



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.

Name: David Chiu

Email Address: info@votedavidchiu.org

Website: www.votedavidchiu.org

Mailing Address: 1323 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA, 94109

District: 3

**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?

San Francisco has the some of the densest neighborhoods outside of Manhattan; District 3 has the least amount of open space in the city. In this context, parks contribute immensely to the quality of life for all of San Francisco: for children and youth, who have an opportunity to play in our parks; for families, who can spend quality time together in our parks; for all San Francisco residents, who can take advantage of the recreational opportunities of parks.

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

My favorite District 3 park in District 3 is Helen Wills Playground at Broadway and Larkin. I love the courts and playground, which brings together our neighborhood kids, families, and weekend warriors. The Helen Wills Playground also contains a great community-gathering place in my immediate neighborhood.

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



It's hard to pick one District 3 park that needs the most help, so I will suggest two. The Joe DiMaggio North Beach Playground (and the adjoining North Beach Library) is a project in the midst of intense public debate, and the next Supervisor needs to build and shore up public consensus. The Chinese Recreation Center, which received an F grade in the 2008 SF Playground Report Card, has been awaiting serious renovations. As Supervisor, I would support moving these projects forward as quickly as possible with city monies, and would encourage neighborhood efforts to raise money from foundations, grants, and private individuals to bridge any funding gaps.

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?

From my perspective, the three most important issues facing recreation and parks in San Francisco are a lack of stable maintenance funding, a lack of capital funds, and a need for recreation programs that are more responsive to constituent needs. For the first two items, as Supervisor, I will strongly advocate for more systemic long-term funding and for fewer budget cuts. For the last item, I would advocate for the Board of Supervisors to direct the Recreation & Park Dept. to develop a customer service model that better solicits feedback from constituents about programs, in order to make the department's activities more aligned with what the community really wants.

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?

I would support this public education campaign proposal. As a former criminal prosecutor in San Francisco, I also support enforcement to combat graffiti and vandalism, to signal to all San Franciscans that such activities are not to be tolerated.

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?

Sufficient funding for park maintenance continues to be a serious challenge, and it is all too easy for this to receive short shrift in the many competing priorities in our city's budget. I actively campaigned for the February 2008 Prop A parks bond measure, as an important step in the city's capital plan, and would be willing to support appropriate financing measures to improve our parks.

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?

As the chair of Lower Polk Neighbors and a founding leadership team member of the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, I have helped to organize numerous neighborhood clean-up efforts involving volunteers. I would support efforts to add specific, complementary tasks that volunteers can help with current work plans, without direct staff oversight. This would be a great way to add additional capacity to our stretched RPD staff.

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 wish that all city departments had tools similar to ParkScan to track issues in need of attention; as the founder of a technology company, I believe this is a great example of tools our city needs to operate effectively in the 21st century.

I ParkScanned the Chinatown Rec Center, which has an arsenic sign that is covered in rust, impossible to read, and presents a hazard to visitors who may not be aware that they should not eat on the wooden play structure.

If Supervisor, I would absolutely want to receive regular reports and use ParkScan on a regular basis.

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.

Of course, I would love to participate in such workdays. As mentioned above, I already regularly participate in neighborhood clean-ups.

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?

I believe the most important example of environmental injustice is the lack of open space and playfields in lower income neighborhoods. The City needs to ensure that adequate open space is available and safe for children, young people and families to play and recreate. Working families are drawn to lower-income neighborhoods because of more affordable housing. These families deserve the same access and proximity to open space and playfields as families living in wealthier neighborhoods. As Supervisor, I would support philanthropic efforts, public/private partnerships, and public bond measures to obtain, build and restore more open space.



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 a Small Business Commissioner and neighborhood association chair, I have been very supportive of Community Benefit Districts and providing start-up funds for CBDs. I am very interested in the concept of Park Improvement Districts (PIDs) as a way to supplement park maintenance and to fund capital needs, and would be willing to support funds to explore 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?

Regarding this situation, I am not generally supportive of privatizing our city's precious open spaces, and am open to exploring their use for important, competing recreational needs.

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?

I would support an open space requirement for neighborhoods slated for intense development (such as the Eastern Neighborhoods), structured so that every neighborhood could have green, open space.