

## **Mason Gulch Public Meeting Survey Results - 2015**

Intent: To capture feedback from the first public meeting and to provide a feedback opportunity for those that were unable to attend the public meeting in order to focus future meetings. The first seven questions and responses were given to those that were able to attend the meeting. The remainder of the questions were open to all respondents.

Survey Time Period: August 28, 2015 - September 18, 2015

Total Responses: 145

### **Q1. To start, did you attend the public meeting on July 30, 2015 at the University of Puget Sound Rasmussen Rotunda?**

Answered: 145

Skipped: 0

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Yes	20.69%	30
No	79.31%	115
<b>Total</b>		<b>145</b>

### **Q2. Did you learn more about the role of Environmental Services in Mason Gulch?**

Answered: 24

Skipped: 121

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Yes	91.67%	22
No	8.33%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>

### **Q3. Did you learn more about the current site conditions at Mason Gulch?**

Answered: 24

Skipped: 121

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Yes	91.67%	22
No	8.33%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>

### **Q4. Did you learn more about the regulatory conditions facing Environmental Services with regard to Mason Gulch?**

Answered: 25

Skipped: 120

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Yes	64.00%	16
No	36.00%	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>

**Q5. Environmental Services shared details about the unique relationship between slope stability and vegetation, and how that may conflict with views from the upper gulch. Which of the following statements best summarizes your thoughts about this part of the presentation:**

Answered: 25

Skipped: 120

Answer Choices	Responses
I understand that this is a complex problem and trust that Environmental Services will try to preserve views whenever possible.	12.00% 3
I understand that Environmental Services needs to prioritize slope stability, but I prefer to keep the views.	36.00% 9
I don't believe that the site needs stabilization.	12.00% 3
Other (please explain):	40.00% 10
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

Other responses:

- I believe that slope stability can be achieved while reclaiming our lost views.
- Keep the view
- I'm not concerned about views, but feel stability is important
- I understand it is a complex problem but feel that that the site has been neglected and that view importance will be given lowest priority on remedial actions.
- If topping the trees degrades the slope, no evidence was presented that showed how topping them in the mid 1990s resulted in slope damage. Topping may make the wrong species more virulent. But none of that was shown.
- This is a complex issue. At the core there is over 100 years of geologic data supporting the fact that the slope around Mason gulch is stable enough to support a thinning of the existing Maples and non-native trees to provide a view for the community. This is provided by a stable tax base from native property owners. It will support a replanting of a mature native forest that is free from a park atmosphere and tour busses. Set aside to protect the wildlife in a urban sanctuary free from trails and "group tours". Tacoma has a robust and vibrant park system (I.E. Point Defiance) to teach our youth and community about its' natural heritage. If this view is lost to the community and its visitors, the city of Tacoma the the county of Pierce WILL loose a valuable source of tax revenue.
- While we understand that slope stabilization is important, we believe I t can be accomplished with plants that don't obscure the views. If our views continue to shrink, our property taxes should be reduced.
- You are idiots to think that slope stability and views are mutually exclusive. They are NOT!!
- You need to keep the views. You should be able to find vegetation that will not conflict with the views.
- I have lived on this gulch for >50 years. The facts around deterioration were not clearly established for me and consequently I have no idea why the views have been allowed to deteriorate so dramatically over the last few years.
- I don't think it is that complex. Return it to it's most natural, pre-clear cut status w/ SOME consideration to views (ie corridors, NOT sweeping ) and more emphasis on stability. But NO monies spent on trails, etc

**Q6. Was there any topic that was particularly confusing? If yes, please explain.**

Answered: 25

Skipped: 120

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	41.67%	10
No	58.33%	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>

Explanations:

- No, but biases were palpable.
- Why, when there are unstable slopes would the city of Tacoma encourage public access and more erosion probability?
- No real geologic history of the gulch was given... How long has it stood through logging, weather, etc No scale in the on site pics taken of the vegetation and "erosion" areas
- It's not that it was confusing, but no attempt was made to speak of the history of the city's maintenance of the Gulch. Cuts were made in the '90s, and before I bought my house in 1986. That is part of a pattern of precedents.
- They said the slope will be "unstable" if any of the trees are trimmed. Most of the people in the community are skeptical of this, because the trees were trimmed in the 1990's and nothing happened. The evidence is there, from the Geologist that the slope has been staple for over 100 years.
- It seemed that some of the science behind the slide theory was chosen to fit the agenda and when the geologist was called out on it from the audience he really didn't have a good explanation.  
I really don't understand why the city is spending time and resources on Mason Gulch. It is a virtually inaccessible natural area that should be left alone. They did not make a case that there is a problem with slope stability.
- Whether or not the city plans to trim the trees to restore the view
- Most of the meeting was confusing. There were too many speakers on too many subjects. Most people were there to find out what the city was going to do about the wild maple trees blocking what used to be one of Tacoma's best views. People already know that hillsides need to be kept stable. I left the meeting not knowing anything more than I did before.
- Not confusing, but most of the presentations were off-topic and a HUGE waste of time. Shame on the city for including parks and rec, and volunteers in the presentation. Goes to show you think we are simpletons. Keep in mind this is the same neighborhood that is taking the city to superior court over blue ribbon and the warehouse mansion.....
- Why in the world would you try and put public trails in an area that you deem sensitive?

**Q7. What topic would you like to learn more about in future communications?**

Answered: 17

Skipped: 128

- how to have more view
- Any forum discussing open, and encouraged public access. Any plans to change the landscape at all, timeframes, etc
- Fire danger assessment from outside consultants. Gulch are known fire hazards and Tacoma has the equipment to save the houses or not?
- More about various plant species and how they function on steep slopes, more about the geology of the area
- What is possible to restore the view soon.

- How can you get rid of the broadleaf maples? Topping doesn't work for more than 10 years. Poison will degrade the streams below.
- The birds, fish and other wildlife that are currently present in the gulch, and which ones, if any are protected species, and if any, how will they be managed?
- Historical Data on Land Slides in the Mason Gulch Area.
- Timeline for activities. Native plant options that will give back our community our views!
- Containment of unruly growth, the role of Metro Parks, timeline to completion
- Why is the city wasting money on this project.
- Public access. We don't want it and we don't want the public crossing our parcels to access or egress.
- Whether or not the city plans to trim the trees to restore the view
- We just want to know if the city is going to clear the growth enough to regain the open views. Can someone just answer that question?
- timeline and major milestones
- What the precise options are for meeting stability goals while maintaining views. We are paying a HUGE property tax relative to much of the rest of town and those values are in part due to views. If the latter are allowed to deteriorate then I would like to hear about plans to reduce property taxes accordingly.
- I would like the city to maintain a full transparency of ALL things related to this matter Including providing all info (maps, studies, survey results, minutes of mtgs, etc) on the city website regarding the gulch.

**Q8. What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about Mason Gulch?**

Answered: 125

Skipped: 20

garbage	habitat	nature	overgrown	untouched
natural	running	view	view	natural
sewer	underutilized	riparian	wild	quiet
view	inaccessible	biodiversity	undeveloped	vegetation
mess	greenspace	wild	opportunity	abandoned
mess	trails	treasure	beauty	artesian
viewless	abandoned	view	transients	serenity
wooded	woods	overlooked	overgrown	overgrown
view	opportunity	green	deer	wildlife
openspace	isolated	refuge	overgrown	habitat
wetlands	natural	trees	deer	overgrown
slopes	where?	mess	greenspace	greenspace
where?	trails	greenspace	open	boondoggle
undeveloped	unknown	historic	wasted	greenspace
inaccessible	wildlife	natural	overgrown	ecological
sewage	greenspace	environment	peaceful	opportunity
view	wild	trees	greenspace	greenspace
trees	forest	overgrown	viewless	nature
overgrown	history	overgrown	stability	overgrown
oasis	treasure	view	overgrown	viewless
sherman	treasure	view	wild	stream

urban jungle	habitat	opportunity	natural	preservation
overgrown	neglected	view	transients	natural
underutilized	pizza	natural	overgrown	untouched
unappreciated	nature	natural	untouched	natural

**Q9. Please choose the top three topics that are most important to you regarding Mason Gulch habitat and natural features?**

Answered: 126

Skipped: 19

Highest – Green, Second – Orange, Third – Blue

	Native Vegetation	Invasive Vegetation	Wildlife Habitat	Public Safety	Slope Stability	Water Quality	Total
Topic #1	22.22% 28	19.05% 24	24.60% 31	11.11% 14	19.84% 25	3.17% 4	126
Topic #2	16.67% 21	16.67% 21	23.81% 30	11.11% 14	19.05% 24	12.70% 16	126
Topic #3	20.97% 26	14.52% 18	18.55% 23	10.48% 13	18.55% 23	16.94% 21	124

**Q10. Please choose the top three topics that are most important to you regarding the use of Mason Gulch property?**

Answered: 121

Skipped: 24

Highest – Green, Second – Orange, Third – Blue

	Recreation Opportunities	Volunteer Opportunities	Public View	Private View	Public Access/Trails	Parks	Total
Topic #1	13.22% 16	4.13% 5	35.54% 43	13.22% 16	26.45% 32	7.44% 9	121
Topic #2	6.03% 7	7.76% 9	27.59% 32	15.52% 18	31.90% 37	11.21% 13	116
Topic #3	14.02% 15	16.82% 18	18.69% 20	4.67% 5	18.69% 20	27.10% 29	107

**Q11. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “not at all concerned” and 5 being “very concerned,” how concerned are with the following in Mason Gulch:**

Answered: 125

Skipped: 20

Green - Highest amount of concern in this category

	1 (not at all concerned)	2	3	4	5 (very concerned)	Total
Slope Stability	9.68% 12	14.52% 18	24.19% 30	25.00% 31	26.61% 33	124
Habitat	7.26% 9	8.87% 11	24.19% 30	30.65% 38	29.03% 36	124
Invasive Vegetation	6.45% 8	11.29% 14	16.94% 21	27.42% 34	37.90% 47	124
Water Quality	8.94% 11	18.70% 23	26.02% 32	23.58% 29	22.76% 28	123

**Q12. Would you use a trail connecting the top to the bottom of Mason Gulch?**

Answered: 126

Skipped: 19

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	72.22% 91
No	27.78% 35
Total	126

**Q13. Would you participate in stewardship or volunteer opportunities benefitting Mason Gulch habitat or slope stability?**

Answered: 124

Skipped: 21

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	72.58% 90
No	27.42% 34
Total	124

**Q14. Please use this space to add any additional comments:**

Answered: 60

Skipped: 85

- Don't make Mason Gulch a park! Get the public views back and let the habitat enjoy the gulch. We have great parks and a nearby gulch that doesn't need duplicating, increasing transient threats to a nice neighborhood. Keep Metro Parks out of the gulch.
- thanks for the good work cutting the grass, never happen before
- I definatly feel there is no place in the Mason gulch for public gatherings.We have enough parks in the area the City is challenged with the maintenance of as it is.
- Public Safety is #1. Everyone still remembers the rape and murder in 1986. Keep it clean and keep transients out. Regular patrols by Park police on foot.
- As a 20 year resident with 300' of frontage on the gulch, I am ADAMANTLY OPPOSED to any additional trail development - for human use or otherwise - in the gulch.
- I miss looking at the view of Puget Sound when walking with my kids around the top of the gulch on Stevens and 37th.
- One perk about living in the North Proctor neighborhood, is the absolutely gorgeous view that we are provided by our proximity to the Sound. Unfortunately, in the last few years the non-native trees have grown so tall in the Mason Gulch that we are no longer able to enjoy this natural beauty. This is not fair for all of us that chose this neighborhood in large part because of these views. Give us back our view. I do not think a park is a great idea for this space. Where would people park when accessing this space? This could also introduce a lot more homeless people into the area as they may see this park setting as a new place to call home.
- Please feel free to compensate all the adjoining owners for the peace and solitude you take away with people on the trails. And feel free to provide fences to contain the gulch trail walkers. Easy for you to decide, who of you lives on the gulch?
- The trees have gotten too tall! Pedestrians can no longer enjoy the once-beautiful view to the water.

- The view needs to be returned to the neighbors in and around the Mason Gulch. Cut down the invasive non native plants/trees and replace with native plantings. We pay extra in our taxes for a view, so we better have the ability to actually enjoy it.
- I love the Puget Creek Gulch and walk it often. Having a similar path in Mason Gulch would be great but I think maintaining the stability of the slope should be the greatest priority.
- Years ago, we had had the slope below our house slide and cause quite a catastrophe- made the front page of the TNT. We have so many small streams coming off the slope causing a wetland area. We are very concerned about anything that might damage the hillside and endanger our property as in trails cut into the hillside, people trampling the vegetation, for safety reasons we do not want people in our backyard. This just sounds like a bad idea. Would you like this in your backyard?? Please spend your money on caring for our beautiful city parks that more people can enjoy.
- At the base of the gulch, Mason Creek enters a culvert before emptying into Puget Sound. Take the creek out of the culvert, daylighting it and opening the creek up for salmonid spawning and habitat. Do the same with the final ~100m of Puget Creek. Both creeks already have bridges under the railroad tracks where they could flow. And I imagine there was a creek in Garfield Gulch too. If there was, take it out of it's pipe and let it flow into the bay again. Salmon and species that rely on them (including humans) would certainly benefit from any reconnection Tacoma did to their former habitat. And reconnect the estuary at Titlow Park to the Narrows. I'm done...for now.
- Please make this oasis of forest into a safe & accessible nature park, perhaps similar to Snake Lake.
- I'm not interested in seeing this area used as a park/trail system
- The view from Stevens has been blocked by scrub trees. If cleaned out with lower height vegetation placed and viewing benches placed at the top. It would be a benefit to walkers runners and nature lovers alike
- As Point Ruston becomes a prime destination on the waterfront, adding more access to the waterfront from the North End by foot seems like a great step towards being a more pedestrian friendly city.
- Love trails!
- A trail network in our gulches would be a tremendous public benefit. I'd like to see more public access here and in Garfield gulch. I'd add that the current state of the gulches without trails offer very little ecological value if they are completely overgrown with invasive species. Adding the public trails will get more people involved in restoring the ecological value.
- I think the gulch should be kept wild. The water quality is probably negatively impacted from the toxic chemicals the neighbors above use on their lawns and the city sprays into the gulch to get rid of the blackberries (that everyone loves to pick).
- Don't live close enough to Mason Gulch to use it, but often drive or run/ride by on Stevens Street. I think that it's a shame that you can't see the view of Commencement Bay from Stevens. I don't think that "use" of the Gulch will be all that heavy, but the promenade along Stevens could be much improved by creating view corridors.
- With the expanding recreational activities along Ruston Way to Point Defiance, this gem of North Tacoma would be another wonderful place for people to hike and run, much like Puget Park.
- My father grew up near the creek that runs through the gulch on waterview st. His family had a series of wooden troughs that went into the creek replenishing their water reserves. The area has always held a certain place in my heart. I would love nothing more than a trail running through it along with restoring the natural habitat.
- The bulk of the "most important" options given are for opening up the space and adding trails, etc. Why wasn't there an option for stabilizing the slope, dealing with the invasive species and leaving it alone. Unlike Puget Gulch where there is a park and parking spaces where would you put additional traffic and parking if this space were opened up.
- Mason Gulch presents our community with a tremendous opportunity to restore public lands so that they are a better resource for our community as well as a better resource for native wildlife and vegetation. To me, that is a win-win for

both the human and non-human communities. The Puget Creek trail is the most used trail in Tacoma. We have the opportunity to establish a similar community resource in Mason Gulch while also enhancing natural habitat.

- I believe the public vistas from Stevens and Mason need to be revived. The broad leaf maples have over grown now blocking the view which is one of the few places in the City that there could be unrestricted views of Commencement Bay, Rainier, Northeast Tacoma, and the Cascades.
- What does the water treatment plant do that requires it to be there? Or, if it is to be there, can a stream be re-routed that will let salmon move back in?
- It would be nice if the survey included a map of the gulch so that survey takers could have a clear understanding of the area being discussed. Particularly with regards to questions about trails, etc.
- Natural green spaces in human-dominated landscapes such as Tacoma are rare and can provide refuges for native species and functioning ecological systems that contribute to the region's biodiversity. We have fantastic examples in Tacoma of commitments to using natural areas such as Mason Gulch to restore functional ecological systems while, at the same time, creating public access opportunities for people to immerse themselves in these natural areas. Mason Gulch could become another jewel in Tacoma, just as Puget Creek has become. Everyone benefits from these public resources.
- Desiree, This survey indicates that you are considering recreational trails to be added to the Mason Gulch. When we last emailed, you assured me you were only considering removal of invasive vegetation, reintroduction of native vegetation and stabilization, like the hillside along Schuster Park Way. What happened?!
- I live bordering the gulch & appreciate it very much just as it is - my choice might be that the city eliminate some of the many maples that encumber the views many had come to expect. We walk the Proctor Gulch a couple times a month & do not think the city should devote the monies & energies to developing a trail that is "safe" for public consumption.
- We are 89 y ears old so volunteer opportunities are limited due to age.
- My friends and family miss the views of Commencement Bay and Brown's Point and the July Fourth fireworks. Please bring them back!
- The sight lines are bad and I can no longer see the bay when I am there
- Need more restored estuary area for rearing salmonids and resident fish. Need more nature trails and outdoor classrooms.
- We do not need Metro Parks in our gulch. We have Point Defiance 2 miles away and Puget Park less than 1 mile away. We say no to trails, and no to recreation in our gulch!
- Although I understand the importance of slope stability, I am most concerned about the loss of my water view and the general disarray of the gulch.
- Concerned about developing public trails in Mason gulch as to where would people park? Would entry/exit at bottom be right next to water treatment facility? Concerned that the city would not maintain the trail system as they have done a poor job managing the overgrowth of invasive species trees and other vegetation over the 23 years we have lived there. Brush maples have taken over the gulch and the views.
- I miss the view that used to be as you walked along the sidewalk around Mason Gulch. I'm also concerned about all the deer that live in the gulch and end up in the neighborhood including on the road-I'm afraid they are going to get hit
- If stabilized, trails would provide educational opportunities for students at Sherman Elementary.
- I have lived in the neighborhood for over 20yrs now the gulch used to be a fun recreational place to access parks & the waterfront now there are so many sketchy looking bums & drug users down there I'm scared I'll be robbed or stuck w/a needle if we walk thru there all the improvements made over the last ten are not bein enjoyed as they should be simply because there is drug use, homeless encampment, & repeated dumping in such a gorgeous part of the proctor district
- I don't want it to change much, but the trees have gotten so tall. The water view is gone.

- Shame the non native trees have taken over and hides our view of beautiful Puget Sound
- please leave green open spaces alone. This survey leads one to believe that bigger things are in the works for this space. We need to preserve the little open green space in the North End of Tacoma. Please do not let developers or private land owners use this space or impact its beauty.
- It's been about 5 years since I've walked that path and hopefully not much has changed. I know it's home to a lot of deer and I would hate to see that change. Hopefully it will be preserved for the wildlife and the vegetation and if I recall the salmon that use that creek. Very peaceful place.
- Focus seems to be on development, to which I am opposed. I love to hike, but feel it's important to maintain what little green space remains in Tacoma. We need it and our wildlife needs it!
- If this is going to take many years, how about topping the current maples that will be coming down so the view is available sooner rather than later.
- I do not want to see the gulch become like Puget gulch. It is frightening to walk it, there is graffiti and litter and I was told by people nearby that it is a party place for college students. Besides UPS, If Weherhauser mansion is ever purchased by Annie Wright the bored rich kids dumped by their parents would be down there raising havoc, if it is easily accessible. Besides going into Mason gulch itself, have any Staffers walked down Stevens around it? It has become the Little Gulch of Horrors.
- The city appears to be using this project as a way of converting Mason Gulch into a park. This will consume tremendous resources and be doomed to failure.
- The city needs to cut back the invasive vegetation as they did in years past.
- What is native vs invasive? TMC 9.19.030 lists prohibited trees including Oregon and big leaf maple or any tree with similar growth characteristics. Also TMC 9.20.010 shows that views are part of the "Intent." They are listed first among the other factors.
- The trees towards the top of the roadways are over grown and should be cut back regularly to allow public and private views, drawing more people to the area, increasing property values and making Tacoma more beautiful.
- I am the MPT habitat steward at Garfield Gulch. I think all of the gulches in Tacoma need to be saved.
- We feel this area should get left as it is so it can be used as a baseline for how other areas need to be brought back to.
- I'm both delighted and nervous about the attention being given to this unique and beautiful area of Tacoma. I hope it will be preserved as green space but that the public will be given access--both as volunteers to help preserve native vegetation and as hikers.
- If Mason Gulch ends up having a trail, the trailhead location needs to take into account the concerns of property owners immediately adjacent to the gulch. The current location seems problematic to at least a couple of properties.
- I live near this gulch and would love the opportunity to walk down to the water along Mason Gulch. I certainly miss the views due to the growing trees, and would love to see them topped, but that view is less important to me than public access.
- I purposefully did NOT mark anything regarding "park like" uses or views above. Neither Rec opportunities nor volunteer opportunities nor public view nor public access /trails are important to me at all and I OPPOSE any effort spent to address those. SOME effort may be necessary re private views (OR property tax assessments should be halved for the entire neighborhood...but that's ok too.
- The area is listed as a view drive. Let's restore it to views again.
- Mason gulch is forever changed given the city infrastructure of sewer, surface water diversion and treatment plant operation. It's a waste of public money to invest in anything but improvement of views and slope stability to assure the homes and views are protected for residents and the public

- The third question above regarding the most important topics leave out a vital consideration in this discussion: development vs. leaving the gulch as is, with minimal human interaction. Mason Gulch is one of the last truly areas in Tacoma that is unspoiled by human interference, where there is an abundance of habitat for wildlife. I have walked in Mason Gulch and it is amazingly unspoiled. I believe consideration should be given to the degree of "improvements" by recognizing that bringing in more people will have detrimental impacts on the unspoiled qualities of the gulch.