



Candidate Questionnaire Reponses from: Dennis Herrera

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 Mayor, I will work with organizations such as the San Francisco Urban Agriculture Alliance (“SFUAA”) to insure that we are maximizing our public lands and spaces and create 12 new gardens by the end of 2012.

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?

Urban gardens and farm spaces are essential to our City. Not only do they provide residents with a way to grow their own foods, but also they conserve water and make good use of City spaces. Recently, I was invited to visit the Hayes Valley Farm, making amazing use of the abandoned portion of the former freeway ramp. I have been inspired and energized by the commitment of the farmers and the involvement of the community. As Mayor, I will work with community farming and agricultural organizations as well as City Departments such as the Planning and Public Works to think creatively about how to incorporate and support urban farms.

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.sfuua.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?

Yes to both.

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 discussed above, I am committed to increase our dedicated urban farming spaces and to making sure that San Francisco remains a national leader in healthy and safe food practices.

As City Attorney, I have fought for healthier food and consumer practices within our City. For example, in 2008, San Francisco became the first city in California (and the second city in the country following New York City) to pass a menu-labeling law requiring chain restaurants to post calorie and other nutritional information directly on menus and menu boards. The fast food industry sued the City over the ordinance, and the City Attorney's Office ("CAO") defended the ordinance. The CAO also helped New York City defend its menu labeling law in a similar lawsuit.

In 2009, I took on Kellogg's over health claims it was using in its marketing of Cocoa Krispies. In the wake of my demand that Kellogg substantiate its claim that Cocoa Krispies "Helps Boost Your Child's Immunity," Kellogg reversed course and announced it was removing the immunity claim from the cereal boxes.

In addition to these efforts, as Mayor, I will support the following healthy food measures in our schools and communities:

Support efforts to improve the quality of school lunch through programs like "edible schoolyards" and lobbying for increased federal funding for school lunch programs. Also support the creation of food education curriculum in public

Support funding to restore physical education requirements in public schools.

Support efforts to increase access to affordable, healthy foods in "food deserts," low-income neighborhoods where access to affordable, quality, and nutritious foods is limited. Create incentive programs to attract supermarkets and grocery stores to underserved neighborhoods through tax credits, grant and loan programs, small business/economic development programs, and other economic incentives. Use zoning regulations to enable healthy food providers to locate in underserved neighborhoods (e.g., "as of right" and "conditional use permits"). Encourage farmers markets to accept food stamps and WIC vouchers/coupons. Support initiatives to use food stamps and WIC programs to give parents incentives to purchase healthy foods. Mayor Bloomberg recently announced he is seeking federal approval to ban the use of food stamps to buy soda in New York City.

Increase access to free, safe drinking water in public places to encourage water consumption instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.

Develop media campaigns, utilizing multiple channels (print, radio, internet, television, social networking, and other promotional materials) to promote healthy eating (and active living) using consistent messages.

Call on the food industry to stop marketing unhealthy foods to young children, and stop using misleading labeling on food packaging that confuses parents as the nutritional content of the foods.

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.

Throughout my adult years, I have grown herbs and smaller vegetables at home. I find it incredibly satisfying to take something from a seed or small clipping, and not only grow it, but to watch it blossom into something edible.

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 will work with the San Francisco Unified School District, community groups, and other stakeholders to encourage and grow our green schoolyards and outdoor classrooms.

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?

Please see the above answer.

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?

As Mayor, I have devised the following plan that I hope will encourage families to stay in San Francisco and embrace our public schools.

1. Invest in Our School System: Proposition H funding is a demonstration of San Francisco's commitment to the education of our children. As Mayor, I will support the renewal and increase of this critical funding beyond its current level to ensure that our schools receive the resources that they so desperately need. I will work with the School Board to dedicate a significant portion of this funding to dramatically increasing access to language immersion programs from kindergarten through high school, since San Francisco's kids need to become prepared to work in the new, international economy, and language skills (particularly Chinese and Spanish) are becoming more and more essential for that. This would make San Francisco the leading City in the nation in terms of providing multilingual education to its students, and it would create a local workforce that would help attract foreign trade and create jobs for our people. It would also attract more families to SFUSD schools by making available the programs that they want.
2. Empower Teachers and Administrators: A School District cannot succeed without a strong infrastructure, and a District's infrastructure consists of its people. Teachers and principals need to be given the support (both in terms of finances and professional development) that will eliminate the incentive to leave San Francisco for private or suburban schools once they have obtained a few years of experience. Accordingly, a significant portion of the funding should also be dedicated to attracting and retaining strong teachers and principals. In particular, the money should be used to ensure that teachers and principals receive strong training (for teachers, through Stanford's National Board Resource Center, which provides an advanced credential, and for principals through Berkeley's Principal Leadership Institute, which credentials school administrators), and to ensure that salaries remain competitive, particularly for teachers in their third, fourth and fifth years.
3. Support Community Schools: We can help support our schools by encouraging partnerships between the schools and other local, neighborhood resources. As Mayor, I will work to make our schools the centers of our community, open to all people and activities. Integrating academics, social services, youth programs, and community engagement will help prepare our children to enter school and later to enter the workplace. It will also encourage parents and community members to have a personal investment in the success of our local schools

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?

I have not yet had the opportunity but would like to tour an SFUSD green schoolyard at some point soon.

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?

I would like our students to be aware of the environmental issues that exist and loom on the horizon and to see themselves as having a responsibility to insure that we protect our precious resources.

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?

As discussed throughout, as Mayor, I will insist that government function in an innovative, efficient, and intelligent way. If some of my strategies cause friction or controversy, I will address those differences of opinion head on. As City Attorney I've demonstrated my ability to sit down with adversaries, to roll up my sleeves, and to reach agreements and find common ground. That's what I do as City Attorney every day to resolve multi-million dollar litigation. And that's exactly what San Francisco's next mayor needs to do solve complex problems such as evaluating several potential new sources of local water supply.

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?

As discussed throughout this Questionnaire, government needs to listen and work with our community partners to generate real solutions and innovative strategies to make the best use of our resources.

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.

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?

The issue regarding the rising sea level is not a question of "If" but rather "When?" "How much?" and "How Fast?" The rising sea levels will drastically affect not only San Francisco, but also the entire Bay Area region, touching our economies and forcing governments and citizens to think creatively. We must ensure that ALL San Franciscans are equipped with the knowledge necessary to prepare for changes in the environment around them, especially low-income, youth, and elderly populations who will likely be more drastically affected than the average citizen.

In San Francisco we must be prepared for these changes. What that means is we need to begin by educating ourselves, our policymakers, our City Departments, and our communities about the real effects of sea level rise so that we can be better prepared as a City and as a community and together generate effective, smart, and comprehensive solutions.

The sea levels are going to rise regardless of what we do, but our actions now affect how fast and to what extent this change occurs in the future.

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?

Leadership that respects the participation of citizens: generally stated, that's the most important criteria I've employed to identify and elevate team leaders in my own office, and that's the criteria I would generally look for to appoint department heads, city commissioners and regional agency representatives. It has been my observation that the traits that enable one to excel at the attorney-client relationship — honesty, openness, accessibility, intelligence, the ability to be fully informed and well prepared, while remaining open to the views of those we serve — are the exact same qualities that make good leaders in San Francisco. The "my-way-or-the-highway" mentality that may serve some leaders well in corporate environments or in top-down governments is a non-starter in San Francisco. As City Attorney, I have watched that approach fail time and again among some of my clients.

I would be meticulous in approaching the full breadth of stakeholder interests for input on all my appointments, even recognizing that some stakeholders will inevitably disagree with my decisions. Leadership that respects citizenship takes more than simply listening to opposing views, it takes an openness to learn from opposing views. As Kipling

famously advised, trust oneself when others doubt you—"but make allowance for their doubting, too."

If it isn't obvious yet, my approach to governing is the approach of a problem-solver. I work to show leadership that respects citizenship every day. And that's the prerequisite that enables me to sit down with adversaries, roll up my sleeves, and reach agreements and find common ground. As I've said before, that's what I do as City Attorney to resolve multi-million dollar litigation. And that's exactly what San Francisco's next mayor needs to do solve our problems, to lead a City that works, and to make appointments that reflect our City's diversity and serve its citizens well.