



Neighborhood Parks Council  
**2010 Board of Supervisors Candidate Questionnaire**

**District 2- Janet Reilly**

**1. In what ways do you feel parks contribute to San Franciscans' quality of life?**

San Francisco is unique amongst other large cities. Development has been handled cautiously, preventing San Francisco from turning into 49 square miles of solid concrete. Conscious efforts to include parks, open space, and greening help residents and visitors escape the busy hustle and bustle of urban life and engage in leisure activities and exercise.

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

It goes without saying that in District 2, we are fortunate to have some of the City's most wonderful parks and open spaces right at our doorstep. However, if I had to choose one park, nothing compares to the time and wonderful memories spent watching my two daughters grow up at their favorite park, the Julius Kahn Playground in the Presidio. From the lavish green playfields, to the fantastic picnic area, Julius Kahn is everything a prime neighborhood park should be. Most importantly, my daughters rank Julius Kahn's playground equipment their top-choice in San Francisco.

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

It is important to note that District 2 and the City as a whole have an extremely impressive network of open space and parks for residents and visitors to enjoy. However, there are areas of concern for maintaining the splendor of our parks system. As Supervisor, it will be a top priority of mine to ensure we maintain the accessibility and beauty of all of the city's parks, and I will strive to identify opportunities to grow and improve our parks system whenever possible.

In District 2, there is an intriguing piece of land that has the potential to be transformed into a world-class open space – the Francisco Reservoir in Russian Hill. This dormant piece of property has blighted the neighborhood and surrounding area for decades. As supervisor, I would welcome the challenge to work hand-in-hand with the community to turn this disgraceful eyesore into a magnificent community asset.

**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?**

The chief concern I have for San Francisco's parks is dwindling resources. Our city's budget issues impact every corner of San Francisco, and over the last decade have left the Recreation & Park Department being forced to constantly do more with less – shrinking the department while maintaining the level of service San Franciscans expect and deserve. I applaud the work of the department's General Manager to find ways to innovate and preserve core services. As Supervisor, the budget will be a top concern. I will view the budget on a city-wide level; considering how we balance our books in ways that are fair and equitable to all San Franciscans.

Another issue facing our parks system is that of public safety. Above all other responsibilities, government has a duty to ensure that our city remains a safe place to live, work, and raise a family. This is especially true in recreational areas. As Supervisor, I will work collaboratively with the General Manager of the Recreation & Parks Department along with the Chief of Police, to evaluate the public safety in our parks. In particular, I would like a review of all crime cameras in or near the parks system and a review of their efficacy in criminal investigations. Additionally, I will work to ensure adequate funding of the intradepartmental Homeless Outreach Teams, to ensure that homeless San Franciscans are not forced to utilize San Francisco's recreational areas as their camp ground.

Lastly, as San Francisco embarks on new and ambitious redevelopment projects, from Mission Bay to Bayview Hunters Point and Treasure Island, we must ensure that parks and open space development remain top priorities. I am excited that the new plans for Treasure Island's development only call for 65 acres to be dedicated to redevelopment. The remaining 300 acres will be reserved for other uses, such as parks and open spaces. As Supervisor I will actively work to ensure that new projects also include high levels of outdoor recreational areas.

**5. What is your view of the role of volunteer community park groups? What commitment do you make to working with these groups to improve our public open spaces?**

I believe that public-private partnerships are powerful tools the city can use for various projects. In particular, utilizing volunteers in our parks and open spaces can help to augment the fiscal constraints and staffing shortages the Recreation & Park Department repeatedly faces every budget cycle. However, we must ensure this is done responsibly, and that parks and open spaces are preserved for the enjoyment of all San Franciscans.

**6. ParkScan.org is a website that enables park users to report maintenance concerns to the Recreation and Park Department. If elected, how would you promote this tool?**

The growth of new media is expanding beyond the imaginations of most. I believe San Francisco has made tremendous leaps in finding ways to utilize this growing media to make it easier for residents to connect with government. One popular way city

government has achieved this is through the 311 call center; which allows people to connect with any city office, find out when the next Muni bus is coming, or report maintenance problem with city property. Now, this feature has been linked with the popular social media website Twitter, to allow San Franciscans to report any issue simply by sending a “tweet” to 311. I believe that ParkScan.org is in keeping with the city’s efforts to remain accessible to all residents. As Supervisor, I will work to ensure residents of District 2 are made aware of this tool. Further, I will work collaboratively with staff at the Recreation & Park Department to ensure these concerns are quickly routed to appropriate department staff and addressed in an efficient manner.

**7. NPC’s Green Envy study identified many neighborhoods that lack playgrounds and neighborhood parks. How would you address these park and open space deficiencies?**

As discussed above, ensuring there are quality neighborhood parks and open spaces in every corner of San Francisco should be a priority. In the face of massive fiscal constraints we must find innovative ways to work together – again, through public-private partnerships - and utilizing perhaps our best tool: The power of volunteerism.

Secondly, a core-component of any new development project – such as we’re seeing with Treasure Island and Bayview/Hunters Point – should include open space and parks.

As the Supervisor for District 2, I pledge to work with Supervisors in other districts to ensure adequate neighborhood parks and open spaces throughout the City. I believe that improving and adding to our network of parks and playgrounds in the city is an important factor in keeping and attracting families to the city. This is an important platform of mine in this campaign.

The value of clean, safe and beautiful parks in a city cannot be over-estimated. Not only do they increase property values, attract families and businesses, but they also provide a place for all our residents and visitors to escape the bustling city and rejuvenate our soul.

**8. Deferred maintenance of things like irrigation systems continue to plague the park system. With little funding available to fix these types of problems, what would you propose to improve park maintenance?**

The longer we defer maintenance on our infrastructure, the worse the problem becomes. Finding creative ways to do more with less during these fiscally challenging times has to continue to be the approach when facing an estimated \$1.7 billion in repairs and maintenance our parks desperately need. I am extremely interested in the effectiveness and progress of 2008’s Proposition A. While \$185 million dedicated to park maintenance is a great start, I believe we need to continue to partner with a variety of organizations who can provide the funding and more importantly, introduce innovative sustainable practices towards the long-term maintenance of our parks.

One example of this is taking place at Boeddeker Park in the Tenderloin, where a multitude of groups over the last decade have banded together collaboratively – serving as a model on how this can be achieved. More recently, The Trust for Public Land announced their plans to implement a pilot program testing the nation's first rating system for green landscape design, construction and maintenance. The new park will reduce water consumption and pollution by capturing and reusing rainwater on site with permeable paving, bioswales and a cistern system supplying a low-flow irrigation system. As supervisor, I will work to continue and to explore projects such as this.

**9. San Francisco currently has no citywide 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 citywide open space requirement for all new residential development so that every neighborhood can have green space for play, exercise, and respite from urban life?**

San Francisco has some of the most remarkable parks and open spaces in the country. It is a priority that the majority of San Franciscans seem to share, and I fully support the continued work to preserve these treasures. I believe that with a collective dedication to parks and open space, new developments will include a responsible amount of open space. This can be seen in the plans to redevelop Treasure Island, where current plans include 300 of the Island's 365 acres to be set aside for open space uses. As Supervisor, I will carefully scrutinize all new plans for development to ensure the project does indeed include these recreational areas. However, I believe placing arbitrary mandates will hamper responsible development in areas that need it the most.