

Sustainability/Environmental Stewardship

I believe that we are now in a new fiscal era where government budgets will grow only modestly, and in some years decline, while at the same time the demands for critical public services will increase. But that does not mean we should put sustainability and environmental protection issues on the backburner for two reasons. First, we face critical environmental challenges and have a moral obligation to address them now. We cannot delay in doing our part to create a healthier and more sustainable environment. Second, green practices are often cost effective, particularly when a longer term perspective is taken. That has certainly been my experience as a San Mateo Union High School District school board member where our district's investments in solar, green construction practices and energy efficiency have resulted in more dollars going into the classroom. (For details, please see my [environmental record](#))

There are a myriad of opportunities for San Mateo County to show leadership in environmental protection, addressing climate change, and developing a clean energy economy. Described below are a number of such opportunities that I would like to take on as a county supervisor.

Green Buildings/Energy Efficiency Upgrades: The energy consumed by residential and commercial/industrial buildings is responsible for roughly 40% of greenhouse gas emissions. San Mateo County has a green building code designed to make buildings more energy efficient, but I would like to see it strengthened.

I would also like to see San Mateo County emerge as a leader in rolling out the new California Energy Commission's "Energy Upgrade California" program. Under this program, homeowners who upgrade their homes to improve insulation, sealing, heating and air conditioning are eligible to receive financial incentives from PG & E and tax credits. I recently had an energy audit done on my home and I plan to take advantage of this program. The county needs to aggressively promote this program as it will not only reduce the county's carbon emissions, but it will also create new local green employment opportunities. In addition, the county should explore following the lead of Sonoma County in offering property owners the opportunity to finance energy efficient property improvements through the property tax system.

Electric Vehicles and Charging Stations: The county is well positioned to be a leader in encouraging the use of electric vehicles. Electric vehicles are now in the market place, but broad adoption will require a concerted effort to provide convenient charging at homes, offices and public areas. Redwood City recently installed seven electric charging vehicle stations and the County should look for funding from the U.S. Department of Energy and the Bay Area Quality Management District to do the same. As a county supervisor with a prior career in Silicon Valley, I would reach out to companies such as Better Place and

Coulomb which are located in the Bay Area to investigate a partnership with the county.

Higher Density and Transit Oriented Housing: We need significantly more housing in San Mateo County so that young families and moderate income earners have the opportunity to own a home and live closer to their jobs. Higher density and transit oriented housing meets this need and reduces car travel and greenhouse gases. Without higher density and transit oriented housing, we will see more sprawl and long commutes that in turn contribute to pollution and global warming. As a county supervisor, I would actively support the county's involvement in the Grand Boulevard Initiative as it encourages transit oriented housing along the El Camino corridor.

Coastal Agriculture: In recent years, farms featuring specialty crops and organic produce have emerged as a vibrant new addition to the San Mateo County Coastside. This is an extremely positive development as it protects coastal lands, creates jobs, moves food production closer to county residents, and is good for the overall health of our community. The "As Fresh as it Gets" labeling program helps promote local agriculture as does the San Mateo County Food System Alliance. Moreover, the County recently partnered with the HEAL program (which offers a hands-on curriculum focused on health, the environment, and agriculture) to pilot a school farm project. As a county supervisor, I would like to build on this momentum and support a strong agricultural presence on the coast.

County Parks and Trails: San Mateo County's park system is woefully underfunded. Yet, county parks are one of the few county services that are available to all county residents. Many residents have no direct interaction with the county other than through the county parks. Our county parks are also important for tourism and for environmental education, particularly for our youth. For this reason, I would not support further cuts in the budget for county parks.

As a county supervisor, I would investigate whether the Parks Department should potentially hire a fulltime grant writer. Such a staff person might be able to secure Federal, State and philanthropic funding far above the cost of the position. I also would work with County Counsel to explore whether there might be a creative funding mechanism available to support the parks that would not require two thirds approval by County voters.

Our trail network is very important asset of our county. Trails should be constructed in a way that provide links with other trail systems and where possible also access public transportation. Currently the county has four long-distance trails going north-south, but no comparable east-west trails. With east-west trails, particularly on the bay side, some of the "trails" will lead people through industrial or suburban neighborhoods and along roads. This may open portions of the trail to recreational cyclists which would increase usage. However, such trails can be problematic if constructed close to creeks as is the

case with the trail along Alpine road which has fallen into disrepair. Any East-West trail crossing San Bruno Mountain would also have to take into consideration the potentially sensitive habitat areas for protected butterflies. As a county supervisor, I would look to grant funding and partnerships with nonprofit organizations (such as the Bay area Ridge Trail and the Peninsula Open Space Trust) to further support these efforts.

Bike Transportation: Bicycles should be a vital part of our transportation system. Bicycling reduces automobile congestion, has virtually no adverse environmental impact, requires significantly less public funding than other modes of transportation, and promotes public health. Yet San Mateo County has done little to promote biking and develop streets that enable safe travel for all users (Complete Streets). I served on the Citizen's Advisory Committee to the San Mateo County Transportation Authority from 2004 – 2007 where I was amazed to learn that the Pedestrian and Bicycles Program receives just a small fraction of the total Measure A sales tax revenue.

The recently released San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle pedestrian Plan provides numerous ideas for moving forward, but much more will need to be done if we want to get people out of cars and instead walk or bike. Specifically, the county needs to provide safe biking routes through the North Fair Oaks area, assign a county employee to seek down grant funding (Marin County has received \$25 million in Federal money since 2005), and coordinate bike planning activities across the county's 20 cities. We should also look at ways of improving the effectiveness of the City/County Association of Governments' Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee as it is responsible for distributing Transportation Development Act and Regional Bicycle Pedestrian Program funds.

Green Healthcare Practices: San Mateo County has taken numerous steps to "green" its correctional facilities. The county should do the same with the San Mateo County Medical Center. Typically, hospitals toss out everything from surgical gowns and towels to expensive ultrasonic cutting tools after a single use. In operating rooms, some items that are never even used are thrown away. With proper sterilization and testing, reuse of equipment is quite safe. In addition, hospitals are often big generators of toxic waste and users of chemicals, cleaners, disinfectants and other materials that can be harmful to patients and employees. Environmentally preferable purchasing and proper waste management can go a long way to mitigate these concerns.