

2015 Urban Forest & Green Space City Council Candidate Questionnaire



Name: Bruce Harrell

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?**

Yes, I support giving greater protection to large trees like Heritage Trees and exceptional trees. Current code states a party cannot remove any exceptional trees on developed property. I will continue to uphold this measure to protect our trees. I believe we need more data and an inventory of all trees 6 inches in diameter to help track trees and assess our progress in reaching the 30% canopy goal. I would work with DPD and other stakeholders to examine a requirement of an Urban Forest Impact Assessment as part of the construction permit process. The assessment should be simple and straightforward for builders. I believe that consistency and effective enforcement creates compliance and compliance with our tree code is critical.

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, I support continuing the policy of protecting tree groves to conserve habitat and canopy cover. The environmental and health benefits of tree groves are too significant and should not be underestimated.

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 funding for the maintenance of public greenspaces. I have demonstrated this commitment. We added \$500,000 each year in the budget starting in 2013 for the Green Seattle Partnership. For nearly 8 years I have been serving on the Council my support and commitment to public greenspaces has been consistent and will remain so.

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, I support strengthening tree protection by requiring permits to remove trees on private property. I would also support increasing the 2-to-1 replacement requirement.

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 have demonstrated my support to fund maintenance for fruit trees on public land. In 2013, I supported the addition of \$28,000 to support fruit gleaning for food banks.

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?**

Seattle-owned Park and open spaces account for 11 percent of the total city land area. The Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan update provides 12 policy recommendations to maintain access to open space. I support and will ensure we implement all these policy recommendations. The city has two goals for parkland space per capita. We have a baseline goal of 1 acre of parkland per 1,000 residents and an ambitious goal of 1 acre per 100 residents set in 1993. Rather than focus on how many open acres we have, I believe we need to move to an equity distribution model of spreading open park space throughout all of Seattle. Seattle has 32 urban villages and 11 do not meet the standard for open space. The city's growth management strategy is to grow in urban centers and villages, locations close to transit and other services. About 77% of the housing capacity and 78% of jobs are within an urban center, hub urban village or residential urban village. As we build taller, increase density and grow in our urban cores, I believe we need to redefine our definition of open public park space. I would like to explore incentivizing more open spaces on rooftops. I support the purchase and retention of surplus city property for use as publicly accessible open space. Council passed SLI 47-2-A-2 last year to help develop new guidelines and recommendations to create more open space and the report is due to Council on July 31, 2015.

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 support this goal set by the 2035 Comprehensive plan and support transferring surplus city properties to parks. Since 2008, Parks has acquired 23 acres and 49 acres from other city departments. I support the recent decision this week by Mayor Murray to acquire property in Greenwood for a new open park.

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 would support appointing a citizens advisory committee to prepare a draft urban forest ordinance. I have a proven track record of appointing a citizens committee to help the city draft and examine policy. As chair of City Light during my first term, I completely restructured City Light's oversight committee. I created a new Review Panel and gave them the authority to independently examine City Light's financial policies and rate structure. The Utility is at an unprecedented level because of this governance model.

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 in the 2035 Comprehensive plan. I was concerned with the explanation of going from 40 to 30 percent in the Draft EIS. I am committed to the goal of reaching 30% canopy cover by 2037, but this should not be our ceiling—40% must remain our long-term goal.

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 grew up in Seattle in the early 1960's in a modest home in Seattle's central district. On the corner of our small lot, there stood a small peach tree that produced peaches every year. My parents put me in charge of the tree at the age of 8. That meant, watering it during hot months, keeping debris away from it during cold months or the fall; making sure its soil was fertile. Every year it produced and I felt as though I were bringing life

into this world; I was very proud. Now nearly 50 years later, I still go by that small lot to see if the tree is there. A fence hides the area, but I believe my small peach tree is still yielding fruit; at least that's my hope.

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?

Absolutely, please email me at contact@electbruceharrell.com to schedule a meeting.

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