



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***

**MAYOR LEE LAUNCHES *SF BUDGET CHALLENGE* TO PROVIDE  
PUBLIC BUDGETING EXPERIENCE**

**San Francisco, CA**— Mayor Edwin M. Lee today announced the launch of the *SF Budget Challenge*, an interactive online tool that allows the public an opportunity to use real public policy choices with real cost-savings to try to reduce the City's \$306 million deficit. The *SF Budget Challenge* will allow users to experience first hand the difficult choices in developing a responsible balanced budget.

"Like many cities and counties across the country, San Francisco faces another difficult budget year," said Mayor Lee. "The *SF Budget Challenge* represents the challenging choices we are making to present a balanced budget that will keep our City safe, solvent and successful for years to come. I encourage everyone to try their hand at this innovative tool."

The Mayor's Office developed *SF Budget Challenge* through a partnership with Next 10, a San Francisco-based non-profit dedicated to innovation and the intersection of the economy, environment, and quality of life. Through a series of multiple choice questions users are presented with a wide range of policy options, each one illustrating tradeoffs for each alternative.

"Next 10 launched the California Budget Challenge in 2005, as a nonpartisan effort to engage Californians in the tough choices and trade-offs that are part of balancing the state budget," said Next 10 Founder F. Noel Perry. "As a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, we are honored that the Mayor is offering this tool to residents about the City's budget. The Challenge offers a unique way for citizens to weigh in on the options being considered by the people who represent them."

To access the *SF Budget Challenge*, go to: [www.sfgov.org/budgetchallenge](http://www.sfgov.org/budgetchallenge).

The *SF Budget Challenge* represents another step in Mayor Lee's efforts to engage and collaborate with residents, labor leaders, community based organizations and the members of the Board of Supervisors throughout the budget process. Last week Mayor Lee finished the last of ten budget town halls, which he hosted with every member of the Board of Supervisors in their Districts. Mayor Lee has met regularly with leaders of City employee unions about the City's rising pension costs. Through *Improve SF*, he has asked City employees to submit practical and innovative budget savings ideas. Earlier this month, Mayor Lee introduced the first-ever proposed five-year financial plan for San Francisco as a key part of a set of financial reforms designed to move the City toward longer-term financial planning and budgeting, and away from the short-term decisions that have led to repeated annual budget deficits. The Mayor will submit a balanced budget for the City's General Fund departments to the Board of Supervisors on June 1<sup>st</sup>, which will close a \$306 million General Fund budget deficit.

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