



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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**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 allow those of us who live and work in the city to connect to nature. They allow us a break from the cars, traffic and concrete of our cities. There is something special about walking from the fast pace of downtown San Francisco to the calm of Golden Gate Park, Lands End, Fort Funston or the Presidio. The ability for us to be able to enjoy these areas is an asset we as San Franciscans cannot place a value on.

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

I visit Golden Gate Park the most because once inside it is truly a different place. From Stow Lake to the Japanese Tea Garden, as many times as I have visited, it is a different experience each and every time.

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

I cannot single out a specific park, but most need more consistent upkeep whether its planting if play structures, re-sodding of grass areas or replanting of trees. I believe that parks need to be allotted more funding, provided that they use the funds responsibly.

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?

Maintenance- I want to see a regular schedule for repair and replacement. I want money to be set aside each year in a special account that plans for replacement of fixtures (play areas, trees. Benches, lighting) on a set basis like ten years.

Graffiti- I would encourage the use of brighter lighting in neighborhood parks along with cameras connected to the internet so that neighbors could take turns watching the park over the internet and contacting police if suspicious activity is observed.

Addition of open space- Open space is so difficult to come by in the city. When a large area is available, the city should try to purchase it and add it to our open space areas. I have always believed the city should have purchased the old Shriners site on 19th Avenue for a park and recreation facility.



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?

As much as these proposals sound good my experience is that the people that abuse the parks do not care. A plan of greater enforcement would probably yield more beneficial results.

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?

I believe that an increase in the parks budget may be in order. We may also want to look at hiring private gardeners and contractors to conduct some of the 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 the parks without direct staff oversight, similar to DPW's adopt a street program?

If the city is unable to take care of the parks they should allow private citizens to volunteer to take care of some of the regular maintenance tasks. I would support adding specific tasks and the ability to work without direct staff oversight.

- 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?

When visiting parks I usually report problems to the S.F. 311 system. I will consider using ParkScan in the future. If elected I will personally visit each and every park multiple times a year as I



believe ensuring that services provided to the citizens of San Francisco is a primary responsibility of an elected official.

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 more that happy to participate in raising the grade of a failed playground.

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?

As I mentioned earlier open space is hard to acquire so when an area becomes available the city should consider a bid to purchase the land for open space. I mentioned the old Shriners location, but its too late since homes have been built. However I have always believed that the Hunters Point shipyard area should not be built upon but cleaned and left as open space. This could be a park that added to that part of the city just as Golden Gate Park has added to the Western Part of the City.

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?

I would not support this because parks belong to everyone and should be paid through funds (taxes) paid by all the people of San Francisco. Long term repairs and replacement must be estimated (e.g building last 30 years) and the funds set aside in a separate account on a yearly basis before any other program is budgeted for.

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?

Golf is a sport that does require much land, but that does not make it less valuable than any other sport. The goal should be to add more recreation area not deprive one group for another. The water issue should be solved at all our parks and open areas by using reclaimed water.

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



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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?

It is hard for me to answer this question without more information. Requirements sometimes can have a negative effect due to unintended consequences. What we need are people who see open space as an asset and who will seek to add open space whenever possible. Sometimes it is the quality of open space available that is more important than just saying there is open space.
