

PBGR



RULEBOOK

About this rulebook

This rulebook is being developed in Grand Rapids for the first time in 2021 by a Steering Committee consisting of volunteers from each Ward. This plan will be accepted by the City and will be revised annually as future Steering Committee members tailor the process to best serve the unique needs, interests, and issues found in our neighborhoods.

This rulebook remains a work in progress.



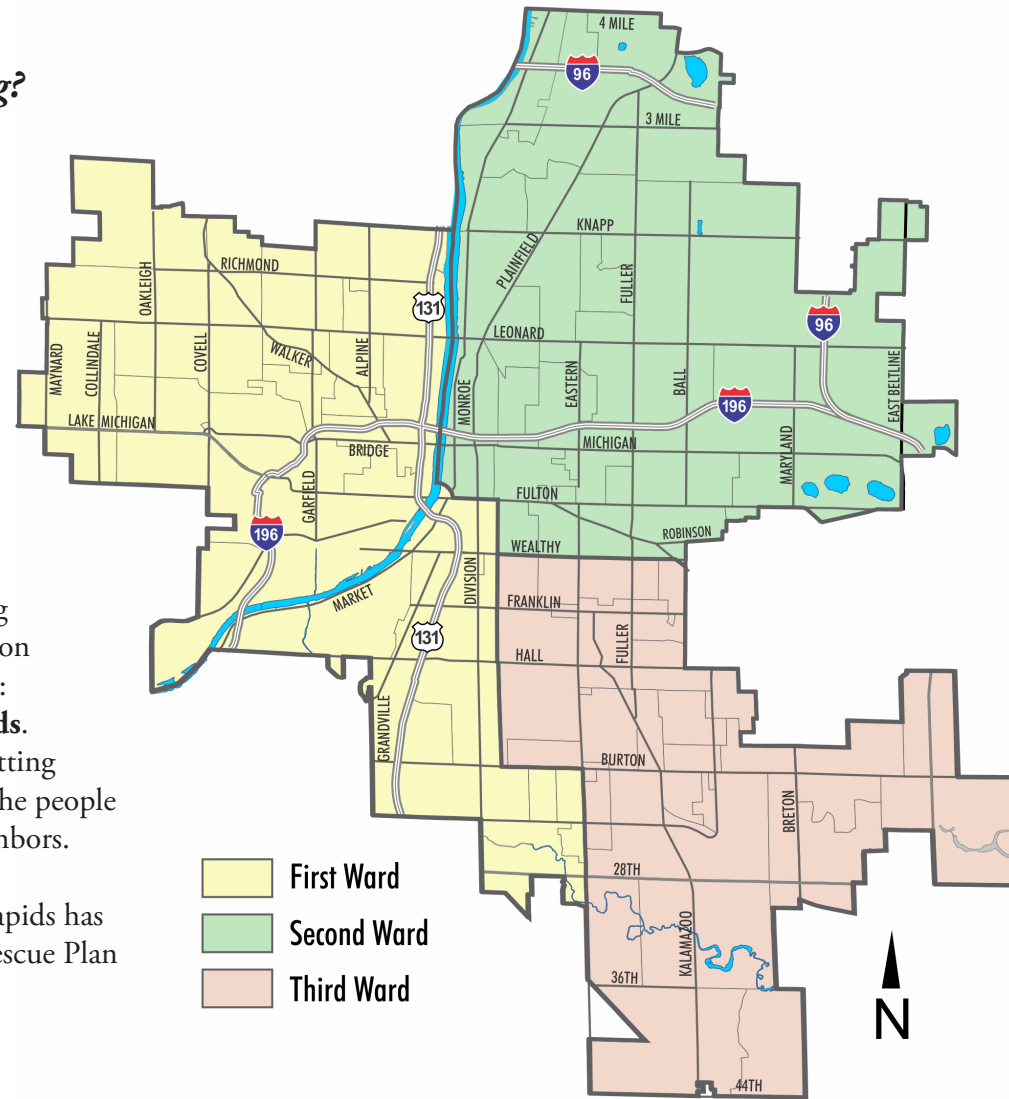
INTRODUCTION

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 was first developed in Brazil in 1989. There are now over 1,500 participatory budgeting processes around the world, most of them at the municipal level.

As residents of Grand Rapids, representing all three Wards, we are pleased to embark on the first cycle of a new form of democracy: **Participatory Budgeting in Grand Rapids.** Through this exciting initiative, we are putting budget decisions directly in the hands of the people those decisions impact the most: our neighbors.

In this initial round, the City of Grand Rapids has allocated 2 million dollars in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for PB.



We are proud to present this rulebook to you and are excited to launch the first Participatory Budgeting in Grand Rapids. Let the participating begin!

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN GRAND RAPIDS

PBGR allows Grand Rapids residents to propose and vote on projects in their city Ward. Projects that receive the most votes in each Ward will be funded through ARP funds that have been allocated in the 2021 City budget. As ARPA funding is not recurring, it is our goal to develop a process that successfully engages all our neighbors and provides direct impact to our neighborhoods. If so, we hope the PB process will receive future annual funds in the City Budget.

In 2021, PB funds can be used for projects that benefit the public and fall into the following categories eligible for funding per ARPA:

- Infrastructure investments related to water, wastewater and broadband
- Evidence-based violence reduction strategies
- Remediation of lead paint or other lead hazards in homes
- Economic and health impacts of COVID-19 (includes assistance to households, small business and nonprofits)
- Incentive pay to front-line workers
- Investments in housing and re-housing
- Addressing educational disparities
- Investing in healthy childhood environments

These projects should cost at least \$50,000. Projects will be evaluated for eligibility by the Ward representatives in the Steering Committee, and then will be voted on by your neighbors. Projects selected in each Ward will be implemented through the City procurement process, overseen by local neighborhood organizations.

OUR GOALS

Through participatory budgeting, we will empower the people of Grand Rapids to make timely, informed decisions that lead to visible and lasting improvements within their neighborhoods.

OUR PRINCIPLES: HOW WE WORK

Our work will be guided by the value of equity, with an intentional, transparent process designed to include marginalized voices, people with lived experience, and diverse groups. This process will be structured to remove barriers and build community capacity.



TIMELINE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN?

The PBGR 2021 process involves a series of meetings that are somewhat independent of the City's annual budget cycle. In future years, the process will need to take into account the following dates:

City Commission Budget Schedule 2022

December/ January	FY2021 Financial Report and Potential Adjustments
April 26	FY2022 Preliminary Fiscal Plan presentation
May 3	Budget Review Workshop
May 5	Budget Town Hall
May 10	Budget Review Workshop
May 17	Committee of the Whole Discussion Public Hearing at City Commission
May 24	Deliberation and City Commission Adoption of FY2022 Fiscal Plan

The initial PB cycle has five main phases, beginning in August 2021 and continuing into 2022. They are:

- Process Design
- Education, Idea Collection and Volunteer Recruitment
- Proposal Development
- GOTV and Vote Week
- Evaluation and Planning

PROCESS DESIGN August 2021 - September 2021

Steering Committee receives training on Participatory Budgeting, drafts this rule book, and submits the draft for comments to key stakeholder organizations in each Ward. Comments are dispositioned and implemented, and the updated plan is approved by the Steering Committee.

EDUCATION, IDEA COLLECTION, AND VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT August 2021 - May 2022

The Steering Committee communicates the plan to local organizations. Local organizations respond to an RFP to perform engagement, and the Steering Committee selects the recipients. Through community meetings led by local organizations with support from the Steering Committee, residents brainstorm and submit ideas. This phase will conclude at the Neighborhood Summit.

During this time period the Steering Committee will recruit Budget Delegates from each Ward to develop the ideas submitted from their Ward.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT June 2021 - August 2022

Ward Subcommittees with the participation of local organizations perform initial ranking of proposals, and work with City Staff to determine ARPA funding eligibility. Budget Delegates in each Ward transform ideas into full proposals, with support from City departments and staff.

Note: projects ineligible for funding from ARPA yet highly ranked may be shared with neighborhood organizations and City Commission members in this phase. This allows the opportunity for Commissioners to elevate the project ideas within the City prior to future year budget discussions.

GOTV AND VOTE WEEK September 2022

Once proposals have been determined, Budget Delegates, local organizations, and residents get out the vote and prepare for a six-day community vote.

EVALUATION AND PLANNING October 2022 -

Selected projects are approved by City Commission. City Staff and local organizations evaluate the process and oversee the implementation of winning projects.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

EDUCATION, IDEA COLLECTION AND VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT August 2021 - May 2022

Outreach & Engagement

Steering Committee will coordinate the outreach strategy to encourage equity and accessibility, and coordinate with local organizations to perform outreach. Local organizations outreach efforts will be funded by the City in tiered approach based on the expected involvement in the overall process. The committee will develop materials for Neighborhood Meetings, Project Expo(s), GOTV and Vote Week phases.

- Outreach should include both broad-based outreach to reach all parts of the district and targeted outreach to ensure engagement with under representative and disenfranchised communities.
- Materials provided by the Steering Committee will be translated into languages identified by City staff.
- Steering Committee will recruit community-based organizations that align with the committee's vision and goals, and coordinate with them for outreach for events.
- Outreach will include social media and traditional press, including local media outlets.
- All public events should be publicized at least two weeks in advance, either online or through publicly displayed posters and fliers in the Ward.
- City Commissioners are encouraged to utilize their e-newsletter list and/or send a mailer to constituents.
- Data (contact information) should be tracked and managed for general updates and announcements. There will be a PB email list that can be subscribed to through the website, which will receive these updates and announcements.
- Steering Committee will evaluate engagement process to measure whether engagement and outreach is meeting the equity goals set by the process.
 - o Equity goal is that engagement and idea submissions parallel the demographic composition of each ward.
 - o Equity will be measured by demographics provided by local organizations for their engagement and by the demographic survey in the idea submission portal.
 - o These metrics will be owned by the City and published on the PBGR website.

Idea Collection

Steering Committee will develop the plan/process to receive feedback from the community.

- The Steering Committee will define the necessary inputs required of a submitted idea. The goal is to make idea submission available to a wide range of neighbors, so incomplete idea submissions will likely receive feedback/assistance from the Steering Committee.
- The City will create/maintain an idea submission portal.
- Idea collection should include education about the PB process and funding restrictions.
- Proposals may define outcomes but not recipients/fiduciary.
- Neighborhood meetings should provide services necessary to best support the participation of underrepresented community members, including food, childcare, being accessible to transit, and at a variety of times during the day.
- Ideas will be collected for each Ward, and anyone at least 13 years old who is a resident of the City of Grand Rapids is welcome to propose project ideas.
- The initial target of this phase is 100 ideas per ward.
- Steering Committee will evaluate the idea collection phase to measure whether idea submission is meeting the equity goals set by the process.

Budget Delegate Recruitment

In order to help build capacity within all of our neighborhoods, each Ward's ideas will be evaluated by Budget Delegates from that Ward. These Budget Delegates will be primarily recruited through recommendations from local organizations.

- Budget Delegates may volunteer to serve if they are at least 13 years of age and live in the Ward they are volunteering to represent.
- Each Ward subcommittee should recruit budget delegates who represent the ward's demographics and geography.
- With an estimate of 12-20 projects per ward selected for budget development, 50-60 volunteer budget delegates, or 3-4 per project, will be required.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- All delegates must attend an orientation session led by the Steering Committee and the City.
- Budget delegates must sign a conflict-of-interest statement.
- Project delegate names will be public, but what project they worked on will be withheld.
- Budget delegates will receive a stipend of \$100/project.
- Budget delegates may support multiple projects.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

June 2021 - August 2022

Identify Ideas for Proposal Development

Prior to Budget Delegates' work developing proposals, the Ward Subcommittees will perform an initial evaluation of the ideas to decide which ideas to further develop, with a goal of 12-20 projects per ward.

The first step will be to consider the ARPA eligibility and feasibility of the idea in coordination with City staff. Ideas rejected at this phase will be made public on the PBGR website.

Ideas deemed eligible and feasible will then be ranked using the collective knowledge of the local organizations in the city. These local organizations are best positioned to know the needs and historic opinions of the neighbors they serve.

In the first phase of the evaluation, all ideas will be voted on by representatives of the local organizations in each Ward. This vote may be ranked choice, depending on available technology.

Each local organization will be publicly recognized as a voting organization. Each local organization will designate a representative to participate in the voting process for that PB cycle. These individuals will sign a conflict-of-interest statement, and will be responsible for evaluating whether each idea meets the Steering Committee's principles:

“Our work will be guided by the value of equity, with an intentional, transparent process designed to include marginalized voices, people with lived experience, and diverse groups. This process will be structured to remove barriers and build community capacity.”

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Following the initial round of voting, the Steering Committee will evaluate the ranked projects and ensure that the ideas selected for proposal development are equitable across each ward, considering geography and underrepresented groups.

The final ranked order of ideas, including the ones selected for proposal development, will be made public on the PBGR website.

The voting tool to facilitate this step will be selected in coordination with the City.

Develop Proposals: Budget Delegate Meetings

- At the delegate orientation, budget delegates will be trained on the proposal format expectations, and will be assigned to one or more projects.
- Each idea will have 3-4 budget delegates assigned to develop it into a proposal.
- Delegates will come from the same Ward as the idea.
- The budget delegates will work with the necessary City departments and staff to define the project scope, so that the City procurement process can bid the proposal.
- The Steering Committee will define the necessary outputs of this process.

GOTV AND VOTE WEEK

September 2022

Local organizations, budget delegates, the City, and the Steering Committee will engage the public on the project proposals that are up for a vote, and educate them on the voting process. The City will plan and execute the vote with input from the Steering Committee.

Project Publicity

- Project proposals will be posted on the PBGR website.
- At optional Project Expos, Budget Delegates will present their project proposals to the community through a science fair format.
- Project Expos may be combined with the launch of the voting period.
- This section will be enhanced following evaluation of local organization input and available budget.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Voting for Projects

- People can vote for projects if they live in the Ward and are at least 13 years old.
- Anyone who serves as a Budget Delegate will be eligible to vote in their district.
- At the time of voting, all voters must satisfy the eligibility requirements by completing an affirmation that they are eligible and have not yet voted.
- Current intent is that all voting will be in person.
- Votes will be weighted in a manner to enforce equity.
- The voting tool to facilitate this step will be selected in coordination with the City.

Voting Locations

Each ward will have at least four advertised voting locations, ideally located at local organizations like Neighborhood Associations.

- All voting events must be fully ADA compliant and accessible.
- Voting sites will be open a publicly posted range of hours throughout the week to provide convenient voting for all work schedules.
- Each Ward will offer absentee ballots to individuals with disabilities, limited mobility, out of town residents and active service members. Ballots can be returned to the City in person or by mail and must be received by the end of vote week.
- To better ensure equitable voting throughout each ward, additional voting events may be executed by trained volunteers, such as:
 - o Mobile voting events in places with a high concentration of underrepresented community members, (e.g. at senior centers, during lunch at schools in the ward, etc.).
 - o “Pop-Up” voting in high traffic areas to target hard to reach populations.

Our goal is to provide full translation of ballots and surveys in the languages most represented in the Ward as identified by City Staff.

To ensure the integrity of the vote, all voting sites will be administered by staff or volunteers who have completed a poll worker training. Budget Delegates can manage vote sites; however, they must be trained on campaigning guidelines. A copy of the campaigning guidelines must also be available at each of the poll sites.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Voting Results

Vote results will be made public on the PBGR website following the 6-day vote period and the time required to tabulate the vote.

- If there is a tie in the vote, the Ward Subcommittee will resolve the tie. Options may include attempting to draw on additional funds to implement both proposals or funding the project that costs the least.

EVALUATION AND PLANNING

October 2022 –

Evaluation, Implementation and Monitoring

- After Vote Week, each Ward will hold at least one evaluation meeting.
- Implementation of the projects will be bid and executed through the City procurement process.
- In each Ward, local organizations in coordination with the City will monitor the implementation of projects and address any problems that may arise with their local Commissioners.
- The City Commission will monitor progress and implementation of winning projects.
- The Steering Committee will complete a lessons-learned session and post the result to the PBGR website.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There is a role for everyone in Participatory Budgeting, but different people have different responsibilities, based on their stake in the community. We encourage all community members to take part in the process.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Anyone can participate, even if participation is limited to attending a single meeting or simply voting.

For example:

- Identify local issues and needs.
- Propose project ideas.
- Provide input and feedback on project proposals.
- Monitor and provide input on the implementation of projects.
- Provide feedback on the PB process.
- Volunteer to be Budget Delegates, if you are at least 13 years old and live in the City of Grand Rapids.
- Vote on project proposals, if they are at least 13 years old and live in the City of Grand Rapids.

BUDGET DELEGATES

Budget Delegates do the critical work necessary to turn ideas into real projects.

- Research local issues.
- Agree to put the needs of the community above their personal interests.
- Learn about the budget process.
- Discuss and prioritize project ideas based on the criteria of need, impact and feasibility.
- Develop full project proposals, with assistance from City departments.

- Update residents on project proposals and solicit feedback.
- Evaluate and provide feedback on the PB process.
- Communicate delegate concerns and ideas to the Steering Committee.

FACILITATORS

The Steering Committee members or budget delegates from alternate Wards will act as facilitators help residents participate effectively in neighborhood meetings and Budget Delegate meetings. They are neutral parties that do not advocate for particular projects.

- Attend at least one facilitator training.
- Coordinate with local organizations who host group meetings and ensure that all participants are able to contribute.
- Remain neutral throughout the process, but work to ensure equity and that PBGR principles are adhered to.
- Connect delegates with information and resources.
- Strive to keep delegates engaged throughout the entire process.
- Ensure that notes are taken at meetings and distributed afterward.
- Support delegates with the tools they need to research, assess and develop proposals, based on criteria that include feasibility, need and impact.

CITY STAFF

Give feedback on project eligibility and cost, and support budget delegates in providing strong, feasible proposals.

- Allow residents of each Ward to decide how to spend their allocated ARPA funds.
- Work with the Steering Committee to recruit and train volunteers.
- Work with the Steering Committee to coordinate and facilitate outreach to organizations, individuals, and underrepresented communities.
- Provide information to the public on the budget funds and funded PB projects.
- Secure spaces – in collaboration with neighborhood groups - for neighborhood assemblies, meetings and voting events, in accessible and ADA-compliant locations whenever possible.
- Serve as a liaison between Budget Delegates, Steering Committee and City Departments.
- Coordinate between Budget Delegates, Ward Subcommittees, and City Departments to provide information on costs and feasibility.
- Offer feedback and technical assistance on project proposals, presentations, and ballot text.
- Determine eligibility of projects in collaboration with the city departments and City Staff.
- Create a plan to increase voter participation.
- Coordinate outreach and serve as spokespeople to ethnic and local media.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Coordinate and oversee Vote Week in collaboration with the Ward Subcommittees.
- Oversee any changes to vetted projects with the Ward Subcommittee.
- Provide updates to Budget Delegates and the public during all stages of the PB process.
- Work with City Commission to ensure that funded projects are included in the City's budget and provide regular updates to ward residents.
- Manage relationships with City departments and external partners.
- Track each Ward's progress.
- Work with City departments to plan and hold presentations for budget delegates.
- Provide participating districts with an online idea mapping tool and digital voting platform
- Design, edit, translate, layout and print materials.
- Develop and conduct trainings and presentations on PBGR.
- Create guides and facilitator and budget delegate resources.
- Liaise with City Departments and collect department feedback and updates.
- Facilitate the Steering Committee.
- Create & implement strategic press plan with citywide and ethnic media.
- Create and maintain PBGR page on official City website.
- Identify, recruit and deploy volunteers citywide for Vote Week.

- Organize all PBGR citywide events.
- Provide tech devices for Vote Week.
- Coordinate and manage ballot counting for each Ward.
- Provide status updates of funded projects on the PBGR page.
- Oversee and enforce local organization engagement contracts.

CITY DEPARTMENTS

- Attend Department information sessions to provide Budget Delegates with feedback on proposed projects.
- Provide Budget Delegates with relevant background information about their department and about eligible projects.
- 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.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Communicate and educate your constituents.
- Conduct outreach with the aim of collecting ideas and increasing voter participation in underrepresented communities.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Designate a representative to participate in the idea prioritization process.
- Local organizations will be funded based on a **tiered** approach.

All organizations get this support

- PB process training (prior)
- Mid-Debrief (formally but also as needed with Kathi)
- Final Debrief to capture learning at the end
- PB (City) provides uniform social media/eNewsletter content and graphics
- PB provides uniform printed materials for distribution
- With notice, slightly branded materials for print (ie. flyers with org logo on it)
- Translation of uniform or slightly branded materials in languages other than English and Spanish if requested and with notice.
- Option to use LiveStream platform offered by the Office of Equity and Engagement (OEE) will provide technical assistance during the event.

Tier 1

- 1 virtual event to explain how to submit an idea for PB (PB team available to be a guest speaker). Must occur by [date]
- 1 virtual event to educate on the projects that will be voted on (PB team available to be a guest speaker). Must occur by [date].

- Share monthly with email listserv (content/graphics provided)
- Bi-weekly social media post (content/graphics provided)
- Reporting Requirements:
 - o Facebook analytics report on virtual event and social media posts.
 - o Confirmation on # on email list
 - o Final report to capture learning, insight and outcomes (use an easier version of NMF... ability to upload flyers and photos).

Tier 2

- Outdoor Event Sponsorship to support an existing event and includes the ability for PB to set up a table and social media posts educating on PB as a sponsor benefit. Plus PB banner displayed. Plus a workshop or formal presentation with the audience on PB.
- Reporting Requirements:
 - o Attendance #s
 - o Demographics if available.
 - o PB on event evaluation (if applicable)
 - o Photos

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Tier 3

- Facilitation of idea brainstorming event specific to PB. Org hosts an in-person experience designed to inspire and motivate residents to submit an idea and work through the process.
- Reporting Requirements:
 - o Attendance #s
 - o Target of 5 ideas submitted
 - o Demographics (if possible)

PBGR STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee guides and supports the PBGR process across the three wards.

- Advise City in a manner that upholds the core values and principles of PBGR.
- Provides support and advice towards overall PB process.
- Advise in key challenges, opportunities and questions that emerge during the implementation of the process.
- Harness energy and the expertise of key partners.
- Explore expansion opportunities for PBGR.
- Evaluate the process.
- Discuss policies affecting the implementation and expansion of PBGR.
- Attend PB events and meetings in participating districts during each stage of PB.

- Provide specialized support for the PB process, such as research, organizing, media, online engagement, social media, policy & budgeting, data visualization, and design.
- Promote the PB process through the press, social media, and other networks.
- Create and distribute educational materials about PB.
- Mobilize broad, inclusive, and proportional community participation.
- Provide assistance at neighborhood meetings, delegate meetings, and/or budget delegate orientations.
- Give feedback on PB rulebook.
- Identify and recruit groups to support PB at the City & ward level.
- Ensure that the ward-level PB processes are inclusive and consistent with the core goals of PBGR.
- Ward Subcommittee members on the Steering Committee will also serve as the voice of the local processes.

STEERING COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

- Make decisions by a recorded vote
- Delegation of decision making/budget decisions to subcommittees by the Steering Committee.
- **Steering Committee subcommittees** will meet during breakout sessions during the Steering Committee standing meeting.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Depending on the skillsets of the group, recruit community members/city staff to support the group.

Steering Committee subcommittees

Executive Committee

- Key objectives:
 - o Work with staff on creating meeting agendas and facilitating meetings.
 - o Brief City leaders, when necessary, on the PB process.

Outreach and Engagement and Event Planning

- Key objectives:
 - o Draft the vision/parameters for how we are going to engage our neighbors equitably regardless of income/language/accessibility/ etc.
 - o Recruit the local orgs to help execute the plan.
 - o Attend engagement events and report back to the Steering Committee.
 - o Engagement with City is responsibility of Steering Committee.

Communications

- Key objectives
 - o Work with news media, city staff, rapid growth, PR.
 - o Draft newsletter articles.
 - o Provide content for community orgs to use-translated, etc.

Measurement and Accountability

- Key objectives
 - o Provide feedback on the plan.
 - o Evaluate each step against the plan and the goals the team has established.
 - o Evaluate progress against our goals.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Allocate

To distribute funds for a specific reason.

Budget Delegates

Volunteers who turn ideas into project proposals for the vote.

City Departments

Government entities that implement city projects and upholds the standards and ordinances of their respective fields.

Community

Residents of Grand Rapids.

Empowerment

Giving power or authority to a person or group.

Equality

Being equal in rights, status, and opportunity.

Equity

Equity is a broader concept than equality. It is not just about equal numbers, but is concerned more with fairness, justice, inclusion, and recognition of systemic oppression. A history of unequal investment has led to a city with an unequal distribution of resources. Equity is the proactive response to this opportunity gap, to ensure all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Facilitator

Someone who helps a group of people understand their common objectives and achieve them, without taking a particular position in the discussion.

Implementation

The process of putting a decision or plan into effect.

Inclusion

The act of including something, someone, or a group of people; making sure that everyone's voice is heard.

Infrastructure

The basic equipment and structures (such as roads, school buildings, parks) that are needed for a city to function.

Marginalized Groups

A group that is treated as insignificant or peripheral.

Neighborhood Meetings

Informational sessions where community members brainstorm ideas to improve the Ward. These ideas then get passed along to budget delegates, who develop concrete proposals for the PB vote.

Participatory Budgeting (PB)

A democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget.

Transparency

Openness and honesty about the way decisions are made.