

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?

Parks contribute to the quality of life of San Francisco residents in several ways: they contribute to residents' health by providing a space for physical activity; they contribute to the aesthetics and environment of the City; they contribute to the recreation and enjoyment of San Francisco families; and they provide a space for neighbors to come together, strengthening the communities that we live in.

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

My favorite park in District 3 is Joe DiMaggio Park. I will be a father for the first time in December, and will probably be spending even more time there in the future.

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

Joe DiMaggio Playground needs the most help. As of right now its basically just a concrete jungle. After all, it's named after a baseball player, yet has no recreation fields. I have been working hard with neighborhood leaders to clean and "green" Joe DiMaggio Park and playground so that San Franciscans have a safe and enjoyable place to spend time with their families.

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. Lack of Funding. I will address this by working with private investors to seek funding for our parks. Organizations such as the Neighborhood Parks Council and The Trust for Public Land have been wonderful resources.

2. Maintenance of Parks and Facilities. I will address this by heightening awareness of services such as ParkScan so that residents have a means of notifying the city of problems. Also by partnering with private and public entities, and coordinating volunteer programs.
3. Greener Parks. Parks such as Joe DiMaggio Playground are essentially concrete jungles. We need more fields and trees in our parks, and as Supervisor, I will work with neighborhood organizations to ensure this happens.
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 such a campaign; I believe prevention is one of the greatest tools we have to alleviate these problems.

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 must evaluate the RPD budget and make sure we are prioritizing park maintenance. In an era of tight budgets, I don't necessarily believe that throwing more city funding at the problem will guarantee that our parks are maintained properly. I also believe we need to partner with other public and private entities, which have a vested interest in the safety and cleanliness of 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?**

I do support adding specific tasks to the current work plans, which volunteers can assist with. I also support a program to certify community members to volunteer in the parks 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?**

Washington Square and Marini Plaza: “Washington Square Park - surrounding hedges and low-hanging tree limbs form barrier around park which invites criminal activity.”

I absolutely would like to receive regular reports on the conditions of parks in 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?**

Absolutely, and as I mentioned above, I have already been actively involved in improving the quality of Joe DiMaggio Park.

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?**

We must continue to increase open recreational space, and improve the parks that we already have. I believe we should take these surveys into consideration, and work to implement their suggestions.

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.

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?**

We must evaluate each golf course individually to ensure that the land is being used in the most beneficial, effective and cost-efficient way. Harding Park Golf Course, for example, has hosted several national golf tournaments throughout its history, and thus is vital to San Francisco's economy and should not be replaced. These tournaments generate millions of dollars in revenue from hotels, restaurants, and other activities. That being said, I believe it would be important to evaluate all golf courses, and if it is determined that a course is not benefiting San Francisco residents, then alternative uses should be considered.

- 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.