Urban Planning & Participatory Budgeting

Exploring participatory budgeting as a tool for addressing urban planning issues.

Eric R. Howell
Co-founder | Advisor | Lead Organizer
Metro Nashville Community Budgeting
Overview: Urban Planning & Participatory Budgeting

- Participatory Budgeting: Definition & History
- Where is Participatory Budgeting Taking Place?
- Metro Nashville Community Budgeting
- Making a Case for Participatory Budgeting
- Common Arguments Opposing Participatory Budgeting
- How Can Participatory Budgeting Work in My Planning Community?
- How Can I Stimulate Participatory Budgeting In My Planning Community?
- Q & A
What Is Participatory Budgeting?

Participatory budgeting (or PB) is a different way to manage public money, and to engage people in government. It is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. It enables taxpayers to work with government to make the budget decisions that affect their lives.

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-is-pb/
Re-Inventing Democracy Through Participatory Budgeting

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLrPJghHIlzg
Participatory Budgeting: Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

Source: https://iap2canada.wordpress.com/category/events/
Participatory Budgeting Process

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org
History of Participatory Budgeting

➢ The first full PB process was in 1989 in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre for the municipal budget.
➢ In Porto Alegre, as many as 50,000 people have participated each year, to decide as much as 20% of the city budget.
➢ Since 1989, PB has spread to over 1,500 cities in Latin America, North America, Asia, Africa, and Europe.
➢ Today over 250 PB Processes have taken place in North America alone.

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/pb-map/
Participatory Budgeting In North America

Source: https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1Swvfxcu07TNbXVnWz1KGeFAMc3Q&ll=43.73446381856525%2C‐91.77532211357413&z=4
Local Advocacy: Metro Nashville Community Budgeting

Metro Nashville Community Budgeting, or PB Nashville, is a resident and council person-driven initiative that was developed in January of 2016 for the purpose of creating dialogue and a framework for establishing a full model of Participatory Budgeting (PB) across Nashville, Tennessee.

Speaking Engagements  Educational Outreach  City-wide Partnerships

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/PBNashville/about/

Twitter: @PBNashville  Instagram: @pb_nashville

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-is-pb/
Making The Case For Participatory Budgeting

- Increased Civic Engagement
- Broader Political Participation
- Development of New Community Leaders & More Active Citizens
- Stronger Relationships Between Government, Organizations, and Residents
- Fairer and More Effective Spending

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/ (Free Download)
Increased Civic Engagement

Participatory budgeting has increased participation in political and community organizations, community boards, school boards, and block associations; increased community mobilization on other issues; and it may also increase voting rates in local elections.

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/ (Free Download)
Stronger Relationships Between Government, Organizations, and Residents

➢ PB connects officials with constituents, enabling them to work together and build trust.
➢ It also forges new relationships between organizations focused on different issues and communities.

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/ (Free Download)
Common Arguments Opposing Participatory Budgeting

➢ That’s the Elected Official’s Job: Voters elect government officials to make the tough decisions, so shouldn’t budgeting be their responsibility?

➢ There’s No Money: Budgets are being cut across the board, so how could there be money to launch PB?

➢ The Process Will Be Co-Opted: If budget decisions are opened up to the public, won’t the “usual suspects” and powerful community groups dominate?

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/ (Free Download)
That’s the Elected Official’s Job

Sure, they should be responsible. But if they share this responsibility with community members, they can better represent local needs and desires.

PB helps officials do their job better, by putting them in closer touch with their constituents, and by injecting local knowledge and volunteer energy into the budget process. Officials still make plenty of other decisions, even when they share some power with the people.

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/ (Free Download)
There’s No Money

Fortunately, PB does not require a new pot of money, just a change to how existing budget funds are decided. You will need some resources to carry out PB, but this investment saves money down the road, as participants discover new ways to make limited budget dollars go farther.

Source: [https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/](https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/) (Free Download)
How Can Participatory Budgeting Work in My Planning Community?

PB usually starts with “discretionary funds”—money that is not set aside for fixed or essential expenses, instead allocated at the discretion of decision makers. While this is typically a small part of the overall budget, it is a big part of the funds that are available and up for debate each year.

Source: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/ (Free Download)
Potential Pots of Money Include (Not Limited To):

Discretionary funds of elected officials...

- City, county (Merced County, CA), or state budgets (i.e., Caltrans)
- Housing authority or other public agency budgets
- School (i.e., Boston), school district, or university budgets
- Community Development Block Grants (i.e., Oakland, CA)
- Community Benefit Agreements (i.e., Atlanta Falcons Stadium)

Sources: [https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/](https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/) (Free Download)
http://www.cardozolawreview.com/content/37-5/DE%20BARBIERI.37.5.pdf
Potential Pots of Money Include (Not Limited To) (cont.):

Discretionary funds of elected officials...

➢ Tax Increment Financing (TIF) money
➢ Non-governmental sources like foundations, non-profit organizations, or grassroots fundraising, if this money is intended for public or community projects.

Some PB processes mix funds from different sources to build a bigger budget pot.

Source: [https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/](https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/) (Free Download)
How Can I Stimulate Participatory Budgeting In My Planning Community?

➢ Consider adopting Participatory Budgeting as a mechanism to meet the participation requirements during various planning efforts.

The State of California’s Transportation Budget requires an element of community participation. In 2017, the department implemented participatory budgeting as part of their outreach efforts.

Sources:
https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/california-transportation-participatory-budgeting-process
How Can I Stimulate & Be Involved In Participatory Budgeting Within My Planning Community?

- Consider serving on a community advisory group (During the Design Process [Step 1]). Establishes perimeters in which the participatory budgeting process will function. (i.e., goals/scope outlined, approach).

- Assist citizens throughout the Proposal Development Process (Step 3). Guide stakeholders through this step by helping them navigate through project ideas they have created in Step 2 (Brainstorm Ideas) for the purpose of helping them understand how it fits within the context of your local planning efforts.

➢ How Can I Stimulate & Be Involved In Participatory Budgeting Within My Planning Community? (cont.)
"The participatory budgeting model, which allows local community members to vote directly on how a portion of capital funds are spent in their neighborhood, could be adapted to allow local stakeholders to vote on trade-offs related to planning and development decisions (e.g., housing affordability, visual impacts, mobility, etc.).

Successful community engagement in the planning process is difficult, so states should make sure communities have the technical support and resources necessary to effectively undertake these efforts."

Source: http://fourthplan.org/action/planning-process
Local governments make most decisions about what gets built where—what planners call land use—as well as where public money is spent. Yet few residents participate in many types of community decision-making, and there is uneven representation by race, age, and income as well. As a result, local institutions make decisions that often reflect the values and needs of older, wealthier, and mostly white residents rather than the population at large…

Source: http://fourthplan.org/action/public-participation
Participatory Budgeting in Regional Planning (Regional Plan Association - NYC Tri-State) - Recommendation 13 (cont.)

“...To promote greater participation in local government, we can use technology to broaden public engagement, adopt participatory budgeting, reform the public planning process, and give all long-term residents the chance to vote. Together, these initiatives will lead to local decisions that better reflect community needs and aspirations."

Source: http://fourthplan.org/action/public-participation
As a Capital Improvement Projects Planner, it is important to raise awareness of projects that are identified in the Capital Improvement Program (C.I.P.) and leverage dialogue with stakeholders so it is meaningful and relevant to the context of the citizens' needs.

Think of alignment between CIP projects and stakeholders' project ideas. How can the CIP process and PB (Participatory Budgeting) be coordinated to ensure that all parties have secured a sound approach that ensures social equity and equality?

Planners can serve in this capacity...
Current & Emerging Technologies vs. Traditional

- Design the Process
- Brainstorm Ideas
- Fund Winning Projects
- Cast a Vote
- Develop Proposals

"Boots on the ground" Approach

Print/Marketing/Social Media/Press Release
Oakland, California & Community Development Block Grant: Web-based Technology

Source: https://pboakland.org/idea/1067
New York City Councilmember Brad Lander Participatory Budgeting Process: Web-based Technology

Source: http://bradlander.nyc/pbVolunteer
Participatory Budgeting Implementation: Consultant vs. In-House

VARIES

➢ The Participatory Budgeting Project, a leading non-profit organization who provides resources, technical assistance, training, research and development, convener, and guidance for cities focus in implementing Participatory Budgeting.

➢ Governments traditionally will assume the role to "house" this process. Some advisement may be necessary depending upon readily available resources and scope of project.

Source: https://soundcloud.com/sastalk/kla_participatory-budgeting_jennifer-godzeno?__hstc=60120fc8-46ef-418c-a62d-b8808829428c%7C14f62454-6b2e-4c4d-9369-16a277168136
Thoughts to Consider...

➢ When government’s start too small:
  ○ It does not inspire the participation level as the stakes are not high enough;
  ○ Cannot commit to solid participatory budgeting process as it takes time and resources (i.e., staff for communications, co) which means the effort may be perceived as not worth it by those involved (think of this from a cost-benefit standpoint).

➢ There are very clear consequences to participation.

➢ No need to identify new money

➢ No need to recreate a new public engagement process (modification)

Source: https://soundcloud.com/sastalk/kla_participitory-budgeting_jennifer-godzeno?__hstc=__hssc=hsCtaTracking=60120fc8-46ef-418c-a62d-b8808829428c%7C14f62454-6b2e-4c4d-9369-16a277168136
Thoughts to Consider (cont.)...

- 1-2% of entire city budget can be a great starting point.
- Stakes must be clearly conveyed that the public’s voice will receive funding/result in building actual things in one’s community - establishing real reason for trust.
- Low-income communities/those who have a low level of trust in government will have an opportunity to understand what is before them and what is being decided. Tangible results drive genuine motivation. Tangible and clear ideas will result in more participation.
- Create a broader framework + Bottom-up conversation = Gain community “Buy-In”.
- Planners must think of participatory budgeting as a “way of life” when developing public engagement approach - PB “baked” into the planning process. This is not a pilot rather a new form of planning outreach.

Source: https://soundcloud.com/sastalk/kla_participitory-budgeting_jennifer-godzeno?__hstc=___hssc=\hsCtaTracking=60120fc8-46ef-418c-a62d-b8808829428c%7C14f62454-6b2e-4c4d-9369-16a277168136
So, How Can Metro Nashville Community Budgeting Help You?

Metro Nashville Community Budgeting is available to meet with you, to learn the working context that is represented so we can better understand how you can maximize your potential for establishing a participatory budgeting process for your city/town.

Provide resources for Planners and officials to utilize during the implementation phase.

Other Ideas??? How can we advise you? What is your circumstance(s) that you think would limit your government from attempting this approach? Let’s talk!
Additional Resources

FY 2017-18 Final Draft SB 1 Sustainable Communities Grant Guide Comment Log: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/grants/1718/1SEP17_SustainableCommunitiesFinalDraftComments.pdf

How to start a participatory budgeting process in your community: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/how-to-start-pb/


Research: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/how-to-start-pb/research/

Questions??

Presenter:

Eric R. Howell
Co-founder | Advisor | Lead Organizer
Metro Nashville Community Budgeting

metronashcommunitybudgeting@gmail.com