



Cities & People

Inside-Outside

Boards and Commissions Leadership
for Local and Regional Advocacy

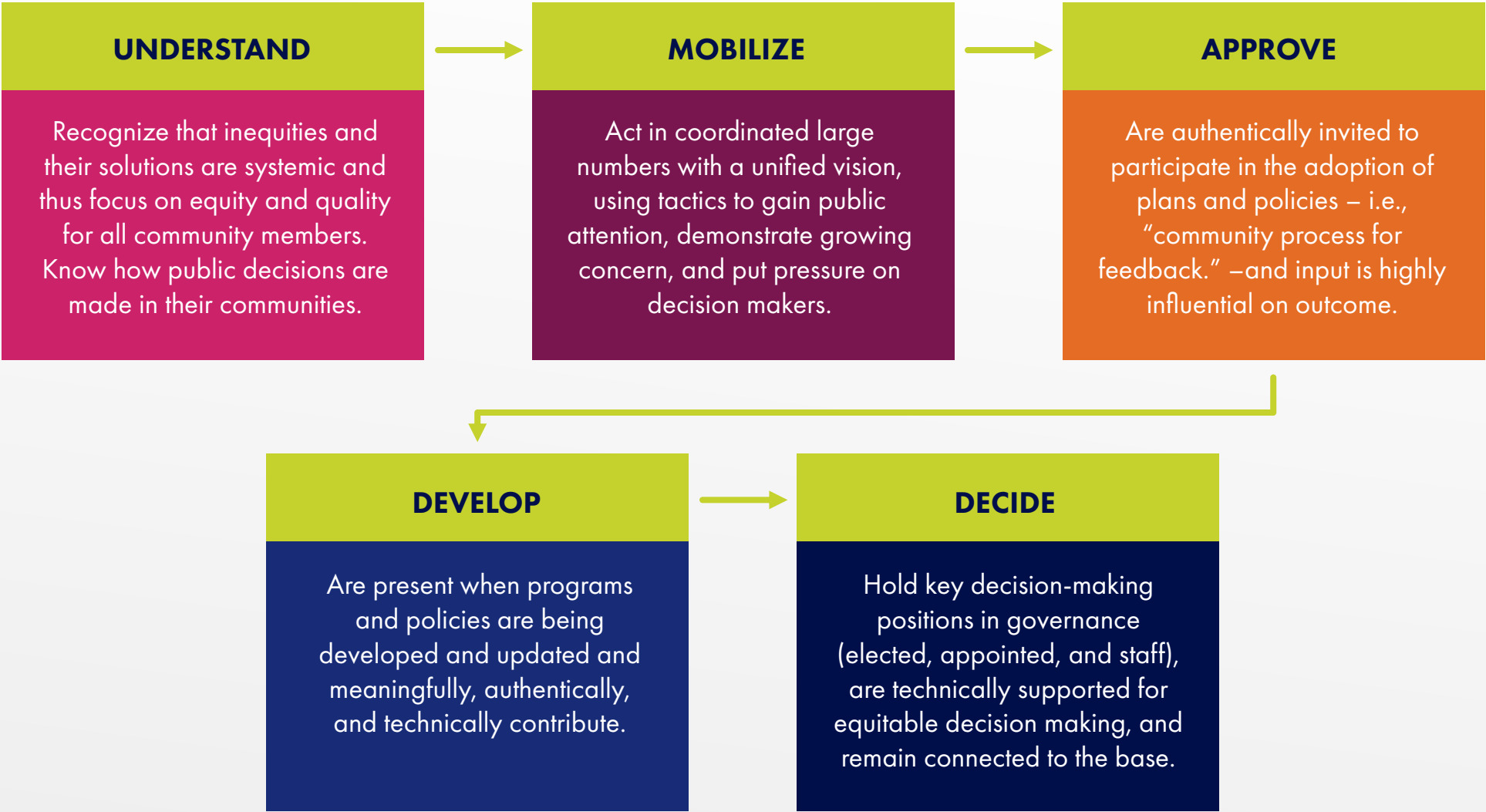
ALL

Richmond Equitable Development Initiative (REDI)



- A core coalition of community-based, faith-based, and regional policy/advocacy organizations in Richmond, CA, with technical support from Health Department and others, help residents **understand** what's at stake in the community.
- First designed to **mobilize** residents in a community-driven General Plan update, then continued to ensure resident voice in other planning processes, including through community **approval** of a Health Element and Climate Action Plan.
- Organized dozens of residents to **develop** policy platforms with coordinated public comment and delegation visits and to provide "study sessions" for electeds and city staff.
- Residents have gone on to serve in key "insider" decision maker roles, and the coalition continues to participate strongly in the city's planning process.

Civic Engagement/Movement Building Trajectory



Who Appoints? Who Confirms? Who Removes?

- Mayor
- Governor
- City Manager
- City Council
- Rules Committee
- Senate
- Board of Supervisors
- Commissioners
- Agency Executives





Historically Speaking

Local boards and commissions first became popular in the late 19th Century as a response to the corrupt “big city bosses” that ruled American cities during that time period.

Reformers sought to decrease power and influence by highly partisan and self-advancing politicians. They wanted a system by which key government decisions would be made by boards and commissions comprised of citizen experts who would, they hoped, apply their expertise for the greater good of society.



Possibilities of Power & Influence

- Provide advice to electeds, departments, programs, or other boards and commissions.
- Enact regulations and establish policy.
- Hear and decide upon appeals.
- Hire and fire agency staff members.

Co-optation

Representation Is Important, But..

If we agree that it's important to have folks "inside" the system, why don't more social justice advocates want to go inside?



Inception of "outside" challenging movement



Appropriation of challenging-movement goals via "inclusion" and "participation"



Assimilation of challenging movement's leaders, participants, goals to inside institutions



Acclimation to insider bureaucracy, regulation, efficiency, protection of the status quo



Depletion of challenging movement, including leaders!

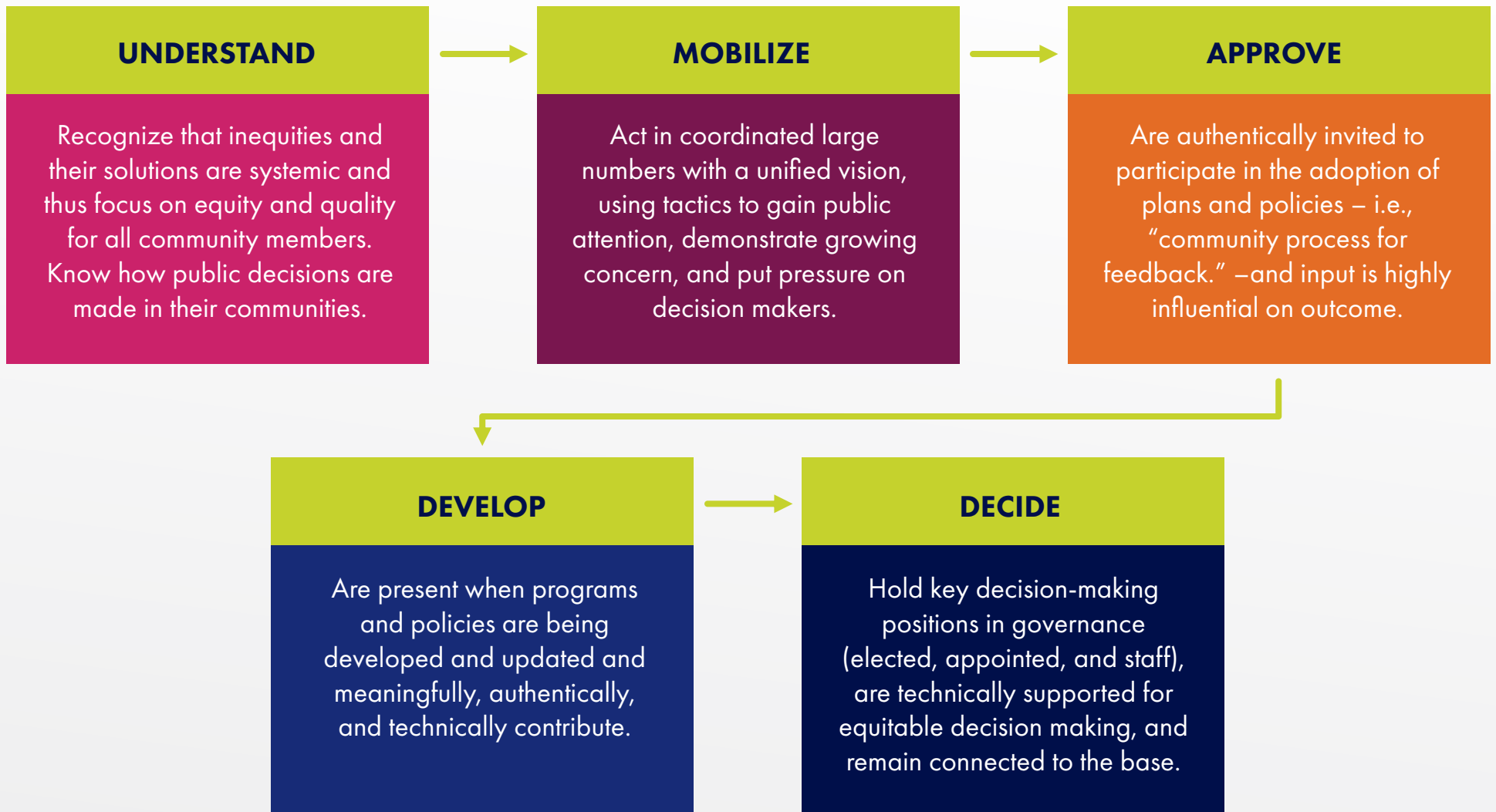
Mutual Accountability

We need to hold public officials accountable to the base!

- Does this work? Why or why not?
- What's an alternative strategy? How do we get there and who needs to be involved?



Civic Engagement/Movement Building Trajectory



The Inside-Outside Strategy: **Advocate-Commissioners**

Inside Only Strategy

Relies on an insider “champion” to act on behalf of under-served communities, and hopes your champion will be willing and able to overcome opposition from other key decision makers or influencers (including staff members and constituents).

Inside Only Strategy

Relies on organizing community members for agitation and direct protest, and hopes insiders will react favorably to community demands.

Inside-Outside Strategy

Aims to alter longstanding power relationships that produce inequitable policies and programs in under-served communities.

Relies on collaborations between those working inside governance and those working outside in order to create a more “permeable” system.

Has as an ultimate goal that local leaders ARE the decision makers and that they are equipped to make good decisions with their communities.

Preview:

The Importance of a Carefully Curated Network

DECISION MAKERS

Appointers and Confirmers

INSIDE INFLUENCERS

Appointment Secretaries, Department Staff, Current Commissioner

OUTSIDE INFLUENCERS

Community Orgs, Labor Groups, Business Orgas, etc.
(also campaign donors, friends, spouses, etc.)

Pathways

Wait, it seems like electeds are pretty important in these networks. Can boards and commissions service prepare me for running for and serving in elected office?!

AND, could boards and commissions service actually keep me from successfully running for elected office?!



Photo Credit: Ashley Hopkinson

Jovanka Beckles

- Richmond, CA Economic Development Commission (appointed)
- Richmond Planning Commission (appointed)
- Richmond City Council (elected)

PROVING GROUND

Technical Knowledge
Political Knowledge
Procedural Knowledge

PIPELINE & PITFALLS

Historical Mapping
Current Contentions

N E T W O R K



Cities & People

San Francisco | 415/200-6753

www.citiesandpeople.com

THANK YOU