



## 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

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**Return to Sunya Ojure electronically at  
[sojure@sfnpc.org](mailto:sojure@sfnpc.org) by Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup>**

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

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Parks contribute greatly to the quality of life in the city. They provide a myriad of recreational options for the residents, including sports games and enjoying the designated "outdoor setting". In some cases such as Golden Gate Park, Pine Lake, and Lake Merced, natural flora and fauna co-exist with residents. These places provide welcome respite for children's play areas, where kids could play and enjoy being outdoors. Last of all, local parks provide pets roaming areas to run around.

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

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I use Golden Gate Park because it is adjacent to my house. It is an incredible place to have a picnic and enjoy the areas that were once home to sand dunes called the "Outside Lands". My family also enjoy Sunset Rec., which needs immediate attention and improvements.

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

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I believe that Sunset Rec. on Lawton St. and 28<sup>th</sup> Ave. is in most need of repair. The play structure is old and not up to standard. The gym is in need of new windows and roof and the fields need to be renovated. Remodeling West Sunset presents a tremendous opportunity for improvement.

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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?

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Funding is always a major issue facing rec. and parks. There is always a lack of city gardeners. As a consequence, vegetation and brush are not being maintained as they should be. Trees subsequently become safety hazards. Bathrooms need to be updated since the facilities are out of date. Also, some coyotes have been spotted in Golden Gate Park and the GGNRA. That is also a concern for our children and our pets. I would address these issues when I am elected. I would be open to having an increase in resources and funding so all city residents could enjoy the parklands. Homeless encampments and drug users represent real concerns for children and pets.

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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?

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I believe that graffiti abatement is always in issue with park benches and public property. Delinquents and some homeless people have scared residents enough that they would stay away from their local parks. I would like to know more about the public education program before I am able to make a thoughtful and informative decision on this.

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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?

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There needs to be a dialogue in regards to what are the standards that we hold our public spaces to. Are they compared to other parks and recreational areas in the country or in the world? Is a

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park's cleanliness and up to date facility the most important aspect? Or is it the options that parks supply residents with measure a park's good standing. Living plants and landscapes have to be cut back and maintained, especially in heavily used rec. areas.

In regards to our neighborhood parks and rec. areas, we need to assess the level of maintenance needed to maintain certain plants. I would look to explore planting native species and drought tolerant species that require little watering. I propose looking at greening the city through landscaping with drought tolerant plants such as phormium phlaxes, olive trees, and ice plants instead of planting large-foreign species such as Eucalyptus.

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- 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 you look around the districts, there are several gardens for the environment that shows us the best in community gardening. They are a testament and a clear example of how volunteers could maintain open spaces through partnerships and generous contributions. One clear example of teamwork and community ownership involves Pat McGuire, Java Beach Café patrons and Steve Ward getting together to create a beautiful garden on La Playa St. I would be supportive of people like these individuals to take responsibility for the beautification and maintenance without direct staff oversight. It seems sensible and worth some consideration.

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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?

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Yes, I would be interested in having regular updates on the conditions of our local parks.

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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](http://www.parkscan.org).**

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I believe Parkscan is an innovative and cost effective way of monitoring our parks and recreational areas without having to hire more staff. I may be interested in volunteering at local park in the district.

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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?

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For a such a beautiful city, San Francisco has been lacking any real design,innovation, and foresight when it promotes its open/ public spaces. I don’t believe that soccer fields are needed in all districts. There simply are not enough designated spaces for that. I do believe we need to better promote our parks with views and vistas unlike any other city in the country. With all respects to a national consultant, I believe that San Franciscans need to know what is available to them and how to get there to enjoy our natural settings.

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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?

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I am open to having creative ways to supplementing park maintenance. I will not commit any set-asides as the devil is in the details.

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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



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS COUNCIL

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?

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San Francisco seems to have more golf courses than golfers. Harding Park is already using repottable water to irrigate the greens. I am open to listening to both sides of the issue.

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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?

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I support an open space requirement for new development as it would attract working families and people with children back to the city. This is especially true for Eastside of the city, where the density will increase and developers look to build up. We must mitigate that by encouraging open space/ gardens. The native species living roof such as the one being grown/ cultivated on the new Academy of Sciences is a great example of blending new development with responsible growth.

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