

Union news for  
**PROFESSIONAL,  
TECHNICAL &  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
EMPLOYEES,**  
LOCAL 21, IFPTE | AFL-CIO  
San Francisco

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### **Planners Fight Privatization of Environmental Review**

The Municipal Planners chapter fought back against the City's effort to contract out the environmental review of major projects and place important environmental review work directly into the hands of developers.

Under the guise of addressing backlog, the Union received a request for qualifications (RFQ) drafted by the Planning Department and the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, to shift review work from Planning's Major Environmental Analysis (MEA) Division, to private consultants hired by the developers they are reviewing.

The proposal would have taken much of the environmental review oversight away from city staff, and created inefficiencies, conflicts of interest, and open-ended policies on contracting out.

Local 21 members within the MEA were instrumental in identifying preliminary concerns. The chapter also organized a meeting to discuss details of the RFQ, where over 35 members gathered to express their opposition and provide input on what the Union's next steps and overall strategy should be.

#### **RISK TO THE ENVIRONMENT, CIVIL SERVICE**

The Union sent a letter to the Department articulating various problems with the RFQ, including the lack of transparency (no MEA staff were ever asked for feedback), and definition surrounding the scope of services and when it would be appropriate to use contractors. Other problems include inefficiency and the ability to create additional work for city staff since they would not perform reviews, but would be responsible for reviewing the consultants' work, and a gross lack of cost efficiency. The RFQ could also put our environment at risk with developers being able to purchase favorable reviews, and the City at risk for lawsuits if and when future hazards

are discovered that had not been properly reviewed. Furthermore, it could establish a precedent for contracting out work that could and should be performed by staff.

#### **SWIFT ACTION YIELDS RESULTS**

Members did not rely solely on voicing their opposition in writing. Local 21 leaders worked around the clock to ensure that other decision-makers, including the Board of Supervisors and City Planning Commission, were aware of the multiple concerns and understood the repercussions of its approval. Members also conducted their own research on the environmental review practices of other major cities to bolster their case.

"Our members were able to quickly articulate the challenges and deficiencies with the RFQ. The comprehensive review reflects their high caliber and commitment to their job," said Municipal Planners chapter President ADAM GUBSER. "Without their proactive efforts, we couldn't be successful in saving jobs and demanding transparency and accountability."

The department responded by hosting meetings with its staff to further review the necessity for the RFQ, which is still under evaluation to determine if there are more appropriate means to address some of the backlog in the department, or if the department should pursue the RFQ at all.

"The new committee that has emerged is the type of body best suited to identify and develop plans that both safeguard civil service jobs, and also seek to address current delays in the review process," noted Gubser.

### **Union Shapes Structure for New Citywide Committee on PSCs**

Local 21 has the opportunity to make real improvements in how and why personal services contracts (PSCs) are approved in San Francisco, through the new PSC Addendum (Appendix F) to our MOU with the City, which

**SAVE THE DATE****October 9**

Help raise funds for more than 700,000 people displaced by floods in Manila last week at a **BENEFIT FOR VICTIMS OF TYPHOON KETSANA (ONDOY)**. The event will feature music and performances from 6-10 PM at Lot 46, 46 Geary, SF, \$20. All proceeds go to flood victims through ABS-CBN Foundation. For more info or to buy tickets, visit [hapihour.org](http://hapihour.org).

**October 19**

Learn how to reduce stress at this free class: Noon to 1 PM at the SF Public Library at 100 Larkin St., Sycip Family Conference Room, 4th floor (no food allowed). No RSVP required. For more info about this event and other Work Life Support Services, please contact the Union office at 415.864.2100.

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provides for a joint Labor-Management Committee to address PSCs.

The Union's own internal PSC Committee has been actively engaged in developing structural proposals for the citywide committee, which will meet this Fall.

"We want to deliver the best possible projects and services and want the best people assigned to deliver the work," said **JIM BUKER**, Sr. Architect. "In most cases, Local 21 members deliver the best outcomes. Sometimes, outside contractors can provide special skills or respond to temporary peak workloads."

In 2008, the Civil Service Commission approved PSCs in excess of \$1.4 billion, many of which were multi-year contracts. Some of this work could have been performed by city employees with greater accountability and oversight. Additionally, opportunities could have been created for knowledge transfer so that in the future, City employees could perform work requiring skills not held in-house.

"The goal of the citywide Committee is to contribute fiscal solutions to some of the City's most pressing problems," said **SHAWN HOLLE**, Health & Safety chapter President. "In a time of budgetary shortfalls, we need increased vigilance and scrutiny of often vast, long term, and expensive City contracts."

**GOAL TO PROACTIVELY REDUCE PSCs**

The special Labor-Management Committee is unique to Local 21's contract, and will include three key areas.

First, the Committee will review PSCs and other contracts affecting Local 21 members, with the goal of ensuring the appropriate use of Civil Service classifications.

Second, to facilitate the appropriate use of city staff, the Committee will explore establishing workload forecasting by departments. This would provide a much needed planning tool to assess staffing needs and availability. With solid forecasting, departments will not feel squeezed later in the year to contract out work because of a lack of available staff.

Third, the joint Committee will review the process for requesting approval and tracking PSCs to ensure consistency and due dili-

gence when the City considers outsourcing.

"We must be more proactive in laying claim to outsourced work," said **NORMA NELSON**, Principal Administrative Analyst.

To support the work of the citywide Committee, Local 21's PSC Committee envisions a campaign which amplifies our voice. The campaign would help our members and the public be more informed, engaged, and supportive of an approach which values city work being performed by city employees.

"By taking on contracting out, we're not only protecting our jobs today, but building capacity and a stronger workforce for the future," said **GUS VALLEJO**, IT chapter President.

**Vote on November 3**

Local 21's San Francisco Council and Executive Committee made the following endorsements in the election on November 3.

**MEASURE A: BUDGET REFORM, NEUTRAL**

Improves San Francisco's budget process and financial management, but could also establish inflexible deadlines for bargaining.

**MEASURE B: IMPROVES GOVERNANCE, YES**

Allows each member of the Board of Supervisors to have three legislative assistants, instead of two. It will improve constituent services and provide needed policy assistance to Board members. Local 21 currently represents the Board Aides.

**MEASURE C: REC AND PARKS, YES**

Allows the sale of naming rights to Candlestick Park. Of the City's share of funds, 50% will go to the General Fund and 50% to fund Director positions. This proposal will help save jobs and services.

**MEASURE D: ARTS & BUSINESS DIST., YES**

Creates an arts & business district on Market St. between 5th and 7th Streets, to be funded through billboards and signs, with funds used to revitalize the area.

**MEASURE E: CITY FURNITURE, YES**

Freezes the number of ads on city benches at the January 2008 level.

Register to vote online at [sos.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_vr.html](http://sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_vr.html)! Registrations must be completed by October 19.