



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: 3

**Return to Sunya Ojure electronically RTat
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 are essential components that positively impact the quality of life. Parks are where residents of all ages can visit for recreational, sports or gardening purposes. Parks are home away from home for many residents where neighbors, friends or families can get together. In addition, parks and green spaces also contribute to economic wellbeing of the City because of its positive impact on property values.

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

I have 3 favorite parks in District 3: Fay Park on top of Russian Hill where there is a unique rose garden, a wonderful example of an 'urban oasis;' Huntington Park on top of Nob Hill, a relatively small park but has a playground for children and a special fountain; and Washington Square Park, simply a great green space that provides the much needed open space for adjacent neighborhoods..

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

Portsmouth Square needs new toilet facilities and better maintenance. I understand that there should be money from Prop A to upgrade the facilities.

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. Deficiency in parks and open space – currently the Open Space Fund has been used for operations rather than acquisition. I would make sure that there will be a capital fund for park acquisition and development.

2. Funding for maintenance – this is a priority which will be reflected in my budget for the Recreation & Park Department. I support the idea of instituting Parks Improvement Districts, much like what Commercial Benefits Districts have been able to achieve.

3. Monitoring Prop A funding – I will make sure that there will be regular audits into the implementation of improvements that bond funds are supposed to be used for.

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



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proposal for the city to fund a public education campaign aimed at reducing misuse such as littering, graffiti and vandalism in our parks?

Absolutely. Enhancing public awareness through an effective educational program is the key to change undesirable behaviors such as littering, graffiti and vandalism in our parks. I will further make sure that such programs will be in multiple languages to maximize outreach.

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?

As discussed in answer to question 4, Parks Improvement Districts would be a sensible approach to secure resources for park maintenance.

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



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the parks without direct staff oversight, similar to DPW’s adopt a street program?

Having been involved in so many volunteer efforts, I believe that we must have specific goals and tasks so that volunteer efforts can be guided to achieve intended results. I would also support the creation of a program that would certify community members to volunteer without direct staff oversight, as long as the program includes some minimum orientation sessions as well as some mechanism to monitor progress of the tasks. An additional idea is to have a “Park Buddy” program where volunteers of all ages can be partnered up with a staff person or more experienced volunteer.

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?

I would definitely like to receive regular reports on parks conditions within my District.

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.

Yes and I would participate in any way I can towards playground



improvements.

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?

Indeed, and as discussed in my response to question 4, I would review the application of the Open Space Fund to make sure that there is capital funding for the acquisition and development of planned open space of recreation, sports or gardening purposes. Further, there should be a plan to identify suitable locations in neighborhoods throughout the city, starting in Districts where the deficiency is the greatest.

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?

As discussed, this is one park improvement mechanism that I will champion.



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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?

There seems to be a relative abundance of golf courses while there is a deficiency in parks and open space for other sports and recreational activities. I will request an audit update to provide an analysis of the economic viability of the golf courses. The fact is that parks and open space for other sports and recreational activities can also be revenue-generators and the positive economic impact of such uses is often overlooked. Further, I will survey the neighborhoods in terms of residents' needs and interests.

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 this proposal. Open space should be considered an essential community benefit to be incorporated in the planning of new neighborhood developments.
