



The People's Budget

Denver's Participatory Budgeting Program

Budget and Policy Committee | March 17, 2025 | Kiki Turner, Program Administrator

A child with long brown hair is holding a circular white sign in front of their face. The sign has the words 'I Voted' written in blue marker, with a blue star next to 'I' and a blue star next to 'Voted'. There are also two red stars on the sign. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or community center setting with colorful decorations.

Agenda

What is the People's Budget?

Direct democracy, where community allocates taxpayer dollars

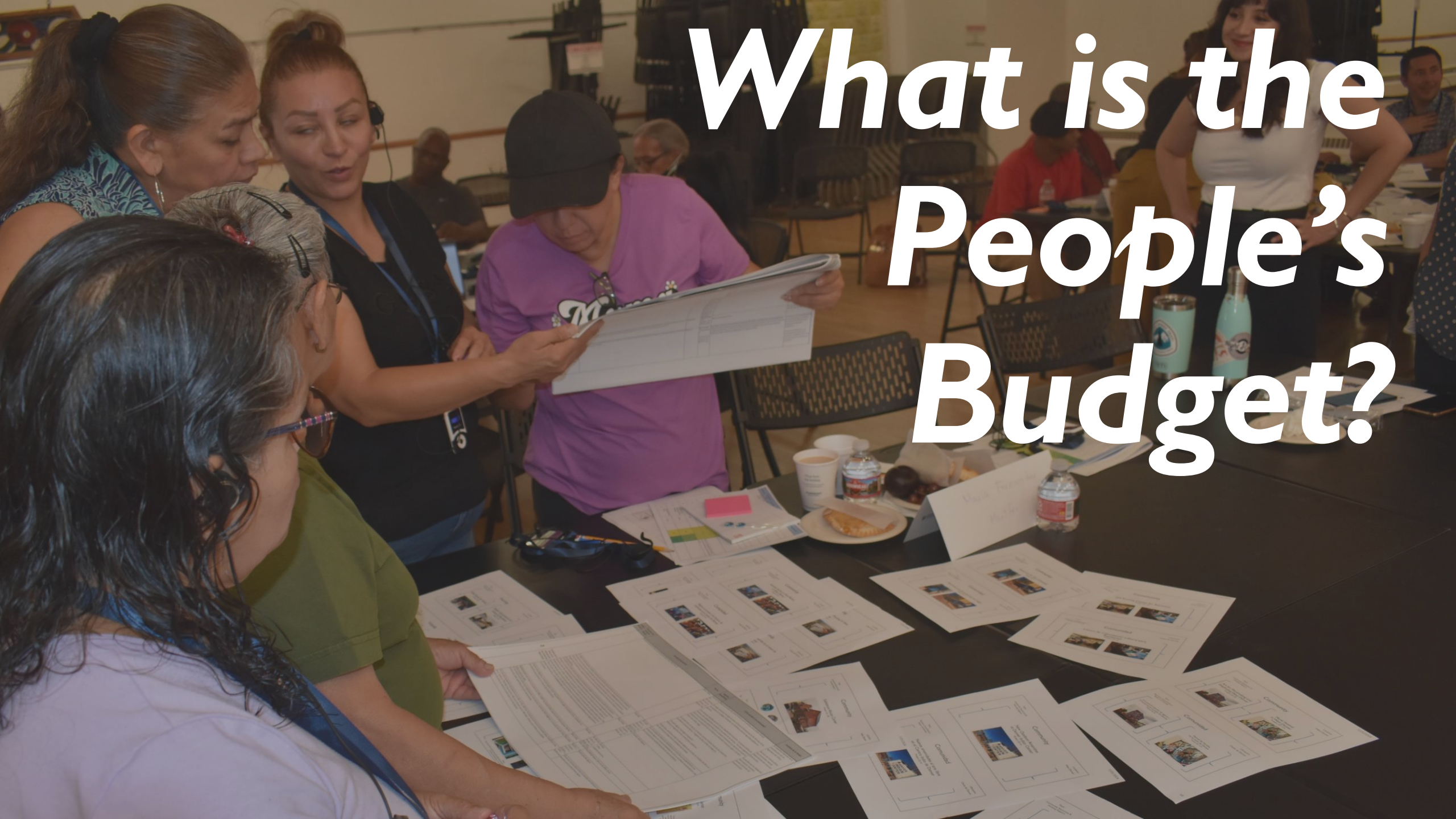
Why do participatory budgeting?

Building trust between government and community

What's next for Denver?

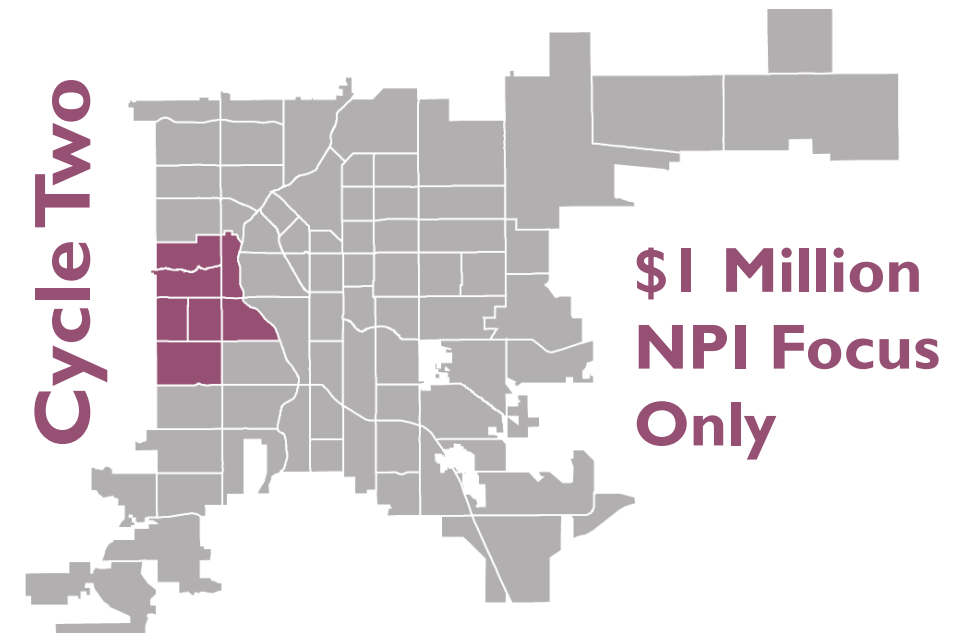
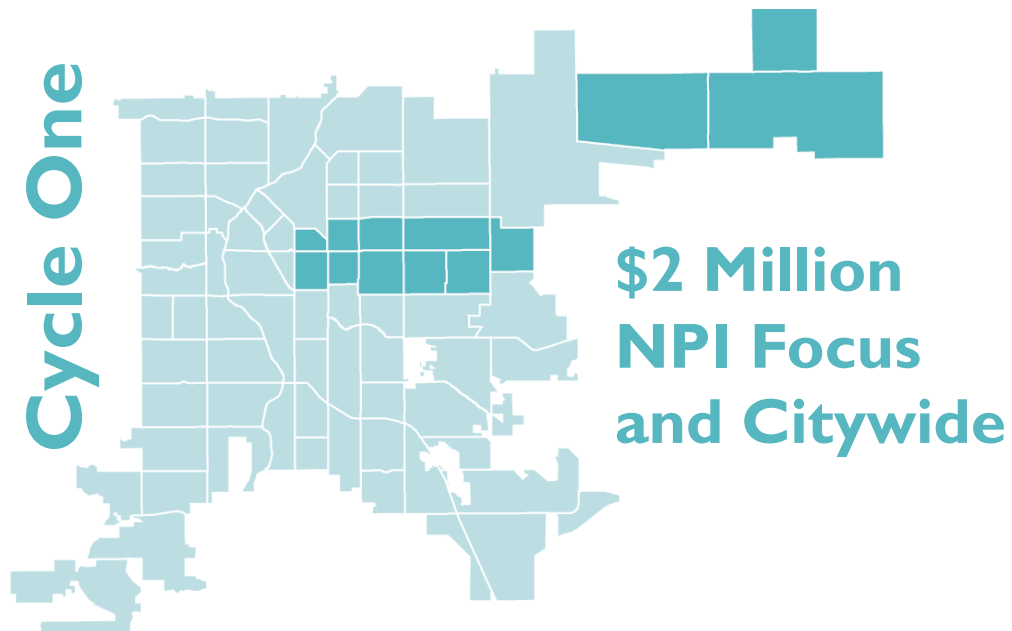
Constructing \$3 million of neighborhood infrastructure and launching Cycle 3

What is the People's Budget?



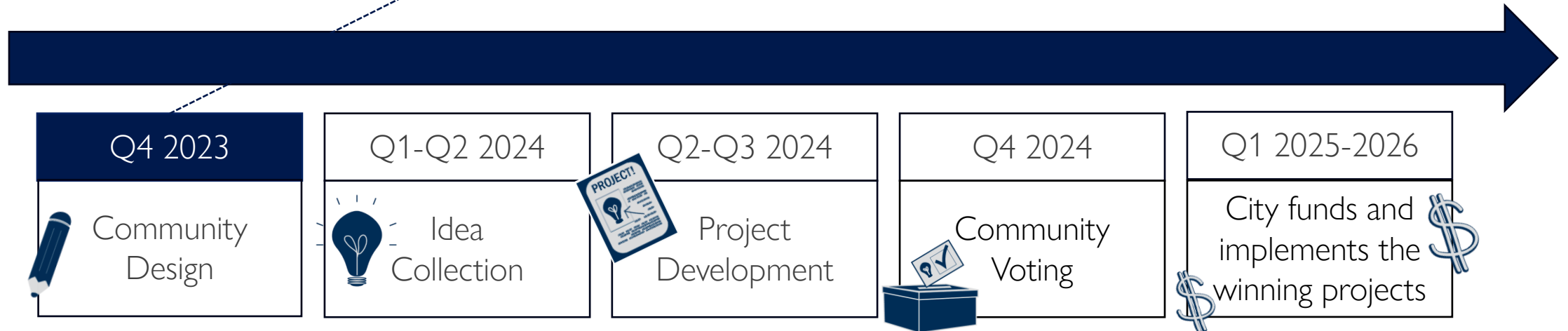
Participatory Budgeting:

A direct democracy process where community allocates a portion of taxpayer funds



Cycle 2 People's Budget Lifecycle:

Four community-led phases followed by project implementation



Cycle 2 Community Engagement (2023-2024)

41 community members from West Denver guide Cycle 2 of the People's Budget

81%

of resident leaders identify as **Black, Indigenous people of color.**

60%

of resident leaders either **cannot or did not vote** in the last election

53%

of resident leaders earn **less than \$25K a year.**

34%

of resident leaders identify as a **person with a disability**

Resident Leaders bring a variety of **lived experience** to the Program

- Residents speak **Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Lakota.** All meetings are **interpreted into Spanish.**
- Residents' age span over 50 years: The **youngest member is 15 and the oldest is 78 years old**
- Residents have perspectives and experience across the housing spectrum, from **homeownership to housing instability.** Three members lived in a city shelter during the program (and have since found stable housing!).

Who can submit ideas?

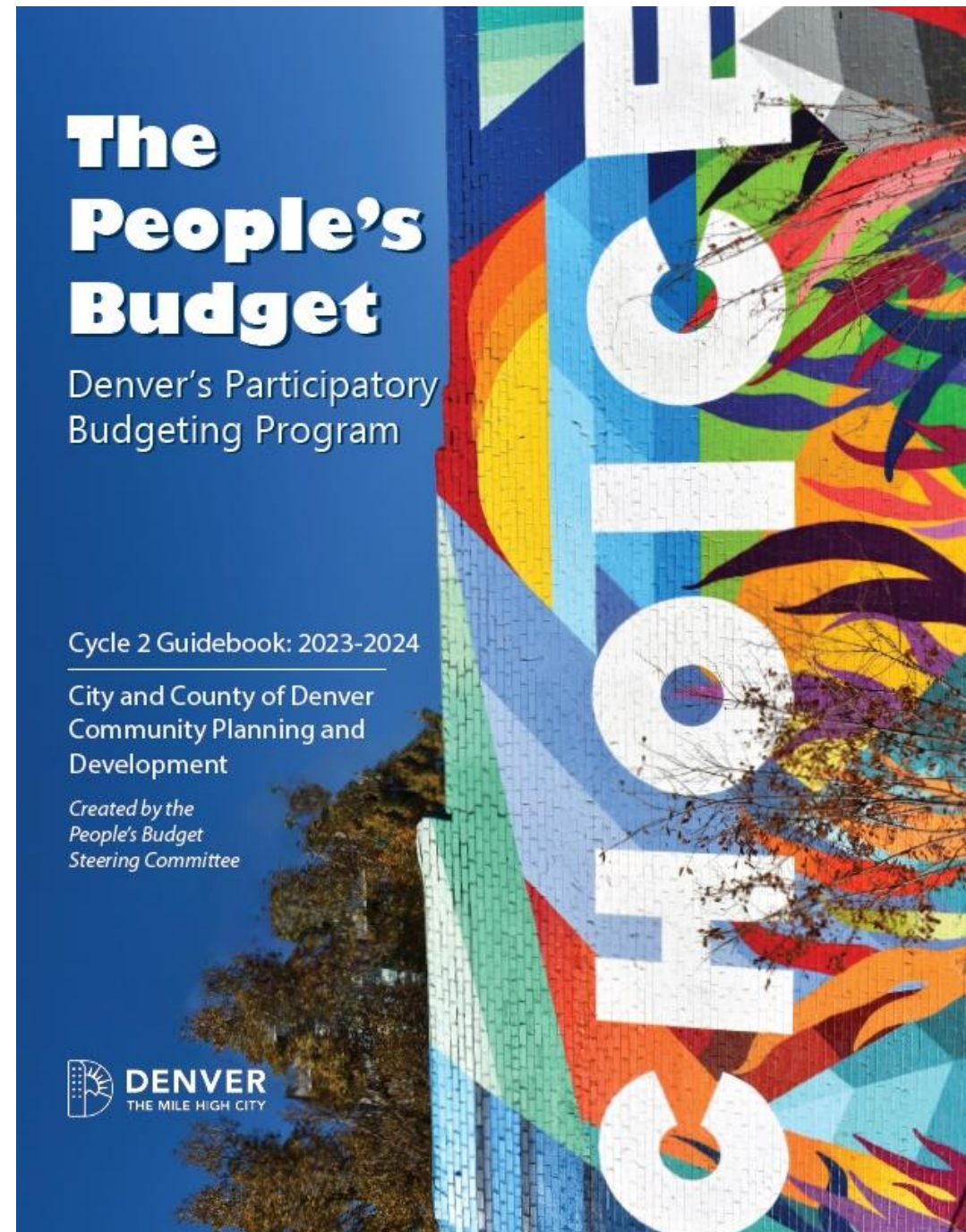
Anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in West Denver of any age

Who can be a Budget Delegate?

Anyone 10+ who lives or goes to school in West Denver

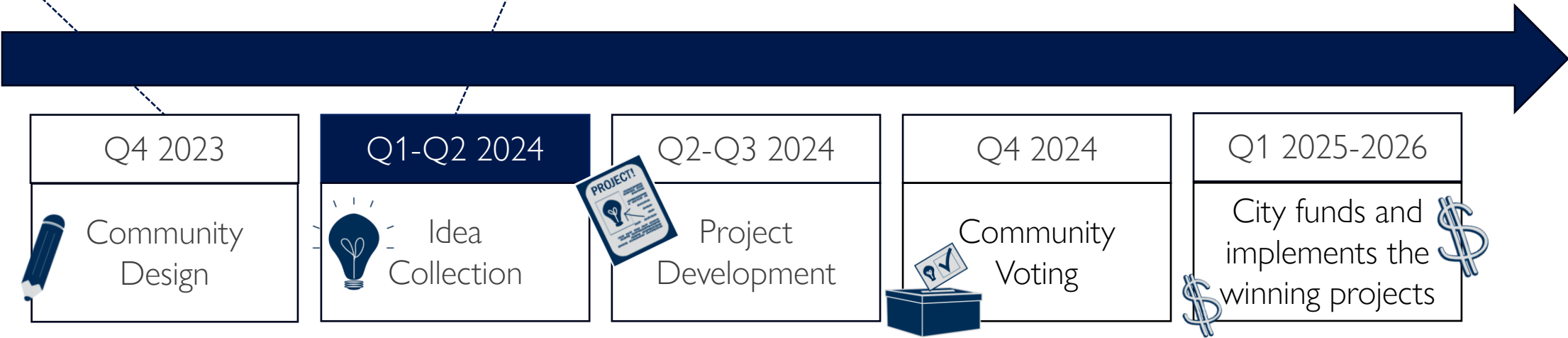
Who can vote?

Anyone who lives, goes to school, or works in West Denver

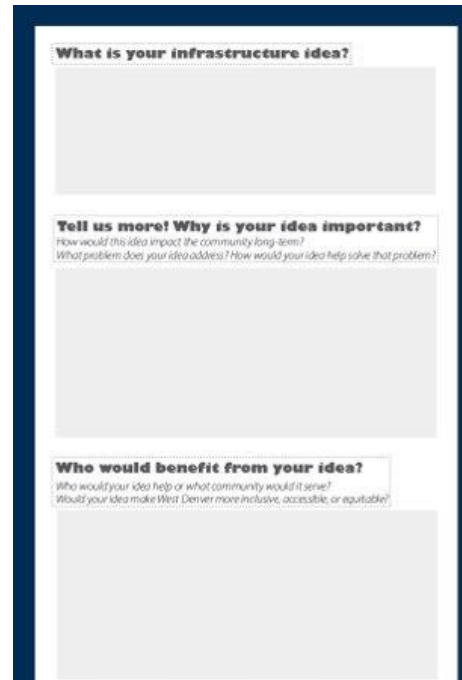
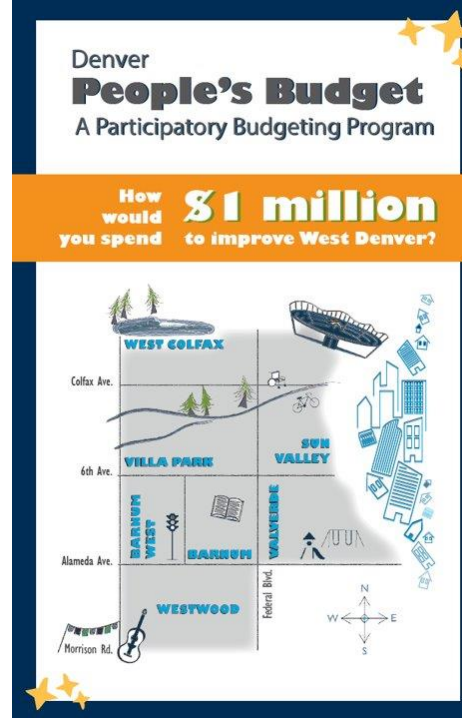




Cycle 2 People's Budget Lifecycle

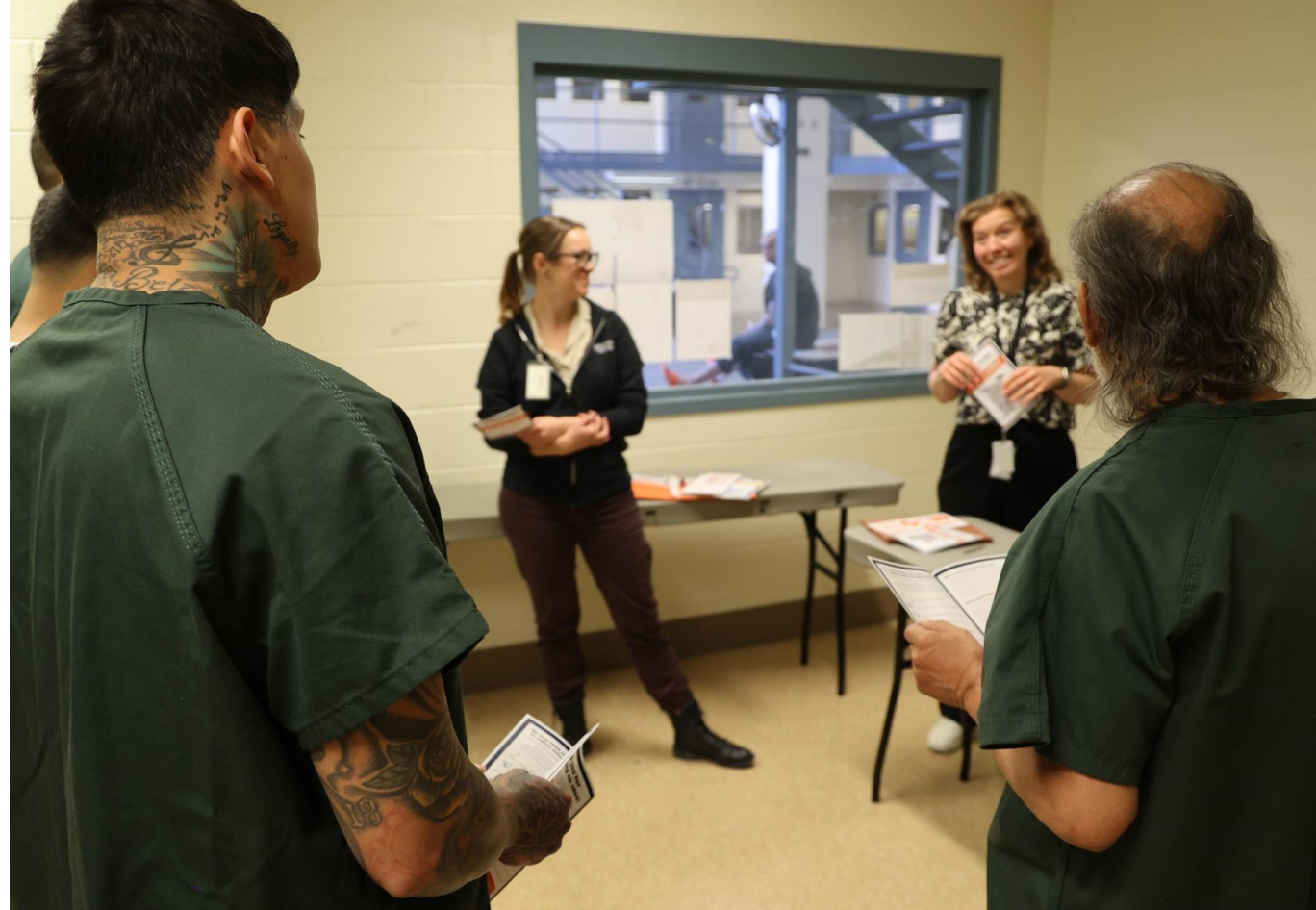
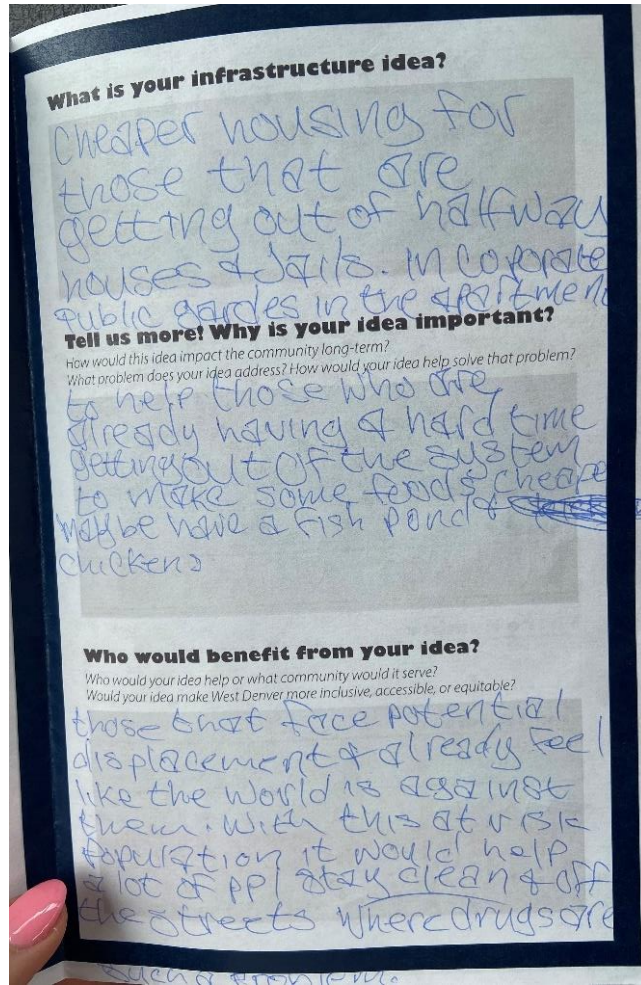


Idea Collection



Idea Collection: Outreach at the Denver County Jails

“Cheaper housing for those getting out of halfway houses or jail. It would help us stay clean and get off the streets where drugs are.”



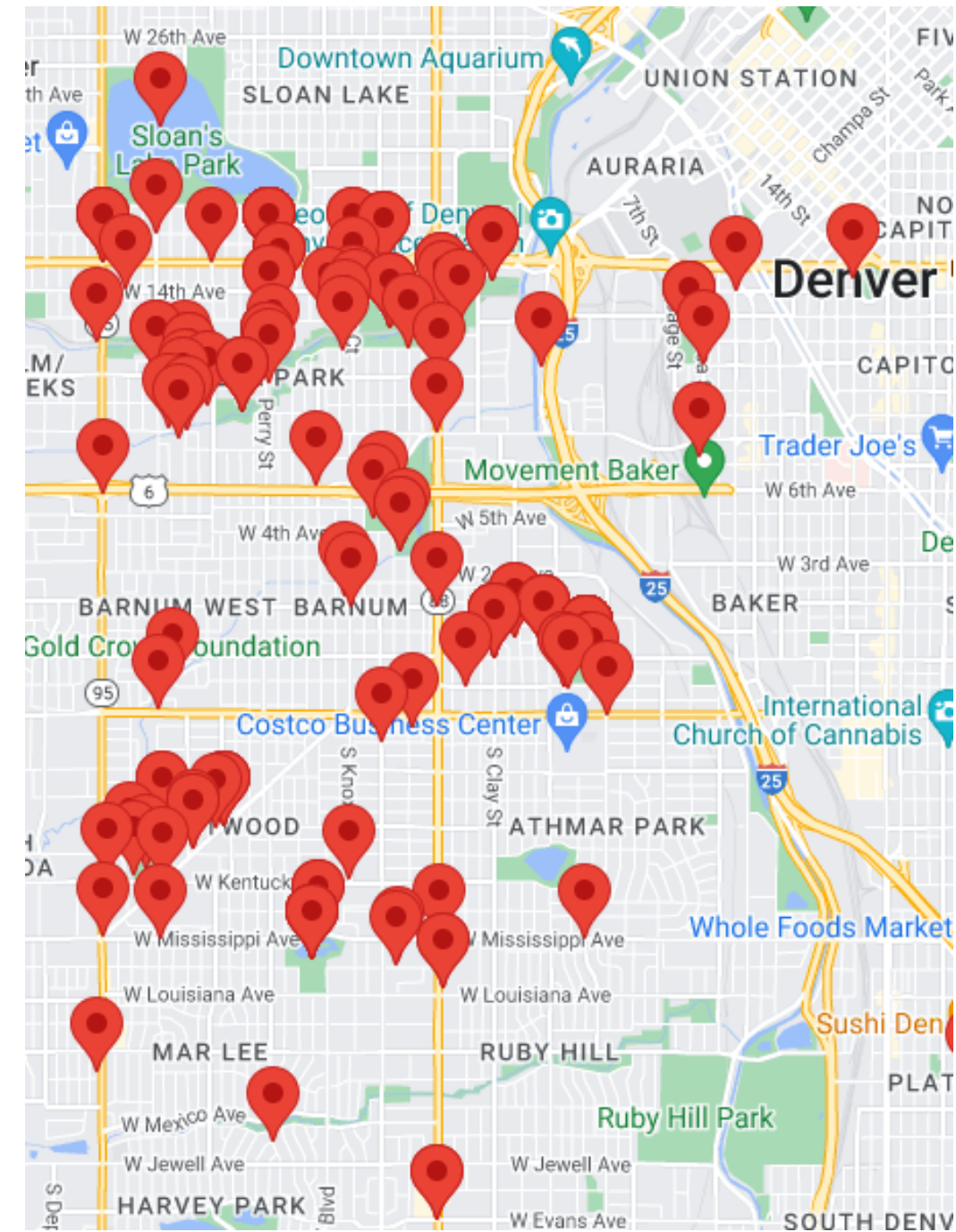
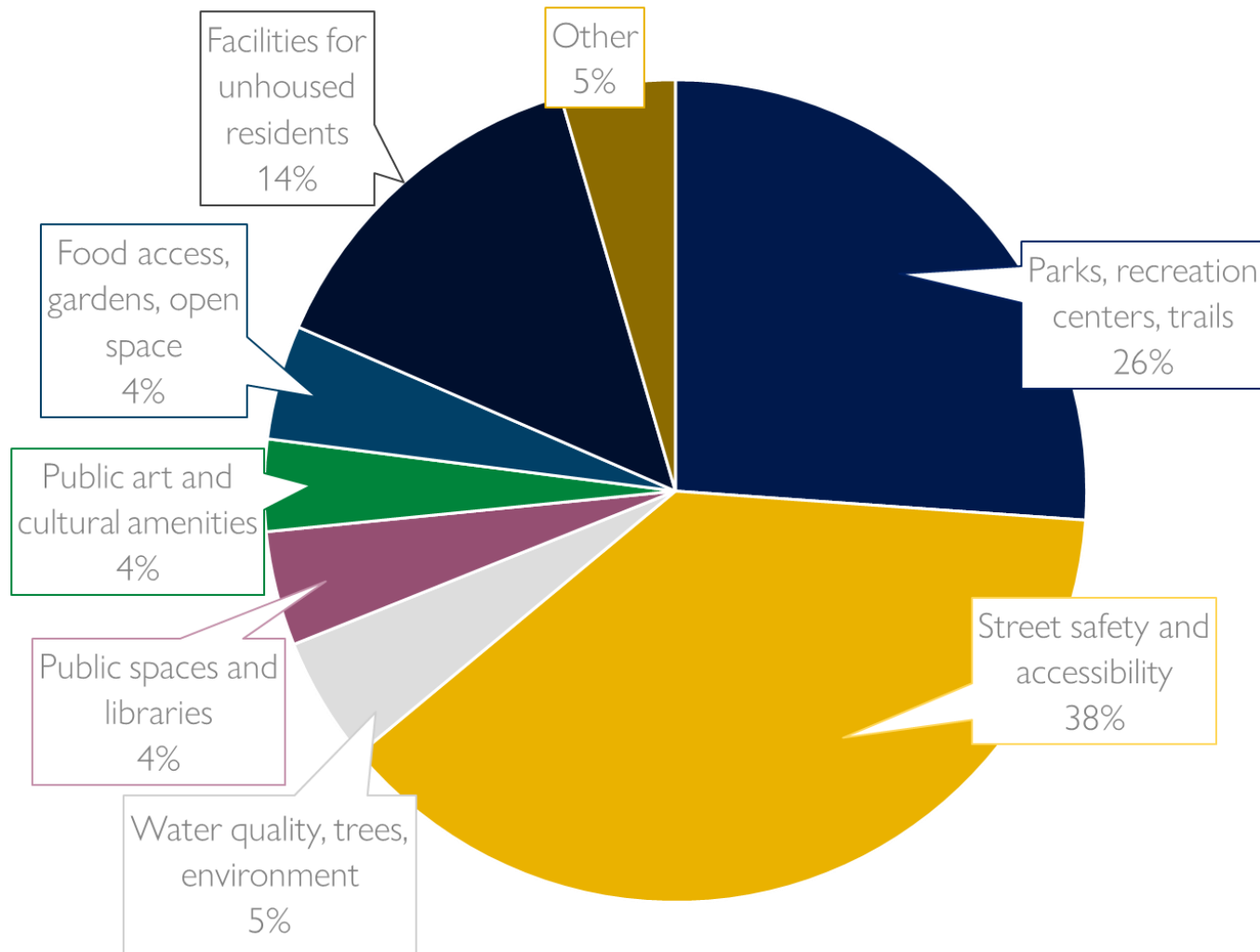
Residents can add details like a description, address or photos and show their support for other people's ideas by "liking" the project

A map of Denver, Colorado, with numerous red location pins placed across various neighborhoods. The pins are concentrated in the central and western parts of the city, particularly around Sloan's Lake Park, Downtown Aquarium, Union Station, Auraria, Baker, Barnum, Costco Business Center, Athmar Park, Mar Lee, Ruby Hill, and Harvey Park. The map also shows major roads like I-25 and I-70, and landmarks like Sloan's Lake and Ruby Hill Park. The pins are scattered throughout the city, indicating a wide distribution of the locations being tracked.

Cycle 2 People's Budget Lifecycle

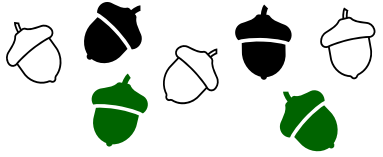


384 Specific Project Ideas



380

Ideas submitted
by the community



116

City staff identify
116 idea groups



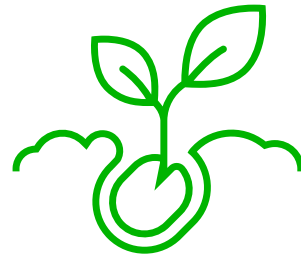
50

Project Delegates
score and advance
the top 50 ideas



30

City Staff do feasibility
review and narrow to
the top 30 ideas



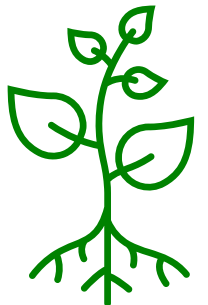
3

The Community votes for
their top three projects!



14

Project Delegates and staff
develop ballot language for
the top 14 projects



Project Development Lifecycle

June through August 2024



Project Delegate Meetings



Monolingual Spanish-speaking residents deliberate with the help of simultaneous interpretation headsets



Visually impaired resident Chris *feels* consensus in the room through textured stickers on project factsheets

Cycle 2 People's Budget Lifecycle



Q4 2023



Community Design

Q1-Q2 2024



Idea Collection

Q2-Q3 2024



Project Development

Q4 2024

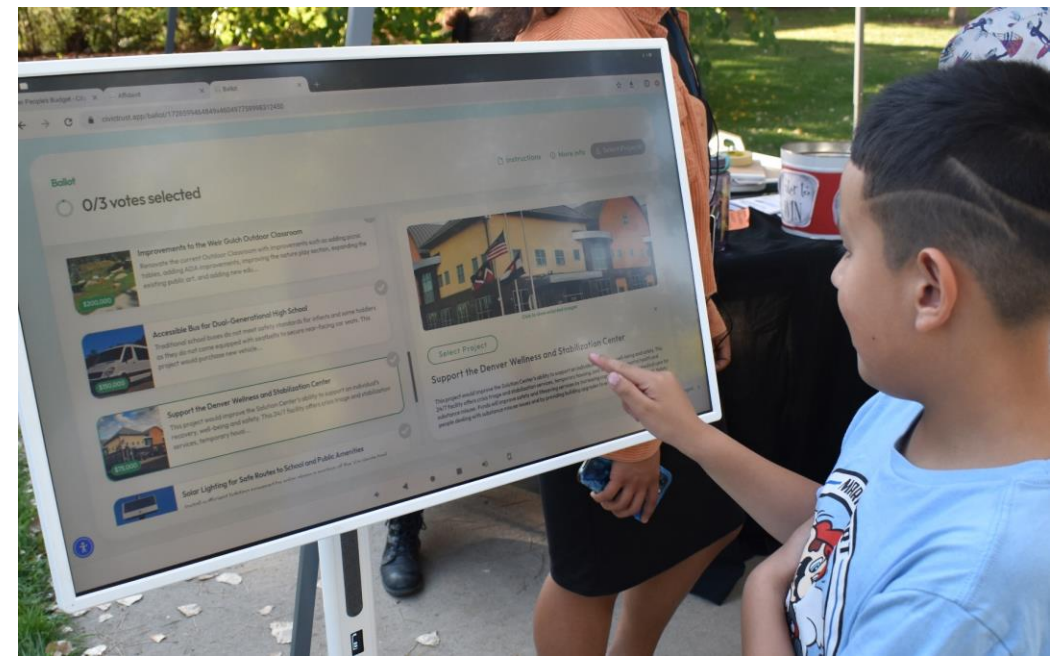
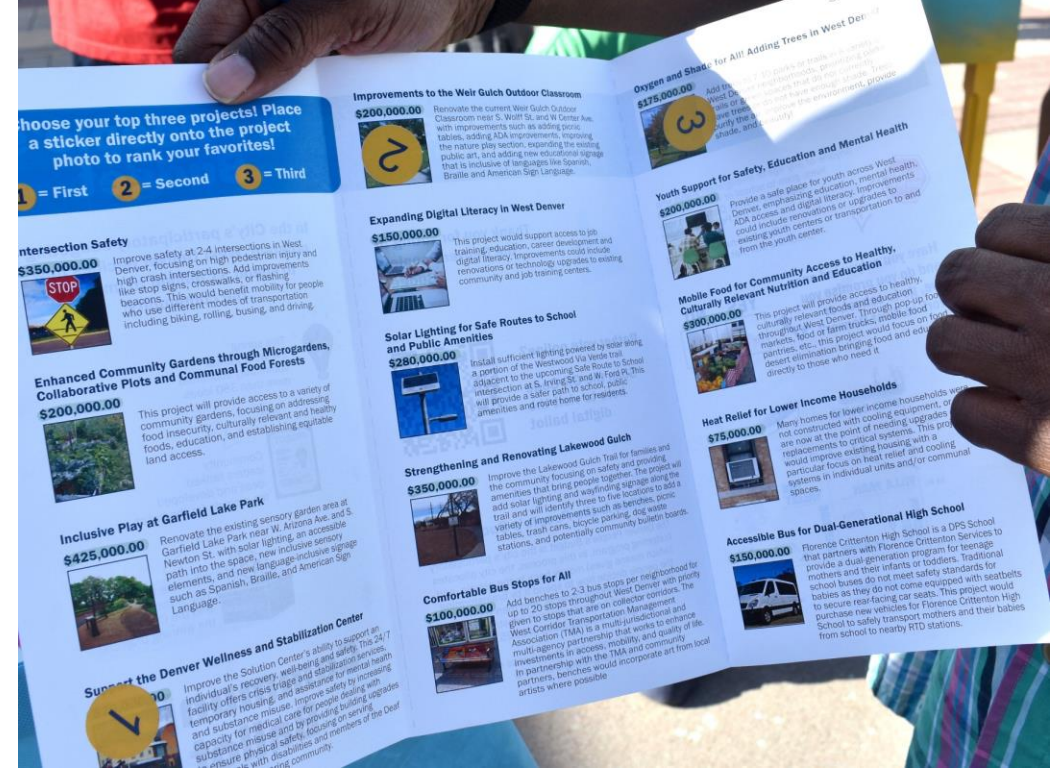


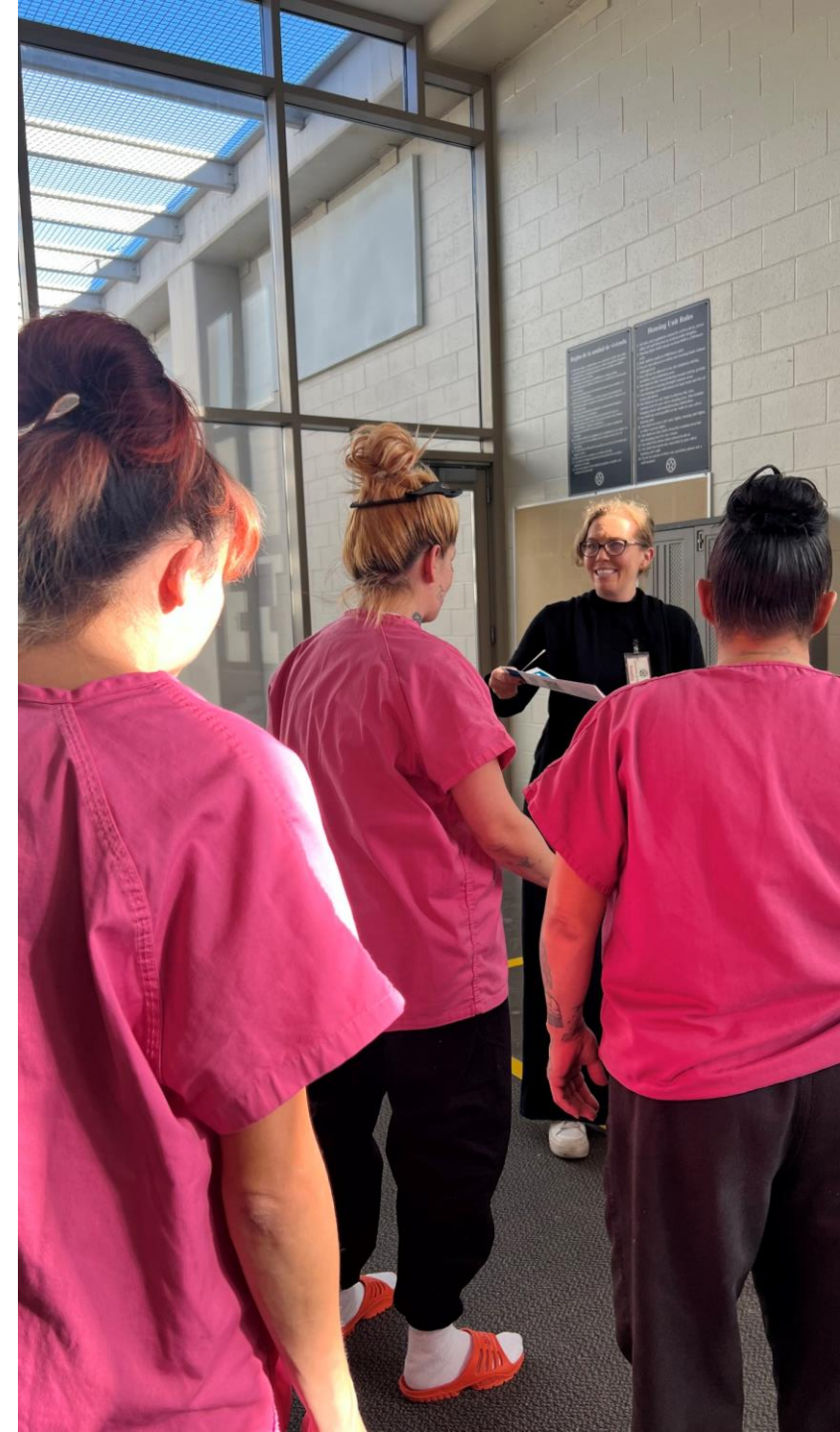
Community Voting

Q1 2025-2026



City funds and implements the winning projects





Cycle 2 Results



Intersection Safety

\$356,250



Improve safety at 2-4 intersections in West Denver, focusing on high pedestrian injury and high crash intersections. Add improvements like stop signs, crosswalks, or flashing beacons. This would benefit mobility for people who use different modes of transportation including biking, rolling, busing, and driving.



Oxygen and Shade for All! Adding Trees in West Denver

\$181,250



Add trees to 7-10 parks or trails in a variety of West Denver neighborhoods, prioritizing parks, trails or green spaces that do not currently have trees or do not have enough shade. Trees purify the air, improve the environment, provide shade, and beautify!



Heat Relief for Lower Income Households

\$156,250



Many homes for lower income households were not constructed with cooling equipment, or they are now at the point of needing upgrades or replacements to critical systems. This project would improve existing housing with a particular focus on heat relief and cooling systems in individual units and/or communal spaces.



Mobile Food for Community Access to Healthy, Culturally Relevant Nutrition and Education

\$306,250



This project will provide access to healthy, culturally relevant foods and education throughout West Denver. Through pop-up food markets, food or farm trucks, mobile food pantries, etc., this project would focus on food desert elimination bringing food and education directly to those who need it.



***Why do the
People's Budget?***

Building Trust & Restoring Faith in Democracy

“A good government takes work, and it takes government meeting community members where we are. The People’s Budget puts the people first. I want everyone to have this kind of access to their government.”

- Craig Allen, Cycle 2 Steering Committee member



Democracy is hard. Without you, it's impossible.

You matter in the D.C. People's Budget. Making a difference for everyone who wants to live better.
Get involved at denvergov.org/involved

“Participatory budgeting builds stronger relationships between government and our residents. We come together as one collective power to build strong, effective solutions that truly speak to the needs of the people.”

- Carol Carter, Cycle 1 Project Delegate



La democracia es difícil. Sin ti, es imposible.

“I had never been a part of anything like this. When people participate, it makes them more excited. Everybody wins, everybody feels better. Everybody's able to say, I'm a part of something, and I matter.”

- Miss Kathy Ewing, Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 Leader



Community Engagement to Date: 2022-2024

The majority of participants are **historically under-represented residents**, including communities of color, undocumented residents, youth, people with disabilities, people in jail and others.

6,000

Residents across Denver engaged by submitting an idea, voting, or through a leadership role

60+

Community organizations or nonprofits involved in Cycles 1 and 2

The People's Budget reaches those who **cannot access traditional government** or who face barriers to civics and are the most likely not to participate.

55%

Reported they could not or did not vote in the previous federal election.

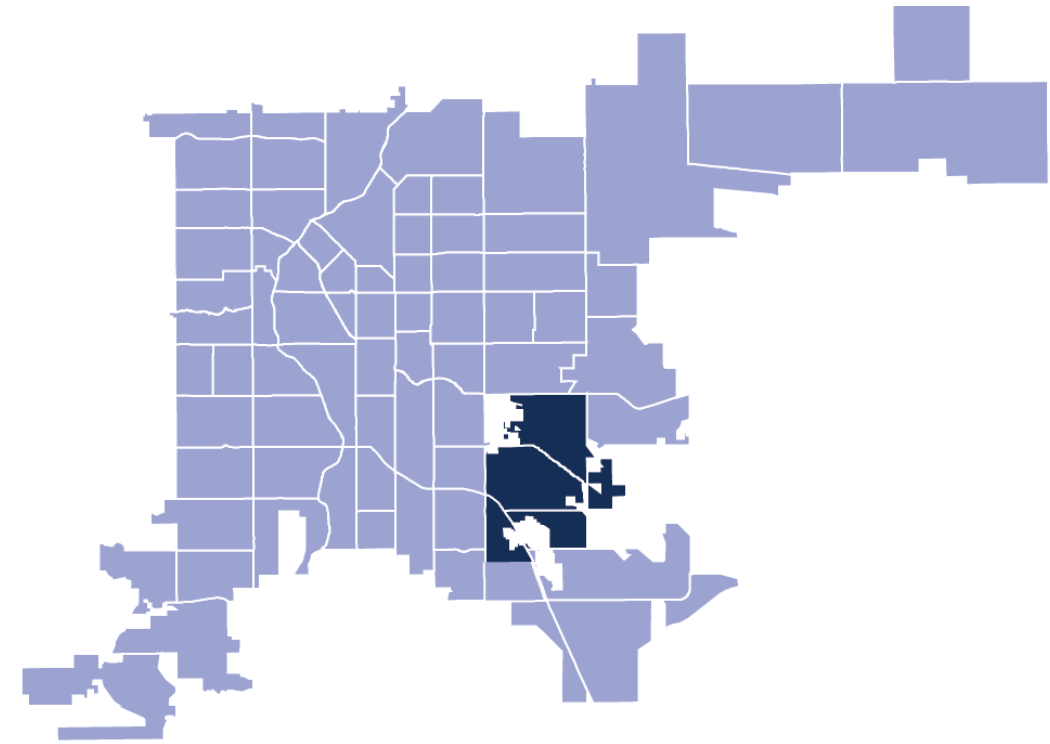
What's next?



CYCLE 3 | \$2 MILLION

\$1M dedicated to the Near Southeast, building off the Neighborhood Planning Initiative

\$1M dedicated citywide to build on prior engagement and enable city collaboration and responsiveness



Q2-Q3 2025

Launch Cycle 3! Recruit and train Resident Leaders



Q3-Q4 2025

PHASE 1:
Steering Committee



Q1 2026

PHASE 2:
Idea Collection



Q2-Q3 2026

PHASE 3:
Project Development



Q4 2026

PHASE 4:
Community Voting

Questions?



Resident Leader Recruitment Strategies

GOAL:

Build community capacity for civics and encourage new leaders

1.

Ask key community organizations/leaders to nominate residents who may not have worked with their government before

2.

Support nominated residents with application process, including info sessions, and interview alternative to complete applications

3.

Employ a “buddy system.” Allow nominated residents to join the committee with a community member they know to work on the committee together.

4.

Online application for all individuals to apply. Conduct multiple diversity scans to ensure applicant pool is representative of the community

5.

Accept all nominated applicants who successfully submit an application. Employ a “Fist to Five” blind review of all other applicants

Cycle I Results

- \$400,000:** Accessible sidewalks in Ruby Hill
- \$362,500:** New lights in FNE Parks/Trails
- \$300,000:** New Freedom Park Improvements
- \$225,000:** Shower trailers for unhoused residents
- \$200,000:** Tiny homes for unhoused residents
- \$187,500:** Safer intersections in Capitol Hill
- \$175,000:** Community Gardens at subsidized housing
- \$112,500:** Accessible transit in City Park
- \$37,500:** New trashcans in FNE Parks/Trails

\$2 MILLION





The Phyllis Mack Mini-Grant Program

Funds are distributed to
residents to conduct
community outreach