



PARKS 2009 CAMPAIGN

Friends of Hudson River Park
Governor's Island Alliance
New York Restoration Project
Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
Mosholu Preservation Corporation
Prospect Park Alliance
Queens Civic Congress

Doug Biviano, City Council District 33

Dear Candidate,

On behalf of New Yorkers for Parks and the Parks 2009 Advisory Committee, we are launching a campaign to support parks and the quality of life of all New Yorkers. In this economic recession, New Yorkers will be relying on the city's features that benefit the most such as parks and open spaces.

Enclosed is a candidate survey that addresses key parks issues, through which we'll learn more about your vision for our city's parks, playgrounds and open spaces. **Please take the time to thoroughly respond to the issues on the attached questionnaire.**

This candidate survey will help to inform the public about parks related issues and policies. Questions are both direct and open ended, so please circle "yes" or "no" when asked and take the time to answer the question as completely as possible in the space provided. If more room is needed to adequately address these issues, please feel free to attach additional pages when resubmitting the survey.

Answers to this survey will be featured in the **Parks Voter Guide** to be distributed by Parks 2009 prior to the primary election; in some cases we may use excerpts or summaries from your answers. They will be made available on our website, www.ny4p.org, and upon request to the public and the press.

To ensure that your views are included, please return the questionnaire by June 19th 2009 to:

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If you have further questions, do not hesitate to call us at 212.838.9410.

*** We need your answers by June 19th for inclusion in Parks 2009 printed material. We welcome responses via email, fax, mail, etc.**

(For non-Mayoral candidates: if any question below specifically relates to Mayoral authority, please indicate if you would support and/or call upon the Mayor to take such action)

2009 CANDIDATE SURVEY

What do you believe are the top priority park issues that need to be addressed in your district and citywide?

Securing Adequate Funding / Maintenance for Parks

a. Will you work towards securing long term funding for Parks?

Yes No

- i. *If so, would you consider exploring creative financial models such as Parks Improvement Districts (based on the BID model), tax increment financing (TIF), zoning benefits and public private partnerships to supplement maintenance and operating costs?*

Absolutely, I think the solution for longterm funding lies in a combination of those factors. The Prospect Park Alliance is a solid model for the public-private trusteeship, and as the 33rd's City Councilman I will fight to incorporate Sen. Squadron's PIRC proposal into the revenue stream to support maintenance and programming for the Brooklyn Bridge and Bushwick Inlet parks as they are constructed.

b. Would you support dedicating revenue earned through park concessions to parks maintenance and operations?

Yes No

- i. *If so, would you also support revising the Major Concessions Rules to include all significant private uses on public property (including parks) to community/borough review?*

Yes No

c. Will you support establishing the tracking of spending and staffing on a park by park basis?

Yes No

While there's a danger here in creating a system of separate and unequal budgetary distributions, it seems logical to maintain as much flexibility as possible in terms of specific allocations and spending at each park.

d. When a capital project is not fully funded will you support diversifying funding sources to ensure their completion? What would those sources be?

Yes No

Public-private partnerships and allocation requests from the general fund, as well as concessions revenue and local business tax incentives

e. What specific actions would you take to ensure that every park in every neighborhood has properly working facilities such as ball-fields, educational facilities, restrooms, etc?

This is a question of willpower, leadership, and accessibility. As City Councilman I will make park funding a priority, and as needs arise on a case-by-case basis we'll take the appropriate steps to address them.

- i. *Will you support a "fix it first" policy for funding capital projects, so that resources are allocated to existing projects in need of repair?*

Yes No

I was taught as a child to always finish what's on your plate first before you go back for seconds, and the lesson rings true with all development projects, capital parks projects included.

f. Will you support adequate staffing and funding to ensure that new and existing parks stay in a "state of good repair"?

Yes No

- i. *What funding/programs would you use to increase the full-time parks maintenance staff?*

Anyone who promises you that park maintenance staff will be increased over the next couple years of razor thin budgets is lying to you, but through extended appeals to public-private partnerships and reallocations of tax revenue captured through rezonings near parks (like the proposed DUMBO rezoning near the Brooklyn Bridge Park) we should be able to weather the upcoming storm and maintain the necessary levels of maintenance staff.

- ii. *What can be done to improve the baseline services, or maintenance of effort, in our parks to ensure that partnerships don't need to replace poor, existing services or neglected services such as bench and fountain repairs?*

Again, if we move to a system of case-by-case budget review and allocation it becomes that much easier to itemize park needs and determine service and repair allocations

iii. How would you fund the unique maintenance costs of waterfront parks (e.g. access, bulkheads, and piers)?

I support Daniel Squadron's PIRC plan for Brooklyn Bridge Park. The proposed rezoning of downtown Brooklyn/DUMBO would immediately increase property values and tax thresholds for that area, a portion of which can be specifically allocated to the estimated \$16 million in annual estimated maintenance and programming costs for that park. Park Improvement District designations are well and good in stronger financial times, and should be explored as a way to capture bonus revenues as property values rebound in the future, but because they are determined by fluctuations in real estate and the overall economy should not be counted on as a lynchpin of our funding structures.

g. Will you support park ratings by borough and community board in addition to the citywide level in the Mayor's Management Report?

Yes **No**

The more local input, there better.

h. Will you support making the official Parks Department "property list" – that specifically delineates all 1,700 properties – available online?

Yes **No**

I support all efforts for greater transparency in government, and in this spirit this is something of a no-brainer

Protecting Parkland

a. Will you support more laws that require public notification and input when a park will be used for non-park purposes, to afford parks the protection they need from development or use by other agencies?

Yes **No**

i. How would you require that professional sports organizations assist in maintaining and operating public parks near their facilities?

You write a law determining support thresholds by geographic proximity

b. Will you work to strengthen parkland alienation regulation by requiring Environmental Impact Statements before parkland alienation bill is filed by municipality?

Yes **No**

i. How will you do this?

Again, this is a simple question of political will. This seems like a smart initiative that I'd support, therefore it's just a matter of proposing legislation and passing it. We need a City Council that is free of corrupting special interest influence that will pursue smart reforms like this, and that's why I'm running.

c. Will you support mitigation for taking of parkland and ensure replacement of lost parkland for the community?

Yes **No**

i. How will you do so?

This can be a fairly straightforward requirement inserted into development agreements where parkland is compromised. Unlike some of the corrupt development processes in Williamsburg and Greenpoint over the last few years, where some of the other candidates in this race had the opportunity to obtain guarantees of parkland up front and as conditional to approval of certain projects, I will work to ensure that any development that impacts existing parkland or encourages population growth in a park-deprived area includes mandatory up-front stipulations for parkland.

d. How would you prevent "pay to play" situations from arising at public and amateur sports facilities?

One of my top priorities in the City Council will be overhauling the member item and budget allocation processes to avoid exactly this type of corruption. I view corruption and spiraling healthcare costs as the two most detrimental threats to the longterm economic sustainability of this city, because they affect all other areas of the city budget. No-bid contracts, kickbacks, and other corrupt dealings inflate our expenses and drain resources away from things like parks and recreation programming, and development projects like stadium construction are a major loophole in the system that needs to be closed.

e. Will you support legislation that requires regular NYPD reports to the City Council on crime in parks (i.e. Intro. 470)?

Yes No

f. Will you work towards making parkland part of the city's CompStat system?

Yes No

Expanding Park Use

a. Will you work toward creating, with significant community involvement, a comprehensive citywide master plan for parks and open spaces that will guide the overall acquisition, restoration, improvement, and maintenance of parks, natural areas, playgrounds and athletic facilities in the five boroughs?

Yes** No

Yes with a bullet. I am again an advocate of decentralized and case-by-case decision-making, but as a non-binding capital plan it would certainly be worthwhile to have a planning outline in place.

i. What is your vision for some of the new parks?

I've talked at fair length about BBP and Bushwick Inlet, and we're going to have to be careful to keep expectations in check for acquisition and development projects of that magnitude in the next couple years. We should be sure we get current projects right, and on budget, before we launch future projects. As I've also discussed, measures need to be taken to ensure consistent funding streams for maintenance and programming are protected.

ii. How would you develop it?

b. Will you support extending Resolution No. 1033 which calls for the continued protection of community gardens and the rights of the community and gardeners?

Yes No

c. What specific actions would you take to revitalize the recreational and amateur sports programs that have been decreased by this year's budget cuts?

This is a case-in-point example of the difficulty we're going to have with tightened budgets in the years to come. Not every worthwhile program is going to be able to receive full funding, and that's the unfortunate truth. We're certainly going to need to continue to make appeals to public-private alliances, and do more with less.

d. What specific actions would you take to enable a much higher level of collaboration among the Parks Dept. and other city agencies on issues such as stormwater management, greenways, and economic development projects?

This gets back to the question of process and corruption. My policy during this campaign has been to have an open door at all times, and that will continue when I'm in the City Council. When we take our time and make the effort to hear from all sides before embarking on development projects and decision-making, we reach better conclusions and better serve the community.

e. How will you ensure that public spaces created as amenities/mitigation for large scale economic development projects such as Atlantic Yards, Hudson Yards, and Manhattanville are truly open to the public?

These stipulations should be written into agreements between the city and developers, and we should designate these allocated spaces under the Dept. of Parks and Rec. so as to ensure they're properly treated as such

i. Do you support mapping such public spaces as parkland?

Yes No

National and Regional Parks

a. How will you support the creation of planned new regional waterfront parks like Fresh Kills, Hudson River Park, Governors Island and Brooklyn Bridge Park?

I have discussed this at length above – proposals like PIRC, supplemented by rezonings, in-park concessions, public-private partnerships, and – in better economic times - tax allocations from the expected property value increases that historically accompany the development of parklands should combine to fund these projects.

b. What are your plans to ensure that all citizens have equal access to these regional facilities?

Make sure infrastructural adaptations, such as the rerouting of bus and subway service, is included as part of the development planning process.