



Neighborhood Parks Council
2010 Board of Supervisors Candidate Questionnaire

District 6- Jane Kim

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

San Francisco has the some of the densest neighborhoods outside of Manhattan. Parks provide a critical contribution to the quality of life for all of San Francisco. All San Francisco residents can take advantage of the recreational opportunities of parks. Children and youth have an opportunity to play in our parks. Families can spend quality time together in our parks. In addition, many San Francisco neighborhoods, particularly in District 6, have many households living in crowded conditions or single room apartments. For these families and individuals, parks are like an extension of their living room. Parks build community by giving residents space to interact with each other, enjoy good weather, exercise, play and relieve some of the tension and stress that comes from living in such close quarters.

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

I use Victoria Manalo Drake Park and South Park the most. VMD is close to my house and right across the street from Bessie Carmichael School which I visit often. I enjoy the open space for community events and exercise and like that VMD has a few different play areas for children and a basketball court. I think that VMD can be a more effective connector/hub between Bessie, SOMA Recreation Center, nearby businesses on Folsom Street and residents than it currently is.

I also enjoy going to South Park on weekends and that it is enclosed by small businesses, cafes and a growing neighborhood on 2nd street and South Beach.

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

I would love to see the SOMA/Eugene Friend Recreation Center at Sixth and Folsom get some help. It is highly utilized by the community and offers many uses - basketball, weight room, playground, community space- and it could use some major capital improvements and increased staffing. As Supervisor, I will work to help attract funding to make these improvements, both public and private funds. One idea may be to utilize some of the SOMA stabilization funds for this purpose. Second is to support the City in applying for second round of Prop 84 funds - the statewide bond passed in 2006 with funds for statewide parks improvements in underserved communities. Third is to

support a parcel tax which would be split between SFUSD and Rec and Park Department, an initiative which has polled well with voters..

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?

I think that the three most important issues facing recreation and parks in San Francisco are: 1) a lack of stable maintenance funding, 2) a lack of capital funds, and 3) a need for recreation programs that are more responsive to constituent needs. As Supervisor, I would strongly advocate for more systemic long-term funding such as a parcel tax as mentioned above and for fewer budget cuts. And I would advocate for the Board of Supervisors to direct the Recreation & Park Dept. to develop a customer service model that better solicits feedback from constituents about programs. We should also support community advisory councils to advocate for programs appropriate for their communities. Certain recreation centers and parks need additional programs for children such as summer camp and after-school, others for senior, such as swing dance classes and others need more space for dogs and their owners.

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?

Volunteer community park groups are absolutely essential to the maintenance and improvement of our public open spaces and we are so fortunate to have so many of them in San Francisco, of which NPC is one. I know personally has a Board of Education member, how vital our volunteer groups are in improving the quality of our schools. Our best schools have strong PTA organizations or community partnerships. I support our San Francisco School Volunteer program because it links adults and their interests/skills directly to school needs. As Supervisor, I would be committed to working in partnership with these groups and the Rec and Parks Department to ensure that our parks and recreation centers are well maintained to serve the community.

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?

ParkScan.org is a great program that I believe works well in conjunction with the 311 system that was launched in 2007. Since ParkScan is focused directly on parks, I would encourage those who are interested in particular parks to use this website, while continuing to promote 311 for reporting concerns about public facilities citywide, including parks. I would like to put a list of resources on the back side of my business cards so that residents know what resources are available to them when they have concerns or need help.

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?

The City needs to ensure that adequate playgrounds and parks are available and safe for children, young people and families. There is a particular need for more playgrounds in certain parts of District 6, such as in the Tenderloin where many families reside. All residents should have access to open space and recreation centers. I also support the Youth and Family Zone Special Use District which would prioritize open space uses and affordable family housing and discourage liquor stores and pornography shops. As Supervisor, I would support philanthropic efforts, public/private partnerships, and public bond measures to support this need.

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?

In addition to supporting new sources of funds to pay for park maintenance (like a parcel tax and or a new bond issue), I would look for creative ways to partner with other public or private entities. For example, the PUC is currently working with the Parks and Rec Department to retrofit some of their irrigation systems. It’s a win-win because it helps the parks and the water that’s saved the PUC can then utilize for something else. I would support these types of partnerships and encourage other innovative partnerships like this one.

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?

For neighborhoods slated for heavy development such as the Eastern Neighborhoods, I would support a requirement for open space that is useful to the public, structured so that every neighborhood could have real benefits from green, open space. We want to ensure that developers do not just put a lawn in front of their building and call it open space. It is important that the open space requirement, whatever it happens to look like, create open space that is useful to the public - more like parks than just open space. This would serve more people and be more flexible in its use. A challenge is that impact fees are frequently assessed after a neighborhood is build out, at which point

there is no land left for open space or the land left is too expensive. We should explore alternatives such as a city loan program to acquire park space during the development of the neighborhood and pay back the loan with impact fees assessed for new developments.