



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 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?

I am endorsed by both the Sierra Club and California Tomorrow, the quality of life in our neighborhoods is integral to our happiness and well being, I am dedicated to the beauty, livability and sustainability of our neighborhoods—parks and green space, people friendly open space, are essential to that vision.

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

Washington Square Park—it is one of the few parks in D3—which has little public open space—NPC itself needs to do more to help stand up for a healthier Wash. Sq. Park—it is heavily used and commercial use has degraded it year-after-year.

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

See 2 above—I have been advocating for years for less commercial use of this Park—we need to hire more gardeners so that more time can be spent repairing the Park. Portsmouth Square has been taken over by DPW—they are doing a better job than Rec./Park—we need all new facilities in Portsmouth Square; more police oversight of Huntington Square Park at night.

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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Obviously leadership is primary—get a new GM.
More \$ for our parks.
More\$ and gardeners for our Natural Areas Program

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?

Sure. Also more police oversight & more \$ for the Ranger Program.



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?

We need to hire more gardeners—so let's get rid of a lot of highly paid managers to make up the difference for every frontline worker hired, let's eliminate 3 managerial positions.

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?

Yes.

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?

See answer above re Wash. Sq. Park and Portsmouth Square.

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 work actively in D3 on creating more open space (I am counsel to the Piazza Saint Francis Association) and improving that which we have including the Joe DiMaggio Playground which just received approval from Rec./Park for its Master Plan. See also my paper,



the District 3 Herald which actively promotes open space and greening projects(www.tonygantner.com).

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?

Take a look at a couple of our Golf courses—perhaps there is an opportunity for some conversion—also there is a temporary soccer field at Pier 27—take a look at making it permanent.

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, absolutely—I am well versed in how CBD’s operate and how they must win neighborhood approval. How about something on our Waterfront to support Waterfront Parks—perhaps affiliated with the Fisherman’s Wharf CBD, etc. Force the Port to put more emphasis on Waterfront Parks north of the Ferry Bldg.



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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?

[See 10 above.](#)

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?

[Absolutely 100% behind that idea.](#)
