

Community-Based Budgeting Evaluation Report

JUNE 2023



From City of Edmonton Councillor Keren Tang and Councillor Andrew Knack



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What is Community-Based Budgeting



Project Background

In 2022, Councillor Keren Tang (of Ward Kariio) and Councillor Andrew Knack (of Ward Nakota Isga) led the City of Edmonton's first Community-Based Budgeting project. Through a collaborative and interactive process, Ward Karhiio and Ward Nakota Isga community members were invited to help decide how to spend part of Councillor Tang and Councillor Knack's office budgets. They were encouraged to think of ideas for small, on-the-ground, projects that seeded and stimulated improvements in their communities.

The two Ward offices partnered with local organizations the Ribbon Rouge Foundation, Islamic Family Social Services Association (IFSSA), and Beta City YEG for wider community reach, sharing resources and knowledge, and leveraging technology to enable the process. This partnership formed an extended project team to reinforce a core group stewarding the project forward. The overall project team included:

- Core team: Project Coordinator, 1-2 staff from each ward office, and ward councillors themselves
- Extended team: 2 members from Beta City YEG, 2 students each from Ribbon Rouge and IFSSA

We are grateful for the interest and financial support from the David Suzuki Foundation for this project that facilitated a conversation with residents about issues that mattered to them in their communities.

What is Community-Based Budgeting

More commonly known as Participatory Budgeting, Community-Based Budgeting (or CBB - a term coined by the residents who participated in this version in Edmonton) reflects a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend a part of a public budget. Participatory budgeting empowers people to decide together how to spend public money. The process of participatory budgeting deepens democracy, builds stronger communities and makes public budgeting more equitable and effective.

It can support:

- Stronger civic engagement.
- More collaborative relationships between residents, government, and community organizations



- More inclusive political participation, especially by historically marginalized groups
- New community leaders, community spaces, and projects
- More equitable and effective public spending

We use the terms Participatory Budgeting and Community-Based Budgeting (CBB) interchangeably.

The Motivation and Inspiration

“I first learned about participatory budgeting from my previous work with a national philanthropic foundation. What intrigued me was that unlike a traditional micro-granting process where it is often an adjudication panel that decides which group receives funding, it is community members and applicants themselves who make that decision. Through open dialogue, and transparency of information, people can see each other’s idea submissions, identify areas of shared interest and similar approaches, and find ways to collaborate and synergize, so that limited funding can be amplified for much broader impact” - Keren Tang

This process was inspired by examples of participatory budgeting around the world, from Brazil’s Porto Alegre, to Victoria, to Montreal, to New York, to Halifax. The project team decided, with input from the public, to call it Community-Based Budgeting (CBB), rather than Participatory Budgeting. The design of the Community-Based Budgeting Project was informed by the project team’s experiences with grassroots community-building, multicultural community work, placemaking, experience working in the philanthropic sector, and CITYlab (a former City of Edmonton initiative), 100in1Day (a citizen-led placemaking festival) and Recover (an ongoing City of Edmonton social innovation initiative).

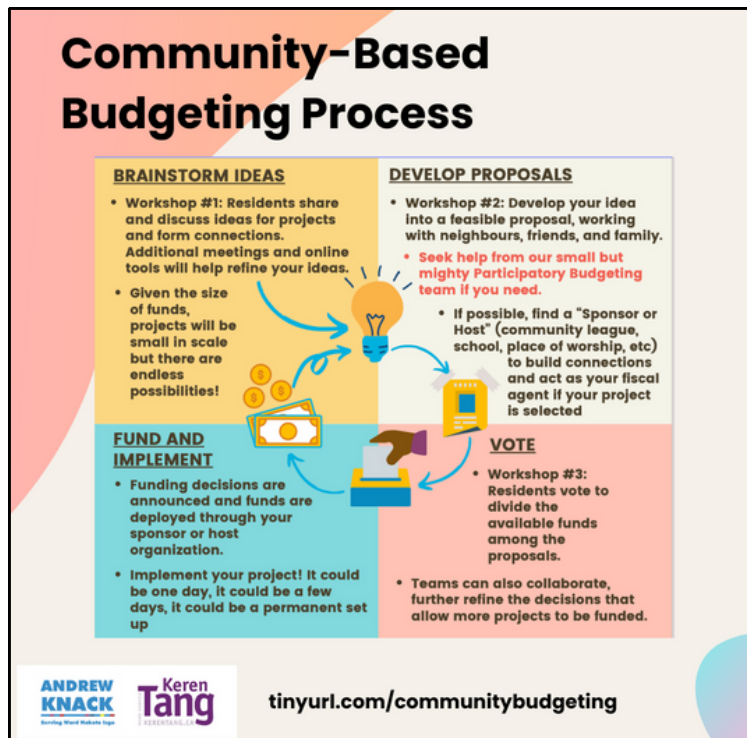
Knowing that community members often encounter institutional barriers and a culture of risk aversion when navigating through formal organizational funding or budget processes, the project team was inspired by the opportunity to imagine an alternative way forward. The spirit of the CBB Project was iterative and experimental. The project

team wasn't afraid to take risks and be scrappy – with a focus on building relationships and putting people first, and initiating community change, from the ground up.

In the words of an interested community member, *“I gather this is a ground breaking project (for neighbourhood funding) and the ground rules will become much clearer and [more] set as time passes. I am glad to be part of this process and look forward to the process and watching how it will unfold.”*

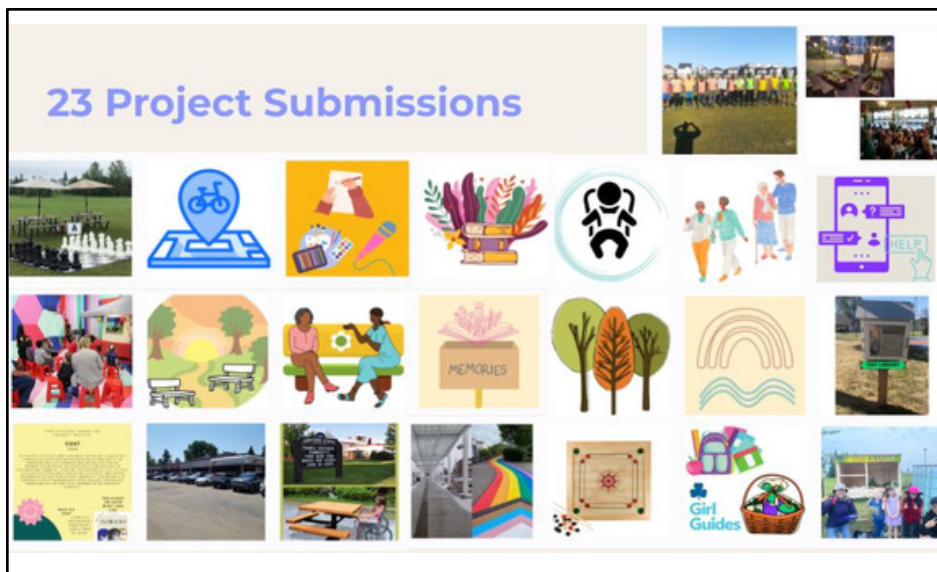
How did it work?

Our team did an initial review of best practices in other cities. This research served as a broad framework for the project. Through multiple workshops and online engagement, we co-developed the process with residents. While not everyone participated in all stages of the project, we are grateful for every advice, feedback, and comment that shaped this version of CBB, including the name of the project, who can participate, how big or small individual projects should be, and how many projects the total budget could accommodate. Additional criteria were determined by internal City of Edmonton administrative policies to ensure accountability and due diligence with funding.



We held a series of workshops to introduce the project, brainstorm ideas, form connections, and develop ideas. We used open-source tools such as Padlet to facilitate community brainstorming and provide feedback, and Google forms to facilitate project submission.

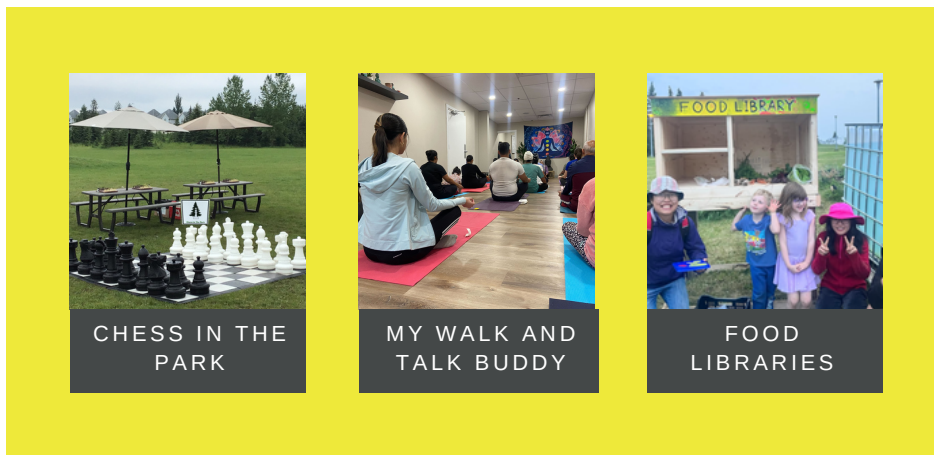
Together with the residents, we determined that each ward budget could support 10-15 small-scale projects, with up to \$2,000 in funding per project (total of \$25,000 in each ward). Participants were encouraged to think of projects or community events that were small and quick to implement, that might spark conversation or positive change in their communities, that used local resources as much as possible, and that, in the words of one community member: ***“We use[d] community knowledge to make better use of under-utilized spaces, which sounds like an all around great way to make neighbourhoods unique and add great assets to our wards.”*** For additional criteria, see Appendix A.



23 project submissions were received, 13 in Ward Karhiio, and 10 in Ward Nakota Isga. Funding was available to fund all 23 projects. A critical element of CBB is a voting process which is open to all. Based on feedback from participants, we provided Edmontonians opportunities to vote online using Spreadsimple and in-person through a CBB roadshow to community centres and block parties, as well as key locations in the community like the public library. Voting lasted a week long.

Given that all projects were funded, we invited members of the public to vote for a “Community Choice Award” in each ward, with the purpose of engaging the community in the process and in providing feedback to project leads about their submission. This differed from the initial intent of voting to make a decision about how to allocate funding for the projects. The projects that received the most number of votes were:

- Ward Karhiio - Chess in the Park & My Walk and Talk Buddy
- Ward Nakota Isga - Food Libraries



For more details on the process, see [Appendix A](#) or the website kerentang.ca/cbb2022.

See [Appendix B](#) for a full list of Community-Based Budgeting Projects.

Evaluation Approach



02

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation approach for the CBB project included gathering reflections from the CBB coordination team, and from community members who led projects. We noted this feedback during a roundtable discussion at the final celebration event, as well as from evaluation forms (with an option to remain anonymous) distributed to all 23 community members who led and received funding for CBB, in both paper copy and through a google form. For a deeper dive, Councillor Keren Tang conducted follow-up interviews with five (5) project leads, one (1) student intern, and one (1) community partner.

Limitations

1. While all participants who responded had positive experiences with the process, there were a few project leads who experienced challenges with bringing their projects to fruition. It is important to note that their feedback is not captured here.
2. Based on the number of projects submitted this year, relative to the funding available, all projects received funding. Thus it is hard to evaluate the effectiveness of the voting component that is central to most other Participatory Budgeting models.
3. The evaluation was carried out by the project-team, with the bulk of it designed and carried out by the project coordinator, and interviews with community members conducted by Councillor Tang, and not an external evaluator.
4. While the respondents were balanced between the two wards, not every Project Lead and Project Team member were interviewed given evaluation scope and time constraint.

Overview of Project Lead Feedback

All 23 people who led community projects (known as “**Project Leads**” moving forward), as well as many of their team members, were invited to share feedback via a questionnaire, with both online and hard-copy options.



- 14 people responded, representing over half of the projects (13 of 23 projects).
- 8/14 had never applied for a grant before, 6/14 had.
- 5 had never connected with their City Councillor before, 9 had.
- 5 had never connected with City staff, 8 had.
- 6 had never initiated a community project, 8 had
- 10 indicated having no previous knowledge of City grants, and 3 had experience with applying for and receiving City of community grants.
- All but one respondent said that being part of the Community-Based Budgeting Process changed how they think about City government.

Did the CBB Project Succeed in Achieving Its Goals & Desired Impacts?

The project had several goals at its core. In the following section, these goals will be examined against the feedback collected from **Project Leads**, and the **core project team**. The goals were iterative and evolved over the course of the project:

Goal A: To develop and test out a process for Participatory Budgeting that works in an Edmonton context and to help the City test out how to work together with residents in a community-based way, that helps Edmontonians bring community ideas to life.

Goal B: To facilitate conversations about community resilience, social connection, and ecological transition.

Goal C: To put decision-making power in the hands of the community

Goal D: To support decolonizing traditional granting processes that have embedded systemic barriers for many. To offer an accessible and inclusive process, and reach people who might not otherwise participate in typical civic processes.

A big part of this first CBB project was designing, implementing and getting feedback on the process.

All Project Leads who responded felt happy with the process. There was a lot of excitement around being part of the CBB process, and excitement about how their projects were going. This section will discuss the key themes that came up from participant and project team feedback, and expand on some of the specifics. These themes focused on what people valued about the process, and included:

1. It was simple and flexible
2. A welcoming and supportive atmosphere
3. Communication
4. Sparking Community Connections
5. Fostering Collaboration
6. Resource-sharing
7. Engaging a diversity of community members



Goal A: To develop and test out a process for Participatory Budgeting that works in an Edmonton context and to help the City test out how to work together with residents in a community-based way, that helps Edmontonians bring community ideas/projects to life.

1. Simple and Flexible Process

Participants

The most common piece of feedback from respondents was that the process was simple, flexible, straightforward, and fast.

“The accessibility, the flexibility, and how much could be accomplished with so little. Although the scale was “small” the IMPACT was HUGE!”

“With my limited experience in applications of project funds this CCB Project feels very simple.”

Participants liked that CBB was open to many ideas, there were few restrictions (besides the maximum amount of \$2000 per project).

“The funding didn't seem to come with strings which is possibly risky, but tying it to a community non-profit reduces the risk.”

The amount of information collected in the application form felt appropriate for the amount of funding/size of the grant, and the turnaround time for receiving the funding was fast.

“This was a great example of ‘critical minimal structure.’ Support was provided while simultaneously removing barriers. There was a high level of trust which was very much appreciated.”

Participants appreciated the accessibility of the process for those who were new to applying for grants or leading community projects.

“This is another thing why I appreciated it. There are grants by the city, by the province - very structured for larger scaled programs, non-profits applying for them. This project funded grassroots programming - you didn't need a lot of experience. With the larger grant applications, they want to see some performance, that you've done some work, to give you funding. So it's harder for first-time goers, first time grant writers, and launching programs.”

How this differed from other grants and participant expectations:

- Participants were surprised that the process was **clearer, faster, and easier** than they expected, or from other grants. They were surprised at how easy it was to connect with the City, and appreciated the Councillors taking the time to support this learning and community development opportunity.
- **The voting process.** “I have never applied for a grant where there was voting.”

2. A Welcoming and Supportive Atmosphere

Participants

Participants felt that the process and the project team were welcoming, friendly, comfortable, supportive and accessible. ***“This was just a welcoming, informal, comfortable, accepting atmosphere. Prior to the first online workshop, I anticipated a rigid procedure, cold and intimidating. This type of process makes it easy for any citizen who wants to make a difference to get involved.”***

“It was different from my expectations in the sense that nearly the entire time I had a network of people who were helping me work on the project.”

“People are very friendly and funds are very accessible, and it was nice to be able to serve the community.”

*“Welcoming, accessible, willing to take chances (*this is really key*) with passionate community volunteers.”*

“People don’t identify with organizations but with people (“I can talk to Salimah, rather than talk to ‘Keren’s office’).”

“The support you provided at the events - good resources. I’m not a networking person, I don’t know how to leverage it, so it was helpful you guys facilitated. Small things - asking Rajah small things, process related. Very helpful on invoicing and expenses””

“At the beginning, working on the project, Kathryn helped me a lot with it, suggested paying contributors, which was great idea. Also asking for me more people, to print more zines, and helped offset the extra cost with local printers. You guys connecting with lots of places for distribution. I had ideas, but having those connections was helpful.”

Participants appreciated the continuous support from staff, and felt that the coaching, encouragement, guidance, feedback, and resources provided throughout the project were helpful. Some noted that they appreciated the series of workshops offered before they submitted their applications, as well as the project implementation meeting and celebration event once they had received funding. They found these workshops helpful, and also appreciated the opportunity to connect with other community members.

“Similarly, the meet and greet events after brought a unique opportunity to interact with other, very talented, very kind individuals and learn about the wonderful project ideas they had!”

Project support was really crucial and key. What is telling is that when one office staff left, the gap was very noticeable to participants.

“When [they] left, it was a bit challenging because I had a few weeks where I didn’t have a project support. A bit tricky switching between liaisons.”

“I valued the sense of community that the whole project fostered. I never felt very stressed doing this project because everyone organising the project was super helpful and informative. Kathryn, Salimah and Keren were instrumental to my project by giving me new ideas, connections and helping with the money. The reimbursement process seemed like it would be difficult, but with help from Salimah, it was a very easy process.”

The Project Team

The project team noted that this wouldn’t have been possible without the external support of a project coordinator/contractor. It did take considerable office staff time, effort and a hands-on, personal touch to create the experience - and this was acknowledged and noticed by many participants.

How this differed from other grants



“This was a completely different experience than traditional grant opportunities. There was a culture of support and abundance from the very beginning. Applying for grants often feels like begging and there is a constant need to prove yourself. This experience was the opposite. There was a spirit of excitement and enthusiasm for all of the projects. It was also much more collaborative because many projects were happening at the same time and we were given opportunities to connect with each other and work together.”

3. Communication

Participants

There was active and open communication between the project participants and project team staff. Many participants felt that when questions or challenges came up, staff were helpful, supportive, friendly, positive and responsive, specifically staff in the Councillors’ offices, the contracted project coordinator, and to some extent, the Councillors themselves. In a handful of projects, the Councillors’ staff also facilitated relationships with City of Edmonton administrative staff to support project implementation. ***“I value the communications from the CBB team, the opportunity to learn about other community projects at a level of average citizen can apply, and last but not least to have the acknowledgement of the value of our club from the perspectives of the City Councillors.”***



Deeper Dive

How did the CBB project help you bring an idea/project to life? What difference did it make to you in bringing that idea/project to life?

Several people mentioned that they had had their ideas for a while, but didn't know how to get started, or that they wouldn't have created their community projects if it hadn't been for the CBB funding. Others mentioned that they wouldn't have thought of looking for funding if the Councillors hadn't brought the idea to them in the community, or encouraged them to apply. For others, attending the project workshops gave them the push to develop their ideas into something tangible.

*“This (project) would not have been possible without the CBB funding. One of the impetus for this was there had been, 4 years roughly, conversations about community resilience, concerns in the neighbourhoods, young people feeling disenfranchised and not knowing what to do, how to organize etc. etc. **This was a spark too - we want to do something but not sure how. CBB was a great opportunity to make the environment happen, the funds were critical.**”*

One of the things we will be talking about (in our project) is cultural loss - reclaiming your sense of self, building local economy around these things. There's a big gap there, a sore spot for people who don't have direct access to their culture and identity, always reading through English lens. The seed funding was absolutely essential, otherwise it would be a dream. Before this, we were just talking about it. If you are just buying 7 or 8 copies of these books, that's a few hundred dollars; this can be significant for young people.”

*“For the workshop (held at IFSSA)... it showed (the project) **really empowered people to come up with ideas and solutions to the problems they see.** They can be minimal but they were empowered to take up action in the community. If a person doesn't have a bench in the neighbourhood, let me put down some bench. If someone wants to beautify the neighbourhood, let's plant some flowers. Even though (not everyone) pursued a project, it was so special to participate in the community. Creative spaces (one of the CBB projects) - with Ima - she almost didn't come to the workshop, her sister forced her to come, and developed her idea into a full project.”*

..... Deeper Dive

*“I had this idea for awhile. My daughter encouraged me, she was doing [the CBB project] too, and I wanted to participate. It was nice to do it with her and be part of the process together. **It pushed me to take a risk.** I didn't know it was going to be accepted. I took a risk on an idea I've always had, instead of a personal risk. Now that I've done it, I totally would've taken a personal risk. No one wants to gamble on themselves; if I apply and they think it's a good idea then I have the encouragement to see it through”*

“This project really gave me an opportunity to do something, a small desire I always had, 'I wish this existed... I wish there's a way we can connect with our neighbours in this way.' I thought it was a trivial idea and wasn't sure. But through CBB, we were collectively building the ideas, hearing other people's ideas, bouncing off of other people's ideas. My dad participated in some of the sessions; the brainstorm board was great.

*It was very encouraging, in all honesty, **I'm not sure if it's something I would've sought out funding opportunity, but you brought it TO us, it made it easier.** That was when I first started thinking about it”*

*“I wouldn't have done it if you guys didn't have this project. I've had this idea for over a year. The original idea was about \$1000 - I'm not rich, I didn't want to spend \$1000 on something that may or may not work. It was a barrier to something that may not have existed. **It's about de-risking that I can give it a shot, and realize there is a potential.** Now I have an opportunity to find out it's true. I wanted you guys to succeed.”*

*“**I feel it's a crash course in civic project management** - how do you build community infrastructure, starting with something small, that part is great. Something that would be great is ask, what's next. Someone has build a small start, how do they scale. People get involved and get really excited, and now they want to do more. How do we facilitate that? This is a taste test. We want people to buy into their neighbourhood and conversations that shape our city”*





Goal B: To mobilize residents in hyperlocal actions to facilitate social connection and ecological transition.

Respondents most closely identified with the outcomes of community resilience and social connection. A smaller number of projects identified with ecological transition. The themes that came up around social connection and ecological transition were:

4. Sparking Community Connections

5. Fostering Collaboration

6. Resource-sharing

While the CBB project was not explicitly focused on environmental and climate action, through the engagement and idea generation process, numerous projects naturally emerged which focused on Climate Justice and Social Justice, which are inextricably linked. Projects such as Tree Planting and the Grovenor Outdoor Classroom were climate-related projects championed by children and youth. Multiple projects were in support of active transportation and encouraging mode shift including Bike Street View (Bike 360), and the Mill Woods Transit Station Pride Walk. Hyperlocal community amenities like Little Libraries, Community Food Libraries, benches and more, encourage walking in communities. Projects like Refugee Welcome Baskets, which will be given to those new to Edmonton, also intersect with Climate Justice as we continue to see the compounding impact of climate displacement and migration globally.

4. Sparking Community Connections

A key theme shared by project participants and the core project team was how CBB created connections that otherwise wouldn't have occurred. Participants valued the connections they made with community members, with their local community organizations, with other Project Leads, and with City Council and City staff.

As an administrative requirement for receiving the funding, Project Leads had to have an organizational project sponsor. However, this was very flexible, and project team supported all Project Leads in identifying organizational partners. As a result, some Project Leads made connections with organizations they had never worked with before.

“I think it helped build engagement with individuals who may not have connected with their council member or city staff before, and is a good introduction to leading community projects and applying for grants.”

Others were able to re-connect or deepen existing connections and relationships with individuals and organizations they already knew.

“I was also able to connect with a bunch of different amazing organizations! Some who I've worked with before like IFSSA/ Islamic Family and some new ones like South Edmonton Youth Council, Hungry Zine, and Macewan Human Rights Office”

Participants were all excited about the chance to connect with and having a positive impact in their community. Not only did they appreciate the opportunities to connect with other Project Leads, but also felt more connected with their City Councillor in an active way.

“I valued the incorporation of local government involvement in our initiative, as it shows support in continuing the programs occurring in our city. It is vital we receive support from our government officials, and we truly appreciate this funding to help support further development in our community.”

“The presence of the City Councillor in the community is wonderful to see. It used to be something more esoteric and disconnected, like City Council behind closed doors, but Keren is really out there connected with the people and it is great! Thank you!”

How this differed from other grants and participant expectations:

"I have never applied for a community grant where there were connections being created between individual project leads."



Deeper Dive

Respondents to our survey most closely identified with the project objectives of 1) community resilience and 2) social connection. A smaller number of projects identified with 3) ecological transition. Participants shared in their follow-up interviews:

“I really appreciated the diversity of the projects. I do remember a few projects related to climate change, which I thought was good. We definitely achieved the first two goals. Especially engaging ward members, allowing voting to happen, it was a great way to bring them in to influence decision-making even though it wasn't super swayed, but it was good to involve them. [There was a] diversity of projects: mini-zines addressing Islamophobia - I thought that was really special. Other projects addressing other community issues, wide ranging. So definitely touched on those goals.”

“Yes - it never crossed my mind those were the goals. Improving the community was the one thing I wanted to do; I'm sure every project can be measured in those KPIs. Yes it does speak to those goals, for example Bike360 encouraged active transportation. But as a participant, I didn't come into this project with those goals in mind. On the note of process, because it didn't have some traditional KPIs, five page, 3 month review process, this was so nice..”

“Facilitating conversation is a big one - spreading awareness about Islamophobia and humanizing Muslims, which was what our project was all about. We went with a local printer in Alberta - Yolkless press. Initially, we were going to go with a larger, cheaper US-based printer, but we wanted to go local, with a press that is climate-friendly, staffed by all racialized people; in the end, we achieved better outcome”

..... Deeper Dive

“Our project addressed the first two goals more directly. A lot of the readings (for the Sikh Book Club) we selected speak directly to these conversations, part and parcel of the conversation when we read the books, is to get people thinking about those things. Lesser so with the third one with the local aspect, doing things in your vicinity. Not sure how much of that will be making a direct impact. The park benches came out of some of these conversations. We talked a lot about heat island and lack of trees in some of these neighbourhoods. Young people will focus in on those issues.”

“I think the first two definitely do - starting with social connection. There are lots of opportunities to instill social interactions, definitely fulfilled that goal. For community resilience - this comes from individual resilience and their willingness to support each other. What we instill with social interactions - not just friends from school or work, but with your neighbours; this builds a very accessible support network. The easiest people to access are your neighbours. So build that strong foundation to be part of your support system will definitely contribute to a strong community resilience. I have one story to share: one of the people we met at an event we were tabling at, turns out they're our front door neighbours, now we say hi and text each other. It's nice to have someone look out for each other. I don't know if I would've connected with them otherwise because we are always rushing.”



5. Fostering Collaboration and Partnerships as Relationships

The project brought together a unique mix of collaborators. The two Councillors' offices, a contracted project coordinator, as well as Beta City YEG, a civic technology group to help design digital tools. Islamic Family and Social Services and the Ribbon Rouge Foundation partnered with the Councillors' offices to link summer students to the project as work experience. And the David Suzuki Foundation contributed some funding to project coordination.

Collaboration occurred in multiple directions: between partner organizations and the Councillors' offices, between community Project Leads and the Councillors' offices/City administration, as well as between community Project Leads.

Our Partners

Funke Olokude, Ribbon Rouge:

"Give power back to the people, why are we in the way? The people have the solutions. Let people closest to the ground have the power. I hope we are able to come together as a group, wherever we are called to talk about this process. Solving everyday problems. We spend our working days talking about it in high level ways, meanwhile there are two groups doing it here, focusing on food security, with dignity. I'm hoping we can do research on this, show what can be done with little money."

Omar Yaqub, IFSSA:

"Some of the push back I've heard from people in the City is that they believe participatory budgeting will pit organizations against one another. This thinking fails to realize that this is what the existing system has been doing. It also misses the bigger opportunity around genuine collaboration."

Many **participants** felt motivated to reach out to a constellation of new partners. One project, Bike360 connected with a variety of organizations doing work related to cycling and active transportation advocacy, as well as open data groups.

Others found their projects gave them an opportunity to build deeper connections with organizations they already had connections to, as well as develop new relationships.

The types of organizations that Project Leads connected with went far beyond one sponsor organization for financial administration. They ranged from community leagues, businesses, faith organizations (mosques, IFSSA), non-profit groups (South Edmonton Youth Council, Bike Edmonton, Seva), and post-secondary institutions (University of Calgary), to City of Edmonton administration, advisory committee (Edmonton Youth Council).

“It got us in touch with yourself, your office, also businesses in the community. We talked to Paratha Hut guy, Koffee Cafe, a few others.”

“Other than at the individual level, I connected and formed deeper connections with Ellerslie Community League and the non-profit org Seva.”

“The location where we did the yoga event, that became a really good resource. After that, the owner herself was someone we knew of in the community. Now we have a connection with her. You just need a reason to connect and to start. She was happy to see the turnout. We saw some give and take from both sides. She got more exposure as well.”

Collaboration can also be a way to reduce costs and support local businesses.

“I can see in year 2 or 3, a real opportunity for businesses to step up. A local printer - being part of PB, doing printing at cost for example. It comes through collaboration - a friendly intro from the ward office, 'can you do a printing for them'.”

6. Resource-Sharing

Several projects leveraged additional dollars from the City of Edmonton. For example, Edmonton Transit Services sponsored the supplies and paint for the Mill Woods Pride Walkway project; Edmonton Urban Forestry Operations donated an additional tree for the Hillview Tree Planting project.

Workshops with community-members allowed for greater collaboration of ideas and long-term relationship-building. This eventually led to some project leads sharing supplies to maximize funding (i.e., Pride Walkway and Little Libraries projects), cross-marketing their events and initiatives (i.e., Puppet Club and Pop-up Coffee Shop), and finding opportunities to share expertise and community-based knowledge (i.e., Food Library and Blessing Box). Many of these new community relationships would not have been built without CBB. ***And the project itself leveraged funds from both wards because of resource sharing.***

Many Project Leads were surprised by how much they were able to do with the available money.

“For my zine, there weren’t a lot of other expenses other than printing and paying contributors. But the connections were invaluable, and connecting with places for distribution - I wasn’t expecting that. People submitted stuff, their art. We also received money from another project that didn’t end up expending everything.”





Goal C. Putting the decision-making power in the hands of the community.

Participants were asked if CBB had changed how they think about City government, all but one respondent agreed that it had. It is telling that many respondents had an initial perception that City government is distant, inefficient, and lacks trust with community.

“Before I had thought of city government as this distant, hazy body that floated above Edmonton. I think this project made me realize that city government is much more ingrained and involved in our communities.”

Being part of CBB changed perceptions for many participants. They appreciated the opportunity to work with and connect with City staff (which for most participants meant Councillors’ office staff, but for some projects included connecting with City administration). They were pleasantly surprised that the City, and their Councillors, would take interest in such local and small-scale projects.

“I was surprised to find your personal care for our Ward. I know it’s your job and yet I thought your main focus was the broader issues of the city.”

The sense of being heard, acknowledged and supported inspired participants to get more involved in their communities.



*“This experience showed me what is possible. The fact that just a private citizen with an idea for community could be ***heard*** and ***supported*** like this was so unexpected. It makes me want to be even more involved.”*

Participants saw the process as building bridges between community and government.

“This shows government involvement on a local scale and how local political leaders can help support and develop initiatives in the community. Also it aids in raising awareness for different community groups and programs that others can have the opportunity to be a part of.”

“This made me value the role of community in government more than I did prior to knowing of these grants.”

How this differed from other grants:

*“This process has helped me see that the City has potential to enable great things! The grants and support provided by the City are already really great, but I think there is a lack of trust which is evident in most grant programs. This project gave us an opportunity to **see what we could make happen without all of the constraints and without the requirement to constantly prove that we are doing what we say we want to do.**”*

Deeper Dive

In follow-up interviews, everyone agreed that CBB succeeded in putting decision-making power in the hands of the community. The things that helped do that included:

Community Voting *"The 'voting' part was a big chunk of shifting that decision-making power. Holding votes at EPL, online voting, all the brainstorming board, the workshops, where people had many ways to give feedback with each other, all of that really succeeded in this."*

The openness of the process *"It was an open call, it allowed us to imagine how we can see a long term benefit. A lot of this is how to keep this going and garner interest, there was no stipulation on where the bounds of imagination can be. It put power in the hands of community, and the process afterwards, in the hands of the leads. It helped the youth develop leadership skills. That's needed in areas like ours (Karhiio), in ways young people can garner and develop those skills, a sense of themselves and making positive change."*

"Usually our politicians tell community what they need, instead of listening to them. You are taking ideas from the community, to come to fruition. In the community, you wear a hat of leader, listening to community about what they need."

Allowing for flexibility with the projects *"There was no real string attached to the money - this gave the flexibility to people to adapt and iterate and improvise. The decision-making was up to community member to do the best thing that made sense, as opposed to sticking to an original plan. That's a very good sign of being flexible and giving people the power to decide and pivot if they needed to. I can see some project that would've failed sooner without such structure."*

Funding Dollars *"\$1000 is a small project; it can make change. But for people to have real decision-making power, bigger projects with bigger amounts of money would need to happen. This was a good start, but it needs to be expanded."*



Goal D. Decolonizing traditional granting processes that have embedded systemic barriers for many, especially equity-seeking groups. To offer an accessible and inclusive process, and reach people who might not otherwise participate in typical civic processes.

In the context of CBB, decolonizing traditional granting structures might be thought of as trying to shift the way public funding is used, who has access to it, and who has the agency to make decisions about how public money should be spent. It can also mean looking at co-creating an alternative that centres people and relationships, embraces messiness and imperfection, and working together. This counters the existing, more rigid, hierarchical institutional ways of doing things that can be seen as part of white supremacy culture. While Participatory Budgeting remains imperfect,

“a clear intention and outreach [can make] the process more truly democratic and representative of the population” (Edgar Villanueva, Decolonizing Wealth, pg.147).



Trying to reach equity-deserving groups with CBB can be evaluated against how well the project reached a diversity of community members. Most of the outreach relied heavily on relationships - sharing the opportunity to participate through the Councillors' networks, newsletters, social media, and word-of-mouth at community events and meetings. Interestingly, the diversity of community members engaged is a reflection of the diversity of the Councillors' networks.

7. Engaging a diversity of community members

Voting Week helped to connect with a greater number and diversity of community members in CBB, collect valuable real-time feedback on the process and the different projects submitted (for project leads), and promote upcoming initiatives and volunteer opportunities to get involved. In-person voting in libraries allowed for community members of all ages to participate, and we had a strong response from children wanting to learn more about projects and vote.

Intentionally partnership was critical to the outreach strategy. We co-hosted one of the workshops with IFSSA, on-site at the organizational Hub. This workshop was co-designed with one of IFSSA's student interns, and IFSSA shared the role of promoting the workshop within its networks.

"I really enjoyed that workshop at IFSSA, because we introduced the facility to the community, and shared our faith (with prayer at the end). The project felt wholesome. It was due to the demographics who participated."

Other participants shared their thoughts on engaging diverse communities:

“I really think so. It was targeted at neighbourhoods, not just a general population like schools or moms. And people who signed up reflected the demographic of the community.”

“I saw a lot of different people represented, a lot of youth. We need to ask: How do we not rest on our laurels, and how do we push that in a meaningful way. For example, how can the Sikh uncles at town centre be engaged in a project. Maybe something that's fully in Punjabi. But really interesting.”

“Yes, very successful. Just looking at all the projects, the names are very diverse. The projects were very diverse. You reached a lot of communities. My project was about little babies; another one was about seniors etc. Looking across the board, everyone was very diverse in terms of ethnicity, age etc. That's how I first heard about it was through IFSSA, it wouldn't have reached to us otherwise.”

“I think so but it's important to continuously using the channels we have through organizations and community groups to target people - it could've been more diverse. It's the first time, so it's hard to push out the widest reach.”

“I think definitely. You guys connecting with IFSSA helps with Muslims, with marginalized communities. A lot of the projects are connecting with diverse communities. Like my project - engaging racialized diverse people, youth. The whole project is open to all people and very inclusive.”

Deeper Dive

People interviewed felt that the process was accessible and inclusive and that there were few barriers in their participation. Several participants talked about how this process contrasted with the constraints of typical granting channels, and how they felt CBB supported real impacts rather than “small, flashy wins.” One person elaborated:

“We were apprehensive and we envisioned barriers because of all of our lived experiences with institutional stuff. We didn’t experience that at all in this project, so it succeeded at that level. I don’t know if we would’ve done this if this were done through city administration. There’s always trepidation about what and how the process is going to go, the questions we’d anticipate from the mainstream society. At some level, this process shielded the people involved from that reality for a little while; it built a support system to face that later.

Projects that the city chooses would be things they can celebrate immediately, rather than ones with long term impact. Politicians on a 4-year cycle have short-term goals. I didn’t feel that at all about this process. It’s administration, I would feel like a bunch of white people would want the small, flashy wins rather than the long win. It would be disrespectful and insulting if you really want to do something uplifting. You should feel a sense of pride where you live.

We have young people growing up in the community that does see violence and injustice, which does affect the Punjabi and Sikh community. The long term impact of the book club is really about building capacity for the young people of today for tomorrow. The books they read wouldn’t even be books they would read in university even.”

..... Deeper Dive

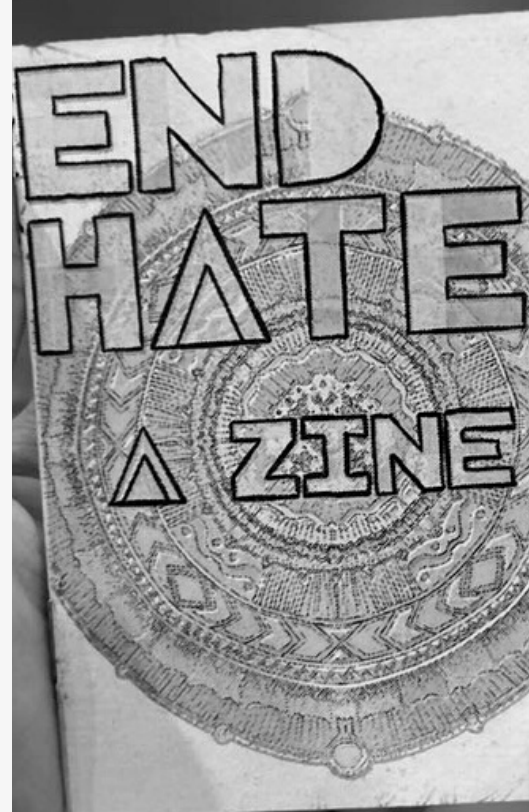
The flexibility of the application process allowed for accessibility and inclusion. Participants noted how individuals could apply and didn't need to be part of a specific organization (until later for reimbursement purpose).

"I have looked into those projects before - they ask for other team members. Usually single leads aren't very successful, they ask for other funding resources you have at hand. It's very structured, asking for many things, with back up from other organizations. We asked for organizations here but it was very open, we could ask anyone. Many things like that... Often times, the other granting programs are expecting a larger impact that the project has had so far. We've reached for a couple of hundreds people; a bigger grant is bigger. Process is lengthier, forms are longer. Things we need to submit are more. Lots of disclosure. This CBB process was very accessible, well advertised. Generally, it felt like it was a collective process. This is something that we are building together. I really liked the vibe of it."

"It was very inclusive. I didn't feel any barrier. When you apply, you are anonymous. It was very inclusive, accessible. People reached out to me. It was on me that I wasn't as sociable."

"Yes. It was just one pager to submit; the timelines weren't three month turnarounds. This was clearly laid out when we'd hear back. Also, I could see when we did get together at the end, different ages, ethnicities - and diversity there...It's one of those things no one knew anything about. But you laid out the foundation for next round, and it was more comfortable for people to come forward. It was an unknown, you took the first step."

"Everyone was really helpful. I've never applied to a grant before, so I don't have anything to compare to. No barriers for me, everyone could've done it. Good first experience with city dollars."



Impacts and Successes



03

Impacts and Successes

Follow-up interviews further shed insights on personal and community impacts.

Personal Impacts

Some of the younger participants noted learning new tangible skills, including leadership skills, facilitation skills (for a student intern), how to make an invoice and a budget, estimating printing and project costs, getting introduced to City politics and learning about where part of the budget goes, and expanding their knowledge of the topics and processes (e.g. zine-making, building food libraries). Participants mentioned feeling excited to play a role in improving their communities, feeling more directly connected with members of their communities, having an excuse to reach out and expand networks and develop new partnerships, feeling good about working on something positive. Participants talked about being able to start-up and scale up an idea, and how powerful and positive that felt.

“Personally, I feel so much closer to my community members. Before this, I didn’t have a reason to go out and reach out to people. Now I have a reason, to learn about their interest, not at a superficial level, but a deeper level.”

“Participating in the project has been so life-giving and educational for me. It gives me hope that we can work together to create amazing things in the world. I can’t thank you enough for the incredible amount of time, energy, and trust that you put into all of these projects!”

*“It’s been really wonderful, seeing the role this project played in team development, community development, exciting people about civics, teaching people about carrying a project from ideation to fruition. I’ve noticed the difference from people who participated in it, how they engage with the city, how they instigate a project, even their sense of ownership has been impacted. Often times, they have chance to participate at the city, but often leave not really feeling where their input goes. ‘I talked to someone, I hope they took my input into consideration.’ What’s been nice about this process was, I had an input, I had to get people involved, and excited, and I had to get it done. It’s been really exciting to see people learn this process. **It’s a lego bricks of civics.**”*



Community Impacts

In some projects, the “community” was defined geographically, by neighbourhood. In some, they were defined by interest, ethnicity and/or faith, e.g. young people from the Punjabi community and of Sikh faith, Muslim teenagers, people interested in cycling. And in others, community was defined as both the people most closely engaged with the project (contributors to a zine, members of a club) as well as the broader audience (e.g. readers of a zine, audience for a puppet show, users of a little library).

Participants talked about the way that their projects are helping neighbours connect to each other and to neighbourhood amenities. They talked about the way that they are supporting “*racialized people who see their issues reflected and [seeing] other people care about it.*” They talked about the excitement of seeing a project grow legs.

“It’s a project that adds the promise of what’s possible. When I tell people about this stuff, I can see this kind of project extend beyond Edmonton, that’s why I reached out to Calgary (Bike) communities.”

Others shared perspectives about community impact not only from their own projects but also from participating in the process overall.

“Often times in community development, you are trying to develop people. Give them opportunities, facilitate things, especially working with youth and equity-deserving communities, you want opportunities to have some teeth and get people involved. Not often you work with discretionary funding to instigate something like this. Let’s give people some opportunities to start something up, with lasting legacy of impact - whether they are zines or benches. Simple processes - once people taste that, they won’t go back. It’s a light bulb moment for people.”

“This project showed positive impact that community based projects can have. I think it helps with the ward to build greater sense of involvement of young people. It changed my perspective a bit: there was a bit of an assumption as we get older, young people don’t want to get involved. This was a nice thing to show that there other non-traditional routes to enter into politics and discussions about their social spaces, these kind of things can build that capacity, involve young people, facilitate conversation that are not as tried and true....I really feel like community and civic politics, city politics is where real change happens, and this project really affirmed that.”

“I hope [our project] engages people to look at their local situations and brainstorm and create changes that are beneficial to them”

Resourcing, Administration and Risks



04

Resourcing, Administration and Risks

The resourcing that was needed to pilot CBB is not to be overlooked. A great deal was done with a modest budget, thanks to partnership, collaboration, staff, contractor and volunteer time and energy, and smart leveraging of resources. Piloting CBB took:

- One contracted project coordinator (roughly 100 hours over five months, costing \$12,000)
- Staff from the two Councillors' offices to support the project, in addition to their regular workload
- Administrative buy-in (from the Councillors offices as well as administrative support staff and processes)
- Working with a volunteer partner (Beta City Yeg) to provide support around digital engagement tools,
- \$25,000 contributed by each Councillor from their ward budgets for the community projects
- 4 summer students from partner organizations, IFSSA and Ribbon Rouge, were also involved at up to 10 hours a week, which had the benefit of allowing the Councillors to test out the idea of a civic fellowship for youth. Involving students brought some fresh ideas to the project, and they also provided support with workshop design, social media content creation, and creating support materials for the application process. However, working with students required the project coordinator to allocate additional time to providing direction and coaching to the students. So in evaluating the project, this project could be repeated without the additional resource of four students
- Additional funding from David Suzuki Foundation supported general project management (food, hosting, supplies etc.)

We worked with the Council Services Office on the administration of small project grants, and identified risks, constraints, and the parameters within the current City fiscal policies. As a result, we took a reimbursement-based approach through community organizations that served as fiscal agents and in some instances, project partners. Where appropriate and needed, our Project Team introduced and connected individuals with a community group that they may otherwise not have had access to.



Recommendations and Reflections



Recommendations and Reflections

“The ethos of how the project team worked was really important - nimble, relationship and people-centered, bringing all of our selves into the process (i.e., our family, personal lives into our professional worlds), willing to step into the unknown with residents, willing to have tough conversations, being brave etc.”

We learned many things through this hyperlocal version of CBB. We offer some reflections based on what we heard throughout the process on what it means to work with communities as partners, in a people-centred way - **the common thread that underpins the process, the relationships, and each project**. Recognizing this project took a particular work ethos and culture of agility, nimbleness, and openness, we wonder how we can replicate this kind of work ethos within a broader institution like the City itself? What are the small things or aspects of this work ethos that can be learned? What are some pitfalls and risks to watch out for?

1. Relationships matter, a lot

Relationships underpinned this CBB project. We **provided numerous opportunities for people to gather throughout the project proposal and budget development process, so that ideas and conversations can collide organically**. For many, developing a community project idea can be fun and exciting. But it can also be intimidating and overwhelming. It was critical for us to offer ways for prospective Project Leads/applicants/people with ideas to come together, workshop their ideas, get feedback, ask questions, be sounding boards to each other, and develop relationships with people they might not otherwise meet. Gathering can include in-person workshops, online brainstorming boards, virtual workshops or meetings, one-one-one coaching conversations, and more.

These gatherings where peers connect with each other, along with one-on-one coaching time with staff or volunteers are part of a broader spectrum of ways to build capacity where Project Leads can sharpen their skills in community organizing, bringing ideas to life, and working as teams. These skills can complement their background, interest, and aptitude for natural community leadership. **By building capacity, we build power**. Often, we throw everyday people into community



development work without adequately preparing them. We stress grassroots initiatives without providing the tools for people to realize those ideas. While solutions can come from the ground-up, not everyone is a natural community leader/community developer (even those who may be educated or have some experience). We believe that any granting programs should come hand-in-hand with capacity development, which needs adequate resources (especially staff time) to properly support and maintain the learning environment.

This learning environment is the foundation for capacity building that also welcomed and made spaces for failure, and room for learning by doing, especially for those who are new to leading community projects, or working with funding. Not all the details needed to be locked down before a project is allowed to proceed. Much can be learned and adapted along the way. So, **build in space for failure, learning and risk-taking.**

2. Start Small

We needed to start small. The scale of project funding in CBB helped to lower the risk that City governments often are averse to when it comes to working and co-creating with communities, especially with people who might be first-time applicants, dipping their toes into getting involved with their community. Whereas they might not have access to bigger grants, grassroots, easily accessible grants wet their appetite for rolling up their sleeves and effect positive change in the community.

Volunteer shortage is a real challenge faced by many communities. CBB was no different. We recognized that relying on volunteer energy to get projects off the ground is a key challenge in this project. This was why flexibility was critical to maintain engagement and alleviating some of the pressures. Many of the Project Leads appreciated the flexibility that was intentionally built into the process. One Project Lead coined the term “critical minimum infrastructure” such as designing grant processes and application forms with the minimum amount of information needed that contributes to and fosters flexibility. Project coordination and coaching support from the Project Team was also key to the experience and success of community members leading projects.

3. Co-creation and trust-building

These lessons of support and infrastructure are some of the ways to **retain the authenticity of projects and relationships if we scale**

CBB within the City. Co-creation, partnerships, and trust-building are other ways. We heard from the Project Leads that it was important to have people in their corners - the Councillors and their teams - who understand what is happening in the community and who have their ears to the ground. This is a shift from the traditional transactional relationship people have with their elected officials and City staff.

From the start, the Project Team was clear that we are not just here to fund, we are here to support, to help brainstorm, to navigate challenges, to clear hurdles, to commiserate and create together, to rejoice in the small wins. **To be your partner.**

This required a significant amount of giving up control and following the leads of community members. How do we move towards this way of working not just in one project, but broadly as a paradigm shift? What could “giving up control” mean for power sharing and anti-racist and decolonizing approaches that we always talk about but never practice in reality? These were questions we often discussed and thought about as a Project Team.

When we gave up more control and step into the role of co-creation, we strengthen relationships, and in turn build deeper trust with community members. In fact, public trust in institutions has been eroding in the past decades; it is one of the most fundamental to our democracy. At the same time we encourage risk-taking, as an institution and a funder, the City needs to **create and build trust with communities, meet people where they are at, and to reflect on what collaboration and partnership can look like across power differentials.** Communities may be equal partners in some ways, in terms of their knowledge of community and solutions, they might not still be equal to the City institution in terms of their access to resources, familiarity with administrative processes, etc. Navigating through these dynamics, being open to tough conversation, and being open and transparent about what we know and what we don't know at each step along the way helped us accumulate trust.

The flip-side of co-creation is that more clearly outlined roles/expectations may also be needed. As several were first time Project Leads, some received quite a high level of support with implementation, and they had hoped for even more (help with connecting to volunteers for their project, help with identifying graphic designers, etc.). Resourcing was always on the Project Team's mind:

what level of involvement can be sustained by staff? Where do additional capacity-building approaches and resources need to be brought in? Or should it be clearer to Project Leads that the task of managing the project is their responsibility? In several projects, the Councillors' offices were essentially partners in the project, not just funders. Is this a direction to continue in? There may be a fine-line between supporting, capacity-building, co-creating, and hand-holding, if this is not clarified from the start.

4. Scaling up

"I think community-based budgeting overall is a promising system to put real money and decision-making in the hands of citizens, and this project was an amazing start! But it's also just a start. I think that for real power to be in the hands of the people, community-based budgeting has to move to the next level and allocate money for bigger projects. Not that these small projects are bad- they are a great start, and small projects can still make big change!"

This project challenged all of us, the Project Team and the Project Leads, to think about new roles such as coaches, new format that combines money and skill development, and new ways that institutions can meaningfully build relationships and trust with the public. **Can we say we are done with piloting? After one iteration, we are unsure if the project is ready to "scale up" or handed off.**

"You need to give yourself 3 iterations before you can properly evaluate. Often times, we pilot an idea, then we retire it. Something like CBB needs to go through many iteration for us to earnestly say how well we've done"

"I saw a lot of people being really excited and learning. At this stage it's too early to say. Success would be how many people from year 1 referred people for year 2. A large part of the cohort are people we can directly tap. So it would be good to see what organic growth would be. We didn't have a vote of elimination. I wonder if some ideas didn't make it - is it because of popularity or merit. It's a natural process of voting. It would be curious to know for later. Maybe part of the process is teaching people to build the hype to get something past the line"

CBB was more than a microgrant program. For many participants, it was not the financial support alone that led to the success of their project. It was the combination of financial support, project development/implementation support, the community building environment, and the warm touch. People were supportive of each other's ideas, and also felt encouraged to bring their ideas forward, to access the funds, and to learn together.

“How many funding organizations are in conversation with community members at a level that they know who needs funding and what projects are germinating?”

We tested the critical role of a “coach” in grant administration. This person is not just someone who coaches you through how to fill out a form, but someone or a group with diverse life experiences who can help you think through a problem, ask right questions, scope the project, and consider audience/end user, impact etc. While Project Leads directly communicated with each of the Ward offices, they also connected with the Project Coordinator, and some in cases, with each other - all serving in this coaching capacity.

Seed funding alone is not enough; implementation support and capacity building, working with communities, collective decision-making (i.e., community voting) strengthens democracy and relationships between residents and institutions, puts power back into the hands of communities, and amplifies grassroots changes. This takes **intentional design, dedicated resources, and deep partnership** to encourage participation if CBB approach were to scale in the future. Incubator-styled programs like [ioby.org](https://www.ioby.org), which offers a crowdfunding platform combined with local and regional teams for on-the-ground support, is an interesting model to learn from.

In scaling or moving forward, Project Leads also challenge us to broaden how we think about terms like “impact,” “value for dollars,” or “return on investment”. Supporting meaningful community change can mean looking for long-term impacts, but it can also mean working with community members to help them tease out the ways they might spark some big idea that starts out with a small amount of resources, and taking the time to think through ideas together, to strengthen them.

5. Timeline and Participation

We recognized that the timeline for the CBB project was not ideal, as the bulk of engagement took place over the summer months when more people are normally out-of-town, and organizations like schools and Community Leagues are closed for recess. The bulk of project implementation took place in late fall/winter. In the future, we would do outreach and planning in the winter/spring, and voting at the beginning of summer so that winning projects receive their funding in time to do project implementation over summer/fall months.

For the first iteration of Community-Based Budgeting we did not receive enough project submissions to require a vote to determine which projects would be funded. However, this allowed for all projects to be fully funded. Voting was also still able to occur to engage community members in the process, pivoting to voting for a “Community Choice Award” geared at building momentum and energy for civic participation.

In the future, methods to increase participation could include the shift in timeline (for more schools and Community League participation), additional targeted promotion and outreach with Community Leagues and Community and Youth Organizations, intentional partnership (similar to ones this year with BIPOC-led IFSSA and Ribbon Rouge Foundation), and word of mouth promotion and story-telling with our current cohort of project leads.

Areas for Growth and Ideas for the Future

These are all suggested areas of growth that came from participant and project team feedback. They would require dedicated resourcing, and building upon the lessons learned from this initial pilot year.

	Feedback	2022 Project Rationale	Going Forward
Application Process			One participant noted that: <i>"I think that if the funding increases in the future, the application will probably need to be more detailed - project goals, project description, what the funds will be used for, etc."</i>
Outreach	More outreach to the community to promote the opportunity to people across the wards and city. Improve and expand outreach. <i>"99% of the people I talked to had not heard of it except from me. The applications may have been more plentiful had more people known about it. I found out because I had a question for Keren and she told me about it"</i> .	Resources were limited, and a detailed outreach plan was not part of the process.	Include a robust outreach and promotional plan in the project plan and budget. It would've been nicer to see even greater diversity. Increasing outreach with minority communities would really help in terms of achieving that goal.
Engagement	Host gatherings/workshops, somewhere other than downtown, or in various locations, and in a variety of formats. <i>"I would have liked to participate more in the engagement, such as the meetings, Facebook group and celebration, but I find that difficult to carry out because of time constraints"</i> .	The project team held workshops online initially due to COVID-restrictions. There was one hybrid workshop offered at the IFSSA hub (central) and the final celebration for project leads was at City Hall. The rationale for this was that the two wards participating in the project are on different sides of the city, so central would be best. Secondly, the idea that it might be a nice introduction to city hall, for community members to be invited by their councillor to be part of an event at city hall.	Creating a series of video recordings, YouTube and Instagram reels that help future iterations. Short, quick how-to videos can go a long way, in various languages, and see if this inspires other groups.

Areas for Growth and Ideas for the Future

These are all suggested areas of growth that came from participant and project team feedback. They would require dedicated resourcing, and building upon the lessons learned from this initial pilot year.

	Feedback	2022 Project Rationale	Going Forward
Capacity-Building	Training to create new Project Leads.		Having past project leads put on a workshop to share tips with new project leads.
Communication	Better and more communication through the process. Clarity of communications around the purpose, goals, parameters and timelines of the Community-Based Budgeting Project. Some participants felt that these were clearly communicated, others felt they were nebulous and shifting. As the idea of public voting to decide funding is new to many people, there was some confusion around this. Some participants thought there would be a grant review committee, or that City Council would meet to approve or reject project ideas.	These were evolving and iterative.	A lot of resources, guidelines, etc were provided, but these could have been clearer.
Students	The experience for student interns lacked clarity but was still a positive experience.	Project staff were aware this would be a challenge, given the lack of resources dedicated to mentoring and supporting student interns.	

Areas for Growth and Ideas for the Future

These are all suggested areas of growth that came from participant and project team feedback. They would require dedicated resourcing, and building upon the lessons learned from this initial pilot year.

	Feedback	2022 Project Rationale	Going Forward
Supports	<p>More structure to the additional resources and support shared. One participant noted that they would have liked some contacts for designer or payment. <i>"I wasn't very interactive but I could've had more conversations with the team to find resources"</i>.</p> <p>Another noted that it would also be helpful to have some more structured ways of working with the other groups. Maybe an organization that can act as a fiscal partner for any project that doesn't/can't find a partner easily.</p>		<p>Provide more clarity or boundaries around what kinds of support and resources can be provided to participants.</p>
Funding Disbursal	<p>The way funding disbursement worked and the timeline needs to be ironed out. Some participants felt the time crunch to receive the money was stressful - the timeline of needed to receive and spend the money between September and December (due to year-end budget timelines for the Coucnillors' offices). Others felt the timeline worked for them to implement their project, and that the reimbursement process was smooth. <i>"Ideally, a timeline over which we can slowly use up the funding can ease submitting payments. Alternatively, it may be helpful to receive the lump sum and then providing a detailed invoice of all our spendings"</i>.</p>	<p>The project team reflected that the timelines for reimbursement during year-end did create additional stress to ensure community members received funding on time. In addition, the majority of project leads submitted their reimbursement requests in the last weeks, creating a backlog and time crunch before year-end.</p>	<p>Creating at least a 1-month buffer before year-end where all reimbursements or funding disbursements are completed to avoid year-end stress.</p>

Appendices



06

Appendix A: Project Scope and Parameters

The Parameters (as agreed upon with project participants):

1. Projects, actions or events were encouraged to be completed in the fall of 2022 (before the end of the calendar year).
- 2 Funds used needed to abide by the Councillors' Budget and Expense Policy, C618A.
3. Funds were provided to the projects as a reimbursement, once project leads submitted receipts for expenses incurred. This meant that project leads needed to pay for the costs upfront. If this was a barrier, the team provided support to navigate the process.
4. Lead project applicant(s) needed to have a connection to one of the two wards, either as a resident of Ward Karhiio or Ward Nakota Isga OR with the project taking place within one of the wards.
5. The City of Edmonton had an administrative requirement for distributing funds: participants needed to work with a sponsor community organization, such as a community league, or a non-profit organization, so that funds could be disbursed to that organization. The project team worked with individuals who needed assistance in finding a sponsor organization, so this would not present a barrier for anyone.
6. There were no age limits for participation. Youth were encouraged to participate.

Appendix B: List of Community-Based Budgeting Projects

Ward Karhiio:

- **Chess in the Park:** A weekly chess community event in Jackie Parker Park held in the summer months for people of all ages and cultures.
- **My Walk and Talk Buddy:** A project to pair individuals and families to facilitate relationship-building through planned activities like walking and exercising. The project also involves hosting larger events including yoga, meditation, and more.
- **Zines to Intervene (on racism):** Creating a compilation of art and writing from Muslim creators in the Edmonton area that humanize Muslims and also provide information on anti-racism.
- **Mill Woods Dining Week:** Mill Woods Dining Week aims to share great restaurants hidden around the many neighbourhoods that make up Mill Woods, and help people discover a new favourite place to go eat right in their own community.
- **Bench Initiative in Charlesworth:** South Asian culture emphasises communal spaces and coming together as a community to build close ties with your neighbourhood. This project focuses on adding more seating to a local park to support a growing neighbourhood.
- **Sikh Book Club:** A book club focusing on topics of Sikh history and of the diaspora to encourage an open dialogue and conversation for people of all backgrounds.
- **Planting Trees in Hillview:** Planting new trees in the Hillview community to draw children and adults back into the cul-de-sac, and to offer a safe haven for children to play, free from speeding cars and the heat.
- **Mill Woods Transit Centre Pride Walk:** Painting the walkway at the Mill Woods Transit Centre with Pride colours to create a symbol of inclusivity and welcoming. This is the first pride walkway/crosswalk in the Southeast community.
- **Building a Carrom Table:** Building an outdoor carrom table for community members to play, get together with neighbours, build relationships and community and reduce isolation. Carrom is a board game of Indian origin.
- **A Great Aunt's Friendship Bench:** A local bench which provides seating, and will also be activated with 'volunteer aunts' who will sit for a few hours and create a welcoming opportunity for friends and strangers to share their thoughts/concerns or just chat to help reduce isolation.

Ward Karhiio continued:

- **Community Memory Box:** Building a memory box for neighbours to share their memories and stories, and later publish it in a magazine format.
- **Tiny Library Project:** Building and installing little libraries in the Millhurst community to facilitate community connection and enrichment, and showcase local artists who will design and paint the little libraries.
- **Welcome Baskets for Refugee Families:** Creating welcoming kits for refugees with essential items to help give a sense of community to newcomers, and so they know they aren't alone.

Ward Nakota Isga:

- **Mindfulness-based Emotional Intelligence Workshops for Children and Youth:** Providing interactive workshops that address and teach emotional intelligence for children and youth, and mindfulness to help them improve their mental health and increase their intelligence and emotional skills.
- **Grovenor School Outdoor Classroom:** Over the past four years, Grovenor School, with the support of the Grovenor Community League and Grovenor Parent Association, has been developing a project to focus on their love of the outdoors. Grovenor School is a positive, fun place for students to learn and grow and wants to extend this feeling to the whole community by creating an outdoor classroom/gathering space.
- **Local Food Libraries:** Build raised wooden hutches to hold food that the community donates, uses, and shares with each other.
- **Pop-up Coffee Shop for Community Connection:** Pop-up coffee shop in the North Glenora neighbourhood to re-engage the community and rebuild connections weakened by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be a space that celebrates diversity, embraces local talent & skills, and connects neighbours. North Glenora does not currently have any commercial space, so a traditional coffee shop is not possible. There is a strong hunger for connection in this community and significant demand for a coffee shop space.
- **Magpie Puppet Club:** Sharing cultural or social justice stories in a language that is easy to understand for children. Goal is to spark attendants' interest in learning about cultures from various heritage backgrounds as well as issues about the society, for example, racism against visual minorities.

Ward Nakota Isga continued:

- **Bike Streetview (Bike 360):** Take Photos/Videos of our official community bike network (as defined by City of Edmonton and sharing them on Google Streetview, which currently doesn't cover all multi-use bike paths or tracks. The goal is to add custom street views from the point of views of riding bike paths for Wards Nakota Isga and Karhiio. This project allows Edmontonians to preview their biking route (how safe, kid-friendly for families) and identifies gaps in signage or infrastructure for wayfinding and safety purposes (e.g., unexpected breaks on bike paths).
- **Soccer in Secord and Rosenthal:** Local soccer group that continued to grow, since Spring 2022 that has been playing every Saturday morning at David Thomas King School. Secord and Rosenthal are newer neighbourhoods and the aim of playing soccer is not only to have fun but also to meet new neighbours, make new friends and create an active and healthy community. This initiative also helps those who cannot afford to pay for League Soccer especially new immigrants and part-time recreational soccer players.
- **Sticky Saviours:** Design, create and distribute car decals to be placed on the driver's window to serve as a visual reminder to check the back seat of the car. These decals would be distributed for free at daycares across the ward with an instruction sheet for use.
- **Accessible Text Helpline:** Problem: None of the adult (18+) helplines or shelters are accessible to those with hearing loss, Deaf, or unable to understand voices on the phone. We want to provide additional services to an already functional system. Solution: To add text and live chat to one adult helpline or shelter in the Nakota Isga ward. This will empower EVERY adult that is being abused to have access to support and guidance they need. (*This project did not proceed with CBB.*)
- **Community Creative Spaces:** Host consistent and intentional spoken word nights, art nights, and spaces for people to share writing or art or pieces that are important to them, whether it's through performances or storytelling or workshops. Curating a space like this is important for community in terms of having a reliable and welcoming place to be vulnerable, creative, and to heal and learn from others.
- **Blessings Box in Britannia Youngstown:** The Blessing Box provides books, food, hygiene items, and clothing, made available to anyone with need in the community. The primary focus is on food, but they also try to provide warm scarves, hats and socks when they can in the winter. The goal of this project is two-fold. First, to feed those who are hungry and second, to remind everyone in the neighbourhood that we are a community that cares for each other.

Appendix C: Community-Based Budgeting in the Media

- [Edmonton councillors invite residents to take part in budget decisions \(David Suzuki Foundation\)](#)
- [Edmonton councillors budgeting for the 'small stuff' \(The Globe and Mail\)](#)
- [Community-led projects could help curb racism, Edmonton city councillor says \(CBC\)](#)
- [Edmonton councillors offering \\$50K in grants through 'participatory budgeting' \(CTV\)](#)
- [Greater Mill Woods Dining Week spotlights southeast eateries \(Taproot\)](#)
- [Project adds hundreds of kilometres of bike paths to Google Street View \(Taproot\)](#)
- [A place to sit in Southeast Edmonton \(CBC Radio Active\)](#)

Appendix D: Evaluation Resources and Data

- [Project Leader Evaluation Questions \(this was distributed as a google form and paper questionnaire\)](#)
- [Project Lead Follow-up Interview + Questionnaire Response Summaries](#)