

**Office of the Mayor**  
City & County of San Francisco



**Gavin Newsom**  
Mayor

December 5, 2006

Dear Supervisors,

I write to share my thoughts on policy dialogue between the Mayor and Board of Supervisors. As you know, our administration is committed to open government and policy-based decision making. I believe that conversations between my office and Supervisors focused on policy issues can advanced such good governance.

To allow for open lines of communication between the executive and legislative branches, my office maintains an open-door policy with Supervisors. Several Supervisors have taken us up on this policy over time, dropping by to discuss a broad range of issues facing the city. Additionally, scheduled meetings with Supervisors on specific policy subjects and standing meetings with the Board President have also been productive toward shared goals.

We believe there is widespread agreement among San Franciscans that we need more policy-based dialogue and less political arguing. Simply put, residents want elected officials to focus on the challenges facing our city and to collaborate on finding solutions. Too often inside of City Hall, policy dialogue becomes political theater, and the public interest loses out.

This past November the voters passed an advisory initiative asking the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor to commit themselves to substantive public policy discussion once a month. If structured appropriately, such dialogue will benefit the city. To truly serve the public interest, I believe that we should hold these conversations in the community. Bringing these conversations to the neighborhoods—during non-work hours— will allow residents to participate and will ensure transparent dialogue, while avoiding the politicized, counterproductive arguing that too often takes place in the confines of City Hall.

Beginning in January, my office will convene monthly public policy town hall meetings in different areas of the city. Each meeting will address a policy subject important to residents, such as homelessness, Muni, and keeping families in San Francisco. All Supervisors will be asked to participate in this public dialogue. I will be asking President Peskin to work with our office to ensure productive, policy-based meetings that allow for public participation. In the upcoming Committee meeting on this subject, we are hopeful that Supervisors will agree with us that the best place to have public policy dialogue is in the community.

I look forward to these community-based meetings that will allow us to productively address important issues facing our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom".

Gavin Newsom