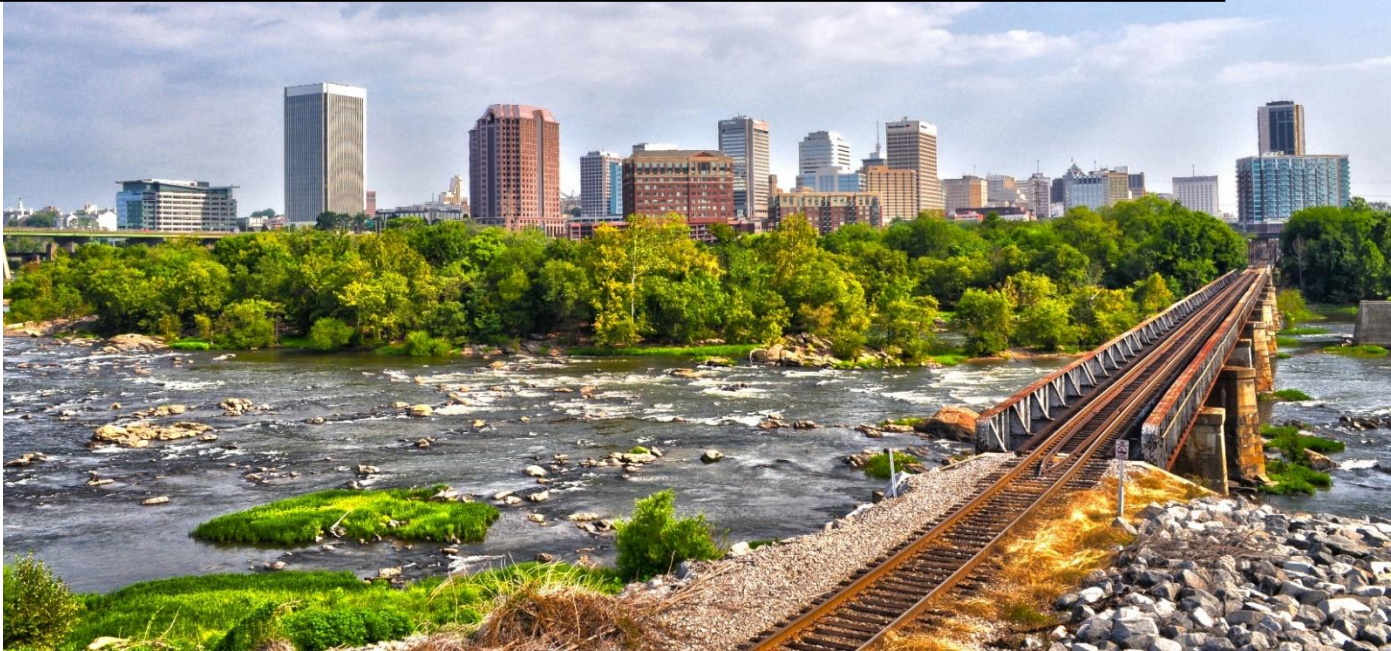


Identifying Evaluation Metrics for Richmond's Participatory Budgeting Process



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About the Office of Research and Outreach

The L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University informs public policy through cutting-edge research and community engagement while preparing students to be tomorrow's leaders. The Wilder School's Office of Research and Outreach conducts research, translates VCU faculty research into policy briefs for state and local leaders, and provides leadership development, education and training for state and local governments, nonprofit organizations and businesses across Virginia and beyond

About the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

Ranked No. 35 among 275 graduate schools of public affairs by U.S. News and World Report and No. 29 in Public Management & Leadership, the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University advances excellence in governance and promotes evidence-based public policy in Virginia and beyond. The school offers an array of graduate, post-baccalaureate and doctoral programs in virtually every policy area including criminal justice, homeland security and emergency preparedness, public administration, public policy and administration, and urban and regional studies and planning. Additionally, the Wilder School is home to the robust Centers and Institutes for Public Policy that provide applied research in the areas of state and local government, social equity, and leadership and a range of services to clients in state and local government, nonprofit organizations, businesses and the general public.

About Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University is a major, urban public research university with national and international rankings in sponsored research. Located in downtown Richmond, VCU enrolls more than 28,000 students in 244 degree and certificate programs in the arts, sciences and humanities. Twenty- nine of the programs are unique in Virginia, many of them crossing the disciplines of VCU's 11 schools and three colleges. The VCU Health brand represents the VCU health sciences academic programs, the VCU Massey Cancer Center and the VCU Health System, which comprises VCU Medical Center (the only academic medical center in the region), Community Memorial Hospital, Tappahannock Hospital, Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU, and MCV Physicians. The clinical enterprise includes a collaboration with Sheltering Arms Institute for physical rehabilitation services.

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Executive Summary

In 2019, the City Council of Richmond, Virginia passed a resolution to support a participatory budgeting process in the city. This process would allow for community members to choose how some public funds are spent, thus increasing participation in the democratic process and promoting community engagement, equity, and transparency. In 2021, a Steering Commission was created to oversee this effort; their work began in 2022, with a goal of beginning the participatory budgeting process in the fall of 2023.

The Steering Commission has partnered with several external organizations that are helping to support and guide the process. In this report, the focus is on the evaluation component of participatory budgeting. This includes:

- Identifying and recruiting stakeholders to participate in the process,
- Goal setting,
- Conducting an evaluation of the overall participatory budgeting process, and
- Conducting an internal evaluation of the Commission's efforts.

Having a high response rate from a wide variety of stakeholders will provide the evaluators with a robust understanding of the quality and impact of a program. When working to identify stakeholders, key questions to ask include:

- Who are the main groups of stakeholders that should be invited to participate in the evaluation?,
- How should each group (or each individual) be contacted?,
- How, if at all, would the stakeholder like to be involved?, and
- What does the stakeholder need to feel supported as they participate in the evaluation?

Once stakeholders have been identified, the first step in the evaluation process is to set goals. Then, evaluation metrics should be developed that allow evaluators to measure the extent to which each of the goals were, or were not, met. One excellent example of participatory budgeting evaluation metrics comes from Public Agenda, which developed a list of 15 evaluation metrics divided into three categories: civic and political life; inclusion and equity; and government (Public Agenda, 2015). The Participatory Budgeting Project calls this list the "shared language to evaluate and compare PB processes [in North America]" (Participatory Budgeting Project, 2015).

This list has influenced the evaluation processes of many participatory budgeting initiatives in cities across the United States. In many cases, these cities have included the recommendations from Public Agenda in addition to adding some of their own evaluation metrics that are tied to their goals.

Finally, conducting a self-evaluation can give the Steering Commission a chance to reflect on its own process and outcomes; this includes successes, challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities for future growth and improvement.

By involving all relevant stakeholders, setting goals, identifying metrics that are clearly tied to those goals, and following through with an external and an internal evaluation, the Steering Commission can help ensure the continued growth and success of Richmond's participatory budgeting initiatives.

Introduction

About participatory budgeting

In response to increasing poverty rates across the nation, the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil created the idea of participatory budgeting in 1989 (Participatory Budgeting Project, 2023; RVA Participatory Budgeting, 2022). Through this process, community members were able to decide how to allocate public funds through a democratic process; the community came together to develop ideas of how funds could be allocated, turn these ideas into feasible proposals, vote on the proposals, and provide funding to the winning projects.



Image Source: The Participatory Budgeting Project. (2023). *How does PB work?* Retrieved from <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-is-pb/>.

This first participatory budgeting initiative was a resounding success. Today, over 7,000 cities around the world have developed their own participatory budgeting process (Participatory Budgeting Project, 2023).

Project overview

In 2019, the City Council of Richmond, Virginia passed a resolution to support a participatory budgeting process in the city. Later, in 2021, a Steering Commission was created to oversee this effort; their work began in 2022, with a goal of beginning the participatory budgeting process in the fall of 2023.

In addition to the Steering Commission, several external organizations were asked to support Richmond's participatory budgeting efforts. The Storefront for Community Design, along with participatory budgeting consultant Matthew Slaats, are both supporting the planning and development of the process. The Office of Research and Outreach within the VCU L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs is also playing a support role, with a primary focus on the evaluation of the participatory budgeting process (RVA Participatory Budgeting, 2022).

Why evaluate?

Creating, and following through with, an evaluation plan can ensure that programs are meeting their goals and the goals of those they serve. They can allow us to gauge if a program is meeting its stated goals, determine if a program is on track or if adjustments need to be made, and help us better understand if resources are being used wisely. Evaluations also help to maintain transparency, and help ensure that all relevant stakeholders are aware of the program's goals and intended outcomes (Martin, 2015; Public Agenda, 2015). In addition, evaluations can be used to support the continuation of a program, show stakeholders the value of the work that is being done, and identify ways of making the program even better in the future (Jackson and Blakey, n.d.; Public Agenda, 2015)

Goals of this report

In this report, we focus on the evaluation of Richmond's participatory budget process. This includes:

- Engaging stakeholders in the evaluation process,
- Exploring the process of setting goals,
- Developing evaluation metrics based on goals that have been set,
- Using metrics to develop survey, interview, and/or focus group questions,
- Identifying promising practices for identifying and engaging stakeholders in the evaluation process,
- Providing examples of how other cities have evaluated their own participatory budgeting processes, and
- Discussing methods and metrics as to how the Steering Commission may conduct a self-evaluation of their own work.

Engaging Stakeholders

The importance of stakeholder engagement

The quality of an evaluation is highly dependent on the response from stakeholders. Having a high response rate from a wide variety of stakeholders will typically provide the evaluators with a robust understanding of the quality and impact of a program. Conversely, a low response rate and/or a very homogenous group of stakeholders may mean that some key information will not be accounted for in the evaluation.

In order to help create a robust group of stakeholders who are willing to participate in the participatory budgeting evaluation process, the evaluators can begin by asking (Jackson and Blakey, n.d.; O'Sullivan, 2012):

- Who are the main groups of stakeholders that should be invited to participate in the evaluation?,
- How should each group (or each individual) be contacted?,
- How, if at all, would the stakeholder like to be involved?, and
- What does the stakeholder need to feel supported as they participate in the evaluation?

Examples of answers to each of the above questions are discussed below.

Who are the main groups of stakeholders that should be invited to participate in the evaluation?

Groups of stakeholders that may typically be included in a participatory budgeting evaluation include (Jackson and Blakey, n.d.)

- Members of the wider community who directly participated in the process
- Members of the wider community who did not directly participated in the process,
- Community leaders,
- Partner organizations, and
- Members of City Council.

How should each group (or each individual) be contacted?

People like to be contacted in different ways; some may prefer a less-invasive option such as a letter in the mail or an email, while others may prefer a telephone call where they can immediately ask for additional information. Common methods of contacting potential participants include:

- In-person,
- Email,
- Standard mail, and
- Telephone.

Deciding which method to choose will be up to the evaluators. Typically, in-person invitations to a known individual will have the highest response rate; however, this may also be the highest-

cost outreach method as it involves planning and travel. Conversely, standard mail is typically the least expensive option and also has the lowest response rate. Email and telephone invitations both have moderate costs and moderate-level response rates, with increasing response rates for individuals who are already known to those conducting the evaluation (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, and DeVance, 2017).

How, if at all, would the stakeholder like to be involved?

Options for participating in a participatory budgeting evaluation may include (Diggs and Paul, 2020):

- Taking a survey (on paper or online),
- Participating in a one-on-one interview, and
- Participating in a focus group.

As was the case with considering the best way to contact each potential participant in the evaluation, an individual's preferred participation method will vary. While efforts such as one-on-one interviews and focus groups require a relatively large time investment from both the evaluators and participants, the data gathered can be richer than data gathered from an online or paper survey. However, not all participant levels will require an in-depth interview or focus group. Determining the best data collection method from each stakeholder group or individual requires considering 1) the depth of information needed, 2) the amount of time the stakeholder is willing to commit to the evaluation process, and 3) the resources (primarily, time and financial) of those conducting the evaluation (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, and DeVance, 2017).

What does the stakeholder need to feel supported as they participate in the evaluation?

Ensuring that all stakeholders who wish to participate have the ability to do so will help to ensure that key data isn't missing due to access issues. As the evaluator considers which stakeholder groups to invite to participate, important considerations include (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, and DeVance, 2017):

- Ensuring that those invited to take an online survey have access to the internet,
- Ensuring that those invited to participate in an in-person interview or focus group have access to transportation (this may include ensuring that all participants have personal transportation, or ensuring that the interviews and focus groups are held in a location near a bus line),
- Ensuring that plain language is used in written communication and that jargon is avoided,
- Ensuring that the font used in written communication is legible,
- Ensuring that all data collection methods are a reasonable length,
- Ensuring that participants have a way to ask clarifying questions,
- Ensuring that participants have the contact information of those conducting the evaluation in case they have questions or concerns at a later time.

Setting Goals and Developing Metrics

Goal setting

When creating an evaluation plan, a first step is to ensure that goals have been set for the program. Typically, a program will have more than one goal; there may be a single overarching goal with multiple sub-goals, and there may be long-term and short-term goals. In addition, different stakeholders are likely to have different opinions on the program's goals and their order of importance. Ideally, goals will be set by a variety of individuals (e.g. members of the Commission, members of the public, key policymakers, advocates, etc.) (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, and DeVance, 2017; Public Agenda, 2015).

A common question that arises when setting goals is – “how do we know if these are the right goals to set?” In addition to communicating with relevant stakeholders, program leaders and evaluators can also follow the SMART model of goal setting. This model asks that we create goals that are (The George Washington University, 2021):

- **Specific,**
- **Measurable,**
- **Attainable,**
- **Relevant, and**
- **Time-bound.**

In other words, goals should be clear in what they are trying to accomplish. They should also have a clear way to be measured, and should be realistic and applicable to the program. Finally, there should be a clear start and end point for when the work toward the goal begins and ends.

Participatory budgeting goals set by other cities are listed below (Diggs and Paul, 2020). While not all of these follow the SMART Goals template (and in some cases, seem to be related more to values than to goals), they are still useful in understanding what is most valued by those involved in the participatory budgeting process of each city, and can serve as inspiration for others looking to set their own participatory budgeting-related goals.

- **Boston, Massachusetts**
 - Increase youth power,
 - Allow all voices to be heard,
 - Build stronger, safer, and healthier communities, and
 - Strengthen city-wide sense of pride, solidarity, and equality.
- **Cambridge, Massachusetts**
 - Make democracy inclusive,
 - Have meaningful social and community impact,
 - Promote public good, and
 - Create easy and seamless civic engagement
- **Vallejo, California**
 - Improve the city,
 - Engage the community,
 - Transform democracy, and
 - Open up government.

- Greensboro, North Carolina
 - Equity,
 - Empowerment,
 - Community-building, and
 - Transparency.
- Durham, North Carolina
 - Implement projects that serve the most marginalized communities,
 - Build greater equity by allocating resources in ways that correct past harm,
 - Engage more diverse populations in making decisions about how resources are used, and
 - Increase overall engagement in decision-making in the city of Durham.
- Chicago, Illinois
 - Community-building,
 - Equity, and
 - Inclusion (Crum, Baker, Salinas, and Weber, 2015).

In conducting an evaluation, we are primarily focused on the “M” aspect of the SMART goal; the metrics that we create are aimed at measuring the goal in the most accurate way possible.

Creating evaluation metrics based on goals

Once goals have been set, the next step is to set evaluation metrics based on those goals. These metrics serve as a way to quantify the extent to which a goal has been met, or not met.

In creating evaluation metrics, evaluators should ensure that they are both valid (i.e. that they are actually measuring the goal in question) and reliable (that they are created in a way that results will be consistent) (Eckerson, 2010; O’Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, and DeVance, 2017). At times, evaluators will also need to choose which metrics are most important and which ones will best help them understand the extent to which their goals has been met (Eckerson, 2010).

For example, a goal that may be set by a participatory evaluation team may be “ensuring that at least 50 percent of participants are from historically marginalized communities.” When setting a metric (or metrics) to evaluate that goal, the evaluators will need to ask if there are any communities in which they are particularly interested (e.g. communities of color, women, or low-income communities). They will also need to ask how to measure what participation means. Does it mean any involvement at all? Will leadership roles “count” more than a standard participant role? Will participation be measured as a simple yes/no, or will the evaluators ask for the number of hours each individual participated in the process?

Generally, having more detailed metrics will yield more robust data than less detailed metrics. In the example described above, measuring the number of hours spent by members of marginalized communities in the participatory budgeting process, as well as the type of activity in which they engaged, will be more helpful in determining if the goal was met than if evaluators simply asked if an individual from a historically marginalized community participated or not.

Developing evaluation questions based on metrics

Finally, the metrics can be used to create questions used in a survey, interview, and/or focus group. Table 1 below shows types of questions that are commonly included in an evaluation (though it is not necessarily required to include all types in a single evaluation) (O’Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, and DeVance, 2017), along with an example of what type of participatory budgeting information these questions may provide:

Table 1: Common Evaluation Questions (types and examples)

Type of question	Potential participatory budgeting information provided
Demographic questions	Who was involved with the participatory budgeting process?
Behavior questions	What did people do during their time being involved with the participatory budgeting process?
Value/opinion questions	To what extent is participatory budgeting important to those involved in the process? Overall, how did people feel about their time being involved in the participatory budgeting process?
Motivation questions	Why did someone choose to get involved in the participatory budgeting process?
Knowledge questions	What do people know about what happened during the participatory budgeting process? What do people know about the outcomes of the participatory budgeting process?
Experience questions	Did people have a positive, neutral, or negative experience when they were involved in the participatory budgeting process?
Fact questions	What were the outcomes of the participatory budgeting process?

When questions are being developed, those writing them should take care to ensure that they are (O’Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, and DeVance, 2017):

- Clearly written,
- Written using plain language rather than jargon,
- Not double-barreled,
- Brief, while still communicating the necessary information, and

- Aligned well with the questions before and after them (i.e., that multiple choice questions are not mixed in with true/false questions; rather, questions of the same style should be kept together).

When developing metrics and questions, tables like the example provided in Appendix B can assist in clearly identifying which metrics have been chosen and which questions will be used to measure each metric.

Examples of Participatory Budgeting Evaluation Metrics

In this section, we provide several examples of metrics that various localities have used in evaluating their participatory budgeting efforts.

Recommendations from Public Agenda

The Participatory Budgeting Project calls a list of 15 key evaluation metrics from Public Agenda the “shared language to evaluate and compare PB processes [in North America]” (Participatory Budgeting Project, 2015).

These metrics are divided into three primary categories: civic and political life; inclusion and equity; and government (Public Agenda, 2015). The report then lists the overarching questions that the evaluation is aiming to address, along with 15 key metrics that relate to these questions. These three primary categories, overarching questions, and related metrics are listed in Table 2 below (Public Agenda, 2015). Public Agenda has also provided sample survey questions; these may be found in Appendix A.

Table 2: 15 Key Metrics for Evaluating a Participatory Budgeting Initiative

Primary Category	Overarching question	Metric(s)
Civic and political life	To what extent does PB engage a significant and growing number of residents, including those who cannot or do not participate in mainstream political life?	<p>Number of PB participants and percent of eligible residents who participate.</p> <p>Number and percent of PB voters who are eligible to vote but did not vote in the most recent local election.</p> <p>Number and percent of PB voters who are ineligible to vote in local elections.</p> <p>Number and percent of participants who report prior civic engagement or participation.</p> <p>Number and percent of participants who report being new or returning to PB.</p>
Civic and political life	To what extent does PB foster collaboration between civil society organizations and government?	Number of nongovernmental and community-based organizations involved in PB

Civic and political life	Is PB associated with elected officials' political careers?	Number and percent of elected officials reelected
Inclusion and equity	Is PB engaging traditionally marginalized communities?	Number and percent of participants who are of low SES and/or people of color; and relative to demographics in jurisdiction and most recent local election.
Inclusion and equity	Through what means does PB facilitate participation?	Accessibility indicators for idea collection phase, project development phase and voting.
Inclusion and equity	Is PB fostering equitable distribution of resources?	Allocation of PB funds by project type (to be compared with the allocation of comparable funds prior to PB).
Government	How are the number of PB processes and dollar amounts allocated to PB changing from year to year?	Number of new, continued and discontinued PB processes from year to year. Amount and percent of funds allocated to PB projects.
Government	What is the implementation rate of winning PB projects?	Project completion rates and final project costs.
Government	Are additional resources being allocated to projects or needs identified through PB?	Amount of additional money allocated to projects and needs identified through PB.
Government	What is the cost to government of implementing PB?	Dollar amount spent on PB implementation

Evaluation practices in Durham, North Carolina

In conducting its evaluation of its first cycle of the participatory budgeting program (FY 2018 – FY 2020), the city of Durham, North Carolina used third party evaluators from NC State University’s department of Public Administration to evaluate the following steps in the participatory budgeting process (Diggs and Paul, 2020):

- Idea collection,
- Proposal development,

- Voting, and
- Program administration.

In conducting their evaluation, the evaluators first addressed each of the 15 metrics set forth by Public Agenda (see Table 2 above). They then created additional questions to better understand each step in their process; Table 3 below shows the various questions and measures used to evaluate each step (Diggs and Paul, 2020):

Table 3: Evaluation categories, questions, and measures from Durham, NC

Process Step	Question	Measure(s)
Idea collection	Did each ward have the same percentage of ideas submitted representative to the eligible population in each ward?	Percent of residents who submitted ideas in each Ward
Idea collection	Was the length of the idea collection phase adequate?	Perspectives from survey
Idea collection	Analyze project categories	Comparison of submitted ideas versus actually implemented ideas
Idea collection	Were winning projects reflective of community priorities?	Comparison of submitted ideas versus actually implemented ideas
Idea collection	Which mediums were most effective for advertising?	Number of views, likes, impressions, etc.
Idea collection	Would a paper idea collection process have increased equity in the first phase of PB	Perspectives from survey/focus group
Idea collection	Was the timeframe of idea submissions effective?	Not reported
Idea collection	How can the experience be improved for future volunteers (e.g. Budget Delegates, people who attended the training but chose not to be budget delegates, voting station volunteers, etc.)?	Perspectives from survey/focus group
Proposal development	Was the timeline for proposal development sufficient?	Perspectives from survey/focus group
Proposal development	Was the structure of the proposal development calendar sufficient?	Perspectives from survey/focus group

Proposal development	Compare the demographics of budget delegates to COD overall	Age, race, and address
Proposal development	Effectiveness of evaluative criteria (project evaluation matrix)	Perspectives from survey/focus group
Proposal development	Was the cost estimate process equitable?	Perspectives from survey/focus group
Proposal development	Was the stipend an effective method to reduce attrition?	Budget delegate attendance
Proposal development	Was the role of the Steering Committee effective?	Perspectives from survey/focus group
Proposal development	Were project impact statement effective in communicating project need	Not reported
Proposal development	Was digital outreach strategy more impactful than traditional	Social media quarterly analytics report
Proposal development	Did the Cycle 1 winning projects address the goals of PB Durham?	Not reported
Proposal development	How can the experience be improved for future volunteers?	Perspectives from survey/focus group
Voting	Was the timeframe of voting effective?	Percent of residents who voted in each Ward
Voting	Was location of voting events equitable?	Demographics of voting locations
Voting	What was the demographic breakdown of participants by voting medium?	Comparison of paper vs. online participation
Voting	Did the absence of a voter registration process increase participation of historically underrepresented groups?	Perspectives from survey/focus group
Voting	How can the experience be improved for future volunteers?	Perspectives from survey/focus group
Program Administration	Was there adequate staffing?	Number of overtime hours paid, number of staff hours, number of meetings per week

Program Administration	Was the PB budget sufficient?	Utilization rate
Program Administration	Should money be split evenly amongst Wards?	Not reported
Program Administration	What is an “equitable project” and was it clearly defined?	Not reported
Program Administration	How can the experience be improved for future volunteers?	Perspectives from survey/focus group

Evaluation practices in Greensboro, North Carolina

The evaluation conducted by the participatory budgeting Steering Committee of Greensboro, North Carolina was an internal process, with Committee members reflecting upon their inaugural cycle of participatory budgeting and identifying ways to improve the process in the future. Their considerations included (Greensboro Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee, 2016):

- Impact of the involvement of the Participatory Budgeting Project team (should this involvement continue?),
- The makeup of the Steering Committee (who should be on the Committee in the future?),
- Assignment of Budget Delegates (should Budget Delegates be assigned by topic, or by district?),
- Length of the participatory budgeting cycle timeline (should the cycle be lengthened?),
- Increasing the number of Budget Delegate volunteers (how can the Committee get more people excited to volunteer in this role?),
- Clarity of project parameters (how could parameters be clarified?),
- Clarify the approval process (how could this process be clarified?),
- The need for additional staff (should community outreach organizers be hired?), and
- The quality of public outreach (should outreach efforts be expanded?).

Finally, the Greensboro evaluators collected the following demographic information of participants in the participatory budgeting process:

- Age,
- Gender,
- Annual household income,
- Level of education, and
- Race/ethnicity.

Evaluation practices in New York City, New York

In New York City, an evaluation is conducted after each cycle of the participatory budgeting process. Metrics utilized in this evaluation include the number of residents served by the project, the extent to which the project met its goals, project outcomes, the ultimate impact of the project, and the extent of challenges faced during project implementation (NYC Civic Engagement Commission, 2023).

In addition, a third-party evaluation of the inaugural New York City participatory budgeting process utilized the following questions and metrics (Cattell and Kasdan, 2012):

Table 5: Questions and Metrics used in Third-Party New York City Evaluation

Question	Metrics
Who participated?	Gender, geographic location, primary language spoken, immigration status, and race/ethnicity of participants
How did participatory budgeting compare to previous patterns of civic engagement?	The extent to which people of color and low-income individuals were involved in the participatory budgeting process compared to their level of involvement in traditional electoral politics
How did people find out about the participatory budgeting process?	Ways in which individuals learned of neighborhood meetings, and ways in which individuals learned of voting options (friends and family, council member, community organization, or internet/email)
What did people learn from participatory budgeting?	Extent to which participants became comfortable interacting with the government and speaking in public
Did participatory budgeting expand social networks and build community?	Perceptions of community connections, extent to which participants learned of new organizations
How did City Council members benefit from participatory budgeting?	Amount of press coverage for each Council Member, public perceptions of Council Members
What changes did participatory budgeting participants want for their communities?	Trends in which projects received the most funding

Evaluation practices in Chicago, Illinois

Evaluation metrics used to evaluate the participatory budgeting process in Chicago included the following goals and associated metrics listed in Table 6 on the following page (Crum, Baker, Salinas, and Weber, 2015):

Table 6: Goals and Metrics used in the Chicago Evaluation

Goal	Associated Metric(s)
Community-building	Participant perceptions of satisfaction with the participatory budgeting process
Community-building	An increase in levels of civic engagement among participants
Community-building	Quality of partnerships developed between government agencies and residents
Community-building	Resources leveraged during the process
Community-building	Levels of knowledge gained about the needs of the ward, interests of residents, and the city budgeting process overall
Equity	Types of projects that were considered
Equity	Amount of votes received by each type of project
Equity	Location of projects throughout the city
Inclusion	Comparison of participant demographics to the demographics of 1) individual wards and 2) election turnout

Conducting a Self-Evaluation

Thus far, this report has focused primarily on conducting an external evaluation. That is, an evaluation that aims to gauge the impact of the program and to better understand the perspectives of a variety of external stakeholders. In addition to conducting this external evaluation, the Steering Commission may also want to consider conducting a self-evaluation to reflect upon their own processes and outcomes.

To aid in this process, some organizations have created “toolkits” to assist participatory budgeting commissions create metrics for and conduct a self-evaluation. Highlights from these toolkits are presented in Table 7 below (Jackson and Blakey, n.d.).

Table 7: Potential goals and metrics for conducting a self-evaluation

Goal	Related metric(s)	Potential evaluation question(s)
A steering commission with the capacity and resources to see the project through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having enough time to participate on the commission • Having a variety of skills represented on the commission to address all aspects of the work • Having enough funding for the commission to successfully meet its goals • Perception of the level of support from the City of Richmond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you ever have trouble balancing your time spent on the commission with your other commitments? • Are there any personal skills that you think were missing from the commission? If so, what were they? • Do you feel that the funding received by the commission was not enough, just enough, or more than enough? • Do you feel that the level of support received by the commission from the City of Richmond was not enough, just enough, or more than enough?
A steering commission that worked well with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of community members who participated in the participatory budgeting process • Perception of the quality of the commission’s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel that the number of community members who participated in the participatory budgeting process was not enough, just

	<p>relationship with the community</p>	<p>enough, or more than enough?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, how would you rate the quality of the relationships your commission built with members of the community?
<p>A positive experience for steering commission members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall perspective of the experience serving on the commission (positive, neutral, or negative) Perception of the value of the work done by the commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If given the opportunity, would you be willing to continue this work in the future? On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, how would you rate your experience serving on the commission? True or False: The work that was completed by the commission made a positive impact on Richmond.
<p>Having ideas as to how the commission could be improved in the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a sense that some areas of the work were successful Having a sense that some areas of the work could be improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any areas of the commission's work went better than expected? If so, what are they? Are there any areas of the commission's work that you feel could be improved? If so, what are they and how would you improve them?

Discussion and Closing Remarks

In choosing which evaluation metrics to use, the 15 metrics recommended by Public Agenda set a solid foundation. However, those alone may not be able to fully address all goals set by the Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission. While not all cities had completed their evaluations, and while some have not made their evaluations publicly available, those that did utilized a combination of Public Agenda's metrics and some new ones of their own to ensure that all metrics align with their previously established goals. Thus, a promising strategy for creating participatory budgeting evaluation metrics seems to be:

- Identify all relevant stakeholders who will participate in the goal-setting and evaluation processes,
- Set SMART goals,
- To the extent possible, match recommended metrics from Public Agenda to goals,
- Identify which, if any, goal(s) cannot be fully evaluated by Public Agenda's recommendations, and then
- Finalize metrics using recommendations from stakeholders and examples from other cities.

The Steering Commission can also consider conducting a self-evaluation in addition to an evaluation focusing primarily on the thoughts of external stakeholders. By doing so, the Commission can help ensure that current and future Commission members are able to do their job in the best way possible.

Participatory Budgeting allows the community to take part in the democratic process, and promotes equity, openness, and transparency in governance. Through the evaluation process, these values can be solidified as successes, challenges, and opportunities are identified. The participatory budgeting movement continues to expand, and lessons learned from evaluations can allow for continued improvement, which in turn can help continue empowering citizens and building better communities for all.

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Appendix A: Sample Interview and Survey Questions

Metric(s)	Sample question(s) and choices
<p>Number of PB participants and percentage of eligible residents who participate</p>	<p>Besides voting, how else have you been involved in participatory budgeting over the last [insert number of months process lasted] months? (Check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was not involved besides voting • I attended a meeting or event in [enter season or month during which idea collection took place] during which project ideas were collected I submitted a project idea online • I was a budget delegate • Other: _____
<p>Number and percentage of PB voters who are eligible to vote but did not vote in the most recent local election</p> <p>Number and percentage of PB voters who are ineligible to vote in local elections</p>	<p>Did you vote in the [specify year and type of last local election]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am not eligible to vote • No, I did not vote, but I am eligible to vote • Yes, I voted • I am not sure
<p>Number and percentage of participants who report prior civic engagement or participation</p>	<p>In the past 12 months, have you worked with other people in your neighborhood to fix a problem or improve a condition in your community, not including work you may have done related to participatory budgeting?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, I have done that • No, I have not done that • I am not sure
<p>Number and percentage of participants who report being new or returning to PB</p>	<p>Did you vote or participate in any way in participatory budgeting last year [if district/city/county has a longer history of PB: a previous year]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • I am not sure <p>Is this the first time you have voted in a participatory budgeting process, or did you vote in a participatory budgeting process last year [if district/city/county has a longer history of PB: a previous year]?</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First time • I voted in participatory budgeting last year [in a previous year] • I am not sure
<p>Number and percentage of participants who are of low socioeconomic status (SES) and/or people of color; and relative to demographics in the jurisdiction and in the most recent local election</p>	<p>Do you identify as: (Check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Indian or Alaska Native • Asian • Black or African American • Hispanic or Latino/a • Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander • White • Other (please specify): _____ <p>Do you identify as: (Check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Male • Transgender • Different gender identity: _____ <p>What is your age?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 18 • 18–19 • 20–24 • 25–34 • 35–44 • 45–54 • 55–64 • 65+ <p>What was your total household income in [LAST YEAR]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under \$10,000 • \$10,000–\$24,999 • \$25,000–\$49,999 • \$50,000–\$74,999 • \$75,000–\$99,999 • \$100,000 or more <p>What is your highest level of education?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than high school diploma • High school diploma, GED or equivalent • Some college, no degree • Associate’s degree • Bachelor’s degree • Graduate or professional degree

<p>Accessibility indicators for idea collection phase, project development phase and voting</p>	<p>How did you first hear about today’s assembly? (Check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Television, newspaper or radio • Online or social media, such as Facebook or Twitter • From my [council member, alderman, supervisor, etc.] • Someone came to my door • A mailing was sent to my house • I got a text message • I got a phone call • The school • From a friend or family member • From a community group • I passed by the PB idea collection site
<p>Amount of additional money allocated to projects and needs identified through PB</p>	<p>Can you think of a project that was or projects that were identified or developed through the PB process that subsequently received funding allocations from sources other than the money allocated directly through PB?</p> <p>Can you think of areas of need that were highlighted through PB that subsequently received funding from sources other than the money allocated directly through PB?</p>

