

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a tan blazer over a blue and white striped shirt, is hugging a man from behind. The man has short brown hair and is wearing a dark blue suit jacket. They are in a room with several large display boards in the background, each showing a grid of numbers and text, likely budget-related information. The image has a soft, slightly blurred background.

Denver Participatory Budgeting

Cycle One Overview and Cycle Two Planning
Finance and Governance Committee | May 2, 2023

Purpose

- Overview of Cycle One
- A community leader's perspective
- Key recommendations and Cycle Two planning
- Questions and discussion





Cycle One Overview



What is Participatory Budgeting?

A form of **participatory democracy** to strengthen partnerships between residents and governments. An equity-focused civic engagement process, PB aims to **improve communication** between municipal government and historically underserved residents, **increase trust and transparency**, and foster reciprocal **learning between government and the community**.



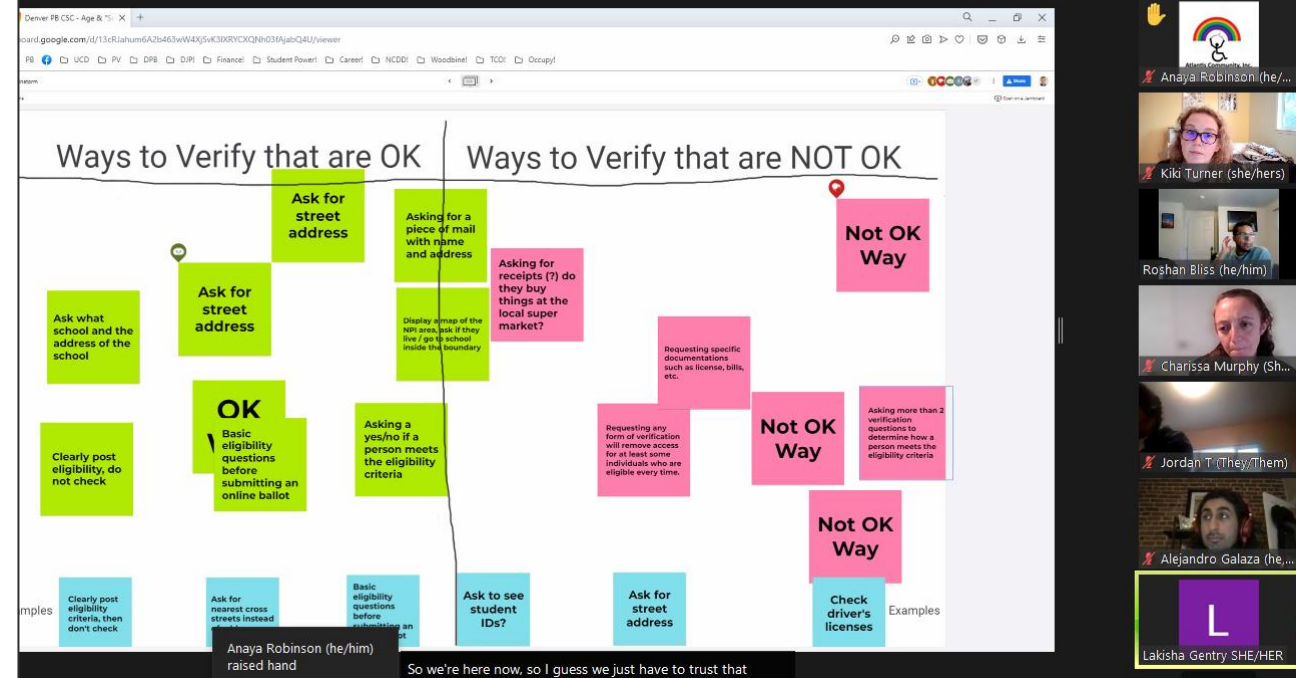
Phase I: Community Design

The Community Steering Committee deliberated to create the first-ever Denver Participatory Budgeting Guidebook, where they decided:

- Participants must **live, go to school, or work at a micro business** in their ballot area.
- Any resident of any **age, immigration status, incarceration status, and housing status**, could vote in this process.
- A **rank vote system** complete with contingency plans for ties and other scenarios.

80%

of the 60+ resident leaders in the program identified as **Black, Indigenous people of color**



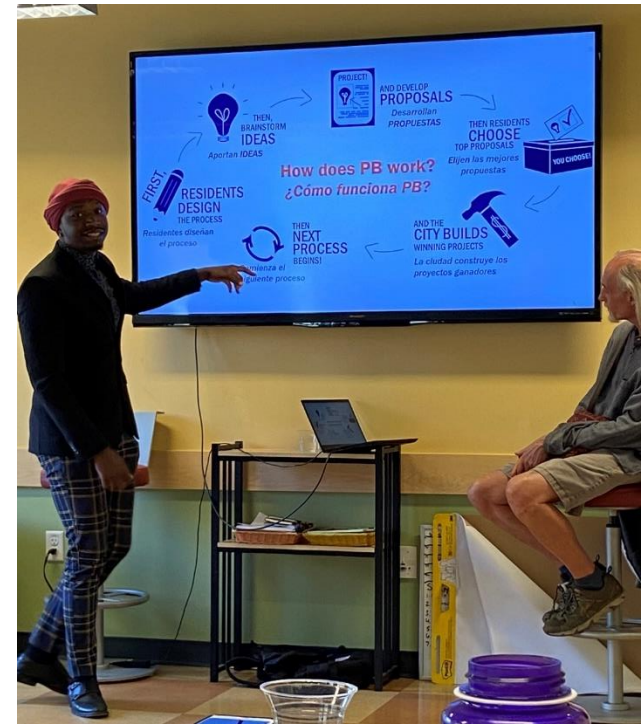
Phase 2: Idea Collection

- Idea collection events focused on reaching **historically underserved communities**, with deliberative meetings at the jails, Safe Outdoor Spaces, schools, Denver Housing Authority sites, food banks, etc.
- \$30K** of “mini-grants” went to residents and grass root organization to solicit project ideas from the community.
- Over 1,100 ideas** were submitted

97%

of idea collection respondents identified as BIPOC.

Half earned less than \$25K a year and **half** had not earned a high school diploma



Phase 3: Proposal Development

- Residents, called **budget delegates**, worked in four groups to score ideas and prioritize projects.
- Collaborating with city staff and community partners budget delegates designed **23 project proposals** across the four ballots.

+ REPRESENTATION

Budget delegates represented historically underserved communities, including people with disabilities, youth, undocumented residents, refugees, and unhoused residents

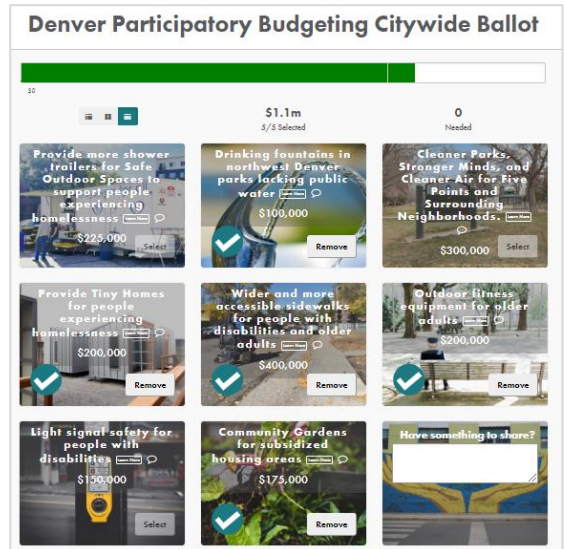
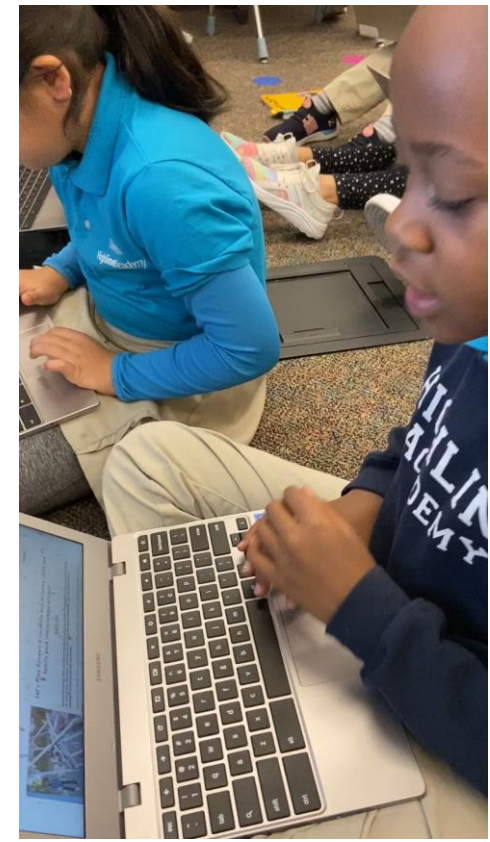
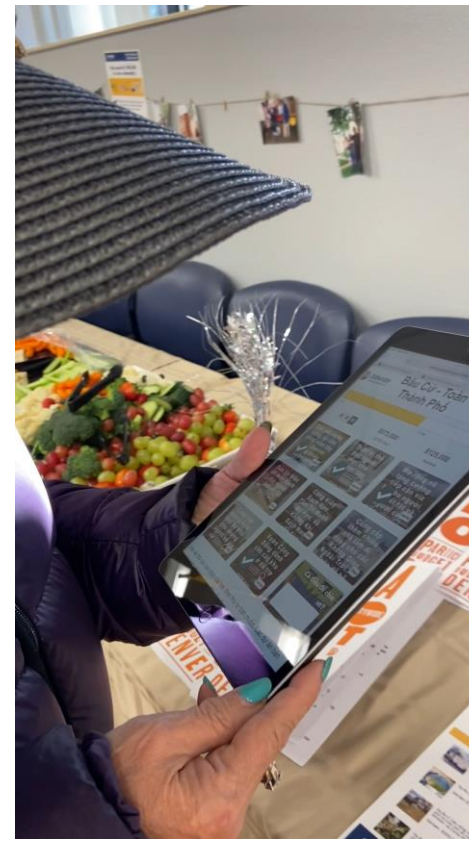


Phase 4: Voting

Over 3K residents of all ages and any immigration status ranked and voted for projects on physical and digital ballots

+ ACCESS

Ballots translated into 8 languages



Results

Residents budgeted \$2M, funding nine projects across a broad range of infrastructure

\$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

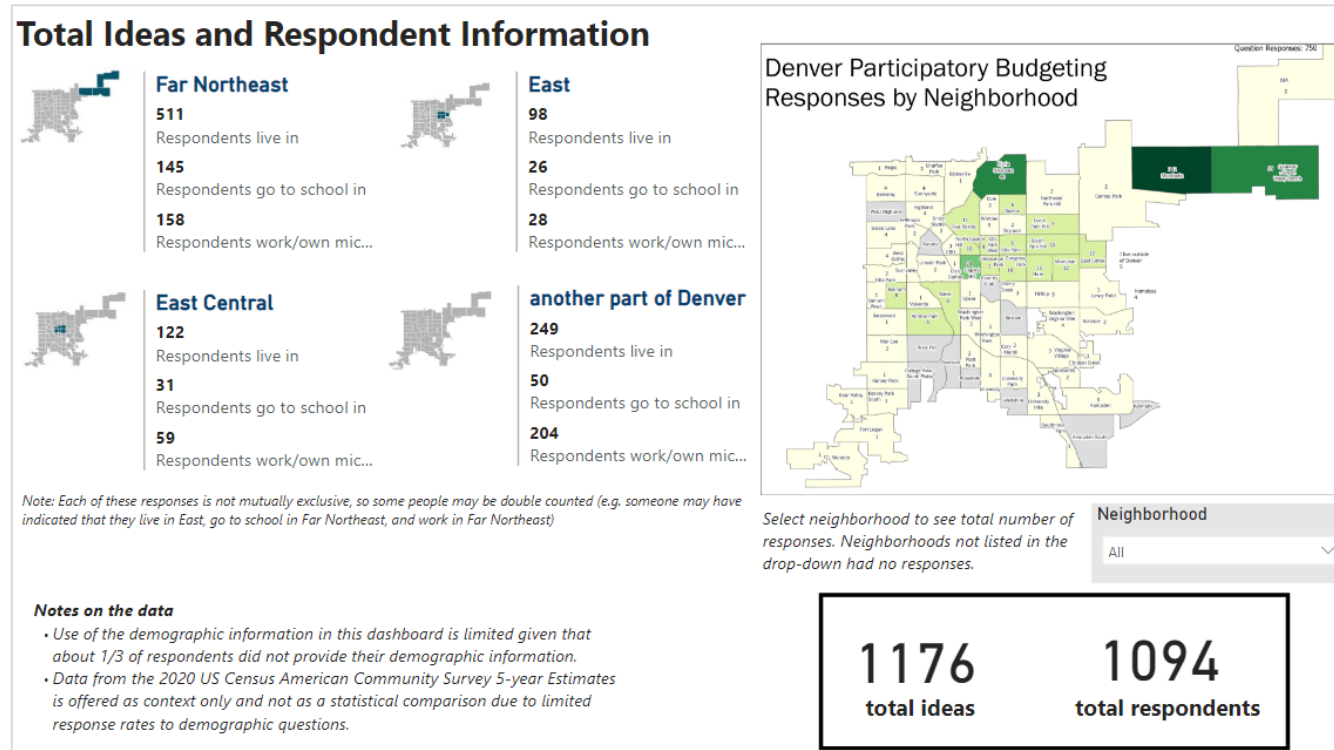
\$187,500: Safer intersections in Capitol Hill

\$175,000: Community Gardens

\$112,500: Accessible transit in City Park

\$37,500: New trashcans in FNE Parks/Trails

\$2 MILLION of community-led infrastructure projects





Phyllis Mack

Cycle 1 Mini-Grant Recipient

Cycle Two Planning



Key Recommendations

From the 3rd Party Evaluation and City Staff

Expanded community involvement

- ☒ Grassroots data collection
- ☒ Referral or recommendation process to select resident leaders
- ☒ Collaborate with community organizations for project delivery (staff rec)

Program resources and resource allocation

- ☒ Create a full-time program position
- ☒ Language justice needs to be addressed
- ☐ Set spending caps on proposals

+ *Staff suggest posing this to the Community Steering Committee*

Program structure and management

- ☒ Integrate the implementation and data-collection teams
- ☐ Expand PB citywide and based on council districts
↓
- ☐ Allocate more money to projects and expand funding to one-time programs/operations
↓

+ *Staff agree and hope to implement if additional funding is available*



Cycle Two Approach



External Approach

\$1M toward infrastructure

- Capital projects delivered by the city and in partnership with community organizations.

Focus on West Region

- Key neighborhoods would include Westwood, Sun Valley, West Colfax, Villa Park, Barnum, Barnum West, and Valverde
- Build upon existing outreach and engagement in these areas through plans and other efforts



Internal Approach

Internal project management team

- Integrate city agencies and city council, and build in time for collaborative problem solving

Professional Services (\$250K)

- Direct majority of funds toward residents and grassroots organization.
- Contract for key needs: fiscal administration, facilitation and outreach, data collection, language access, etc.

Cycle Two Timeline

Key milestones for 2023:

- **Successful solicitation** for professional services
- Onboard program-wide **resident specialists** (for facilitation/data collection/outreach)
- Onboard **Community Steering Committee** and begin design meetings



Questions and Discussion

