



2008 Board of Supervisors Candidate Questionnaire

Candidates, please complete each question to the best of your ability in order for NPC to assess your "Park Friendly" rating. All responses will be posted on our website for the public to view. Text boxes expand to accommodate longer responses. Thank You.

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District: 4

Return to Sunya Ojure electronically at sojure@sfnpc.org by Friday, September 19th

1. In what ways do you feel parks contribute to the quality of life of San Francisco residents?

Parks contribute to the quality of life of San Francisco residents in the following ways:

- Strengthen community image and civic pride
- Support economic development
- Promote health and wellness
- Give children a place to play
- Protect environmental resources
- Help retain families in San Francisco
- Provide recreational experiences and community meeting places



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2. What park in your district do you use most and tell us what you like most about it.

I go to Ocean Beach the most of any park in my District. I enjoy the ocean in general and like the open space and water. I like to walk along the ocean with my dog for my morning exercise.

3. Which park in your district appears to need the most help and what do you propose to do about it?

I have been working with the Department to improve both McCoppin Square and Sunset Playground. These two parks are the most heavily used and, until now, some of the most under funded parks in the City. Due to our community and our office advocating for our parks, we were able to secure \$5.3 million for McCoppin Square and \$13.7 million for Sunset Playground and planning is well under way. The McCoppin Square improvements will begin in the fall and construction is expected to complete by July 2011, and Sunset Playground construction will begin in spring 2010 and completion is expected by January of 2012. The improvements to the parks include the repair and renovation of children’s play areas, fields and courts, restoration of existing roads and pathways, upgrades to the irrigation and lighting systems, modifications to the site to remove barriers and improve accessibility and overall reconditioning of the park landscapes.

4. From your observations, what are the 3 most important issues facing recreation and parks in San Francisco? How will you begin to address these Issues if you are elected?

1. Public Safety. It is important that our parks are safe and used appropriately. Too often parks are misused by using parks as



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encampments, places for illegal substance abuse and selling and are generally not safe. I will make sure parks are properly policed and that curfews and laws are upheld.

2. Maintenance. We need to properly fund maintained workers, encourage people to volunteer and take pride in their parks, as well as explore options to help keep parks clean and well maintained.

3. Creating new parks in highly dense parts of the City. We need to counteract the newly created high-density areas of downtown by providing more open space and recreational opportunities in the surrounding areas.

5. NPC’s ParkScan program indicates that the majority of problems reported by the public relate to misuse of parks by city residents. These conditions cost the City millions of dollars in staff time to address. Would you support NPC’s proposal for the city to fund a public education campaign aimed at reducing misuse such as littering, graffiti and vandalism in our parks?

Yes, I would support a proposal for the City to fund a public education program to limit the misuse of parks.

6. The Recreation and Parks Department estimates that we are 200 gardeners short to keep up our parks to a good standard. Also, many common complaints from park users have to do with deferred maintenance such as broken irrigation parts and hazardous trees, largely the result of too few maintenance personnel and far too little funding. The Controller’s City Survey 2007 indicates many residents continue to be dissatisfied with park maintenance. What do you propose to improve park maintenance?

While we need to hire more gardeners even if we stated today it would take months or years to reach the full complement of qualified gardeners required. We need to find ways to supplement this staff. Some ideas I support are creating more volunteer opportunities and looking at using qualified contractors to perform

some work.

7. RPD has just developed work plans for each park but the plans do not clearly outline the tasks that volunteers can assist with. At the same time, efforts to reduce staff overtime require volunteer work parties (which usually take place on Saturday) to involve 15 or more—effectively eliminating many possible hours of volunteer assistance. With our parks being understaffed, volunteers are a critical way to bridge the maintenance gap. Do you support adding to the current work plans the specific tasks that volunteers can assist with? Also, in an effort to reduce staff overtime, would you support the creation of a program that would certify community members to volunteer in the parks without direct staff oversight, similar to DPW’s adopt a street program?

Yes, I would support both programs. Public involvement in maintaining our Parks is both important in decreasing maintenance costs and increasing civic pride.

8. ParkScan.org is a public portal that enables park users to report maintenance concerns to the Recreation and Park Department (and even include a photo!). Please ParkScan a park near you and describe the maintenance issue that needed attention in your park. If elected, would you like to receive regular reports on the conditions of parks reported in your district?

Yes, I would receive regular reports on the conditions of parks through ParkScan. It will increase efficiency in response, pinpoint exact locations and give community members a voice to bring up their concerns about Parks. I have been aware of ParkScan and just looked up McCoppin Square and saw there were several posts



of things that needed to be fixed and which may not have been brought to my attention without ParkScan.

9. More than two dozen San Francisco playgrounds received failing grades in NPC’s bi-annual Playground Report Card this year. Would you be available to participate in a workday to raise the grade of a failed playground?

Note: To check which playgrounds in your district might be on the list, please check NPC’s Playground Initiative Report Card at www.parkscan.org.

I would be happy to attend a workday. I have attend many of these in my district both organized by the NPC and local volunteers.

10. NPC’s Green Envy study identified many neighborhoods that lack playgrounds and neighborhood parks. (see enclosed map). Another survey (put the link here to Leon’s study) by a national consultant indicates that San Francisco is deficient in soccer fields and opportunities for hiking on trails or community gardening. Do you have ideas to address these deficiencies?

The City should use the money allocated to parks through Prop A effectively and wisely to maximize its utility and increase the amount of park land dedicated to hiking trails, fields and playgrounds. Also, the City should look into converting golf courses to the above mentioned uses.



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11. The City provides start-up funds to establish Community Benefit Districts. Would you support additional funds in the city budget to establish Park Improvement Districts (PIDs) to supplement park maintenance and provide funds for some ongoing capital needs in our parks such as irrigation systems and repairing playgrounds?

Yes, I would support additional funds in the city budget to establish PIDs.

12. Are you aware that over 700 acres of park land is dedicated to golf in San Francisco (6 public golf courses) even though it has been identified as a low priority recreation in the 2004 Recreation Assessment (see above) and that each golf course requires 250,000 gallons of water a day? The Rec and Park Department is proposing to lease out 4 of these courses for 30 years, despite the need for more than sixty new baseball, softball and soccer fields just to meet current demand in these sports. What is your position on retaining so much golf land at the expense of other recreation needs?

With shifting demand and pressure on our Recreation facilities we need to make decisions that are best for the community as a whole. I think we should analyze what it the best use of our resources to meet the needs of San Francisco residents.

13. San Francisco currently has no city-wide open space requirement for new development. In areas such as the Eastern Neighborhoods, which are already deficient in open space and could see a tripling in residential density in the near future, this oversight could create unlivable communities severely deficient in parks. Would you support a city-wide open space requirement for all new residential development so that every neighborhood can have green space for play, exercise, and respite from urban life?

Yes, I would support a city-wide open space requirement for all new residential development. It is vitally important for all



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residents to have access to parks for quality of life issues. Also, our City is remarkable because of its closeness to nature and the amount of outdoor activities that can be done in San Francisco. I would hate to lose the feel and one of the greatest attributes of our City in high-density areas.
