

The People's Budget Vallejo

A Budget for the People, By the People



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Cover photo by Cole Hammond

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Coalition

The People's Budget Coalition is a collective of community organizations, researchers, and volunteers who have come together to design, distribute, and analyze The People's Budget Vallejo survey. Community organizations that make up this coalition are Defund Vallejo PD, Justice Coalition of Vallejo, Vessels of Vallejo, and Vallejo Housing Justice Coalition. The different perspectives and experiences this coalition offers is something that our city has been desperately in need of. The Coalition is dedicated to representing the diversity in Vallejo and intentional about centering the voices of the entire community.

What is the People's Budget Vallejo?

The People's Budget Vallejo is a participatory approach that seeks to radically democratize how Vallejo residents identify community priorities in order to more equitably inform how limited City resources and funds are allocated. To accomplish this, we created and distributed a digital survey to the community. As of July 23rd at 10:30 AM, said survey has a total of 1,493 respondents. This survey was made available in English, Tagalog, and Spanish. We have canvassed various neighborhoods and public spaces throughout Vallejo for the past several weeks encouraging people to take the survey.

This work is part of a larger movement taking place across our country, in which community-led groups are paving the way to re-imagine how to more equitably allocate our resources while divesting from systemically racist and violent institutions such as the police. Participatory budgeting, however, is not a new concept. It has been a tool to help empower communities where there have been opaque and corrupt governments for decades. Additionally, our city was the first in the nation to adopt a citywide participatory budgeting process back in 2012.

Inclusive economic development

As you cross city lines coming from Highway 29, you pass a sign that welcomes you to Vallejo. At the bottom, it reads "A City of Opportunity." *And it's true.* We are situated in an ideal location within the San Francisco Bay Area. We have a mix of different land uses that could cater to a variety of businesses and employment opportunities. We have a beautiful downtown corridor and waterfront. But perhaps our greatest claim is that we are consistently heralded as one of the most diverse cities in our nation. However, our budget does not reflect our unbridled opportunity as a diverse city.

To address both the needs of investing in our community and shifting the paradigm of public safety, we propose adopting an inclusive economic development framework.¹ This means investing in our communities and prioritizing those who are most marginalized in order to bridge the many gaps created by systemic racism and oppression. This could be realized through investment and support for: affordable housing, programs to upend homelessness, support for public health in times of a pandemic and beyond, services for local businesses, improvements to our public spaces and infrastructure, funding the vibrant arts and culture in our community, alternatives to policing that prioritize care and restorative justice approaches, and so much more!

Instead, the approach our City takes is completely removed from one that is inclusive. Our City has a scarcity mindset that focuses its limited funds on policing. This is apparent in not only the more than 40 percent of general funds that have been allocated to the Vallejo Police Department every year since 2003, but also in the way in which the future of economic development hinges upon massive investments to public safety and not the community. **Our City must do better, and the People's Budget Vallejo is a tool to begin the process of re-imagining our future as a community.**

¹ Sacramento, with the aid of the Brookings Institute, currently follows this [framework](#). This alignment of identifying community needs *with the community* to better shape a community and economic development plan is deeply needed for our City to undertake.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of findings

The survey encompasses five different budget priority areas: Universal Needs and Crisis Management; Built Environment; Re-imagined Community Safety; Police and Policing; and Supplements to Programs Funded Outside of the General Funds. The People believe the budget should reflect our community priorities in the following manner:

- Universal Aid and Crisis Management (31%)
- Built Environment (25%)
- Re-imagined Community Safety (21%)
- Supplements to Programs Funded outside of GF (19%)
- Police & Policing (4%)

A meta-level analysis of these findings suggests that participants have an implicit understanding of the need to address and invest in the root causes— not symptoms—of systemic racism. Additionally, by restructuring the paradigm of which we approach public safety, we are able to more strategically invest in the key needs of the most disadvantaged and marginalized members of our communities.

Summary of recommendations

We recommend using the results from the People's Budget Vallejo survey as the blueprint for reimagining community safety and reallocating funds into much needed community programs. This means framing and setting the context for the process of reallocating funds away from the Vallejo Police Department under programs and services that capture the goals of the budget priorities as outlined by the study.

In addition, we must ensure that the programs we are funding will serve the community in a way that meets one of the requirements of what the Coalition created, called the S.I.C. standard. These programs will serve as an alternative to police, intervene at the level of root causes, or create a pathway for reinvesting into programs outlined by community priorities within the Vallejo community.

WHY DEFUND?

What does it mean to defund the police?

Nationwide, we over-rely on a police force that is trained and equipped for violent situations. However, we know that police today are expected to deal with a wide range of nuanced situations and dynamics, including illegal dumping, traffic crashes and violations, mental health crises, domestic disputes, robberies, and much more. We also know that 90% of calls to the police are in regard to non-violent incidents.² If cities such as ours become more selective about what their police departments are expected to handle, we can use taxpayer money more efficiently and minimize the number of people who encounter armed officers. This is especially crucial and urgent for Black people who are three times more likely than whites to be killed by police. Native Americans and Latinx people are also killed at higher rates.³

Gradual reallocation of funds to systems that equitably serves our communities.

“Defunding” means reallocating a portion of a police department’s budget to other city services such as affordable housing and homelessness services, youth development programs, addiction treatment, and mental health resources—services that can proactively prevent crime and ultimately further reduce our need for policing. Defunding involves a gradual reallocation of police funds. Over time, portions of police budgets are redirected to areas of demonstrated need within the community. Defunding is an active and thoughtful process that requires community participation in deciding what services residents need and how their tax dollars are deployed, as well as

ensuring that funds are invested into equitable systems that do not further perpetuate other forms of injustices. The movement to defund also embraces a wider definition of public safety that considers crime rates while recognizing that communities with greater opportunities and resources are not only safer, but also healthier and better positioned to give back to society.

Refunding our communities looks like...

Instead of a policing model that responds reactively after a crime has been committed, local governments should invest in alleviating the root causes of crime by addressing poverty, unemployment and under-employment, institutional racism, and trauma. For decades federal, state, and local governments have cut funding for education, the arts, healthcare, and housing, and these cuts have only further exacerbated racial inequities. Directing fiscal resources toward high-quality public schools and youth programs, affordable housing, living-wage jobs, and trauma healing centers will help empower under-resourced communities to stabilize and succeed.

A study that drew from 60 years of data revealed that more funding for police does not correlate with lower crime rates.⁴ Therefore, if our goal is to reduce crime, our tax dollars would have a significantly greater impact being funneled into early childhood education. The Economic Opportunity Institute cites powerful evidence that “high quality care in the first years of life can greatly reduce the risk that today’s babies and toddlers will become tomorrow’s violent teens and adults.”⁵

2 Ray, Rashawn. “What Does ‘Defund the Police’ Mean and Does It Have Merit?” *Brookings*, Brookings, 19 June 2020, www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2020/06/19/what-does-defund-the-police-mean-and-does-it-have-merit.

3 Fottrell, Quentin. “How America Perfected the ‘Art of Demonizing Black Men’” *MarketWatch*, MarketWatch, 28 June 2020, www.marketwatch.com/story/george-floyds-and-christian-coopers-are-all-around-you-just-the-latest-in-americas-long-history-of-demonizing-black-men-2020-06-04?mod=article_inline.

4 Ray, Rashawn. “What Does ‘Defund the Police’ Mean and Does It Have Merit?” *Brookings*, Brookings, 19 June 2020, www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2020/06/19/what-does-defund-the-police-mean-and-does-it-have-merit.

5 “The Link between Early Childhood Education and Crime and Violence Reduction.” *Economic Opportunity Institute*, 2002, www.opportunityinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/early-learning/ELCLinkCrimeReduction-Jul02.pdf.

Defunding police forces and refunding communities is an effort that invests in the future and has the power to impact generations to come, but it is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach. Because every city and community has different needs, resources must be allocated differently according to those needs and how they change over time. In Vallejo, defunding the police will enable us to better address our affordable housing crisis, create and enhance youth and job programs, support our small businesses, and fix our crumbling streets. Community leaders and residents are best equipped to identify issues within their own communities. Tools like the People’s Budget Vallejo have helped to capture our community’s values and funding priorities and how our tax dollars can be best allocated to reflect the needs and desires of our community. By putting our values and voices at the center of Vallejo’s policies, we can effectively ensure that all residents of our beautiful and diverse city have ample resources and opportunities.

Police alternatives

An alternative to the police is to form a team of civilian Mental Health First Responders. Under this model, the mobile response team is composed solely of mental health professionals and trained volunteers that respond to non-violent, non-criminal calls to service without police presence.

The CAHOOTS program (Eugene, Oregon) should act as the blueprint for Vallejo’s Mobile Response Team due to its longevity and proven efficacy. “CAHOOTS has been operating as a mobile crisis intervention

program in Eugene since 1989. We respond in teams of two with a medic and trained crisis worker, handling 20% of the 911 calls in our area last year.”⁶ Another model Vallejo should look to is the MH First program set up by the Anti-Police Terror Project (AFTP) in Sacramento, California. Their purpose is to “interrupt and eliminate the need for law enforcement in mental health crisis first response by providing mobile peer support, de-escalation assistance, and non-punitive and life-affirming interventions, therefore decriminalizing emotional and psychological crises and decreasing the stigma around mental health, substance use, and domestic violence, while also addressing their root causes: white supremacy, capitalism, and colonialism.”⁷

Re-imagining community safety

Community safety means shifting the mental health support needed by the community into the hands of professionals and volunteers who are appropriately trained and equipped. Adopting programs such as CAHOOTS and MH First would reduce the strain on Vallejo PD’s staff and budget, in addition to further reducing the criminalization and stigmatization of mental illness, and ultimately connecting residents with life-affirming and enriching community services. There are existing programs as part of Solano County Behavioral Health Services, **but we recommend that there be no police presence in these response approaches.**

6 Morgan, Ebony. “Racism is a Public Health Crisis: A Statement from CAHOOTS” Cahoots, 14 June 2020, <https://whitebirdclinic.org/category/cahoots>.

7 “MH First” Anti Police-Terror Project, 2019, <https://www.antipolice-terrorproject.org/mh-first>.

A POLICE FREE SOCIETY

What is institutional racism and what would our communities look like if we addressed it?

In order to re-imagine the ways in which our society can be equitable, ethical, and just we must first examine the current structures and institutions that make up our societal structure. It is irrefutable that in this country there is a large opportunity gap, and therefore a substantial wealth gap, between white individuals and Black and Indigenous peoples and People of Color (also referred to as BIPOC). While some have argued that these gaps are due to individual shortcomings, we understand that in actuality they are a direct result of institutional racism, and need to be addressed at a societal level. The term institutional racism refers to a series of practices, laws, regulations, patterns, and structures within a society that actively oppress BIPOC and favor white people. These practices can be overt, such as racial profiling practices by police that unjustly and disproportionately target Black and brown people, or covert, such as underfunding schools in Black communities so that fewer children in these communities graduate. Forms of institutional racism exist in all levels of our society. Courts, police departments, schools, hospitals, banks, and jails are just a few institutions where oppressive and harmful practices are enacted to oppress BIPOC. With each passing generation, the gap between those who benefit from this form of racism and those who are harmed widens. It is imperative that we work actively to dismantle these practices in order to create a truly equitable society.

If we removed the barriers that result from institutional racism in Vallejo, we would see greater opportunity for the youth in our community through improved education, increased access to financial and medical resources, and fewer interactions with the penal system. We would see an increase in homeownership in BIPOC communities, an increase in new and sustained business at the local level, and therefore, an increase in our tax base which would benefit the City exponentially. Moreover, the City would be able

to decrease spending on services such as the police department which would equate to even more resources that could be invested back into Vallejo. We as a community cannot progress and prosper until our most vulnerable community members are supported, and therefore we argue that the time for undoing systemic racism in our society has to be now, and the first institution that we need to dismantle is the police.

Won't our city become more dangerous?

In the national discussion of defunding police departments, one common question that those in opposition ask is, "won't our city be more dangerous without a strong police presence?" As a result of "law and order" media campaigns, many Americans believe that police keep communities safe by preventing crime and arresting criminals. However, a 2019 study conducted by Northwestern University⁸ found that police brutality is the leading cause of death in young men in America. This same study also found that Black men are killed at a much higher rate than any of their peers, especially white men. Moreover, Vallejo unquestionably has a deeply rooted and often fatal relationship with police brutality. For example, in 2012 one-third of all murders in Vallejo were committed by police officers. Additionally, although the media often highlight high crime rates in Vallejo, the majority of VPD's calls for service are not for violent crimes; they are for mental health crises and minor infractions such as noise disturbances.

Reducing the police budget would reduce the number of police officers patrolling neighborhoods, which would arguably create a safer city for Vallejo's community members. It would also increase financial resources that Vallejo could invest into the community. By investing in programs such as affordable housing, job training, and mental health first responder

⁸ Edwards, Lee, & Esposito, (Aug 2019). Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race-ethnicity, and sex. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Aug 2019, 116 (34) 16793-16798; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1821204116, retrieved from <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/34/16793>.

programs, the City could create a sustainable future for its residents, ultimately reducing crime rates. After all, the cities that are the safest are not the cities with the most police officers, but those with the most resources.

Why defund Vallejo PD?

Police forces have long been the arm that enforces white supremacy in our society. Policing is used as a tool of social control, with Black men being arrested, charged, and incarcerated more frequently than any other demographic. Astoundingly, Black men have a one in three chance of being incarcerated in their lifetime. Since 1997, Vallejo's police officers have murdered 37 people, with the overwhelming majority of the victims being BIPOC. Yet institutional racism is just one of many reasons to defund the police. Vallejo spends upwards of 43% of the general budget on the police department annually. Almost \$2,500,000 of that is set aside each year for liability allocations to pay out civil suits for police misconduct. \$115,000 of the budget is spent solely on recruiting new cadets. By contrast, in FY 2019/2020 the City allocated only \$115,000 combined for the Youth Initiative and Solano First Five. By prioritizing spending on police instead of prioritizing spending on basic human needs such as shelter, mental health, and youth services, Vallejo's City officials are actively harming the residents of Vallejo. Defunding the police would allow the City to redistribute police funds to social services that will support and aid community members. It will also decrease the criminalization and stigmatization of Vallejo's most vulnerable residents.

History of Vallejo PD violence

As previously mentioned, since 1997 the Vallejo Police Department has murdered 37 people. VPD has one of the highest numbers of police killings per capita in California as well as in the greater United States. Most recently, Vallejo Police officer Jarret Tonn shot and killed Sean Monterrosa while he was kneeling on the ground with his hands up in surrender. The officers involved in this shooting claimed they feared for their lives, but evidence shows that Monterrosa was unarmed, and what they believed to be a handgun in his pocket was in actuality a hammer. The officers made no attempt to de-escalate the situation, nor did

they use lethal force as a last result. Officer Tonn had his finger on the trigger of his rifle and shot as soon as the unmarked truck he was riding in pulled onto the scene. Footage released by the police department shows that the vehicle Officer Tonn was riding in had not even come to a complete stop before he fired through the windshield, instantly killing Monterrosa.

Last year, six Vallejo Police officers shot Willie McCoy over 50 times while he was asleep in his car. Officers claimed McCoy was reaching for a gun, but footage released from the police department showed that McCoy was awake for less than 10 seconds before officers opened fire on him. At no point did officers attempt to wake McCoy in order to persuade him to leave the vehicle on his own accord, nor did the officers call a medic in the event that McCoy was having a health emergency. The officers surrounded McCoy's vehicle and fired as soon as McCoy stirred without even attempting to talk to him.

In 2018, Officer MacMahon, who also participated in the murder of Willie McCoy, shot and killed Ronnell Foster after trying to detain him for riding a bicycle without a light. Foster, a father of two, was shot in the head as he tried to escape his assailant, Officer MacMahon, who had chased him into an alley and had begun to beat Foster.

The list of systemic, violent, and lethal abuse at the hands of the Vallejo Police Department goes on, and could easily fill the pages of many reports. How many people have to lose their lives before the City Council takes action? Historically, the police have not acted alone in their malice. In the past decade, our District Attorney has brought exactly zero charges against Vallejo Police officers in any of these cases. Police continue to kill with immunity and impunity, because there is a pattern of the DA ruling that these murders are "justified." However, it is important to remind our City Council that looting, bike riding, and sleeping in a car are not capital crimes. In Vallejo, officers who are involved in shootings are often returned to active duty before their cases are even heard. In fact, many police officers who have been involved in shootings are promoted. For example, there are currently 14 Vallejo Police officers who have been involved in more than one shooting on their payroll. To put that in perspective, statistically speaking, about 15% of

VPD's officers have fired their weapons at civilians more than once. Clearly, there is an undeniable culture within VPD of racism, violence, and lawlessness.

Myth of reform

Vallejo's newest Police Chief, Shawny Williams, was hired specifically to address long standing issues in the police department and strengthen the department's relationship with the city's inhabitants. In the past year, Williams, along with the City Council, have fought for police reform. Williams argues that reforming the police department will lead to a higher level of accountability and transparency within the department that will repair the broken trust between Vallejoans and their police department. While we unequivocally agree that VPD cannot go on the way it has for the past decade, we vehemently disagree that reform is the answer to "fixing" the problem of an out of control police department. The claim that police reform creates safer cities rests on the questionable assumption that police keep us safe.

As demonstrated by the 37 police-involved murders in the last decade, police do not keep us safe. Very rarely do police stop violence before it happens in the community, and often the violence in our community is emanating from the police themselves. This is largely because police ultimately protect power and property of the ruling class. Police as we know them evolved over hundreds of years from slave patrols, which were created to control Black people who were considered the property of white landowners. Although the name of these slave patrols has changed over the years, the mode of operation has been the same. For example, the "Tough on Crime" policies enacted in the 90s under the Clinton Administration resulted in a massive increase in state and federal inmates who were booked on drug

offenses, with up to 90% of these new inmates being Black or Latinx. The police system is not broken, it is working exactly how it was meant to when it was created. This is a system that cannot be fixed; it needs to be completely rebuilt and re-imagined.

Furthermore, many of the reforms that Chief Williams wants to enact are already laws on the books that officers simply choose not to follow. For instance, AB392, which was signed into effect in 2019, states that officers can only use force when completely necessary. As demonstrated by numerous cases such as with Sean Monterrosa's, officers in Vallejo are not abiding by this law. Ultimately, even when officers do openly flout these laws, they are not charged with crimes because all an officer has to say is that they feared they were in mortal danger and then lethal force is considered justified, routine even. Moreover, officers are also not held accountable in civil suits because of qualified immunity, which means that every time a person or family that has experienced excessive use of force and sues for damages, the payouts are transferred to the taxpayers, and not to the officers.

Lastly, reform is cost prohibitive. VPD already gets the majority of the city's general fund. Implementing reform will cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars, with no guarantee of change. We ask, why should we give more money to VPD to implement practices that should have already been in place? Do we really have to pay people just to not shoot us? Defunding the police would immediately give Vallejo resources to improve our city in tangible ways. Reforming the police department would take away precious resources from a City that is already reeling financially from the effects of a pandemic, and not guarantee positive results.

METHODOLOGY

Budget 101

BUDGET TIMELINE

- **Beginning of the Calendar Year:** Finance Department and City Manager work with other department heads to identify budget needs for the upcoming fiscal year.
 - » They also work with City Council to identify goals for the budget. However, this year, due to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and the economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic, this meeting never occurred.
- **May:** Finance Department and City Manager submit Proposed Fiscal Year Budget for review by City Council and Mayor. Recipients submit questions and comments to the appropriate departments for feedback and further information.
- **June:** City Council votes to adopt or reject Proposed Budget.
- **July:** If Proposed Budget is approved, we begin the fiscal year with said Adopted Budget
 - » This year, because of massive public outcry against the proposed budget, City Council rejected approving the budget. This means that we will carry over last year's General Funds component of the budget on a month-to-month basis, until City Council votes to approve a budget. The next vote will take place on July 28th.

Why the General Fund?

RESTRICTED VS DISCRETIONARY

The city budget pulls from many different sources of funds, and depending on the source, there are rules and restrictions that specify how that money can be spent. The General Fund, however, is where our city officials have the most discretion, or power to choose, how and where money is spent. This is why we focus our attention here.

Additionally, since we're primarily addressing an incredibly bloated police budget, it's important to know that the primary source of funding for the Vallejo Police Department is the General Fund. Hence our focus on this particular source.

Methods

SURVEY OVERVIEW

The People's Budget Vallejo Survey seeks to both understand the priorities for spending as well as to re-imagine the way in which we approach the idea of public safety. Our outreach teams have spent the past few weeks canvassing public spaces and neighborhoods in all six Council Districts in Vallejo in addition to marketing the survey through our coalition members' social media accounts. The survey itself is hosted through the Google forms platform, primarily for reasons of access (read: affordability), and ease of user participation. We also made sure that the survey was anonymous and did not collect any personally-identifiable data.

By bringing to light various programs that provide direct services for the most disadvantaged members of our communities while introducing a new frame that shifts away from punitive approaches for justice. The survey encompasses five different budget priority areas: Universal Needs and Crisis Management; Built Environment; Re-imagined Community Safety; Police and Policing; and Supplements to Programs Funded Outside of the General Funds. Additionally, we collected demographic information, particularly information regarding the effects of COVID-19, to both help inform our outreach strategy as well as to understand our results. Please see the appendix for a text version of the People's Budget Survey.

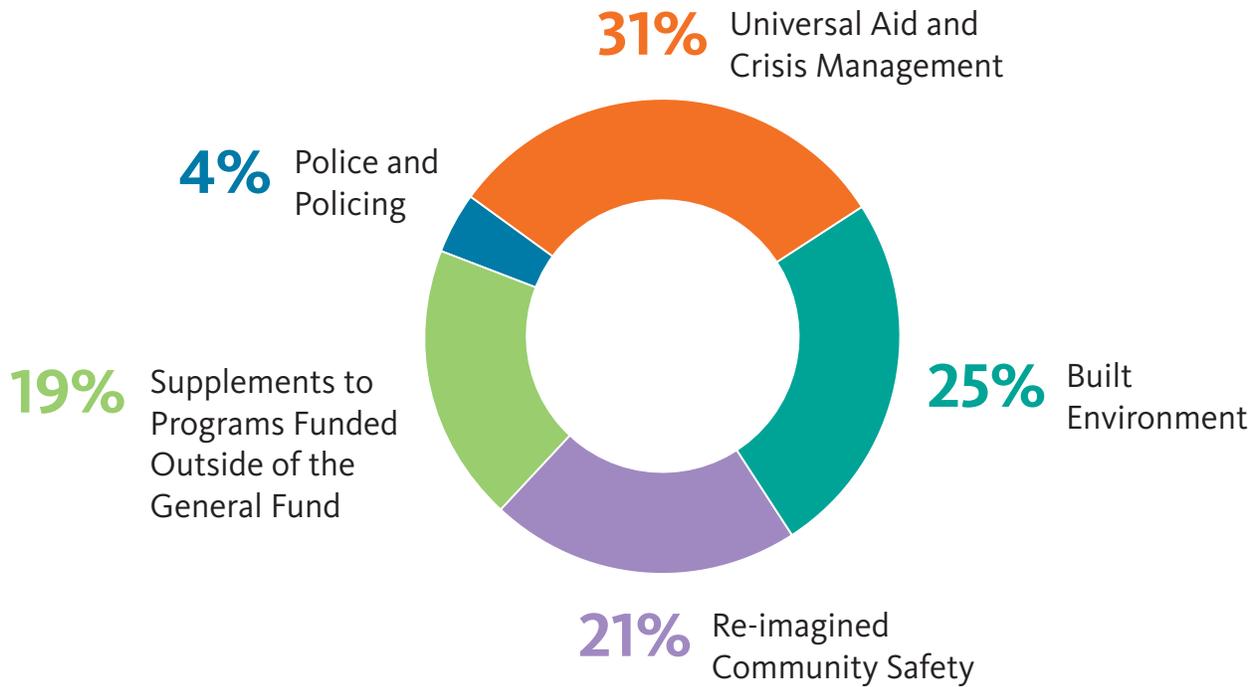
Analyses

The People's Budget Vallejo Survey uses a sliding scale of 0 to 4 in order to represent priorities of Divestment (0), No Investment (1), Minimal Investment (2), Moderate Investment (3), and Maximum Investment (4) for programs that fall under the different defined budget categories. So, a vote of a higher number gives more weight toward investment priority. In addition, it includes a variety of demographic questions such as Council District, sexual orientation, race, age, and financial security to view priorities through different lenses.

In analyses, we looked at the distribution of votes for each of the five budget categories. We also looked at the four programs most voted for investment and the two programs most voted for divestment. To gauge overall investment priorities, we summed votes over each budget category and looked at the overall distribution of the weights.

FINDINGS

People's Budget Vallejo Survey Results



31% Universal Aid and Crisis Management

- Child and Youth Development
- Emergency Preparedness
- Food Security
- Environmental Justice and Climate Change
- Housing Security
- Economic Assistance

25% Built Environment

- Public Works
- Parks and Recreation
- Libraries
- Public Transportation
- Fire Department

21% Re-imagined Community Safety

- Mental Health and Wellness
- Community Care Workers
- Restorative Justice Models
- Community Investment and Neighborhood Empowerment

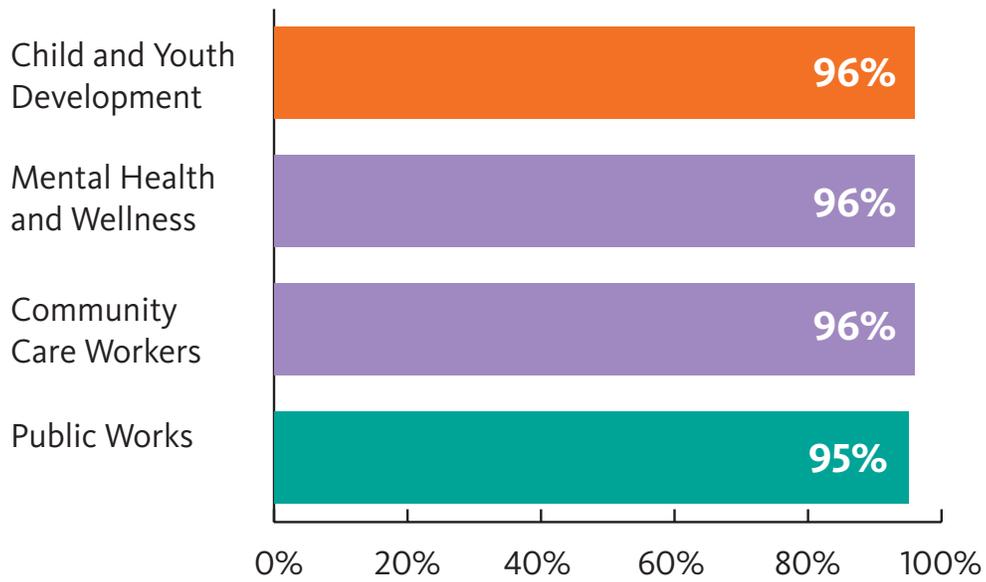
19% Supplements to Programs Funded Outside of the General Fund

- Education and School Districts
- Mental Health, Public Health and Health Care
- Housing Affordability
- GVRD (Greater Vallejo Recreational District)
- Child and Youth Development

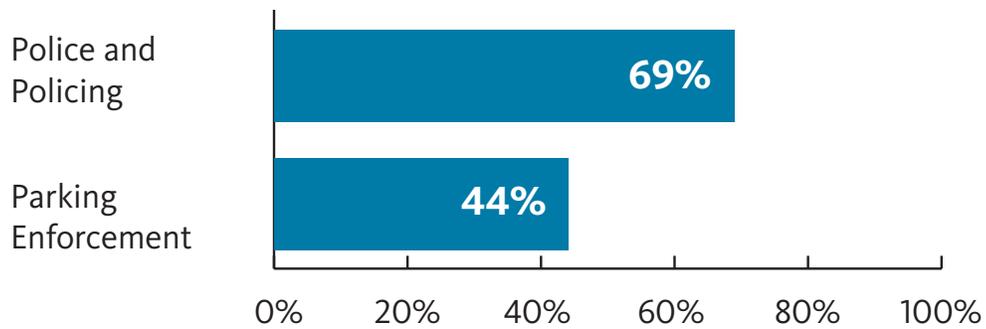
4% Police and Policing

- City Attorney's Office
- Parking Enforcement
- Police and Policing

The People's Top Four Investment Priorities



The People's Top Two Divestment Priorities



As of July 23rd 10:00am pacific standard time, the People's Budget of Vallejo has received 1,493 respondents.

Community-led budget: key findings

As mentioned in the Methods, the questions answered by the People of Vallejo were grouped into 5 different budget priority categories. As indicated by the graph, the People believe the budget should reflect our community priorities in the following manner:

- Universal Aid and Crisis Management (31%)
- Built Environment (25%)
- Re-imagined Community Safety (21%)
- Supplements to Programs Funded outside of GF (19%)
- Police & Policing (4%)

TOP INVESTMENT PRIORITIES FINDINGS

Key among the top investment priorities of the respondents are Child and Youth Development (Universal Aid and Crisis Management), Mental Health and Wellness (Re-imagined Community Safety), Community Care Workers (Re-imagined Community Safety), and Public Works (Built Environment).

Conversely, the top priorities for divestment to support the refunding of previously divested community needs are Police and Policing and Parking Enforcement.

PARTICIPATION AND SAMPLE BIAS

While reviewing the provided demographic from the respondents the following demographics were overrepresented using the 2019 Census data:

- Those living in District 5
- Individuals within the 18–25 age range
- Those identifying within the Asian and White communities

A possible correlation to these over-representations can be aligned to the mode in which the survey was provided (electronic) and the mode of dissemination (predominantly social media); both of which have been mitigated by adding physical flyers and outreach among different districts.

Similarly, the following demographics are under-represented:

- District 4 and 6 (increasing with mitigation measures)
- Individuals within the 56–65; 66 and over age range
- Those identifying within the Black and Hispanic or Latino communities

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

In the process of creating spaces for discussing the budget, both in how it works from a process standpoint and what the final budget allocations actually look like, most people enter into this discussion with very little knowledge. It was made clear that a significant part of setting up this work would be the education component of helping our communities both learn the budget process and empower their involvement and participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Before recommendations are discussed, it is essential to explain why anti-reform recommendations are needed in the first place. When people argue for reform, they are simply calling to place a bandage over a wound. In order to see true change in the community, one must figure out why that wound is even there in the first place. In other words, this issue must be solved by getting to the root of the problem. It is known that the root of the problem with policing is historical systemic and institutional racism. Police must be disarmed, dismantled, and abolished in order to get to the root of the problem. When police undergo reform, they are just placing a bandage over the wound. Reform has happened time and time again, and nothing has changed. This is why the People's Budget Coalition is pushing to Defund VPD and reallocate funds into much more effective programs.

We recommend using the results from the People's Budget Vallejo survey as the blueprint for reimagining community safety and reallocating funds into much needed community programs. In addition, we must ensure that the programs we are funding will serve the community in a way that meets one of the requirements of what the Coalition created, called the S.I.C. standard. These programs will serve, intervene, or create within the Vallejo community.

Serve as an alternative to reduce the need for police

One of the most important components for reducing the police budget, police brutality, and institutionalized racism instituted through the legal and penal system are programs that will serve as alternatives to policing. These programs would form a team of civilian Mental Health First responders. On June 25th 2020, during a "Virtual Town Hall" Police Chief Shawny Williams stated that VPD receives at least 110 calls for service/month (please note, there was no concrete data provided by Williams to corroborate this number) for individuals facing a mental health

illness or crisis. Williams noted that police officers are not equipped nor trained to provide non-punitive health and safety services to individuals with mental health or behavioral health needs. Williams went on to advocate for the creation of a mobile response team.

We second this notion, however, we also strongly recommend that the mobile response team be composed solely of mental health professionals and trained volunteers. We also recommend that this mobile response team respond to non-violent, non-criminal calls to service without a police presence. This would both reduce the strain on VPD's staff and budget, as well as reduce criminalization and stigmatization of mental illness, and connect residents with life affirming and enriching community services. As stated previously, programs like CAHOOTS and Sacramento Mental Health APTP should serve as the blueprint for creating the response team, exploring funding options, and implementing a similar program in Vallejo. If a program like this is to be implemented, it would need to be completely independent and have no affiliation with VPD.

Intervene at the level of root causes

Intervention is important in reimagining community safety. Vallejo, like many other cities, has a high number of individuals who struggle with mental illness and/or addiction. More programs need to be put in place to meet the needs of these individuals to help provide them with the necessary tools and resources to reach their goals. Examples of these programs would be more mental health services, addiction services, job programs, homelessness programs, etc. Many programs like these can be effective if they serve as a space that truly has the best interest of the individuals in the programs in mind. These programs would need to be dedicated to a holistic approach that works to empower individuals in need that are seeking help.

Create a pathway for reinvesting into programs outlined by community priorities

Vallejo has constantly cut funding for youth programs, art programs, and any other programs that are dedicated to youth development and empowerment. Vallejo needs to create more spaces where youth could go to participate in extracurricular activities outside of school such as sports, arts, or education. Creating more spaces like these will ensure that young people are getting the attention and nurturing they need at critical ages to prevent them from making choices that will result in them making poor decisions.

It is possible for youth to find their purpose through these programs at a young age, and with Vallejo having very few of these resources, the result is more youth in the streets and not enough youth going to college, trade school, working, or giving back to their community. These types of programs ultimately create more opportunities for the youth. They will find themselves to be more optimistic and have a

more positive outlook on life overall. Organizations like Vallejo Project are doing amazing work to educate and empower the community from all ages and backgrounds, offering yoga, martial arts, technology classes, and many other valuable resources that Vallejoans don't typically have access to.

Our city also lacks any permanent shelters or programs that provide permanent solutions to end homelessness. There is a need to deepen the level of care that we currently provide for the unhoused members of our community. A comprehensive affordable housing strategy, that strategically and intentionally targets households who fall below the local area median income is incredibly needed. Additionally, writing in policy that requires a certain set aside of affordable housing developments made available to formerly unhoused community members should be an integral part of this commitment. We propose shifting more funds and resources to staff a robust housing department that focuses on the need to develop and/or preserve affordable housing.

CONCLUSION

The just and equitable visions that we have for our future will not happen overnight. The systemic oppression deeply embedded in our institutions, such as the police, are a product of centuries of willful design and policies that come from a lens of white supremacy and stem from an even older regime of colonialism. While the oppressive systems responsible for keeping marginalized communities at a place of disadvantage are under different names and facades, tackling these issues from the perspective of critically interrogating systemic racism demands that we shift how we think of and, in effect, provide resources for these institutions.

What that looks like today, for our City of Vallejo, is carving out a path to effectively listen to, and provide substantial and material ways for our government to enact the values, priorities, and needs of its people. The work of People's Budget Vallejo is just an initial, but necessary, first step into identifying the essential needs for the most disadvantaged members of our community, with the understanding that by focusing our attention on the most marginalized, we in effect develop a strong community and economic network that has positive benefits for all.

The work, too, is situated in principles of restorative and transformative justice. The new era of hope we are working towards, founded on principles of equity and justice, shifts away from systems that further perpetuate punitive measures to achieving justice, and instead focus on approaches that restore healthy communities free from the trauma of centuries of violence and injustices.

In this sense, People's Budget Vallejo is not just a survey. It's the beginnings of a roadmap, it's the idealized start of a dream, it's a tool we can use to start a journey where all of us, the People of Vallejo, can achieve true justice and equity. The results also make clear that our communities deeply understand the need to invest into programs that directly address the root cause and sin of systemic racism, as opposed to focusing on programs and interventions that serve as the proverbial "band-aid" to societal ills.

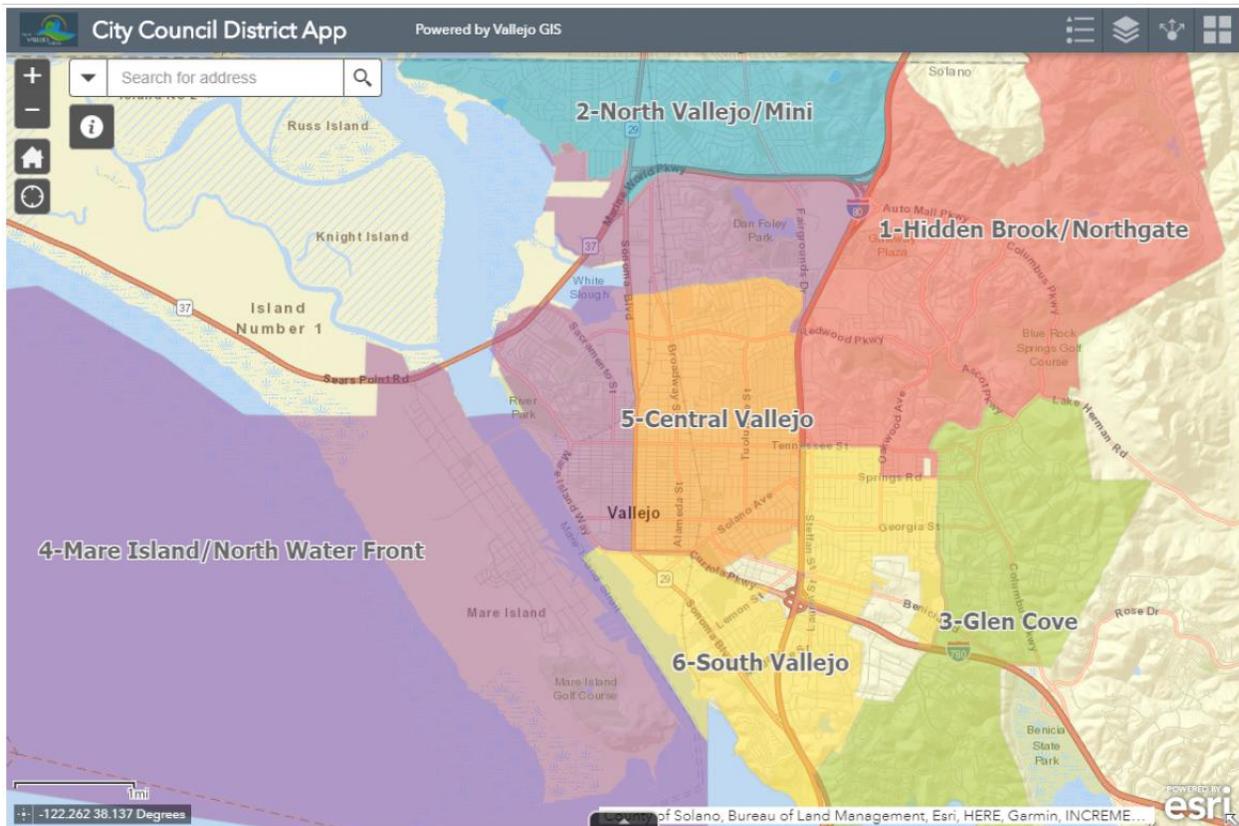
We demand that our City officials take into consideration the work, findings, and recommendations of People's Budget Vallejo as a platform to begin the process of meaningful community outreach and engagement and as a blueprint for defunding the police and reinvesting in our communities.

APPENDIX

The People's Budget Vallejo Survey

Participate in this survey and let your voice be heard! Help us create The People's Budget Vallejo! This survey will give the People's Budget Vallejo Coalition an understanding of what budget priorities are from our community's diverse perspectives.

This survey will be anonymous - we will not be collecting any personally identifiable data.



1. What district do you live in?

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4
- District 5
- District 6
- Unsure

2. What is your zip code?

Please fill in one circle for each statement using the sliding scale below:

- 0 - Divest Money (i.e. cuts to budget)
- 1 - No Investment (i.e. maintain current budget)
- 2 - Minimal Investment (i.e. small increase to budget)
- 3 - Moderate Investment (i.e. considerable increase to budget)
- 4 - Maximum Investment (i.e. large increase to budget)

UNIVERSAL NEEDS & CRISIS CARE					
	0	1	2	3	4
	Divest Money	No Investment	Minimal Investment	Moderate Investment	Maximum Investment
1. Housing Security (eg rent/mortgage support, emergency housing, etc)	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Food Security (eg access to healthy and affordable foods, CalFresh/SNAP)	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Economic Assistance (eg small businesses, independent contractors, wage/income support)	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Child and Youth Development (eg after school programs, neighborhood youth programs, youth centers, etc)	<input type="radio"/>				
5. Environmental Justice and Climate Change	<input type="radio"/>				
6. Emergency Preparedness	<input type="radio"/>				
REIMAGINED COMMUNITY SAFETY					
	0	1	2	3	4
	Divest Money	No Investment	Minimal Investment	Moderate Investment	Maximum Investment
1. Community Care Workers (eg gang/violence intervention and domestic violence workers from the community)	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Restorative Justice Models (eg community healing circles, alternatives to policing, reparations to victims, etc)	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Mental Health and Wellness (eg family counseling, community-led crisis response workers, MH-First model of emergency response)	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Community Investment and Neighborhood Empowerment (eg investing in community led safety alternatives, block parties, stronger neighborhood connections, etc)	<input type="radio"/>				
BUILT ENVIRONMENT					
	0	1	2	3	4
	Divest Money	No Investment	Minimal Investment	Moderate Investment	Maximum Investment
1. Parks and Recreation	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Public Transportation (eg improvements to SolTrans)	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Libraries (eg improvements to JFK Library, Springstowne Library, etc)	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Public Works (eg fixing potholes, landscaping, maintaining streets, etc)	<input type="radio"/>				
5. Fire Department	<input type="radio"/>				
LAW ENFORCEMENT					
	0	1	2	3	4
	Divest Money	No Investment	Minimal Investment	Moderate Investment	Maximum Investment
1. Police and policing	<input type="radio"/>				
2. City Attorney's Office (Handles City lawsuits, including minor crimes)	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Parking enforcement	<input type="radio"/>				

****NOTE This is a different sliding scale from previous questions****

Please fill in one circle for each statement using the sliding scale below:

- 0 – Receive no supplement from the General Fund
- 1 – Small supplement from the General Fund
- 2 – Moderate Supplement from the General Fund
- 3 – Maximum Supplement from the General Fund

PROGRAMS FUNDED OUTSIDE OF THE GENERAL FUND				
These typically receive funding from sources outside of Vallejo’s General Fund (“G.F.”). For these items, indicate whether you’d like the City to remain at their status quo for their support for these programs, or if you’d like to see maximum funding supplements to these programs and services.				
	0	1	2	3
	Receive no supplement from G.F.	Small supplement from G.F.	Moderate supplement from G.F.	Maximum supplement from G.F.
1. Housing Affordability (eg Federal Programs that fund Section 8 Vouchers, First-time homebuyer support, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Mental Health, Public Health and Health Care (Funded at the County-level)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Education and School Districts (Funded at the State-level)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. GVRD (Greater Vallejo Recreational District) (Funded by internal revenue and Measure K)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

DEMOGRAPHICS

All information will be kept private, we will not be collecting names or any other personally identifiable information through this survey.

This will help us to better understand the survey sample by comparing it to publicly available Census data to understand how representative findings are of Vallejo. It also helps us to understand the varying needs of the many diverse communities in our city.

Tell us more about yourself:

1. Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply):

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

2. Select a category below that best describes your age:

- 17 or younger
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 45-55
- 56-65
- 66 and over

3. How you would describe your gender? (e.g. Female, Male, Non-binary, Trans, Two-Spirit, prefer not to say, other)

4. How you would describe your sexual orientation? (eg Asexual, Bisexual, Gay, Heterosexual/Straight, Lesbian, Queer, Pansexual, prefer not to say, other)

Housing:

1. Are you experiencing housing insecurity? (eg your rent/mortgage is late or delinquent, you're currently staying with relatives or a friend, etc)

- Yes (unrelated to COVID-19)
- Yes (related to COVID-19)
- No
- I do not wish to answer

2. Are you experiencing any financial insecurity? (eg going through a rough patch of little to no income)

- Yes (unrelated to COVID-19)
- Yes (related to COVID-19)
- No
- I do not wish to answer

3. Are you currently experiencing homelessness/houselessness? (eg couch surfing, living in a motel, living in a car or tent, unsheltered)

- Yes (unrelated to COVID-19)
- Yes (related to COVID-19)
- No
- I do not wish to answer

4. Home tenureship:

- Own your home
- Rent your home/apartment
- Rent your home and own rental property
- Own your home and own rental property
- None of the above
- I do not wish to answer

5. Are you a parent/caregiver? (to children, aging adults, adults with special needs, etc)

- Yes
- No
- I do not wish to answer

6. Are you immunocompromised, elderly, otherwise more susceptible to COVID-19?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Work & Education:

1. Employment Status: I am currently...

- Working
- Furloughed
- Unemployed
- Experiencing Wage Cuts
- Retired
- Other: _____

2. Is your employment status affected by COVID-19?

- Yes
- No
- I do not wish to answer

3. Highest level of education completed:

- Some high school
- High school diploma or equivalent (GED)
- Some College
- Associates Degree
- Vocational/technical degree or certification
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate/Professional Degree
- Other: _____

4. What languages are spoken in your home?

Thank you for participating!