

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

2023-2024

GUIDEBOOK

Everything you need to know about
Participatory Budgeting



To request this information in another language or format, call 206-477-3800
or send email to AskLocalServices@kingcounty.gov

ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook was developed by King County’s 2023-2024 Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee, a group of residents who applied to guide the second cycle of the urban unincorporated **King County Participatory Budgeting** process. This document sets the guidelines for the 2023-24 Participatory Budgeting program.

These guidelines reflect the unique needs, interests, and issues of the five unincorporated areas in King County: **East Federal Way, East Renton, Fairwood, North Highline/White Center, and Skyway-West Hill.**

This is a living document that is meant to be revised with every participatory budgeting cycle.

The purpose of this guidebook is to give instruction to community members on how to take part in the participatory budgeting process.

2023-2024 Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee



Pictured R-L: (Back row) Jeremy Gitchel, Jerry Jennings, Beau Ervin; (Middle row) Norma Garcia, Ruth Contreras-Rodriguez, Sarey Savy, Marilyn Schafer, Kayla Knight, Heather Patrick, Noni Ervin, Lorraine Swalley, Diane McClain, Cynthia Edwards; (Front Row) Jacques Imperial, Brandon Houston, LaCretiah Claytor

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WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING?

Participatory budgeting is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. It gives people real power to make real decisions over real money.

A single cycle has five key phases: Design the Process, Brainstorm Ideas, Develop Proposals, Community Vote, and Fund Winning Projects.

Design the process. A steering committee that represents the community creates the rules and engagement plan.

Brainstorm ideas. Through meetings and online tools, residents share and discuss ideas for projects.

Develop proposals. Volunteer “budget delegates” develop the ideas into feasible proposals.

Vote. Residents vote on the proposals that most serve the community’s needs.

Fund winning projects. The government or institution funds and implements the winning ideas.

In addition to these phases, processes are typically evaluated and improved between cycles.

Participatory budgeting involves a cycle of engagement that is connected to the regular budgeting process. It sparks a variety of powerful, lasting impacts across a community, including:

- ▶ More equitable and effective spending
- ▶ Broader political participation, especially from historically marginalized communities
- ▶ Stronger relationships among residents, government, and community organizations
- ▶ New community leaders
- ▶ Increased civic engagement

WHY PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN UNINCORPORATED KING COUNTY?

BACKGROUND

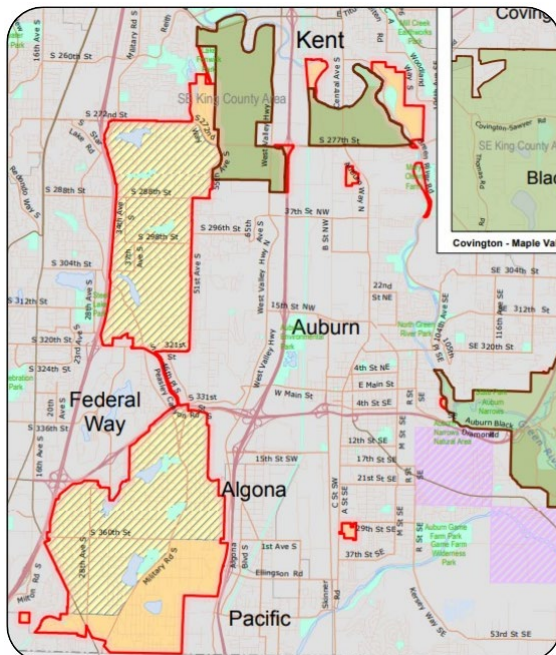
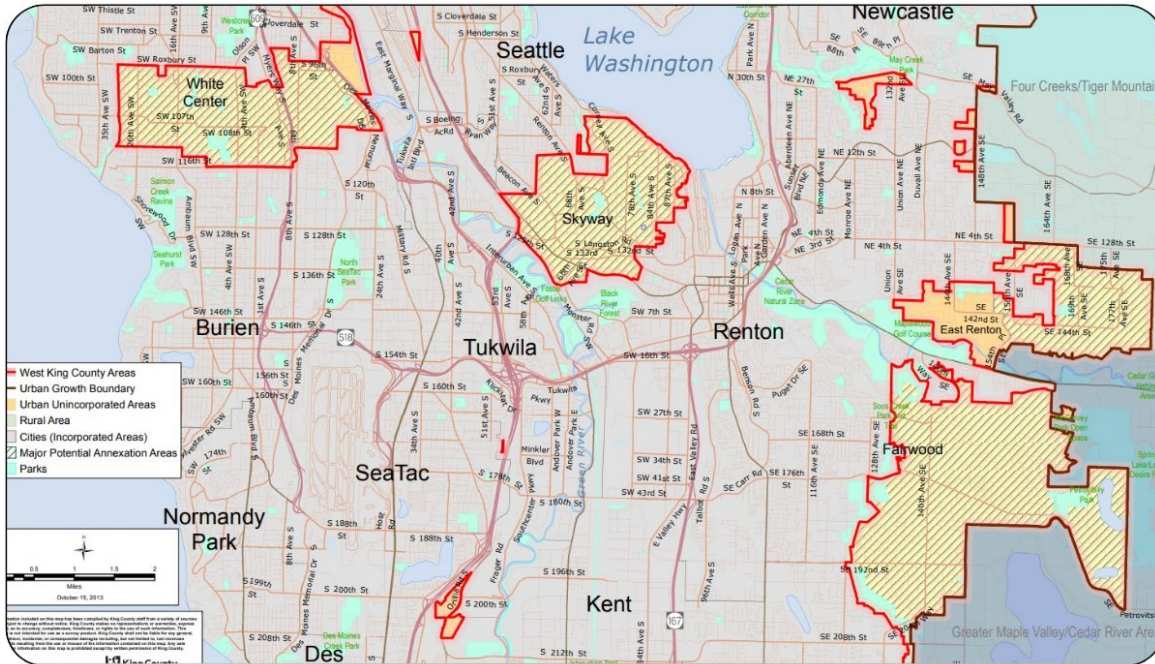
Building on previous work to advance equity and racial and social justice for all people, King County Executive Dow Constantine and Public Health–Seattle and King County declared racism as a public health crisis in 2020 and committed to centering Black and Indigenous communities in developing solutions that aim to repair the harm and bring healing and well-being.

In the 2021-2022 biennial budget, the Executive proposed, and the Council adopted, \$11.35 million in capital funds for investment into the county's five urban unincorporated areas: East Federal Way, East Renton, Fairwood, Skyway/West Hill, and White Center/North Highline. These funds were intended to be spent in these communities and allocated through a participatory budgeting process. Of the \$11.35 million appropriated, \$10 million is identified as one-time investments for capital projects in these five unincorporated areas. The remaining \$1.35 million, generated from marijuana tax revenues, is for services and programs in Skyway-West Hill and North Highline.

Local Services launched five participatory budgeting processes in June 2021 and completed those processes in August 2022 after holding community-wide votes for the five areas. More than 2600 King County residents participated, selecting 46 projects for implementation. In October 2022, the King County Executive proposed to continue these anti-racist and pro-equity investments in this program with an additional \$10 million in bond-backed funds and \$2 million from marijuana tax revenue funds for a second round of participatory budgeting for urban unincorporated residents.

In 2023 the Participatory Budgeting program received a King County Performance Excellence Award for innovation in Equity and Social Justice. The award recognized Participatory Budgeting for achieving exceptional results and helping to make King County a place where every person can thrive. Participatory Budgeting aims to promote racial equity by building transformational relationships with communities, increasing civic engagement, and shifting power to communities.

PARTICIPATING URBAN UNINCORPORATED AREAS IN KING COUNTY



Areas drawn in red lines

- ▶ East Renton
- ▶ East Federal Way
- ▶ Fairwood
- ▶ Skyway/West Hill
- ▶ White Center/North Highline



PROGRAM ROLES

Community Leaders are voting members of the Steering Committee. They collaborate with King County government and decision makers to decide on the rules that will guide the participatory budgeting process. Their responsibility is to:

- ▶ Provide oversight to ensure the process meets its goals
- ▶ Vote on decisions for the guidebook
- ▶ Organize community engagement activities

County staff members support participatory budgeting. Their responsibilities are to:

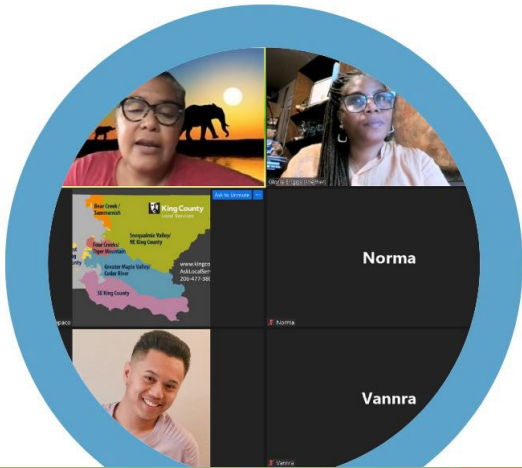
- ▶ Administer and implement participatory budgeting within county processes
- ▶ Ensure that participants and the public have the information needed to be involved in process
- ▶ Support participants during idea collection and sorting, coordinate agency briefings, and support voting events

County resource experts provide valuable input into the development of proposals. Their responsibilities are to:

- ▶ Support community members in proposal development, including cost estimates
- ▶ Review proposals during development to ensure they are feasible and meet King County’s funding eligibility criteria, including any requirements based on the source of funding

Facilitators may be consultants, county staff, or community members. Their responsibilities are to:

- ▶ Create safe spaces at idea collection events and proposal advocate meetings, allowing community members to participate effectively
- ▶ Make sure everyone stays on track to meet process deadlines
- ▶ Make sure that decisions are made within the framework established by the Steering Committee

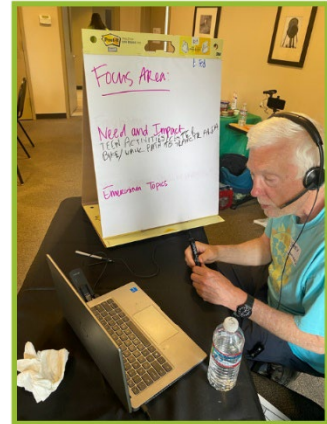


PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING STEERING COMMITTEE

In April 2023, King County convened a steering committee to make decisions about how its second Participatory Budgeting Program would be run. Community leaders and King County staff members evaluated applications submitted by interested community members, and the committee members listed below were chosen with input from the program manager and the director of King County Local Services.

The committee has worked to develop inclusive and equitable processes to divide the available resources between the five areas and increase public input into the Participatory Budgeting Program. In particular, the committee is focused on engaging residents and communities that have historically been omitted from budgeting processes.

After several months of meetings in which members worked to build trust, created structure, established values, and immersed themselves in King County Equity and Social Justice strategies, the committee allocated funding based on its values. Those values were thoughtfully and intentionally chosen to help create racial equity in the urban unincorporated areas while acknowledging King County's position that racism itself is a public health crisis.



2023-24 Steering Committee Members

EAST FEDERAL WAY – Jerry Jennings, Marcy Lang, Deborah Salem, Taji Sterling, Barbara Tisi, Jean-Paul Yafali

EAST RENTON – Anthony Curtis, Jeremy Gitchel, Marilyn Schafer, Lorraine Swalley

FAIRWOOD – Mario Bolden, Beau Ervin, Suzy Gillett

WHITE CENTER/NORTH HIGHLINE – Robert Baker, Ruth Contreras Rodriguez, Justin Cox, Heather Patrick, Sarey Savy, Pat Thompson, Vannra Yan

SKYWAY/WEST HILL – LaCretiah Claytor, Cynthia Edwards, Jawan Harris, Brandon Houston, Diane McClain, Ann Okwuolu, Terrence Williams

PROCESS VALUES

The steering committee developed and defined the following values to guide the process design and decisions.

Racial equity

Equity is the ongoing effort to ensure equal access to opportunities, power, and resources that enable individuals to thrive. Racial equity is a deliberate inclusive journey toward well-being, defined by those most affected, with a focus on Black and Indigenous communities and communities of color. We commit to centering racial equity by dismantling anti-blackness, systemic racism, and discriminatory practices. To create an equal society, we embrace being anti-racist, making unbiased choices and string for equity in all aspects of life.

Needs-based

We are committed to making socioeconomic needs-based decisions that prioritize areas with the lowest access to financial, educational, social, and health resources. Our focus is on promoting equitable outcomes, with a specific emphasis on recognizing and rectifying the disproportionate impact experienced by people who are Black or Indigenous and communities of color. By centering their needs, we aim to undo the harm caused by past inequities and create a more just and inclusive future.

Community empowerment

We empower Black and Indigenous people and communities of color, providing them with a continued voice and power in community investments and decisions. This leads to equity in race, social, health, and economic areas. We collaborate with King County to uphold these values and vision.

Building community

We actively amplify all voices, especially those of historically underserved Black and Indigenous people and communities of color, to foster a strong sense of community. Our mission includes promoting financial, digital, and technical literacy, civic engagement, health, and wealth. Our efforts facilitate growth and development within our communities, aiming to create thriving neighborhoods for all.

Community engagement

We lift up all voices in the community, centering the experiences of descendants of enslaved African Americans and those of people who are Black or Indigenous or who belong to communities of color. Through authentic engagement and intentional collaborations we will implement a targeted universalism approach in our comprehensive community outreach plan.

Accountability

We pledge to be fully accountable to historically disenfranchised and underserved residents, community partners, and business owners in all unincorporated areas of King County. Accountability means actively seeking diverse perspectives, implementing checks and balances within the steering committee, and regularly reviewing our work and decisions. Through these measures, we ensure that our actions are transparent, responsive, and aligned with the needs of all members of the communities we serve.

Transparency

We are fully committed to advocating for transparency in our decision-making processes and interactions with the communities we serve. This includes sharing comprehensive information, providing timely updates, disclosing relevant data, and fostering open dialogue. By taking these actions, we ensure that our decision-making is accessible, accountable, and responsive to community needs and expectations.

Building community

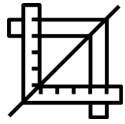
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Inclusion

We will work to include community members of varying abilities and disabilities, including those with invisible disabilities and neurodivergence. We recognize that inclusion of all individuals will require consideration of barriers to communication, learning, mobility and acceptance. We are committed to reaching out to isolated neighbors so that they can identify their special needs for participating in community and accessing resources.

2023-24 SCHEDULE

NOTE: Dates are subject to change based on community needs



DESIGN (April–August 2023)

27 community members lead the steering committee to design the process and allocate funds to each area.



IDEA COLLECTION (September–November 2023)

Community members submit project ideas in person, online, by phone, or via paper idea submission forms.



PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT (November 2023–April 2024)

Community volunteers work with King County staffers to build out detailed project proposals that will be on a community ballot for a vote.



VOTING (May–June 2024)

Community members vote on the proposals that best serve the needs of their communities.



FUNDING (begins July 2024)

King County Local Services provides funds and makes the winning ideas happen.

THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET

YOUR VOICE, YOUR CHOICE

\$11,750,000

Participatory Budgeting Fund

The participatory budgeting process will allow community members to generate ideas for infrastructure investments and vote directly on how to spend \$8,850,000 on capital projects in the five urban unincorporated areas. In Skyway/West Hill and White Center/North Highline, community members will also submit ideas and vote to invest \$2,900,000 from Marijuana Tax Revenue funds in services, programs, and community improvements.

The committee chose to allocate funds to each of the five communities by choosing one of the equity indices shared by King County's Office of Equity and Social Justice: the Black and Indigenous Population with Equity Impact Awareness Index.

2023-24 Funding allocation

Capital project funds (\$8,850,000)

Skyway/West Hill	\$3,040,000
White Center/North Highline	\$2,786,000
East Federal Way	\$1,516,000
East Renton	\$ 754,000
Fairwood	\$ 754,000

Marijuana Tax Revenue Funds (\$2,900,000)

Skyway/West Hill	\$1,740,000
White Center/North Highline	\$1,160,000

HOW THE FUNDS CAN BE SPENT

These funds can be used to invest in capital projects. A capital project, sometimes also called a capital improvement project, is used to plan, design, and create or improve a capital asset. This can include the purchase of property, demolition of structures, improvement of an existing asset, or development of a new asset.

Depending on the source of the funds, there may be additional requirements such as a need for the project to provide a public benefit for a certain period of time. Funds may not be gifted or loaned to nonprofits or private entities without confirming that the purpose meets state constitutional requirements that apply to public funds.

Capital project funds – \$ 8,850,000

These funds must be used to pay for a physical thing. This can include new items or improvements to existing assets. Funds may not pay for programs, services, or operating costs.

Funded assets...

- ▶ ...must last for 10 years or longer.
- ▶ ...must benefit the public.
- ▶ ...must be accessible to the community on an ongoing basis.
- ▶ ...must be used inside the urban unincorporated area.
- ▶ ...may be managed by a public-private partnership.
- ▶ ...may be owned by public, non-profit, or private entities.
- ▶ ...may be located on private land.

Examples

- ▶ Sidewalk/street improvements
- ▶ Park improvements
- ▶ Community gardens
- ▶ Art installations

Marijuana tax revenue funds (programs/services) – \$2,900,000

Skyway/West Hill or White Center/North Highline ONLY

- ▶ Funds may be spent on operational cost, services, programs, or capital investments.
- ▶ They must be used for the benefit of a community in the designated unincorporated area.

IDEA COLLECTION

Who can submit ideas?

For this 2023-2024 process, anyone who has vested interests in their community is encouraged to submit ideas for project proposals that are feasible and benefit the community. There is no citizenship or identification requirement. Each area has different age requirements; please review your area guidelines. All steering committee members and volunteers can submit ideas.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Who can serve as a proposal advocate?

Anyone who has meaningful or significant connections to the community. This includes people who live, work, own a business, attend school, receive services, or worship in the area. Each area has different age requirements; please review your area guidelines.

Community members volunteering as Proposal Advocates will review ideas for feasibility and prioritize projects that best meet the process goals and values for the ballot. They will take the ideas and develop them into detailed project proposals (including budget, implementation details, and impact). The steering committee will be available to assist community members in developing proposals.

Community members who serve as Proposal Advocates will have the opportunity to work with King County staff members and learn how to turn submitted ideas into detailed project proposals.

VOTE

Who can vote?

For the 2022-23 process, voting will be open to community members who live, work, go to school, own a business, worship, or demonstrate strong community connection in the specific participating urban unincorporated King County area. There is no citizenship requirement for participation in the vote. Please review area guidelines for age requirements.

Members of the steering committee who meet these criteria may vote, but must abide by King County's ethics policies. They will participate in the same way as anyone else from the community and their votes will be counted the same way.

VOTING PROCESS

The voting process and methods vary by area and are listed below, along with project eligibility. Two types of voting were chosen:

Knapsack voting

Voters can choose any valid allocation of the budget dollars among the various projects

Ranked choice voting

Voters rank their top five favorite projects

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT DECISIONS

FOCUS

To engage descendants of enslaved African Americans, Native Americans, and other communities of color.

Outreach strategies (electronic)

During the past few years, online engagement has increased significantly. This includes hosting community events, building broad consensus, and learning and sharing information. The steering committee decided to focus on using technology and related platforms to build awareness of the process via virtual community events and meetings and an online survey.

Outreach strategies (non-electronic)

Given the impact of the digital divide and our commitment to racial equity, other methods of outreach will be essential to engage those without consistent or reliable access to technology. To this end, the steering committee elected to focus on strategies that include:

- ▶ Flyer/mailer distribution
- ▶ Paper submission forms and drop boxes for idea collection
- ▶ Dial-in/telephone voicemail for idea collection

Other considerations

The steering committee will work to ensure that outreach and engagement are aligned with the vision of this process.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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