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2009 CANDIDATE SURVEY

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

I am committed to providing that all New Yorkers have access to quality parks and adequate recreational opportunities. I believe that the top priority park issue that needs to be addressed in my district is the severe shortage of park space in our community. The 25th City Council District, which includes Jackson Heights, LeFrak City, Elmhurst, Corona, East Elmhurst, Woodside, and Rego Park, ranks near the very bottom of districts in terms of open space and parks/playground access. I will dedicate my time in the City Council to expanding green-space. I will fight to get more money to expand the few parks that are currently in use and I will chase down any opportunity to convert land into public green-space.

SECURING ADEQUATE FUNDING / MAINTENANCE FOR PARKS

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

Yes No

I am an advocate for securing long term funding for the Parks. I will work with my colleagues in the City Council to create a new budget model that truly represents the value of our Parks in our City. The increase in population has made the necessity for well-maintained parks even more critical. For too long different City administrations have preferred to increase capital spending for the Parks without adequately funding maintenance.

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?

I will consider exploring creative financial models to help fund maintenance and operating costs. I would like to learn more about how specifically PIDs were structured. My main concern with any attempt to include private partnerships, zoning benefits, or other such incentives for the business community is they may not directly benefit currently underserved communities. We need to be careful not to create an even more polarized division of resources between individual parks.

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

Yes No

I strongly support dedicating revenue earned through park concessions to park maintenance and operations. I will be a leading voice in the City Council on this important issue.

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

I support revising the Major Concessions Rules to include all significant private uses on public property to community/borough review. I, and many constituents in my district, enjoy spending time at nearby Flushing Meadow-Corona Park. However, there are frequent occasions when the Park is overwhelmed with professional sporting events and other activities that undermine public access to the park. I believe that local communities should have a strong voice in how their local parks are used.

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

Yes No

I support establishing the tracking of spending and staffing on a park-by-park basis. This is an obvious management and operational tool that will help keep the Parks Dept accountable. I am deeply concerned that on a park-by-park basis resources are not allocated in a fair way.

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

I support diversifying funding sources to ensure the completion of capital projects in certain cases. I believe that we should explore additional funding from the Federal government, the State government, not-for-profit institutions and private donations.

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?

I support the creation of an independent monitor to ensure that every park in every neighborhood has properly working facilities. I understand that we need more transparency and accountability in our Parks Department. I believe that an independent agency which would report to the City Council would be a certain way to verify the condition of every Park in our City.

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 am a strong supporter of a 'fix it first' policy for funding capital projects. I understand that we need to allocate more resources to existing projects in need of repair.

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 absolutely will support adequate staffing and funding to ensure that new and existing parks stay in a 'state of good repair'. It is critical to the well-being of every citizen in our great City that we have Parks that service our communities.

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

I will pursue any opportunity to get federal stimulus money from the Obama administration to increase the full-time parks maintenance staff. I will also pursue creating a new property tax code that helps sustain our Parks system.

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?

New York City clearly does not currently have enough staff to improve the baseline services in our Parks. I believe that by increasing the Parks budget, improving public participation in the decision-making process, and providing new leadership, we can ensure that partnerships are efficient, effective, and collaborative.

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

I will recommend funding the unique maintenance costs of waterfront parks by applying for federal stimulus money from the Obama administration.

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

I will support park rating by borough and community board in addition to the citywide level in the Mayor's Management Report. I believe that our Parks are an essential part of life in New York City. We need to make sure that the individual parks are being maintained properly with additional oversight and transparency.

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

Yes No

I will support making the official Parks Department 'property list' available online. The public has a right to information in a convenient and accessible manner. Online listing of these properties is a valuable way to inform the public about Parks properties.

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 will support new laws that require public notification and input when a park will be used for non-park purposes. The community also has a right to understand who is using their parks and how in advance of any event. I also strongly believe that we need to protect our Parks from any development or misuse. Providing greater public transparency will help protect our Parks.

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

I am a strong advocate for making sure that professional sports organizations do their fair share in maintaining and operating public parks. Flushing Meadow-Corona Park is a major Park in my area. All too often baseball games and tennis events overwhelm the park. These successful sporting institutions have an obligation to contribute to the nearby parks.

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?

I will work to strengthen parkland alienation regulation by requiring Environmental Impact Statements before parkland alienation. I will work to create awareness and consensus in the City Council to address this important issue. I believe that we need to protect our parks, requiring an Environmental Impact Statement is a smart way to understand how any proposed municipal usage will affect the community.

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?

I will support mitigation for taking of parkland and ensure replacement of lost parkland for the community by creating significant tax penalties and withholding 'certificates of occupancy' until the necessary replacements have been made.

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

We need to prevent 'pay to play' situations from arising at public and amateur sports facilities by increasing enforcement and oversight.

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

Yes No

We need to have regular NYPD reports to the City Council on crime in our Parks. It is essential to the well-being of our community to understand exactly what activities are happening in our Parks.

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

Yes No

The use of technology to improve the safety, efficiency, and enjoyment of our Parks is clearly a good idea. I will certainly work toward making parkland part of the city's CompStat system.

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

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

My vision for new parks is to provide adequate open and green space for every New Yorker within walking distance. I will be a leader in the City Council on creating a comprehensive citywide master plan for parks and open space.

ii. How would you develop it?

To develop a successful master plan for Parks and open spaces, we need community involvement. No one knows our Parks better than the people who use them every day. As a City Council Member, I will work with local civic groups and organize community workshops to engage the community on a comprehensive plan for our Parks.

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

I will support extending Resolution #1033. I will help to protect community gardens and the rights of the community and gardeners. Community gardens are a wonderful display of civic

pride and responsibility. The City should be encouraging and fostering such participation in public life.

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?

As a public school teacher in the NYC public schools for the past 25 years, I understand first-hand how important recreational and amateur sports programs are in our community. I will take action to protect and expand funding for these programs by raising revenues through ending the regressive tax break for Madison Square Garden and Cablevision.

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?

It is essential for city agencies to collaborate on key issues that are important to our City. I believe that a communicative and cooperative approach to management will yield superior results for the public. I will suggest creating a task force on important matters like stormwater management, greenways, economic development, and sustainability. The Parks Dept is a key agency for these issues and a task force approach will ensure their participation.

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?

I propose to have an enforcement agency that monitors and oversees public spaces at developments to ensure public access. These developments are granted land use rights in return for community concessions. If the property owners fail to live up to their obligations, then the City must guarantee the public interest by enforcing the law.

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

Yes No

I firmly believe that information is a public right. I would be supportive of mapping public spaces as parkland. And I would be supportive of an enforcement plan to guarantee that these spaces are truly open to the public.

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 will support the creation of planned new regional waterfront parks like Fresh Kills, Hudson River Park, Governors Island and Brooklyn Bridge Park by applying for federal stimulus funds from the Obama Administration. I recognize that these parks will require significant funding but they will also create thousands of jobs. And most importantly, these parks will be enjoyed