



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: Rafael Mandelman

Age: 44

Family: Single, no kids or pets; a few dying house plants.

Hometown: San Francisco

Lived in San Francisco since: 1985

Education: B.A. Yale College; Master of Public Policy, Harvard University; J.D. UC Berkeley School of Law

Occupation: City College Trustee / Attorney

Employer: City College of San Francisco

Political experience:

Trustee, City College of San Francisco (2013-present)

Member, Democratic County Central Committee: (2006-present)

Notable affiliations:

Former Chair of the Board of the San Francisco LGBT Community Center

Past President, Noe Valley Democratic Club, Harvey Milk Democratic Club, and District 8 Democratic Club

Former Commissioner, San Francisco Board of Appeals and Building Inspection Commission

Former Board Chair, Livable City

1. What do you see as the greatest challenges when it comes to providing residents with a livable, affordable and safe community?

The greatest challenge facing our City is not a lack of resources, or ideas, or solutions; the greatest challenge is the petty factionalization that prevents our elected leaders from working together to effectively address pressing issues like homelessness, our affordable housing crisis, aging and inadequate transit infrastructure, epidemic property crime and rising retail vacancies. It's time to turn the page and start a new chapter at City Hall, where we find common ground and get serious about taking on the problems in San Francisco.

That's the kind of Supervisor I will be. I won't rest until people are off our streets and have the care they need; until we build enough housing for everyone in San Francisco; until our City starts moving again with a world-class transportation system.

2. What is the biggest opportunity for your district or city during the next four years?

I believe we can address our homeless crisis in San Francisco, and we have the opportunity to be a model for how other cities can get people off the streets and into care.

My mother suffered from serious mental illness for most of her life and was homeless for a time when I was young. As an adult I was able to get a conservatorship over her, and get her into safe and reliable care. I've witnessed firsthand the failures of our system to provide sick and mentally ill folks the help they need. And I know what it takes to get people off the streets.

As Supervisor I will work tirelessly to ensure that we have the short and long-term psychiatric facilities we need to care for folks who cannot care for themselves, expanded residential and outpatient drug treatment resources for those in need of treatment and strong and effective case management services. But that only addresses the most visible piece of the crisis.

The much larger portion of the homeless population, which is largely invisible, is comprised of people who are not mentally ill or drug-addicted but have suffered economic and/or health setbacks in an increasingly stratified and unforgiving economic environment. We can't solve that portion of the crisis without significantly expanding public investment in the acquisition of land and buildings and preservation and development of permanently affordable housing for low and middle income San Franciscans who cannot afford market rents. Happily, we are a wealthy city, more able than most to make the investments in affordable housing necessary to protect our city's economic diversity.

3. Describe your commitment to your district or city leading up to your bid for office.

As an urban development attorney, I have spent the last 18 years helping build affordable housing, revitalizing commercial districts and making more livable neighborhoods in the Bay Area. I was elected to the City College Board of Trustees in 2012 when the accreditor was threatening to close CCSF. I led the the charge to save City College, and as President of that Board I helped to make CCSF free for all San Franciscans. As Chair of the Board of the San Francisco LGBT Community Center I oversaw a much need renovation which added 10,000 feet of much-needed below-market non-profit office space, putting the Center on stable financial footing for the first time in its 15 years. Additionally, I have had the honor of serving as President of the Noe Valley Democratic Club and District 8 Democratic Club, member of the Democratic County Central Committee since 2006, Commissioner on the San Francisco Board of Appeals, and Board Chair of Livable City.

4. Silicon Valley and the Bay Area are at the center of global, technological advancement. How do you see technology's role in changing the lives of both longtime residents and transplants?

Our city sits at the epicenter of a technological revolution which is fundamentally reinventing the way we do everything from ordering dinner to falling in love, but our city government has so far largely failed to harness that creative energy to tackle the inevitable strain the boom has put on our aging infrastructure.

As our City's population has expanded, we have privatized the overflow, relying on tech shuttles and private car services to address our transit needs, with mixed results. We need a massive investment in our public transit infrastructure to make sure the City can handle not only the current population, but the projected increases over time as well.

When it comes to emerging technologies, our City needs to be more proactive in making sure everyone is playing by the same rules. Whether through establishment of a City Office of Technology Innovation or other approaches, we can, and should, find a better balance between encouraging innovation, and regulating new technology to make sure we don't leave behind the things that shape the character and culture of our City.