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Youth Lead the Change: Participatory Budgeting

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Boston University

Youth Lead the Change: Participatory Budgeting

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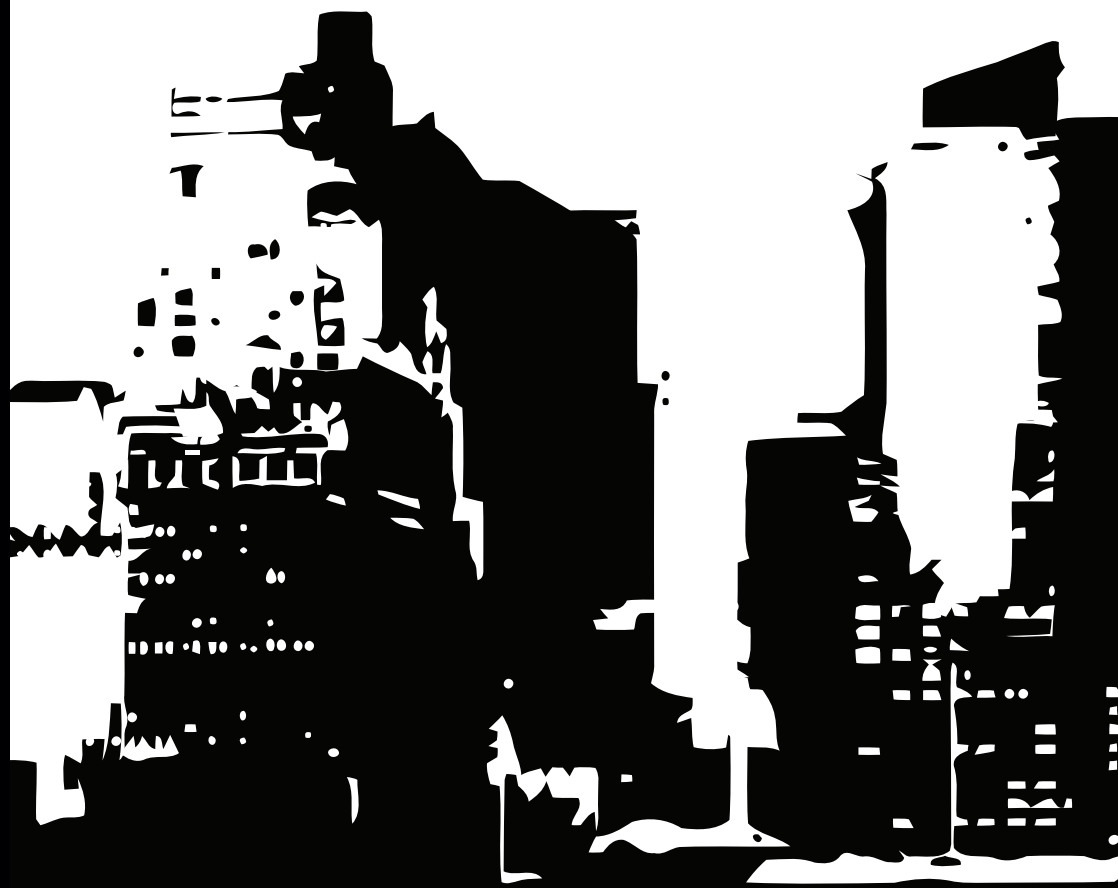


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I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The year 2015-16 marks the third year of Youth Lead the Change: Participatory Budgeting Boston. As with the program's first two years, young people from across the city were asked to suggest ideas for capital projects that will bring long-term physical improvements to parks, streets, schools, and neighborhoods on city-owned property. Youth volunteers, called Change Agents, reviewed the ideas and turned them into proposals. The final proposed infrastructure projects needed to benefit the public, cost at least \$25,000, and have a lifespan of at least five years. Then young people from throughout Boston voted on their top priorities for funding.

This evaluation report examines the Youth Lead the Change process in its third year, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources. Throughout the year, the Evaluation Team of Boston University researchers conducted interviews, observations, and other data collection activities to fully understand and analyze the process, its intent, and its outcomes. We describe the participatory budgeting process, present our research questions, explain our methods, report our findings, and summarize the conclusions with recommendations to further develop this innovative effort to engage youth in city government.

History of Participatory Budgeting in Boston and Beyond

The participatory budgeting process provides an opportunity for citizens to determine how to utilize a government budget. The concept of participatory budgeting arose from an experiment in Porto Alegre, Brazil in the 1980s when a new government invented a method to manage public resources through community involvement. This broad concept spread to nearby cities, with each adopting their own modified version. In the following decade, participatory budgeting spread to other locations in Latin America and on to Europe and Canada (Cabannes, 2004; Lerner 2011). The United States eventually began to experiment with participatory budgeting in 2010 in Chicago's 49th Ward (Lerner, 2011). Youth engagement in participatory budgeting, in particular, has been examined as one type of participatory budgeting (Cabannes, 2006), but cases of youth participation in participatory budgeting outside of Latin America are limited.

The City of Boston was the first instance of youth-led participatory budgeting in the United States. This initiative, established in 2013 by the Boston Mayor's office, allows Boston youth ages 12-25 to determine how to spend one million dollars of the city's capital budget. The Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) estimates that Boston's process incorporates about 2,000 youth participants annually (Participatory Budgeting Project, 2016b). Dubbed Youth Lead the Change: Participatory Budgeting Boston, Boston's approach allows young people to not only vote on how to spend the one million dollars, but also enables youth to play a role in identifying and shaping particular projects to propose for voting, particularly through the Mayor's Youth Council (Participatory Budgeting Project, 2016a). In Boston, the Mayor's Youth Council is comprised of mayoral-appointed youth delegates from neighborhoods citywide.

During the inaugural year of Youth Lead the Change, which ran from November 2013 to June of 2014, the City of Boston and the Mayor's Youth Council collaborated with the Participatory Budgeting Project for guidance on how to conduct the participatory budget process (Participatory Budgeting Project, 2016a). Specifically, the Participatory Budgeting Project¹, a nonprofit organization operating mostly in the U.S. and Canada, assisted Youth Lead the Change by providing guidance materials, training for youth participants and adult facilitators, and developing other educational material (2016a).

¹ www.participatorybudgeting.org

Youth Lead the Change Project Goals

1. **Increase Youth Power:** Engage youth in meaningful decision-making and prove that young people are the solution, not the problem.
2. **Allow All Voices to Be Heard:** Include all community stakeholders in the democratic process.
3. **Build Stronger, Safer, and Healthier Communities:** Bring neighborhoods together, solve community problems, and develop projects that will improve the well-being of all members of the community.
4. **Strengthen City-wide Sense of Pride, Solidarity, and Equality:** Create a unified Boston across neighborhoods where everyone feels part of a growing community.
5. **Pathways into Civic Life:** Create an entry point for young people to become civically engaged and learn about the city and government.

Research Questions

This evaluation and associated data collection activities were focused on two research questions:

- (1) Where are opportunities for improvement to Boston’s youth participatory budgeting process, including the pre-planning stages, as well as idea collection, proposal development and voting?
- (2) What general needs and priorities of Boston youth emerged as a result of the process?

Description of Annual Cycle

Youth Lead the Change involves a series of meetings and events that feed into the city’s budget cycle. The 2015-16 process has five main steps, starting in November 2015 and concluding in June 2016.

Table 1: Description of YLC Stages

<i>Month(s)</i>	<i>Step</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Nov-Dec	Pre-Planning	Multi-Stakeholder (Adult and Youth) Steering Committee decides on rules and plans the process
Jan	Idea Collection	Public (Adult and Youth) invited to submit ideas for spending \$1 million of Boston’s capital budget
Feb-Apr	Proposal Development	Youth “Change Agents” develop ideas into concrete project proposals
May	Voting	Youth residents between the ages of 12 and 25 vote on the projects to be funded
June	Evaluation and Monitoring Implementation of Projects	Adult and youth participants evaluate the process and oversee the implementation of projects, including reviewing associated Requests for Proposals

Phase 1: Idea Collection



The public was invited to submit ideas for consideration and evaluation through personal outreach by Mayor’s Youth Council representatives, community events and mass advertising. Ideas were intended to improve the City of Boston or a neighborhood within Boston. Anyone could propose project ideas, regardless of age or residence, and considerable effort was made to engage a broad audience.

Public events were held throughout the city to collect ideas, and ideas were submitted online, through social media and via text message. This year’s process was also intended to inspire friendly competition among the youth, with prizes awarded for the most number of clicks on shared links. Language translation and interpretation were provided as often as feasible to ensure widespread participation.



There were additional outreach efforts focused on youth who faced barriers to participating. All submitted ideas were logged into a spreadsheet by Mayor’s Youth Council representatives for tracking purposes and assigned to a relevant subcommittee.

Measures of Success:

- *Total youth engaged*

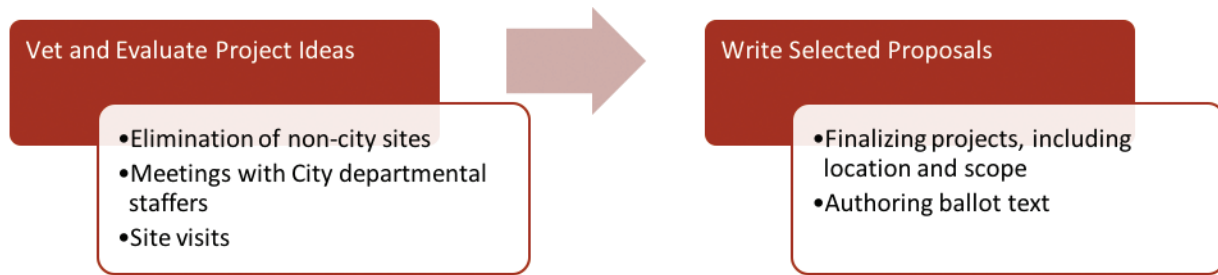
The Youth Lead the Change effort is perceived by the City as a valuable way to engage youth in Boston via the promise of real impact. Related marketing materials invest youth with decision-making authority, calling on them to spend \$1 million of City money.

- *Total number of submitted ideas, both capital eligible and non-capital eligible, aligned with the mission of each of the Subcommittees*

Rather than focus exclusively on capital eligible projects, the City seeks a wide array of both capital eligible projects and programmatic ideas from youth citywide. The rationale is three-fold: First, the City believes it will engage more youth if it introduces fewer parameters, helping to achieve Goal 1. Second, City staff see the Idea Collection phase as an opportunity to inform both the Youth Lead the Change ballot and the strategic priorities of the Mayor’s Youth Council. Third, they feel the city’s youth Change Agents are able to convert at least some programmatic ideas into capital eligible ideas, due to their greater understanding of capital eligibility and consultations with departmental staff within the City.²

² Interview with Boston Mayor’s Youth Council Manager, Francesco Tena on June 17, 2016

Phase 2: Proposal Development



Change Agents were central to the Proposal Development phase. All members of the Boston Mayor's Youth Council were Change Agents. Additionally, select youth ages 12-25 volunteered to be involved in this process. In addition to the age requirement, youth must be residents of Boston. Youth were trained by the Participatory Budgeting Project and interacted with city staff to identify feasible ideas that could be honed into projects for the public vote. Youth worked in thematic committees to develop project proposals for issues such as: Education, Parks & Recreation, Environment, and Public Safety. Trained youth facilitators guided each committee.

Change Agent committees met weekly after school between February and May and typically dedicated 8-10 hours each month to this phase of the project. The Steering Committee provided the criteria by which Change Agents evaluated and developed project ideas, including feasibility, community need, and community impact. Change Agents visited sites to evaluate need and feasibility. Proposal writing was a group activity, with multiple Change Agents contributing to the wording of a single proposal.

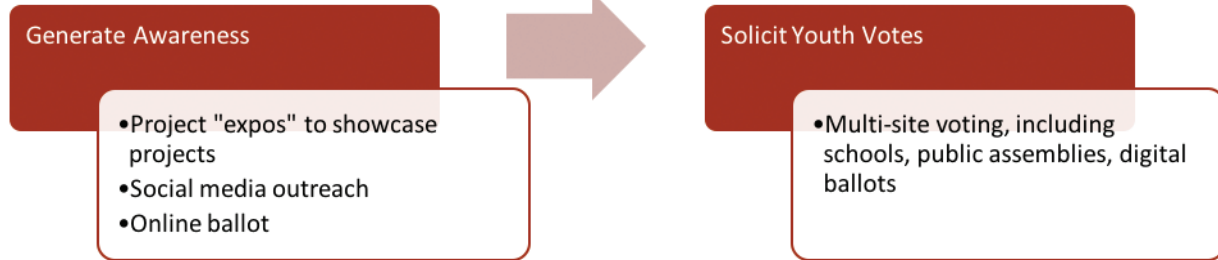
Measures of Success:

- *Focused ballot ideas which are:*
 - a. *Financially and jurisdictionally feasible*
 - b. *Necessary*
 - c. *Predicted to have a positive community impact*
 - d. *Inspired by or directly related to ideas submitted by youth*

The Proposal Development stage is intended to refine submitted ideas into vetted capital projects. Change agents and City Hall department staffers hone the ideas to ensure they fall within the jurisdictional boundaries of the city (e.g., Wi-Fi on city streets vs on MBTA buses) and are financially feasible within the bounds of the allotted \$1 million funds. The teams also work to winnow down ideas to those that are deemed necessary and predicted to have a positive community impact.³

Youth were eligible to vote if they were: (a) between the ages of 12 and 25, and (b) a resident of the City of Boston. Only one vote per voter was allowed. Voting was held primarily at schools and public assemblies over several days. Voting was also held at voting stations in public places, and through digital ballots. To educate the broader youth population about the project proposals on the ballot, events such as science-fair style project expos were held before or during the voting period. Additionally, the project proposals were posted online.

Phase 3: Voting



The following capital projects received the highest number of votes:

- More trash cans and recycling bins in Boston neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan.
- Job and resource finder app to be managed by the Division of Youth Engagement & Employment to streamline youth job searches.
- Incorporation of individual play elements designed for people with disabilities in 10 parks in five Boston neighborhoods (Dorchester, South End, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Roslindale).
- "Wicked Free Wi-Fi 3.0" to provide free Wi-Fi and charging stations at key locations and bus stops across Boston.
- Digital billboards in schools to broadcast events, resources, and programs.
- "Sunshine & Books" - an app that will let anyone know where there are designed outdoor study spaces.

Step 1: Million Dollar Vote

Rank your top projects in order at the bottom of this page.
Take both cost and benefit into account.
The most highly ranked projects will be funded.

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<p>PROJECT A \$80,000</p> <p>More Trash Cans and Recycling Bins Install newer trash cans and recycling bins to make our neighborhoods cleaner - Mattapan, Dorchester, Roxbury</p>	<p>PROJECT B \$475,000</p> <p>Gym Renovation at K-8 Improve the gym facility for students in elementary school students in Roxbury - Higginson/Lewis K-8</p>
<p>PROJECT C \$135,000</p> <p>Job and Resource Finder App Create an app that lets teens find jobs, programs, free events, and scholarships - Citywide</p>	<p>PROJECT D \$500,000</p> <p>Parks are for Everyone Up to 10 new park renovations will have inclusive play elements for people with disabilities - Dorchester, South End, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale</p>
<p>PROJECT E \$300,000</p> <p>Performance Space in Chinatown Replace seats and renovate the auditorium to support the theatre performances and church that uses the space throughout the week - Josiah Quincy School</p>	<p>PROJECT F \$500,000</p> <p>Multi-use space for Chinatown Fix the gym divider, scoreboard, and bleachers in order to make the space more usable for students and the community - Josiah Quincy School</p>
<p>PROJECT G \$150,000</p> <p>Wicked Free Wifi 3.0 Bring internet and phone charging to sidewalks and bus stops in key locations across Boston - Citywide</p>	<p>PROJECT H \$280,000</p> <p>Turn Up at Community Centers Install a dance floor, cool lighting, a DJ Booth, and sound system in order to throw parties - BCYF Curtis Hall Community Center</p>
<p>PROJECT I \$100,000</p> <p>Link Up: Digital Billboards in Schools Install TV screens in schools that display information about jobs, programs, and other resources for students - BPS High Schools</p>	<p>PROJECT J \$25,000</p> <p>Sunshine and Books Develop an app to make it easy to find outdoor study spaces in parks across Boston - Citywide</p>

YOUR TOP FOUR PROJECTS:

#1 CHOICE	#2 CHOICE	#3 CHOICE	#4 CHOICE

Step 2: Youth Council Priorities

Rank your top topic areas in order at the bottom of this page
Each topic includes a description and sample projects for that area.
The highest ranked topics will direct the Mayor's Youth Council efforts next year.

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<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>TOPIC A: Arts & Culture to redefine arts as an essential tool for life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplying tools for the arts at BPS App to explore the history of Boston Feasibility study for cultural spaces in Chinatown 	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>TOPIC B: Environment to build towards cleaner air, water, spaces, and mind through education and action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in green rooftops Parks for people with disabilities Outdoor studying spaces
<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>TOPIC C: Public Health to make mental health a bigger part of everyday life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased affordable mental health services Confidential depression screenings Stigma reduction campaign 	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>TOPIC D: Human Services to preserve the cultural identities of neighborhoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovating community space in Chinatown Excess food delivery to homeless shelters
<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>TOPIC E: Education to create an environment where students are motivated to grow and achieve their goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New technology in schools More funding for afterschool clubs Higginson/Lewis Gym Renovation 	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>TOPIC F: Public Safety to provide safe alternatives to harmful behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substance abuse peer-speaker series Parties at community centers Blue light emergency poles
<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>TOPIC G: Streets to get people where they need to be by creating a more accessible transportation system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More trash cans and recycling bins Access to wifi on sidewalks and bus stops 	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>TOPIC H: Civic Engagement to mobilize youth to take full advantage of opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarship for undocumented students iPhone and Android app to find resources Informational digital billboards in schools

YOUR TOP FOUR TOPICS:

#1 CHOICE	#2 CHOICE	#3 CHOICE	#4 CHOICE

(if you make a mistake, ask for another ballot)

Measures of Success

- *Total votes cast by eligible youth voters in Boston*

The Voting phase provides youth with an opportunity to select capital eligible projects they deem most critical to improving Boston. In addition to the capital projects, the ballot includes a list of potential strategic priorities on which the Mayor's Youth Council could spend time in the year ahead. Youth are thus invited to prioritize both strategic priorities of their youth representatives and specific investments in the City.

Additional Stakeholders and Roles

While youth are at the center of the process there are additional stakeholders who contribute to the project.

- A City of Boston Oversight Committee made up of City staff and Participatory Budgeting Project staff oversees the project. Duties of the Oversight Committee include appointing a Steering Committee, helping with outreach and event planning, providing background information for participants, connecting participants to relevant City agency staff, and overseeing the work of the Participatory Budgeting Project.
- A Steering Committee of 25 organizations oversees the PB process (see Appendix).
- City Departments, staff and experts provide feedback on project eligibility and cost, and advise Change Agents in developing proposals.

The City of Boston contracts with the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) each year to provide technical assistance. The PBP is a nonprofit organization that empowers people to decide together how to spend public money, primarily in the U.S. and Canada. They "create and support participatory budgeting processes that deepen democracy, build stronger communities, and make public budgets more equitable and effective." PBP convened the Steering Committee and led the group through a series of participatory rule-making workshops to decide the basic structure and rules of the process. PBP worked on an ongoing basis with city staff and participants, providing training and technical assistance.

A team of researchers at the Boston University School of Social Work conducted the present evaluation. A previous evaluation report of the pilot year evaluation of Youth Lead the Change was produced in 2014 (Grillos, 2014). Some of the recommendations from this earlier report included utilizing an expanded timeline and improved communication throughout all stages of the process. Additionally, the author recommended enhancing the educational aspects of the process. In order to increase turnout and reduce attrition, it was recommended that youth have a more direct role in marketing and have a greater web presence. Lastly, the author recommended that the City engage more young men and youth who are not involved in City programming or related youth programs. Overall, there was a need for more youth leadership and engagement in committee meetings.

Evaluation Components

The 2016 evaluation utilized various quantitative and qualitative data sources and focused data collection to analyze the process, discover areas for improvement and glean insight about the needs and priorities of Boston youth. Data sources and methods are noted below.

Mayor's Youth Council Interviews and Observations. Between September 2015 and June 2016, the research team from Boston University collected data regarding the Mayor's Youth Council for an initially unrelated study of the scope, structure, function, and activities of youth councils. Although this study was broader than the specific Youth Lead the Change evaluation, some data are relevant to the evaluation. For example, the study team observed the Mayor's Youth Council meeting at which PBP conducted the training of Change Agents.

In-person interviews were conducted with 27 Youth Council members. Interviews were held during regularly scheduled office hours from October 2015 to December 2015. Interviews were conducted in a private room in City Hall and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide focused on youths' reasons for joining the Council, experiences on the Council, perceptions of city government, and the impact of participation on the youth. All interviews were audio recorded and electronically transcribed for analysis.

In-person interviews were conducted with four adults associated with the Boston's Youth Council, including the former Mayor, the former Mayor's Youth Council Manager, the current Mayor's Youth Council Manager, and the Executive Director of Youth Engagement and Employment. Interview questions focused on the design, origin, purpose, structure, and functioning of Boston's Youth Council. Researchers took handwritten notes, which were electronically transcribed for analysis.

Researchers attended seven Youth Council meetings between August 2015 and May 2016. All meetings occurred in Boston City Hall between 5:30-7:30 pm. Researchers completed a general observation guide focused on the number of participants, content of the meetings, level of youth engagement, and barriers to youth engagement. Handwritten notes documenting Council member interactions, the meeting process, and the location of the meetings accompanied the observation guide. All handwritten notes were electronically transcribed for analysis.

Focus Group Data. Three focus groups were conducted with Change Agents to provide feedback about the stages of Youth Lead the Change, including idea collection, proposal development, and voting. The focus groups were held during regularly scheduled office hours on April 25, 26 and 27 of 2016. All youth attending office hours participated in the focus groups. The sample consisted of 32 participants, including Youth Lead the Change Change Agents and Subcommittee Facilitators.

Two researchers from Boston University led each focus group, including one of the principal investigators and a trained research assistant. All groups began with an introduction, notifying participants that the purpose of the focus group was to better understand youths' experiences participating in the Boston participatory budgeting process. Confidentiality was assured to participants in each of the groups.

Participants were asked to complete a one-page handout reflecting on their role and their subcommittee's role during each stage (idea collection, proposal development and voting) of the participatory budgeting process. Participants were asked: 1) if there was enough time allotted to each stage, 2) whether they received enough guidance from staff, and 3) whether they received enough information to carry out tasks. Once completed, the focus group began. Participants were asked to discuss their experiences participating during each stage of the participatory budgeting process, including what worked well and what needed improvement. All focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each focus group lasted between 30-45 minutes.

Change Agents. Some Change Agents were interviewed as described above. All members of the Mayor's Youth Council were enlisted as Change Agents in the Youth Lead the Change process, along with select youth volunteers. A pre/post survey of Change Agents was also designed and administered by City Hall staff. Survey questions included attitudes towards government, perceptions of soft skills such as communication and public speaking, and demographics. Pre-surveys were collected in late February/early March, with 47 Change Agents participating (N=47). Post surveys were sent to Change Agents at the beginning of May (N=18). The research team was unable to compare pre/post survey data, due to the low rate of post-surveys collected. Results from the pre-survey, including a detailed analysis of Agent's response to "What are the three biggest problems facing your neighborhood?" is included in this report.

Idea Collection Data. Analysis was conducted on two additional sources of data, which were gathered as part of or during Idea Collection. First, the research team analyzed the results of a quantitative survey of both Change Agents and members of the general public who contributed ideas for consideration. These surveys were designed by the City of Boston to capture demographic information and the needs and priorities of young people in Boston. Individuals were prompted to complete the idea collection survey once they had submitted ideas for the vote; 134 individuals completed the survey. The idea collection survey was almost identical to the pre-survey for Change Agents, which enabled comparisons between the two groups. In addition to demographic comparisons, a detailed qualitative analysis was conducted based on each group's responses to the question "What are the three biggest problems facing your neighborhood?"

Second, the evaluation team coded and analyzed the qualitative capital and programmatic ideas that were submitted during Idea Collection. Subcommittees were responsible for recording these ideas verbatim, assigning them to a Subcommittee and providing an initial indication of whether each was capital eligible. This database of ideas was further reviewed and coded by the evaluation team to: 1) remove obvious duplicates, 2) note likely capital eligibility if it had not been indicated, 3) specify intended location for the project (e.g., citywide, specific neighborhood, specific school etc.), and 4) specify project type (e.g., technology, youth program, mass transit). Given the large number of proposed ideas that could be considered youth programs, that category of projects was further coded (e.g., after-school program, youth jobs) to provide additional insight.

Voter Data from Boston Public School. Attempts were made to survey voters by sending surveys to individuals after the voting process concluded. This yielded a very low response rate (3%) and could therefore not be used in the report. In order to analyze the voting population, the Boston Public Schools Office of Data and Accountability matched student ID numbers of those who voted to public school student demographics. Roughly 70% of the total voting population were Boston Public School students.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Data. To examine the demographic distribution of participants a series of GIS maps were produced. These included: distribution of youth in the city of Boston, distribution of Mayor's Youth Council representatives, distribution of individuals who completed surveys during idea collection, and distribution of Boston Public School student voters.

II. FINDINGS

This section begins with an overview of Change Agents and individuals who participated in the idea collection phase as well as those who voted on the final balloted projects. It then delves into the two research questions.

Representativeness of Change Agents, Idea Collection Participants and Voters

Data from the Change Agent pre-survey and the Idea Collection survey help illustrate who participated in the early stages of Youth Lead the Change. Responses to a voter survey were too low to allow for analysis of that data, but Boston Public Schools (BPS) provided demographic data on the roughly 70% of voters who attend their schools.

While these surveys and BPS data provide strong directional evidence on demographics, including age, race and languages spoken, it is important to remember that in every instance they represent only a subset of participants. Nothing is known about the non-responders and non-BPS voters.

Demographics

Table 2 summarizes the basic demographics for each group, with some comparison data from Massachusetts and Boston, drawn from a Boston Redevelopment Authority report⁴.

	Massachusetts	Boston	Change Agents (N=47)	Idea Collection Participants (N=134)	BPS Voters (N=3087)
Age	Median Age: 39	Median Age: 31	Median Age: 17 (Age Range: 13-22)	Median Age: 17 (Age Range: 11-61; 86% between ages of 12 and 25)	Median Age: 16 (Age Range: 3-23; 99% between the ages of 12 and 25) ⁵
Gender	--	--	71.7% female	55.2% female	55.8% female
Born in the U.S.	82.1%	69.5%	83%	83%	N/A
Speak Only English ⁶	77.8%	63.4%	80%	88%	N/A
Race	--	White (46%) Black (22.7%) Latino/a (18.4%) Asian (9.1%)	White (30.4%) Black (32.6%) Latino/a (8.7%) Asian (19.6%)	White (15.7%) Black (33.6%) Latino/a (34.3%) Asian (7.5%)	White (26.2%) Black (26.2%) Hispanic (27%) Asian (19.1%)

⁴ <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/7b9b1201-8b4f-4fa9-b0f2-4acbbe083198>

⁵ According to data provided by the Boston Public Schools, 21 BPS student voters were under the age of 12 including two as young as three. The authors presume this is an error in the data.

⁶ The Change Agent pre-survey and the Idea Collection survey were only administered in English, suggesting non-English or non-Native English speakers may be underrepresented among survey respondents.

The most notable demographic differences among Change Agents, Idea Collection Participants (ICPs), and voters are age range, gender, race, and neighborhood representation. Change Agents were selected with age restrictions, which is evident in the data. ICPs encapsulated a noticeably larger range of ages, with individuals as old as 61 submitting ideas to the process. There was no age restriction in the idea collection stage, so contributions from adults were permitted. However, 86% of survey respondents who contributed ideas were between the age of 12 and 25, suggesting the City successfully engaged youth in the idea collection process.

The City also appears to have been successful at engaging youth during the voting stage, when there was an age restriction in place. Not surprisingly, given the sample pool are all students, 99% of voters enrolled in Boston Public Schools fell into the prescribed age range of 12-25. Median age was consistent among groups; age 16 for Agents and 17 for ICPs and BPS voters.

With regard to gender, the Change Agents who participated in the survey were much more likely to be female, whereas the ICP and voters had a more balanced sampling of male and female contributors.

Asian and Black youth are slightly overrepresented among Change Agents, whereas ICPs are heavily Latino/a and Black. Stakeholder interviews help to explain the racial representation, as City staff sought to explicitly target youth-of-color and partnered with My Brother's Keeper⁷ for recruitment efforts.

However, youth interviews and focus groups suggest that school affiliation may be an important, yet missing piece of information that complicates representation based on race alone. Change Agent and ICP surveys did not solicit educational status or affiliated school type, but interviewees remarked on the over representation of "exam school kids" on the Mayor's Youth Council.

At first glance, it appears that Boston Public School voters, who represent roughly 70% of the population of youth who voted this cycle, are strongly representative of the diversity of the City's school system. Seventy-six of the City's 125 Boston Public Schools were represented in this subset of voters. While this suggests strong outreach to a wide array of schools in Boston, one school was over-represented among voters: 42% of BPS voters are enrolled at the Boston Latin School, one of the City's public exam schools. Overall, this equates to roughly 30% of youth voters drawn from one school.

These data illustrate that racial *and* educational representation are important to consider, as the City seeks to engage its youth. Race, ethnicity and school affiliation should all be considered when recruiting Change Agents, soliciting ideas for the ballot and devising youth voter outreach activities. Future Youth Lead the Change survey instruments would gain in analytical depth by asking participants about school affiliation.

Comparing averages for Boston and Massachusetts on persons born in the U.S. and English-only speakers with youth engaged in Youth Lead the Change suggests the City could do more to engage non-English speakers and foreign born residents. Throughout the idea collection phase, as well as ballot design and preparation for voting outreach, Change Agents were mindful of language barriers.

For instance, at a Mayor's Youth Council/Youth Lead the Change meeting in April "thinking stations" were set-up around the room. Posters were hung from the wall and youth went around to each station to provide input for the advertising and organizing of the voting process. One such station asked youth to list and prioritize the languages voting materials should be translated into, in order to reach more youth.

The top three languages according to the youth were: Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese.⁸ Ballots were printed in multiple languages in order to engage a diverse youth population.

⁷ <https://youth.boston.gov/category/my-brothers-keeper>. President Obama established a federal program that local municipalities have re-created to address the disproportionate number of young Black men who are failing school or dropping out.

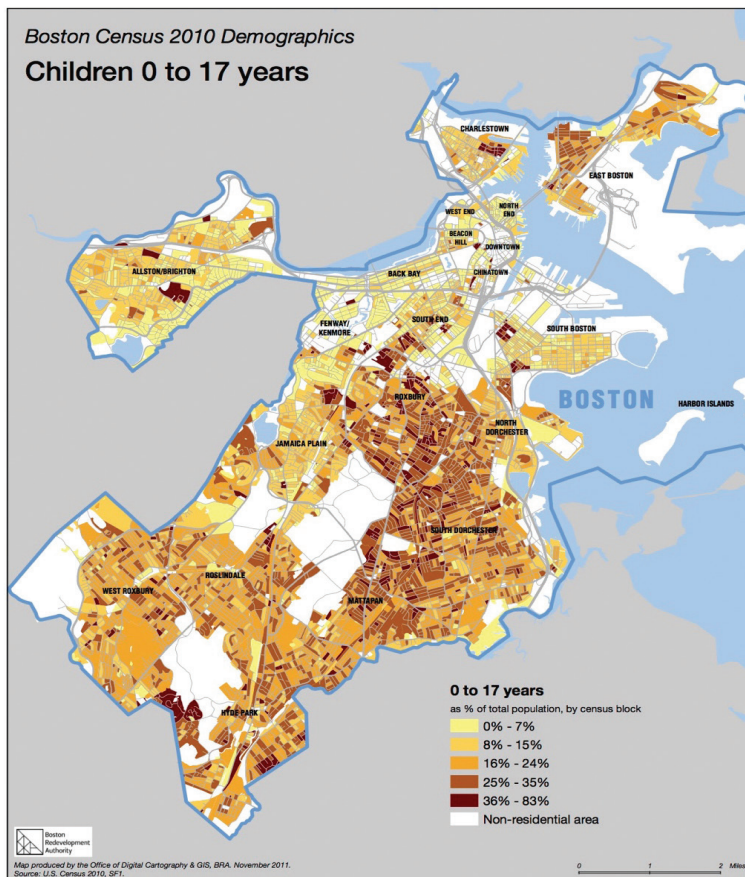
⁸ Field Notes from meeting on April 12th, 2016

In spite of awareness of the need to engage youth in other languages, Change Agents and ICPs responding to the surveys are more likely to be born in the U.S. (83%) and speak only English (80% and 88%, respectively) than the state and city populations overall (see Table 2). Youth representatives attending Mayor’s Youth Council meetings spoke exclusively English. Data on languages spoken were not available for BPS voters.

Neighborhood Representativeness

Neighborhood representation of participating youth is difficult to measure. Based on the map below⁹, the Boston neighborhoods with the highest concentration of youth (age 0-17) are: Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, East Boston, and Hyde Park. A more recent report by the Boston Redevelopment Authority defined youth as ages 0-19, and showed the Longwood and Fenway neighborhoods as those with the highest concentration of youth¹⁰; followed by Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. Given Boston’s large college student population, it is important to draw distinctions between Boston resident youth and young people attending college in the City. As expected, neighborhoods such as Longwood and Fenway—which are both home to multiple colleges and universities and large proportions of students—spike dramatically when comparing populations of 10-14 and 15-19 year olds.

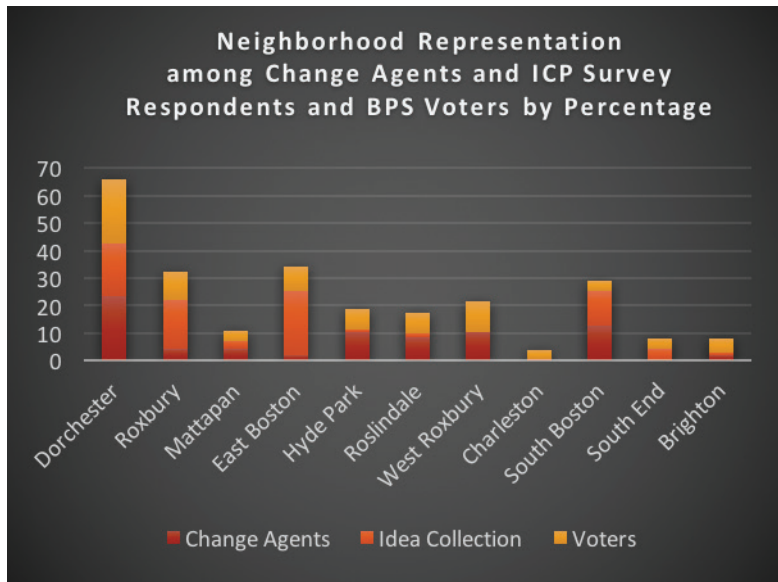
For analysis purposes, we focus primarily on representation from Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, which have large youth populations but fewer college students.



Map 1:
Neighborhood Representation of Youth in Boston Age 0-17, 2010

⁹ Provided by Boston Redevelopment Authority, <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/4cda8ee0-6ebf-49ca-ae8f-90c577546c60/>.

¹⁰ This may be indicative of non-native college students living in these neighborhoods.



The adjacent graph illustrates where Change Agents (red/lower bar), ICPs (orange/middle bar), and BPS voters (yellow/upper bar) reside.

Representation from Dorchester is strong among all three groups. In contrast, few Change Agents, ICPs, and youth voters were drawn from Mattapan, suggesting that youth from this neighborhood were scantily involved in Youth Lead the Change.

A major change for the Mayor’s Youth Council in the last two years was expanding total membership to exceed 80 youth, with the direct intention of achieving neighborhood representativeness. The Mayor’s Youth Council controls for college-aged youth when configuring a standard for youth representation among Change Agents, which is particularly important given Boston’s large higher education student population. However, among the three neighborhoods certain to contain a high proportion of resident youth (Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan), few Change Agents appear to be drawn from Roxbury and Mattapan. East Boston also appears to be under-represented.

One factor to consider when examining the representativeness of Change Agents is transportation to City Hall, where Mayor’s Youth Council and Youth Lead the Change meetings are typically held. Boston’s City Hall, located in the downtown, is not easily accessible from many of the neighborhoods with the largest proportions of youth. Youth regularly mentioned transportation challenges as one limiting factor in their participation.

While Change Agents do not well-represent Roxbury and Mattapan, there seems to have been a concerted effort made to collect ideas and votes from communities where fewer Change Agents resided. ICPs are mostly from East Boston, Roxbury, and Dorchester.

Initial findings highlight a number of ways in which Change Agents and ICPs differ, particularly in age range, gender, race, and neighborhood representation. It is possible that ICPs differ widely in age range, gender, race, and neighborhood because of targeted recruitment strategy. It’s also important to remember that these results are drawn from surveys which only represent a subset of Change Agents and ICPs.

Further analysis on Change Agents’ neighborhood representation and member involvement are discussed on the following pages. Greater insight is also provided in regards to the idea collection stage and its participants.

Community Engagement by Participants

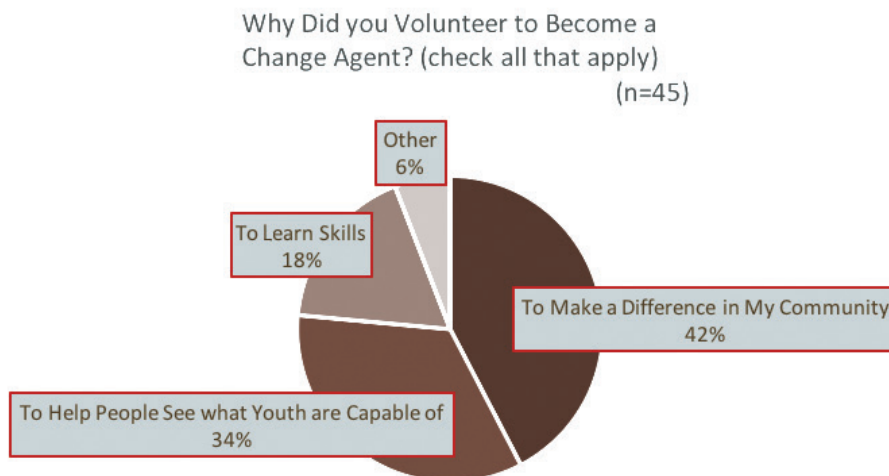
Information collected in the Change Agent and ICP surveys also addressed community involvement (see Table 3) and perceptions of self and community. Graphs detailing the self and community perceptions are provided in the appendix, as this information adds little to the overall analysis of these groups. Regarding involvement, both groups were asked “Over the past 12 months, have you worked with others in your community to try and solve a community problem OUTSIDE of YLC or MYC?”

	Change Agents	Idea Coll.
Yes	47.8%	40.3%
No	32.6%	34.3%
Don't Know	19.6%	25.4%

Table 3 shows that Change Agents reported slightly higher levels of involvement outside of YLC/MYC (47.8% compared to 40.3%). A quarter percent of ICP respondents marked “don't know”, which may signal phrasing confusion; perhaps respondents did not consider themselves involved in the YLC/MYC, or were unaware of what the acronyms stood for.

Reasons for Participating in Youth Lead the Change

Specific to Change Agents, data from the pre-survey reveal that 75.6% heard about YLC through the Mayor’s Youth Council.



The pie chart illustrates why youth volunteered as Change Agents. Youth checked “To make a difference in my community,” as the major reason for participating in YLC. Interestingly, two of the five “other” reasons for volunteering highlight confusion in distinguishing the MYC from YLC. These respondents wrote in “I didn’t. I thought it was MYC, oops” and “way too many acronyms. I’m confused”.

Research Question 1: Process Improvements

Where are opportunities for improvement to Boston’s youth participatory budgeting process, including the pre-planning stages, as well as idea collection, proposal development or voting?

Three data sources help shed light on the success of the City’s current participatory budgeting process: 1) interviews with Mayor’s Youth Council members and observation of Council meetings, 2) focus groups with Youth Lead the Change Subcommittee Change Agents, and 3) analysis of the submitted and balloted ideas. Overall themes emerged, as well as opportunities within specific phases.

General Themes

We describe focus group data here and supplement these findings with other data from individual interviews with Mayor’s Youth Council members and observations of Mayor’s Youth Council meetings, to provide insight on general areas of opportunity.

Table 4: Focus Group Summary of Findings

	What Worked Well	Opportunities for Improvement
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-training that provided context on PB, strategies for outreach and mapped the process month by month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve guidance on proposal development, including necessary elements and structure
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Council staff were responsive and available to answer questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide transparency regarding youths’ role as Change Agents, including time commitment Provide a calendar at the start of the planning process that maps out Subcommittee meeting times and locations Provide more frequent reminders on meeting times – consider setting up alerts
Member Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong enthusiasm for participating in Boston’s Participatory Budgeting process Strong attendance and participation in meeting with Mayor Walsh Strong desire to make a difference for Boston youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve Change Agent engagement throughout the process, starting with expectations around meeting attendance Provide opportunities for Change Agent collaboration and involvement that do not require in-person time, such as using Google Docs to co-create proposals or hosting online meetings
Access to Expert Advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YLC facilitators and second year agents were useful sounding boards for those new to the process Direct engagement with city staff, including the Mayor, was both instructional and helped to legitimize the process and youth voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase involvement of city staff by permitting direct contact to a departmental staff member or increasing frequency of meetings
Outreach via Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Perception of] success in reaching previously untapped communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure direct person to person interaction is still prioritized, along with social media engagement
Member Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong engagement from Boston Public Schools community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop more targeted strategies to engage youth enrolled in private and charters schools

Feedback from Participants

Overall, participants enjoyed participating in the participatory budgeting process and appreciated having a concrete project to work on¹¹. Participatory budgeting provided the youth with a unique opportunity to learn about city government, develop leadership skills and expand their social networks.

¹¹ The focus groups took place in April prior to the voting phase of the process; therefore, the present analysis is focused mainly on idea collection and proposal development.”

Focus group participants discussed six themes, shared below, including: 1) preparation, 2) communication, 3) member engagement, 4) access to expert advisors, 5) outreach via social media, and 6) member representation.

Preparation

Prior to idea collection, Change Agents received training, led by Mayor's Office and Participatory Budgeting Project staff, on the context of participatory budgeting, strategies for outreach and mapping the process month by month. Participants found the training to be useful as it provided specific information regarding the three stages of the process (idea collection, proposal development and voting) as well as their role as Change Agents. Reflecting on the training, one participant said, *"I felt it was good because we basically had a broad idea of what participatory budgeting was, and then they came in and filled us in on specific details of how it works and what, like our role in it is. So it helped to clear up that kind of confusion."* Similarly, another youth stated, *"they painted a picture of what the process looks like in a very vivid or clear way. For example, I remember that they had a timeline, what specific month we were going to be doing what."*

Participants reported a need for additional training and guidance during the proposal development stage. One participant stated, *"I, personally, could have used some more guidance on how to write the proposal."* Specifically, participants lacked an understanding of the structure and components of the proposal. For example, although the Change Agents decided to write one of their proposals on green roofs, the participant in charge of writing stated, *"Okay. I'm not an expert on green roofs so I had no idea how to start or where to begin, and what information I needed to convey."*

In sum, participants found the trainings held by the Mayor's and Participatory Budgeting Project staff to be useful in terms of understanding the specific stages of the process and outreach strategies. They would benefit from additional training and guidance focused on the nuts and bolts of proposal writing.

Communication

Participants felt supported by Mayor's Office staff and Change Agents. Staff members were always available to answer questions posed by the Change Agents. As reported by one participant, *"I feel like the Change Agents are always able to come to the facilitators and ask them questions, and rarely will they not know the answer. And then they'll have to go [staff members] and I feel like we always had what we need."*

Although participants were supported, they reported a need for clearer communication regarding their role as Change Agents and the time commitment of that role. As reported by one participant, *"I was applying for Mayor's Youth Council... So then I show up to a meeting and suddenly it's Youth Lead the Change, I'm like, 'What's this? This isn't Mayor's Youth Council,' so I just wasn't aware of what this was at the beginning."* Similarly, a returning member of the Mayor's Youth Council stated:

"Last year we had two separate things: MYC and YLC. And this year, we're trying a new thing where all MYC members would be YLC, so it's kind of combined. Instead of working on MYC issues, MYC issues became YLC issues, and that just all became one thing. So, it didn't feel like we were doing anything else other than YLC for the entire year. And like is that right?"

Although the majority of participants enjoyed working on the participatory budget process, they expressed a desire for transparency during recruitment and orientation regarding their role as Change Agents.

Participants reported a need for better communication regarding meeting times. They expressed a need for a calendar at the beginning of the year with each subcommittee meeting listed and more frequent reminders so they could plan better, rather than receiving last minute emails:

"I also think you should have more frequent reminders 'cause once a couple weeks ago, I got a reminder that we had a meeting an hour before, and I was home and I couldn't get to it. So that day I got it and I thought, 'I can't go to this.' We should get more frequent reminders."

Participants also reported a need for better communication regarding the expectations of the subcommittees. During Idea Collection, they received clear communication regarding their responsibilities, including developing a mission statement and specific goals. Communication broke down during the proposal development stage. Participants were aware they needed to write a proposal, but there was confusion as to who on the committee was responsible for the writing and the specific information that should be included. One participant said, *"Communication was really distant. Last year seemed more regimented and everyone had to be at their meetings. This year, it seemed a bit more disjointed, and, it's hard to write a proposal when not everyone's on the same page."*

Member Engagement

At the start of the participatory budget process there was strong enthusiasm, including member attendance at participatory budget meetings. For example, almost all Youth Council members were present at the Council meeting in October 2015 where Mayor Walsh spoke. Participants reported feeling inspired by the Mayor and wanting to *"make a difference"* for Boston's youth. As the participatory budget process progressed, there were issues pertaining to retention of Change Agents. Member engagement was especially challenging during Proposal Development, resulting in greater responsibility placed on select members of the subcommittee. Reflecting on Proposal Development, one participant said:

"I wasn't super involved in this part of the process. I feel bad because I would have loved to be because I love writing, but I don't know if it was personally being busy, but I just felt like this was a more disjointed part of the process in terms of getting everyone involved, especially members of the Youth Council."

Similarly, another participant reported that one member wrote the entire proposal: *"it was crazy to see just one person just working on a proposal. It wasn't a group of people... it was not a committee working on it."*

To improve the issue of member engagement, participants recommended the use of online meetings and/or utilizing Google Docs for a more efficient communication. One youth stated:

"We were really good at discipline in the beginning of the year, and then as we started to drop off, I fell into that lull, and I was one of those people, I fell into that lull, and I think if we placed more of an importance on showing up for the proposal development, or doing stuff online, like online meetings, if we tried that more, maybe it would have been more effective."

Participants also reported a need to find a way to accommodate their busy schedules, which may fluctuate throughout the year:

"But, I think we need to find some way to address attendance, 'cause I play tennis, and I can't really come to spring meetings, and I feel we need to find a way to accommodate people who have athletics or some sort of break in their schedule, and find a way to keep them in the loop without making them feel ashamed."

Access to Expert Advisors

Participants highlighted the important role of Youth Lead the Change facilitators and second year Change Agents in providing guidance and support. One participant stated:

“The facilitators are the in-between, Francesco and the Change Agents, because Francesco can’t run two meetings at the same time, so it’s the facilitators who take charge of that.”

Another participant said: *“if there was a Youth Council member who didn’t know what they were doing, then Francesco was always around, but they have other Youth Council members and we’re always helping out one another. So, it’s very easy to get the directions you needed.”*

Participants wanted to have access to City staff throughout the entire participatory budget process. Early in the participatory budget process, City staff met with the subcommittees and provided guidance around the mission and goals. Participants found it very useful: *“they were just giving us guidance from like a professional point of view. Cause like they really know like what goes into it and how to get things done, so they would kind of just like smooth it over and explain to us how we could do that in like a way that would actually be able to make it happen.”*

Similarly, another participant discussed feeling as if they were working together as a team with City staff:

“Yeah, it was cool ‘cause we got to meet with like Julie Burros¹², she’s like arts for the City of Boston, which is like very cool. But she definitely treated us like we were like bringing valid ideas to the table. We weren’t kids. We were like telling her what we wanted and she was like, ‘That’s cool. Let’s write it down on the board and talk more about it.’

Participants expressed a need for more direct access to expert advisors throughout the entire participatory budget process. One participant stated, *“I mean, I think that it was nice to have them (City staff) visit once but it would have been better if we had a consistent support system.”* Similarly, another participant said:

“I also think that more direct contact with the City official, so that you don’t have to go through Francesco. You have more of that direct line so if you have a burning question that needs to be answered really soon, you won’t need a few days for Francesco to get in contact, you can just send them an email and be like, ‘what’s the answer to this question?’ Or, talk to them and just have more of a familiar kind of relationship with your city employee.”

Outreach via Social Media

“Through social media we’re able to reach all youth from across the City of Boston at the same time. So that way all young people are getting involved throughout the process.”

–Change Agent

One goal of the 2016 Youth Lead the Change was to reach underrepresented youth including court involved youth, homeless youth and LBGTQ youth. Participants overwhelmingly believed that the increased use of social media (e.g., texting, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook) enhanced the Youth Lead the Change efforts and allowed them to reach a more diverse audience.

¹² Julie Burros serves as the Chief of Arts & Culture for the City of Boston.

As reported by one Change Agent:

“My outreach is on social media, on Twitter, Facebook, and I know a lot of kids are on that. So sharing that and then, I know many people from the Mayor’s Youth Council and Youth Lead the Change, kept continuing to share and favorite, and retweet. So, I think that the message was able to spread through different communities.”

Although participants perceived the enhanced use of social media to be effective in reaching Boston youth, a few noted that they did not feel as personally involved in the idea collection process as in previous years. One participant stated, *“A lot of it was on social media, so it took away from, I guess, like not reaching out to the community ‘cause social media did that, but I just, I didn’t feel as involved as I did last year, and that’s because of those sort of personal interactions that were not there this year.”* Participants noted the need to find ways to enhance social media while also maintaining the person-to-person connection.

Member Representation

Although the Mayor’s Youth Council strives to be representative of the diverse youth population of the city by recruiting and accepting youth based on neighborhood representation, a large proportion of youth come from Boston Public Schools.

Participants felt that the private and charter schools were less represented than the large public and exam schools: *“We go to a huge school, and like it’s a public school, so like a lot of us, there’s a lot of public school kids, like a lot of us don’t know about private school and stuff.”* Similarly, another youth explained:

“... there’s like really heavy focus on the public schools and a little bit less focus on the private and charter schools, and I know that makes sense ‘cause a lot of the students here go to Boston Latin School, but I think sometimes that the other schools are neglected a little bit, and it’s more about like the students who are in the private and the charter schools to reach out to them.”

Participants noted that the Mayor’s staff was aware of the disproportionate representation and took steps to prevent any bias. One participant said, *“I know [Boston’s Youth Council Manager] does a really active job of trying to keep the numbers even, and I don’t know, I think just talking to kids from different neighborhoods that go to different schools is very important for in terms of getting more perspectives.”* That said, participants felt this issue needed further attention.

Data from Other Sources: Mayor's Youth Council Interviews & Observations

Interviews with Youth Council members and observations of Youth Council meetings support the focus group findings: youth were enthusiastic about participating in the participatory budget process and staff members made an effort to prepare youth for their role as Change Agents, however on-going member engagement posed a challenge.

Interview participants reported a variety of reasons for joining the Mayor's Youth Council. Several participants learned about the council from friends who were previously, or currently on the Council, other participants learned about the Council from family members, through school, or through internships with the city. Participants discussed what they hoped to achieve from participating in the process. Several wanted to fulfill school-mandated community service hours, or to improve their resumés for college applications. The majority of participants were interested in interacting directly with City government and learning about the inner workings of government. Participants hoped participating on the Council would allow them to "make a difference" in their community and to "be a voice" for youth in City government. Participants also believed the Youth Council provided a steady commitment, the opportunity to meet new people, and a sense of purpose. One participant stated:

"...as I started to go through the process and learn about what Mayor's Youth Council was about, I really liked the idea of being a part of the change. Being a part of something that positively changes youth especially, because we don't really get a voice in the government. And so this is a nice way to let people know what we want."

Observations of Youth Council meetings demonstrated that adult stakeholders made an effort to educate youth about their role as Change Agents. Staff from the Mayor's Youth Council and the Participatory Budgeting Project provided youth with resources and instruction on the stages of the participatory budget process and the activities of each stage. Youth had the opportunity to network with various City officials, including Mayor Walsh, who attended one council meeting. The meetings were particularly helpful in preparing youth to participate in outreach, as many group activities involved youth working in smaller groups to practice communication skills and/or brainstorm ideas for outreach, such as social media platforms. Youth who attended the meetings appeared engaged in the small group discussions and activities.

One major barrier to youth engagement in general meetings was the physical space. Meetings typically took place at City Hall in a large open room with high ceilings that produced an echoing effect. City staff did their best to accommodate the space, but youth and other participants struggled to hear the information presented. For example, in one meeting there was a video conference with a Participatory Budgeting Project staff member. After repeated attempts to hear what the speaker was saying, youth became distracted and played on their cell phones.

In sum, general Council meetings strived to educate youth about the participatory budget process, while also providing opportunities to develop leadership skills, network with peers, and meet city staff. The initial meetings were very well attended (approximately 80 youth), while the later meetings were poorly attended (approximately 20 youth). Although important information may have been provided, not all Change Agents received it.

Insight on Specific Stages of Youth Lead the Change

There are three core stages to Boston’s youth participatory budgeting process. Drilling deeper into specific stages provides additional insight on the challenges and opportunities. Overall, the process seems to have worked well, both with regard to the scope of youth engagement, and the quality and breadth of ideas submitted and balloted.

Idea Collection Phase

Analysis of ideas generated by youth during the Idea Collection phase were revealing along many dimensions. Seven hundred and eighteen ideas were generated by contributors throughout Boston and logged by members of Youth Lead the Change during the month of January. The ideas spanned a broad range of geographies and themes. Submitted ideas also offer a sense of the varied needs and interests of Boston youth associated with the Subcommittee themes of Arts & Culture; Communications Outreach & Civic Engagement; Education; Environment; Energy & Open Space; Human Services; Public Health; Public Safety & Streets; and Transportation & Sanitation.

All Subcommittees succeeded in generating a large volume of ideas, whether capital eligible or ineligible/programmatic ideas. Ideas relevant to the Human Services subcommittee were the most numerous, while the Environment, Energy & Open Space subcommittee had the highest proportion of ideas that had the potential to be capital eligible.

**Table 5: Submitted Ideas by Subcommittee:
Total Count and Percent of Ideas that are Capital Eligible
N=718**

Subcommittee	Count of Ideas Submitted	% Capital Eligible
Arts & Culture	84	18%
Communications Outreach and Civic Engagement	52	29%
Education	117	17%
Environment Energy & Open Space	82	65%
Human Services	119	20%
Other	28	4%
Public Health	67	6%
Public Safety	67	19%
Streets, Transportation & Sanitation	102	26%

Overall, just 24% of submitted ideas were likely to be eligible for capital funding. This may suggest the greater ease with which people are able to imagine programmatic ideas or a lack of understanding of capital eligibility. However, it is not necessarily indicative of flaws in the Idea Collection process given the City’s interest in leveraging this process to better understand youth priorities and needs in a general sense.

While ICPs were most interested in ideas that specifically served themselves and their youth peers, submitting ideas that chiefly related to youth programming needs, they were relatively magnanimous in other ways. There was strong geographic and place-based diversity among the submitted ideas.

Of 718 proposed projects, 203 were generally relevant citywide and 160 related to schools in general. A relatively small number (54) specified a particular school in Boston, but even there the diversity was impressive with 18 different schools referenced. Boston Public Schools made up the majority of specific schools referenced, although some charters and at least one parochial school (Holy Name) were also noted. No individual school dominated the list of proposed beneficiaries.

One hundred and thirty-seven projects were tied to a specific neighborhood, although here too the range was strong with 17 neighborhoods noted. Surprisingly, a large proportion of neighborhood specific idea (53) specified just one neighborhood: Chinatown. Some of the Chinatown projects related to small parks or street cleanliness, but the overwhelming majority called for a feasibility study for a Chinatown public library. According to the notes provided, the idea was rejected during the Idea Collection phase as a related study had been completed in 2008.¹³

The geographic and institutional diversity of the ideas suggests outreach efforts were successful in reaching a diverse array of young people across the city.

Due to the nature of data collection methods used, there are no data available on the following:

- Total number of people who submitted ideas
- Ages of all ICPs
- Number of ideas submitted at each Idea Collection site

Proposal Development Phase

Comparing balloted 2016 projects to submitted ideas provides some insight to the effectiveness of the Proposal Development stage. Related conversations between the research team and City staff also revealed the ways in which proposed projects were influenced by a myriad of factors, including community need, departmental staff expertise and site visits by subcommittee members.

Ultimately, it is clear that the preliminary ideas submitted by Boston youth undergo extensive refinement during Proposal Development. Winning ideas are noted with an asterisk.

- More Trash Cans & Recycling Bins (Roxbury, Mattapan, Dorchester)**: Eighteen youth submitted ideas related to improving trash, recycling or composting in Boston. Four were specific to the neighborhoods noted, while most noted multiple neighborhoods or were citywide proposals.
- Gym Renovation at K-8 (Higginson/Lewis K-8 in Roxbury)*: This project does not appear among the submitted ideas, but City staff shared insight behind the site selection. During Idea Collection, four contributors had requested a renovation of the Jeremiah Burke High School gym, which is also located in Roxbury. Boston Public School administrators indicated the Burke gym was not among those most in need of renovation, so Subcommittee members requested a list of other public schools in Roxbury that were in need of improvements.
- Job & Resource Finder App (Citywide)**: There were 18 suggestions for more/expanded job opportunities for youth, three for scholarships, and four suggestions for a “Boston Youth Service Network” app. In addition, as later analysis in this report will show, a large proportion of submitted ideas related to calls for more (capital ineligible) youth programming. The more general “resource” aspect of the app may have been intended to help better connect youth to existing programming.

¹³ Two projects specific to Chinatown did appear on the final ballot, suggesting this constituency was heard, if not for the project requested.

- d. *Parks Are For Everyone (Dorchester, South End, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale)**: This project called for inclusive play elements for people with disabilities at 10 parks in five Boston neighborhoods. It does not appear among the submitted ideas, but again conversations with City staff offer context for the project. Subcommittee members were interested in how to stretch dollars further than one park renovation and learned, in discussion with Parks department staff, that these types of improvements would ensure a positive impact at multiple sites.
- e. *Performance Space in Chinatown (Josiah Quincy school)*: Four submitted ideas related to the Josiah Quincy School, including two calling for improvements to facilities at the school. According to City staff, subcommittee members visited the school during Project Development, and discovered the wide variety of ways in which the school is used by students and the community. They felt investments here would have a significant positive impact and moved forward with balloting these investments, but also decided to split one large effort into two smaller related projects in hopes of improving their odds of success. It is also worth noting that there were 54 ideas submitted that specifically related to Chinatown – the most of any neighborhood – so the youth may have felt compelled to find some way to serve this constituency.
- f. *Multi-Use Space for Chinatown (Josiah Quincy School)*: [See above]
- g. *Wicked Free Wifi 3.0 & Charging Stations (Citywide)**: There were 10 mentions of expanded WiFi and/or improved access to charging stations.
- h. *“Turn Up at Community Centers” – Dance party space and equipment (Curtis Hall Community Center)*: There were four relevant submissions that included creating: “an underage dance club” (downtown), “a building for dance and SOCA” (Roxbury), “safe parties” or block/community center parties. The proposed upgrades to Curtis Hall in Jamaica Plain, specifically, do not appear among the submitted ideas.
- i. *Link Up: Digital Billboards in Schools (Boston Public High Schools)**: This project does not appear among the submitted ideas, but was the evolution of an idea related to a resource app for young people. The subcommittee wanted to expand beyond an app, and ultimately hit on the idea of digital billboards in schools in lieu of a phone application.
- j. *“Sunshine and Books” - Outdoor Study Space App (Citywide)**: There were two submitted ideas requesting expanded outdoor study space in Boston. In conversations with Parks department staff, subcommittee members learned that Boston parks already have study areas. The team agreed that what was needed was funding that would allow for an “audit” of these spaces, as well as an app that would help youth find them.

Research Question 2: Youth Priorities and Needs

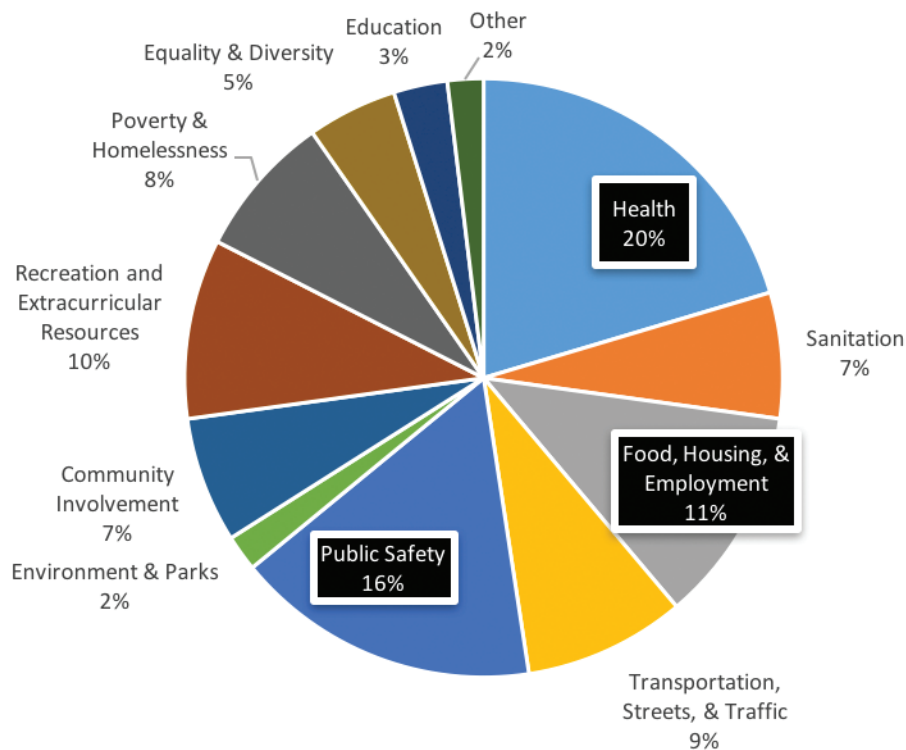
What general needs and priorities of Boston youth emerged as a result of the participatory budgeting process?

Several sources of data provide information about youth perspectives on the problems, priorities, and solutions for the city and for its neighborhoods. First we report data from separate pre-test surveys of Change Agents as well as Boston residents who contributed ideas during the Idea Collection process. We then share content analysis of the actual ideas that were submitted and logged during the Idea Collection phase, as it helps to reveal some immediate needs and priorities of Boston youth.

Change Agent and ICP Surveys: Results

Change Agents: Three Biggest Problems Facing Your Neighborhood

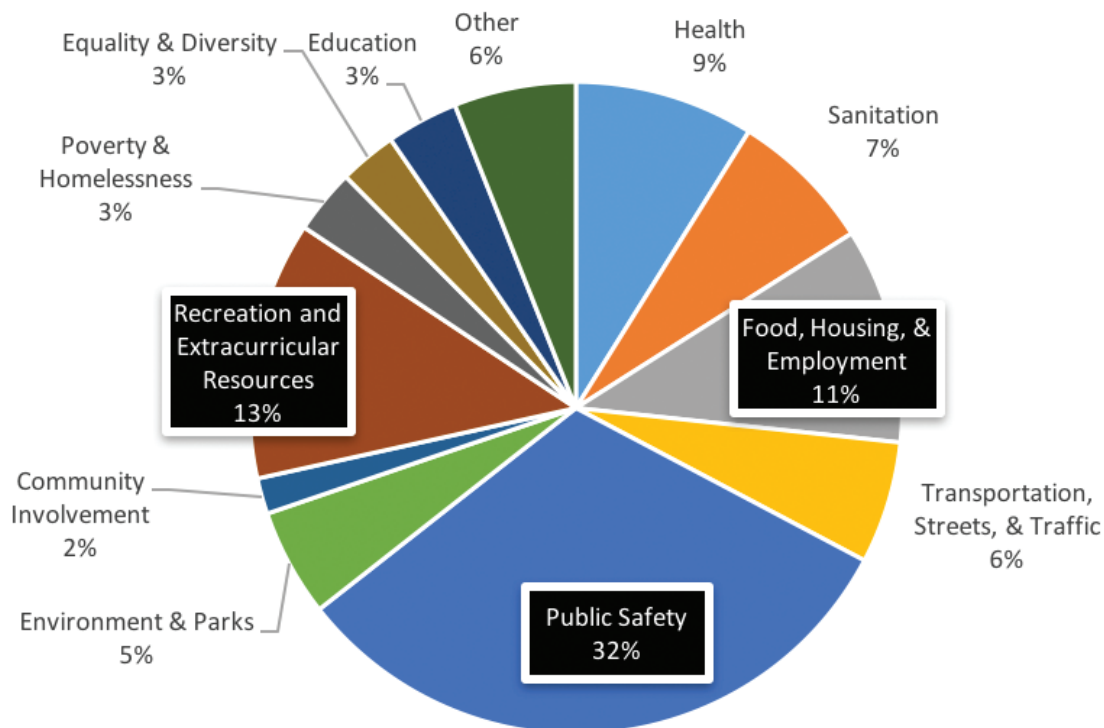
N(individuals)=47, N(Ideas)=103



The Change Agent pre-test survey and ICP survey asked individuals “What are the three biggest problems facing your neighborhood?” The graph above emphasizes Change Agents’ major concern as health-related (~20%). Public safety was the next highest category with ~16%. The third largest area of concern was Food, Housing, and Employment (11%), of which six responses heeded the issue of gentrification.

Idea Collection Participants: Three Biggest Problems Facing Your Neighborhood

N(Individuals)=135, N(Ideas)=281

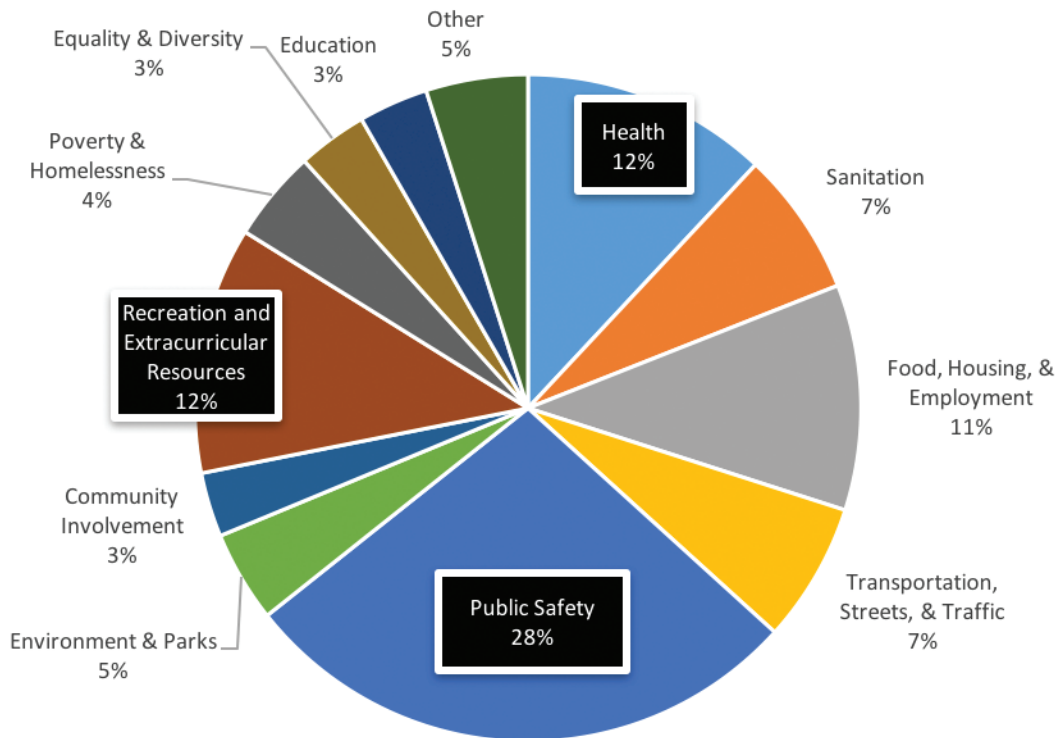


For ICP survey respondents, the most frequently cited problems facing their neighborhood was public safety (~32%). Responses coded under public safety dealt with “gangs,” general mentions of “violence” and “safety,” and particular concerns with “youth violence” and “bullying.” The second most frequently cited problem area related to recreation and extracurricular resources (13%), which included responses such as “theatre renovation,” “no skate parks,” and “lack of community meeting areas.” The third major category was food, housing, and employment (11%), which includes “lack of youth jobs,” “unemployment,” “affordable housing,” and “cheaper house options for residents.”

In combining the responses of both the Change Agent and the ICP surveys (chart below), the most popular recommendations (roughly 28%) relate to issues of public safety. Some responses listed under public safety include: crime, violence, stealing, safety, and fighting. Health (12%) and recreation (12%) tie for second most frequently cited issue, with health including mental health, drugs, alcohol, and obesity. The category “Recreation and Extracurricular Resources” revolves around a need for youth activities, opportunities, and recreational resources. Responses included afterschool activities, places for youths to hang out, lack of exercise, “crappy facilities,” “fun,” “theater renovation,” and other issues stemming from a lack of resources.

Combined: Three Biggest Problems Facing Your Neighborhood

N(Individuals)=182, N(Ideas)=384



One of the most enlightening findings from the comparison of Change Agent and ICPs' perceptions of problems in their neighborhoods was the importance of public safety. Only 19% of proposed project ideas that related to public safety were capital eligible, and none of the balloted projects ultimately related to public safety. There is thus some evidence to suggest that, while youth feel public safety is a major issue, Youth Lead the Change may not be the best avenue for addressing these specific challenges.

The importance of recreation and extracurricular resources was a topic of great interest amongst both groups. The need for youth to have things to do in the community suggests that there are neighborhood-specific issues for young people. Twelve percent of youth in both groups felt that these resources were lacking in their own neighborhood. This finding deepens our understanding of the difficult balance that the Youth Lead the Change process, and participatory budgeting projects, face. That is, these projects must strike a balance between specific needs and the need or desire for ballot items to have broad appeal. The requirement that projects be capital projects also complicates how the City addresses major concerns among youth: issues of recreation and extracurricular resources may call for programmatic remedies rather than capital improvements.

A comparison of submitted ideas to neighborhood specific priorities identified via the surveys demonstrates the ways in which a participatory budgeting process devoted to capital projects may not always result in investments in areas of greatest need. For example, a number of the balloted items related to Environment, Energy and Open Space, yet parks and open space were low on the list of Change Agents' and ICPs' major neighborhood concerns.

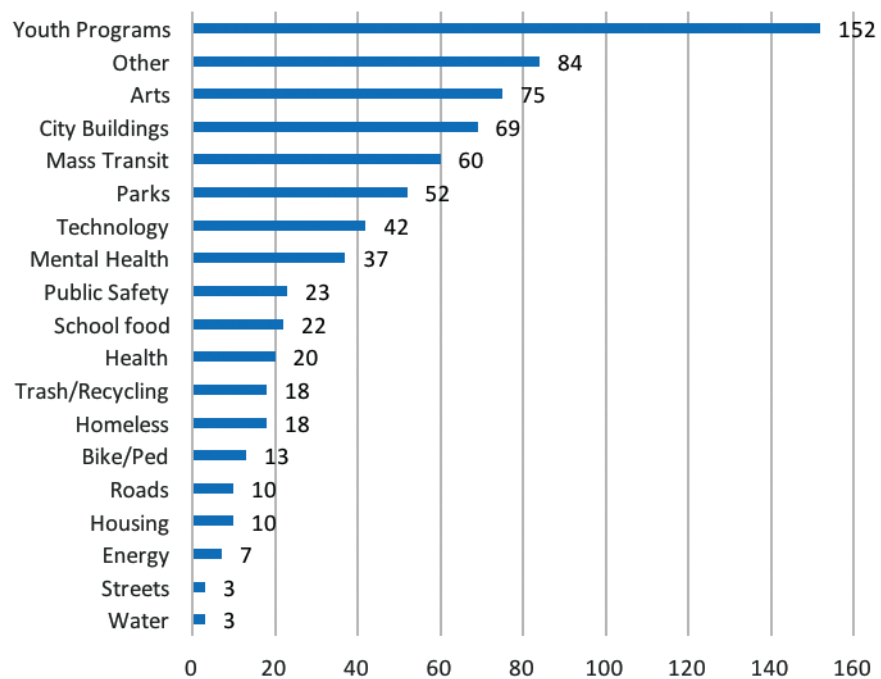
The information gleaned from analyzing the question “What are the three biggest problems facing your neighborhood?” could be easily utilized during the Proposal Development stage. Future Youth Lead the Change initiatives may find it useful to evaluate these data points to help guide the proposal writing process and guide the Mayor’s Youth Council’s policy priorities.

Content Analysis of Submitted Ideas

While the direct surveys with Change Agents and other Change Agents and ICPs yield some insight, additional needs and priorities can be gleaned from deeper analysis of ideas that were submitted during the Idea Collection phase. The submitted ideas, particularly those related specifically to youth programming, provide a gauge of youth interests beyond what self-reported survey responses may yield.

Twenty-one percent of all submitted ideas related specifically to youth programming. This suggests tremendous interest on the part of Boston youth for additional formal supports and activities. It may also suggest lack of understanding of the full breadth of available resources, facilities and youth programming. It may also indicate the ease with which youth can imagine ideas which benefit themselves and their peers.

Count of Submitted Ideas Coded by Project Type



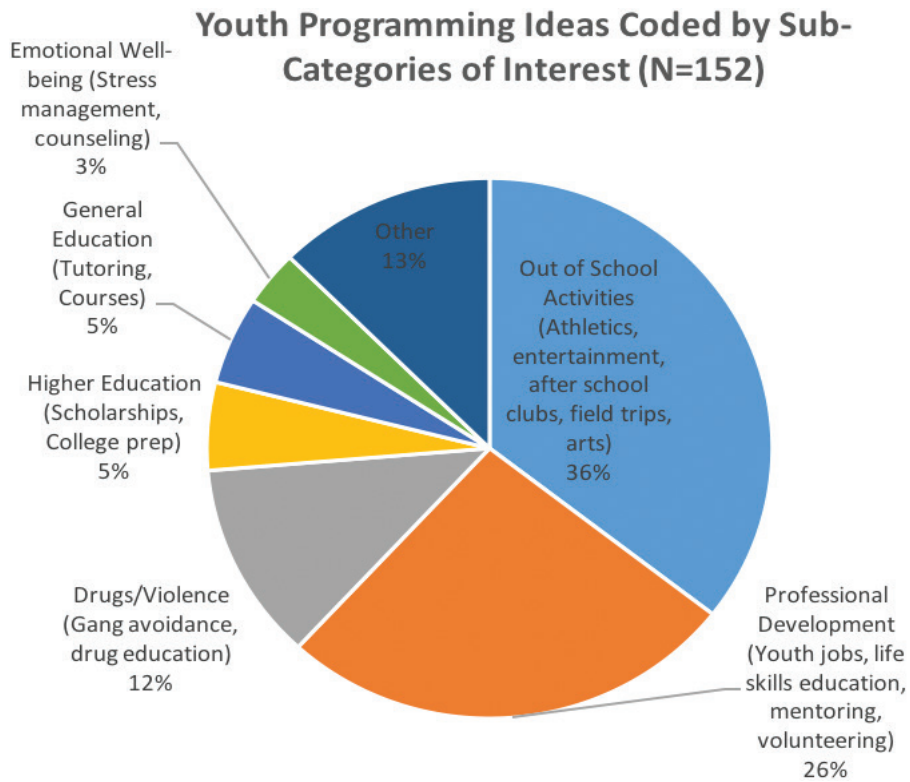
Other interesting themes emerged:

Sixty submissions related to mass transit, which serves as a reminder that Boston youth are heavily reliant on it to get around the city and travel to school. As one ICP noted, *“during the winter months in general, the bus schedule gets really messed up and it interferes with students’ chances of getting to school on time because every day there seems to be a different schedule.”* Another youth called for *“year round T passes for BPS students.”*

Thirty-seven submissions were related to the need for improved mental health supports, whether for young people or for the community at large. Students felt more could be done to raise awareness of available services and better support those with mental health needs: *“Schools need to better educate students on mental health. Make them aware of different things that come up and the options they have to get help.”* Helping people overcome the stigma of mental health challenges was also noted: *“I think no one with mental health issues would ever reach out because they don’t want to broadcast their issues because they are afraid of being seen as an outcast or just feel like a burden.”*

With a surprising level of specificity, 22 submissions focused on what students consider to be the poor or deteriorating quality of food in the Boston Public Schools. One youth asked that the City “improve the quality of the food at BPS since statistics show in my school that students have not been taking the lunch ever since our school went on free lunch. The quality has dropped a lot since four years ago. To mention a few, there are no side dishes, no entrees that students actually enjoyed, and breakfast is mostly cereal every day when it used to be hot breakfast before.”

Given the large number of proposed programs that specifically related to youth, additional coding was used to identify sub-themes or program categories. There was considerable interest in additional formal after-school programming, such as free dance classes, improved youth sports facilities, and better funding for existing programs including individual funding supports to allow students to more easily participate in extracurricular sports. The youth also expressed interest in organized entertainment, including dance parties at community centers, which was one of the ideas that ultimately appeared on the ballot.



The second largest theme related to activities that contribute to youth development, including – most notably – an expanded youth jobs program and education in “life skills” such as paying taxes, creditworthiness, sewing, cooking or parenting. Programming designed to reduce or deter drug use and gang involvement was the third most common theme.

A consistent story emerges from the self-report surveys and the ideas collected: youth want more youth-specific programming and youth resources in their neighborhoods and/or lack awareness of what is already available to them. Additionally, issues of health (particularly mental health) and public safety are central areas of concern to Boston youth, although they have a harder time identifying related program or capital ideas they want to see implemented.

Step 1: Million Dollar Vote

Rank your top projects in order at the bottom of this page.
Take both cost and benefit into account.
The most highly ranked projects will be funded.



<p>PROJECT A \$80,000</p> <p>More Trash Cans and Recycling Bins Install newer trash cans and recycling bins to make our neighborhoods cleaner - Mattapan, Dorchester, Roxbury</p>	<p>PROJECT B \$475,000</p> <p>Gym Renovation at K-8 Improve the gym facility for students in elementary school students in Roxbury - Higginson/Lewis K-8</p>
<p>PROJECT C \$135,000</p> <p>Job and Resource Finder App Create an app that lets teens find jobs, programs, free events, and scholarships - Citywide</p>	<p>PROJECT D \$500,000</p> <p>Parks are for Everyone Up to 10 new park renovations will have inclusive play elements for people with disabilities - Dorchester, South End, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale</p>
<p>PROJECT E \$300,000</p> <p>Performance Space in Chinatown Replace seats and renovate the auditorium to support the theatre performances and church that uses the space throughout the week - Josiah Quincy School</p>	<p>PROJECT F \$500,000</p> <p>Multi-use space for Chinatown Fix the gym divider, scoreboard, and bleachers in order to make the space more usable for students and the community - Josiah Quincy School</p>
<p>PROJECT G \$150,000</p> <p>Wicked Free Wifi 3.0 Bring internet and phone charging to sidewalks and bus stops in key locations across Boston - Citywide</p>	<p>PROJECT H \$280,000</p> <p>Turn Up at Community Centers Install a dance floor, cool lighting, a DJ Booth, and sound system in order to throw parties - BCYF Curtis Hall Community Center</p>
<p>PROJECT I \$100,000</p> <p>Link Up: Digital Billboards in Schools Install TV screens in schools that display information about jobs, programs, and other resources for students - BPS High Schools</p>	<p>PROJECT J \$25,000</p> <p>Sunshine and Books Develop an app to make it easy to find outdoor study spaces in parks across Boston - Citywide</p>







YOUR TOP FOUR PROJECTS:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
#1 CHOICE	#2 CHOICE	#3 CHOICE	#4 CHOICE

Step 2: Youth Council Priorities

Rank your top topic areas in order at the bottom of this page
Each topic includes a description and sample projects for that area.
The highest ranked topics will direct the Mayor's Youth Council efforts next year.



<p></p> <p>TOPIC A: Arts & Culture to redefine arts as an essential tool for life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplying tools for the arts at BPS • App to explore the history of Boston • Feasibility study for cultural spaces in Chinatown 	<p></p> <p>TOPIC B: Environment to build towards cleaner air, water, spaces, and mind through education and action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in green rooftops • Parks for people with disabilities • Outdoor studying spaces
<p></p> <p>TOPIC C: Public Health to make mental health a bigger part of everyday life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased affordable mental health services • Confidential depression screenings • Stigma reduction campaign 	<p></p> <p>TOPIC D: Human Services to preserve the cultural identities of neighborhoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovating community space in Chinatown • Excess food delivery to homeless shelters
<p></p> <p>TOPIC E: Education to create an environment where students are motivated to grow and achieve their goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New technology in schools • More funding for afterschool clubs • Higginson/Lewis Gym Renovation 	<p></p> <p>TOPIC F: Public Safety to provide safe alternatives to harmful behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse peer-speaker series • Parties at community centers • Blue light emergency poles
<p></p> <p>TOPIC G: Streets to get people where they need to be by creating a more accessible transportation system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More trash cans and recycling bins • Access to wifi on sidewalks and bus stops 	<p></p> <p>TOPIC H: Civic Engagement to mobilize youth to take full advantage of opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship for undocumented students • iPhone and Android app to find resources • Informational digital billboards in schools

YOUR TOP FOUR TOPICS:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
#1 CHOICE	#2 CHOICE	#3 CHOICE	#4 CHOICE

(if you make a mistake, ask for another ballot)

It is important to remember that, while these themes and needs were not necessarily manifested in capital projects on the ballot, they were readily apparent on the half of the ballot related to prospective Youth Council priorities. Public safety and public health, particularly mental health, were included as potential priority areas for the Youth Council in the year ahead. Youth were invited to vote and prioritize these issues, alongside their vote on capital projects.

The narrative of needs identified may indicate the value of the participatory budgeting process as one of multiple tools that yield greater understanding of youth needs. Because youth are being asked to divide up a \$1 million pie, they have a strong inducement to participate and an opportunity to hone in on the things they and their peers really need and want, rather than the general issues or challenges facing their neighborhoods.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data reported provide several pieces of important information. They reveal the many ways in which the City of Boston has leveraged a participatory budgeting process to positively and successfully engage youth citywide, provide insight into some of the needs and priorities of Boston youth, and shed light on some of the challenges associated with a process of this scale and complexity. Additionally, the data provide indications of youths' views of city government.

Below we provide conclusions and recommendations related to our two research questions, and delve into the extent to which we believe Youth Lead the Change has fulfilled the goals set forth by the City.

(1) Where are the opportunities for improvement to the process?

This year's participatory budgeting process generated a great deal of enthusiasm from youth in the city of Boston. The data reflect strong participation from Boston's public school community and enhanced opportunities for youth to assume leadership positions as Youth Lead the Change Agents and Facilitators. Youth learned first hand about city government, including interacting with the Mayor and other city officials. Youth were enthusiastic about "making a difference" for Boston's youth and perceived success in outreach to previously underserved communities, such as homeless youth and criminally and justice involved youth. The data demonstrated strong participation from the public, including 718 ideas generated during idea collection and approximately 4,480 votes cast by youth.

While the participatory budgeting process appeared successful in terms of youth involvement, ideas generated and total votes, study participants identified some areas in need of improvement. The recommendations below were based on analysis of the focus groups, interviews, observations, and generated ideas.

Recommendation 1: Clarify Role and Obligations of Change Agents

Youth reported confusion regarding their role as Change Agents versus their role as Mayor's Youth Council members, with some youth noting they were unaware that they would spend the majority of time focused on the participatory budgeting process. Based on this feedback, it is recommended that youth receive clear information during the recruitment, selection and pre-training for the Mayor's Youth Council regarding their role as Change Agents and the specific responsibilities of that role. One specific recommendation is that youth receive a calendar at the start of the year with the dates and locations of all general meetings and subcommittee meetings. Additionally, they should receive meeting alerts one week and one day prior to the meetings.

Recommendation 2: Provide Training and Guidance Throughout the Process

Youth reported receiving targeted training during idea collection resulting in strong participation during this stage. Communication broke down during proposal development resulting in youth feeling ill-prepared to write their proposals. Additionally, some youth were confused as to the process for voting. Based on this feedback, it is recommended that youth receive targeted training and guidance during the proposal development and voting stages. Specifically, they should receive training on the nuts and bolts of proposal writing, including the necessary elements and structure. They should also receive specific information regarding the voting sites and their role/responsibilities in the voting process.

Recommendation 3: Provide On-going Access to Expert Advisors

Prior to idea collection, each subcommittee met with City officials to develop their mission statement and goals. Youth found this exercise to be extremely helpful in that they received advice from experts in the topical area. As the participatory budget process progressed, some subcommittees had additional meetings with expert advisors, while others did not have any further contact. Youth reported communicating with the expert advisors through a “middle-man”, which at times resulted in long waits to access information. Based on this feedback, we recommend each committee be assigned an expert advisor (e.g., City Hall staff member) at the start of the participatory budget process. The advisor should meet with the subcommittee during each stage of the participatory budget process and be available via email and/or phone.

Recommendation 4: Employ a Targeted Recruitment Strategy

Our data demonstrated strong representation of youth from Boston’s Public Schools, both among Change Agents and voters. Youth reported the need for a stronger voice from other school communities. Based on these data, we recommend a targeted recruitment strategy that focuses simultaneously on neighborhood representation and school affiliation. Specifically, there should be enhanced outreach to youth in private schools, charter schools, trade schools, and alternative school settings.

Recommendation 5: Maintain Member Engagement

During the initial stages of the participatory budget process, youth expressed clear enthusiasm, resulting in strong attendance and participation at meetings, especially when Mayor Walsh was present. Member engagement waned during the Proposal Development and Voting stages, resulting in the bulk of the work falling on select Change Agents and Facilitators. Based on this feedback, we recommend establishing clear expectations regarding meeting attendance at the beginning of the participatory budget process. We recommend providing incentives for on-going participation. For example, Change Agents could receive public recognition from the Mayor or other City officials at each stage of the participatory budget process for their efforts.

Observations revealed issues with the physical space of the general meeting. Additionally, youth expressed difficulty with the number of in-person meetings, noting a need to accommodate their busy schedules and transportation issues. We recommend moving the in-person meetings to a location that is conducive to all participants hearing the information. We also recommend providing opportunities for collaboration and involvement that do not require in-person time. For example, subcommittees could hold online meetings and/or use Google Docs to complete tasks at various stages of the participatory budget process (e.g., developing and refining proposals).

Recommendation 6: Prioritize Personal Connections

Youth reported enhanced outreach via social media, which resulted in accessing a broader and more diverse group of youth. While this important goal was achieved, some youth found outreach via social media to be impersonal and felt disengaged during this stage of the process. Based on this feedback, we recommend finding ways to enhance outreach via social media while continuing to prioritize person-to-person contact.

(2) What are the priorities of Boston youth?

The secondary value of Participatory Budgeting is its ability to source vital information in regards to the needs of citizens. In this case, the participatory budget process garnered important and useful data concerning youth priorities in the City. Survey data among Change Agents and ICPs and deeper analysis of the proposed ideas revealed that youth wanted more programming and community resources and were concerned about the health and safety of their neighborhoods.¹⁴ As previously mentioned, many of the suggested ideas were not capital eligible, which hindered the chances of an idea making it onto the ballot.

Based on these conclusions, we make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Use Data Throughout the Process

The research team gleaned valuable information about youth need by sorting through, categorizing, and organizing all of the ideas collected during the Idea Collection stage. Having also analyzed Idea Proposals and the final ballot, we detected a number of instances in which the volume of ideas submitted did not translate to balloted initiatives. We recommend that Youth Lead the Change incorporate a similar idea of coding and analysis into their pre-proposal process. This will allow project proposals and ballots items to better represent the key needs of Boston youth. Additionally, Change Agents will benefit in their understanding of data analysis and the process of molding ideas into proposals.

Recommendation 2: Elevate Youth Priorities Beyond the Ballot

Youth represent an important constituency in the City of Boston, and many of the concerns raised by youth are issues that go beyond age and impact many citizens of Boston (i.e., issues of housing and public safety). In its effort to elevate a wide range of youth priorities, Youth Lead the Change developed a ballot that included both capital eligible ideas and prospective Mayor's Youth Council priorities for the coming year. We recommend that the City consider *additional* ways to elevate youth priorities identified via the Youth Lead the Change process. One opportunity is to incorporate youth needs and priorities into the agendas of City Departments. At a minimum, the City should consider providing opportunities for the identified priorities to be shared across departments, via Department Head meetings or through follow up (post-voting) meetings between the Youth Lead the Change Subcommittees and City staff.

Recommendation 3: Conduct Deeper Analysis of Youth Access to and Awareness of Youth Programming

Twenty-one percent of ideas submitted as part of the idea collection stage pertained to youth programming. Hundreds of youth believed this to be a potential area of improvement for the city. The extent to which youth are truly lacking in resources, versus lacking an awareness of what currently exists, remains unclear. We recommend further analysis to determine the awareness and utilization of youth programs and resources in the city. Results should be used to inform or augment the scope of the "job and resource finder app" that was among this year's winning projects. Findings may also warrant development of a comprehensive, dynamic youth resource and programming website, searchable by activity-type as well as age and neighborhood. In addition, a focused awareness campaign should be developed to help promote widespread adoption of these digital resources.

¹⁴ Based on data gleaned from Change Agent surveys, ICP surveys, and analysis of idea collection suggestions

Has Youth Lead the Change Achieved its Goals?

Increase Youth Power: The data indicate that many youth do feel empowered through the Youth Lead the Change process. However, without a pretest measure it is not possible to identify whether or not there has been an “increase” in youth power. Furthermore, the definition of “power” can be highly variable.

Allow All Voices to Be Heard: While it may not be possible for “all” voices to be heard, there was extensive evidence that many voices were heard. Additionally, there were robust efforts to encourage the participation of many constituencies.

Build Stronger, Safer, and Healthier Communities: This goal suggests a long-term impact of the efforts described in this process. A logic model would likely identify this as the ultimate goal.

Strengthen City-wide Sense of Pride, Solidarity, and Equality: Several pieces of data suggest a sense of pride, solidarity, and equality is developed through this process.

Pathways into Civic Life: There is little doubt that the project provides an entry point for some young people to become civically engaged and learn about the city and government.

Opportunities for Further Evaluation

We offer the following recommendations in regard to further evaluation:

One important limitation of the survey data was the low response rate in the Change Agent post survey. As a result, we were unable to use the data to measure changes over time. That said, the low response rate confirmed our finding that there were issues with attrition of Change Agents. There should be some mechanism in place to encourage Change Agents to complete the post-survey. One suggestion would be that youth who complete the survey (and the entire participatory budget process) are given some form of incentive (e.g., gift card, money, public recognition ceremony).

Another limitation to the survey data was the low response rate, just 3%, to the voter survey. Therefore, we were unable to accurately capture attitudinal data pertaining to the voting population and instead relied on demographic data provided by Boston Public Schools on a subset (70%) of the voting population who are enrolled in BPS. We recommend that the survey instrument be attached to the vote. In other words, youth fill out the survey first and then they are granted access to the ballot.

The interview, observation and focus group data were based on the Change Agents who attended office hours or Youth Council meetings. Therefore, there may have been selection bias in that the youth who were more active in the participatory budget process were the voices captured by the data. Because there was an issue with attrition of Change Agents, we recommend conducting follow up interviews with youth who dropped out and/or were less engaged in the later phases of the participatory budget process. The interviews would shed light on the reasons youth became disengaged in the process and suggestions for keeping them engaged.

We only conducted interviews with Change Agents and Mayor's Youth Council staff. While we were successful in capturing the voices of youth who participated in the participatory budget process, it would enhance the data to interview other key stakeholders. We recommend interviewing the Mayor, City Hall staff, Participatory Budgeting Project staff, and members of the steering committee in order to gain their perspective on the 2016 participatory budget process.

Finally, since Boston's participatory budget process is in its third year, there are several winning projects that have been implemented. We recommend conducting an implementation study to measure the impact of winning projects on youth in Boston. In other words, are the winning projects "making a difference" by enhancing the lives of youth in the city of Boston?

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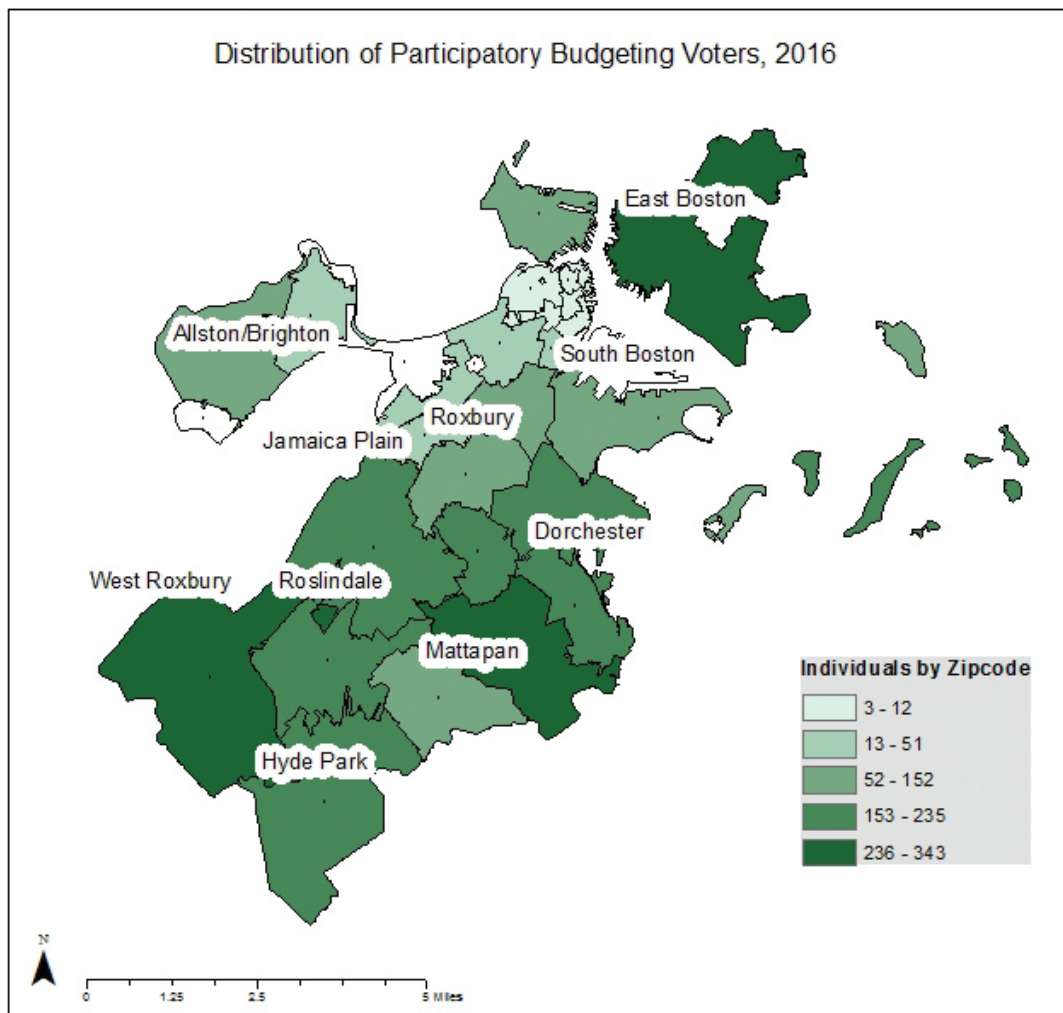
Appendix

Steering Committee Members

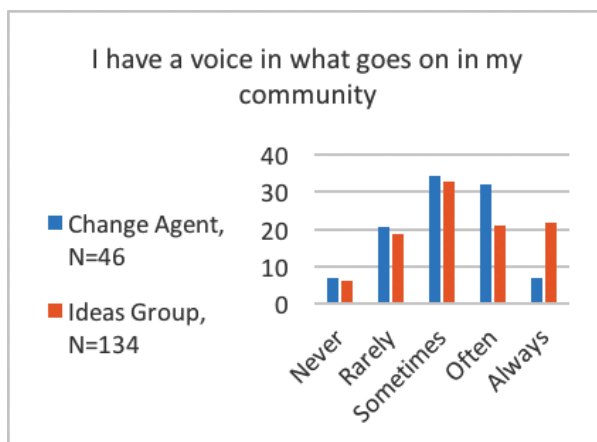
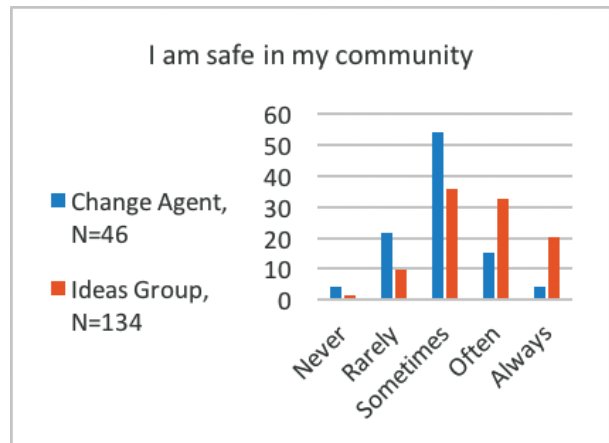
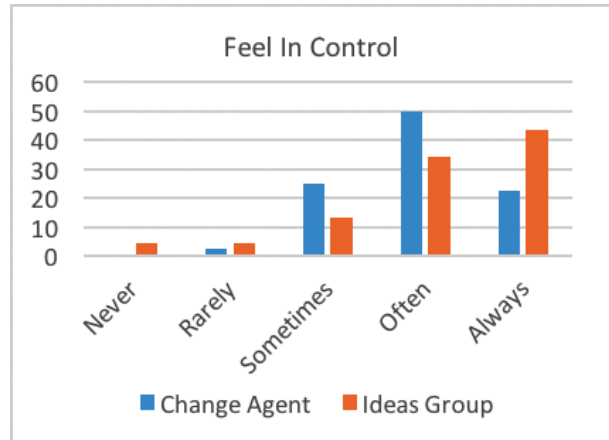
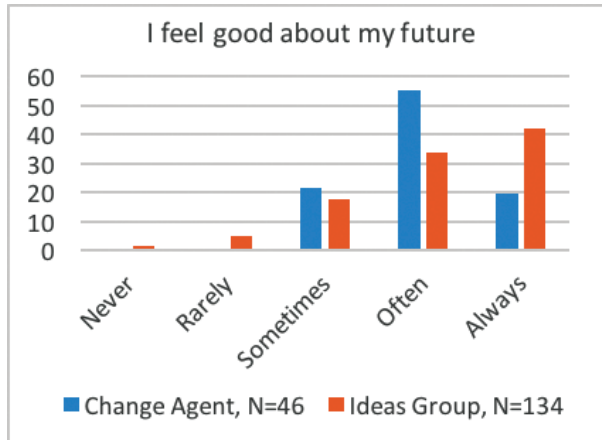
<https://youth.boston.gov/youth-lead-the-change/about/committee-members-2/>

- Roxbury Tenants of Harvard
- Suffolk County Youth Advisory Council
- Boston Makers
- Family Services of Greater Boston
- Emerald Necklace Conservancy
- Boston Centers for Youth & Families
- Boston Police Area B-2 Community Services
- South Boston Neighborhood House
- Sociedad Latina
- Stephen's Youth Program
- MassCOSH
- Statewide Black Clergy for Unity, Inc
- YMCA of Greater Boston - Roxbury
- Press Pass TV
- Health Resources in Action
- Center for Economic Democracy
- South End Technology Center at Tent City
- Computer Clubhouse, Science Museum
- Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries, Inc
- Boston Youth Services Network
- South Boston En Acción
- Boston Alliance of Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Youth
- Hyde Square Task Force
- Youth on Board
- Mayor's Youth Council

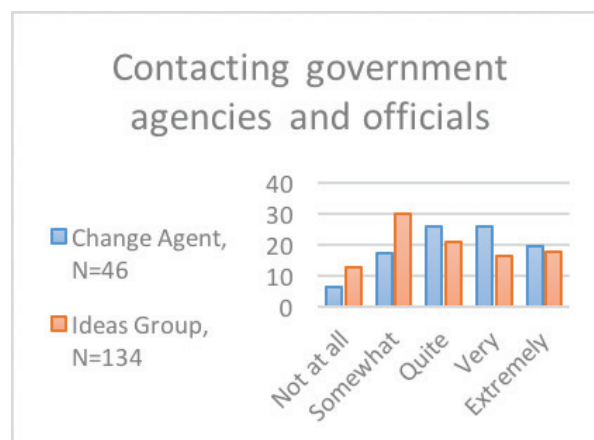
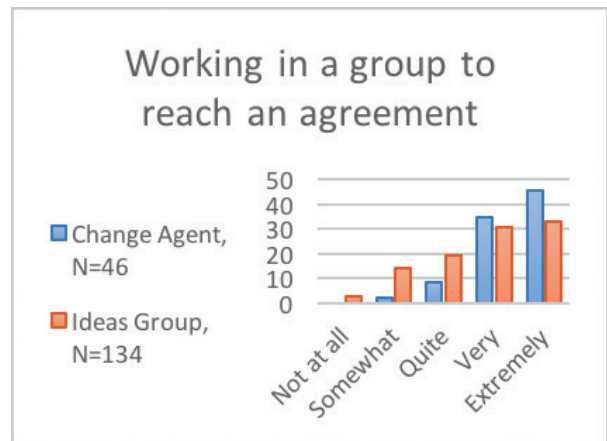
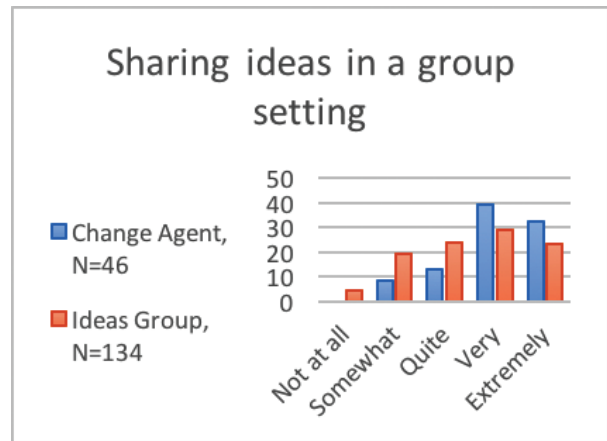
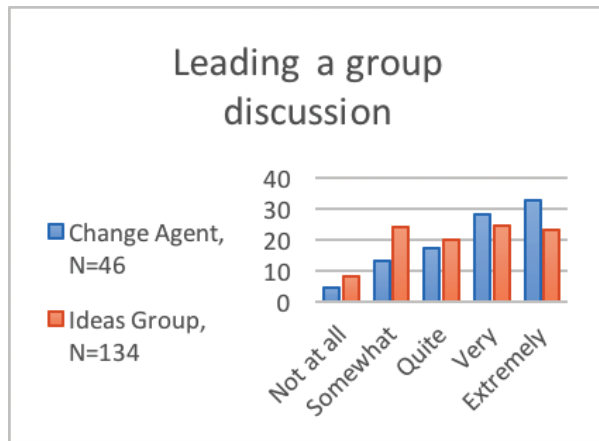
BPS Data: Distribution of Participatory Budgeting Voters Attending Boston Public Schools

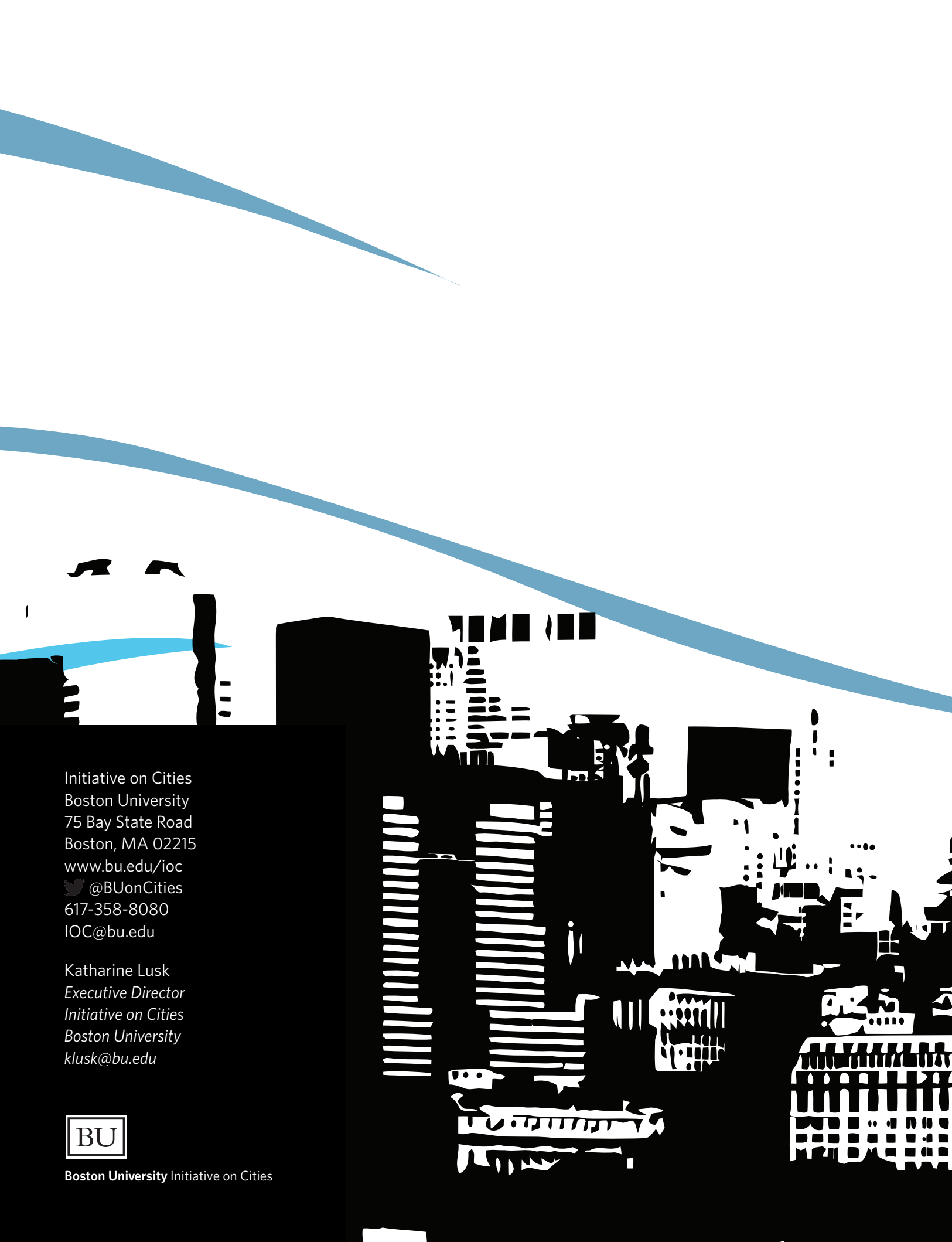


Survey Data: How Often Do You Feel the Following...



Survey Data: How Comfortable Are You with Each of the Following...



A stylized black silhouette of a city skyline is set against a white background. The skyline includes various building shapes, some with horizontal lines representing windows. A thick, light blue curved line sweeps across the upper portion of the image, starting from the left edge and curving towards the right. The overall aesthetic is modern and graphic.

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