



Neighborhood Parks Council
2010 Board of Supervisors Candidate Questionnaire

District 8- Rafael Mandelman

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

I have been enjoying San Francisco's parks for more than a quarter century. As a child, Stow Lake boat rides were among my favorite weekend activities. In high school, I ran with the cross country team on a course that started and ended at the polo fields in Golden Gate Park. As an adult I have enjoyed picnics at Dolores Park, walks in Glen Canyon and runs up to and through Buena Vista Park. Parks and open space are among the most important amenities of urban life, benefitting people at all stages of life and from every background.

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

I live across the street from Dolores Park and walk through it every day. I love the diversity of people who use Dolores Park, from hipsters to immigrant families, seniors to dog owners.

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

The next District 8 Supervisor will need to spend a good deal of time on Dolores Park: mediating disputes and tensions between the various groups that use the park, engaging those stakeholders in the renovation and other productive activities that enhance the park, ensuring that the renovation project meets the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods as well as users from across the City and beyond, and dealing with crime and quality of life concerns.

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?

Revenue, revenue and revenue: San Francisco's parks, like many other public services, are dramatically underfunded and understaffed. My first priority for our parks would be to find more public revenue for their operation.

Safety: I will work with the police department and neighborhood groups to ensure that San Franciscans feel that they can use their parks without fear for their safety.

Homelessness: Our inability to solve our homelessness crisis has implications for our parks, as they become a refuge for people looking for a place to spend the night. I will work tirelessly for real solutions to homelessness: increasing funding for the homeless

outreach teams, expanding housing opportunities for formerly homeless individuals, making good on our city's rhetorical commitment to treatment on demand.

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?

The volunteer community park groups provide an invaluable service to our city, supplementing the work of our overstretched Rec and Park Department and engaging the broader community in maintaining an important public resource. I have met with and/or volunteered myself with a number of such groups in District 8 (in Glen Canyon, on Billy Goat Hill, at Corona Heights, at Dolores Park, etc.), and I look forward to continuing to work with them in the future.

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 appears to be a great tool both in allowing the public to report park problems but also in allowing Rec and Park staff and policy makers to understand the needs and challenges of the parks system citywide. I would certainly encourage park users to use ParkScan and would work with NPC and neighborhood groups to expand public awareness of this valuable tool.

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?

San Franciscans want to support our parks, and we want more of them. The Open Space Fund was established in 1975 with one of its specific purposes being the acquisition of additional park land. In 2000 and 2008 the voters approved park bonds. Unfortunately, the city's underfunding of the parks' maintenance needs has drawn resources away from the acquisition of land and creation of additional facilities to backfill lost operations and maintenance dollars. We need to reverse that trend, first by ensuring that the parks system has the resources it needs to maintain existing parks on an annual basis, and then by renewing our commitment to acquiring new park land and creating new park facilities.

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?

I would propose that we find the funding to prioritize such maintenance.

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?

Absolutely. After Proposition 13, it is critically important that new development at least pay for the public infrastructure and amenities that its residents will require. Parks are a critical element of a thriving neighborhood, with parks and open space impact fees being common throughout California.