Participatory Budgeting
Niagara Falls, NY

PB 2019 Guide Book
About this Guide Book

This booklet was developed by the City of Niagara Falls Department of Community Development to provide guidelines for the 2019 Participatory Budgeting (PB) process. 2019 PB is the third year that Niagara Falls has used U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for improving our communities with this community-led, inclusive, democratic process. We hope this Guide Book supports that process and results in a better future for Niagara Falls.

What is Participatory Budgeting (PB)?

Participatory Budgeting is a community-led, democratic process where community members share their ideas, develop those ideas into project proposals and vote on which project proposals should become a reality. PB brings the public into the forefront of the budget process and provides more community ownership over the work being done in our neighborhoods.

In Niagara Falls, NY, the Community Development Department allocates an amount of its annual CDBG budget for PB. In 2017, Niagara Falls improved two parks and brought in additional foundation funding to program those improvements. In 2018, the people of Niagara Falls decided to fund a community center in the North End neighborhood, strategic demolitions of problem properties in Middle Pine neighborhood, and an exterior home renovation program in the South End neighborhood. 2019 is the third year of PB in Niagara Falls and the goals of PB 2019 are listed below.

Goals of PB

Goal 1: Make Hyde Park an all ages, all abilities, all day destination

Two common subjects brought up at Community Development meetings are (1) there needs to be more for people to do in Niagara Falls and (2) we need more city destination areas for tourists. We believe in building on what we have and Hyde Park is a good place to keep up the momentum.

Hyde Park is the second largest city park in New York State only behind Central Park in Manhattan. Hyde Park is centrally located in the City and offers a dynamic setting for residents and visitors alike. While Hyde Park has undergone considerable improvements in the past few years, there is still more work to go. We believe parks are for everyone and we want to make sure people of all ages and all abilities can enjoy Hyde Park as the “Jewel of Niagara Falls.”

PB 2019 will improve the Rose Garden and Bocce Area at Hyde Park. The Rose Garden and Bocce Area is within a 2-minute walk from abundant parking space
and is centrally located to other indoor and outdoor facilities for people of all ages and abilities. The Rose Garden and Bocce Area is an icon of Hyde Park and Niagara Falls that can be enjoyed by many people with many interests. Some things you can find there are bocce courts, nature trails, paved walking paths, picnic areas, and restrooms. However, some of the facilities at the Rose Garden need to improve before the disrepair gets too far gone and the City wants to improve it starting with you and your ideas.

**Goal 2: Programming our Public Spaces**

Niagara Falls Community Development has made investment in our public spaces a priority for several years. Niagara Falls City Parks now exceed the recommended parkland-to-resident ratio set forth by the National Parks and Recreation Association. All residential properties in Niagara Falls are located within a half mile radius (or a 10-minute walk) to parkland, with a majority of residents living within a quarter mile (or 5-minute walk) to a park. Parks and other public facilities, like school gyms, the City Market, and our youth and senior centers offer locations for activities and programming that are currently under-utilized.

Comments submitted to Community Development often include a familiar criticism: “There’s nothing to do in Niagara Falls.” We need to fix that. When we consider the fact that Niagara County has the second-highest premature death rate from cardiovascular illness of all counties in Western New York, the need for active recreation in our public spaces is clear.¹

NF CD will hold events in our city’s public spaces throughout 2019 and 2020. Residents are invited to propose ideas for events that provide healthy recreational activities, opportunities for learning and education, and community service delivery.

**Timeline**

**Idea Sessions**

PB Idea Session #1 – Saturday, April 27, 10 am.  
Hyde Park Stone Room (inside Hyde Park Ice Pavilion)  
911 Robbins Drive  
Niagara Falls, New York 14301

PB Idea Session #2 – Tuesday, April 30, 5:30 pm.  
Hyde Park Stone Room (inside Hyde Park Ice Pavilion)  
911 Robbins Drive  
Niagara Falls, New York 14301

Vote
Saturday, June 15 – Sunday, June 30

Voting will take place in person at events, during regular CD business hours and online at nf-cd.org. A full list of voting opportunities will be announced on Sunday, June 9, 2019 in the Niagara Gazette, nf-cd.org, and on the Niagara Falls Community Development Facebook page. Other news agencies will receive a press release.

Announcement Event
Saturday, July 13, 10AM-12PM (Rose Garden, Hyde Park)

Roles & Responsibilities

Community Members
This is anyone that lives, works, or plays in Niagara Falls. PB starts with Community Members at the Idea Sessions. Community Members identify problems and needs, propose project ideas and solutions, and provide feedback on the PB process.

Community Development (CD) Staff
CD Staff keeps the PB process on track. CD Staff help community members participate at PB events and online, conduct the voting process, and implement the winning projects. CD Staff also provides technical assistance to Community Members and Voters throughout the PB process by answering questions and working on solutions.

Voters
Voters must be 14-years-old or older and reside in Niagara Falls, NY, during the voting period. Voters must prove residency by showing at least one of the following items at the time of voting:
- School ID
- Report Card
- NYS ID
- Utility Bill
- Delivered Mail

Project Eligibility

Rose Garden Improvement
Hyde Park Improvement projects must meet the following conditions:
1. Be a construction project in the Rose Garden Improvement Area (see map below)
2. Can easily be used by persons 14-years-old or older for passive or active recreation purposes (see sample list below)
3. Costs less than $250,000 to build

**Public Space Programming**
Public space programming must meet the following conditions:
1. “Programming” refers to events held in our community’s public spaces.
2. Programming must address a need of the community: e.g., health, youth programming, community and social services,
3. Programming must be held in a publicly-owned space in the City of Niagara Falls. This includes parks, schools, the City Market, city-owned vacant lots, and others. **PLEASE NOTE:** NF CD cannot guarantee access to every public space, however all ideas will be considered and NF CD staff will attempt to secure access to any location that receives a high level of support.
4. Projected costs cannot exceed $10,000.
5. All public space programming events must be able to be completed by September 1, 2020.

**Rose Garden Improvement Area**
Passive Recreation Examples

- Walking
- Hiking
- Wildlife Observation
- Fishing
- Photography/Videography
- Picnicking

Active Recreation Examples

- Running/Jogging
- Bicycling
- Kayaking
- Bocce
- Tennis
- Basketball
- Outdoor Fitness/Play