



DATE: April 17, 2024
TO: Council Budget and Finance Committee
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: People's Budget Project Debrief

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives this report debriefing the People's Budget process and projects and provides feedback.

SUMMARY

The Hayward People's Budget was awarded a one-time amount of \$350,000 in 2021 to fund community-generated, community-led projects. The goal of the People's Budget project has been to increase public safety by building connections among neighbors and civic capacity. This report summarizes the current status of the funded People's Budget projects, as well as the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from this process.

BACKGROUND

Policy Innovation Workshop on Public Safety

The Hayward People's Budget originated from the Policy Innovation Workshop on Public Safety that took place from February - April 2021. The [ten-week Workshop](#) paired teams of community members and staff to collaboratively brainstorm, research, and test possible policy alternatives to increase community safety. The Workshop resulted in a set of pilot recommendations that were funded by Council in May 2021, including the People's Budget, the Hayward Evaluation And Response Teams (HEART), and the Dispatch Assessment.

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Neighborhood Delegates and Project Generation

For the People's Budget process, staff divided Hayward into six sectors. Each sector was assigned a budget of \$50,000-\$70,000, depending on the population and income level of the

sector. Staff then conducted an outreach and engagement process to create the project proposals.

- September-October 2021: Neighborhood Meetings and Delegate Recruitment: Staff held 6 online meetings and 6 in person events at parks to communicate about things happening in Hayward and market the participatory budgeting process. At these meetings, residents were invited to apply to be neighborhood delegates.
- November 2021: Delegate Kickoff: Staff hosted virtual orientations and trainings for neighborhood delegates to support their efforts to conduct community outreach and draft proposals. Over 50 delegates were involved in the process.
- December 2021 – March 2022: Brainstorming and Creation of Proposals: Neighborhood delegates conducted outreach to collect ideas for projects and gauge the interest level for each concept. Neighborhood delegates worked with City staff to create feasible project proposals. There were no restrictions on the type of proposals, as long as the project planned to connect neighbors and build community.
- April 11, 2022: Voting Guide Released: Staff published a bilingual voting guide by sector with all the proposed projects. This was printed for in person events and posted online.

Voting

Voting occurred between May 1-20, 2022. Residents age 10 and up were invited to vote in person at sites around Hayward or online. No registration or identification was needed. Voters were required to sign an affidavit to confirm age and residency. Staff hosted five in person voting events at parks and High Schools. 1,117 residents voted. The results can be [viewed here](#).

Project Implementation:

Following the results of the votes, City of Hayward staff met individually with the project leads for each of the twelve projects to create a project scope and execute an agreement to transfer funds. Each project was required to identify a nonprofit or business to receive any funds on the project’s behalf because the City does not issue checks directly to individuals for tax purposes. Staff assisted seven of the project leads with finding a fiscal sponsor, since they did not have one.

Further updates on each project and video footage can be found on the [People's Budget main webpage](#).

Summary of Event Status

Sector	Project	Amount	Status
1	510 Night Market	\$25,000	The Night Market took place on September 30, 2023 from 4-9PM in the St. Rose Hospital parking lot. The event included 68

			vendors and live performances. The City led parts of this event directly and EYFC was the fiscal sponsor for some parts.
1	Palma Ceia Park Renovation	\$25,000	Staff connected the community leads for this project with HARD staff. Through a grant match opportunity, HARD is utilizing the People's Budget funds to design and implement a new play structure at Palma Ceia Park. In November of 2022, HARD and the City of Hayward held a community outreach event to engage residents around Palma Ceia Park and gathered feedback on the initial draft for the new play structure, which should be completed by Summer 2024. HARD is the fiscal partner of this project.
2	Cumbia in Hayward: A Day of Bonanza	\$20,000	This event took place on Saturday, August 5th from 5-10PM at Eden Youth and Family Center (EYFC). The event included music, drinks & snacks, raffles, dance, and a backpack giveaway. EYFC was the fiscal sponsor.
2	Skate Fest: Roller and Inline Skating	\$50,000	Avanta Boot Labs, the project lead and fiscal sponsor for this project, hosted a community skating event on July 1st, 2023 at Weekes Park. The free roller skating and music event included free roller skate rentals, live music and DJ, a Brazilian Samba band, and car show. In addition, Avanta produced special Hayward-themed roller and inline skates, which they raffled to the community at the event.
3	Stackfest	\$25,000	StackFest hosted three events at Chabot College during Summer 2023 with music, cuisine from local restaurants, and local business vendors. La Familia was the fiscal sponsor.
3	Mental Health Camp for Teens	\$28,000	Project reFRESH was a resident-led, 8-week summer camp program focused on the well-being of teen girls ages 14-17, including a 3-night camping trip, peer mentoring, wellness and check-in sessions. La Familia was the fiscal sponsor.
4	Community Farming	\$23,000	This project was originally focused on supporting the farm at Tennyson High School. Due to unforeseen constraints, the project leads pivoted to put these funds towards launching the South Hayward Public/Farmers Market at South Hayward BARD, which will start around Memorial Day. EYFC is the fiscal sponsor.
4	ESL Tutoring	\$45,000	El Puente Comunitario, the project lead and fiscal sponsor for this project, kicked off an English and math tutoring program for ESL Students at the end of September 2022 at Schafer Park Elementary. They originally expected around 70 students but had an overwhelming interest with over 140 students participating. Students tested throughout the program and showed a marked improvement.

5	Tree Planting	\$27,000	The project lead for this program experienced unforeseen conflicts that limited their ability to move forward. Staff continues to work with the project lead and others to find a suitable replacement to spend these funds in District 5 on tree planting.
5	Pop Up Community Garden	\$26,000	This event will be held on April 27, 2024 at Bidwell Park. The event will include a giveaway of 600 plants in partnership with the Seed Lending Library and Alameda County Master Gardeners. The City is hosting this event directly.
6	Hazel Garden Community Connect	\$31,000	In August of 2022, Hazel Garden Community Connect hosted a world food competition along with a potluck for National Night Out. The neighborhood event brought together around 80 attendees to share food and conversation. The project is also funding improvements to the garden, such as a community event kit and a dog run area. Forestr.org is the fiscal sponsor for this project.
6	Sun Gallery Community Space	\$31,000	Sun Gallery, who was the fiscal sponsor for this project, partnered with the Hayward Techies & Maker Club to create the Makerspace at Sun Gallery's Art Studio. This project purchased 3D printers, laser cutters, LED electronics, and other tools for community use, as well as upgraded the outdoor courtyard into a café, stage area, and workshop. To commemorate this project, Sun Gallery hosted a ribbon cutting for the Makerspace and Art Meets Tech reception opening on August 12, 2023 with art demonstrations, a taco truck, snacks and beverages, special coffee, and music.

DISCUSSION

The People’s Budget was the City’s first attempt at running a participatory budgeting process that involved community ideation and voting. Because of this, staff relied on best practices to design the process and made modifications as needs arose. Staff has summarized lessons learned below. For more context on participatory budgeting in general, staff [provided a high level overview](#) on the topic to the CBFC in September of 2020.

One important note is that the 2021-23 Hayward People’s Budget was focused on community-led projects. This created unique benefits and challenges. In comparison, many participatory budgeting processes are to fund government-led projects like traffic calming or recreational programming. In those cases, the community engagement is primarily limited to the idea generation and voting process and community members are much less involved in the implementation portion. Other communities have limited their participatory budgeting processes to established non-profit providers only and do not offer staff support for implementation.

Successes

Building Connections and Civic Capacity – The stated goal of the People’s Budget was to build community connections and civic capacity. Staff experienced several indicators of success on this goal. The fact that over 50 community members volunteered to be neighborhood delegates, many of whom had not participated in a City initiative previously, indicates an appetite for this type of engagement. Staff surveyed the delegates at several points and a common theme was that people were excited to be involved and help their neighborhood, but had previously struggled to meet neighbors.

For many project leads, this was the first time they had worked on a community-led project of this size or at all, and they embraced the opportunity to build new connections and skills. For example, the owners of Avanta Boot Labs, which is located off Tennyson, had wanted to give back to the Hayward community but hadn’t previously implemented a community skating event. Participating in this process with the City connected them to a wide audience and gave them a platform to engage residents with their business’s mission.

In the case of Hazel Garden Community Connect, this project was the catalyst to build needed physical infrastructure and create formal agreements. The Hazel Garden on Main Street is a long running community garden on City land that, up to this point, had been largely informal. Through the People’s Budget process, the City connected the garden volunteers to a nonprofit sponsor, Forestr.org, which has allowed them to receive grant funding for improvements. In addition, the garden now has an updated lease with the City that provides clarity on roles and improved services.

A few of the projects have already grown into longer term initiatives. For example, El Puente Comunitario was able to demonstrate proof of concept with its tutoring program at Schafer Park Elementary in the fall of 2022. The pilot was so successful that the leads advocated to HUSD to provide ongoing funding to continue the program. Also, the leaders of Stack-Fest, who had long been eager to launch community-centered events for local vendors, piloted this concept to create an ongoing model. Each of their three events last summer grew progressively larger and better attended as they learned about how to create a successful event. They have now planned two pop up markets for this spring.

Staff interviewed five of the project leads in February about their experience and they expressed pride at their efforts and enthusiasm for continuing to be leaders in Hayward. While each project had its challenges, these were also learning opportunities that built community capacity for future efforts.

Expanding Events to Other Parts of the City – One of the top community requests for the People’s Budget projects and most common pieces of positive feedback during implementation has been the strong desire and gratitude for having more family-friendly events in Hayward across all neighborhoods. Altogether, the People’s Budget events reached at least 1,500 unique community members. Attendees shared how much they appreciated attending events close to home and spending time with other residents,

particularly after the pandemic. For example, the Night Market was able to activate a section of the St. Rose Hospital parking lot, which helped event planners and attendees rethink where a successful event could be held in our city. In addition, Skate-Fest was held at the new all-purpose courts at Weekes Parks. Several attendees shared they now regularly use that park for skating, which they had not visited before.

Student Voice – To help hear from more community members, the neighborhood delegates recommended that staff open the voting to include individuals aged 10 and up. Staff worked with the Hayward Youth Commission on outreach, Chabot College classes on ideation, and held voting parties during lunch breaks on each of the HUSD High School campuses. The largest voter response came from youth. Staff found that students were eager to participate, quick to understand the concept of participatory budgeting, and both surprised and inspired to see the types of projects they could vote for. Staff feels that student engagement is a promising opportunity for future initiatives like this.

Challenges and Lessons Learned for Future Projects

Covid – One primary challenge was that the City began this effort during the Covid pandemic, and therefore had to host delegate meetings virtually. The lack of in-person interaction was a barrier to forming neighborhood relationships and limited the delegates ability to conduct outreach. Covid also delayed many of the projects as project leads navigated launching events while parts of the community continued to isolate. Because of this, staff extended the deadlines for project completion.

Challenges with Event Logistics – Project leads expressed challenges with navigating the permits and approvals needed for larger events and relied heavily on staff support to successfully get the required items in place before the events. This included special event permits from the City, insurance requirements from HARD and Chabot College, and food and special event permits from County Environmental Health. Staff will be utilizing the FY 2025 Management Fellow to conduct an assessment of these barriers to present to Council at the August 20, 2024 work session on special events.

In addition, project leads expressed challenges with finding spaces in some neighborhoods that could accommodate medium sized events. Organizers often relied on City staff connections to access spaces like the Chabot parking lot for Stack-Fest or Weekes Park for Skate-Fest. It isn't always clear which spaces may be available to rent and the process for doing so. Moving forward, creating a menu of public event space options with pricing could be a way for the City to encourage community-led events outside of the downtown.

Limited Existing Civic Capacity – The most successful participatory budgeting examples from around the world rely on a robust ecosystem of neighborhood-focused nonprofits that can accept and administer funding and coordinate neighborhood volunteers to implement projects. Staff found this to be true with the People's Budget - the most seamless projects were those that were led by nonprofits or individuals with administrative capacity.

However, most project leads for this process were not in this position and did not have a connection to a nonprofit or business that could serve as a fiscal partner to accept funds. Even established organized groups like the Prospect Neighborhood Association needed assistance from staff to find a fiscal sponsor. Staff found that the breadth of options for Hayward-based fiscal sponsors is limited, which can be a barrier for grassroots or volunteer-led projects.

If the City were to rely only on established nonprofits, one challenge is that some neighborhoods in Hayward may be left out. While there are long-standing service based nonprofits in Hayward, there are fewer active neighborhood-focused organizations (aside from HOAs, which often have a different focus). This reality was one of the reasons why the 2021-23 People's Budget process was designed to build grassroots capacity. The tradeoff with that approach, however, is the need for substantial staff involvement.

Staff Impact – The biggest limitation for replicating this specific model is the need for extensive staff support. The 2021-23 People's Budget process was possible because the City used 50% of the Management Fellow position, used staff volunteers from other divisions, and hired temporary staff support that was paid for using vacancy savings. As described above, there are important benefits to supporting community-led project implementation, but it also requires a substantial amount of staff time to provide technical assistance and ensure that City funds are being spent responsibly. If the City pursues participatory budgeting in the future, staff recommends being realistic about the staff impact by 1) assigning 80% of a position for the duration of the project, 2) including budget to contract out staff support, or 3) limiting the projects to government-led items.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with this informational report.

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