

Participatory Budgeting in Vallejo

2013-2014 Rulebook

About this Rulebook

This booklet was developed by the Steering Committee for Participatory Budgeting in Vallejo (PB Vallejo) in September 2012 and revised in July 2013, with assistance from City of Vallejo staff and the non-profit organization The Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP). While participatory budgeting is inspired by experiences elsewhere, we want the Vallejo process to reflect the special characteristics of our community. The Steering Committee and City Council agreed on these guidelines and rules based on our understanding of local needs, issues, and interests.

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

What is Participatory Budgeting?

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

Participatory Budgeting in Vallejo

In 2012, the Vallejo City Council established the first city-wide PB process in the United States. Through PB, the community helps the City Council decide how to spend a pre-determined amount of the City's general fund. In June 2013, as part of the Fiscal Year 2013-2014 budget process, the City Council approved an allocation of approximately \$2.2 million for the second cycle of PB Vallejo projects. Vallejo residents and stakeholders develop project proposals, residents vote on projects, and the list of the projects that receive the most votes are submitted to City Council for consideration.

Project Eligibility

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

- **Benefit the public.** Projects that only benefit private individuals or groups are not eligible. Projects may not result in a 'gift of public funds' to individuals (See Cal. Const. Art. XVI § 6) and must serve a public use or purpose, providing a "public benefit". Generally this means that the project results in a concrete or quantifiable service or benefit to the public.
- **Are a one-time expenditure that can be completed with funds from this year's PB process.** Both capital infrastructure projects and program or service projects are eligible. A multi-year program will be eligible only if it off-sets other expenditures in the City budget so that the cost is \$0, pays for itself, or increases City revenues.
- **Are implemented by the City of Vallejo, or in collaboration with the Vallejo City Unified School District, the Greater Vallejo Recreation District, or any other public agency, non-profit organization, or religious institution that operates in Vallejo.** Projects implemented by non-city public agencies, however, must also include financial or value in-kind contributions from the agency, in addition to PB funding. Projects may not be implemented on private property, by private individuals or for-profit organizations, and may not promote religious views or beliefs.

In addition to these criteria, the following rules apply to projects:

- For some projects not implemented by the City of Vallejo or a public agency, the City will use a formal bidding process to select the entity that will be responsible for implementing the project. This process will be determined by the City Manager, or designee, in consultation with the City Attorney.
- California Gov't Code § 1090 prohibits PB project participants from receiving financial compensation as a result of a project they helped promote.
 - City or agency staff may participate but may not work on proposals that involve their office or department.

- City or agency staff may not initiate, be the main representative of or participate in projects where they will receive a personal benefit. However, if requested by the City Manager, or designee, an employee-upon approval of their manager-may give professional input on whatever project is discussed, subject only to time and other project constraints.
- In most cases, funds will not be distributed up front and will be distributed as a reimbursable service, purchase order and/or progress payment to a local certified contractor.
- Initial determination of project eligibility will be made by the PB Steering Committee and Budget Delegates based on a qualification check list.
- Projects must be fully eligible and approved by the City Manager, or designee, before the Expos. A fully eligible project must contain the following:
 - Sufficient details to understand the purpose and intent of the project.
 - Identification of Public Benefit(s)
 - Proposed Beneficiary(ies)
 - Total Budget, including the cost to fully implement the project to completion (i.e. bidding, staff, etc.)
 - Timeframe for project completion
 - Non-City project proponents must consent to implementation and present proof of eligibility
- Final project determination for ballot placement will be made by the City Manager, or designee, in consultation with the City Attorney.

Goals: What is this for?

We hope to accomplish four main goals through PB Vallejo:

1. Improve our city

- Improve the infrastructure of the City, assist in enhancing the public safety of citizens, and to improve the quality of life for residents through the creation of and payment for projects without the expenditure of Measure B funds for salary expenses.
- Build a new spirit of civic pride and raise the profile of Vallejo on the regional, state, and national levels.

2. Engage our community

- Ensure that all members of our community have a voice.
- Engage those who are traditionally underrepresented in politics, who face obstacles to participating, or who feel disillusioned with the political process.
- Increase public involvement in civic life in Vallejo. To the extent applicable, public meetings will comply with the open meeting requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

3. Transform our democracy

- Empower Vallejoans with the skills and knowledge they need to shape our city's future.
- Build leadership from the bottom up and forge deeper ties between residents, neighborhoods, and communities.

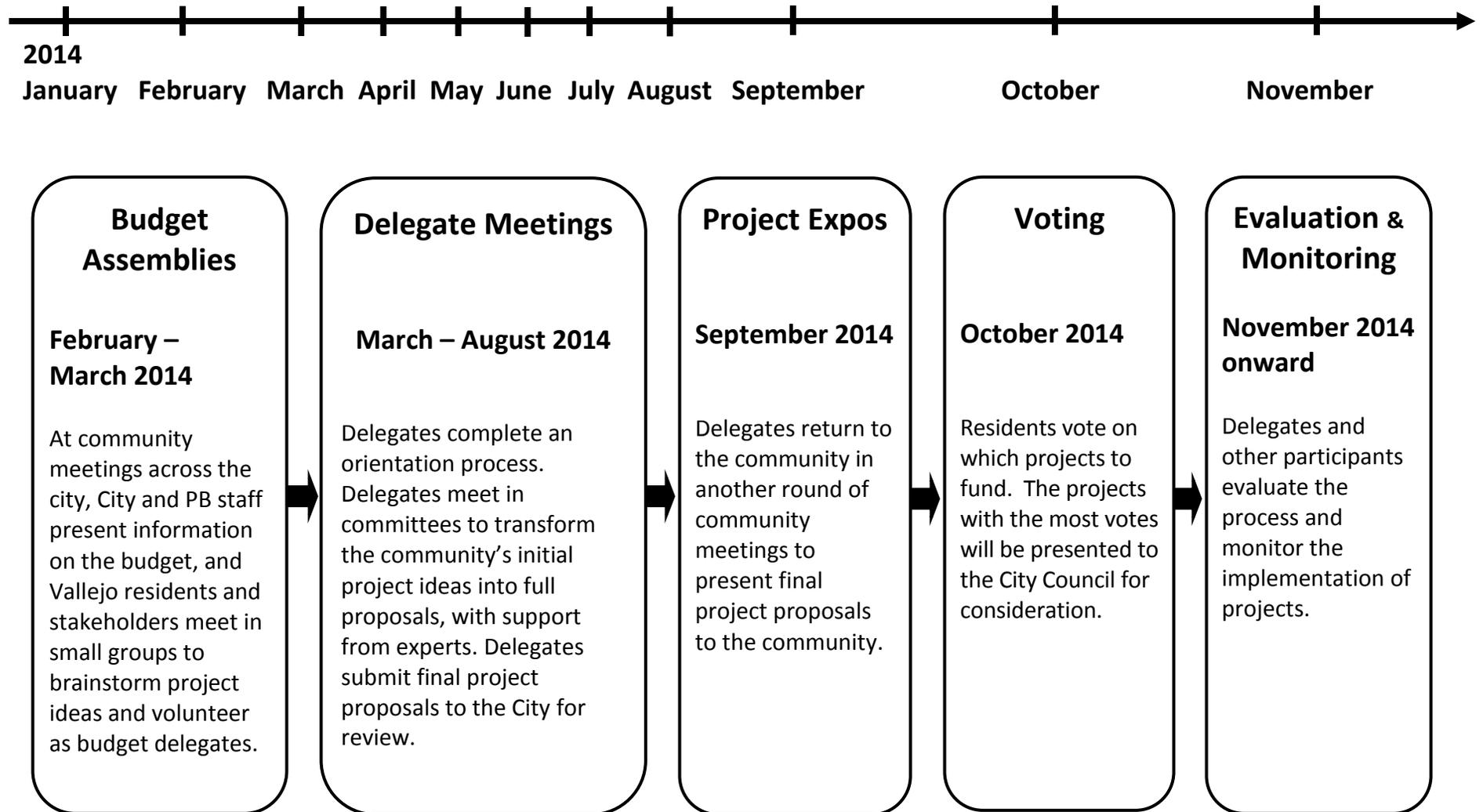
4. Open up government

- Increase transparency and accountability of local government to community stakeholders.
- Improve communication and collaboration between local government and the community.
- Support a framework within government for decision-making that promotes a more just and equitable city.

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

Timeline: What happens when?

The PB process involves a series of meetings that feed into the city's annual budget cycle. The second cycle of PB Vallejo has five main stages. Alongside these face-to-face meetings, the public will submit, review, and discuss project ideas online.



Rules: How does it work?

Budget Assemblies

- Budget Assemblies will seek to reflect Vallejo's diversity and include all segments of the community.
- The public will learn about the city budget and propose project ideas during the assemblies, including, but not limited to:
 - Two afternoon assemblies for youth,
 - One daytime assembly for seniors,
 - One Spanish-language assembly with interpretation in English,
 - One assembly focused on the Filipino community with interpretation in Tagalog
 - One assembly focused on the African-American community
 - Other assemblies will attempt to target areas where a fewer number of residents voted in the first PB cycle.
- The public will have the ability to submit project ideas online, through mail-in and email submission, and through community meetings. Anyone is welcome to attend the assemblies and propose project ideas.

Delegate Meetings

- All budget delegates must attend a delegate orientation session.
- At the delegate orientation sessions, each delegate will join a committee to discuss and develop project proposals for a certain issue area or demographic group.
 - Issue committees may include but are not limited to: Transportation, Public Health, Public Safety, Education, Parks & Recreation, Environment, Art & Culture, Housing
 - Demographic committees may be formed to ensure maximum participation from people who might not otherwise participate, including: Youth, Seniors, Spanish-Speakers, and members of the Filipino and African American communities. These committees will develop

projects that specifically address the needs of their demographic group.

- Any residents of Vallejo, its unincorporated areas, or stakeholders in Vallejo - people who physically work in Vallejo, own a business in Vallejo, attend school in Vallejo, or are parents of children who attend school in Vallejo may participate.
- The Steering Committee and Budget Delegates will strive to minimize the total number of projects (i.e. combining projects that address a similar public need and vetting projects that do not meet the eligibility criteria and rules). As the City has limited staffing resources, a maximum of sixty (60) project proposals will be submitted to the City for final review. This number may be increased only at the discretion of the City Manager (i.e. two additional project proposals are prepared).
- After the City has reviewed the final project proposals, they may not be altered or combined, except under extraordinary circumstances as determined by the City Manager, or designee.

Project Expos

- There will be at least three Project Expos, including one in Spanish. At the Project Expos, budget delegates will present the final project proposals to the community. The Steering Committee will determine the final number of Project Expos.
- The Steering Committee will determine the maximum number of projects to be presented at the Project Expos.
- After the Project Expos, project proposals may not be altered or combined, except under extraordinary circumstances as determined by the City Manager, or designee.
- Participants will abide by the Campaigning Guidelines as determined by the Steering Committee and the City Manager, or designee.

Voting for Projects

- People are eligible to vote for projects if they:
 1. are at least 16 years old, *and*
 2. are residents of Vallejo or its unincorporated areas.
 - Budget delegates who have committed their time to the process and are under the minimum voting age as determined by the City Manager, or designee.
- Through these inclusive voter eligibility rules, the City of Vallejo aims to more deeply engage all Vallejo residents in the community and government.
- At the time of voting, voters must present proof that they satisfy the eligibility requirements. A comprehensive list of acceptable IDs will be publicized prior to the vote.
- Voting opportunities will take place on multiple days and in multiple locations. Each voter can vote on one occasion.
- Each voter may cast one vote per project. The Steering Committee will decide the number of total votes a voter may cast based on the following calculation: up to 20% of the total number of projects on the ballot rounded to the nearest whole number. Ex. 15% of 50 projects = 7.5 = 8 votes.
- No campaigning will be allowed at polling locations.
- The Steering Committee will determine the structure of the ballot with input from the City Manager, or designee.

Approval of Funding by City Council

- Upon completion of the public voting process, the results of the balloting will be brought before the City Council for consideration. The City Council will have the discretion to approve which projects are funded, the amount of funding, and conditions (if any) placed upon the use of approved funds.
- If there is a tie, subject to available resources and the discretion of the City or other agencies, Council will try to secure additional money to complete the tied projects. If this is not possible, the remaining funds will be split between the tied projects. If these projects cannot be completed with partial funds, the remaining

money will go to the project with the next most votes that can be fully funded, or into a reserve fund.

- If the available funds do not cover the cost of the next highest vote-getting project, subject to available resources and the discretion of the City or other agencies, Council will try to secure additional money to complete the project. If this is not possible, the project will be partially funded. If the project cannot be completed with partial funds, the remaining money will go to the project with the next most votes that can be fully funded, or into a reserve fund.

Monitoring of Funded Projects

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

Amendments

- The Steering Committee may propose changes to the Rulebook with approval from a quorum of the Committee, and final approval by City Council. The City Council may make changes to the Rulebook via a majority vote.

Roles & Responsibilities: Who does what?

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

Vallejo Residents and Stakeholders

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

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

Budget Delegates

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

- Discuss, categorize, and prioritize initial project ideas.
- Vet the initial list of project ideas against the eligibility check list. If project does not meet all criteria it will be struck from the list.
- Consult with Vallejo residents and stakeholders on project proposals.
- Develop full project proposals.
- Prepare project posters and presentations.
- Mobilize Vallejo residents and stakeholders to participate.
- Monitor project implementation.
- Evaluate the PB process.

Facilitators

Facilitators help residents participate effectively in budget assemblies and delegate meetings. They are neutral parties that do not advocate for particular projects.

- Facilitate group discussions and meetings, and ensure that all participants are able to contribute
- Serve as the main point of contact between the City Manager, or designee, and delegates, helping to coordinate communication and resolve conflicts
- Connect delegates with information and resources
- Ensure that notes are taken at meetings and distributed afterward
- Support delegates in researching, assessing and developing proposals, based on criteria that include feasibility, need and benefit

Workgroups

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

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

City Manager Designee

The City Manager Designee will be the main person responsible for coordinating the PB process.

- Serve a point of contact between the City and the PB Process
- Coordinate PB outreach efforts

- Serve as staff liaison to the PB Steering Committee. Will enforce rules of order.
- Recruit and coordinate volunteers
- Create qualifications check-list based on this Rule Book
- Categorize project ideas
- Reserve space for assemblies and meetings
- Arrange food, childcare, and interpretation for assemblies and meetings
- Present information on the City's budget and past spending
- Distribute promotional materials
- Serve as liaison between PB participants and City
- Present final voter- approved project priorities to the City Council for consideration
- Present updates to the City Council

City and Agency Staff

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

The Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP)

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

- Prepare PB Vallejo Rulebook
- Prepare educational and promotional materials
- Recruit PB Steering Committee Members
- Work with the City Manager's Office to train and support the new City Manager Designee responsible for coordinating the PB process.
- Conduct trainings for participants
- Provide ongoing technical assistance to the City
- Assist City staff with facilitation of process milestones (budget assemblies, budget delegate meetings, project vetting, project expos, the vote, evaluation, and monitoring)
- Help categorize project ideas
- Assist with evaluation of the PB process

Vallejo City Council

- Establish the PB process
- Appoint the Steering Committee
- Appoint two alternates to the Steering Committee (one organization and one at-large) who will automatically fill vacant positions should they become available during the current PB cycle.
- Approve the Rulebook
- Approve funding for the projects prioritized by voters

City Council Liaisons

City Council will select two liaisons to the Steering Committee.

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

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee coordinates PB Vallejo. The committee is composed of 21 members, including; a minimum of 14 civic organizations and a maximum of 7 at-large. The City Council shall appoint two alternate members to the PBSC who will not have member privileges unless they fill a vacancy that has become available. Steering Committee meetings will be held in compliance with the open meeting requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

- Design and oversee the PB process
- Distribute promotional materials
- Promote PB in their organizations and at community events
- Volunteer for at least 1/3 of assemblies, 1/3 of expos and 1/3 of voting sites, or recruit volunteers to meet these requirements
- Steering Committee members will be assigned as liaisons to Budget Delegate committees, but may not participate as budget delegates
- Recruit organizations and community stakeholders to workgroups
- Mobilize Vallejo residents and stakeholders to participate
- Facilitate budget assemblies and delegate meetings

- Assist City Manager Designee arrange food, childcare, and interpretation for assemblies and meetings
- Help categorize project ideas
- Assist City Manager Designee present voter-approved project priorities to the City Council for consideration
- Evaluate the PB process
- Revise rules to the PB process
- Monitor project implementation

The Steering Committee includes representatives of civic, business, cultural, educational, and community organizations, all nominated by City Council. The Steering Committee designed this Rulebook and oversees Vallejo's PB process.

Steering Committee meetings are held in compliance with the open meeting requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act. Whenever possible, the Steering Committee will make decisions by consensus. If consensus is not reached, decisions will be made by a formal vote and approved only by a quorum.

SC civic organization members must nominate a primary representative and a secondary representative, and provide names and contact information to the City Manager, or designee, via a letter pledging their interests. If the civic organization's primary representative cannot attend, the named secondary representative must.

PBSC members (civic organization and at-large) who do not attend three regular PBSC meetings in a 12-month period shall be disqualified from the PBSC and replaced by an alternate. However, if a PBSC civic organization secondary representative has met the attendance requirement, the PBSC civic organization remains a qualified member of the PBSC. If the primary representative has not met the attendance requirement they will be disqualified and the civic organization must submit a new letter nominating primary and secondary representatives to the PBSC. A City Manager designee shall contact member civic organizations if two regular meetings are

missed by either an organizational representative or the organization as a whole.

SC members will serve two (2) PB cycles. A cycle is defined as beginning before budget assemblies and ending after the vote.

An updated list of individuals and organizations who serve on the Steering Committee for 2013-2014 can be reviewed on the City's [website](#).

Edited January 14, 2014 by the City of Vallejo City Council. Changes are effective immediately.