

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 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?

I am forever appreciative of the beauty and serenity our City's many parks provide, both as Park's and Rec facility director and San Francisco native.

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?

Maintenance, accessibility, and proper attention. I have questions about whether or not the current administration at the Rec and Parks department possesses the key leadership need to tackle these issues. If elected, I would review the department thoroughly to ensure that we have the right leadership in the right places.

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?

I am very supportive of volunteer community groups and the work they do and I will continue to support them as Mayor.

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?

I would employ directors and administrators at the Rec and Parks department who actually know what they're doing and who will be able to adequately provide this essential service in the most fiscally responsible way.

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

I need to know more about the bond before I can fully support it.

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?

A thorough review and investigation of the needs of the department is in order and I would conduct such a study before embarking on any program.

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?

Obviously, I would address the problems that are being caused by the lack of irrigation and appoint the leadership that can successfully tackle these issues and create long term solutions to them.

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?

Adhere to the recommendations of the NPC Green Envy study and make a commitment for green space in every neighborhood.

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?

I will aggressively seek reasonable solutions so that the Blue Greenway project can be applied to both the eastern shoreline and southeastern waterfront.

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?

Obviously the Rec and Parks Department needs to maintain open spending records. The very fact that they can't shows the lack of competent leadership within the Department. Like I stated earlier, we need leadership in the Department who can effectively manage its budget and do so in a way that is open and holds the opinion of the people in the highest regard.

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?

I will support this dialog in the same way that I plan to conduct all manners of government, with honesty, openness, and transparency. This will include the creation of a system whereby resident concerns are addressed, regularly scheduled State-of-the City Addresses, and the re-constitution of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer which will allow more thorough oversight of each City Department.

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