

1 Tip For A Tiny Belly:



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Villaraigosa pitches case for redevelopment agencies

By Rick Orlov, Staff Writer
Posted: 02/17/2011 05:08:54 PM PST

With Gov. Jerry Brown considering the elimination of redevelopment agencies to save money, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa sought Thursday to make his case on why they are still needed.

Villaraigosa spoke at the downtown YWCA, which was built with money from the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency and a project that he cited as an example of how such agencies can benefit a neighborhood.

"Investments like the YWCA, where we stand today, bring recovery to our local economy," Villaraigosa said at the event with business and labor leaders.

"The CRA invests in areas that have been forgotten or dismissed and can bring them back."

Redevelopment plans in the works will create more than 73,000 jobs - nearly 40,000 of those permanent - and create more than 6,100 affordable housing units.

The mayor's office also cited projects in the San Fernando Valley fueled by redevelopment money, including the Plaza Pacoima development built on the former site of the Price Pfister plant.

"The site would have sat fallow due to the toxic contamination and the lack of private investment in the community," mayoral spokeswoman Sarah Sheahan said. "CRA/LA provided the initial funding, along with the federal government, to clean up the site."

Brown has challenged state and local officials to come up with ways to help the state deal with a \$25 billion budget deficit. One of his proposals is eliminating redevelopment agencies to provide more

money for schools and counties.

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Villaraigosa and mayors from the 10 largest cities have been resisting the plan. CRA/LA has proposed transferring \$930 million of its current projects to the city in order to protect them. The City Council has yet to act on it.

Carol Willis, spokesman for the California Professional Firefighters, argued for the governor's plan, saying it will end the diversion of \$6 billion in property taxes from schools, public safety and care for the needy.

"Local services in Los Angeles are in critical condition and should not be sacrificed for developer subsidies," Willis said. "Redevelopment is a net loss for taxpayers."

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Tip

