Participatory Budgeting in Cambridge, MA

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX
Real Money, Real Projects, Real Power

- Since FY16, yearly dedicated City Budget allocation for projects designed by residents.
- With the program’s success, each year its budget has grown.
- PB allocation has doubled since inception:
  - FY16 = $500,000
  - FY21 = $1 million
Resident volunteers play a large part in managing the process:

- **Outreach Committees**
  - Collect *community generated ideas* and encourage voting

- **Budget Delegates**
  - Develop and narrow down *proposals (1,047 submitted in 2018)* and work with City Staff to estimate necessary amount of funds

- **Voting station staff**
  - *Raise awareness*, answer questions and help residents *cast ballots*
All residents ages 12 and up are eligible to vote.

Voting is available online and in person at locations throughout the city.

Polls are open for 7 days, and results are announced at the end of the voting period.
Examples of completed projects:

Public “Portland Loo” toilet installed in Central Square

Flashing crosswalk safety lights at key crossings

Protected bike lanes in Harvard Square
Selected projects for FY20:

6,849 residents voted in Dec. 2018. Their top choices:

1. Trees, please! ($200,000)
2. Water Fountains in Every Park ($90,000)
3. Firefighter gear washing and drying stations ($110,000)
4. Smoother Cycling ($250,000)
5. Clean Up Cambridge ($125,000)
6. Rain Gardens for Resiliency ($150,000)