

Participatory Budgeting in Vallejo

2012-2013 Rulebook

About this Rulebook

This booklet was developed by the Steering Committee for Participatory Budgeting in Vallejo (PB Vallejo) in September 2012, with assistance from the non-profit organization The Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP). While participatory budgeting is inspired by experiences elsewhere, we want the Vallejo process to reflect the special characteristics of our community. The Steering Committee and City Council thus agreed on these guidelines and rules based on our understanding of community needs, issues, and interests.

This rulebook is only a starting point, and we intend for it to remain a work in progress. We expect to continue developing and improving the process as it unfolds, together with other community members. Hopefully you will even help!

What is Participatory Budgeting?

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process that was first developed in Brazil in 1989, and is now practiced in over 1,500 cities around the world. In these cities, PB lets community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. Though each PB initiative looks different, the process generally involves several months of public meetings, discussions, and voting, so that the public has time to make wise decisions.

Participatory Budgeting in Vallejo

In 2012, the Vallejo City Council established the first city-wide Participatory Budgeting process in the United States. Through PB, the community is invited to help decide how to spend a minimum of 30% of the revenue generated by the Measure B sales tax - approximately \$3.2 million, collected over a 15 month period from April 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013. Vallejo residents and stakeholders will develop project proposals, residents will vote on projects, and the list of the projects that receive the most votes will be submitted to City Council for approval.

Project Eligibility

Projects are eligible for funding if they meet the following criteria:

- Benefit the public. Projects that only benefit private individuals or groups are not eligible.
- Are a one-time expenditure that can be completed with funds from this year's PB process. Both capital infrastructure projects and program or service projects are eligible. A multi-year program will be eligible only if it off-sets other expenditures in the City budget so that the cost is \$0, pays for itself, or increases City revenues.
- Are implemented by the City of Vallejo, or in collaboration with the Vallejo City Unified School District, the Greater Vallejo Recreation District, or any other public agency, non-profit organization, or religious institution that operates in Vallejo. Projects implemented by non-city public agencies, however, must also include financial or value in-kind contributions from the agency, in addition to PB funding. Projects implemented by non-profit organizations or religious institutions must also meet the eligibility guidelines used by the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

Goals: What is this for?

We hope to accomplish three main goals through PB Vallejo:

1. Improve our city

We aim to enhance quality of life in Vallejo by developing projects that solve real problems and create strong and healthy communities. We hope that this process will build a new spirit of civic pride and raise the profile of Vallejo on the regional, state, and national levels.

2. Engage our community

We aim to ensure that all members of our community have a voice. We will make every effort to engage those who are traditionally underrepresented in politics, who face obstacles to participating, or who feel disillusioned with the political process. Through widespread and meaningful community engagement, we hope to increase public involvement in civic life in Vallejo. To the extent applicable, public meetings will comply with the open meeting requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

3. Transform our democracy

We aim to empower Vallejo residents and stakeholders with the skills and knowledge they need to shape our city's future. By enabling people to make real decisions-, we will build new leadership from the bottom up and forge deeper ties between residents, neighborhoods, and communities.

We ask everyone involved to work with us to achieve these goals.

Rules: How does it work?

Budget Assemblies

- The public will learn about the city budget and propose project ideas during at least nine assemblies, including one afternoon assembly for youth, one daytime assembly for seniors, and one Spanish-language assembly. At least one other assembly will include interpretation in Spanish, and there will be interpretation in other languages as necessary.
- The public will also be able to submit project ideas online, through mail-in and email submission, and through meetings at places like senior centers, schools, and clubs.
- Anyone is welcome to attend the assemblies and propose project ideas.
- Participants can volunteer to serve as budget delegates if they:
 1. are at least 14 years old, *and*
 2. are residents of Vallejo or its unincorporated areas, *or* are stakeholders in Vallejo - people who physically work in Vallejo, own a business in Vallejo, attend school in Vallejo, *or* are parents of children who attend school in Vallejo.

Delegate Meetings

- All budget delegates must attend a delegate orientation session.
- At the delegate orientation sessions, each delegate will join a committee to discuss and develop project proposals for a certain issue area or demographic group.
- Issue committees may include but are not limited to: Transportation, Public Health, Public Safety, Education, Parks & Recreation, Environment, Art & Culture, Housing

- Demographic committees may include but are not limited to: Youth, Seniors, Spanish-Speakers. These committees are meant to ensure maximum participation from people who might not otherwise participate. They will develop projects that specifically address the needs of their demographic group.

Project Expos

- There will be at least three Project Expos, including one in Spanish. At the Project Expos, budget delegates will present their project proposals to the community and get feedback through a science fair format.

Voting for Projects

- People are eligible to vote for projects if they:
 1. are at least 16 years old, *and*
 2. are residents of Vallejo or its unincorporated areasThrough these inclusive voter eligibility rules, PB Vallejo aims to more deeply engage all Vallejo residents in their community and government.
- At the time of voting, voters must present proof that they satisfy the eligibility requirements. A comprehensive list of acceptable IDs will be publicized prior to the vote.
- Voting opportunities will take place on multiple days and in multiple locations. Each voter can vote on one occasion.
- Each voter may cast one vote per project. The Steering Committee will decide the number of total votes a voter can cast, once the approximate number of projects on the ballot is known.

Approval of Funding by City Council

- Upon completion of the public voting process, the results of the balloting will be brought before the City Council for funding approval. The City Council will have the discretion to approve which projects are funded, the amount of funding, and conditions (if any) placed upon the use of approved funds.
- If there is a tie for the last bit of funding, subject to available resources and the discretion of the City or other agencies, Council will try to secure additional money to complete the tied projects. If this is not possible, the remaining funds will be split between the tied projects. If these projects cannot be completed with partial funds, the remaining money will go to the project with the next most votes that can be fully funded, or into a reserve fund.
- If the last bit of available funds does not cover the cost of the next highest vote-getting project, subject to available resources and the discretion of the City or other agencies, Council will try to secure additional money to complete the project. If this is not possible, the project will be partially funded. If the project cannot be completed with partial funds, the remaining money will go to the project with the next most votes that can be fully funded, or into a reserve fund.

Monitoring of Funded Projects

- After the vote, a monitoring committee of Steering Committee members and budget delegates will be established to monitor the implementation of funded projects.

Amendments

- The Steering Committee may make changes to the Rulebook via a three-quarters majority vote of those present at the meeting, and final approval by City Council. The City Council may make changes to the Rulebook via a majority vote.

Roles & Responsibilities: Who does what?

There is a role for everyone in participatory budgeting, but different people have different roles and responsibilities, based partly on their stake in the community and their time commitment to the process. We encourage every community stakeholder to both participate and encourage others in the community to participate.

Vallejo Residents and Stakeholders

Anyone can participate in the process, even if they only come to one meeting or only vote.

- Identify local problems and needs
- Propose project ideas
- Select budget delegates
- Volunteer to serve as budget delegates
- Mobilize Vallejo residents and stakeholders to participate
- Vote on project proposals, *if a Vallejo resident*

Budget Delegates

Budget delegates do the extra work necessary to turn community ideas into real projects.

- Identify local problems and needs
- Discuss and prioritize initial project ideas
- Consult with Vallejo residents and stakeholders on project proposals
- Develop full project proposals
- Prepare project posters and presentations
- Mobilize Vallejo residents and stakeholders to participate
- Monitor project implementation
- Evaluate the PB process

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee coordinates PB Vallejo. The committee includes 20 civic organizations nominated by City Council. A full list of Steering Committee members is included at the end of the rulebook. Steering Committee meetings will be held in compliance with the open meeting requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

- Design and oversee the PB process
- Distribute promotional materials
- Mobilize Vallejo residents and stakeholders to participate
- Facilitate budget assemblies, delegate meetings, and delegate orientations
- Evaluate the PB process
- Revise rules to the PB process
- Arrange food, childcare, and interpretation for assemblies and meetings
- Monitor project implementation
- Deliver final budget priorities to the City
- Recruit organizations and community stakeholders to workgroups
- Facilitate communication with city departments and agencies

City Council Liaisons

City Council has selected two liaisons to the Steering Committee. See the end of the rulebook for more details.

- Provide support to the Steering Committee
- Facilitate communication between the Steering Committee and City Council

Workgroups

Steering Committee members, representatives of other organizations, and community stakeholders are welcome to help implement PB Vallejo by volunteering in the following workgroups:

- **Event Planning:** Help organize budget assemblies, delegate meetings, project expos and the vote, by securing venues, food, childcare, equipment, and other amenities.
- **Facilitation:** Help develop facilitation plans for assemblies and meetings, recruit and train facilitators, facilitate meetings, and develop meeting materials.
- **Outreach:** Help design and implement outreach plans, recruit and train outreach workers, and develop outreach materials.
- **Media:** Help generate media coverage, respond to media requests, and organize press events.
- **Online Participation:** Help plan, oversee, and promote the PB Vallejo website and opportunities for online engagement.
- **Resource Development:** Help pursue additional funding and resources for PB Vallejo.

The Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP)

The City of Vallejo has contracted PBP, a non-profit organization specializing in PB processes, to support the Steering Committee and the City in designing and implementing PB Vallejo.

- Prepare PB Vallejo Rulebook based on Steering Committee input
- Prepare and distribute educational and promotional materials
- Present information on the budget funds and past spending
- Facilitate and provide materials for budget delegate orientation
- Reserve spaces for assemblies and meetings
- Arrange food, childcare, and interpretation for assemblies and meetings
- Mobilize Vallejo residents and stakeholders to participate
- Offer technical assistance on the PB process
- Coordinate evaluation of the PB process
- Recruit organizations and community stakeholders to workgroups

Vallejo City Council

- Establishes the PB process
- Appoints the Steering Committee
- Approves the Rulebook and structure
- Approves funding for the projects prioritized by voters

City and Agency Staff

- Assess feasibility of project proposals
- Provide cost estimates for project proposals
- Offer feedback on project proposals

About the Vallejo City Council

The Vallejo City Council established the first city-wide PB process in the United States. The City Council is made up of the following members:

- Osby Davis, Mayor
- Erin Hannigan, Vice-Mayor
- Hermie R. Sunga, Councilmember
- Marti Brown, Councilmember*
- Stephanie Gomes, Councilmember*
- Bob Sampayan, Councilmember
- Robert H. McConnell, Councilmember

*The City Council liaisons to the Steering Committee are Councilmembers Stephanie Gomes and Marti Brown.

About the PB Vallejo Steering Committee

In accordance with the City Council resolution that established PB, the City invited 80 civic organizations to apply to serve on the PB Vallejo Steering Committee. In July 2012, 20 organizations applied, with each Councilmember nominating up to three groups. Council approved all 20 applications. These representatives of civic, business, cultural, educational, and community organizations designed this Rulebook and are overseeing PB Vallejo. The following individuals and organizations serve on the Steering Committee for 2012-2013:

- Joey Lake, Better Vallejo (Chair)
- Lynda Daniels, Vallejo NAACP (Vice-Chair)
- Dennis Albright, Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD)
- Marisela Barbosa, Solano Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Mike Browne, Vallejo Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Peggy Cohen-Thompson, Solano County Black Chamber of Commerce
- John DeLaTorre, Belvedere Homeowners Association
- Pippin Dew, Vallejo Chamber of Commerce
- James Eggert, Heritage District Neighborhood Watch
- Pam Keith, Solano Community College
- K. Peter Livingstone, Hillcrest Park Homeowners Association
- Jesus Malgapo, Filipino-American Retired US Armed Forces Association
- Karen McKeivitt, Parkview Terrace Neighborhood Association
- Katy Miessner, Vallejo Heights Neighborhood Association
- Paul Norberg, Hiddenbrooke Property Owners Association
- Pelton Stewart, Vallejo Sister City Association
- Rozzana Verder-Aliga, Filipino Community of Solano County
- Cris Villanueva, Filipino-American Chamber of Commerce
- Johnny Walker, Solano Association of Realtors
- Robert Wolf, Florence Douglas Senior Center