



Portland Parks Foundation

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Portland City Council Candidate Questionnaire on Parks

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1. What is your favorite park, trail, natural area, or community center that you have visited in your District? What attracted you to it? What would you change about it if you found something that could use improvement?

My favorite park in my district is Gateway Discovery Park. I love taking my kids there. There are some great park features. There are also some great small businesses nearby and we love treating ourselves to a snack which allows us to stay at the park longer. One thing I would improve is expanding the tree canopy as shade is non-existent at this park. This fits within my larger policy goals of creating shade equity for East Portland.

East Portlanders face a life expectancy of 10 years less than people living west of 82nd Ave. This is due to higher rates of gun violence and traffic crashes but also due to having less parks per resident in East Portland and greater challenges accessing green spaces. I'm committed to addressing these health disparities and increasing East Portland's life expectancy.

2. What are two ways in which Portland can create more equitable access to parks and community centers prioritizing voices and needs of underserved communities, specifically Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, immigrants and refugees, LGBT2SQIA+ people, people with disabilities, youth, older adults, and people living with low incomes?

There are a number of things we can do to support underserved communities. First, we can build out parks in areas where park access has been deficient. In East Portland, there is Gates Park located at the corner of SE Holgate and SE 136th. It is an undeveloped park in an area where people with lower incomes, limited English proficiency, people of color, and Black Portlanders reside. These parks should be developed and have the same park features that the rest of the city takes for granted.

We should also be more strategic about using the public right of way to create places for people to play. Some side streets could be turned into pocket parks with green spaces, park features, and shade. Due to historic underinvestment and park deficiencies, East Portlanders tend to live further away from parks and have greater challenges getting to parks due to less access to sidewalks and transit than inner Portland neighborhoods. Working with community based organizations to create pocket parks within the public right of way could have the effect of increasing shade, reducing gun violence, and bringing play features within walking distance to more East Portland families.

3. Volunteers, nonprofits, private individuals and the business community, play an integral role in maintaining and advocating for our parks system. How do you envision supporting these relationships in your position, if elected?



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I'm committed to supporting and enhancing relationships with the many people and organizations who touch our parks systems. Building and maintaining a world class parks system requires engaging with many people who have an interest in safe, healthy, and vibrant parks. I am committed to listening, leading with integrity, and working together to support a world class parks system.

4. Portland's parks system is facing a dual financial crisis: a \$600 million maintenance backlog and the expiration of the 2020, 5-year Operating Levy. In the final two years of the current Parks Levy, it is expected to fund 41% of PP&R's operating expenses. If the maintenance backlog is not addressed, Portlanders will continue to be impacted by failing park assets and ADA deficiencies in the park system, and the community may lose an estimated 1 in 5 park assets in the next 15 years. On the operations side, to maintain current levels of service, PP&R projects the operating levy will not only need to be renewed in 2025, but it will also need to be increased to avoid a 20% cut in services. As a member of the city council, you will be asked to identify desired service levels for park and recreation services to the community, and establish funding to deliver those service levels. What steps would you take to ensure that the current financial crisis is resolved, and that the financial management of the system is put on a sustainable path designed to avoid repeated future crises? Do you believe parks funding should increase and, if so, where should the money come from (levy, bond, something else)? If not, what would be your top 2 priorities for cuts?

When working toward addressing budget challenges, I start by looking at all available options, listening to people who have studied the benefits and drawbacks of various options, and advocating for policies that work toward creating equitable outcomes, meaning that taxes should not be disproportionately burdening low income communities. I support renewing the 5 year operating levy.

More importantly, I am committed to working with fellow council members, Parks foundation, budget advisory groups, East Portland residents, and business organizations to develop a long term plan to ensure our parks system is adequately funded and is the envy of other cities. I look forward to this work.