INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners

FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Media Clippings from 12.06.10 to 01.11.11

Enclosed is a collection of newspaper and media clippings that refer to the Redevelopment Agency or an Agency-related project or program.

(Originated by Gia Casteel-Brown, Executive Assistant)

Fred Blackwell
Executive Director

MISSION BAY / TRANSBAY / YERBA BUENA:

Attachment 1: Office of the Mayor Press Release: “Mayor announces effort to promote ties with China Medical City,” December 20, 2010

Attachment 2: SFGate.com: “SF’s Transbay Terminal: looking beyond the rubble,” January 10, 2011

Attachment 3: Office of the Mayor Press Release: “Mayor Newsom announces approval and issuance of all permits for new downtown Target Store,” December 28, 2010


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Attachment 28: **The Examiner/sfexaminer.com:** “Jerry Brown pledges honest, painful budget for California,” January 11, 2011

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MID MARKET SURVEY AREA:

Attachment 31: **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL:** “Once Again, Revitalizing Market Street,” January 6, 2011
Mayor announces effort to promote ties with China Medical City

Mayor Gavin Newsom on Monday announced the opening of the China Medical City representative office in San Francisco’s Mission Bay.

China Medical City, based in the city of Taizhou, is one of only four national-level biotech developments in China.

In 2009, ChinaSF signed a deal with the city of Taizhou to foster more business between China Medical City and Mission Bay.

The new office connects CMC’s 400-plus companies to Mission Bay’s leading companies in life-science innovation. Simultaneously, this office offers Bay Area companies a local representative to access growing opportunities in Taizhou.

“ChinaSF’s strategic efforts have helped to connect important economic opportunities between San Francisco and China,” Newsom said. “We welcome China Medical City to Mission Bay, our city’s center for biotech and life-sciences innovation, and look forward to building a productive and prosperous relationship between our two regions.”

China Medical City will open their offices at FibroGen’s Mission Bay building as part of the QB3 Mission Bay Incubator Network and located two blocks from the UC San Francisco’s Mission Bay campus.


esherbert@sfexaminer.com


SF’s Transbay Terminal: looking beyond the rubble
Will Kane, Chronicle Staff Writer
Monday, January 10, 2011

Once the hub of transit for downtown San Francisco, the Transbay Terminal building is now a fresh pile of rubble that many hope will eventually become the face of the city's skyline.

Announced in May 2008, the much heralded plan would shift the city's high-density heart from the Financial District to an area south of Market Street. Construction was once scheduled to be under way by 2010.

But construction has idled while planners continue to study the development's impact on traffic on the Bay Bridge, air and water pollution and the shadows that the handful of skyscrapers would cast on the Embarcadero and other public spaces.

Under the most aggressive timeline, the city won't begin debating the details until spring and construction won't begin until late this year or early 2012, said Joshua Switzky, project manager with the city's planning department. And that's assuming the economy picks up and opponents of tall buildings don't further stall the plan.

The delay is understandable, given the scale of the proposed plan, Switzky said.

Besides the marquee 1,200-foot Transbay Tower, the plan also sets the framework for at least six other high-rise buildings in the 600- to 800-foot range that many hope will redefine that area of the city. The Transamerica building - currently the city's tallest - is 853 feet tall.

"The power of the concept of the Transbay comes from bringing such a major transit investment with such a major land-use change," said Gabriel Metcalf, executive director of San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, a pro-development think tank.

The new $1.2 billion Transbay Terminal near First and Mission streets will be the hub of transit for much of downtown San Francisco.

If everything goes according to plan, the terminal will be the site of San Francisco's high-speed rail station, linking regional transportation with local buses. Planners hope that having the transit center as a hub of the new development will allow higher concentrations of housing and offices without a commensurate increase in the number of cars on the road.

The terminal is expected to be finished in six to seven years, Switzky said.

"By then there could be a couple of these buildings on the ground or being built," he said.

But those high-density high rises will redefine the southern cityscape, a concern of many who appreciate the city's low-density character. The current limit for building height in that area is 550 feet.

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/01/10/BAV01H5EDC.DTL&type=printable 1/12/2011
Sue Hestor, a development attorney who has questioned the impacts of skyscrapers for decades, said she is watching the bureaucratic process.

The market for office space in San Francisco is already oversaturated, she said. Even if a developer finds the funds to construct the 1,200-foot tower, it could end up being vacant for years, she said.

"The market for that tower is no different than anything else going up in this city," she said.

Metcalf, an ardent supporter of the project, said the new towers would center thousands of workers near a transit hub, a practical way to combat the suburban sprawl that breeds gridlock and air pollution.

"It is a powerful idea," he said. "In the renaissance, the tallest building would always be the church steeple; the center of the city. For San Francisco to say our tallest building is going to be our transit center is a more wonderful idea."

E-mail Will Kane at wkane@sfchronicle.com.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/01/10/BAV01H5EDC.DTL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Tuesday, December 28, 2010
Contact: Mayor’s Office of Communications, 415-554-6131
San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Amy Neches, 415-749-2450

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

MAYOR NEWSOM ANNOUNCES APPROVAL AND ISSUANCE OF ALL PERMITS FOR NEW DOWNTOWN TARGET STORE
Construction of San Francisco’s first urban Target to begin next month, project marks revitalization of Westfield Metreon Center and Yerba Buena Center Redevelopment Project

San Francisco, CA—Mayor Gavin Newsom today announced the final approval and issuance of all permits for the first urban-centered Target store in San Francisco at the Westfield Metreon Center. With the approval process now completed and permits issued, construction and renovation can begin in January 2011 on the new 85,000 square foot store, expected to open in mid-2012.

“The Metreon is the perfect place for a new, urban-centered Target that will bring jobs, smart development and an exciting and unique new retail destination to Yerba Buena Center,” said Mayor Newsom. “Through redevelopment, the area has been transformed into a world-renowned hub of museums, hotels, shopping and open space. Finalizing the approval of Target at the Metreon is a powerful closing chapter to this successful effort.”

“With all the permits issued, Westfield and Target can move forward immediately toward repositioning the Metreon as a lively retail and entertainment center,” said Fred Blackwell, Executive Director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. “This project will create hundreds of construction and permanent jobs, and will attract residents and visitors to San Francisco and the Yerba Buena district.”

In November, the Redevelopment Agency Commission unanimously approved the Metreon Target project, providing Target with an opportunity to transform an underperforming asset into a successful shopping destination, and generate significant economic activity as a result. Economic benefits from the Target store include 600 construction jobs, 700 permanent jobs and an estimated $15 million annually in benefits to the city through sales and real estate taxes. The project is near more than 30 public transit opportunities providing easy access to all neighborhood businesses to San Francisco’s regional visitors and tourists.

The Westfield Metreon Center is a state of the art technology and entertainment marketplace covering over 350,000 square feet on four levels, which includes the popular AMC Loews Metreon 16 with IMAX. Westfield has been working with the City to develop plans to rejuvenate the Metreon property to make it even more relevant to the neighborhood and provide a broader range of services and dining, entertainment and retail offerings to the community. In addition to Target, Westfield will triple the size of the Metreon food court from 110 to 470 seats, and build a new dining terrace overlooking the Yerba Buena gardens. Westfield is investing $30 million in the changes, and expects to generate approximately 775 construction jobs and up to 300 permanent jobs with new tenants other than Target.
“We’re excited about moving forward with improvements to Metreon,” said Heather Almond, Senior General Manager of Westfield Metreon. “The project puts San Franciscans to work with more than 1,000 construction and permanent jobs. The enhancements celebrate Yerba Buena Gardens, improve the visitor experience and complement nearby cultural and entertainment activities. We believe in the location and look forward to getting started.”

The Westfield Metreon is part of the Yerba Buena Center Redevelopment Project Area (YBC), San Francisco’s key cultural, convention and visitor district. At the heart of the project area is the 6-acre Yerba Buena Gardens, which includes the Esplanade, the Martin Luther King Memorial, the Zeum Children’s Center, an ice rink/bowling alley, a playground with the historic Playland carousel, and the Metreon, which are built over the Moscone North and South conventional halls. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency developed or partnered to create cultural facilities in the YBC, which include the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Museum of Modern Art, Zeum, the Museum of the African Diaspora, the Contemporary Jewish Museum and currently the development of a new home for the Mexican Museum.

YBC includes major visitor facilities developed through the Agency, including the Marriott, Four Seasons, W, Westin Market Street, and St.Regis Hotels, totaling over 2,500 hotel rooms. Major commercial developments include several office projects as well as the redeveloped Bloomingdale’s and Westfield Shopping Centre on the site of the former Emporium department store, which connect Union Square to this burgeoning district. Residential development includes over 2,500 units, including both luxury rental and condominium units and over 1,400 units of affordable senior housing.

The Redevelopment Plan for this Project Area is essentially complete and will expire on January 1, 2011. The Agency will continue to be actively involved in YBC through its ownership and operations support of major public assets, including Yerba Buena Gardens, and ongoing work on the development of a new home for the Mexican Museum, which will be developed on an Agency-owned site as part of a mixed-use project at Third and Mission Streets.

The new Metreon redesign will complement the Redevelopment Plan and improve the neighborhood, celebrating neighborhood strengths to enliven Yerba Buena Gardens and its streetscapes. The improvements celebrate Yerba Buena Gardens, creating an experience that will be substantially more inviting to visitors. Activating the retail store fronts along Mission and 4th Streets will create pedestrian activity to bring more people to the area and benefit local businesses and attractions. Improved lighting, especially in the evening, will make Metreon a beacon to pedestrians. Designs improve public spaces for everyone to enjoy, and with improved designs, the area will be more inviting and brighter, adding elements that contribute to the safety and comfort of residents and visitors.

###
Path cleared for San Francisco's first Target

San Francisco's mayor says the last bureaucratic hurdles have been cleared for the construction of the city's first Target retail store.

Mayor Gavin Newsom announced Tuesday that the final permits had been issued to begin building the downtown store in January.

The 85,000-square-foot store will be built as part of a preexisting retail and entertainment complex rather than as a stand-alone big-box outlet.

The city estimates the store will create 600 construction jobs, 700 permanent jobs and $15 million in economic benefits.

The Westfield Metreon Center also will triple the size of its food court as part of the redevelopment project, creating another 300 jobs.

The Target store is scheduled to open in mid-2012.
Target ready to break ground at Metreon

City officials have announced that Target has obtained all necessary permits to open a new 85,000-square-foot store on the second floor of the Metreon, at Mission and 4th streets. (Examiner file photo)
The Minneapolis-based big-box chain Target, which operates more than 1,700 stores nationwide, received the last of the permits needed to start making a new home on the second floor of the Metreon building, at Mission and Fourth streets.

The owners of the Metreon — Westfield Group, which also owns the nearby Westfield San Francisco Centre — nailed down permits for a dramatic redesign of the first floor.

Work on the 85,000-square-foot project might start as soon as January, and the projects could be complete by mid-2012.

City officials hope the addition of Target and the remodel of the first floor will make the Metreon a draw for shoppers and help attract a final large tenant — perhaps a restaurant — to the long-vacant fourth floor.

The Metreon opened in 1999 to great fanfare as a theme park-style haven for gamers, anchored by a large Sony store. Within a few years, it was clear that model did not draw the crowds initially hoped for, and eventually Sony sold the building and pulled out its store. Since then, city planners and building managers have cast around for a workable vision for the building, which is in a prime location in the heavily trafficked area off Market Street and across from the Yerba Buena Gardens.

The new anchor store could be just the thing to finally make the building work, said Amy Neches, manager of project-area planning and development for the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

“You know what, people love Target and I think it'll be very successful,” she said.

Also, the Target store could help attract a restaurant for the top floor of the building, which is too distant from the street to support retail or many other uses, Neches said.

The new store is expected to create jobs, but the exact number is unclear. Last month, Redevelopment Agency staff said Target could hire between 200 and 250 employees and generate 225 temporary construction jobs. On Tuesday, a news release from the Mayor's Office included figures stating that Target would hire 700 employees and generate 600 new construction jobs.

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The Metreon Target is the first of two planned in The City. The company is wending through the planning process for a location at Geary Boulevard and Masonic Avenue.
Thrown under the bus, Arc sues Redevelopment

By sarah
Created 12/06/2010 - 7:51am

Arc's Community Window on the Shipyard office will be moving to Evans Street, this winter
Sarah Phelan
Arc Saul Bloom (right, opening door for DeWitt Lacy, left) will move from his Third St. office this winter, after losing Redevelopment contract

Arc Ecology filed suit today in federal court against the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, citing First Amendment issues and the Commission's alleged retaliation for Arc's criticism of the Agency's Candlestick Point/ Hunters Point Shipyard project

Represented by attorneys from the First Amendment Project, Arc said the purpose of the suit is to hold the Redevelopment Commission accountable on two counts. First, for attaching an unconstitutional condition to the contract that requires silence from its contractors on matters of public concern outside the scope of the contract and second, for taking reprisal actions against Arc Ecology for its award-winning critique of the Candlestick Point Hunters Point Shipyard Redevelopment Plan.

Re Redevelopment commissioners threw Arc under the bus this September, when they rejected the recommendation of Agency staff, an independent interagency selection panel, the Hunters Point Citizens Advisory Committee and dozens of Bayview Hunters Point and San Francisco residents to rehire Arc to provide environmental technical and educational services for the cleanup of the shipyard.

At that same meeting, the Commissioners voted to award the contract to Circle Point, a San Francisco-based consulting company that Commissioner Francee Covington worked for, in support of a bridge project near Sacramento, several years earlier.

During the Commission's Sept. 21 meeting, Commissioners Leroy King, Francee Covington and Darshan Singh joined Commission President Rick Swig in calling for Arc's ouster, variously accusing Arc's executive director Saul Bloom of disloyalty and dishonesty, but failing to support their claims with evidence related to the contract in question.

"I'm opposed to giving the contract to Arc," Commissioner King said, accusing Bloom of talking, "against Lennar." But Lennar is the developer for the city's massive Candlestick Point/Shipyard project, and as such it is not in charge of the Navy's clean-
Thrown under the bus, Arc sues Redevelopment up of the shipyard.

Commissioner Covington pulled out the city's response to comments on its EIR (environmental impact report) for Lennar's redevelopment plans, as alleged evidence of Arc's malfeasance, even though the non-profit's Redevelopment contract involved assessing environmental issues related to the Navy's shipyard clean-up, and not assessing rLennar's redevelopment proposal. Covington then pointed to, but did not identify, letters she claimed were from individuals who alleged their names were falsely included in a letter supporting Arc's EIR comments.

(The Guardian subsequently discovered that these missives were form letters. Both were written in identical language. Naim Harrison, who works for Positive Directions, which sent the city one of the form letters, told the Guardian that he signed Arc's EIR letter, which asked for more time to review the city's draft EIR. "It seemed a reasonable request," Harrison said. But Positive Directions director Cedric Akbar, who sent the form complaint letters and was running as a candidate in the hotly contested D10 race, did not return the Guardian's repeated calls.)

Commission President Swig, a hotel and tourism industry consultant, sought to frame Arc, which was hired as an independent non-profit, as an ungrateful consultant. "As a consultant myself, I don't agree with all my customers, but I don't bite the hand that feeds me," Swig said.

Then the Commission voted 4-0 to reject Arc and award the contract to Circle Point, instead.

"The Redevelopment Commission's punishment of Arc Ecology sends a message to all contractors that they must now lie for the Commission." Bloom stated in a Dec. 6 press release. "Just listen to the Agency's own web-audio of the Commission's September 21st meeting. This unelected, unaccountable legislative body, one of only a handful of such Commissions in California, is attempting to put responsible criticism in the deep freeze."

"No matter that the subject of our commentary was outside the scope of our contract, no matter that purpose of the contract was to provide the community with an independent view of the decision-making regarding the Shipyard's cleanup, and no matter that its own staff found our analysis helpful, the Commission's action states clearly they prefer public relations to transparency," Bloom continued. "This is a governmental body with a duty to uphold speech not their private business. The Commission has given notice that to contract with the Agency be prepared to kiss the First Amendment goodbye."

Arc and the First Amendment Project say their lawsuit will also demonstrate that the Office of Economic and Workforce Development "clearly biased the applicant evaluation score against Arc Ecology but failed in its attempt to rig the recommendation of the Selection Panel" and that the Redevelopment Commissioners "falsely stated the Commission's policy as always awarding contracts to the highest scoring applicant — even if the difference is only two tenths of one percent out of a possible score of 100."

First Amendment Project staff attorney Geoffrey King told the Guardian that Arc's suit focuses on two distinct areas of concern.

"First, there was the attachment of an unconstitutional condition to Arc's contract, and then there was the taking of retaliatory action," King said. "We allege that statements that Arc made were wholly outside the scope of its contract. But even if its statements were inside the scope of its contract, Arc was hired to be a watch dog and not a lap dog. Arc's role within that process was to be an independent voice. You can't condition funding on someone's silence over something they were not contracting for."

You could impose conditions like that, King says, if the government hired a public relations firm to disseminate an approved message.

'That's where you can control the content," King said. "But if the government is hiring you to be independent, it can't get mad at you for providing answers it doesn't like."

"And nobody accused Arc of a breach of the duty of loyalty," King continued, noting that Bloom asked Redevelopment Agency staffers if he was in a breach, and was told that he was not."

"It's pretty stark when you look at the transcripts of that Redvelopment Commission meeting what the real issue was," King said.
San Francisco Supervisor Sophenia "Sophie" Maxwell rises before dawn nearly every morning, puts on her running shoes, sweat suit and baseball cap, and drives to Lake Merced, where at 6 o'clock sharp she begins her roughly 4 1/2-mile walk.

At 60, she keeps a fast pace, completing the loop in under an hour. The lake, a favorite of rowers and an important wetland habitat, is tranquil at that time of day - and a world away from the San Francisco that Maxwell represents.

"Isn't this beautiful," she said, as the dark sky slowly brightened one recent morning with streaks of orange, pink and yellow. "It is so peaceful here, gives me a chance to think." It also gives her a chance to bounce ideas off a small group of friends and acquaintances who often walk the lake with her, free from the insular chatter of City Hall.

The 10-year Board of Supervisors' veteran will be termed out of office early next month. As she looks to her future, she is keeping her options open. However, she hopes to focus on water policy, and use the skills she's honed as a public servant and activist to build consensus for water-conservation measures and needed upgrades to the aging water-delivery and wastewater systems.

"There is so much to do, locally and globally," she said. "I'm good at listening to what people need, to bring clarity to things and to help work out solutions."

As district supervisor, Maxwell represents the Bayview district, Potrero Hill, Visitacion Valley and the city's other southeastern neighborhoods, pockets of which are among the city's poorest, most violent and most polluted.

The San Francisco native grew up surrounded by political activism. That spirit, along with her motherly intuition to make things better for her child and others in her neighborhood, helped get her elected with the Class of 2000. The renegade group of new supervisors was elected under the revised system of district elections that pried loose the powerful grip that then-Mayor Willie Brown had on the city.

Maxwell's votes usually have sided with the left-leaning progressive bloc on the board, but at times she's been the swing vote for moderates on such issues as development and the economy. Her tenure brought a sense of decorum to the often raucous Board of Supervisors, and has been peppered with challenges that included three recall efforts.
A place of hope

District 10 is home to the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, a federal Superfund site; a power plant that belches toxic substances into the air; and a sewage-treatment plant. The area, pocked with high rates of cancer and asthma, long has been isolated from the city's political and financial centers and has been used as a repository for manufacturing and maintenance facilities shunned by other parts of the city.

For Maxwell, the district represents anguish - and hope.

In 2001, 11 months after winning her first race, Maxwell's only son, Rama Kellum, died at 30 from Hodgkin's lymphoma. It was his disease, diagnosed when he was 25, that propelled Maxwell's deep involvement in environmental justice.

"It drives her," said Carol Tatum, a close friend.

Maxwell raised her son in the Bayview, and to this day believes the dirty air and soil there contributed to, if not caused, his illness.

"They were messing with the wrong mother," she said of her drive to clean up the area. "I wanted to make sure this wouldn't happen to anyone else's child."

Divorced after a short-lived marriage in her 20s, Maxwell still lives in the same house just off of Third Street where she raised her son, and until recently his son, who is now in high school. She shares her home with her longtime partner, Horace Pete, a retired cement mason; her sister and nephew live in the building's other two units and her nieces live across the street.

Environmental advocate

As the District 10 supervisor, Maxwell helped lead the charge to close the Hunters Point power plant, one of the oldest and dirtiest in the state. It was shuttered four years ago.

The other power plant, in Potrero Hill, may close early next year. "It's still there, polluting," she said. "We're not there yet," she said. "But we will be."

That's typical Maxwell, voicing disappointment, followed by optimism. That attitude is reflected in her district, which is undergoing major changes with the redevelopment of the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and the encroaching gentrification of Third Street.

One very visible sign of the transformation is Muni's nearly 4-year-old T-Third light-rail line, which connects the southeastern neighborhoods with downtown via Third Street. It's a line Maxwell helped usher through.

A controversial leader

The district's changes often have put Maxwell in the middle of political hornets' nests. She's been tagged as either too pro- or anti-development or too pro- or anti-environment.

There have been three recall efforts, but none ever reached the ballot. Mel Washington, a copy shop owner in the Bayview and former head of the Black Chamber of Commerce, helped organize one of the recall campaigns.

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/12/12/MNP11GMQE8.DTL&type=printable 1/7/2011
because he didn't think Maxwell did enough to help African American-owned businesses. He also said Maxwell didn't make herself easily accessible to her constituents.

The most recent recall effort, launched earlier this year, centered on the redevelopment of the shipyard. The group behind it wanted Maxwell to take a tougher stance against the Navy, which is responsible for cleaning up the polluted site.

Maxwell said critics' efforts failed because they were spearheaded by people who never supported her in the first place and didn't appeal to a broader coalition of residents who elected her three times, the last time in 2006 when she won with 56 percent of the vote in a field of seven candidates.

"From a political perspective, she's got the most challenging district in the city," said Mayor Gavin Newsom, who served with Maxwell on the Board of Supervisors before becoming mayor in 2004.

"Her district has an enormous history of neglect and injustice, and Sophie has had the challenge of navigating the past, present and future," Newsom said. "She's served her district well, with a focus and intensity to get things done ... that transcends ideology."

**Divisive development**

Her biggest political test came earlier this year when the proposed 702-acre Hunters Point Naval Shipyard project, one of the largest developments in city history, went before the Board of Supervisors.

The plan would transform the abandoned military site tainted by toxic materials into a new waterfront community. The development promises 10,500 homes, parks, commercial space and perhaps, a new stadium for the 49ers. The board approved the project 10-1 - but not before several proposed amendments nearly killed it.

Environmentalists are continuing to wage a legal battle to preserve some of the wetlands, which they believe would be endangered by building a bridge over Yosemite Slough.

Maxwell, the project's biggest champion on the Board of Supervisors, said the benefits - chiefly the expected 10,000 new jobs and the opportunity to turn a toxic wasteland into a vibrant neighborhood - could not be passed up.

"There's a certain fear this will bring change to the Bayview. ... Well, I say, 'yes' and about time," Maxwell said the day of the vote.

**Standing out**

Prior to her election, Maxwell served as chairwoman of a citizens advisory committee for the Redevelopment Agency's Southeast Project Area and as a board member of the Southeast Alliance for Environmental Justice, an advocacy group.

She also worked as a union electrician for Amtrak.

She was the lone woman at the railroad maintenance yard, which was the same position she found herself in when she joined the 11-member Board of Supervisors in 2001. At the time, Maxwell also was the lone African
American on the board. She is still the only African American on the board, although she has been joined by two other women.

One of Maxwell's defining moments as supervisor came after just a few months in office. Two of her then-colleagues, Aaron Peskin and Gerardo Sandoval, were sniping at Newsom, who was out of the room but then charged back in to defend himself. Maxwell jumped in.

"You are gentlemen ... and whoever has not acted in that way, we should let that go and make this a new time and a new start. It is ugly. It is not productive," she firmly scolded. "Let's get on with the people's business."

It is a role she's continuously played. Supervisor Sean Elsbernd, who regularly gets into heated floor debates with the more liberal Supervisor Chris Daly, said he uses Maxwell as his gauge to see if he's going too far; "I know I have when she gives me that look of disapproval."

Maxwell says she has a temper, but works hard to conceal it.

Her walks around the lake, yoga, Pilates and meditation help, she said. People wrongly mistake her calm demeanor for passivity, she said. When she does let loose, she said, it's in the safety of close family and friends.

"I don't want to be emotional, lose control; my mother taught me that," she said. "I want to stay logical and not say something I'll later regret."

**Next steps**

Maxwell brings up her mother frequently. Enola Maxwell, who died in 2003, was an influential force.

Enola Maxwell grew up in segregated Louisiana and moved to San Francisco with her two oldest children in 1948 to join her mother, who ran the Little Red Door thrift store in Potrero Hill. Sophie was born two years later. Her first home was a public housing project in Potrero Hill - not far from a middle school now bearing her mother's name.

Enola Maxwell worked as a housekeeper and then as a postal worker. Divorced, she saved up enough money to buy a house for her and her children and they eventually settled in the Bayview after living in the Mission and the Haight.

Over the years, Enola Maxwell became a well-known neighborhood activist and civil rights leader and ran the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House for more than 25 years. She became a Presbyterian minister and was active in the anti-war movement and the anti-freeway revolt that gave rise to a neighborhood-based political movement.

Sophie Maxwell was at her mom's side through it all.

"Our mother wasn't a politician; she was an activist," said Barbara Dundy, Maxwell's older sister. "Sophie was always right there next to our mother. She just fell into the role and it stuck with her."

E-mail Rachel Gordon at rgordon@sfchronicle.com.

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This article appeared on page A - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/12/12/MNP11GMQE8.DTL&type=printable 1/7/2011
Despite economic indicators that have shown San Francisco is on the mend, our unemployment rate is holding steady at 10 percent. In some areas of San Francisco - such as the Lakeview and Bayview Hunters Point neighborhoods in the districts we represent - unemployment is much higher.

Fortunately, the city's need to maintain and build its public infrastructure for the demands of the 21st century presents us with a great opportunity to increase employment in both the public and private sectors. The city is expected to spend nearly $30 billion on public works projects over the next 10 years, creating hundreds of jobs annually and offering a major opportunity to put San Franciscans to work.

Today, the Board of Supervisors will cast a final vote on landmark local hiring legislation that will require city contractors to hire San Francisco residents on publicly funded projects, creating blue-and-green-collar career opportunities.

For decades, the city has merely required "good faith efforts" of contractors to increase access for local residents to well-paying construction jobs. Despite the city's goal of hiring 50 percent local residents, the actual level of resident participation historically has been much lower and is on the verge of dipping below 20 percent.

Last week, the Board of Supervisors overwhelmingly agreed that we must do better, voting in favor of today's mandatory local hiring measure. It will go to the mayor's desk for signature this afternoon.

Over the next several years, this ordinance will gradually phase in a 50 percent local hiring requirement on public works construction projects. It immediately requires half of all apprentices on public projects to be local residents, helping to grow our local middle class instead of importing one.

This legislation is the product of more than a year of collaboration with all major stakeholders and has earned the support of the city's two largest trade unions, some of the region's largest public works contractors, local businesses, environmentalists and unemployed workers and community-based organizations in every neighborhood throughout San Francisco.

Mandatory local hiring delivers a message of hope and a promise to our local communities to make our workforce more inclusive. The city controller has also stated that today's measure will have a "net positive economic impact" on the local economy and will generate $27 million in wages for San Franciscans that will be reinvested in local businesses and the local tax base.

This law will help us close the economic gap with our disproportionately unemployed communities while simultaneously fueling the local economy and sparing the air by reducing environmental pollution associated with long commutes.

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/12/14/EDEH1GQ2L0.DTL&type=printable
Our outgoing mayor and supervisors leave behind a legacy of projects that have been approved and will be built on the basis of jobs promised to our local neighborhoods. Final passage of this legislation will be a historic step toward a guarantee that these commitments will be fulfilled not by good faith, but by the force of law.

John Avalos and Sophie Maxwell are members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

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For 10 years Johnetta Richards has taught the undergraduate course "Blacks in California" at San Francisco State, without much in the way of documentary photography to back her up.

There are images of the shipyards in the 1940s, jazz in the Fillmore in the 1950s and the Black Panthers in the 1960s. But nothing on the 1970s and nothing in book form on any decade that speaks to the day-to-day life of black society in San Francisco.

Nothing, that is, until "A Dangerously Curious Eye" landed on the desk of Richards, an associate professor of Africana Studies, who teaches courses in black history at both State and City College. Dr. J, as she's known, was eight or 10 pages into the black-and-white prints of Hunters Point before she could catch her breath long enough to comment on what she'd seen.

"This is the 1970s, so there is definitely black pride there," she says, finally. "Oh, Lord, I could write a lecture for each of those images."

She'd have to, because the photographer, Barry Shapiro, left no caption information of his own, and he died of cancer in October 2009 while still sorting through thousands of negatives.

Shapiro's friend, famed rock photographer Jim Marshall, knew there was a book in it and wrote the check. But he, too, died before the project was completed. The publisher, Jay Blakesberg of Rock Out Books in San Francisco, never met the photographer, who lived in Oakland and worked as the principal at an alternative high school in Albany. Nobody from that side of Shapiro's professional life knew about the other side, which was spent inside the homes and barber shops, after-hours clubs and pool halls on the poor southeast side of San Francisco.

"Was this photographer African American?" asks Richards. When told that he was white, she is even more impressed. "Apparently the community let him in. They don't look like they're annoyed or angry. So he was part of it."

The full title of the book is "A Dangerously Curious Eye: The Edge of San Francisco: Photographs by Barry Shapiro, 1972-1982." It costs $40 at www.rockoutbooks.com, and one sure customer is Linda Brooks Burton, librarian at the Bayview branch of the San Francisco Public Library.

"There's nothing that I can even think of that would come close to that, from the '70s," says Burton, over the phone.

According to the book's introduction, by writer Mark Joseph, Shapiro became enthralled with Hunters Point when he was teaching remedial English and made a house call to teach an adult resident how to read.
"Barry found himself immersed in a fringe neighborhood that suited him perfectly," Joseph writes. "Night after night, year after year, Barry went into San Francisco's most obscure ghetto to live the life and walk the walk, and in a very real sense these photographs are a record of his life as much as they capture the essential humanity of his subjects."

The book is divided into two sections: "Hunter's Point and Beyond" and "Through the Window," which consists of pictures that Shapiro took while driving around in his VW bus. Sometimes the windshield wiper is in the middle of the frame and sometimes his hand is at the big steering wheel.

Street-corner life was more photogenic then than now. For one thing, everybody wasn't talking on a cell phone or staring into one punching keys. Either inside or out, the hair, the cars, the plaid pants and denim leisure suits all say '70s "Soul Train."

"You put this in context, despite harsh economic realities, despite the Great Society not living up to what (President Lyndon) Johnson had planned, black people in their own communities did celebrate," says Richards. "They're poor but they're having fun. In my mind, this could be put to music."


E-mail Sam Whiting at swhiting@sfchronicle.com.

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The late Barry Shapiro, a principal at an alternative high school in Albany, shot these images in Hunters Point from 1972 to 1982. They are compiled in the new book "A Dangerously Curious Eye: The Edge of San Francisco."

Photo: Copyright Barry Shapiro

The late Barry Shapiro, a principal at an alternative high school in Albany, shot these images in Hunters Point from 1972 to 1982. They are compiled in the new book "A Dangerously Curious Eye: The Edge of San Francisco."

Photo: Copyright Barry Shapiro
The late Barry Shapiro, a principal at an alternative high school in Albany, shot these images in Hunters Point from 1972 to 1982. They are compiled in the new book "A Dangerously Curious Eye: The Edge of San Francisco."

Photo: Copyright Barry Shapiro

Life in '70s Hunters Point captured in photo book

The condo's main living area, above, can be seen in the new book "A Dangerously Curious Eye: The Edge of San Francisco."
The late Barry Shapiro, a principal at an alternative high school in Albany, shot these images in Hunters Point from 1972 to 1982. They are compiled in the new book "A Dangerously Curious Eye: The Edge of San Francisco."

Photo: Copyright Barry Shapiro

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Life in '70s Hunters Point captured in photo book

From "A Dangerously Curious Eye: The Edge of Media (4 of 8)" published by Rock Out Books.

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Life in '70s Hunters Point captured in photo book


Photo: Copyright Barry Shapiro
The 49ers will be sticking around San Francisco until at least 2014 under a tentative lease deal hammered out this week after Mayor Gavin Newsom met with team President Jed York to mend fences, city officials said.

The deal, which still needs the approval of the Recreation and Park Commission and the Board of Supervisors, gives the Niners more flexibility to pull up stakes and move to Santa Clara, but also settles a $60 million maintenance claim the team had filed against the city, a precursor to a lawsuit.

The 49ers' current Candlestick Park lease expires after the 2012 season. Renewing the lease would mean signing on for an additional five years. But the team hopes to move into a proposed stadium in Santa Clara in 2015 and doesn't want to be on the hook to San Francisco for years of rent for a decaying stadium it's not using.

The new agreement lets the team renew its Candlestick lease for five years starting after this season, but it allows the team to opt out of the last year, which would be the 2015 season. The Niners would also have the option of one-year lease extensions every year until 2023, when the current lease would have expired.

"It gives us time to remind them that San Francisco loves them," said Newsom, who is pushing through proposals on multiple fronts in his whirlwind final days before being sworn in as lieutenant governor in January. "We want to keep them here as long as we can."

The team will get rent credit for completing $6.5 million in lapsed maintenance work over the next two years that the city was obligated to handle, like repaving the parking lot, flood control work for the lot, replacing seats and fixing leaks in luxury suites. The team will get an additional $4 million to $6 million in either rent reduction or credit on the back end of the deal.

The team pays about $6 million a year to the city in combined rent for the stadium, including a cut of parking and advertising revenue, but had been battling for a decade saying the city has failed to maintain Candlestick as required under the lease. Periodically, the two sides have reached deals where the team pays to do the work and gets credit toward its lease. This latest deal comes as the deadline loomed for the team to file a lawsuit.

Lisa Lang, a team vice president, said the Niners are "pleased that our negotiations with the city of San Francisco have resulted in a tentative settlement regarding both our deferred maintenance and our lease extension."

Newsom said the deal helps pave the way for the team to consider staying in the city and building a new stadium in a redeveloped Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. That proposal has already received voter and city approval.

"It gives us some time now to remind them how great the deal is that San Francisco has put up," Newsom said. "We've got this teed up on a silver platter. ... All they need to do is get building permits."

E-mail John Coté at jcote@sfgate.com.

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Malia Cohen among new San Francisco supervisors
Rachel Gordon, Chronicle Staff Writer
Tuesday, December 28, 2010

Malia Cohen was on a City Hall field trip in third grade when Dianne Feinstein, who was mayor of San Francisco at the time, invited the class into her office. The young student was hooked.

"It wasn't just the grandeur of the rotunda that really left an impression on me. It was also Mayor Feinstein, who talked about working in public service," said Cohen, now 32. "I knew I wanted to work at City Hall."

On Jan. 8, Cohen will be sworn in as a member of the Board of Supervisors, one of four newcomers elected in November.

Her policy agenda, she said, initially will focus on public safety and job creation - crucial to her district in south eastern San Francisco, which is dotted with areas of high crime and unemployment.

"I'm still formulating my approach to the problems," she said during a recent interview.

Politically, Cohen is hard to pigeonhole.

Like all officeholders at City Hall, she is a Democrat. But beyond that she has taken positions and won endorsements from both the city's moderate camp and the progressive faction on the left.

The more moderate firefighters union and building trades unions backed her candidacy. After she was elected, business interests stepped up contributions to her campaign account.

On the issues, Cohen supports tax incentives to spur job growth and favors limiting rent control so only people on fixed incomes, the disabled or who are "otherwise disadvantaged" benefit - positions supported by the city's more moderate bloc.

She tilted left, however, when it came to several measures on the November ballot. She opposed the voter-approved ban on sitting or lying on public sidewalks, supported the failed effort to allow undocumented immigrants with children in the public schools to vote in school board races, and backed another to raise the hotel tax.

She also picked up endorsements from left-leaning Board of Supervisors President David Chiu, and his predecessor, Aaron Peskin.

Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, who sees her as a little sister, said the supervisor-elect is well situated as she enters office.

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"I told her, 'Don't paint yourself into a corner. Keep an open mind and listen to everybody.' I've tried to work that way, and I think it's a good position to be in," Ma said.

Pressure to take sides

As District 10 supervisor, Cohen will feel the pressure to take sides, particularly when it comes to land-use decisions. Her district is one of the last places in San Francisco ripe for more development, with the proposed transformation of the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyards the centerpiece.

The Board of Supervisors approved the project last summer. But the debate over how to proceed with the development continues.

Cohen, who will be the only African American on the 11-member board, will represent one of the most challenging districts, with racial diversity and economic divides that make a one-size-fits-all approach to successful governing impossible.

She promises to be accessible, and already is building a reputation as someone who attends a lot of community meetings and events in her district. She’s also been meeting with representatives from groups with citywide interests.

"She's definitely been making the rounds," said Karen Gilbert, executive director of the Visitacion Valley Community Development Corp.

Cohen won her race in a crowded field of 21 candidates. She didn't secure the most first-place votes, but under ranked-choice voting was declared the winner when voters' second- and third-place picks were factored in.

A San Francisco native, Cohen is the oldest of five girls. Her mother is a social worker; her dad a retired telecommunications worker who once climbed telephone poles.

When she was young, the family lived in the Richmond District, and then moved across town to the Portola neighborhood. Cohen now owns a condo in Hunters Point, near Candlestick Park.

Muni rider

She doesn’t own a car and rides Muni most places, but may end up back behind the wheel, given the community forums she plans to attend in her district at night and the long travel time via streetcar between home and City Hall.

Cohen began building a foundation to win a seat on the Board of Supervisors with her election as student body president at Lowell High School and with her stint during high school on a city youth panel that gave her the chance to meet with members of the board. She has an undergraduate degree in political science from Fisk University and a master's in political science from Carnegie Mellon University.

She got involved with Emerge, an organization that trains Democratic women in careers in politics, and worked as a field organizer in Mayor Gavin Newsom's first campaign for mayor. After he was elected, she worked for him and his chief of staff as a confidential secretary for a little more than two years.

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After she left the mayor's office, Cohen served as a legislative aide to San Mateo County Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, started a social media and public policy consulting firm and held a handful of other jobs in public policy and government affairs. None lasted more than a couple of years, but all built on the course she set out on when she was in grade school and met the mayor of San Francisco.

"It was all part of the larger plan," she said, smiling.

**Coming this week**

The Chronicle will highlight each of the new members of the Board of Supervisors who will be sworn in Jan. 8.

**Wednesday:** District Two, Mark Farrell.

**Thursday:** District Eight, Scott Wiener.

**Friday:** District Six, Jane Kim.

E-mail Rachel Gordon at rgordon@sfchronicle.com.

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Tuesday, December 28, 2010
Contact: Mayor’s Office of Communications, 415-554-6131
San Francisco Housing Authority, Rose Marie Dennis, 415-713-2178

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

MAYOR NEWSOM ANNOUNCES BROADBAND ACCESS IN ALL SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC HOUSING FACILITIES
Installation of Wi-Fi Completed at All Public Housing Facilities

San Francisco, CA—Mayor Gavin Newsom and the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) today announced the completion of free Wi-Fi access in all public housing facilities. In June 2010, the SFHA entered into an agreement with the San Francisco Department of Technology to expand broadband access and adoption for low income residents, and today broadband Wi-Fi is available at all thirty three SFHA facilities including all HOPE SF sites. These changes lay the foundation for every resident living throughout public housing in the City to have better more meaningful access to the benefits of the internet.

“Free Wi-Fi and broadband access will create new opportunities for jobs, education and a better quality of life for our public housing residents,” said Mayor Newsom. “We must continue to work towards improving our public housing facilities, but I am proud we are making historic investments through HOPE SF to build sustainable, modern public housing and bridge the digital divide for families in public housing.”

“With the installation of these technological upgrades, access to the internet is now a reality for our residents,” said Henry Alvarez III, Executive Director of the SFHA. “These improvements also advance a primary core value of this agency which is to significantly improve the quality of life for our families, seniors, and disabled persons that we serve.”

HOPE SF is the City’s landmark SFHA public housing transformation effort, which recently received its first long-term financing commitment envisioned as part of the City’s $95 million commitment. Hunters View is the first of five active HOPE SF developments, which include Sunnydale, Potrero, Westside Courts, and Alice Griffith. HOPE SF is an initiative that is to transform existing public housing communities into thriving, mixed income neighborhood by not only building quality housing and infrastructure and creating sustainable mixed income communities, but also improving social and economic outcomes for the existing public housing residents by offering them the services and resources needed to enhance their lives. In total, the HOPE SF communities are anticipated to grow from 2,000 homes today to 5,000 homes. They will serve a range of critical housing needs in San Francisco—from affordable rental housing to new for-sale housing opportunities for middle-class families.

HOPE SF’s goal is to ensure that Hunters View and the larger Bayview-Hunters Point community residents benefit from the job opportunities associated with the Hunters View revitalization process. This commitment was evident in the recently completed demolition phase. In the demolition phase, 40% of the workforce hours and 30% of the workers during the demolition phase were residents of the Bayview-Hunters Point community. This strong commitment to hiring residents will continue throughout the entire construction process.
Already underway, Hunters View is the pilot project for HOPE SF. The first phase of Hunters View will also include the construction of 107 affordable rental apartments that begin the process of replacing all 267 public housing apartments and creating new affordable housing as well. As a pilot project for the new LEED Neighborhood Development rating system, Hunters View sets new standards for neighborhood sustainability and accessibility. The development will be more than sustainable buildings; it will become a sustainable community. Incorporating San Francisco’s ground-breaking Green Building Ordinance, Hunters View achieves previously unprecedented levels of community sustainability in San Francisco resulting in improved energy efficiency, recycling, air quality, and accessibility throughout the neighborhood. With these key investments, HOPE SF will inject nearly $75 million of capital investment into the local economy which began in October 2010 and continues through early 2012.
Trees to greet kids after winter leave

When students at El Dorado Elementary School return to school for the spring semester, they will soon welcomed by two dozen fruit trees.

The elementary school in the Visitacion Valley neighborhood will get up to 25 new fruit trees as part of "Fruit Tree 101" that brings fruit tree orchards to schoolyards so students can improve the quality of the air and water while creating a source of tasty snacks for decades to come, according to organizers.

The trees will arrive and be planted Jan. 10 and will be planted by students and community volunteers.

The tree project is made possible by FruitaBu - makers of all-natural fruit snacks for kids - with the help of the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation.

The grassroots program works school-by-school to address important issues like caring for the environment and proper nutrition by providing students with an outdoor classroom where they can foster fruit trees and shrubs - from planting to harvest.

Block by Block | El Dorado Elementary School | Fruit Tree 101 | Fruit Tree Planting Foundation | fruit trees | FruitaBu | san francisco | Visitation Valley

Nonprofit Says City Took Revenge for Airing Views

By JOHN UPTON

Saul Bloom is preparing to pack up roomfuls of overstuffed binders in the offices of the small nonprofit environmental organization that he helped form almost 30 years ago. Arc Ecology, whose headquarters in a faded white storefront are protected by metal bars in the Bayview neighborhood’s crime-ridden Third Street commercial district, must move to a more affordable location after losing a key contract with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

The loss in September of the contract — which never exceeded several hundred thousand dollars a year — comes after Arc’s opposition to key elements of the sprawling Hunter’s Point Naval Shipyard redevelopment plan that was passed by the Board of Supervisors in August.

Over the last eight years, Arc has analyzed the health and environmental impacts of the project. It has also taken some strong advocacy positions, opposing the plan’s transfer and subsequent development of state-owned parkland and the construction of a bridge over sensitive wetlands.

Documents obtained by The Bay Citizen raise questions about the assessment process that led to another group’s being awarded the environmental information services contract, and which also highlight the influential role that Mayor Gavin Newsom’s administration played in rejecting Arc Ecology’s bid.

On Dec. 6, Arc Ecology filed a federal lawsuit against the city’s redevelopment agency, stating that its advocacy work relating to the shipyard project was separate from its contract, and that its free-speech rights had been violated. The case could help determine the extent to which city officials can require contractors to fall in line with city policies.

“Arc had a First Amendment right to speak on matters of public concern whether they were outside the scope of the contract, as we allege, or even if they were within the scope of the contract because they were brought on to be independent,” said Geoffrey King, Arc’s lawyer.

The city said Arc Ecology’s complaints are nothing more than “sour grapes.”

Arc Ecology’s job under a contract it held with different government agencies for almost a decade was to examine the local impact of the proposed shipyard redevelopment on the surrounding Bayview and Hunters Point neighborhoods, which were plunged into poverty when the Naval base closed in the 1970s.
In particular, Arc Ecology was charged with researching and explaining how the housing project of more than 10,000 units would affect traffic, noise, air-quality, affordable housing, educational opportunities and open space in the surrounding communities.

Arc Ecology’s approach has fueled debate and controversy over the years about smart growth, pollution cleanup and environmental justice issues related to the 702-acre waterfront redevelopment project.

When the contract came up for renewal this fall, the Redevelopment Commission, whose members are appointed by the mayor, voted 4-0 to take the contract away from Arc Ecology and award it to CirclePoint, a national environmental planning and public relations firm headquartered in downtown San Francisco that had received a slightly better assessment from the five-person panel that evaluated the bids. CirclePoint specializes in managing public affairs for troubled government projects.

But the selection of CirclePoint over Arc Ecology went against the advice of the Redevelopment Agency’s executive director and senior staff, who are employed by the state of California. The staff recommended renewing the nonprofit’s contract, noting its extensive experience and expressing “serious concerns” about CirclePoint’s ability to understand and explain pending shipyard land transfers.

The documents obtained by The Bay Citizen show that four of the five panelists appointed by the Redevelopment Agency rated Arc Ecology’s proposal more favorably than CirclePoint’s. Members of the panel represent local agencies and a citizen advisory committee.

Andrea Bruss, the panelist drawn from Mr. Newsom’s economic development office, however, rated CirclePoint as the winner. Ms. Bruss gave Arc Ecology’s bid a low enough score to tip the average scores slightly in CirclePoint’s favor.

Tony Winnicker, the mayor’s spokesman, said the low score given by Ms. Bruss (54 out of 100 compared to between 87 and 89 by the other members of the panel) was based on her opinion. He disputed claims by Mr. Bloom and his lawyers that the process was rigged in retribution for its vocal negative positions against the shipyard project. Ms. Bruss declined to comment.

The loser complained “about the rules and the process after the fact because it didn’t turn out the way they wanted,” Mr. Winnicker said.

Mr. Bloom said that his group does not “believe that the shipyard is being developed for the benefit of the community that surrounds it and that was the original purpose of the project.” Arc Ecology has characterized the shipyard redevelopment plans as non-sustainable suburban development that will further damage and displace the communities that Arc aims to serve.

Rick Swig, the Redevelopment Commission president, complained during a September hearing that Arc Ecology had taken inappropriate advocacy positions in its work.
“As a consultant, I have my feelings and sometimes I don’t agree with all my customers,” Mr. Swig said during the hearing. “But I don’t bite the hand that feeds me. It’s not a good policy.”

Mr. Swig said his vote on the contract was based purely on the number of points awarded to each of the competing firms by the panel, which scored CirclePoint over Arc Ecology by 0.2 points.

“Somebody has to lose,” Mr. Swig said in an interview. “We work really hard at keeping that playing field flat.”

Mr. Bloom co-founded Arc Ecology in 1983, when he was 30, after growing frustrated with the work of his employer, Greenpeace, which he said ignored race- and class-based environmental justice. Arc’s initial agenda was ending the Cold War and stemming nuclear weapons proliferation, and its activities included protests that led to arrests at a Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory testing facility near Tracy.

But the group has long since moved into science-based environmental assessment and outreach, with a focus on minority communities.

“As we moved along and the Cold War began to end we began to really ramp up our science end of things,” said Mr. Bloom, 57, sitting behind a tidy desk in a sparse office decorated with pictures of past protests and Albert Einstein. “We began to focus on providing technical support to communities.”

With the words “Community Window on the Shipyard Cleanup” emblazoned across its building’s facade, Mr. Bloom said there is no contradiction between his group’s advocacy work and its technical analysis and outreach regarding the shipyard project’s environmental impact.

In the group’s lawsuit, which seeks the return of its contract and alleges retribution by the Redevelopment Agency, the group said that its advocacy is private speech. CirclePoint’s plans to begin work for the Redevelopment Agency are on hold.

As Arc Ecology prepares to move to a smaller office space on Evans Street, Mr. Bloom said the group would continue to be involved in advocacy work. It is planning wetlands for the shipyard under an unrelated contract it holds with San Francisco International Airport, to help the city agency offset some of its impact on San Francisco Bay.

“We’re trying to be honest news brokers,” Mr. Bloom said. “We just tell the facts.”

jupton@baycitizen.org
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Saturday, January 8, 2011
Contact: Mayor’s Office of Communications 415-554-6131
City Attorney’s Office, 415-554-4662

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

MAYOR NEWSOM AND CITY ATTORNEY HERRERA ANNOUNCE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT WITH SIERRA CLUB AND GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY ON CANDLESTICK POINT - HUNTERS POINT SHIPYARD DEVELOPMENT LEGAL CHALLENGE

San Francisco, CA— Mayor Gavin Newsom and City Attorney Dennis Herrera today announced a settlement agreement with the Sierra Club and the Golden Gate Audubon Society (“Petitioners”) resolving and dismissing a CEQA lawsuit against the City, Redevelopment Agency and developer, which challenged aspects of the Candlestick Point - Hunters Point Shipyard Phase 2 development project (“Project”). The lawsuit focused on environmental impacts from the proposed construction of a bridge across Yosemite Slough, which is critical for the Project. The settlement agreement includes criteria for the design and construction of the bridge to lessen environmental impacts and also provides for significant habitat improvements.

“The development of the Hunters Point Shipyard and Candlestick Point is one of the most important development projects in the City’s history,” said Mayor Newsom. “This settlement will ensure the City can move forward without delay to transform the blighted shipyard and bring new housing, parks and thousands of jobs to the Southeast community.”

“This settlement preserves the enormous benefits of this project for Bayview Hunters Point residents, while maximizing protections for the delicate ecology and remarkable beauty of our San Francisco Bay,” said City Attorney Dennis Herrera. “Finding common ground in a multi-party CEQA lawsuit can be extremely difficult. Credit for the remarkable accomplishment goes to Mayor Gavin Newsom and his Office of Economic and Workforce Development for coordinating the agreement, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, the Sierra Club, the Golden Gate Audubon Society, and Lennar, the Project’s developer.”

The Project, which received approvals from respective City commissions and the Board of Supervisors in August 2010, will provide:

- 10,500 residential housing units across the project site, approximately 32% of which will be offered at below market rates in a mix of both rental and for-sale housing, which will target very-low, low and moderate-income households.
- The complete rebuilding of the Alice Griffith Public Housing Development, to provide one-for-one replacement of existing units.
- 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 sq. ft. of research and development uses on the Shipyard targeting “green” and clean tech uses and 150,000 sq. ft. of green office/research & development or other commercial space on Candlestick Point.
More than 300 acres of new and restored open space and active recreation areas, which includes neighborhood parks within Candlestick Point and the Shipyard, new waterfront parks around the entire perimeter of the Shipyard connecting to the region’s bay trail, and a major renovation of the Candlestick Point State Recreation Area into a “Crissy Field” of the southeast with restored habitat areas and public access to the water.

- Permanent new and renovated space for the existing Shipyard artists.
- 885,000 sq. ft. of regional and neighborhood-serving retail on Candlestick Point and the Shipyard.
- A 220 room hotel and a 10,000 seat performance venue on Candlestick Point.
- An opportunity site for a new, 69,000-seat, world-class football stadium for the San Francisco 49ers.
- More than $1 billion in transportation and other public infrastructure improvements.

At full build-out, the Project is estimated to create 10,000 permanent jobs, and thousands of ongoing construction opportunities during the 20-30 year build out.

“I am pleased that all parties have reached an agreement that ensures the comprehensive list of public benefits associated with this Project can move forward,” said District 10 Supervisor Sophie Maxwell. “The real beneficiaries of this settlement are the residents of Bayview Hunters Point, who will, after 17 years of community dialogue, finally see the transformation of these neglected areas into vibrant neighborhoods.”

The settlement agreement reached by the Sierra Club, Golden Gate Audubon, City, Redevelopment Agency and the Project’s developer, provides that the parties will work to ensure that the design and construction of the bridge across Yosemite Slough will:

- minimize the need for fill,
- reduce noise from vehicles traveling across the bridge,
- reduce the possibility of bird strikes,
- minimize light spill, and
- create an architecturally significant entryway that enhances views of the San Francisco.

Additionally, the parties to the settlement have agreed to pursue creating a backbarrier lagoon on Hunters Point Shipyard or to provide habitat enhancements to Bayview Hill or other area near the Project site. The Project developer has also committed to provide $200,000 upon completion of the construction of the lagoon, which will serve as a source of funding for maintenance of the lagoon. The agreement also provides for additional bird habitat enhancements, including a commitment by the Project developer to incorporate stormwater treatment seasonal wetlands into the design of the Grasslands Ecology Park, construct raptor perches/hunting posts or nest boxes in the area, pursue the creation of a refugium for water birds along the shoreline of the Hunters Point Shipyard and provide $90,000 for independent bird monitoring and surveys to document changes in bird communities on the Project site.

“The agreement creates benefits for the community and the open space, habitats and wildlife throughout the project area,” said Mark Welther, Executive Director of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. “The lagoon and other improvements will create an area whose beauty and ecological significance will rival Crissy Field.”
"A settlement that provides great benefits to both people and wildlife is not one that is often achievable. We’re extraordinarily pleased to have done so in this case," said Arthur Feinstein, Chair of the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter. "The result will be a development that benefits the residents of the Bayview and the entire east shore of San Francisco - long deprived of parklands - and also the wildlife that will make use of these new and restored habitats,"

“This Project is critical to the revitalization of the Bayview Hunters Point and the long term economic growth of the City,” said Board of Supervisors President David Chiu. “I commend all parties for a reasoned, principled settlement which addresses key concerns raised by the Sierra Club and Golden Gate Audubon Society and advances the communities vision for redevelopment.”

###
Environmental groups fighting the Hunters Point shipyard redevelopment project signed a settlement Saturday with San Francisco and the developer, removing a key legal hurdle for the planned new neighborhood of homes, retail, offices and open space.

The Sierra Club and the Golden Gate Audubon Society sued Florida developer Lennar Urban, the city and the city’s redevelopment agency in September, arguing that a proposed bridge over the Yosemite Slough would irreparably harm the shoreline and wildlife near Candlestick Point.

The agreement clears the way for construction by reducing the environment impact of the planned bridge and providing habitat improvements. Changes in the agreement include reducing the noise from vehicles traveling across the bridge, minimizing unnecessary lighting and lowering the risk of injury to birds.

The settlement also calls for creation of a lagoon along the shipyard’s southern shoreline. The lagoon, which will be separated from the bay by a barrier beach, is expected to provide a nursery for waterfowl and other species, along with foraging and roosting habitat.

"With this agreement, the community will have both economic development and the opportunity to enjoy a much improved shoreline that will provide essential habitat for wildlife," Mark Welther, executive director of the Golden Gate Audubon Society, said in a statement.

The Board of Supervisors in August approved the plan to convert the long-shuttered Navy base and area around Candlestick Park into a new neighborhood with 10,500 homes and 24,500 residents, along with the complete rebuilding of the Alice Griffith housing project. The redevelopment plan also includes office buildings, retail sites, research and development space and recreational areas.

The lawsuits have prevented Lennar from paying out $7 million in community benefits, the first installment in a package for workforce development and housing for the entire district.

Saturday’s settlement leaves one remaining unresolved lawsuit, which was filed over environmental issues by POWER, a community group based in the Bayview district. Officials from POWER did not return a call for comment on Saturday.

The development agreement requires that within 60 days of resolving all litigation the developer will begin funding the $82 million community benefits package, to be paid out over the lifetime of the project.

The settlement is a huge move forward for the project because it ensures that the bridge, considered a vital part of the plan to link the two parts of the project, will be built.

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/01/09/BAOQ1H6A5I.DTL&type=printable
"The development of the Hunters Point Shipyard and Candlestick Park is one of the most important development projects in the city's history," Mayor Gavin Newsom said in a statement. "This settlement will ensure the city can move forward without delay to transform the blighted shipyard and bring new housing, parks and thousands of jobs to the southeast community."

E-mail Victoria Colliver at vcolliver@sfchronicle.com.
Malia Cohen refuses political label

Refusing to pick sides, the newly elected representative of San Francisco's Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood promises collaboration and staking out positions on issues regardless from which political camp they originate.

The youngest of the four newly elected members to the Board of Supervisors, Malia Cohen, 33, says her experience running a business and various nonprofits along with a stint as a staffer in Mayor Gavin Newsom's administration has laid the foundation for her to become "a successful" legislator.

Since winning this November by beating out 20 other candidates in a competitive race, Cohen has been meeting with community groups, her soon-to-be-colleagues and city department staff. She will be sworn into office on Jan. 8.

The crash course will serve her well. The City faces a deficit of about $380 million, and she could cast a decisive vote selecting who will serve as San Francisco's mayor for at least the next year.

"It should be a caretaker mayor," Cohen said, meaning someone who will not run for election in November after serving the year in office. "And I do believe it should be the new board who should select."

Newsom may postpone his Jan. 3 swearing in for his lieutenant governor post, ensuring the new board will decide, not the current one.

Closing a budget deficit will be part of the workload right away, and that will include talks with labor unions about concessions.

One means of cutting back that Cohen has in mind is for elected officials to start paying into their pensions.

"When you are an elected member, you don't pay into your pension," Cohen said. "That's a problem. I do think everyone should be paying into their pension. There is no free ride. I should be paying in, members of the Board of Supervisors."

Her first-year focus for District 10 will be public safety. She also plans to facilitate the formation of a community benefit district for the entire Third Street corridor, as well as for San Bruno Avenue.

These districts, which assesses a fee on property owners if a majority approve, pay for enhanced services like increased security and marketing of businesses.

She now finds herself responsible for shepherding the massive redevelopment of the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard with plans of 10,500 new residences.
Malia Cohen refuses political label

The southeastern neighborhoods — along with District 6, which will be represented by newly elected progressive Supervisor Jane Kim — are where San Francisco will grow through massive development. She has discussed with Kim working together on legislation, as their districts face similar challenges.

On the legislative body, where every vote counts — it takes six to approve legislation and eight to override a mayoral veto — Cohen will likely find herself courted by both sides of the political aisle.

Cohen’s political bent is often compared to her that of her predecessor, Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, who was middle of the road, at times siding with the board’s progressive bloc, other times aligning herself with Newsom and his moderate allies. But Cohen refuses to be pinned down.

“I will be able to work with anyone,” Cohen said. “For me it's less about who is introducing [legislation] and what political camp that they self-identify. I’m never going to measure 100 percent up to anyone’s either moderate or progressive litmus test, so I don’t identify with either.”

Malia Cohen

*Date of birth:* Dec. 16, 1977

*Neighborhood you live in:* Bayview

*Occupation:* Small-business owner

*What is the most significant issue facing your district?* I think District 10’s double-digit unemployment rate is by far the most significant issue. This impacts quality of life, public safety and crime as well as public health.

*Do you support the use of gang injunctions to curb violence?* No. I believe that gang injunctions are a short-term fix to a much larger and complex problem. It’s analogous to a shell game. You’re simply moving criminal activity from one block to the next without really addressing the root causes of the problem.

*What concerns do you have about the Hunters Point Shipyard redevelopment?*

- Jobs for the local work force
- Affordable housing for families and seniors
- Gentrification

Q&A: SUPERVISOR SOPHIE MAXWELL LOOKS BACK

*What are your top three accomplishments?*

1 City Build (provides work force training and job placement services to San Francisco residents interested in pursuing a career in the construction industry, among other fields)

2 The rezoning of the eastern neighborhoods, it was the biggest rezoning in over 50 years.

3 And then, of course, Hunters Point Shipyard, and also the redevelopment plan.

*How do you want to be remembered?*
As somebody who helped empower people, believes in collective leadership and somebody who had integrity. Somebody who above all listened to people.

*What are the biggest challenges facing The City as you leave?*

I think trying to keep intact what we truly believe in because those things are under attack. We believe in everyone being healthy. We believe that everybody should be welcomed here. And that means poor people. We are losing that population of poor people. You have to be almost wealthy to be able to live here.

*What is the biggest challenge facing District 10 that your successor needs to deal with right away?*

A lot of promises have been made. We have a lot of development going on. The biggest challenge is to make sure that all the things that we have put in place, and there have been some great things, that those things actually happen and that we don't take no for answer. And that we continue to understand that the city has to have an industrial base because that helps to ensure that there are diversity of jobs.

*Biggest regret?*

You know, I really accomplished everything I set out to do. I had some big, huge things to accomplish.

*Who should be interim mayor?*

I think it should be someone who knows this city inside and out, no personal agendas and nobody else's personal agendas other than The City's and knows the departments inside and out, knows the budgets inside and out. We have a $380 million gorilla in the room. Ed Harrington [director of the Public Utilities Commission] is my first choice.

*What do you plan to do next?*

Being on a management team dealing with water issues.

*Words of wisdom for Malia Cohen?*

The No. 1 thing is to listen and a lot of times people have the answers, so if you listen hard enough you find the best answer since sliced bread. You don't have to know everything, but you have to listen.

jsabatini@sfexaminer.com
Settlement reached over Hunters Point project

Comments (0)

A settlement has been reached in a case brought by environmental groups who sued over plans to build a bridge as part of the redevelopment of San Francisco's abandoned Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.

The settlement announced Saturday addressed concerns the groups had raised over a 41-foot bridge over Yosemite Slough that would provide a high-speed bus link and pedestrian and bicycle connection between the two parts of the project area.

The Sierra Club and Audubon Society filed the suit in San Francisco Superior Court, saying the bridge could permanently damage shoreline and wildlife.

As part of the settlement, bird habitat areas will be improved, including a plan to build a backbarrier lagoon.

In announcing the settlement, Mayor Gavin Newsom termed the development "one of the most important development projects in the city's history."

Source URL: http://www.sfexaminer.com/news/california/2011/01/settlement-reached-over-hunters-point-project
Revolt against earmarks hits SF

A congressional rebellion against earmarks in Washington, D.C., might put several local projects at risk.

Cleanup of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and Pier 70, along with some of Mayor Gavin Newsom's projects, are losers now that the new Congress is curtailing earmarks. Last weekend, the $1.2 trillion federal omnibus spending plan failed to pass because Republican lawmakers refused to vote on a bill that contained what they referred to as wasteful spending.

That money, however, was aimed at several San Francisco projects and nonprofit organizations, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi inserting almost $34 million into the bill.

The biggest chunk was an earmark for cleanup at the shipyard — $9 million requested by Pelosi and another $8 million from Sen. Dianne Feinstein. Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill said cleanup efforts will still be funded by the Navy, but some money will be lost.

"If Senate Republicans had not killed it, the omnibus would have also included an additional $17 million for Hunters Point cleanup," he said.

Other city projects that will miss out on $1 million each include San Francisco's electric vehicle infrastructure, the Police Department's CompStat unit and plans to replace streetlights with energy-saving LED bulbs.

If federal funding continues to be removed, the Mayor's Office will have to adapt The City's budget, Newsom spokesman Tony Winnicker said. But many projects will continue to go forward, and federal funding comes from more areas than just earmarks, Winnicker said.

"We're confident that we can still compete for federal funds in this new environment," he said.

For nonprofits such as New Day for Learning, a drop-in educational center, the loss of a $300,000 earmark means that an innovative program that would have helped children learn during summer will have to be scrapped, according to Director Margaret Brodkin.

"What a loss for the children of San Francisco," Brodkin said. "The idea that this is wasteful and frivolous is wrong."

As lawmakers pay more attention to spending, wasteful or not, the future of other local projects remains uncertain.

"When Republicans in Washington cut vital services to the bone, this has real-life consequences for our city and the nation," Hammill said. "We will not stop fighting to ensure our budget reflects our values, makes smart investments and creates jobs."

Blocked

*House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s earmarks for city projects that will never see the light of day:*

- **$9 million:** Hunters Point Naval Shipyard cleanup
- **$2.4 million:** Pier 70 hazardous materials abatement
- **$1 million:** Golden Gate Park trails
- **$1.25 million:** SF Hope housing development work
- **$1.2 million:** Improvements to YMCA projects
- **$1 million:** SFPD’s CompStat
- **$1 million:** Electric vehicle initiative
- **$1 million:** LED streetlight project
- **$750,000:** Human trafficking prosecutions
- **$300,000:** New Day for Learning summer program

*Sources: Sen. Tom Coburn’s database, Sen. Nancy Pelosi’s office*

Ed Lee wants better relations with 49ers

Former Mayor Gavin Newsom had a notoriously strained relationship with 49ers owner Jed York. In fact, it got so bad it was thought the two had no relationship at all. While it appears Newsom will go down in history as the mayor who lost the 49ers, as that franchise pursues a new stadium in Santa Clara, not every one has given up on keeping the team in San Francisco. And not everything is going according to plan with the move.

City Administrator Ed Lee, who is to be appointed mayor of San Francisco at 3 p.m. Tuesday, said earlier in the day he wants to have a close relationship with York. Could Lee be the Hail Mary San Francisco football fans have been praying for?

“I don’t know about convincing them to stay, however, I will have a personal relationship. I want one with the 49ers owner, with Mr. Jed York. I want to know what he is thinking. I want to know what he feels about The City. I also want to let him know that I’m a big 49ers fan. Also let him know that I’m a West Coast offense guy,” Lee said.

The team and The City recently negotiated terms of an agreement for the team to keep playing in Candlestick for at least five more seasons.

Lee said good things can happen as result of improving relations.

“Anything can happen. What I have learned over the years. And I know [former Mayor] Willie Brown taught me this very well, those relationships are key because you begin discussing what is common, philosophy and then you build trust,” Lee said. “I know that the 49ers, while they are a business organization, every business also works also on trust, particularly with government officials. If we can make an assurance here and there that certain things can happen and they can respond positively to that who knows where it goes. I am full of hope. In this sports arena you never have one way of making the play. There is always many ways. And I think when you work as a team, when you believe in the people that are working with you, a lot of other things can happen. That really has worked very well for me in these years.”

The City has a plan for a brand new stadium as part of the massive redevelopment of Bayview-Hunters Point if the team decided to stay.
Hunters View redevelopment struggles to hire locally

In the 1940s, San Francisco's Bayview Hunters Point was home to one of the most important shipyards on America's West Coast. The shipyard employed nearly 20,000 workers. They were mostly African-American migrants who came to San Francisco, lured by the Navy's promise of steady work. The buildings they lived in were meant to be temporary - but after the war ended, they became permanent parts of the landscape.

People kept living in them even after the shipyard closed in the 1970s, and the neighborhood became one of the city's poorest.

Now, San Francisco wants to redevelop the area for market-rate housing. And that means demolishing some of those old buildings. New construction means new jobs, but residents are wondering just how many of those jobs are for them. Deia de Brito reports.

Read the rest of this article at KALWNews.org

Posted By: KALW News (Email) | January 11, 2011 at 04:47 PM

Comments
Jerry Brown wants to eliminate Redevelopment

By sarah
Created 01/04/2011 - 4:21pm

Calitics reveals today that newly sworn-in Gov. Jerry Brown told the Sacramento Bee that he’s proposing to eliminate local redevelopment agencies as part of a set of austerity measures that he is proposing in a purported effort to shock folks into approving new revenues.

Brown’s shocking proposal got me calling tenants rights activist Calvin Welch and Arc Ecology executive director Saul Bloom, who both have strong and well-informed views on what’s up with local redevelopment agencies and how they could be improved. And interestingly neither Bloom nor Welch was in favor of eliminating redevelopment.

Welch, who hadn’t yet had time to read the article when I called him, actually laughed when I outlined Brown’s basic idea, which admittedly is big on shock value and thin on explanations, at least at this point.

“That would be very interesting, but the devil’s in the details,” Welch observed, noting that voters just approved Prop. 22 in Nov. 2010 to prevent the state from taking city redevelopment money to balance the budget in Sacramento. (Unfortunately, Prop. 22’s passage still doesn’t protect San Francisco from having its budget raided by the state, since it’s defined as both a city and a county.)

“That’s an astounding idea,” Welch added, trying to wrap his mind around Brown’s out-of-the-blue proposal. “Because in San Francisco, there are redevelopment areas, including Bayview Hunters Point, Mission Bay and the Transbay Terminal, that have already been authorized for another 25-30 years.”
"Perhaps the language would be 'no new redevelopment' but I don't know how you would do that," Welch added, noting that Brown has not only been governor before, but was also mayor of Oakland. (During his term as mayor, Brown was credited with starting the revitalization of Oakland but was also accused of being more interested in downtown redevelopment and economic growth than political ideology.)

Welch noted that San Francisco was fortunate in being able to reshape its Redevelopment financing arrangements in 1990 under then mayor Art Agnos.

"It was probably the most progressive and long standing reform of Art Agnos’ administration—and no one understands it," Welch said. As Welch tells it, when Agnos came into office, he inherited a city that had been bankrupted by a decade of mayor Dianne Feinstein’s business-friendly policies, much like how San Francisco has been milked in the past decade by Newsom’s business-friendly policies.

"Redevelopment doesn’t pay its way in the post Prop. 13 world," Welch stated. "Under Mayor Gavin Newsom, we’ve had the most market rate housing produced and the biggest deficits in what was a real estate collapse, as part of the collapse of the economic markets. And under Mayor Feinstein’s 10-year rule, we saw massive amounts of commercial office space built that never paid its way, leaving Agnos with a $103 million deficit."

Welch notes that Agnos also inherited a huge homeless crisis (something Welch says Feinstein was in denial over) and that Agnos sought to reform Redevelopment in large part as a way to address the city’s growing lack of affordable housing. "Art basically said, let’s take a look at tax increment financing," Welch said, referring to a tax financing arrangement, under which a municipality can a) do an assessed value of an area before redevelopment takes place, b) estimate what that same area’s local taxes would be after redevelopment, and c) borrow money against the incremental difference between a) and b).

"Art said, 'I want to do that and I want to use the hundreds of millions of dollars available through redevelopment for affordable housing,'" Welch recalled. He noted that Agnos succeeded in his mission by shifting the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency’s mission from ‘urban renewal’ (which had negative connotations following the displacement of African American and other low-income communities from the Fillmore in the 1960s) to ‘community development,’ making Redevelopment subject to the same budgetary process as other departments, and insisting that 20 percent of tax increment financing dollars be devoted to affordable housing.

"But we said, 'no, 50 percent has to be devoted to affordable housing and Art agreed, and that’s been the case since 1990," Welch recalled. "And since then our Redevelopment Agency has been the principal source of affordable housing revenue in San Francisco."

So, in another words, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency is pretty much alone in the state, in terms of devoting half its tax increment financing revenues to affordable housing. But by the same token, San Francisco’s Redevelopment Agency is pretty much alone in the state in terms of not being governed directly by a city council or a county Board of Supervisors. Instead, it’s governed by a Commission, whose members are appointed solely by the mayor. And therein lies the problem, Welch says.

'It would only take six votes on the Board of Supervisors, or eight votes to override a mayoral veto, to change that," Welch observed.

But to date there haven’t been eight votes to do that, even with a progressive Board. Welch believes the problem is that supervisors, who currently each only have two legislative aides, fear swamping from Redevelopment responsibilities.

"To contemplate taking over a multibillion dollar agencies and taking on the likes of Catellus with only two staffers, well it’s a recipe for disaster," Welch said, acknowledging that additional reforms, including splitting appointments on the Redevelopment Commission between the mayor and the Board, or allowing the Board to hire additional legislative staff to work on redevelopment issues, could solve the problem.

Jerry Brown wants to eliminate Redevelopment

Bloom, who recently sued after the Redevelopment Commission threw his non-profit under the bus, said his non-profit’s recent experience perfectly illustrates why and how Redevelopment should be reformed, rather than completely eliminated.

“Redevelopment is a process that has been much abused, so it’s easy to say, let’s get rid of it, but I’m not there,” Bloom said, noting that his beef has been with the way his non-profit was treated by Redevelopment Commissioners, rather than Redevelopment staff.

“But I do believe there needs to be a modification of the process, in which redevelopment is put in the hands of an entity that is answerable to the public.”

Bloom believes this modification could be achieved by making the Board of Supervisors the governing body of the Redevelopment Agency, which is already the case in almost all municipalities in California.

“Give that role to the Board of Supervisors because you can fire your supervisor,” Bloom said, noting that currently there are no limits on how long individuals, who are appointed by the mayor, can serve on the Redevelopment Commission. “If you give that role to the supervisors, they will be able to utilize more staff to become better Board members. So, this is an opportunity to increase people’s participation in the process.”

Meanwhile, it’s possible that Brown’s threat to eliminate Redevelopment will be like the time Warren Buffett, who’d just been announced as then newly elected Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s financial adviser, caused a brou-haha when he threatened to reform that even holier of cows, Prop. 13.

Source URL: http://www.sfbg.com/politics/2011/01/04/jerry-brown-wants-eliminate-redevelopment

Links:
Governor Brown's Progressive Shock Doctrine Takes Shape

by: Robert Cruickshank
Tue Jan 04, 2011 at 07:00:00 AM PST

As Jerry Brown finishes the first 24 hours of his third term as California governor, we're learning more about his proposed budget solutions - specifically, the austerity he will use to try and shock voters into approving new revenues, and what those new revenues might be. The Sacramento Bee has more:

The broad set of budget cuts that Gov.-elect Jerry Brown will propose in the coming days would touch nearly all Californians, eliminating local redevelopment agencies, shrinking social service benefits, shuttering parks and reducing library hours, according to a source familiar with his budget proposal.

Brown, to be sworn in this morning, wants to slash virtually every state-funded program to help balance California's massive deficit, in many cases resurrecting cuts sought by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger but rejected by lawmakers. Brown would restrict Medi-Cal access, divert low-level offenders to county jails and cut deeply into California State University and the University of California.

The Democrat is counting on lawmakers to approve the cuts to encourage voters to also provide revenue. A June ballot measure would extend higher tax rates on income, vehicles and sales set to expire this year, as well as eliminate a new corporate tax benefit. The money from the vehicle and sales tax extensions would be sent to local governments, which would take on some functions the state performs now.

The article goes on to note that Brown will try to get voters to approve moving funds from Prop 10 (the First 5 program, funded by cigarette taxes) and Prop 63 (the mental health surcharge on incomes over $1 million). You might remember that voters once before rejected raids on those funding sources, when Props 1D and 1E went down in flames in the May 2009 special election.

In many ways, Brown's proposals resemble the May 2009 special election closely. His other revenue proposals would be extensions of those existing revenues, just as was proposed in Prop 1A. That initiative failed when progressives balked at the spending cap. Brown hopes that progressives will support these revenues in order to reverse the all-cuts budget, and that other Californians not on the right will support them out of a desire to protect schools, parks, libraries and other vital services.

Similarly, some of Brown's other revenue proposals didn't fare well at the ballot, such as Prop 24, which would have closed the 2008-09 corporate tax loopholes but was rejected by voters in November 2010. And voters didn't seem too interested in saving state parks for a measly $18/year, which most voters could easily afford. Brown is obviously banking on Californians being sick of austerity and, finally seeing that there really are only two options - collapse or new revenues - that they will choose to save California.

To put it mildly, this strategy is pretty fucking risky. It may be the only way to get new revenues approved, but it is going to require a major mobilization of progressive activists to make the case for these revenues - especially to voters who consider themselves progressive but who have bought the right-wing talking points that they're "taxed enough already" and that if they're asked to pay another dime, they'll vote no out of spite. We saw some comments to that effect the last time I discussed Brown's shock doctrine. While the resentment at the way the rich have escaped their burdens is understandable, letting kids and the poor suffer isn't a legitimate response. If these initiatives are clean - i.e. not compromised by some right-wing thing like a spending cap - then progressives should support them. Either we're all in this together, or we're not. And besides, if we want to convince voters to approve new taxes for the rich, we have to show that a statewide electorate will raise taxes at all.

The other interesting story here is Gov. Brown's proposal to eliminate the redevelopment agencies. Getting rid of enterprise zones is a no-brainer; those things have been a costly failure. But the redevelopment agencies aren't as clear-cut a case. Many such agencies are providing some of the most effective and forward-thinking urban planning in the state, much more so than the relatively status quo-friendly planning departments of most cities. Further, many major urban projects are dependent on redevelopment dollars, such as a convention center expansion in San Diego.

On the other hand, one could make a pretty strong case that funding our schools is more important than enlarging the San Diego convention center so that Comic-Con doesn't move to LA or Anaheim. And Gov. Brown may not need voter approval to abolish the redevelopment agencies and redirect their funding to schools.

Overall, this is a very risky move by Gov. Brown. I'm a bit surprised that he appears to be trying for tax increases and financial solutions that were rejected by voters in 2009 and 2010, and while Californians do need to be shown what will happen if those revenues aren't approved, Brown would also do well to add some new kinds of tax solutions as well - particularly higher taxes on those making $200,000 or more. Either way, progressives are going to have quite a fight on our hands this year, and if we lose, California will be headed into the abyss for some time to come.

Close Window
As California faces a budget deficit that could top $28 billion over the next 18 months, Gov. Jerry Brown and other state leaders are poised to shift the responsibility for providing some services from the state to counties and cities.

In one of his first meetings as governor, Brown spoke with county leaders Tuesday about significantly restructuring government. He also attempted to allay the fears of some local officials that the state could pass off duties without providing sufficient means to pay for them.

"We're going to shift funding to the local level, we're going to make sure there's enough responsibility and discretion to use the money in the wisest possible ways," Brown told reporters after the meeting, adding that he does not believe it will be an easy change. "There will be controversies."

Brown did not publicly lay out a specific plan, but said he is considering changing the way foster care, welfare, food stamps, redevelopment, and parole and probation services are provided to the public.

Brown's campaign plan

The restructuring is the underpinning of Brown's campaign promise to move the responsibility for delivery and funding of government services closer to the people instead of keeping it concentrated in Sacramento.

The meeting at the headquarters of the California State Association of Counties was met with praise from that organization's leaders, who said they believe counties and local government agencies can provide the same services more efficiently than a statewide bureaucracy.

Money must be there

Chief among the concerns of locals, though, is that the state would hand over responsibility without sufficient resources to pay for them. County officials have in the past complained that that's what happened when the state gave them oversight of In-Home Supportive Services for the elderly and the disabled.

"We expressed to the governor that the money has to be there with the shifts, but we can ultimately save money on the local level by being more efficient," said John Tavaglione, president of the California State Association of Counties and a Riverside County supervisor.

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/01/05/MN331H1G82.DTL&type=printable
Senate Democrats in June proposed restructuring government over several years by shifting the oversight of juvenile parolees from the state to the counties and by moving low-level criminal offenders from state prisons to county jails.

They also proposed transferring some welfare duties and programs for the elderly, including adult protective services. Making those changes would move billions of dollars worth of costs for providing services from the Capitol to the state's 58 counties.

The Senate plan called for a new tax on oil plus adjusting some current taxes to provide up to $4.2 billion to counties to pay for the new duties.

It's a starting point

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, the leading proponent of the restructuring, said he sees the Senate proposal as a starting point in a drive to eliminate overlap in government. Currently, more than 70 percent of the money the state collects is passed through to counties, school districts and other local bodies to provide services for residents.

In short, Steinberg said, "If you are responsible for providing the service, you ought to have the responsibility on how to pay for it. And if you don't have the responsibility for providing the service, then you ought not to be the one ... raising the money."

The money-raising issue could prove to be the most difficult at the Capitol, as Democrats have said local governments should have greater ability to raise taxes while Republicans have opposed that transfer of power. Steinberg said he would let Brown decide whether the shift would entail the power to raise local taxes.

After the meeting Tuesday, Brown told reporters: "If we're doing something here, we can send it back to the counties and send the money with it and it does not require a tax." He added, when asked about giving local entities new authorities to tax, that first he wants to "give them some responsibility with some funding."

Brown refused to comment on whether he would seek an extension of taxes set to expire, or new taxes, as part of his budget solution.

Higher taxes predicted

Steinberg said a restructuring is critical if leaders decide to ask voters to increase taxes in the near future, as many Capitol observers say is likely.

"I just don't think the public is going to look at the revenue question, which is going to be an inevitable discussion, and say, 'Let's use that to continue (the current) structure.' I just don't think that will happen," he said.

He said the state should set minimum standards for public services to ensure some uniformity among counties and other local agencies, but he would try to avoid hard mandates to allow them some flexibility to run the programs.

Brown will release his budget Jan. 10.
The funding and control of services began moving from counties and other local agencies to the state after the 1978 passage of Proposition 13, which limited property taxes and was passed during Brown's first term as governor.

**1991 restructuring**

That's when the state began backfilling billions of dollars lost from local coffers. California's last major restructuring happened in 1991, when the state was facing a multibillion-dollar budget deficit. That year the state shifted $2 billion worth of services, including mental health and in-home services for the elderly and disabled, to counties.

The restructuring generally is regarded as being successful for mental health services, but some counties still are upset with the state because resources to pay for services such as in-home services have not kept up with demand and have burdened local budgets, said Marianne O'Malley, director of general government for the Legislative Analyst's Office.

E-mail Wyatt Buchanan at wbuchanan@sfchronicle.com.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/01/05/MN331H1G82.DTL

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Gov. Jerry Brown's proposal to eliminate redevelopment agencies and enterprise zones baffled city and county officials who have relied on the two programs for decades to spur economic growth and development in depressed areas.

Critics said the move will exacerbate the state's flailing economy, push jobs out of California and take important tools away from local governments looking to eliminate blight and improve job prospects in underserved communities. They also expressed confusion about which projects will be impacted.

**New projects impacted**

Although Brown emphasized that his proposal will only affect new redevelopment projects, not "bonds or commitments that have been contractually entered into," redevelopment officials said Monday they are still sorting out exactly which projects would be impacted.

In Oakland, for example, city officials planned to use redevelopment funds for a new Athletics ballpark and transit village at the MacArthur BART Station. Their ability to do so is now in doubt. And San Francisco redevelopment director Fred Blackwell said a number of planned projects in that city, including some phases of the Hunters View revitalization, development of affordable housing on former freeway parcels, and redevelopment of the Hugo Hotel at Sixth and Howard streets, are now in jeopardy. Blackwell called the situation "dire."

"Right now we have more questions than we have answers," said Oakland City Councilwoman Jane Brunner. "We need to see how exactly this is going to work."

**$2.7 billion savings**

Eliminating the two programs will save the state's general fund nearly $2.7 billion over the next 18 months, money Brown plans to use to stave off deeper cuts to health care, trial courts and local services. In future years, the funding - which will increase as redevelopment projects are completed - will be given directly to schools, cities and counties as part of the new governor's plan to bring government services closer to the people. To replace redevelopment funds, the new governor also wants to allow cities and counties to raise some taxes with the approval of 55 percent of voters.

Mark Hill, a program budget manager with the state Department of Finance, said cities and counties will be able to move forward with projects in the future - they will just have to decide whether they want to use the former redevelopment funds for those purposes, or ask voters to approve taxes.

Still, Bay Area development leaders warned of dire consequences. They said eliminating redevelopment as an option for counties and cities will have a long-term impact on blight, jobs and housing. According to the
California Redevelopment Association, redevelopment activities support more than 304,000 jobs in the state, contribute tens of billions of dollars to the economy and generate $2 billion in taxes every year.

"It's cannibalizing local government," said San Pablo City Councilman Leonard McNeil. "This is a weak-kneed response to the budget crisis - absconding with the economic engine that fuels hundreds of cities across the state."

There are dozens of redevelopment projects under way or in the pipeline in the Bay Area. San Pablo is relying on city and county redevelopment funds to build a 19-acre site for retail, housing and a Doctors Medical Center clinic. In Richmond, the city is using redevelopment funds for downtown revitalization, a new BART parking garage and a slew of affordable housing projects, parks, retail areas and community centers.

**Mid-market on hold**

Most of those projects are probably far enough along to escape the ax. But Blackwell said future projects - such as the possible redevelopment of San Francisco's squalid Mid-Market area - will now be impossible to move forward.

California's redevelopment program has, since the 1950s, allowed local governments to develop blighted areas by borrowing against future property taxes in those zones. In San Francisco, it has enabled the city to build more than 25,000 units of housing and transform areas such as Yerba Buena Center in the South of Market neighborhood from a series of rundown buildings and vacant lots to a cultural center and vibrant public park.

**Enterprise zones**

In his budget proposal, Brown argued that the mechanism has taken billions in revenue away from schools, public safety and other local programs by earmarking property tax revenues that otherwise would have flowed to state and local coffers. He also contended that the private development that has occurred in redevelopment areas would often have taken place even without the program.

Enterprise zones, created in 1984, allow local governments to offer tax credits to businesses that invest in underserved and low-income areas that meet certain requirements. There are currently 42 of these zones in California, including a number in the Bay Area. In San Francisco, for example, an "enterprise zone" covering a huge swath of the city gives businesses $36,000 in tax breaks for every hard-to-hire worker employed.

E-mail the writers at mlagos@sfchronicle.com and carolynjones@sfchronicle.com.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/01/11/MN2P1H6U2L.DTL
Gov. Jerry Brown on Monday proposed $12.5 billion in cuts to a wide range of state programs and $12 billion in revenue, partly from an extension of tax increases, to close California's budget deficit. Here are some of his proposals.

OVERVIEW:

— Total spending, including special funds and bond payments, is $127.4 billion for the 2011-12 fiscal year, slightly ahead of the current total spending of $125.2 billion.

— General fund spending is $84.6 billion, slightly less than the $86.5 billion adopted for the current fiscal year.

— The deficit is $8.2 billion in the current fiscal year and $17.2 billion in the fiscal year that begins July 1.

TAX EXTENSIONS & BORROWING

— Ask voters during a special election in June to maintain a 0.25 increase in the state income tax rate, an increase from 0.65 percent to 1.15 percent in the vehicle license fee and a 1 percent increase in the state sales tax for another five years. If approved, some of the revenue from the sales tax and vehicle license fees would go to local governments.

— Ends a corporate tax break and streamlines the current tax structure by requiring all corporations to pay taxes solely on their share of sales in California, generating $942 million.

— Ends tax breaks available to businesses that operate in depressed areas designated as enterprise zones, generating $924 million.

— Borrows $362 million from the unemployment compensation disability fund to pay for interest the state owes on unemployment insurance loans.

— Extends a hospital tax that expired at the end of 2010, bringing in an extra $160 million.

— Uses $98 million in funds from Proposition 63, the voter-approved mental health fund, to pay for mental health services for special education students, saving that money from the general fund.

EDUCATION

— Cuts of $500 million each for the University of California and California State University systems.
Gov. Jerry Brown's budget plan at a glance

— Cuts $400 million from the California Community College system and increases fees to $36 per unit from $26 per unit, which is forecast to bring in $110 million.

MEDI-CAL:

— Caps doctor visits to 10 per year and sets maximum annual benefit limits for items such as hearing aids, medical equipment and urological supplies for a savings of $217 million.

— Requires co-payments from Medi-Cal recipients of $5 for doctor's office visits and most prescriptions, and a $50 emergency room co-payment; limits the number of prescription drugs to six per month, for a savings of $557 million.

— Eliminates the adult day health care program and other benefits for a savings of $193 million.

— Reduces payments by 10 percent to physicians, pharmacies, clinics, transportation, home health and some nursing facilities, for a savings of $709 million.

— Extends a hospital fee that expired at the end of 2010 until June 30, for a savings of $160 million.

OTHER CUTS:

— Caps benefits in the CalWORKS welfare-to-work program at four years instead of five and cuts program funding, for a savings of $533 million.

— Reduces the number of hours of help available and cuts benefits entirely to some recipients in the state's in-home supportive services program for the disabled, saving $486 million.

— Repeals many state mandates for local governments and school districts not related to law enforcement or property taxes, for a savings of $228 million. Brown wants to review all reimbursable mandates with the Legislature, which would have to approve any changes.

— Assumes $200 million in savings by reorganizing state agencies and programs and reducing such items as outside contracts and vehicle and cell phone use.

— Cuts pay by 10 percent for the six state employee bargaining groups that are operating without a contract, saving $308 million.

— Adds a lower-cost "core health plan" for state employees, for a savings of $72 million.

— Cuts funding for county fairs, saving $32 million.

— Cuts $15 million in funding from the Department of Food and Agriculture.

— Cuts $11 million from state parks that could lead to the closure of some parks.

GOVERNMENT REALIGNMENT:

Brown wants to shift a host of responsibilities from the state to counties, including:

— Keeping low-level offenders in county jails rather than state prisons and making local authorities responsible for monitoring parolees, reducing the corrections budget by $458 million. This is forecast to eventually lead to the elimination of 4,000 state corrections jobs.

— Transferring responsibility for child welfare services such as foster care, adoptions and child abuse prevention and adult protective services for seniors.


1/11/2011
— Eliminating local redevelopment agencies.

— Realigning emergency responsibilities so the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection would no longer respond to some 60,000 medical emergencies each year.

— Cutting state operations for health and human services programs with federal requirements by 25 percent, which would lead to "hundreds of state positions being eliminated."

Source: California Department of Finance.

Brown: California needs wholesale restructuring

As he inherits California's chronic budget problems, Gov. Jerry Brown says he wants to try a new approach to dealing with the state's massive deficits: a broad restructuring of the relationship between the state and local governments.

His proposal would shift many services now offered by the state to cities and counties. California's government has become too centralized and its tax revenue hasn't kept pace with residents' expectations, he said Tuesday.

On his first full day on the job, Brown met with county leaders to discuss shifting responsibility for a host of state-run programs. If eventually implemented, such a change would return some of California's government structure to the way it was before voters passed Proposition 13, the landmark property tax revolt, in 1978.

Counties would have greater responsibility for a host of programs that Californians are most closely connected with, including health care, public safety and welfare.

"This will be a complex undertaking to realign jobs, whether it's in foster care or welfare or food stamps, redevelopment," Brown told reporters after meeting with officials at the California State Association of Counties. "We're going to try to redistribute power in a way that's closest to the people, that it makes sense, and that services and the work of government can be delivered in the most effective, transparent way."

The maneuver is one way in which Brown is attempting to address an estimated $28 billion budget deficit through June 2012. The shortfall comes after several years of budget deficits that have shown the state has a chronic imbalance in revenue and spending.

The governor has said he will ask Californians to decide what services they are willing to give up or pay more for.

The shift to a more centralized state government began when Brown was last governor, when voters in 1978 approved Proposition 13, which rolled back local property taxes and capped annual increases, shifting the financial burden for schools and other services to the state.

"Proposition 13, because it took away the power of counties to tax, for the most part, it sent the decisions up to Sacramento. So we want to redistribute all that," Brown said Tuesday.
Brown acknowledged that many interest groups will be out to protect their own programs, making the discussions controversial and compromise elusive. Tuesday's meeting, while upbeat, did not include specifics about his plans.

For example, it is unclear what would happen to the state agencies and employees who currently oversee many of the programs, although Brown mentioned the goal is to "realign jobs."

County leaders are eager to be part of the conversation, although they repeatedly stressed that they cannot offer programs without adequate funding.

Association President John Tavaglione, a Riverside County supervisor, said counties already deliver many of the services, such as foster care, but face burdensome regulations and mandates from the state about how to do it.

"We know how to provide the programs better. We are the providers of the programs and if we are given the opportunity with less restrictions, less regulation, we know we can be more efficient," Tavaglione said.

Yolo County Supervisor Mike McGowan, the association's first vice president, said the state Legislature and former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger never articulated the state's funding priorities.

"It's just like at home — you fund to your priorities. If you don't have enough money, then things have to come off the table," McGowan said. "There's been an avoidance of that throughout the state, I think, for many, many years."

McGowan said the funding options include dramatic cuts to services and programs, a statewide tax increase to fund services, or local governments appealing to voters to pay for specific programs.

In a budget proposal that fizzled last summer, Senate President Pro Tem Darrel Steinberg, D-Sacramento, proposed shifting a host of state programs to local control, including moving low-level offenders out of state prisons and into county jails, many of which also are crowded.

The plan also called for local governments to take more responsibility for juvenile parole services, the administration of CalWORKS, the state's welfare-to-work program, and protective services for the elderly.

Steinberg proposed to help counties pay for doing the extra work by making permanent a temporary vehicle tax hike, imposing a new oil tax and delaying corporate tax breaks.

Voters in recent years have repeatedly rejected ballot measures that called for increasing statewide taxes, even temporary ones. In May 2009, they voted down an extension of temporary increases to the sales, income and vehicle taxes.

But they also have shown they are most concerned about what happens in their communities, providing momentum for a legislative effort to make city and county governments more responsible for services.

In November, voters approved Proposition 22, which is intended to keep more money in local governments' hands by restricting the state's ability to borrow from then.

Voters also are much more likely to approve higher taxes locally than on a statewide basis.

An analysis by The Associated Press after last year's June primary found that California voters approved 73 percent of the 60 local revenue measures on ballots in a six-month span, with even those requiring two-thirds majorities faring well.
Still, leaving such decisions up to local voters could lead to a patchwork of services, leaving financially struggling areas with fewer services for residents.

Brown on Tuesday did not address reports that he will balance deep spending cuts in his Jan. 10 budget proposal with a spring special election to extend temporary tax increases.

"I really can't get into any more detail, because we have a very complicated budget that we want you to look at in totality and not just get snippets from me," Brown said.

Brown has said he would not raise taxes without voter approval, but he will need some Republican help to reach the two-thirds legislative vote necessary to place any tax or fee measure on the ballot.
Jerry Brown pledges honest, painful budget for California

Gov. Jerry Brown said Monday he will propose a painful but honest budget next week likely relying on deep cuts to state services and an extension of temporary taxes as he tries to prepare Californians for more tough times ahead.

On the day he was sworn-in as California's 39th governor, Brown sought in his inaugural address to strike a cooperative tone with lawmakers, asking them to "rise above ideology and partisan interest and find what is required for the good of California."

Democratic and Republican leaders welcomed that approach.

"Today's a day I think when everybody needs to think positively," said Assembly Minority Leader Connie Conway, R-Tulare.

California has faced several years of budget deficits and confronts an estimated $28 billion shortfall through June 2012.

Brown did not addressed reports that he will balance deep spending cuts with a special election to extend temporary tax increases. The Los Angeles Times and The Sacramento Bee, citing unnamed sources, have reported that Brown will propose a special election to extend a variety of temporary tax hikes that are set to expire by July.

California had temporarily raised the state income tax rate by 0.25 percent, increased the fee for licensing vehicles from 0.65 percent to 1.15 percent and hiked the sales tax by 1 percent as part of a February 2009 budget deal cut by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and lawmakers.

The Bee, citing anonymous sources, reported Monday that Brown will propose eliminating local redevelopment agencies, reducing social service benefits and closing some state parks.

Public education is the largest part of the state budget, accounting for roughly 40 percent of general fund spending. Per pupil spending in California is roughly $1,000 less than it was three years ago.

When asked about education funding on Monday, Brown said, "You'll have to wait."

Brown said he would not raise taxes without voter approval, but will need some Republican help to reach the two-thirds legislative vote necessary to place any tax or fee measure on the ballot.
He remained vague Monday in responding to reporters' questions about a possible special election as he left the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium after his inaugural address.

"I'll confer with the legislative leaders, and we'll work something out that makes sense, but we don't have a lot of time and we've gotta cover a lot of ground," he said.

Brown also could try to make changes that voters rejected in 2009, including taking money from voter-approved programs intended for early childhood development and mental health care.

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, said Democrats who control both houses of the Legislature will be more willing to make the same cuts former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed if they are proposed by Brown.

"The context is different, and I'm looking forward to working with the new governor very closely," Steinberg said.

The newspapers reported that the new governor will seek to shift more tax revenue to local governments in exchange for their taking on more responsibility for services. In exchange, he will revive some Schwarzenegger proposals that failed to gain legislative support, such as restricting Medi-Cal access, diverting low-level offenders to county jails and cutting deeply into higher education.

"Hopefully the Democrats will listen to him more about spending than they did to me," Schwarzenegger said.

In recent years, the state has sought to save money by reducing health care benefits, eliminating dental insurance for low-income adults, reducing in-home services for seniors and the disabled, laying off thousands of teachers in public schools and furloughing state government workers.

"If the budget is going to be balanced, you have no choice: You either have to produce enough money to keep spending like drunken sailors or you have to cut back as if you're almost homeless. And he's talking about doing both," said former Assembly speaker and San Francisco mayor Willie Brown.
Gov. Jerry Brown promised Californians that his budget proposal would avoid gimmicks, and budget experts who reviewed the plan said Brown has mostly stuck to his word.

In tackling the projected $25.4 billion deficit, Brown has proposed $12.5 billion in cuts and an additional $12 billion in taxes and avoided relying on solutions that have little chance of materializing, the experts said. Such gimmicks used to balance the budget in the past have merely pushed the problem into future fiscal years.

Over the past three years, between 75 and 85 percent of deficit solutions never came to fruition, according to the Department of Finance. Brown's budget might break that trend.

"I think this budget is really much more realistically put together than budgets of recent years," said Jean Ross, executive director of the California Budget Project, a Sacramento think tank that advocates for low-income Californians.

Brown's budget, Ross said, "has a much lower reliance on one-time solutions than we've seen in recent years."

She said long-term solutions mean state programs and services - many for poor, sick and elderly residents - face the prospect of deep and permanent cuts.

Some one-time fixes

Brown did, however, include a few proposals that are one-time fixes, rely on borrowing and put payments off until later years.

For example, Brown proposed plugging $5.4 billion of the deficit by borrowing from other internal state funds, shifting property tax revenues from redevelopment agencies to counties, and taking money from voter-approved funds for services for the mentally ill and for young children.

Not relying on bailouts

But H.D. Palmer, spokesman for the state Department of Finance, noted that Brown avoided relying on nonsecured measures such as multibillion-dollar federal bailouts, which former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger included in his last budget even though the money never had been offered to the state.

Palmer said the deficit itself has about $8.2 billion in one-time expenses and so, "Since a portion of the shortfall is one-time in nature, it's appropriate to use solutions that are also one time."
Additionally, Brown plans to put off $2.1 billion in payments to K-12 public schools, a practice known as a "payment deferral." Such deferrals have been a common practice in past budgets and have yet to be paid in full. Adding that much more would bring such deferred payments owed to schools to a total of nearly $10 billion.

And Brown included in his budget the sale of 11 state office buildings, a Schwarzenegger-era deal that has been criticized by nonpartisan entities including the Legislative Analyst's Office. When Brown released his budget Monday, he told reporters he had not decided whether to go forward with the sale. Not doing so would add about $1.4 billion to the deficit.

Fred Silva, a senior fiscal policy adviser for the California Forward think tank and a longtime fiscal adviser at the Capitol, said Brown's budget proposal represents a major change from the year-to-year thinking that has driven spending plans going back to Gov. Pete Wilson in the early 1990s.

But Republicans in California said deficits would be a persistent problem unless Brown tackles public employee pensions and reforms collective bargaining with unions in public schools.

"His proposal is completely inadequate because it does not affect the underlying factors that are cost drivers of state government," said Ron Nehring, chairman of the California Republican Party.

One budget tactic that could become an issue is the billions of dollars in unallocated, or nonspecific, cuts that Brown has proposed for higher education and the court system. Schwarzenegger proposed similarly large, unspecified cuts to prisons that never were fully made.

**Cuts in the courts**

California's new chief justice, Tani Cantil-Sakauye, met with leaders of the judiciary and the State Bar in San Francisco on Tuesday to discuss Brown's proposed $200 million unallocated cut in the courts' budget.

They will work to try to reduce this "alarming and grave challenge to the judicial branch," Cantil-Sakauye said in an interview after the meetings. Reducing the size of the cut would mean a loss of that money in overall budget savings.

She said all court programs would be on the table, but said the top priority would be preventing closures of courts like those imposed from July 2009 through June 2010, when all of California's courts shut down the third Wednesday of each month to bridge most of a $100 million gap in the judicial budget.

"Our goal today is to keep the courts open," Cantil-Sakauye said. "Especially in times of crisis, when services to people are cut, homes are lost and jobs are taken, the courts need to be open so citizens can come and plead their case. The judicial branch is the safety net."

*Chronicle staff writer Bob Egelko contributed to this report.*

E-mail Wyatt Buchanan at wbuchanan@sfdchronicle.com.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/01/12/MN5P1H7JBS.DTL

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1/12/2011
They like it, they really like it.

That's the early reaction to Gov. Jerry Brown's budget from Bay Area business leaders, economists and a labor representative I spoke to on Tuesday. The governor gets an A+ for "honesty" and for generally grabbing the bull by the horns, even on taxes.

Concerns were expressed on the proposed elimination of state redevelopment and enterprise zone funding, and a requirement that corporations use a "single sales factor," based on their actual sales in California, to determine corporate tax owed, rather than allowing them to opt for a formula based on employment and property, as well as sales in the state.

Perhaps most important is how the Legislature and the electorate respond. As one business leader said, "Ultimately, the real wild card is whether Californians will be willing to go to the ballot box to tax themselves to stave off more cuts."

Herewith a sample of opinions, in their own words:

**Stephen Levy, director, Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy**

The budget is positive for the economy because it's honest. It says in order to cut $25 billion (the current deficit), everyone's got to kick in. It's about allocating pain, and the 50-50 division between spending cuts and tax increases is a strong symbol of Californians sharing the pain.

If we can balance the budget honestly, it's a signal to business and to investors that California once again can do, rather than the reputation it currently has, which is the state that can't agree on anything.

**Jim Wunderman, CEO, Bay Area Council**

The governor is to be commended for a reality-based budget. The state can't move forward without it. But this is very big and complex and has to be looked at carefully.

We could be supportive of the tax extensions, but they could impact job creation and investments in plants, for example. On the single sales factor, we preferred the more flexible optional approach, and will have to look at the implications of putting every company affected in the one cup of soup.

As to eliminating state money for redevelopment and enterprise zones, we know there are some boondoggles, and money not always used in ways intended, but they've also helped with major improvements in areas suffering from economic malnutrition.
We're currently polling our 275 members on these issues.

Christopher Thornberg, principal, Beacon Economics

I like it. He's attacking the problem properly. He's looking to make tax cuts semipermanent. I applaud him for that. He's also looking for a systematic way to prevent the problems in the future, including shifting more responsibilities to local governments, even though it will be tough on them in the short term.

And he's making the tough decisions at a time when the California economy is better able to handle them. We're estimating fourth-quarter growth of 3 percent to 3.5 percent. We're recovering, no question about it.

I hope to hell (Gov. Brown) can do this. What worries the hell out of me is that he's not the only one who will be making the decisions.

Steve Smith, director of communications, California Labor Federation

The governor has shown a willingness to put everything on the table, including tax provisions that work and those that don't. We haven't seen much economic benefit from enterprise zones, and the proposal to eliminate money for them we view as a positive sign.

Carl Guardino, CEO, Silicon Valley Leadership Group

There are incredibly painful cuts, but also sound economic provisions that will help California's business climate. They include extending the temporary tax increases and the single sales factor, although we're looking to have discussions on the latter about the details.

Two major items in a "white paper" we just sent to the governor, who had asked us for recommendations to grow manufacturing and technology jobs in California, is to develop a strategic economic plan for the state, complete with a Cabinet position, and to create an office charged with streamlining regulations in order to reduce burdens to businesses.

Steve Falk, CEO, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce

The state's financial situation is a classic business turnaround situation. First you have to stop the bleeding, and there is no doubt pain must come before the gain.

The impact on cuts in higher education, for example, will hurt the competitiveness of California. The elimination of redevelopment and enterprise zone incentives will no doubt slow development and job creation in the short term. The benefits of that tax increment financing are all over the city - Embarcadero Center, Transbay Transit Center, affordable housing, the Hunters Point and Treasure Island projects, Yerba Buena Gardens.

But getting California's budget balanced will help restore business confidence. That will lead to economic development and job growth - and that's a good outcome.

Blogging at sfgate.com/columns/bottomline. Facebook page: sfg.ly/doACKM. Tweeting: @andrewsross. E-mail: bottomline@sfchronicle.com.
Once Again, Revitalizing Market Street

Effort to Transform Blighted Neighborhood Gathers Steam, but Local Retailers Grow Impatient With Slow Pace of Change

By VAUHINI VARA

A man sleeps on Market St. between 5th and Cyril Magnin streets. Brian L. Frank for The Wall Street Journal

group of city officials, nonprofits and developers have joined forces to help the blighted thoroughfare thrive. Their testing ground is Market Street between 5th and 6th Streets near the prime shopping district of Union Square, where they hope the development of a new shopping center and other amenities could kick-start growth.

This isn't the first initiative aimed at revitalizing Market Street. Over the years, city and community agencies and business people have waged numerous campaigns to clean up the area, but infighting over strategies and deeply ingrained social problems such as drug use and homelessness often derailed those efforts. This time, too, some are skeptical of the efforts, which have yet to pan out. But civic leaders and community groups say they hope to make more headway by working together in ways they hadn't in the past.

The loose coalition includes real-estate developer David Rhoades of Urban Realty Co., who plans this year to break ground on CityPlace, a 250,000-square-foot shopping center set...
Some Market Street retailers say problems in the area persist despite revitalization efforts.

Eventually, those behind the revitalization effort hope to expand their focus to a five-block stretch of Market Street between 5th and 10th streets dubbed mid-Market. "It's actually in the middle of a lot of things," says Amy Cohen, director of neighborhood business development in the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development, who is spearheading efforts to connect city agencies, developers and nonprofits. "From an economic development position, it's the biggest opportunity there is."

Yet even as the group moves forward with its plans, some newcomers to mid-Market say they are disappointed with the pace of change.

"It's hard," says Josette Melchor, executive director of the nonprofit Gray Area Foundation for the Arts, which in 2009 moved to near Market Street and 6th Street. She says she has to keep the office doors locked at all times to keep out thieves, drunks and drug addicts.

Market Street is one of San Francisco's major thoroughfares and is considered the city's main ceremonial space. Yet mid-Market has been afflicted with poverty and crime for decades. Already, two people have been killed this year within a block of the very stretch that Ms. Cohen and others hope to fix.

The current effort to revive mid-Market stretches to 2004, when Mr. Rhoades, the developer, began amassing property on Market between 5th and 6th Streets. In September, he won approval from the city to build CityPlace, a $100 million shopping center that will house discount retailers. Since then, Ms. Cohen and her cohort have homed in on the block as their best shot at starting to improve the mid-Market stretch, in one case tapping Mr. Rhoades for help.

In meeting with neighborhood advocates to promote his CityPlace plan, Mr. Rhoades got to know Elvin Padilla Jr. of the Tenderloin Economic Development Project, who hoped to attract theater companies and other arts groups into the area to piggyback on foot traffic to CityPlace.

Mr. Rhoades introduced Mr. Padilla to a building owner across the street from the CityPlace site. Ms. Cohen, meanwhile, introduced Mr. Padilla to San Francisco theater company A.C.T., which was seeking property to house some of its performances.

Last summer, Mr. Padilla struck a deal that lays the groundwork for a future purchase of the Market Street property, with the nonprofit and A.C.T. potentially buying it together. If all goes according to plan, an arts hub could take shape on the stretch of Market Street across from CityPlace by 2015.

The plans are nascent and could fall apart, with years of fund-raising and permitting likely ahead. But those involved say they are optimistic about collaborations like this. "It seems like we're all at the
New Bid to Revive San Francisco’s Market Street - WSJ.com

table for the first time," says Judy Nemzoff, a
program director at the San Francisco Arts
Commission.

There are other developments, too. Last January, the
city created an $11.5 million loan fund for businesses
willing to relocate to the area and is trying to reboot
stalled efforts to turn the district into a
"redevelopment area" eligible for certain financing.
And through a Better Market Street Project,
launched in December, the city plans to repave and
beautify Market Street starting in 2014.

Still, retail space in mid-Market is more than 20% vacant, compared with an overall vacancy rate of 5.5% in the city, according to Cassidy Turley BT
Commercial.

Some businesses drawn to mid-Market by promises
of its renewal aren’t shy about their disappointment. Gayle Pirie, chef and co-owner of the Mission District
restaurant Foreign Cinema, says she was wooed in 2009 to the mid-Market area by real-estate developer David
Addington, who owns the Warfield, a concert venue in the area.

Ms. Pirie and her partner joined with Mr. Addington that year to open Showdogs, a sausage specialty shop, on
Market Street and 6th Street. Now, Ms. Pirie says the property owner "led us astray" with his talk of mid-Market
as a burgeoning arts district. She says the often-dark theaters don’t draw enough traffic.

Mr. Addington says Ms. Pirie’s frustration "is certainly valid." He attributed the theaters' troubles to broader
economic strains, along with neighborhood-specific problems. He concedes that while he and others are working
to remake the area, "today it doesn’t have the look and feel that [businesses and individuals] find appealing."

Those spearheading the mid-Market plans acknowledge they could fail or take a long time to pan out. "I wouldn’t
want to give anyone the illusion that it’s easy right now," Ms. Cohen says. "But every new addition to the
neighborhood makes it exponentially better."

Write to Vauhini Vara at vauhini.vara@wsj.com