



Victoria Is Part of a Growing Movement to Put Spending Decisions in Hands of Taxpayers

Date: Tuesday, January 10, 2017

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Victoria's first participatory budgeting process kicks-off Thursday with an opportunity for residents to learn more about participatory budgeting and begin to design a process where the community decides how to spend \$60,000 in Victoria.

The launch event will be facilitated by the [Participatory Budgeting Project](#), a non-profit agency from New York that works to empower people to decide together how to spend public money. They have supported participatory processes across North America through which over \$200 million dollars have been allocated. Shari Davis, Director of Strategic Initiatives for Participatory Budgeting Project, will lead the Thursday session. During her time at the City of Boston, Shari launched *Youth Lead the Change*, the first youth participatory budgeting process in the US.

Participatory budgeting, commonly known as PB, pushes traditional public engagement and traditional budgeting methods to the limit by empowering citizens to design a decision-making process and choose how the funds are spent. The municipality becomes the facilitator of the community and supports the citizen efforts, implementing what the community decides they want for the community. This is the first participatory process led by a municipality on the South Island, and one of the first in BC.

Responsive to citizen needs for greater involvement in government decision-making, participatory budgeting was originally introduced in 1989 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and is now common across the globe in varying forms and deliberative processes. In North America, cities including San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, New York, Toronto, Guelph, and closer to home, Tofino, have introduced participatory components to their annual municipal budgets. In terms of financial allocations in other cities, they range from nominal amounts in small centres, to millions of dollars in large cities such as Chicago and New York. Canadian examples include Toronto (\$450,000), Guelph (\$125,000) and Tofino (\$20,000).

The \$60,000 earmarked in Victoria applies to the entire community rather than one specific neighbourhood. It is an important principle of participatory budgeting to reach all demographics and neighbourhoods in the community. Accordingly, efforts are being made to reach neighbourhoods and groups not typically active in the budget process (e.g. youth, seniors, new residents, new immigrants).

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING KICK OFF

Thursday, January 12, 2017

5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Foyer of the Atrium Building at 800 Yates Street

Everyone is invited to participate. It's important there is participation and views from groups across the city. The event will also be of interest to government, school, and community organizations looking to introduce participatory budgeting processes.

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For More Information:

Mayor Lisa Helps 250.661.2708

Shari Davis, Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Participatory Budgeting Project, is available for interviews January 11 and January 12. Interviews can be scheduled by calling 250.661.0085