

2015 Urban Forest & Green Space City Council Candidate Questionnaire



Name: Tammy Morales

District: 2

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 providing greater protection to Heritage trees. As our city grows, it will be important to balance the anticipated density, with maintaining the tree canopy and open space as community assets. I would consult with the Urban Forest Commission and City arborists about how to evaluate whether a tree qualifies for greater protection and how to best protect it.

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'm excited that the Parks Legacy Committee fought for greater funding for preserving the urban tree canopy.

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 support equitable funding for maintenance in public spaces, including restoration efforts to remove invasive species and plans to plant more native trees and other native plants.

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 absolutely support strengthening tree protection by requiring permits to remove trees on private property and establishing policies for how to replace trees that are removed. I would work with the Urban Forest Commission, the Parks Board of Commissioners and City arborists along with DPD to establish consistent, equitable policies.

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?**

Organizations like City Fruit, the Beacon Food Forest and new Georgetown Food Forest efforts, and others are working hard to grow, preserve and maintain our urban fruit trees. I support these efforts and I've been involved with many food banks in my work to increase access to safe, healthy food for everyone and I recognize the value of fresh, local produce. I also appreciate the diversion of thousands of pounds of fruit from our waste stream.

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 follow best practices as we create new development. I support acquiring new land to create open spaces and staying within our stated goals for "breathing space" as defined by the 2011 Open Space Gap Analysis Update. We must create new housing and we must build more densely around transit centers to support our climate change goals.

I hope to focus on the equitable distribution of access to open public spaces instead of focus on the number of open areas we have citywide. District 2 has many parks and greenspaces, as well as lovely shaded boulevards and private streets. We also have entire neighborhoods without any mature trees. I support the efforts SDOT has made to get street trees onto public and private property and I appreciate the effort to make it easy and affordable for property owners by offering City maintenance of those trees.

I also support creative efforts to energize alternative “open spaces” such as open/green rooftops and courtyards and to include public spaces such as beaches and streetends as we evaluate “breathing space”.

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?**

We should work to fulfill the open space goals of the Comprehensive Plan. We must balance density with open space to maintain our quality of life and protect our natural resources. I support adding open space where needed, using current city surplus properties when appropriate and purchasing new properties when needed.

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 would engage the Urban Forestry Commission and encourage them to work with the Parks Legacy Committee, Parks Board of Commissioners, Green Spaces Citizens' Advisory Committee as well as Department of Planning and Development to advise Council and the Mayor's Office on best practices for our urban forest. Let's get everyone working together and create a plan that will work for generations.

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?**

It's important that we maintain the long term goal at 40%. Again, I am focused on equity—addressing the Open Space Gap Analysis to create open space where it is most needed. We need to create and maintain public open space in every community. It isn't enough to reach a 40% goal if 80% of the open space is concentrated in very few neighborhoods.

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 kids love to play in the neighborhood parks and greenspaces. This summer we hiked through Seward Park to look for nests, helped clean out invasive plants at the Cheasty Mountain View space, and picked fruit from the streetscapes as we made our way around town. I understand the need to invest in these community resources so that we can enjoy them for generations to come.

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 treepac@comcast.net.