



Edwin Obras Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Washington State Representative LD33, Position 1

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

Protecting Workers' Rights: Advocating for labor protections—particularly for low-wage, gig, and service industry workers—so all workers have dignity, safety, and economic security. Expanding Housing Affordability: Advancing legislation that increases access to affordable housing, supports tenants, and prevents homelessness. Strengthening Community Safety with Justice Reform: Enhancing public safety through improved jail standards, reentry programs, and humane, effective justice policies.

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 someone who's worked in housing and anti-homelessness policy for over two decades and co-chaired a capital campaign for affordable housing, I understand the urgent need for solutions across the housing continuum. I've supported legislation like HB 1217 to protect renters and limit extreme rent hikes, and I'll continue to back policies that expand affordable options near jobs and transit. I believe in transparent public engagement and lifting up the voices of those most impacted—especially low-income families and communities of color. While community concerns matter,



they must be weighed against the broader need for housing justice and our moral obligation to ensure everyone has a home.

The Transportation budget became a hot topic this session with efforts to balance the budget on cyclists and tolling transit, as well as falling short on fast ferries. What are your thoughts on the approach of balancing the budget at the expense of non-drivers in the name of bipartisanship?

Balancing transportation budgets on the backs of non-drivers is inequitable and short-sighted. Many in my district rely on transit, biking, or walking—not just out of preference, but necessity. We must prioritize safe, multimodal transportation infrastructure and resist any budget framework that sacrifices equity or sustainability under the guise of bipartisanship. I support reinvesting in active transportation, pedestrian safety, and accessible public transit.

The legislature has tackled big housing policies in recent years: parking reform, transit-oriented development and middle housing. What still needs work?

We've made progress, but we're not done. We need to accelerate zoning reform to allow more multifamily and missing middle housing in high-opportunity areas. We also need stronger renter protections, expanded funding for deeply affordable units, and robust anti-displacement strategies—especially near transit corridors. I'll continue supporting legislation that addresses these gaps while ensuring working families can afford to stay in their communities.

Of the progressive revenue options the state legislature considered this year that did *not* make it into the final budget proposal (or were vetoed by the governor), which would you fight for during the upcoming legislative session and why?



I support progressive revenue tools that ensure our tax system doesn't overburden working families. Of the options considered, I would champion a wealth tax or expanding the capital gains tax. These tools allow us to invest in housing, health care, and infrastructure without increasing regressive taxes. Washington's upside-down tax system needs structural change, and I'm committed to leading on that front.

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, I support adding progressive revenue sources. Options like taxing extreme wealth, closing corporate tax loopholes, and enhancing the capital gains tax would ensure the wealthiest pay their fair share. I do not believe we can afford austerity budgeting—especially with pressing needs in housing, health care, and public safety. Cutting vital services in a time of rising costs would hurt working families most.

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?

The most impactful strategy is increasing affordable housing supply through zoning reform, public investment, and tenant protection laws. We must empower local jurisdictions with tools and incentives to build deeply affordable homes, preserve existing stock, and protect renters. I'll work to ensure state policies support cities that embrace housing abundance while backing tenants and vulnerable families.



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?

I support a “Safe Systems” approach—designing streets that prioritize pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users over cars. That means investing in traffic calming, protected bike lanes, lighting, and crosswalks. Equity must guide these investments—too many traffic deaths happen in low-income, high-traffic corridors. I’ll support state-level funding for Vision Zero initiatives and policies that hold drivers and infrastructure planners accountable.

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

Public safety is about more than policing—it’s about prevention, accountability, and community resilience. My bill to improve jail conditions (HB 1424) reflects a humane approach to justice. I’ll push for investments in mental health care, youth programs, reentry services, and trauma-informed practices. I’ll also ensure police accountability while funding non-carceral approaches to public safety. Our communities deserve safety and dignity.