



Derica Escamilla Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Lynnwood City Council, Position 1

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

Youth Council, Affordable Housing, Human Services

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?

Housing options can be increased in Lynnwood by promoting zoning for middle housing, the allowance of ADUs, and mixed-use buildings and developments with mixed-income options, as well as supporting MFTEs (Multifamily tax exempt) projects that incentivizes developers to take projects meant for lower income renters.

Engaging with the public is critical. We need our elected officials to be more accessible to their constituents. This can be done through town halls, office hours, and asking the city to do direct public, informative outreach. It is important for elected officials to meet people where they are. To maintain engagement with residents even if/when residents disagree. The biggest challenges come when residents feel like their elected leaders are no longer listening to them. Maintaining transparency is key when promoting progressive policy changes. It is because of this that I sought out the Pallet Shelter Company for a presentation. I then introduced the City of Lynnwood to them for future consideration to be granted through possibly



the Opiate fund or other future grant opportunities or non-profit/city partnerships, such as what the City of Everett has done with the Union Gospel Mission and the Pallet Company.

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. Washington has one of the most unfair state-level tax systems in the country. We need to even the playing field for working Washingtonians by raising taxes on the wealthy and on big businesses. On my end, this means raising property taxes on high-value homes. It also means lobbying our state lawmakers to pass statewide taxes for high-income earners and family size. And it means ensuring that large corporations aren't being unfairly subsidized by taxpayers because they aren't paying what they should. We cannot afford to cut critical funds in order to maintain lower taxes for those at the top. All of our public services are too important to risk losing. I am also in support of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for the greater good of the community and redevelopment goals our community can enjoy for generations to come.

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?

We have to make our city more affordable for people to live in. Everything starts with that. The way things currently stand, my own kids might not be able to afford to live in the same city where I am on city council because homeownership and even renting an apartment is unattainable for most people who aren't above a certain income level. In some cases this will mean limiting what landlords can charge



renters, or in the very least limiting how much of an increase landlords can place upon renters over a certain period. Landlords need to be able to make a profit, but they should not be allowed to exploit people. We also need to do a better job of creating a safety net that keeps people housed or helps with housing costs, as preventing homelessness is always cheaper than trying to fix the problem after it happens.

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?

We, for sure, need more bike lanes and off-the-road bike paths that can be used for recreation and as a means for commuting safely from point A to point B. Bicyclists should not be required or expected to do the bulk of their commutes in traffic with cars. We also still need better sidewalks in parts of Lynnwood, as we still have intersections and streets (even in areas of high traffic) where sidewalks are either nonexistent or subpar. Some of the newer crosswalks are visible enough but there are still many that could use updating and even many of the newer intersections do not allow enough time during green lights for any pedestrians with mobility issues to fully cross the street before the light changes. Upgrades around schools and more speed and safety signs around areas with children such as all schools and parks. Think City of Seattle Safe Crossings Program.

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



Prevention. In order to prevent crime in the long term, we need to first make communities healthier and more sustainable. This includes supporting community-based programs and increasing access to mental health services. We also need to do more to enhance the transparency of our law enforcement branches, at both the city and county level, so that our residents will feel like they can trust law enforcement no matter their political affiliation or color of their skin. In Lynnwood we have an ever-changing landscape with our fast-growing population, newly opened light rail and a heavy retail district that presents unique challenges. Continually working with our community, retail partners and law enforcement to understand the data, uphold the law, but still lead with compassion and heart will be imperative moving forward.

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

I make it a priority to put my personal opinions aside and be impartial to every single agenda item brought in front of me every single meeting. I listen to all perspectives then see it through the lens of how I think or know my constituents would want me to vote. If it's something I know is controversial I make sure to do my research and seek out public opinion anywhere I can, resident friends, grocery store, kids' school, the park, etc. If I receive a complaint via email, or call to city cell phone or voicemail, I make sure to respond. When residents feel heard and part of the process I feel and know I have done my job, even if it is just listening or handing them off to someone else who is better suited to address the concern. I also spearheaded and chaired our brand-new Youth Council along with a stakeholder group of 15 adults and children at any given meeting. Since January I have been advocating for the use of chambers for town halls for our community to discuss different topics and be open to the public.



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

We need to make our buildings more efficient. We also need to do a better job of promoting local food sources. And there is so much that we can do around promoting public transit, given the excitement of the recent opening of the new light rail stop in Lynnwood. Making our bus system as efficient and reliable as light rail is, and adding more stops that will make our bus system more accessible to more residents will play a vital role in taking cars off of the roads and creating a world with less pollution. We also need to ensure that we will maintain a certain level of undeveloped acreage that can act as a buffer for critical habitat and as a carbon sink and reduce the heat island effect.

What is your financial sustainability plan for the city?

We need to increase revenue through a progressive taxation plan, while at the same time attracting good, sustainable jobs via a well-educated workforce and reputation as being a great place to live and raise a family. We need to invest in sustainable infrastructure and in programs that give back to the community. This will need to be a delicate balance of courting good business while at the same time not allowing large corporations to take advantage of us. Transparency and collaboration will be key in all of this.

I am also part of a task group that is assessing our disadvantaged business enterprise goals in Lynnwood to not only support small business but also look at adding a local business set aside where we give work to businesses that operate out of Lynnwood. This will serve as both diversification but also economic vitality and infusion to TRULY live, work, and play here. I've seen in Pierce County where if you don't have a business there you don't win work there, we can aspire for the same local business infusion and tax benefits in the City of Lynnwood.



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?

My top transportation goals involve finding ways to make public transit the safest, easiest, fastest, most reliable and affordable option. This will mean lowering the cost of bus and light rail fares, per trip, even further. It will also mean expanding the bus routes and ensuring that we have routes that reliably reach neighborhoods that have predominantly been reliant upon cars and that we give those neighborhoods a second, long term option that families can plan their schedules and futures around. It also means making Lynnwood more walkable and safely bikeable. Most bicyclists don't want to ride in the street with cars if they don't have to. Bike paths can make people healthier, happier, create a fun activity for families and even increase tourism. They can also be used for walkers to have a safe, scenic route to get to their destination while avoiding street traffic. Reaching Lynnwood's climate goals is dependent upon us becoming less reliant on cars. Our healthcare goals, longevity goals, and happiness goals also all tie-in to developing this new infrastructure. There is no downside to shifting our most common mode of transportation and it needs to be one of the city's top priorities.

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, no I do not support them. Camping bans and sweeps make the homeless problem worse. They are also inhumane. Few people want to sleep on the streets. What most people experiencing homelessness need is access to affordable housing, mental and behavioral health help, and to find a good job. It is much more



effective and efficient to prioritize those things, rather than spend money on inhumane sweeps. I am not okay with anti-homeless campaigns being guised as safety concerns coming in overnight and adding no parking signs everywhere that at one time were "public". Where are people living in their cars supposed to go exactly if a No parking or basically your only "shelter" will be taken from you is , as previously mentioned, inhumane. I have and will continue to advocate for a shelter and/or a safe parking site with wrap around services. So many people are one paycheck from being homeless. The lack of compassion baffles me, especially in this economy.

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

The Lynnwood Comprehensive Plan still needs to do a better job at considering just how much Lynnwood has changed over the past many years, including the wide array of diverse communities with diverse needs that exist throughout the city. Easy and affordable access to reliable public transit really is our bread and butter and needs to be one of our highest priorities. Making Lynnwood more walkable is also critical for a sustainable future. Climate resiliency will be a key part of humanity's future. In Lynnwood, that means doing what we can to mitigate the city overheating during summertime. This will mean balancing maintaining tree canopy while simultaneously not limiting much needed housing development. Mitigating traffic, traffic pollution, and all pollution also needs to be better prioritized. I am also not convinced yet that it has much to protect the South Lynnwood Neighborhood from the possible future socioeconomic inequalities identified in the Department of Commerce Comp Plan comments/recommendations issued last year.

