

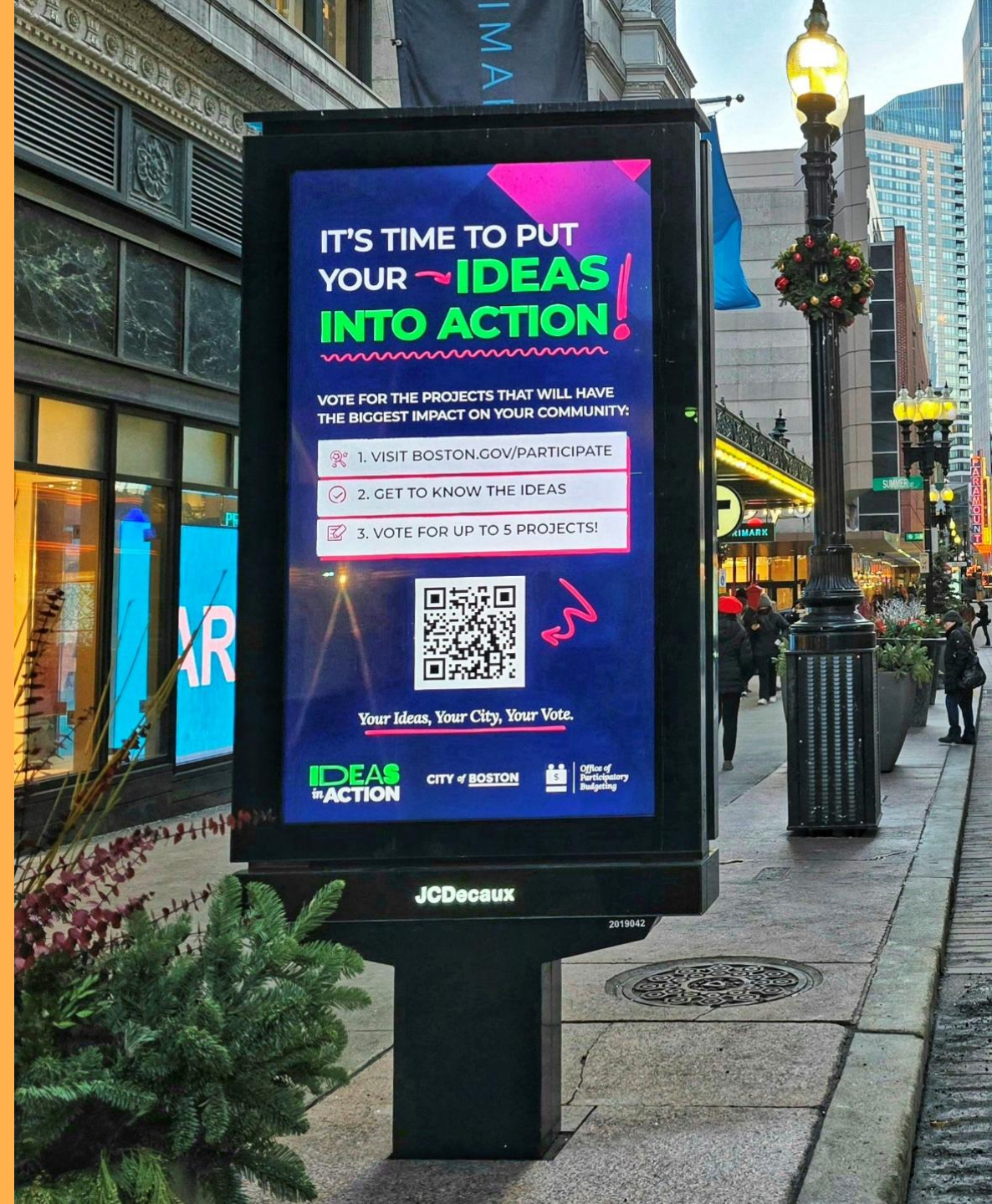


Street advertisement for  
*Ideas in Action* in  
Downtown Crossing  
Photo credit: OPB

# Participatory Budgeting Cycle 2 Evaluation Plan

Office of Participatory  
Budgeting

May 2025





**Data+Soul Research** (formerly known as MXM Research Group) is a research and evaluation consulting firm based in Boston that specializes in **design, strategy, and evaluation** for social impact. We support organizations to co-create solutions with the communities they serve by facilitating planning, data management, and organizational learning through evaluation.

Cycle 2 Evaluation will be led by Evan Kuras and Min Ma with support from Kayla Benitez Alvarez and Bobbie D Norman.



# Why Evaluate?

- Learn about the effectiveness of *Ideas in Action*, especially in advancing equity and inclusion
- Inform and improve future Participatory Budgeting cycles
- Meet PB Ordinance section 5-1.11.7, Part c, under Power and Duties of the External Oversight Board (EOB): *"At the end of each fiscal year, create an annual review of the Participatory Budgeting process for review by the Mayor and City Council and accessible to the public. A draft of the final evaluation report can be presented to the Board, incorporating any relevant feedback or additions before being presented to the Mayor, Council, and general public."*

# Our Approach

- Use multiple modes of data collection, including quantitative and qualitative methods
- Integrate evaluation into overall OPB infrastructure
- Center the values that guide OPB's evaluation framework: Transparency, Sustainability, Fiscal Responsibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), and Collaboration
- Build on successes and lessons learned from Pilot Year evaluation implementation
  - Collect data in a more targeted way
  - Integrate demographic questions into the Online PB Portal and Voting Platform

# The evaluation will explore 4 questions



1. **Participation.** Who participated, and how?
2. **Impact.** What impact did *Ideas in Action* have on those who participated?
3. **Process.** What was the process used and how can it be improved? (especially operations, resources)
4. **Objectives.** How are the selected projects meeting the objectives of the PB Ordinance in terms of uses of funding and populations served?

# Mini Learning Cycles



Data collection:

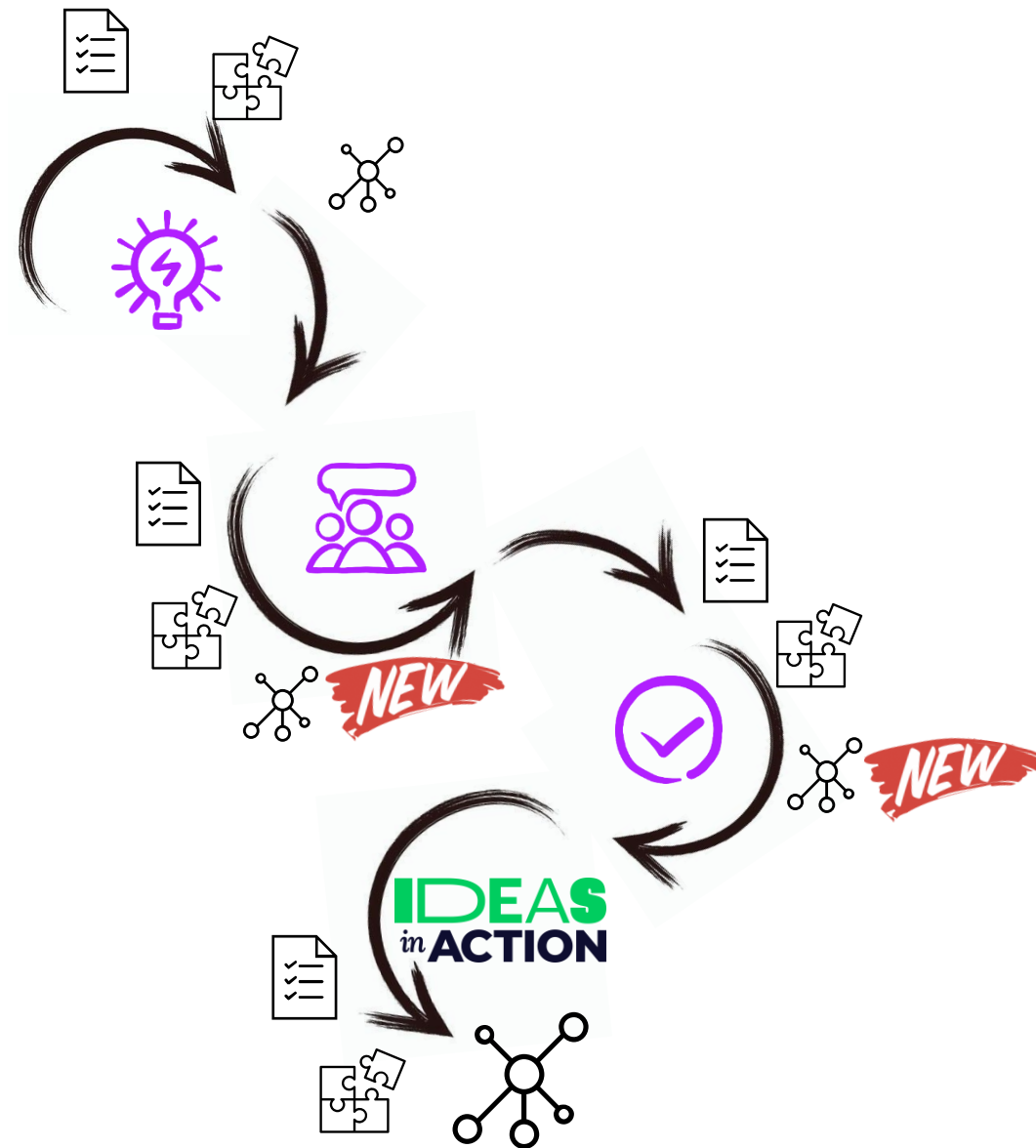
- *Ideas in Action* participants
- Contracted Community Partners
- OPB staff retrospective reflection



Data sensemaking session with OPB staff to co-produce and document findings and recommendations



Presentation of high-level findings with the External Oversight Board



# Mixed Methods

- Surveys with *Ideas in Action* participants (paper and online)
- Embedded data collection (e.g., observation) during city-sponsored events/outreach
- Debriefs with Contracted Community Partners (brief online form)
- OPB staff quarterly retrospectives
- Analysis of process data (voting data, idea submission data)
- Additional data collection as needed (e.g., conversations with *Ideas in Action* participants, Contracted Community Partners, City Staff, Board members...)

# Evaluation Framework of Selected Projects and their Implementation



Develop a simple monitoring and reporting protocol to document:

- Costs
- Who is served (geography and demographics)
- Project-specific outcomes
- Process reflections





# Thank you! Questions?

Evan Kuras and Min Ma  
evan@dataplussoul.com  
min@dataplussoul.com  
www.dataplussoul.com

