

**POTRERO HILL MAYORAL CANDIDATE FORUM**  
**Tuesday, August 30, 2011**

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

**Candidate/Campaign Information**

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Anticipated budget: \$1.47 million
Funds raised to date: \$1 million
Percentage of donations \$100 or less: I raised my first \$100,000 limiting contributions to no more than \$100. 49% of our donors are \$100 or below.

*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?

I want to lead a dynamic, responsive and effective City government for all San Franciscans. San Francisco can be the first city to bridge the opportunity gap by building new economies in the fields of biotech, clean and green tech, and digital media. We need to create opportunities for our young people to receive the education and training they need for their careers- from Pre-K to Ph.D.- so they can stay and thrive in San Francisco.

As Mayor, I will pay attention to the basics so we fix the big picture. During my over 18 years of City services as Supervisor and Director of Neighborhood Services, I've listened to neighbors' and merchants concerns, then brought my colleagues from City government into a team to address these problems and make San Francisco better. I believe we can build these same coalitions and partnerships to address the biggest challenges facing San Francisco. Working together, we can create the a thriving and multifaceted economy while honoring our responsibility to provide effective services, including Muni, public safety, parks and schools. We can embrace opportunities and expand initiatives to make ourselves into the greenest, most environmentally-conscious City in the world.

2. What sets you apart from your opponents?

I've always believed that an angry customer is my best asset. I am committed to collaborating, innovating and working harder-- that's what I've done all my life. I'm scrappy enough to roll up my sleeves every day to make this promise real --that's what I've always done -- and that's what I love to do.

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?

Yes-- My campaign has qualified for public financing.

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

- **Securing our economic future:** When I talk to people around San Francisco, their primary concerns are jobs, and the future of our city's economy. As Supervisor, I worked with many local entrepreneurs — from restaurateurs to biotech startups — who spend too much time and money jumping over hurdles. I co-sponsored legislation to support three targeted payroll tax exemptions focused on creating biotech jobs for San Franciscans, and allowed biotech firms to pay permit fees once they had their certificate of occupancy rather than at groundbreaking. These measures increased the biotech presence from 2 firms to 72 firms and created over 3,000 new jobs. As Mayor, I will continue to leverage my years of experience with City processes to focus on common sense reform and streamlining regulations so that businesses can open faster.
- **Preparing our kids for the 21st Century economy:** Our education system can support our youth to excel in the growing fields of biotechnology, clean and green technology and digital media. As Mayor I will align our city's resources to support the academic goals of each school in SFUSD so that students and families get the full range of

services available- from school security to the arts- in a coordinated and strategic way.

- **Making San Francisco more sustainable for individuals and families** by creating home-ownership opportunities, supporting reliable transportation, and fostering healthy and sustainable neighborhoods. I plan to re-start negotiations with PG&E to put more neighborhood utility lines underground, expand successful Community Benefits District model to additional neighborhoods to fund beautification and pedestrian improvements, and implement sensible reforms to the condo lottery process. Improving the efficiency and reliability of Muni is another important part of this growth. I will be a mayor who is out at the bus and rail yards, working with Operations and Division Superintendents to make sure that the system is managed effectively from all levels.

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?

It's frustrating to me that success in community policing heretofore has not been rewarded in terms of promotions or assignments. Chief Suhr is very committed to community policing and we have to figure out how to reward officers in the promotional process for being strong community policing practitioners.

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?

Access to high quality affordable housing is key to keeping families, teachers, nurses, police officers and first responders in the City. As Supervisor, I sponsored legislation to allow in lieu fees to be congregated in order to acquire land in more expensive neighborhoods such as the Castro to be developed for affordable housing. I have championed Open House, the development of affordable housing for LGBT seniors. I strongly supported the two unsuccessful bond campaigns, and as Mayor will pledge to go to voters in 2012 with an affordable housing bond.

I support building new high quality affordable housing throughout San Francisco, including major developments like ParkMerced and the recently approved Treasure Island plan. I believe that such projects must utilize skilled union labor and have a high percentage of affordable and workforce priced housing and be sustainable in terms of transit and efficiency. My record speaks to working with developers, labor, affordable housing advocates, and neighborhood leaders to make new projects reflective of the needs of the neighborhoods, and inclusive of services like childcare to make the developments truly livable.

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?

As Mayor I am committed to appointing a diverse and representative cabinet of advisers and senior staff, and to recruit and train people from across San Francisco to serve as Commissioners. I have engaged City College to help build a training program for aspiring City leaders so that they can learn how the City's budget works and have a policy tool-kit and professional network to draw on should they be tapped for City service.

I have supported a number of innovative and successful programs that give young people the opportunity to attend college, and get skills to prepare them for the changing economy. As Mayor I will continue to support programs I helped create like the Athletic Scholar Advance Program at Mission High and Kindergarten to College, which provides a college savings account to every entering Kindergartener.

One way we can foster more socio-economic diversity in our city fabric is by creating Life Colleges at the Big Four public housing developments. By providing on-site access to higher education, job training, and apprenticeship programs we can cultivate a new cohort of leaders and a workforce that better represents the diversity of our City.

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.

Preserving civil service positions ensures greater quality control in the services provided to the public. I have consistently opposed contracting out, including the most recent effort to privatize security at SF General. I have spent more time at SF General than any other candidate- visiting constituents, victims of crime and police officers harmed in the line of duty. It is unthinkable to me to hire private security with no benefits to protect doctors and nurses working in one of the most intense workplaces in the City.

As Mayor, I will continue my successful track record of working with neighbors, advocates, City employees, Labor and others to find solutions that don't involve privatization. Recreation and Parks continues to struggle with difficult budget decisions which have prompted a shift to the current revenue focus. I do not believe this is a wise long-term direction for our City and for a healthy park system. I opposed the Conservatory fee, and advised Blue Bottle to pull out of Dolores Park. I do, however, oppose the ballot measure about Parks because I believe the language goes too far, and impedes the ability of the General Manager to identify new revenue opportunities that are aligned with San Francisco values.

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?

No.

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

As the son of an immigrant, I saw firsthand the indignity of our current system. I am a strong supporter of keeping San Francisco a Sanctuary City. I've met with and been touched by my conversations with immigrant families. Sanctuary City recognizes the humanity and dignity of each individual, and as important is its role in protecting public safety. The current federal policy leads to a two-tier system of justice, and that's a threat to all of us when people are afraid to go to police and report crimes. As Mayor I would work closely with my Police Chief and other law enforcement officials to keep San Francisco safe for immigrant families.

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 Director of Neighborhood Services, I spent a lot of time at public housing developments. I will be a Mayor who meets regularly with residents of public housing, brings my Department Heads and Commissioners, and creates the responsive City government that all our residents deserve.

As I mentioned in a prior response, I would provide on-site job training and access to higher education through the creation of Life Campuses. I would also like to work with small property owners to increase the acceptance of Section 8 vouchers throughout the city's rental housing stock.

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?

Muni requires a Mayor's daily attention and dedication as well as long-term vision. I will be a Mayor standing at the bus and rail divisions, talking with Operators as well as regular riders, insisting that we not just be a transit first city in words but in deeds.

I ride Muni every day, and have dedicated a large part of my working life to transportation policy at the federal level in Los Angeles and San Francisco. I am excited to lead our City toward High Speed Rail, the Central Subway, Transbay Terminal, and increased transit-oriented housing and commercial development.

My record speaks for itself. I successfully pushed hard to get Muni to build a new central control facility next to their headquarters. I launched the Transit Effectiveness Project after a Controller audit of the J Church line revealed significant structural defects in the system as a whole. As Mayor I will implement trip time reduction measures outlined within TEP and make sure that Rapid Bus service is a priority along these corridors.

These larger policy goals must be supported with a strong commitment to basic maintenance of our fleet.

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?

My child starts public school this August – I will be the nation’s most active Mayor collaborating for great public education. I was a strong supporter of Prop H, and will champion the passage of the School Bond Measure on the ballot this fall. As Mayor, I will align our city’s resources to support the academic goals of each school in SFUSD.

Currently, only one out of every five families ranks their neighborhood school first when choosing a kindergarten. To me, this means that parents value choice – but also that we must work harder to make every neighborhood school a great choice. Creating more language immersion schools is definitely one means to expand quality school choices and keep families in our City. I believe the new student assignment system will improve longstanding frustration with the lottery, and as Mayor I will work closely with the SFUSD to be responsive to concerns about the new system.

The State budget is a huge challenge for our schools. I will work with the Superintendent to shield our schools from continued cuts to education, support authorizing Rainy Day Funds for our schools, and connect private sector resources to schools.

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

During my over 18 years of City services as Supervisor and Director of Neighborhood Services, I’ve listened to neighbors’ and merchants concerns, then brought my colleagues from City government into a team to address these problems and make San Francisco better. I believe we can build these same coalitions and partnerships to address the biggest challenges facing San Francisco. Working together, we can create a thriving and multifaceted economy while honoring our responsibility to provide effective services, including Muni, public safety, parks and schools.

Throughout my career I have successfully built coalitions to get things done. I have taken the time to get to know my colleagues in City government- particularly those whose jobs impact the daily lives of San Franciscans- and by engaging them we've been able to find solutions to problems that have plagued neighborhoods for years. Some examples of this are the renovation of Duboce Park, incorporating the first mixed use off-leash dog play area in the City; crafting a solution to rebuild Trinity Plaza that improved the lives of tenants and helped revitalize the MidMarket area; and championing the Muni Central Control Facility that was just approved by the Board of Supervisors.

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?

Budget management is a daily task: controlling department spending, monitoring overtime, comparing revenue receipts versus projections. Funding for basic public services like street repaving should be based on a quality index, rather than on political maneuvering. My budget strategy will include several key points:

**Establish Reserves.** I supported legislation that will create additional reserves by saving prior year surpluses and setting aside one-time windfalls for a rainy day. These actions will allow the City to use reserves to make up future financial deficits, rather than require reductions to vital services in future budgets.

**Carefully Manage Growth of Services.** As our City's economy grows over the next four years due to increased jobs and expansion of economic development in the Mid-Market, Mission Bay, and Bayview-Hunters' Point areas, we must strategically balance the cost of City services by managing the size and cost of our workforce, and respond to the current and future needs of our neighborhoods.

**Seek and Expand State and Federal Grants.** The City has been a leader in maximizing funds to support transit and public works projects, green energy innovations, job creation for the poor, and progressive public health and social service initiatives that promote social justice and healthy living. As Mayor I will leverage and expand our expertise in this area.

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*Please return your responses to this Questionnaire by **Thursday, July 7, 2011**, to [HYPERLINK "mailto:contact\\_us@phdemclub.org" contact\\_us@phdemclub.org](mailto:contact_us@phdemclub.org). Thank you again for your participation.*

