



## 2024 Portland City Elections Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to fill out United for Portland's candidate questionnaire. Any candidate seeking our endorsement or support must fill out this questionnaire.

The endorsement process and all responses will be made public on our website.

**Please return this questionnaire via email to [doug@moorestrategicconsulting.com](mailto:doug@moorestrategicconsulting.com). Please return it as a Microsoft Word document or as a PDF file by 8/30/24.**

All questions are open-ended, and an opportunity to tell us about your thoughts on key issues facing our city, as well as discuss your leadership style. This will be shared on our website, and we ask that you take the time to tell us what you really think and what voters should know about you. There are no right answers to these questions, and we don't want you simply telling us what you think we want to hear.

If you need further information about any of the items covered in the questionnaire, please give United for Portland Executive Director Doug Moore a call at 503-729-5175 or email [doug@moorestrategicconsulting.com](mailto:doug@moorestrategicconsulting.com).

**Candidate Name: Luke Zak**

**Campaign Contact: Luke Zak**

**Phone #: 971-361-8024**

**Email: [info@lukeforpdx.com](mailto:info@lukeforpdx.com)**

**Candidate Signature:** 

**1. Do you want United for Portland's endorsement and support?**

Yes.

**2. What's your approach to ending unsheltered homelessness in Portland?**

There is no silver bullet to ending unsheltered homelessness in Portland. Our response needs to be multifaceted and able to meet folks where they are at, providing the access to resources and housing that works for them. From my perspective, that means helping folks experiencing houselessness get housing, preventing anybody experiencing housing instability from losing their housing, and improving overall housing availability and affordability.

For the first part of that plan, we need to ensure that we have enough shelter to house everybody. That includes continuing to invest in Temporary Alternative Shelter Sites and Safe Rest Villages as well as additional transitional and supportive housing. We should also be



uplifting the efforts of aligned non-profits providing focused support to more vulnerable populations via targeted programs like affinity-based micro villages and not force folks into one congregate shelter model.

For the second component, we need to make sure that folks who currently have housing stay in it. We can enact more renter protections and provide additional rent support so that Portlanders can retain the housing they already have. Lastly, our housing production has not kept up with need and affordability has suffered as a consequence. We need to ensure that we are encouraging development of housing units across the entire affordability spectrum and that the folks that need the support have access to it.

**3. How do we create housing sufficient to meet future needs, not just current needs? What mix of housing does that look like to you?**

To have a vibrant, connected, housed city, we need to ensure that we have an adequate, dense housing supply in a variety of housing options. The rate at which the Portland metro area is losing its population has slowed and the trend toward smaller household sizes both mean that we must be prepared to scale up our rate of housing development.

We must undo previous zoning decisions that have prevented medium density multifamily housing. This includes upzoning much of the central east side to allow for an array of mixed-use multifamily development that can increase liveable capacity, alongside investment in transit development and improved infrastructure. We have yet to see if the consolidation of permitting processes will bear the intended improvements to costs and construction times, but we need to continue to remove barriers for new development. Conversely, zoning in other areas of the city like the Gateway TIF District previously required the same hyper density as the downtown core and has prevented gentle, mid-level density development from happening as well. Making sure that zoning and permitting is recalibrated to allow for adequate affordable housing production is critical.

I also believe that there is an opportunity to further explore a social-housing model to address the growing need for housing affordability in the long-run, perhaps through acquisition and residential conversion of chronically vacant office space.

**4. When you think of public safety, what does that mean to you? What will you do to ensure public safety for all Portlanders as a member of the city council?**

When it comes to public safety, I believe in harm reduction and crime prevention first. As far as need areas are concerned, addiction and mental health crises and our emergency response network are top of mind. We are making strides in these areas, but there is a lot more work to be done.

For people experiencing addiction and mental health crises, we must be able to deliver better access to harm reduction and treatment resources. This can include developing sobering centers alongside the proposed deflection center, establishing safe use centers, implementing drug checking programs, and generally providing easy access to resources for individuals in need. I



would also like to see us explore other harm reduction strategies, such as the type of pilot program Minneapolis just rolled out installing a narcan vending machine in a high need area. In addition to helping folks experiencing addiction, we also need to increase our efforts around identifying and preventing the supply and distribution of fentanyl and other drugs into the city.

When it comes to our emergency response network, we must make sure our dispatchers are appropriately staffed so that we can improve response time and ensure the appropriate component of the system is being engaged, with armed officers being reserved for violent crime. We also need to fully fund and increase the capabilities of Portland Street Response so that it can adequately serve Portlanders around the clock and throughout the entire city.

I also believe in community safety as a principle and there is a lot of foundational work that needs to be done to improve PPB relations with the community. I was encouraged to hear Chief Day report that the majority of new recruits have been local, although the most recent data shows that less than 20% of the force lives inside of the city. I believe that instituting a residency requirement along with ensuring the implementation of the voter-approved community-based accountability process are both important steps in establishing transparency and improving relations that need to be taken.

Especially relevant in District 3, I also believe transportation safety is vital to keep in mind. Through traffic-calming measures, increased enforcement on driving speed, and further investment in public transit, biking, and pedestrian infrastructure, we can make meaningful progress toward Vision Zero and reducing traffic deaths.

**5. What do you see as Portland's economic engine, and what do you believe it should be for the future?**

While most recently, government is the only sector that is growing, Portland's economic heavy-hitting industries also include healthcare, tourism, apparel and outdoor, and technology. Although the Silicon Forest is predominantly out past the West Hills, much of that revenue brought into the market passes through into the city and boosts our economy as well. Additionally, more finely than apparel and outdoor, I would consider Portland to be the footwear capital of the world.

Big business aside, it is largely the local, small businesses that make up the character of the city. Whether it is at independent restaurants, niche retail stores, or other entrepreneurial ventures, 28% of Portlanders are employed by small businesses. That said, many are struggling or have closed since the pandemic, often due to staffing shortages, rent increases, or supply chain difficulties. Our city should have a more direct role in supporting folks looking to establish, grow, or even stabilize their small businesses. As a city, we have so many vibrant, quirky, unique neighborhoods that would feel a lot safer and more connected if we did our part to have thriving local businesses in place of empty storefronts.

**6. Tell us about your leadership style. How will you work with constituents and interest groups? How are you going to address the inevitable disagreements in a brand new council of 12?**



My leadership style is responsive and collaborative. I want to ensure that I am transparent and available for my constituents and bring their visions, their needs, into City Hall with me. I will have an open line of communication with affinity groups and neighbors in my community and make sure that folks know that the communication goes both ways. I want my constituents to know that I will advocate for them, even when they aren't in the room.

Of course, some disagreements are bound to happen on the new community council. When that happens, folks want to know that they have elected somebody that will be the adult in the room. Somebody that can bring folks together, find common ground, and work toward outcome-oriented solutions for the good of the city. That sort of collaboration and coalition building is what I have already been doing since launching my campaign. I have been active and intentional about building relationships, not only with my potential future councilor peers, but also with the mayoral candidates, our county commissioner candidates, and our state electeds. We need to have improved coordination and, above all, a desire to work together across local, state, and federal jurisdictions so that we can make meaningful progress on the issues that go beyond the city borders.

**7. What would you do to align Portland's taxing and spending with our city's needs and values?**

With Portland being one of the highest-taxed cities, I support the moratorium on adding new taxes and fees, especially ones that would come at individual expense. It seems instead that we have an implementation problem, due in part to siloing of operations, process redundancies, and communication barriers between bureaus.

We routinely witness lapses in process, from the now-deferred deflection center opening that had no means of providing treatment yet to the multifamily housing development stagnation, which is pacing at 500 permits issued on the year and will not meet production needs. In working to align the tax revenue collected with the city's needs, we need to make sure that we are spending money responsibly and efficiently. To me, that means setting specific, measurable goals that can be evaluated over time with clear delineation of who is responsible for what work and outcomes. In turn, that needs to be baked into our city budget, which is a document that reflects our values and priorities as a society.

**8. Is there an issue, topic, or policy we didn't ask about, but is very important to you? If so, feel free to ask and answer your own question(s).**

One thing that hasn't been touched on much is environmental justice. We need to ensure that Portland returns to its place as a leader on climate. There are many key environmental issues in the city that the new council will need to address. This includes action around our transition to clean energy, investment in multimodal and active transit away from auto dependency, and disaster mitigation around the fossil fuel transportation that cuts through our city and then is stored at the high-risk Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub. Additionally, as much of the policy that has been discussed involves new development, I would also like to posit that while we need to streamline permitting and improve processes, that those efficiencies must not come at societal or environmental costs.