



# State of the City: Style over Substance

A Mid-Term Analysis of the Policies and Priorities of Mayor Newsom

Prepared by the SFPO Policy Committee

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San Francisco People's Organization

The San Francisco People's Organization is a coalition of community based organizations, labor, advocacy groups, and individuals committed to building a progressive vision for San Francisco. We are creating a long-term strategic alliance of people of color, women, labor, working poor, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender persons, seniors, persons with disabilities, faith-based communities, youth, and any group or individual that will fight for economic and social justice. We believe that through grassroots, constituency-based, multi-issue organizing efforts we can transform San Francisco into a progressive city that places human needs and the common good first.

# State of the City: Style over Substance

## A Mid-Term Analysis of the Policies and Priorities of Mayor Newsom

San Francisco is a city that embodies the progressive values of diversity, equity, justice, opportunity, and optimism. San Franciscans should be proud that people across the country and the globe look toward our city for leadership and inspiration for how a city can embrace these values in its public policies. SFPO believes that progressive values should be the driving force behind all of the actions taken by our elected officials. However, there are signs that San Francisco is falling short of its progressive principles, and this is inexcusable when the results of growing inequities and racial disparities are violence and human suffering.

Violence is at a ten-year high in the city, leaving youth and families affected in ways that are too terrifying for most of us to comprehend. Recent reports from the non-profit sector point to troublesome trends in the lives of the low-income and homeless populations. Our services network is under-funded, often resulting in children without proper nutrition, youth without jobs, and adults without homes. The Mayoral Administration's responses to many of these situations have been inadequate. As a result, SFPO is becoming increasingly concerned about themes that have emerged from the current Administration in its handling of significant issues.

The Administration displays a consistent pattern of **prioritizing style over substance**, of relying on high profile press conferences and press releases to announce initiatives that then receive no follow-through. When responding to crises, it is easy to create quick sound bites that give the impression that real progress is being made, but the issues facing the people of San Francisco need real leadership and attention, not simply public relations and press coverage. While Mayor Newsom's much publicized "Connect" initiatives may make for good press, they are doing little to address the growing social inequity facing our city's low-income populations and increasingly marginalized communities of color. It is morally indefensible that the Mayor held a recent photo-op press conference at Plaza East announcing the installation of security cameras while having opposed the violence prevention measure, Proposition A, which was on this year's June ballot and which was defeated by the slimmest of margins. The Administration's preference for style over substance, along with a limited focus on a few select issues, has created a pervasive environment of benign neglect of critical issues that adversely impact low income communities and communities of color.

Complicit in this pattern of the Administration prioritizing style over substance have been the city's major media outlets. Unfortunately, San Francisco is essentially a one newspaper town, although there are a number of smaller, alternative media. As a result, it is incumbent upon the San Francisco Chronicle to provide substantive analysis of Newsom and his proposed policies. To date, much of the Chronicle's reporting has simply appeared to be a rehashing of the media advisories put out by Peter Ragone, the Mayor's Press Secretary. For there to be an effective public policy dialogue in this city, SFPO believes we need the media to meet its responsibility to fairly and consistently ask in-depth questions regarding the nature of the Administration's policies, who they affect, and what the results are.

The Administration's frequent **inability to deliver on promises** also concerns SFPO. There is no greater example of inability to deliver than the Mayor's handling of the crisis of violence that is crippling our neighborhoods. In 2004, faced with what was then a sharp increase in violence, Mayor Newsom made a much-publicized statement that if the homicide rate did not decrease San Franciscans should hold him accountable, saying "begin the campaign to recall me." In the fall of 2005, the Mayor's office began an ill-fated Connect initiative called "Community Connect" to address the growing calls for community policing and increased services from groups like the African-American Community Police Relations Board. However, after two challenging public meetings in the Western Addition and Bayview, Community Connect came to a screeching halt, and there has been no public follow-up since, despite the ongoing violence throughout this year. The city is now facing a new ten-year high in homicides. Further, the Mayor, in response to the SFPD Bayview Station video scandal, announced the creation of an independent Blue Ribbon Commission to review the culture and policies within SFPD that led to the incident. To this date the Commission has not been created and there has been no move to reform the SFPD, its policies, or its culture.

In addition to focusing on style over substance and not delivering on promises, SFPO notes that many of the Administration's programs and policies **perpetuate inequalities** among our residents and communities. Newsom supported, and continues to entertain support for, Muni fare increases over other forms of revenue to keep Muni solvent. These other revenue options, such as increased parking fees, would prevent the burden of the agency's problems from falling on the shoulders of populations like the elderly and low- and fixed-income. The Mayor has also perpetuated the unequal distribution of city arts funding among our communities, with the lion's share going to wealthy organizations like the symphony, opera, and ballet, leaving relatively little for neighborhood arts organizations. Finally, Mayor Newsom has supported the interests of wealthy real estate developers over tenants through his support of policies that would make condominium conversion easier and through his veto of anti-demolition and anti-eviction legislation passed by the Board of Supervisors.

Another disconcerting trend is Mayor Newsom's tendency to co-opt ideas, **take credit for the work of other able progressive leaders** and aggrandize himself on a national stage without acknowledging the partners or the sources that made advancements possible. A perfect example of this was Newsom's posturing as the creator of San Francisco's new Healthcare Access Plan unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors in July. As Mayor Newsom basks in the glow of national press his shadow engulfs the hard work and initiative of veteran Supervisor Tom Ammiano. It remains the case that the Mayor's plan would not have been fiscally solvent without Ammiano's Health Care Security Ordinance, which was the genuine root of San Francisco's landmark advance in health care access for the uninsured. The Mayor's recent touting of Tidal Power as a potential source of renewable energy for San Francisco has all the trappings of this same pattern. It was former Supervisor Matt Gonzalez who brought the idea to prominence during his 2003 Mayoral bid and who was in fact much maligned by Newsom forces for the proposal at the time.

Mayor Newsom, through his highly visible work to legalize same-sex marriage, rightfully gained the respect and admiration of progressive San Franciscans. However, same-sex marriage is only one issue, and progressive San Franciscans should not give Mayor Newsom carte blanche for this single act. We readily acknowledge that Newsom has also shown initiative and leadership in other areas, such as through his support for city greening and his advocacy for increased civic engagement with Project Homeless Connect. SFPO is committed to working in partnership with Mayor Newsom when our values align with his, but we will not sit quietly by on the sidelines when San Francisco needs a mayor who lives up to his promises, who addresses the real service needs of vulnerable San Franciscans, and who is not afraid to challenge the status quo.

As a result of these themes we recognize in the Mayoral Administration, SFPO decided to review the current status of five fundamental issues that impact the daily lives of all San Francisco residents and to examine the policies of the Newsom administration through the Mayor's first three years in office. In doing so, it is SFPO's hope to add a voice of social justice to the public policy dialogue in the city and to hold Mayor Newsom accountable for his performance. SFPO also hopes to offer its own vision and recommendations for future policies and priorities. The selected issues are public safety, economic development, land use and housing, transportation, and homelessness.

Following are analyses of each issue which include examinations of the conditions that existed when Mayor Newsom took office, the policies that he has implemented, supported, or not supported, and the results of these actions. In the concluding portions of each section, we also put forth SFPO's recommendations for the City leadership to implement. SFPO looks forward to working with Mayor Newsom to implement these recommendations.

## **Public Safety**

The increasing homicide rate is the shame of our city and requires a comprehensive response to the human tragedy enveloping it. Public safety is the foundation of a healthy community and of an active civic life. If people are unable to feel safe as they go about their daily activities, every aspect of a community is affected, including the health of our children, youth, and seniors. San Francisco is experiencing a public safety crisis as it suffers through an unprecedented wave of violence, with the number of homicides increasing steadily from 69 in 2003 to 96 in 2005, which was the highest number in ten years.

In addition, according to the California Department of Justice, violent crime has increased 19% since 2004–2005. As of September 26, there have been 69 homicides, a marked increase from the number of homicides at the same time last year. These homicides have disproportionately affected the city's African-American population and have been centered in the Western Addition and Bayview communities. But while those areas have been most directly impacted, it is crucial that we understand that this escalating violence is an issue that affects each and every San Franciscan and that it will take a coordinated effort to stem this rising tide and to address the root causes behind it.

As recently noted in a *San Francisco Chronicle* editorial, Mayor Newsom has been highly visible and personally involved with some of his signature efforts, like Project Homeless Connect, but has remained noticeably less visible when it comes to issues like the rising violence in communities of color. The City's 2006–2007 budget included \$48 million dollars for crime-fighting programs, but Mayor Newsom's approach has excessively focused on law enforcement strategies such as increased police, the revisited enforcement of a child curfew and security cameras, without crafting a broader strategy that involves community based solutions and services. The cameras, which will be installed by both the City and the San Francisco Housing Authority, cannot replace the integrated services that are needed in the impacted communities. We must begin to create proactive evidence-based crime prevention policies and not simply rely on reactive ones, such as increasing police. Increased enforcement, while necessary, is only one part of a comprehensive strategy.

We need more initiatives like the Community Response Network (CRN), a community based network that provides crisis intervention, case management, and street level outreach, which is currently expanding to the Bayview, Western Addition, and Visitacion Valley from its original location in the Mission. The CRN is the type of community based prevention and intervention strategy that is needed in frontline neighborhoods.

### ***SFPO Recommendations***

SFPO understands that it will take a coordinated, collaborative approach to find solutions to the ongoing violence that will include the Mayor, the SFPD, the District Attorney, the criminal justice system and the community. But with two consecutive years of increasing homicides and on pace for a third, Mayor Newsom needs to provide the public leadership and accountability necessary to direct the City's response to the violence and to address the growing social and economic inequality that exists in the African-American community which foster conditions that lead to violence. Without doing so, it will be impossible to break this historic cycle of violence facing our city. To these ends, SFPO recommends:

- **Convene a Violence Prevention Task Force to draft an integrated citywide violence prevention plan.** Despite the current crisis, the city currently does not have any citywide violence prevention plan. To utilize a broader strategy beyond law enforcement, the Mayor must immediately begin developing a comprehensive community-driven violence prevention plan that includes community-based policing, community empowerment projects, school-based anti-violence programs, increased public education about violence and its effects, and transitional services for ex-prisoners.
- **Combat recidivism.** The City must develop more coordinated reentry services since nearly 75% of the violent crime committed in San Francisco is by repeat offenders. We must begin to understand the link between the criminal justice system and the root causes of violence like housing, lack of education, and good jobs. The City should create and fund a long-term re-entry initiative by establishing a "right to successful re-entry" which focuses on

young adults, and which provides universal access to housing, education, job training and jobs to every young man and woman coming out of the system.

- **Institute community policing.** Mayor Newsom must direct the SFPD to institute true community policing similar to practices used in other cities. The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice along with the SFPD has only given lip service to changing police practices and how the SFPD relates to communities of color. The most impacted neighborhoods and communities must begin to have improved policing to begin the slow process of building trust between the residents and law enforcement. Right now, trust between the African-American community and the SFPD is at an all-time low and as a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the SFPD to find witnesses for crimes that are committed.
- **Support beat/foot patrols.** Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi has introduced legislation creating a pilot program to require increased police foot patrols in District 5 and in other selected districts. Foot patrols reduce crime by strengthening bonds and breaking down barriers between the police and the community. The proposed new law calls for a one-year pilot program in which the Northern and Park Stations each staff at least two foot patrols per day. It would also require that a comprehensive report on the progress and effectiveness of the patrols be prepared in six months.
- **Reduce the number of guns on the street.** In collaboration with the DA, the City and the SFPD must begin an aggressive public campaign to get guns off the street.
- **Improve/increase awareness of anonymous tip lines.** The city currently has 10 anonymous tip lines, one for each police district station. As part of community policing and potentially in conjunction with the new 311 system coming on-line next year, the SFPD needs to consolidate its anonymous tip lines and engage in a public education campaign to increase community awareness and restore trust with the SFPD.
- **Expand critical response.** The City must expand the Department of Public Health's Critical Response Team, which deals with the effects of homicides and shootings in the community.
- **Increase public education.** The City must begin a comprehensive, culturally competent public education campaign against violence, involving City departments and the SFUSD. As DPH's recently released Bayview Health report indicated, the violence being experienced is not only a law enforcement issue, it is a public health issue and should be treated as one. Entire neighborhoods are suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and we must begin to restore the basic value of life by creating a continuum of services.
- **Improve public housing/Housing Authority.** With the federal government drastically reducing funding for public housing, the City needs to overcome simply installing security cameras at housing development sites without ensuring that the physical conditions of the properties themselves are clean, habitable, and conducive to public safety. The physical infra-

structure of developments like Alice Griffith, Alemany and others are an eyesore and directly reflect the growing inequality existing for the residents of public housing who are disproportionately African-American.

- **Invest in communities.** Current funding for educational and cultural opportunities are inadequate in most neighborhoods in our city. There is inequity in arts funding for programming and facilities. In most neighborhoods there is nowhere for people to be a community. Recent focus on Prop H for after school programs is the right approach, but we need to reinvigorate neighborhood cultural opportunities and coordinate these with other departments programs.

## Economic Development

As San Francisco's economy has evolved over the past four decades it has inclined toward increased wealth stratification and income inequality even more so than the rest of the nation. The middle and working classes are being driven out as the economic base has shifted from port and manufacturing industries to financial and corporate services to a knowledge-based high-tech economy. This much can be gleaned from "An Overview of San Francisco's Recent Economic Performance" prepared earlier this year to begin compliance with voter approved Proposition I of 2004, which authorized the creation of an economic development strategy for the City. The report so far includes important and primarily well-known general demographics about economic and population trends in San Francisco but has yet to present a comprehensive strategy for economic development. Altering some of the trends identified in this report by retaining and creating economic diversity in San Francisco is by far the biggest challenge facing the city in the 21st century.

While Mayor Newsom has not aggressively pursued the desires of his downtown big business base, his ideological allegiance has prevented him from forging a progressive vision for economic development in San Francisco. Industries Mayor Newsom has favored by supporting tax exemptions, such as biotechnology, digital media, and clean technology, are attractive and represent great aspects of San Francisco's intellectual capital, proclivities of talent and forward-looking philosophy. However, few of the Mayor's economic policies are geared towards reducing income inequality or retaining middle and working class jobs in San Francisco. Newsom's focus on developing new market-rate housing on land previous zoned for production, distribution and repair (PDR) businesses and emphasis on attracting high wage jobs in high-tech industries only accentuate the existing conditions and trends. The future effects on the local economy of administration backed re-zoning on the Eastside of the city have been practically ignored by Mayor Newsom's office.

Tourism will continue to be a major element of San Francisco's economy into the foreseeable future. One way to reduce San Francisco's now chronic economic disparities that exclude many immigrants and people of color from the dignity of an affordable lifestyle is to create living wage jobs in the tourism industry. The hotel workers' recent labor victories are a prime example of progressive San Francisco's will to uplift low wage earners and expand the ranks of the middle

class. Mayor Newsom deftly posed with hotel workers on the picket lines but did nothing to steward the confrontation toward a victory for labor. It is unconscionable that Mayor Newsom let a major boycott and potential strike fester indeterminately for nearly two years as negotiations languished and he chose not to facilitate any kind of resolution. This lack of substantive leadership while conveniently posing through a coordinated PR campaign will not raise the living and employment standards of less privileged San Franciscans nor will it help create good paying jobs for people that do not have a college degree.

San Francisco's greatest economic assets and prospects lie in its small business economy. The small business economy is robust in recessionary times, keeps capital circulating within the local economy, and is sustained by middle-class entrepreneurial enterprises. Measures effectively limiting formula retail and chain stores should be expanded and will continue to protect, support and encourage small retail operations in San Francisco. The business tax structure should be retooled to promote and sustain a vibrant small business economy. By eliminating the payroll tax and replacing it with a gross-receipts tax on big businesses, San Francisco can promote small business viability and job growth. Whether the will exists to make this occur has yet to be seen.

Politically, small business in San Francisco has been co-opted by big business and is too often used as a poster child to resist progressive taxation and other progressive economic policies. It is critical that the small business community find the wherewithal to organize independently of the interests of big business. In this regard, Mayor Newsom can be said to be guilty of a kind of benign neglect of small business that has perpetuated the status quo. His administration has focused more on sensational quests to court the State Biotech Institute and the Olympics Games than on dedicating staff resources to attracting sustainable enterprises and increasing San Francisco's small business infrastructure.

### ***SFPO Recommendations***

SFPO recommends supporting and stabilizing existing industries. The arts, galleries, clubs, theaters, cultural centers, and the like are a billion dollar industry producing jobs and economic stimulation. These types of business sectors should be supported similarly to the administration's support of biotech. Minority-owned, women-owned and local businesses need to receive support as promised by the Mayor at the beginning of his administration. San Francisco's land use policy should ensure that new real estate development includes higher levels of affordable housing and protects blue collar, manufacturing, and PDR jobs through appropriate zoning. To these ends, SFPO recommends:

- **Pass measures limiting formula retail and chain stores.** Proposition G on the November 2006 ballot would require conditional use permits for formula retail. Mayor Newsom should support proposition G.
- **Replace the payroll tax with progressive gross receipts tax on big businesses.** Mayor Newsom should show leadership in reforming the business tax structure. SFPO supports revenue enhancing measures to transition from a payroll tax to a gross receipts tax that exempts small businesses and more equitably taxes big businesses.

- **Strengthen and enforce First Source Hiring.** Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi authored legislation to magnify the city's first source hiring policy. Mayor Newsom should similarly support enforcing the degree of local hiring intended by city policy. For instance, out of state construction crews should not be dominating the trade and restricting employment opportunities for locals.
- **Show strong support for the Transbay Terminal project.** The economic benefit in terms of jobs and business that this new regional anchor for transportation and commerce could generate is undeniable. Mayor Newsom needs to show leadership where he has previously obstructed or neglected the project.
- **Implement commercial rent control.** The high cost of rent in San Francisco affects businesses just as much as it does residential tenants. Implementing commercial rent control would limit the degree to which small businesses become burdened by the often prohibitive costs of renting retail space in the city.
- **Create sustainable levels of light industrial and PDR zoned spaces.** Planning and rezoning on the east side should incorporate sufficient levels of light industrial and PDR spaces. A massive conversion to housing will not only evaporate the city's remaining industrial infrastructure but will turn San Francisco into a bedroom community for Silicon Valley.
- **Dedicate benefits from real estate development for the arts and housing for artists.** With state art funding having been gutted to shamelessly low levels, San Francisco should create alternate local funding sources for the arts.
- **Fund low interest and/or deferred payment loans to create worker owned cooperatives.** The City should help transform businesses into worker-owned cooperatives by assisting workers in purchasing existing businesses from owners who are in the process of selling.

## Land Use and Housing

In San Francisco, land use and housing policies have long been used to shape what kind of city San Francisco will be and who will be able to live here. At the beginning of Mayor Newsom's administration in 2004, he inherited a landscape with a glut of for sale market-rate housing, but scarcity in both rental and for sale housing for moderate income and low-income individuals and families.

Recognizing the need for affordable housing, Newsom introduced the Home 15/5 housing initiative in August 2005. Home 15/5 aims to create 15,000 new housing units in the next five years, largely through streamlining the permitting process to expedite projects in the construction permitting backlog. It is unknown at this time what the recommended restructure of the permitting process will be, how that will affect future development of housing, and how many units of affordable housing this will create.

By way of contrast to Mayor Newsom's questionable and uncertain projections, the Board of Supervisors recently passed legislation, authored by Supervisor Chris Daly, that will increase the percentage of inclusionary units required in new housing developments, thus spurring the production of more affordable housing units in the city. Though he signed this legislation, the Mayor has leaned more consistently toward building market-rate housing units than affordable ones, as evidenced by his first two housing initiatives: 1) Proposition J on the March 2004 ballot proposed to up-zone the downtown and waterfront areas in order to build more housing for those earning 80% to 120% of area median income; and 2) legislation initiated by the Mayor in March 2005 that would have made it easier for tenancy in common units to be converted to condos. Both measures were defeated.

Despite these setbacks, the Mayor has still found a way to appease wealthy real estate interests by consistently vetoing legislation intended to curtail Ellis Act evictions that continue to displace working families, people of color, seniors, disabled people, AIDS/HIV patients, immigrants, and artists living on the East side. He vetoed legislation that would have required Planning Commission hearings on all condominium conversions. If enacted, the ordinance would have brought more sunshine into the condominium conversion process and given the public the opportunity to comment. Newsom also vetoed legislation that would have mandated early disclosure of evictions to potential buyers of real estate. Such a law would have encouraged socially conscious buyers to avoid purchasing units cleared by eviction. He also vetoed the Anti-Demolition Ordinance, which would have protected low-income tenants by prohibiting the demolition of sound, rent controlled housing. Nowhere has Newsom more brazenly shown his true colors than in his refusal to protect some of San Francisco's most vulnerable populations from being displaced in a wave of speculative real estate profiteering.

Since taking office, the Mayor has visited many of our neighborhoods and worked to jump start economic revitalization through the creation of Community Benefit Districts (CBDs). The purpose of CBDs is to bring vitality to new and existing business districts, making these areas friendlier to potential shoppers through activities such as cleaning streets and façades, filling vacant storefronts, and planting trees. Although CBDs have their benefits, there are also down sides. CBDs are formed and controlled only by property owners of the district and often focus solely on superficial "quality of life" issues, such as clearing out homeless people and others that the CBD boards have deemed "undesirable" elements. The Mayor has made a considerable effort to reach out to neighborhood businesses to help them improve their business districts. However, what is missing is a big picture plan for the comprehensive affordable housing needs of the city and for how the administration will take the lead in meeting those needs.

### ***SFPO Recommendations***

SFPO recommends prioritizing permanently affordable rental housing and homeownership opportunities for low and moderate-income individuals. San Francisco needs a Mayor who understands the demographic trends and challenges that San Francisco faces in the 21st century. If San Francisco is to preserve and expand upon the diversity that makes it great, the Mayor must be willing to buck real estate industry interests and provide workable solutions to the city's crisis of unaffordability. Though the Mayor has not done so to date, he can achieve this by embracing the following SFPO recommendations:

- **Expand affordable housing revenues by capitalizing on his ties and reputation in the Democratic Party** to leverage State and Federal funding for San Francisco. The Mayor should intensify his outreach efforts and become a stronger lobbyist for San Francisco to ensure we receive our fair share of tax revenues.
- **Establish an Affordable Housing Plan Advisory Committee** that includes community stakeholders and city officials to draft a comprehensive affordable housing plan that includes the following: 1) balancing allocations between ALL needs populations; 2) lowering the income limits for rental and home ownership; and 3) creating a set-aside to fund rental for extremely low-income households.
- **Conduct regular housing inventory of the city's housing stock** so that there is a clear picture of the overall housing need (rental units lost, rental units gained, what levels of affordability is most/least needed) as well as look at trends in housing in time to control any trends that are decreasing available affordable housing stock.
- **Support measures that protect tenants**, such as legislation curtailing Ellis Act evictions and the Anti-Demolition Ordinance that would have prevented the destruction of structurally sound, rent-controlled units. These measures will ensure that San Francisco's labor force can continue to live in the city.
- **Explore ways to expand the participation of community stakeholders in the planning process** including input and participation in Redevelopment Agency planning and neighborhood development and rezoning plans. Encourage citizen advisory control in areas with a lot of new development activity (currently the South Beach, Rincon Hill Waterfront Development Area).

## Transportation

Overall, Mayor Newsom's record on transportation has not been one of supporting the wrong things, but rather one of not supporting the right things, and of doing too little to address the structural problems in the city's transportation system that make it insolvent, inequitable, and unsustainable. Despite the Mayor's stated focus on making the city cleaner, greener, and more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, there are significant ways in which he has not taken adequate leadership on transportation issues.

The majority of trends in Muni performance have not been positive since Newsom took office, although fares have risen by 50 percent in the past four years, a rate much higher than inflation. Ridership is relatively flat, as is scheduled service, which is running below the goals set by Proposition E. On-time performance, which was at 63% in the latest quarter, is far below the 85% goal. Article 8A of the city's Charter, added by the voters in November 1999 as Proposition E, governs the Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) and contains a number of exhortations

and performance measures. Then-Supervisor Newsom was the champion of Proposition E, so it is fair to hold him accountable for Muni's progress on Proposition E's indicators of performance.

Muni has a significant structural budget deficit, estimated at \$40 million this fiscal year. Although this should not be attributed to Mayor Newsom, he has not supported or implemented some of the proposed alternative funding mechanisms for Muni that would impact low- and fixed- income San Franciscans less, such as the proposed parking tax on the November 2006 ballot. At the time of the last fare increase, which took place in the fall of 2005, Supervisor Daly introduced a set of parking fee and fine increases that would have balanced the Muni budget without a fare increase. However, a majority of the Board of Supervisors instead supported a plan by Supervisor Elsbernd, Newsom's appointee and closest ally on the Board. The plan resulted in the use of one-time funds to roll back some of the parking fee and fine increases that the MTA commission proposed in their budget, instead of balancing the budget without a fare increase.

San Francisco's streets can be dangerous, and even deadly, for pedestrians and cyclists. Although Newsom stated in his campaign promises that he would increase funding for traffic calming, no additional funding has been appropriated to date. Also, the city is mandated by Federal law to construct all curbs to be ADA-compliant, but the administration has provided no real and timely plan for adhering to the mandate. Further, San Francisco's Bicycle Plan never received attention nor support from the Mayor during its development and is not much more than an unprioritized and unfunded 'wish list' that will not, by itself, result in a substantial increase in bicycling during the Mayor's term. Its publicly approved goal of attracting 10% of all trips by bicycle is a PR stunt not supported by the actual proposals within. The plan was halted by a court injunction earlier this year and has received little public support from the Mayor during the legal proceedings. Further, Newsom vetoed Supervisor Daly's downtown parking reform legislation, which would have protected bicycle, pedestrian, and transit streets from new drive-ways. And Newsom sided with wealthy and NIMBY interests in his recent veto of the Healthy Saturdays legislation, which would have closed parts of Golden Gate Park to cars on Saturdays for a trial six month period.

Unfortunately, the Mayor has been relatively quiet in articulating his transportation priorities and vision for land use and transit, both in the city and Bay Area-wide. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) uses comfortable buses operating on dedicated lanes to provide much of the comfort and performance of light rail at a fraction of the cost. A citywide network of bus rapid transit corridors would complement the Muni light rail and BART lines, providing fast, efficient transit service to all corners of the city. Although the proposal for BRT on Geary has encountered considerable opposition from some merchants, the Mayor has said little in support of the project, despite the fact that having a fast and reliable transit line through that section of the city is long overdue. The Mayor does not have a staffer in his office focused on transportation, but has them for other major policy areas, such as criminal justice and education. Sound transportation policy in a city with a myriad of agencies and interest groups involved requires leadership and coordination from the highest levels of city government.

Finally, the Mayor does not act as a leader on regional transit issues, unlike Los Angeles' Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who regularly advocates for more sustainable transportation in his stump speeches and who

personally chairs regional transit-planning bodies. Most egregiously, the Mayor has not been a strong enough proponent of the Caltrain Downtown Extension / Transbay Terminal project, our region's most important transit project. Newsom left his appointment to the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) vacant for almost six months. During the first 2 years of the Newsom Administration, either the Newsom appointment or MTA director was absent at 13 of TJPA's 19 meetings. Also, by initially siding with a politically connected property owner at the proposed site of the terminal, Newsom caused several months of delay and project escalation costs (estimated between \$9 and \$15 million). Although publicly supporting the project, the Administration's actions have caused many to question his commitment to sound regional transportation planning.

### ***SFPO Recommendations***

SFPO recognizes that many San Franciscans rely on alternative transportation for their livelihoods. They deserve a Muni that is affordable and provides frequent service and access to all neighborhoods. Our City, State, and Federal governments subsidize automobile ownership through road construction and maintenance costs, public health costs of asthma and other diseases caused by air pollution from cars, and police and ambulance service costs related to traffic accidents. SFPO supports policies that do not place the burden of alternative transportation costs on those less capable of affording them and shifting the costs to those who can. Further, SFPO believes that citywide and regional transportation planning requires leadership and vision from the very highest levels of government. To these ends, SFPO recommends that the Mayor:

- **Provide leadership and interdepartmental coordination.** The Mayor should hire a Transportation Policy Director in his office to coordinate among various departments and present a cohesive vision for San Francisco's transportation system.
- **Make San Francisco a leader in bicycle transportation.** The Mayor should call for and fund a Bicycle Facilities Implementation Plan to expedite the most important recommendations of the Bicycle Plan, to achieve the plan's stated goal of 10% of all trips by 2015.
- **Support a car-free Golden Gate Park on weekends.** Although the Mayor vetoed the Healthy Saturdays legislation, SFPO believes that Saturday closure to automobiles is an important to promoting alternative transportation, healthy communities, and a more green and livable city.
- **Prevent future Muni fare increases.** Fare increases are significant burdens for the many low-income San Franciscans who rely on Muni for all of their transportation needs. SFPO believes that the Mayor should exhaust all other funding options, including increased parking fines and fees, before raising Muni fare.
- **Advocate for Bus Rapid Transit along Geary and other appropriate corridors.** A citywide network of Bus Rapid Transit corridors would complement the Muni light rail and BART lines, providing fast, efficient transit service to all corners of the city. The Mayor should show leadership by strongly supporting the Geary bus rapid transit proposal. A fast and reliable transit line through that section of the city is long overdue.

- **Make the streets safer for all pedestrians, including those with disabilities.** The Mayor should develop a clear plan, including funding sources, to complete the Federal mandate to construct all curbs to be ADA-compliant.
- **Support the Transbay project and other regional transit initiatives.** The Mayor should act as a leader on regional transit issues by regularly advocating for regional transit solutions in his speeches, ensuring his appointees to regional transit bodies are qualified and engaged in their work, and, most importantly, providing strong and vocal support for the Transbay project.

## Homelessness

Homelessness is an issue that intersects the lives of all the people of San Francisco. Over the past 20 years, the situation has worsened, affecting not only homeless individuals, families and children but also residents, neighborhoods, businesses, and the tourism industry. According to the Coroners Office, on average, over 100 people die each year on the streets while, according to the Mayor’s 2005 Homeless Count, at least an estimated 6,000 are without permanent homes on any one night. It is important to note that these numbers are in fact human lives and they reveal a larger social tragedy and modern moral failure.

According to the 2001–2006 Continuum of Care, a five-year strategic plan for homeless services adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the causes of homelessness include poverty; lack of housing, living-wage jobs, vocational skills, and health care; and the disruptions resulting from substance abuse, severe mental illness, and domestic violence. In addition, other contributions to the cycle of homelessness in San Francisco include historical policy decisions on the state and federal level, such as the drastic reduction of federal funding for public and subsidized housing, defunding of community mental health programs and cuts in public assistance. While state and federal policies have a major impact and state and federal funding and participation is essential, the structure and programs for dealing with homelessness are essentially local.

While the high-profile initiative “Project Homeless Connect” has certainly increased civic participation and public engagement around the issue, SFPO believes that the City must also have a consistent homeless policy that addresses all aspects of the problem, not just the “chronically homeless.” In addition to the single adult population, the First Five Commission of San Francisco in 2005 estimated that 2,600 homeless San Franciscans are members of homeless families, and on any given night more than 500 children sleep in the city’s transitional or emergency shelters. Homeless children are more likely to experience developmental problems, educational delays, behavioral issues, and learning disabilities.

Much has also been made of the reduction of the City’s general assistance rolls through the implementation of Care Not Cash, but not as well known is that since 2004 the city has decreased the number of shelter beds, further limiting resources available to our most vulnerable populations.

While almost 2,000 homeless individuals have lost public assistance since the measure came into place, policy makers have no idea how individuals fared after losing their assistance.

Furthermore, the City must move away from the persistent efforts at criminalizing homeless individuals. Since Mayor Newsom took office in January 2004 until June 2006, the San Francisco Police Department issued 31,230 "quality-of-life" citations. According to a recent study by Religious Witness with Homeless People, more than \$5.8 million in taxpayer money has been spent on police, paperwork, and court staff issuing and prosecuting these violations during the 30-month period, with the majority of these cases (more than 80%) being dismissed. Knowing that the city has limited capacity, it is unconscionable that the Mayor would put resources into efforts to confiscate people's property and criminalize those already suffering from poverty, inequity, and lack of opportunity. These funds can and should be used toward increasing the capacity and improving the quality of services available to the homeless.

### ***SFPO Recommendations***

SFPO believes that homelessness is a national issue which directly reflects the increasing poverty and inequity in our society today. We understand that the city alone will not be able to solve this growing crisis but it is our moral responsibility to do the best we can to provide for our most vulnerable populations. As the city of St. Francis, the city must take a proactive approach in finding solutions and providing support to help homeless individuals, children and families transition out of homelessness. San Francisco has already experienced the failed policies of previous administrations such as Mayor Jordan's MATRIX program and now Mayor Newsom has decided to follow suit by recently promising to clear Golden Gate Park of homeless individuals despite the fact that the shelter system is at capacity and people have no where to go. Instead, SFPO calls on the city and its residents to resist this constant cycle of public persecution of our society's poor and challenges Mayor Newsom to show courage and leadership to protect the rights of those who are experiencing homelessness by restoring their dignity and showing them the respect that is the foundation of our basic human rights. To these ends, SFPO recommends that the Mayor:

- **Preserve emergency homeless services until full housing is achieved** and support the replacement of a new 24 hour drop-in center after the McMillan center at 39 Fell Street is transitioned to a respite facility.
- **Create permanently affordable housing for all homeless San Franciscans**, including the allocation of over 700 safe, decent and permanently affordable housing units for homeless families.
- **Halt the issuance of citations used to criminalize homeless people**, such as camping, blocking the sidewalk. The funds currently used for law enforcement efforts against homeless individuals should instead be used to increase available services.
- **Support the creation and passage of human rights legislation for homeless shelter residents.** The Local Homeless Coordinating Board and city departments should develop a standard "Bill of Rights" for all shelter residents, inform residents of these rights, and create standard system-wide operating policies which ensure fair and decent treatment.

- **Invest fully in community based integrated mental health and substance abuse treatment.** The city must maximize and leverage local, state, and federal funding including new Proposition 63 money to ensure a continuum of services.
- **Ensure comprehensive access to higher education and relevant job training** opportunities that lead to living wage employment for homeless individuals.

## Conclusion

Through this analysis of five issues—public safety, economic development, land use and housing, transportation, and homelessness—SFPO has tried to analyze the policies and priorities of the Newsom Administration through a social justice lens, as well as provide a clear vision of what progressive public policy looks like when it is applied to some of the fundamental issues facing the city.

Through this report, SFPO has hoped to shed light on some key themes emerging from the Newsom Administration that it finds troublesome—the preference for style over substance, an inability to de-liver on promises, the perpetuation of inequalities, and the usurping of work done by others without giving proper credit. Aggravating these trends is the lack of any real critical analysis of the Administration by mainstream media in the city.

San Francisco is not just a city, it is an idea, a concept of conscious, collective living that is a hopeful example to people, communities, and governments throughout the world. At its heart, SFPO's support for progressive policies is about challenging San Franciscans to create a city that not only lives up to this lofty ideal but continues to envision new ones. In this modern era of war, violence, and fear, San Francisco is an idea worth struggling for. SFPO is dedicated to making San Francisco a city that embodies the progressive values of diversity, equity, justice, opportunity, and optimism, a city that creates a community that is welcoming and supportive of all its members regardless of race, gender, or economic status.

This is the vision of San Francisco that the members of SFPO uphold and it is our hope that this report is but one step in fostering the dialogue necessary for change. Because we believe that progressive values should be the driving force behind all of the actions taken by our elected officials, we are presenting this analysis of the Newsom Administration in hopes that it will have impacts that will better the lives of all residents. We must acknowledge that our city is only as strong as the most vulnerable. We can, should, and must do a better job of respecting and uplifting our elderly, youth, communities of color, homeless people, low-income populations, and all San Franciscans.