



Chris Eck Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Edmonds City Council, Position 1

What are your top three priorities to achieve in your term?

I've been on council as the incumbent for 1.5 years after being elected in 2023 to complete the term of another CM. I'm running now for reelection, and solving our significant budget deficit, growth/housing, and protecting our environment are my three biggest priorities.

How will you boost housing options, particularly for families of all incomes to live where they work? How will you engage the public for new shelters, transitional housing, emergency housing, permanent supportive housing? How do you weigh community objections with the housing goals for your jurisdiction, while encouraging engagement from neighbors?

At this very time, our Planning Board is working on the middle housing types they will recommend to Council, since we have to pick 6 different types. We are also actively working on the STEP housing requirements from the state that require shelters, transitional housing and the others mentioned above, and are close to passing the ordinance. We have a Comprehensive Plan but we have community members actively trying to water it down and I will stand up for maintaining the plan so that all of that doesn't happen. My stance, when I hear a community member express concern or objection to housing goals, is to listen actively and thoroughly. Show that I understand their concerns, and then speak to why it's necessary to have our housing targets but it's also the right thing to do for our community members. Everyone who lives and works in Edmonds deserves to be able to afford a place to rent or own here, and I explain that even soundly middle income families like those



with parents who are teachers and firefighters can't afford to live here now. It doesn't always change their mind but sometimes it does, and sometimes they at least come away with a better understanding. I also explain why we have a growth and development plan in order to avoid sprawl, and so that we add housing where there is public transportation, businesses, and the opportunity to create walkable centers and hubs that also foster place making.

Do you support adding progressive revenue sources? Which ones would you support to fund your priorities? Or what cuts would you make to balance budgets facing increasing strain under Trump?

Yes. Not only do we need to put a levy on the ballot this year, we may need to do it again next year. But we can't just do that. We have to diversify revenue in the forms of increasing fees and permits that haven't been increased for a long time. We're looking at creating city parking fees where there aren't any now. Those are just a few examples. A bigger idea that I support is to move forward with selling City Hall. It's on prime downtown land, it's not even likely half full most of the time, and a lot of work needs to go into the building. It would also help us pivot to a possible development in our most marginalized and vulnerable area, the Highway 99 neighborhoods. This one-time sell of the current building would give us millions of dollars and in the interim city staff could work out of another temporary office building.

About cuts to offset those Trump is making or could make, we have already severely cut our budget. Unfortunately there isn't much more to cut but we are working on a plan as a City. We may need to temporarily close down areas that need maintenance, like public spaces, parks, etc. That is a last resort for me, however, it's the worst case scenario.



What do you think is the most important strategy your jurisdiction can pursue to limit cost increases and make the region affordable to live in? How would you go about implementing that strategy?

Housing type variety is a big factor as we grow the number of new units, so people have options of types of units to rent or buy. As our city works on a variety of middle housing types now, and also preventing our Comprehensive Plan from being whittled, I will stand strong to push and advocate for preserving the progress we made with the Plan and continuing to educate our community on why we aren't just obligated to have variety and increase housing supply, but it's the right thing to do. Education is key and will not win everyone over but we are seeing progress with many community members.

Traffic deaths are rising across Washington state, with pedestrians composing an increasing share statewide. What is your approach to making our streets safer for all users?

Edmonds has made some strides with multimodal-friendly streets and the work will continue the next few years. That will help with pedestrian safety. Additionally, this past year I voted to implement red light cameras at two of our most dangerous intersections, and believe we need to implement more of them. Our Public Works department also has a list of roads throughout the city that need calming measures and sidewalks that they are working through. I'll be pressing for them to keep those priorities in focus so the work continues.



What is your approach to improving public safety over the next five years? How will you actualize it?

Public safety is the top concern in Edmonds based on a recent survey. This means having adequate and responsive police and fire departments, safe streets, and measures to prevent theft, graffiti, and property destruction. Unfortunately, with our budget deficit, many police positions continue to go unfilled and some have also been cut. My vision to reduce retail theft, for instance, in our highest crime area (south Highway 99 in Edmonds) is to have a thriving business and neighborhood community there. It's known that when you increase community in an area it can decrease crime. Before most of our boards and commissions were recently paused due to reduced staffing levels and the budget deficit, I was liaison to the Economic Development Commission where there was much enthusiasm and drive to attract new businesses to fill the empty areas of Highway 99. Despite the pause, several commission members continue their work, and I'm sticking closely to them to see what progress we can make in partnership with the Economic Development Director, even if just modest progress while we work on fixing our budget issues. But my plan is to keep pressing for this economic development in the area, along with green spaces for residents and other amenities that increase the quality of life and placemaking.

What have you done/will you do to increase collaboration at city hall and ensure all residents are included?

First, before I was elected, our council was infamous for not getting along and for having a lot of drama. I do not take the credit for it changing other than I brought a different dynamic and the former CM who heavily contributed to the discord left. I



bring the professionalism and collaboration that I consistently display in my day job as VP of Programs at Volunteers of America Western WA. In regards to including residents I have intentionally sought out and fostered open communication with community members who are not the the vocal minority, meaning those who resist change and growth. I have created relationships with LGBTQ+ leaders, environmental and climate action leaders, along with housing and development champions from across different neighborhoods in our city. I'm also actively making headway with engaging younger community members and young families, something that has been a challenge for many candidates and officials in Edmonds since our average age is still around 46 and most voters are older. For me, none of these connections are "one and done" and I invest the time in these relationships along with getting to know other community members.

What actions should the city take to address the climate crisis?

The City has a Climate Action Plan that is quite old - from years ago - but very little progress has been made. I'm in close contact with environmental and climate action leaders who volunteer significant time to work on these issues, and who haven't had much partnership from the City. I have committed to keep working with them and will press for our City to make headway even while we have a budget deficit and reduced staffing, because it's critical.

What is your financial sustainability plan for the city?



Like many cities, we are in a budget deficit. The City has been negligent in raising revenues, not just through taxes, but also through raising fees and figuring out a diverse number of sources. So now, after cutting the budget significantly last year, and again early in 2025, we are finally actively talking about how to raise revenue. Short term, we need big items to raise revenue (one idea is to sell City Hall is which is never full and needs a lot of work, and another is a levy that we may vote to put before the voters) to get a handle on the deficit, hire back staff in key areas, and get out of the scarcity mentality. Then, some of the sources of revenue need to be recurring in order to provide stability for the next few years, like raising fees for many licenses, services, permits, etc. as well as seeing if we need to put another levy before the voters. Not only have we not raised revenue for years, but we also haven't dealt with infrastructure updates that have been urgent for years, so the revenue we raise has to allow us to make progress on them. The City has also been adverse to applying for grants, I will be pressing for the City to change this mindset and aggressively after grant and even foundation funding.

What are your top transportation goals for the city, and how will you get them done? What is your plan to improve walkability, bike safety, and accessibility in your community?

For the administration to continue it's work on multimodal-friendly streets, and for us to work with public transit to have better alternatives for Edmonds residents to get from multiple parts of our city to light rail. We do have bus connections but some community members want more direct access so it's important to see if we can find a solution. The Public Works department also has a long list of streets they'll be working on to calm traffic, add sidewalks and bike lanes, etc. I'll fight to keep those priority streets on their worklist and monitor to make sure the plan is on track.



Do you support camping bans or sweeps? If elected, how would you adapt or change current law/policies to protect and support our neighbors?

No. I support Human Services staff from the City or from nonprofit agencies going into areas where people in need are to offer services such as transitional housing, medical and addiction referrals, education and employment assistance, and more. The Administration has had no appetite to strengthen human services, and in fact we've had to cut a position because of our budget deficit. As we build back services and support after turning our budget crisis around, I will advocate for hiring back human services staff and removing the ordinance we have that doesn't allow camping.

In what ways could your city's comprehensive plan go further, and what would you push for to improve it during your tenure?

Our comprehensive plan could do more to add green spaces along our busiest roads, like chiefly highway 99 and SR 104. We certainly have in the past added some growth targets along Highway 99, but have not focused on adding amenities for our communities along that road. At minimum, we need pocket parks, playgrounds, more trees and greenery. As we work to improve our budget deficit, and I continue to press for economic development along Highway 99, I'll also push for green spaces and other amenities for the area. Thank you for your consideration!

