

Potrero Hill Mayoral Candidate Forum
Tuesday, August 30, 2011

*Please return your responses by **Thursday, July 7, 2011**, to
contact_us@phdemclub.org. Thank you again for your participation.*

Questionnaire for candidates for the office of
Mayor of the City of San Francisco

Candidate/Campaign Information

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Anticipated budget: \$1,475,000
Funds raised to date: When the funds we raised before June 30th are combined with public financing funding based on pre-June 30th contributions, we have raised over \$800,000 for the campaign.
Percentage of donations \$100 or less: 51%

Thank you for taking the time to complete the Questionnaire for the Potrero Hill Mayoral Candidates Forum. Note that your responses to this Questionnaire will be used as one of the criteria by which candidates will be invited to participate in the event ; completion of the Questionnaire is not a guarantee that you will be invited to participate.

Please write a brief response (fewer than 200 words) to each question.

1. Why are you running and why should we vote for you?

Throughout my career in San Francisco - as a civil rights attorney, a criminal prosecutor, a small businessman, a community leader, and President of the Board of Supervisors - I've seen what is possible when city government works

hand-in-hand with people of every background and from every neighborhood. Whether we're leading the fight for marriage equality, providing health care for all residents, or cultivating a 21st century economy, we achieve great things when we come together around our shared San Francisco values.

I ran for office in 2008 because I saw that City Hall wasn't doing its part. There were times when the Mayor and members of the Board of Supervisors couldn't even be in the same room, let alone work together on the difficult issues of the day.

I'm proud that since I took office as President of the Board, things have changed for the better. We're putting results ahead of rhetoric and getting things done. But there's more to be done, and I'm running for Mayor to keep us moving in the right direction. I've shown that I can bring people together to make government work for the people it serves, and as your next Mayor, that's exactly what I'll do.

2. What sets you apart from your opponents?

It's no secret that San Francisco is facing serious challenges, but I think that we're headed in the right direction with our current Board and interim Mayor. To keep moving forward, our next Mayor will have to focus on building bridges, seeking common ground, and looking to solve problems rather than score political points.

Over recent years, I have proven that I am that kind of leader - whether it be balancing significant budget deficits or crafting legislation to keep jobs in San Francisco. My record of fighting for San Franciscans -- which you can find at www.davidchiuformayor.com -- is unique among the candidates, and I look forward to sharing it with San Franciscans during the course of our campaign.

What also sets me apart are my experiences outside of public office. I have experience as a founder of a business. I've worked as a civil rights attorney and a criminal prosecutor. And I've volunteered as a leader of my neighborhood association and chair of an affordable housing organization. All these experiences have given me perspectives on the challenges that everyday San Franciscans face - perspectives that I would bring to the Mayor's Office.

3. Have you qualified for public financing? If not, do you plan to do so? If you do not plan to seek public financing, why not?

As in my race for Supervisor in 2008, I am participating in San Francisco's

limited public financing program. I have already qualified for and received public financing. I believe that public financing will allow me to spend more time doing the real work of campaigning - talking with residents about the issues that matter in their lives - rather than raising money.

4. What do you view as the top three issues facing San Francisco? Please describe your solutions for those issues.

First, we must rebuild our economy and create jobs. I helped lay the groundwork to bring billions of dollars and thousands of jobs to the city through the America's Cup and significant development projects. I also sponsored legislation to give more city business to local firms, and eliminated fees that impair small business growth. Going forward, we must look at creative ways to ensure that businesses stop leaving San Francisco.

Second, we must make sure that city government works smarter and better for our people. That means crafting balanced budgets that ensure that our city provides basic services that better protect our public safety and public health, and commits to community-based budgeting, community-based planning, and community-based policing. It also means building a world-class transportation system, with a Muni system that runs on time, safe pedestrian and bicycling experiences, and clean streets without potholes.

Third, we must ensure that families don't continue to leave our city, and that our young people receive a world class education. Our City must prioritize funding for our schools and teachers, build affordable housing, and invest in child care, after-school programs, our parks and our libraries.

5. What are some specific public safety strategies currently being implemented in San Francisco that you agree or disagree with? With these strategies in mind, what do you intend to do about public safety if elected mayor?

As a former criminal prosecutor and judge-arbitrator for a neighborhood community court, I know that public safety requires extensive collaboration between our police department, District Attorney, court system, probation and social service programs that can prevent crimes in the first place. No single strategy will solve all problems, but there are several things we can do to make San Franciscans more secure.

First, I believe strongly in community policing, and will make it a cornerstone of our City's public safety strategy as Mayor. That means promoting formal and informal mechanisms for residents to collaborate with the police department, and supporting beat patrol officers to build effective relationships.

Second, good data analysis is crucial to effective policing. The SFPD should continue to integrate the CompStat model into its everyday policing, and we need to implement our JUSTIS program to share data between law enforcement agencies.

Third, with many police officers retiring, we need enough trained professionals to replenish the ranks. In this year's budget, I supported funding for a new Police Academy class because it's critical for long-term public safety.

Fourth, the SFPD must continue to implement ongoing reforms and modernization. I strongly support our police chief in making this progress.

6. What does the term “affordable housing” mean to you? What, if anything, will you do to increase the quantity of affordable housing in San Francisco?

To me, the fight for affordable housing is the fight to give working families from low and middle income backgrounds a real choice to make San Francisco their home. It also allows San Franciscans to consider becoming first-time homebuyers, and promotes neighborhoods that are socioeconomically integrated.

Throughout my career, I have taken an active role in advocating for affordable housing. Prior to becoming a Supervisor, I served as the board chair of one of the city's leading affordable housing organization that has developed over 2,000 units of housing for tenants, seniors, immigrants and working families.

As Supervisor, I am proud to have sponsored legislation that protected our city's Inclusionary Affordable Housing Program against recent court decisions. I have also passed legislation that facilitated the creation of housing cooperatives, incentivized the construction of senior housing, created permanently affordable rental housing for homeless veterans, and protected tenants facing Ellis Act evictions by owners who wanted to replace housing units with garages. As Mayor, I am committed to continuing to bring together public, private and nonprofit stakeholders so we can prioritize the creation of affordable housing.

7. In the 2000 census, San Francisco was the second most racially diverse county in California. In the 2010 census, we were twelfth.

What issues do you see in the changing demographics of the City, and how as mayor do you plan to support racial, economic and cultural diversity?

Throughout our history, San Francisco has been a beacon of diversity to the rest of the world. But in recent years, I have heard from too many San Franciscans who aren't sure if they have a place in our City anymore. Whether it is day laborers from the Mission, African American families in the Bayview, or Chinese seniors in public housing, if we're going to succeed as a city, we need to make sure people of diverse backgrounds can live here.

To do that, we must acknowledge that this is a problem worthy of government attention, then take concrete steps to solve it. First, we must make economic development of neighborhoods a priority, which is why I championed the Tenderloin/Mid-Market tax incentive to revitalize those neighborhoods. Second, we must provide truly affordable housing for low-income and middle-class families, which is why I've spearheaded efforts to facilitate the creation of housing cooperatives and ease the requirements for purchasing units at below-market rates. Third, San Francisco cannot continue to lose families because our schools struggle. I am committed to working with SF Unified School District to build the strongest education system in the state.

8. What is your position regarding privatization of the public sector, i.e., contracting out public land and services to for-profit or private entities? Please explain with specific examples.

Public land and services must contribute to the common good. Any private use of public space, or private service in an otherwise public setting, should be consistent with the underlying purpose of the public good. I have consistently voted against contracting out public services, and would only consider shifting work to private entities when such a shift would not result in public employee layoffs and when such shifts would prevent more sweeping privatization proposals.

I do believe that it is essential that our parks and public lands are maintained as free and accessible places for all San Franciscans to enjoy. I do not believe that concerts and concessions, to cite two recent practices, constitute privatization of our public spaces. Rather, they offer another way for San Francisco residents and visitors to enjoy city life, just as food trucks in Civic Center and UN Plaza have activated empty spaces and provided appreciated options for nearby workers.

9. Do you support reforming the 1932 Refuse Collection and

Disposal Ordinance to allow the City to contract out its garbage services through competitive bidding?

While I understand the impetus behind the effort to overturn the 1932 ordinance, and agree that competitive bidding generally an important principle, I do not believe that this issue is a priority for our city and for many San Franciscans at this time. Our existing garbage services company has been an industry leader when it comes to waste diversion through recycling and composting, and we have a realistic opportunity to reach the goal of zero waste by 2020.

10. Do you believe that San Francisco should be a Sanctuary City, and will you remove San Francisco from the Secure Communities Program?

As a former criminal prosecutor who knows firsthand the importance of building trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities, I have been a strong supporter of San Francisco's status as a Sanctuary City. As Mayor, I would work with the appropriate law enforcement officials, including a new Sheriff, to explore removing San Francisco from the Secure Communities Program.

11. What will you do as mayor to fulfill the promise of Hope SF and improve substandard public housing conditions? What changes, if any, would you make to the San Francisco Housing Authority?

As the former board chair of an affordable housing nonprofit, I believe that public housing is essential to retaining our diverse populations, and it is a moral imperative that we make our public housing truly habitable for those who live there. The most important thing our next Mayor can do in that regard is to ensure that federal, state, and local monies continue to flow to San Francisco's public housing improvement projects. As Mayor, I will aggressively lobby Washington DC and Sacramento for full funding to rebuild San Francisco's public housing and fulfill Hope SF's promise. With the major recent changes to Redevelopment, we also need to ensure that work of the Housing Authority, the Mayor's Office of Housing and what Redevelopment has been doing are better integrated.

Our next Mayor needs to provide better leadership in integrating public housing projects with the surrounding community. In my supervisorial district, I have championed neighborhood councils - where residents, merchants and city staff come together to tackle local problems - and I believe the model should be applied citywide. It can be a particularly effective method to bring together residents of public housing projects with their neighbors to tackle long-standing issues.

12. Complaining about Muni is a local pastime. That said, we have seen repeated decreases in service while the City has approved plans to substantially increase the population of zip code 94107 over the next 20 years. What, as mayor, will you do to fulfill the City's Transit First Policy for today's San Franciscans? How will you prepare for tomorrow's Muni riders?

I regularly take Muni, ride my bike, walk and use car sharing to get around the city, so I know our city's transportation challenges first hand. To me, improving public transit is an absolute priority, and I would prioritize it more than any Mayor in recent history.

On the Board of Supervisors, I'm proud to have been a leader in reversing Muni services cuts, expanding car sharing, and making our streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians - but we can do more. In my opinion, implementation of the MTA's Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP) would go a long way toward helping us fulfill our Charter's "Transit First" mandate. I support more transit-only lanes for rail and bus, giving buses priority at traffic signals, and implementing all-door boarding. I support changes to encourage people to use the bicycle as an everyday form of transportation and to promote vibrant and safe pedestrian corridors. And I support following through with the TEP's recommendation to add direct bus service between Potrero Hill and downtown. I strongly subscribe to smart growth principles of investing in transit where we have population growth - and that includes the zip code of 94107.

13. Likewise, the San Francisco Unified School District provides an often-cited reason for families to leave the City and is a source of stress for those choosing to remain. What are the biggest issues related to public education in the City, and what factors contributed to these issues? What will you do in your term as mayor to improve education in the City?

I believe that our city government must be the moral authority in taking care of our students. While the Mayor does not have direct governance authority over the SF Unified School District, I would use the bully pulpit to build the strongest education system in the state.

To start, that means ensuring that our schools are equitably funded. Sacramento has failed to produce a sustainable solution for school funding, and we cannot tolerate more failing schools or fleeing families. I am proud to have supported the passage of the June 2008 parcel tax, which increased teacher salaries and make infrastructure improvements to San Francisco's schools, but we must do

more.

We also must begin to seriously address the achievement gap for many of our city's students. This means using city resources to invest in early education, summer school and after-school programs for under-performing students, and strengthening the relationship between SFUSD and the Department of Children, Youth and Families. I would also ask the private sector to partner with under-performing schools, as I recently did with Twitter vis-a-vis Tenderloin schools, so that companies can provide resources to teachers and classrooms, as well as expose students to 21st century work environments.

14. How, as Mayor, would you facilitate better dialogue and collaboration between City departments, such as SFMTA or Recreation and Parks, and neighborhood organizations?

Many residents feel a significant disconnect between their \$6.8 billion dollar, 26,000 employee, 50 department bureaucracy known as the City and County of San Francisco. We need to evolve our city government to be one that is truly community based - and this why I support community-based budgeting, community-based planning, and community-based policing. Since it is so critical that city residents have a real dialogue with city agencies, especially those that touch their lives as directly as the MTA and the Recreation and Parks Department, I would like to replicate a model of collaboration that I have championed. In my Supervisorial district, residents, merchants and city staff come together on neighborhood councils to tackle local problems, and this model should be applied citywide in every neighborhood to tackle tough issues. I would also use technology and new open government tools to get direct citizen feedback on everything from the lateness of a Muni bus to the latest repair needed in a neighborhood park.

15. Please review the policies and programs you have advocated in your responses to the questions above. Given forecasts of difficult budgets for the next several years, how do you propose that we fund the aforementioned policies and programs while maintaining other vital City services and programs?

I passed the law to create our city's first 5-year financial plan, which shows that revenue growth will be vastly outpaced by increasing costs, driven largely by rising pension and health care costs. This is not sustainable, which is why I partnered with Mayor Lee to develop a consensus pension reform measure for the November 2011 ballot. This measure will save the City up to \$1 billion over the next decade, while preserving a dignified retirement for our workforce.

To adequately fund programs and services, we must grow our tax base by stimulating our economy. For years, I have advocated replacing our current business payroll tax, which is viewed by economists as a job-killer, with a gross receipts tax to increase revenue. I helped bring over a billion dollars in economy activity and thousands of jobs to the city through the America's Cup and projects like the Hunter's Point Shipyard and Treasure Island.

We should seek new revenue streams, which is why I have strongly advocated for legislation to allow San Francisco to reestablish the Vehicle License Fee to its pre-2003 levels. I recently proposed leasing some of our City's unused high-speed communications infrastructure -- called dark fiber -- to the private and nonprofit sectors.