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| <b>Pesquisa FAPESP nº 2021/04556-0</b>                                 |
| <b>ENTREVISTA COM V5</b>                                               |
| Cidade: Vallejo (Califórnia, EUA)                                      |
| Entrevistada: V5, 30+ anos, diretora do OP                             |
| Entrevistador: Rodrigo Sartori Bogo                                    |
| Local de realização da entrevista: Vallejo City Hall, sala de reuniões |

## TRANSCRIÇÃO

**V5**

- So, it's difficult because we're well into what should be the idea collection process and proposal development at this point, and I don't have somebody to help me with that... so considering kind of a lower turnout and participation I was thinking of going into a two-year cycle potentially, not sure if you...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, I saw that in the last steering committee meeting because I was watching from home and I saw that this was a debate, I would probably ask you that during the interview because I got, like, very interested in the motivations for that.

**V5**

- Yes.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- No problem, if I can ask you later...

**V5**

- No! You can ask me whatever you want!

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, cool, so I'm already recording, but I need for the bureaucracy, you know how, scientific research is I need you to ask any authorization for recording.

**V5**

- Yes. - **Okay, thank you.** - You have my authorization.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, thanks so much. First of all, I have to start the interview explaining my research and the broader research I'm part of. I know we talked about that in our first meeting but, like, officially doing that. So, I research the territorial impacts of participatory budgeting in mid-sized cities, and the mid-sized cities is because normally studying PB focus too much on the big metropolis or the big... like Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte or the big cities like New York or Chicago here in the US, right? But a large number of PBs are done in mid-sized cities or small towns, especially in Latin America, but here, like, Vallejo is the first citywide PB in America, so it's very important, this experience. And it's... I can see it is a role model for... especially talking to the people from PBP. That's why I am also studying Vallejo in comparison to other

cities. And I'm part of a broader project that is it's called the "social spatial fragmentation and Brazilian urbanization" in Portuguese, and it's a project that we study how changes in urbanization from the last four [sic] years are transforming cities into more fragmented, not just in like the shape of the city but also in the social relations. Like more gated communities, shopping centers, gated clubs, and this kind of stuff are turning the relationship between people more fragmented. - **Yes.** - It's a hypothesis, we see that happening in metropolitan areas with a lot of evidence, especially in the Global South, but we're looking for that in mid-sized cities. And we have a lot of strong evidence on that already, but that's why I also study mid-sized cities because it's a focus of a broader research project.

**V5**

- Yeah, it's interesting that you mentioned that because this summer I visited my mother's home state and city in Mexico, Chihuahua, Mexico. And I was there I was wondering if they have a *presupuesto participativo* and I looked it up and they had it, and it was true that in the past, probably eight to ten years, they've had a large influx on a specific area in the city that never existed before and... I forget what it was called... the zona, zona something, and it's like in a very elite area of the city. It's like this kind of pop-up, you drive in there and it's not out of the realm to see these beautiful [Cadillac] Escalades and Lamborghinis there, but you're still in a very pretty rural city in northern Mexico, in the middle of a desert, so it's interesting. It's like, yeah, they do have participatory budgeting there and there are colonies and districts, but then you have that really elite area that was just kind of interesting to see.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- This is the kind of process we are looking for. - **Okay.** - The kind of thing that we see happening in this type of cities and also in small towns. It's because... it's what we call the complexification of urban spaces. Normally we'd see places like these just in metropolitan areas, but now they're changing. There's a very interesting case that it's not part of our research project but I know because I lived in the city, in the south of Brazil, there is a rural town like 40 kilometers away and it's like very small, 2.000 people, but in the last 20 years appeared what they call, like, a "rural elite condominium", people who are very wealthy from Florianopolis, the city that's big, have houses there where they spend winter, or where they go to the weekends and move. In some cases, at the same day commute by helicopter. - **Wow!** - So, very wealthy in a small town.

**V5**

- Yeah, yeah, interesting.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And this complexification is happening all over the world.

**V5**

- So, what do you think participatory budgeting has to do within that complexification?

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, that's what I'm researching for. How PB can relate to that, how this can appear in PB projects, in PB processes. - **Okay.** - So, this is part of also what I'm investigating.

**V5**

- Yeah.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And to start, I would like to know about your personal background, career, how did you get here in Vallejo, if you are born here or not, how do you started working with PB.

**V5**

- Okay, well, I am originally from a very small town called Geyserville, California. Rural community, very agricultural in a sense, I think to this day the population maybe is 2.500 of this town, very small, and I kind of moved around for a good minute and up until my mid 20s I moved to Vallejo... was it my mid 20s? I think yeah, about 15 years ago, late 20s. I moved to Vallejo that was right after the recession had hit in Vallejo, right after Vallejo had declared bankruptcy, which is when the participatory budgeting process was actually kind of prompted as a result of that bankruptcy here. We passed the measure and all that, but prior to that or right after that, one of my first consistent jobs here in Vallejo was working at a tutoring center. I was an accounting major, business major and I had this great opportunity to help children learn math and it was something that I was attracted to because I always had difficulties with mathematics, even though I was an accounting major, I'm like, accounting all it is adding and multiplying, but as far as it comes to algebra and all of that it was always something that I had a difficulty with. And I happened to meet this woman who was a prior math teacher here in the Vallejo City Unified School District and she was really passionate about starting a not-for-profit to help the students catch up. So, yeah, I worked for her for a while, and we had an intermediary friend that was involved in the participatory budgeting process and I saw that they were hiring an intern for the PB process and the intern is a volunteer outreach coordinator. So, their job is basically to set up all of the outreach opportunities, coordinate the volunteers that they want to serve as budget delegates or for steering committee, and help with that capacity.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- When was that?

**V5**

- I believe the interns probably started in the second year of participatory budgeting, I started with participatory budgeting in the fourth cycle which was June of 2016. Prior to that I had lived in Vallejo for a couple years and I've always been a person that really... I became really attached to Vallejo, I'm

very proud of it, so anytime somebody comes into town I love to tell you everything about the city, I love to drive you around, I love to tell you this history, I'm like a 'Vallejo ambassador' and I take a lot of pride in that. So when the opportunity came to serve as an intern, talk with the public, and engage them about things that are going on and become kind of a resource, because you are a point of contact basically for the city, you stand under the booth, under a canopy, people see "city of Vallejo" and they want to know what is going on with that project and that project... a lot of [the] time I don't know, but I take, I made it a point to try to learn as much as I could so that I could provide the customer service and direct people to the appropriate avenues and resources, so it really was something that kind of mirrored my passion for engaging with people, talking about Vallejo and trying to do something that was positive for the community. So, in 2016 I served as an outreach coordinator intern for a year and every year, I think, well, so a few years before me and then after me they would always hire an intern for one year to serve in that capacity. And then I kind of chimed in on my exiting interview like "so you guys are gonna restart all of this hard work to prepare the person within this role to train them, that's not easy, and this role that I just fulfilled I made really good contacts and I networked and I established those contacts, it seems like it would behoove you to make it a permanent position and hire me for it". And at that point they had another intern lined up, but he had already served most of his intern hours, so I got.... he was basically... he maxed out and then they invited me to apply for it. So, it was 2016 to 2017... I believe I started in December of 2017 permanently, within that outreach coordinator intern permanent position. Yeah, and since then people have been kind of dropping off of PB and going to different avenues, different cities, and we had a pandemic and I'm kind of the one that held it down.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, you can talk more about your position now, how is your role now with PB.

**V5**

- So, before, like I mentioned, it was all about coordinating the intern... excuse me, the volunteers, but now somebody needs to roll out the contracts, somebody needs to go before council to make rulebook changes and that was usually what was left to the analyst, that was my supervisor and so now I'm stepping into that capacity to roll out all of the contracts and manage the actual projects. But without somebody fulfilling my old role, it's still very difficult to juggle both, trying to coordinate the masses and pushing out all of the communications and doing all of that element and at the same time I have people asking me "where's my check? Where's my contract? What's going on?". So, it's two roles at the same time that I'm trying to juggle.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And we were talking about before the interview that you're working alone, right? In this position.

**V5**

- Yes, yes. So, what I would need is a rock star or somebody... you know, a youthful college intern that would want to help, chat with people all day in the city and keep spreadsheets and push out communications and... yeah, organize my volunteers.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- You feel a little bit overwhelmed?

**V5**

- Oh yeah, oh yeah. I'm crazy [laughs]!

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- I can see that because normally a PB is a very massive process... - **Yes!** - And I know... I have been talking also with the directors and their heads of PBs in other places and normally they work basically... they work their ass off, all the time.

**V5**

- And there's a lot of people!

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- A lot of people working and, like, in Brazil normally, back in the day when... especially during the 1990s when there was more flexibility in public management to fund, there was like a lot of people working in PB, but normally there is less, less and less funding for that, normally that's one or two people that do most of the job.

**V5**

- Yeah and now we're seeing less that the... you still have to do the equal amount of work even if there's less funding for the projects itself. Whether it's 500 thousand [dollars] or 500 million it's still the same amount of work, to roll everything out. So, what we're seeing is, we cut the budget in half for participatory budgeting but I'm still having to have the same amount of effort put forth and the same amount of staffing and now it's like "do we really want to pay 300 thousand dollars to spend 500 thousand dollars?". It's still a lot of work to push everything out. So that's something that we have to consider which is also why I kind of can segue into potentially having a two-year cycle, now we have at least a million dollars and maybe that would satisfy the need for two staff personnel again.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, that's a good point that I want to get back later. So, you're talking to me a lot about the difficulties, right? So, can you summarize the challenges and the difficulties you have now with PB?

**V5**

- Meeting... rolling out projects in time, so the administrative element of participatory budgeting. And then, maybe it's more like Vallejo specific, but when I came into the analyst one position there wasn't like "here's your first day as an analyst one and here is everything you need to know and here's some training on it". It was more like "fix it every time you get yelled at and you're going to get yelled out for it", so you just kind of cry [laughs]. And it's like this is the way you learn in Vallejo, we say you get baptized by fire here, you get fed to the wolves and hopefully you come back leading the pack, because that's the way we do things here in Vallejo. So, it's a little difficult. So, lack of kind of that support to make sure that you can segue into this, you're just teaching yourself every day and receiving angry emails and trying to figure that out. As we roll into that administrative capacity then it's having the capacity to highlight the projects and that goes... that's really important because the people in the public, if they do not see the projects being rolled out, it's hard enough to communicate with the public even though you say "meet us on Facebook" or "reach us on Instagram", "we have a weekly newsletter", they're like "well, I didn't know". I'm like "so, do I come to your house to knock on your door to tell you about this? Like, meet me halfway". So, when the public doesn't meet you halfway to see the good in the projects that you're doing and you don't also have the capacity to highlight and share that, make videos and tell everybody of the importance of what it is that you're doing, they're like "I don't know where the money went". And there's... they feel like there's a lack of transparency or that, like, we're being dishonest with something. So, it's like, the voting part is usually my favorite part because it's the easiest ask of the people in the public, like "hi, just pick two projects it's really simple". So, they come back and they say "well, I voted, but I don't know what happened, I don't know what happened", and immediately there's this negativity, like I hid the money from them or something. But it's that lack of being able to focus and show you what I did with those projects that also goes hand in hand with lack of staffing and the way that the PB cycle is structured. We do idea collection and then proposal development and then the vote and one week later I have to do idea collection again and I'm simultaneously trying to implement these projects, get the contracts rolled out, so everything is overlapping, and I don't have enough time to focus on the feel-good part of it, of highlighting those projects. So, that's another difficulty with the participatory budgeting. Something else [that is] a big challenge right now is our idea collection phase. In prior cycles and in the city of Vallejo, people really emphasized that, like, participation in PB was just showing up and putting in an idea and that satisfied participation in PB. And I kind of want to see it as quality versus quantity, so they were like "oh, well we have 3.000 ideas this year and next year let's hope we get 4.000 ideas!". And when I look at the ideas and the quality that's being put forth, they are suggestions and they do echo the needs of the community, but they're very much like "fix the roads", "more safety" and they're kind of just general, not anything that I could really use substantially for participatory budgeting in the city of Vallejo. It's not a person that I'm going to say, if I do get their contact information, are they going to show up as a budget delegate, did they fill out a survey, like... so, what I want to see is more quality versus quantity, and if I get 200 ideas but they're really well thought out potential proposals, I'd rather sometimes maybe have that then sifting through just an idea then like "okay, we get it, we need to fix our roads, we need to fix our roads, I get it", you know? So, really quantifying what [is] our understanding, what is participation and what is good participation in our PB

process, and this also goes in with our vote. People are like "more votes is more better" and I'm like "okay, that's good, but let's say we got 5.000 votes and 3.000 of those votes are middle-aged white women", are we really... do we really have equal participation? So how do we prove that we had all of these different demographics and groups participate? We have to have them do surveys and this year I'm excited to highlight some of that work, I haven't done it yet, but we did get a lot more survey participation. So even if it is still half of them are middle-aged white women participating, you know, we did get a larger sample of survey completion.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And even with all the data, what is your feeling about that? Do you see that... because in my other interviews I did, people generally say that there is integration in PB between, like, the social classes here. Because Vallejo is very diverse, right? So, you have like, a quarter of the population is white, a quarter is Asian, a quarter is black, a quarter is Latino basically, and do you see this integration happening in PB, or there are social groups that dominate the process more?

**V5**

- I believe in cycle one through three it was always middle-aged white people or older in a much higher income bracket, and the year that I started, PB cycle four, was the first year that we had the four major demographic groups in Vallejo according to the census actually reflected in our PB surveys, in the vote. So we had all four groups, almost 25, 25, 25 percent reflected in our PB process.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay and since then it's happening like that?

**V5**

- I don't remember for cycle five, six and seven or eight at this point. I think cycle five might have been close and then I don't recall in the later cycles.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, okay, good. This discussion we're having about the bi-annual PNL process, maybe changing the design, right? Could you tell me more about, like, the design changes that already happened in Vallejo or that you're thinking about, like this one.

**V5**

- Sure, yeah. So, the design changes as far as the timelines and the cycles... so, right now, typically we would already be in the first phase, yeah, in the first phase of the proposal development. Our proposal development goes through three phases. The first stage is like 500-word summary, second stage is almost your whole proposal done and usually are almost our whole proposals are done in February, so first stage would already be right now [November]. So, with this delay in our process I am thinking we'll

continue to do outreach, we'll continue to collect ideas, but right now I would focus on rolling out the projects that are from cycle eight, that just one and anything that's still outstanding, not funded, so this would be essentially the year of rolling out all of the projects and then potentially having our proposal development phase begin in, let's say, September of 2024. So that our vote would be in May, June of 2025, but at that point we would have two fiscal years' worth of funds. And I had also mentioned that something that in our steering committee meetings, that something that I wanted to change is our idea collection process. In prior years we would do idea collection from June or July up until very early October and that was it. That's your only time during the year to submit your ideas. And then we would grab those ideas and submit them into the proposal development process, but what I had said is what if we just leave the platforms open and we "say up until October 7th, these ideas up until that point, will be used for that next cycle, anything on October 8th and on will be used for the next cycle". And like I said, in prior years it was only like three to six months or something of idea collection this way we'd have year-round collection and we could continue doing outreach during the winter sometime or anything like that. Usually people are like "do you want to set up a booth?" I'm like "what am I going to ask people for, usually I have an ask of them, I guess I could hand them a flyer but I'm not collecting ideas right now" so... but if you think of an idea in May or June that'll be your time to submit it. So, now at this point if I just leave the platforms open, then people could submit an idea year-round.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And what about in person meetings for thinking about ideas and submission?

**V5**

- Our budget delegate process! That would be in 2024.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Now they happen online, right? - **Yes.** - After the pandemic?

**V5**

- Yes, they happened online, we used to meet in person right here at the library and sometimes at Kyle's temple, a local church, would allow us their space as well. It was mixed feelings, sometimes people wouldn't show up, sometimes people couldn't show up, like commit to those consistent meetings and because they were only in person, it wasn't a hybrid at that point, it was like, if you were very passionate about your project but it was that day that we were doing in the votes to whittle down our ideas and you weren't there that day, then nobody spoke up for your project and I'm sorry, you should have been there. But now if you could just zoom in and talk about it and you talk about it with your subcommittee group, it lessens that stress of having to be physically somewhere at six o'clock in the middle of November, December, in the evening.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- But don't you feel that participation is less intensive in Zoom? Your opinion.

**V5**

- It can be... it could be less intense in that people probably aren't talking over each other [laughs] yeah, that's a possibility. We have less participation in general though, so I kind of encourage people like, if you show up and you show out, you do your work. I'm at this phase, I'm seeing, let's say, early on like 16 projects, I'm like, I'm pretty sure you'll have a spot on the ballot, so just stick with it. It's not like back in the days where we'd start up 40 projects and only 12 would come out, yeah.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay. And you said about the investments, right? So, it started with US\$ 3 million, [then] US\$ 2,5 million and now, I think in the last three cycles if I'm not wrong, it's like fixed at US\$ 1 million and it goes a little bit up...

**V5**

- No, it was... well, yeah, you're right. The first couple was like 3% of an entire measure, so it was in the US\$ 3,5 million marks, US\$ 2,5 million and then it was US\$ 1 million for cycle... I think four, five, six, then seven was the pandemic and that's when that million got reduced to US\$ 500.000. Cycle eight was US\$ 500.000, because we skipped a year, we added two pots worth together for cycle seven and cycle eight and that's how we had a US\$ 1 million fund for cycle eight. Then cycle nine will be back to US\$ 500.000 unless we change the timeline to make it cycle nine, but two fiscal years. – **And why this decrease?** - To stave off the effects of the pandemic. We weren't allowed to go... we were trying not to touch our reserves and one of the projects that got slashed, unfortunately, was participatory budgeting process. And we haven't gotten our US\$ 500.000 back.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And do you think that there is any chance for future cycles, if you think about like planning for PB in this decade, to increase again? Like, for more than one million dollars, for example? Get back to three million?

**V5**

- Yeah, it's interesting that you asked that because I think it was in February of 2020 we were discussing making a recommendation... the steering committee was discussing making a recommendation to request more funding for projects at that point. They didn't say specifically how much they wanted I think, but they said "hey if you could throw anything else our way we would appreciate that", but then we got hit with the pandemic, then we got reduced to US\$ 500.000. I would like to see it increase again, but I think... again, our council and our steering committee see our success as numbers, how many people are actually participating in this and when I'm seeing that decline [in participation] it's scary

now. I'm like "oh no", if we don't probably get up to those numbers pre-pandemic style then I don't see them probably considering increasing our budget.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, that's an interesting dynamic, because normally if you... like, I'm saying that as a researcher, from what I read from a lot of cases I read about, normally what gets participation growing stable is more funding, you know? Because then people see that things are happening from PB. - **Yes!** - That PB matters, because there is funding. If funding decreases, normally participation decreases together.

**V5**

- Yeah, and when we decrease the funding in participatory budgeting in Vallejo it decreases the amount that we can allocate towards projects. So, in capital infrastructure projects we have a cap of US\$ 300.000 when we have a US\$ 1 million budget, so it's 30%. Now we're at US\$ 150.000, and it's difficult enough to roll out a capital infrastructure project that can be impactful with US\$ 300.000, nonetheless US\$ 150.000. Now it's like, I guess we can get some picnic benches, you know? Which is so nice, nothing against picnic benches, but to see something that's really impactful those caps on the amounts have an impact.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Interesting. And you were talking about the participation, the question between quality versus quantity and this kind of stuff, in the different types of groups that participate... what do you think about if there is any inversion of priorities here. And by that I say, like, normally inversion of priorities is when political groups, social groups, that normally are off the political decisions have a voice. - **Yeah.** - And not just a voice, but more resources with them, do you see that happening in Vallejo PB?

**V5**

- I'm not sure if I understand the question 100%, but I know that across the board, it's like people care about their assets, they care about their roads, and they care about their children and that is across the board. I do feel that sometimes, possibly, you have people that are financially more stable and they have kind of that luxury to be able to think of things that go beyond things that affect my car, how I get to work, things that affect my child especially after school, after school programming, because I'm at work and just those immediate needs whereas some other folks are like "oh, well, what if we do something for economic development and we put up something, like, if we improve the alley so that we can have poetry nights" and... it's not to say that those minority groups don't think about those things, but there I've noticed that what really matters to them is their children and those things that affect them immediately.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- But do you see the investments that come from PB going to poorer neighborhoods or not? To people who need them more?

**V5**

- So, I wouldn't say that it's neighborhood specific because neighborhood specific would probably be capital infrastructure projects, specifically in certain areas, but when it comes to a program and service projects, 51% of the participants have to be low to moderate income participants. So, they have to have low to moderate income and in Vallejo, let's say we do an after-school project, I can't even tell you, but the percentage is so high... like a way that we can qualify if a student is low to moderate income is if they receive free or reduced lunch and I don't know the exact number but it's like 85% of the students in the Vallejo City Unified School District are recipients of the reduced lunch. So, it's easy for everybody here to qualify for those projects because they are lower income.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Because also the characteristics of the city, right? Vallejo is a low-income city – **Yes.** - I would ask you about that later...

**V5**

- So, one of our projects, one for example, is for foster youth, so immediately is targeting lower income residents. We have the Firefighter Youth Academy, which targets students that are at risk, at-risk youth, somebody has identified them within the school and so... Meals On Wheels also for low-income... Fighting Back partnership programs or No Child Left Hungry, those were all for the unhoused population as well as children that don't have food security over the weekend, so all people that are qualifying for reduced lunch or free lunch.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- So, do you see this inversion more for service projects, like expense projects, than capital ones?

**V5**

- Absolutely, absolutely. The capital ones I would say... let me think of an older one that we did was the community gardens, which benefited different areas around the city, but I would say like St. Vincent's Hill is an area where we invested into a garden, and I wouldn't say St. Vincent's Hill is necessarily low income, it's right here in downtown, it's part of the Heritage District which is nothing but old Victorian homes...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yea, I saw, by Georgia street, right?

**V5**

- It's right here, like off the Florida street, right behind me.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, Florida street, okay, I walked there.

**V5**

- The big Catholic Church right across the street from there, is that one. But then we also implemented those gardens in schools, we did one on Mare Island which is partnered with... - I went there! - And that one has a partnership with one of the churches and stuff... so, capital infrastructure. And then we had, I believe, one year we did like the instruments for students which, I mean, it went to needy kids, the kids that couldn't afford an instrument. When it comes to the big ones though, road repair. The road repair projects go to supplement something that's already outlined, so when... one of the issues with road repair and capital infrastructure projects in Vallejo is that people say "well, I want you to fill my pothole!", and they want a very specific location and that's just not the way it's going to work out, because of the way the public works projects get rolled out. So, they are saying "well, we're gonna work on Sacramento Street and if we notice on the side streets that they need to be paved then PB money can supplement, and we can extend this project in that capacity but we have everything planned out. I'm not going to go to this street, this street, sporadically around the city and fill the potholes, unfortunately, with PB funds". So, there is a big element of educating people when it comes to potholes and how PB can help you in that capacity. I tell people the PB money that's allocated for road repair is a drop in the bucket for what we need, I am telling you right now, it is not going to solve the pothole problem in the city of Vallejo, we would need like US\$ 200 million to fix that not US\$ 300.000. But still, it's like, you're doing outreach in the community, it's the 4th of July event, everybody wants to have a good time, you're like "hi, how would you improve Vallejo?" and they're like "all right, fix the potholes", I'm like "okay, I get, it's important", but to say that you have a minute to give them the whole educational background on why our potholes aren't filled and let's get a more well thought out concept an idea for a proposal it's like "maybe leave me alone, I just don't want to talk about this right now", it's kind of the attitude sometimes. So, it takes some finessing when you're talking to people like this. They say "something for the kids", I'm like "like what?", "you know, like what would you have liked to have learned after school" and then that you get a happier response from that and I'm like "let's write that down, and would you like to get you be further involved?", and they more than likely will, but to say that they have like a full-out drawn-out proposal, no.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, it is hard, it is hard. And this distribution of the capital projects and also the expense projects... the design today of Vallejo PB is citywide, right?

**V5**

- Correct.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Do you think that this design influences the outcomes? Like if you had a design that is divided by the region of the city...

**V5**

- Like districts?

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- By districts or something like that, would you like different territorial outcomes?

**V5**

- I think it could, because then we would be forced to do more specific outreach in those regions. Right now, we kind of do the "shooting fish in the barrel" method, which is a lot of residents come down on Saturday to downtown Vallejo for the farmers market and it's easy to dedicate staff time and volunteer time to a location where we have a thousand people showing up on a Saturday or 2.000 people, where sometimes you're like "oh well", if we were to separate or if we were to say "all right, now we're going to do something in North Vallejo", they don't have as many gatherings of... massive gatherings of Vallejo, so you're like "okay, well, I was out there for five hours and I talked to three people..." and so, it's like, how do we get the best use of staff time to yield the most participation. If we were in a district situation, I think one, now that we are in districts and we do have representatives I think that we could potentially partner more with our district representatives and have that be more of a focus.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- So, Vallejo is divided in districts? - **Yeah!** - Okay.

**V5**

- I have a map somewhere around here. We have another one over there, I will show it to you. But, yes, and you can see it online and actually, in our idea collection platform this is the first time I actually integrated what district are you in, so that we could see where people are participating from and hopefully in the future say to our city council members like "hey, no one in 'district one' is participating, is there a way that... you know, we can have more town hall meetings or you can engage those folks".

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Interesting, yeah. Because, for an example, there is a city that I studied in Portugal, that's Cascais, they have... it's basically like Vallejo, they're mid-sized town, they're a part of a bigger metropolitan area, Cascais is part of Lisbon metropolitan area, the difference is they are high income in general, but... and the city is divided in four districts and they do the local assemblies in person, but also the proposals online, so it's hybrid. And when you do the proposals in person or online, you have to put "I'm from this

district or that", you can propose things for citywide projects or projects that are just for this district. - **Yeah.** – So, it's a design that decentralized the projects, you know? And well, I don't know if there is any discussion on that about...

V5

- Well, for example, something that I encouraged when people are doing proposal development, because we are citywide, I encourage people to try to do citywide projects. So if they are doing a parks and recreation project and they focus all of their attention on a park in South Vallejo, literally every person that doesn't live near that park will be like "where is that park? I don't care, it's not by my house" so, that's very much the attitude. So, what I would encourage those people to do is to pick another two parks, one in central, one in North Vallejo so that it matters to those people in those different areas. So, definitely decentralize that and then as far as the districts... yeah, it's been a few years now that we have the districts in here, in Vallejo, but it's because of a law that's going around in California. Are you familiar with that?

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- I think we talked about that in our first meeting, but I don't know the details.

V5

- Okay. I don't know all of the details either, but there was somebody that was suing different municipalities in the state of California, demanding that people district their cities. Saying something about doing citywide elections is against the law and we will sue you if you don't have a district, if you don't have a districting process. So, immediately the city of Vallejo had to do a districting process, and it continues, it's ongoing. But, yeah, these are the districts for Vallejo.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay. Is this in the PB website?

V5

- It's on our city website. And you can put in your address and determine what area you're in... So, currently we're in the purple [area]. This is City Hall down here.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, together with [incomprehensive], okay, interesting. And there's this dynamic that Vallejo is a low-income city that's part of a bigger metropolitan area... - **Yeah.** - Do you think that Vallejo can be considered a peripheric city? Like, it's in the periphery of San Francisco?

V5

- That's always an argument here in the area because... we touch the water...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Sorry, and this relates to PB somehow?

**V5**

- Let me see...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- But you can continue your argument, just to...

**V5**

- Yeah. I would just say that Vallejo is part of the San Francisco Bay because we touch the bay, we're a waterfront city, so there's that. And we are part of the Bay Area because we're part of the six counties that surround San Francisco. So, now what was the other part of your question?

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- If you can be considered like a peripheric city, because of that.

**V5**

- Yes, yes, we are in the peripheral... a lot of people in Vallejo work in San Francisco, we have a lot of commuters. Actually, the ferry that leaves Vallejo is the one that transports the most people into the city out of the whole ferry system in the Bay Area.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And does this relates to PB somehow? Like this debate of being a peripheric city and, like, we're low-income town so we need more investment, this kind of stuff appears?

**V5**

- I think that it could be affected by the fact that we assume that in bigger cities there's bigger thinking and in those larger cities, especially in San Francisco, in Oakland, people have been pushed out by the housing crisis, so they're coming to Vallejo because they can afford to live here, but they also want to have that big city mentality of "let's do grassroots democracy, why don't we have participatory budgeting the way Oakland does" and it's like, Vallejo is the itty-bitty city, but we're doing those types of things as well. And so, we are fighting to stay on the level of politics of involvement like San Francisco and Oakland. And a lot of it has to do with that influx of people that have that big mentality coming in from those larger cities into Vallejo. And I always say like when people are like, if you do outreach in Vallejo, I'm like "oh, are you a Vallejo resident?" "Not yet, but I'm going to be here, I'm moving here, we love Vallejo", and they're really intrigued to know that we do this participatory budgeting process here.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Cool. And do the NGOs have a strong place in the process?

**V5**

- The what? I'm sorry.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- The nonprofits.

**V5**

- Oh, yes! They are the implementing partners. So, earlier on everybody that wanted the city to roll out these projects, we'd say "okay, but who in the city? We don't have anybody hired to do that type of project", whether it's... I don't know, something to... especially in the early years, to help the unhoused, we didn't have anybody in housing [department] to help, to do that. That was a county, anything to do with the unhoused was always at the county level and that was years ago, and then a lot of not-for-profits started developing in the book in Vallejo to help those groups. So, once they became established, we're like "oh, you're doing all of that work? Well, can we fund you to do that element? Because it's out of our capacity, to do it." So, those groups that are doing all of that good, they pre-qualify to become the implementing partners, and they also help. In the earlier years they didn't develop proposals, they were partners, but the proposal development was specifically just for residents. You couldn't be too involved with an organization, and I noticed that it was kind of a play a game of telephone, like "oh, well, I work for Meals On Wheels and Meals On Wheels really needs funding, so, why don't I have Rodrigo sit in on the meetings and I'll tell him how to write the proposal so that we can get the funding, because I can't be in there, but Rodrigo, he's just a resident of Vallejo, he can do it for us" and I was just like "why are we doing this? You guys are the subject matter experts, come sit at the table and tell us what it is that you need and get involved". But at the same time if Rodrigo wants to work on a skate park project or whatever it is that his passion is, that he wants to pursue, to improve the city by all means, go for it. So, I still want that hybrid approach of letting not-for-profits come sit at the table as well as a common person.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, interesting. And do you see any conflicts happening between PB and other institutions of the city? Like, the City Council, the city management, like the mayor or other departments?

**V5**

- I would say that, sometimes, it's kind of just an educational process, and taking somebody that doesn't know how things work all the time, they are just a resident and educating them on why we can't just snap of a finger do it your way... and, so, there's a lot of bureaucracy on our end and it's mitigating each other's expectations of what you think that we're going to be able to do. And as far as like City Council

now, I just wish they would give me more money [laughs]. But, they're, in general, usually pretty supportive of the process. What other part of the question did you ask me? And I need to get some water, don't mind.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- No, of course, you can stop, no problem. [brief interruption] So, I have two more questions just about PB itself. The first, if PB has any connection with other urban planning processes or institutions here?

**V5**

- I think that the funding has been pretty low as far as it comes to, like, infrastructure projects that PB is used more as a supplement, but sometimes it was also kind of a catalyst in some sense. For example, we had a project that in the early stages of participatory budgeting, it was the Capitol Street stairs, I'm not sure if you saw that... - **I saw.** - Yeah and initially that was kind of a learning curve for Vallejo PB, it was like "all right, we're going to allocate US\$50.000 towards this project to beautify the stairs" and we start that process... and this is before I started with PB, but they were like "oh, all we need is like, you know, US\$100.000 worth of public work staff time to improve everything and rewire and redo all the plumbing..." and the city was like "whoa, we didn't sign up to do all of that". So, it was like "okay, we need to vet these projects further, we need to..." it was a learning process, we need to vet them just more, we need to make sure that if they require extra funding, that all of that extra funding is already secured at the time that they request the participatory budgeting funds, because for years those Capital Street stairs... the people that helped develop that proposal, they had to fundraise for years after that, to do all of that work, and they did a phenomenal job, but there was a dissatisfaction between the people that developed that proposal and the city, because they were trying to hold the city liable for all of the extra work that was required beyond the scope of the original PB project. So, we learned that and then we get to the Waterfront Arts project and it was just another project where they thought that they could renovate the whole waterfront for like US\$500.000...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- It's still, like, not being done this project, right?

**V5**

- Correct, correct. It's a US\$ 13 million project, but it's something that I'm passionate about having participatory budgeting's name attached to it in a sense, the way that participatory budgeting was attached to that Capitol Street stairs.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, it's on one of the plates.

**V5**

- Yeah, yeah. And it was a catalyst, right? It's something that it sparked interest in the people and it motivated them to do something to improve the quality of life in Vallejo and it was because of participatory budgeting. Further on from there, urban planning with PB funds, no. A lot of program and service projects, but nothing, I don't think it's concrete.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- So, do you see spillover effects? For example, we normally see them in PB processes. Normally, they don't have the fund, but you see ideas appearing that later, like, years later, for example, appear in local planning processes...

**V5**

- Yeah. For example, the Herbert house is something that's kind of contentious here in Vallejo. And it's people wanting to remodel an old, really old home, that the city of Vallejo kind of inherited and people earlier on had done some of the legwork to have contractors come look at it and kind of satisfy a proposal, a kind of a grant process... so, anytime something like that pops up, I'm like "oh, wait somebody started a proposal for that, let me send you that, because somebody's kind of done some of the groundwork on that or they have resources on it". So certain projects, like community emergency response team projects, that was something that somebody kind of worked on, they did a lot of the legwork, and I have a report or a project on it, so I'll send that out. Let's see... and then I thought of something else as far as spillover... yeah, people just get motivated by different things and we encourage them to do the proposal... oh, something else was, at one point, they wanted to do a beautification project where they improve, they do kind of like this mural system on the crosswalks in city, so in San Francisco, in the Castro, in the crosswalks they have rainbows and it's reflective of the LGBTQ+ community there, it's a public works project and somebody had wanted to do that here in Vallejo, to kind of bridge a gap between the ferry here on Mare Island to get to draw people into downtown. And somebody had done, actually it was councilmember Paul Maris who started first in participatory budgeting here in the city of Vallejo. Like, he was a budget delegate, now he's on the council. But he had developed kind of a project for that and when people wanted to do the Black Lives Matter mural that's out in the front, that was an option that we had suggested to them, like "this could be a little more permanent and it can be beautiful", and, you know, here's some of, I guess, that's a kind of the way I see a spillover, like "hey, somebody's done some of the legwork, here's the work, here's resources, here's products, materials, that they've done the research on already".

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Much of that comes from PB, right? From discussions, from people who participate.

**V5**

- Yes, and me eavesdropping on everything [laughs].

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, perfect. I have one broader question about PB in Vallejo PB that... do you think that Vallejo PB looks for social or territorial justice?

**V5**

- For social or territorial justice? I don't think that in general that's our focus. I think maybe it's not the mission. Specifically, it's more of opening the doors to anybody that wants to participate, but to say that we target groups to broaden equality... I don't think that that's our mission. Our mission is to open the doors and let anybody come in who wants to sit down at the table. But I know and I think about, like, City of Marin, Marin County, they are rolling out their participatory budgeting process and it's because they have an unequal distribution of welfare that is so drastic that PB is made to give those minority groups the voice. And so, they're very focused on social justice and making sure that those people are represented. They even discuss like, in their voting process they have... if you're from certain areas that are considered lower income, then your vote has a higher weight than the people that are in a wealthier neighborhood, but it's because there they have such a great disparity that they want to put those funds and give the voice to those demographics and that the marginalized communities.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- What's the name of the city again?

**V5**

- Marin. So, it's the county of Marin, they are right over Highway 37, and they are, like, it's considered like day and night. It's also Marin, in that area they are one of the epicenters for the anti-vaccination movement, super wealthy anti-vaxxers, you know? [laughs] It's interesting. And it used to be a very industrial area, but you have a very... it's everybody that wants to live a little more rural, right outside of San Francisco.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Interesting, interesting case. About these urban elements and the city of Vallejo itself. Do you live here from, like, ten years?

**V5**

- I moved here in... I think 2010, yeah, so 13 years.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- How do you evaluate the changes that the city has passed through in this last 13 years, 12 years?

**V5**

- I see a great improvement from where we started, as far as like what changes. Let's see, I'm always kind of the out-and-about social person, so that's what I can speak to. When we first moved here, we would have a small market on a Wednesday and our parades used to be tiny and now it's boomed, it's huge when we do events now here in the city. And I think that during the message, very much during like 2010, was we were scared to come out because we had just gotten out of... we were still like in the bankruptcy, there was no police officers, so the message, when what they would have events is "it's safe to come out at night, please come out and enjoy your city" and it was kind of a demonstration, like "we're gonna go out and we're gonna put a stage in the middle of the street and we're gonna have a nice time", and it was like smaller groups showing up and even though the crime is crazy right now, or that's what gets highlighted a lot in Vallejo, we have a lot more people that want to congregate and it's not the crime or lack of police, isn't the overwhelming... like, it's not oppressive here anymore. We're over it and we're going to stand up and have a good time with one another. Yeah, I don't know, things...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- The crime rates are too high here?

**V5**

- Vallejo is, I don't even know where we rank as far as crime, but we rank pretty high per capita.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- In California or in the United States?

**V5**

- Let's see... I believe, I mean, this is just a TikTok one, but we were considered the seventh most dangerous city on TikTok [laughs]. - **Okay.** - Yeah, I mean, I don't remember what the source was but, yeah. Vallejo crime per capita [typing in laptop]...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, and one of the many things that we see, one of the many changes that we see in the world, in cities, normally rely on this fear of crime. There are huge gated communities, gated communities not just for high-income people, but for middle-class. Do you see this happening in Vallejo, like this kind of community appearing in the city? Being developed?

**V5**

- I would say probably the areas where there could be less crime would be Hiddenbrook, which is a pretty isolated gated area. And Glen Cove, which isn't necessarily gated, but there are a lot more modern areas of the city, and they are a lot more isolated, they're separated from the main suburbs of Vallejo.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And are they new?

**V5**

- Yes, Glen Cove in comparison is a lot newer and Hiddenbrook by far, yeah. And a lot of wealthy people live in those two different areas. One is right along the water and another one is in the north. But I could say this in the same breath, right along the waterfront here around the B Street, I believe that's... I forget, north... I forget what is the name of that neighborhood is, but a lot of wealthy people live there too and their cars are always getting broken into, so... yeah. But as far as gated communities, probably behind the Costco, there's wealthier people living over there, where they're not as probably... and I'm just judging this because of what I see on TikTok and our Vallejo's, you know, scanner crime and I know that, when I recognize the streets, it's because it's downtown, Vallejo downtown streets are [named as] counties and states, so it's like "okay, that's got to be downtown or in eastern kind of area in Vallejo, or Springs Road, there's kind of those hubs where some of the crime is focused.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And do you see urban sprawling here, happening? Like, these very far away developments and they are promoted more by real estate or by public power?

**V5**

- There are definitely some developments coming along down the pipeline, but it's still pretty slow to happen in Vallejo. We're hoping that things really pick up on Mare Island, which is all the old industrial area and stuff, but it's been really slow in Vallejo.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, you already said there's a lot of concern about public safety... - **Yes.** - And do you think that these new gated communities and also other things like more walls, more security cameras, more private companies and this has an effect on public spaces?

**V5**

- Absolutely! It gives a poor impression when you go by what's considered, like, a vintage and historic downtown and things are covered in gates or windows are covered in bars, but unfortunately, it's the steps that people are having to take because of the onslaught of break-ins. And that's pretty sad, that's a prevalent thing here in Vallejo and it's affecting businesses to such an extreme that they can't afford their insurance premiums anymore, so they're being dropped from insurance, they have to take on the costs of putting up those heavy gates and things of that nature. So, a few months ago, when I was at council trying to... we're trying to get some ARPA funding for the skate park project, council voted to have a chunk of the ARPA funds go to support the small businesses that couldn't afford those insurance premiums anymore or that needed to make those physical improvements to their buildings in order to protect themselves because, in the same breath, we don't have enough police officers. So, then the

businesses are having to pay more to protect their buildings and their establishment. So, it's like "if we're not paying for the police officers, can we at least help them pay for some of the infrastructure changes that they need or their insurance premium?", and that was something that was directed by council, but it wasn't something on staff's, it wasn't a staff suggestion, so now staff is trying to develop this this process in order to qualify a business. Like "okay, so how do I qualify?", we didn't have a project, in other words, behind it to say "all right, let's put a US\$ 100.000 and X, Y, Z is going to cost as much and this is how we're going to qualify the businesses, they're going to fill out this", we have nothing. So, now we're working behind the ball trying to catch up, to establish that process.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And I was walking around, especially most downtown, because I'm between South Vallejo and downtown, where I'm staying. And I saw that there's almost no one in the streets, like, using public spaces. Normally it's just homeless people, are more walking around, but in general... you told that the parades and events have a lot of people, but in day-to-day basis, in my opinion, I saw a small amount of people in the streets. - **Yeah.** - You think that relates with the crime or not?

**V5**

- No, I don't think so.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Or it's because everyone uses cars?

**V5**

- Everybody uses cars to get around in Vallejo and, for example, in Sonoma Boulevard, the way that... it's a boulevard and it wasn't laid out so that it's a downtown walkable area, like there, the business fronts have parking lots in front of them and then there's the road, so it's not like an area that you kind of wander around and say "I'm going to go have a seat at the bench and the... you know, in the town center". People use the waterfront a lot for that type of activity and a lot of parks are being used during the day. I know because I just find it fascinating that sometimes you'll go to one of the parks in Vallejo and it'll be like 10 a.m. and somebody is rolling out their things to barbecue on a Wednesday and they have their beers and I'm like "must be nice" [laughs]. I wish that was my life, like, how do I barbecue on Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.? So, there are a lot of people that just hang out at parks.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, because the only park that I visited was Setterquist Park, and it was people there. - **Yeah.** - Like young people enjoying the place...

**V5**

- People just like to hang out by their cars, I mean sometimes it's like "oh, right here along the waterfront, man, right now you go and there's like a party going on, there'll be like 10 cars, and people are just kind of hanging out, playing music, smoking or they'll be barbecuing" [laughs].

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, but the car-driven society is much stronger here than in San Francisco, for example?

**V5**

- Absolutely, yeah.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Do you think that the ferry changed that a little or not?

**V5**

- The ferry usually takes people out of Vallejo.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- So, people drive inside Vallejo and go...

**V5**

- They park and then they take the ferry. The ferry... the awesome thing is that it's reduced in price substantially, it's gone like almost half price it used to be, I think like something... I think it was about...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, I paid US\$ 9 to get here.

**V5**

- US\$ 9? It used to be US\$ 15.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Very expensive.

**V5**

- All right, so US\$ 30 for you, US\$ 30 from my partner, I'm like, US\$ 60 now is what we're in for. But what we used to say is the time, and the fuel and the bridge toll it takes to go into the city, and then when you get to the city you have to pay for parking, and then you have to get your windows smashed. So how much is that whole of that going to cost you? So, we used to always opted to take the ferry and then do Uber or Muni or anything like that when we were in the city.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Yeah, yeah. In San Francisco, in my opinion, you don't need a car. There is like public transit everywhere. - **Yeah, yeah.** - But here, what's your opinion about the public transit? I took the bus like two times.

**V5**

- Yeah, people hate it here in general. They have a... I get a lot of negative feedback from it. I'm like "so, what would you approve in Vallejo?" and they're like "fix the buses", I'm like "well, I don't have the jurisdiction over that, that would be Solano transportation authority, here's when their meetings are, you can go and express that to them". But I get a lot of negative feedback about the public transportation here.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, that's good to hear... not good! - **Is it?** - No, no, not good, but interesting to see this opinion, you know?

**V5**

- Yeah, yeah. So that's also why there's a lot of people that are passionate about bike projects here. Because they want to improve the routes, the accessibility for people on bikes here in the city of Vallejo. A lot of times bike lanes will just disappear and you're at, you know, you are right at your own risk. So, there's a big movement of people pushing towards making those areas safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. So that's a common theme that continuously comes up in PB projects is to improve pedestrian, traffic improvements and bicycle access.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, nice, that's very nice.

**V5**

- As well as water access, that's also something that people are passionate, we have a lot of kayakers...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, you mean water access, access to the waterfront...

**V5**

- Yeah, so people want to be able to back up their vehicle and drop their kayaks into the water. And, right now, those access points aren't very good. We need to also dredge our whole straight, it's full of silt basically and when we have that much mud and silt then the boats can't dock here, so them both are going to other places to dock, which means we're losing out on docking fees. But it's a multi-million dollar project to take all of the silt out of the channel here.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay and do you see any recent construction of public housing here in Vallejo?

**V5**

- I do know that there are some projects, but I couldn't tell you more about that, I could put you in contact with the correct person for that and that would be Natalie Peterson. But I know that we... okay, that was a PB project, the Sacramento Street project... - **I took pictures of it!** - Yeah, so that was a catalyst of a PB project and we... there were some issues early on, but we decided to secure the funding, the PB funds, to help secure the land for that project which now... I don't know how many, I don't know if it's like 50 apartments that opened up or the unhoused, they were given priority in that situation. And I know there's another one that's like the Broadway project, Natalie could speak more to those than I can.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay and how the homeless situation appears in PB or even the city in general?

**V5**

- So, early on, people wanted us to use the funding to support the unhoused. The only issue that we had was that in the early phases we didn't have somebody in the housing department within the city of Vallejo that was dedicated to helping the unhoused. In 2016 that wasn't a position. Until later the council added those out of those roles and added those focuses within the housing department. Before that it was the county, it was like "take it to Solano County, it's kind of their issue, it's out of our jurisdiction". But the problem has increased at such a rate that finally the council appointed somebody to focus on some of these issues. And also that's when we can discuss again those not-for-profits coming in and trying to do a lot of work and establishing themselves legitimately that now we're like "oh, well, if you folks want to coordinate an effort, if you want to feed them, if you want to coordinate..." like, at one point somebody had a ride proposal, where we would create a schedule... one of the local not-for-profits groups had a van and they'd say like "let's schedule some of these folks to go to the Social Security office and get some of these things", kind of checked off of a list of things they need. If they need a doctor's appointment... so, that's some of the ways that the PB projects have affected the unhoused. Something that came about last year was the extreme weather; we were hit with a lot of rain last year. We had to activate extreme weather centers, and this was the first year we'd ever done it, but we knew we needed to do something. Everything was done on a volunteer donation basis, we had a very small fund for security guards, the local recreation district would allow us the usage of some of their spaces and other than that... what else did we have? Oh, the local buses would say like "hey, we would send out a text, we would let people know that we were going to activate the extreme weather center, and the buses would go around and pick everybody up, if they were at a certain point at a certain time we could give you a ride there". That was all done on donation and volunteer basis. And then they said "well, what if this happens again and we don't have funds?", so they came to the participatory budgeting process to see if

they could secure the funds for at least the security guards and the disposables, for example, sleeping bags, pillows and everything of that nature as well as like a crockpot. Literally the Girl Scouts were coming with crockpots of soup and things like that, and they said like "oh, it'd be nice if we had some of our own supplies, so that we wouldn't have to rely on volunteers and donations". So, that was a winning project and we'll hopefully be rolling that out and securing them the funds, so that when there's extreme weather, whether it's cold or hot, there'll be some funding for them. Those resources secured.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Nice. Do you see any influence of the redlining in Vallejo today?

**V5**

- I couldn't speak to that, but possibly V6 will be able to talk to you more about that, since she's worked with the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] for years and I believe that she had expressed some opinions on that. I don't know enough about it.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, okay. And what's your personal opinion about the expansion of gated communities?

**V5**

- I don't have a personal opinion on them, honestly. I don't, honestly.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay. Last question, more broad too. What's your vision of future for Vallejo and for Vallejo PB?

**V5**

- In future of Vallejo, I see us finally using all of the resources, our land, our waterfront to improve this city. I think that we were... we've been kind of on a downturn, because we had a powerhouse, we had an industry here, a naval base that basically funded everything and when that shut down, we were left basically without our big financier here in the city.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- When was that, actually?

**V5**

- 1996. And so, for years now, we've had to find new ways to improve ourselves and pull ourselves up from the bootstraps, so hopefully in the future people see the potential in Vallejo and invest and we really increase our commerce, our economic development, because this city has an insane amount of potential. We have our waterfront, we have in this, you know, industrial sites, yeah, but hopefully our city really improves. And I do see constantly... like here working in City Hall people bend over backwards

and work till their fingers bleed to make a difference here in Vallejo and it's because they really do believe that this is an underdog city and that we're going to do some great things.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And what about PB?

**V5**

- As far as our future for participatory budgeting, I'm hoping that we can get our participation back up once I have some support in here and hopefully, we can secure more funding, and I really would like to see some changes made to our rulebook. Personally, I'd like to see the removal of the cap on projects, I think that it stifles our innovation... In a hope of and I know that the spirit of putting the caps on the projects was to give more program and service projects a fighting chance, we allocate the first 20% to program and service projects, the remaining goes to whoever and it was, like, to really give not-for-profits an advantage. But when we put the cap on, anytime somebody comes up with something that would be potentially a really great project, a capital infrastructure project for Vallejo, it's like "oh no, but it's too much money" and I'm like... but one of the reasons that they put the caps on them is because potholes was the project that was kind of dominating our ballot. So, they're like "all right, no more US\$800.000 pothole projects, let's do a US\$300.000 pothole project and then everything else will kind of balance out", I'm like... there's been times when people come up with amazing ideas, for example, splash pads. It gets hot here in Vallejo and it would be nice to see a little fountain system where children could play, and people could cool off during the summer. It's like "oh, but that's more than US\$300.000", but I know that if that project was on the ballot, it would knock out a pothole project. It would knock out everything else. So, I feel like our innovation is being stifled because of these financial caps. So, ideally in the future we would secure more funding in total and eliminate those caps on those projects.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Good. I remember just one specific thing I saw. That besides the public works department the other department that receives more investment is the police office. Why do you think that happens?

**V5**

- Are you talking about in participatory budgeting? - **Yeah.** - I think so... it's not a... I don't think they have received a lot, I mean they've received funding, but I wouldn't say that's probably to the...

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- I think it's the third. - **Third?** - After public works and...

**V5**

- GBRD? - Yeah. - Global and then... let's see... so, their projects, now we have a cap on them, but in the past, it was for a VR trust system, which was the like artificial simulation project and radios, police

radios, and I think that one of the reasons that those projects come up a lot is because public safety is a concern. Within the Vallejo PB process we can't hire, we can't pay for payroll, I can't hire more people, but if you were to interview the liaisons from the police department, they're like "all right, well, here's a couple things that we could potentially use funding for: improvement on radios, because we're going from analog to digital". but it really comes from a desire from budget delegates and people in the community wanting to make a change in our safety within the city. So, they're really the champions for funding police department projects. And the police department says "hey, if you guys want to, you know, integrate, if you guys want to pay for those radios, that would be awesome, you know, we'll take that". As far as the police department showing up and, well, one they can't be involved in the process, but to say that they are the ones that spearhead any type of PB proposal, not really. It's usually people in the community wanting to improve safety and they're the ones that approach the police department for their ideas on how we can create a PB project. The fire department, I think, because they do a lot more out... well they do, they both do equal outreach, but usually the fire department is the one that'll be like "hey, it'd be really great if we could have a trailer or something like that" or, you know, they're more involved, I think. Whereas the police department is more approached by people in the community.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Okay, okay. Feel free to comment on another thing that you think it's important.

**V5**

- I don't think so, I think that I'm all talked out Rodrigo [laughs].

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- It was a great, great talk. So, this is it I would like to thank in name of myself, obviously, you are helping me a lot, a lot, here in Vallejo. I'm very, very grateful, very grateful. Also, thank you in the name of the institutions I represent, São Paulo State University and Boise State University where I'm working in the US.

**V5**

- Wonderful, thank you.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Also would like to reinforce that all of our conversation, this recording, is for scientific purposes, right?

**V5**

- Absolutely.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- And we are available for further questions in the future. - **Sure!** - Can you just, like, also for bureaucracy, confirm if was everything all right with the interview, with our conversation?

**V5**

- I, V5, have participated in this interview under no form of duress with Rodrigo on this day, Friday, November 17th, and I give authorization for this interview to be used for scientific purposes.

**Entrevistador (Rodrigo)**

- Thank you so much!

**Fim da transcrição**