

Marjan Philhour

Meet the candidates, week 24: “Residents in the Outer Richmond complained they don’t receive enough resources. Do you agree? How do you plan to address these complaints?”

Ten years ago, I joined a group of parents and merchants on Balboa Street to discuss how we could bring more activity to the Outer Richmond. Through those meetings we brought the BalBOOa Fright Fest, our annual Halloween Festival, to the corridor which hosted over 3000 participants in its first year.

Since the formation of the Balboa Village Merchants Association, events such as Playland on Balboa, Holiday Art Fair, Art Walks and band, music, and comedy nights have been brought to the neighborhood. Grant funding has allowed merchants to invest in more lighting in the corridor, and several new businesses have opened. While the Balboa corridor and Ocean Beach are not immune to business closures, we have seen renewed activity over the years which brings more foot traffic and neighborhood engagement.

Merchants and neighbors have gotten creative with identifying funding sources since City funding is not always available — a combination of these sources combined with the commitment I have seen from the community has created a solid foundation for the Outer Richmond to evolve into a more active neighborhood. Input from residents is imperative, which is why it is critical for the supervisor to work to obtain feedback through outreach, community meetings and coffees, and merchant engagement. This change has been steady over many years, and we must ensure that the future of the neighborhood reflects what local merchants and neighbors want.