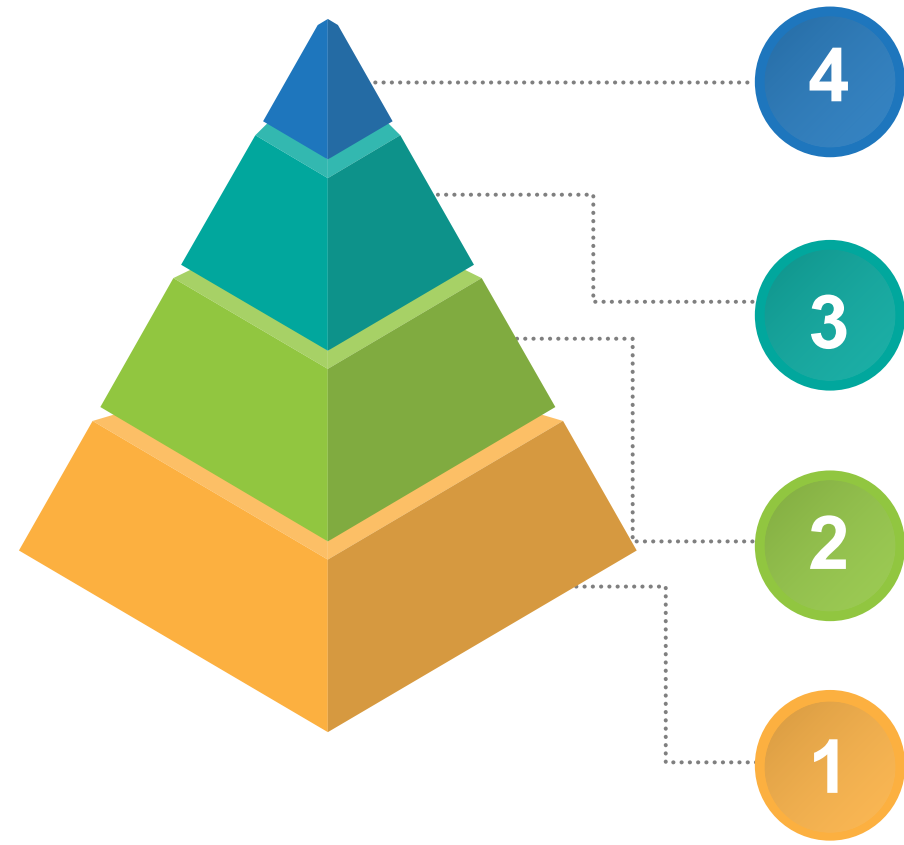


Priorities Are The Priority

Start with the foundational elements, the infrastructure for health and safety (lighting, sidewalks, bike lanes).

The “nice-to-haves” are at the top, smaller in their substance and a peak you’d like to reach. A stretch goal (e.g., pickleball courts)

Tie every request back to the property and the process.



Step 8 – Prioritization

The Fulcrum helps the Community decide the following priorities

1. They want sidewalks and tasteful pedestrian-scale streetlights
2. They want a civic space, ideally for a library branch
 - Or, at minimum, a multi-purpose space
3. They want a grocery store
 - Or, at minimum, a community garden
4. Bike lanes
5. Pickleball
6. Some affordable housing would be nice



Becoming the Fulcrum

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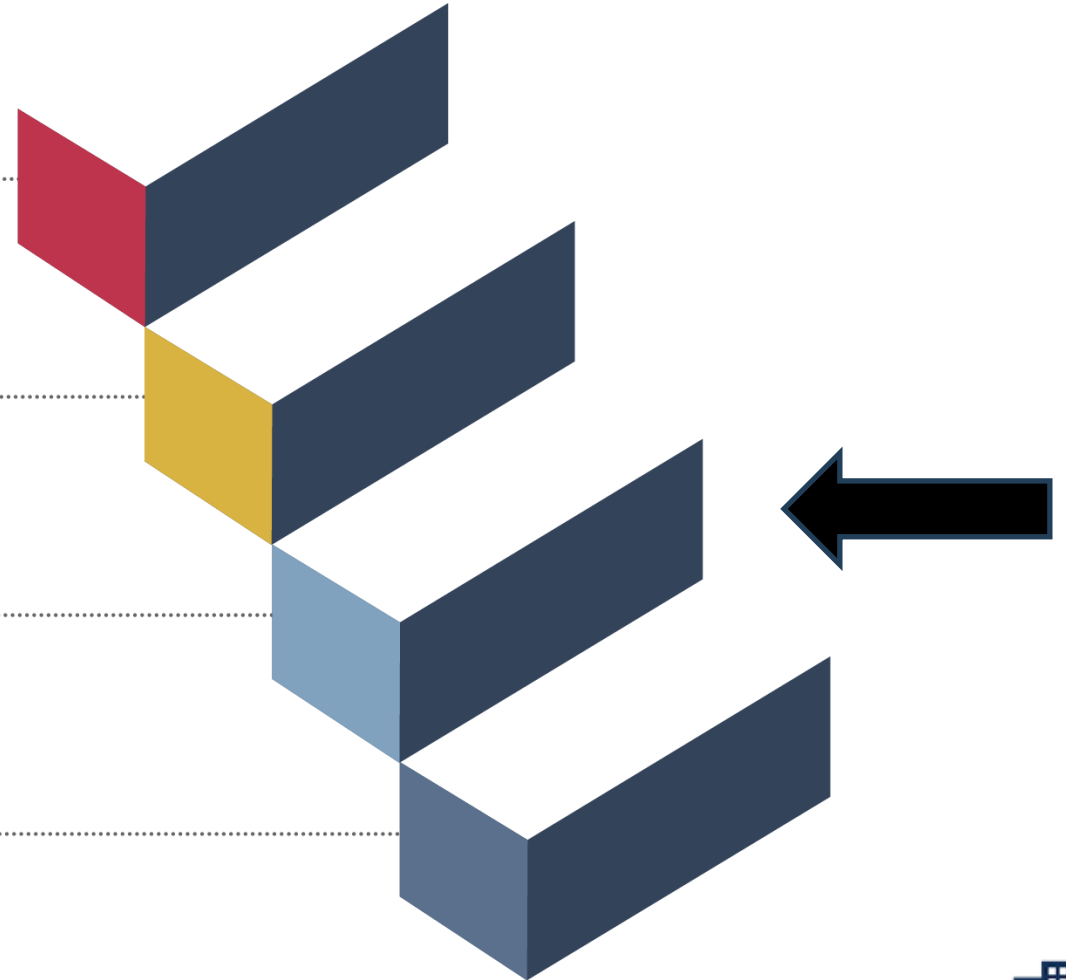
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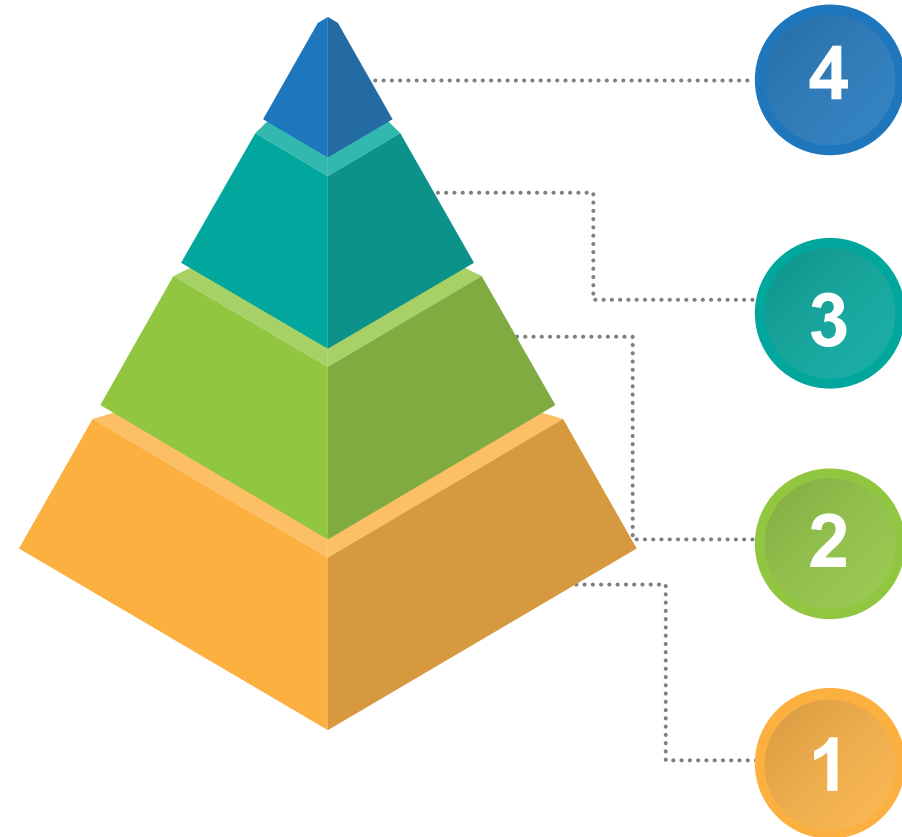
Actively participate in all stages of the decision-making process, monitor and report progress

Step 9 – Report Writing

The Fulcrum helps the community formalize these requests with a report for the City

The report is simple and clear

- Their concerns about the property.
- Their needs.
- The data that validates these things.
- Their priorities and requests.
 - List all requests
 - Long lists are fine *so long as it is ordered by priority*



Step 10 – Effective Public Comment

The Fulcrum shares the report with the City

1. Treat it with ceremony! This is a real accomplishment!
2. Deliver a print version to the City; share a copy with your council representative, too.
3. Submit another copy through normal public comment.
4. Do not bend on any requests! This is an “information-only” meeting.
 - Raise awareness
 - Increase understanding

Becoming the Fulcrum

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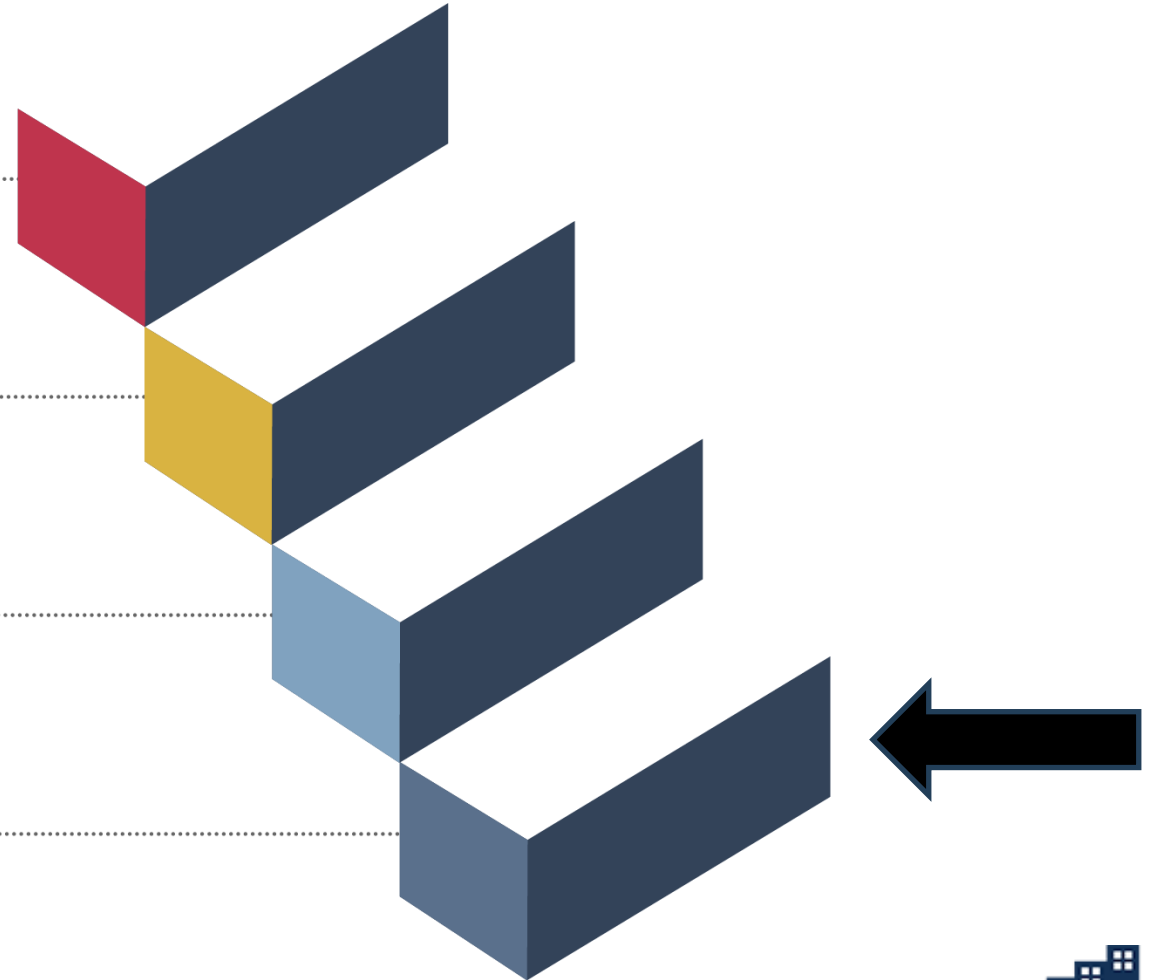
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Share information and prioritize needs

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Actively participate in all stages of the decision-making process, monitor and report progress

Deliver!

Step 10 – The Public Process

The Fulcrum and Community Leaders attend all public hearings for the rezoning

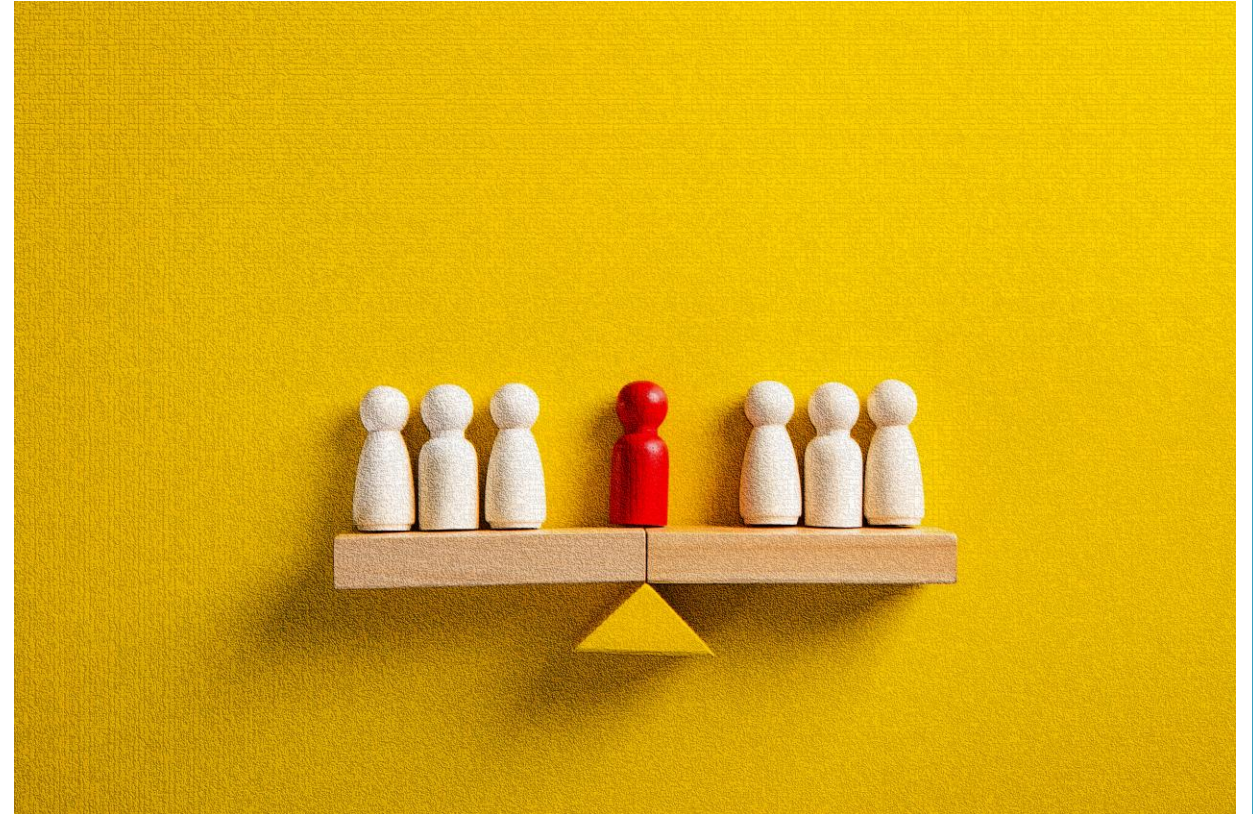
1. Planning Commission
2. City Council
3. Their report is included in the case packet
4. Leaders sign up at each meeting to provide comment
 - Comments kept brief (3 minutes each)
 - Comments are “on message”
 - Diplomacy goes a LONG way
 - The case makes itself at this point!



Step 10 – The Public Process

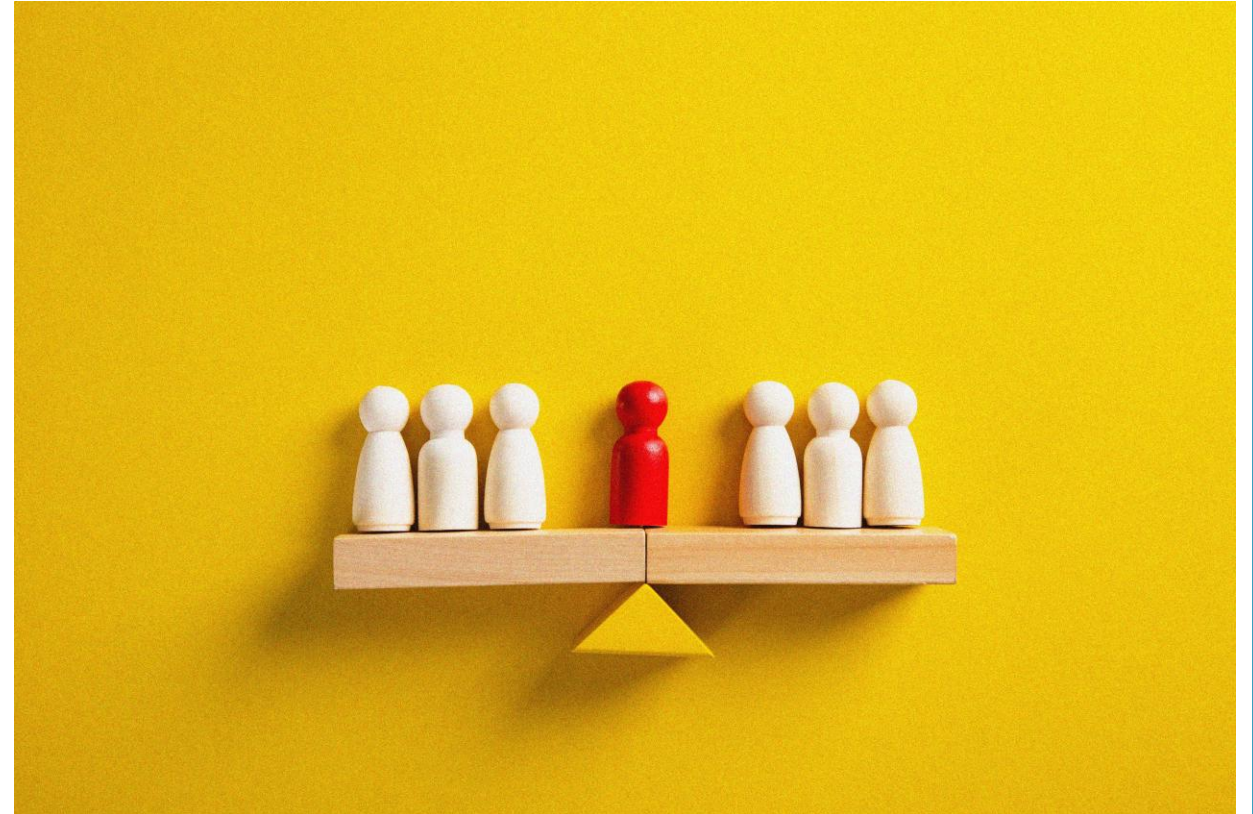
Turbulence Ahead

- Staff recommends a special district zone with the Community's conditions added
- Planning Commission approves request
- But City Council debates the conditions
 - Revenue is an issue
 - Conditions make the property less marketable
- 5-4 vote to approve the zone
 - Special district applied
 - *But* mayor adds additional condition for a market feasibility study



The Fulcrum continues to help the Community do the following ...

- Establishes a social media channel to create two-way communication on all aspects of the project, the needs, and the ongoing effort
- Reports on all stages of the planning process as it continues
- Makes sure the feasibility study is shared in a future neighborhood meeting
- *Regular meetings, new information, more influence*



Key Points

The Fulcrum doesn't put themselves on one side.

The center is where there is leverage!

The Fulcrum helps the community increase its contact with those in power.

The Fulcrum makes sure both sides are sharing information with each contact.

The Fulcrum helps the community increase influence in the best way.

Issues backed by data & clear priorities & regular presence = long-lasting influence.

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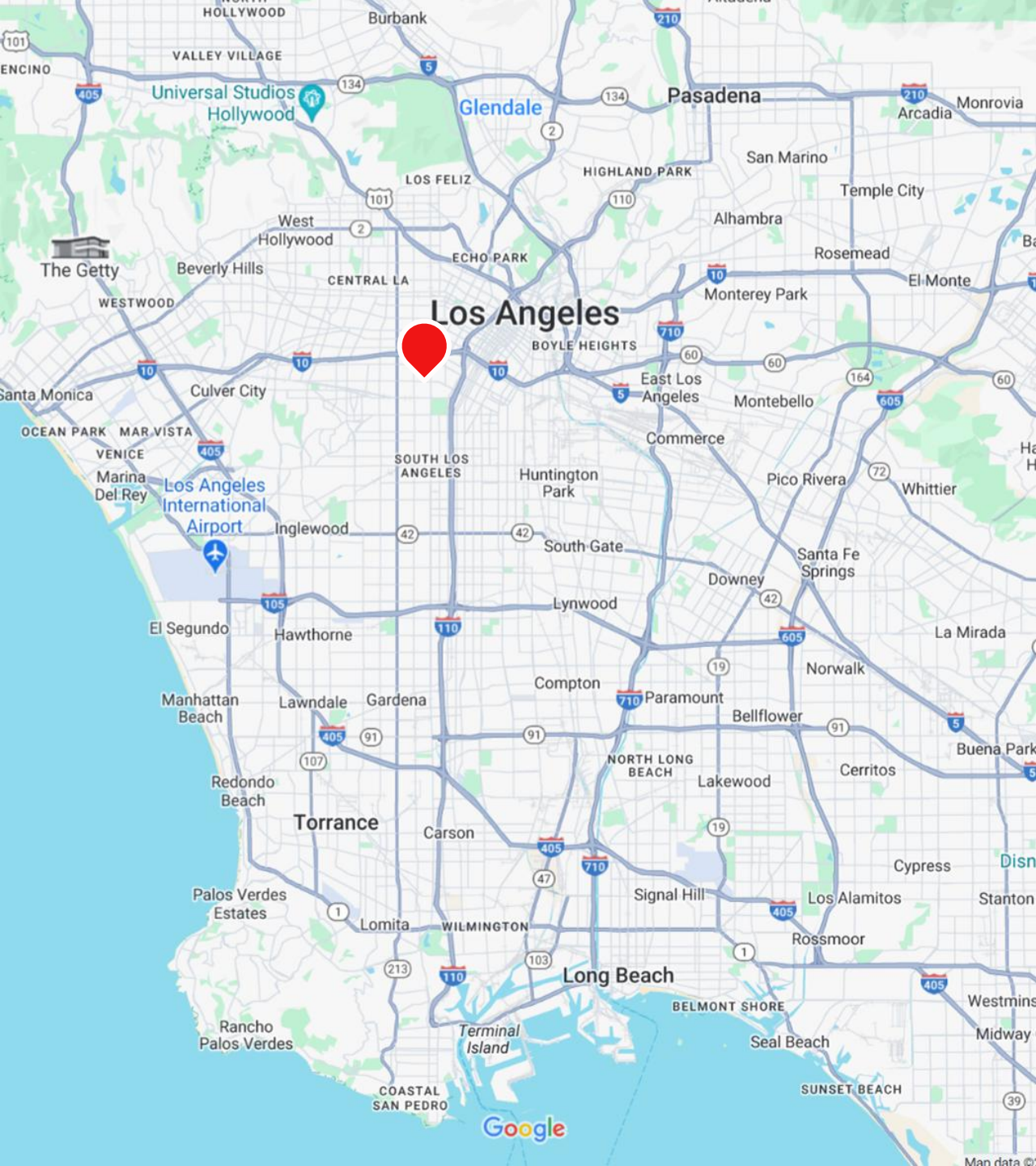


Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust

Health & justice through
parks & gardens

- Founded in 2002
- 30 Parks & Gardens / 22 acres
- Serving 500,000 in LA County

Bz Zhang, AIA, NOMA / bzhang@lanlt.org



Jefferson Park & Affordable Housing Project

Los Angeles, California

1.86-acre former oil drilling site

- 2018: shut down by community partner, RCP, & communities
- 2023: acquired by LANLT





Jefferson Park & Affordable Housing

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Redeemer Community Partnership (RCP)
- Stand Together Against Neighborhood Drilling Los Angeles (STAND-LA) coalition
- Neighborhood Housing Services of LA County (NHS)*

*on deck, awaiting community input to refine scope

PUBLIC PARTNERS:

- Asm. Reggie Jones Sawyer (CA 57), \$10m, acquisition
- CA State Parks, \$5.8m, park dev.
- CA DTSC, ECRG, \$500k, remediation planning only

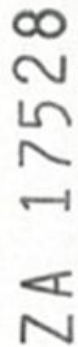
SEEKING TECHNICAL

ASSISTANCE SUPPORT FOR:

- Affordable housing market analysis
- Reuse planning
- Pro forma guidance







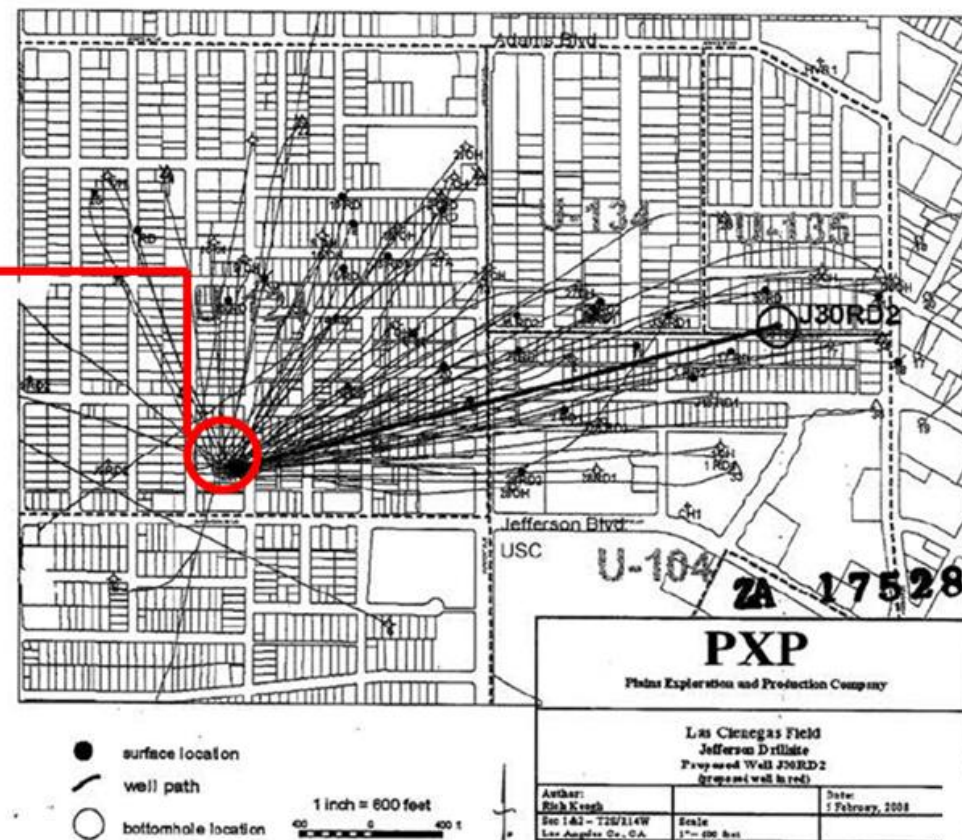
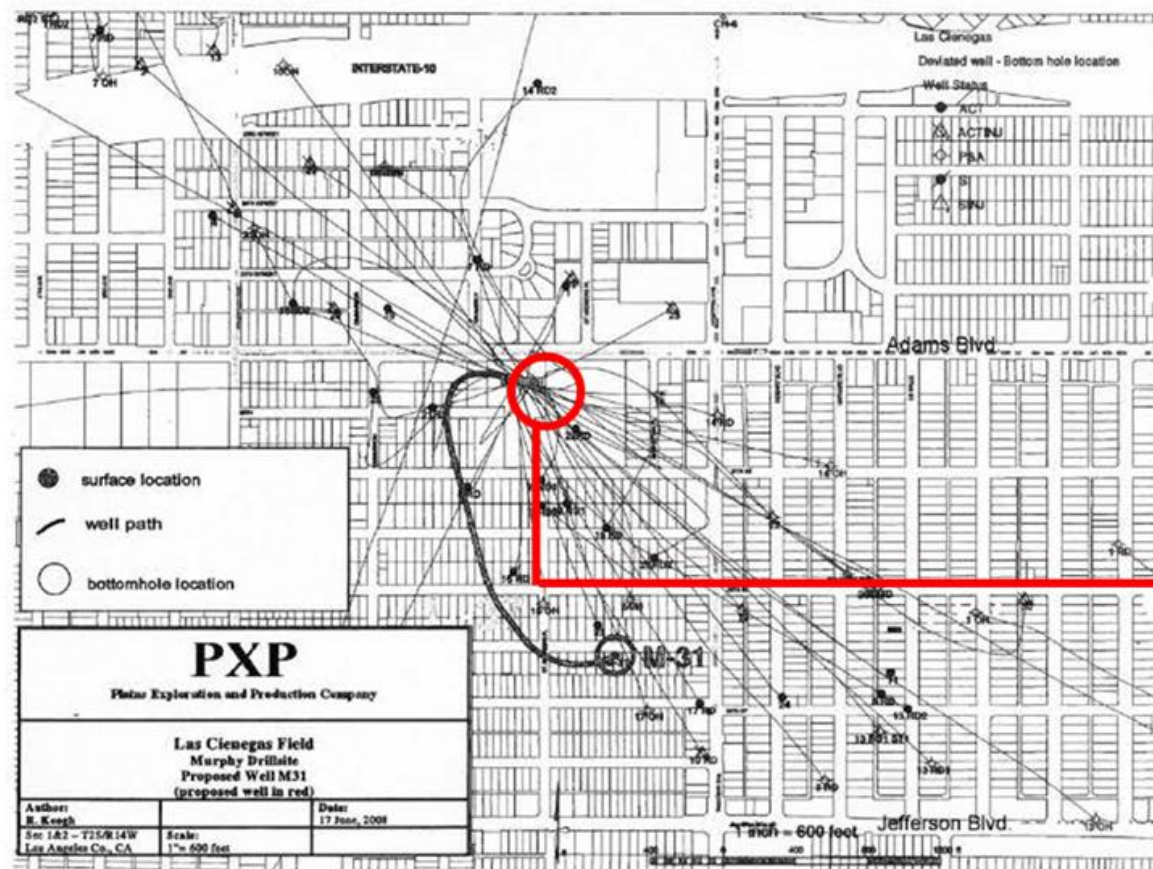


EXHIBIT "A"

West LA



South LA





2013–2018 – Community Organizing



2019–2020 – Community Visioning*



*more forthcoming this fall!

2023–now – Remediation Planning





1965	12 residential + commercial lots converted into oil drilling
1960s-2010s	50 years of oil drilling 3 feet away from neighboring bedroom
2013	Community organizing led by RCP
2018	Community victory in shutting down the site!
2019-2021	Community visioning led by RCP & LANLT identify site use
2022	Oil operator begins well abandonment
2023	Due diligence and acquisition by LANLT
2024-2025	Remediation planning by LANLT *we are here!
2025-2027	Site clean-up / Site planning & design by LANLT & RCP
2027-2028	Site construction

Jefferson Park & Affordable Housing Project



Thank you!

Bz Zhang, AIA, NOMA / bzhang@lanlt.org

Don't Miss Our Next Webinar!

LET'S CREATE A PARK!

*Building Creative Funding Strategies
for Park Development*

Tuesday, November 18
10:00 a.m. PT | Zoom webinar



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LAND RECYCLING
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