

2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT

NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION

Richmond Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission

DATE - 11/9/23

1. Current Members and Terms

Commissioner	22-23 Term	Role	24-25 term
Jerome Legions	1st Term	Co-Chair	Renewed for 2nd term
Jeff Walker	1st Term	Co-Chair	Stepped Down
Aaron Linas	1st Term	Co-Chair	Renewed for 2nd term
Erica Sklar	1st Term	Co-Chair	Stepped Down
Erin Kelley	1st Term	Co-Chair	Renewed for 2nd term
Scott Castro	1st Term	Co-Chair	Stepped Down
Mary Gresham	1st Term	Co-Chair	Renewed for 2nd term
Shannon Gonzales	1st Term	Co-Chair	Renewed for 2nd term
Quawnesha Peoples	1st Term	Co-Chair	Renewed for 2nd term
Oludare Ogunde	1st Term	Co-Chair	Renewed for 2nd term
Abigail Delaney		Co-Chair	New Commission Member

At the moment, the commission is using a shared leadership model which has the chair of the meeting change at each meeting.

2. By-Laws

We are presently using the standard by-laws provided by the Clerk's Office and the City Attorney. In the coming months the Commission is committed to developing a governing statement that shares the broad values and procedures that the group has developed over the FY 2023.

3. Attendance Records

See the attached spread sheet

4. Dates of Meetings

1/4/23, 1/18/23, 2/1/23, 2/15/23, 3/1/23, 3/15/23, 4/19/23, 5/3/23, 5/17/23, 5/31/23, 6/28/23, 10/4/23, 11/1/23, 12/6/23

5. Expectations and Responsibilities of Board/Commission Members

The primary responsibility of the commission members, as stated in the ordinance, is the development of a rulebook to guide the creation of a participatory budgeting process for the City of Richmond. In doing so they have been reviewing material from similar processes around the country, speaking with staff about those processes, and developing information that will help to define the Richmond initiative.

They are also providing knowledge and guidance for the development of resources and infrastructure for the initiative. This includes working with subcontractors in the development of an evaluation, marketing, and engagement plan based on the rulebook they are creating.

As those pieces have been completed, the Commission began focusing on supporting the outreach and engagement efforts to prepare for a June 2024 start of a City wide Participatory Budgeting process.

6. 2023 Projects

Complete of the Richmond Participatory Budgeting Rulebook, Communications Plan, Evaluation Plan, and Engagement Plan.

Advise on communications and outreach materials.

7. Legislation and Policy Recommendations

The Richmond Participatory Budgeting Rulebook defines the broader implementation for the Richmond People's Budget process. In this document, the Commission made the following recommendations:

Commission Representation Recommendations:

- Make all Commission members voting members
- Include representation from each council district
- Include at least 2 teens and one non English speaking (preferably Spanish) commission members
- Provide stipends and other organizational support to make the process accessible.

RVAPB Values

- Sustainability in PB decision-making process, implementation, and environmental practices.
- Transparency and accountability in the PB decision making that includes clear communication of the expectations and boundaries of the process.
- Inclusivity in the process that prioritizes ensuring that people who are often excluded from the political processes have full access to the PB process.
- Improve quality of life by building projects that residents value.
- Empowerment through community decision making that sees results.

RVAPB Goals

Financial Equity

- Prioritize projects to serve underrepresented and/or marginalized populations.
- Serve areas of the city that have experienced disinvestment or overlooked projects.
- Include direct outreach to diverse populations for ideas on projects and processes.
- Consider local firms and vendors on all contracted projects.
- Build bridges with organizations and companies who might want to participate in participatory budgeting process.

Metric (Cycle1) - 60% of RVAPB projects will be funded equally across the city, and the additional 40% of projects will be funded in districts that have higher [social vulnerability](#). It will also take into consideration the history of [Capital](#)

[Improvement Program](#) investments over the past 5 years.

Community Impact

- Community members play an active role in city spending decisions, understand how the PB process works, and are better prepared to influence larger decision-making processes in local government.
- Be a process through which new community leadership emerges.
- Residents better understand their own power and local power dynamics.
- Provide resources, information, and tools that increase residents' ability to communicate their priorities and interests and that enhance the ability of city staff and elected officials to respond effectively.
- Measure how effective RVAPB is at actively engaging with members of the community frequently left out of the political process.

Metric (Cycle1) - PB idea collection and voting should match the demographics of the City.

Community Building

- Create opportunities for sharing diverse perspectives and building mutual trust across city.
- Inspire people to engage in their communities more deeply, and to create new networks for economic opportunity.
- Work together to identify needs, learn about resources, and share solutions to connect individuals to one another.
- Create collaboration across blocks, neighborhoods and organizations to improve the community and bring people together to make better budget decisions.
- Support better alignment and understanding between community and government through the PB process. Foster honesty, empathy, and integrity in our interactions.
- Include art & culture, food, childcare and fun to make spaces more accessible and inviting.

Metric (Cycle1) - Council members, RVAPB Staff, and members from the RVAPB commission will host one outreach, information, and idea collection event in each district, with a focus on neighborhoods that have significant social vulnerability. Budget delegates will be recruited from across the city with a goal of 60% from underserved districts.

Timeline

In order to support a process that is responsive to the needs of the community and sustainable for the City to implement, RVAPB will take place over a two year cycle. The first year will center on implementation of the idea collection, proposal development, and voting stages of the process. This will be followed by another year focused on implementation and evaluation.

RVAPB Budget

The budget for the RVAPB is split between the cost of doing a 2-year community engagement process and the funds allocated to implement the projects that emerge from that process. The Commission has broken these down into the operations and implementation budgets.

Operations Budget - \$550,000 per each 2-year cycle

Implementation Budget - \$15 million over 6-Year RVAPB Capital Improvement Program

- Cycle 1 - \$3 million
- Cycle 2 - \$5 million
- Cycle 3 - \$7 million

Distribution of funds around the City

To achieve the RVAPB goals and values in the initial year, the implementation budget will be distributed both equally and equitably across Richmond. To accomplish this, each council district will receive an equal amount of funds consisting of 60% of the overall budget. While the other 40% will be placed in a city wide pot allocated to projects specifically for under-resourced and underserved communities, which may have specific themes.

RVAPB Phases

The Commission set the overarching guidelines for the RVAPB process including Design, Ideal Collection, Proposal Development, Voting, Implementation, and Evaluation. Further information can be found in the RVAPB Rulebook.

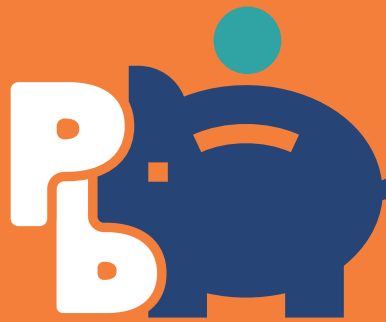
Attendance Record 2023 - RVA PB Steering Commission

X = Present

		1/1/23	2/1/23	3/1/23	4/1/23	5/1/23	6/1/23	7/1/23	8/1/23	9/1/23	10/1/23
NAME											
1	Jerome Legions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2	Jeff Walker	X	X	X	X		X	X			
3	Erica Sklar	X	X		X	X	X	X			
4	Aaron Linas	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5	Erin Kelley	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
6	Scott Castro										
7	Mary Gresham	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
8	Shannon Gonzales	X						X	X	X	
9	Quawnesha Peoples	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
10	Oludare Ogunde	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
11	Abigail Delaney										
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# in Attendance:		9	8	7	7	6	7	9	7	7	4

PEOPLE'S BUDGET RICHMOND RULEBOOK

2023-2024



**PEOPLE'S
BUDGET
RICHMOND**
OUR CITY. OUR MONEY. OUR IDEAS.



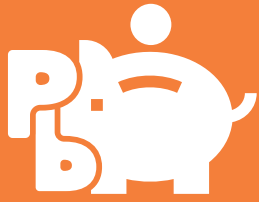


TABLE OF CONTENTS

» OVERVIEW	2
» GOALS AND VALUES	7
» TIMELINE	9
» MAPS	11
» BUDGET	13
» PHASE OF RVAPB	19
» FAQ	29
» GLOSSARY / REFERENCE DOCUMENTS	31

OVERVIEW

In 2019, Richmond City Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting the development of a participatory budgeting process in Richmond, VA. The goal of this resolution was to set initial parameters around the use of the capital improvement budget and the design of a process that would allow residents of the city to decide how these dollars are invested in their neighborhoods.

The participatory budgeting process seeks to democratically and equitably assign a part of the City of Richmond budget and create public investment in neighborhoods which have faced historic disinvestment. It seeks to build greater trust between residents and the City through a collaborative process that is rooted in transparency and accountability, but also provides insight into how the City of Richmond functions. Ultimately, participatory budgeting empowers residents to be at the center of deciding how a portion of the budget is allocated in order to build the health and wellbeing of their neighborhoods.

By listening to the community's needs and completing projects they envision for their neighborhood, participatory budgeting is a vehicle for residents to actively engage and see the tangible results of their ideas realized.

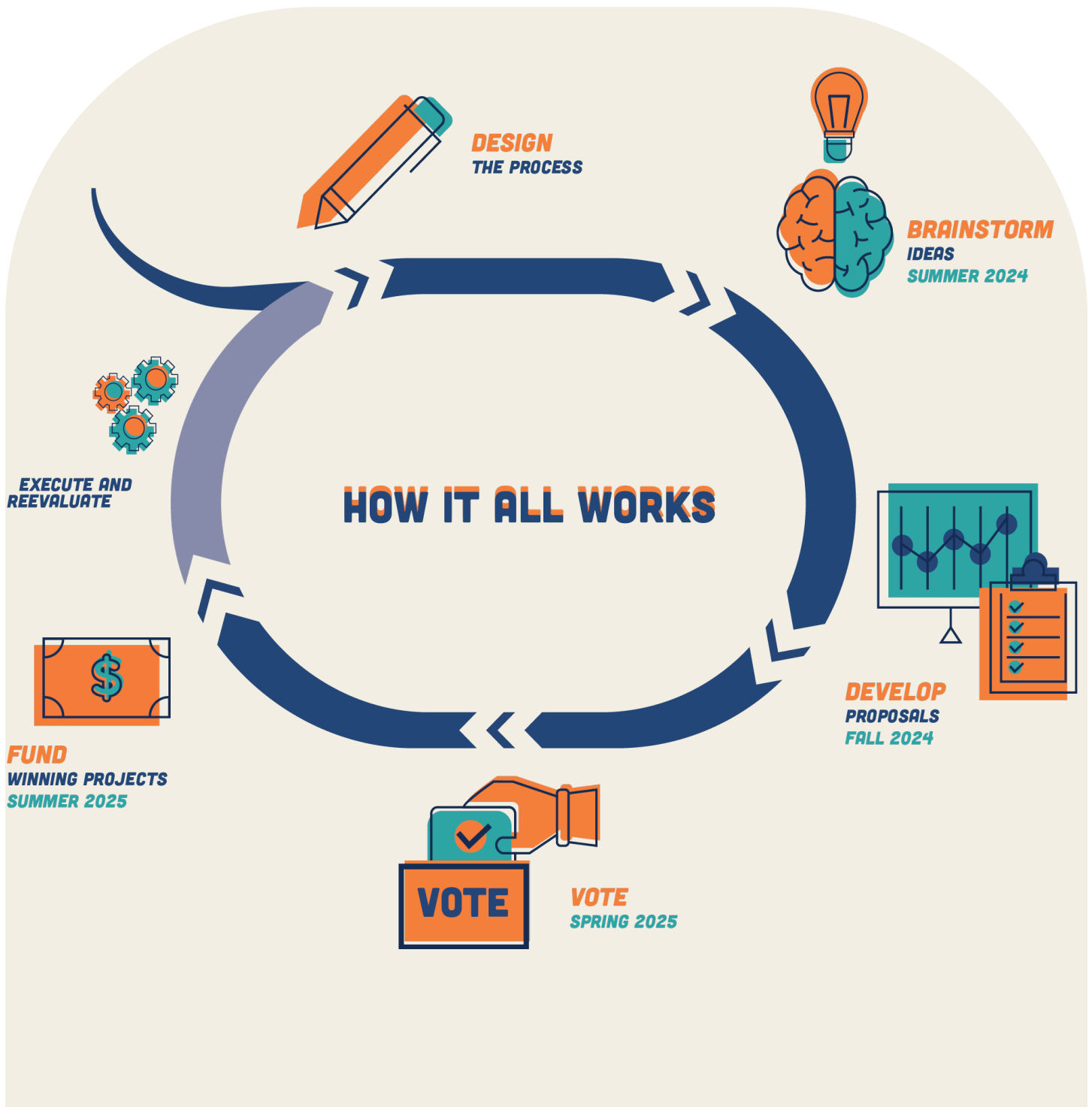
In Richmond, the process will be called the Richmond People's Budget (RVAPB).



WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING?

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. PB gives people real power to make real decisions over real money.

The process is comprised of the following phases:



WHAT IS THIS RULEBOOK AND WHO IS IT FOR?

This Rulebook sets the initial guidelines for the current participatory budgeting process and is a foundation for future participatory budgeting processes in the City of Richmond. It consists of information necessary to understand the goals set by the commission, the process for how it will take place, and ways that the community will participate. This rulebook is a living document that is meant to be evaluated and updated to make sure this initiative is responding to the needs of all those living in Richmond.

For the community, the Rulebook is meant to set expectations, clearly define how the participatory process will move forward, and describe the various ways they can participate. For City Council and City Staff, it is meant to create a platform for the ways that they can support the community in these efforts. Lastly, it is a set of guidelines and guardrails for current and future commissioners as they help to steer the success and support the evolution of deeper forms of civic engagement in Richmond.

RICHMOND VIRGINIA PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING COMMISSION

The initial Commission was composed of seven voting members and four non-voting alternate members appointed by the Council as follows:

- 2 voting members shall reside in a Council district located north of the James River;
- 3 voting members shall reside in a Council district located south of the James River;
- 1 voting member shall be a person with a disability;
- 1 voting member shall be a resident of public housing; and 4 non-voting alternate members shall be residents of the city of Richmond and may be appointed from any Council district.

Members serve a two year term and may serve up to two consecutive terms.

The initial Commissioners were:

- Scott Castro - 1st District - Non-Voting Member
- Jerome Legions -2nd District - Non-Voting Member
- Aaron Linas - 6th District - Voting Member
- Erin Kelley - 4th District - Voting Member
- Jeff Walker - 4th District - Non-Voting Member
- Erica Sklar - 5th District - Non-Voting Member
- Aaron Linas - 6th District - Voting Member
- Oludare Ogunde - 7th District - Voting Member
- Quawneisha Peoples - 8th District - Voting Member
- Shannon Wilson-Gonzalez - 8th District - Voting Member
- Mary Gresham - 9th District - Voting Member

Recommendations for improving the Commission in the future:

- 1) Remove Voting/Non-Voting status so that all members are voting members.
- 2) Representation should consist of residents from all districts.
- 3) Include 2 teens.
- 4) Continue to make sure those participating represent the diversity of Richmond.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITH RVAPB

To establish clear accountability and responsibility for the success of RVAPB, the commission defined the following roles and responsibilities for residents, partners, the commission and the City of Richmond. They are meant to set expectations for how each can and should participate.

Residents

- Identify local problems and needs
- Propose project ideas
- Vote on projects
- Volunteer as budget delegate to create proposals, PB Budget Facilitator to create proposals.
- Magnify and support the process in their community
- Provide feedback to make the process better



Commission

- Design and oversee PB process addressing questions as they arise.
- Create and update PB rulebook.
- Support outreach by raising awareness and encouraging involvement in an equitable fashion.
- Help facilitate assemblies and committee meetings.
- Communicate with budget delegates and ensure proposal development is in accordance with process goals.
- Monitor project implementation.
- Explain decision making through documentation and communication with commission and the community.
- Evaluate PB process.
- Provide feedback to city staff and advocate on behalf of the community
- Recruit volunteers, stakeholders, and partners.



Community Stakeholders and Partners

- Provide input to develop proposals
- Help facilitate assemblies and committee meetings
- Help increase awareness of the process
- Advocate for constituents and support their involvement
- Help secure venues for meetings
- Evaluate the PB process





Overlook of the City of Richmond

City of Richmond – PB Administrative Staff Members

- Provide support and convene steering committee
- Support outreach and active involvement by the community
- Develop and implement processes according to goals set by the steering committee.
- Raise awareness and facilitate involvement from other city departments
- Communicate updates to City Council and Steering Committee
- Maintain transparency of the process
- Create the internal infrastructure for PB success
- Deliver final budget priorities for implementation
- Provide data on neighborhoods & districts

City of Richmond – Supporting Departments (DPW, Parks, City Attorney, Planning, Budget, Communications)

- Provide cost estimates for project proposals
- Offer feedback and technical assistance on project proposals
- Vet projects in a timely and transparent way
- Implement projects in a timely manner
- Evaluate the PB process
- Collaborate to increase effectiveness of the process
- Provide updates to the Steering Committee

City of Richmond - City Council/ Mayor

- Be advocates for participatory budgeting
- Support outreach and communication with residents
- Facilitate coordination with other City Departments
- Provide feedback on process and the outcomes
- Support the community in their decision making

GOALS AND VALUES

Through deep consultation, review of city ordinances, researching the work of other PB initiatives, and their direct experience, the RVAPB Steering Committee defined the following values and goals. These are meant to provide both overarching direction and specific tangible actions as the participatory budgeting process moves forward.

VALUES

The principles and standards by which RVAPB will take place.

- Sustainability in PB decision-making process, implementation, and environmental practices.
- Transparency and accountability in the PB decision making that includes clear communication of the expectations and boundaries of the process.
- Inclusivity in the process that prioritizes ensuring that people who are often excluded from the political processes have full access to the PB process.
- Improve quality of life by building projects that residents value.
- Empowerment through community decision making that sees results.

GOALS

The following are core objectives that RVAPB seeks to achieve. Each is meant to have tangible meaning and measurability for the community as RVAPB moves forward.

Following best practices, the purpose in applying it here is that the goals identified should be S.M.A.R.T. – specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused and time-bound.

To do this the commission defined a baseline using public local data and a specific outcome the RVAPB seeks to achieve.

Community Building

- Create opportunities for sharing diverse perspectives and building mutual trust across city.
- Inspire people to engage in their communities more deeply, and to create new networks for economic opportunity.
- Work together to identify needs, learn about resources, and share solutions to connect individuals to one another.
- Create collaboration across blocks, neighborhoods and organizations to improve the community and bring people together to make better budget decisions.
- Support better alignment and understanding between community and government through the PB process. Foster honesty, empathy, and integrity in our interactions.
- Include art & culture, food, childcare and fun to make spaces more accessible and inviting.

Outcome- Council members, RVAPB Staff, and members from the RVAPB commission will host one outreach, information, and idea collection event in each district, with a focus on neighborhoods that have significant social vulnerability. Budget delegates will be recruited from across the city with a goal of 60% from underserved districts.



Community Impact

- Community members play an active role in city spending decisions, understand how the PB process works, and are better prepared to influence larger decision-making processes in local government.
- Be a process through which new community leadership emerges.
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- Measure how effective RVAPB is at actively engaging with members of the community frequently left out of the political process.

Outcome - PB idea collection and voting should match the demographics of the City.

Financial Equity

- Prioritize projects to serve underrepresented and/or marginalized populations.
- Serve areas of the city that have experienced disinvestment or overlooked projects.
- Include direct outreach to diverse populations for ideas on projects and processes.
- Consider local firms and vendors on all contracted projects.
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Outcome- 60% of projects will be funded equally across the city, and the additional 40% of projects will be funded in districts that have higher social vulnerability. It will also take into consideration the history of Capital Improvement Program investments over the past 5 years.

TIMELINE

In order to support a process that is responsive to the needs of the community and sustainable for the City to implement, RVAPB will take place over a two year cycle. The first year will center on implementation of the idea collection, proposal development, and voting stages of the process. This will be followed by another year focused on implementation and evaluation. After this is completed a new cycle will begin and continue to take place indefinitely. The following is a proposed timeline for the first and subsequent cycles of RVAPB implementation:

This is based on the following research - [Timeline Comparisons.pptx](#)

Summer 2023 - Summer 2024

- Workshops and Engagement
- Communications
- Partnership development
- Internal City Infrastructure Development



01

RVA PB – PREPARATION AND PLANNING

02





Summer 2026 - Summer 2028

- Idea Collection: June - September 2026
- Proposal Development: October 2026 - February 2027
- Voting: April 2027
- Implementation of Projects/Evaluation: July 2027 - June 2028

RVA PB – CYCLE 1

03

RVA PB – CYCLE 2

- Idea Collection: June - September 2024
- Proposal Development: October 2024 - February 2025
- Voting: April 2025
- Implementation of Project/ Evaluation: July 2025 - June 2026

Summer 2024 - Summer 2026

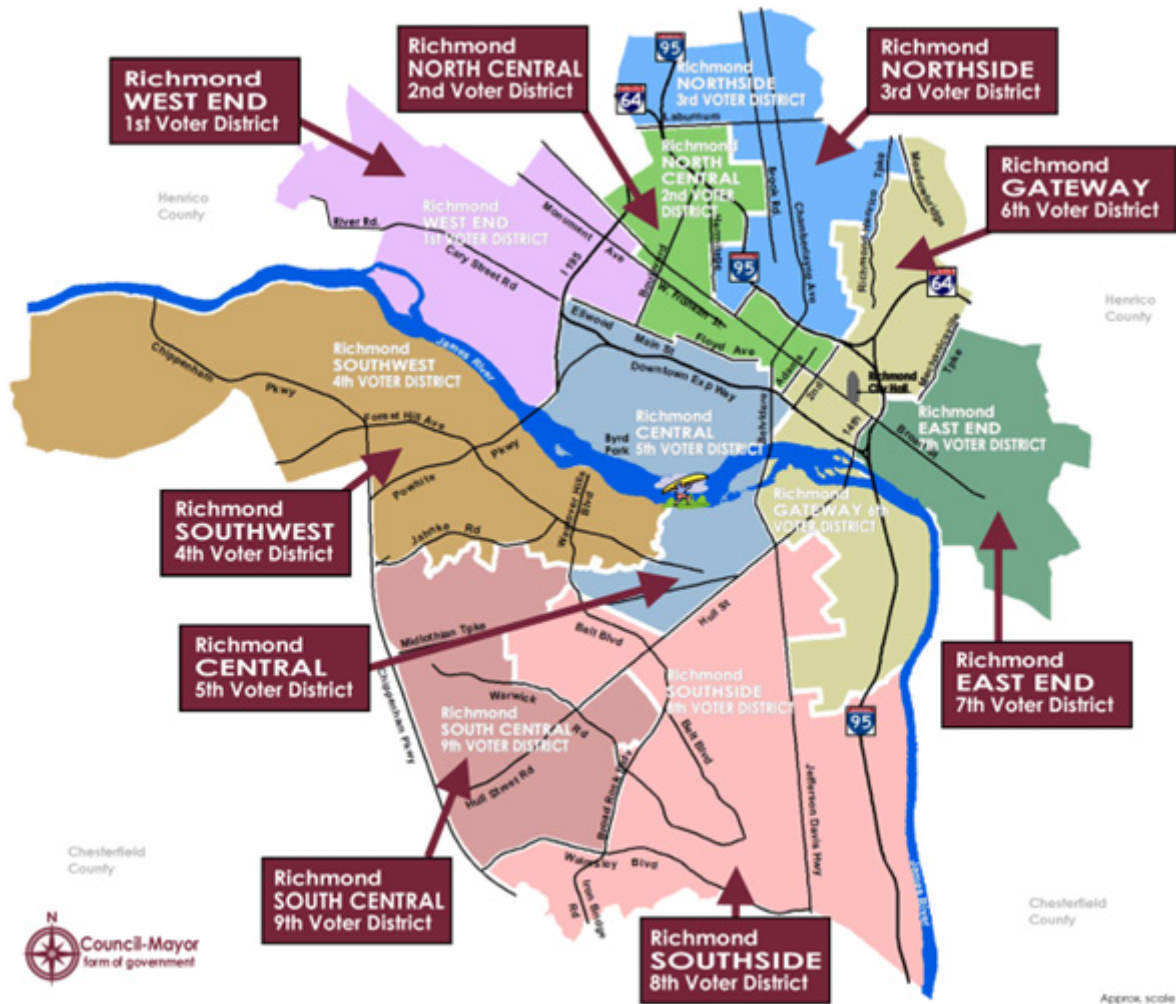


MAPS

As the Richmond Participatory Budgeting will use both already established political boundaries and social vulnerability index, we wanted to share how these layer onto the geography of the city so that residents can better understand where to get involved and how RVAPB will take place.

VOTER DISTRICTS

Included below is a map that shows the 9 voting districts of Richmond. In this initial year, RVAPB will use these to define the engagement process and locate projects that emerge from the process. This will take advantage of already established connections, starting with the work of City Council.



SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

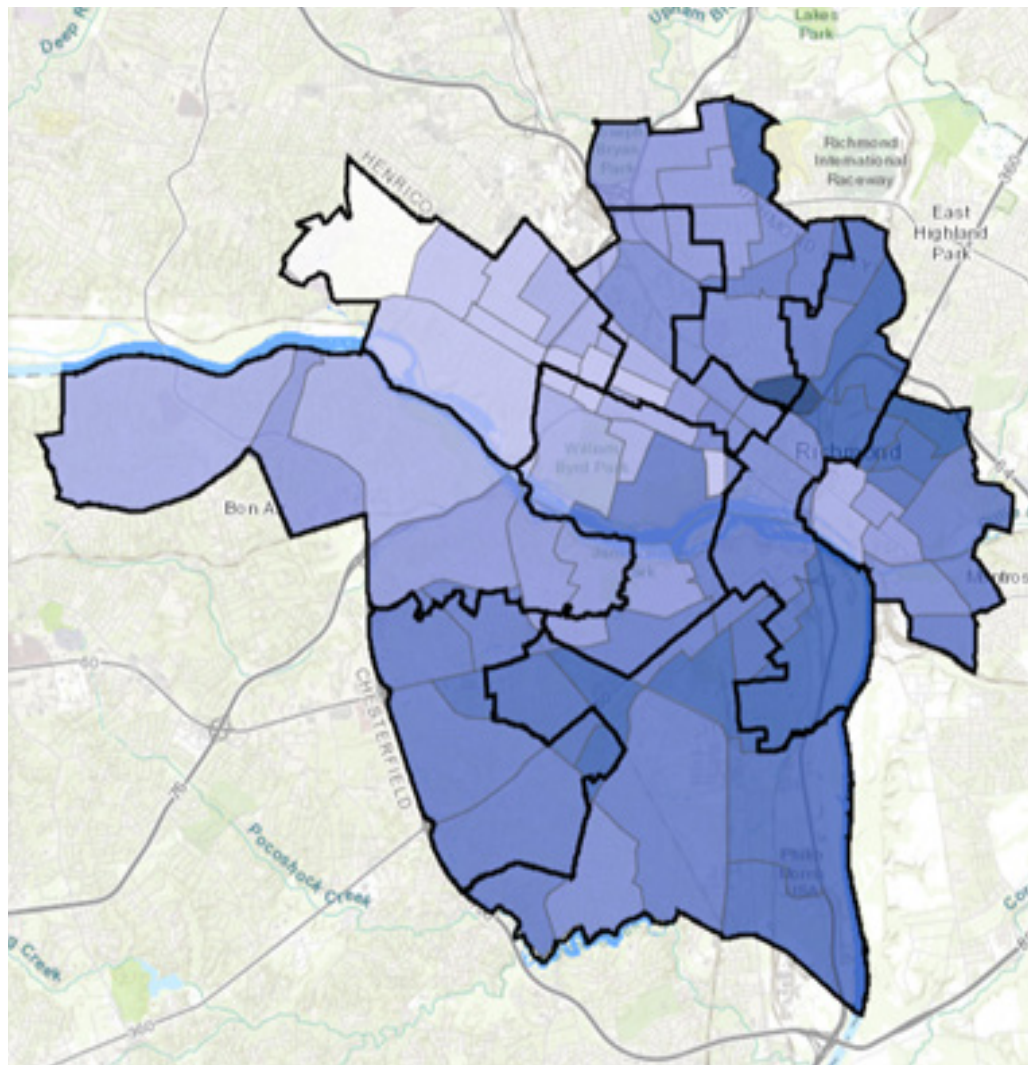
The RVAPB Commission decided to use the social vulnerability index as a way of understanding need and considering where RVAPB project can help to support a more vibrant community for all. The map below, sourced from the Richmond Green 2050 website, show the different levels of social vulnerability across the city by district.

Richmond Council Districts



Overall Social Vulnerability

- Lowest Vulnerability
- Very Low Vulnerability
- Low Vulnerability
- Somewhat Low Vulnerability
- Moderately Low Vulnerability
- Moderately High Vulnerability
- Somewhat High Vulnerability
- High Vulnerability
- Very High Vulnerability
- Highest Vulnerability



BUDGET

An important goal of RVAPB is to educate residents about the City Budget and how it is spent. The following section reviews the present status of the budgeting which changes on an annual basis, providing a brief snapshot of how funding is being invested.

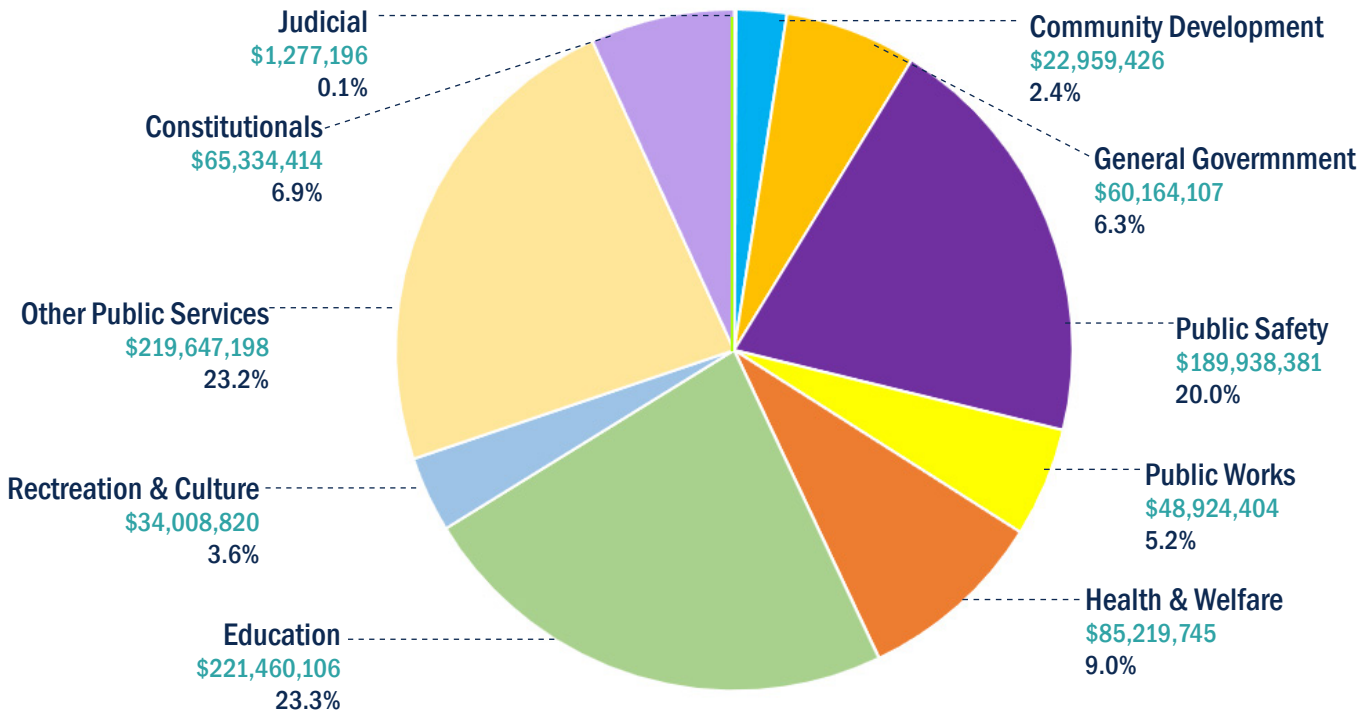
CITY BUDGET OVERVIEW

The following are the broad details of the City of Richmond Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (July 2023 - June 2024).

More detailed information is available at <https://www.rva.gov/budget-and-strategic-planning>

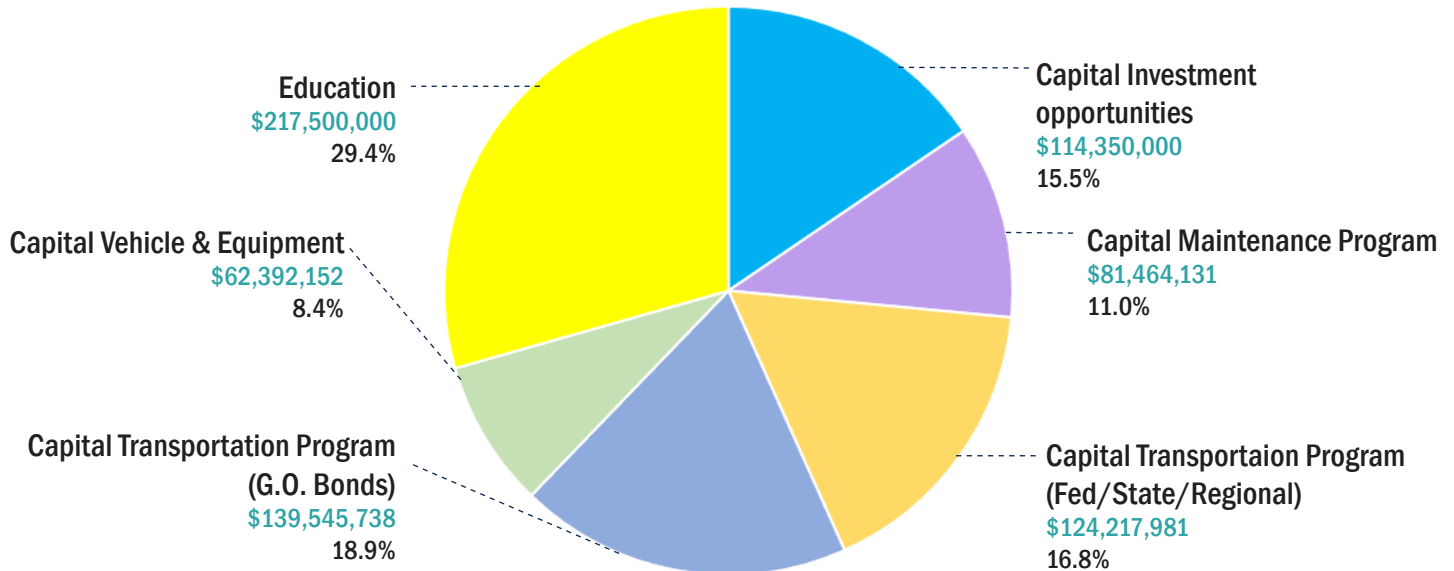
General Fund	\$948,923,789
Capital Improvement Program	\$699,431,305
Special Revenue Funds	\$162,613,061
Enterprise Funds	\$476,671,432
Internal Service Funds	\$74,921,447
Debt Service Fund	\$92,887,754
Richmond Public Schools	\$547,374,228
Total	\$3,002,923,016

Total Proposed General Fund Expenditures



PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

FY 2024-2028 Proposed CIP: Funding by Category



KEY TERMS

- General Funds:** The General Fund is the City's primary operating fund. It is used to account for all revenue sources and expenditures which are not required to be accounted for in other funds.
- Enterprise Funds:** These funds are used to account for the operations (a) that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises where the intent of the governing body is that costs (i.e., expenses, including depreciation) of providing goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges; or (b) where periodic determination of revenue earned, expenses incurred, and/or net income is appropriated for capital maintenance, public policy, management control, accountability, or other purposes. (e.g., Department of Public Utilities).
- Capital Improvement Funds:** The Capital Projects Fund accounts for financial resources to be used for the acquisition, construction or renovation of capital facilities, or other equipment, that ultimately become City fixed assets.
- Richmond Public School:** This accounts for financial resources that support the entirety of the Richmond Public School System.
- Special Funds:** These funds are used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (other than expendable trusts or major capital projects) that are legally restricted to expenditures for specified purposes. Special Revenue Funds include, but are not limited to, federal reimbursements, grants, and donations.
- Internal Service Funds:** These funds are used for the financing of goods or services provided by one city department or agency to other departments, agencies, or governments, on a cost-reimbursement basis (e.g., Fleet Management).
- Debt Services:** The Debt Service Fund accounts for the payment of interest and principal on all governmental fund long-term debt, costs related to debt issuance, and other related financing costs

RVAPB BUDGET

The budget for the RVAPB is split between the cost of doing a 2-year community engagement process and the funds allocated to implement the projects that emerge from that process. The Commission has broken these down into the operations and implementation budgets.

OPERATIONS BUDGET

To engage the entire city, the City of Richmond will allocate a budget to create 2 staff positions that coordinate the process, invest in in-person and online engagement practices that meet people where they at, execute communications that bring residents into PB, gather and analyze data to rigorously evaluate the process, and support effective execution of the PB process. Best practices across the US recommend an allocation of at least \$1 per resident to effectively support the project. Based on this metric and research of other comparable cities, the RVAPB Steering commission recommends the following:

\$550,000 per each 2 year cycle

- **\$350,000 for Year 1 (Idea Collection, Proposal Development, Voting)**
 - 2 Full-Time City Staff
 - Paid interns to support communications, data/evaluation, and engagement processes
 - Engagement technology
 - Communications and Marketing
 - Evaluation development and data gathering
 - Facilitation and Support of PB process
 - Commission engagement
- **\$200,000 for Year 2 - (Implementation and Evaluation)**
 - 2 Full-Time City Staff
 - Communications and Marketing
 - Data Assessment
 - Project Management
 - Third Party Process Evaluation
 - Commission engagement



IMPLEMENTATION BUDGET

The Implementation budget focuses on the amount of funding that is allocated for projects chosen by the community during the year long participatory budgeting process. Based on the 2019 city ordinance, continued conversations with City Council, and global best practices that recommend allocating 1% of the city budget, the RVAPB Steering Commission recommends that the City of Richmond start by carving out \$3 million per year over the next five years from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This will then be used to support projects defined during a six year/three cycle participatory budgeting process.

This allocation will take into consideration two important considerations. First, it will use an equity lens. This will consider historical data about how the CIP has been allocated across the city and use a social vulnerability index to prioritize under-resourced communities in both deciding and investing these funds. This will also include working in concert with other City Department initiatives to align similar community driven/equity focus decision making (RVA Green 2050, Richmond 300, Health Equity, and Transit Equity).

At the same time PBRVA will work with the City Budgeting and Strategic Planning Department to incorporate significant deferred maintenance needs and align with ongoing plans for CIP investments.

\$15 million for 6-Year RVAPB Capital Improvement Program

- Cycle 1 - \$3 million
- Cycle 2 - \$5 million
- Cycle 3 - \$7 million



WHAT CAN THE IMPLEMENTATION FUNDS CAN BE USED FOR?

The initial focus of the RVAPB budget centers on working within the Capital Improvement Program. This was decided based on research into other PB processes and the ability to procure/manage the projects effectively with established city systems.

The City of Richmond defines capital improvements as projects which:

improve roadways, sidewalks, and bikeways; improve neighborhood parks, libraries, and recreational facilities; constructor renovate facilities; provide economic development activities; acquire property; and efficiently operate water, sewage and gas systems.



Projects will use the City of Richmond Capital improvement guiding principles and decision-making process as defined in the annual CIP Budget.



At this time, Implementation Funds cannot be used for the following:

1. Ongoing, annual programs
2. School improvements
3. Cannot take place on private property

Supporting the local economy

RVAPB seeks to make sure all public funds are spent to support the local economy. When possible the following parameters should be considered:

1. Consider a local business
2. Give preference to SWaM businesses
3. Consider company policies for best practices of environmental and social impact.

Distribution of funds around the City

To achieve the RVAPB goals and values in the initial year, the implementation budget will be distributed both equally and equitably across Richmond. To accomplish this, each council district will receive an equal amount of funds consisting of 60% of the overall budget. While the other 40% will be placed in a city wide pot allocated to projects specifically for under-resourced and underserved communities, which may have specific themes. This aligns with the Federal Justice 40 program that seeks to invest in the communities most impacted by economic and environmental crises.

FY 2025-2027 RVA PB Cycle 1

Total Funding Allocation from CIP - \$3 million

60% District based Allocation - \$1.8 million
\$200,000/district

40% Financial Equity Allocation - \$1.2 million
City-wide investments

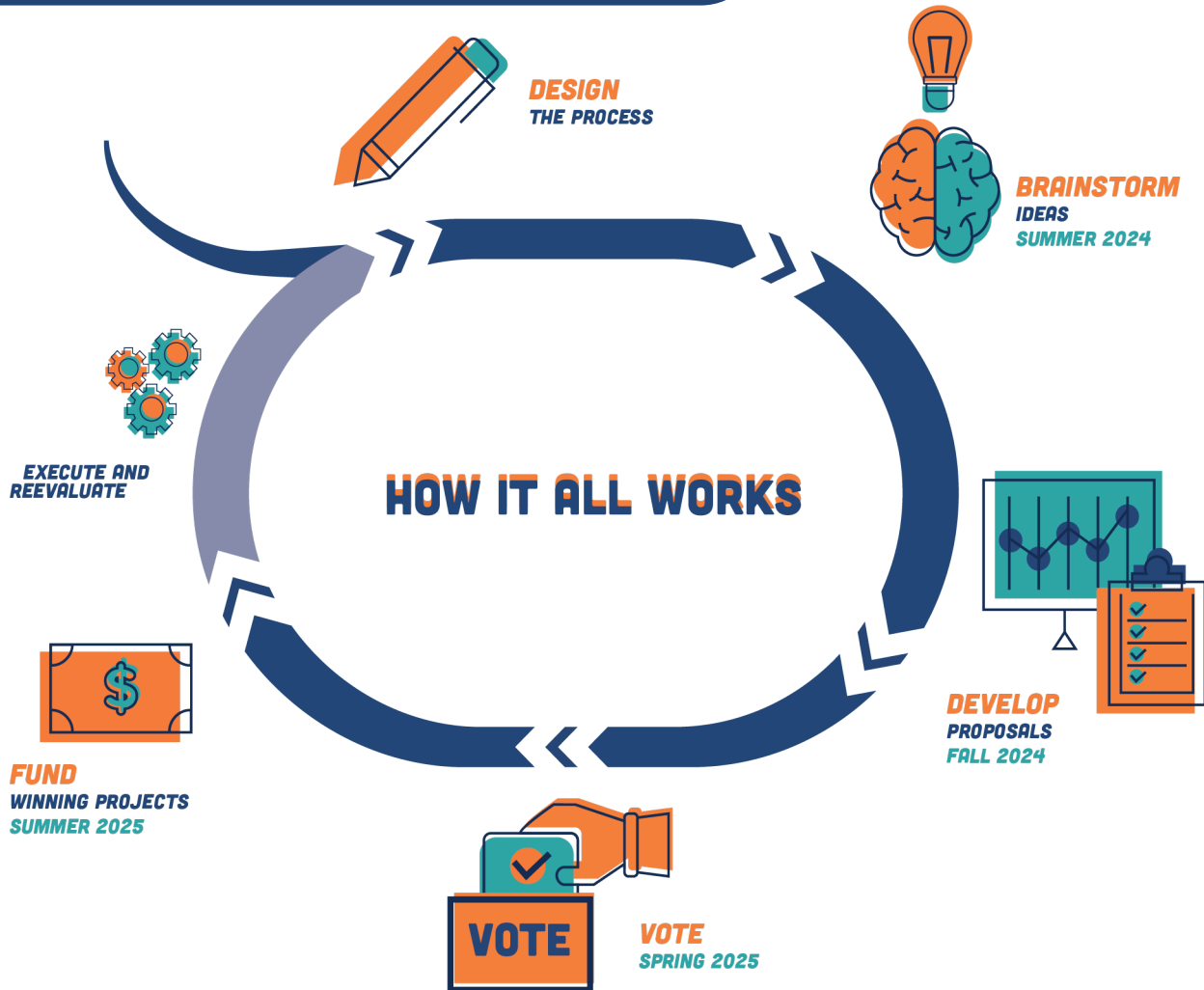
The RVAPB Commission recommends focusing the initial Financial Equity Allocation on infrastructure investments to take place in neighborhoods around local schools.

Future Budget Considerations

As RVAPB continues to solidify processes, strengthen internal infrastructure, and grow engagement, the goal is to not only expand the budget allocated to participatory budgeting for both operations and implementation, but also consider other budget lines. Specifically, discretionary and non-departmental funding that can be used to support programmatic efforts desired by the community.



RVAPB PHASES



The RVAPB process is designed according to the needs and priorities of residents and the vision of Richmond City Council. The 2019 Participatory Budgeting Ordinance defined initial guidelines. Between the fall of 2022 and the summer of 2023, the RVAPB Steering Committee conducted further research reviewing how PB had been implemented in cities across the US.

The process is the culmination of this work and represents one PB funding cycle and the 5 steps necessary to execute that cycle. Each cycle consists of an initial stage that includes design of a PB process, ideal collection, proposal development, and voting. Upon the completion of this city wide engagement process, the second phase will center on implementation of PB projects and overarching evaluation to adjust the design as needed for the new cycle in order to allow for continuous learning and improvement.

As depicted in the visual above, there are five phases of the Richmond Participatory Budgeting Process:

PHASE 1: DESIGN

The initial design of participatory budgeting in Richmond focused on the creation of a process which would give the residents of the City of Richmond a role in helping to decide how \$3 million dollars of Capital Improvement Funding is allocated throughout the city. In subsequent years, the Richmond City Council provided overarching guidelines that included eligible PB projects and a detailed list of ineligible projects.

City residents will have primary influence in the project selection, understanding that they must comply with certain restrictions. All projects will be vetted for compliance by the City Council, City Attorney, and Chief Administrative Officer.

Appointed by Council in 2021, the Richmond Participatory Budget Steering Committee further defined the goals, vision, rules, and type of engagement to make sure the process was inclusive and response to community needs. This was focused on making sure that the PB process benefited all council districts, but also targeted the poor, marginalized, and historically underserved communities.

Project Requirements

- Funded projects must be implemented in one year.
- Funded projects should not require a change in City Policy.
- Projects cannot promote religious or political beliefs.
- Projects must be on City property.
- Avoid funding school initiatives or on school property because the school district has its own capital budget.
- All materials should be made as accessible as possible in terms of distribution and language.

Project Examples

There are significant capital improvement projects that can be funded with PB dollars. Listed below are some examples (and representative costs).

- Creating a traffic roundabout: \$25,000 - \$100,000
- Planting Trees in a Park: \$300 per tree
- Repairing streets and sidewalks: \$3 per square foot
- Installing accessibility ramps on public property: \$1,000 - \$6,000 per ramp
- Renovating public buildings: \$30-\$450 per sq ft depending on the grade of finish
- Installing benches or street lights: \$2,000 per bench and \$3,000 per street light
- Creating a community garden: \$7,500 - \$30,000
- Resurfacing a basketball court: \$15,000 - \$85,000
- Installing Street Art (eg murals or sculptures): \$10-\$20 per sq ft for murals or \$10,000 and up for commercial sculptures

Project Examples that are Ineligible

These are examples of projects that have been deemed outside the boundaries of receiving RVAPB funding at this time.

- After School garden program
- Community arts education program
- Major Street repairs - resurfacing of entire roadway or alley
- Bridge Replacement
- Utility replacement or upgrade
- Any Richmond Public School infrastructure expense

In general, RVAPB is funding smaller scale civic improvements that are easily achievable and the community defines as a direct need.

PHASE 2: IDEA COLLECTION

Idea collection will consist of a city wide process that listens to and documents the needs that residents have for their neighborhoods. To do this residents will be asked to contribute specific ideas for how funds can be directly used.

To do this we will ask the question - “How would you improve your neighborhood?” and gather responses via in-person events/meetings, tabling, canvassing, and an online web portal. When possible, engagement efforts should work with already established events, meetings, and festivals. The use of creativity and cultural modes of engagement should be encouraged as a form of celebration and fun.

City Residents and students of Richmond high schools, colleges and universities (regardless of residency) aged 14 and older are eligible to contribute ideas for how RVAPB funds can be used to meet resident needs and improve their neighborhoods.

Idea collection must take place equitably. Efforts will occur across all 9 districts and work in partnership with the City and local partners to achieve that goal. All materials and events must be available in English, Spanish, and ASL as appropriate.

The effort will take place over 3 months.

IDEA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

Budget Delegates will use a variety of methods to collect ideas from the public including but not limited:

- Attend City Council District, Neighborhood Assoc Meetings, ask city council members to send an email to their constituents
- Post info at community centers, neighborhood pools
- Post information or go on site to grocery stores, laundromats, DMV, playgrounds, high volume gas stations, assisted living facilities, Children’s museum
- Put up signage across the city - City Hall, Buses and Bus Stops, Libraries, etc
- Set up idea drop boxes at businesses
- Door-to-door canvassing in select neighborhoods to seek public input;
- On-line idea collection via a web-based portal.
- Host community meetings, attend parades and festivals, and set up pop-up events at local schools, neighborhood events, and religious institutions
- Leverage mapping tools like Mapseed or a similar mapping tool to help residents visualize the location of proposed projects.



GOAL SETTING AND TRACKING

The plan for where idea collection events will take place and the goals for how many people will be reached will be set by the RVAPB Staff according to the goals set by the Steering Committee for the process. As idea collection takes place, implementation staff will keep track of all of the ideas that are submitted and publicly post them to the online portal. At the end of idea collection, staff will organize all ideas that are collected into relevant categories defined below and by district with relevant information included. Implementation staff will do a preliminary review of the list to flag any projects that do not meet basic feasibility considerations.

All ideas will be tracked, and even if ideas do not proceed through the Richmond PB process, this information will be shared with other city departments to determine if they can be developed through another program.

IDEA CATEGORIZATION

Ideas are organized into categories to ensure that we are considering funding across a spectrum of possible choices. This will allow the commission and City to access the variety of projects and liaise with specific city departments. The following are recommended:



EVALUATION AND PRESENTATION

Both during and after the idea collection process, efforts will be made to concretely and tangibly evaluate the ideas that are being shared. This can be accomplished at events by using various forms of review and reflection. It also provides residents with an initial way of showing what ideas are resonating with the community. Upon the completion of idea collection, RVAPB staff and the steering commission will do an initial review and consideration of all ideas. This will then be presented to the City Council, Staff, and the community in transparent and accountable ways. A comprehensive review will be used to define which ideas move forward to the proposal development stage.

PHASE 3: PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Proposal development brings together groups of district-based volunteers called Budget Delegates to create proposals based on the ideas shared during idea collection. The Budget Delegates will thoroughly review the ideas that were shared about their district, research and gather community input about those ideas, and then develop specific proposals. The goal of the proposal stage is to create tangible, specific projects, with coherent budgets, deeply consider equity, and recognize the impact that the project will have in the community. This will provide all the information necessary to implement ideas as projects. The following are specific guidelines to help define how that will take place:

- Proposal Development will take place from October 2024 to February 2025
- All Budget Delegates will go through training and be supported by RVAPB staff to accomplish this work.
- Each district will organize a group of 5-9 people that will form a Budget Delegate Committee.
- Budget Delegates are responsible for meeting bi-weekly to gather and review information, meet with city staff, and ultimately complete the project proposals.
- Each Budget Delegate Committee is then responsible for creating proposals in their district and submitting proposals for the Financial Equity Allocation.
- Proposals will be vetted at established meetings with participation from the Steering Committee and relevant City Officials February 2025.
- A group meeting of all Budget Delegates will take place to review projects per district and collectively organize Financial Equity Allocation.

The Role of Budget Delegates

Budget Delegates play a critical role both in idea collection and proposal development. The primary roles of a budget delegate are:

- Discuss and prioritize initial project ideas
- Consult with residents on project proposals
- Develop full project proposals
- Discuss and prioritize final project ideas for ballots
- Prepare project posters and presentations
- Budget delegates should live or work in their district.
- Collectively assess all proposals



BUDGET DELEGATE TIME COMMITMENTS AND STAFFING

- We anticipate having a total of 45 to 81 Budget Delegates based on evaluation of other similar cities who implemented PB.
- Budget Delegates are supported by RVAPB Staff.
- Each Budget Delegate is expected to support RVAPB for 5 hours per week for up to 6 months.
- Budget Delegate Committees will elect District leader(s) and have a Commission member to support their work.
- An RVAPB Facilitator will be responsible for administrative tasks including scheduling, reporting back to the city, and project mapping.
- We seek to create a diverse group of Budget Delegates but understand that the final composition will be a function of the diversity of applicants.
- Recruiting of Budget Delegates will begin in July 2024 and training will begin between August and September 2024. These will be recruited by working with established partners, city staff, and a general invitation.
- All Budget Delegates will go through a training to prepare them to be active and responsible participants in the RVAPB process.

IDEA ASSESSMENT

They will start by assessing ideas based on the community need for the project, the potential impact of the project, and the feasibility of the project. This will include an evaluation matrix to document and share how decisions are being made, which will be publicly available.

City of Richmond departmental staff will assist in developing the cost and regulatory information necessary to complete the project proposals. Over the course of the proposal development process, staff in departments relevant to the project will participate in the review and research necessary to ensure project feasibility. They will provide support for reasonable cost projections and alignment with any regulations and requirements that are applicable.

Final proposals will contain all information necessary to implement the project once voting is complete. This will include: location; cost; full description of project; and how the project will benefit residents. Proposal will be further organized using a matrix designed to note community need, project impact, cost, equity, and feasibility.

PB Steering Committee members will provide support for budget delegate committees by attending delegate committees and supporting assessment and development of the proposals in line with the goals of the process. They will also act as a resource by addressing questions that arise about the process as a whole and by supporting accountability, transparency, and engagement among key stakeholders.

After proposals are finalized, the Budget Delegate committees will make their final decisions about which projects will appear on the ballot for the community vote. This decision will be based on information gathered during proposal development and using the criteria of need, benefit, and feasibility for each project. Proposals will be reviewed to make sure they align with the broader RVAPB goals set by the Steering Committee. It will also include an equity assessment.

Before final decisions are made about the projects moving forward to voting, RVAPB Staff will convene all the Budget Delegate Committees to collectively review and assess the projects. This will provide clarity on any overlapping or parallel projects that could be brought together.

It will also serve to support the definition of the Financial Equity Allocation projects.

CITY REVIEW

Once initial proposals have been completed, the Steering Commission will do an initial review before they are reviewed by City Staff for final approval. At the end of proposal development, projects that are deemed feasible will be presented at a district based community event.

RVAPB staff will facilitate communication with City Procurement so that projects can be developed in a timely manner.

City staff and Budget Delegates will determine feasibility according to the specified guidelines:

1. Community need
2. Project impact
3. Equity
4. Cost

Once proposals are developed for potential projects, they will be put on a ballot for the general population to vote.

PHASE 4: VOTING

Voting for RVAPB will take place for the entire month of April 2025. Voting will take place at a variety of locations including libraries, district meetings, local businesses, and online in order to make them as accessible as possible.

VOTER ELIGIBILITY

- Voter eligibility consists of any resident of the City of Richmond and any Richmond public school student aged 14 and older regardless of residence.
- Voters must provide a legal name and zip code/address and contact information. For those that are unhoused, they can provide the general area they live in.
- Ballots will include an affidavit attesting that the provided information is true and accurate. It will also stipulate that each person can only vote once either in the district where they live or work.
- Voting will be administered by RVAPB City Staff, the Steering Commission, and assisted by other volunteers from local colleges and universities including Virginia Union University (VUU), Reynolds Community College, Brightpoint Community College, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and University of Richmond (U of R)





BALLOT NEEDS

- Ballots will be created for each district and will also include the city-wide Financial Equity funding.
- Voting will take place in-person and online.
- Ballots will be created in English, Spanish, and ASL.
- Use ranked voting. Voters will select their top three project choices both in their district and for the city wide funds. This will be used in the tabulation of the winners. In the event of a tie, even with ranked voting, the tie will be decided by the Steering Committee.
- Residents can vote on up to 3 projects per district and 2 citywide.
- Voting occurs at assemblies, pop-up voting tables, and canvassing community events and door-to-door canvassing ballots were utilized to encourage voting participation in each ward.
- Residents also have the option of voting through a free-to-use, open-source web-based platform.
- Potential projects will be made publicly available prior 2 weeks prior to voting through an announcement event and online posting.
- Projects will be presented at monthly district meeting(s) hosted by city Council members.
- Ballots will include pictures and descriptions of each project, and written descriptions will be simple and easy to understand. Additional information regarding each project will be available at polling sites and by following links from electronic ballots.

TABULATION AND PRESENTATION

Once voting is complete, votes will be tallied through an open process at a public location. To effectively count the votes, RVAPB will use a barcode scanner system. Selected projects will be announced at the monthly district meeting of the City Council members in May 2025. A media campaign will be created to announce the projects and the voting results.



PHASE 5: IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION

The City of Richmond will implement the projects that receive the winning number of votes in each district in the budget year immediately following PB voting.



IMPLEMENTATION

The City of Richmond Implements the winning projects between July 2025 and June 2026. The City will create and issue RFPs for the approved projects.

Monthly updates will be provided to the steering commission and to the public from the City, facilitated by the RVAPB staff. The RVAPB website will publicly track and present the status of the projects in development.

EVALUATION

Throughout the process, efforts will be made to evaluate the process both qualitatively and quantitatively. This will include broadly surveying those participating in RVAPB at all stages of the process, interviewing specific participants to more deeply understand their thoughts about the process and civic engagement generally, and keeping general documentation of the process.

The survey should collect the following:

- Demographic data to understand who participated
- General civic engagement participation
- Likert Scales about RVAPB process

Interviews should document the following:

- Civic Engagement History
- Perceptions of RVAPB process
- How they participated in RVAPB

Broader process evaluation

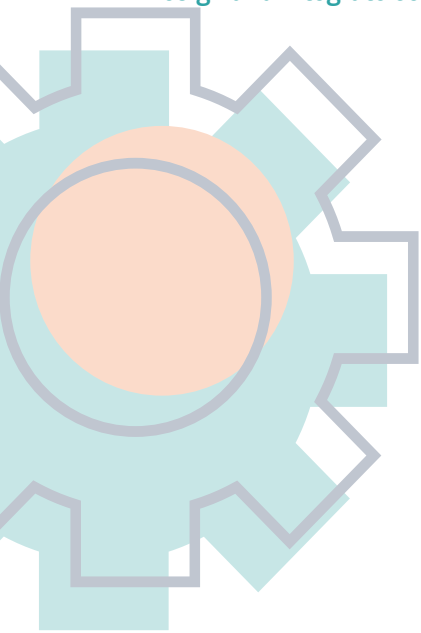
- Idea tallies by district
- Budget Delegate Participation
- Voting tallies by district

EVALUATION PARTNERS

Upon completion of the process, we recommend VCU, VUU or U of R conduct a third-party evaluation of the initial PB cycle from idea collection through project selection, as well as the roles of the different stakeholder groups in the process, and elements of the process design and structure. This should also situate RVAPB in relationship to broader publicly available civic engagement data.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Surveys for each stage of the PB process to document who is participating and how they feel about the process.
- Random interviews with participants.
- Project Management of each individual project, documenting process and evaluating budget.
- A web-based survey designed by a University partner to evaluate the process of the implementation of the PB initiative and the impact it had on community engagement and perceptions of equity.
- Administer the survey instrument through Qualtrics, Survey Monkey, or other online service.
- Identify key stakeholder groups to target for additional data collection in this evaluation process, including PB staff, Internal Staff Committee, Project Sponsors, Steering Committee, City Council Liaisons, PB Delegates and Facilitators.
- Conduct focus groups to ask about each stakeholder group's involvement, perceptions and experiences with the PB process in regard to strengths and weaknesses of the process, equity in decision making, equity in project selection, engaging participation and overall thoughts of the process.
- Administer focus group sessions both in-person and online
- Establish response rate expectations (eg 30%) for each stakeholder group participating in the qualitative data collection process of the evaluation-focus groups and interviews.
- Design and integrate consistent surveys into each phase, including the voting process.



FAQ'S

What is Participatory Budgeting (PB)?

Participatory Budgeting is a chance for communities to decide together how government money is spent. The process is simple: craft infrastructure improvement or project ideas and then vote on which ideas to invest in for your neighborhood. This process allows residents to identify, discuss, prioritize, and have a direct line to the funding needed for community improvements.

How was the \$3million allocation determined?

A general goal when starting a PB process is to spend 1% of the City budget. Some cities do more and some less. With Richmond having an annual budget around \$3 billion, City Council decided that 1% would be an ideal goal. Though, it does not mean it could grow in the future.

Why is the city using Capital Improvement funding?

The primary reasons that City Council decided to focus on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) was two fold. One, the money goes to cover specific, physical projects. Like sidewalks, park improvements, or bus stops. Things that are easy to see and touch. Secondly, there is a process in place to move these projects forward rather quickly. This is vital to building trust around the process and between the city and community. In the future, the commission hopes to expand where the funding is coming from so that RVAPB can include programs and other types of projects.

What can the Citywide Participatory Budgeting (PB) fund?

Participatory budgeting can fund one-time improvements to your neighborhood, from something as simple as a trash can or a crosswalk to the creation of a community garden or a playground. No idea is too small, and while some will definitely be larger or more programmatic than PB can implement, we want to hear them in order to understand what neighborhoods need to thrive.

What happens if there is a popular project, but it is not feasible?

Sometimes a great idea might fall outside the scope of RVAPB. When that is the case, we still want to work with those ideas to make them possible. RVAPB staff and the Commission will share those ideas with City Council, other City departments, local foundations, and local businesses. Should the guidelines change for RVAPB in the future, the project can be included at a later date.

What happens if a project gets on the ballot but does not get funded?

We want to make sure any project developed during RVAPB, but is not supported, has the opportunity to go through another cycle of RVAPB. It will be directly included in the next cycle. As mentioned above, we will also share it with other organizations that might be willing to make it a reality.

What are some of the ways that the community can get involved?

RVAPB is a year-long process and there are a multitude of ways to be involved. Some have a bigger commitment and others less. The two simplest are sharing an idea or voting which can be done pretty quickly. You can go online, come to an idea event, or get a ballot. For those wishing to make a bigger impact, they are invited to serve on the steering commission or volunteer as a budget delegate. These both require greater time and energy.

How can my business or organization partner to support RVAPB?

There are a few different ways for a business to be supportive of RVAPB. One is to become an idea collection site, where the community can drop off idea cards. Another is to magnify the outreach of RVAPB with your community by reposting or sharing social media posts. Lastly, businesses that wish to support community projects that are not funded through RVAPB can commit to supporting those through a donation.

What is the time commitment if I want to volunteer?

RVAPB will be looking for community members to volunteer in several ways. There will be opportunities to help with idea collection by spending an afternoon knocking on doors or sitting at a table to listen to the community. During voting, we will be looking for help doing outreach with the ballots and later with the counting. Being a budget delegate is a bigger commitment, requiring about 5 hours a week over 4 months. Lastly, the RVAPB steering commission is a 2 year commitment that requires regular meetings and ongoing leadership.

How was the RVAPB Steering Commission created and what do they do?

The Commission was created by City Ordinance in 2021 and is administered by the City Clerk's office. They are a diverse group of community members from around the city tasked with providing vision and leadership for the RVAPB process. They designed the initial process defined in this rulebook. Later they will support outreach, help with the various phases, and advise on how the process is going.

What is the timeline for Citywide Participatory Budgeting (PB)?

The official RVAPB process will begin in the summer of 2024 and will go until spring 2025. Before then, work will take place to educate and engage the community about RVAPB. At the same time, the City of Richmond will be creating processes and infrastructure to support the process. After the process is over, projects will be funded and then implemented. The Commission will then evaluate how RVAPB went for the community.

What are the benefits of the Participatory Budget for the city and its residents?

There are many benefits that RVAPB will bring to the city and its residents. Foremost, it will allow residents to be at the center of deciding how a part of their tax dollars are spent in their communities. RVAPB is also focused on creating an entirely new relationship between residents and local government. This is about humanizing each other by deeply listening to the needs of the community and then working together to respond in proactive, thoughtful ways. Lastly, it will give residents a new understanding about how their city works.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

A process that allows community members to make decisions about a part of the city budget.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND

This is a part of the City budget that invests in city infrastructure.

RVAPB STEERING COMMISSION

A group of citizens that helps design, evaluate, and support participatory budgeting so that it meets community needs.

CITY COUNCIL

Elected officials that make core policy decisions for the city.

CITY STAFF

Professionals hired by the City to run all city processes and programs.

IDEA COLLECTION

The first stage of PB that collects ideas from community members about neighborhood improvements.

IDEA

A concept for a community improvement that people would like to see.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

The second stage of PB that focuses on turning ideas into tangible proposals.

BUDGET DELEGATE

A volunteer that helps to support the work of reviewing, researching, and developing PB proposals.

BUDGET DELEGATE COMMITTEE

A group of people that come together to develop proposals. In Richmond, these groups will be by district.

PROPOSAL FACILITATOR

A RVAPB Commission Member, Staff, or trained volunteer that support the work of the Budget Delegate Committee

VOTING

The third stage of PB, where the community selects the projects they wish to see funded in their neighborhood.

BALLOT

A document that shares the final projects and allows residents to vote on the projects they wish to see funded.

IMPLEMENTATION

This is a year long process that makes sure the selected RVAPB projects become reality.

EVALUATION

Done throughout the RVAPB process as a way of making sure it is reaching its goals.

DEMOCRACY

control of an organization, group or process by its members.

TRUST

A belief that an institution, person, or organization will do what it says.

EQUITY

Treating people differently in order to provide meaningful equality of opportunity.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Being responsible for one's actions.

TRANSPARENCY

Making sure a process is easily accessible and understood.

**VISIT [RVAPB.ORG](https://rvapb.org)
TO ACCESS RESEARCH
DOCUMENTS AND
LEARN MORE ABOUT
YOUR NEXT STEPS IN
GETTING INVOLVED**



THANK YOU!



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