
WE Choo\$e

Rulebook for Participatory Budgeting in the City of Vancouver's West End

Prepared by the WE Choo\$e Impact Team
January 2019





About this Rulebook

This rulebook was developed by the WE Choo\$e Impact Team, a group of community members who have volunteered to guide the West End’s Participatory Budgeting pilot project, as mandated by the City of Vancouver. The purpose of this rulebook is to set the guidelines for the 2018-19 West End Participatory Budgeting initiative.

These guidelines reflect the unique needs, interests and issues of the West End community and the Participatory Budgeting process. It is a living document that is meant to be revised at the beginning of each participatory budgeting process.

Table of Contents

Background	3
What is Participatory Budgeting?	4
What is PB in Vancouver?	5
About the PB Steering Committee	6
Goals	7
Principles	8
Pilot Program Details	9
Project Eligibility	10
Proposal Development	11
Community Voting	13
Voting Eligibility	14
Evaluation Process	15
Roles and Responsibilities	16
Project Timeline	18
WE Choo\$e Impact Team	20

Background

In 2013, the City of Vancouver's Engaged City Task Force recommended the development of a Participatory Budgeting (PB) pilot project. Following two years of research and study into best practice, a viable pilot opportunity emerged via the West End Parking Strategy consultation process.

The West End Parking Program offered the unique opportunity to explore a Participatory Budgeting pilot in Vancouver, engaging residents and enhancing relationships between the city and the community. The West End is an ideal pilot neighbourhood with a manageable geographic size. It is also an area rich with social and community networks with capacity to undertake localized community engagement.

During the development of the West End Parking Program, City of Vancouver staff recommended incremental net revenue gained as a result of the shift back to market-based parking permit prices be reinvested back into community, and that it be allocated through a pilot Participatory Budgeting process.

In early 2017, a Council motion directed staff to report back on the feasibility of implementation for this purpose, and to propose a possible framework for the process. This report recommended a framework and timing for a proposed pilot process to begin in 2018.



What is Participatory Budgeting?

Participatory budgeting is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. It gives local people the power and resources needed to make real decisions and real change in their community. Simply, residents decide how to spend some of the money that affects their communities.

PB is one of many tools used by municipalities to engage the public, and has been successfully implemented around the world, including by cities and schools across North America. It started in Porte Alegre, Brazil, and Toronto, Canada was actually the first city in North America to run a process.

How it works

Residents identify projects that would benefit their community. The community then helps shape the ideas into feasible proposals for a ballot. City staff vet the projects and assign cost estimates. Project proposals are voted upon by residents, and the ones that receive the most votes win funding until the funding is extinguished. Finally, the City and/or non-profits implement the winning projects. Once completed, this pilot project will be reviewed and reported back to Vancouver City Council to determine future participatory budgeting initiatives.



Some of the goals and now observable outcomes of PB in other cities include:

- Greater civic participation, particularly in communities that are typically under-represented in civic affairs;
- Improved relationships between residents and government through the lens of transparency and shared accountability; and
- Localized budget decisions that better reflect local interests.



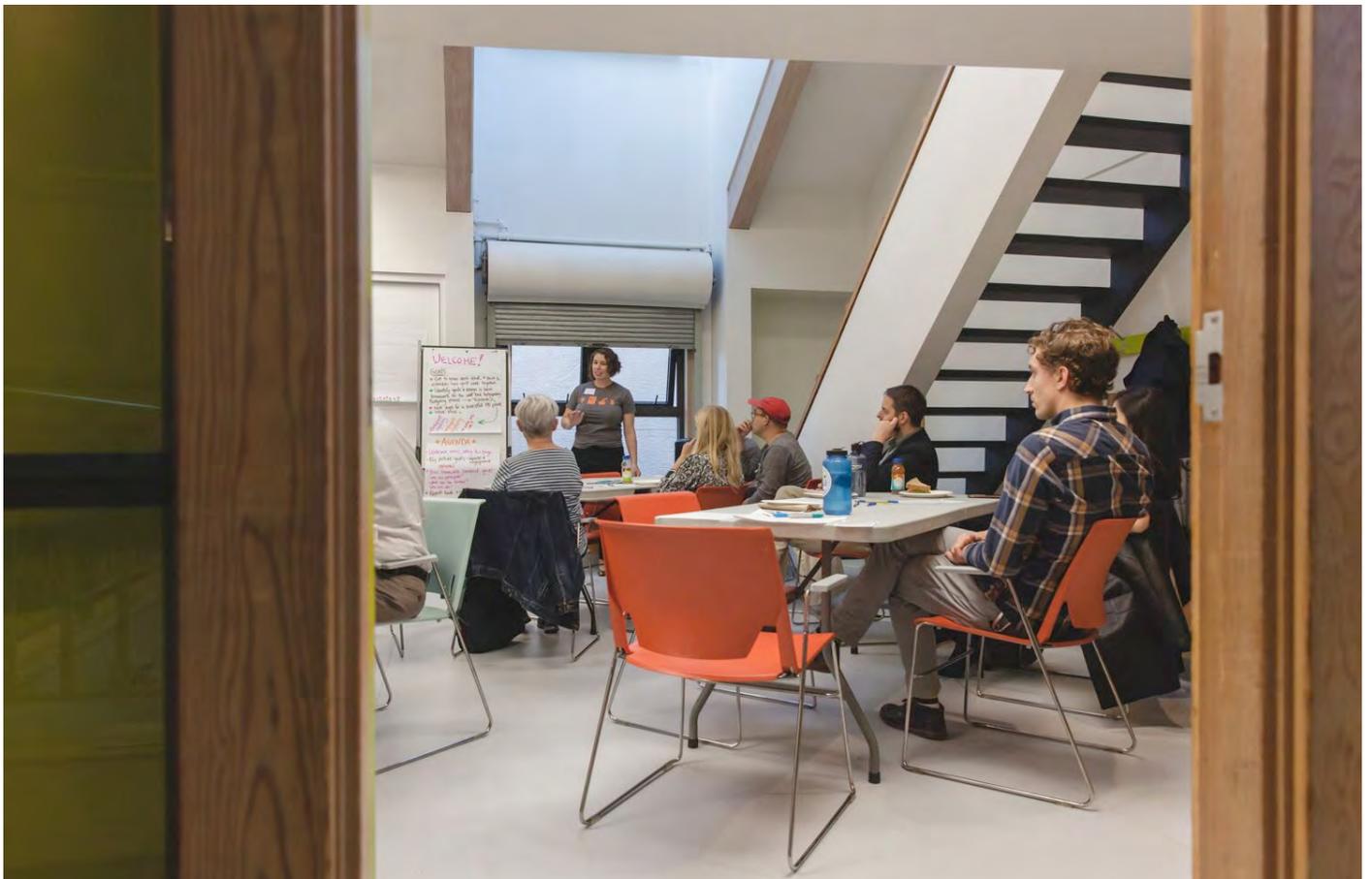
Participatory Budgeting in Vancouver: West End Pilot Project

The West End pilot is the first PB project of its kind in Vancouver. The process enables West End community members to propose and vote on projects for their area. Successful projects will be funded by revenue collected through West End permit parking fees.

The total budget for this pilot project is \$100,000.

The pilot is being supported by the Participatory Budgeting Project, a non-profit agency based in New York City. This organization grew out of a 2005 social forum in Porte Alegre, Brazil, and since then has helped participatory budgeting processes across Canada and the US. For more information, check out:

www.participatorybudgeting.org.



About the WE Choo\$e Impact Team

PB is a process designed by and for community members. A community-led leadership council was formed in September 2018 following a call by the City of Vancouver for volunteers and intensive outreach to community-based organizations.

The self-named “WE Choo\$e Impact Team” aims to be representative of the City of Vancouver’s West End residents and has designed the PB West End pilot which they are calling “WE Choo\$e”, including goals, project and participant eligibility criteria, voting plans, and community outreach strategies.

City of Vancouver staff support the PB West End pilot process, but generally do not play a role in the deliberation or decision, nor do elected officials.



Goals

Through this work, WE Choo\$e aims to empower community, especially underrepresented and marginalized voices, through a transparent and inclusive process to make more effective spending decisions that will improve the West End.

Through this process, we will:

- Increase civic engagement - focus on engaging more people in politics and community decision-making.
- Transform democracy and build trust - allow the community greater understanding of and power over the City's spending decisions.
- Foster connection and build community - inspire people to engage more deeply in their community and create new networks and opportunities.
- Build momentum for more community control in Vancouver - foster the capacity of community members to own the long-term success of the project.



Principles

The WE Choo\$e Impact Team is committed to the following principles:

Empowerment and Inspiration

Enable people to determine how the PB process works in their community, while promoting engagement.

Transparency and Accountability

Share information and make decisions as openly as possible, monitor the process.

Inclusion and Equity

We recognize that inclusion and equity requires work. We will focus on making this process accessible and welcoming to all. WE Choo\$e Impact Team will operate with a spirit to ensure that each community member has a place and a voice at the table. We will accomplish this by working with organizations that understand the communities we are trying to reach. We will make special efforts to engage those who are often excluded from the political process, such as First Nations peoples, youth, seniors, people of colour, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA2S+, people experiencing homelessness or eviction, single parent families, and small-business owners.

Community

Bring people together across traditional lines of division to work together for the good of the whole community.



Pilot Program Details

Idea Collection

Beginning in 2019, West End residents and local community groups will be encouraged to put forward creative proposals for community improvements. The PB process aims to support projects and/or events that benefit and can be enjoyed by the community.

The following outreach events are planned to kick-off the idea collection process:

A Pop-Ups

Supported by the City of Vancouver's Pop-Up City Hall, WE Choo\$e will conduct a series of neighbourhood outdoor pop-up events designed to allow the public to share their ideas and learn more about the process. At least three events are being planned, in addition to smaller events with specific West End-based non profits.

Locations and Times

West End Community Centre

Wednesday, January 23 from 4:00 to 7:00pm

Jim Deva Plaza

Friday, January 25 from 11am to 2:00pm

Bute-Robson Plaza

Tuesday, January 29 from 4:00 to 7:00pm



B Community Assemblies

The WE Choo\$e Impact Team will host a series of community assemblies with West End community partners, inviting both key stakeholders and the broader public to get involved in a series of neighbourhood-driven ideation sessions. At least three events are being planned. Dates and times to be announced.

Locations and Times

Gordon Neighbourhood House

Saturday, January 26 from 1:30 to 3:30pm

West End Community Centre

Saturday, February 2 from 2:00 to 4:00pm

Dr. Peter Centre

Thursday, February 7 from 6:00 to 8:00pm



Project Eligibility

Project proposals can be submitted by Vancouver residents for projects to be implemented in Vancouver's West End neighbourhood. After administering the PB public engagement and voting process, the inaugural WE Choo\$e Impact Team will award \$100,000 to implement the successful local community initiatives, as voted by the public.

Criteria for projects or investments identified within the PB West End process have been set by the WE Choo\$e Impact Team:

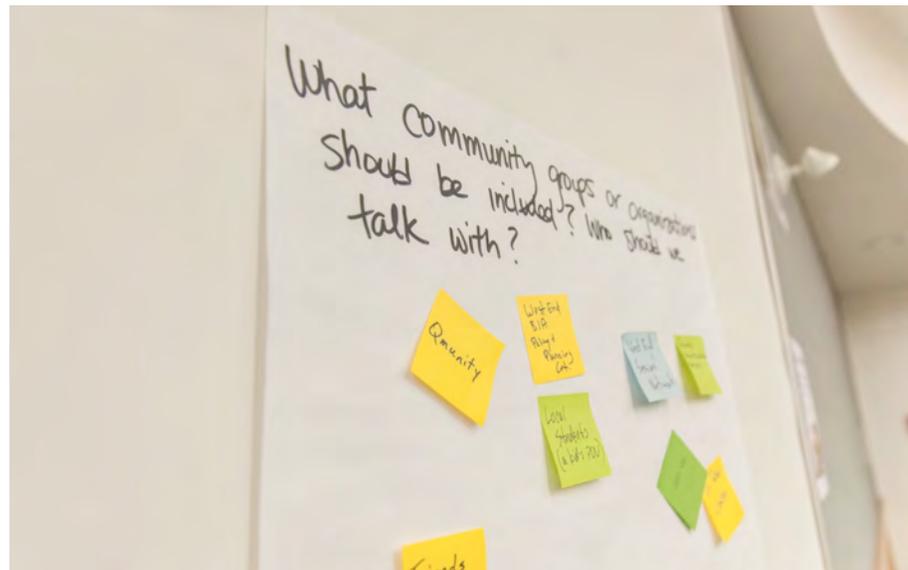
- Projects must cost between \$10,000 and \$50,000;
- Projects can develop, maintain or improve infrastructure or assets owned or leased by the City;
- Projects cannot delay, cancel or supersede the Council-approved Capital Plan or Park Board approved plans;
- Projects cannot cancel or supersede priorities within the existing budget;
- Projects must begin construction within twelve (12) months and be completed within eighteen (18) months after the community votes to select community improvement projects;
- Projects must not create ongoing operating cost impacts;
- Projects can include programming for West End community groups, events, festivals,
- Projects can happen if it can be completed by the City (on public property) or by non-profit organizations, and;
- Project proposals need to be vetted by City staff and must comply with all City bylaws and policies.



Proposal Development

After an initial Idea Collection phase of public engagement in early 2019, community members volunteering as “Project Proponents” will review the ideas for feasibility and prioritize projects for the ballot that best meet the goals of the process.

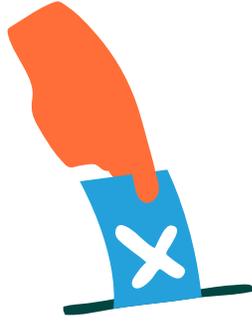
If a proposed project meets the PB West End criteria, the Project Proponent can be asked to complete a detailed project proposal (budget, implementation details, and impact) that will go on a ballot for a vote. The WE Choo\$e Impact Team and City Staff will be available to assist community members in developing proposals.



Public Showcase

Proposals will be showcased to the public through online platforms as well as community information sessions or project expos. Community members will be encouraged feel empowered in their roles in the PB process, while learning of the different projects their neighbours have put forward.





Community Voting

The Community Voting process aims to increase civic engagement and showcase City decision-making through a process that is open, transparent, simple, efficient, and inclusive.

PB West End will include both online and in-person voting. Talk Vancouver or an equivalent tool will be used for the online vote and paper ballots can be cast via a voting station that will be located in the West End. Paper ballots will be entered into the online system by WE Choo\$e Impact Team members. The WE Choo\$e Impact Team opted to include both online and paper voting in order to make the process as accessible as possible to all members of the community.



Voting Eligibility

Voting is open to all West End residents, aged 12 and up, and those that have a clear connection to the community (e.g. work or volunteer for a West End business or non-profit).

In the interest of inclusivity, the WE Choo\$e Impact Team will ask that voters sign a declaration card confirming their connection to the West End. No other form of identification will be required.

Evaluation Process

The WE Choo\$e Impact Team will evaluate the PB West End process during all stages, in addition to a final evaluation process, which will be compiled into a Lessons Learned document.

For the 2018-19 PB West End process, the WE Choo\$e Impact Team will:

- Document outreach activities and manage contact information for community contacts and stakeholders;
- Track and respond to questions and feedback about the PB West End process;
- Ask for feedback from the public on the PB West End process at key points (e.g. Idea collection and voting);
- Track and record the number of inquiries about project proposals and the number of project proposals received;
- Ask all Project Proponents participating in Community Voting for feedback on the process, and;
- Refer to existing evaluation tools used in PB processes internationally.



Roles and Responsibilities

There is a role for everyone in PB! To be involved, individuals must live in the West End or have a connection to the area, and be interested in investing their time to improve the community.

There are seven significant ways to contribute to the process:

1. WE Choo\$e Impact Team

- Functions as a community leadership body, or steering committee, to design and guide PB process and draft the PB West End Rulebook.
- Attend PB events and meetings to publicize and introduce community groups to the PB process.
- Provide support for the PB process through research, project management, promotion, data visualization, and design.
- Promote the PB process through the press, social media, and other networks, using protocol agreed upon by the WE Choo\$e Impact Team.
- Mobilize broad, inclusive, and proportional community participation.
- Evaluate and revise the rules of the PB process .

2. Project Proponents

- Volunteer on behalf of the community to assess project proposals for feasibility, impact on the community, and need for the project.
- Prepare a detailed project proposal and budget.
- Commit to staying involved if necessary during the implementation of the project.
- Maintain ongoing communication with WE Choo\$e Impact Team members.

3. General Public

- Volunteers to assist with the voting process and by promoting the process.
- Submit ideas at a public engagement or pop-up event, community assembly, or online.
- Become informed about potential projects through the website, social media, and project expos.
- Vote on projects.

4. Civic Engagement and Communications Team

- Provide support to the WE Choo\$e Impact Team and ensure alignment with City policies and practices in relation to use of technology, freedom of information, communications, protocol, etc.
- Support the Project Proponents with project proposals and budgeting.
- Review project proposals for feasibility and compliance with City bylaws, rules, and regulations.
- Monitor WE Choo\$e Impact Team meeting minutes and communications to ensure that questions are answered as needed.
- Accept final report from WE Choo\$e Impact Team.
- Provide updates to Mayor and Council at key milestones throughout the project.
- Distribute funds to successful projects for implementation.
- Provide communications support including templates, City of Vancouver website updates, and assistance with other City communication tools (e.g. neighbourhood hot sheets, media releases, online events calendar.)

5. City of Vancouver Staff Steering Committee

- Provide proposal proponents with relevant background information about their agency and about the types of projects that are feasible.
- Assess feasibility of all project proposals.
- Provide cost estimates for all project proposals.
- Offer feedback on all project proposals.
- Work with budget delegates to make desired projects feasible within City guidelines.
- Implement winning projects.
- Provide updates on project implementation status.

6. City Council

- Receive updates from City staff on the progress of the PB process.

7. Participatory Budgeting Project

- Consultative role, supporting the process at all levels.

Timeline

August 2018	Information Sessions Initial phase of community outreach Community information session at Gordon Neighbourhood House City staff briefing
September	Design Process Call out for PB West End steering committee members “Writing The Rules” workshop hosted by Melissa Appleton of the Participatory Budgeting Project held at the Gordon Neighbourhood House
October to December	Activating the WE Choo\$e Impact Team Identify co-chairs Plan public engagement for idea collection Finalize the Rulebook
January to February 2019	Idea Collection Launch public engagement campaign and host events (pop-up events and community assemblies) to collect project ideas from community Recruit Project Proponents Deadline for idea collection: February 21, 2019



March to May

Proposal Overview Review

WE Choo\$e Impact Team and Project Proponents review idea submissions against criteria and eligibility

Project proponents identify proposals to put forward for an initial round of project vetting

City staff and non-profit partners, if applicable, review these proposals to ensure feasibility and to assign a budget

Project proponents finalize project proposals and draft text for the ballot

Final project proposals submitted to WE Choo\$e Impact Team: May 15, 2019

June

Project Proposals Announced & Voting Opens

Detailed project proposal information reviewed and then posted online and announced to community

Community outreach and engagement around proposals and voting process

Online voting opens

In-person voting

Voting to take place in mid- to late-June 2019

July

Winner Announced

Review of final votes and successful proposals

Notify successful project proponents of award

Project Proponents must complete implementation within 12 months

July and August

Evaluation and Reporting

Review of PB West End process

Update Rulebook

Report to City Council



2018-2019 WE Choo\$e Impact Team (and affiliated organizations):

Co-chair: Kendal Fish

Co-chair: *West End Senior's Network,*
Anthony Kupferschmidt

Dr. Peter Centre,
Patrick McDougall

Gordon Neighbourhood House,
Jim Balakshin
Siobhan Powlowski

Lord Roberts PAC,
Alison Charabin

QMUNITY,
Joel Harnest

Vancouver Pride Society,
Alicea Praeker

*West End Community Centre
Association/WE Arts,*
Chris Hyndman

West End BIA,
Jacqui McMullen
Mark Achtemichuk
Michael Arzadon
Nellie Cheng
Colleen Hamilton
Owen Hynes
Susie Joe
Sol Lewites
Cheryl Loveseth
Tim Maskell
Catherine McKeehan
Geoff Trimpol

Graphic Design and Illustration:
Jeff Kulak · jeffkulak.com
Photography: Alison Boulier