



Candidate Questionnaire Responses from: David Chiu

Questions from the San Francisco Urban Agriculture Alliance

Access to Land

One of the largest barriers to expanding urban agriculture in San Francisco is access to land. There are numerous potential locations including vacant lots, underutilized public land, and barren rooftops. How will you facilitate the linking of passionate gardeners and organizations with usable sites? And will you prioritize helping the SFUAA reach its goal of 12 new gardens by the end of 2012?

As the Supervisor representing the district with the unfortunate distinction of having the least open space per capita, as well as the district with only 2 community gardens, I understand this issue all too well.

As Mayor, I would undertake the following initiatives, among others, in order to increase access to land for urban agriculture:

- Request RPD, PUC, DPW and other City land owners to continue to prioritize the identification of land in their portfolios that could be used for urban agriculture;

- Request that the PUC consider that some of its extensive landholdings outside of the City could be used for the development of City farms, much like San Francisco uses RPD land in the Sierras near Hetch Hetchy for a City campground. Families and residents could work the land and learn the values and reap the benefits that come from a closer connection to our food's origins;

- Direct the City to develop a technological tool that would link available land resources with people or organizations looking for land for urban agriculture. The tool could take the form of a robust registry of usable land for gardening, including vacant lots awaiting development and residents who have gardens they don't use;

- Direct RPD to prioritize the use of bond funds (via Community Opportunity Fund) for projects that have community gardening and urban agriculture components;

- Change city law so that it is easier for rooftop gardens and greenhouses to be built. For example, a recent law in New York City allows for greenhouses on rooftops to be excluded from height limits as long as they are set back a distance from the edge of the building. SF could do something similar -- it may not be appropriate in all neighborhoods but could be a great thing in newer, less dense parts of the city, such as parts of SOMA and Mission Bay;

Incent buildings to accommodate rooftop and/or balcony production space and systems (water, compost, processing center, tool storage). Establish specifications for multi-use high rise construction that includes food production, or establish zones where vertical farms are acceptable;

Explore the possibility of Green Development Agreements, which would incentivize temporary gardening projects on land that has stalled development; and

Request, when funding is available, that the City purchase open space suitable for urban agriculture and community garden uses, in particular in under-served neighborhoods.

City Support

What role do you see the city government playing in supporting urban agriculture and the growing community of city gardeners and farmers? How will you work to create a more fluid and efficient system for the creation and maintenance of urban gardens and farms in SF?

The urban agriculture and urban gardening movement has been a central part of the City's ethos for decades. The Bay Area is the birthplace of the Slow Food movement, a hotbed of DIY culture, and a major generator of food and environmental activism. More and more San Franciscans are interested in community gardens, farmers markets, urban agriculture, homesteading, and many other related pursuits. However, at the same time over the past decade, the City of San Francisco's involvement to the same has stalled and in some cases dwindled.

As a Supervisor, my office has been actively involved in understanding the City's historical and current commitment to and vision for urban and community gardening. We have learned that since the dissolution of SLUG, the city contractor that formerly served as the coordinating body for urban gardening activities, there is no unified vision or commitment coming from local government. In addition to losing coordination when SLUG disappeared, the City lost valuable Federal and private funds with which to augment the City's funding.

Today, RPD essentially acts as an asset manager for its community garden properties -- they become involved only to perform necessary maintenance and administration. According to the department, the total RPD budget for all urban agriculture and community gardening is \$200,000 this fiscal year and \$150,000 in most previous years. RPD offers no gardening programming or enrichment through its recreation division, no tool lending program, no seed or plant provision, and no foreseeable plans to transition existing underused parkland into garden and agriculture space. The PUC and DPW both operate community gardens and gleaning programs, and the Mayor's Office and Department of the Environment have some small staffing resources dedicated to urban gardening, but the unfortunate reality is that all of these departments are acting for the most part independently. This silo-ed uncoordinated organizational structure is holding City government back from being more active and efficient.

With waiting lists at all but few community gardens, and a population of San Franciscans increasingly interested in local and sustainable production, I believe we can do better. I will be a Mayor who makes San Francisco a leader in all things urban gardening, greening, agriculture, and sustainability. But you don't have to take my word for it; I've already proven my commitment by championing groundbreaking urban agriculture legislation at the Board this year that updated zoning regulations to explicitly permit urban agriculture in all areas of our city and to allow for the sale of produce from those gardens.

Moving forward, I will have three major goals with respect to urban agriculture . First, the city should prioritize locating additional urban farming and community garden space. Second, the City's efforts in these areas need to be coordinated and responsive to a vision of urban agriculture that is developed in conjunction with all community stakeholders; as Mayor, I'll explore whether that coordination should come from within the City in the form of an empowered lead department or a multi-department policy body or from outside the City in the form of a City contract for urban gardening. Third, we must update city regulations to permit the sale of fresh produce from urban farms so that entrepreneurs in urban agriculture can turn their hobbies into small businesses.

Access to Resources

The will and manpower to create beautiful and effective urban agriculture projects is amply present as evidenced by the extensive community involvement in the work of SFUAA members (<http://www.sfuaa.org/membership.html>). However, a lack of resources such as tools, compost, mulch and money has continued to be a difficult obstacle to overcome. If you become mayor, what will you do to help increase the availability and distribution of resources for urban gardeners and farmers? And will you commit to ensuring that every supervisorial district is equipped with an urban agriculture resource center by 2012?

As Mayor, I would be committed to ensuring that every district has such a center by 2012. I would prioritize the creation of garden resource centers throughout the city that would provide soil, compost, tool lending, seeds, and other necessities. Resource centers could also serve as locations for gardening education, food stands for sale of backyard and urban farm produce, and community gathering spaces.

San Francisco as a National Leader

Since San Francisco prides itself on being a trailblazer for progressive causes, how will you make San Francisco a national leader in building a healthy and sustainable food system?

As Supervisor, I sponsored groundbreaking urban agriculture legislation that updated zoning regulations to explicitly permit urban agriculture in all areas of our city and to allow for the sale of produce from those gardens. I also worked for the creation of two farmers markets in my district, one in North Beach that began in 2010 and one planned for the Polk Corridor in the Spring of 2012.

I pledge that as Mayor, I will continue to prioritize a healthier and sustainable food system and will insist on nothing short of leadership in these areas on a national and even international scale.

As Mayor, I would undertake the following types of programs and actions:

- Set a Citywide goal for consumption of locally sourced food, similar to our Zero Waste and carbon emission targets. I would request that City departments purchase an even higher percentage of locally grown food to lead by example;

- Increase the responsibilities, resources, and powers of the Food Security Task Force and Food Policy Council;

- Allow food production, small-scale animal husbandry, community composting, and small scale CSAs in all city neighborhoods and on public land where appropriate;

- Require integrated pest management methodology for all produce grown and sold in the city, and develop ways to limit the use of all pesticides and herbicides within the city limits;

- Promote community or commercial production of bees on approved public lands, fish in public parks, and fruit trees in public parks. The City could possibly sell some of this produce, as well as have additional food security for emergencies;

- Create community production centers for cooking and food preservation in every neighborhood. These could be combined in other public facilities such as recreation centers

- Ensure that regulations permit the sale of fresh produce and sundries to be sold directly from mobile food trucks, particularly in neighborhoods that lack adequate food options.

- Advocate for the creation of farmers' markets in every neighborhood, with a focus first on those neighborhoods that are "food deserts" and establish incentives to ensure that there is grocery store with fresh produce sited within 15-minute walk of all residents.

Gardening and Agricultural Experience

Do you currently grow, or have you ever grown, food in the city? We are curious to hear about anything from a small pot of herbs in a window sill to a full blown vegetable garden.

When I was growing up, my family had a small garden, where we grew squash, tomatoes and other vegetables. From that experience, I learned so much about the benefits to self, city, and the planet that come from developing a relationship with the earth and with food production. I deeply respect the values of community, stewardship, and self-sufficiency that I see in those who grow their own food and advocate for more such activities happening in San Francisco. More recently, I spent some time at the Hayes Valley Farm - you can see some pictures on my Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150325695223081.370328.20006038080&type=1>

Questions from the San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance

Outdoor Classrooms

SFGSA's experience shows that green schoolyards serving as outdoor classrooms help close the achievement gap and attract families to our public schools. How would you encourage this trend?

I have seen first-hand the positive impact of such schoolyards in helping to close the achievement gap and keep families in San Francisco. As Mayor, I would ask my education advisor to work with the SF Unified School District to ensure that all schools have green schoolyards that serve as outdoor classrooms, and would help the expansion of such programs for all students.

Schools as Green Hubs

SFGSA is launching into our next phase of work to insure that SFUSD schools are green hubs for each community. For example, we are helping schools develop gardens and natural play areas, installing cisterns for rainwater harvesting to better understand the value of our watersheds, solar panels to understand renewable energy sources, and composting lunch room waste to help increase waste diversion above 75%. How would you support this momentum in our public schools?

The creative learning and play areas being developed by SFGSA are helping our young students understand their role in the environment better than ever. We need to secure funding to fully realize the potential of these areas so that our teachers are properly supported and can institute a curriculum that takes advantage of these innovative and interactive learning environments.

Increasing Community Support

All of our efforts to make our schools better only work with intensive community support. San Francisco has the highest percentage of families who have decided not to send their children to public schools. How would you change this?

While there are some great schools in San Francisco, there are not enough options for educational excellence in all corners of the city. Too many students in the San Francisco Unified District struggle in a system that is underfunded, overcrowded and lacking resources. We simply cannot tolerate schools that are failing our children, or continue to have families flee our city because of them. Moreover, we cannot allow funding problems to stall innovative approaches that have shown to spur academic achievement and inspire our children such as SFUSD's green schoolyards program.

But while this is important, so much of our education crisis comes from the challenges we face at the State level. Sacramento has failed to produce a sustainable solution for school funding, and we simply cannot take it anymore. As Mayor, I would play a leading role in the California Mayors Education Roundtable to tackle inadequate and inequitable education funding. State legislators have failed to enact the fundamental school finance reform that everyone agrees our system needs. I want to represent San Francisco and lead Mayors around the state to call for a sustainable solution to the funding issues.

The reality is that, in the short term, our City government must do its part to fill the gaps that Sacramento has created - or else programs like SFUSD's green schoolyards will fail to reach their full potential. I will continue to advocate for the use of general funds to support our school system, and strongly support the extension and expansion of Prop H. To mitigate the impact of such spending on the budget, I am supportive of new revenue sources, and have proposed an increase in the vehicle license fee, licensing the city's dark fiber infrastructure and business tax reform as three revenue-generating possibilities.

Community support should not be limited to families either, and I would also ask the private sector to partner with under-performing schools in their area, 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.

Green Schoolyard Tours

SFGSA has found that our green schoolyard tours can change the way potential SFUSD families view our public schools. Have you toured any SFUSD green schoolyards lately?

Yes, most recently I visited the Living Library at Gordon Lau Elementary in my district, and saw the very positive impact on the school's students. I would encourage SFUSD to host more green schoolyard tours as a way to promote our public schools and show the benefits of transforming our traditional paved yards into these innovative, outdoor learning and play spaces.

Next Generation of Students

Our public schools are in crisis. Our environment is in crisis. What sort of environmental knowledge would you like the next generation of SFUSD students to graduate with, and how will you help them attain it?

It is critical that our next generation of SFUSD students graduate with a fuller understanding of the role that we play in impacting our environment, and vice versa. As the population of San Francisco increases and resources become more scarce, we will need our citizens to be more environmentally conscious and literate than ever. San Francisco is surrounded on three sides by water and our population is projected to grow to 1 million by 2035, so climate change and overpopulation are not abstract problems for the City. We need our next generation of leaders to understand that the economy, the city's future, and our very livelihood is linked to how we overcome the serious and difficult environmental issues of the day. I would work with teachers and SFUSD to ensure that science and environmental education are emphasized. These subjects are far too important to take a backseat in the course curriculum.

Questions from the Bay Area Water Stewards

Potential New Water Sources

San Francisco imports virtually all of its water from outside the City primarily from the wild and scenic Tuolumne River (85% of SF's water supply). SFPUC is currently

evaluating several potential new sources of local water supply, including greywater, recycled water, groundwater and a desalination plant on SF Bay. All of the options under consideration have generated controversy over cost (most are more expensive than our current water supply) and environmental impacts. As mayor, how would you decide which, if any of these alternatives to pursue, and how would you address the controversies surrounding your decision?

When altering something as vital as our City's water supply, we need to make sure we are comprehensive in our research, and detailed in our approach. I would bring experts and stakeholders together including the numerous environmental groups that make up BAWWS, such as the Tuolumne River Trust, the Sierra Club, Restore Hetch Hetchy, and Clean Water Action. I believe in strong outreach to the community when it comes to development and planning projects, so I would conduct a community process to do as much outreach as possible to lay the groundwork for consensus and community input. All of our numerous neighborhoods and communities should have a say in deciding what water we drink, and I would listen to stakeholders before making a decision. I should also say that the cost of such options should not be the only factor in a decision over such options, if they have a more positive impact on the environment.

Stormwater Runoff and Green Spaces

The city has a combined sewer/stormwater system, which means that we spend money and energy to treat all of our stormwater as sewage. An increase in urban agriculture and greening, along with an emphasis on low-impact development, can save time, water, and money. Given the City receives an average of 20 inches of rainfall each year (the equivalent of half of our annual consumption) how would your office support these strategies?

Promoting urban agriculture and ensuring low impact development are keys to my environmental strategy for a more sustainable city. I will be a Mayor who makes San Francisco a leader in urban gardening, greening, agriculture, and sustainability. But you don't have to take my word for it; I've already proven my commitment by championing groundbreaking urban agriculture legislation at the Board this year that updated zoning regulations to explicitly permit urban agriculture in all areas of our city and to allow for the sale of produce from those gardens.

I will have three major goals with respect to urban agriculture. First, the city should prioritize be placed on locating additional urban farming and community garden space. Second, the City's efforts in these areas need to be coordinated and responsive to a vision of urban agriculture that is developed in conjunction with all community stakeholders; as Mayor, I'll explore whether that coordination should come from within the City in the form of an empowered lead department or a multi-department policy body or from outside the City in the form of a City contract for urban gardening. Third, we must update city regulations to permit the sale of fresh produce from urban farms so that entrepreneurs in urban agriculture can turn their hobbies into small businesses.

Low impact development begins with our transportation and housing policy. City policy must include sustainable transportation choices and create affordable housing near where people work. I have a comprehensive plan for improving our city's transportation system that will make Muni more efficient, make biking and walking safer, and expand car-share to every residential neighborhood. I have been one of our city's foremost champions of sustainable, transit-oriented developments, and will continue to assess the environmental impact of projects before and during the approval process. One of the most effective ways to reduce the impact of our current housing is to incent energy audits of residential buildings. We must take action to encourage owners of commercial and residential buildings to understand and address their energy consumption challenges and make necessary energy efficient retrofits. As Supervisor, I sponsored legislation that set the nation's highest standards for regular energy audits in San Francisco's commercial buildings. As Mayor, I will expand upon this concept and provide incentives for residential property owners to make their properties more energy efficient. We also need to expedite "green construction" projects. San Francisco has been a leader in setting policy and incentives for installing solar on our homes, city buildings, and businesses. I will work with the Department of Building Inspection and the Planning Department to create a one-stop permit office for solar installations, rainwater harvesting, and other green construction, and allow expedited permitting for these projects.

Smart Water Usage

The City has the lowest per-capita water usage of any large City in California, because of climate, small lot size, and the fact that much of the land area is covered in impervious surfaces (buildings, streets and sidewalks). Greening the City without increasing our water usage will require smarter use of existing supplies (including stormwater, gray water and recycled water) Will you as Mayor direct the SFPUC to invest in alternative (non-system) water supplies for community garden and urban farms?

Yes, in order to make our community gardens and urban farms truly green and sustainable, we need to maximize use of our supplies of stormwater, gray water, and recycled water. I would direct the SFPUC to invest in such efforts.

Long-term Stormwater Capture

SF's sewer system is designed to allow 10-12 combined sewer overflows annually. As sea levels continue to rise, this practice will become less and less feasible. Long-term investments in stormwater capture through green infrastructure can reduce these overflows, but cannot be accomplished by the PUC alone. What will you as Mayor do to integrate needed actions (such as design requirements, enforcement of impervious bans and new maintenance needs) into all City Departments' work plans and budgets?

As Mayor, I would hold department leadership accountable for using and maintaining better stormwater capture infrastructure, and ensure that we are maximizing permeable surfaces and street structures to allow more rainfall to soak into the ground, and to reduce the volume and intensity of storm water runoff. I would direct a staff member to

coordinate the City Departments to make sure that they are including these actions in their work plans and budgets.

Also, since the city's sewage and stormwater run into one system, I would be interested in studying whether separating them into two systems would allow for the reuse of stormwater, as long as such reused water did not negatively impact wildlife. Wastewater management planning should also include as much restoration of the natural watersheds as possible.

Commission Nominee Attributes

The SF PUC sets water policy for the City. As Mayor, what attributes would you look for in candidates you nominate to serve on the commission?

I expect commissioners to have a real expertise in one or more of the issues that they consider on a regular basis, and need to be completely independent and free of perceived and actual conflicts of interest from the parties who appear in front of them. The criteria I will use when appointing commissioners for the SFPUC and other commissions will include:

- Knowledge and familiarity about the issues that the department has jurisdiction over.
- Track record of competence and inclusiveness.
- Utmost integrity.
- Respect for the public and their desires to have a voice in their local government.
- A relentless commitment to providing effective and efficient public services that our residents expect from their local government.

As Mayor, I would always view the appointment process as collaborative. I would engage community stakeholders to share their vision for the particular department, commission or agency, as well as potential commissioners.

I would also ensure that San Franciscans from all backgrounds are reflected in our city leadership. This is why I passed legislation to create an electronic database of all commission appointments to bring transparency, accountability and diversity to the commission appointment process.