

Protect Newton Trees

2025 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate: Maria Scibelli Greenberg
Office Running for: Ward 1 Councilor



Questions 1–8 asked Candidates to rate their responses to the statement using the following scale:

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

1. *It is important to support the Newton Tree Preservation Ordinance because it preserves and protects existing trees and provides for planting replacement trees.*

Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

2. *Newton needs both housing and trees. It is important to develop policies that promote low-impact development to protect our shared green infrastructure (trees, waterways, and wetlands).*

Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

3. *Properly sited trees block winter winds and provide shade from summer sun, reducing energy use for both heating and cooling, thus saving families money and reducing carbon emissions. (For example, when the City of Worcester cut down about 30,000 trees because of the Asian Longhorned Beetle, temperatures on tree-bare streets increased nearly 10 degrees F and increased the average family's cooling costs.) Newton needs a strong ordinance to preserve trees, especially in our environmental justice neighborhoods and wherever there are heat islands from lack of trees.*

Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

4. *Newton needs to maintain the Ordinance's existing protections for trees on an entire property and resist efforts to limit tree protections to setback areas (the strips around the border of a property).*

Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

5. *Newton needs to apply the Ordinance's tree protection requirements in the same way to all properties, including 1- and 2-family residences, which are 80% of Newton's residential property and 53% of all City land.*

Response: 4 = Agree

6. *The Tree Warden has reported that the number #1 complaint to the City's Urban Forestry Department for the past 20 years is when work on one lot causes damage to trees on neighboring lots. Newton residents have also reported that knowing in advance about a plan to cut trees on a neighboring property has allowed friendly conversations about preservation of trees. Therefore the requirement to notify neighbors of an application to cut trees should be extended to include all permits on all properties.*

Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

7. *The tree canopy and biodiversity are both important. All mature trees provide significant climate benefits, so the Newton Tree Preservation Ordinance should continue to avoid any blanket exemption for invasive species, but allow for weighing the harm versus benefit of removing non-native trees in a specific permit location.*

Response: 4 = Agree

8. *The City needs to evaluate our progress on preserving and expanding Newton's tree canopy. We need better data collection about trees preserved and cut down.*

Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

Questions 9–10 were open-ended:

9. *Do you have any thoughts about tree preservation or a [personal tree story](#) that you would like to share?*

Response: A significant area of Ward 1, including the Mass Pike corridor and the manufacturing area in Nonantum, is considered a heat island hotspot, making Ward 1 one of the warmest sections of Newton. These areas are hotter because of the concentration of heat-absorbing materials such as asphalt and concrete and the lack of shade from trees. The City's Urban Forestry Division has a limited budget, limited staffing, and new responsibilities under the updated Tree Ordinance, including oversight of trees on private property. As a result, it is clear that the need for more tree planting in Ward 1 will not be fully met. That is why I advocated for state funding with an earmark request from our State

Representative John Lawn. I am happy to share that the request for \$50,000 was approved, and we are now awaiting the Governor's approval this fall.

10. If a section of your campaign website addresses tree preservation, please provide a link here.

Response: <https://maria-for-ward-1.mailchimpsites.com/>