

**Transforming Our Democracy: Participatory Budgeting and the Importance of  
Deliberation in Civic Engagement**

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**Abstract:**

Participatory Budgeting (PB) exists at varying scales in more than 3,000 cities across the globe and the process continues to expand both in scale and in new technology, particularly as digital technologies are being integrated into a myriad of City and governmental functions. As this expansion occurs, it is critical to explore the transformative and deliberative nature of the process upon which projects are debated and developed among PB participants (often referred to as Budget Delegates), relevant City agencies, and implementation partners. This research takes a case study approach to explore the Vallejo PB program in the City of Vallejo, California, the first American city to adopt PB on a citywide scale, and explores how PB serves as a space that provides new modes of civic engagement and leadership, lessons in collaboration with other community members and City agencies, and a deep and critical understanding of local governance processes and functions.

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## Introduction

Vallejo, California is a small city in the northern limits of the San Francisco Bay Area and serves as a gateway to the global destinations of Napa and Sonoma Counties to the north and east respectively. It is a confluence of many diverse communities and cultures and is the most racially diverse city of its size in the United States. It has also served many important historical functions—having been the first state capital of California, and more recently a bustling navy shipyard industrial town during the mid-twentieth century.

More specific to the study, Vallejo is the first city in the United States to adopt a citywide Participatory Budget Program<sup>1</sup> in 2012 (Bjerg 2012). Prior to Vallejo's 2012 implementation, only two of cities had some sort of PB program, with Chicago's 49th ward being the first to implement the program in 2009 (Biewen 2012) in PBNYC in 2011 (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2016). In this sense, Vallejo has a depth of available data for research that spans nearly six years. This has allowed for nuanced discussions and interviews with PB participants—a mix of citizen volunteers, City staff, and elected officials—on lessons learned regarding the nature of deliberation and increased forms of civic engagement and how it has changed through the years.

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to as "PB" or "Vallejo PB" throughout this document.

Finally, a major significance of Vallejo's PB program as a radical practice of democracy is driven by the financial context of the city at the time PB was adopted. Vallejo was the first city in California to declare bankruptcy in 2008 during the wake of the Great Recession and came out of this state of municipal fiscal crisis in 2012 (Hicken 2014). The City's decision, then, to enact PB and provide its residents the opportunity to vote on the allocation of \$3.2 million as the City was coming out of fiscal crisis is a radical practice meant to increase civic engagement and trust.

This case study approach explores how the Vallejo PB program has provided new modes of civic engagement for Vallejo citizens, by deeply exploring the process of deliberation that occurs within the PB cycle. First, Vallejo PB is framed within existing literature under a deliberative process-driven approach (Goodin 2017) and within the theoretical framework of Empowered Participatory Governance (Fung and Wright 2003). Then, PB is situated within the historical context of Great Recession, and Vallejo's fiscal crisis in 2008 (Kirkpatrick and Smith 2011; Anderson 2014). Finally, this particular case study methodology is explained and is followed by original findings and a discussion to merge findings within the existing theory.

## *Vallejo PB Overview*

Vallejo PB is the first citywide Participatory Budgeting process in America. Through this process, local residents ages of 14 and up can provide ideas for projects they would like to see happen in their city, develop fully feasible project proposals with other community members and with the help of City Agencies and Staff, and then decide on how to City money to fund these projects. Vallejo uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) rules to help target projects to serve low- to moderate-income residents, particularly with projects under the Programs and Services category. The funding for PB comes from Measure B, a one percent sales tax passed by Vallejo residents in 2011. It has three stated goals of improving the city, engaging the community, transforming democracy, and opening up government. Because PB is funded by locally generated sales tax monies and is framed under CDBG guidelines, projects must meet certain requirements to be eligible. Additionally, in having done PB for more than five years now, the City has learned to use a balance that incorporates a higher percentage of Capital Infrastructure and Durables projects over Programs and Services projects created through Vallejo PB.

The Vallejo PB process is temporally organized through cycles. Cycles are roughly a nine-month process with several stages that facilitate the ideation, development, campaigning, voting, implementing and evaluation of PB projects. The ideation stage takes place in the Fall in which engagements referred to as *Budget Assemblies* essentially

work as town hall meetings that break off into smaller groups where local residents provide ideas in both small and large group settings. These Budget Assemblies take place all over the City in order to provide as much coverage and garner a wide range of participation. Additionally, an online digital platform is activated at this stage to generate ideas online. After this stage, ideas are compiled into a master list upon which citizen volunteers, or *Budget Delegates*, split off into categorical working groups and take on the intensive task of filtering, consolidating, and narrowing original ideas into manageable set of ideas to which they can then further develop. This proposal development stage, which ultimately served as the unit of study in this research, is where Budget Delegates, along with review and guidance from City staff and the Steering Committee, refine projects into feasible and implementable (as defined by the rulebook) proposals over the course of three to four months.

Once a final set of proposals have been developed, Budget Delegates, the Steering Committee, City staff, and other volunteers enter a phase of campaigning and promoting the final proposals. Voting occurs at various locations and in the case of Vallejo PB, as well as many other PB initiatives elsewhere, through an online platform for an extended amount of time. Once the voting period closes and votes have been counted, the final set of projects go to City Council for final review, and the implementation occurs at the onset of the Fiscal Year.



A Steering Committee, appointed by City Council, helps to coordinate the process and is comprised of “civic organizational seats and at-large seats” as well as two seats reserved for City Council Liaisons (City of Vallejo 2018). A designee from the City Manager’s office is the main point person that coordinates and oversees the entire PB process in collaboration with the Steering Committee. Budget Delegates are volunteers that do the critical work of turning project ideas into fully feasible project proposals by the end of the proposal development phase. They work with the City Manager Designee and with City and Agency Staff to work out the details and caveats, such as line item costs of specific parts of the project they are developing, throughout the process. For the past two years, Vallejo PB has used an external third party facilitator who creates meeting agendas, facilitates group discussions and meetings, serves as a point of communication, and aid in other logistical tasks.

### *Empowered Participatory Governance*

The predominant theoretical frame that Vallejo PB fits within is Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright's (2003) conceptualization of Empowered Participatory Governance (EPG). They define EPG as practices that amplify the ability for ordinary people to engage and influence policies that have direct impact on them (Fung and Wright 2003). More specifically, the term "participatory" points to the cultivation of space that allows ordinary citizens to commit and build capacity to make "sensible decisions," while the term "empowered" is indicative to actually creating action, or implementing policies and/or projects, tied to the aforementioned decisions (*ibid.*). Through the application of this conceptual definition to Vallejo's PB program, it is participatory in that from the first three cycles alone, 1,548 residents have been recorded as assembly participants, more than 300 residents have served as PB Delegates, and a total 20,186 votes have been cast in the five full cycles of PB (City of Vallejo 2018). Additionally, PB is "empowered" in that actual results have been funded and implemented in the community. To date, Vallejo has allocated \$9.79 million towards the Participatory Budget program, funding a total of 39 projects that are a mix of physical infrastructure projects and services and programs implemented since 2012 (*ibid.*).

The theory of Empowered Participatory Governance also relies on two basic sets of tenets: general principles, which outline the fundamental components of EPG's purpose, and institutional design features that describe a specific institutional

framework needed for EPG to be fully effective (Fung and Wright 2003). The first of these principles outline that EPG is an approach that focuses on “specific, tangible issues” (*ibid.*) pointing to role of EPG as goal-oriented and specific to concerns and priorities of a given community. In the case of Vallejo, PB was a means to address specific needs of various members of the community. There have been a range of physical infrastructure projects such as the upgrading and improving of road conditions where they are needed, or the installation of new streetlights on a once dark street. There are also new services and programs that have come from PB, such as the creation of a community garden to generate social cohesion and community building and the provision of scholarships for graduating high school seniors that would benefit from the added financial aid. It is also important to note that where it is applicable, particularly for projects that fall under the services or programs category, that the PB funded project must serve low-income communities<sup>2</sup>.

Secondly, EPG requires the participation of ordinary people that are direct stakeholders of the issues it wishes to address (Fung and Wright 2003). This bottom-up approach is a means to 1) increase accountability for the actions that are implemented to address the issue and to reduce traditional bureaucratic processes that are often timely, and 2) make use of the grounded knowledge that is rooted within ordinary citizens (*ibid.*). An article from *The Atlantic* in 2013, covered Vallejo’s PB and noted a

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<sup>2</sup> This requirement was incorporated by initially using Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) requirements to help determine project eligibility.

larger turnout in city council hearings centered around the budget where “voters showed up to make sure they had been heard” (Semuels 2013). This was because of the larger buy in that the community had in seeing that these projects, which they had a large part in developing, would receive the appropriate funding and implementation (*ibid.*). This is exemplary of the role of “ordinary citizens” in creating meaningful and targeted solutions to the issues that they directly face, as well as a case in which they uphold accountability of the City in providing the necessary resources to see those solutions through.

The last of the three principles is the role of deliberative decision making to curtail the possibility of the tyranny of the majority and to help tailor outcomes that are most reasonable for the group, rather than serving the self-interest of any one individual (Fung and Wright 2003). This is critical in that as opposed to the traditional role of a majority or plurality voting, the process of deliberation helps bring about nuanced issues and dialogues that allow for the negotiation and compromise of a solution, or set of solutions, that the group can agree to (*ibid.*). This is an important feature of PB in that the process of deliberation allows for agreed upon distribution of funding and resources to various communities in Vallejo. The multiplicity of projects that can be funded each year, in addition to the overall deliberative structure of PB—the process of the community generating ideas together and presenting their top priorities, then appointing several Budget Delegates that further develop the ideas and consistently

meet to rank the priority of their proposed projects before the general community at large is offered a vote—allow for a more refined and deeper interpretation of democracy.

Additionally, there are three institutional designs that allow EPG to work (Fung and Wright 2003). First, and perhaps most obvious, is the devolution of political power to local action units, or citizens (*ibid.*). This maintains that the citizens who partake in EPG processes are not merely advisory, but rather, have recognized political control and agency in the ideation, development, decision, and implementation of the solutions that they put forward (Arnstein 1969; Fung and Wright 2003). An early example of this occurring in Vallejo's PB program is the involvement of community member Vilma Aquino, as a Budget Delegate, in developing the project of a community garden in her community (Semuels 2013). She was heavily involved in the ideation and the deliberation that helped refine her community project, and ultimately a key player in the implementation of the community garden (*ibid.*). This highlights the devolution of political power traditionally held by City agencies, to expand on the capacities of ordinary citizens. In this case, Vilma was not merely someone that offered the idea to a local city councilmember or other City staff, but rather the main point person in creating the specifics of this PB project. However, it should be noted that it is unclear whether this transfer of capacity from the City to its citizens is completely sustainable from a logistics perspective. The critique here would be that citizens might lack resources, such

as time or access to broader knowledge, that could push forward the best solution.

However, the second institutional design consideration that follows addresses this gap.

Secondly, is the role of centralized supervision and coordination (Fung and Wright 2003). This essentially calls for the role of a central unit that creates links for accountability and communication that reinforces the deliberative democracy approach, as well as aid the coordination of the different parties involved, and ensure proper implementation (*ibid.*). The central unit provides capacity to carry out the projects that individual groups of citizens would not be able to do on their own (*ibid.*). This point refers back to the case of Vilma, the community member that advocated for the community garden. While she might have incurred additional work in teasing out her project, she was aided by the City in that she had a platform to discuss and shape the community garden project. There is also, of course, the actual funding resource to carry out the project once it has been approved, funding that she would not have easily obtained without the City's approval and allocation of funds for the project. This is particularly true for projects that take on a physical infrastructure nature. It would be unlikely and difficult for community members to take on projects that would require significant funding, the coordination of City agencies and contractors, and the navigation of legal processes to take on changes in the physical environment. However, through the process of PB, community members can identify and prioritize these types

of projects to be funded, which the City, through its own agencies, could then implement on its own.

Finally, and most radically, the last institutional design property of EPG is that it seeks to transform the formal spaces and institutions of state power (Fung and Wright 2003). Because these practices are embedded within the governance system, they have an underlying transformative or reformatory approach that seeks to restructure and deepen the participatory practices within the system (*ibid.*). The goals of Vallejo's PB program, highlighted in every program rule book since its creation, explicitly states it aim to "Transform our democracy":

Empower Vallejoans with the skills and knowledge they need to shape our city's future. Construct leadership from the bottom up and build deeper connections between residents, neighborhoods, and communities (City of Vallejo).

This is a critical and fundamental tie to the EPG model, and perhaps a unique case for Vallejo in that this was an action that was taken, again, in the context of fiscal recovery from years of being declared bankrupt. When Councilwoman Marti Brown proposed Participatory Budgeting as a new initiative for Vallejo, she saw it as a means to instill more transparency within the processes that happen in city hall, as well as provide more agency for the community to be able to dictate where their taxes went (Semuels 2013). Thus, PB is a critical approach for transforming traditional governance and democratic processes, and more importantly, can navigate this change from within the existing system. This last point, most specifically, is presented as a significant finding of this case study discussed later.

*Radical democracy as fiscal recovery: Vallejo PB in the aftermath of municipal fiscal crisis*

There is no doubt that the Great Recession in 2008 has had lasting impacts on the fiscal status of many cities across the country. In 1978, California's Proposition 13 capped property taxes at 1% of the property's assessed values and has had the effect of tremendously slashing local government revenues that funded critical City programs, services, and employee salaries and benefits (Kirkpatrick and Smith 2011). This fact, compounded with national<sup>3</sup> neoliberal economic policies that have since cut federal financial aid to cities, meant that cities had a continuously shrinking revenue stream available in their general fund to provide for basic City services and functions. Cities made risky decisions that fall outside of the traditional means of taxes and fees to generate revenue, whether for general funds or for specific purposes. This often meant that cities underwent the process of 'financialization;' that is, relying on bond markets to fund projects it had traditionally funded through tax revenue it had generated or as was distributed by the state (Kirkpatrick and Smith 2011; Frug 2001). However, in the events of larger national and global economic decline, ie the Great Recession, these risks are exacerbated and display the limits and pitfalls of this financing structure.

Financialization brings about "the outright privatization of urban infrastructure networks," giving less oversight and control to local government officials, not to

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<sup>3</sup> Worth mentioning that the US prioritization of neoliberal economic policies fall in line with the global trend and shift to the shift in these political ideologies during the Reagan/Thatcher eras from Fordism modes of production to more globally dispersed, and private means of neoliberal capital accumulation.



mention democratic input from city residents, and simultaneously binds cities to the demands of the municipal bond market, since urban growth and development is reliant on access to this market (Kirkpatrick and Smith 2011). During the 2008 foreclosure crisis, the resulting drop in tax revenue in the City of Vallejo meant that the City had the dilemma of choosing between continuing its functions as a municipal corporation—provide key services and programs, maintain operations of public facilities, pay and provide its contracted benefits to City employees—or continue to honor its obligations to municipal bondholders (*Ibid*); Vallejo would ultimately choose the latter. While the City's declaring of Chapter 9 municipal bankruptcy in 2008 was an effect of a \$200 million long-term debt to municipal bondholders, it was moreover an insidious method to dissolve public-employee obligations<sup>4</sup>(*Ibid*). The declaration of bankruptcy was a move to avoid default because such an outcome would restrict Vallejo's access to the bond market, and not a means to evade paying back these loans. However, the explicit intent of cutting employee benefits and pensions, in such a gesture, displayed the negative effects of financialization in times of fiscal crisis to not only to city residents that suffer from the reduction of City services and programs, but also to workers unions that have bargained for these benefits. This move undermines the accountability to be had in local governments and its contractual obligations to its constituents.

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<sup>4</sup> At the time when Vallejo declared bankruptcy, public-employee salaries were unsustainably high and the City "owed \$135 million in retiree health and \$84 million in pensions" (Mendel 2009).

Perhaps one of the most unique features of Vallejo's PB program is that its implementation was situated in light of fiscal crisis of the city. Vallejo's bankruptcy status from 2008-2011, and the general lack of City funds from decreased tax revenues resulting from the Great Recession, and though not discussed in great detail here, California's Prop 13, provides for a unique interpretation of Vallejo PB. Michelle W. Anderson (2014) writes an article talking about the effects of the Great Recession and the aftermath of bankruptcies that ensued in 28 cities, and moreover the diminishing effects it had on the capacity of those local governments, talks about the effect of 'minimal cities'. In it, she mentions the effects of Vallejo's bankruptcy, including the cuts to many services and provisions that the City forcibly took, such as: "funding for youth, library, arts, elderly, needy, education, and recreation programs" (Anderson 2014). Considering that there is already a limited amount of federal funds that go specifically to local municipal services in addition to the increasing rate of suburban poverty, the budget cuts that occurred in Vallejo incurred a compounded negative effect for Vallejo's residents. If the City was not providing the most basic services for its people, who is? Even more of a concern is the assumption and hope that these services will be provided through privatized means (Anderson 2014), which provides a host of concerns regarding accountability and the general outsourcing of services that local government traditionally provided.

It is with this context that I argue Vallejo's PB process to be indeed radical. In the climate of diminishing funds to local programs, the general trend of increasing poverty in suburbanized areas, and most importantly the recovery from fiscal crisis—

Participatory Budgeting is a reach for radical democracy that provides agency for a city's residents to ensure that their needs are prioritized and met. PB demands accountability and support for projects that would have easily been passable for cities to redirect to private or charitable entities. Instead, PB brings about a transformative change that reforms traditional democratic processes of municipal funding allocation. PB answers the question, "to who is the city for" by creating a space that empowers residents to craft their own solutions and to pursue it fervently, while simultaneously holding accountable the local government institutions to ensure its provision.

## Methodology

This research takes a case study approach in analyzing the participatory budget program in Vallejo, Vallejo PB. Primarily, qualitative data was collected in the second phase of proposal development in which Budget Delegates, volunteers who self-organize into working groups, take project ideas submitted from the ideation process and develop them into feasible ideas that fit within the purview of PB. In this process, Budget Delegates work individually and in teams to coordinate with relevant City staff to identify a budget and determine specific needs and language to make the project feasible. The process of data collection occurred in during meetings #7, #8, and #9 (see Appendix D), which falls between the first and second stages of project review by City staff. During this period of time, the researcher conducted four direct observations of meetings (3 Budget Delegate meetings, and 1 working group meeting), and conducted ten interviews ranging from 45 minutes to 2 hours (see Appendix C).

Direct observation of meetings helped to identify the structure of the deliberation of this stage of the PB cycle, both in the larger group setting as well as in a smaller group setting. Interviews, that ranged from Budget Delegates, Steering Committee members, City staff, and elected officials (both current and former) discussed the extent to which Vallejo PB has increased civic engagement and participation from the community, as well as the role that deliberation has played in developing new

community dynamics and connections. The case study is sorted through thematic elements that surfaced throughout most interviews.

Secondly, an anonymous online survey was sent to Budget Delegates throughout this data collection period that asked participants to provide demographic information. The questions are consistent with demographic data that the City of Vallejo has of Vallejo PB Budget Delegates and voters for the previous 5 cycles. While it is not statistically significant, it serves as a rough benchmark to compare this current cycle's Delegates to previous cycles and to assess how these cycles have changed over time.

## Case Study of Vallejo PB

### *From bankruptcy to new governance: the initial hope of Vallejo PB*

In interviews conducted with participants who were present at the genesis of Vallejo PB, most had mentioned the critical role that the 2008 decision for the City to file for bankruptcy had in the initiating a participatory budgeting process in 2012. One of the initial councilmembers who played an integral role in the adoption of the program mentions that the idea of PB came even prior to the City's bankruptcy:

The City was rapidly marching towards bankruptcy and I was researching ways of how to do finance and municipal budgeting differently and with more transparency [...] Moving forward, can we do things differently when it comes to financing and budgeting? And I stumbled across participatory budgeting and the more I read about it the more I got excited about it. This councilmember then reached out to Josh Lerner with the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP), the primary PB research and technical assistance organization that helps cities adopt PB processes in North America, who at the time was assisting Chicago Alderman Joe Moore establish PB in his district. However, it took several more years to develop the political will and consensus for PB to become a political reality in Vallejo, a process that required a restructuring of city council seats, the passing of Measure B, a one percent sales tax passed in November of 2011, and rigorous advocacy of this particular councilmember. PB finally came to be adopted, after a contentious council session, on April 10, 2012, which included a contract to hire PBP to help pilot the program for its first year.

There was initial skepticism, with much of the critique stemming from residents and elected officials' concerns of the spending of public monies, immediately after coming out of bankruptcy. However, a current elected official remarked, "I thought it was a good time to do that, as opposed to saying it was a bad time. That was a perfect time for that [PB], because it gave the residents input, and that's what was important. Some people didn't like the project, but if you didn't like the projects come out and vote and tell us why." This began to highlight some of the initial transformative effects that PB was bringing to Vallejo, in that this elected official was discussing the new avenues for engagement that residents had to address issues and concerns they had regarding their city.

"There was far more people who were not supportive of the project in the beginning. But as the process went through, by the time we got to the end, *many* of those people were won over and were supportive and thought it was an impressive feat," says the initial councilmember who brought PB to the City.

Participants would say, "Government is so much more complicated than I thought, it's so much harder—now I understand what your jobs are like, I had no idea how difficult everything was." Even some of the most skeptical people, got involved with the PB process. They were Delegates, or they came to the assemblies, and some of them, even the most skeptical, if they were 10% at the beginning, they might never be fully for it, but they all moved closer to being in favor of the process.

Vallejo PB became a space for people who were both supportive of the process and deeply questionable of it to develop solutions that were ultimately productive. In other words, the space for conflict is a productive one in that it led to implemented projects.

This is important in that PB serves as a space for deliberation where different community perspectives can come together and build consensus and produce solid outcomes. The transparency of the process, as well as the support that the City provides in developing out the proposals also serves to develop trust between residents and the City, an important aspect of the process in light of coming out of bankruptcy.

### *Deep collaboration*

A seemingly obvious yet integral component of PB is the collaboration that occurs between community members themselves and with City agencies and staff. Stated as a goal of Vallejo PB, this is certainly a virtue that has been observed in Budget Delegate meetings, working group meetings, and participant interviews. Budget Delegates form working groups after the ideation process and usually stay within these groups for the remainder of the process. Each project normally has one or two lead persons responsible for developing the proposal, but they often work as a team to help develop the content necessary for each proposal. Additionally, the City staff, under the City Manager's office, dedicated to the PB process helps to liaise Budget Delegates to the appropriate City agency or staff to help develop specific parts of a proposal. The City, whether the PB staffer or associated City staff, are clear at the outset of the communication process about feasibility of projects, but otherwise do a good job of accommodating the vision of Budget Delegates into proposal development. A new



Budget Delegate remarks that they often “bring in people from different agencies to the Delegate meetings to talk about projects and help with specific questions that might need more thorough answers.”

Budget Delegates communicate often with the respective City agencies, whether in-person, through email, or phone, and when there is difficulty reaching a contact person, the PB staffer will more proactively ensure that a line of communication becomes available. There are often times where communication is not immediate, but the necessary feedback does eventually find its way to the Delegates in order to move forward with proposal development. This is also a part of the process where collaboration plays in favor for the working groups, where members of groups who have more experience with or are more comfortable with talking to City officials take on the role of coordinating with the necessary agency. Members of the working group who are more comfortable with technology, particularly those who are younger, often help assist some older Delegates who may not be as technologically apt. This is particularly helpful since Budget Delegates use a platform called Appcivist<sup>5</sup> to develop their proposals, an issue discussed later in this research.

Although the City provides the appropriate help when it is needed, they maintain a clear boundary to ensure that ownership of the project is maintained within

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<sup>5</sup> Appcivist, now in its third year of use for Vallejo PB, is a digital platform developed by The Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS) and the Banatao Institute at University of California, Berkeley. During the proposal development phase, It serves as a live document for Budget Delegates to input components of project proposals that is open to comments by the wider community.

community members. In a sense, they serve as consultants to Budget Delegates, to ensure that projects are developed in a way to best ensure feasibility during implementation, but maintain a careful distance as to not sway the projects away from the intended vision. This is an important role that PB plays in that it allows for citizen control of a process, but that the process is happening with institutional support of the City. As one Delegate shares, "There's a lot of good conversations, people are being reminded that we have to get a project that will get votes. The City staff and consultant stay out of it, careful not to push an agenda of any sort. The Steering Committee as well, push the Delegates to make the choices."

The space where this leadership comes to fruition is within each working group. There is a strong relationship that working group members form in the course of developing their projects and each person's strength is made of use to make the process efficient. Additionally, working groups internally identify a leadership agreement that works for them, and from what has been observed, occurs as an organic process as opposed to something that is programmed.

To sum up the process of collaboration, a first year Budget Delegate shares his perception of the role that diversity plays in overall collaboration:

You start out as strangers and one of the ways they do it is people start throwing out ideas. And people will say, "oh, that's a great idea, or that was done here." People aren't afraid to speak up which is really nice, and they have their vision for Vallejo, you know, that little piece of their vision for Vallejo. It's amazing because people come from such different backgrounds. We have a guy from Santa Rosa that's done tons of stuff for the homeless so for a lot of the social services

projects, he was really useful because he had all this experience. And we would we have done it without him, yeah, but would it have been as good, no [...] So you get a group and you learn pretty quickly that we're all here for the same thing.

*Growing pains: the learning curve and transformative outcomes of the PB process*

Not only were residents building relationships with others in the community and with various City agencies, they had also started to use PB as a platform to develop leadership skills. Many participants that were interviewed, particularly ones that had been involved since the inception of the project have consistently accrued more responsibilities throughout their continued involvement with Vallejo PB, with some of them eventually becoming members of the Steering Committee (SC). A current SC member that was interviewed recalls the very first Vallejo PB meeting in 2012:

I went to the very first assembly that they had and it was packed because it was brand new. No one knows what this PB was and my sister had basically signed me up to go. She said, 'I don't know what this is, but it sounds just like you!' So I went and it was a wonderful presentation, it was so crowded though, but they broke off into smaller groups and asked us about ideas and everything, what we would like to see done in Vallejo. And then they asked would any of us want to work with the participatory budgeting and I ended up signing up for them. I wanted to see more about this and I signed up to be a Delegate right there on the spot.

Since then, this resident had remained a part of the PB process at varying capacities, ultimately becoming a SC member and putting in time to help move the program forward and to facilitate between the City and the Budget Delegates. With 100 percent of participants surveyed (19 total) reporting that they are registered to vote, it is worth noting that Vallejo PB certainly attracts a number of residents that are already civically-

minded prior their participation in PB. A couple participants interviewed were members of neighborhood associations and advocacy organizations as well.

However, this is certainly not the case for many participants interviewed or observed. In fact, 63 percent of survey respondents (12 responses) reported that they had not been involved in PB in prior years, and many of those interviewed were also joining PB for their first time. These participants share the difficulty of learning the process in the beginning, particularly the process that immediately follows the ideation process in which Budget Delegates sift through more than 1,000 ideas submitted to help shape initial project proposals a difficult process to deliberate in a larger group setting. Some reported the number of extra hours and meetings with other working group members they had committed outside of regular meeting times to begin this process:

When we do meet, it's an hour and a half to go through "well did you do the format right," versus a deep dive of, "here's the problem and how do we change this idea or transform the idea into a creative innovate solution?" And that's apart from the submission thing. An hour and a half is not enough time, I have to personally gather my crew and we spend hours independently working on that. The time that Delegates spend per week to help accomplish these tasks began to taper off as ideas were sorted through and finally became rough project proposals, through a mix of deliberation within working groups though mostly through a Project Priority Matrix (see Appendix) that systematizes ideas based on need, feasibility, and benefit. Another Delegate mentions the need for the City to better communicate the amount of work and commitment needed to make the process work. "One of my feelings is that [while] I feel that the staff tries, it's hard to transmit what the expectations of the whole

cycle is. The clearer that they can be at the beginning, the better they can be at keeping people as well as having it be more efficient.”

This process of deeply diving into City processes as Budget Delegates develop proposals, while at least initially cumbersome, can be a rewarding, if not transformative, form of civic engagement. Participants have shared the wealth of knowledge they accumulate as they explore what it takes to take a project from idea to implementation in roughly a year’s time. As a SC member describes the role of a Budget Delegate, they start to show the rich and deep involvement that Delegates have with the City and the process of project development:

Delegates take the idea and develop it into a proposal. In that development, it may be necessary for Delegates to do research, talk to different agencies, City departments, or different groups involved (partners). Delegates check to see if it’s feasible, legal, all of this occurs in the proposal stage. Very important, and thorough. We go through stages in the proposal stage. Opportunity to get very good comments from partners, council, City staff, and Steering Committee. A first year Budget Delegate remarked about much he had learned in the process of researching a project proposal:

It’s been a great process. It’s interesting to see how city government works. One of the projects involves City-owned properties, it’s amazing to see how many entities and agencies are involved in one thing. Some projects can be simple, some can be more involved—there’s different layers and levels of entities to coordinate with.

While the issue of how much work it takes for Budget Delegates to develop proposals is important to consider, particularly in addressing questions of equitable participation and who can be a part of the process, the outcome of deepened civic engagement and

understanding of City processes was a consistent theme in the observations and interviews.

### *Participation beyond PB*

The Vallejo PB process served as a space to practice and develop leadership skills and opportunities for many participants throughout its six cycles. This is accounted for both by current Delegates and SC members, as well as the various elected officials, both current and former, who were asked on whether PB led to other forms of engagement and leadership. For the councilmember who initiated the program, this external aspect of PB became paramount to the overall program:

The other thing that I didn't see initially but now I do after so many cycles that I find so inspiring, and this in itself is enough reason to do PB, is that it just somehow breeds leaders. Leadership skills just seem to flourish in this environment of PB. Whether if it's, 'I'm gonna be the one that's the leader or the captain of the community garden or I'm gonna get on the planning commission, or I'm gonna run for Council myself, or I'm gonna start my own nonprofit.' I mean I've heard people from all over the map, and it all came from this seed. Moreover, they describe how each person's leadership development is unique to that person, and that PB allows a plurality of leadership styles to unfold within the process. This is a nod to how the deep engagement and work that Budget Delegates take on can proliferate to new modes of civic engagement since the process of PB requires deep collaboration with fellow community members, City agencies and staff, and substantial learning of City processes.

Vallejo PB has a rulebook—assessed and revised annually by City staff, the Steering Committee, some Budget Delegates, and approved by City Council—that provide the guidelines for the types of projects that PB can fund. These guidelines are shaped by the learnings of City staff about types of programs that are likely to have issues before, during, or after implementation, by the legal limitations of the types of projects that can be funded by Measure B, the one percent sales tax that funds PB, and by CDBG guidelines that the City had incorporated to the Vallejo PB program. Although it can be viewed that these guidelines stifle creativity and innovation of projects as some participants had voiced, they are beneficial to the overall process in several ways such as establishing a clear path to implementation within the next fiscal year for approved and voted projects, as well as ensuring wider community benefits through the adoption of CDBG requirements. As one Budget Delegate reports, “Sometimes you start in one spot and end up somewhere else, maybe because ‘this’ wasn’t eligible, but ‘this’ is,” as they describe how proposals are dynamic and made to fit within the existing guidelines of Vallejo PB. Most relevant to this discussion, however, is the activity that ensues for both City agencies and Budget Delegates who want to move forward a particular project that is outside of the limits of PB. That is, where PB might not allow for a particular project to move forward, residents become interested in exploring other avenues to continue the work, and often with an established connection to appropriate City agencies. A Budget

Delegate accounts his experience in exploring and discussing ineligible projects with other PB participants:

One of the really cool things about PB is I had an idea of an Urban Farm, but what it really needs is a 2-3 year grant because otherwise it would be considered a pilot study which is not PB fundable. So at some point I've been looking to find a source of a grant to see if that could work. I know one lady that had been in contact with the Mayor to make some regulation changes to make a project doable with or without the PB money. I was amazed at how many people I talked to [at a Steering Committee meeting] that had thought of other things for their project because it was ineligible or in some cases it was just gonna take too long to develop.

This circles back to the initial discussion of how PB inspires leadership. PB first provides a space for residents to think critically and proactively of projects that they believe benefit the city, and regardless of whether or not the project will ultimately fit under the purview of PB, can choose to pursue those visions further through other means if they should want to. Other elected officials have shared how constituents have come to them to advocate for projects or raise other policy ideas that were born out of ineligible PB projects. By allowing space for citizen projects and visions to manifest, and by providing technical assistance to help bring projects to reality, whether or not they are ultimately eligible, empowers citizens to move forward with their ideas. As one participant stated about this effect, "It opens up a whole other door to civic awareness and civic duty for people."



### *Youth Participation*

Perhaps one of the most mentioned aspects of Vallejo PB throughout the interview process is its capacity and its history in providing a space for youth participation. The program itself allows residents as young as 14 to participate, potentially allowing the input for many of the community's youth to shape City funded projects and services. The way in which this came to be also reveals an important role that deliberation has played in PB:

One of the most powerful times that I ever really saw that [deliberation] was when the first PB Steering Committee was writing the rulebook and they were at the point where they had to decide how much they were going to lower the age by. The PBP team, sometimes Josh would come out and lead some parts, like the writing of the rulebook he led that for the most part, but the first year he would come out from New York from time to time and help develop different aspects of the PB process. So he's leading it and he said, "Let's think about what's the range of what you want the age to be for PB voting, 18 or do you want to lower it?" So, some people said, "Well they should definitely be 18," and other people said, "Well, why not lower? What's the lowest it's ever been?" and he said, "I've seen five year olds vote, I think in South America, but here in the Western Hemisphere it's more like 12 or 14, maybe." So they started out with a spectrum [the participant at this point stood up and acted out the process of standing in a line with others] and he said, "I want you to walk along the spectrum, and if you think it should be 18, I want you to go down there, and if you think it could be as young as 14, then go there." In the beginning everyone was at the 18 end, and maybe a few people were in the middle at 16 or 17, and there were only a couple people down here at 14. But, by the end of talking through like, "Well, why do you think that a 14 year old can't vote, but an 18 year old can?" talking through all of that and getting them to talk to each other you know. It'd be really funny because all of a sudden he said, "if you change your mind, I want you to move across the spectrum." So I remember somebody reading some paper, she's walking down and everybody's laughing, and then somebody else did that, and then we said, "Why did you move? What swayed you?" and she said, "Well, you said *blahblahblah*," I don't even remember now—but what was funny about it was that [we were] working collaboratively, where there was a division, but

working through it in a deliberative way, right deliberative democracy? In the end it was a unanimous recommendation to the Council in the rulebook to lower the age to vote from 18.

In its earlier cycles, Vallejo PB had high levels of youth participation as one Steering Committee recalls, "In Cycle 1, we had such a large group of youth that they had their own team! This helps them with leadership, where they get to take their own ideas, and formulate them, and present them in positive ways." The initial cycles of PB with high youth participation was something the City promoted and sent some of the youth to national conferences to present Vallejo PB and their involvement.

However, youth participation has dwindled through the years with the current cycle having no one younger than 24 years old participating. The number of youth participating as Budget Delegates, since the drop off in participation that occurred in the third cycle of the program, has never recovered, though many youth still vote during the voting stage of PB, particularly since online voting had become an option. As Vallejo PB moves forward, it will be important to address the disparity between the number of elected officials, City staff, and SC members who have voiced their pleasure and aspiration of having more youth be involved in the process and the reality of the lack of youth represented during the Vallejo PB process.

### *Technology*

The issue of technology was the single most mentioned component of PB amongst Budget Delegates, Steering Committee members, and City staff involved

directly within the PB process. Appcivist, by the end of the direct observations of meetings, became a running joke in regards to the recurring issues that Budget Delegates had in navigating and operating the platform. Issues ranged from not being able to access the site (ie log on) during critical moments such as when proposals were nearing a review, to the general lack of user intuitiveness that older Delegates were looking for, to being deemed as “just crazy” by a new Budget Delegate.

An interview participant mentioned that the initial presentation to introduce Appcivist to Budget Delegates was too high level, citing that it needs to be more connected to newer Delegates who were new to the process of PB overall and needed to be introduced only to the most pertinent information and functions of the tool and that it be presented in way that takes into consideration of the audience. “This is what’s important to communicate with folks at Berkeley to understand that every cycle is a new cohort,” says this participant. City staff more closely related to the PB process, and some Delegates acknowledge that Appcivist is still under development and were more forgiving, saying that they see the objective and potential of the technology as valuable, but that it needed a bigger focus on designing the front-end experience of the user for it to work effectively. An interview participant recalls the use of Appcivist in a previous year, jokingly saying that Delegates were “putting about half of their energy dealing with Appcivist, this year it’s more like ten percent.”

## Discussion

### *Roots of Radical Democracy in Planning History and Theory*

In 1965, amidst the massive societal changes brought on by the Civil Rights Movement, Paul Davidoff wrote an integral piece of planning literature that calls for the role of planner as an advocate. In it, he argues that planners have a role in being able to advocate on the behalf of many different stakeholders of policies that shape their communities and the built environment (Davidoff 1965). Additionally, he warned that planners need to be careful and must balance bureaucratic control that could potentially omit the needs of local communities, and disregard public participation and involvement (*ibid.*). This was a slight critique of incremental planning (Lindblom 1959), and a prescriptive (Brooks 2002) approach to solving urban issues. Davidoff (1965) also discusses the approach of advocacy and pluralism to provide various alternative to originally proposed plans of the city. A multiplicity of plans, then, allows the public alternative solutions.

These arguments by Davidoff are particularly relevant to the discussion of Vallejo PB. Essentially, the various projects that are proposed, adopted, and then implemented by PB are representative of the multiplicity of approaches and a reflection of the various community members and groups represented in the deliberative process, as opposed to projects and/or interventions that the city itself would identify and develop. This is not to assume that the city would omit participatory practices in the projects that it initiates,

but PB presents, through an expansive forum, an opportunity for communities to present on a wide variety of local issues and to develop solutions themselves—an opportunity not present in many other local governance processes. What Davidoff offers to the discussion of PB is that planners could potentially have a role in the deliberative process, as an advocate of the community's projects, but with the technical skills of planner, and the knowledge of local government processes and capacity. This would be a critical asset to the PB program in helping to determine feasibility of projects, adding capacity and technical knowledge in the ideation and development stages, and providing advocacy and support at the deliberative stages.

This is an argument to both add more City staff to the PB process to help facilitate and develop projects with Budget Delegates, but also a call to innovate the processes and limits that are already defined within local governance. Using PB as a metric to measure the concerns and visions of the community helps to extend planning and other City processes in a way that can adapt more dynamically to current local issues. That is to say that community input within the phases of ideation, project development, and voting serve as proxies for what kinds of projects and services are wanted by city residents. An influx of proposed services for the homeless, for example, not only sheds light to an increase of homelessness within a city, but to that providing adequate care and services is a priority of residents. Again, while not every project might

fit the purview of PB, it is worthwhile for the City to identify themes of resounding concern to further develop.

Beard (2009) discusses the role of radical planning practices in Indonesia where she states some of the core tenets of radical planning (Friedmann 1987; Sandercock 1998). In her conceptualization of radical planning, there are particular points that contribute to the case of Vallejo's PB. First, she adopts Friedmann's definition of planning (1987) that provides a broad interpretation of the capacity of planning in that there is a "deliberate transfer of knowledge to action" that occurs in the public sphere and works specifically towards the purpose of "a shared vision of the 'good society'" (Beard 2009). Additionally, Beard (2009) maintains that planners and practices on the side of the spectrum that point towards social transformation (Friedmann 1987), attempt to change the institutions and structures that establish and maintain the status quo. These changes do not have to particularly large undertakings, rather they can be, as Sandercock (1998) expresses, "a thousand tiny empowerments," or smaller actions that work towards the goals of radical planning and social transformation (Beard 2009).

Within this conceptual framework, Vallejo's Participatory Budget efforts, as an extension of the Empowered Participatory Governance theory (Fung and Wright 2003), is indeed a radical practice. PB is arguably a process that facilitates the transfer of knowledge, of both rooted "on-the-ground" knowledge of the community, and the technical and institutional knowledge of city agencies, that creates action towards the

common good. The transformative capacity of EPG, and this transformational aspect as an explicit goal of Vallejo's PB makes it an attempt to shift the status quo of municipal fiscal processes, one that historically has not included this level of participation from its residents. While the framing of PB in North America as a practice of radical democracy is notably different from contexts in the Global South (Su 2017), it is fundamentally and quite literally radical in that it is providing a platform for *rooted* and deliberative democracy. PB maintains itself as a small, perhaps 'tiny empowerment', that seeks to positively transform the functioning of municipal governance. Beard (2009) also mentions Friedmann's (1987) push for broad community participation to challenge the tendency of power and information to be maintained and concentrated within a small sphere of decision-making elites. This is precisely one of the reasons that PB was established, as previously discussed, and thus a justification of why the Participatory Budget program is a radical planning practice. Finally, in Beard's (2009) operationalizing of the role of radical planner, she uses a quote by Friedmann (1987) that is reminiscent of Davidoff's (1965) discussion of the role of planner as an advocate. Friedmann states that, "planners help the community find practical solutions, understand institutional constraints, and provide the 'intelligence' necessary to develop successful strategies" (1987). This, again, validates the role that planners have in a transformative process such as PB, particularly when we go beyond the scope of PB to see what implications this process might have for other City processes and functions.

There is a worthwhile discussion to be had, however, in how to make the process more open to a wider variety of participants. In particular, the amount of time and commitment that Vallejo PB demands of Budget Delegates calls into question what privileges one might carry to be able to participate in this space, or at least in the capacity of a Delegate. This is important to consider as more continue to voice their desire for youth participation: process design might be reconsidered how to make participation as a Delegate more feasible for different members of the community. Since City staff hold technical expertise, they can help provide more guidance or develop ways to streamline the process of narrowing the often hundreds of ideas that are generated in the ideation phase, perhaps by identifying feasibility of the projects. However, careful attention should be given to this consideration in that suggestions and guidance by City staff should not serve as constricting, but rather a means to help start and shape the conversation and process for narrowing. The paradox of participation (Baiocchi and Fernandez 2017) is certainly a factor here, in that making the process easier and more efficient limits the transformative effects of deep deliberation, and the inverse of deeply deliberative processes being less open to wide participation.

### *The Paradox of Participation*

The most recent discussions regarding the critique of PB to be truly transformative comes from Gianpaolo Baiocchi and Ernesto Fernandez (2017) in their text titled, *Popular Democracy: the Paradox of Participation*. In it they discuss the



evolution of PB, having been an intervention of radical democracy in Puerto Alegre, Brazil to now a potentially surface level 'best practices' effort in local governance. The importance of this discussion ties back to one of the institutional design factors identified by Archon and Fung (2014), which is the importance for participatory governance programs to be embedded within the existing institution of the governance system that is enacting said programs. What this allows is a true systematic transformation of how democracy and citizen control exist within local government.

However, this is not the reality for most systems of local government in that many are apprehensive to allow direct control of City finances by residents. This was particularly present in the case of Vallejo PB, in that the initial adoption of the program faced much resistance, both from those representative of the system (ie elected City officials), as well other community members who questioned the spending of City monies in this way.

David Harvey (2003) makes a passionate plea about the current state of cities and how the rampant growth of capitalism has only exacerbated deep inequalities embedded in the urban fabric. Relevant to this discussion are a few things in his essay. The first is the tie to the utopian ideal of justice and the city (Harvey 2003). These motivations help drive people to envision and craft the necessary and positive changes that address the ills of society that plague us today and drive creativity towards those efforts. Arguably, PB is one such utopic approach that seeks to transform cities and

tackle some of society's challenges. An underlying component of EPG is its attempt to empower, not just ordinary citizens, but moreover, those that have been historically disenfranchised (Fung and Wright 2003). Along those lines, PB offers the same capacity by promoting practices such as lowering the voting age to 14 so that young community members have a chance to be involved, as well as integrating, since the inception of the program, no citizenship requirements, so that residents, whether they be citizens, permanent residents, or undocumented residents can partake in the efforts of PB. This again, is a critical call to consider how to continue to make the process open for participation at all phases of a cycle.

Another critical aspect of Harvey's (2003) writing is the "active right to make the city different, to shape it more in accord with our heart's desire". This poetic claim to the city is essentially at the heart of Vallejo's PB program. The hundreds of people who have been heavily involved in the process of developing their projects, and the thousands more that have showed support through their votes are indicative of the people's will to take agency and ownership over the inner workings that shape their city. The root of Vallejo PB as a program to allow residents to create a new vision for Vallejo as it was coming out of bankruptcy was a radical act of democracy. The deep way in which Delegates work to develop project proposals are resonant of Harvey's assertion of the right to make the city according to our heart's desire.

Finally, Harvey calls for a “creation of a new urban commons” which requires active democratic participation and inclusive practices (Harvey 2003). Vallejo’s PB program, as a product of Empowered Participatory Governance, seems to be a step towards reclaiming the right to the city. However, it is critical to develop the proper digital eGovernance tools to help expand the notion of an urban commons, particularly as more and more City functions become part of a digital technology infrastructure. The ongoing issues with Appcivist and Vallejo PB should be a higher concern, and developing the technology with a critical eye towards opening participation while allowing for ease of use by all user types must play an important part of the development of the platform. With that said, the observed capacity for democracy to be up front and center under the PB model is integral for advancing a critical and radical understanding of democracy, and more so, advancing towards utopic ideals of social justice and equity.

## Recommendations

(1) Revisit the process of sorting ideas from the ideation phase.

(a) Focus on the role of deliberation in the stage immediately after ideation.

Think of new ways of facilitating this process so that Budget Delegates have a clear framework of narrowing projects that are not as time intensive. This could be done by applying more technical assistance from appropriate City staff or agencies upfront, particularly by determining feasibility and perhaps an initial (projected) project cost.

(b) Make room for an iterative deliberation process, particularly as ideas are condensed but developed to maintain original visions. While it is important to establish feasibility of projects at an early stage, questions of how to instill creativity and innovation are important to raise early on.

(2) Better explain the process and expectations, beginning to end, of Budget Delegates.

(a) Develop a storytelling/narrative tool that explains the role of Budget Delegates, the work that it takes, and the benefits and effects of the work that is accomplished. Perhaps this can be done in partnership with local high schools or youth organizations to both galvanize interest and participation from the youth demographic and to increase overall

awareness of PB to the general public. Youth involvement has the external effects of word-of-mouth to other peers as well as to their parents.

(3) Make youth engagement easier.

(a) Hold meetings at different times, perhaps earlier in the day, or on weekends.

(b) Hold meetings in a different location, particularly at schools or other places where youth gather or could easily access.

(c) Create youth contingencies at the local high schools where they can develop project ideas in school, either during lunch time or a dedicated period. They can attend meetings as a group or send representatives during regular Budget Delegate meetings.

(d) Make a subset of PB money available for youth to develop specifically youth facing projects. Perhaps this can be done in concert with the school district, or perhaps the school district can think about doing their own version of PB.

(4) Pay close attention to how Appcivist, or any other eGovernance tool or platform, is developed in regards to PB.

(a) The frustration of using the platform is antithetic participation and combats the values of PB it is essential to continue to update the

technology with user ease at the forefront. There should be a separate evaluation provided for Appcivist for future iterations of the platform.

- (b) Ensure that the onboarding and orientation process of Budget Delegates to the platform takes into consideration the range of experiences that the audience have to both the technology as well as the overall process of Vallejo PB.
  - (c) Invite developers of the Appcivist platform at various stages of the PB process so that they can co-develop the platform with participants and conduct direct observation to better inform design decisions.
- (5) Balance deep deliberation with open participation.
- (a) While the deep transformative effects of this current iteration of the PB process is certainly notable, it requires a tremendous amount of commitment of time to be able to truly participate. It is important to consider where moments of the process can be made more efficient to scale back the amount of personal commitment currently needed.
  - (b) Earlier recommendations regarding youth engagement and improvements to technology can also address the dynamic of deliberation and participation.
- (6) Instill PB learnings and methods to other City processes

- (a) There is a rich amount of information that PB is able to collect from city residents. It is important to see how that information can be folded into other City functions, programs, and/or goals, particularly in its capacity to serve as a metric for sentiment.
- (b) PB serves as a platform that allows a deep learning of City functions and processes. It could be used to model other processes to create spaces for more participation and transparency. Particularly as City agencies develop new programs or services, PB can serve as an example of how participatory processes can be integrated with local government functions.

## Conclusion

There is certainly something to be lauded in the process of participatory budgeting in Vallejo. It serves as a space that provides new modes of civic engagement and leadership, lessons in collaboration with other community members and City agencies, and a deep and critical understanding of local governance processes and functions. Certainly not without critique, there is room for progress particularly in areas of widening the opportunity to participate, developing technology that is more user friendly, and cultivating more youth engagement with the process.

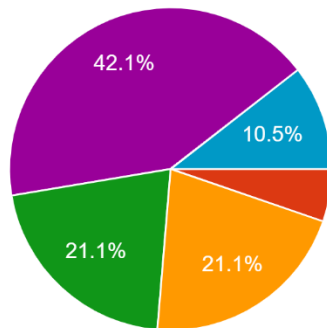
A resounding theme from participants interviewed is everyone's overall positive hope for the PB program. It is certainly successful in that it provides a new mode of citizenship, particularly as a program that had hoped to cultivate trust as the City was coming out of bankruptcy. While many participants may not have brought up or known of this genesis story of Vallejo PB, the initial hopes for the program to transform democracy is one that is well underway. This is important—that we find new ways to take ownership of modes of citizenship that often are at the hands of elite entities, market forces, or prescriptive technocrats. But the paradox of participation, or perhaps the balancing between wide participation and thorough deliberation, is one that must be considered often to ensure that the goals of PB and its radical transformation of democracy remain at the forefront of the process and not a superficial facade for participation.



## Appendix A: Survey Results

### Race/Ethnicity

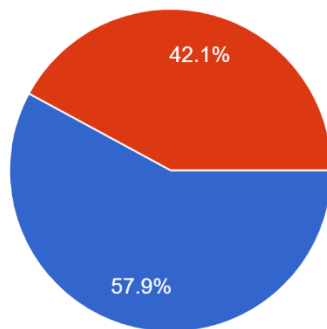
19 responses



- American Indian/Native American
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- White
- Other

### Gender

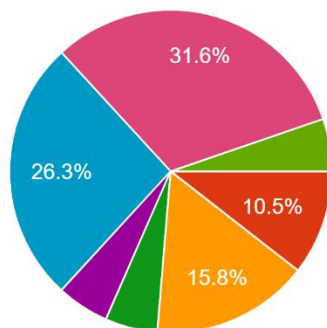
19 responses



- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

### Income

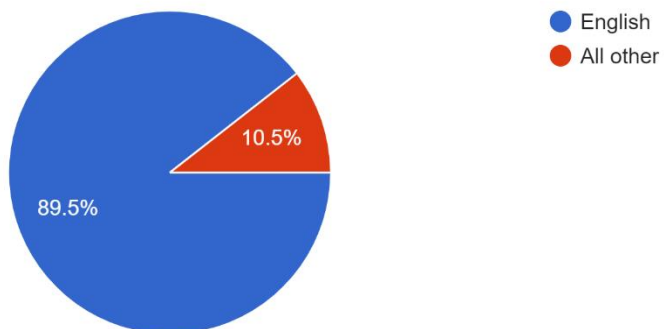
19 responses



- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$14,999
- \$15,000 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- More than \$150,000

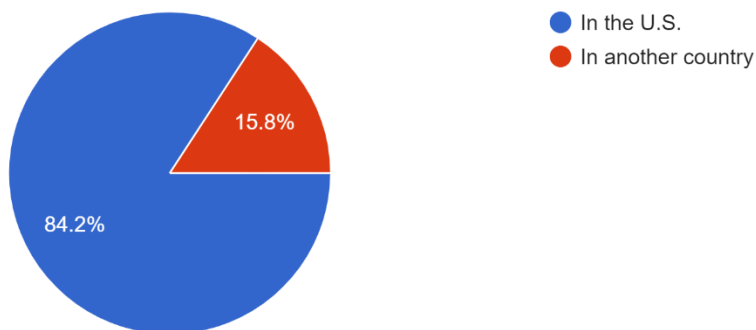
### Primary Language

19 responses



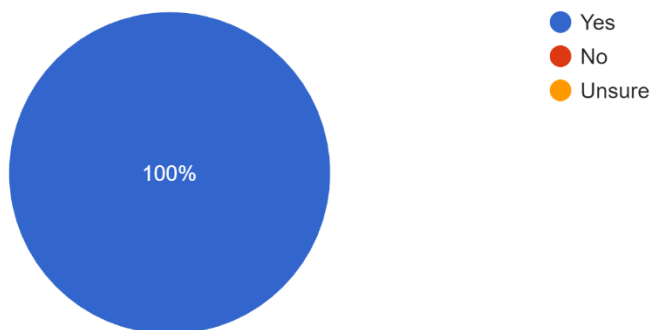
### Country of Birth

19 responses



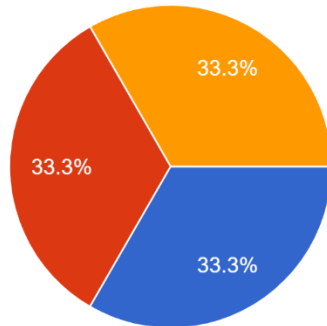
### Registered to vote?

19 responses



### Highest Level of Education

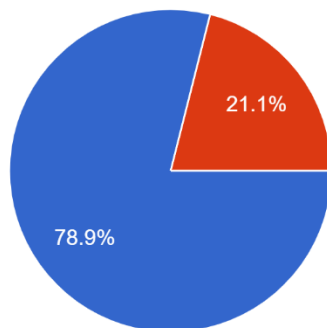
18 responses



- High School Diploma or GED Equivalent
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate Degree or Higher

### Have you voted in previous PB cycles?

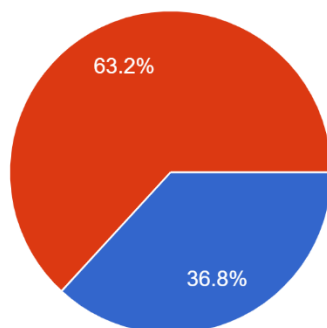
19 responses



- Yes
- No

### Have you participated in previous PB cycles?

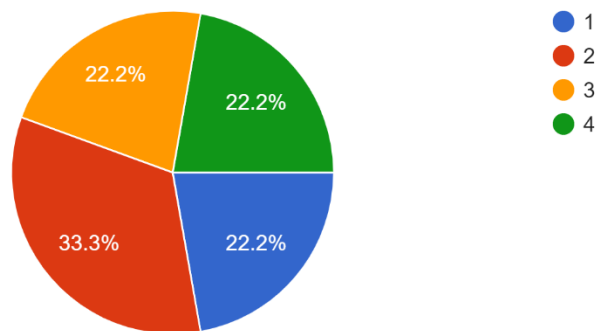
19 responses



- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, how many years have you been involved?

9 responses



## Appendix B: Interview Structure

The structure of the interview attempts to (1) gauge how effective they think deliberation is amongst other Budget Delegates, (2) determine if the nature of this stage has changed over the past several cycles, and (3) explore how interviewees feel about PB overall and what their hopes are for the program. The aims for this step are to gain personal insights on the deliberation that occurs, as well as to see if PB is a medium that provides a different hope than other forms of civic engagement.

Structure:

Background information of involvement with Vallejo's Participatory Budgeting (Budget Delegates and City Staff):

1. What role do you play in the PB process and what do you believe to be your main responsibilities?
2. Is this your first time participating in PB? If not, how long have you been participating?
3. If this is not your first time with PB, is it different from previous years? If yes, how?
4. What kinds of changes, if any, would you like to see implemented in the process?

On deliberation (Budget Delegates and City Staff):

1. How would you describe the process of developing project proposals thus far?
2. Are they developed in a way that fosters collaboration? Can you describe an instance where this may have been the case?
3. Are there moments of tension as proposals are being developed? If so, how are they resolved/not resolved? If not, what about the process allows for it to be that way?
4. How do Budget Delegates approach the idea of prioritizing which projects, or components of projects, move forward? How do you come to this consensus?

On the process (Budget Delegates):

1. How much support do Budget Delegates have from the City to develop proposals?
2. How much time/personal resources do Budget Delegates spend working on project proposals? Is it too much, too little?
3. Are there issues with the process that could be resolved to make things easier?

On the process (City staff):

1. How much support does your office/agency offer to Budget Delegates in developing the process?
2. What kinds of ways are you able to help in that process? What kind of support and/or resources are offered?
3. Are there moments when support is limited from the City side? (eg limited capacity of staff/office, etc) How is this resolved?
4. What challenges surface in the process of partnering with Budget Delegates during the proposal development process? How have they been resolved?

For elected officials:

1. Broadly speaking, can you speak about your own experiences and thoughts about PB?
2. How do you see this process evolving for the City?
3. Do constituents discuss matters regarding PB with you or your office? Is PB a platform that you are able to use to engage more with constituents?
4. How do you view PB as different from other local government functions?

### Appendix C: Titles of Interviewees

1	City Staff: Administrative Analyst
2	Steering Committee Member
3	Steering Committee Member
4	Current Elected Official
5	Current Elected Official
6	Former Elected Official
7	Budget Delegate (First Year)
8	Budget Delegate (First Year)
9	Budget Delegate (Second Year)
10	City Consultant: Facilitator

### Appendix D: Meetings Observed

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
01.08.2019	Budget Delegate Meeting (after holiday recess)
01.29.2019	Budget Delegate Meeting (prior to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Stage Review)
01.29.2019	Working Group Meeting
02.26.2019	Budget Delegate Meeting (post 2 <sup>nd</sup> Stage Review)

## Appendix E: Sample Project Priority Matrix

Table 1: Individual project priority matrix

<b>Project</b>	<b>Need (1-5)</b>	<b>Benefit (1-5)</b>	<b>Feasibility (1-5)</b>	<b>Total Project Score</b>
Project 1: Mobile recreation unit for areas without parks	4	4	4	12
Project 2: Tennis Court Improvements	2	2	3	7
Project 3: Install wheel-chair friendly playground equipment	3	2	2	7

Table 2: Sample combined results from multiple delegates per project (working groups or larger groups)

### Sample Proposal: Mobile Recreation Unit

	<b>Need</b>	<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Feasibility</b>	<b>Total Score</b>
Delegate 1	3	4	3	10
Delegate 2	4	4	2	10
Delegate 3	3	3	3	9
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>9.7</b>
	<b>AVG for need</b>	<b>AVG for benefit</b>	<b>AVG for feasibility</b>	<b>FINAL SCORE</b>

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