

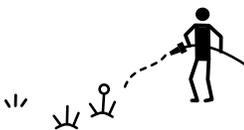
A PEOPLE'S BUDGET



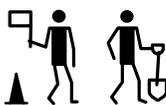
A Research and
Evaluation Report



on the Pilot Year of
Participatory Budgeting
in New York City



By the Community Development Project
at the Urban Justice Center
with the PBNYC Research Team



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Introduction



In March, thousands of New Yorkers went to the polls. But they weren't voting for Democrats or Republicans; they were casting ballots for computer labs in schools, a meal program for senior citizens and a composting system, through a groundbreaking process called Participatory Budgeting (PB).

There are over 1,000 participatory budgets around the world,¹ most at the municipal level. These diverse undertakings generally follow a basic process: residents brainstorm ideas, volunteer budget delegates develop proposals based on these ideas, residents vote on proposals, and the city implements projects.

This year, four New York City Council Members—Brad Lander, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Eric Ulrich, and Jumaane D. Williams—partnered with community groups, led by Community Voices Heard and the Participatory Budget Project, to pilot Participatory Budgeting, or what the New York Times called “revolutionary civics in action,”² relinquishing decision-making power over about \$6 million along the way. While PB has its roots in Brazil, New York was only the second city in the United States to implement participatory budgeting.

In New York City, budget allocations usually happen quietly, behind closed doors. City Council Members might make their best guesses at what their constituents want, work with the city agencies they know best, or allocate funds to the residents and organizations that have the means to participate.

Not this year. Over 2,000 community members were the ones to propose capital project ideas in neighborhood assemblies and town hall meetings in the fall of 2011. During the winter, budget delegates put in some 15,000 volunteer hours, vetting costs and the feasibility of projects with city agencies and preparing proposals for the ballots. Six thousand people selected 27 projects, which totaled \$5.6 million dollars. Several Council Members also committed funds for projects that were not selected or eligible for PB. Voters included those that the government bars from traditional elections: undocumented immigrants and the formerly incarcerated.

Knowing that their opinions finally mattered, city residents turned off or typically excluded by politics got involved for the first time. Of the New Yorkers who attended assemblies, 62 percent reported that American democracy is in need of a lot of changes or should be completely revamped. Almost half had never before contacted a civil servant or elected official—yet there they were, participating.



6,000 people
selected
27 projects
totaling
\$5.6 million
dollars



Participatory budgeting holds the potential to not only reconnect us to government, but with each other—to help us build coalitions across political, racial and class lines, to address inequalities within the American public. PB mobilized a racially and ethnically diverse cross-section of New Yorkers, and through this process renewed their faith that government can do better and be more transparent, equitable, and inclusive.

Research and Evaluation

In order to track participation, examine shifts in civic participation and attitudes towards government, and conduct ongoing evaluation throughout the PB process, a research and evaluation team was formed, comprising scholars, professional researchers, and graduate students. Overall, researchers collected over 5,000 surveys, 35 in-depth interviews, and 91 observations at key points during the PB process. Unless otherwise noted, all data in the report derives from this research. Researchers also analyzed baseline data about the participating districts, such as overall income, race, gender and education demographics and voting patterns, in order to draw meaningful comparisons between PB participants and the broader population.

Overall, the data included in this report show that PB brought together thousands of New Yorkers from diverse backgrounds, many of whom do not typically participate in politics or have contact with government. These participants developed close connections with Council Members, neighbors and organizations in their districts. They gained valuable leadership skills and knowledge about government, and learned to work collaboratively to solve community problems. The following report details the pilot process from 2011-12 and provides key trends and lessons learned from the initial year in NYC.

PB brought together thousands of New Yorkers from diverse backgrounds, many of whom do not typically participate in politics



Background

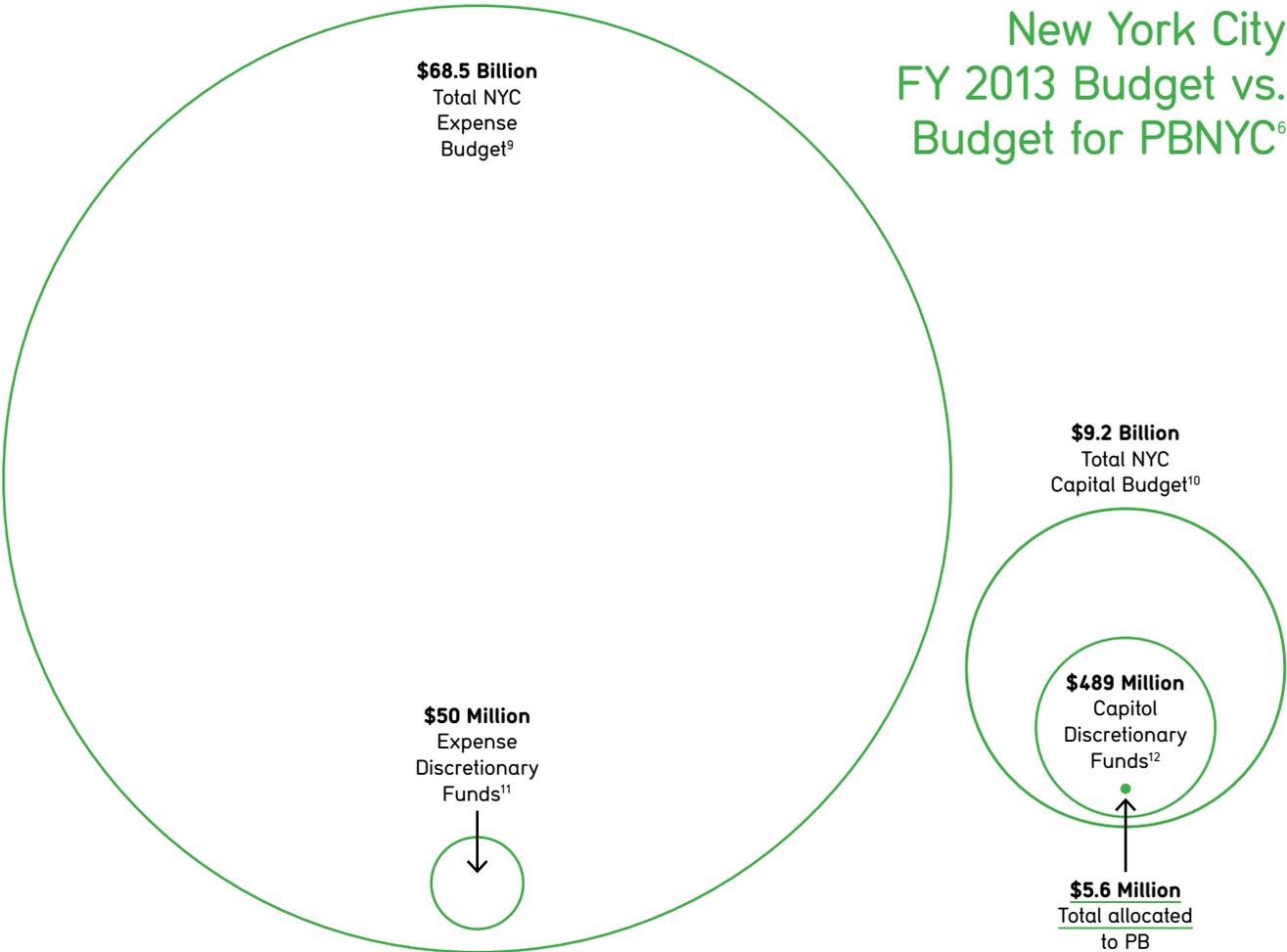
How the NYC Budget Works

To understand why Participatory Budgeting is unique, it is helpful to consider how PB compares to the traditional budgeting process in NYC. As indicated by the timeline on the right, every February the Mayor releases a preliminary budget. The City Council then holds hearings on the Mayor's budget, where community members can testify about their concerns and priorities but have no opportunity to play a meaningful or decisive role in what gets funded. The following month, the City Council submits a response to the Mayor's budget, which may or may not incorporate testimony from the public hearings. Behind closed doors, the Mayor and City Council then do more negotiating, and the City Council holds more hearings. In late April, the Mayor releases his executive budget, which in the last several years has included cuts to critical services, like senior centers, childcare and HIV/AIDS services.³ A political performance ensues: the City Council fights with the Mayor, and community groups and activists protest to restore budget cuts. Finally, in late June, the City Council and Mayor approve a budget. This annual process, known as the "budget dance"⁴ exemplifies the centralization of power, inequity and lack of transparency that tends to characterize typical government decision-making.

The fiscal year begins July 1st and ends June 30th. The budget for a fiscal year includes expenditures (all the money that the city government thinks it will spend) and revenues (everything it expects to bring in through taxes and fees).



New York City FY 2013 Budget vs. Budget for PBNYC⁶



**PB is a tiny fraction
of the overall
budget:**

0.008%
of the Total NYC
Expense Budget

0.06%
of the NYC
Capital Budget

1%
of Capital Discretionary
Funds Allocated By
City Council

Expense Budget: Pays for the annual operating costs of the city, such as the salaries of teachers and police officers, supplies, contracted services with non-profits and debt service. This is like a household’s annual budget that includes food, clothing, and childcare.

Capital Budget: Pays for infrastructure projects that benefit the city well beyond the time of purchase, such as constructing a firehouse, repaving a road or sidewalk or building a new sewer.

Discretionary funds: City budget resources allocated by elected officials. The City Council, individual Council Members, the Speaker and the Borough Presidents can all allocate pots of discretionary money. Like the overall budget, there are two types of discretionary resources: expense funds, to finance programs; and capital funds, for infrastructure projects.

Council Member discretionary funds: Each Council Member can allocate between approximately \$2 and \$9 million dollars as

individual discretionary funds. The amount of discretionary funds that a Council Member receives each year is determined by the City Council Speaker, depending on factors such as length of time in office, committee appointments and relationship to the Speaker.⁷ In recent years, critics have accused the City Council Speaker of inequitably distributing discretionary funds to benefit her political allies and short-change her critics.⁸

Eligible Participatory Budgeting Projects: For the first year of PB, Council Member discretionary funds were used to pay for only capital items. There is a very strict test for funding projects in the city’s Capital Budget. **In order to be eligible for PB, a project must meet all of the following three conditions:**

- 1. Cost at least \$35,000**
- 2. Have a “useful life” of at least five years**
- 3. Involve the construction, reconstruction, acquisition, or installation of a physical public improvement**

Participatory Budgeting

In contrast to the annual budget dance and arbitrary allocation of discretionary funds, participatory budgeting stresses three core principles: transparency, equity and inclusion. This means that the items funded through a participatory budget are selected with the maximum amount of public input, aim to benefit those most in need and engage the most diverse set of stakeholders possible in decision-making.

There are over 1,000 participatory budgets around the world, most at the municipal level.¹³ These diverse undertakings generally follow a basic process: residents brainstorm ideas, volunteer budget delegates develop proposals based on these ideas, residents vote on proposals, and the city implements projects. For example, if community members identify recreation spaces as a priority, their delegates might develop a proposal for basketball court renovations. Residents would then vote on this and other proposals. If the voters approve the basketball court, the city pays to renovate it.

The most famous example of PB comes from the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, where since 1989 as many as 50,000 people have decided how to allocate as much as 20% of the city budget.¹⁴ Such high levels of public involvement in deliberation and decision-making resulted in more equitable distribution of funds and markedly improved the quality of life.¹⁵ Because of this success, PB has spread to cities in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe and North America over the past 20 years. Countries such as the United Kingdom and Dominican Republic have mandated that all local governments implement PB.¹⁶ States, counties, public housing authorities, schools and community organizations have also used PB for their budgets. The United Nations and The World Bank have promoted PB as a best practice of democratic governance.¹⁷

Participants in PB NYC focused on three core principles: transparency, equity and inclusion

How PB Got to NYC

In 2011, New York City became only the second place in the United States to do participatory budgeting, thanks to the efforts of four NYC Council Members and 42 organizations headed up by Community Voices Heard and the Participatory Budgeting Project (see appendix for a full list of participating organizations). Between October 2011 and March 2012, each participating Council Member let residents directly decide how to spend at least \$1 million of discretionary capital funds.

Community Voices Heard (CVH), a membership-led organization founded in 1994 by women on welfare, first learned of PB during the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2002. In the years following, members and staff of CVH worked with the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) to learn more about the

Each Council Member let residents directly decide how to spend at least \$1 million of discretionary capital funds





Because of the visible success of PB in its pilot year, participation will double for the next cycle



process. PBP introduced CVH to those involved with participatory budgeting in Chicago and Toronto and, as a result, CVH became increasingly interested in bringing the model to NYC. In 2010, PBP organized three events: a public talk at Pratt Institute attended by Council Members Brad Lander and Melissa Mark-Viverito; an event at Brooklyn College, attended by Council Member Jumaane D. Williams; and a briefing for the full City Council about PB, sponsored by Lander and Mark-Viverito.¹⁸ In March 2011, Lander, Mark-Viverito and Williams, all Democrats and members of the City Council's Progressive Caucus, as well as Republican Eric Ulrich, agreed to implement PB in their districts.

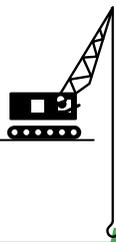
Because of the visible success of PB in its pilot year, participation will double for the next cycle in 2012-13, with four additional Council Members joining the process. NYC has inspired other cities and institutions around the country to adopt PB, including Brooklyn College and the City of Vallejo, California.¹⁹

Timeline and Description of Phases of PB in NYC

In May 2011, a city-wide Steering Committee, composed of 42 organizations and led by Community Voices Heard and Participatory Budgeting Project, was established to plan and oversee the PB process in New York City. District Committees were also formed to coordinate local implementation. These committees spent months working with the Council Members to design and plan the process.

In September 2011, the four Council Members and the Steering Committee officially launched the process at a press conference at City Hall. Speaking on the steps of City Hall, Council Member Lander said, "We are excited to put budgeting power directly in the hands of the people. Not only will next year's budget be more democratic as a result, it will also be more effective, because our constituents know best where money needs to go in our community."²⁰ Council Member Williams added, "The message behind participatory budgeting is 'your money, your vote, your choice',"²¹ while Council Member Mark-Viverito said, "Participatory budgeting asks citizens how they want their taxpayer dollars reinvested in our communities, and encourages civic participation across the neighborhoods we represent. It is a real step towards true democracy in our city, and I am excited to bring this process to my district."²² Council Member Ulrich said, "This is an effort to bring the public into the budget decision-making process."²³

In October 2011, the PB team rolled out the process with approximately 2,000 residents attending 27 neighborhood assemblies across the four districts. Through the assemblies and project website, residents submitted nearly 2,000 ideas for capital projects, and over 250 people volunteered to serve as budget delegates. In November,



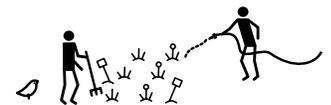
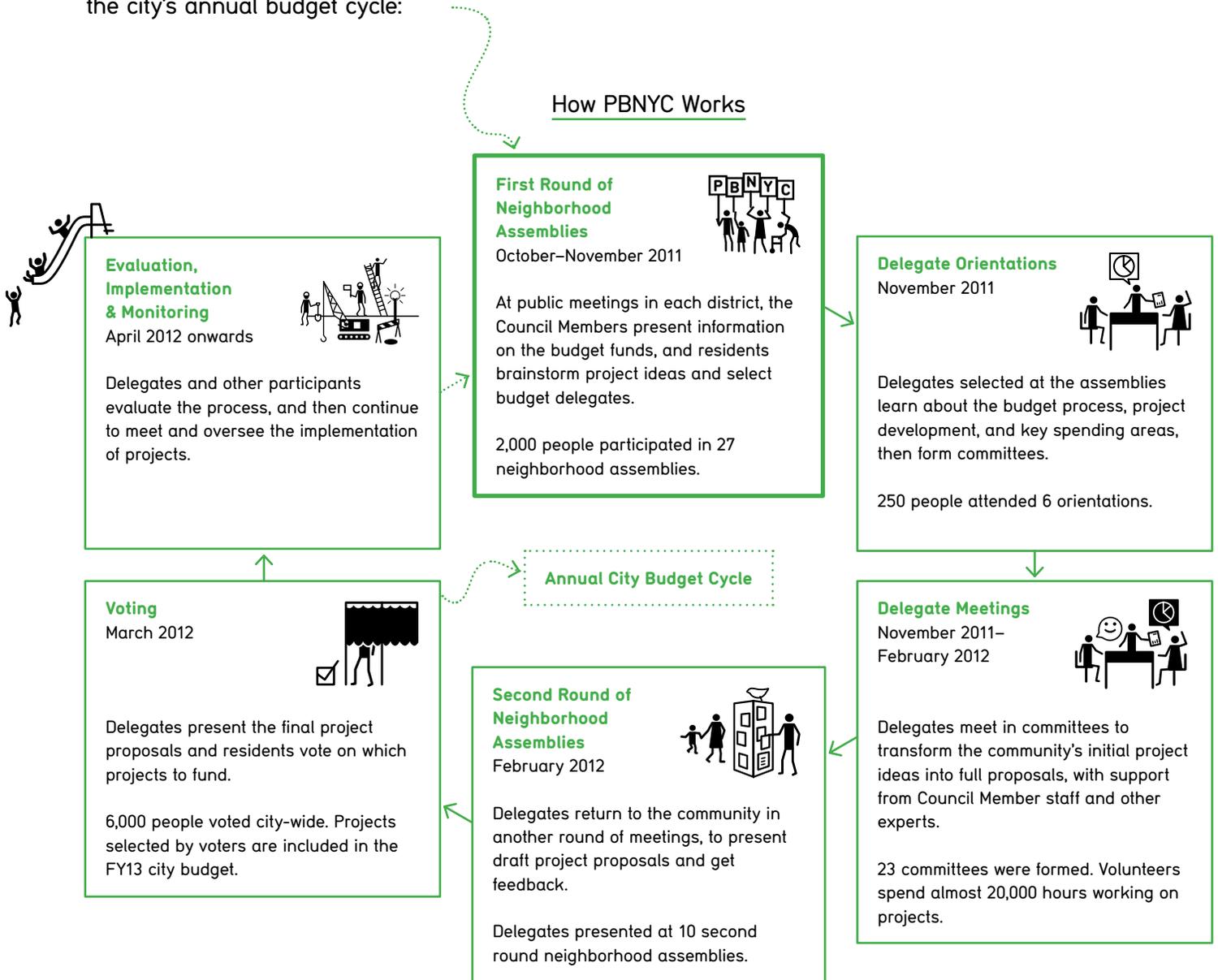
"The message behind participatory budgeting is 'your money, your vote, your choice'"

the delegates began researching, revising and prioritizing the initial project ideas and transformed them into detailed and concrete proposals. In February 2012, the delegates presented and received feedback on the proposals at another round of neighborhood assemblies.

At the end of March, residents 18 years and older in each district voted for five out of about 20 projects that made it onto the ballot.²⁴ In total, about 6,000 people voted for projects. Twenty-seven projects won, totaling \$5.6 million. In addition, other projects that were not selected by voters or were ineligible for PB ended up being funded through other mechanisms.

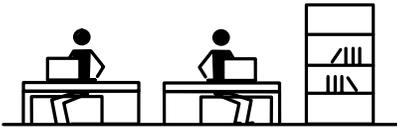
In 2011-2012 the PBNYC process had six main steps that fed into the city's annual budget cycle:

How PBNYC Works



Research Methodology

Methods



Background and Secondary Research

Researchers collected data on the NYC budget, population demographics and voting patterns in the participating districts to explore how PB impacts government spending and operations, and to conduct a comparative analysis of participation in PB. Data sources include Census data, the General Social Survey and 2009 voter data from the Voter Activation Network and Catalist.



Surveys and Evaluation Forms

Over 5,000 surveys were collected to examine who participated in PB, how they learned from the process and what outreach methods were most effective.

Survey respondents included:

- Neighborhood Assembly participants: **796**
- Budget Delegates: **251 surveys at beginning** and **95 at the end of the process**
- Facilitators of Neighborhood Assemblies and Budget Delegate meetings: **150**
- Voters: **3,746**



In-depth Interviews

Researchers conducted **35 in-depth interviews** with neighborhood assembly participants, budget delegates, steering and district committee members and Council Member staff to examine how and why people participated in PB, what participants learned from PB, and how it affected relationships between city officials, city staff and community members.



Observations

Researchers collected **91 observations of PB meetings and events** to examine the dynamics of participation in PB.

Participating NYC Council Districts: 8, 32, 39 and 45

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Neighborhoods</u>	<u>Key Demographics</u>	<u>Unique Characteristics</u>
<p>Melissa Mark-Viverito, Democrat</p> 	<p>8th Manhattan The Bronx</p> 	<p>Manhattan Valley, El Barrio/East Harlem, Mott Haven, Central Park, Randall's Island</p>	<p>50% of the district's population identifies as Hispanic/Latino/a, 23% as Black/African American, and 19% as White²⁵</p> <p>40% of residents are lower income (less than \$25,000)²⁶</p>	<p>District encompasses Central Park and Randalls Island</p> <p>Neighborhoods span from the Upper West Side to East Harlem/El Barrio to the South Bronx</p> <p>Has the greatest concentration of public housing in the city.</p>
<p>Eric Ulrich, Republican</p> 	<p>32nd Queens</p> 	<p>Belle Harbor, Breezy Point, Broad Channel, Rockaway Park, and Rockaway Beach</p>	<p>68% of the district's population identifies as White²⁷</p> <p>40% of the district has household income of \$25,000 to 75,000²⁸</p>	<p>Most of the district is located on a peninsula known for its beaches and parks.</p> <p>Only a portion of the district participated in PB.</p>
<p>Brad Lander, Democrat</p> 	<p>39th Brooklyn</p> 	<p>Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Columbia Waterfront, Gowanus, Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Boro Park, and Kensington</p>	<p>Large Bangladeshi population in Kensington</p> <p>66% of the district's population identifies as White²⁹</p> <p>57% of residents have a college education³⁰</p>	<p>The district is intersected by the Gowanus Canal and contains several parks and cemeteries. These geographical characteristics create distinct neighborhoods: including wealthy Park Slope; Kensington with a large Bangladeshi population; and finally Borough Park, a Jewish enclave.³¹</p>
<p>Jumaane D. Williams, Democrat</p> 	<p>45th Brooklyn</p> 	<p>Flatbush, East Flatbush, Flatlands, and parts of Midwood and Canarsie</p>	<p>76% of the district's population identifies as Black/African American³²</p> <p>45% of residents have a college education³³</p>	<p>Has the largest foreign-born population in Brooklyn, made up of immigrants from Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago.³⁴</p>

City-wide Findings



PB engaged
7,736 people:
2,138 neighborhood
assembly and
245 online
participants,
251 budget
delegates
and almost
6,000 voters

From November until March of 2012, four Council Members: Melissa Mark-Viverito (D-8), Eric Ulrich (R-32), Brad Lander (D-39) and Jumaane D. Williams (D-45), serving four distinct constituencies, took part in the pilot year of participatory budgeting in NYC. Based on an aggregate analysis of over 5,000 surveys, 35 interviews, 91 observations and multiple secondary data sources collected across the four districts, researchers developed a set of city-wide findings.

Overall, the data shows that PB brought together thousands of New Yorkers from diverse backgrounds, many of whom would not otherwise participate in politics or have contact with government. Research shows that these participants learned how the budget works; developed close connections with Council Members, other residents and organizations in their districts and learned to work collaboratively to solve community problems.



Budget delegates attend an orientation to learn more about the city budget and how to turn project ideas into concrete proposals that can be voted on by residents in their district.

Who Participated in PBNYC?

In its pilot year, PB engaged 7,736 people, including: 2,138 neighborhood assembly and 245 online participants; 251 Budget Delegates; and almost 6,000 voters.³⁵ In addition, hundreds more joined the process as volunteer members of the Steering and District Committees. Demographic information collected at key points during the process indicates the following:

PB mobilized long-term residents, many of whom had NOT previously worked for community change.

“Before [PB], you heard from civic associations or a block association or a tenant association or a non-profit, but those are naturally organized constituencies already. The point is that people, who don’t feel a part of those groups for whatever reason, still have a way in.”

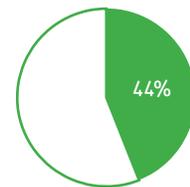
— **Bart Haggarty**, Chief of Staff, Office of Eric Ulrich, District 32

- 75% of neighborhood assembly participants and 78% of PB voters lived in their neighborhood for more than 8 years; 55% of assembly participants and 60% of PB voters lived in their neighborhood for more than 15 years.
- 1 out of 3 neighborhood assembly participants and budget delegates and 44% of PB voters had never worked with others in their community to solve a problem before PB.

PB Mobilized a racially and ethnically diverse cross-section of New Yorkers.

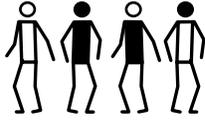
- 20% of PB voters identified as African American; 14% as Hispanic or Latino/a; 2% as Asian and 2% as “Other.”
- A higher percentage of African Americans participated in neighborhood assemblies (38%), compared to the full population in the four districts (31%).³⁶
- 21% of budget delegates and 19% of PB voters were born outside of the United States.
- 1 out of 10 PB voters reported that English is not their primary language.

Percentage of PB voters who had never worked with others in their community to solve a problem



PB voters identified as:
20% African American
14% Hispanic or Latino/a
2% Asian
2% Other





People of color actively participated in PB meetings and discussions.

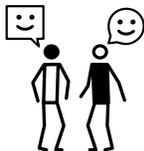
- 87% of participants who identified as Black/African American, 81% of Asians and 79% of Latino/as made specific budget proposals at neighborhood assemblies.
- Participants that identified as Black/African American were the most likely to volunteer to be budget delegates.



Women were over 60% of the participants in each stage of the process

Although women reported starting the PB process with less comfort in their leadership skills and more skepticism about government, they were the most likely to actively participate in all phases of PB.

- Only 24% of female budget delegates reported that they felt “very comfortable” with public speaking prior to starting PB, compared to 40% of male delegates.
- Only 18% of female budget delegates reported that they felt “very comfortable” with negotiating and building agreement prior to starting PB, compared to 30% of male delegates.
- 64% of women neighborhood assembly participants think that government needs a lot of changes or that it needs to be completely changed, compared to 58% of male participants.
- However, women were 64% of neighborhood assembly participants, 65% of budget delegates and 62% of voters in the PB process.



21% of budget delegates and 19% of voters were foreign-born

Non-English speakers and those born outside of the U.S. were actively engaged in PB.

- 21% of budget delegates and 19% of PB voters were born outside of the United States.
- 1 out of 10 PB voters reported that English is not their primary language.
- 89% of Spanish-speaking participants spoke during the small group discussion at the neighborhood assembly and 42% of Spanish-speaking participants volunteered to be budget delegates.

How did Participatory Budgeting compare to previous patterns of civic engagement?

One of the most striking findings about who participated in PB is how the data compares to other types of civic engagement, particularly voting patterns in NYC elections. Across the districts, PB engaged communities that have traditionally been uninspired by politics. People of color, low-income people and some immigrant groups turned out at higher rates than in previous elections. More than just getting people to vote, PB deepened the connections between residents and the government.

People of color and low-income people participated in PB at higher rates than traditional electoral politics.

Melissa Mark-Viverito, District 8:

- Latino/as were 39% of voters in the 2009 City Council elections.³⁷ However, 46% of the district's neighborhood assembly participants and 50% of PB voters identified as Latino/a.
- 22% of PB voters had household income less than \$10,000 compared to 4% of the district's voters in the 2009 City Council election.³⁸

Jumaane D. Williams, District 45:

- Black or African Americans were 79% of voters in 2009 City Council elections.³⁹ However, 83% of the district's neighborhood assembly participants and 87% of the district's PB voters identified as Black or African American.
- 21% PB voters had household income less than \$25,000 compared to 6% of the district's voters in the 2009 election.⁴⁰

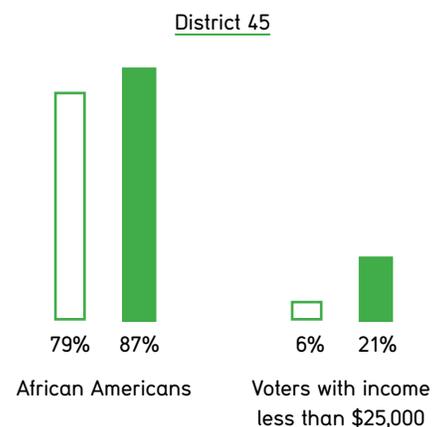
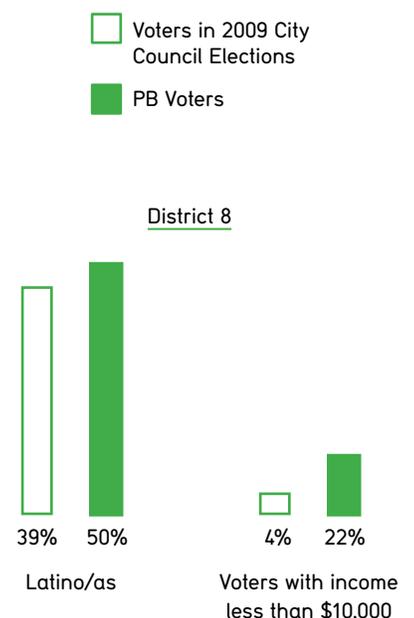
Eric Ulrich, District 32:

- 9% PB voters had household income less than \$25,000 compared to 1% of the district's voters in the 2009 election.⁴¹

Brad Lander, District 39:

- Approximately 10% of the ballots for the PB vote were cast in a language other than English.

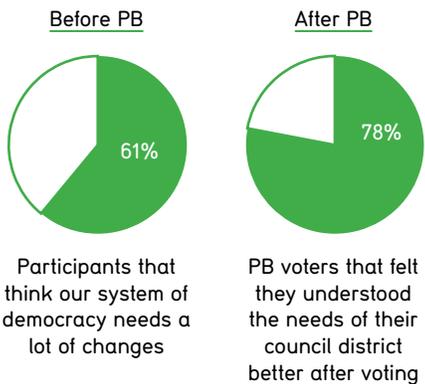
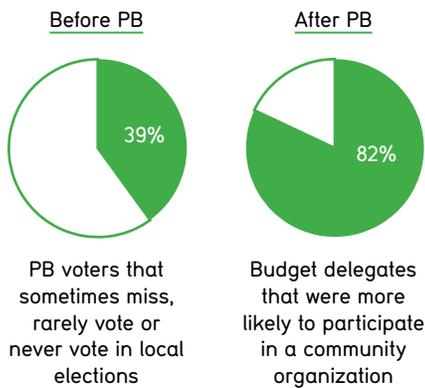
Demographics of PB Voters compared to Voters in 2009 City Council Elections



PB created deeper connections to government and community for participants, many of whom were disillusioned or disengaged from politics.

“Early in the process, Council Member Viverito got approached by someone from Douglass Houses [NYCHA public housing] and he told her, ‘I don’t vote, I don’t come to any meetings but this sounded really interesting,’ and he said, ‘You better be serious about this. You’re not gonna just bring us out here then go do whatever you want.’ And she gave her word and then I actually saw him come out to vote so he obviously went through with the whole process.”

— **Joe Taranto**, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Melissa Mark-Viverito, District 8



Before PB:

- Almost half of the neighborhood assembly participants had not contacted an elected official in the year before PB.
- Almost 2 out of 3 (61%) neighborhood assembly participants think our system of democracy needs a lot of changes or that it needs to be completely changed, compared to 1 out of 3 (33%) in the general population.⁴²
- About 40% of PB voters either sometimes miss, rarely vote or never vote in local elections.

After PB:

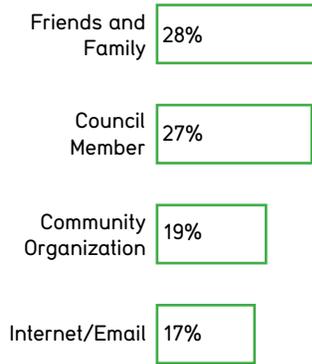
- Budget delegates were more likely to be “very comfortable” contacting government agencies and officials after PB.
- 82% of budget delegates said they were more likely to participate in a community organization after PB.
- 78% of PB voters felt that they understood the needs of their council district better after voting.

“[The] benefit is that people feel they are part of the political process. It’s always that the government doesn’t do anything... but we make up the government too.”

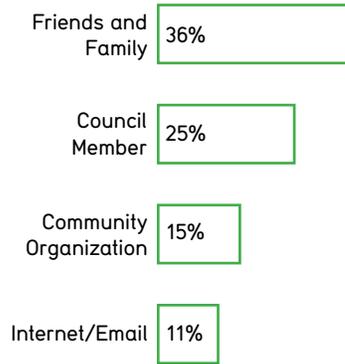
— **PB NYC participant**

How did people find out about participatory budgeting and what motivated them participate?

How People Learned About Neighborhood Assemblies



How People Learned About The PB Vote



While there was variation across districts, overall, participants were most likely to hear about the neighborhood assembly and the PB vote through social networks, community organizations and their Council Member. In addition:

Many low-income people heard about the PB vote through their social networks.

- 49% of people with a household income less than \$25,000 heard about the PB vote through family and friends.

African American participants were also likely to hear about PB through family and friends.

- 43% of Black/African American PB voters heard about the PB vote through family and friends.

Targeted Outreach & Engagement

In year one of PBNYC, the city-wide Steering Committee identified “inclusion” as one of the core values to be advanced in the process:

All voices in the community should be included—especially those of community members who feel disillusioned with the political process or face obstacles to participating. By making every effort to reduce obstacles to participation, we hope to prevent the ‘usual suspects’ or groups with more resources from dominating, and to generate projects that better reflect community needs.

In order to involve people beyond the “usual suspects,” extra efforts needed to be made. Community Voices Heard (CVH), the Lead Community Engagement entity for PBNYC, saw supporting and coordinating this work as one of its primary functions.

A city-wide Outreach Workgroup was established to bring together key Council staff, community organizing district partners—such as the Flatbush Development Corporation and the Fifth Avenue Committee in Brooklyn—and groups with inroads into local communities, such as the New York Immigration Coalition. This workgroup identified traditionally excluded communities and constituencies in the various districts, brainstormed organizations that might help to connect with these groups, and prepared memos to help guide the District Committees in thinking about their outreach plans in a holistic and inclusive manner.

CVH also worked with many of the District Committees and Council offices to develop targeted outreach and mobilization plans, teaching the basics of “organizing math” and the importance of “repetitive contacts” (i.e., how many people you need to talk to and how many times you need to talk to them to get them to come out), conducting rap trainings and overseeing group outreach sessions. This work was meant to both provide new tools to community members to engage their neighbors and to generate new ideas to reach people who were not already part of existing organizations and networks. Supplemental outreach teams were

**Targeted Outreach & Engagement
cont. from pg. 17**

hired, trained and supervised by CVH to target a variety of identified constituencies, including Bangladeshi residents in Kensington, Brooklyn; public housing residents in East Harlem, Manhattan and the South Bronx; renters and co-op owners in the Rockaways; and affordable-rent tenants in Flatbush, Brooklyn.

As this report documents, these outreach efforts led to the involvement of long-term residents who had not been active in their communities before PB. Low-income people, people of color and some immigrant groups participated at higher levels than in traditional elections. These results demonstrate the critical need to couple PB with strong, systematic outreach and mobilization efforts.

Community groups helped to bring Latino/as and people with lower levels of education into the PB process.

- 68% of Hispanic/Latino/a PB voters heard about PB through a community group.
- 24% of PB voters with a high school degree or less heard about PB through a community group, compared to only 12% of PB voters with a graduate degree.

Highly educated and higher income people were likely to hear about PB through their Council Member.

- 35% of PB voters with graduate degrees heard about PB through their Council Member.
- 31% of PB voters with incomes greater than \$75,000 heard about PB through their Council Member.



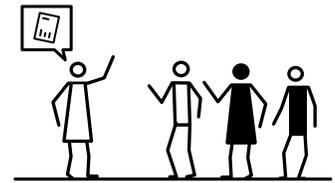
Residents of Council District 8 participated in a neighborhood assembly where they heard more about PBNYC from Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito.

What did people learn from PB? Did PB expand social networks and build community?

The data shows that people did more than just show up to various PB meetings: they were transformed and energized by the process. Participants actively engaged in discussions and decision-making and worked collaboratively with other community members, Council Member staff and agency officials to make important decisions. As a result, participants gained skills and knowledge of complex issues, expanded social and organizational networks and forged connections to government and politics.

PB made people, particularly those with lower incomes and less education, more comfortable interacting with government and speaking in public.

- 50% of budget delegates with incomes less than \$25,000 became more comfortable contacting government agencies and officials.
- 38% of budget delegates with incomes less than \$25,000 became more comfortable with public speaking.
- 75% of budget delegates with a high school degree or less formal education became more comfortable contacting government agencies and officials.
- 100% of budget delegates with a high school degree or less formal education became more comfortable negotiating and building agreement.



People worked collaboratively with others in their community.

“People came out with a community agenda rather than a personal agenda.”

– **Neighborhood Assembly Interviewee 11**, District 8

“Many times participants fed off the ideas of others and expanded them; there was a very rich discussion of needs and ways to address them.”

– **Neighborhood Assembly Observation 30**, District 8

“The discussion was collaborative; some ideas led to thinking of other ideas, free from confrontation.”

– **Neighborhood Assembly Observation 5**, District 39



New social networks were built in communities

PB expanded social networks for participants, particularly for low-income people and Latino/as.

- While low-income people were more likely to have smaller social networks before PB, their participation in PB expanded these networks.
- 57% of budget delegates with a household income less than \$25,000 knew more people in their district after participating in PB.
- 36% of Hispanic/Latino/a budget delegates knew more people in their district after participating in PB.

PB exposed participants to a variety of organizations.

- Budget delegates were affiliated with 250 organizations.
- 41 organizations served on the Steering Committee.
- Over 1/3 of Budget Delegates reported an increase in their participation with community organizations after completing the PB cycle.

Table 1
Types of Organizations with which Budget Delegates were Affiliated by Issue Area and Geographic Focus

(Total Organizations=250)

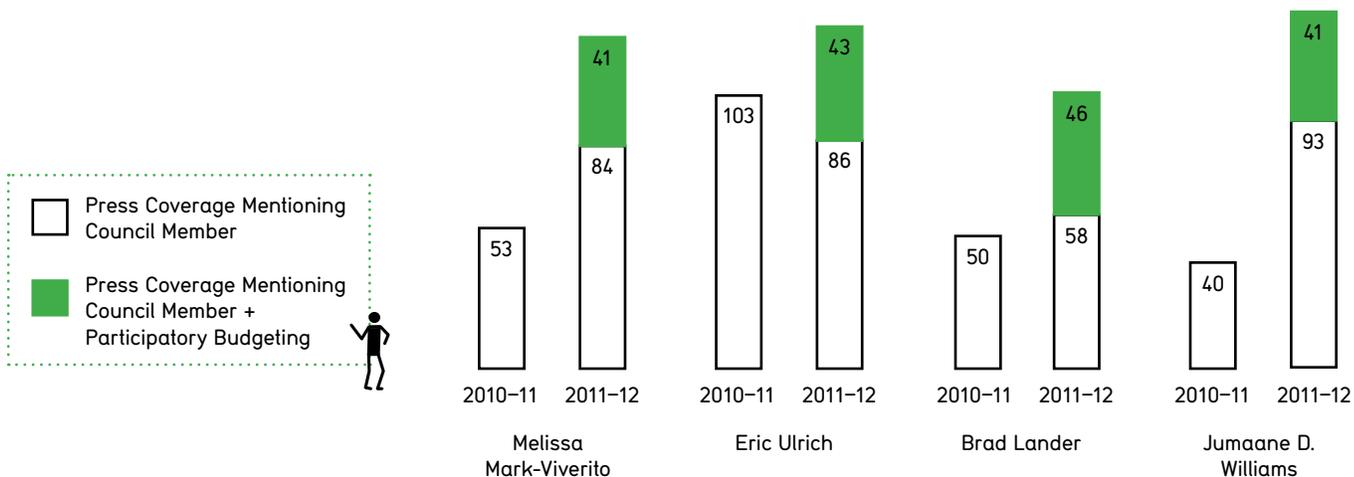
<u>Issue Area of Focus</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Geographic Focus</u>	<u>#</u>
Neighborhood Development	66	Neighborhood	175
Education	40	City-wide	53
Social/Economic Justice	38	National	19
Environment	25	International	12
Arts and Culture	17	State-wide/regional	8

How did City Council Members Benefit from Participatory Budgeting?

In addition to the benefits PB brings to participants, such as skill building, enhanced civic engagement, and leadership development, elected officials gained from the process in the following ways:

During the PB cycle, Council Members received more media coverage than in the previous year.

Council Member Press Coverage Before and During PB



Participants valued the Council Members' involvement in the process and felt it brought the Council Member closer to the community.

- Almost 70% of budget delegates felt that they got a lot of support from their Council Member throughout the PB process.

"We get to know our Council Member. Now I know what he looks like, not just his name. Usually we only see our elected officials when they need votes."

— PB Participant (Neighborhood Assembly Interviewee 5, District 39)

"We're a big presence in the community and we're represented in probably every major community meeting and I think that people generally have a good rapport with her (Council Member Viverito) but I think she touched a lot more people through this process because there are a lot of people who just don't come to those community meetings."

— Joe Taranto, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Melissa Mark-Viverito, District 8

"Now I know what he looks like, not just his name. Usually we only see our elected officials when they need votes."

"I've been in the area for 47 years so it feels really good. I'm glad the Council Members are really getting involved in the community."

– PB participant (Neighborhood Assembly Interviewee 14, District 8)



Council Members were able to identify additional community needs and make concrete improvements to neighborhoods, even beyond the projects that were eligible through the participatory budgeting process.

"There were a lot of things we couldn't fund through the [PB] process because they weren't capital projects, but, for example, we heard over and over again about the trash situation...hearing it in the context of the [PB]...I think it made us step up our game because we had a meeting with the sanitation commissioner. There's this one corner that gets really bad and we got them [sanitation department] to put an extra trash can on each corner to deal with the waste. We're also looking to invest some expense funding to purchase additional trash cans. That was a result of what we were hearing over and over in the PB process."

– Joe Taranto, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Melissa Mark-Viverito, District 8

"There are probably a dozen or more things that we're doing or asking agencies to do that we learned about through PB but either couldn't work through PB, didn't get to the ballot or didn't get enough votes but, it's clear that there were many people that want them."

– Alex Moore, Communications and Events Director, Office of Brad Lander, District 39

Table 2

Projects that did not win PB vote but will still be funded in FY '13⁴³

<u>Project</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Additional Garbage Cans	8th	\$10,000
50th Street Repaving	39th	\$150,000
Bus Countdown Clocks	39th	\$50,000
Ft. Hamilton Street Subway	39th	\$325,000
International Mother Tongue Monument	39th	\$150,000
Wi-Fi at Carroll Gardens Library	39th	\$250,000
Increase street lights and underpasses	45th	N/A
Additional speed bumps throughout the district	45th	N/A
<u>Total</u>		<u>\$935,000</u>

What changes did PB participants want for their communities?

In the year preceding participatory budgeting, the four Council Members focused their discretionary funds primarily on school improvements, park improvements and library improvements⁴⁴—and for the most part, the projects proposed by community members were consistent with previous allocations. However, some new trends emerged, with a large number of projects proposed for traffic and street repairs, lights and security cameras, public housing improvements and green space. In addition, some participants wanted projects that were ultimately ineligible for PB. The following trends emerged across the districts:

- School improvements were in the top five project ideas for every district.
- Park improvement, traffic improvements and security cameras were in the top five in two of the districts.
- Most ineligible project ideas were related to the proposal of funding for a new community center, a program or school improvements.
- Many traffic improvements were ineligible, since these are completed and funded through other funding streams.
- Over 75% of the ineligible projects were not eligible for PB because they were expense requests rather than capital projects, indicating the need for more education for participants.
- Some of the other reasons for ineligibility include: project cost too much or too little (5%), was outside of district (4%), was not a specific proposal (2%) or was traffic related and covered by federal funds (6%).



What projects made it on the ballot?

Total projects that were voted on city-wide:

78

Average cost of projects city-wide:

\$201,361

Most expensive project:

\$840,000

(for sidewalk bump outs in district 45)

Least expensive project:

\$35,000

(2 projects in district 32: dog run and trash receptacles)

The Education Committee had the most projects on the ballot in 3 of the 4 districts (8th, 39th, and 45th) at an average cost of \$198,350 city-wide.

Winning Projects City-wide

Total overall
funds allocated
to all winning
projects:
\$5,600,000

Number of
Projects:
27

Average cost
of a project:
\$196,370

Highest cost
project:
\$525,000

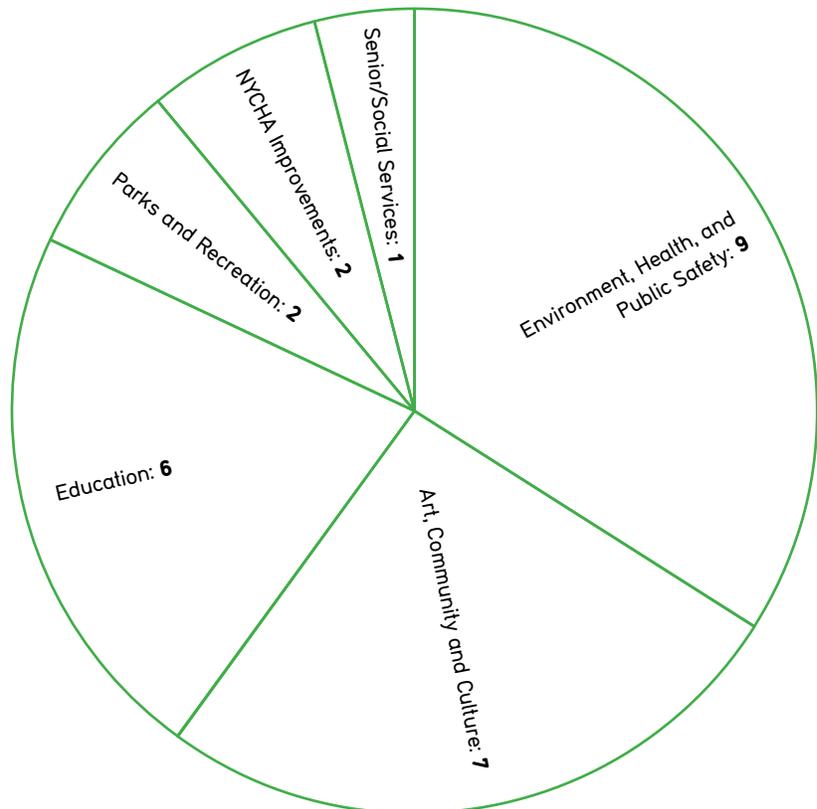
Lowest cost
project:
\$39,000

City-wide Summary

The city-wide data provides an important snapshot of the pilot year of PBNYC: who participated and why, what people learned, how PB shifted attitudes about government and civic engagement, and how participating Council Members and districts benefited from the process. PBNYC brought together thousands of New Yorkers from diverse backgrounds, many of whom do not typically participate in politics or have contact with government. These participants developed close connections with Council Members, neighbors and organizations in their districts, gained valuable leadership skills and knowledge about government and learned to work collaboratively to solve community problems.

To learn more about how PBNYC varied across the participating districts, researchers took a closer look at participation demographics, outreach and mobilization, project ideas and winning projects for each of the districts. The following chapters include data specific to council districts 8, 32, 39 and 45 as well as a highlighted budget delegate experience, a community that was mobilized by PBNYC and a winning project in each district.

Winning Projects by Type



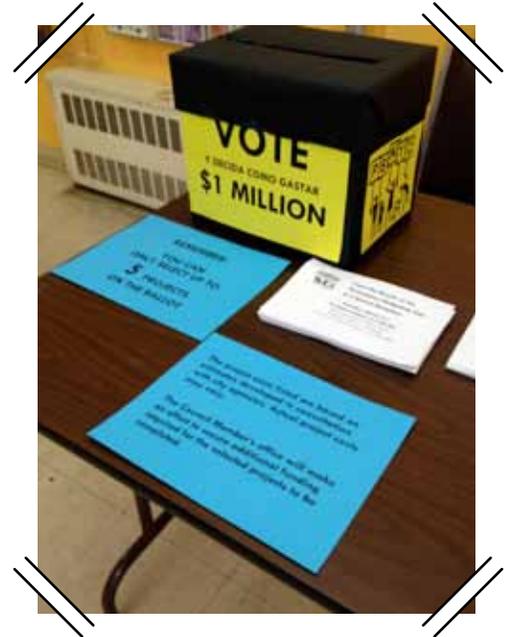
Recommendations for Future Participatory Budgets in NYC and Beyond

While the data indicates that PB succeeded in upholding the three guiding principles of transparency, equity and inclusion, it is helpful to build on past successes and identify areas for improvement. In order to strengthen the PB process in NYC and in other locations, we recommend the following:

Participation

Council Members should:

- **Reduce the voting age to 16**, to encourage youth participation.
- **Design the process with the community.** Engage a diverse group of organizations in deciding how the process will work, to build more support and ground the process in the local community.
- **Provide and publicize interpretation or special meetings and assemblies for non-English-speaking populations.** Districts that had assemblies in additional languages engaged more non-English speakers.
- **Hold community meetings specifically for youth.** Districts that organized youth assemblies engaged more young people.
- **Special PB events should be organized for seniors, who face unique participation barriers.** These meetings should be accessible for seniors, occur during the day and include materials with large fonts. When these techniques were used in the first year of PB, senior participation drastically increased.
- **Conduct targeted outreach to specific populations that tend not to participate.** Districts that used targeted outreach were able to engage more community members from the targeted groups.



A PBNYC voting site in Melissa Mark-Viverito's district gave directions in both Spanish and English.

Outreach

Council Member offices should:

- **Commit sufficient resources to ensure that effective outreach and mobilization work can be done.** Create outreach workgroups to focus on outreach and mobilization in the community.
- **Set up a series of group outreach and phone banking days in each district** so that more people can become familiar with how to do effective outreach and begin to employ these skills.
- **Ensure that outreach materials are translated** into the variety of languages represented in the districts.
- **Use ethnic and local media** (newspapers and radio shows) strategically to reach out to particular populations.
- **Enter into partnerships with groups that work directly with youth, non-citizens and the formerly incarcerated** as a way to ensure that these traditionally excluded populations are encouraged and supported to participate in PB.
- **Run the voter mobilization work like a traditional Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign**, by which people are contacted three to six times (in person, by phone, by mail) in order to inspire participation.

Project Ideas

Council Members should:

- **Develop a clear and consistent methodology across districts for determining whether or not a proposed project is eligible for PB.**
- **Consider allocating expense funding for PB.** Many neighborhood assembly participants proposed projects that can only be funded through expense funds.
- **Increase funding allocations in areas that residents prioritized.**

Expansion of PB to Cover Other Pots of Money

While the nearly \$5.3 million allocated through PB is a huge step forward for democratic decision-making, it is a tiny fraction of the full New York City and City Council budgets (.008% of the total NYC Budget; .06% of the NYC capital budget and 1% of capital discretionary funds allocated by City Council).

New York City council, City agencies and the Mayor should:

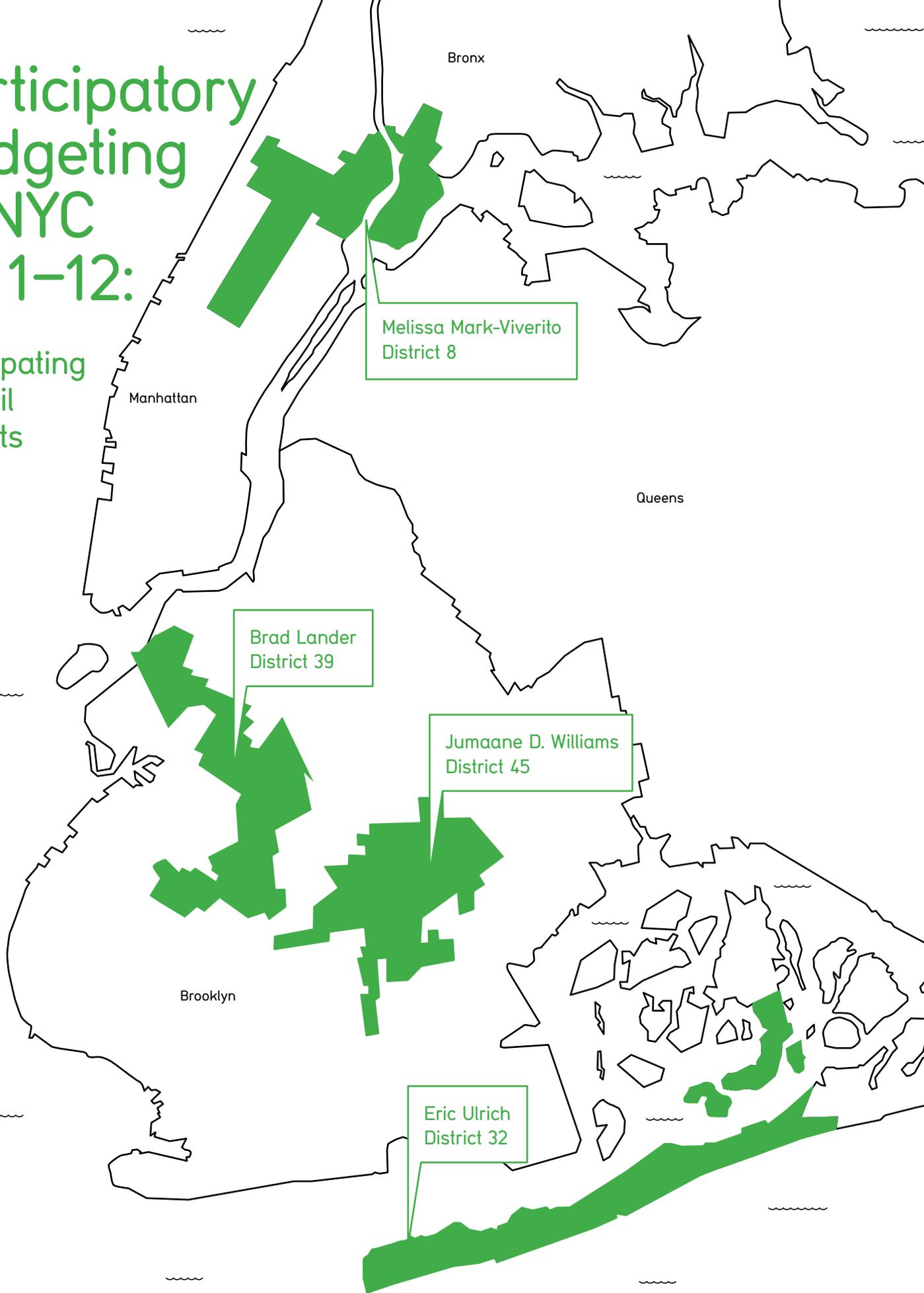
- **Expand PB to additional pots of money:**
 - **Expense Funds:** Many desired projects were ineligible by virtue of being expense fund projects, indicating an interest in more participation for these funding decisions.
 - **City agencies such as New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), NYC Department of Education (DoE) and Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) should implement PB for their budgets.**
 - **Full City Council budget.**
 - **Overall City budget.**
- **Dedicate more funding for implementation of participatory budgeting.** If the City wants to meaningfully engage residents, more resources are necessary to facilitate inclusive participation.



District 39 handed out stickers to participants after they voted.

Participatory Budgeting in NYC 2011-12:

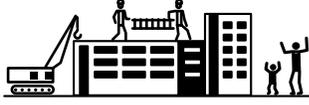
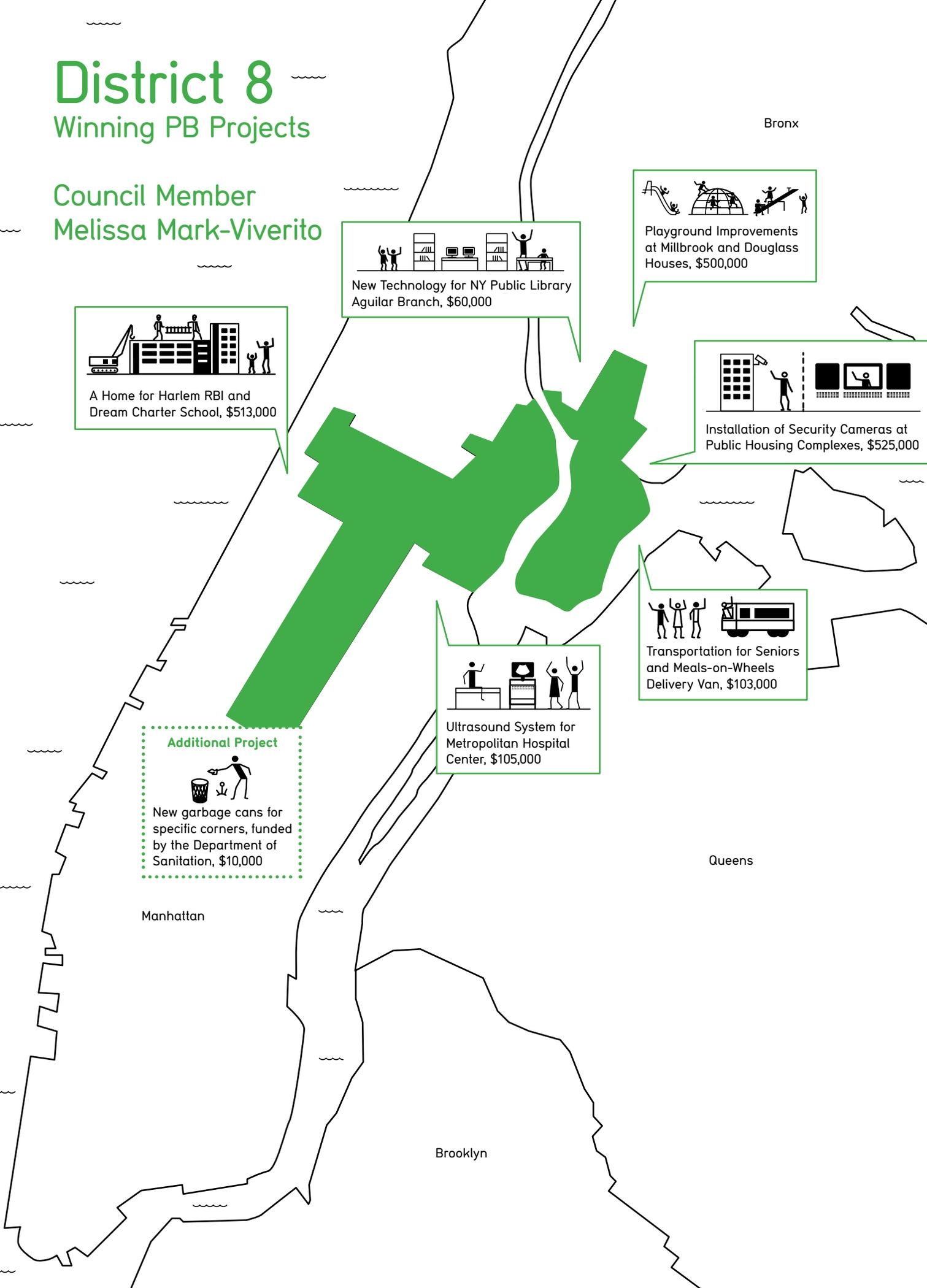
Participating Council Districts



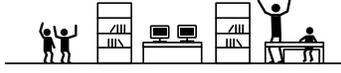
District 8

Winning PB Projects

Council Member
Melissa Mark-Viverito



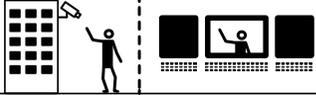
A Home for Harlem RBI and Dream Charter School, \$513,000



New Technology for NY Public Library Aguilar Branch, \$60,000



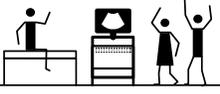
Playground Improvements at Millbrook and Douglass Houses, \$500,000



Installation of Security Cameras at Public Housing Complexes, \$525,000



Transportation for Seniors and Meals-on-Wheels Delivery Van, \$103,000



Ultrasound System for Metropolitan Hospital Center, \$105,000

Additional Project



New garbage cans for specific corners, funded by the Department of Sanitation, \$10,000

Bronx

Manhattan

Queens

Brooklyn

District 32

Winning PB Projects

Council Member
Eric Ulrich

Queens

Brooklyn



Pagers for four Volunteer Fire Departments, \$48,000



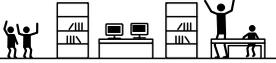
Water pump for Volunteer Fire Departments to Alleviate Flooding, \$39,000



Cascade (Oxygen Refill) System for Fire Departments \$60,000



Technology Upgrades at PS 47, PS 317/MS 318, PS 114, \$230,000



Library Renovation/Upgrade at Peninsula Library Branch, \$500,000



Gazebo/Grandstand/Outdoor Performance Space on Shorefront Parkway, \$150,000



Library Vending Machine in Breezy Point, \$200,000



Knights of Columbus, Rockaway Council: Handicapped Bathroom Upgrade, \$45,000



Six Argus Security Cameras for 100th Precinct (3 locations) \$100,000

District 39

Winning PB Projects

Council Member
Brad Lander

Manhattan



Renovation of two dysfunctional bathrooms at PS 124, \$150,000



Planting 100 new trees on blocks throughout the district with few or no trees, \$100,000



Repairing Prospect Park pedestrian paths to prevent flooding, and adding trash cans in the park, \$205,000



New technology for PS 130 and PS 154, \$140,000

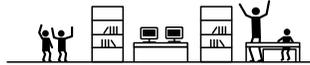
Brooklyn



Repairs and safety improvements at the dangerous Prospect Expressway/Church Avenue pedestrian crossing, \$200,000



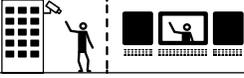
Innovative community composting system near Gowanus Canal to turn 1 ton/day of food waste into soil, \$165,000



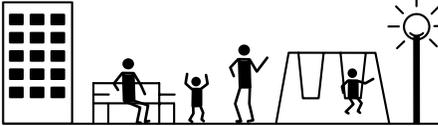
New books and equipment for the Kensington public library to enhance the branch's use for meetings, storytelling, rehearsals, and small performances promoting Kensington's cultural diversity, \$80,000

District 45

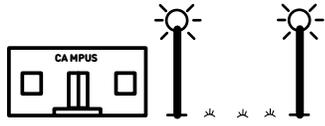
Council Member
Jumaane D. Williams



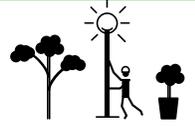
The installation of two security cameras at several locations district-wide, \$400,000



Funding towards the purchase or renovation of a space for a proposed community resource center, \$350,000



Field lights for Tilden Educational Campus, \$350,000



The installation of floodlights in each park in the district, \$150,000



The purchase of desktops, laptops, a security cart, and a smartboard for students at the CAMBA Beacon Program located at PS 269 Nostrand, \$150,000

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44. "Supporting Detail for Fiscal Year 2012: Changes to the Executive Capital Budget Adopted by the City Council Pursuant to Section 254 of the City Charter." *The New York City Council* http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/adopt11_capresowork.pdf

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About the Authors

The Community Development Project (CDP) at the Urban Justice Center strengthens the impact of grassroots organizations in New York City's low-income and other excluded communities. We partner with community organizations to win legal cases, publish community-driven research reports, assist with the formation of new organizations and cooperatives, and provide technical and transactional assistance in support of their work towards social justice. CDP's Research and Policy Initiative partners with and provides strategic support to grassroots community organizations to build the power of their organizing and advocacy work.

For more information about CDP please visit:

www.cdp-ny.org

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About the Designers

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement. CUP collaborates with designers, educators, advocates, students, and communities to make educational tools that demystify complex policy and planning issues.

MTWTF is a graphic design studio specializing in publications, exhibitions, environmental graphics, and interactive work with clients in other disciplines such as art, architecture, and urban planning.