

**Friends of Sunset Park
City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2012**

Response from Steve Duron

1) *In the 1984 Agreement between the City of Santa Monica and the FAA, the City agreed to operate the Santa Monica Airport until 2015. In addition, when the 1984 Agreement expires, all the leases at the airport (short and long term) will expire giving the city enormous parameters in changing the character of the airport property.*

A) When this Agreement expires, how do you envision the future of the 227-acre airport property? (100 words maximum)

I envision the creation of a great park which includes an amphitheater for classical music and live theater such as Shakespeare in the Park.

The city has two great assets: location and its people. Our location gives us sunlight, wind and waves. I would also want to use a portion of the airport site for research, development and execution of unobtrusive technology that can capture solar and wind energy. Use of this technology will make the city more self-sustainable.

Eventually, these innovations can transform the city into an exporter of energy, creating more jobs, revenue and opportunity.

B) Whom do you feel your future vision would benefit? (100 words maximum)

Use and enjoyment of the park will be a benefit to all. There will be green space and picnic areas, playgrounds, exercise equipment and seating to enjoy the view. The amphitheater will provide free or very affordable classical music, live theater and other cultural events for our residents and children.

Innovation and execution of solar, wind and wave energy can not only make the city more self-sustainable, it will also create jobs, revenue and opportunity for residents.

C) What kind of process do you feel should be involved in the decision? (100 words maximum)

What I have described is my vision for the airport site. However, the residents should be a critical part of the decision making process, especially those who will be directly impacted by the changes.

The city will need to conduct several planning/conception meetings with residents and consultants to develop the best plan for the space. The city must then analyze what it will take to execute the plan.

Since buses and bus stops along Walgrove would make traffic worse and would be considered a new car trip, buses are not the solution for this area.

Assuming the airport closes, I would open other access routes to gain entrance. Entrances could be at 28th Street, 31st Street, Centinela Ave. and along Airport Ave. An entrance point on Bundy Ave. could be an option.

4) 18 acres of land (the 1949 Quitclaim Parcel) encompassing the western portion of the runway are not covered by the 1948 Instrument of Transfer. When the 1984 Agreement expires in 2015, and the City can exercise proprietary powers over this property, how do you think the City should proceed regarding the status of this portion of land? (100 words maximum)

Five things must be done:

First, survey residents asking if the western portion of the runway should be destroyed;

Second, assuming the answer is yes, the city should begin planning for a legal battle;

Third, the city must plan what to do with that portion of the runway (until the City can close the entire airport, a safety berm on the western end makes the most sense);

Fourth, the city should notify the airport community about its decision; and,

Fifth, On July 1, 2015, or soon thereafter, the city begins removal of the western portion of the runway.

5) *The Airport currently operates at a deficit.*

A) Should the City of Santa Monica continue to subsidize airport operations or should the airport be self-sustaining? (YES OR NO)

Yes and yes.

B) If you support "subsidization," please explain why. (100 words maximum)

Safety must always be a priority, above all else.

Until the airport finally closes, the city has a responsibility to ensure that the airport operates as safely as possible. If this means it must subsidize operations, maintenance, etc., to keep residents as safe as possible, then that is what it must and should do.

C) If you support "self-sustaining," how would you change the fee/lease structure to make airport operations self-sustaining? (100 words maximum)

Even though I am in favor of subsidizing to ensure the airport stays as safe as possible, the city could change fee/lease structures until the airport is closed.

The city cannot generate revenue from the airport. However, it can raise the cost of property leases, landing fees, tie down fees and fuel taxes.

Many fees and leases at the airport are below market value. After July 1, 2015, new fee/lease agreements could be structured at market or premium prices that would allow the city to generate revenue to mitigate subsidization of airport operations until the airport is closed.

6) *The residents of Sunset Park, Ocean Park, Venice, Mar Vista, and West LA complain of the impacts of pattern flying over their neighborhoods.*

A) What is your position on the following statement?

I would oppose granting additional flight school Commercial Operations Permits (COP's), and I would oppose renewing flight school leases that expire.

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

5

B) If you rated the previous statement 3, 4, or 5, please explain your reasons for supporting the continuation of permits and leases for flight schools. (100 words)

7) Any additional commentary you wish to share on Santa Monica Airport issues is welcome.

It is so strange how becoming a parent makes one think more about safety. Many things I once thought a "thrill" or something to put on my "bucket list," are now risks I will no longer take.

My new family and I live directly under the flight path. This community has been lucky, so far. No plane or jet crashes into homes or playgrounds have occurred in my neighborhood.

I will take being lucky any day of the week, but I can never count on it. Too much is at stake. So, noise and pollution generated by airport operations concern me, but my primary concern is the safety of my children and our neighborhood. Until the airport closes, I know luck can run out any day.

LAND USE & CIRCULATION

8) Will you accept donations from developers, land use attorneys, or architects whose projects the City Council will be voting on? (YES OR NO)

NO

If yes, will you recuse yourself from voting on any of their projects that come before the City Council? (YES OR NO)

N/A

Background: The FOSP Board took a position in 2005 to oppose any large development project who traffic impacts on residential neighborhoods could not be mitigated.

Although the federally funded Bergamot Area Plan has not yet been adopted by the City Council, 2 million square feet of development is currently in process and will generate 10's of thousands of new daily car trips in the Pico and Sunset Park neighborhoods (Agensys, Bergamot Transit Village, Colorado Creative Studios, Paseo Nebraska, Roberts Business Center, and Village Trailer Park).

In Sunset Park, the proposed Pico/Centinela project would include 300 apartments and possibly generate 2,000 new daily car trips. It's a block from Trader Joe's, a few blocks from the SMC Main Campus (with more than 30,000 students enrolled), and on a section of Pico that already has more than 26,000 daily car trips.

On the NE corner of Pico and Centinela, in West LA, a 95-unit apartment building is under construction. At Pico and Sepulveda, more than 750,000 sq ft of commercial/residential development is planned.

9) If elected, how would you decide which development agreements in the Pico and Sunset Park neighborhoods to support? (100 words or less)

I will work to transform our “development first” minded council into a “community first” minded council.

Too many development projects are approved without enough consideration of residents' quality of life. Over-development causes more traffic, less parking, and eats away at our community.

As a father, I want what is best for my children. The decisions made by the City Council today do not support what is best for our community or my children.

I will make sure that any impact upon our community caused by new development will be offset by compelling benefits for us, or I won't support it.

In making your decisions, would you take into account the traffic impacts of West LA development projects on Santa Monica neighborhoods? (YES OR NO)

YES

VILLAGE TRAILER PARK

Background: The Village Trailer Park has been described as an irreplaceable neighborhood, with historic roots, that has enabled affordable home ownership for low-income residents of Santa Monica for more than 50 years. If the city allows it to be destroyed, it can never be replicated. In the November 2007 Memorandum of Understanding, it states that "Village Trailer Park agrees that the Development Agreement Application review shall require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which would review a reasonable range of alternatives including, but not limited to, a resident owned mobile home park subdivision, and alternative rezones and projects (including reduced scale projects that would avoid or substantially lessen potentially significant environmental impacts as required by CEQA)."

10) If elected, would you direct City staff and the Village Trailer Park developer to seriously consider alternative projects along the lines of the Ron Goldman proposal to the Planning Commission and City Council, a "reduced scale" project that would allow current residents to remain in place? (YES OR NO)

YES

If no, why not? (100 words or less)

11) EXPO LINE -- What policies would you support to enable the city to cope, logistically and financially, with the influx of daily visitors in 2016 when the Expo Light Rail Line goes into operation? (100 words maximum)

Safety is my first concern. I will endorse policies that give fire and police the resources they will need to meet the challenges both will face with the influx of daily visitors.

Some have cautioned that the Expo Line will divide the city. Coordination and communication between departments and divisions must be at optimal levels to ensure minimal response times and safety throughout the city.

Policies that facilitate revenue enhancement to mitigate impacts the influx of visitors will have on residents, such as trash collection, recycling and graffiti removal, will be my next priority.

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES & PUBLIC SAFETY

Background: Social service agencies such as Common Ground are considered "general office use" in the current Zoning Ordinance. In the last few years, Common Ground (then located at 2012 Lincoln) and 818 Cedar (located directly behind 2402 Lincoln and used to house OPCC clients) generated 186 Calls for Service to the Fire and Police Departments. This had a negative effect on residents in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The FOSP Board has recommended that in the updated Zoning Ordinance, social service agencies be required to get Conditional Use Permits (CUP's), as they do in other cities.

12) Would you support a CUP requirement for Social Service agencies? (YES OR NO)

No. As phrased, the question is too broad. I do not believe that every social service agency requires a CUP. I believe it is better to look at social service agencies on a case by case basis and determine the services they intend to provide.

13) CITY BUDGET -- The City of Santa Monica spent \$583 million in FY 2011-12. What strategies would you support in order to control city expenditures? (100 words maximum)

Budgets mean choices. After making mandatory expenditures required to keep the city operating, I would then prioritize based on resident needs.

Besides listening to public comment, I will use a common sense approach to analyze what is in the best interest for our community before I approve any expenditure.

Without the benefit of public comment at this time, my priorities would be:

- 1. Public Safety – to ensure the police and fire departments have what they need to protect our growing city;**
- 2. Infrastructure improvements – including traffic management;**
- 3. Education – it benefits our children and our community.**

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

Background: According to the California Community College Chancellor's Office Data Mart -- http://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Enrollment_Status.aspx -- Fall semester enrollment at Santa Monica College increased from 22,393 in 1994 to 35,229 in 2009, a 57% increase. About 85% of the SMC students live in the Los Angeles Community College District (9 campuses) or come from out-of-state or from other countries.

Despite the increase of online classes and the recent "Any Time Any Line" Big Blue Bus program, the traffic and parking impacts on Pico and Sunset Park neighborhood residents remain substantial.

14) What can the city do to reduce the increasing traffic and parking impacts of the SMC Main Campus on residents? (100 words maximum)

Having talked with SMC students, I have learned that many are reluctant to take the Big Blue Bus and other public transportation because buses are unreliable.

They cannot risk being late to class because the bus did not arrive at their stop on time.

Three things can be done:

- 1. Ensure the BBB has enough buses on routes that travel to the campus to improve reliability;**
- 2. Continue the “Any Time Any Line” program for SMC students; and,**
- 3. Market the city’s efforts to improve reliability so students believe they can make their classes on time.**