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Supervisor Gordon Mar advocates for more community input in City budget

[Tuesday, Jan. 15th, San Francisco] In his first regular Board of Supervisors meeting, newly-elected District 4 Supervisor Gordon Mar pushed for more community engagement in shaping the City’s $11b budget. The issue was brought forward during Question Time, when Supervisors are able to ask questions of Mayor Breed on topics submitted ahead of time.

“Our budget is a statement of our values, and as a Board, this is the single most important item we vote on” Said Mar. “Community members struggle for a seat at the table and an opportunity to express their priorities, which often only occur during the add-back process, if at all, when most of the budget had already been set.”

Prior to joining the Board, Mar served as the co-chair of the Budget Justice Coalition, where he advocated for more funding to address unmet needs of vulnerable populations and proposed reforms to the City’s budget process. Over the last year, the Budget and Finance Committee adopted changes in line with some of the Coalition’s recommendations.

“Still, there is more we can do at every single step to include, empower, and engage the public - and in doing so, to ensure that our budget priorities and allocations best reflect the needs of all our diverse communities.” said Mar.

In his question, Mar asked “what specific, concrete opportunities will members of the public have to provide meaningful input on the City’s budget priorities”, and “how these opportunities will be expanded from prior years.” Mayor Breed welcomed the question, and committed to a robust process for community input in this year’s budget cycle -- the first she will oversee as Mayor -- indicating fiscal year 2019-20 “business-as-usual,” and referencing the input process for her ERAF windfall funding proposal as an example of the type of outreach she plans to do.

Mar thanked the Mayor for her answer, and indicated his push for community input wouldn’t be limited to the City’s budget: “My highest priority in office is to promote transparency, engage communities in the decisions that impact them, and expand opportunities for public input across all areas of our work.”