

# 2015 Urban Forest & Green Space City Council Candidate Questionnaire



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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. In too many instances, trees like these are neglected by property owners or removed to address minor maintenance concerns. I would support continued or enhanced enforcement of prohibitions or permissions to remove or alter these trees.

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.

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 also support the planting of native vegetation, undergrowth, removal of invasive species (e.g. Morning Glory, English Ivy, Himalayan Blackberry, etc.) and other environmental remediation efforts to support our tree canopy for maximum survival.

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?**

Yes, and I also support an expedited process for emergency removal where there are demonstrated safety issues (post storm, immediate risk, etc.), provided that they are immediately replaced. I will explore ways in which to close loopholes that would potentially be abused.

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. Also, new trees for food consumption should not be sited in places where they will not be contaminated (in polluted soil areas, near major polluting emission sources, etc.)

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?**

We need to ensure that up-zoning and other planning decisions take this issue into consideration, especially with the recent emphasis to convert SF zones to multi-family. Green spaces are one of many reasons why there needs to be restraint on blanket up-zoning decisions. Also, there is pressure to convert park wild areas to recreation intensive spaces (bike tracks, zip lines, etc.) for private interests and we need to ensure that unmaintained spaces that potentially can add to our healthy urban forest are restored or preserved for public enjoyment and benefit.

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?**

Our city is already zoned adequately to accommodate urban growth projections and we have already surpassed projections for accommodating this in terms of time and share of growth in King County. There must be a corresponding growth of open space before significant pressures to repurpose these spaces for other uses emerge. Places like the Duwamish Greenbelt, Beacon Hill, and spaces near White Center/Westwood Village are examples of places to set aside for added green space. Larger green spaces need to be added in future planning for urban villages.

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?**

Only if the committee is comprised of qualified stakeholders and knowledgeable members of communities that will benefit. Since DPD is being phased out, and because there is so much work for the successor departments to accomplish, this seems like the most pragmatic solution.

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. Reducing the goal effectively means that we are not preserving the canopy. This would be exacerbated in areas of the city with lower land costs, such as Rainier Valley, Highland Park, South Park, and other south end areas due to developer impacts. I support adding trees as a component for all new industrial developments in the IG1 and IG2 zones, especially as buffers to adjacent uses.

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 have a 120+ year old (non native) Sequoia at my home and it is one of the reasons I chose to live here. I grew up in the Puget Sound and have lived in Seattle since 1989 and one of the most striking changes in our region over the years has been deforestation for development. In urban areas, trees do not replicate themselves and it is up to use to ensure the depletion of our urban forest due to disease, damage, and removal is replaced at a faster rate.

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 have been an advocate for increasing the tree canopy in my own neighborhood. I served on the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund with my neighbors and the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition in Georgetown and South Park, and we chose to fund tree plantings throughout the watershed over other projects that did not meet our environmental needs. I have worked with neighbors to improve a street end at the south end of 8th Ave S, in Georgetown, and working with the city on a parcel that was not considered part of the streetends program was particularly challenging.

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 [treepac@comcast.net](mailto:treepac@comcast.net).***