Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a process that allows the public to decide how to spend capital money set aside for their district. The capital funding allocated must be used toward projects that have a useful life of more than five years (except IT equipment which is 3 years) and cost at least $50,000. However, most Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) capital projects cost significantly more than this, and take an average four years to move from project concept to completion.

Brooklyn Public Library Capital Needs

- BPL’s extensive system needs an estimated $247M in critical infrastructure upgrades.
- Many branches need new roofs and HVAC systems for our libraries to remain operational.
- Additionally, many branches need interior renovations, new technology, furniture and collections, as well as development of dedicated patron spaces.

Brooklyn Public Library & the City of New York

- BPL is a separate 501(c)(3). However, most of its 59 buildings are owned by the City.
- The City manages most BPL capital construction projects through the Department of Design and Construction.
- BPL’s capital budget comes primarily from the City Council, Borough President and Mayor.

Restrictions on Capital Spending

The City defines capital-eligible projects as:
- Over $50,000
- “Useful lifespan” of at least five years except IT equipment which is 3 years
- Construction projects utilizing the four-trades (construction, electrical, mechanical and plumbing), or meeting other FF&E requisites
- **NOT used for:** Laptops, tablets, furniture or other “collections” items except when initially fitting out a new or substantially renovated branch

Construction or Reconstruction of a Building or Structure

To be capital-eligible, construction or betterments must usually utilize all four trades (general construction, mechanical, plumbing and electrical).

Projects must be substantial in nature; they must increase functionality or expand the space. Routine maintenance—such as painting, carpeting, or changing light fixtures—is not eligible.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- **Renovation of community or Children/Teen programming space**
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** HVAC, roof, electrical outlets etc
- **Technology Systems:** desktop and laptop computers (minimum of 50,000)
- **Security Alarm System**
- **ADA Compliance:** wheelchair lifts, ramps, accessible entrances, enlarged bathrooms, etc

Example of Ineligible Projects:

- Installing a bench or book drop outside of a library
- Routine maintenance: painting, carpeting, light fixtures
- Furniture: bookcases, chairs or table
- Murals or carpets
- Computers to replace those purchased with capital funds in the last 5 years

For more information, contact
Naila Rosario at nrosario@bklynlibrary.org
Branches in Participatory Budget Districts

Previously Funded Projects

Councilmember Stephen Levin
Council District 33
Brooklyn Heights
Greenpoint
Williamsburg

Councilmember Antonio Reynoso
Council District 34
Bushwick
DeKalb
Leonard

Councilmember Laurie Cumbo
Council District 35
Central
Bedford
Eastern Pkwy
Clinton Hill
Walt Whitman

Councilmember Robert Cornegy
Council District 36
Brower Park
Macon
Marcy

Councilman Rafael Espinal
Council District 37
Arlington
Washington Irving

Councilmember Carlos Menchaca
Council District 38
Red Hook
Sunset Park

Councilmember Brad Lander
Council District 39
Borough Park
Carroll Gardens
Pacific
Park Slope
Windsor Terrace

Councilmember Mathieu Eugene
Council District 40
Cortelyou
Crown Heights
Flatbush

Councilmember Alicka Samuels-Ampry
Council District 41
Brownsville
Saratoga
Stone Avenue

Councilmember Justin Brannan
Council District 43
Bay Ridge
New Utrecht
Dyker
Fort Hamilton
McKinley Park
Flatlands

Councilmember Farah Louis
Council District 45
Clarendon
Rugby
Flatlands

Councilmember Mark Treyger
Council District 47
Coney Island
Gravesend
Highlawn
Ulmer Park

Meeting Room upgrade at Kensington Library
Creating a new reading garden at Park Slope Library from unused outdoor area
New green roof at Windsor Terrace Library