



# OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR POLICY AND RESEARCH DIVISION

## PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING OVERVIEW

PRESENTED TO BUDGET COMMITTEE JANUARY 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2024

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## Introduction

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In 1989, Porto Alegre, Brazil adopted what is considered as the first modern iteration of participatory budgeting<sup>1</sup>. The underlying concept was to create an avenue through the democratic process that allowed for residents to provide direct input on how a dedicated allocation of funding is spent. Over time, the participatory budgeting process has expanded across the globe, including at least 29 U.S. cities<sup>2</sup>, and been modified and tailored to best serve respective resident populations. While these changes are wide ranging, several core components generally remain a constant:

- 1) A dedicated pool of funding is identified for the specific purpose of participatory budgeting.
- 2) An engagement strategy is created and implemented as the primary vehicle for participation.
- 3) The process stages and timelines are made clear, as well as the mechanisms for how potential projects will be assessed by government officials and/or staff.

## Past Efforts and Current Examples

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The City of Minneapolis has explored participatory budgeting in multiple forms over the past decade. In the 2017 budget, Council directed a number of departments to develop a plan for a participatory budget program that may include the following<sup>3</sup>:

- A best practice report of other cities' existing participatory budgeting process and those cities' metrics for evaluation of success of the program.
- Recommendations for the participatory budgeting process including expected number of participants, methodologies of voting, and organizing structure.
- Methodologies for outreach to the City's 70 neighborhood organizations, cultural and community organizations, and under-represented groups and groups of residents who have not traditionally participated in City programs, including youth.
- Recommended range dollar amounts and components of the budget, preferably one-time capital or operating expenditures that could be delegated to a participatory budget process.
- Sample calendar of an annual participatory budgeting process.
- Identification of other public, non-profit, and private partners that may be willing to provide resources for the participatory budgeting process.
- Outline of City administrative dollars and potential funding sources for an annual participatory budgeting process

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<sup>1</sup> [The journey of participatory budgeting: a systematic literature review and future research directions - Luca Bartocci, Giuseppe Grossi, Sara Giovanna Mauro, Carol Ebdon, 2023 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Case Map for PBP Website \(carto.com\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [2017 City of Minneapolis Budget Book](#)

While it is unclear if a formal program was ever developed, the City did produce a [Participatory Budgeting Playbook](#) that provided an overview of participatory budgeting and recommendations related to what a program in Minneapolis would resemble<sup>4</sup>.

Additionally, the City currently operates a number of programs in capacities that are similar, or adjacent, to a formal participatory budgeting process and seek resident input on how specific funding is allocated.

The first of these programs is the Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC). This 33 member committee includes two seats per Council Ward and seven at-large seats appointed by the Mayor. There are two programmatic working groups focused on transportation and human development, as well as an executive committee. CLIC is responsible for review of all capital budget requests (CBRs) and providing ranking recommendations that can inform the Mayor's proposed budget and the Council adopted budget. CBRs are contained in six-year plans and the most recent [report](#) for 2024-2029 contained [123 CBRs](#) that were reviewed and ranked by CLIC members<sup>56</sup>.

In addition to CLIC, Neighborhood and Community Relations oversees four programmatic and funding areas that include direct allocation of funds to neighborhood organizations. As addressed in the 2024 budget, these areas included the following<sup>7</sup>:

- Citywide Neighborhood Network Fund
  - The Citywide Neighborhood Network fund uses an equal distribution of funding, with one allocation allotted to each neighborhood. NCR asks neighborhood organizations to participate in the board diversity survey.
  
- Equitable Engagement Fund
  - The Equitable Engagement Fund, the largest of the four Neighborhoods 2020 funding areas, uses a formula that considers three metrics to allocate funding:
    - Areas of concentrated poverty (50% of allocation): The Metropolitan Council defines areas of concentrated poverty (ACPs) as census tracts where 40% or more of the residents have family or individual incomes that are less than 185% of the federal poverty threshold. Some census tracts that meet this poverty threshold have a large share of college or graduate students, so we exclude these census tracts from our definition of areas of concentrated poverty. (Source: State of Minnesota Spatial Commons).
    - Cost-burdened households (30% of allocation): The cost-burdened household measure comes from the 2018 American Community Survey 5-year average data at the census tract level and is defined as households spending more than

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<sup>4</sup> [Community Voice \(minneapolismn.gov\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [CLIC-Report-2023.pdf \(minneapolismn.gov\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [2024-2029 Capital Projects Table of Contents Copy \(opengov.com\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [FY 2024 Neighborhood & Community Relations \(opengov.com\)](#)

30% of their income on rent or their mortgage. The funding formula partially allocates funds according to the number of cost-burdened households within a census tract. Cost-burdened renters are weighted twice as heavily as cost-burdened homeowners.

- Gentrification (20% of allocation): Gentrification is a measurement of change in census tracts over time (2000-2015), specifically comparing income, race, ownership status (renter or homeowner), rent cost, and education level. Neighborhood with census tracts that were vulnerable to gentrification received the maximum funding available per neighborhood for this category. Neighborhoods in census tracts identified as gentrified received half of the funding amount available.

- Partnership Engagement Fund
  - The Partnership Engagement Fund is intended to support collaboration and partnerships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and neighborhood organizations to increase diverse public participation through project development and implementation, engaging historically underrepresented residents meaningfully and effectively on policies and programs that impact them and in decision-making with a focus on furthering equity. This is a competitive pool of funding, applications can be submitted in various languages and in oral or written format, and community residents are available in the decision-making process.
- Collaboration and Shared Resources Fund
  - The goal of the Collaboration and Shared Resources Fund is to maintain the long-term feasibility of the place-based neighborhood network system and provide technical and financial assistance to neighborhood organizations that want to consolidate or share resources with each other. This is a competitive pool of funding.

As highlighted by the [20-21 Neighborhood Programs Annual Report](#), these funds comprise part of the larger Neighborhood Programs effort that includes racial equity work, neighborhood meetings, community events, and home improvement or purchasing programs<sup>8</sup>. While not necessarily considered to be formal participatory budget processes, these neighborhood programs provide opportunities for communities and neighborhoods to have direct input and/or access on funding that is intended to serve their respective neighborhoods.

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<sup>8</sup> [2020-2021 Neighborhood Programs Annual Report \(minneapolismn.gov\)](#)

## Participatory Budgeting Landscape

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In addition to existing academic research of participatory budgeting, one of the most effective methods of identifying any patterns or best practices is through the direct review of models that have been implemented both nationally and globally.

### New York, NY

- History
  - Participatory Budgeting in New York “PBNYC” started with 4 council offices in 2011 to allow residents in their district to provide input on a percentage of discretionary funding for capital projects in their districts. Currently, 29 of 51 City Council members participate in PBNYC<sup>9</sup>.
  - “The People’s Money” launched in September 2022 by Mayor Adams and the Civic Engagement Commission as a separate citywide participatory budgeting process<sup>10</sup>.
- Current Allocation
  - 2023-2024 PBNYC: At least \$1 million in participating Council Districts<sup>11</sup>
  - 2022-2023 The People’s Money: \$5 million
- Eligible Projects
  - PBNYC<sup>12</sup>: Physical infrastructure projects costing over \$50,000 and with lifespan exceeding 5 years
    - Eligible ideas must be for “capital” projects: physical infrastructure for public benefit, such as park improvements or new technology for schools. “Expense” projects, such as afterschool programs or expanding bus service, are not eligible.
  - The People’s Money<sup>13</sup>:
    - The People's Money uses mayoral expense funding for ideas to fund projects to benefit NYC communities. Projects must be implemented within one year and must be expense funding, examples of which include:
      - Programming, including but not limited to events, fairs, workshops, trainings and classes.
      - Expanding or enhancing direct or social services (e.g. after school programming, food distribution initiatives, etc).
      - Community organizing or awareness and advocacy campaigns.
      - Research studies.

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<sup>9</sup> [The People's Money \(2023-2024\) - NYC Civic Engagement Commission \(CEC\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [The People's Money \(2023-2024\) - NYC Civic Engagement Commission \(CEC\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> [New York City Council Participatory Budgeting 2024 \(pbnyc.org\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Guidelines - New York City Council Participatory Budgeting 2024 \(pbnyc.org\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [1. Idea Generation - The People's Money \(2023-2024\) - NYC Civic Engagement Commission \(CEC\)](#)

- The People’s Money CANNOT fund:
      - Ideas for capital projects which involve the construction, reconstruction, acquisition, or installation of a physical public improvement, with a value of \$50,000 or more. This may include everything from buying garbage trucks to reconstructing bridges to building housing.
      - Ideas that break New York City laws, spread hate or unfair treatment.
      - Projects that add to a city agency’s headcount, such as hiring more police officers or sanitation workers.
- Eligible Participants
  - PBNYC & The People’s Money: All New Yorkers, ages 11 or up, regardless of immigration status, will have the opportunity to vote to fund projects in their borough and/or neighborhood. Residents will enter their zip codes to determine the ballot they receive<sup>14</sup>
- Annual PBP Timeframe
  - PBNYC
    - October-November: Idea Collection and Volunteer Recruitment
    - November-February: Proposal Development
    - April: GOTV and Vote Week
    - May-June: Evaluation and Planning
  - The People’s Money<sup>15</sup>
    - 09/19/2022 - 11/18/2022 Idea Generation
    - 11/19/2022 - 02/24/2023 Project Evaluation
    - 05/10/2023 - 06/25/2023 Citywide Voting
    - 06/26/2023 - 06/30/2024 Project Implementation
- Project Evaluation Mechanisms
  - PBNYC: Winning projects are included in New York City’s upcoming fiscal year budget. Staff and stakeholders evaluate the process and oversee the implementation of winning projects by agencies.
  - The People’s Money: resident committees reviewed and evaluated projects that come out of the idea generation phase. They then further developed ideas into proposals and selected the final project proposals to be placed on the ballots. Ballot creation and translation
    - Assembly Committees<sup>16</sup> Every Borough and TRIE neighborhood will have its own Committee.
    - The Borough/Neighborhood Assembly Committee members will be provided with a set of criteria developed by the CEC and the Participatory

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<sup>14</sup> [How will Assembly Committee meetings work? - NYC Civic Engagement Commission \(CEC\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Participatory process phases - The People's Money \(2022-2023\) - NYC Civic Engagement Commission \(CEC\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [How will Assembly Committee meetings work? - NYC Civic Engagement Commission \(CEC\)](#)

Budgeting Advisory Committee (PBAC) to ensure the projects address equity issues, and meet the needs that residents have surfaced in Phase 1.

- Committees will hold up to 6 meetings between January and February for members to discuss the projects. They will also work with CEC staff to gather information needed to clarify the ideas put forward.
  - The organizations responsible for implementing the projects will be announced publicly by mid-October. The CEC will work closely with the implementing organizations over the course of the year to ensure they are supported, projects are effectively monitored, and are completed successfully.
- Submissions Received
    - PBNYC<sup>17</sup>
      - 2023-2024 Cycle 2,318 Ideas
    - The People’s Money<sup>18</sup>
      - 2022-2023 Cycle 2,023 ideas submitted
      - 2022-2023 Cycle Equity Neighborhoods 2,116 ideas submitted
  - Distribution Categories
    - PBNYC
      - Cycle 8 Examples<sup>19</sup>
        - Street Tree Protection Package
        - Improved Lighting for NYCHA Parks
        - Gertrude Kelly Park Pathway Repairs
        - P.S. 51 Entrance Accessibility Upgrade
        - Gertrude Kelly Park Pathway Repairs
        - P.S. 51 Entrance Accessibility Upgrade
        - Gertrude Kelly Park Pathway Repairs
        - P.S. 51 Entrance Accessibility Upgrade
    - The People’s Money<sup>20</sup>
      - Bronx - \$265,000 of funding for each project
        - Financial Literacy Classes for Youth
        - Trauma-Informed Childcare Workshops
        - Youth Life Skills Workshops
      - Brooklyn - \$250,000 of funding for each project
        - Strengthen Mental Health Programs for 9-13 Year Olds
        - Parenting Education Program for Single and Teen Parents
        - Field Trips for Elementary and Middle Schoolers

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<sup>17</sup> [New York City Council Participatory Budgeting 2024 \(pbnyc.org\)](https://pbnyc.org)

<sup>18</sup> [1. Idea Generation - The People's Money \(2022-2023\) - NYC Civic Engagement Commission \(CEC\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Cycle 8 Results - Participatory Budgeting \(nyc.gov\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> [3. Voting - The People's Money \(2022-2023\) - NYC Civic Engagement Commission \(CEC\)](#)



- Delivery of Nutritious Meals for Homebound Seniors
- Manhattan - \$262,500 of funding for each project
  - Trade Skills and Vocational Resources for Students
  - Housing Resource Outreach
- Queens - \$280,000 of funding for each project
  - Healthy Lifestyle Guidance for Kids
  - Parent Support and Wellness Services
  - Young Entrepreneurs Program
- Staten Island - \$177,000 of funding
  - Staten Island Job Link

## Durham, NC

- History
  - Adopted in 2018 and currently on it's third participatory budget cycle, Durham is the second city in North Carolina to adopt a version of the PB process<sup>21</sup>.
- Current Allocation
  - Initial "Cycle 1" FY 2019-2020: \$2.4 million
- Eligible Projects<sup>22</sup>
  - Cycle 3: One-time projects are projects with one-time expenditures that address a community need. Projects can be built on City, Durham Housing Authority, and private land, upon donation. "One-time projects" may include physical infrastructure, technological improvements, and community enhancements. "One-time projects" may have some sort of associated operating cost. However, they do not require the City to hire additional staff. Monetary donations will not be considered. Before projects are put before a public vote, they must be reviewed by the City Manager, City Staff, and the Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee to ensure they meet all legal requirements. Examples of "one-time projects" include park improvements, computers for a community center, bus shelters, and bike-lanes.
- Eligible Participants<sup>23</sup>
  - All Durham residents 13 and older could vote at sites across the city as well as
  - online regardless of voter registration status or immigration status.
- Annual PBP Timeframe
  - Fall 2018 Phase One – Idea Collection
  - Spring 2019 Phase Two – Proposal Development
  - May 2019 Phase Three – Voting
  - Fall 2019 Phase Four – Implementation

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<sup>21</sup> [PB Durham Cycle 1](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Participatory Budgeting | Durham, NC \(durhamnc.gov\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> [PB Durham Cycle 1](#)

- Project Evaluation Mechanisms
  - A 15-member Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee (PBSC) was appointed by the Durham City Council. This committee was comprised of individuals who are representative of the community in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, profession, age, and ability. Each member of the committee committed to serve a two-year term and assist in educating citizens regarding PB, getting citizens involved and excited about participating with the process, and guiding improvements to the process.
  - Budget Facilitators led volunteers over Budget Delegate Committees and ensured that budget delegates evaluated proposed projects based on community need, impact, and feasibility within the allotted proposal development phase.
  - City of Durham Internal Staff Committee This 14-member team represents the various City departments that were relevant to proposed ideas or project classification areas. These individuals worked primarily during the proposal development phase by assisting with cost estimates for project proposals, offering technical support, vetting projects with budget delegates that ensured increased effectiveness proposal development. City staff also ensured the timeliness and transparency of project evaluation.
  - Community Stakeholders & Partners Nine project sponsors provided input on the development of project proposals. These groups assembled committee meetings, increased awareness of the PB process and encourages their involvement. The community stakeholders also helped to evaluate the process.
- Submissions Received
  - 2018-2020 “Cycle 1”: 517
- Distribution Categories
  - Ward 1
    - LGBTQ Youth Center \$ 37,767.00
    - Technology for DPS \$ 134,784.00
    - Accessible Ramps \$ 56,650.00
    - Ward 1 STEM & Entrepreneurship Program \$ 99,121.00
    - Bus Shelters with Reclaimed Art & Solar Panels \$ 131,919
    - Street Trees 231 \$ 67,980
    - Historic Monuments (Fayetteville St.) \$ 89,702
    - ADA Equipment (Drew Granby) \$ 79,310
  - Ward 2
    - Technology for DPS \$ 134,787
    - Accessible Ramps \$ 56,650.00
    - Bus Shelters on Fayetteville \$ 158,620
    - DHA Lighting & Security Cameras \$ 113,300.00
    - LGBTQ Youth Center \$ 37,767
    - Bus Shelters with Reclaimed Art & Solar Panels \$ 131,919

- Ward 3
  - Ward 3: El Futuro \$ 96,168
  - Technology for DPS \$ 134,784
  - LGBTQ Youth Center \$ 37,767
  - Bus Shelters with Reclaimed Art & Solar Panels \$ 131,919
  - Accessible Ramps \$ 56,650.00
  - The Life Center \$ 145,991
  - DHA Lighting & Security Cameras \$ 57,783
  - Belmont Park Improvements \$ 124,630

## **Denver, CO**

- History: Program development began with [Participatory Budgeting Project 2017 Briefing](#) and resulted in development of a [Community Guidebook](#) that was used to facilitate the initial program cycle.
- Current Allocation: \$2 million (currently \$1 million for 2023. Mayor commits \$1 million for 24 and 25<sup>24</sup>)
- Eligible Projects: Neighborhood Improvement Projects / Infrastructure Funding
- Annual Timeframe: 7+ months
- Evaluation Mechanisms<sup>25</sup>:
  - City staff feasibility review conducted (does it fit guidelines, is it feasible to build)
  - Budget delegates (Community Steering committee) assess and rank feasible projects based on established criteria<sup>26</sup>
  - Top ideas are developed into formal budget proposals (23 formal proposals drafted across 4 ballot areas)
  - Participatory Budgeting Vetting Guide<sup>27</sup>
  - Project Evaluation Matrix<sup>28</sup>
- Submissions Received: 1,100
- Distribution Categories<sup>29</sup>
  - \$1 million - Citywide Ballot
  - \$400,000 – Far Northeast Ballot
  - \$300,000 – East Central Ballot
  - \$300,000 – East Ballot

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<sup>24</sup> [Mayor's Budget Letter to Council, 2023 \(denvergov.org\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Denver PB - Idea Collection FAQs | Denver PB: Idea Collection | Rise Together Denver](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Community Steering Committee FAQs | Denver PB: Community Steering Committee | Rise Together Denver](#)

<sup>27</sup> [Durham PB Vetting Guide .pdf \(d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net\)](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Durham PB Vetting Guide .pdf \(d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net\)](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Denver Participatory Budgeting | Rise Together Denver](#)

## Burnsville, MN

- Program Development
  - May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023
    - Introduction and comprehensive research presentation into participatory budgeting.
  - June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023
    - Expert testimony on participatory budgeting
  - August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023
    - Public comments and discussion on participatory budgeting
  - September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Governance Meeting<sup>30</sup>
    - Council consensus was to move forward with a pilot participatory budgeting program Depending on your direction, staff will provide a menu of options for further consideration, including:
      - Expectations and timeline
      - Roles and responsibilities
      - Impact of investment
  - Staff continue to engage the community and funding for the program would be determined as part of the 2025 budget process and he anticipated it would be approximately an 18-month process to develop.

## **Equity Components of Participatory Budgeting**

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The Participatory Budgeting Project notes that the participatory budgeting process “deepens democracy, builds stronger communities, and creates a more equitable distribution of public resources”<sup>31</sup>. Many cities implementing a participatory budgeting process have noted how they have pursued the use of an equitable lens on the process to ensure that funds can be distributed in a manner that is both accessible and impactful to marginalized communities. This is evident in both New York City’s “Equity Neighborhoods” component that goes beyond what is distributed to the larger boroughs themselves and in the city of Durham, North Carolina shifting its participatory budgeting “Cycle 3” to move away from the City Council Ward System to leverage an asset map that supports using an equity lens to determine priorities.

A toolkit for evaluating participatory budgeting developed by the non-profit Public Agenda in collaboration with the Participatory Budgeting Project. This toolkit identifies a number of factors that should be considered when trying to gather data to evaluate the effectiveness and success of a participatory budgeting program. A subset of this toolkit focuses on how to best measure program success regarding equity and is further divided into equity of access and equity of outcomes. The

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<sup>30</sup> [City of Burnsville - Meeting Information \(civicweb.net\)](#)

<sup>31</sup> [Learn About PB - Participatory Budgeting Project](#)

following toolkit examples serve as a framework to inform best practices adopted by a city or an independent evaluator to examine and measure equity and inclusion components of a participatory budget program<sup>32</sup>:

- Number and percentage of participants who are of low socioeconomic status (SES) and/or people of color; and relative to demographics in the jurisdiction and in the most recent local election.
  - This metric indicates PB's potential to engage communities that are marginalized in the traditional political process.
  - Additional demographic questions: Some local evaluators have included additional demographic questions on their idea collection participant and voter surveys to assess participation of traditionally marginalized communities, including questions about their primary language use, country of origin, etc. (For example, these questions were included on idea collection participant and voter surveys in Cambridge 2014-15, Long Beach 2014-15, PBNYC 2014-15 and Chicago 2014-15.) The Additional Demographic Questions for PB Participant Surveys document in the Library of Additional Participatory Budgeting Research Instruments includes examples of these questions.
- Accessibility indicators for idea collection phase, project development phase and voting.
  - A list of variables that captures aspects of the process implementation that increase access during the idea collection phase, the project development phase and the voting phase.
  - Additional accessibility measures: Some local evaluators have used additional accessibility measures in the past, such as whether or not idea collection events had language translation, child care, food, transportation, etc. (For example, PBNYC 2014-15 used an idea collection event observation sheet that included these and other questions.) The Event Observation Sheets included in the Library of Additional Participatory Budgeting Research Instruments include these measures.
- Allocation of PB funds by project type (to be compared with the allocation of comparable funds prior to PB).
  - This metric describes how PB funds get allocated across types of projects. It is one step toward studying differences in the allocation of funds through PB compared with traditional methods of allocation and one step toward considering equity in the distribution of PB funds. The metric can also highlight differences between the distribution of ballot items across project types and the distribution of winning projects across project types (e.g., are winning projects representative of the distribution of projects that are on the ballot or not?).
  - Analyzing spatial equity: Another way to think about project diversity and equity is to consider where in the community projects are located and whether the location benefits some community members more than others. Such a spatial equity project

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<sup>32</sup> [01-Public-Agenda-PB-Metrics.pdf \(publicagenda.org\)](#)

would use geographers' and planners' tools to estimate characteristics of the population most likely to benefit from the project. That can then be compared with spatial analyses of projects funded prior to PB or with projects funded in matched comparison districts/cities/counties. Such data collection efforts are, however, beyond the scope of the key metrics.

While the toolkit focuses on measuring impact at the individual level, the City of Durham provides budget delegates with a "Project Evaluation Matrix" that is used to evaluate a projects impact at the neighborhood level using the criteria of impact, equity, and feasibility. Specific to evaluation of equity, the matrix outlines several components that can be used to determine "how do we know if a project advances equity?"<sup>33</sup>:

- Similar projects have been implemented by the local government and its partner agencies.
- The project meets eligibility criteria for PB funding.
- The project cost is above \$50,000 or below \$800,000 based on the elements identified during community research and validation of cost with government and stakeholders.
- The related government department has stated that the project is feasible.
- There are little or no legal barriers to implement the project.
- The public agency or community organization that is participating has stated it is feasible and provided an agreement with local government.

What is demonstrated by the toolkit and matrix is that there are a range of approaches that can be employed at various stages of a program to measure equitable impact or outcomes. While the matrix is employed at a specific stage of the process, the toolkit reinforces that any measurement of a participatory budget programs impact requires a 360-degree evaluation of each stage in the program lifecycle. While meeting equitable engagement goals on the front end of a process is a positive step, the true impact can be minimized if you are unable to determine an equitable impact of outcomes from projects that were ultimately funded. Further, the toolkit reinforces the importance of understanding the correlation vs causation component so that outcomes aren't misinterpreted through confirmation bias. Once you have some measurement of the spatial equity impact of projects, you then can compare that data to projects completed outside of the participatory budget process or through comparing outcomes from similar cohort groups in other cities to determine if there is a causal relationship between the participatory budget process and the outcomes being measured.

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<sup>33</sup> [Durham PROJECT EVALUATION MATRIX](#)

## Additional Considerations and Next Steps

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Consideration of developing a formal participatory budget process requires that a thorough review of both existing and potential resources that a city is willing to allocate to the process. A report from the Brennan Center for Justice notes that, while there can be significant upside, participatory budgeting programs can also face numerous barriers to both genuine success and perceived success including<sup>34</sup>:

- failing to fully empower residents by keeping too much control in the hands of city government;
- not providing enough project funding to generate excitement among residents;
- not providing funding to hire dedicated staff, thus requiring government staff to run PB on top of existing job responsibilities;
- placing tight restrictions on the types of projects allowed by PB and enforcing these restrictions rigidly; and
- encouraging residents to believe that PB would have a transformative effect, leading to disillusionment when outcomes were more modest.

This report is intended to serve as an opening step in any potential future participatory budgeting process or discussion. Should this subject continue moving forward, there are a number of options that could merit consideration.

- Conduct a more focused and narrow review of program specifics to compare external example(s) to existing City resources.
- Determine any potential for promoting or expanding any existing City programs that operate in capacities similar to participatory budgeting.
- Similar to the 2017 budget request, consider what a formal “proposal” for a participatory budget program would look like for the City.
- Conduct listening or engagement sessions to gauge resident enthusiasm for, and answer questions related to, participatory budgeting.

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<sup>34</sup> [Making Participatory Budgeting Work: Experiences on the Front Lines | Brennan Center for Justice](#)

