



Candidate Questionnaire

Climate Resilience: How serious an issue for your level of government do you believe climate change to be? What actions would you support (a) to mitigate climate change locally and (b) to improve Lexington's resilience to expected severe weather events?

Climate change is a serious issue for local government because its effects are already felt in public health, severe weather, and the infrastructure residents depend on. During my time with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, I worked with programs focused on clean air and clean water. This work provided an early appreciation for the role government plays in protecting natural resources and translating science into responsible public policy. We saw how poor air quality contributed to rising rates of asthma and other health problems, particularly in marginalized communities that often carried a disproportionate burden. But poor air quality does not recognize ZIP codes. It can affect any family and any neighborhood.

In my nonprofit work, I have also helped coordinate communications after floods, tornadoes, and other disasters across Appalachia. Those experiences taught me that severe weather and environmental challenges are not abstract policy debates. They affect real people, real families, and entire communities.

To reduce local emissions, I would support energy-efficiency improvements in city buildings, responsible expansion of renewable energy, cleaner municipal vehicles and equipment as they are replaced, stronger support for walking, biking, and public transit, and land-use decisions that reduce unnecessary sprawl. I also support protecting and expanding Lexington's tree canopy, preserving green space, and encouraging compact development in appropriate areas where roads, utilities, and other infrastructure already exist.

As Lexington grows, we must make smart investments that protect our neighborhoods, infrastructure, and natural resources from flooding, severe weather, and other challenges that are becoming more common. I would prioritize updated flood-risk and stormwater planning, stronger environmental and drainage standards for new development, and coordinated emergency planning that identifies vulnerable neighborhoods and communicates clearly with residents before, during, and after a crisis. We should also review major weather events afterward, share what worked and what did not, and use those lessons to improve future response.

Land Use: Land use and the expansion of the Urban Services Boundary are a perpetual concern. Providing affordable housing and preserving our landscape are always in tension. What is your view of how to handle these competing goals?

Lexington does not have to choose between providing more housing and protecting the farmland, green space, and natural beauty that make Lexington special. We do, however, have to make thoughtful decisions about where and how growth occurs. I support a balanced approach that expands housing options while making better use of land and infrastructure already inside the Urban Services Boundary. Responsible growth is not just about housing. It is about protecting quality of life, strengthening climate resiliency, and ensuring Lexington remains a great place to live. The decisions we make today will shape not only housing opportunities, but also the long-term sustainability of our community.

My first priority would be to encourage more infill, redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and housing options like duplexes and townhomes that provide more choices for families, young professionals, and seniors. These types of homes can give families more housing choices while helping Lexington accommodate growth without relying solely on large apartment complexes or continued expansion into farmland.

At the same time, we must be mindful that redevelopment does not come at the expense of the people who already call these neighborhoods home. Growth should strengthen communities, not price longtime residents out of them. Greater density can be appropriate near major corridors, employment centers, and transit, but it should come with strong design standards, safe pedestrian connections, stormwater planning, and meaningful neighborhood input early enough to shape the project.

I do not want Lexington to become a concrete jungle. The farms, green spaces, and scenic landscapes that surround us are a major reason people choose to live here and a key part of our identity. If we continue to push growth outward without careful planning, we risk losing the very qualities that make Lexington special.

Any future expansion of the Urban Services Boundary should be based on documented housing and land needs, infrastructure capacity, environmental impacts, fiscal responsibility, and a clear explanation of why existing land and redevelopment tools are not sufficient. I would also look for stronger connections between development approvals and investments in roads, sidewalks, transit, stormwater systems, parks, and public services. Housing affordability matters deeply, but affordability cannot be used as a blanket justification for poorly planned expansion. We need more housing that is attainable, safe, and well-maintained, but we must pursue it in a way that protects farmland, preserves quality of life, and ensures Lexington remains a place where both current and future residents can thrive. We must protect the agricultural land and natural resources that cannot be replaced once lost.

Solar Power: The Urban-County Council is considering an ordinance to allow a small amount solar on farmland while keeping the land open to agricultural use now and in the future. While this particular ordinance will be decided soon, the issue will remain an active one going forward. What is your view of the proper place for solar power in Fayette County?

A majority of the Council recently voted to allow large-scale solar facilities as a conditional use in agricultural areas, and I understand why this has generated strong opinions on both sides. Many residents support renewable energy goals, while others are concerned about the long-term impact on productive farmland. I believe both concerns deserve to be taken seriously.

Solar power has an important place in Fayette County, but its location and design matter. I support an approach that begins with rooftops, public buildings, brownfields, commercial and industrial properties, parking canopies, and other already-developed sites. Those opportunities can produce clean energy without competing with productive farmland that supports our agricultural economy and helps define Lexington's character.

I am also open to carefully regulated agrivoltaic projects that allow agriculture and energy production to coexist on the same property. Any ordinance should have strong guardrails that protect prime soils and environmentally sensitive areas, address impacts on neighboring properties, and include binding plans for maintenance, financial responsibility, decommissioning, and restoration of the land. Decisions should also consider impacts on infrastructure, the electric grid, and the long-term health of our rural landscape.

My interest in renewable energy is both personal and practical. Years ago, after seeing solar technology used in Haiti, I explored whether similar solutions could help families and businesses in remote parts of Eastern Kentucky where energy costs and access can be challenges. That experience reinforced for me that renewable energy can be both an environmental tool and a way to improve resilience and opportunity. Over the years, I have also seen how renewable energy can strengthen resilience in Appalachian communities. After the devastating 2022 floods in Eastern Kentucky, the Isom IGA in Letcher County rebuilt with rooftop solar and energy-efficient equipment, reducing utility costs by thousands of dollars each month while helping secure the future of an important community resource. Experiences like that reinforced my belief that renewable energy can do more than reduce emissions. It can lower costs, strengthen local economies, and help communities recover from and prepare for future challenges. But just as we must be thoughtful about growth and development, we must be thoughtful about where we place renewable energy infrastructure. Fayette County should move solar forward thoughtfully, with strong guardrails and respect for the land that makes Lexington unique.

Transportation: What is your vision of Lexington transportation long term (say 20 years), what are your top 2 priorities for transportation? Is there a viable way to improve the use of mass transit?

Twenty years from now, I want Lexington to be a city where people have safe, reliable choices for getting to work, school, medical appointments, shopping, parks, and community events. Driving will remain important, but it should not be the only practical option. A connected transportation system should include well-maintained roads, dependable public transit, continuous sidewalks, safer crossings, protected bicycle connections where appropriate, and thoughtful land-use planning that places more daily needs within easier reach.

My top two priorities are safety and connectivity, and improving the reliability of public transit. Lexington should continue moving toward a Complete Streets approach that considers the needs of everyone using our transportation network. We should focus investments on practical improvements in areas where people are most vulnerable, particularly near schools, parks, bus stops, and growing commercial corridors. Safe, accessible connections help people of all ages stay active, engaged, and connected to their community.

When my four children were growing up, there was a time when they attended four different schools. I remember coordinating drop-offs, pick-ups, and after-school activities every day. That experience helps me understand how transportation affects a family's time, budget, and stress. People need systems that work in real life, not only on a planning map.

While City Council does not operate Lextran, councilmembers can work closely with Lextran leadership, support funding for transit improvements, and ensure transportation is considered when making decisions about housing, development, and infrastructure. My goal would be to make public transit more reliable, accessible, and connected to where people need to go, including jobs, schools, health care, and recreation.

I would support exploring sustainable funding options for programs such as WHEELS so that seniors and neighbors with disabilities can access transportation without cost barriers. Transit planning should be coordinated with new housing and commercial development from the beginning so residents are not forced into longer commutes and greater transportation costs. Recent investments such as improved rider information and downtown circulator service demonstrate the type of practical improvements that can make transit more useful for everyday riders.

More broadly, I believe transportation and land use must be planned together. If we want to reduce congestion, improve affordability, and strengthen climate resiliency, we need growth patterns that allow more people to live closer to jobs, schools, services, recreation, and transit. The goal is not to make it harder to drive. The goal is to give people options and make it easier for Lexington families to get where they need to go. When we build connected neighborhoods and place daily destinations within easier reach, we reduce transportation costs, support local businesses, and create a higher quality of life for everyone.

Data Centers: We are currently seeing a boom in data center production in this country and a lot of interest in potential data centers being built in Fayette County. No matter what the current council decides to do, this hot button issue will be with us for some time. What are your views on data centers large and small?

Data centers are not all the same, and Lexington should not regulate a small facility serving an existing business in the same way it would a hyperscale industrial operation. Smaller facilities may have a role in established commercial or industrial areas where the necessary infrastructure already exists and where they can meet strong performance standards. Hyperscale data centers are fundamentally different because of their enormous demands on electricity, water, land, and public infrastructure.

I am opposed to hyperscale data centers in Fayette County. Developments with significant environmental impacts are too often placed in low-income communities and communities of color, where residents already may face higher environmental and economic burdens. Those communities are then left to live with the noise, traffic, pollution, health concerns, pressure on public services, and potential increases in utility costs, while the broader region receives the promised economic benefits. Lexington should not continue a pattern in which marginalized communities are expected to bear the greatest risks and receive the fewest lasting benefits.

Rising utility costs are already placing real pressure on working families, seniors, and people on fixed incomes. Lexington should not approve a project that could increase demand on the electric grid or water system without fully understanding how those costs would affect ratepayers. Nor should tax revenue and temporary construction activity outweigh concerns about public health, natural resources, neighborhood quality of life, and the relatively small number of permanent jobs these massive facilities may create.

I support the current Council's moratorium and its decision to take the time necessary to research data centers and understand their cumulative impacts. That research is important even though I oppose hyperscale facilities. Council needs a solid foundation of independently reviewable information to develop regulations that clearly distinguish among types of data centers, protect residents and ratepayers, establish strong standards for smaller facilities, and guard against future proposals that could harm our communities.

That process should be transparent and include plain-language information, independent analysis, and meaningful opportunities for residents to participate. Council should closely examine energy and water use, utility costs, backup generation, noise, traffic, emergency response, infrastructure demands, public incentives, environmental effects, and who would ultimately carry the financial and health risks.

My position is not a rejection of technology or economic development. It is a recognition that not every project is right for every community. Innovation should serve the public interest, not come at the expense of marginalized communities, affordable utility service, farmland, natural resources, or neighborhood quality of life. Lexington can support technology and responsible economic development without accepting hyperscale data centers whose risks are too great and whose benefits may be uncertain or unevenly distributed.