Brown vetoes replacement for redevelopment agencies

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

SACAMENTO— Having previously ordered the closure of hundreds of redevelopment programs throughout California, Gov. Jerry Brown on Saturday vetoed six bills that would have given local governments other economic development powers, saying it is too soon to consider alternatives.

The governor and Legislature had acted earlier this year to close redevelopment agencies and have them begin to unwind their finances to increase money available for the state general fund and eliminate its shortfall.

Among the bills rejected were measures by Assembly Speaker John Pérez, D-Los Angeles, and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento. Pérez's AB2144 would have allowed local communities to create "infrastructure and revitalization financing districts" if approved by 55 percent of voters.

Pérez wanted to expand their powers to more clearly allow them to use property tax money and bond revenue to buy land and build housing and to construct and renovate commercial and industrial buildings.

"Expanding the scope of infrastructure financing districts is premature," Brown wrote in his veto message. "This measure would likely cause cities to focus their efforts on using new tools provided by the measure instead of winding down redevelopment. This would prevent the state from achieving the General Fund savings assumed in this year's budget."

The veto message was similar for Steinberg's measure that would have allowed cities to set up "sustainable communities

investment authorities” to help the development of neighborhoods near transit hubs with housing and factories that provide equipment for the clean energy industry. That bill is SB1156.

Brown liked the idea but wrote in his veto message: “I prefer to take a constructive look at implementing this type of program once the winding down of redevelopment is complete and General Fund savings achieved.”

Learn the ins and out of Medicare

Medicare expert Margaret Reilly will host a community forum explaining Medicare and health insurance on Oct. 3 from 12:30-2pm at the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation facility located at 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd.

This meeting is for anyone who currently has or is soon to have Medicare as their primary health insurance. This meeting should also be helpful for anyone who helps relatives or friends with Medicare.

Reilly is the program manager for HICAP, California’s Health Insurance Assistance Program, and is an expert on Medicare.

There is no cost to attend this event.

State transportation agency spending money near South Lake Tahoe

California Transportation Commission has allocated $4.8 million to construct a water quality and collection and treatment facilities along Highway 50 west of South Lake Tahoe.

The CTC allocated $236 million last week in new funding to 32 projects that will improve the state's transportation system and strengthen California's economy.

The allocations include $81 million from Proposition 1B, a transportation bond approved by voters in 2006. In total, nearly $14.5 billion in Proposition 1B funds have been distributed statewide.

The remaining $155 million in allocations came from assorted transportation accounts funded by state and federal dollars.

Bodies have peak time to accomplish all sorts of tasks

By Sue Shellenbarger, Wall Street Journal

Could you pack more into each day if you did everything at the optimal time?

A growing body of research suggests that paying attention to the body clock, and its effects on energy and alertness, can help pinpoint the different times of day when most of us perform our best at specific tasks, from resolving conflicts to thinking creatively.

Many people are squeezing so much into their days that old-fashioned time management doesn’t work, productivity researchers say.

Most people organize their time around everything but the body’s natural rhythms. Workday demands, commuting, social events and kids’ schedules frequently dominate—inevitably clashing with the body’s circadian rhythms of waking and sleeping.

As difficult as it may be to align schedules with the body clock, it may be worth it to try, because of significant potential health benefits. Disruption of circadian rhythms has been linked to such problems as diabetes, depression, dementia and obesity, says Steve Kay, a professor of molecular and computational biology at the University of Southern California. When the body’s master clock can synchronize functioning of all its metabolic, cardiovascular and behavioral rhythms in response to light and other natural stimuli, it “gives us an edge in daily life,” Kay says.

When it comes to doing cognitive work, for example, most adults perform best in the late morning, says Dr. Kay. As body temperature starts to rise just before awakening in the morning and continues to increase through midday, working memory, alertness and concentration gradually improve. Taking a warm morning shower can jump-start the process.

The ability to focus and concentrate typically starts to slide soon thereafter. Most people are more easily distracted from noon to 4pm, according to recent research led by Robert Matchock, an associate professor of psychology at Pennsylvania

State University.

Read the whole story

Placer County meeting to focus on Tahoe community plans

Placer County is having a town hall meeting on the Lake Tahoe Basin Community Plan update on Oct. 17 in Kings Beach.

The meeting will take place at 6pm in the North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd.

The meeting will be a chance for community members to learn more about the update process, the status of the community plan update, and the work being done by the county's community plan working groups.

Placer County currently has nine community plans for the Tahoe basin. Most are joint planning documents developed about 20 years ago by the county and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

TRPA is in the process of updating its Regional Plan, and all community plans within the Tahoe basin must be consistent with the Regional Plan.

Through its update process, Placer County intends to consolidate the nine plans into a single policy document with four planning areas. Each planning area will have its own distinct zoning ordinance and community-specific design guidelines.

The four planning areas include:

• North Tahoe East, which covers Kings Beach and the state line community;

• Greater Tahoe City, which includes Tahoe City, Tahoe City Gateway, Lake Forest, and Dollar Hill;

• North Tahoe West, which includes Carnelian Bay and Tahoe Vista; and

• The West Shore, which includes Sunnyside, Homewood and Tahoma.

For more information about the town hall meeting and community plan update process, contact Supervising Planner Crystal Jacobsen at (530) 745.3085 or cjacobse@placer.ca.gov.

California to provide some textbooks digitally to college students

By Megan Garber, Atlantic

Last week, California took a big step forward in open-source education. Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law a proposal to create a website that will allow students to download popular textbooks for free.

The legislation contains two bills: One, a proposal for the state to fund 50 open-source digital textbooks, targeted to lower-division courses, which will be produced by California's universities. Students will be able to download these books

for free or to pay $20 for hard copies. The other bill is a proposal to establish a California Digital Open Source Library to host those books.

On the textbook side, California will ask the California Open Education Resources Council, comprised of school faculty, to develop the list of targeted courses and create and oversee the approval process. The council will create a list of 50 lower-division courses in the public postsecondary segments "for which high-quality, affordable, digital open source textbooks and related materials would be developed or acquired" by the University of California, California State University and California Community College systems. The council will then solicit bids to produce these textbooks in 2013. (The first free books are set to be available for the 2013-14 school year.)

And the bill makes clear that the council has the option to use "existing high-quality digital open source textbooks and related materials" if those materials fit the requirements."

The main idea here, politically and socially, is to lighten the burden – a little bit – for students who have been hit with tuition increases at California's public schools in recent years.

"Many students are paying more than $1,000 every year on their textbooks, sometimes having to choose between buying the books they need or paying for food and other living expenses," said Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, the author of the bills, in a statement.

The new law will also be something of a technological experiment – and an intriguing one, at that. For one thing, it makes a point of extending its impact beyond California's borders. Any digital textbooks created under the council's auspices, the new legislation says, must be placed under a Creative Commons license – which will allow faculty at

universities in other states to make use of the textbooks for their own students. And the textbooks, furthermore, must be encoded in XML (or another "appropriate successor format") to facilitate their re-use.

So can government successfully step in to encourage the development textbooks that are both open-source and high-quality? Can Sacramento be its own kind of digital disruptor?

As Ars Technica's Timothy Lee noted, "It seems unlikely that having the government issue an RFP would be a good way to develop, say, an open-source operating system."

Which is very true. Then again, much of our assumptions about education – that it should take place in classrooms, that it should rely on expensive textbooks – is a matter of institutional intertia as much as anything else. Sometimes, change needs to come from the top down rather than vice versa. And California, for all its financial problems, is full of universities whose faculty and staff have expertise in both curriculum-writing and digital technology. So there's a good chance that this 50-book initiative is the start of a broader overhaul that will find bulky, expensive textbooks replaced by versions that are both digital and free.

Bicycle ridership increases when helmets not mandatory

By Elisabeth Rosenthal, New York Times

One spectacular Sunday in Paris last month, I decided to skip museums and shopping to partake of something even more captivating for an environment reporter: Vélib, arguably the

most successful bike-sharing program in the world. In their short lives, Europe's bike-sharing systems have delivered myriad benefits, notably reducing traffic and its carbon emissions.

A number of American cities – including New York, where a bike-sharing program is to open next year – want to replicate that success.

So I bought a day pass online for about $2, entered my login information at one of the hundreds of docking stations that are scattered every few blocks around the city and selected one of Vélib's nearly 20,000 stodgy gray bikes, with their basic gears, upright handlebars and practical baskets.

Then I did something extraordinary, something I've not done in a quarter-century of regular bike riding in the United States: I rode off without a helmet.

I rode all day at a modest clip, on both sides of the Seine, in the Latin Quarter, past the Louvre and along the Champs-Élysées, feeling exhilarated, not fearful. And I had tons of bareheaded bicycling company amid the Parisian traffic. One common denominator of successful bike programs around the world – from Paris to Barcelona to Guangzhou – is that almost no one wears a helmet, and there is no pressure to do so.

In the United States the notion that bike helmets promote health and safety by preventing head injuries is taken as pretty near God's truth. Un-helmeted cyclists are regarded as irresponsible, like people who smoke. Cities are aggressive in helmet promotion.

But many European health experts have taken a very different view: Yes, there are studies that show that if you fall off a bicycle at a certain speed and hit your head, a helmet can reduce your risk of serious head injury. But such falls off bikes are rare – exceedingly so in mature urban cycling systems.

On the other hand, many researchers say, if you force or pressure people to wear helmets, you discourage them from riding bicycles. That means more obesity, heart disease and diabetes. And – Catch-22 – a result is fewer ordinary cyclists on the road, which makes it harder to develop a safe bicycling network. The safest biking cities are places like Amsterdam and Copenhagen, where middle-aged commuters are mainstay riders and the fraction of adults in helmets is minuscule.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Sandy is a very nice 9-year-old yellow Lab who acts years younger than she looks.



She knows several commands, walks nicely on her leash, and has beautiful teeth.

Sandy likes other well-mannered dogs and has lived with small children. She love the water and likes to play fetch. Sandy ended up at the shelter because her previous owners' new child is allergic.

She will make a great pet for just about any family.

Sandy is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with

many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go online to see photos and description of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The first South Lake Tahoe City Council forum is Oct. 1 at 11am at Inn by the Lake.

• Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe's annual wine tasting is Nov. 2, 6pm at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

• You obviously like to get your news digitally. This story proves you aren't alone. It should also be telling you your customers are online. Is your business advertising online? If not, let *Lake Tahoe News* help you launch your online ad campaign. Drop an email to info@LakeTahoeNews.net with "want to advertise" in the subject line.

• Here is the roadwork schedule from Caltrans for El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra.

• Hear what South Shore's Glen Plake has to say about his

experience surviving an avalanche in Nepal:

Opinion: Lake clarity needs to be reported in real time

To the community,

On Sept. 30, Tahoe Pipe Club completed its final summer 2012 Lake Tahoe clarity measurement. During summer 2012 (June through September) the average clarity of Lake Tahoe was equal to 59.7 feet and represented an 8 foot improvement in summer clarity compared to the 2011 average as reported by the Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

Tahoe Pipe Club would like real time publication of all official clarity measurements. Real time publication will improve the public's understanding of the fluctuations in lake clarity and help to improve our understanding of the processes which impact clarity.

Processes such as snowfall, snow melt, boating, rain, lake mixing and drought.

The current delay in releasing the official record and withholding monthly results deprives the public of gaining an understanding of how these processes can be better managed to improve clarity.

To learn more about Lake Tahoe and how we need to improve the management practices which are intended to save its clarity, go online.

Tahoe Pipe Club