

Lines
from
Lorri

JANUARY
2024



GREETINGS, NEIGHBORS!

Thank you for re-electing me to another term as your Councilmember – it's truly an honor. And thank you also to my Council colleagues for electing me Council Chair/Deputy Mayor.

Congratulations to our new Mayor Tom French, and to our new Councilmembers, Paula Goode and Ellyn Saunders. We are well-positioned to represent LFP citizens and take care of our city over the year ahead.

Thank you and farewell to former Mayor Jeff Johnson and former Council Vice Chair Phillipa Kassover, who both served Lake Forest Park faithfully for many years!

AROUND LFP CITY HALL

Lake Forest Park has experienced some staff changes recently due to retirements and departures. The hiring process takes some time, and we are now pleased to welcome our new Community Development Director, Mark Hofman, who comes to us from the City of Newcastle; our new Assistant Planner, Elizabeth Talavera; and our new Project Manager in Public Works, Katie Phillips.

The Council carried a demanding workload in 2023. Many Council meetings ran well overtime, until 10 or 11pm, due to the press of business. 2023 actions by the Council include:

- Public meetings/hearings and adoption of an updated **Tree Ordinance** covering corridors such as Bothell Way and Ballinger Way.
- Public meetings/hearings and adoption of both a **Retaining Wall Ordinance** covering appropriate design, greening, and noise management for large structures, including along Bothell and Ballinger Ways.
- Adoption of the **2024 budget**, including changes necessary for increased costs for policing and 911 dispatch services
- Studies and decisions to enable **lower speed limits and traffic calming** throughout the city, including on Bothell and Ballinger Ways.
- Approved workplans and contracts to assist the Planning Commission and Council with community engagement and mandatory updates to the **LFP Comprehensive Plan**, as well as community engagement and products for a **Master Plan for the Lakefront Park**.
- Approved workplan and contracts to assist the Climate Action Committee and Council with community engagement and development of a new **Climate Action Plan** for LFP.
- Public meetings/hearings and adoption of more protective regulations governing construction for "reasonable use exceptions" in **environmentally critical areas**, based on recommendations from the Planning Commission.

- *Adoption of a process for residents to request a **residential parking permit program** in areas where commuter parking congestion occurs, in anticipation of possible issues related to Sound Transit, the lakefront park, or other developments.*

2024 promises to be just as busy, with park plans, land use plans, and new budgets on the agenda, to name just a few.

SOUND TRANSIT PLANS IN LFP

*Despite repeated requests from the City and LFP community to pause and reconsider, Sound Transit (ST) and its Board continue to advance work on the **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stops and road widening for Bothell Way in LFP**. Fellow Councilmembers and I support reasonable, efficient, and cost-effective transit improvements, but the current ST designs are deeply flawed, disproportionately damaging to the environment, and unduly expensive for 2 minutes of peak transit time savings.*

Our city and the LFP community are trying to help ST – by requesting transit alternatives that are far less damaging to the environment while providing substantially the same benefits to bus transit riders. These alternatives will also be substantially less costly and much less time consuming to build, with cost savings that can be applied to other important currently unfunded transit improvements. Why doesn't ST consider this a win-win? It defies business sense and good use of taxpayer dollars.



Following up on Council and public meetings with ST CEO Julie Timm (attended by over 450 LFP citizens), the Council sent a letter to the Sound Transit Board and CEO at the end of October. The Council once again noted that LFP, comparatively the smallest, is by far the most heavily impacted of any city along the BRT route. We summarized the disproportionate environmental impacts (to trees, streams, and steep slopes, as well as noise and pollution impacts) and enormous costs (over half a billion dollars) associated with a full-size dedicated bus lane in LFP.

The Council again requested ST to pause and study the alternative of queue jumps and signal light changes through LFP -- what ST is already planning to implement with good results along 145th Street. We requested a side-by-side comparison of queue jumps and ST's full size bus lane in terms of time savings, costs, construction impacts, environmental

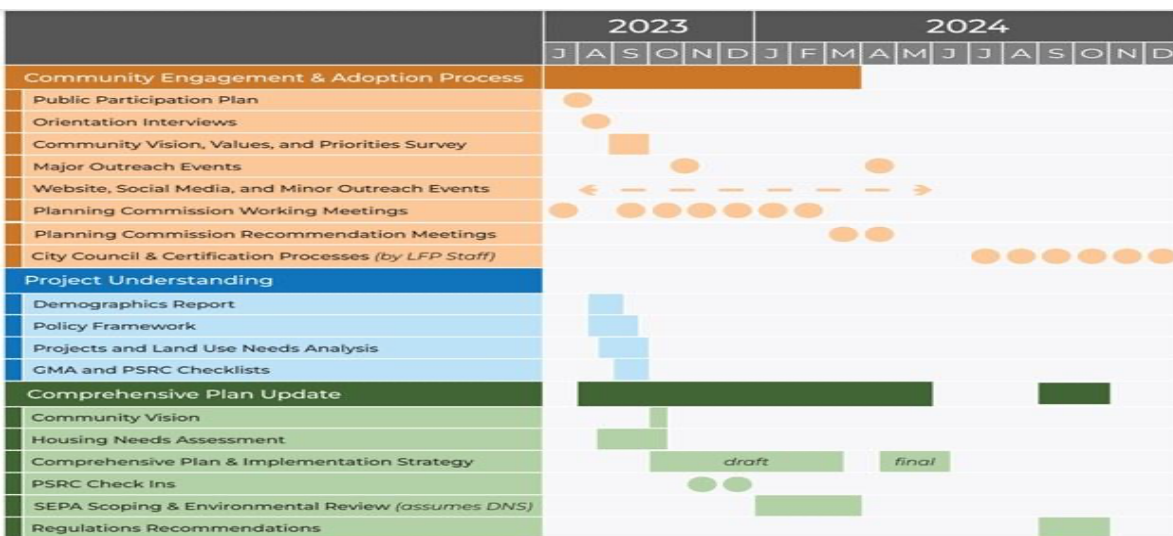
impacts, etc. As was the pattern with prior City letters to ST, ST still has not responded after several months !

There are new developments at ST that may provide an opening for the changes we are requesting. CEO Julie Timm, who attended Council and public meetings in LFP to hear our concerns, is leaving ST after a short tenure and Board concerns about cost overruns. And the re-election loss of Kenmore’s ST Board member opened the opportunity for a new “north end” Board member. Councilmember Tracy Furutani and I both requested that Board Chair Dow Constantine appoint a LFP representative in his place, but we were not successful.

Speaking of community engagement and comments, the city now has a portion of the LFP website dedicated to sharing ST materials. You can find the latest Council letter there. <https://www.cityofflp.gov/676/Sound-Transit-Bus-Rapid-Transit-BRT> LFP is fortunate to have active organizations sharing BRT information and advocacy. LFP CORE, <https://www.lfpcore.org/>; the Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation <https://lfpsf.org> ; and the Sheridan Beach Community Club all continue to weigh in.

UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS

I am the Council liaison to our LFP Planning Commission, a citizen body required by State law. The Planning Commission is actively working on updating LFP’s Comprehensive Plan, which must be revised every 10 years. The Comp Plan memorializes the community’s vision looking ahead 20 years, setting goals and policies for growth, infrastructure, and services necessary under the vision. Our current 2015 Comp Plan continues to provide a green vision and thoughtful policies for the future. Still, Lake Forest Park has changed since 2015, and modifications are also needed to comply with recent legislation and guidance regarding housing, density, regional transportation plans, and climate action. By way of example, State law now requires LFP to allow more dwelling units on all lots currently zoned for single family building and greater density in certain transit-oriented locations (but notably without requirements for affordability).



Our city has made a good start on these updated housing elements. Existing zoning, including multi-family zoning at Town Center and at Southern Gateway, is sufficient to meet our allocated growth targets. The Council also adopted code provisions for affordable housing requirements

and incentives when we adopted Town Center updates a few years ago. And our recently adopted, more flexible code provisions for accessory dwelling units allow improved housing diversity and affordability consistent with the character of LFP.

Are you interested in learning more, following the Comp Plan updates, or getting involved? The 2015 Comp Plan and 100 Year Legacy Vision for LFP are available online, as are an updated draft Community Overview and preliminary Housing Assessment. You can also attend monthly meetings of the Planning Commission and attend a community open house and workshop sometime this spring. You can see more information and sign up to receive updates here:

<https://www.cityofflp.gov/373/2024-Comprehensive-Plan-Update>

LAKEFRONT PARK MASTER PLAN PROCESS

I also serve as Council liaison to our citizen Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The Parks Board is actively working on outreach and recommendations for a **Master Plan for the new Lakefront Park**. The plan will describe desired recreation types and facilities, tree preservation, environmental protection and compliance, public safety and security, parking and disabled access, neighborhood privacy and impacts, and ways to acknowledge tribal and other history. Our goal is to have a completed Master Plan concept in plan in time for State biennial grant funding opportunities this spring.

So far, the Board and the city have reached out to our community through an online survey and in a community workshop, both well-attended, to receive input on designs and issues. Based on their survey and workshop comments, our community shares many goals for the park, including a focus on water-based recreation and all-age use, waterfront access for community members who are not able to use the two LFP private clubs, seamless alignment with the Lyon Creek Park conservation area, and acknowledgement of the property's history. **The next community meeting will occur on February 21st at City Hall**, where the Board and team will share design options for your consideration and input.



Are you interested in learning more, attending monthly Parks Board meetings, or getting involved? For more information and to receive updates, please see:

<https://lfplakefrontpark.com/> and <https://www.cityofflp.gov/577/Parks-and-Recreation-Advisory-Board>

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN PROGRESS



Early in 2024, our hard-working citizen Climate Action Committee will be sharing its **draft Climate Action Plan** recommendations for public review and comment. The objective of the plan is to reduce our community's use of fossil fuels and help us adapt to our changing climate.

To learn more or sign up for notifications, please see: <https://www.cityofflp.gov/649/Climate-Action-Committee>

YOUR VOICE ON CITY COUNCIL

Happy New Year to all! As we begin 2024 with a new Mayor and Councilmembers, a reminder that all Council meetings are hybrid public meetings (virtual and in person), with relevant public comments welcome. Dates and agendas are posted on the LFP website and you can sign up for advance e-mail notices.

Well-deserved thanks once again to our Police Department and the LFP Rotary for another year of "Shop with a Cop," helping community families at Christmastime.

<https://www.shorelineareanews.com/2023/12/shop-with-cop-lfp-police-help-ten-local.html>



And many thanks also to LFP community visionaries, the Shoreline Historical Museum, numerous funders, and many volunteers for making a Miyawaki Forest possible on the grounds

of the museum. Miyawaki Forests, originally conceived in Japan, are small, intensive forests with large environmental benefits. What an amazing community effort this has been, from vision, to funding, to planting! <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/volunteers-use-miyawaki-method-to-plant-dense-pocket-forest-in-shoreline/>
<https://www.shorelineareanews.com/2023/12/volunteers-plant-miyawaki-urban-forest.html>



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Warm wishes,

Lorri Podi