

#23

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Email Invitation 3 (Email)  
**Started:** Friday, July 21, 2023 7:36:24 AM  
**Last Modified:** Friday, July 21, 2023 7:44:36 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:08:11  
**First Name:** Maritza  
**Last Name:** Rivera  
**Email:** maritza@maritzaforseattle.com  
**IP Address:** 76.135.236.241

---

Page 1

**Q1**

Please share your information below:

Name	<b>Maritza Rivera</b>
District	<b>4</b>
City	<b>Seattle</b>
Position	<b>City Council</b>

---

**Q2**

As a City of Seattle Council Member, will you commit to prioritizing amending Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance to include maximizing the retention of existing healthy trees, especially large ones, and planting more trees, as part of a climate resiliency plan for low income and economic justice communities to respond to environmental inequities?

**Yes,**

Please share why this is, or is not, important to you: Politicians ought to be judged first and foremost by how we improve conditions for the next generation. We live in a city with some of the most incredible green spaces, tree canopy, and relationship with our environment of any in the world and we owe it to our kids and those that come after us to improve it, rather than let it decline. I was shocked to learn that we lost 1.7% tree coverage since 2021, especially when our city has committed to increasing coverage up to 30%. This is just one example of how good campaign rhetoric has failed to deliver effective public policy. As the next council member in District 4 I will bring urgency and experience in aligning our city budget and policy with our goals.

---

**Q3**

Seattle's new tree ordinance would allow the removal of all trees when lots are developed without considering alternative site design and building options to save trees. Would you support an amendment to the Tree Protection Ordinance requiring developers to consider alternative site designs to protect more trees? Many trees are the edge of lots.

**Yes,**

Please share why this is, or is not, important to you: Often, increasing affordable housing and preserving or expanding tree coverage is presented as if we can only have one or the other. But that's simply not true. Effective public policy and partnership with developers can result in new construction that meets their need to reduce costs and keep housing prices low, while also ensuring that we grow rather than diminish our natural beauty. As I knock on doors throughout our community there are numerous examples of new affordable housing developments that seamlessly incorporate tree coverage to increase the value of the property and serve our sustainability goals. The best council member in district 4 will work closely with everyone, including developers, to understand all concerns and craft an approach that allows us to pursue bold investment in affordable housing and development, alongside sustainability and tree coverage.

---

**Q4**

As Seattle's population increases, so does the pressure for increased housing. Significant tree loss occurs in Seattle when lots are clear-cut for development. Advocates for more tree protection believe with better planning and regulations, we can both increase housing and save more existing trees. Trees create healthy communities. Can you think of additional ways Seattle can succeed at saving more of its exceptional and significant trees while building new housing?

One effective solution to build significant affordable housing while also expanding tree coverage and climate resiliency is the efforts to lid I-5. The recent feasibility study showed we could cut back on carbon emissions by reducing traffic downtown, create 4,500 units of affordable housing, protect against stormwater pollution, and increase access to green space and tree coverage with 10+ new public parks.

Additionally, I believe it is crucial to align our public policy with the need to prioritize tree coverage and planting in health pollution disparity areas. Washington's Environmental Health Disparities Map from the Department of Health provides an excellent visual guide to those areas that have been disproportionately impacted by increasing pollution, traffic, emissions, and lack of public investment. Importantly, those areas, because of our city's racist history, are predominantly communities of color. I believe we should have stricter rules for protecting tree coverage and incentivizing planting, including through public investment in neighborhoods that have traditionally been left behind and forced to pay the price of our growth.

**Q5**

The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) currently oversees tree protection on private property. SDCI is mainly funded by money from development permits but gets no money for tree protection. This creates a potential conflict of interest. Additionally, SDCI has no Urban Forestry Division or Urban Foresters. Trees and our urban forest need a city department to represent them that does not have conflicting priorities. San Francisco has a Department of the Environment with responsibilities for a diversity of issues, including the urban forest and climate. Would you support moving tree and urban forest protection and oversight to a new independent Department of the Environment and Climate that includes an Urban Forestry Division to specifically coordinate and prioritize tree and urban forest protection?

**No,**

Please share why this is, or is not, important to you: Unfortunately the City of Seattle is facing significant budget deficits so while I share the urgency of protecting trees, I would focus my energies on making the current structure for protecting tree and urban forest protection under SDCI work better rather than establishing a new city department. I know with better oversight we can achieve an expanded tree canopy within our current structures.

**Q6**

Portland, Oregon requires that a comprehensive Tree Inventory and Tree Plan be done at the beginning of their development permit process. Developers enter the inventory and information into an Excel spreadsheet which can easily be added to a city database. This allows developers to plan around trees from the start of the development process and not a later add on, complicating an already moving process. This will also help Seattle more quickly track tree loss and replacement during development. The current tracking is requiring SDCI staff to remove data from a site plan which is both time consuming and frequently incomplete because all the information is not on the site plan. It also eats up employee time and the SDCI budget. Do you support amending the current Tree Ordinance to add this requirement?

**Yes,**

Please share why this is, or is not, important to you: Seattle, in 2007, set a 30 - year goal to reach a tree canopy of 30% by 2037. Yet there has been no specific plan developed by the city detailing how we can reach this goal. The recent record temperatures in Seattle and the Northwest confirmed the deadly impacts of urban heat island effects on human life, especially in areas where there is low tree canopy. Mapping has shown these areas to be mostly previously redlined areas and low- income areas. Seattle needs a detailed plan in place to plant in areas needing more trees to address environmental equity.

**Q7**

Seattle, in 2007, set a 30 - year goal to reach a tree canopy of 30% by 2037. Yet there has been no specific plan developed by the city detailing how we can reach this goal. The recent record temperatures in Seattle and the Northwest confirmed the deadly impacts of urban heat island effects on human life, especially in areas where there is low tree canopy. Mapping has shown these areas to be mostly previously redlined areas and low- income areas. Seattle needs a detailed plan in place to plant in areas needing more trees to address environmental equity. Will you support developing a tree planting plan and prioritizing this goal by moving the 30% canopy goal to 2030 as is being done with other climate mitigation timeline goals in Seattle?

**Yes,**

Please share why this is, or is not, important to you::

I grew up in the Bronx on the fifth floor of a large affordable housing complex. I've experienced this issue first hand, how communities of color face the disproportionate impacts of growth, whether that's increasing pollution, emissions, traffic, or lack of government investment and oversight. For this reason, I feel strongly that Seattle has failed its duty to support communities of color including on the issue of tree coverage and canopy. As I said before, our city should align its policy to specifically incentivize and ensure tree coverage in areas with high environmental health disparities. I am the only candidate in the race with any city government experience, currently as the Deputy Director of the Office of Arts and Culture and previously as an aid to the City Council. I've also worked at the national level as Hispanic Liaison for President Clinton and Vice-President of the National Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. In all of these roles I learned precisely how important it is to create concrete plans that truly align our cities budget and priorities to match its rhetoric. I'm also the only candidate in the race that has actually experienced these issues first hand as a person of color. All of these experiences together matter— they give me the urgency and know how to bring bold action to address this important issue.

**Q8**

Many trees in Seattle die as the result of invasive species like English ivy, killing them with their climbing vines. On steep slopes this greatly threatens slope stability and increases the risk of landslides. A good time to remove invasives is during development. The current landscaping plan requires that invasives be removed only where a replacement tree is being planted. Do you support requiring developers, as part of their landscape plan, to remove all invasives on the lot undergoing development?

**Yes,**

Please share why this is, or is not, important to you::

The city shouldn't simply obfuscate its role in supporting the removal of these invasives during development. I support the idea of requiring developers to do their part, but believe this is a partnership in which the city and developers work together to share the cost burden, keep new developments affordable, and ensure they meet our sustainability goals.

**Q9**

Portland, Oregon in 2020 complied with an Oregon State law to require approval of building 4 plexes in their single-family zone. Last November, responding to continued canopy loss, they amended their building code to require a dedicated 20% Tree Retention and Planting area in multifamily zones and a 40% dedicated Tree Retention and Planting area in their 1-4 family zone as a planning alternative to save trees. Would you support a similar provision to help Seattle protect its tree canopy for climate resiliency and tree equity across the city?

**Yes,**

Please share why this is, or is not, important to you::

I know we can both build more affordable housing and protect and expand our tree canopy -- and this approach sounds very interesting to me.

**Q10**

The new Tree Protection Ordinance guarantees developers a 100% allowable development area in Midrise, Seattle Mixed and Commercial zones and an 85% allowable development area in the Lowrise zones. Seattle's multifamily zones currently have a 23% canopy cover and Seattle mixed zone has a 12% canopy cover according to the Seattle 2021 Canopy Report. Would you support maintaining the present building code which allows the city to work with developers to try to save trees in these zones instead of a one size fits all guarantee that will result in significant canopy loss in these zones?

**No,**

Please share why this is, or is not, important to you:  
I absolutely support the goal of ensuring we are preventing significant canopy loss. However, the existing building code has to be updated. I know the Mayor is engaging in a thoughtful process to update this code in a way that can prevent loss in canopy and I look forward to being an experienced, and intentional voice to collaborate in a solution that works for everyone in Seattle. Unfortunately, I can't commit to maintaining the existing building code when for so many reasons, including our sustainability goals it must be updated.

---

**Q11**

The Seattle City Council approved funds to scope a study of Seattle's Natural Capital but never followed through. Would you support funding a Natural Capital Study for Seattle to monetize the economic value of Seattle's trees and urban forest?

**Yes**

---

**Q12**

Share your favorite type of tree and how you like to spend time in nature?

Japanese Maple! They are amazing and resilient trees that can be easily planted in residential property to provide year-round beauty and tree coverage.

---

**Q13**

Is there anything else you would like to share about why tree protection is important (or not) to you?

One of the reasons I believe Seattle is the best place in the world to raise a family is precisely because of the access to world-class parks, green spaces, and tree coverage throughout our neighborhoods. The reason I decided to run for office in the first place is to contribute to what makes this city so incredible and ensure that it is thriving for decades to come. I look forward to being a collaborative partner with you to ensure that we meet our sustainability goals, keep our neighborhoods beautiful, and expand coverage throughout the city.