

# 2015 Urban Forest & Green Space City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Debora Juarez

District: 5



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 protections to these valuable community resources. I propose changing permitting processes to protect these trees whenever possible. In the event they have to be removed, I support charging impact fees to fund the replacement of these trees with at least three new 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. In addition to being relaxing places for humans to recreate, groves of trees are important habitat for the wildlife that lives in Seattle.

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 see the Seattle Parks District as an important mechanism for funding the expansion of these green spaces.

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. It is important to respect the rights of property owners, but in this area, like many other land-use changes, city government has the duty to review proposed changes via the permitting process.

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. Fresh produce is a critical part of a healthy diet, and Seattle should continue to take a leading role in providing our neediest residents with local produce whenever possible.

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 am a huge proponent of increasing public access. One prominent example of this process in my district is the example of the 130<sup>th</sup> Street Beach, which is being removed from public use. I support the use of city government to fully activate unused areas of the city, such as street ends and old Seattle City Light substations.

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?**

This is a wonderful goal. Seattle should leverage the funds made available through the Seattle Parks District to purchase land to expand the parks system, and as stated above, we should also look into creative pathways to activate currently vacant/unusable city owned properties.

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?**

Citizen groups like the Parks Legacy Committee have done yeoman's work on behalf of our city, and their actions should be fully recognized and commended. I believe it would be wonderful to have increased citizen input on a draft urban forest ordinance.

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?**

Lofty goals are important to maintaining long-term vision in any organization. I do support maintaining this 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.**

My favorite memories of open spaces revolve around my two lovely daughters, both of whom were raised in Seattle and had the opportunity to enjoy our beautiful green spaces. I look forward to getting the chance to preserve future opportunities like this for the children of the future.

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

Yes, of course!

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