



Josh Rosenau Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Lake Forest Park City Council Position 3

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

Add third places including neighborhood cafes, shared streets, new playgrounds, and a public lakefront park that finally puts the lake in Lake Forest Park for all residents; implement the city's climate action plan including substantial changes to land use that allow denser housing amid the city's valued urban forest; community decisionmaking, including participatory budgeting, to bring decisions on key issues out of city hall and into neighborhoods.

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?

I support more efficient use of existing footprints without harming the tree canopy that defines the city. That means single-staircase and form-based code to allow more diverse housing within already-legal envelopes, and height/FAR bonuses for affordability. Legalizing neighborhood retail would open the door to mixed-use development. Community outreach would surface needs and orient development toward solving those problems. A community land trust would hold costs low and bundle properties for more comprehensive redevelopment, and even help break existing covenants restricting properties to single-family construction.



There is a large commercial development at the center of our city, which is currently zoned for multi-family development but current rules do not allow development of transitional, emergency, or supportive housing. I would look for ways to reopen the (lengthy and stressful, and ineffective) effort to redevelop the property with denser housing, doing so in ways that would make mixed-use development pencil, and allow critically-needed housing for unhoused neighbors in this transit-focused area.

I would reorient community discussion toward what is possible and desired, and include voices of potential new residents as well as current owners.

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?

I favor overall reforms to more progressive taxation on a state and regional level, but the existing base in LFP offers limited options for progressive revenue. Adding neighborhood retail and increased density would offer new revenue streams. I hope to add a participatory budgeting element to this fall's levy lift, or to a future round of levy lift funding. Public parks, public services, and public transit define our residents' experience of the community. I believe a clearer presentation of what our current commitments and spending are, and asking people to vote on an allocation that matches their need, would result in more funding. A community land trust could be capitalized by private funding and city support. It could add a pathway for affordable and social housing and other community improvements that would improve walkability, community, and affordability.



I would push to ensure that the regressive effects of taxes are more than offset by the progressive benefits of the spending and work with the legislature and regional partners to explore better options for progressive taxation.

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?

LFP was founded as a community all could afford, and is rapidly losing that. I would restore that principle by allowing diverse housing forms within existing envelopes, offering height/FAR bonuses for higher-density housing, and revisiting development rules to bring taller apartment buildings to the central shopping area and transit corridors. One strategy I hope to explore is a version of the antiparochi system, which would keep current residents engaged in design, hold down costs, and provide diverse housing forms that would be affordable to current residents as they age in place, students as they move back, and teachers and other public servants as they enter the community. A community land trust would be a valuable aid to that effort, again keeping down costs and encouraging community buy-in as we move toward denser housing forms without destroying the urban tree canopy.

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?



LFP recently adopted a Healthy Streets program, which will be enhanced by the new woonerf law that takes effect this summer. I would work with neighborhoods to find cost-effective ways to reclaim car space for people, lowering speeds and adding infrastructure for community, such as playgrounds, street furniture, flowerpots, and extensions of neighborhood cafe seating into protected streets. Our city has plans on the books to add bike lanes along a major state highway, and to add sidewalks and other protected bike/pedestrian space radiating out from schools and parks. I would use revenue from automated traffic cameras to fund implementation of these programs.

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

Public safety is likely to be a focus of a levy lift measure on this fall's ballot. LFP's police force is recognized for its community-oriented approach and innovation, and I support that focus. I also believe the public safety discussion should not be solely about police. Automated traffic cameras and improved street designs create public safety, and creating new community spaces including cafes, playgrounds, and woonerfs will increase community resilience and safety without uniformed officers. As FEMA and other federal emergency aid dry up, we should also invest in regional programs like NEMCO that encourage resilience and community preparedness, and use the energy transition to promote microgrids and neighborhood battery backup to ensure safety even in emergencies.



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

On the city's parks and recreation advisory board, I pushed for an inclusive design and design process for our new lakefront park. LFP's two existing private beach clubs were founded with deeded access, and many of those deeds also included racial covenants. A park for the whole community must provide the level of service that those private clubs have long offered, and must be designed by the voices of the whole community. I brought design exercised to PTA events and other community gatherings, bringing in voices not usually included in city decisions. I also have organized a monthly urbanism book club to engage the community in new discussions about the city's choices. With colleagues at Urbanist Shoreline, I organized a petition and then rally to support completion of the Stride S3 BRT project from Woodinville to the Shoreline light rail station. The rally included Transportation Choices Coalition and Disability Rights Washington, and gave voice to members of our community and neighboring communities who have not been heard in protests by wealthy neighbors of the bus line.

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

Housing policy is climate policy, and increasing options for dense housing will be necessary to reduce our city's carbon footprint and prevent car-oriented sprawl. It will also bring bus lines back into our city, reducing reliance on cars. Neighborhood retail and parks will also cut VMT, as would adding sidewalks and safe pedestrian routes. Our city's bold climate action plan also pushes for electrifying the city vehicle fleet and creating incentives to electrify home appliances and bring city-wide emissions to zero. I support hiring a city climate manager. The incumbent in my race



voted against the budget he wrote as budget committee chair, specifically citing his opposition to hiring a climate manager and directing funding to sidewalks for schools.

What is your financial sustainability plan for the city?

Our city will likely be voting on a levy lift this fall. Four years ago, as PTA advocacy chair, I led an effort to endorse a previous levy lift. The incumbent campaigned against that same levy. Participatory budgeting will increase community support for new taxes and ensure the projects funded benefit the whole community. Property taxes alone are not a sustainable or progressive funding source. Neighborhood retail and increased development will increase city revenue as well without raising property tax rates.

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?

I support quick completion of the Stride S3 BRT project, and hope to restore bus service in town to complete last mile links to light rail and BRT. We have solid plans for bike lanes and sidewalks to schools, which I would push to complete quickly. Our city's Healthy Streets program and the woonerf law offer exciting opportunities to reclaim car space for people, building community and increasing safety. I also hope to explore a community shuttle that could connect the full city to the lakefront park and to expanding neighborhood retail.



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 don't support sweeps or bans. I support regional efforts to increase transitional and supportive housing options to provide options for unhoused neighbors, both in LFP and in neighboring communities. I favor height/FAR bonuses for affordable development, and hope to untangle legal obstacles to dense transitional housing at Town Center.

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

The Comprehensive Plan has been updated to meet minimum standards under state missing middle and TOD laws, but we can go beyond that minimum. It is also now being updated to reflect the city's climate plan. I would push for the plan to be expanded to allow neighborhood retail and denser housing, with transit oriented development along major corridors. I would also encourage more expansive outreach, bringing discussions to living rooms and local gathering spots to bring in feedback on local desires and needs that could bring a more thorough reworking of zoning and make it truly a comprehensive plan for the community's development.