Let's Budget, Denver!
Participatory Budgeting Pilot: Update

Finance and Governance Committee | May 10, 2022

Agenda

Overview of Participatory Budgeting Pilot in Denver
- o Program history and structure
- o Team members
- o Capital improvements

Design Phase Update
- o Community Steering Committee recruitment
- o Rulebook design

Idea Collection Phase
- o Upcoming outreach and mini-grants

Proposal Development and Community Voting Lookahead
- o Planning for the community vote

Participatory Budgeting in Denver

How it works and who is involved in Denver's pilot program

Participatory What?

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process where community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.

PB BUILDS A STRONGER DEMOCRACY

Community leadership

Learning and collaboration

Inclusive civic engagement

THEN, BRAINSTORM IDEAS

PROJECT!

AND DEVELOP PROPOSALS

THEN RESIDENTS CHOOSE TOP PROPOSALS

YOU CHOOSE!

FIRST, RESIDENTS DESIGN THE PROCESS

How does PB work?
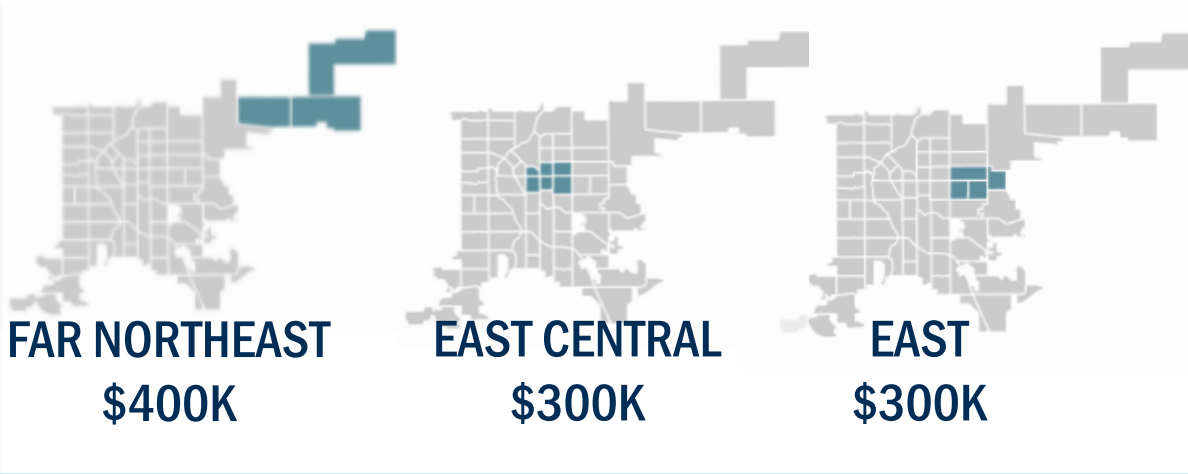
AND THE CITY BUILDS PROJECTS

$1.7 million on capital improvements

$1,000,000
Distributed across three areas with completed neighborhood plan initiatives (NPI)

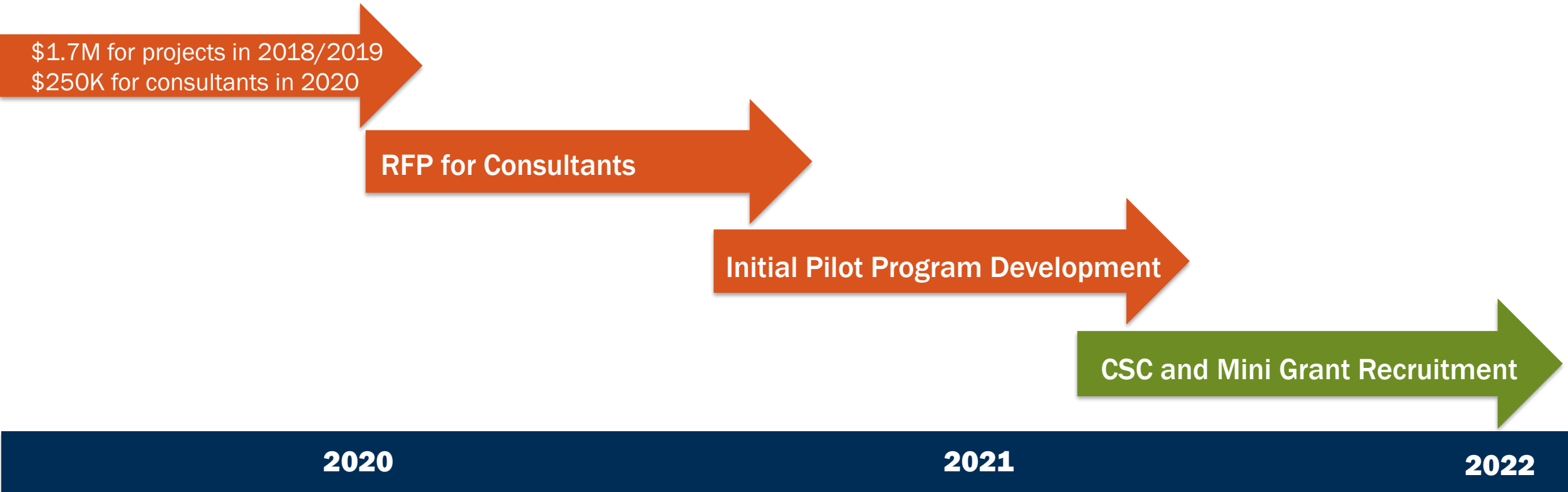**FAR NORTHEAST**
$400K

EAST CENTRAL
$300K

EAST
$300K

$700,000
Distributed to mobility safety projects citywide in areas outside the NPI areas

Denver PB Timeline: History

$1.7M for projects in 2018/2019
$250K for consultants in 2020

RFP for Consultants

Initial Pilot Program Development

CSC and Mini Grant Recruitment

| 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |

Initial planning for Denver PB started in 2018

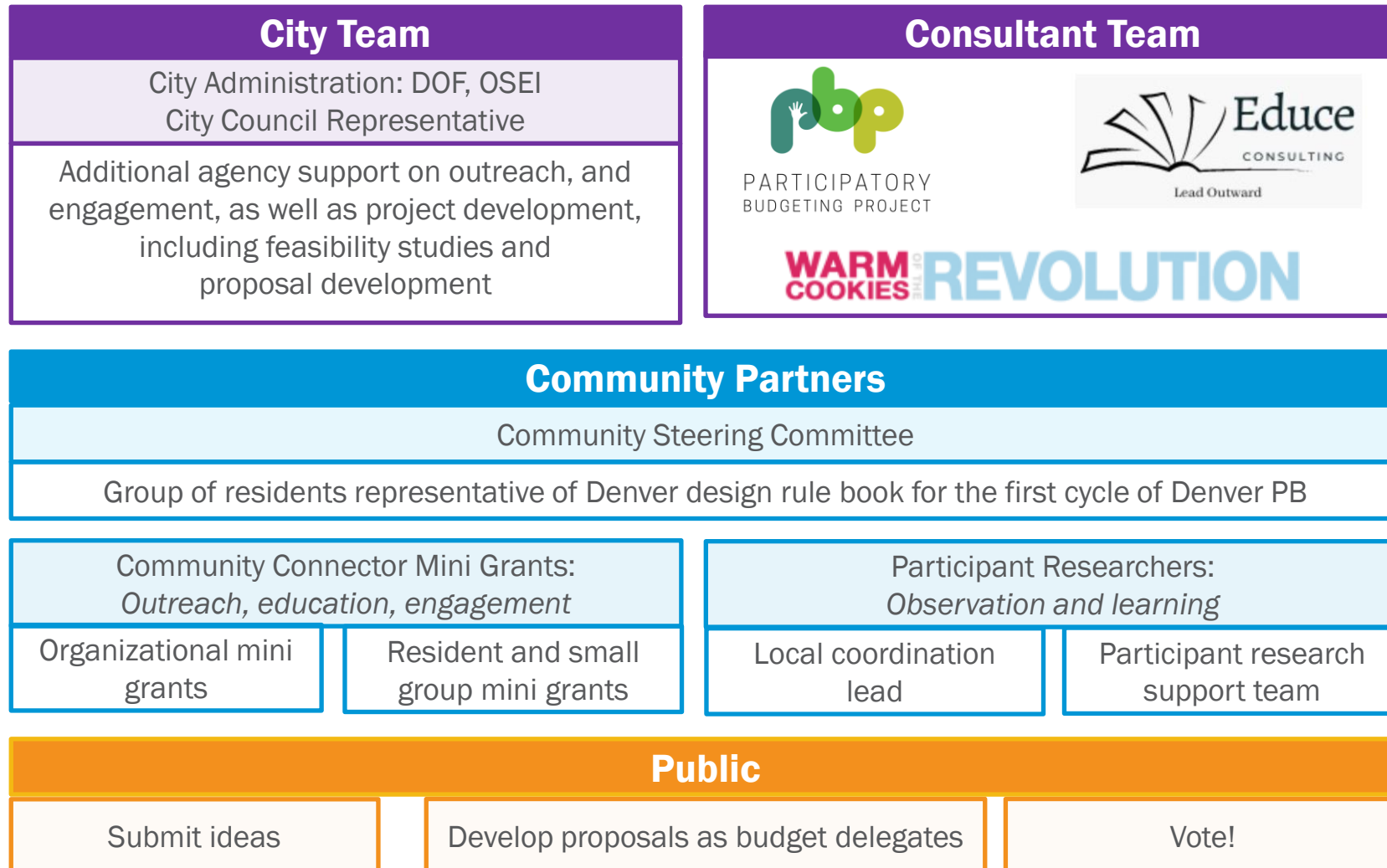# Current Phase: Design

Seating the CSC to design the process

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Denver PB Timeline: Current Status

The first cycle of Denver PB will take place over the next several months.

CSC Design the process

Idea Collection

Develop Proposals

Vote on Projects

Evaluation

We are here!

| APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUG | SEPT | OCT | NOV |
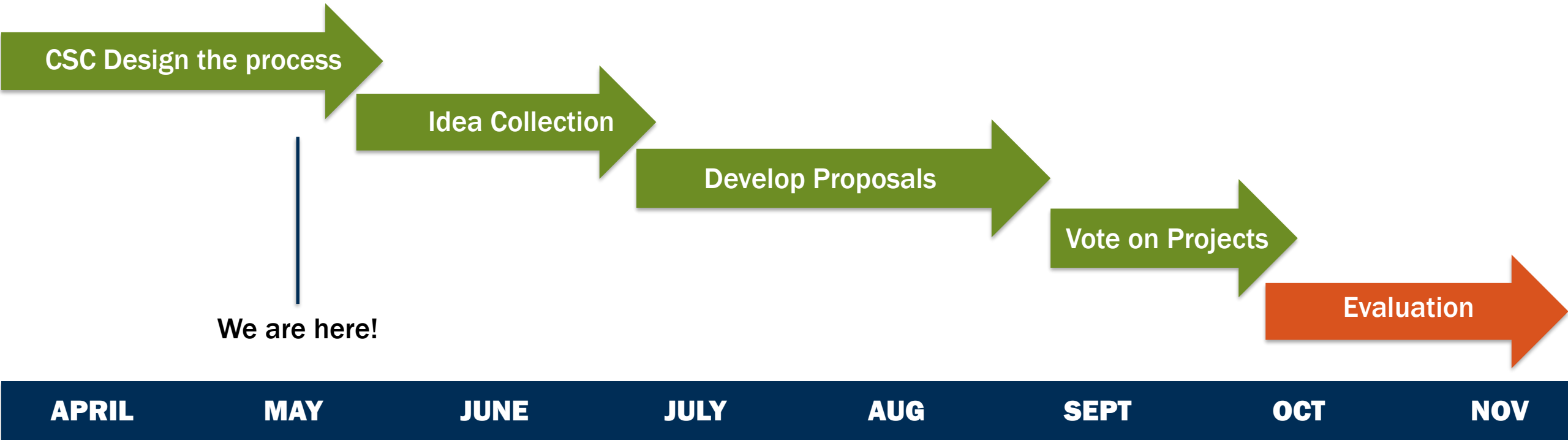
The City may start designing and constructing selected projects as early as the end of 2022.

Program Structure

City Team

City Administration: DOF, OSEI
City Council Representative

Additional agency support on outreach, and engagement, as well as project development, including feasibility studies and proposal development

Consultant Team

Community Partners

Community Steering Committee

Group of residents representative of Denver design rule book for the first cycle of Denver PB

Community Connector Mini Grants:
Outreach, education, engagement

Organizational mini grants

Resident and small group mini grants

Participant Researchers:
Observation and learning

Local coordination lead

Participant research support team

Public

Submit ideas

Develop proposals as budget delegates

Vote!

Civic Engagement

- Resident ownership in government and participation in long-term, collective decision-making

Community Capacity and Education

- Individual and collective capacity to shape civic affairs

Denver PB Goals

Equity and Accessibility

- Equitable outcomes for historically underserved communities, especially BIPOC residents, people with disabilities, youth, and immigrants and refugees

Institutional Capacity

- Authentic collaboration rooted in improved listening and dialogue to create a more responsive government that invests in residents and community power

Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

Denver PB is committed to an inclusive process that prioritizes residents who have historically faced the highest barriers to civic engagement, including:

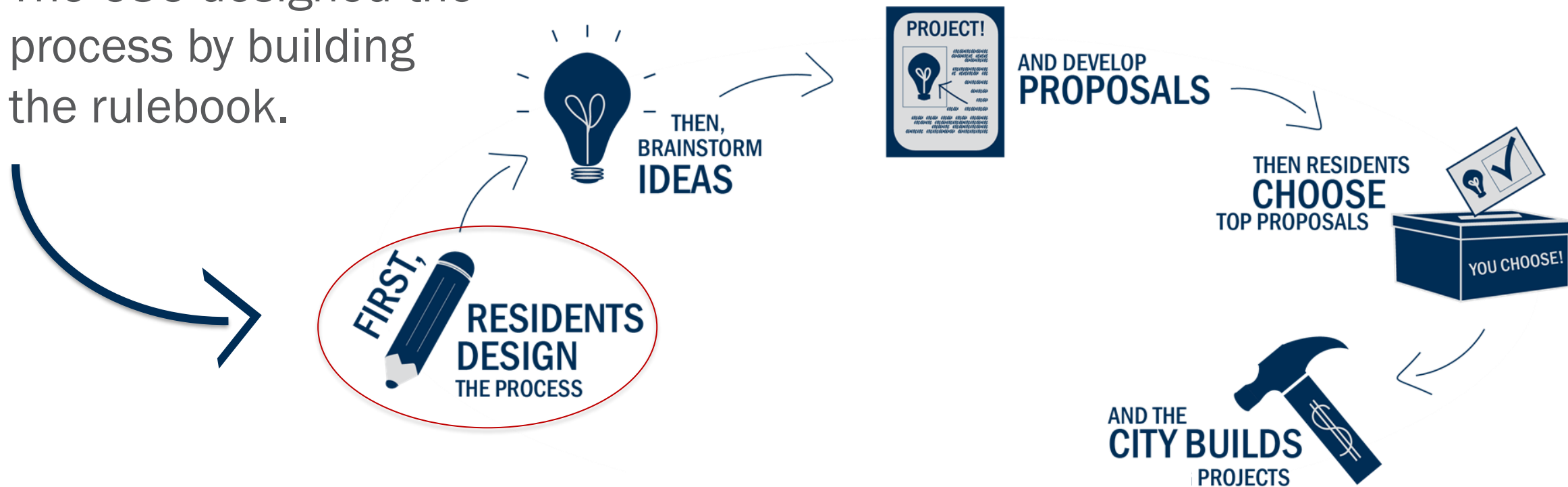| Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) | Immigrants and refugees | Persons with disabilities | Youth |

Equity is built into every step of the process, including consideration of:

- Language justice
- Compensation

- ASL and captioning
- Transportation support

- Childcare support
- Flexible meeting times

Community Steering Committee (CSC)

The CSC designed the process by building the rulebook.

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THEN, BRAINSTORM **IDEAS**

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AND THE **CITY BUILDS** PROJECTS

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Community Steering Committee

CSC members have vibrant and diverse perspectives:

Strong advocates for historically underserved communities:
Representation from persons with disabilities and LQBTQ identities. Strong advocacy for unhoused residents.

Culturally rich and committed to language justice:
Members speaking Karen, Poe Karen, Burmese, Thai, Poah, Fulani, Spanish, Lakota, Nyanja, Bemba, and Tonga

Citywide representation with Focus in NPI areas:
Strong representation in FNE, E, and EC. Members represent 12 different neighborhoods across the city.

Racially and Ethnically Diverse:
Strong representation from Black, Indigenous, People of Color as well as immigrants and refugees

Youth representation:
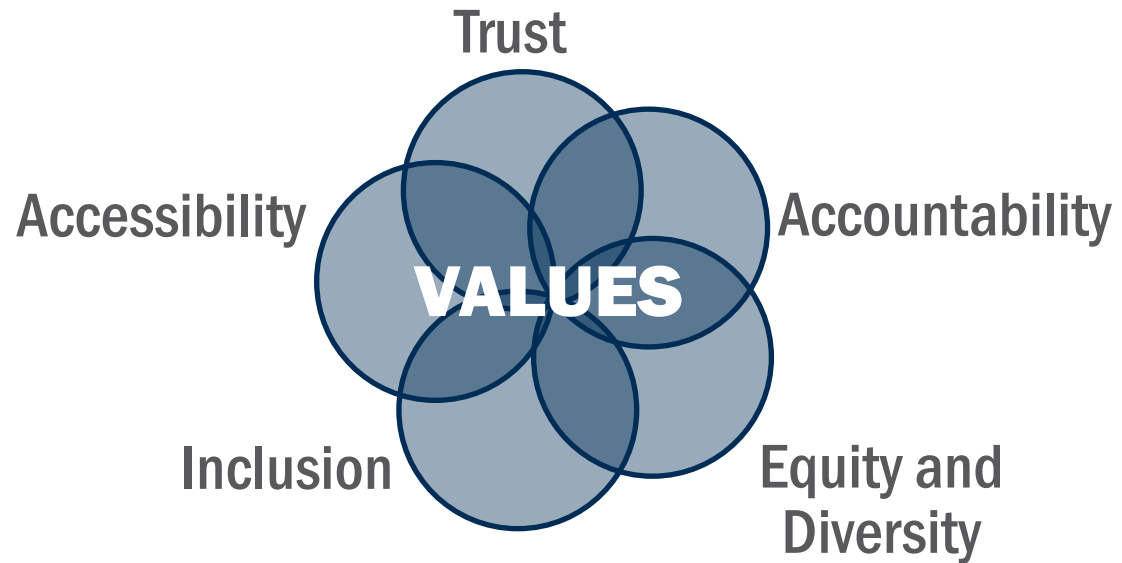Two members 18 or under, with the youngest member under the age of 15

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CSC Engagement

Let's Budget, Denver Rulebook

Pilot name

> **Let's Budget, Denver**
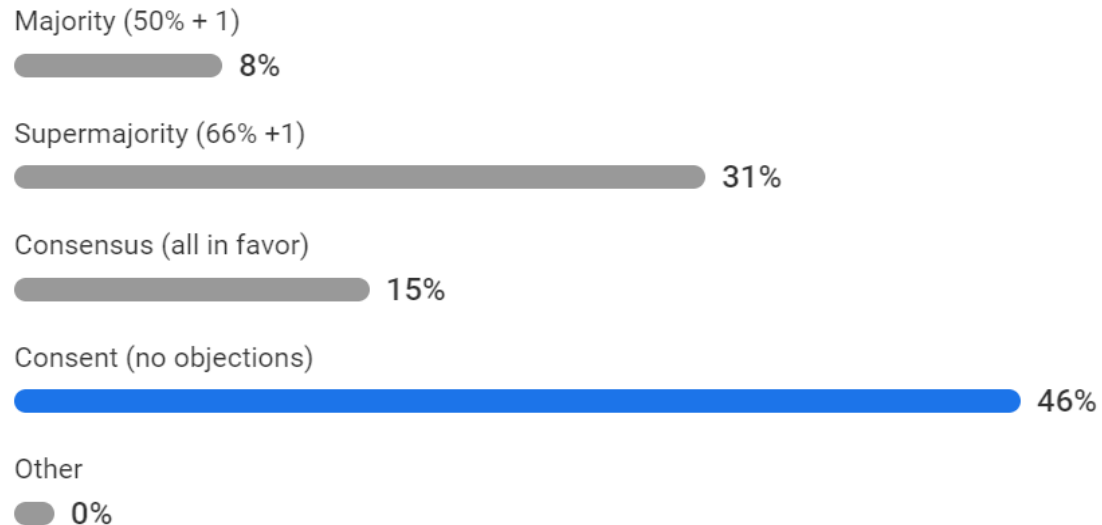> *Your Community Choice*

Values and Goals

Let's Budget, Denver Rulebook

Decision-making: Consent

What decision-making method would you prefer the CSC use to adopt or approve decisions for the guidebook?

Majority (50% + 1)
8%

Supermajority (66% +1)
31%

Consensus (all in favor)
15%

Consent (no objections)
46%

Other
0%

Group agreements

Assume best intentions

Make space, take space (step up, step back)

Respect how people engage on camera and present themselves in this space

Spell out acronyms

Clarify when making proposal vs brainstorming ideas – support each other in clarifying

And others!

Launching the Pilot Program

1 Foundation set by the City

- $1.7M for capital projects
- Citywide and regional approach

2 Decisions and rulebook created by CSC

3 Share rulebook and launch idea collection to the public

Building the Rulebook: CSC Input/Decisions

CSC Functions
- How the committee will work together
- How CSC will make decisions
- Program name
- Values & goals

Public Participation
- Who can participate in idea collection, proposal development, and voting
- Are there age thresholds for each phase?

Outreach and Engagement
- Who do we want to prioritize in our outreach?
- How to reach people through technology?
- How to reach people without technology?

Vote and Ballot Planning
- Project scoring rubric input
- Project voting method input
- Vote contingency
- Participation criteria verification

Let's Budget, Denver Rulebook

NPI Participation Criteria (specific to each NPI area)

Submit ideas

- Participants must **live, go to school, or work at a micro business** in an **NPI area.**
- There is **no age limit** to submit an idea.

Develop proposals

- Participants must **live or go to school** in an **NPI area.**
- Participants must be **at least 10 years old**

Vote for projects

- Participants must **live or go to school** in an **NPI area.**
- Participants must be **at least 10 years old**

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Let's Budget, Denver Rulebook

Citywide Participation Criteria

Submit ideas

- Participants must **live, go to school, or work at a micro business** in Denver.
- There is **no age limit** to submit an idea.

Develop proposals

- Participants must **live or go to school** in Denver.
- Participants must be **at least 10 years old**

Vote for projects

- Participants must **live or go to school** in Denver.
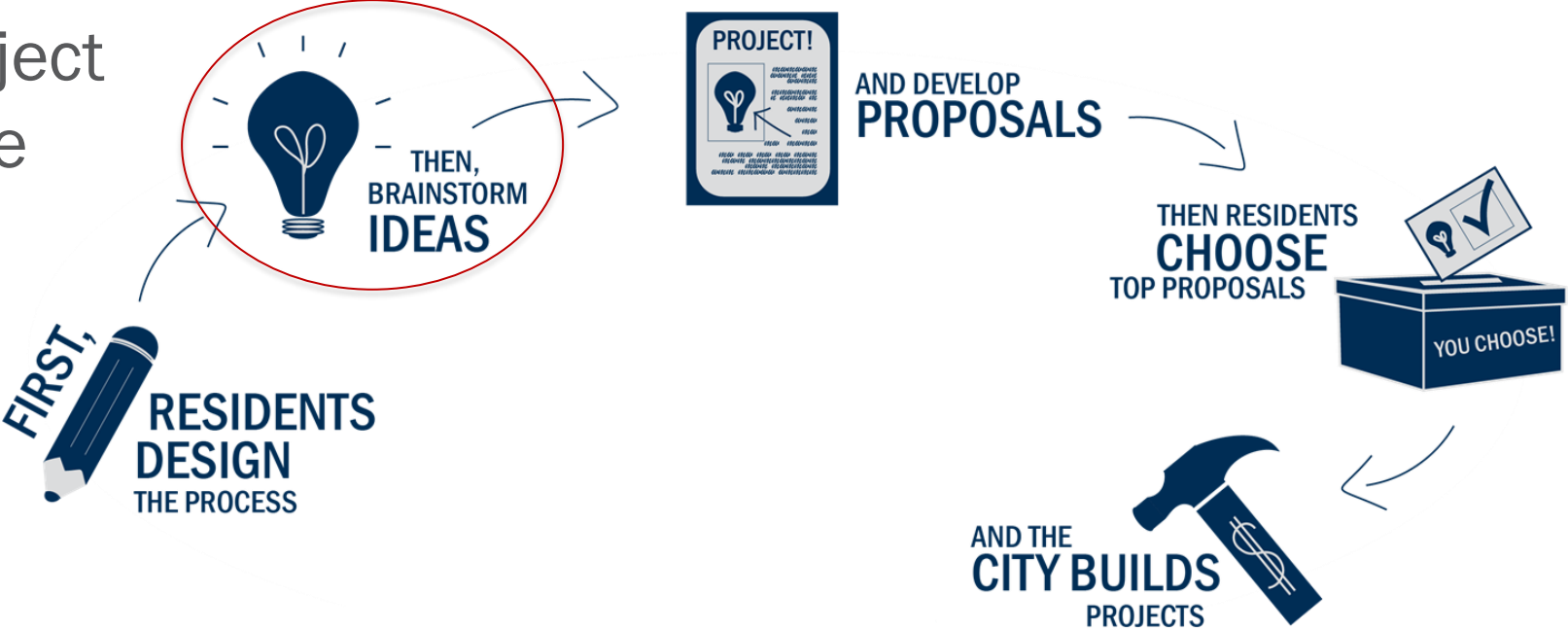- Participants must be **at least 10 years old**

PROJECT!

YOU CHOOSE!

Upcoming Phase: Idea Collection

Launching the idea collection process

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Idea Collection

The public will submit project ideas in-person and online starting in late spring.

Community Connector Mini Grants

$30K in mini-grants to amplify community engagement

$21K for Organizations

$9K for Individuals/Small Groups

Let's Budget, Denver
Community Connectors will

→ Motivate residents to participate in the process and develop long-term skills to lead future civic processes

→ Coordinate and host events to make the process accessible and inviting, and to encourage new and diverse perspectives to participate

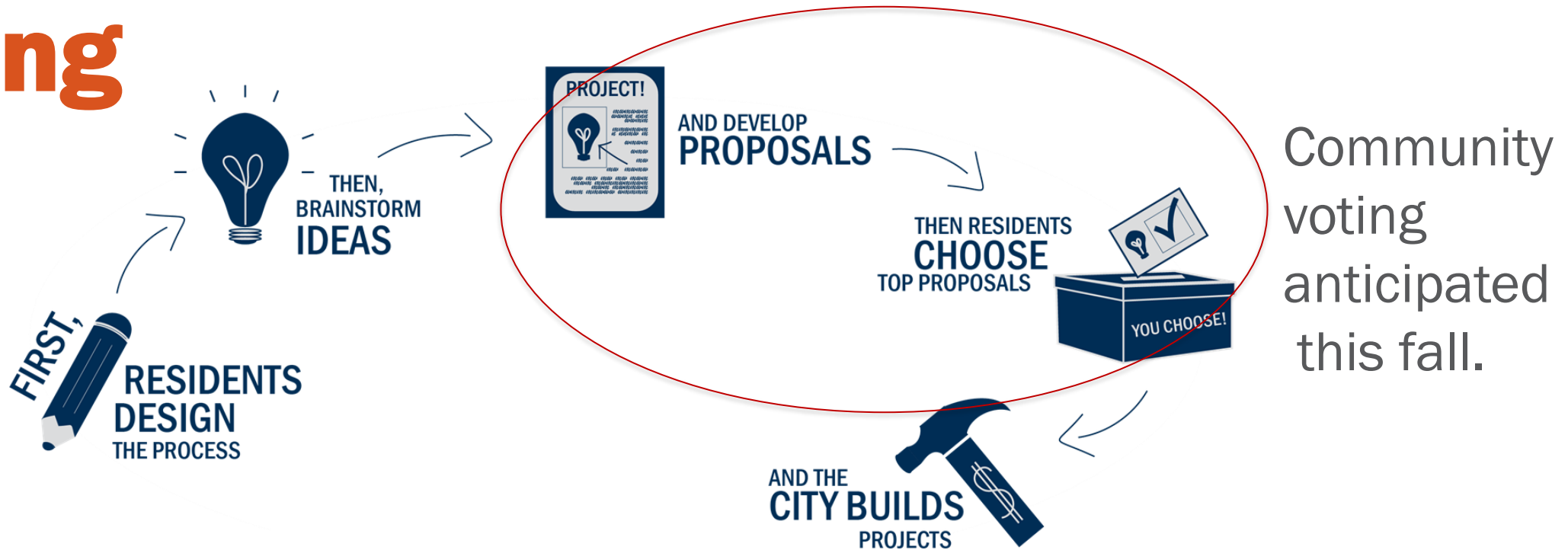| Tactics proposed by Community Connectors:	o Navigators/ canvassing	o Budget workshops	o Budget storytelling	o Neighborhood events	o WhatsApp and text outreach

Future Phases: Proposal Development, Voting, and Evaluation

A Lookahead

Proposal Development & Voting

Budget delegates will work with City staff to develop proposals, complete with cost estimates.

Community voting anticipated this fall.

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Proposal Development & Voting Process
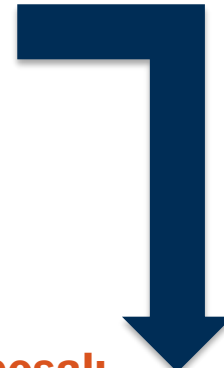

Public reviews/submits **Project Idea**

Feasibility Review: City determines if an idea meets city feasibility requirements

If yes

Budget Delegate Scoring: Does it align with the "Lets Budget, Denver" values and goals?

Draft Proposal: Budget delegates work with city staff to create detailed project descriptions and costs

Final Projects are added to the ballot

Evaluation

- Observe the pilot Program's development, including responses to scale and geographic scope, decision-making processes, representation of the Steering Committee, and overall Program participation
- Interview City staff and Denver-based organizations/individuals who partnered with the Program to provide local support.
- Engage in Program events and processes, including idea collection and deliberation events, budget delegate meetings, and voting events.
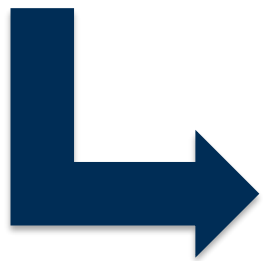
After the pilot cycle of Denver PB is complete, the Evaluation Consultant will provide a complete analysis and evaluation answering the questions:

- What did we achieve and learn in relation to our established goals and outcomes?
- Which approach- neighborhood v. citywide – was more effective?
- What could be improved?

Questions?

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