

## 2015 Urban Forest & Green Space

### City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Lorena González

District: Position 9 - City Wide

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 support giving greater protection to Heritage Trees, large trees and urban canopy. As our city experiences rapid growth, it becomes more important than ever to make sure we have the green cover to help keep our city clean as well as maintaining historic trees that are an essential part of our city's history. I would work with groups like Tree PAC to craft and propose a resolution to require city review prior to the removal of trees over a certain size or age. I would also be interested in exploring developer requirements for creating green space or trees if developments impede previous tree cover or green space. From a Race and Social Justice perspective, I am also interested in creating more green cover in areas that need it most, like Georgetown and South Park, where residents have disproportionately high rates of severe asthma, reduced lifespans and lower birth-weights.

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?**

**I do. I would also be interested in exploring the possibility mentioned above, requiring developers to replace things like groves if development demands they be moved.**

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?**

I do support funding for public green spaces. As I mentioned above, I am particularly interested in ensuring that low-income and industrial neighborhoods are included, as this is where the need is greatest.

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 do, so long as we make sure that the permitting process is streamlined and efficient.**

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 do.

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?**

This is a concern and a challenge. We are rapidly growing and as part of that we need to find a way to provide affordable housing for local residents. Part of this is expanding the number of multifamily homes. However I believe there can be smart growth that not only helps protect Seattle's unique neighborhoods but that also helps preserve and increase parks, open space and ultimately our urban canopy. The Highline park in New York City is a great example of bringing green space into an urban area. The "mini" parks sprouting up around our city is another. I believe in supporting many different methods of reintroducing canopy and green space to our city.

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?**

**As I stated above, I think green space and, more importantly, equitable access to green space for a Seattle residents, is critically important. I am very interested in bringing many stakeholders to the table - parks, developers, green cover advocates, the Sierra Club and environmental experts - to discuss a multi-faceted plan to implement this space equitably around the city in a variety of multi-use ways.**

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?**

I believe a hallmark of my leadership style is bringing voices to the table so that when a solution is reached, that solution represents the interests of all who will be affected. As such, I do believe a citizen committee should supplement the Department of Planning and Development in this area, though not replace it.

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?**

I do. Again, as I've said, I'd like to see urban canopy applied to our city in a diverse and equitable way. I think this will require cooperation and engagement from our city's residents and government representatives.

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.**

Unfortunately, I do not think I can name a favorite tree, however I am very fond of our local parks throughout the city – especially in West Seattle where I live. I am the proud owner of a pug who loves to get outside and I often find myself enjoying numerous parks throughout West Seattle. Parks are good for our health, our environment and need to be a priority of the city.

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?

Yes I am.

***Thank you for your participation!  
Please return questionnaire by July 15 to [info@treepac.org](mailto:info@treepac.org).***