

2015 Urban Forest & Green Space City Council Candidate Questionnaire



Name: Chas Redmond

District: 1 - West Seattle/South Park

1. Larger trees provide significantly more ecological value to Seattle's green infrastructure, by reducing storm water runoff, cleaning pollutants from the air, and providing animal habitat. **Do you support giving greater protection to large trees like Heritage Trees and exceptional trees? What measures would you propose to provide this protection?** *Yes, I support protecting Seattle's trees including Heritage trees. For trees subject to removal because of development I would support zone changes and permit changes to require the trees be protected and/or removed and relocated. For private property trees, I support a city-wide education and outreach program coupled with SPU and City Light bills.*

2. Seattle's interim tree ordinance protects existing groves of trees (group of 8 or more trees 12" in diameter). The Department of Planning and Development has proposed removing this protection. **Do you support continuing the policy of protecting tree groves to conserve habitat and canopy cover?** *No. I support maintaining this statute because our current forest canopy is shrinking and the removal of any tree, let alone a grove, has a negative and deleterious effect. I would encourage developers to accommodate small tree groves in their projects or support a removal and relocation policy if the grove cannot be protected based on a conflict with a development plan.*

3. Deferred maintenance results in the costly loss and replacement of trees and landscapes. **Do you support funding for the maintenance of public greenspaces,** including increased funding for the Green Seattle Partnership so that the goals to restore our parklands, greenbelts, and critical areas can be met? *Yes, I support additional funding for public greenspaces, particularly in areas where there has been invasive removal work such as the Duwamish Greenspace. Maintaining our urban forests and greenspaces is critical to maintaining a healthy ecosystem and our funding should support proper maintenance of these valuable greenspace areas.*

4. Seattle currently has a 23 percent tree canopy cover. Seattle's Urban Forest Stewardship Plan targets a 30 percent canopy cover goal by 2037. **To help reach this goal, do you support strengthening tree protection by requiring permits to remove trees on private property?** *No, I support reaching a higher tree-cover goal through increased planting and maintenance of trees in public spaces and I support an aggressive and continuous education and outreach program initiated through Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle City Light using customer bills and insert pamphlets as one*

of the outreach means. Private property owners need to be informed of the advantages and reasons for maintaining tree cover but often have issues with trees or roots which are causing some degree of negative impact. I would support an incentive program for private property owners to increase the tree cover on their property and would also support a program whereby an owner with a troublesome tree could receive arborist assistance from the City and advice on removal and replacement.

5. Seattle is one of the very few urban environments that still boasts an extensive, diverse, and impactful urban fruit tree canopy. Over the last six years, over 80,000 pounds of fruit has been gleaned from public and private property, and donated into the emergency food system. **Do you support funding to continue the maintenance of fruit trees on public land and gleaning of fruit from private property for food banks?** *Yes, I support City Fruit and other programs of this nature and also support the growth and maintenance of fruit trees on Seattle's public space areas. I would support increasing funding for City Fruit and other similar groups to increase the harvest of fruit on private fruit trees as the limiting factor now is physical support for the gleaning itself.*

6. Seattle is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. Over the last two years, there has been a 25 percent increase in apartment building, which often involves the destruction of single-family homes that provide open space and trees. In 2014, Seattle reports that it has 5,546 acres of designed parkland plus natural areas. The Trust for Public Lands 2014 report places Seattle's ranking among the 200 largest U.S. cities as 188th -- that's 12th from the bottom. **What do you propose to stop this loss of open space, and to increase open space in the city?** *The City can purchase property as it becomes available. This was done through the Parks Opportunity Fund Levy and could be continued with no administrative changes other than providing additional funding. Also, the development of large-scale properties could also include some requirements for an area to be made available for public open space access. Funding and purchase of property for the purpose of adding to the city's open space inventory are the solutions and I would support and advocate for these.*

7. The Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan calls for the addition of 1400 acres of open space by 2035 to accommodate population growth. **What is your opinion of this goal? What ideas do you have to achieve this goal? Do you support this goal and saving current surplus city properties to help meet this goal?** *I definitely support saving current surplus city properties as one means of meeting this goal, this is true for City Light, SPU, and I would go further and advocate that excess Seattle Public School property (should any exist) also be included in properties to be considered for saving. I support an aggressive goal of adding new open space as can be done. Setting a specific number goal of new acres seems a bit arbitrary considering the lack of funding and the possibility that acreage may not be available where it's most needed. I support adding open space through purchase of excess properties, purchased property being sold and even would consider joint ownership of open space with private developers.*

8. Currently, the Department of Planning and Development is responsible for drafting the urban forest ordinance. **Do you support the Mayor and City Council appointing a**

citizens committee to prepare a draft urban forest ordinance instead, such as the Parks Legacy Committee and Parks and Green Spaces Citizens' Advisory Committee? *Given the track record and the complete lack of confidence most have in DPD, I would support a completely different group to draft legislation. The Parks Legacy Committee and the Parks and Green Spaces Citizen's Advisory Committee are both good alternatives and might even be paired to create a new urban forest ordinance. The role should definitely not be given to the Department of Planning and Development, though.*

9. The Department of Planning and Development is proposing to reduce the current long-term tree canopy aspirational goal in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan from 40 percent to 30 percent. **Do you support maintaining the 40 percent long-term goal in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan?** *Yes, I support maintaining the 40-percent long-term goal for tree canopy here in Seattle. This is another reason for DPD to not be involved in any planning for urban open or green spaces, their principal goal is to manage the built environment and therefore they are not the correct group to consider tree canopy or urban forest goals.*

10. Trees and open space offer a number of community benefits: increased housing values; decreased rates of crime; offering protection against climate change; filtering stormwater run-off; and quality of life for communities. **Share with us your favorite tree or memory of an open space and why you support continued investment in these community resources.** *My yard has always been a place of trees and shrubs providing cover and sustenance for birds and squirrels and other small critters. The oxygen and sunshade trees provide has always been one of the best features of my yard and listening to the leaves rustle in the wind is an added treat when the wind picks up. Continued support for an urban forest and a robust tree canopy gives us the added cooling and shade sorely needed in an urban area and provides the environment necessary for wildlife to thrive. I cannot imagine living in an area without a robust tree canopy - it's part of what I consider essential environment.*

Please add any clarifications or comments you would like to convey to us regarding the questions above, or on protecting trees and the urban forest and open space in general.

Are you willing to meet briefly with representatives from TreePAC, at a time and place that is mutually convenient?

Thank you for your participation!
Please return questionnaire by July 15 to info@treepac.org.