

# Youth Voice, Youth Choice

Youth between the ages of 11 – 25 years old, voted on how to spend \$700,000 of the City of Seattle's budget.

Youth Voice,  
Youth Choice



**Seattle**  
Neighborhoods

## Why Youth Participatory Budgeting?

- Work together to improve our city
- Engage historically underrepresented communities
- Empower youth to actively participate
- Spark interest in local government and voting among youth
- Increase communication and trust between City officials and underserved communities

# Our Starting Point: Forming a Steering Committee

## Who were our Steering Committee members?

Nineteen organizations representing multiple dimensions of diversity: age, race, cultural background, neighborhood, and organizational focus.

## What did they do?

- ✓ Renamed and rebranded ‘Seattle Participatory Budgeting’ to
- ✓ Charted a course for Youth Voice, Youth Choice: See the [2015-16 Rule Book](#)
- ✓ Set goals for Youth Voice, Youth Choice
- ✓ Set outreach targets and assisted with Idea Collection and Vote Week turnout

Youth Voice,  
Youth Choice

# Our Process

January

February

March

April

May

June through 2017

## Collect



Community Members brainstormed ideas for potential projects

## Develop



Youth Volunteers developed ideas into concrete proposals for the ballot

## Vote



Youth voted on which projects they wanted to see implemented

## Fund



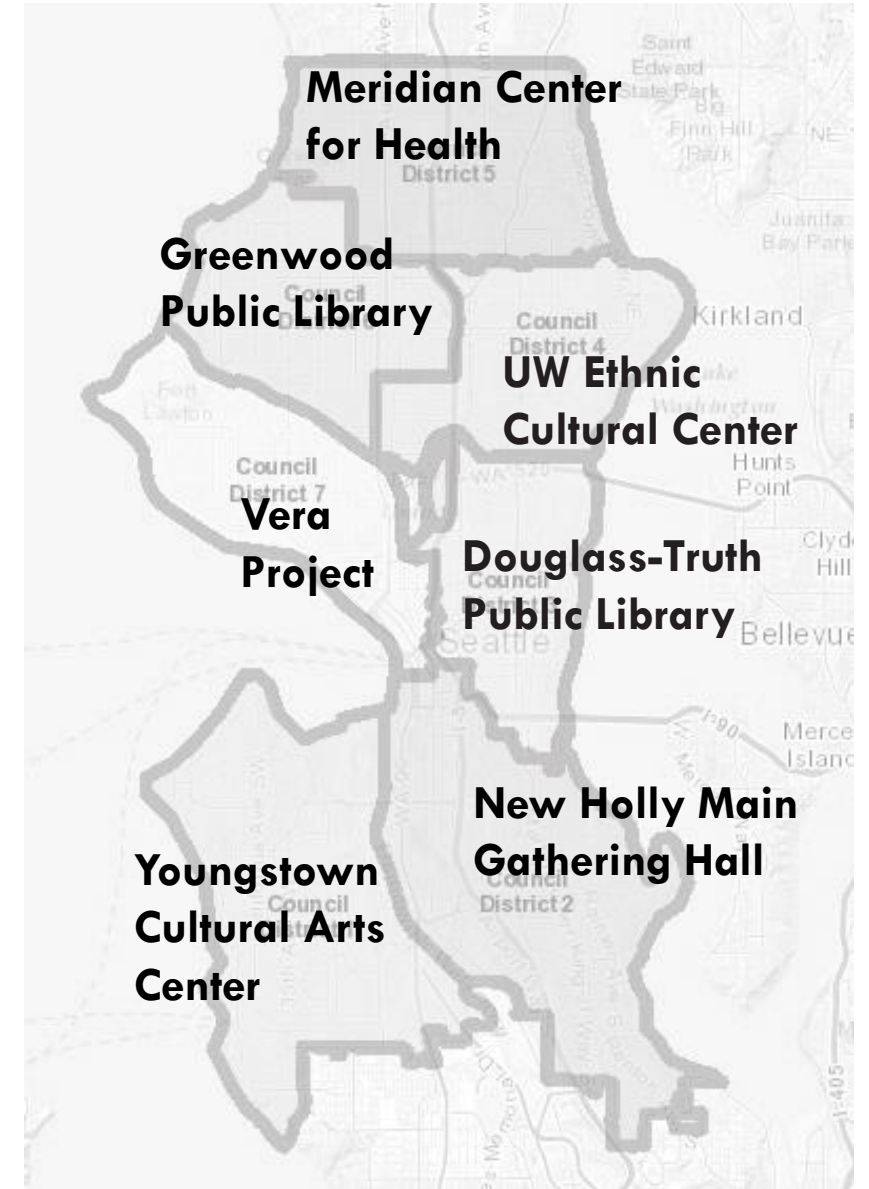
The City will now fund and carry out the winning proposals!

# Idea Collection

 = 534 Ideas

## Who Participated?

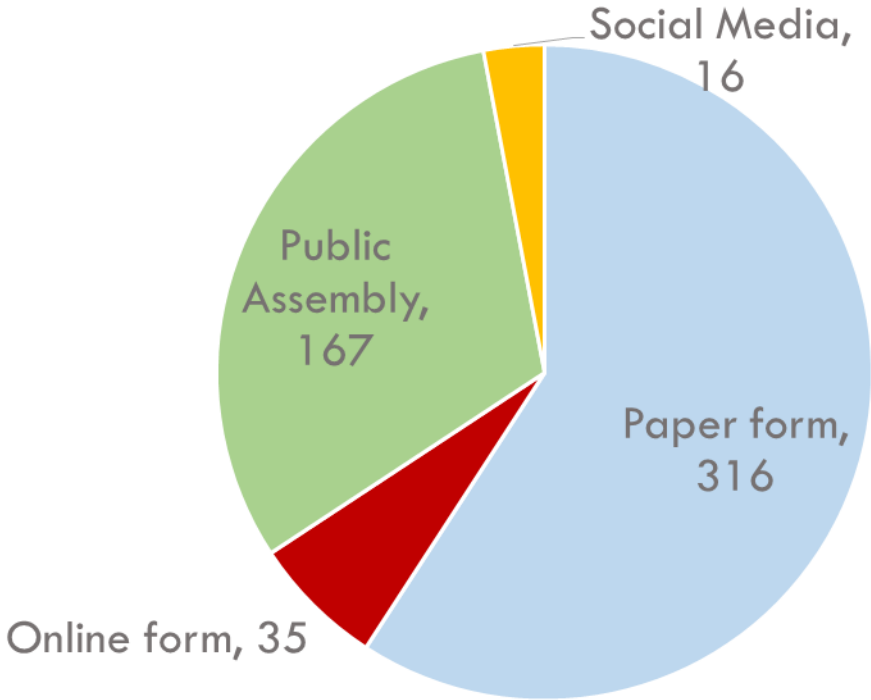
- Hosted 7 Public Assemblies (101 participants)
- Hosted 10 Mobile Assemblies (229 participants)
- In-school Presentations (480 participants)



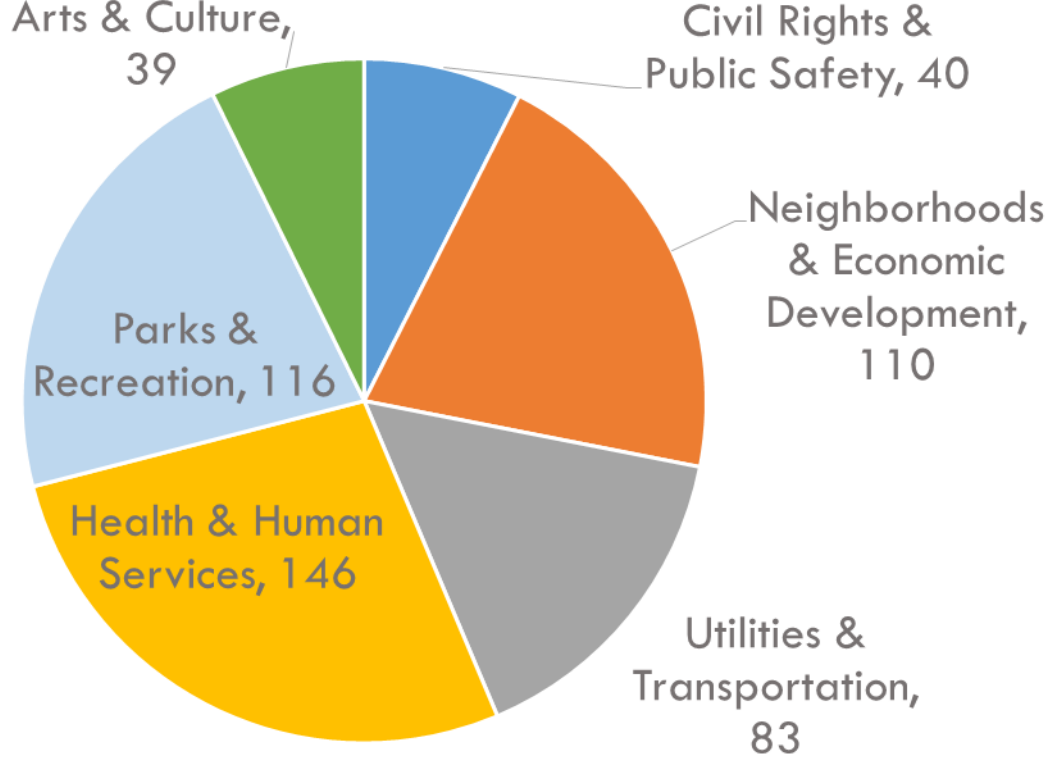
\*The steering committee set a goal to collect 700 project ideas

# Idea Collection (cont'd)

### Ideas Collected by Type of Engagement



### Ideas Collected by Category





# Proposal Development

## RECRUITMENT

## CITY DEPARTMENT FEEDBACK

Youth Budget Delegates

Budget Delegate Facilitators

Budget Delegate (BD) Orientation

534 Ideas

BDs choose committees and begin work on proposals

Early feedback by City depts. on project ideas

52 Ideas

BDs incorporate City dept. feedback in project proposals

30 Ideas

Request cost estimate for project proposals

25 Ideas

Finalize ballot language and create ballots

19 Ideas

February

March

April

May



**\*The steering committee set a goal to recruit 55 budget delegates**



# Vote Week

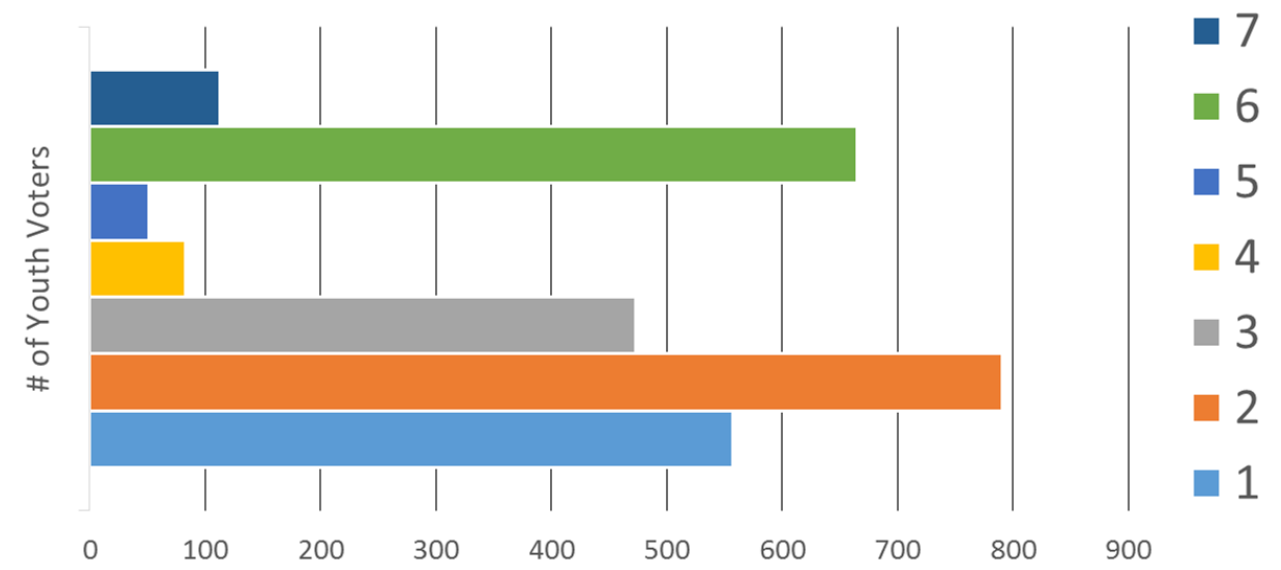
May 21 – 29

**3,065 Voters**

- 486 online ballots
- 2,579 paper ballots

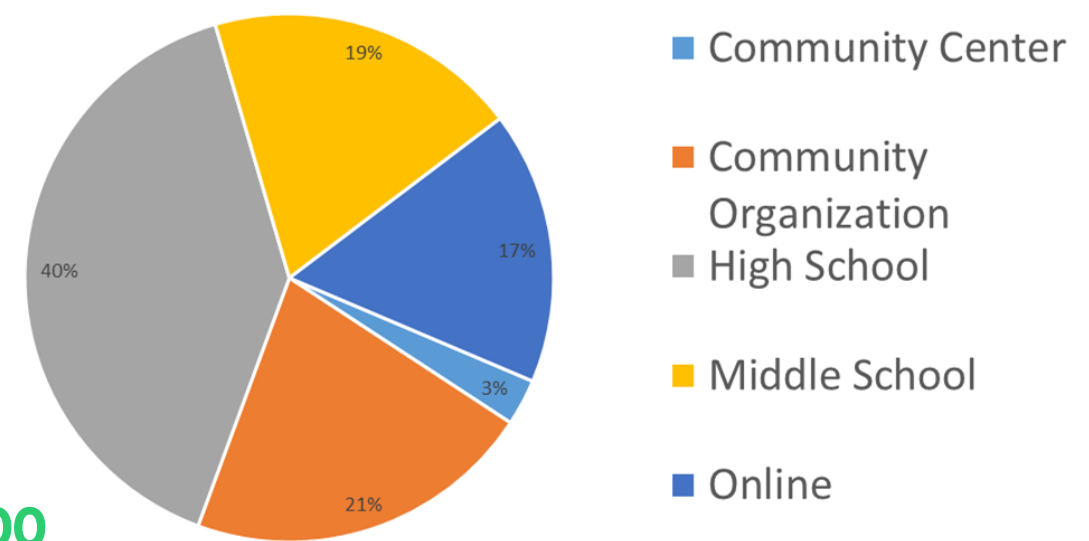
**Over 60 Vote Sites Participated**

### Vote Distribution by City Council District



*\*Out of 2,579 paper ballots received*

### Vote Week Participation by Type of Site



**\*The steering committee set a goal to reach 1,000**



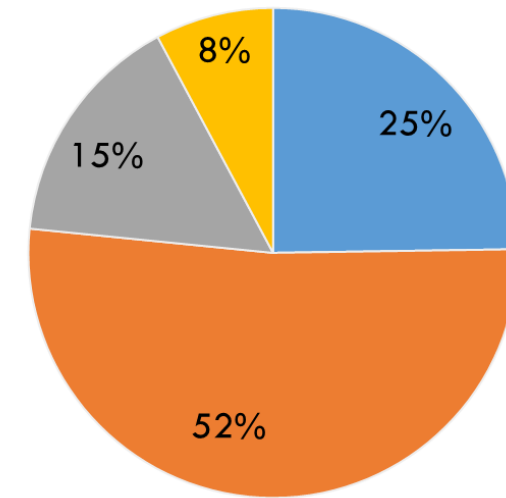
# Who voted?

Voters by Race	In-Person	Online	Combined
American Indian or Alaska Native	3%	0%	3%
Asian	16%	18%	16%
Black or African American	22%	14%	21%
Hispanic or Latino/a	14%	5%	13%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4%	0%	4%
White	36%	55%	38%
Other	4%	7%	5%

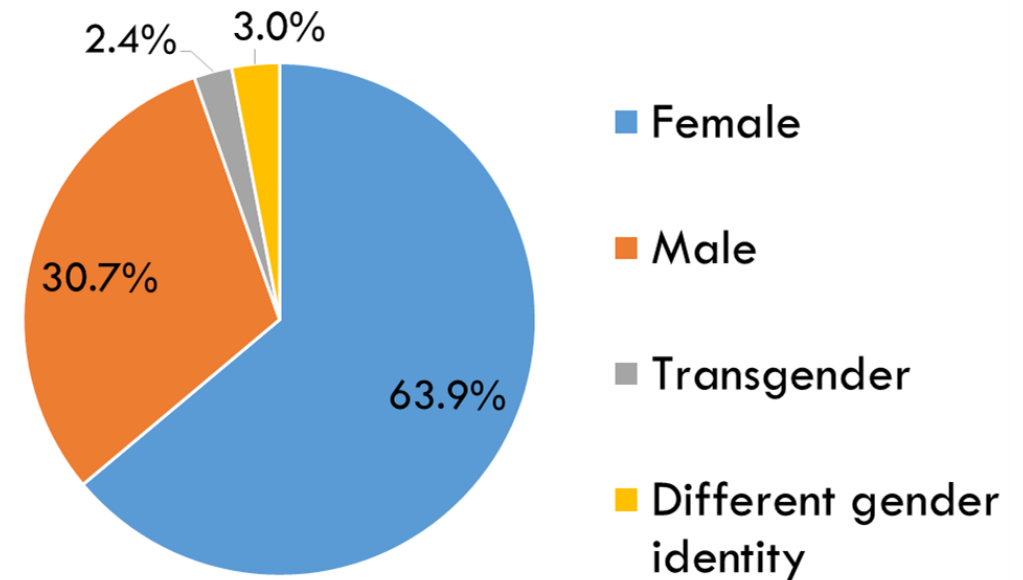
\* Out of a total of 2,325 surveys submitted

## Voters by Age \*

■ 11-13 ■ 14-17 ■ 18-21 ■ 22-25

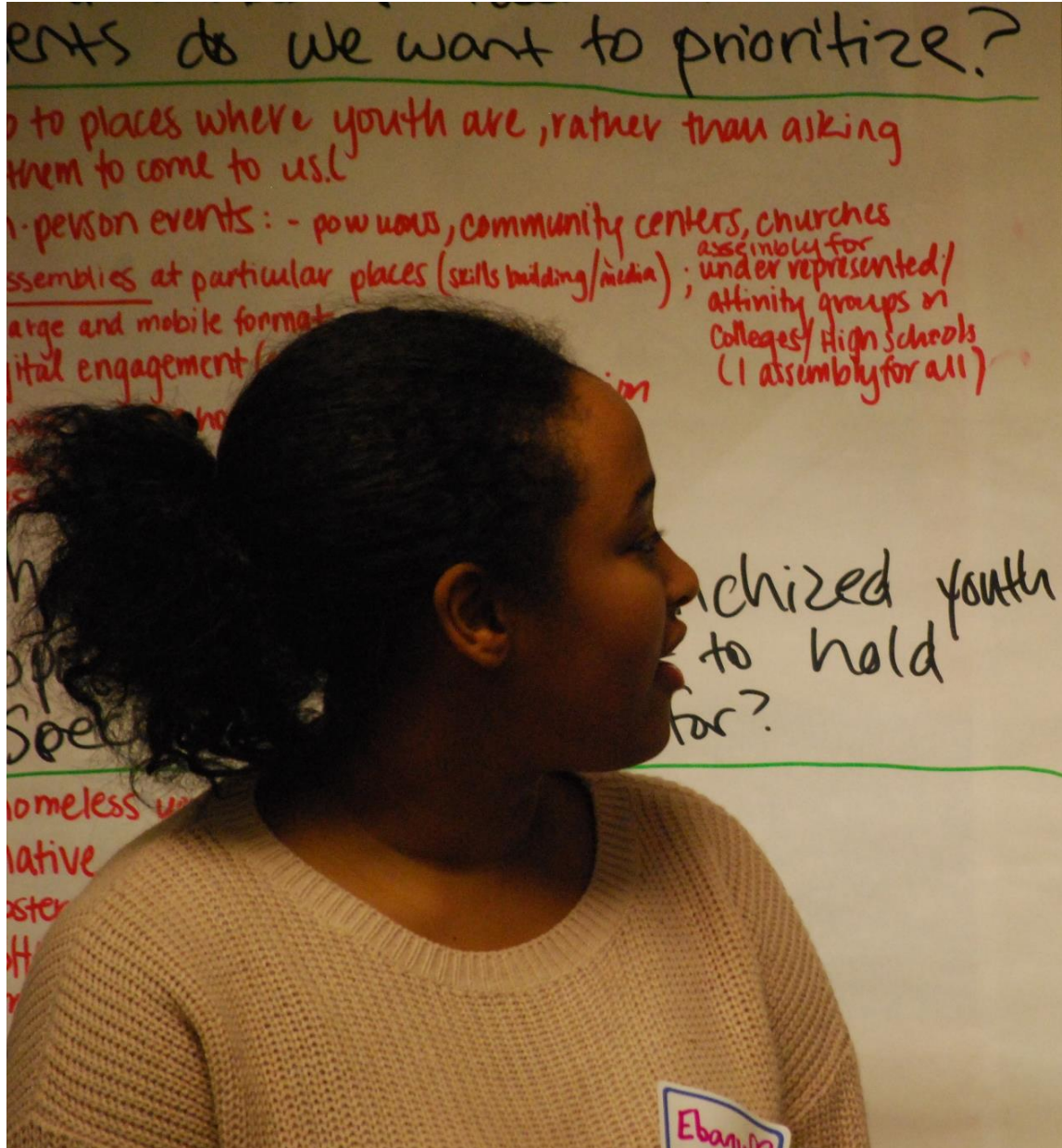


## Voters by Gender \*



# What did youth vote for?

Winning Youth Voice, Youth Choice Projects	Ballot Cost	Funded Amount	Total Votes
Houses for People Experiencing Homelessness	\$128,500	\$128,500	1900
Youth Homeless Shelter Improvements	\$42,000	\$42,000	1828
Job Readiness Workshops for Homeless Youth	\$43,600	\$43,600	1517
Homeless Children and Youth Liaison Services	\$70,400	\$70,400	1515
Wi-Fi Hotspot Checkout	\$165,000	\$165,000	1377
Park Bathroom Upgrades	\$205,000	\$205,000	1307
Safe Routes to Schools	145,000	<b>\$45,500</b>	1306
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$700,000</b>	



## Challenges:

- Timeline
- Online voting
- Broad age range defined as 'Youth'
- Program familiarity
- Timing of Vote Week
- Staff capacity

## Successes:

- Timeline
- RSJI and equity principles central to process
- Community response
- Voter turn-out
- Quality of projects selected

# Takeaways:

## Steering Committee

- Better geographical distribution
- Refine decision-making authority
- Consider org capacity in recruitment
- Stronger facilitation of group

## Idea Collection

- Avoid stand-alone events
- Identify partnering opportunities
- Combine facilitator role for Idea Collection and Proposal Development
- Collect ideas throughout the year
- Boost outreach for online idea submission

## Proposal Development

- Work with City depts to review list first
- Create more opportunities for Budget Delegates to learn about City programs
- Actively involve City depts in sessions
- Lessen time commitment for budget delegates



# Takeaways (cont'd):

## Vote Week

- Utilize Steering Committee more for ballot distribution and pick-up
- Ensure Vote Week does not coincide with a holiday weekend
- Ensure Youth Voice, Youth Choice is searchable
- Create Voter Guide and make available one week prior to Vote Week
- Make online voting more accessible

## In General

- Define youth as 13 – 19 years old for this process
- Engage schools early and often
- Increase opportunities for youth to participate in a variety of ways
- Allow for greater lead time in preparation for key stages

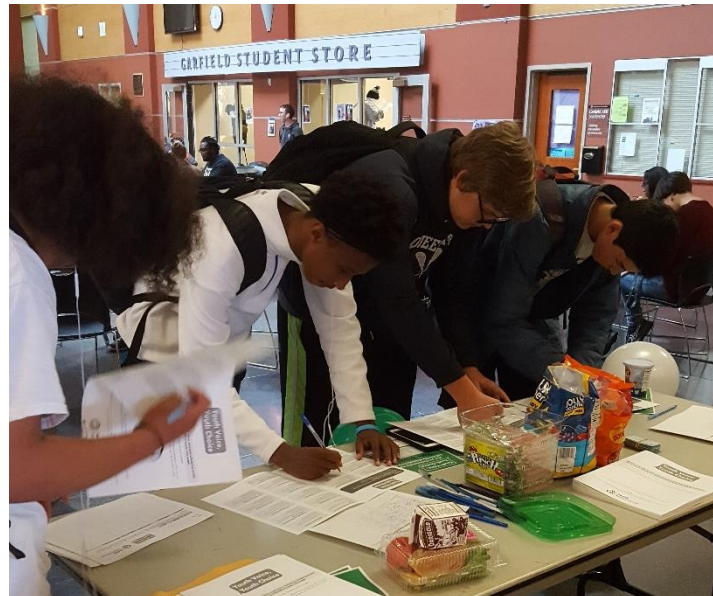


# Outcomes (realized):

- ✓ Youth decide on projects that improve their communities
- ✓ Youth, especially youth from historically underserved communities, are aware, engaged, and excited about local government
- ✓ High voter turnout
- ✓ Projects are vetted for feasibility by time of public vote
- ✓ Participants receive more information about the City's funding opportunities

# Outcomes (in-progress):

- High retention of Steering Committee members and Budget Delegates
- Process is not tied to traditional gatekeepers
- Sustained engagement of community partners
- Projects implemented within one year



# Questions?

**Youth Voice,  
Youth Choice**



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