

President, Board of Supervisors
District 3



City and County of San Francisco

DAVID CHIU
邱信福
市參事會主席

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 20, 2012

Contact: Amy Chan
amy.chan@sfgov.org
415.554.7419

Board President David Chiu Launches Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program

Residents to Decide Use of \$100,000 of Discretionary Funding

San Francisco, CA – Board of Supervisors President David Chiu today announced the launch of a participatory budgeting pilot program in District 3 to give residents the power to decide how to use \$100,000 of discretionary funding. As part of the 2012-2013 budget approved last July, each district was allocated this funding to be decided by a District Supervisor for one-time expenditures that are not operational costs.

Participatory budgeting is a civic engagement process that involves citizens voting directly on what community projects government should fund. After being first developed by the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil in 1989, the process has since been adopted by more than 1,500 cities worldwide, including recently by several municipal wards in Chicago and 8 city council districts in New York City.

“I want to introduce participatory budgeting in San Francisco because a deeper level of civic participation will improve our community investments in our neighborhoods,” said Supervisor Chiu.

President Chiu is partnering with the Office of the Controller, the Participatory Budgeting Project and the Right to the City Alliance to implement a four month process that will engage residents, neighborhood groups and other community stakeholders in dialogue and voting on proposed projects.

“Through our work in New York, Chicago, and Vallejo, we have seen firsthand how participatory budgeting can empower residents to have a real say over how their tax dollars are spent,” said Josh Lerner of the Participatory Budgeting Project. “At a time when trust in government is so low, participatory budgeting offers a golden opportunity to increase transparency, build community, and engage people in democracy.”

“Right to the City Alliance views participatory budgeting as an important stepping stone toward greater democracy in our cities. We have watched the process in New York allow for the involvement of those typically alienated or disenfranchised from political and budgetary processes in the city and are committed to see participatory budgeting strengthen and spread,” said Rachel Laforest of the Right to the City Alliance.

"As the Controller for the City, I'm always interested in new ways we can further engage our residents in the financial decisions regarding the services they value most," said Controller Ben Rosenfield.

In the coming month, Supervisor Chiu will be convening the partners to initiate planning of the pilot program. The process will include community sessions to identify and develop potential projects and a final vote to select winning projects.

For Further Resources on Participatory Budgeting:

The Participatory Budgeting Project

Josh Lerner at 347-554-7357

<http://www.participatorybudgeting.org/>

Participatory Budgeting in the 49th Ward of Chicago

<http://www.ward49.com/participatory-budgeting/>

Participatory Budgeting in New York City

<http://pbnyc.org/>

###