

Mayor Gavin Newsom
State of the City
October 26, 2006

Tackling the Unfinished Business of San Francisco

Thank you all very much for being here today.

I'd like to start by acknowledging the members of the
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
President of the Board, Aaron Peskin
Supervisor Tom Ammiano
Supervisor Chris Daly
Supervisor Bevan Dufty
Supervisor Sean Elsbernd
Supervisor Sophie Maxwell
Supervisor Jake McGoldrick
Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi
And Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval.

Thank you all for your unwavering commitment to
the people of San Francisco and for your work to
make our City a better place.

I'd like to acknowledge
Assemblyman Mark Leno...
Our District Attorney, Kamala Harris.
Our Sheriff, Mike Hennesey.

Our Treasurer, Jose Cisneros.
Our Assessor, Phil Ting.
Our Public Defender, Jeff Adachi.
Our City Controller, Ed Harrington.
Our City Administrator, Ed Lee.

And of course – it is my honor to recognize former Mayor Willie Brown.

And thank you to Burton High School – and Principal Eric Marshall – for hosting us.

And the members of the Junior and Senior Class...

I'd also like to take a moment to acknowledge a very special guest – the Democratic nominee for Mayor of Washington DC – in other words the Mayor-Elect of Washington DC – Adrian Fenty.

I am proud as well to be joined today by the command staffs of our Fire and Police Departments.

In particular, I'd like to recognize Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White and Police Chief Heather Fong – both of whom have taken bold steps to ensure that our streets are safer and our neighborhoods are stronger.

When I took office nearly three years ago, San Francisco was facing daunting economic challenges.

The dot.com bust – and the shock of 9-11 hit our local economy hard.

We were facing historic budget deficits – unemployment and office vacancies were near all time highs – and expectations were at an all time low.

As I look back now – I’m proud of how San Franciscans came together to overcome these challenges.

In just a few years we’ve gone from historic budget deficits to the highest city budget reserve in history.

In the last 3 years, unemployment is down a remarkable 26 percent – and over 6,300 new jobs have been created in the last year alone.

Some 57 companies have located or relocated back to San Francisco during this period – 17 in the last 9 months ...

And visitors are returning to our city

in remarkable numbers...

The Convention and Visitors Bureau, for example, enjoyed a record-breaking year in 2005, booking 925 convention groups – representing more than 2.2 million hotel room-nights over the next 16 years...

And 2006 looks to be on pace to exceed 2005.

We've raised our bond rating... cut millions of dollars of waste from the city budget... began long overdue civil service reform... improved our use of technology and focused on serving more people more efficiently...

And we've put the city budget back on sound economic footing. At the same time - taking giant steps to make sure that our region's economy remains strong.

We came together with leaders like Supervisor Alioto-Pier, to bring the headquarters of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine to the City.

And already, the \$3 billion dollar stem cell institute is proving a catalyst for biotech and life sciences.

Indeed, just this month FibroGen, with over 200 employees, announced its plan to move to Mission Bay.

Three years ago – biotech and life sciences in Mission Bay were just a dream. Today they are a reality with an exciting future for all of us.

In a city known for its divisive political climate – we were united in the face of these challenges – and our accomplishments are justly shared by all of us here today.

In the face of those great economic challenges– we were still able to look forward and address many of the long-term issues that confront all of us in our city, our state and our nation.

As Washington failed – and Sacramento ducked – we honored our responsibility to insure that the basic human right of health care is enjoyed by all San Franciscans.

In the next year, we will begin implementing this historic Health Access Plan – ensuring that all 82,000 San Franciscans currently without health insurance are guaranteed comprehensive high-quality health care.

I want to thank to the leadership of Supervisor Tom Ammiano – and every single one of you who were instrumental in creating this unique and innovative plan.

As a City, we took on health care – one of the greatest challenges facing our country today – and found an innovative solution...

Now at this moment, as we enjoy stronger revenue, continuing job growth and greater opportunity – it is time that we take – head on – the unfinished business of our City.

It is certainly true that San Francisco is nationally and internationally recognized as a City of innovation, entrepreneurialship and discovery...

But San Francisco is still a small and precious place.

Still just 47 and a half square miles and 740,000 souls.

And in this fragile place – our challenge is to preserve the qualities that make this the finest city in the world.

The irony is – that while it has become easier to find a job, it’s become harder to find a seat on the bus.

Our budget reserves may be filling up – but so are our streets, our sidewalks and parks.

San Franciscans have more money in their pockets. But the cost of basic goods and services is going up, and the economic challenges facing working families, particularly families with school age children, have never been greater.

The question before us today – then – is how do we as a City – answer these challenges...

How do we keep our economy strong – without making our quality of life worse?

How do we continue to offer the kind of compassionate government we so desperately need – without making this city more expensive for middle class and working families?

How do we make room for the new housing our residents so desperately need – without displacing our fellow San Franciscans by pricing them out and gentrifying our neighborhoods?

How do we dare to dream big – while not forgetting to fill the potholes, clean our streets and parks and address the small problems of urban life that make such a big difference in our quality of life?

These are the challenges facing San Francisco. And to many of us here today – they sound very familiar.

Just a few short years ago – in the midst of the dot-com boom – our city was divided over just these questions.

Long debated and long discussed, these vexing issues have – in truth – simply have been long deferred.

In the months and years ahead – we have an opportunity to address these challenges... to answer how we can be a model for the world – and still be a place of sustainability, affordability and quality of life for all San Franciscans.

Thanks to our strong economy – we now have the funds to address these persistent problems. Now it is up to us to muster the will as a city to see the job through.

Some of these issues may seem small. But truly, they make the difference between whether people want to commit to staying here for the long term or not.

Certainly – filling potholes doesn't make headlines...

But it does make a difference.

So – as we talk about improving our quality of life – let's start right there – with those terrible marks of urban decay – those potholes.

It doesn't matter how you got here today – by bus, by bike or car – you probably hit one, or many.

I believe we can fulfill our promise as a city – and fill those potholes.

But to do that, we have to stop deferring... and deferring... and deferring – the simple maintenance of our basic infrastructure.

San Francisco has 12,458 blocks of pavement – 60 percent of which are in serious need of repair.

Some streets need total repaving – others just need that pothole filled to make them safe.

That’s why – thanks in large part to the vision and support of Supervisor Sean Elsbernd, we are investing \$30 million dollars this year to fill those potholes, repave those streets and finally – finally begin to address the over \$380 million dollars needed to bring our streets into repair.

At the same time – we are taking a much-needed step to resolve one of the biggest reasons our streets are in such bad shape.

And that’s the damage done by projects to repair and upgrade sewers, power, cable and other vital infrastructure that tear up our streets – and too often leave them in worse condition than they were to begin with.

To ensure that these projects no longer compromise our street quality – today
I am proposing new Restoration Guidelines requiring that the agencies responsible for tearing up our streets – be it a utility or cable company – or even our own sister agency, the Public Utilities Commission – return the pavement to as-good or better condition than when the work began.

The Department of Public Works will inspect the repaving to ensure that our streets are repaired to an acceptable level.

Not just patchwork.

But we're not just focusing on our streets. After all San Francisco should be a pedestrian oasis.

Walking is one of the best ways to experience our neighborhoods and enjoy our breathtaking views.

But our sidewalks – like our streets – suffer from the very same neglect .

With 5,298 blocks of sidewalk – the reality is, City Hall is only legally responsible for the maintenance of just 106 blocks.

Let me repeat that... 5,298 blocks of sidewalk. And the City is only responsible legally for 106 blocks.

The remaining sidewalks are the responsibility of property owners.

This year alone, the City is investing some three-quarters of a million dollars

to fix our sidewalks.

At the same time, I recognize that upkeep can often be too expensive for the average property owner to afford.

That's why, today, I am proud to announce a plan to help property owners repair and maintain their sidewalks.

DPW will go out and inspect them – and notify property owners of deficiencies.

Property owners will then have the option to self correct the problems, or have a DPW sponsored contractor perform the necessary work.

Property owners – conveniently – will either be assessed directly or through their property tax bill.

We won't see a difference overnight – but we will make a difference in the years to come – on both our streets and our sidewalks.

Filling the potholes and repairing our streets and sidewalks – will make day to day life a little bit better.

But as you know, if we want to have any hope of making San Francisco a more enjoyable and easier place to live...

We simply must make it possible for more people to get back and forth to work - and school – without having to get into their cars and fight for a parking space.

The best way to do that – is to make our public transportation system faster and more reliable.

MUNI, alone, carries almost 700,000 passengers every day –roughly equivalent to the entire population of the City – making it one of the most heavily used transit systems in America.

But the truth is, the current network was designed in the late 70s, and San Francisco today is a very different place.

We need to develop a transit system that works not only for today but also for tomorrow.

Certainly, in the past several years MUNI has made great strides. But fare hikes and budget cuts have taken their toll on riders and the system.

And as any San Franciscan who has been late to work because the bus just didn't come – or when it did it was too full to board, can tell you – we haven't done enough to improve MUNI in a way that riders can see and feel.

Make no mistake – we are not going to sit back and wait for MUNI to derail.

As mayor, I recognize that while I don't have direct responsibility or policy authority over day to day decisions at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority – Proposition E wisely divests politics from this discussion...

... I do bear a direct obligation and responsibility to make our transit first policy a reality for all San Franciscans.

Frankly – I don't think it's too much to ask for the buses to run on time.

Under Director Nat Ford, we are taking concrete steps to better MUNI's reliability and on-time performance.

For the first time in 25 years – a quarter of a century – we are conducting a system wide analysis of routes

and ridership, with a goal to fundamentally overhaul service.

This Transit Effectiveness Project – or TEP – is a visionary effort to fundamentally reform and improve MUNI.

It is an 18-month study and analysis of almost 80 lines, 5,000 bus and train stops and travel patterns.

Fundamentally it seeks to reshape the system to meet the needs of today’s new realities – and anticipate tomorrow’s challenges.

The TEP defines a new vision for transportation in the City.

This study will recommend adjustments to service based on geography, trip purpose, population, and utilization during different times of the day.

It will analyze best practices of peer systems throughout the US and abroad.

It will focus on load factors, stop spacing, line spacing and headways – technical – but critical factors in making the system run on-time.

It will determine appropriate vehicle types and passenger facility needs.

And most importantly, it will focus on new avenues for increasing revenue – beyond fare increases – and recommend areas to reduce costs.

No idea is too big or too small to be considered – but the end result will be simple:

MUNI will get you where you're going faster.

By this time next year – when the plan is complete – we will have a blueprint for reform.

But we're not going to wait until then to implement the small things that will make a big difference in our everyday commute.

We are going to be smarter about how we use existing resources – because I believe that we can raise MUNI to a higher level of performance.

That's why today, I am announcing a new pilot program that will demonstrate what we can – and should expect – from MUNI on one of our most heavily used bus lines – the 1 California.

We are going to put more line managers on the street,
– to help manage the flow of bus traffic.

And beginning next week, we’re going to add
parking control officers at problem intersections at
peak hours – to ensure that gridlock does not keep
you from getting to work on time.

We’re going to work to change state law to
strengthen enforcement of double parking laws in bus
lanes.

We’re going to work with MUNI to explore changes
like expanded hours for express service, larger
vehicles on express routes and backdoor boarding.

This pilot will show what’s possible when we focus
our energy and attention on getting results.

If it proves effective – and efficient – we will expand
it to other key lines.

In the meantime, we are working to speed up other
high-use routes by implementing Bus Rapid Transit
on Van Ness Avenue and Geary Boulevard.

The BRT – as it’s called – creates dedicated lanes for
public transit, allows passengers to embark and

disembark more efficiently and takes advantage of SFGo – our state-of-the-art integrated traffic management system – that gives buses priority in real time.

Make no mistake – we will work closely with Merchants to address their concerns before implementing this program.

We are also going to make it easier to purchase a Fast Pass.

Right now, many people have to stand in line to buy a Fast Pass and, as hard as it is to believe, sometimes they run out.

That’s going to stop.

I have directed the MTA to explore the feasibility of placing Fast Pass distribution machines at Metro stations and MUNI kiosks throughout the city – so that riders don’t need to go out of their way to purchase a Fast Pass.

We are also going to make pre-paid parking meter cards available online next year.

So if you find yourself needing to drive – parking at a meter will no longer require a roll of quarters.

I have also directed the MTA to make installation of NextBus technology and new bus shelters a priority. We have been talking about this technology and these new shelters for too long.

The time to act is now... so that when you're waiting for the bus or streetcar you will know exactly when the next one is coming...

NextBus technology also lets you check on your bus from your home computer and your mobile phone, taking one of the biggest stresses out of commuting – not knowing when that next bus is going to arrive.

In collaboration with the Chair of the Transportation Authority, Supervisor McGoldrick, and other key transportation leaders,

I know we can get this done and fulfill these long-overdue promises.

In this day and age – more and more people are using their bikes to get to and from work.

It is an increasingly important way to confront the challenges of traffic congestion, traffic pollution, and health problems caused by a lack of physical activity.

We need to make biking safer and easier.

While San Francisco is already considered one of the best big cities in the country for bicycle commuting – we can do more.

So there is no misunderstanding – let me make this clear – the lawsuit holding up our bike plan will not stop us.

Whatever the judge’s decision – we will continue our long term planning to create a citywide bicycle network, uniting the current patchwork of bike lanes into a unified, comprehensive system.

It is also time to take steps to reach our goal of making 10% of all commute trips in the City bicycle trips within the next 3 and a half years.

While making MUNI faster and bike riding safer – we aim to get people out of their cars and get them healthier – so we must commit to reducing emissions from our public transportation fleet.

With new hybrid busses coming on line, we can now say by this time next year, we will have the greenest public transportation fleet in the nation.

I think we can all agree that the more people who get out of their cars and use alternative transit – the better this city is going to be for everyone.

Another way of doing this is to have safe, reliable and affordable taxi service.

Recent legislation passed by the Board makes San Francisco one of the most expensive cities in the country to take a taxi.

The reality is, when people know they can get a taxi in a pinch – it keeps them from using their car for short trips.

But if taking a taxi is going to cost you more – something that I continue to believe was a mistake – then at least we should make it easier for people to find one.

Customer service in the taxi industry is simply behind the times.

We are one of the most technologically-advanced cities in the world, yet taxis are still being dispatched by radio.

We are a transit first city, but not when getting a taxi means being placed on hold for ten minutes before even talking to a dispatcher.

For the taxi industry to survive – and for San Franciscans to get the best service possible – we must move this industry – into this century.

I challenge the Taxi Commission and its industry partners to create a centralized dispatch system available online and by phone.

This idea was first proposed by our new Executive Director of the Taxi Commission in 1999 and 7 years later we are still debating it... It's time has come.

Another idea whose time has come – is a substantial expansion of taxi stands.

Anyone that's been to the Caltrain station at Fourth and Townsend, knows the importance of taxi stands.

So I am directing the Taxi Commission and the MTA, in coordination with, AC Transit, BART and

our other transit partners to install taxi stands at every major transit hub in the city – not just downtown.

Recognizing that there are peak hours of need in our neighborhoods – we will also create a comprehensive system of taxi stands throughout our neighborhoods.

What’s more, I am asking the Taxi Commission to require that a Taxi Rider’s Bill of Rights be posted in every cab, with complaints and compliments directed to our new 311 call center.

... More on that later...

Now – I recognize that as Mayor I cannot simply wave my hand and make it so... but today I sent a letter to the Taxi Commission asking that they require all new taxis to accept credit cards – and be GPS enabled.

Why GPS? Well...

GPS, is the first step we must take in order to make a centralized dispatch system a reality.

I have also directed the Taxi Commission to continue the transition of our entire taxi fleet to hybrid, alternative-fuel and other green vehicles, so that by

2011 – in just four years – every cab in San Francisco will be clean.

Incidentally, we have the second highest number of alternative fuel cabs in the nation – but we can do better.

As we clean and green our taxi fleet we must also make an investment in a cleaner and greener San Francisco.

That’s why we are expanding our Livable City Initiative to green our streets and help define the unique characteristics of each of our neighborhoods.

We have secured \$8 million dollars in federal and local funds to begin major streetscape improvements, everything from planting trees and improving median strips to repairing sidewalks and replacing street lamps.

We are completing
San Bruno Avenue and Lombard Street... Beginning work on
Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street...

And Balboa and Ocean Avenue are now in the planning stages.

Our goal is to not only soften the edges of our urban landscape but to restore a sense of pride and place by revamping at least one major street or corridor in every Supervisorial district.

Let me thank Supervisor Dufty, and others, who have long championed this initiative.

In addition to these streetscape improvements – we are making progress on our pledge to plant 25,000 new street trees by 2011.

As we did last year – in the next 12 months, we will plant another 5,000 trees on our streets, our open spaces – and in our neighborhood parks.

And speaking of neighborhood parks – I don't think it's too much to ask that they be kept clean and safe.

I also don't think it's too much to ask that residents be able to use their fields and gyms easily – without the cumbersome reservation policy that now exists.

By early next year, all Rec and Park users will be able to reserve play fields, gymnasiums and register for classes – online.

And for those without a computer or internet access, we will expand the number of sites across the City where you can make a reservation in person – cutting down on wait time and making it more convenient for all of us.

Supervisor Ma – who has long fought to make these changes a reality, will no doubt welcome these reforms – as

I imagine, every baseball, softball, football and soccer league in the City.

While all San Franciscans should be able to enjoy a clean and safe park near their home.

All residents should also be able to walk in neighborhoods that are clean and safe on streets - free of litter and garbage.

That’s why this month, we launched the Clean Corridors program that focuses on our main commercial districts.

Over the next 9 months, DPW crews will be out in force on 100 blocks across the City.

You will see City workers on Third Street this week... and on Mission Street and Grant Avenue next month... removing graffiti, picking up trash and bringing these 100 key corridors to a higher standard of care and cleanliness.

This initiative, if it proves successful – and I believe it will – will be substantially expanded in the coming year.

Another successful tool to improve our neighborhood commercial corridors, is the creation of more Community Benefit Districts.

Thanks in large part to Supervisor Aaron Peskin, neighborhood groups and merchant associations now have the ability to come together – to form these CBDs – to expand daily street cleaning, to plant new trees, to sponsor neighborhood festivals, to provide new signage and banners and other improvements.

When I took office - we had only one CBD in Union Square.

Last year, I pledged to create 6 more – and we're well on our way to making this a reality.

The Fillmore and Central Market Districts were both recently approved and just yesterday, I signed enabling legislation forming the new Fisherman's Wharf CBD.

We need to encourage every other neighborhood and every other business district in our City to do the same.

That's why in next year's budget, I will include matching grant funding for merchants, residents and property owners interested in forming these districts.

I will also add additional matching capital funding for existing districts to plant more trees, install more planter boxes and hanging baskets, purchase more benches and trash cans and other improvements.

Leading to cleaner, greener and safer streets, while giving residents and businesses the final say on how the funds – they raise – can best be spent.

In the process – we will also help these merchants and property owners fight the relentless scourge of graffiti, which – despite a considerable investment by my administration all too clearly remains a problem.

Cleaning up graffiti – simply isn't good enough.

We must also hold those responsible for it – accountable.

That's why we've partnered with the District Attorney's Office to fund an attorney to prosecute the worst graffiti offenders.

And – I want to underscore this – that's why we've helped expand alternatives for appropriate artistic expression – which is not tagging stop signs.

Now – San Francisco has always maintained an almost instinctive notion that we are all in this together – that we are one community.

And that we all do better when the fewest are left behind.

That is why we cannot forget the greatest challenge our city still faces – homelessness.

Without question, over the last 3 years we have made great progress.

I want to thank Angela Alioto and her team for their outstanding work over the last 2 and a half years to help end chronic homelessness...

With their guidance, we have made Housing First a reality. We've instituted HOMeward Bound. And we've launched Project Homeless Connect that has become a model for the nation...

The numbers tell the story...

We've placed 2,222 individuals in permanent supportive housing – 95% of whom remain housed today.

We've created 1,891 new units of housing – a 152 percent increase since December of 2003 – bringing us to 3,130 units of permanent supportive housing for single adults.

1,656 individuals have been reunited with their families and friends through our Homeward Bound program since February 2005.

And – get this – some 22,000 Homeless Connect volunteers have given their time to help thousands of homeless San Franciscans – connecting those in need - with medical attention, federal benefits - and a host of critical services.

In total, since 2003, when we began – some 4,263 homeless individuals have permanently left our streets. That is progress.

But all you need to do is walk down almost any street in the City to know – our job is not yet done.

The fact is, the vast majority of the chronic homeless who remain on our streets suffer from addiction and mental illness.

They are the highest users of City services and also the most resistant to getting the help they need.

So here’s what we’re going to do...

Through a collaboration of our homeless outreach workers, the Department of Human Services, the City Attorney, Public Defender, District Attorney and the courts, we will implement a new Serial Inebriate Program that provides treatment for chronic alcoholism.

This program, implemented in 2000 in San Diego has reduced the number of chronic inebriates living on their streets from 750 to 175 today.

There is no reason San Francisco can't successfully adopt and implement a similar strategy to help those most in need.

In addition, we will work with liquor store owners to limit sales of certain kinds of alcohol in critical areas of the City...

It is wrong for liquor stores to sell high-proof alcohol to certain individuals at 6am in the morning... But they legally can do that.
That's got to stop.

I also believe it's time that we got serious about providing a comprehensive - housing based – work program...

One that targets homeless individuals with histories of incarceration and substance abuse... Providing employment in return for housing, food and financial incentives to work and stay drug free after completing the program.

I will be talking a lot more about this in the weeks ahead.... simply put – though – we need to create more job opportunities for homeless individuals so they can move forward to real independence.

And we must expand our Homeless Outreach Teams – to create new teams focused citywide, to reach out into every neighborhood not just the central city.

Currently our teams are deployed in the Tenderloin, the Mission, South of Market, Mid-Market and the Castro.

And while - these teams have helped over 300 people get into treatment or permanent housing directly from the street... We can replicate this success in every corner of our City... and I plan to do that by hiring more outreach workers with the support of the Board of Supervisors.

What's more – expanding our outreach teams will make it possible for any San Franciscan who seeks to help a homeless person find that help by dialing 311.

While we are making great headway reducing the number of people living on our streets – we must also do a better job addressing the quality of life crimes that don't make headlines but that make our lives much harder.

Too often, we see people shooting up and dealing drugs in public... And far too many people are having their cars broken into and windows smashed.

We know that much of this crime is driven by substance abuse and mental illness. Services are important. But some people simply refuse to participate without strong encouragement.

I know that District Attorney Kamala Harris feels strongly about this – and we agree that there needs to be more responsibility – more accountability – and more successful rehabilitation.

The City will continue to offer treatment options, sure... but we're going to make it clear that, if you refuse treatment, there will be consequences.

Because the truth is – these crimes, while minor under the law – are often committed by people with major records.

We're not pretending we can fix these problems overnight but together with the DA, we will create a new Focused Enforcement program to target and address these quality of life infractions.

This will be a pilot project – we're going to start small.

But the DA and I are optimistic that Focused Enforcement will make our city safer – and help those who need a little bit more encouragement to get off the streets and get the help they need.

Now – while we are trying new and innovative ways to tackle quality of life crime – the reality is, San Francisco, like almost every major city in the United States today, is experiencing a surge in violent crime.

There is no excuse for even a single homicide.

But there is also – no single cure.

Make no mistake though – we are already implementing new strategies to address the root causes and effects of this critical problem...

...We are implementing neighborhood specific Community Policing plans throughout the City.

... We're working in partnership with state and federal law enforcement agencies, including the CHP to increase saturation of resources in hotspots, increasing tactical and specialty units, expanding the gang taskforce and extending the hours of our narcotics unit...

... we're working at a new level of collaboration with our public safety agencies to combat gun and gang violence with programs like as Project Gun Stop, and Operation Ceasefire, which are taking guns off the street and focusing police and prosecution efforts on gang leaders.

... We're employing state-of-the-art technologies like Community Safety Cameras.

... And we're continuing to civilianize the Police Department so officers are not behind a desk – including 23 officers that will be on the street in the new year.

We've recently hired 153 new officers – complimenting the most aggressive recruitment and training program in recent memory.

But to keep us on pace to meet our goal of 700 new officers by 2009, we must recruit upwards of 2,100 applicants due to attrition and retirements.

I urge San Franciscans to answer a new call to service – to become a police officer... to become part of the front line ensuring our city's safety.

We need your help.

And while new recruitment is a priority – we are also doing more to retain experienced officers.

Working with Supervisor Elsbernd and the Police Officers Association, just this week we put forward a proposal to create financial incentives to retain experienced officers, as well as incentives to recruit officers from other jurisdictions.

Today, I call upon the Board of Supervisors to support this effort to ensure that we have the funding necessary to put this essential plan into action.

But we all know officers alone are not the answer...

It's not enough to be tough on crime – we must also be tough on the causes of crime...

And that means we must stop playing in the margins when it comes to changing the conditions of poverty that create a generational legacy of hopelessness and violence.

That's why we've created Communities of Opportunity – a groundbreaking initiative modeled after New York's – Harlem – Children's Zone, that re-invests City dollars

in a centralized and coordinated fashion
in areas identified by the community.

We looked at the data – and we found that there are 7
corners – literally 7 street corners – that are the
intersection of families most at risk and most in
crisis.

4 in the Southeast, 1 in Potrero Hill, 1 in the Western
Addition and 1 in the Tenderloin.

It is these neighborhoods that are – our Communities
of Opportunity...

Places of diminished hope but of great expectation...

Think about this...

In spite of the fact that we invest \$98 million dollars
a year in and around the 4 areas
in the Southeast alone...

... The numbers tell a very different story...

Unemployment there is 50% higher than the city
average...

2/3 of the families there - live in poverty...

And by the age of 17,
70% of the Southeast's African American males have
been involved in the juvenile justice system.

Clearly – despite decades of government investment,
few residents or service providers are seeing the kind
of positive results they deserve.

At the intersections of Fitzgerald and Griffith...
Sunnydale and Santos... Westpoint and
Middlepoint... Oakdale and Griffith...
Here – in our City's Southeast –
Communities of Opportunity is taking shape.

We held 50 community meetings and heard from
over 300 residents to help shape the core principles of
this unique, place-based strategy.

Communities of Opportunity is anchored in 3
bedrock principles:

One – Linking services to results...

Two – delivering services that will actually improve
the lives of the people they serve ...

And Three – Strengthening families to help re-knit
the fabric of the community.

For the pilot phase launched last month, we've identified 2,600 families in-crisis in these 4 areas, and partnered with the philanthropic community to raise \$5 million dollars to invest in programs with a proven track record for lasting change.

We are creating Opportunity Centers in each of the four Southeast areas.

These centers will serve as social and professional hubs for families and individuals...

... Providing education, training, job placement, child care and other services meant to help residents stand on their own.

By this time next year, we plan to train and place 400 Southeast residents in new jobs. We plan to target 100 of our highest-risk families with intensive wraparound crisis services tailored to their needs.

I am hoping we can work with Supervisors Maxwell, Mirkarimi and others who have long called for a Marshall plan to address the root causes of crime and violence – to expand Communities of Opportunity to the other high-need areas of our City.

Let us not forget, however, that one of the best crime-prevention strategies remains a high-wage job.

That's why we created CityBuild and CityBuild Academy, an initiative that offers low-income San Franciscans the opportunity to learn new skills and access high-paying jobs

CityBuild leverages the billions of dollars we are investing in our infrastructure over the next decade to bring poor and working class San Franciscans into the middle class.

To date, CityBuild has trained and placed over 240 low-income San Franciscans in highly skilled, highly-paid jobs.

And speaking of jobs, this past summer alone we created over 3,000 jobs and job training placements for at risk youth and adults – one of the most concerted efforts in our City's history...

Central to any strategy to combat poverty and the underlying causes of violence – is quality education.

We need schools that provide tools and opportunities for advancement that are too often lacking in underserved communities...

We need schools defined by excellence no matter which neighborhood they're in.

That's why we have made an historic investment in our public schools of over \$77 million dollars in the last 3 years alone.

Well beyond what the voters called for in Proposition H.

This investment has resulted in tangible improvements and benefits for our kids.

We are gaining momentum in our effort to make San Francisco schools the reason people want to stay and raise a family in our City.

Not the reason they want to leave.

And to ensure that we don't lose any ground – we are working to create a first-of its kind Joint-Partnership with the School District.

This historic Joint Partnership will make it easier to bring city services and resources to our students and their families – services like wellness centers and

after school programs, while also supporting anti-truancy and other initiatives.

I have directed all City department heads who work closely with the schools to think even more strategically about ways they can further contribute to our schools.

For example if an elementary school is without an adequate sports facility – and is close to a neighborhood park – then why shouldn't that school be given priority – as a user for that park?

Or conversely – in a neighborhood where there are no parks – school fields could offer recreational opportunities for that neighborhood.

The Partnership is about simple efficiencies like these, as well as broad policy changes – like our pledge to create After-School opportunities for all public elementary and middle school students.

Last year, I pledged to provide after-school for all by 2010. Today, I am proud to say that we are on track to achieve that goal.

This year alone, we will invest \$2 million dollars to advance this initiative for 2,000 kids – at the same time leveraging as much as \$5 million dollars in state funding for additional programming.

We've also made enormous strides – as well – returning arts education to our schools.

Thanks to the recently completed Arts Education Master Plan, we have finally restored comprehensive arts education to every child in every classroom, K-12.

Now – every school will have a budget for art supplies, music, dance, professional development and even resources to host visiting artists... Making San Francisco one of the only school districts in the State with this kind of comprehensive arts curriculum.

Our schools are making progress...

But let us not forget that we can do better.

That's why today, I am challenging our public schools to create a basic expectation for community service.

I challenge every public high school principal

to create a new standard of excellence –
one defined by service.

The goal is to make community service a common experience – a rite of civic passage - for young San Franciscans on their way to responsibility and productive citizenship.

In 1962, Bobby Kennedy spoke here in San Francisco at USF.

He took the opportunity to remind the audience that since the days of Greece and Rome, when the word citizen was a title of honor, we have often seen more emphasis on the **rights** of citizenship than on its **responsibilities**.

He also noted, though, that responsibility is the greatest right of citizenship – and service is the greatest of freedom’s privileges.

This was true 44 years ago – and it remains true to day.

Let us commit, as Kennedy said, to this new covenant, a new fellowship of shared interest – an ideal of a just community – and let us start with the generation currently in our public schools.

It's time for all of us – politicians, parents and students to recognize that we are indeed, one City – and as I said earlier – one community.

And that we are all strengthened when we contribute our time to those most in need.

So I hope this November when we elect a new school board –that they understand the importance of community service...

That's why I am supporting candidates like Hydra Mendoza – who I am proud is here today.

Schools of course are one of government's greatest responsibilities and are at the very core of our quality of life...

But quality of life is not just about good schools, clean streets or public transit.

It's also about how government serves you.

And without question, one of the ongoing frustrations for anyone who lives here is just how hard it can be to get a simple answer or basic service from City Hall.

But that's going to change.

It's taken a little longer than I would have liked but finally, this spring, those 2,300 city telephone numbers currently available to serve you – will be replaced by a single 3 digit number that can be used to access a real human being... 24-hours a day,, 7-days a week... 365 days a year,, and available in 140 languages.

With 311, we have more than just a tool for residents to use to interact with their government. It is also a powerful management tool for making government more effective an more accountable.

Once 311 is fully implemented – we are going to know how long it takes to clean up that trash, or fill that pothole, or move that car blocking your garage.

And that knowledge is going to help us deliver services faster and more efficiently.

While the 311 call system will make a big difference – many San Franciscans also have trouble accessing basic information – online.

If you are one of the 100,000 or so San Franciscans with limited English proficiency – your experience on our city web page has probably been, frankly, unintelligible.

And with good reason. Many of the translations were simply gibberish. And much of the information simply wasn't available.

We need to make sure that our web resources make sense in every language.

That's why I asked our Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting and Treasurer Cisneros to lead the effort to make sure that our web pages start making sense.

As part of our comprehensive overhaul of the City's technology services – non-English speaking residents can now look forward to culturally competent web services... and all residents can look forward to a new, more interactive and user friendly city web page.

It's an issue of accessibility and ease. It's an issue of making the city a little easier to navigate and a little easier to live in...

It's an issue that goes directly to the heart of our initiative to make free wireless Internet available to every San Franciscan.

WiFi though – in and of itself – is not enough... we must also take concrete steps to bridge the digital divide.

That's why we recently created a citywide digital inclusion strategy.

Anchored in free WiFi, our inclusion strategy will provide free or affordable hardware, culturally competent training and geographically relevant content to those communities too long isolated by poverty and violence.

I challenge the Board of Supervisors to help us move forward in this critical effort by approving our plan to make free wireless Internet a reality in the next calendar year.

From potholes to 311, WiFi to cultural competency – we are making progress addressing the small matters that often matter most – but the reality is there is one very important quality of life concern that is anything but easy to solve...

... That is the unbelievable cost of housing.

It is out of control. And it is driving out San Franciscans who have called this city home for generations.

There is no one answer. But there are some clear goals. And it's time that we start meeting those goals.

Last year, I announced our Home 15/5 plan that calls for 15,000 new housing units to be built in the next five years – 5,400 of which will be made affordable to low and moderate income San Franciscans.

Last year alone, the City authorized the construction of 5,570 new homes – more than double the number in 2004 – and more than we have seen in decades.

And while we invested a record \$210.7 million dollars in this year's budget for affordable housing, I have to tell you – frankly, it's just NOT enough.

We need more housing of all types – particularly in new and emerging neighborhoods.

From where we stand today –we are just a single T-line ride away from over 9,675 units of new housing in Mission Bay and Rincon Hill – a number that rises

to 15,675 if you add Treasure Island, which I am firmly committed to moving forward.

These new neighborhoods – which are models of community input and planning, as well as environmental sustainability – are also models of basic affordability.

Together they will create 4,020 new units of affordable housing.

What’s more, the new plan for the Bayview Hunters Point Project Area calls for 3,700 new housing units – 25 percent of which will be affordable.

Well above our inclusionary housing requirements.

When we talk about housing, we need to be talking about housing for all San Franciscans including residents of our Housing Authority.

And that means honestly dealing with the massive federal cuts in housing programs like Hope 6 and Section 8 enacted by the Bush administration.

These drastic cuts have left us with a clear moral imperative – address the conditions in our housing projects – or allow them to deteriorate... and in so

doing – turning our back on thousands of our fellow citizens.

That’s why I ask each and every one of you today, to join me in an unprecedented initiative – improving the deplorable state of our public housing developments.

Together with a broad partnership, I believe we can rebuild hope in our City.

That’s why we are initiating Hope SF – an effort to rebuild our most distressed San Francisco housing authority properties into mixed use, mixed income communities...

...Creating more low-income housing... more middle-income housing,, and more housing overall.

Too many of our Housing Authority projects are scars on the landscape of San Francisco.

They were built in an era when the federal government was focused on temporary, cheap housing.

They were dropped into isolated locations because the land was cheap and there was no neighborhood opposition.

And they were built without reference to the underlying problems of poverty and unemployment – which caused people to need in the housing in the first place.

There is another terrible chapter in this story – and that is the shameful history of redevelopment across this country and in San Francisco.

We did something terribly wrong when we tore down our historic neighborhoods and replaced them with housing projects that are historic mistakes.

We displaced and drove out families. And we incurred a debt to the people of those destroyed neighborhoods that has yet to be repaid.

I can tell you right now – we are going to repay that debt – starting with restoring each of these housing projects to something much better than the original construction and something better than what was destroyed...

Right now these projects are not just some of the worst places to live.

They are in some of the most isolated communities, far from jobs, services, and even the simple things like a supermarket or pharmacy.

And ironically, they are also in some of the least dense areas of our city.

We can use that accident of history to repair the damage caused by these projects.

Because within the footprint of these projects is the space to replace each and every Housing Authority unit.

But that's just for starters.

Our plan includes adding ground floor retail, new jobs and services... adding units that can be rented by low income San Franciscans... adding units that are market rate. And creating new homes for sale.

The goal is to leave the city with better neighborhoods, more housing, and finally – a clean conscience when it comes to the terrible history of neglect in public housing.

Hope SF will rebuild 2,500 new Housing Authority units, up to 1,000 new low income units, and we can help pay for this with 2,500 new family units for sale.

We will create new neighborhoods... Preserve existing neighborhoods by relieving the pressure for new housing... And create new economic opportunities.

And finally – perhaps most importantly – right a wrong.

From where we stand today – at the nexus of the Bayview, the Excelsior and Visitacion Valley – we can see the future of San Francisco.

A city we can all live in...

A city that doesn't pit one group against another and let them fight it out...

A City – not just for the few... but a City for All.

It's both the big ideas – and the small things – that together add up to a City we can all call home.

I am proud of our accomplishments but frankly – they pale in comparison to our challenges...

If we are to remain a city of constant possibility – we must once again – become a city that works.

We will never stop dreaming big and acting boldly.

But neither should we be afraid to roll up our sleeves to deal with the problems that never make the newspapers... but that make all the difference for the people of San Francisco.

It's time to get back to the basics.

Let's get to work.

Thank you all for being here.