

Participatory Budgeting Process for the Tenderloin Community Action Plan

Overview

Participatory budgeting is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.¹ It started in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989, as an anti-poverty measure that helped reduce child mortality by nearly 20%.² Participatory budgeting is a new approach to budgeting City and County dollars in the United States. Over the past few years in San Francisco, Supervisor Yee (District 3) and Supervisor Melgar (District 7) conducted a participatory budgeting process for their District funds with their residents and businesses once per year. The Supervisors' participatory budgeting process and lessons learned served as a foundation for the Tenderloin Community Action Plan Participatory Budgeting process.

Background

Tenderloin Emergency Initiative

On December 17, 2021, Mayor Breed declared an official 90-day State of Emergency in the Tenderloin, allowing the City to waive certain laws to respond to the conditions relating more quickly to the health and safety of the people in the neighborhood. As the operational lead, the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) drafted the Tenderloin Emergency Initiative (TEI). The TEI is a three-phase plan that outlines an initial assessment of conditions, crisis operations and plans for sustained operations in the Tenderloin to help stabilize conditions on the street.

The City recognizes that Tenderloin Community Action Plan (TCAP) is in alignment with community values and vision for the neighborhood. As *Crisis Operations* in Phase II (December 17, 2021 – March 17, 2022) of the Tenderloin Emergency Initiative transitions to *Sustained Operations* in Phase III, *Management, and Operations* transition from DEM to SF Planning (CPC). The Tenderloin Community Action Plan, as of July 1st, 2022, includes *Phase III, Sustained Operations*, of the Tenderloin Emergency Initiative.

In June 2022, the Mayor's Office approved \$4.1 million dollars to the Planning Department to begin bringing to life projects and programs which fall under the TCAP. \$600,000 of the \$4.1 million will be used for resident stipends, community engagement, facilitation, translation and interpretation, and a position in the neighborhood and the operation of the Community Stakeholder Group and Working Groups, leaving \$3.5 million to fund community development projects and programs. A \$350,000 contract for community engagement and outreach services will be awarded through a Request for Proposals process with the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development. Community-based organizations and groups in the Tenderloin can apply to lead the effort and tasks.

Tenderloin Community Action Plan (TCAP)

The TCAP is a neighborhood-driven collaboration between residents, community organizations, businesses, and City agencies. Participating residents, community-based organization representatives, and small businesses will identify current needs for the neighborhood's diverse population, develop a collective vision for Tenderloin's future, then develop an action plan for top priorities identified by the

¹ [Home - Participatory Budgeting Project](#)

² Ibid

community. These priorities include housing and homelessness, health and wellness, neighborhood empowerment, arts and culture, safety and street conditions, and economic resilience. Tenderloin residents, community-based organizations, and small businesses collaborate in the Community Stakeholder Group's (CSG) monthly meetings to direct the city's implementation of the Plan. Stakeholders can also participate in the various working groups that analyze local issues and support the general group by proposing solutions and advising decisions. Both the CSG and Working Groups provide recommendations on projects or programs to SF Planning office and other implementing agencies.

The TCAP aims to focus on the needs of the neighborhood's diverse and vulnerable populations. These include:

- Black
- American Indian
- Latinx
- Asian Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern/Arab
- Other communities of color
- low-income people
- people living with disabilities
- seniors
- families and youth
- LGBTQIA++
- unsheltered residents

Learn more about the TCAP on the [webpage](#).

Process

Project and Program Proposal Submission and Voting Timeline

The following is a timeline of the participatory budgeting project and program proposal process:

- Participatory Budgeting Process began - October 18th, 2022, and proposed projects were requested from the neighborhood through the Community Stakeholder Group, resident groups, and community partners.
- Co-creation of Criteria Workshops - November 3rd from 11:30am-1:00pm (online) and November 10th from 11:30am-1:00pm (in-person at Boeddeker Park Recreation Center, 246 Eddy Street), workshops were held to co-create criteria to evaluate projects.
- Information Session - November 8 11:30am-12:30pm SF Planning held an information session online for potential project and program submitters.
- Project Proposals Due - November 14, 2022, at midnight for feasibility and criteria review.
- Community Stakeholder Group #3 - November 17, 2022, developed criteria was shared at the Community Stakeholder Group meeting.
- Proposed Projects Evaluated - November 2022 collectively developed criteria will be applied to project proposals.
- Confirm List of Projects for Voting - December 2022 – SF Planning continued confirming project feasibility.

- Participatory Budgeting Voting Begins - December 9, 2022, at 8:00am
- Participatory Budgeting Voting Ends – December 23, 2022, at 11:59pm

Project and Program Proposal Process

The Community Stakeholder Group (CSG), which includes residents and neighborhood-serving community organizations, is an important part of this process, supported the request for projects and collaboratively created the criteria by which projects will be evaluated.

applicants were asked to complete a comprehensive Google form with detailed information about their proposal including: a project description, neighborhood needs met by the project or program, staff and project manager assigned, populations served, estimated costs, outreach completed, project deliverables, expected timeline, and, if the project is existing, project deliverable status and how the participatory budgeting funding would benefit the existing program.

SF Planning offered support to those applicants who did not have experience developing an idea into a proposal and/or completing an application process with the City. After applications were submitted, SF Planning followed up with applicants to complete the application and include all required information to be considered.

Criteria

To be eligible for voting, proposed projects and programs had to meet the following essential criteria:

- Within Tenderloin boundary. Project or program occurs within the Tenderloin official boundary.
- Community-driven and designed. Proposal comes from the Tenderloin community - residents or community organizations serving the Tenderloin residents or businesses.

The rest of the criteria was collectively shaped by the CSG and interested residents to ensure that the final list of projects represented the values of the Tenderloin’s diverse communities. Over 100 CSG members and Tenderloin residents attended one of two workshops to develop criteria by which proposed projects were reviewed. Tagalog, Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Arabic interpretation and materials were available at the in-person meeting. Workshop participants reviewed and provided feedback on draft criteria. SF Planning incorporated feedback, refined the draft criteria, and finalized the following criteria to assess and evaluate proposed projects and programs:

A. Criteria A: Addresses Needs

- *This criterion evaluates the project ability to problem-solve and cater to one or more on-going issue(s) in the neighborhood.*
- Project responds to and or improves one or more urgent and/or chronic issue in the Tenderloin as indicated in the Tenderloin Community Action Plan survey collected in 2021.
- Needs include:
 - Wellness: Improving physical and mental health, holistic wellness, and increased connections to care. Understanding economic and environmental conditions as key factors in health outcomes
 - Public Space/ Streets: increased cleanliness, safety accessibility, new park, or open space

- Housing: Protect, improve, and expand affordable housing and affordable housing access
 - Unhoused support: Supporting, engaging, and enabling dignity for unhoused residents.
 - Environmental Justice – community investment in and stewarding of healthy environments and ecosystems.
 - Arts and Culture: Fostering culture and the arts to celebrate cultural diversity and cultivate community belonging & sense of pride.
 - Mobility access –protect mobility of the most vulnerable population.
 - Neighborhood empowerment – cultivating resident empowerment, self-determination, and increased civic engagement.
- B. Criteria B: Primary Equity Populations Served
- *This criterion ensures that the most vulnerable, local population is targeted as primary beneficiary of the project.*
 - The project serves at least one vulnerable population of the Tenderloin including but not limited to: families, children and youth, racialized Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, immigrants, unhoused residents, low-wage residents, residents on fixed incomes, and elders.
- C. Criteria C: Feasibility
- *This criterion ensures that the project is ready to be implemented as soon as funding becomes available.*
 - **Staff capacity:** project has appropriate staff assigned, ready to carry out tasks as soon as funding becomes available.
 - **Clear scope:** Project includes a clear definition of the work, clearly stated goals, and delineated tasks to achieve those goals.
 - **Clear deliverables:** Project clearly states what the project or program will accomplish. Clear deliverables are outcomes that can be measured or tracked.
 - **Timeline:** Project has a clear timeline that is appropriate to outcomes and that fits the funding cycle of the grant.
 - **Community buy-in:** Project demonstrates engagement with and support by local community including direct discussions with multiple groups of residents and community-based organizations, focus groups, surveys and potential partnerships formed around the project. Project could include prior demonstrated community or client interest and engagement in an existing project or program.
- D. Criteria D: Builds Local Capacity
- *This criterion illustrates the ability of the project to invest in existing local resources and grow capacity in the neighborhood.*
 - Project invests in residents, local small businesses, or creative enterprises to cultivate leadership, build skills, or develop experience which could serve the neighborhood far into the future.
 - Project includes compensation of resident leaders, volunteers or workers which incentivizes participation in skill building and leadership experiences.
 - Project expands organizational capacity by increasing reach or services.
 - Project builds on or institutionalizes a pilot program.

- Project facilitates community cohesion through resident participation and shared experience. Particularly in the Tenderloin, builds capacity for future resident investment in the unique resource that are community relationships and the social, economic, and material benefits of such relationships at scale.

Submitted Project and Programs

Community members submitted 53 projects for consideration for participatory budgeting. These projects totaled \$9.7 million dollars and supported the following impact area categories:

- Community Celebration
- Livability – Public Space Activation
- Community Wellness
- Basic Life Needs
- Public Safety – Ambassadors
- Economic Mobility

Proposed projects and programs were reviewed for consistency with the criteria outlined above by a group of SF Planning staff members with experience in implementation and community development. After careful review of all proposals, 32 projects met all criteria and qualified for the participatory budgeting process in December 2022. For a description of each project, please review the [Voter's Guide](#).

All proposals that did not meet the criteria and were submitted by the Tenderloin's communities will be considered in the TCAP for implementation and will be discussed at the CSG and Working Group meetings in early 2023.

Voting Tools

After an in-depth review of the participatory budgeting tools and options available, SF Planning worked with the *Stanford Participatory Budgeting Platform*, a free and open-source project to support cities and other organizations run a participatory budgeting election.³ SF Planning inputted the 32 projects⁴ into the online tool in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog. SF Planning developed a Voter Guide in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog that outlined the process, voting locations, and a summary of each proposed project and program.

Voting Outreach

Outreach to engage Tenderloin residents was a collaboration between SF Planning and resident groups, small businesses, youth service providers, and neighborhood-serving organizations that work with marginalized residents to encourage individuals to vote on the list of projects that were proposed. In a neighborhood with roughly 50% of resident speaking languages other than English at home, language access to the participatory budgeting process was a priority. Outreach included interpretation and translation in Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Arabic to ensure language access. This was in addition to direct partnership with neighborhood-serving organizations that work with a range of under-engaged populations.

³ [Stanford Participatory Budgeting Platform \(pbstanford.org\)](https://pbstanford.org)

⁴ 2 of the projects were combined into one totaling 31 projects for voting.

Community Outreach

SF Planning reached out to service and housing providers in the neighborhood and requested that they post, share, and distribute the flyers to their respective communities. Flyers with QR codes that directed participants directly to the voting webpage were created in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. These flyers were distributed to single-room occupancy housing, senior housing, family housing, schools, parks, and service providers in the neighborhood. The voting flyer was also posted on SF Planning’s social media accounts, as well as other community organizations social media accounts.

Neighborhood Events and Voting Stations

SF Planning staff attended the following neighborhood events to assist with the voting process and to encourage individuals to vote:

Date	Time	Event Name	Location
12/9/2022 Friday	2:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Winter Wonderland	Tenderloin Children's Playground
12/9/2022 Friday	4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Kroc Center WinterFest	KROC Center
12/13/2022 Tuesday	1:00 pm-2:30 pm	Food Pantry	201 Turk
12/15/2022 Thursday	8:45-9:45 am	Community Coffee	Tenderloin Community School
12/15/2022 Thursday	2:30 pm -4:00 PM	Afterschool Table	Tenderloin Community School
12/15/2022 Thursday	5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Family Night	KROC Center
12/16/2022 Friday	6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Cross Cultural Center	259 Turk
12/20/2022	4:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Youth Voting/ Listening Session	201 Turk

Voting stations were in community spaces that were unaffiliated with participatory budgeting project and proposal submissions. SF Planning staff and community partners tabled at the following voting stations:

- Tenderloin Children’s Playground (570 Ellis Street)
 - Operated Tuesday - Friday 10:00 am - 2:30 pm
 - Leads: Sondra Long (Park Facilitator)
- Safe Passage Park (parklet neighboring 201 Turk Street)
 - Monday – Tuesday, 10am –1pm
 - Saturday- Sunday, 12pm – 4 pm
 - In addition, SF Planning staff tabled at this location on the last two days of voting, Thursday December 22nd & Friday, December 23rd.

Small Business Outreach

We visited 51 businesses in the Tenderloin where we spoke to workers and owners about participatory budgeting voting, posted flyers & encouraged business workers and owners to vote. Businesses consisted of: laundromats, grocery stores, liquor stores, restaurants, coffee shops, bars, parking lots, and more.

Additional Community Engagement and Outreach Activities

A voting hotline was established to provide access codes, assist with voting over the phone, and troubleshoot if any technical difficulties occur. A video was added to the PB Stanford tool (voting ballot) which displayed the step-by-step process of online voting. This video was created to guide those who aren't familiar with online voting or adept with technology.

Outcome

Please see below for the list of proposals with the vote count for each received during the two-week voting period.

Total Votes by Project

Project	Amount	Total Votes
1. Innovative Community Services to build up Capacity of the Tenderloin Southeast Asian Neighborhood	\$200,000	642
2. Clean Team	\$200,000	456
3. Tenderloin Community School Elm Alley Safe Kids Space	\$50,000	429
4. Safe Passage Ambassadors	\$200,000	404
5. Park Stewardship	\$250,000	373
6. Golden Gate Greenway Phase 1: Parklets Project	\$200,000	360
7. Nights and Weekends Safety Navigators	\$533,923	358
8. Tenderloin Family Housing Tutoring Program	\$120,000	358
9. Larkin Street Canopy Project	\$70,000	345
10. Tenderloin Teen Drop-In Center	\$208,000	328
11. Tenderloin Forest Stabilization	\$100,000	325
12. Art in the Park	\$25,500	325
13. Tenderloin Urban Rest and Sleep Center	\$718,020	324
14. Tenderloin Eid-cultural Celebration	\$40,000	318
15. Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing (DISH) Food Program	\$250,000	311
16. Tenderloin SINULOG Festival and Flores De Mayo Festival	\$15,000	295
17. Grace Notes Community Festival 2023	\$18,000	274
18. Tenderloin People's Holiday Tree and Lighting Ceremony	\$20,000	299
19. Tenderloin Dog Park	\$100,000	260
20. Black History + Culture of the Tenderloin	\$100,000	257
21. Lower Polk: Expanded Ambassador Program and Community Festivals	\$708,840	248
22. Safe Passage Path Demonstration	\$163,000	239
23. Resident Leadership and Empowerment Development	\$234,400	236
24. Veterans Art and Healing Center (a community project)	\$60,000	233
25. Small Business Support	\$400,000	228
26. Tenderloin Arab Youth Community Center	\$286,897	226
27. Community Housing Education for Tenderloin Arabic-speaking residents	\$150,000	225

28. Dodge Alley Community Space	\$250,000	221
29. Tenderloin Arabic Mental Health Support Network	\$263,300	220
30. Hustlers Alternative Project	\$413,560	201
31. Veterans Alley Mural Project	\$75,000	189