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Q1

Please share your information below:

Name

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Position

Seattle City Council District 5

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:

Our urban forest is essential infrastructure that improves public health, climate resilience, and neighborhood livability. Any restructuring should deliver measurable results, reduce fragmentation across departments, and balance tree preservation with the housing and infrastructure our city needs.

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::

As a researcher, I know that measuring both canopy area and canopy volume will provide a more complete picture of the environmental and climate benefits our urban forest provides and help the City make data-driven decisions about tree preservation, planting, and equitable canopy investments. Accurate data leads to better accountability and better outcomes.

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

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::

A consistent citywide approach would improve public safety, promote equity, protect our urban forest, and help ensure trees receive the care they need regardless of a resident's ability to maintain them.

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::

Yes. I support exploring a Treebate-style incentive program to encourage property owners to plant and maintain trees, especially in neighborhoods with low tree canopy and higher urban heat. I spoke with a few neighbors during canvassing and they are also supportive of such program to keep their trees. Incentives can complement education and community partnerships to expand our urban forest, improve climate resilience, and increase equitable access to the many benefits trees provide. This is an upstream investment for the future.

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::

As someone who grew up in "concrete jungle" and appreciating the local parks, I support exploring a parks impact fee as one tool to help ensure neighborhood growth is matched with investments in accessible parks, pocket parks, and green space. Any fee should be predictable, transparent, and calibrated so it supports livability without unnecessarily increasing housing costs. I also support leveraging grants, public-private partnerships, and strategic acquisition of public land to expand green space in areas with limited park access and tree canopy.

Q8

Seattle gets 58% of its tree canopy from trees on private property, according to the 2021 canopy study. The mature native trees being removed on most infill projects frequently grow on the very edge of the lot, yet clearcuts are still the first step of almost every development project. Would you support legislation requiring developers to consider alternative site plans to protect existing trees and still build the same amount of housing?

Yes,

Comments:

I support requiring developers to consider reasonable alternative site plans that preserve mature trees while still allowing the same housing capacity whenever feasible. We can increase housing supply and protect our urban forest by encouraging thoughtful site design, predictable standards, and early planning rather than treating these goals as mutually exclusive. We need tree advocates since they're the "Giving Tree" without a voice.

Q9

Putting 4 to 6 separate housing units, often with separate driveways, on a lot in the neighborhood residential zone leaves no space on most lots for saving or planting trees. Building up with stacked flats or building with common walls for housing units could allow more space to retain and plant trees, yet the preference of developers seems to be to build 4 separate townhouses. Existing trees are providing many benefits now in neighborhoods. Would you support stronger incentives to build stacked flats or housing sharing common walls, like Oregon does to retain more existing trees?

Yes,

Comments:

I spent many years in Los Angeles in multiplex housing and I support incentives that encourage housing designs, such as stacked flats and shared-wall buildings, when they can retain more existing trees while delivering the same or greater housing capacity. Good urban design should balance housing production, affordability, and environmental stewardship by preserving mature trees wherever feasible without creating unnecessary barriers to building new homes.

Q10

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::

Seattle approved the funding, and I support completing a Natural Capital Assessment to better quantify the environmental, public health, and economic value of Seattle's urban forest. Understanding the benefits trees provide, from cleaner air and stormwater management to heat reduction and improved health, will help the City make more informed, data-driven investment and land use decisions.

Q11

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 support reviewing and updating Seattle's definition of a protected tree grove based on current science and regional best practices. If lowering the threshold better protects wildlife habitat, strengthens our urban forest, and can be implemented without creating unnecessary barriers to housing, I would support that change.

Q12

In Seattle and throughout the Pacific Northwest, there is a growing interest in housing development designs that provide increased urban density while preserving trees and natural areas.Do you have an example of a housing development or project that accommodates both density and trees that could be a model for Seattle development?

One model I find compelling is clustered housing with shared open space, where homes are grouped together to preserve mature trees and natural areas rather than clearing an entire site. I enjoy traveling and learning about sociocultural aspects of other countries and take inspiration from Asia and Europe where they accommodate density and trees. We should also encourage stacked flats and shared-wall housing, which reduce building footprints and leave more room for tree retention and new plantings. As Seattle implements middle housing, I believe we should incentivize designs that achieve both our housing goals and our urban forest goals through thoughtful site planning rather than treating them as competing priorities.

Q13

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.

Seattle can better align housing and tree preservation by adopting earlier tree assessments, requiring tree preservation plans before site design is finalized, streamlining permitting for projects that retain significant trees, and offering incentives for clustered housing, stacked flats, and shared-wall designs that reduce building footprints. We should also strengthen replanting standards, prioritize protecting mature trees where feasible, and invest in tree canopy in neighborhoods with the greatest environmental and health disparities. With clear, predictable standards, we can build the housing we need while growing a healthier, more resilient urban forest. I see missed opportunities when our neighborhoods cut down mature trees to build a bigger home and plant a small tree to justify their actions.