



Semra Riddle Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Lake Forest Park City Council Position 1

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

City-wide safety plan for pedestrian/cyclist/etc. safety. Housing options beyond the state bare minimum. Increased business opportunities in our residential areas as well as our neighborhood commercial nodes.

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 believe that we should not regulate housing units specifically, but instead continue to regulate the available 'envelope' a building can occupy and the number of parking spaces that can fit on any given site and allow the market to build out units as they see fit. I don't see a large distinction between a mc-mansion with 4 parking spots and a 4-plex with 4 parking spots.

Our community already has several group houses so we are prepared for permanent supportive housing and transitional housing. But, Council has had to punt creating emergency shelter regulations as we have had to focus on fulfilling several other state requirements this past year+ (Comp plan update, middle housing, etc.). I intend to finally have council address our codes to make shelters and emergency



housing viable. Yet even after that, we have very few commercial parcels that are good fits for shelters (access to transit and other services). In the meantime, we co-fund a severe weather shelter through KCRHA along with other North King County Cities, to fulfill this need in our community. We are advocating for upgrading this to a seasonal shelter that is open all winter.

The community is fixated on the character of our communities. So treating the footprint and design of multi-tenant housing the same as we have our residential housing will soften the objections. The strongest objectors are not the majority and we have to remember that when making policy choices that at best for all our residents.

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 fully support any progressive revenue sources. My City gets the majority of our revenue from property taxes, sales tax, utility taxes, Transit Benefit District, and fees & fines. None of these are truly progressive. This year I am going to advocate for a property tax levy lid lift to attempt to fill out \$1M general fund deficit. The challenge with property taxes is that folks often live here for long periods of time, often generations, and the high value of their home is not always reflective of a high income. This leaves many in our community impacted more than others. I will continue to advocate for any progress tax proposals being discussed at the state level.



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?

Going beyond the State minimum for middle housing is our best chance to get affordable housing in LFP. Second best option is the redevelopment of our town center zone with a min requirement of 10% affordable housing (20% to get bonus height). This requires the desire of the developer to match our needs which has not happened yet.

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 were the first to implement 24HR speed cameras. We located ours at our existing school zone cameras. This has provided needed traffic safety improvement revenue, of course, but most importantly it has lowered our average speed through this elementary area from 32MPH to under 23MPH. An amazing feat and I see more people, kids even, walking this arterial now than ever. My city-wide safety plan will include identifying other areas near schools where we need to reduce speeds and improve safety for our kids.

This additional revenue will go to creating sidewalks, separated shoulders, lighted crosswalks, etc. throughout the community.



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

Full funding our police force is the number one goal to maintaining our safe community (#1 and #2 safest in WA in two different studies). Our police focus on community policing and it really shows in our community. New recruits are often surprised that folks will wave to our officers from their yards or while walking. It's a different culture than you'll find elsewhere and we have invested a lot of time and money into creating and maintaining this culture.

We were also instrumental in testing a mental health co-responding team with our neighboring cities and an King County grant. It was so successful that it is now a permanent program that is fully funded by the partner cities. RCR has been a great success and has provided the much needed mental health support to our community and is frequently utilized by our officers and has become a great tool for deescalation and getting services to folks.

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

The first and most impactful way to connect with all facets of our community is to have a Council that looks like our community. This year I am working very hard to ensure we have more representation from non-retirees, those with young families, those with disabilities or families with disabilities, etc.

Beyond representation on Council, we have had several well attended and highly regarded community workshops for work we have been doing over the past couple



years. I hope to take what we learned from these successes and integrate that with more of our community outreach processes. (interactive displays, staff/consultants as each 'station', longer hours, online versions, etc.)

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

We created a Climate Action Committee of community members to build a guide for us. Their work was integrated into all areas of our Comp Plan update and by the end of this year we will have their recommendations added to the Comp Plan in it's own Climate section.

Additionally we are pursuing moving any possible vehicles, tools, etc to electric. This is slow as we don't have the power available yet to handle this demand. I have asked for a multi-year transition plan for purchasing vehicles that also accounts for the infrastructure costs to City Hall and our Public Works yard. Part of that is adding battery back-up storage for when we lose power to solar panels on city building roofs.

I will continue to fight for our tree canopy coverage as this has provided so much relief from heat island effect, stormwater run-off pollution, etc. I look forward to the specific policy guidance that will be presented to Council by the Climate Action Committee later this year.

What is your financial sustainability plan for the city?



Property tax increase levy. Increase business opportunities within the city for B&O taxes and sales taxes. Encourage middle housing construction for construction taxes.

Other than that, I will advocate to the legislature to add new ways we can equitably collect revenue.

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 want to make as much of LFP safe for Active Transportation (peds, bikes, scooters, strollers, etc.) as possible. Adding more traffic cameras can fund these improvements.

Every time a street needs a pavement overly, we will look at the Active Transportation needs and add that to the project using these other funds.

We also need to find all the barely known trail connections our community has made over the years and take them on a city project to make them safe and accessible to at least peds and bikes and hopefully all modes of Active Transportation. These connections are frequently on private property so easements and such may be needed to secure them for future residents. This is a big lift and will take a long time to complete, but it is worth it to connect different neighborhoods together and get kids to school safer.



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

Due to the layout of our city we have yet to address a homeless camp. Personally, I feel sweeps are more harmful than helpful. If a community wanted a sweep, there has to be appropriate shelter for those folks to go that meet their needs (staying with their partner, keeping pets, calm and quiet, having a safe, locked space to sleep and keep all their stuff). At the moment, there are not enough of those spaces to make a sweep worth it. I oppose any sweep that destroys their property. Nothing is as cruel as taking away the little a person has when they essentially have nothing.

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

I feel I made several important improvements to our Comp plan update last year. I revised the Comp Plan Land Use map to set the stage for middle housing, neighborhood businesses, and increasing neighborhood commercial nodes. I pushed for providing as much Justice as possible and when not possible, we had a focus on Equity. I don't feel that any needs to be improved other than completing the Climate section.