

Opportunities for Participatory Budgeting in HRM

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Outline



Recap of HRM Report



Participatory Budgeting



Industrial Engineering Methods to Support Effective Public Decision Making



Example Scenario

Re-cap of the *Defunding the Police* report

- July 9, 2020: motion around creating definition of defunding is passed by BoPC
- March 8, 2021: Board approves terms of reference for Subcommittee to Define Defunding the Police
- June 19, 2021: Public consultation session
- January 7, 2022: Report presented to the Board

Re-cap of the *Defunding the Police* report

- Impetus for the report emerged from community outcry over policing in HRM
- *Defunding the Police* proposes an alternative model of community safety that is not reliant on coercive forms of state violence to keep community members safe.
- The report is action-oriented and requires the Board among other institutions to take steps towards transformation.

Suggestions from the HRM Report

The subcommittee makes robust proposals for de-tasking, related to:

- Mental health crisis response,
- Traffic enforcement and traffic safety,
- Third party sexual assault reporting,
- Incidents involving unhoused persons,
- Incidents involving young persons,
- Gender-based and intimate-partner violence,
- Noise complaints, ...

Suggestions from the HRM Report



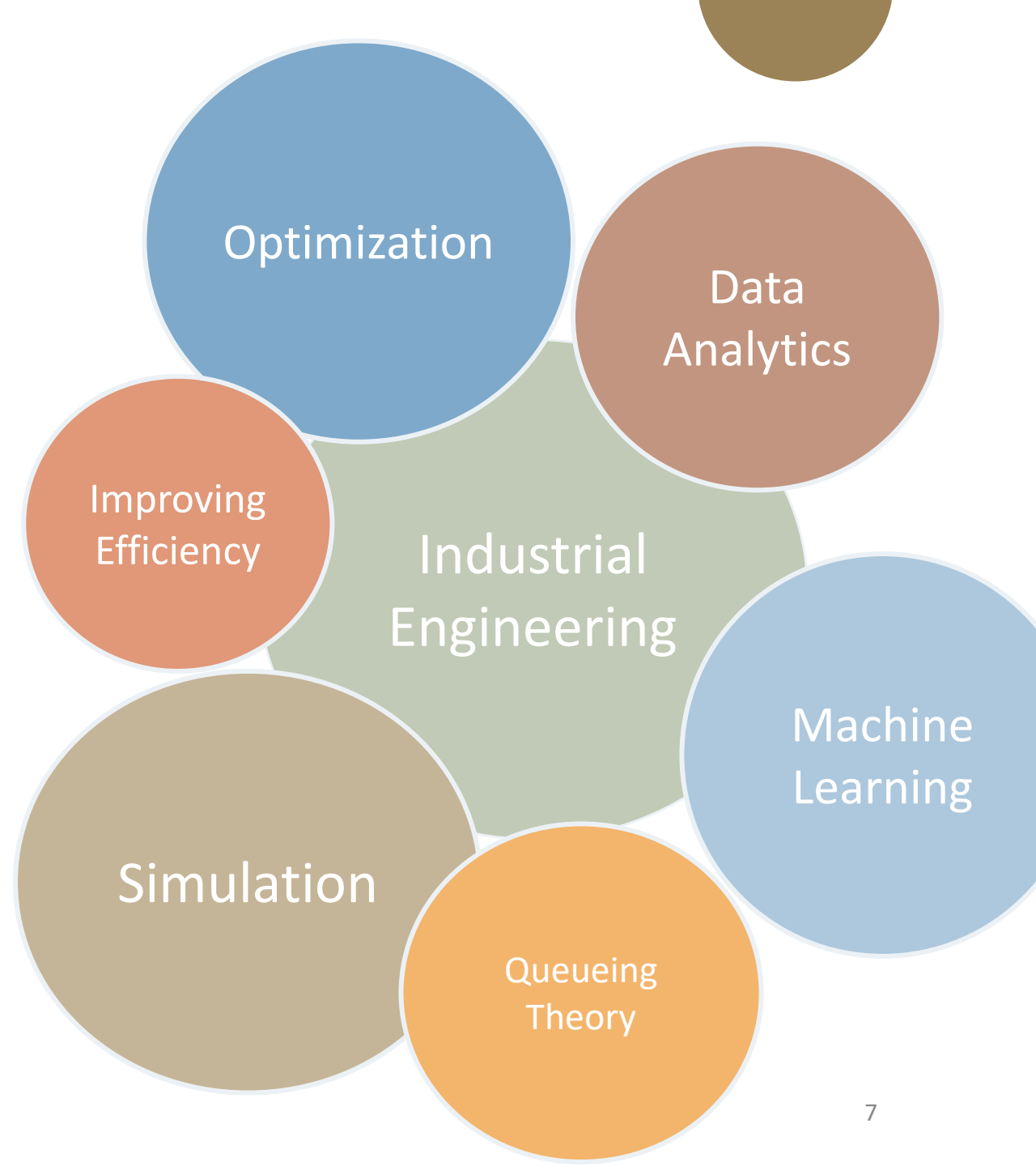
New policy should empower and support community members to design and convene participatory budgeting processes on their own terms.



Regional Council should explore opportunities to expand the use of participatory budgeting, as well as other enhanced public participation methods, as part of its annual Budget Committee process.


What is Industrial Engineering (IE)?

The application of **advanced mathematical methods** to the analysis of problems involving **complex systems** to facilitate **better decisions**



Humanitarian Problems as Complex Systems

- Human Trafficking
- Public Healthcare
- Refugee Resettlement
- **Homelessness Assistance**
- Disaster Preparedness
- Environmental Issues
- Food Security, ...

- 
- High uncertainty,
 - Multiple stakeholders,
 - Limited resources,
 - Uncertainty regarding human behavior,
 - Limited data,
 - Political instability ...

Improving Access to Housing for Unhoused Youth in New York City

Aim: Reducing unhoused youth's vulnerability to human trafficking by improving access to housing and support services such as: physical and mental healthcare, education, legal assistance...

Motivation: Currently the demand for housing services exceeds the existing capacity in New York City (NYC)

1

Data Collection

- 500 surveys with unhoused youth
- 20 surveys and interviews with shelters

2

Analytical Model Formulation

- Estimate the number of extra resources needed in NYC shelters to fulfill youth's demand

Community Partners



Unhoused Youth in NYC

Shelters in NYC

This work* is in collaboration with:

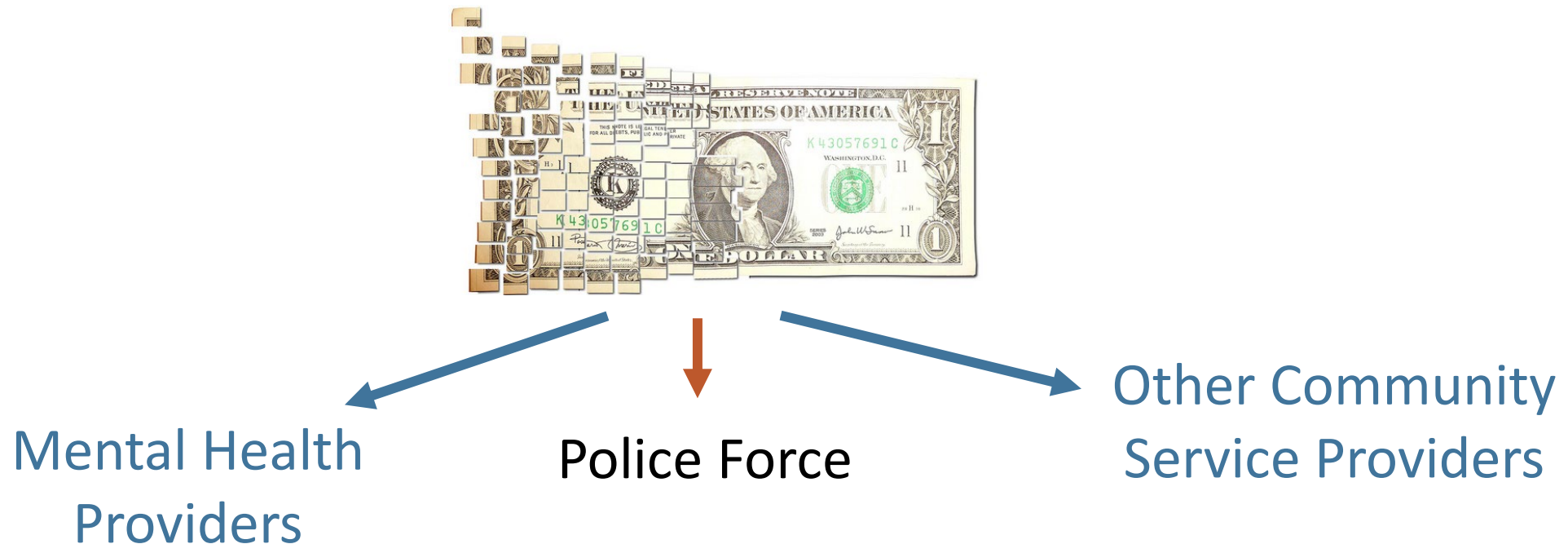
- NYC Mayor's Office 
- Coalition for Homeless Youth (NYC) 
- Social Scientist (from NYU)  NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
- Industrial Engineers (from Northeastern and WPI)  Northeastern University  WPI

We are aware of the importance of doing research **with** communities and those most impacted by social issues and structural oppressions.

*Y. B. Kaya, K. L. Maass, G. L. Dimas, R. Konrad, A. C. Trapp & M. Dank (2022) Improving access to housing and supportive services for runaway and homeless youth: Reducing vulnerability to human trafficking in New York City, IISE Transactions, DOI: [10.1080/24725854.2022.2120223](https://doi.org/10.1080/24725854.2022.2120223)

Common Challenge in Public Services: Limited Resources

Budget allocation can be handled through participatory budgeting:
de-tasking police and re-tasking more appropriate community service providers



Suggestions from the HRM Report

Funds diverted from the police budget going forward are redistributed through a participatory budgeting process, at possible “levels”:



- **geographic area** (e.g., district-level, a combination of districts, or the entire municipality);

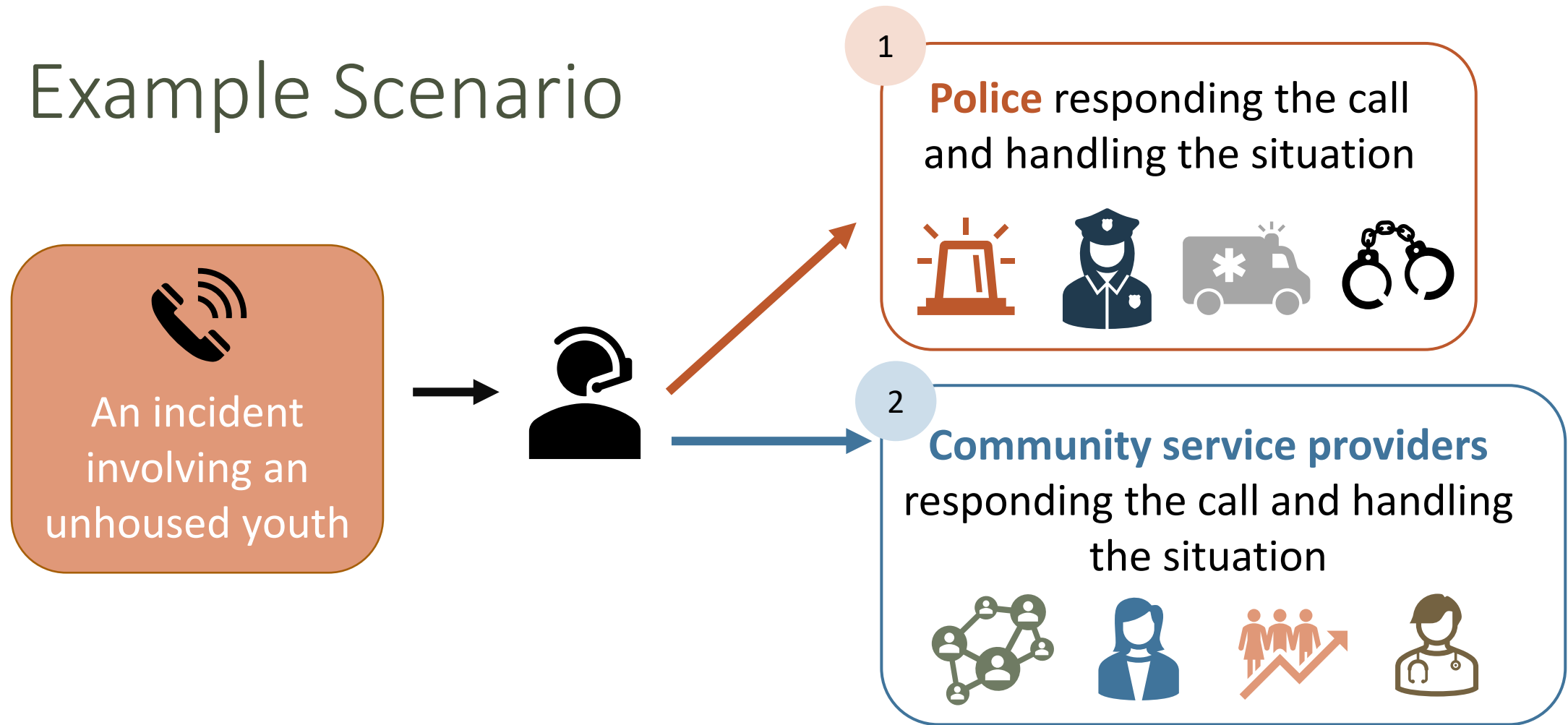


- **subject matter area** (e.g., mental health, and substance use, traffic safety, affordable housing);



- **community-specific** (e.g., African Nova Scotians, Indigenous communities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities);
- any combination of the above.

Example Scenario



With the help of mathematical models that are responsive to community identified objectives, we can evaluate different scenarios.

Possible Community Identified Goals to Consider



- Advancing social justice



- Building community participation (include perspectives of all community members during the participatory budgeting process)



- Ensuring equitable access to public services



- Improving the wellbeing of the community (as identified by the community members)



**Thanks for listening, we
welcome your thoughts and
questions!**



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Our Questions to the Board



Given the proposed budgetary process how can we partner with you to ensure that “community needs and values” are reflected in future budgetary processes?



What kinds of information could you make available to us and to the broader public to make the budget process more transparent?