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Q1

Please share your information below:

Name	Katie Wilson
Position	Mayor

Q2

The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections oversees trees on private property and during development. They get most of their funding for development but almost none for overseeing tree protection. To protect and grow our trees and urban forest, we need a city department that does not have conflicting priorities. San Francisco has a Dept. of Environment, with responsibilities for a diversity of issues, including the urban forest and climate. In Seattle, six city departments and the Office of Sustainability and Environment currently oversee tree issues. Would you support moving tree and urban forestry protection into a new independent Department of Environment and Climate that includes an urban forestry division?

Yes,

Comments::

I would be open to the idea of restructuring departments. I would also be open to reorganizing how our current Office of Sustainability and Environment to better oversee tree protection standards.

Q3

Next year, Seattle will be updating its 5-year tree canopy assessment. Previous studies have only reported on Seattle's canopy area. The environmental and climate benefits of Seattle's urban forest are, however, most dependent on the volume of Seattle's canopy, which cleans the air of pollution, reduces stormwater runoff, provides shade and habitat for birds and other wildlife, reduces urban heat island impacts, and supports the mental and physical health of Seattle's human population. While funding for canopy volume was approved in the city budget in 2021, it was never implemented. In next year's canopy assessment, would you support the city funding and including a canopy volume assessment?

Yes,

Comments::

I would be supportive of funding and including a canopy volume assessment. Having data of our canopy is the first step in understanding how we can improve.

Q4

Ivy is killing many trees in Seattle. Washington State recently banned the sale of invasive English and Atlantic Ivy. Would you support increased efforts to remove ivy from trees, including on city and public property, on private property, and when property owners and developers apply for permits to build on their property?

Yes,

Comments::

I would be supportive of increased efforts to remove ivy from trees. I would be open to updating our land use code to ensure ivy is prohibited when property owners apply for permits. I would also be open to exploring ways to incentivize property owners to remove invasive ivy off their property, maybe through a tax credit or other means. I would be supportive of assessing publicly owned land for invasive ivy (and other invasive species) and funding removal.

Q5

Currently the cities of San Francisco, CA; Philadelphia, PA; Bellevue, WA; and Vancouver, BC all have assumed responsibility for taking care of street trees which are in the right of way. Seattle currently is responsible for taking care of street trees they planted. Would you support Seattle taking over care of all street trees to help ensure public safety and reduce the burden of residents, particularly in low-tree or low-income areas?

Yes,

Comments::

I would be open to updating the SMC to put the onus of responsibility of our public right-of-ways on the city rather than the property owners. Many property owners are not aware that this is their responsibility to begin with and it creates an undue burden on low-income residents.

Q6

Many Seattle lots lack trees or have room for more. Portland's Treebate program offers a one-time water, sewer, and stormwater bill credit for planting a tree. Would you support a similar program in Seattle?

Yes,

Comments::

I would support exploring programs to incentivize residents to plant more trees on their property, including, but not limited to, a similar model to Portland's Treebate Program.

Q7

Many cities in Washington State require developers to pay impact fees for meeting increased services as density increases. Accessible parks in neighborhoods are important for urban areas. Shoreline, WA, recently passed a Parks Impact Fee. A recent study by SDOT has found that tree canopy goals cannot be met even by planting trees in every available street-side spot. Would you support a parks impact fee to create more accessible parks in neighborhoods, including pocket parks and recreation areas, as neighborhood density increases? If not, indicate other sources of funding that you would support to meet the need for neighborhood green areas.

No,

Comments::

I would not support an impact fee for developers because development costs are already too high and the cost would be passed onto the consumers, making rent higher. Development in Seattle is much higher than in other jurisdictions. Disproportionality punishes multi-family developments over single-family developments. They would discourage affordable housing developments and encourage unaffordable luxury developments. They would negatively impact small businesses because the cost of the impact fee would be passed on to the tenant and would add an additional cost barrier to an already expensive city to run a small business in. I would be open to exploring a progressive tax that does not indirectly put an undue burden on renters in order to fund canopy goals.

Q8

In 2020, Seattle approved funding in the budget for conducting a Natural Capital Assessment of the city's urban forest, but never followed through on conducting the study when COVID struck. The study was to quantify the value of Seattle's urban forest and other natural assets to the city. Would you support Seattle funding and conducting a Natural Capital Assessment Study?

Yes,

Comments::

I would support Seattle funding and conducting a Natural Capital Assessment Study. As mentioned previously, more data is important to better understanding our canopy needs.

Q9

Bellevue, Kirkland, and Edmonds all define a tree grove to be protected as 3 or more significant trees 6" DSH with overlapping or touching crowns. Seattle currently defines a grove as 8 or more trees, 12"DSH as a grove?Would you support reducing the number of trees required to constitute a grove in Seattle, thereby protecting more trees and habitat for birds and wildlife?

Yes,

Comments::

I would be supportive of reducing the number of trees required to constitute a grove in Seattle and, in addition, looking at other ways we could update our tree legislation to protect more trees (and the right kind of trees) while allowing for housing density.

Q10

Advocates for protecting and growing Seattle's trees and urban forests believe that with improved and updated oversight and clearer regulations, we can both increase the needed housing and save more existing trees. Can you think of additional ways Seattle can succeed at saving more of its healthy and large trees while building new housing.

I would be open to changing the diameter at standard height (DSH) that comprises the various tiers from being solely based on the diameter of the tree to basing it on the species and the diameter of the tree. As currently written, it assumes one size fits all.

Under the current ordinance, heritage trees are not allowed to be cut down for development, but the process for getting trees designated under the Tier 1 category is opaque. I would be open to having a more clear and transparent process on how the public can designate trees as heritage trees.

I would be open to exploring better ways to enforce tree protection. Under current legislation, we can only react to illegal tree cutting which does not help when the tree is already cut down. Once it's gone, it's gone. I would be open to working with the community to find ways to better protect trees before they are cut down.

I would be open to assess ways in which we can incentivize developers to retain trees by giving them more flexibility in development standards. For example, if they are able to retain a tree(s) on the lot then we could allow more flexibility in FAR and height limits.