

2015 Urban Forest & Green Space City Council Candidate Questionnaire



Name: Jean Godden

District: District 4

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?**

I do support giving greater protection to large trees like Heritage Trees and exceptional trees. I have supported and will continue to support tree protection requiring permits for cutting down more than three trees per year on private property. We need to keep a tree canopy in our city because trees do serve an important purpose, helping with drainage and oxygenation. In addition to public education outreach approach that engages with Seattle's diverse stakeholder groups, we should encourage the Department of Planning and Development DPD to resume work on this critical element of a comprehensive urban forestry strategy for Seattle.

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?**

Yes, absolutely.

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 more funding for the maintenance of public greenspaces. As chair of Parks Department, I have done all I can to fully fund our public parks and greenspaces and have voted to increase funding for the Green Seattle Partnership.

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?

I have supported and will continue to support tree protection requiring permits for cutting down more than three trees per year on private property.

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, this is an excellent means of adding to our food banks to provide for those who cannot afford fresh fruit.

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?**

I value open space and I believe in the public good of providing places for recreation. For example, the city will obtain the derelict Sisely properties along 65th, I will continue to advocate for using that land to provide a public park in addition to affordable housing. We need someone on the council who is willing to speak up on behalf of amenities such as open space along with addition to density and increased housing stock. We have to find a balance between density and maintaining neighborhood character. Parks are essential in creating neighborhood appeal.

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?**

Yes, I support the goal of 1400 acres of open space by 2035. Again, we have to balance growth with public amenities and housing. Seattle would not be the city it is without space for recreation. I believe we should use surplus city properties to help meet this goal.

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?

Yes, I support a citizen committee to prepare a draft urban forest ordinance. I think this would help increase public involvement and spread the word about maintaining our tree canopy.

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.

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.**

I am lucky to live right next to the Burke Gilman Trail and Magnuson Park. Magnuson Park is a hub of community activity. I supported the 2004 redevelopment plan for a multi-purpose activity and sports meadow, seven play fields and a wetlands/wildlife habitat at the park. During my tenure, I approved a resolution creating a citizen's committee to advise the Parks Department and report to the council's Parks Neighborhoods and Education Committee on progress of the Magnuson Park project.

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.

I am a huge supporter of protecting trees and the urban forest. I see many community benefits from keeping up our green spaces – recreation, peace of mind, public gathering places. I will champion the TreePAC's cause and I would be grateful for your support.

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

Yes!

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