

**1. Currently RPD management is seeking to convert the Department into an enterprise agency and end General Fund support, effectively making a commodity out of the commons.**

**a. What is your thinking about removing the Recreation & Park Department from the General Fund and transforming it into an enterprise agency?**

San Francisco's parks are one of the most valuable assets – and services – our city government provides the people of our city. They give San Franciscans a place to relax, enjoy our amazing city and make new friends.

When I took over the Assessor-Recorder's office in 2005, it was one of the worst departments in the city. By increasing office efficiency and productivity, ending favoritism and putting my management experience to work, we helped clear a five-year backlog and collected over \$300 million in new revenue – money that can now be used for our city's general fund. I believe our parks are one of the many things that should be funded by our general fund.

**b. Will you continue this RPD privatization strategy?**

Our Rec & Park Department should be funded through our General Fund, but to understand our tight budget situation, we may need to look at creative solutions to increase revenue for our parks. These may include more voter approved revenue measures to ensure adequate long term funding.

**c. If you oppose this strategy, what would be your approach to funding the RPD?**

San Francisco's parks are one of the most valuable assets – and services – our city government provides the people of our city. And, although I strongly believe that the Recreation and Parks Department should raise as much of their budget as they can through concessions, fees and the leasing of facilities, it would be imprudent to expect the department to be completely self-sustained. That is why I support financing the Recreation and Parks Department through the General Fund in order to ensure our parks remain maintained and open for all to enjoy.

As I mentioned above, as Assessor-Recorder my office helped to bring in over \$300 million in new revenue for the city's General Fund. I believe that by making sure everyone is paying their fare share we can continue to contribute to the general fund, and fund our parks.

I would also look into additional revenue measure to fund our parks.

**d. Do you believe the RPD operations should be supported by tax dollars?**

Our City tax dollars should help support Rec & Park operations.

1. **The Department recently fired its recreation staff who delivered services to children and families, hired supervisors to outsource programming, and added a highly paid property management team to lease out recreation and park facilities.**
  - a. **Do you think this model should be reversed, and if so, what would be your plan to providing those services?**

Similar to when I took over the Assessor-Recorder's office, I would ask the department head to evaluate the entire organization and come up with a staffing plan. I would make sure there is proper balance between management and staff.

One way is by closing the corporate loophole in Prop 13. Through my organization called Close the Loophole, we're building a grassroots coalition across the state in support of a split-roll property tax. By closing the state's property tax loophole, California can raise an additional \$7.5 billion in revenue, which means millions of dollars for San Francisco's vital services and programs. As Mayor, I will continue to work to Reset San Francisco by making gov 2.0 and Prop 13 changes to balance the budget and make more money available to fund these projects.

2. **According to figures gleaned from the Controller's office, in 2009 the City laid off nearly 2,000 employees who were the interface with the public and whose average cost to the City was \$37,000 for a "savings" of \$70 Million, and at the same time added 779 management employees whose average pay was \$147,000 for a total cost of \$115 Million.**
  - a. **Would you reverse this practice and reduce management and use the savings to hire employees who provide direct services to the people?**

I would evaluate staffing for the entire City (oftentimes the most ignored staffing is in the middle) and ensure we have a proper balance of staff to offer city services in the most efficient way possible.

- b. **Are you aware that RPD is hiring hundreds of outside recreation providers who are limited to 16 hours/week with no benefits to replace former recreation directors? Do you approve of this policy?**

I would research all hirings to make sure they comply with Civil Service regulations and are offering city services in the most efficient and cost effective way possible.

3. **The Recreation and Park Department has been aggressively marketing and leasing out clubhouses to private entities. In many cases this has resulted in loss of clubhouse use for the neighboring communities.**

- a. **How would you ensure that neighboring communities have regular access to clubhouses?**

I am aware of the money that private entities bring to RPD through leasing of neighborhood clubhouses. However, I am also aware of the need for parks to be available for residents to use and enjoy. I often enjoy San Francisco parks with my wife, and our two daughters, Isabella and Madeleine. Parks are a big part of my family's recreation time. We often ride our bikes in Golden Gate Park during Sunday Streets. As Mayor, I would work to ensure that we are getting the necessary money from clubhouse rentals while also keeping neighborhood clubhouses open and accessible for residents to enjoy and use.

4. **The Recreation and Parks Department has proposed to develop the western end of Golden Gate Park by building a large artificial turf soccer sports complex with 60 foot tall stadium lights. This project will destroy the naturalistic landscape character of the western end of Golden Gate Park. The woodland character of the western end of Golden Gate Park is supported by both the 1998 Golden Gate Park Master Plan and the 2004 National Register of Historic Places application. Both of these documents were written by the Department of Recreation and Park and yet, they are being violated by this project.**

- a. **As mayor, would you oppose changing the Beach Chalet fields into a soccer complex with artificial turf and 60 foot lights?**

I would balance the concerns of my Sunset and Richmond neighbors with the need to have more recreation facilities and hours for all San Franciscans.

- b. **Would you direct the Department to renovate the Beach Chalet soccer fields with real grass and no lights?**

I would look at all options and pick the plan which balances the environment, our costs and service hours.

- c. **Renovating the Beach Chalet fields with real grass will save bond funding that could be used in other parks. Would you direct the Department to use the remainder of the bond funding to fix up other parks?**

I would look at all options and pick the plan which balances the environment, our costs and service hours. If there were additional resources, I would work with the Department to properly deploy them to the areas with the most need.

5. **The Recreation and Parks Department is allowing the SF PUC to build a 40,000 square foot recycled water plant in Golden Gate Park, in the area north of the Murphy windmill, contrary to the Golden Gate Park Master Plan.**

a. **Do you support Golden Gate Park as a landscape park as described in the Master Plan?**

b. **Do you oppose any more new buildings in Golden Gate Park?**

I would review all buildings on a case by case basis, but believe any new building in the Park would have to be extremely important and compelling.

c. **Would you direct the Recreation and Park Department and the SFPUC to find other locations for the water treatment factory outside of Golden Gate Park?**

I would work with SFPUC to find the best location in the City for the water treatment plant.

d. **If the SFPUC refuses to move the project, would you uphold the charter and put a measure on the ballot to vote on the placement of this building in Golden Gate Park?**

If the building had support from the community, I would consider placing a measure on the ballot.

6. **The Historic Preservation Commission has proposed to make Golden Gate Park a Historic District. Do you support this proposal, and why or why not?**

I would support the proposal depending on the scope and our ability to properly maintain some of the properties in the Park

7. **On May 11, 2011, RP Commission President Mark Buell explained to a Commonwealth Club audience that he views the RP Commission as primarily responsible to respond to RP Department Staff. There was no mention of focus by the Commission on the public's proposals. The Commission has not demonstrated a track-record of incorporating public feedback?**

a. **How would you make the RP Commission more responsive to the public?**

My website, [www.ResetSanFrancisco.org](http://www.ResetSanFrancisco.org) is using online tools to build community-based support for important environmental issues. I know that the next Mayor of San Francisco needs to have a strong commitment to creating sustainable solutions to both our local and global environmental challenges.

Reset is a model of how to make government more responsive to the public. At Reset San Francisco, we work to take a lead in making all of San Francisco city government more efficient by using technology, data, crowdsourcing and the many Gov 2.0 innovations available to us today. By using data and tools that are already available to us, we can save money and time in all city departments to then help fund many important city services.

8. **What, if any, changes would you make to the management and priorities of the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department?**
9. **Currently the Mayor appoints all seven members of the RP Commission and the General Manager, which has resulted in near 100% approval of staff proposals and nearly uniform dismissal of citizen objections.**
- a. **Do you support a more balanced approach to appointments to the Recreation and Park Commission, such as split appointments between the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor?**

I would be open to considering split appointments.

10. **The non-resident entry fee to the Arboretum has proven to be a financial failure and resulted in a dramatic reduction in visitation by both non-residents and by residents.**
- a. **Have you reviewed the data and concerns of the public about the fee and this path to privatizing the Botanical Gardens?**

No, but as Mayor I will work to ensure that every San Franciscan has their voice heard. I believe our parks need to remain open for all San Franciscans and visitors to enjoy.

- b. **Would you be willing to introduce and support legislation to eliminate the fee?**

I would balance the revenues and expenses and make a decision based on the data. I would like to increase revenue for Parks potentially through revenue measures in hope we might be able to eliminate this fee.

11. **Implicit in past public support for the Recreation and Parks Department has been a promise that our parks will continue to be free and our clubhouses will remain open to everyone.**
- a. **Would you willing to place a higher priority for General Fund support to the Rec & Park Department?**

I would balance the importance of Parks with our other critical services such as transit, public safety and public health.

**b. Can you explain why we are being denied what we have already paid for, with fees for park entry and new rental charges for clubhouse use?**

Obviously, our city faces tough economic times. However, I strongly believe our parks should remain free and open for all residents and visitors to use and enjoy. However, we need to balance this with economic realities unless we can convince voters to revenue increases to pay for parks.

**12. Should you become mayor, would you continue the policies of committing tens of millions of tax dollars in subsidies to the wealthy like Larry Ellison and Twitter and continue to deny sufficient general fund money to hire more gardeners, custodians and recreation directors to maintain our parks and staff our playground clubhouses?**

San Francisco's parks are one of the most valuable assets – and services – our city government provides the people of our city. And, although I strongly believe that the Recreation and Parks Department should raise as much of their budget as they can through concessions, fees and the leasing of facilities, it would be imprudent to expect the department to be completely self-sustained. That is why I support financing the Recreation and Parks Department through the General Fund in order to ensure our parks remain maintained and open for all to enjoy.

I do not support payroll taxes because they inhibit job growth. However, I support replacing that revenue through other means, including closing the corporate loophole in Prop 13 like I described in Question 1A. In addition, as Assessor-Recorder, my office worked to make sure everyone paid their fare share and, by doing so brought in over \$300 million in revenue for our General Fund. I know we can work to find funding for the General Fund to ensure our city's important resources like our parks continue to get the funding they need.