



Robert Leutwyler Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Lynnwood City Council Position 5

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

Housing, multi-modal transportation, Deferred maintenance

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?

As a member of Council as well as my past time on the Lynnwood Planning Commission and as an individual advocate, I have pushed for expanded flexibility in the types of housing we allow, and for Lynnwood to re-evaluate our parking minimum requirements. These are important for many reasons, but in particular to help reduce costs. Through Council meetings, community engagement, and resident outreach, I will continue to make the argument for why Lynnwood will benefit from shelters and supportive housing, with those discussions grounded in data. At the same time, I will listen to residents' concerns and look for ways to address or mitigate those concerns.

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 do support transitioning to a more progressive tax system. In the short-term, allowing for property tax increases to better keep up with inflation is important so cities can meet their obligations and resident needs. In the long term, I support a state income tax proposal coupled with a proposal for specific regressive tax and fees reductions should an income tax be permitted. In the meantime, we need to carefully evaluate areas we could reduce spending or operate more efficiently, to restore and maintain taxpayer confidence.

To mitigate potential revenue shortfall/budget issues, I would first focus on discretionary spending, and temporarily leaving vacancies unfilled. As we develop our revenue forecasts further, I support regular budget workshops for the public to be kept up-to-date on the issues facing the city and the options being considered. The public needs to have the opportunity to be informed and to provide their feedback as we deal with the economic and budget uncertainties.

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?

Overall, I believe Lynnwood has great opportunities for economic development (both commercial and residential). At the same time, cities are still evaluating the impact, outcome, and new responsibilities resulting from the state legislation passed over the last several years. On top of this, we face downward pressure from economic uncertainty and instability. Our strategy right now needs to focus on short-term, immediate benefits we can provide to help offset rising costs and uncertainty - things like faster permitting processes, and flexibility for parking requirements or fees. Where we do set requirements to ensure a certain standard is maintained in the look and feel of new development or protect our tree canopy and green spaces, those requirements need to be reasonable and not cost-prohibitive.



or used as a way to discourage development. This has been my approach throughout our comprehensive plan and unified development code update.

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?

Safer street design needs to be prioritized as the true solution to this problem, and I have advocated for this approach. I also see this closely tied to another priority - focusing on our deferred maintenance for the city's infrastructure - in this case, our roads and sidewalks. I have also pushed for the city to partner closely with WSDOT on upcoming studies of Highway 99, with a greater emphasis on pedestrian and bike safety given the increasing development happening along the 99 corridor from Seattle to Everett.

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

I will advocate for greater investment in safer street design. Over time, as street design influences safer behavior and a safer environment, this will reduce the costs incurred by our police department and others when dealing with the hundreds of vehicle collisions and injuries that happen every year.

To make that investment financially possible, I will draw more public attention and discussion to Lynnwood's history of underfunding road maintenance for the last several decades - and seek public support for increased reinvestment in Lynnwood.



I will continue to support the partnerships created between our police and programs like LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) to ensure a more holistic approach to public safety.

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

I have supported and attended numerous city events held for the public. I advocate for city and council events to be held at varying locations, times and on both weekdays and weekends, to better accommodate people's schedules.

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

Climate change and environmental factors are partly why I have advocated for meaningful changes to housing/zoning/land-use and our approach to transportation. As a city, we can offer a comprehensive strategy that reduces or eliminates the number of cars on the road, or the number of vehicle miles driven; this is a critical goal, given the significant greenhouse gas emissions resulting from transportation. As part of this strategy, we can dedicate more land within Lynnwood to trees and green spaces to provide urban relief. Importantly, when cities embrace this type of strategy, it reduces pressure for development to expand outward into agricultural areas or into our natural, undeveloped lands.

What is your financial sustainability plan for the city?

Supporting development and densification in Lynnwood (in particular, our City Center development and potentially along Highway 99) strengthens the city's financial base. I will continue making this argument for how everyone, including single family homeowners, benefit fiscally through this development. Longer term, if



we are successful in slowing the housing cost increases, as well as creating an environment where owning a car is not a necessity, residents will have greater flexibility for how they spend their money; this can drive further revenue to the city through sales tax generation. Lastly, as noted before, it is important to continue engaging with residents about the significant backlog of deferred maintenance that our city has, and seek their support for property tax increases or similar sources of steadier revenues. A city budget built on deferred maintenance is never financially responsible.

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?

Reinvesting in our street maintenance, with a greater emphasis on multimodal transportation improvements. The city has developed plans like our "Connect Lynnwood: Active & Accessible Transportation Plan"; what we've lacked is strong leadership from City Council to prioritize this type of initiative and financial backing to make it possible. I have also raised the idea for Lynnwood to join the National Association of City Transportation officials, and will work with city staff and city council to evaluate that idea. My goal is to truly embed multimodal transportation into our strategies and planning.

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

I do not think bans and sweeps are effective when there are insufficient or no shelter beds available. At the same time, when residents feel their city parks and spaces are unsafe or now "off-limits" to them, we do them a disservice as well. It is essential to permit and fund shelter and support services throughout the region. We need to



recognize that homelessness is not a "Seattle problem", it is something facing all our communities - so we all need to help be part of the solution.

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

I pushed for evaluating minimum parking requirements as one way to take our comprehensive plan further, as well as to allow a wider variety of housing options.

I also signed off as a Councilmember on a letter of support to our legislators, in favor of parking reform. Given the activity here from the state legislature, this is an area I will continue to press for greater proactivity and engagement by the city.