

MEET *Your* CANDIDATES

A circular portrait of Heather Ramsey, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blue sweater over a white collared shirt, smiling. The background of the portrait shows green trees and a blue sky.

HEATHER RAMSEY

Extra questions from City Council Candidate Forum

Do you feel that the city's "20 is Plenty" campaign has been effective at reducing speeding in neighborhoods? Why or why not?

Partly. A 20mph limit is right for most neighborhood streets, and the campaign has raised awareness. City officials and council members tell me visual reminders help, especially on streets where children and families walk and bike. Law enforcement contacts note that drivers commonly go about 5mph over the posted limit, so emphasizing 20 means more drivers near 25 instead of 30. Even a small reduction in speed can mean the difference between a close call and a tragedy.

But signs are costly and don't work on their own. Our police and traffic safety experts must be fully engaged, including targeted enforcement where speeding persists. Enforcement isn't the full answer either. Streets should be designed so driving 20 feels natural. That means exploring speed humps, curb extensions, raised crosswalks and narrower lanes, starting near schools, parks and senior centers, where our most vulnerable residents travel.

Bottom line: we need clear data on where speeding is happening, what actually works and what it will cost. Residents also deserve a simple, responsive way to request traffic calming on their own streets. Safe streets are a basic quality-of-life issue, and our neighborhoods depend on results, not just signs.

What are you doing as a candidate to inform yourself about community concerns and priorities? And how do you plan to stay informed over the next 4 years if you are elected?

Leading last year's school bond campaign took me into neighborhoods across the city. Since entering this race, I've returned to several of the neighborhood associations to listen to what residents want, need and expect.

My seat on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors also gives me a front-row view of community concerns. The Chamber is the one place where the schools, the city, the Lake Corporation and local businesses come together, and it hears a great deal about what residents need.

I've also been regularly attending city council meetings and talking constantly with various council members about their priorities. If elected, my role would change, but my commitment to staying informed would not. I'll keep showing up at neighborhood association meetings across town to hear what's working and help replicate those successes elsewhere. I would also welcome serving as liaison between the city and the Chamber board.

Staying informed must be a two-way conversation. I want the city to deepen how they share information so residents have answers before they have to ask. I also want to expand how residents give feedback so they are part of the process. In our community, problems shouldn't go unanswered.

MEET *Your* CANDIDATES



HEATHER RAMSEY

Parking around the high schools and some of the parks, especially George Rogers Park, has become a recurring problem for residents of nearby neighborhoods. How do you think the City should approach parking in these areas, and what role do you see for partnership with the Lake Oswego School District in shaping long-term solutions?

“Neighbors near Lake Oswego High School, Lakeridge High School and George Rogers Park shouldn't have to compete for parking in front of their own homes. The goal is balance: keeping our schools and parks accessible while protecting the livability of the streets around them.

I've heard from residents in affected neighborhoods and will keep listening. For example, Old Town neighbors are working to deepen livability by working with the city to add clearer signs and implementing ticketing. Continuing to use data to pinpoint when and where issues occur, whether school days, games, summer weekends or events and then using that data to come up with creative solutions is key.

Partnership with the Lake Oswego School District is also essential. Where appropriate, together we can coordinate student parking permits and event schedules, share existing lots, and encourage walking, biking and carpooling. At George Rogers Park, continuing with clearer signage, time limits, overflow options, event shuttles and targeted enforcement are worth exploring before summer crowds arrive.

Solutions must be fiscally responsible: make the most of what we have before building anything new. And the process must be transparent, giving residents a seat at the table, clear options and costs, and measurable results.“

With costs rising across the board and the city having raised utility rates in recent years, how do you weigh affordability issues for local residents with city infrastructure needs?

“Affordability and infrastructure aren't competing priorities. They're two sides of the same coin in terms of responsibility. Residents are feeling rising costs everywhere, and my family is too. Every rate increase hits household budgets, especially for seniors on fixed incomes and young families.

At the same time, deferring maintenance on our water, sewer and street systems only makes repairs more expensive later. Putting off needed investments isn't fiscally responsible. It simply hands a larger bill to the future.

Striking that balance takes careful planning and accountability. That means prioritizing projects based on real need and long-term value, scrutinizing costs before asking residents for more, and pursuing county, state, federal and other outside funding wherever possible. Sometimes the most affordable path costs more upfront. Our recent water treatment plant decision showed how a one-time larger rate increase can save residents significantly over time.

MEET *Your* CANDIDATES



HEATHER RAMSEY

Transparency is essential. Residents deserve to know where their money goes, why each investment is needed and what results it delivers, and they deserve a voice before major decisions are made. I'd also support strengthening assistance programs for those who need help most, so no one is priced out of the community they love."

Lake Oswego is a predominantly white, aging community. Do you favor efforts to make it more diverse and, if so, how would you suggest we get there?

Yes. I want anyone who hopes to build a life in Lake Oswego and contribute to our community to feel welcome here and have a real chance to do it. Our community is better when it includes young families, seniors, working professionals and people from all kinds of backgrounds.

I don't think state mandates or quotas are the answer. I'd rather focus on removing barriers, and right now the biggest one is cost. Home prices are mostly set by the market, but the City still has a role. Many of the teachers and first responders who serve Lake Oswego can't afford to live here, and I'd like to help change that. I support middle housing options that fit each neighborhood, shaped by neighbor input and good data. The right strategies should also allow seniors to age in place and encourage the next generation to stay in LO.

Getting there isn't only about housing. A more diverse community depends on whether people feel connected once they're here. Our schools, businesses, faith communities and civic groups can help newcomers of every background find their place, and so can supporting entrepreneurs, especially first-time business owners. When opportunity is open to everyone, diversity follows.

Lake Oswego's 460 acres of natural area parks and open space and 53 percent tree canopy are treasured assets and make LO one of the most desirable places to live. What would you do as a City Councilor to protect and preserve those assets?

Our natural areas and tree canopy are a big part of what makes Lake Oswego home. I love the trees around my home in Mountain Park, I hike Tryon Creek and Iron Mountain regularly, and I'm often at George Rogers Park.

Taking care of these places can't be an afterthought. I'd continue to treat them as long-term investments, with a real maintenance plan and budget, instead of waiting until problems get expensive.

Wildfire is a real concern with hotter, drier summers. I was glad to see the City team up with the Oregon National Guard and volunteers this fall to clear brush and debris from Iron Mountain Park. That's the kind of work I'd like to see more of.

MEET *Your* CANDIDATES



HEATHER RAMSEY

Working with Clackamas County, Metro, the Lake Corporation, the Oregon Department of Forestry and others, we can also tackle invasive species, protect waterways and bring in outside funding so residents don't carry the full cost.

Neighbors and volunteers already do great work, and the City should continue to support them and help homeowners protect their properties. Tree rules should be clear and fair, protecting the canopy while respecting property owners. Get that right, and these places will thrive for generations.

If you are elected to City Council, what are your highest priority issues that you believe the City Council should address?

My top priority is getting our big capital projects right, because they'll shape the city for decades. That means keeping infrastructure work on time and on budget, and making sure plans for the Foothills, our library and other key projects are fiscally responsible, sustainable and shaped by the community. The new wastewater treatment plant is a major investment, and keeping it on track protects ratepayers.

I want to champion our local businesses. Increasing economic development efforts to ensure our businesses have the customers they need to thrive. Small businesses create jobs, keep our city lively and support a healthy tax base.

Growing responsibly is another priority. We need to balance state housing mandates with local needs and preserve LO's character, with residents involved from the start.

Protecting what makes LO special matters to me, especially our parks and waterways. Keeping families safe is just as important, so I'll support police, fire and emergency preparedness.

Finally, all of this depends on how the Council works together. A collaborative Council sets the tone for City staff, makes decisions in the open, spends wisely and keeps residents in the loop. That's how we keep Lake Oswego one of the best places to live.

Lake Oswego has some large scale projects on the horizon including the new wastewater treatment facility and a new public library. What are your thoughts about prioritizing major infrastructure projects both from a perspective of fiscal constraints and also the ability to manage these projects for success?

MEET *Your* CANDIDATES



HEATHER RAMSEY

With limited dollars, essential infrastructure has to be our top priority. The wastewater treatment facility is already approved, and with a 28% sewer rate increase coming, residents deserve to see it finished on time and on budget. Same goes for the South Shore Fire Station voters approved in May.

Next come our stormwater system, which is older than many of the homes it serves, and aging bridges we need to fix before a Cascadia earthquake tests them. Sidewalks count, too, for safer, more walkable neighborhoods.

Our library has one of the highest circulation rates in the country, but its 1983 building has serious seismic, water intrusion and accessibility problems that affect cardholders across the city. The Foothills District and the long-delayed North Anchor project could also help shape LO's future.

Managing projects well is just as important. Taking on too many big projects at once puts them all at risk, so the order matters. Every project needs a realistic funding plan, including grants and partnerships, plus clear milestones, strong oversight and regular public updates. I'd rather ask hard questions early than fix an expensive mistake later. Residents should know what each project costs, why it matters and whether it's working.