

**Office of the Mayor**  
City & County of San Francisco



**Gavin Newsom**  
Mayor

**Joe Arellano**  
Deputy Communications Director

By Fax (415-255-1478) and Mail

Michael T. Risher  
Staff Attorney  
American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California  
39 Drumm Street  
San Francisco, CA 94111

**Re: Mayor's Office Response to Public Records Act Request dated March 13, 2008.**

Dear Mr. Risher:

This letter responds to your Public Records Act request dated March 13, 2008, in which you seek documents relating to San Francisco's "plans, policies or procedures for allowing, regulating, or restricting assemblies – including but not limited to protests, demonstrations, and parades – on the date the Olympic torch is expected to pass through the City (April 9, 2008)."

We recognize that First Amendment concerns are at the heart of your request. In general, your request appears to be based on press reports that San Francisco intends to restrict protestors to particular zones or to keep the torch relay route secret. These reports are inaccurate. The public is welcome to line the sidewalks along the torch relay route and to attend the opening and closing ceremonies. The opening ceremony is tentatively set for McCovey Cove and the closing ceremony for Justin Herman Plaza. There will be open areas near the opening and closing ceremonies where groups may assemble if they wish. The torch relay route will be along major thoroughfares in the area of the waterfront. Under International Olympic Committee procedures, the torch relay route is selected by the Beijing Olympic Committee in consultation with the national Olympic Committee and the community that hosts the torch relay. The relay route is still being reviewed under these procedures and the City hopes to be able to finalize and release the route soon.

Representatives of the Mayor's Office, Police Department and Department of Recreation and Parks have been working with various groups to facilitate their activities on April 9, 2008, along the torch route and in the City's public spaces. The Mayor's Office has met with representatives of the Save Darfur Organization, which intends to line the route with its representatives. The Police Department is working with representatives of the Falun Gong, Burma America Democrat Alliance and the Committee of 100 Tibet to facilitate the use of an area along the waterfront by these groups on April 9. The Police Department is also facilitating marches by these groups on other dates leading up to April 9. The Department of Recreation and Parks has issued permits for various groups for events leading up to April 9 and continues to work with groups on venues for April 9.

We are working with the Police Department and the Department of Recreation and Parks to produce to you the documents pertaining to issuance of permits for April 9 and the days leading up to April 9. Those efforts are continuing. The Mayor's Office will produce a memorandum that summarizes information about the City's efforts to accommodate activities by various groups in connection with the torch relay.

Your request included but was not limited to eight categories of documents.

1. "Communications between the City and any other public or private entity or person – including the Olympic Committee – concerning demonstrations or protests." The Mayor's Office has no documents responsive to this request, except the memorandum referenced above.
2. "Areas where assemblies will or will not be permitted." As stated above, this request appears to be prompted by media reports that protesters would be limited to certain "free speech zones." These reports are inaccurate. The public is welcome to line the sidewalks along the torch relay route and to attend the opening and closing ceremonies. There will be open areas near the opening and closing ceremonies where groups may assemble if they wish. Finally, as stated above, the City is working with various groups to facilitate their activities on April 9 and beforehand.
3. "Criteria for granting permits for parades or other assemblies, other than those specified in the San Francisco Police Code." The Mayor's Office has no documents responsive to this request.
4. "Applications for permits to parade, protest, or demonstrate, including whether these applications have been granted or denied." The Mayor's Office does not handle applications for parades or public assemblies and therefore has no documents responsive to this request. The Department of Recreation and Parks or Police Department may have copies of any applications or permits. The contact for the Department of Recreation and Parks is Dennis Kern (831-2709). The memorandum referenced above contains information about applications for April 9 and other dates.
5. "Requests by any person or entity asking that CCSF restrict or prohibit protests, demonstrations, or other expression relating to the torch, the Olympics, or the Olympic host country." The Mayor's Office has no documents responsive to this request.
6. "The planned or expected route that the torch will take, or any areas reserved or set aside as possible torch routes." As stated above, the City has not finalized the torch route, but hopes to finalize it soon.
7. "Plans to restrict protesters to 'areas set up for First Amendment rights issues' or 'areas associated with the torch route,' as reported in the San Francisco Chronicle, S.F. Restricts China Protests for Torch Relay, March 12, 2008." As explained above, the City has no plans to restrict protesters to certain areas. Therefore, the Mayor's Office has no documents responsive to this request.
8. "Plans or guidelines to arrest or otherwise restrict the rights of individuals or groups of protesters that do not constitute a 'parade' as defined in the Police Code." The Mayor's Office has no documents responsive to this request. There are no plans to restrict the rights of individuals or groups who protest.

Sincerely,



Joe Arellano  
Deputy Communications Director  
Office of the Mayor