



# Budget Delegate Guide

## 8<sup>th</sup> District - 2011-2012

### Introduction to the Budget Delegate Role

Thank you so much for stepping up on behalf of our community to serve as a budget delegate in the 2011-2012 participatory budgeting process!

**Budget delegates** take the ideas developed by community members at the neighborhood assemblies and elsewhere, and turn them into concrete proposals to put on the final ballot. Over the next few months, you will review these ideas in committees, organized by types of projects.

Why “delegates”? Hundreds of your neighbors have taken the first step of brainstorming project ideas. But to turn these ideas into reality, more needs to be done. Your neighbors have **delegated** this essential work to **YOU**. As delegates, it is your job to respect the community’s wishes and make decisions for the good of the whole community.

Budget delegates have a wide variety of skills and levels of experience working with budgets and capital projects. To make sure that everyone can participate actively, Committee Facilitators and Council Member Staff will help guide you through the process, and connect you with the resources you need to develop proposals for the community vote in March.

We hope that you have an exciting and rewarding experience as a budget delegate and again **thank you for your commitment!**

# Expected Timeline of Meetings and Goals

MEETINGS	GOALS	DATE
<b>Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn about the delegate process and project development</li> </ul>	November
<b>Committee Meeting 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn about project development in committee issue areas from experts</li> <li>Review project list and criteria</li> <li>Start to prioritize and select projects</li> </ul>	November
<b>Committee Meeting 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify priority projects</li> <li>Assign delegates to visit each priority project location</li> </ul>	December
<b>Delegate Site Visits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess projects and neighborhood need</li> </ul>	Late December - Mid January
<b>Committee Meeting 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report back from site visits</li> <li>Pick projects to present to Council Members for review</li> </ul>	Mid January
<b>Councilmember staff submits ideas to city agencies to review and vet, and give price estimates</b>		
<b>Committee Meeting 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review draft project proposals and share feedback</li> </ul>	Late January
<b>Committee Meeting 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finish project proposals to present at second round Neighborhood Assemblies</li> </ul>	February
<b>Second Round Neighborhood Assemblies</b>		
<b>Committee Meeting 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize project proposals for ballot</li> </ul>	Late February / Early March

# List of Committees and Sample Projects

We have sorted the ideas from the neighborhood assemblies into several committees, to help break down the workload and allow delegates to become experts in specific issue areas. The following is a list of the budget delegate committees with some sample ideas of the projects that have been included:

COMMITTEE	SAMPLE PROJECTS
<b>Transportation &amp; Public Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalk and street repair</li> <li>• Speed bumps</li> <li>• Street Lights</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computers and SMART Boards for Classrooms</li> <li>• New lockers for students</li> <li>• School renovations</li> </ul>
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resurfacing of a basketball court</li> <li>• Renovating a dog park</li> <li>• New playground equipment</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security cameras in NYCHA buildings</li> <li>• New intercom systems at NYCHA buildings</li> <li>• Roofing and plumbing repairs in NYCHA buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Art &amp; Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murals and other public art projects</li> <li>• Renovations of museums and cultural spaces</li> </ul>
<b>Public Health &amp; Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More garbage cans on the street</li> <li>• Capital work to improve pest control</li> </ul>
<b>Seniors &amp; Social Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repairs to local senior centers and community centers</li> <li>• Accessibility renovations for public buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renovations at local youth community centers</li> <li>• Skateparks</li> </ul>

Note: The Youth Committee is for delegates who identify as youth and who want to work on issues that especially affect their peers. This committee is meant to make PBNYC more inclusive, by creating a safe space for youth who otherwise might not participate.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## **Budget Delegates:**

- Participate in regular committee meetings
- Visit proposed locations of projects
- Help develop a proposal for at least 1 project
- Help keep the community informed on the committee's progress
- Help present the proposals at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Neighborhood Assemblies and the voting

## **Council Member Staff:**

- Provide a facilitator for each budget delegate committee
- Schedule meetings and book meeting space for all committees
- Provide technical feedback and cost estimates for projects
- Serve as a liaison between budget delegates and city agencies
- With District Committee, help resolve conflicts

## **Committee Facilitators:**

- Help facilitate meetings and ensure that all delegates are able to participate
- Serve as the main point of contact for Council Member staff, and help coordinate communication between delegate committees and Council Member staff
- Connect delegates with info and resources
- Ensure that notes are taken at each meeting and distributed to the committee

*Note: The Committee Facilitator is NOT a delegate. He or she should not make decisions on projects or committee work, or write or present proposals.*

# What Projects Are Eligible for Funding?

There is a very strict test for funding projects in the city's **Capital Budget**. In order to be eligible, a project must meet all of the following three tests:

## 1. Cost at least \$35,000

- Low-price tag items can be bundled together to meet the \$35,000 cut-off if they work together as a "system". Ex: computer lab

## 2. Have a "useful life" of at least five years

- Some things, like laptop computers or certain municipal vehicles, are not considered to have a useful life of five years.

## 3. Involve the construction, reconstruction, acquisition, or installation or a physical public improvement

- This typically means work done in public space, buildings and land owned or controlled by the city.
- In limited cases, land or buildings owned by non-profits that have contracts with the city can qualify through a vetting process. These are called "non-city capital projects" and have many additional requirements to ensure they are for a public purpose.

## What are examples of items that are eligible?

**The following are almost always eligible, as they are clearly public improvements:**

- Reconstructing a street.
- Installing street furniture, such as trash cans, benches, bike racks or street lamps.
- Renovating a portion of a park.

**The following have some additional requirements:**

- Planting street trees (must be over \$35,000).
- Buying sets of movable play equipment for a playground (must be over \$35,000 and items must work together in a system).
- Buying computers for a school computer lab (must be over \$35,000).
- Installing security cameras in public housing (must be over \$35,000 and must be in the same housing development).

**The following are "non-city capital projects" that require extensive vetting to be eligible:**

- Buying new furniture for a space owned by a community group (must be for the initial outfitting of a building or renovation of an office; group must have a substantial contractual relationship to provide services on behalf of the city; various minimum cost criteria).
- Helping a community group buy a building or equipment (group must have a substantial contractual relationship with the city; non-city matching funding

must be largely in place; minimum costs for real estate projects vary depending on nature of project).

**The following are almost never eligible:**

- Paying for an item that belongs in the expense budget, like the salary of a public employee or a contract with a non-profit to provide services.
- Repairing a privately-owned building.
- Helping an organization renovate space that it rents from a private landlord.
- Helping a religious institution repair its sanctuary (although renovating space in which it provides social services to the general public might be an eligible non-city capital project).

**What other barriers might there be to making a project work?**

Almost all of the following issues can be addressed, but are worth keeping in mind as you continue to flesh out a project proposal:

- An agency might not agree to begin a project until it is fully funded in the capital budget (Agency might reject a phased funding approach for expensive projects).
- The agency has engineering or quality standards that the project might not meet or might significantly raise costs if applied.
- Getting an accurate cost estimate for a unique project might be difficult.
- Unforeseen conditions might delay implementation or increase the cost.
- It might be unclear which agency should implement the capital project.
- In some cases in which a capital project carries an expense item attached to it, the city agency might require money in the expense budget for maintenance or a maintenance agreement with a local organization to be arranged before it approves a project. This often occurs with projects that involve the installation of street furniture or greenery in a public place.

**What should you do to make sure that your projects will work?**

- **Remain goal-oriented and be flexible** about how you will meet the public need you identify. Just because a project does not work in one location doesn't mean it shouldn't be tried in others.
- **Consider a phased approach** to the project that breaks it up into discreet pieces. If Phase I gets funded this year and is successfully implemented, Phase II could be funded next year.
- **Identify potential project partners.** Community groups — particularly those that are well-developed, well-funded or have a substantial contractual relationship with the city to provide services — can often help implement projects.
- **Look for precedents.** Similar projects elsewhere in the city can help you get an idea of what is needed to implement one in your community.

# How Will Delegates Evaluate Project Ideas?

## Criteria for Evaluating Ideas

Since budget delegates will not have the time or resources to work on all the ideas community members have proposed, you will have to make some hard choices on which projects to pursue. As representatives of the community, you should keep the community's best interests in mind as you decide which projects to work on and include in the final ballot. The criteria below will help you evaluate and prioritize project ideas:

### NEED

- interest in the project (number of times that the idea was prioritized by a Neighborhood Assembly group, number of times that it was proposed)
- level of neighborhood socioeconomic need (median household income, other demographic statistics)
- level of neighborhood need for capital infrastructure (number of capital projects recently built in the neighborhood)
- open space ratio (for parks projects: how much park land is there nearby)

### BENEFIT

- how many people benefit (number of people served or who will benefit, number of people served or who will benefit per dollar cost of project)
- which communities benefit (impacts on low-income communities, youth, seniors, immigrants, etc.)
- environmental impact
- whether project is for year-round or seasonal use
- whether the community is involved in project implementation

### FEASIBILITY

- whether project could or should be funded by other sources
- how long project is expected to take to complete
- cost
- whether the project involved is on city or non-city land
- whether there are any other potential problems with project eligibility (legal issues, durability considerations, etc)

Some criteria could be used quantitatively to rank project ideas, while others could be more general criteria for delegates to keep in mind. Some criteria could be used to narrow down the initial list of projects, while others could be used to present information to the voters in the final project proposal.

## Tools for Evaluating Ideas

You will receive several tools to evaluate projects according to the criteria above. This includes a project grid with data for each project idea and district maps with information on the population and land use. Keep in mind that this data is not always precise and that other criteria are also important.

You will likely want to do additional research on project ideas to determine a project's value. The following websites may be a good place to start:

### Additional Online Resources for Evaluating Projects

- PBNYC Website: The project website has additional information and tools to evaluate projects, including a map feature to track ideas. Community members will also use this website to submit new project ideas.  
[www.pbnyc.org](http://www.pbnyc.org)
- Street Conditions:  
<http://gis.nyc.gov/moo/scout/index.htm>
- Cleanliness ratings:  
[http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/html/data/street\\_scorecard.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/html/data/street_scorecard.shtml)
- Local performance ratings for agencies:  
<http://gis.nyc.gov/ops/mmr/address.jsp?app=MMR>
- DOHMH health tracking info:  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/tracking/tracking.shtml>  
<https://gis.nyc.gov/doh/track/>
- OasisNYC map of open space, land use, city-owned land, zoning, basic demographics:  
<http://oasisnyc.net/map.aspx>
- Crashstat: compilation of traffic accidents 1995-2009 by location  
<http://crashstat.org>
- Transit Ridership map:  
<http://graphicsweb.wsj.com/documents/MTAFARES1108/#v=showSeniors>

# Budget Delegate FAQs

## **1. Do we have to propose all the projects on the list of eligible projects?**

No, but you do have to consider all the projects. Delegate committees will develop a list of “recommended projects” that you believe are most needed and worthwhile for the District, based on the criteria above. You will present your recommended projects to the public at the second round of neighborhood assemblies in February. At these meetings you will explain why you recommend these projects and not others, and then residents will give feedback on the recommended projects. After these meetings you will compile a final list of projects to include in the ballot for the final vote.

## **2. Will we only be developing proposals for projects that are on this list?**

You will use this list as a solid jumping off point for developing proposals. The projects on the lists given to each committee were all of the capitally-eligible projects suggested at neighborhood assemblies that related to the committee’s focus. You may also, however, propose new projects based on the district ideas and needs. Community members will also be able to submit new project ideas online and to the councilmember’s office for a few weeks after the delegate orientation.

## **3. How do we decide which projects to propose?**

As delegates, you should prioritize projects that best serve the good of the community. Use the criteria and tools proposed in this guide to begin evaluating project ideas.

## **4. How do we divide up the projects among us or decide who does what?**

This is up to you to decide. You can each work on separate projects or you can work in sub-committees on groups of projects.

## **5. How will we know how to go about proposing these projects, especially since many are not typically funded by the discretionary money? How will we know how much projects cost?**

Council Member staff and others will work with the committee to help develop each proposal. Representatives from the committee and the Council Member’s office will also work with the City agencies that will implement these projects to answer questions about costs and other concerns. Additionally, some experts from the City-wide PBNYC Steering Committee can help your committees form project proposals.

## **6. How specific should our proposals be?**

Your proposals should specify the exact project, its proposed location(s), its cost estimate, and some information on why community members should vote for the project. Please see the Project Proposal Form for details.

**7. How can we be sure that another agency/level of funding isn't simultaneously planning for one of the projects we're working on?**

The Council Member's office will work to find out whether proposed projects are already being planned in the future. Since some projects might fit within multiple issue areas, you may also want to check with other budget delegate committees to make sure that projects aren't being repeated.

**8. What is the best way to communicate within our committee outside of meetings?**

Each committee is free to decide what works best in terms of communication, as long as your communication method is as inclusive as possible – that is, if members of your committee do not have access to the internet or are not comfortable using e-mail, you should not communicate exclusively over e-mail. For those committees where everyone has access to e-mail, you might consider using Google groups ([www.groups.google.com](http://www.groups.google.com)) to share information. Each group's facilitator can help them establish a Google group or other tools to help you communicate in between meetings.

## Contact Info

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# Project Proposal Form

<b>Project Name:</b>
<b>Location(s):</b> (address, intersection, or landmark name)
<b>Description:</b> (1-2 sentences describing what the project involves)
<b>Need:</b> (Why is this project necessary? What local problems or needs does it address?)
<b>Benefit:</b> (Who will the project benefit? Which communities? How many people?)
<b>Feasibility:</b> (How have you verified that the project is eligible for funding and technically feasible?)
<b>Potential Challenges? Other comments?</b>
<b>Estimated Cost:</b>
<b>Responsible City Agency or Organization:</b>