City of Sacramento
Measure U Community Advisory Committee Report
915 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814
www.cityofsacramento.org

File ID: 2022-02462 3/20/2023 **Discussion Item 6.**

Findings and Recommendations of the Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program Evaluation Report

File ID: 2022-02462

Location: Citywide

Recommendation: 1) Receive the Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program Evaluation Report (Evaluation Report); 2) discuss the Evaluation Report's findings and recommendations; and 3) pass a **Motion:** a) accepting the Evaluation Report, and b) forwarding the Evaluation Report to City Council for consideration.

Contact: Ash Roughani, Special Projects Manager, (916) 808-7751, aroughani@cityofsacramento.org, Office of the City Manager

Presenter: Ari Eisenstadt, Senior Researcher; Ellen Kimball, Director, Third Plateau

Attachments:
1-Description/Analysis
2-Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program Evaluation Report

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: On June 15, 2021, City Council adopted the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 Approved Budget. The Approved Budget allocated up to $1 million in Measure U funds for residents to propose ideas and vote on proposals that may be funded through a Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program (PB Pilot). Separately, $250,000 was made available for administrative activities to support the PB Pilot process.

At the conclusion of the Idea Collection phase on May 31, 2022, the City received a total of 550 ideas. Beginning in June, proposal delegates evaluated and ranked the ideas submitted, and developed the highest scoring ideas into 21 total project concepts for placement on the North (8 projects) and South Area (13 projects) ballots. Residents of the North or South focus areas were able to vote for their preferred project concepts from October 12 through November 11, 2022. The vote

results and list of winning project concepts were announced by the City on December 15, 2022 and comprise the following:

North Area Winning Projects

- **Neighborhood Cleanup Grants ($60,000):** Funding for community groups to fund cleanup events around the Old North Sacramento/Gardenland/Del Paso Heights areas.
- **Work and Mentoring Programs For Northeast Sacramento Youth ($100,000):** Funding for organizations to implement youth development programs, including vocational skills training and mentorship.
- **A Second Chance Career Opportunity for the Youth ($200,000):** Funding for a three-month summer job/internship that provides work experience in a trade or computer skills for youth 17 to 22 years of age.
- **Garden and Farmers Market ($140,000):** Funding to support a mobile farmers market program that offers affordable food, cooking classes and community education to community members.

South Area Winning Projects

- **Teaching Tech ($100,000):** Funding for in-school and afterschool digital skills training that teaches students how to code, design and educate.
- **Additional Literacy Support for Elementary Students ($100,000):** Funding for literacy programs that assist students in multiple grades who are behind in reading ability.
- **South Sacramento Entrepreneurial and Career Academy ($125,000):** Funding for youth and adult entrepreneurship training in South Sacramento.
- **Transportation Van for Underserved and Unhoused Youth in Oak Park ($75,000):** Funding to purchase a van and provide free and reliable transportation services for underserved students to access learning opportunities.
- **Beautify Sacramento ($75,000):** Funding for trash receptacles and pick-ups along streets of Sacramento in the vicinity of Meadowview/Mack Road.
- **Sacramento Area Homeless Services Event 2023 ($25,000):** Funding for a one-time event for people experiencing homelessness to receive services and enjoy food, music and community in a safe place.

City staff is developing an application process to identify organizations that may be funded to implement the winning projects. As decided by the Committee, a selection panel consisting of an equal number of proposal delegates and Committee members will choose the implementing organizations. Staff anticipates that the implementing organizations will be identified by April 2023.

The attached Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program Evaluation Report was prepared by the City's

consultant, Third Plateau. The independent report covers the phases of the process from development of the Playbook through the conclusion of voting, and includes: 1) an evaluation of the PB Pilot's intended outcomes and the degree to which they were achieved; 2) cross-cutting challenges identified during the PB Pilot process; and 3) recommendations for future implementation consideration.

Short-term Outcomes

Third Plateau found that, generally, the process successfully achieved the following short-term outcomes:

1. Participants gained knowledge about the budgeting process;
2. Council members learned about residents' priorities and concerns; and,
3. Winning projects are likely to benefit historically underinvested communities beginning in the second half of 2023.

Cross-cutting Challenges

Third Plateau identified four cross-cutting challenges that negatively impacting the process:

- **Lack of role clarity.** It was frequently unclear who should be responsible for making decisions and completing specific work components.
- **Unclear facilitation and communication.** Measure U Committee members and proposal delegates were often confused about the purpose of Playbook and Proposal Development sessions led by the City's implementation consultant, as well as what role they were expected to play and how decisions would be made.
- **Lack of guidance about existing funding sources and projects.** Proposal delegates frequently expressed frustration about the lack of clarity regarding existing funding sources and City projects already funded while attempting to rank ideas and develop proposals.
- **Unrealistic timelines.** Participants shared that the initial pilot timeline was highly unrealistic, given the time needed to hire local outreach staff, conduct outreach, educate residents about the process, and develop proposals for the ballot - ultimately taking seven months longer than projected.

Recommendations

Based on its findings, Third Plateau offers the following recommendations for Measure U Committee and City Council consideration, should the City decide to implement PB in the future:

- **Institutionalize the process.** In other cities where PB is employed, the process is most often led by a heavily-involved steering committee made up of City staff and community members.

This group has full decision-making power and is responsible for the implementation of PB. In order to clarify roles and decision-making responsibilities, Third Plateau recommends that the City take ownership of future iterations of PB while applying the lessons learned from this pilot.

- **Create clearer rules and structures.** The pilot highlighted multiple instances where the Playbook lacked important clarity on rules and processes, leading to confusion and frustration among participants. Third Plateau recommends that the Playbook be revised to address these omissions, particularly by clarifying roles and responsibilities of all parties, setting a realistic timeline, and clarifying relevant City policies, such as conflicts of interest and whether ideas already addressed within the current City budget should be eligible for funding.
- **Scaffold the process.** The PB process seeks to engage residents who have not historically engaged in or been well served by City processes. During the pilot, however, many of these same residents felt confused by the process and what was expected of them. In order to lead a truly inclusive process, Third Plateau recommends that facilitators understand the information needs of their audience and dedicate time and resources to ensure adequate context is provided, technology is accessible, and individual support is available for participants.

The full Evaluation Report is included as Attachment 2 to this staff report.

Policy Considerations: City Council Resolution 2018-0393, adopted October 2, 2018, specifies that a primary power and duty of the Committee is to, “work with City staff on community engagement with respect to the Transactions and Use Tax.” On February 16, 2021, the City Council adopted Resolution 2021-0044, which formally established the Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program. Council subsequently approved Resolution 2022-0284 on August 23, 2022 that authorizes a funding allocation process for winning projects and requires the City Manager to implement and enforce the Proposal Delegate Conflict of Interest Policy.

Economic Impacts: None.

Environmental Considerations: None.

Sustainability: None.

Commission/Committee Action: None.

Rationale for Recommendation: The Measure U Committee requested the opportunity to receive and discuss the Evaluation Report prior to being forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

Financial Considerations: Not applicable.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): None.

City of Sacramento Participatory Budgeting Evaluation Report

January 2023

Executive Summary

Overview

Between September 2021 and November 2022, the City of Sacramento (the City) piloted the use of Participatory Budgeting (PB) to determine how a portion ($1M) of funds from Measure U would be spent. The goals of the pilot were to increase resident involvement in the allocation of funds within their neighborhoods, increase City understanding of residents' needs and desires, and to advance equity. The pilot had four phases – Playbook Development, Outreach and Idea Collection, Proposal Development, and Voting – and the process involved hundreds of city residents, community-based organizations, the Measure U Community Advisory Committee, City staff, City Council members, and the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP), the contracted technical assistance and implementation partner. In November 2022, 853 voters selected ten projects to receive funding. A panel of twelve community members will select organizations to implement the projects through an open competitive solicitation process in early 2023.

In August 2021, the Measure U Community Advisory Committee selected Third Plateau to evaluate the pilot. The purpose of this evaluation is to describe the results of each phase, analyze the extent to which the desired outcomes of the process were achieved, and provide recommendations for future iterations of PB in Sacramento.

Key Takeaways

From the beginning, participants acknowledged that, as a pilot, the process would yield vital lessons to inform future iterations. This was certainly true, and while the challenges that arose throughout significantly impacted the pilot, they also illuminated several clear steps to improve the process in the future.

Outcomes: Interviews prior to the start of the pilot surfaced three main outcomes that the Measure U Committee hoped the process would achieve. The first was that **residents who have not historically engaged with government processes would be engaged, particularly through increased knowledge of the City budgeting process** through their participation in the pilot. Surveys and interviews indicated that this outcome was achieved for the 34 residents who were heavily involved as Proposal Delegates, but evidence was only suggestive of this outcome for residents who engaged less intensively with the process by submitting ideas or voting. The second outcome was that **members of City Council would learn about the needs and interests of residents** through the process. The PB process produced significant data on residents' needs and interests in the form of submitted ideas, project proposals, and the final vote to select projects. Submitted ideas most commonly focused on parks,

homelessness, youth programming, and road maintenance. City Council members, along with other City staff and elected representatives, reviewed and reflected on these data, indicating that this outcome was achieved. The final desired outcome of the process was the **advancement of equity**. With the explicit aim of centering the needs of historically underinvested communities, it was decided that only projects that served two high-needs geographic focus areas within the City would be eligible for funding, and only residents with a connection to those neighborhoods were eligible to participate as delegates and vote. Ultimately, process participants roughly demographically approximated the population of the focus areas, and selected projects focused on youth development and job training, community beautification, literacy, and food access. Consequently, residents of the two neighborhoods directly made decisions about how one million dollars in funding would be allocated to benefit their communities – a concrete advancement of equity as a result of the process.

Cross-cutting Challenges: Throughout the 15-month pilot, four challenges surfaced repeatedly across phases, negatively impacting the process:

- **Lack of role clarity.** It was frequently unclear who should be responsible for making decisions and completing specific work components. Interviews identified multiple instances when PBP, the Measure U Ad Hoc Committee, and City staff felt another party was better positioned to or should have been responsible for making decisions or carrying the work forward. This confusion was occasionally discussed but ineffectively addressed, leading to confusion throughout;
- **Unclear facilitation and communication.** Measure U Ad Hoc Committee members and proposal delegates were often confused about the purpose of Playbook and Proposal Development sessions led by PBP, as well as what role they were expected to play and how decisions would be made. This poor facilitation and communication created tension between the Ad Hoc Committee and PBP, and led to a negative experience for many proposal delegates, and a feeling that the City and PBP had not been honest with them about the process;
- **Lack of guidance about existing funding sources and projects.** Another cross-cutting challenge was the lack of guidance about existing funding sources and City projects, particularly the extent to which the PB process should seek to avoid funding projects that fell within existing City budgets or to support projects already underway. Proposal delegates frequently expressed frustration about this lack of clarity while attempting to rank ideas and develop proposals; and
- **Unrealistic timelines.** Finally, the vast majority of participants shared that the initial pilot timeline was highly unrealistic, given the time needed to hire local outreach staff, conduct outreach, educate residents about the process, and develop proposals for the ballot. The process fell behind its initial timeline from

the outset, and lagged further and further over the course of the process, ultimately taking seven months longer than projected.

Recommendations: Should the City decide to implement PB in the future, we recommend the following overall action steps:

- **Institutionalize the process.** In other cities where PB is employed, the process is most often led by a heavily-involved steering committee made up of City staff and community members. This group has full decision-making power and is responsible for the implementation of PB. In order to clarify roles and decision-making responsibilities, we recommend that the City take ownership of future iterations of PB while applying the lessons learned from this pilot;
- **Create clearer rules and structures.** The pilot highlighted multiple instances where the Playbook lacked important clarity on rules and processes, leading to confusion and frustration among participants. We recommend the Playbook be revised to address these omissions, particularly by clarifying roles and responsibilities of all parties, setting a realistic timeline, and clarifying relevant City policies, such as conflicts of interest and whether ideas already addressed within the current City budget should be eligible for funding; and
- **Scaffold the process.** The PB process seeks to engage residents who have not historically engaged in or been well served by City processes. During the pilot, however, many of these same residents felt confused by the process and what was expected of them. In order to lead a truly inclusive process, it is critical that facilitators understand the information needs of their audience and dedicate time and resources to ensure adequate context is provided, technology is accessible, and individual support is available for participants.

For other recommendations broken down by phase, see the Recommendations section of the full report.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 2
- Overview 2
- Key Takeaways 2

Introduction 7
- Context 7
- Process 9

Methodology 10

Findings 11
- Phase-by-Phase 11
  - Phase 1: Playbook Development (October 2021 - February 7, 2022) 11
    - Goals 11
    - Results 12
    - Challenges 14
  - Phase 2: Outreach and Idea Collection (February 7 - May 31, 2022) 14
    - Goals 14
    - Results 15
      - Outreach 15
      - Idea Collection 16
    - Challenges 20
  - Phase 3: Proposal Development (May 23 - September 12, 2022) 21
    - Goals 21
    - Results 21
      - Delegate Selection 21
      - Ballot Design 24
      - Idea Scoring 24
      - Proposal Development 27
      - Changes in Delegates 29
    - Challenges 32
  - Phase 4: The Vote (October 12 - November 11, 2022) 33
    - Goals 33
    - Results 34
      - Outreach and Engagement 34
      - Project Results 35
      - Voters 38
    - Challenges 41
- Cross-cutting Challenges 42

Conclusions 44

Recommendations 46

Appendices 50

Appendix A. Theory of Change 50
Appendix B. Methodology 51
Appendix C. Research Instruments 54
Appendix D. Selected Projects 54
Appendix E. Example Materials 58

Introduction

Context

Participatory Budgeting (PB) refers to a "democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget." PB started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989, as an anti-poverty measure that helped reduce child mortality by nearly 20%. Since then, PB has spread to over 7,000 cities around the world, and has been used to decide budgets of states, counties, cities, housing authorities, schools, and other institutions.[1]

In Sacramento, the implementation of PB was an outgrowth of Measure U, a ballot measure first approved by voters in 2012 as a temporary half-cent sales tax. In 2018, voters made the tax permanent and raised it from a half-cent to a full cent. Measure U proceeds are used to "build and bolster an inclusive economy, grow jobs and provide housing that is affordable to all."[2] The Measure U Community Advisory Committee (Measure U Committee) has 15 members appointed by the Mayor and Council members, as well as the Personnel & Public Employees Committee.[3] Since 2019, the Measure U Committee has discussed the idea of piloting a participatory budgeting process in Sacramento, using proceeds from Measure U.

While Measure U funds were targeted for inclusive economic development, members of the Measure U Committee did not believe residents most adversely affected by racial and economic disparities were given priority in the allocation of those dollars. Committee members were informed of low resident participation from lower income neighborhoods in the annual City Survey and the desire to increase engagement. The documented lower rate of response and engagement coupled with the City's increased commitment to equity and inclusion made PB an attractive strategy to increase the involvement of residents normally not engaged in local government. For these reasons, the Measure U Committee researched PB, educated Council members and others about PB and advocated for a portion of Measure U funding to support this PB pilot process.

[1] "What is PB?" Participatory Budgeting Project, Accessed: December 15, 2022, https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-is-pb/
[2] The measure was originally passed in 2012 as half cent tax, then increased to full cent in 2018.
[3] https://www.cityofsacramento.org/City-Manager/Major-Projects/MeasureU

In 2020, the Measure U Committee sought to rectify this disparity by recommending that the City Council set aside a portion of Measure U funds ($15 million) to implement PB.[4] The effort aimed to empower residents, build trust between citizens and City leadership, and build budgets that reflect and align with the community's values.[5] Over the course of the following year and a half, City Council eventually allocated $1 million in Measure U funds toward a PB pilot program in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 Approved Budget. Additional funding was requested and approved for securing an implementation partner and a separate evaluation partner. The role of the implementation partner was to "collaborate with the Measure U Community Advisory Committee, community members, local groups, and City's Office of Innovation and Economic Development," to "co-design the process," and "offer support to implement the process across each phase." The evaluator role was to "evaluate City's Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program… [helping the] City learn what did and did not work, and how the PB Pilot might be improved in future iterations."[6] The Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) was selected to be the implementation partner, and Third Plateau was selected as the evaluator.

The Measure U Committee formed a Participatory Budgeting Ad Hoc Committee (Ad Hoc Committee) to oversee the implementation of PB. The Ad Hoc Committee was made up of the following Measure U members:[7]

- Cathy Creswell;
- Dana Kivel;
- Debra Oto-Kent;
- Gina Lujan;
- Kim Williams;
- Noel Mora;
- Tracy Thomas.

Overall, the pilot process sought to achieve three main outcome categories, shown here with their corresponding short-term outcomes.

[4] https://sacramento.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=22&clip_id=4707&meta_id=597529
[5] https://sacramento.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=59&clip_id=4660&meta_id=589763
[6] Participatory Budgeting Project Contract with the City of Sacramento, Third Plateau Contract with the City of Sacramento
[7] Gina Lujan's time on the Measure U Committee ended midway through the PB Pilot. Noel Mora and Tracy Thomas joined the committee after the development of the playbook, and Tracy Thomas left the committee after a few meetings.

Figure 1. City of Sacramento Participatory Budgeting Short-term Outcomes

Outcome category	Short-term outcome
Resident engagement with government	Participants gain knowledge about the budgeting process
Government knowledge of residents	Council members learn about residents' priorities and concerns
Advancement of equity	Projects benefit historically underinvested communities

For the full theory of change for the pilot process, including activities and long-term outcomes, see Appendix A.

Process

The PB process took place over four phases:[8]

1. Playbook Development
2. Outreach and Idea Collection
3. Proposal Development
4. The Vote

Below is a short description of each phase.

1. Playbook Development (October 2021- February 7, 2022)

During Playbook Development, PBP worked with the Measure U Ad Hoc Committee to determine the rules for how the process would run. The Playbook was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee and representatives from various City departments, and ratified by the entire Measure U Committee. These rules included the geographic focus areas, participation eligibility, and project eligibility.

2. Outreach and Idea Collection (February 7- May 31, 2022)

Outreach involved the selection of six community-based organizations (mini-grantees) to each receive $5,000 to reach out to community members in their networks and encourage them to participate in the process.[9] Mini-grantees used social media, email, one-to-one outreach, and public events to encourage community members to submit

[8] The playbook for the process does not include Outreach as a phase. We choose to do so in this report given the difference in activities during that period of time and its relevance to the process. The playbook includes Project Implementation and Monitoring as a separate phase after the Vote. We have excluded that phase from this report as it is outside the scope of our evaluation.

[9] A budget was included in the implementation partner budget to engage and pay local CBOs with trust and history working with residents in the two primary areas for the pilot process to extend outreach, education, reach; collect ideas and encourage voting.

ideas, participate as delegates, and vote. City staff, Council members, and Measure U Committee members also supported outreach. Starting on April 11, 2022, PBP and mini-grantees distributed physical and online forms to community members to submit ideas for the PB process. Anyone in Sacramento was eligible to submit an idea for consideration. Community members from the focus areas were also invited to apply to be a *Proposal Delegate*, someone who agreed to work with other delegates to convert ideas into ballot proposals.

3. **Proposal Development (May 23 - September 12, 2022)**

During Proposal Development, PBP guided Proposal Delegates through the process of organizing and consolidating ideas, deciding which to turn into proposals, and developing these into the proposals listed on the final ballot. Delegates also made key decisions about ballot design (e.g., total project size, number of projects that would appear on the ballot).

4. **The Vote (October 12 - November 11, 2022)**

The Vote was an opportunity for residents of the focus areas to vote on the developed project proposals in order to select winners for funding. Mini-grantees, City staff, City Council members, and Measure U Committee members encouraged community member participation, and voting was conducted both in-person and digitally.

Methodology

Figure 2 describes the methods Third Plateau employed to evaluate the pilot process, broken down by phase.

Figure 2. Evaluation Methodology

Phase	Method(s)
1. Playbook Development	Observation
2. Outreach	Observation Media monitoring
3. Idea Collection	Observation Idea submission survey (n = 508, 100% of submissions)[10]
4. Proposal Development	Observation Pre- and post- surveys for proposal delegates (n = 46 (pre), 21 (post)) Proposal delegate focus group (n = 13)
5. The Vote	Observation Voter survey (n = 267, 31% of voters)
Process-wide	City Council interviews (n = 1)[11] Ad Hoc Committee focus group (n = 1) City Staff Interview (n=1) PBP interview (n = 2)

For a full description of the methodology, see Appendix B. Methodology, and for links to research instruments, see Appendix C. Research Instruments.

Findings

The following section contains findings laid out for each phase of the process. For each phase, we have chosen to describe the specific challenges that impacted that phase. We have also identified and described four cross-cutting challenges that significantly impacted the entire pilot on page 35.

Phase-by-Phase

Phase 1: Playbook Development (October 2021 - February 7, 2022)

Goals

The goal of the Playbook Development phase was to create a living document (the Playbook) which comprehensively outlined the rules and processes for the pilot.

[10] There are different sample sizes for different questions on the survey, and some people submitted multiple ideas. There were 550 ideas submitted.
[11] Third Plateau reached out to both Councilmember Loloee and Councilmember Vang with the request to complete an interview. Councilmember Loloee agreed to an interview.

Results

PBP facilitated the Playbook development phase, seeking to guide the Ad Hoc Committee through the process of making decisions about Playbook elements.

In the end, the following parties contributed to Playbook Development:

- Measure U Ad Hoc Committee members;
- Measure U Committee members;
- PBP;
- City Council members' staff;
- Sacramento's Mayor and his staff;
- The City's Special Projects Manager; and
- A representative from the Neighborhood Development Action Team. [12]

In our assessment, the Ad Hoc Committee, with approval from the broader Measure U Committee, made six decisions that had significant impact on how the process unfolded:

1. *Geographic focus*

While the goal for the process was to increase equity, there was no direction about what doing so entailed. In a discussion facilitated by PBP, the Ad Hoc Committee determined that an acceptable way to target PB funds for this purpose would be to focus on geographic areas in the City with high concentrations of marginalized or vulnerable populations. PBP compiled a list using census, Healthy Places Index, and Community Vulnerability Index data to identify the most in-need neighborhoods, which PBP and the Ad Hoc Committee then prioritized.[13] Ad Hoc and Measure U Committee members then edited the list to add neighborhoods they understood to be high needs, even if the data from the indices did not fully align, and to remove neighborhoods that were largely commercial rather than residential.

Given the locations of the neighborhoods, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to split the funding evenly between two areas, each encompassing various neighborhoods high up on the list.[14]

---

[12] The team is a collaboration between City departments and partner agencies, led by the Office of Innovation and Economic Development and the Planning Division, and committed to ensuring Sacramento's neighborhoods and commercial districts reflect a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy.

[13] These indices take into account the following factors: health insurance coverage, education, gross rent percentage of income, poverty, unemployment, disability status, and percent non-white population.

[14] For an interactive map of the focus areas, see: https://saccity.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=6f4e09417d214c009a910fdf2a724edb

2. *Lengthened outreach timeline*

The original timeline for the process specified that outreach would last from November to December 2021. Ad Hoc Committee members decided to lengthen this process in order to address delays in Playbook Development and provide enough time for community engagement and outreach to ensure community members in the focus areas were aware of the pilot. This was one of the first of numerous delays in the process, which eventually resulted in not having final project votes by the beginning of the City's FY2022-23 budgeting process.

3. *Participant eligibility*

The Ad Hoc Committee compromised about participant eligibility, ultimately deciding to allow any Sacramento resident to submit ideas, but only those who lived, worked, attended school, or acted as the guardian of someone who attended school in the focus areas to vote. The rationale for this was to seek inspiration from as wide a group of people as possible, but to limit decision-making to those who would be impacted by those decisions. Notably, the Ad Hoc Committee decided not to include formal residence verification in either the idea collection nor voting phases.[15]

4. *Project eligibility*

Per PBP's guidance, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to permit both programmatic and capital project expenditures, leaving maximum flexibility for idea submissions. This led delegates to have to compare vastly different types of projects (e.g., infrastructure construction vs. youth programming).

5. *Simple voting system*

While other voting approaches were suggested, the Ad Hoc Committee ultimately decided it was best to choose the simplest approach to voting – approval voting. Specifically, voters were asked to select a certain number of projects (determined by proposal delegates for each area based on the number of projects or "proposals" appearing on the ballot for that area). The projects receiving the most votes were recommended for funding in order of votes received until the total funds ($500,000 for each area, respectively) were used up.

6. *Delegation of many decisions to proposal delegates*

The Ad Hoc Committee decided to leave numerous other decisions about the process to proposal delegates, figuring that delegates were closest to their communities and should have the right to make choices about how the process was run. Decisions made by proposal delegates included:

[15] As a consequence, this report does not evaluate the extent to which only residents participated in the process.

- Feasibility criteria for projects;
- The total number of proposals on the ballot;
- Maximum and minimum project size;
- Budget limits on organizations applying for funding to implement winning proposals; and
- What to do in the case of ties/insufficient funds.

Challenges

The primary challenge during this phase, one which would be repeated throughout the process, was the lack of clarity regarding roles between PBP, the Ad Hoc Committee, and the City. PBP was accustomed to processes in which an active City-led committee makes most decisions and largely runs the process, with advisory support from PBP. The Ad Hoc Committee and the City, meanwhile, envisioned a much more active role from PBP, wherein PBP would be not only facilitating but also project managing and providing strong recommendations to the Ad Hoc Committee for key process decisions. The debate and uncertainty surrounding roles created confusion and caused Playbook development to take longer than originally anticipated. In reflecting on the process of Playbook development afterward, a City employee noted that it would have been helpful to start the process with a default Playbook that listed common policies that PBP has seen prove effective in other cities. They felt this would have made the process more efficient and helped identify potential challenges that the Ad Hoc Committee did not have enough context to anticipate.

Phase 2: Outreach and Idea Collection (February 7 - May 31, 2022)

Goals

The Measure U Ad Hoc Committee outlined three goals for the Outreach step:

- Educate residents on the PB process;
- Identify community-based organization (CBO) partners for outreach; and
- Solicit applications for mini-grantees.

Neither Ad Hoc Committee members nor PBP set targets for total ideas collected. Having no target was envisaged as a way to set a baseline for future years, however Ad Hoc Committee members later described it as a flaw, as a specific target may have encouraged greater outreach from mini-grantees.

However, Ad Hoc Committee members did intend for Idea Collection to target “hard-to-reach” parts of the focus areas. These were tacitly understood and mentioned (e.g., Meadowview), but never codified into an explicit map.

Results

Outreach

Because of the multiple modes of outreach (digital, physical) taking place across multiple actors, it is impossible to know how many people were reached through outreach.[16] Instead, we offer the following summary of outreach activities.

There were four primary actors driving outreach: The City, City Council, Ad Hoc Committee Members, and mini-grantees.

The City advertised the process through its regular channels, including update emails, the City Minute newsletter,[17] social media,[18] its website,[19] a blog post,[20] a mayoral announcement,[21] and a press conference on March 10, 2022. The City also sent 64 emails that mentioned PB throughout the process, largely during Proposal Development and the Vote. The City's PB website garnered 2,725 unique pageviews across the whole process, 769 of which happened during Outreach, 812 of which happened during Idea Collection, and 799 of which happened during the Vote.

Council members whose districts included the focus areas (Vang, Loloee) also committed to doing outreach on their own. Councilmember Loloee hosted a community conversation on the topic on April 21, 2022, and Councilmember Vang tweeted about the process during Idea Collection.

Ad Hoc Committee members and their organizations also attended various community events, such as COVID-19 outreach locations, offering education and sometimes gift cards as incentives to encourage participation.[22]

---

[16] As an example of this diversity, Child Action sent emails to 15,000-person email lists, while other mini-grantees tabled at local events, where they would reach tens of residents.
[17] After May, 2022, the City Minute no longer referenced the PB process.
[18] Six tweets referenced the City website for PB during the process. No tweet received more than 10 retweets or likes.
[19] The City created a webpage devoted to the PB process: https://www.cityofsacramento.org/City-Manager/Major-Projects/MeasureU/Participatory-Budgeting
[20] City of Sacramento, "$1 Million Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program Launches in April. Here's How the Process Works." March 3, 2022, https://sacramentocityexpress.com/2022/03/03/1-million-participatory-budgeting-pilot-program-launches-in-april-heres-how-the-process-works/
[21] Mayors' Office of Civic Engagement, "Sacramento launches Participatory Budget pilot with $1 million in Measure U funds," March 10, 2022, https://engagesac.org/blog-civic-engagement/2022/3/8/f8em453459rcgj9hy6t739vqslvk15
[22] For instance, Ad Hoc Committee Members tabled at a Health is Wealth event in April. Roughly 500 people attended the event. Ad Hoc Committee Members collected ideas and helped residents understand the PB process.

The Ad Hoc Committee selected mini-grantees during the Outreach Phase. PBP hosted an information session for mini-grantee applicants, and invited 56 CBOs. Applicants were scored by PBP and selected by the Ad Hoc Committee based on applicants' connection to the focus areas, how aligned their proposed approach to outreach was with the process, the level of resources organizations already had to conduct outreach, and the proposed number of people they would reach. Six grantees were selected (two from the North Area, two from the South Area, and two city-wide), each of which were given $5,000 for their roles during both the Outreach and Voting phases.

In an orientation session, mini-grantees were trained on the general PB process, the timeline in Sacramento, and what their roles were during the process, with a focus on Outreach and Idea Collection. Mini-grantees were asked to commit to each engaging at least 500 people.[23] Mini-grantee outreach strategies included hosting educational events,[24] email newsletters,[25] social media,[26] and one-to-one outreach to community members.[27]

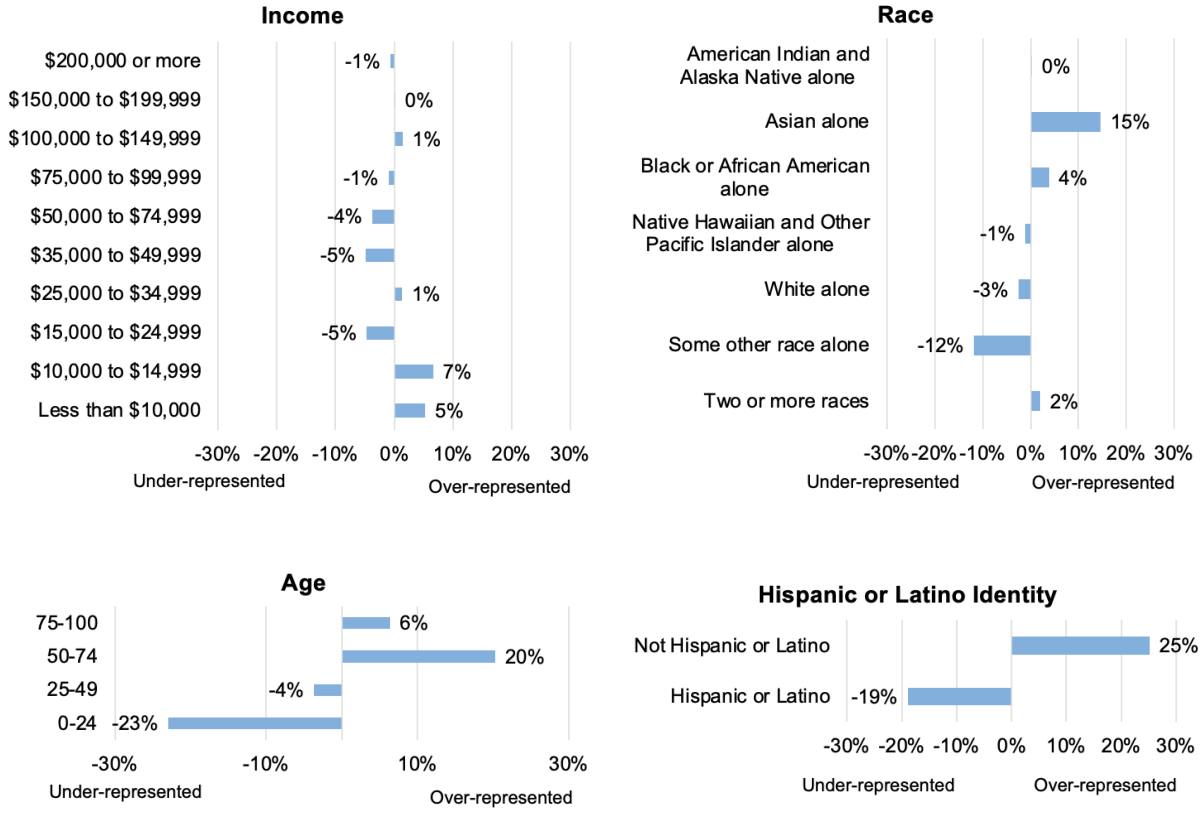
In reflecting on the outreach process, mini-grantees noted that residents were thrilled to hear about the PB process, and learning about the process offered residents an opportunity to learn about the City's budgeting process more generally. It generated excitement and interest in the budgeting process overall. Additionally, the outreach provided a forum for residents to express their frustrations about the City's budgeting process, and gave local organizations a voice they did not previously have.

Idea Collection

508 people submitted ideas during Idea Collection. By demographics, these individuals roughly approximated the population of the focus areas, with some exceptions. Youth were underrepresented, as were people who identified as Hispanic or Latino. Asian Americans were overrepresented. See the figures below for demographic representation of the participants in Idea Collection, as compared to the general population in the area.[28]

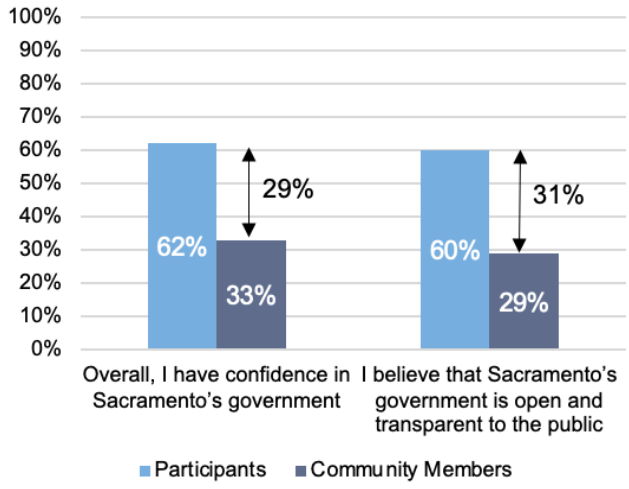
[23] Engagement was defined as having someone either submit an idea, sign up to be a delegate, or vote.
[24] For example, the Roberts Family Development Center ran events with groups from 10-25 people describing the purpose of the process and generating ideas.
[25] For instance, Child Action sent an email about the process to 15,000 residents, and another targeted email to 3,300 parents.
[26] MIni-grantees conducted limited social media outreach, opting instead largely to rely on in-person events and email.
[27] Asian Resources Inc. sat down with residents and walked them through the process, helping them fill out Idea Collection forms and translating their ideas into English.
[28] Third Plateau calculated general population statistics by summing U.S. Census data from the American Community Survey in the following Census Tracts: 27, 28, 31.02, 32.02, 32.03, 32.04, 36, 37, 41, 42.01, 42.02, 42.03, 43.01, 43.02, 44.01, 45.01, 48.01, 49.06, 49.07, 49.08, 49.09, 49.10, 55.02, 62.02, 63, 64, 65.01, 66, 67.05, 67.06, 68.01, 68.02, 68.03, 69.02, 70.01, 70.07, and 96.01. Margins of error for the calculations range from 1-2%.

Figure 3. Demographic Representation of Idea Submitters, Compared to General Population of Focus Areas



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation

Figure 4. Perceptions of Sacramento Government Among Idea Submitters, Compared to General Community Members

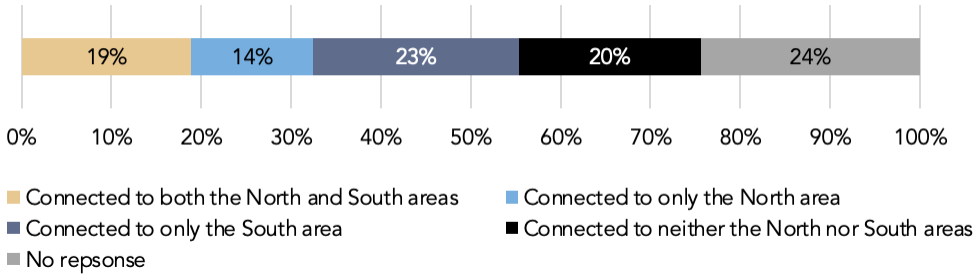


Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation and Sacramento National Community Survey Report

Idea Collection participants had higher faith in Sacramento's government than the average person in Sacramento.

Most participants lived, worked, or attended school in at least the North or South areas, though 20% had no connection.

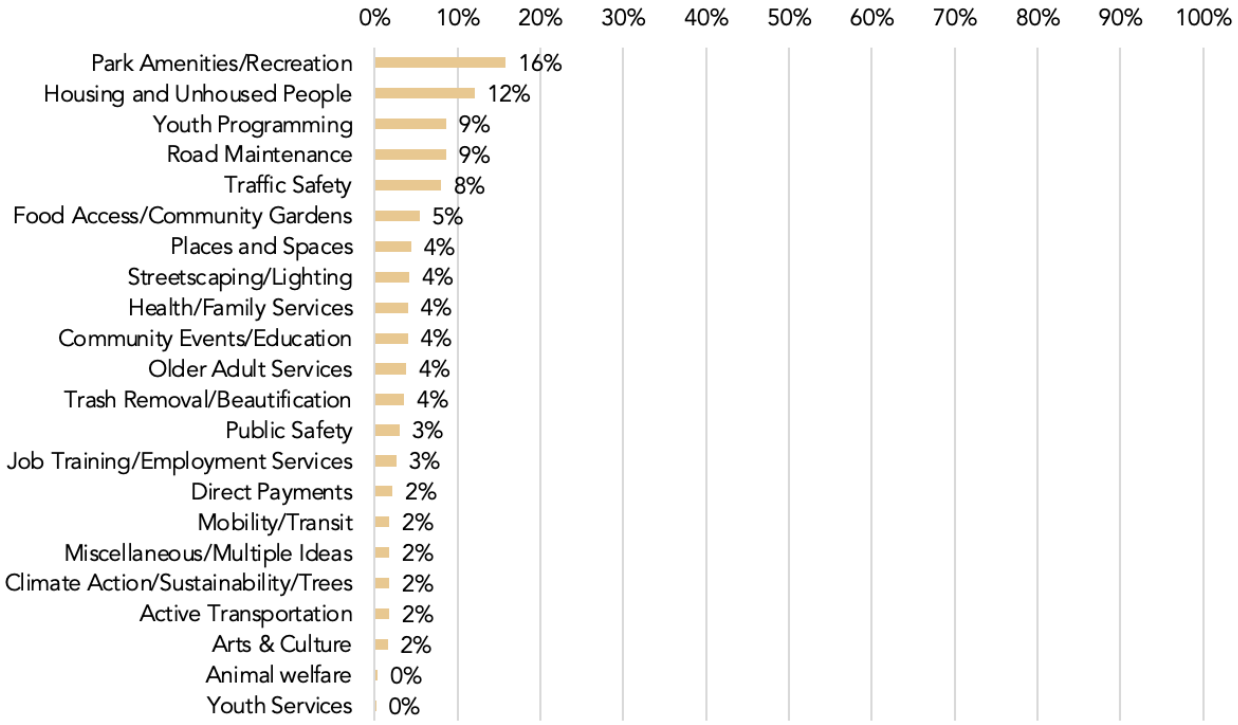
Figure 5. Connection to Focus Areas Among Idea Submitters



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation

In total, the process generated 550 ideas, spanning a wide range of issues from parks and recreation to healthcare, public safety, and arts. Ideas most commonly focused on parks and housing/homelessness, but only by a slim margin.

Figure 6. Popularity of Issue Area Among Ideas Submitted



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation

With respect to demographic trends, participants of all backgrounds were interested in park amenities and housing and houselessness issues, while Asian, Black, and respondents identifying as having two or more races had other specific issue priorities.[29]

Figure 7. Popularity of Topics Among Idea Submitters by Race

What is your race?	Asian	Black or African American	White	Two or more races
Count	84	63	97	36
Housing and Unhoused People	8%	13%	15%	14%
Older Adult Services	2%	0%	5%	28%
Park Amenities/Recreation	2%	8%	21%	17%
Road Maintenance	21%	10%	9%	0%
Traffic Safety	26%	2%	4%	3%
Youth Programming	1%	21%	7%	17%

Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation

[29] Very few respondents identified as American Indian or Alaska Native (5) or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (3), and so were excluded from this analysis

Latino participants were more interested in older adult services, and in park amenities than non-Latino participants.

Figure 8. Popularity of Topics Among Idea Submitters of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?	No	Yes
Count	251	65
Older Adult Services	2%	23%
Park Amenities/Recreation	10%	18%

Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation

There were no observable trends by location or age.

Challenges

There were five core challenges during the Outreach process:

- **Delayed hiring of PBP Project Manager.** PBP planned to hire a local project manager with community engagement experience to oversee communication with mini-grantees and organize outreach. Hiring for this position was delayed for several months, limiting PBP's local capacity to lead the outreach process;
- **Late mini-grantee preparation.** Mini-grantees had their first meeting one business day after being told they were selected to participate, and, with 42 days from selection to Idea Collection, they had very little time to execute. Moreover, mini-grantees were insufficiently prepared by PBP to educate residents about the PB process before Idea Collection began;
- **Low public awareness.** Residents needed context (e.g., what Measure U was and why PB was happening) before they could learn about the PB process itself, which took additional time and resources. Even some City Council staff did not know what PB was;
- **Low capacity among local organizations.** Local organizations had limited capacity, and this hampered them from reaching more residents;
- **More resources needed to reach particular demographics.** Engaging seniors was challenging since equitably doing so required organizational staff working with them in-person, rather than relying on technology.

Overall, the following groups were under-engaged during the Outreach process:

- Lower-income residents;
- Southeast areas such as Meadowview and Valley High; and
- Youth.

The main challenges in Idea Collection were a spillover effect from the challenges during Outreach. In particular:

- **Both participants and mini-grantees lacked key guidance.** Participants needed more instruction about the kinds of topics likely to receive funding (e.g., programming over capital improvements, given the small budget for the pilot process), as well as what constitutes a thorough submission (i.e., more detailed ideas were easier for delegates to develop into proposals). Moreover, participants needed support in understanding what kinds of projects were feasible given a $500,000 budget. Mini-grantees needed guidance in how to facilitate idea collection sessions and what information to give to participants;
- **Lack of outreach.** Various stakeholders claimed there was insufficient outreach in particular neighborhoods (e.g., Meadowview).[30]

Additionally, some participants required support in filling out idea collection forms, which required staff time from mini-grantees.

Phase 3: Proposal Development (May 23 - September 12, 2022)

Goals

Proposal delegates had three main charges for this phase:

- Determine key features of the ballot (minimum and maximum proposal size, number of proposals to be voted on) so that those parameters informed the proposal development process;
- Review all submitted ideas and rank them;
- Select final ideas and develop these into proposals.

Results

Delegate Selection

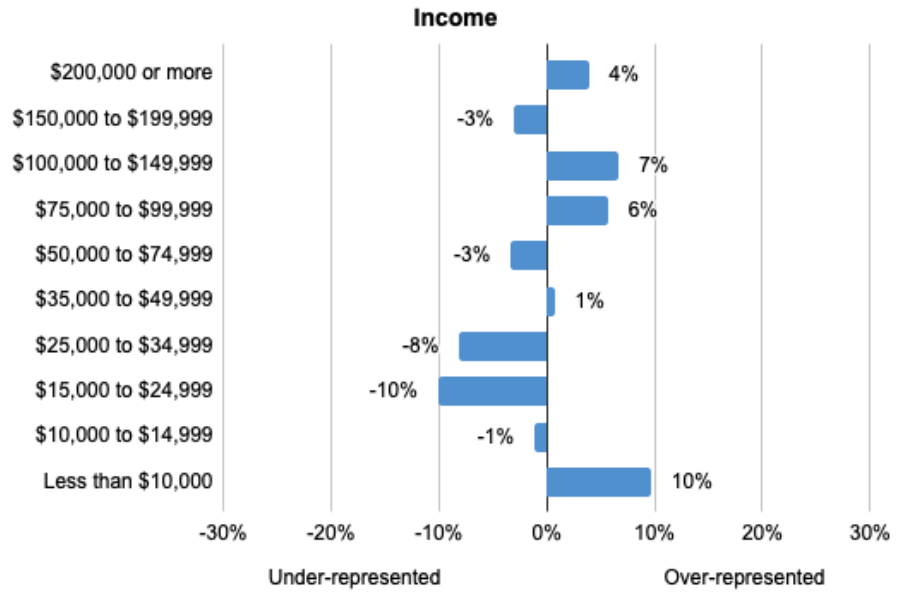
People who submitted ideas during the Idea Submission phase were invited to complete an application to serve as proposal delegates. Due to the low number of applicants, all 42 eligible applicants were offered the chance to participate in the process, with 34 ultimately persisting beyond orientation and initial meetings. Per the Playbook, they were required to "live, work, or play" in the two focus areas.

PBP facilitators and Ad Hoc Committee members felt that the delegates were more representative of local community-based organizations (CBOs) than community

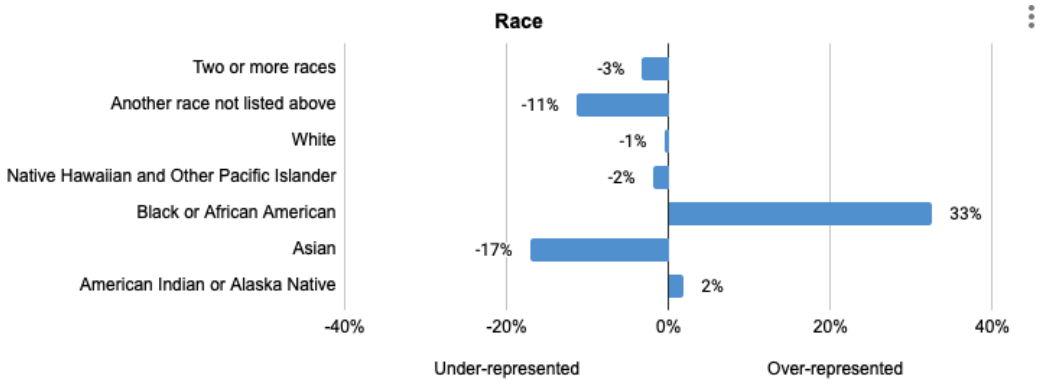
[30] These stakeholders did not define what would be "sufficient," and other neighborhoods may also have received "insufficient" outreach, but lacked advocates to make this known to the evaluators.

members themselves.[31] In reflecting on this, an Ad Hoc Committee member shared "the delegates weren't consistent with the personas we wanted in the process."[32] This led facilitators to worry that CBO leaders participated to secure funding for their organizations, rather than serve the community. This issue came to a head later in the Proposal Development phase when the question of conflict of interest arose.

Figure 9. Demographic Representation of Proposal Delegates, Compared to Population of Focus Areas

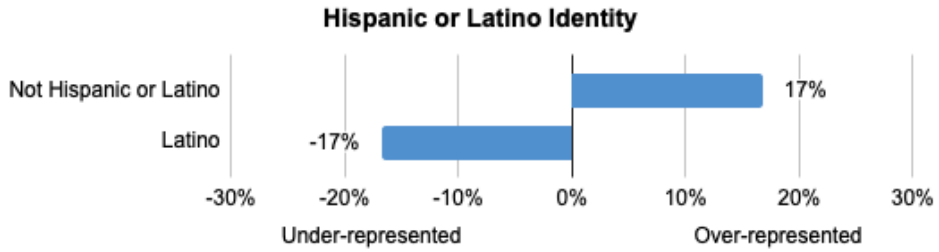


Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation and Sacramento National Community Survey Report

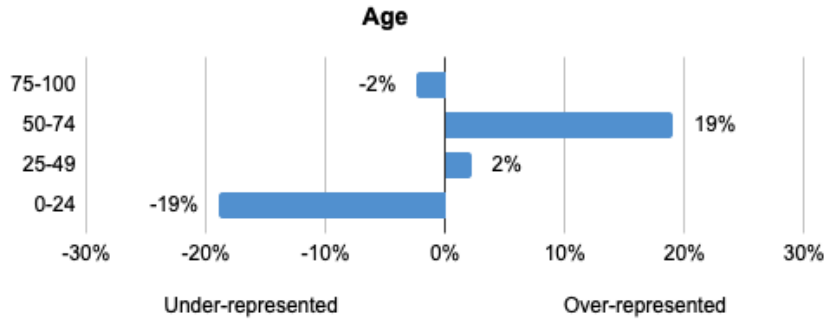


Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation and Sacramento National Community Survey Report

[31] Interview with PBP Facilitators, December 1, 2022.
[32] Ad Hoc Committee Focus Group, November 28, 2022.



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation and Sacramento National Community Survey Report



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation and Sacramento National Community Survey Report

Among the 28 delegates who reported their profession, eight were retired and two were high school students. Other professions represented included executive directors (2), educators (2), a community youth program manager, development executive, nanny, pastor, neighborhood navigator, engineer, and business owner. Of the delegates, 26% reported speaking another language than English.

Delegates were motivated to participate in the process most commonly out of a desire to improve their neighborhoods. Many felt that their community was overlooked, and that other communities typically received funding and services while theirs did not. Others participated by request or because of other social ties.[33]

Delegates stayed only moderately engaged throughout the process. While attendance at delegate orientation started at 42, only 34 persisted past orientation, and that number dropped to 22 by the last meeting. Delegates blamed some of this attrition on the slow start of the process and its focus on ballot design and group norms for multiple meetings before discussing ideas.

[33] Proposal Delegate Focus Group, September 12, 2022.

Ballot Design

The first stage of the Proposal Development process was ballot design. As the Ad Hoc Committee did not feel they could represent the community, they decided to delegate various decisions about ballot design (e.g., minimum and maximum project size) to proposal delegates. Delegates from the North and South focus areas largely made ballot decisions separately, resulting in differently designed ballots, as shown in Figure 10.

The ballot design process lasted several weeks, and proposal delegates reflected that they felt this part of the process should have occurred later, after proposal delegates had reviewed the ideas and understood more about project costs. Proposal delegates noted that without this context, they felt ill-equipped to make decisions about ballot design, and did not understand the impact that these decisions, particularly minimum and maximum project cost, would have on the types of ideas that could be considered for the ballot. They also noted that these extended discussions early in the process contributed to the drop-off in proposal delegate participation: "I feel that too much time was wasted not working on the proposals but going over the procedures again and again."[34] A City employee with significant insight into the process offered the reflection that the process would have run more smoothly if PBP had provided templates or guidelines, such as a default ballot, and allowed participants to edit them as they saw fit.

Figure 10. Ballot Design Decisions

Decision	North Ballot	South Ballot
Minimum and Maximum Project Cost	Min: $10,000 Max: $250,000	Min: None Max: $100,000
Total number of project proposals allowed	10	15
Total number of project selections per voter	4	10

Idea Scoring

The next stage of the process was idea scoring and selection. The City did an initial feasibility review on the 555 submitted ideas to inform delegates about which could be realistically implemented. Subsequently, delegates individually scored ideas based on their assessments of:

- The need for the project in the community;

[34] Anonymous proposal delegate.

- The impact the project would have on the community; and
- The impact the project would have on equity in the community.[35]

These criteria served as a tool for delegates to explain which ideas they prioritized and why. Proposal delegates later reflected that the scoring of ideas felt highly subjective, and that ratings across proposal delegates were inconsistent. Idea submissions with greater detail tended to receive higher scores, and briefer or more vague ideas were scored lower, potentially privileging submitters who were more skilled at writing. Delegates who were more familiar with an idea's issue area or neighborhood tended to supplement the submitted idea with their own experiences and inferences, and therefore score the idea higher.

Delegates then discussed their scores in small groups and aligned on what they saw as the most important issues in each focus area, drawing in many cases on their personal and professional experience to add additional context such as existing City services targeting areas of need and organizational capacity to take on particular projects. After ranking ideas in small groups, proposal delegates were instructed to combine similar ideas where possible and select the top ideas to be developed into proposals.

Most proposal delegates seemed extremely committed to the process. They wrestled with difficult considerations, including:

- Ensuring that not only good ideas got on the ballot, but also ideas that were reflective of the general trends in the ideas pool, as that reflected community needs;[36]
- How to make sure that the projects that got funded were able to facilitate getting money to the community quickly;[37] and
- Whether ideas that the City might fund through other means (e.g., Parks and Recreation) should be turned into proposals or not.[38]

Proposal delegates voiced the concern that they lacked important context to score ideas and develop proposals, particularly regarding the approximate cost to implement ideas, and which ideas would be funded through other City processes or departments (and therefore should be deprioritized for this process).

---

[35] For specific definitions of these terms and to see an example scoring worksheet, see Sacramento DRAFT/PRACTICE Idea Ranking Spreadsheet.

[36] "We have 45 ideas in the Southeast dealing with housing and homelessness, so it's important we do something about that." - Proposal Delegate

[37] "Isn't it our point to get this Measure U money out into the community as quickly as possible? Given that, we should vote down proposals that aren't RFP-ready." - Proposal Delegate

[38] "Certain ideas are more appropriate for City funds (e.g., Parks and Recreation), not Measure U." - Proposal Delegate

> *"If the idea is already being done, it doesn't necessarily need to be turned into a proposal. We should find a way to get money to the organizations already doing this." - Proposal Delegate*

Although City staff attempted to provide ballpark project costs, the City was challenged by the variability in how any single project might be implemented and how that variability could have a major impact on the estimated cost. For example, the City cited a minimum cost of $300,000 to develop a typical sized community garden in an existing City park. However, without a specific City park identified, the project may require an additional land acquisition cost that could easily push the cost estimate well beyond the total focus area budget amount of $500,000. Ultimately, the City felt it was neither feasible nor appropriate to attempt to provide accurate cost estimates for hundreds of ideas whose specific implementation details were far from fleshed out.

In reflecting on the types of ideas that were submitted through the process, City Councilmember Loloee noted that several of the top idea categories (Parks and Recreation, Services for Unhoused Individuals) have significant existing City budgets, and the participatory budgeting process could have better prioritized other topics.[39] Proposal delegates believed this context should have been provided earlier in the process by either PBP or by involving representatives from City departments sooner. However, idea submitters presumably identified needs or opportunities that they perceive are not already being addressed, so budget allocations toward general spending categories alone may be insufficient to deprioritize such ideas if the amount budgeted or the manner in which funded programs are being implemented are not effectively addressing the community's perceived needs. Another challenge was that many submitted ideas lacked context or detail, making it hard to understand the intent or idea's potential impact.

Delegates expressed an earnest desire to use the proposal process to fund underfunded organizations that otherwise would not have access to the kinds of resources the City could provide. Delegates worried that established nonprofits with strong relationships to the City but who were less representative of the focus areas might secure the grants, instead of small organizations with strong local roots. In response, they decided to set caps on the size of organizations eligible to receive funding from certain proposals.

One delegate raised the concern that smaller organizations may not be ready or able to successfully apply for or absorb the level of grant funding available through this process. In response, the delegate agreed to offer a Grants 101 course for local

[39] Interview with Councilmember Loloee, December 1, 2022.

nonprofits to learn about municipal grant writing and reporting, in order to build their capacity to apply for and receive City grants.[40]

> *"Not only are organizations often unaware of how to find the money, but they are also not ready to receive it. [Preparing them to do so is] part of the recipe to help us be successful as Black and Brown newer organizations." - Proposal Delegate*

Proposal Development

The last stage was Proposal Development, in which delegates were tasked with developing ideas into proposals. Delegates were never taught how to do so, and consequently struggled with the complexity of turning vaguely-worded ideas into concrete, votable proposals with budgets and scopes. Moreover, the proposal template did not focus on the key elements of the proposal (i.e. the details of its implementation), and instead asked questions such as "What ideas inspired the project" and "Why is the project needed," which assist with ballot language but not with concrete feasibility assessment. Delegates later said they wished PBP had provided them with examples of proposals from other cities to understand the type of information they should include. Given that many submitted ideas had similarities, delegates were encouraged by PBP to combine similar ideas. Delegates made choices about which elements of the multiple ideas to prioritize, and in some cases made substantial changes to the ideas as they had been originally submitted.

At this stage, City staff were invited to meetings to support the process by answering questions or providing feedback. In several instances, however, PBP allocated some of the meeting time originally dedicated to City staff support towards internal delegate issues. This meant that delegates had less time to interact with and ask questions of staff. Within the meetings, staff provided guidance such as a framework for estimating proposal costs, background on laws and regulations, and information about whether there were existing City efforts serving the same objectives that proposals targeted.[41] City staff also hosted office hours that delegates could attend to ask additional questions and receive support.

Despite this, delegates expected City staff to be significantly more involved in and do more of the work of proposal development than staff had been led to expect, leading to breakdowns in communication and frustration on behalf of both parties. Proposal delegates, surprised and disappointed that City staff were not more involved in the

[40] It is unknown whether this Grants 101 course occurred.
[41] Staff answered questions varying from "what's the first step if we're trying to get a gym built," to "I have a proposal trying to give youth a second chance at a career opportunity, by working with the City, and eventually moving into full time jobs. Who should I talk to? What exists now and how can I shape the proposal?"

development of proposals (in part, due to City staff lacking expertise in areas that it does not typically fund or implement projects), felt they were expected to put in more work than had been advertised:

> *"The heavy lifting that was eventually asked of many of the proposal delegates was not disclosed when they volunteered…This was frankly beyond the capacity of many delegates and required a great deal more time and involvement than was outlined in the beginning." - Proposal Delegate*

Delegates shared that greater and earlier involvement by City staff would have increased their feeling of trust with the City, one of the key outcomes of the process. Delegates also worried that because of limited City involvement, ideas that were not developed into proposals, or which did not receive funding after the vote, would not be advanced by City staff, and most of the needs expressed by the community through the process would not be addressed.

Perhaps the most contentious moment during the entire process centered on conflicts of interest. During the Playbook Development phase, neither the Ad Hoc Committee nor City staff anticipated that delegates would endeavor to name specific organizations as funding recipients in the final ballot proposals. The Ad Hoc Committee and staff instead assumed that projects would either be implemented directly by City departments or that the City would solicit funding applications from prospective implementing organizations through a subsequent solicitation process once the winning projects were identified, as they understood had been done in other cities. Because the City did not anticipate that delegates would insist on naming specific organizations as funding recipients, it did not implement any safeguards to prevent real or apparent conflicts of interest.

Proposal delegates were unaware of or unclear on the fact that if they originally submitted or worked on an idea proposal and subsequently applied for funding to implement that proposal, it might constitute a conflict of interest. To prevent such conflicts from occurring, the City suggested that proposals omit naming specific organizations as funding recipients in the final ballot descriptions (i.e. Organization X will receive $50,000 to develop a youth program). Instead, the City proposed employing an open, competitive solicitation process that would allow multiple organizations to apply for funding. Delegates were frustrated by this suggestion for two reasons:

1. Some previously believed their organizations would be contenders for funding to implement proposals and later learned they were ineligible because of their participation as delegates; and
2. They feared the solicitation process would privilege established organizations that historically have good relationships with the City but have not served the marginalized communities for whom the funding was originally intended.

> *"I don't trust my ideas with people who have historically done them wrong." - Proposal Delegate*

Ultimately, the City Council approved a Proposal Delegate Conflict of Interest Policy to protect the integrity of the process while creating a pathway for delegate-affiliated organizations to be eligible for funding.[42] In addition, careful facilitation from PBP and Measure U Committee members helped alleviate some of the tension, preventing the dispute from derailing the process. The Measure U Committee later recommended that the final ballot language omit naming any implementing organizations as funding recipients and that the City utilize a subsequent solicitation process to identify implementing organizations for each winning project. In response, delegates set caps on the budget size for applicant organizations to be considered eligible to implement various projects. Additionally, delegates, the City, and the Measure U Committee agreed to create an independent review panel to evaluate funding applications and select awardees. The panel is composed of equal numbers of proposal delegates and Measure U Committee members, and will make final decisions about grant awards to implementing organizations for winning projects in the first half of2023.

Changes in Delegates

Proposal delegates developed into a more cohesive group through the shared tasks of proposal scoring and development. Over the course of four months, delegates spent hours together and deepened their relationships with each other. Many of the delegates demonstrated significant commitment to the process, despite the fact that the process was more laborious and longer than they had expected. Multiple delegates offered to be involved and provide input and recommendations in the future if the City decides to repeat the PB process.

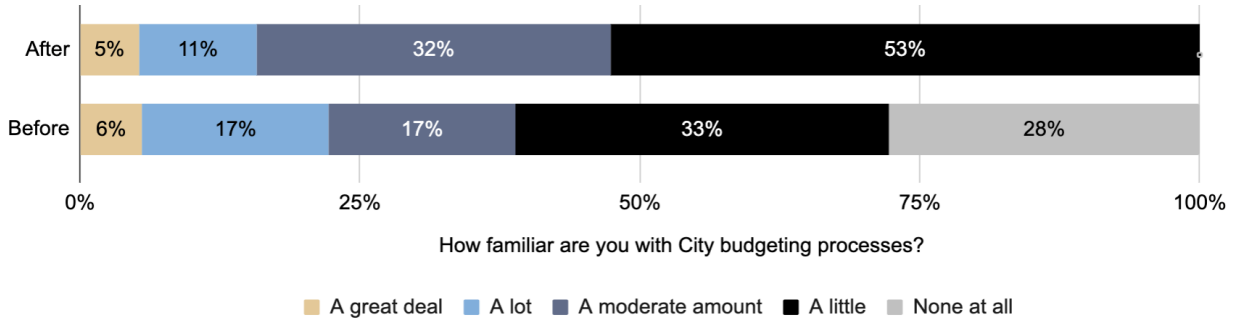
Additionally, delegates became more confident and aware of their role and power as advocates. Delegates expressed the feeling that their input and opinions were taken more seriously by PBP and the City after delegates spoke up about the conflict of interest issue.

> *"Our role as delegates was also to be advocates... I want to empower all of us… to be advocates, and speak up. I encourage everyone to use public comment time at City Council meetings and Measure U meetings… It would be wonderful to see some of our delegates present at that meeting… about these conversations we're having." - Proposal Delegate*

[42] https://sacramento.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=22&clip_id=5354&meta_id=695236

Delegates were asked a series of survey questions to assess how participation impacted their knowledge of City processes and perception of the City. First, delegates were asked to rate their perceived knowledge of City budgeting processes at the end of the process as compared to the beginning. Figure 11 depicts their responses and demonstrates that, on average, delegates gained some level of familiarity with budgeting processes.

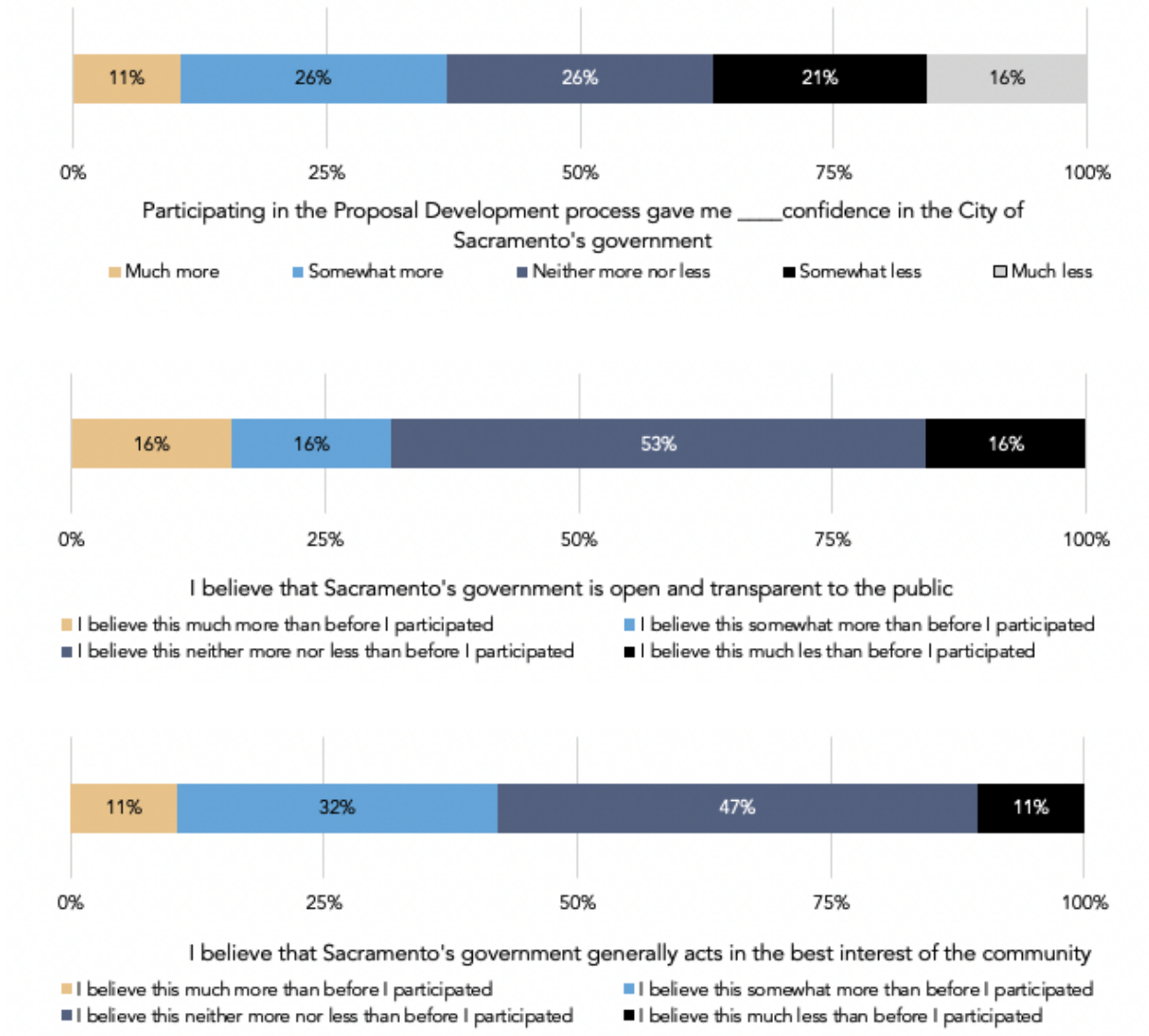
Figure 11. Self-reported Familiarity with City Budgeting Processes Among Proposal Delegates, Pre- and Post-Proposal Development



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation

Delegates were also asked to self-evaluate how participation in Proposal Development affected their perception of the City. Survey responses were mixed, with equal numbers of delegates reporting the experience led them to view the City more favorably as less favorably.

Figure 12. Impact of Proposal Development on Delegates' Perception of City Government



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation

When asked whether they believed the process advanced equity, delegates predominantly answered that it was too soon to tell, and that they would need to see the implementation of winning proposals to decide. A few other delegates answered negatively, noting that the challenges of the process and the significant changes to ideas that delegates made while developing the proposals meant the community's voice was not accurately represented.[43]

[43] Proposal delegate focus group, September 12, 2022.

Challenges

In addition to the cross-cutting challenges described at the end of this section that impacted the entire pilot, the following challenges arose during Proposal Development.

- **Poor organization and communication.** While delegates developed relationships with and expressed appreciation for individual representatives of PBP, they generally described the process as disorganized. Delegates reported challenges receiving their stipends, repeatedly received last-minute meeting invites and requests to complete work before the next meeting, and often felt unclear on next steps in the process;
- **Poorly planned timeline.** In addition to the cross-cutting challenge of an unrealistic timeline throughout the pilot, delegates unanimously agreed that too many early meetings were used to set norms and offer context, and that delegates were then provided too little time for the ranking of ideas and development of proposals. This dynamic was further compounded by additional time lost to making numerous process and ballot design decisions;
- **Uninformed decision making.** Delegates struggled with ballot design. They were unclear why the Ad Hoc Committee had delegated key design decisions to delegates, and PBP facilitators did not make fully clear the impacts of these decisions, nor precisely why the choices needed to be made prior to reviewing the ideas. While facilitators told delegates they could possibly adjust these decisions later, it was unclear when and how these adjustments would be made, and none ultimately were. Moreover, despite requests to change the order, delegates were still asked to make decisions about minimum and maximum proposal size without any information about the ideas themselves and what they might cost;
- **Bias.** As delegates had to rank ideas based on the text of the ideas themselves, delegates ended up prioritizing ideas with greater detail, as these could be more easily interpreted and scored. Additionally, certain delegates had themselves contributed to or directly submitted ideas. This meant that those delegates could advocate for and share details about those ideas in group meetings, leading those ideas to receive higher scores as well. These dynamics privileged submitters with stronger writing skills and people with more insider knowledge about City functions;
    - One dynamic of bias that served both positively and negatively related to expertise. Certain delegates, often local nonprofit leaders, had issue area expertise they could lean on to interpret and contextualize submitted ideas. This was very helpful to other delegates, who could then make

much more informed decisions about the viability of those ideas.[44] However, this only worked for ideas for which there were issue area experts among proposal delegates. Relatedly, delegates were more open to supporting project ideas for which they already knew of local organizations that could implement them. This was limited by delegates' awareness of potential local partners.

- **Idea sorting and parsing.** Delegates often struggled with what to do with similar ideas and whether it was possible to combine them. They ultimately decided to combine various similar ideas into single proposals; and
- **Negative group dynamics.** Some individual delegates were rude to others or took up too much space in meetings, which created negative group dynamics and poor collaboration. Delegates also dropped out through the process, with 42 initially accepted, 34 persisting beyond orientation, and 22 remaining in regular attendance at the end.[45] Small group work became challenging when delegates dropped out of the process or a single group member completed more work than others. Furthermore, even when acting in good faith, some delegate groups were simply unable to reach consensus in making final ballot language decisions. For example, a delegate in one group proposed that a specific ballot proposal include a portion of funding to their neighborhood. However, that delegate was outnumbered by delegates from other neighborhoods who were unwilling to accommodate any dilution or increase to the project budget by splitting the funding to more than one location.

Phase 4: The Vote (October 12 - November 11, 2022)

Goals

The Ad Hoc Committee set a goal of engaging 10% more people in the Vote than participated in Idea Collection, for a total of 605 voters.

Mini-grantees targeted the following populations, aiming to reach 6,100 people total:

- Immigrant refugee communities;
- Non-registered voters;
- Seniors;
- Undocumented community members;
- Unhoused community members; and
- Youth.

[44] For instance, a delegate who ran their own organization was able to help her small group think carefully through the feasibility of ideas relating to new social services programming in the community given existing services.
[45] This tally of Proposal Delegate involvement is based on PBP's recordkeeping.

Voting was open to community members who lived in one of the focus areas and were 14 years old or above. Residents voted on the specific area ballot (North or South Area) that corresponded with their neighborhood.[46]

Results

Outreach and Engagement

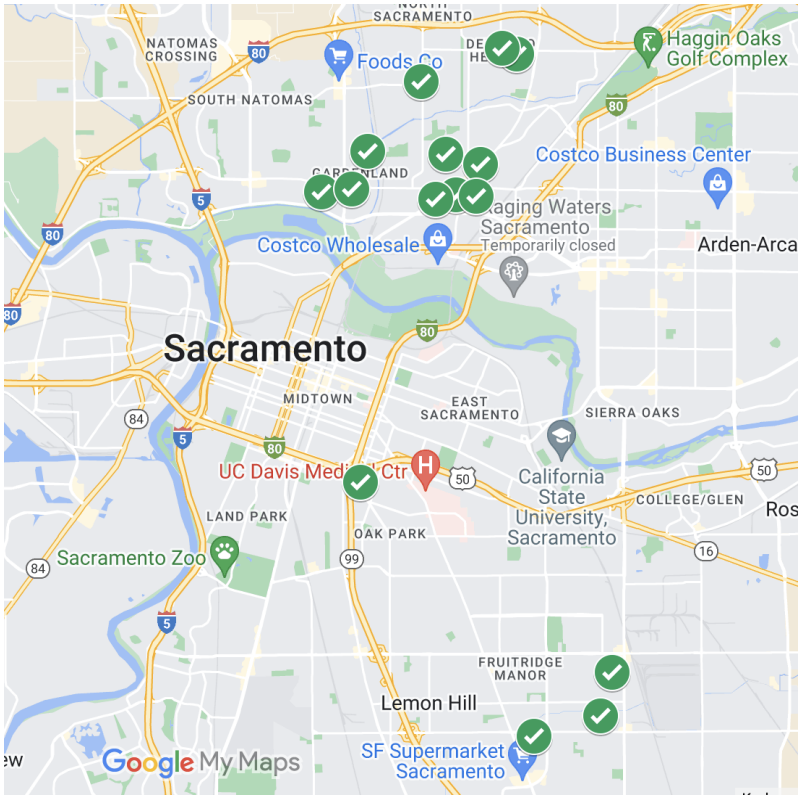
Mini-grantees' reached out to potential voters through a mix of digital and in-person methods. Digitally, mini-grantees sent out email blasts, texts, newsletters, and social media posts to their networks and communities that referenced the Vote.[47] Additionally, mini-grantees engaged various partners to promote the Vote on social media as well. In person, mini-grantees sent mailers to their communities, flyered, and conducted a variety of get-out-the-vote (GOTV) events, including promotions at churches, high schools, football games, vaccination clinics, ESL classes, employment assistance workshops, and food distribution sites. Some mini-grantees also engaged in direct canvassing in the focus areas.

In the North Area, mini-grantees engaged in a significant effort to engage youth through schools and sporting events. Roberts Family Development Centers collected 95% of the North Area youth ballots. In the South Area, mini-grantees relied more on digital engagement, and received fewer paper ballots.

Overall there were 18 voting sites, 12 in the North Area and six in the South Area.[48] For more details, see this sample GOTV events calendar for example events and this map of voting locations.[49] Digital ballots were only available in English. Paper ballots were translated by partners into Spanish, Hmong, Chinese, and Vietnamese.[50]

[46] However, there was no residency verification on the ballot, as Ad Hoc Committee Members worried that doing so would deter potential voters.
[47] As with Idea Collection, it was challenging track outreach, given the reliance on many different channels and actors, and the variety precludes us from naming an overall estimate of people reached through outreach. For instance, while mini-grantees engaged their communities directly through tabling, the City sent a blog post with a reach of approximately 100,000 people.
[48] Information on the number of voting sites shared by PBP.
[49] This calendar does not contain all voting events, nor includes information related to the extension of the voting timeline through November 11th, 2022.
[50] Information on ballot translation offered was provided by PBP.

Figure 13. Map of PB Pilot Voting Locations



Participants could also vote online through a platform developed for voting by the Stanford Crowdsourced Democracy Team, which has developed similar platforms for other PB processes.

Project Results

Ten projects were selected for funding, four in the North Area and six in the South Area. The projects addressed issues such as youth development and job training, community beautification, literacy, and food access.

Below is a list of the selected projects. For full descriptions of each project, see Appendix D. Selected Projects.

Figure 14. Winning Projects

Project Name	Total Votes (% of total voters)	Funding Allocated
North Area		
Neighborhood Cleanup Grants	291 (63%)	$60,000
Work and Mentoring Programs For Northeast Sacramento Youth	283 (61%)	$100,000
A Second Chance Career Opportunity for the Youth	259 (56%)	$200,000
Garden and Farmers Market	233 (50%)	$140,000[51]
South Area		
Teaching Tech	307 (79%)	$100,000
Additional Literacy Support for Elementary Students	230 (59%)	$100,000
South Sacramento Entrepreneurial and Career Academy	221 (57%)	$125,000
Transportation Van for Underserved and Unhoused Youth in Oak Park	217 (55%)	$75,000
Beautify Sacramento	189 (48%)	$75,000
Sacramento Area Homeless Services Event 2023	185 (47%)	$25,000[52]

Source: Participatory Budgeting Project

With the exception of projects focusing on streetscapes, proposed projects largely aligned with the most common categories for ideas submitted during Idea Collection, indicating proposal delegates were attentive to community desires in crafting proposals.

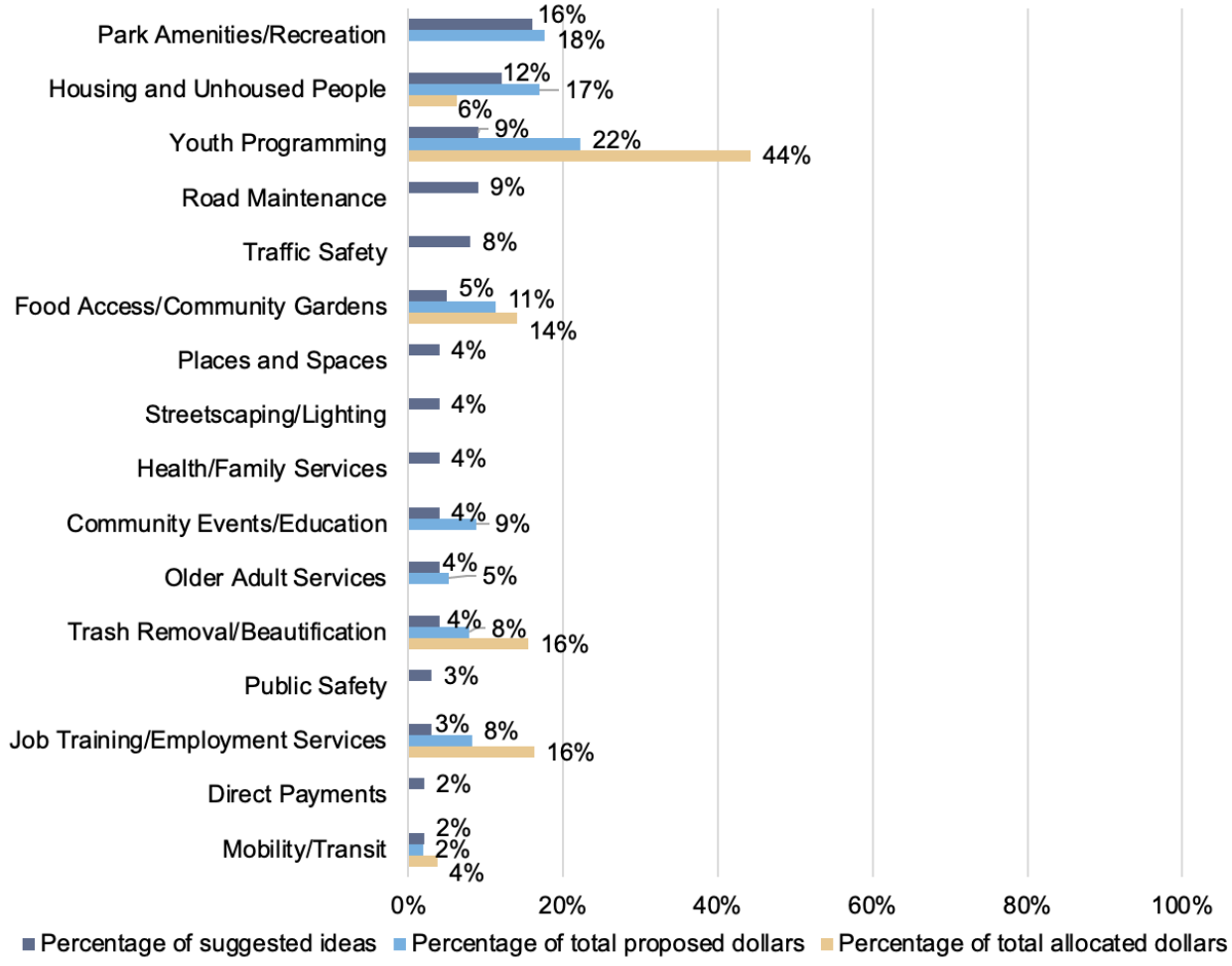
[51] Note from PBP: The original funding request was for $150,000 but proposal delegates decided that if a project could not be fully funded but the differential was under $50,000, they would proceed with funding the project with the remainder.

[52] Note from PBP: Proposal delegates were given the option to do one of the following: 1. Split this $25k up across all of the winning projects to further pad each one by $5k; 2. Allocate the $25k towards capacity building for organizations applying for implementation; 3. Dedicate $25K towards the next vote getter to seed some portion of that work. The 3rd option was supported by the majority of delegates and is why this partial allocation is reflected here.
It may be noteworthy that some delegates did not want to do any of these options and voted instead to allocate the remainder of funds towards other projects they had worked on or personally preferred. These requests were seen as misaligned with PB and the commitment made to a democratic process and transparency through the process and were not pursued further.

However, delegates also chose to advance proposals about topics that were less frequently suggested by residents, such as mobility and transit and job training.

Voters did not align particularly closely with submitters nor with proposed projects. In contrast with both delegates and idea submitters, voters rejected all three proposals relating to parks, amenities, and recreation, the most common category among submitters. They also approved some of the proposals about topics that were less popular among submitters, such as mobility and transit. The exception to this is that voters approved six projects focusing on youth programming and two projects on housing and unhoused people. See Figure 15 for a comparison of ideas categories, proposed projects, and funded projects.

Figure 15. Prevalence of Idea Categories Across Idea Submission, Proposed Projects, and Funded Projects



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation

Voters

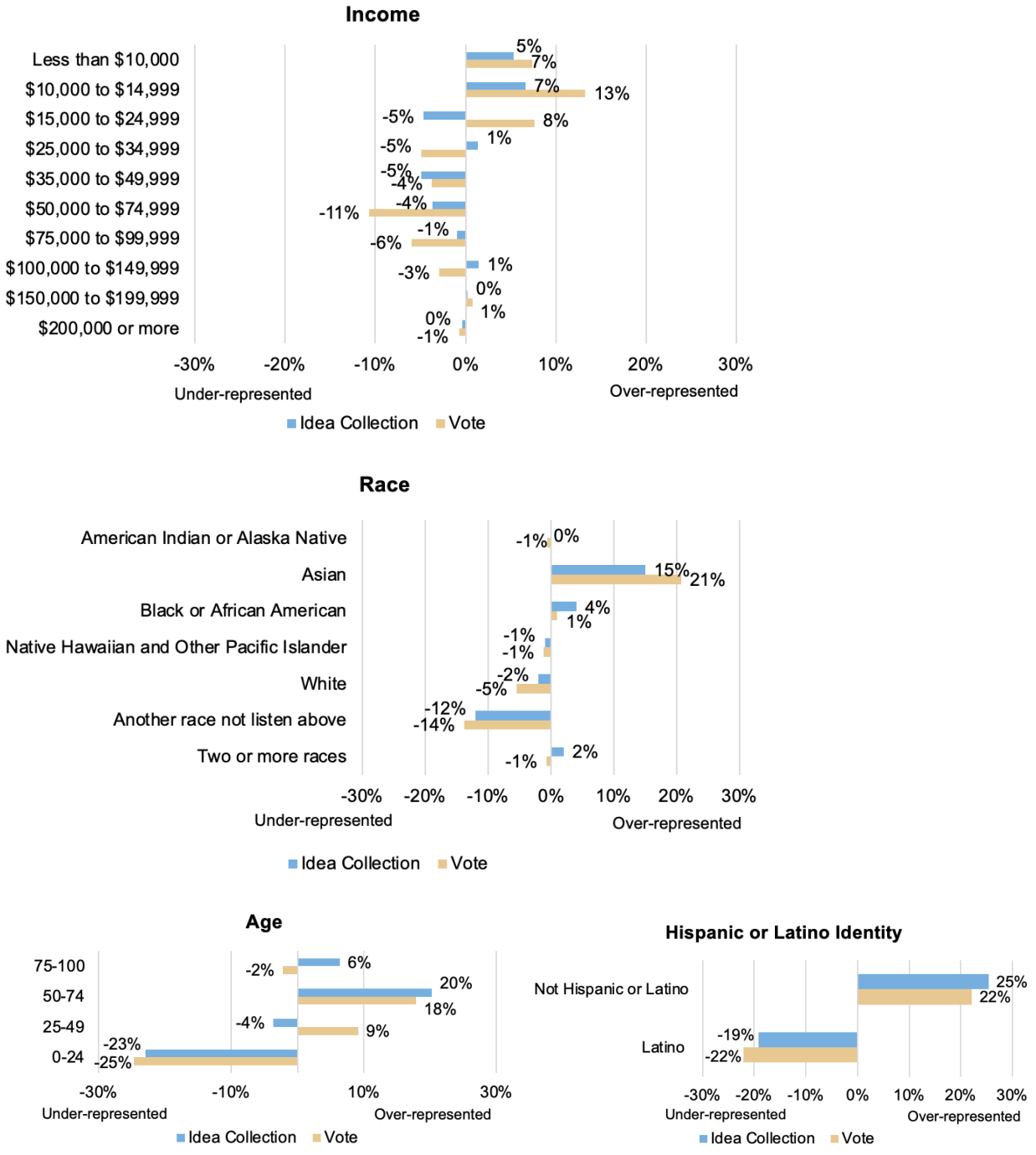
The process recorded 853 votes, 462 in the North Area and 391 in the South Area, exceeding the threshold targeted by the Ad Hoc Committee (605).[53]

As in Idea Collection, voters roughly approximated the population of the focus areas by demographics, with some exceptions.[54] Youth were underrepresented, as were people who identified as Hispanic or Latino. Asian Americans were overrepresented, as were low-income people. See Figure 16 below for demographic representation of voters, as compared to both the general population in the area and idea submitters.

[53] Some of these were paper ballots. North Area: 190 Digital, 272 Paper = 462 total | South Area: 386 Digital, 5 Paper = 391 total

[54] We change from "votes" to "voters" here since we assume that each survey corresponds to a single voter. With respect to ballots, digital ballots were protected from duplication by use of an automatic online ID system. In person, volunteers listed ballots alphabetically to avoid duplication.

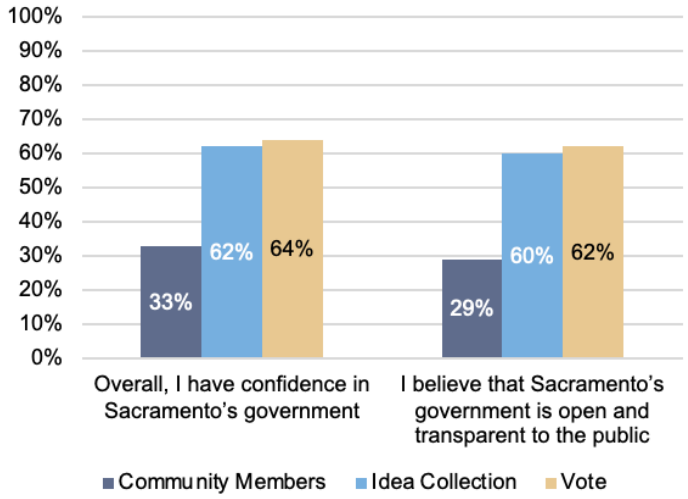
Figure 16. Demographic Comparison of Idea Submitters and Voters to Focus Area Population



Source: Third Plateau After-Voting Survey

Voters had higher faith in Sacramento's government than both idea submitters and the average person in Sacramento. It is impossible to know the extent to which their disposition indicates the process made voters feel more confident than average residents, or if more confident people are more likely to participate.

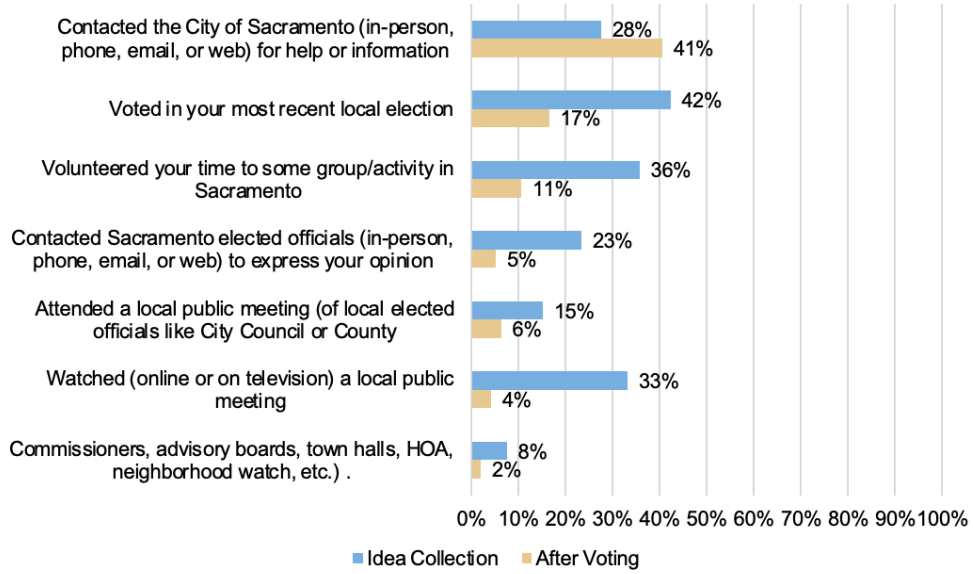
Figure 17. Perceptions of Sacramento Government Among Idea Submitters and Voters, Compared to General Community Members



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation and Sacramento National Community Survey Report

Voters seemed less civically engaged than idea submitters. While most voters (64%) were at least somewhat familiar with Measure U, many fewer had voted, volunteered, or attended local meetings than idea submitters. See Figure 18.

Figure 18. Percentage of Participants Who Engaged with the City in Various Ways in the Past Year



Source: Third Plateau Participatory Budgeting Evaluation

Lastly, a plurality of both idea submitters (18%) and voters (37%) heard about the participatory budgeting process because of Asian Resources, Inc, one of the mini-grantees.[55]

Challenges

The Vote faced relatively few challenges. Total voters exceeded expectations, mini-grantees supported on outreach, and the counting proceeded smoothly.

The biggest challenge during the Vote was that it coincided with the 2022 midterm elections. The overlap between the two voting processes and the fact that each used separate voting mechanisms left some residents confused as to which election was being referred to during outreach or at voting stations.

[55] This may also be reflective of Asian Resources, Inc.'s work to get voters to fill out after-voting surveys.

Additionally, as with Idea Collection, various groups were underrepresented among voters, including people who identified as Hispanic or LatinX and youth.[56]

Cross-cutting Challenges

Four challenges surfaced across multiple phases of the process and significantly impacted participants' experiences and the pilot's outcomes.

- **Lack of role clarity.** In other cities where PBP supports PB processes, the organization normally serves in a support role, providing advice and guidance to help an active, City-driven steering committee in designing and implementing the PB process.[57] Other cities' staff are typically much more involved in supporting the process as well, offering multiple dedicated staff and many hours of staff time to proposal development in particular. In Sacramento, however, the Ad Hoc Committee and City contracted with PBP to serve as lead facilitator, responsible for ensuring decisions were made about process implementation.[58]This contrast between PBP's typical role and its contracted one in Sacramento created a tension between PBP and the Ad Hoc Committee, especially during Playbook Development, as each desired the other to take a more active role in decision making. As a result, decisions about Playbook rules and the outreach process took much longer than anticipated, delaying the process. Additionally, PBP running the Proposal Development phase created a middleman between the City and delegates, which may have impeded trust-building between delegates and the City. Proposal delegates, meanwhile, expected City staff to be more heavily involved in proposal development despite some delegates not taking full advantage of the time staff made themselves available. While PBP told delegates to expect help from City staff, which they then received, there were no expectations set for delegates about the extent of that help – particularly when the City lacked staff with experience or subject matter expertise in some areas, leaving some delegates disappointed by what they felt was inadequate support from City staff, and feeling the City let them down. In reflecting on the process, the Ad Hoc Committee noted that they had expected the City to play a more robust role in overseeing the PB process and ensuring clarity and accountability regarding the roles of the various players. Without a single party speaking up throughout the process to ensure role clarity, this issue plagued the pilot from start to finish;

[56] We say "possibly" here since Roberts Family Development Center engaged youth directly and collected paper ballots, without associated survey responses, making it impossible to estimate their participation in the process.
[57] Interview with the Participatory Budgeting Project, November 30, 2022.
[58] The contract specified, somewhat vaguely, that PBP "codesign," "collaborate," and "inform" decision-making.

- **Unclear facilitation and communication.** There were numerous instances of unclear facilitation during the process, most evident during Proposal Development. PBP facilitators did not clearly explain at the outset the rationale behind, nor potential impact of, key decisions delegates were asked to make, such as the minimum and maximum project cost or number of proposals allowed on the ballot. Lacking this understanding, delegates made uninformed decisions they were forced to either live with or change later when the consequences of those choices became evident. Most seriously, delegates were not adequately informed about the potential for conflicts of interest – that their participation in developing proposals might preclude their organizations from seeking funding for the implementation of those proposals. Several nonprofit leaders participated as delegates with the goal of securing funding, only to learn weeks into the process that their organizations were ineligible for funding due to their participation. The City and Ad Hoc Committee believe that as experts in participatory budgeting, PBP should have foreseen and proactively elevated potential conflict of interest concerns early in the process in order to mitigate them. Conversely, PBP contends the City should have handled this issue itself given its much deeper familiarity with City policies. In either case, unclear and ineffective facilitation throughout the proposal development phase hindered the development of trust between proposal delegates and the City, a key outcome of the process;
    - A complicating factor throughout proposal development was that it was conducted entirely virtually. This made relationship-building among delegates, PBP, and City staff more challenging and hindered the development of trust necessary to conduct a meaningful deliberative process.
- **No guidance about existing funding sources and projects.** A question regularly emerged for participants, delegates, and the Ad Hoc Committee about how to handle proposals for projects that might otherwise receive funding from existing City funding streams outside the PB process (e.g., streetlight installation) or could leverage work already underway by the City. The lack of role clarity between PBP and the Ad Hoc Committee meant that no actor took the initiative to design a process to resolve these concerns by excluding, including, or prioritizing ideas with existing funding among other proposals, leading to confusion about the purpose of the process. Moreover, it was difficult for anyone to answer delegate questions about existing funding streams as there is no central, searchable compendium of City funding allocations year-by-year. Lacking centralized information limited both the ability to make informed decisions about proposals, as well as the ability to deeply evaluate funded proposals' implementation in comparison to existing services;

- **Unrealistic timelines.** From the start, the process fell behind its initial projected timeline. The first phase, Playbook Development, took two months longer than expected, and Idea Collection, which was originally slated to end in February, extended through the end of May. PBP planned to hire someone from the Sacramento community to support with outreach and facilitation, but struggled with recruitment for the role. The two staff members were hired several months later than anticipated, shortly before Proposal Development. The Proposal Development phase, which was scoped to last for two months, experienced the most significant timeline extension, and stretched from May until September, placing a significant burden on proposal delegates, who had not planned for such an extensive time commitment.

Conclusions

Overall, the pilot process made headway against its targeted short-term outcomes, and was a source of much learning for participants at all levels. Moreover, while the challenges facing the pilot diminished its overall impact, the process generated ideas for how to improve neighborhoods and engaged well over 1,000 residents in the process of idea collection, voting and serving as proposal delegates.

Outcome category	Short-term outcome	Third Plateau Evidence Assessment
Resident engagement with government	Participants gain knowledge about the budgeting process	Achieved among delegates, possible among general public
Government knowledge of residents	Council members learn about residents' priorities and concerns	Suggestive
Advancement of equity	Projects benefit historically underinvested communities	Highly suggestive

Participants gain knowledge about the budgeting process
Achieved among delegates, possible among general public

Proposal delegates demonstrated clear and growing perceived understanding of City budget processes.[59] Despite the fact that many came in already familiar with City processes, many learned more about City allocations and RFP processes, as well as regulations surrounding the budget process.

[59] This understanding is only "perceived" as PB processes differ significantly from standard City budgeting processes.

We did not track whether participants both submitted ideas and voted in order to assess whether their familiarity with the budget process changed as a result of participating. However, facilitators, mini-grantees, and Ad Hoc Committee members had to inform the public in order to support them in submitting meaningful ideas, which generated both interest and excitement in the process. That suggests that the process may have raised basic public knowledge about City budgeting processes among a population usually less engaged in municipal affairs.

Council members learn about residents' priorities and concerns
Suggestive

This process is still underway, so it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about this outcome. Various Council members participated in the process by raising awareness and encouraging residents to vote or submit ideas. These members certainly became aware of the top categories of ideas that members of the public submitted. The publication and implementation process for the winning projects will further affect the extent to which Council members become clear about residents' priorities.

Projects benefit historically underinvested communities
Highly suggestive

As a whole, selected projects largely reflect the will of the focus area communities, each of which was chosen due to its historical underinvestment. As such, it is highly likely that selected projects will benefit historically underinvested communities, and to that end, this outcome was largely achieved through the pilot process. Moreover, participants largely demographically reflected their communities, avoiding a typical equity concern where democratic processes overly privilege particular groups.

However, as was noted by many delegates during the proposal development process, the ultimate outcome for communities will be determined through the funding and implementation process for the projects.

Long-Term Outcomes
Not enough time has passed to evaluate long-term outcomes and preliminary evidence is inconclusive as to whether the pilot built trust between community members and the City. Anecdotal evidence suggests community members were often interested in the process and valued the opportunity to submit ideas, suggesting the process may have potential to cultivate trust in the future.

Proposal delegates engaged more deeply with the City. While delegates were initially excited to participate, frustrations about communication accumulated throughout the

process, leading some delegates to feel disillusioned about the work, describing the experience as "business as usual." It's worth noting that some delegates conveyed mixed messages regarding their desire for City involvement in the process: On the one hand, many desired for City staff to be more involved in helping to develop proposals; on the other hand, many expressed distrust of a solicitation process to select implementing organizations. That said, various delegates built their leadership capacities through the process, and are excited and interested in further participating in City budget processes.

Recommendations

The pilot process offered an opportunity to explore participatory budgeting as a mechanism for building trust between government and residents, deepening resident engagement, and advancing equity. This pilot year served to test some of the key mechanisms for implementing the process, such as timeline and outreach approach, as well as begin to develop the infrastructure for future iterations, such as public awareness of the process, templates for outreach and voting, and process documentation. Should the City decide to pilot the process again, taking into account the need for significant improvements, we believe the PB process could make progress towards the outcomes identified in the Theory of Change (Appendix A).

There are myriad opportunities to improve the process if it moves forward in future years. Below are Third Plateau's recommendations for the process.

Overall

- **Institutionalize the process.** The lack of role clarity and poor facilitation, created a vacuum of ownership and decision-making that hobbled the implementation of the process from the start. In future years, Sacramento should imitate other cities that employ participatory budgeting by taking ownership of the process in order to fully implement it. In particular, we recommend the City convene a steering committee to run the process, and compose that committee as a mixture of City staff with public engagement experience and community members. While this steering committee might consist of members from the Measure U Committee, it should be established as a separate committee solely focused on the development and implementation of the PB process. The committee should have full decision-making power over the process (e.g., the Playbook) and be expected to drive much of the outreach and oversight, not merely serve in an advisory capacity. City staff members on the committee can support the process by answering questions, coordinating other staff to inform proposal development, and leveraging the City's community engagement and communication mechanisms to recruit and engage participants. In addition, the

steering committee should engage a panel of outside experts (e.g., nonprofit practitioners, academic researchers) who can be consulted to help inform development of proposals in which the City lacks in-house expertise;[60]

- **Create clearer rules and structure.** As a pilot, much of this year's process was both created and tested in real-time, generating significant confusion and uncertainty. With the benefit of experience, the process can be more clearly designed to ameliorate some of the biggest areas of confusion. In particular, we recommend:
    - Explicitly clarifying the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making power of all those involved in the process;
    - Setting a realistic timeline, including sufficient time for high-quality outreach and education of the public on PB, and training for local organizations and proposal delegates; and
    - Sharing participant eligibility rules and restrictions (e.g., conflicts of interest) with idea submitters and proposal delegates as early as possible.
- **Scaffold the process for participants.** The PB process intentionally seeks to engage a diverse group of stakeholders, many of whom have not historically engaged in or been well served by civic processes and city communications. This year, however, the people leaders most wanted to engage in the process were the ones most lost during its implementation. They were unfamiliar with topics ranging from City budgeting and funding streams to how to use technological tools such as Google Docs. In the future, implementers should further customize the process more to make it accessible to participants (e.g., idea submitters, proposal delegates) by creating more educational resources for each of these groups, providing training, and facilitating inclusively.

The following list includes more detailed phase-by-phase recommendations. These recommendations were generated by Third Plateau, mini-grantees, PBP, proposal delegates and Ad Hoc Committee members.

Playbook Development

- **Clarify eligibility criteria** for idea submitters and proposal delegates during Playbook Development;
- **Incorporate community stakeholder voice into next year's Playbook**, either by conducting an outreach process to community members, or by including community members in the Steering Committee. This year's proposal delegates are also a valuable source of information about how the Playbook might be improved;

[60] City staff's greater knowledge of City processes may create a power imbalance between staff and residents, who do not feel as empowered to suggest rules for the process. The committee and process should be designed with that in mind (e.g., potentially by having more resident than staff representation).

- **Make key playbook decisions (e.g., ballot design) during Playbook Development**, rather than deferring to proposal delegates.

Outreach and Idea Collection

- **Add questions to the Idea Submission Form**, including about what neighborhood people are connected to, in order to assess where more outreach is needed to ensure representation, and submitter contact information, in case delegates want to follow up with submitters to learn more about their original intentions;
- **Create uniform messaging** and outreach materials about PB to use across the community, so residents recognize PB regardless of which organizations promote the process;
- **Provide more guidance and examples during Idea Collection about ideal submission content**. Guidance should include the level of detail (e.g., geographic location, audience served) and types of ideas most suited to be developed into proposals;
- **Publicize that non-citizens are eligible to vote in the process;**
- **Regularly update the community about the status of the process;**
- **Regularly convene mini-grantees** to share materials and best practices, in order to facilitate collaboration and avoid siloing;
- **Set clear goals for mini-grantee outreach and reach.** This will motivate greater outreach and allow the City to intervene if the process is not on track. Given the challenges of the pilot process, it may take multiple years to appropriately calibrate these goals.

Proposal Development

- **Expand the recruitment and vetting process for proposal delegates**, explicitly seeking outsiders and those less familiar with City processes, and confirming their level of commitment to the process before approving them;
- **Increase the proposal delegate stipend**, given the significant time commitment required of proposal delegates and the desire to make participation accessible to historically underrepresented and low-income community members;
- **Require City staff review ideas during idea revision and selection**, to flag which could be implemented by existing organizations in the area, which might be funded by existing City budgets, and which would not be funded, except through this process;
- **Train proposal delegates in their role at the beginning of the process**, explaining their responsibilities and decisions they are expected to make. This training should include sections about how to translate ideas into effective proposals without incorporating bias;

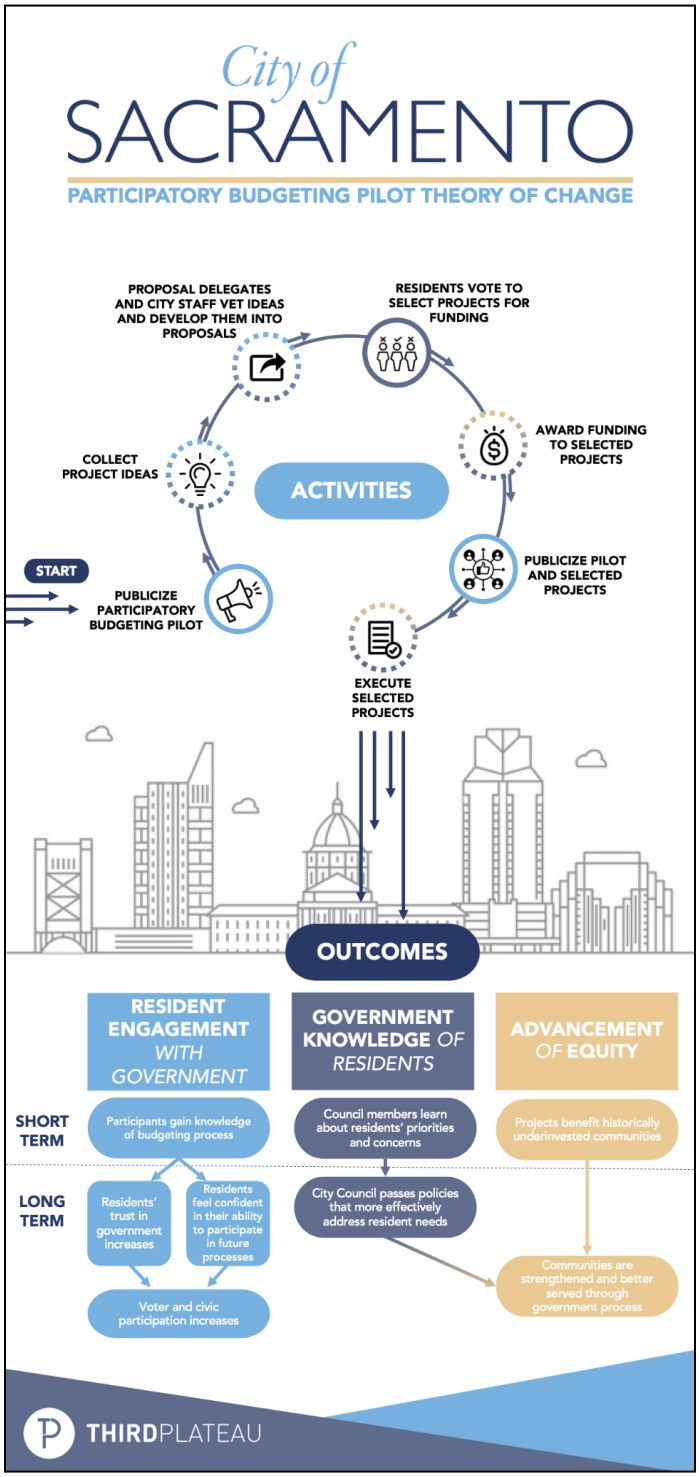
- **Preserve and share with City staff ideas that were not developed into proposals**, in order to convey as much community voice to City staff as possible. Possibilities for this include creating an annually updated database for ideas from PB, and creating a process through which these ideas are systematically reviewed and shared with the appropriate departments.

The Vote

- **Develop metrics for measuring advancement of equity for historically underinvested communities**, in order to rigorously evaluate the equity impacts of the process over time. In particular, it would be helpful to be able to assess the total amount of funding going to particular neighborhoods or communities before and after PB, though this would depend on the City having a list of total funding by neighborhood;
- **Schedule the election at least two months before or after other elections**, to avoid confusing voters about varying processes between elections.

Appendices

Appendix A. Theory of Change



Appendix B. Methodology

Figure 19 describes the methods Third Plateau employed to evaluate the pilot process, broken down by phase.

Figure 19. Third Plateau Evaluation Methodology.

Phase	Method(s)
1. Playbook Development	Observation
2. Outreach	Observation Media monitoring
3. Idea Collection	Observation Idea submission survey (n = 508, 100% of submissions)[61]
4. Proposal Development	Observation Pre- and post- surveys for proposal delegates (n = 46 (pre), 21 (post)) Proposal delegate focus group (n = 13)
5. The Vote	Observation Voter survey (n = 267, 31% of voters)
Process-wide	City Council interviews (n = 1)[62] Ad Hoc Committee focus group (n = 1) City Staff Interview (n=1) PBP interview (n = 2)

We overview each of these below:

Observation

Third Plateau kept detailed observations throughout the process about trends, challenges, and interactions between actors. We directly observed Ad Hoc Committee meetings, various Measure U Committee meetings, two Idea Collection events, and every Proposal Development session. These notes and our reflections on them seeded many of the recommendations in this report.

Media Monitoring

Third Plateau reviewed City web page analytics during the process, as well as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook activity from mini-grantees. We report on total reach and total activity when possible.

[61] There are different sample sizes for different questions on the survey, and some people submitted multiple ideas. There were 550 ideas submitted.

[62] Third Plateau reached out to both Councilmember Loloee and Councilmember Vang with the request to complete an interview. Councilmember Loloee agreed to an interview.

Idea Submission Survey

With input from the Measure U Ad Hoc Committee, Third Plateau created a series of survey questions to include in the Idea Submission Form. The questions measured:

- Demographics, aligned largely to the American Community Survey;
- Attitudes towards the City, aligned with two questions from the National Community Survey, which Sacramento implements on an annual basis, in order to compare idea submitters' opinions of local government with the broader attitude in Sacramento;
- Familiarity with Measure U and general civic engagement, aligned with the National Community Survey, to compare idea submitters' involvement in City activities with the local community, in order to assess the extent to which local insiders were participating in the process;
- How participants heard about the process; and
- How participants were connected to either of the focus areas.

The questions were included as optional in the Idea Submission form, so all participants who submitted ideas had the chance to respond, creating an opt-in sample of respondents.

For the full survey, see Appendix C., *Research Instruments*.

Pre- and Post- Surveys for Proposal Delegates

To assess who decided to participate as proposal delegates, what changes they experienced as part of participating, and what feedback they had for program design, Third Plateau created a pre- and post-survey for delegates.

The surveys asked demographic questions aligned with the Idea Submission and Voting forms, as well as motivation for participating as a delegate, opinions about the City (as aligned with the Idea Submission form), feedback on the process, learning about the City's budget process, and net promoter score.

The pre-survey was distributed to all delegates as part of their orientation, with follow-ups sent by email over the following week, while the post-survey was sent to delegates just before their final meeting, with follow-ups sent over the following week. Both surveys were opt-in and had no incentive for participation.

For the full surveys, see Appendix C., *Research Instruments*.

Proposal Delegate Focus Group
To qualitatively understand delegate experience at a deeper level than surveys could capture, Third Plateau facilitated an opt-in focus group with delegates during one of their final weekly meetings.

The focus group was a semi-structured process facilitated by Third Plateau staff in breakout rooms with small numbers of delegates. Delegates were asked a series of questions about their experience in the process, successes and failure points, and recommendations for changes to the process should it be run again.

For the full protocol, see Appendix C., *Research Instruments*.

Voter Survey
Third Plateau used the same questions from the Idea Submission form as part of an optional Voter survey that voters could complete as part of their online and paper submissions. Unlike the Idea Submission form, the survey was not built into the form itself, rather voters could access it using a separate link they clicked from inside the ballot. This separation protected voter privacy and prevented Third Plateau from knowing any particular voter's preferences.

There was no incentive for participation.

For the full survey, see Appendix C., *Research Instruments*.

City Council Interviews
As one of the outcomes from the pilot process Theory of Change was growing Council member familiarity with their constituents' issues, Third Plateau intended to interview Council members whose districts overlapped with the focus areas. We selected Councilmembers Loloee and Vang, as they had the largest overlap with each of the areas. Third Plateau reached out to both Councilmember Loloee and Councilmember Vang with the request to complete an interview. Councilmember Loloee agreed to an interview, and we spoke with him on December 1, 2022.

We had a semi-structured conversation with the Council member, covering his expectations for the process, its perceived impact, and his advice for future years.

There was no incentive for participation.

Measure U Ad Hoc Committee Focus Group

Given their deep involvement in the process, we facilitated a semi-structured focus group with members of the Measure U Ad Hoc Committee, exploring their experience as part of the process, perceptions of successes and failures therein, and suggestions for future years.

There was no incentive for participation.

City Staff Interview
We conducted a semi-structured interview with the City's Special Projects Manager, as he was extensively involved in the process throughout its implementation. We asked about his experience as part of the process, perceptions of successes and failures therein, and suggestions for future years.

There was no incentive for participation.

Participatory Budgeting Project Interview
We separately conducted semi-structured interviews with national and Sacramento PBP staff, to understand their perceptions of the process. We asked about how the implementation of the pilot process compared with other cities, what they saw as the success and failure points, and how they would suggest improving the process in future years.

There was no incentive for participation.

Appendix C. Research Instruments

- Idea Collection Form
- Proposal Delegate Pre-Survey
- Proposal Delegate Post-Survey
- Proposal Delegate Focus Group Protocol
- After-Voting Survey

Appendix D. Selected Projects

Project Name	Project Description	Total Votes (% of total voters)	Funding Allocated
North Area			
Neighborhood Cleanup Grants	This is a grant based program for community groups to fund cleanup events around the Old North Sacramento/Gardenland/Del Paso Heights	291 (63%)	$60,000

	areas. Organizations that recruit local youth volunteers would be given preference. The total available grant funds would be $60,000.		
Work and Mentoring Programs For Northeast Sacramento Youth	This project would provide organizations funding to implement youth development programs. These programs would include vocational skills training and mentorship. This project would also fund field trips and training to help build character development. Projects could also include community beautification projects performed by youth. The total amount of funds that would be awarded is $100,000. There is no minimum grant award amount. However, no one organization could be awarded more than $25,000.	283 (61%)	$100,000
A Second Chance Career Opportunity for the Youth	This project is targeting youth from 17 to 22 years. Not all youths are college bound, ready for the military or prepared for a job, and this is especially true to the youth that reside in North Sacramento who may not have any direction. The North Sacramento Youth in the D2 area need other outlets to launch them into careers. A 3 month summer job/internship that provides work experience in a trade or computer skills can be the spark that their mind needs to alter their direction. A maximum of 20 candidates will be required to enroll into an application process. Screening will be done by the non-profit that will be assigned (and possibly the sponsoring city department).	259 (56%)	$200,000
Garden and Farmers Market	This project would support mobile farmers markets to offer affordable food, cooking classes and community education to community members, particularly youth in Del Paso Heights. Funds may also go towards the establishment of a non-mobile garden space in Del Paso Heights to support the cultivation and harvesting of locally grown produce to also be sold at low cost at the mobile markets.	233 (50%)	$140,000[63]
South Area			
Teaching Tech	Tech is the future and students in Southeast Sacramento are at a disadvantage. This project is for an organization that goes to different	307 (79%)	$100,000

[63] Note from PBP: The original funding request was for $150,000 but proposal delegates decided that if a project could not be fully funded but the differential was under $50k, they would proceed with funding the project with the remainder.

	schools and afterschool programs to teach students how to code, design, educate, and program using current tech. To be eligible, the implementing organization must have an annual operating budget under $100,000 and already be serving your community.		
Additional Literacy Support for Elementary Students	Literacy rates in Southeast Sacramento are in crisis. This project would fund existing literacy programs in Southeast Sacramento and assist students multiple grades behind in reading. Eligible programs must have school partnerships, and a track record of measurable results providing services to underserved youth, unhoused youth, English Language learners. To be eligible, the implementing organization must have an annual operating budget under $100,000 and already be serving your community.	230 (59%)	$100,000
South Sacramento Entrepreneurial and Career Academy	This project would fund an organization to organize youth and youth adult entrepreneurship training in South Sacramento. These trainings will focus on topics such as Entrepreneurial Programs, Art/Culture Classes, Educational/Life Skills Programs, Culinary, etc. Programs would also address Healing Circles (Adult and Youth), recreation, and anti-violence. Eligibility for implementing organizations is limited to those with an annual operating budget of less than $75,000 with a successfully proven history in implementing the training topics. Additionally, funds will be used toward startup costs to establish a culinary institute.	221 (57%)	$125,000
Transportation Van for Underserved and Unhoused Youth in Oak Park	Help underserved youth succeed. School absentee rate is at an all time high and educational growth is at an all time low. These students need reliable transportation to access learning opportunities. This project would allow a community-based organization to purchase a van and provide free transportation services to these students. To be eligible, the implementing organization must have an annual operating budget under $100,000 and already be serving your community.	217 (55%)	$75,000
Beautify Sacramento	Beautify the streets of Sacramento bounded by Meadowview/Mack Rd. Providing trash cans and trash pick ups. Project could hire the	189 (48%)	$75,000

	youth/volunteers to design trash cans that will be placed within a blocks radius in such locations. This could create community awareness and get the people involved. This will give our youth something to take pride in and help enforce less littering within the community. This could also influence youth job training and employment with other established organizations willing to collaborate. A cleaner environment enhances the property value and visitors of businesses. Placement of new trash receptacles and regularly scheduled pick-ups will require a third party to manage the project which includes purchasing the receptacles, obtaining all required permits, completing or contracting for the installation work, and financing ongoing collection, service, and maintenance of trash receptacles.		
Sacramento Area Homeless Services Event 2023	The homeless services event will provide a specific day for the unhoused to come out to a safe place and receive much needed services, food, music, and community. The qualified organization will provide services that are typically difficult for the homeless to obtain. Some of these services will provide key support that will aid in the many of the difficulties the homeless experience. The idea of the event is to provide a day that will both help with their needs, while showing them the respect and love they deserve. This project will be available for nonprofits with an annual operating budget of $50,000 or less. To be eligible, the implementing organization must have an annual operating budget under $50,000.	185 (47%)	$25,000[64]

Source: Participatory Budgeting Project

Appendix E. Example Materials

Please click the following link for sample outreach materials that the PB organizers employed to publicize the process.

[64] Note from PBP: Proposal delegates were given the option to do one of the following: 1. Split this $25k up across all of the winning projects to further pad each one by $5k; 2. Allocate the $25k towards capacity building for organizations applying for implementation; 3. Dedicate $25K towards the next vote getter to seed some portion of that work. The 3rd option was supported by the majority of delegates and is why this partial allocation is reflected here.
It may be noteworthy that some delegates did not want to do any of these options and voted instead to allocate the remainder of funds towards other projects they had worked on or personally preferred. These requests were seen as misaligned with PB and the commitment made to a democratic process and transparency through the process and were not pursued further.