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Q1

Please share your information below:

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Position	Seattle City Council Position 9 At-Large

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 support efforts to make city government more efficient and effective. If creating a new Department of Environment and Climate would streamline responsibilities, reduce overlap, and strengthen tree and urban forest protection, I'm open to that idea. Note that so much of what impacts our climate and environment lives in Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities – i.e. Combined Sewer Overflow infrastructure, renewable energy investments, etc. – and I wouldn't want good decision-making on those things falling through the gap with all the focus on a separate department. Just a word of caution, not dissent.

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::

Yes, I support funding and including a canopy volume assessment in next year's study because understanding the volume of Seattle's urban forest is essential to understanding its true environmental and health benefits. I have serious concerns about the city's pattern of underspending on approved priorities, including the previously funded canopy volume assessment. When Council allocates money for studies like this, the Executive branch must follow through. I intend to review how much was budgeted in 2021, why the study was not completed, and where those funds were redirected, to ensure accountability and that future appropriations are actually implemented.

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::

Ivy removal is one of my top priorities. I added funding to the 2022 Metropolitan Parks District Spending Plan renewal for ivy removal in parks. I've been advocating for using goats to mitigate ivy and blackberry on embankments and other open spaces. I don't really care how it's done, I just want ivy gone – by any means necessary!

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::

Yes, I support Seattle taking over the care and responsibility for all street trees. This would ensure consistent maintenance and better tracking of the health of our urban canopy. It would also help reduce inequities by supporting neighborhoods with fewer resources and lower tree canopy coverage.

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 creating a program like Portland's Treebate in Seattle to spark interest in planting trees but a one-time credit is not enough to incentivize the consistent and sustained care that newly-planted trees require. I'd be interested in learning how the City of Portland works with residents to ensure long-term stewardship of trees.

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.

Yes,

Comments::

THAT IS A QUALIFIED "YES" Cities that have implemented impact fees do not also have a square footage fee for growth like Seattle's MHA requirement so I would support impact fees or MHA but not both. I am concerned about pricing low-rise construction out of Seattle because that's the least expensive and least impactful housing development (particularly LR 1 and LR2). I would need to see more details about the proposed rate to ensure it does not make housing development more difficult during the current housing crisis. Seattle should continue pursuing both housing growth and progress toward its tree canopy and park access 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::

Yes, I support Seattle funding and conducting a Natural Capital Assessment Study on Seattle's forests. Understanding the environmental, health, and economic value of our urban forest is essential for good decision-making. The City Council already approved funding for this work, and the city needs to spend the money that was approved in the budget to complete the study and deliver the results. This will help the city council make more informed decisions about tree canopy going forward, it's a win-win.

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::

Yes, I am open to any approach that helps protect more trees and the habitats they support. At the same time, it's important that the rules are clear and practical so that the city staff responsible for enforcement can do their jobs effectively and efficiently.

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.

Enforce the rules on the books right now! From what I hear, enforcement is lax and inconsistent, fueling distrust among tree advocates and the call for a complete redo of the tree ordinance. Worse, poor enforcement drives willful violations of the law and the destruction of our urban forest.

Beyond that, Seattle can save more healthy, mature trees while building new housing by improving early planning and design standards so trees are considered from the start of a project. The city should also expand incentives for developers to preserve existing trees, such as allowing flexible site design or modest height or density bonuses when significant trees are retained.

Finally, the city should convene or sponsor opportunities for builders and tree advocates to come together – outside any legislative process when the stakes are so high – and talk about their perceptions of how the current tree ordinance, building code, and land use regulations limit and/or enhance the supply of new housing and the growth of our canopy. In other words, assume best intentions and put the brains together for what everyone says is the common goal: more trees AND more housing.

Strengthening tree replacement requirements and investing in proactive inspections and enforcement would also help ensure accountability. Collaboration between housing and environmental departments can make sure we meet both our housing and urban forest goals.
