

## 2011 Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

The Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC) works closely with our elected and appointed officials to ensure parks and open space are a priority at City Hall. Electing a “Park Friendly” Mayor who values neighborhood parks, open spaces and recreation facilities for all San Franciscans and understands the challenges facing our park system is essential for our city. With the help of our dedicated community volunteers San Francisco’s parks are the cornerstone of every neighborhood but it is with the support of our new Mayor that our parks can continue to thrive.

Please complete each question to the best of your ability in order for NPC to assess your “Park Friendly” rating. Everyone loves parks, Our coalition strives to understand your specific ideas about supporting parks, in addition to your overall level of appreciation for them. All responses will be posted on our website for the public to view. Thank You.

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Please return electronically to Victoria Bell, Deputy Director at [vbell@sfnpc.org](mailto:vbell@sfnpc.org) by Wednesday, September 7, 2011 by 5pm.

1. Tell us about your personal parks use or experience. In what ways do you feel San Francisco’s parks contribute to your quality of life?

As the parent of three young children, parks and open spaces are critical to our quality of life as a family. We go to parks regularly – they are where we play, where we spend time with friends and family.

2. From your observations, what are the 3 most important issues facing recreation and parks in San Francisco? Specifically how will you begin to address these issues if you are elected?

Obviously funding is an issue, as is accessibility of programming and maintenance. Parks continues to take big hits every time there is a budget deficit in the city, and there is a deficit every year. We need to create some consistency in the parks budget by addressing the long-term deficit in the city. We need to evaluate where the people who use recreation programs live to ensure that we're serving every community fully.

3. 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?

As a Supervisor, I worked with community groups on a number of park projects, and I see them as vital to a thriving parks system. As Mayor, I will make coordination with volunteers and community groups a priority.

4. There is a substantial budget gap for the City's ongoing parks and recreation programs, estimated at over \$30 million a year. What will your administration do to reduce or eliminate this serious annual shortfall? And how will you mitigate the impact on the General Fund?

As a Supervisor, I created the city's first long-term economic plan. I did it because I believe we need to plan for the future. As Mayor, I'll implement a zero-base budget. We will evaluate every line in the budget, and make sure every dollar in the city goes toward useful, necessary programs. I know there is administrative overhead that can be redirected to programming, and I will find it.

5. RPD requires nearly \$2billion in capital funding to repair and renovate our parks. Will you commit to supporting the upcoming GO park bond?

Yes.

6. How will you work to ensure both capital and operating funding becomes more sustainable for RPD while ensuring parks are accessible, safe and enjoyable for all?

We have to come up with a long-term solution to the city's budget. Some year-to-year security is the only way to make sure funding is sustainable.

7. 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?

As a Supervisor, I worked with private groups and local businesses to protect parks in my district, and as Mayor, I would do the same to find alternative revenue for maintenance.

8. NPC's Green Envy study, a landmark white paper first published in 2003 and updated in 2007, advocates for equitable open space for all residents in all neighborhoods of San Francisco. What, specifically, would your administration do in the next four years to

ensure that every neighborhood can have green space for play, exercise, and respite from urban life?

We need to make sure open space is part of all new developments, properly maintain existing parks and open space, and transition underutilized spaces into green space.

9. The Blue Greenway project promises to transform our eastern shoreline and serve a number of communities desperately in need of open space and access to the water. But the southeastern waterfront has many pollution issues, developing it is expensive, and there is a significant funding gap in the Blue Greenway plans.

What will you do, in the next four years, to advance the Blue Greenway and bring it closer to reality?

In the next four years, we will have access to a substantial amount of money from and for the America's Cup. Cup organizers have committed to aiding the city in environmental projects, and we need to hold them to it.

10. Numerous neighborhoods in the City are exploring ways to better support their local parks, including voluntarily taxing themselves for new and increased services (Park Improvement Districts, etc.). It is nearly impossible to develop these districts without clearly understanding what the Recreation and Parks Department currently spends on each facility. The Department does not maintain this type of budgeting, and it is therefore difficult to understand what the needs of each park are.

What will you do in your administration to support improved clarity of the Recreation and Parks Department's fiscal management given its extremely diverse facilities?

As Mayor, I will place the entire city budget in an easy-to-use, searchable online database.

11. Community outreach and a transparent public process is a critical component to our civic work in San Francisco, such as when we look at leasing facilities, adding amenities and even creating a new public park. How will you support the public dialog about parks across every City agency that manages land?

As a Supervisor, I made community involvement central to the decision-making process. I believe citizens should always be heard from, and have a say. I'll do the same as Mayor.