

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: Denise McCarthy

Email Address: denise@denisemccarthyforsupervisor.com

Website: www.denisemccarthyforsupervisor.com

Mailing Address: 1898 Leavenworth St, SF, CA 94109

District: Third

**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 and open space create public space, improve quality of life for residents, provide community gathering space and a respite from dense housing in District 3. As a port commissioner for seven years, two as president, I worked to restore the Embarcadero waterfront to create open space. I am proud of the Ferry Building, Pier 1 and AT&T Ballpark in expanding open space along the waters edge.

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

I bring my grandchildren to Helen Wills, North Beach and Michelangelo parks all the time. Of these parks Helen Wills is their favorite; there is cool stuff for all ages.

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

North Beach/Joe DiMaggio Parks need the most help. I am part of current community planning efforts to address these parks. Smart land use development requires bringing everyone together to develop a broadly supported plan. My record on the Port Commission and in addressing neighborhood issues in North Beach shows the success of this approach.

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. Dollars for maintenance and acquisition
2. Administration and budget management including planning, implementation and accountability.
3. Integrating neighborhood and rec & parks efforts to make improvements

Everyone needs to be brought together to in order to develop a broadly supported plan. Rec and Parks should have natural allies in the communities around city parks.

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 think that event users should be charged a significant fee to repair damage to City parks. Staff and residents and businesses need to be more vigilant and report misuse when it occurs.

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 set realistic goals for maintenance – enlist neighborhood volunteers – raise private funds to cover some costs hire more gardeners through apprentice training programs.

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 – I would also strongly encourage flexible fours so park staff would be available for some Saturday shifts without overtime.

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?

Yes if concerns are not reported they can not be dealt with.

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.

YES

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 agree with the study – I would look at reuse of underutilized green space. Golf uses could be adjusted to provide more soccer fields. We should look to raise private funds for acquisition of 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?

Yes, a great idea! This is a natural in many neighborhoods in the city in the City. We will still need to provide support for other areas where we have open space but the community would not be inclined to support that specific use.

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?

I believe that some golf courses should be converted to other uses to meet the recreation needs of San Francisco residents. We should also look at converting tennis courts to basketball courts in areas where Tennis courts are underutilized.

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 believe new development mitigation should include appropriate open space that is significant and open to the public.