



Looking@Lakewood

Google Fiber coming to Lakewood

Lakewood will become the first city in Colorado to receive Google Fiber's fiber-to-the-building network, expanding the competitive market for high-speed broadband service for the city's residents and companies. Lakewood joins a select group of cities nationwide where Google Fiber has deployed its 100% fiber optic internet service.



Google Fiber

As the pandemic demonstrated with the shift to more virtual work, school and commerce, high-speed internet service is vital to how

the world functions today, and Lakewood has been working to bring providers to the city to expand options and ensure competitive pricing for the community. Google Fiber service is capable of delivering gigabit and even multi-gigabit speeds.

"Everyone needs to be connected today whether it's for school or work, and I think adding Google Fiber in Lakewood is a great step in the right direction," said Mayor Adam Paul. "Internet connectivity is as important as having water and electricity, and we need to ensure we have robust systems in place to serve our residents and our businesses."

The city's agreement with Google Fiber stems from a 2019 vote in which Lakewood residents authorized the city to explore options to improve the city's broadband offerings.

"Everyone deserves access to fast, reliable internet, and Google Fiber is working to connect folks in Lakewood to work, school and each other by providing great internet and customer service," said Google's Southwest Region General Manager Sasha Petrovic. "We are looking forward to serving the people of Lakewood and plan to offer service as broadly as possible throughout the community."

Google Fiber will begin construction of the new fiber optic network in the city's rights of way and easements in 2023, with service available as segments of the network are completed. Google Fiber's goal is to serve as many residents as possible in all neighborhoods. To receive construction updates, visit fiber.google.com/cities/lakewood.

The city has a resource center at Lakewood.org for residents to learn more from answers to frequently asked questions, including contact information for the company. This center will be updated as more information becomes available. [A](#)

The key to preventing auto theft

The police commander leading the Colorado Metropolitan Auto Theft Task Force (C-MATT) uses a simple saying when explaining the best way to stop the rise in car thefts.

"The key is the key to reducing auto theft," Lakewood Commander Mike Greenwell repeats frequently during community meetings and other talks with residents. "The best thing I can give you from a prevention side is that the vehicle owner is the key to reducing auto theft by removing the key from the vehicle when not attended."

Greenwell said that an estimated 35% of auto thefts could be prevented if the owner or driver removed the key or fob from the vehicle. This, along with never leaving running vehicles unattended with the keys inside, is the best way to prevent car thefts.

The experts in auto theft trends also note that it doesn't matter what your socioeconomic status is or how nice a neighborhood is. Auto thieves are trolling the streets, and they're looking for cars.

The Colorado Auto Theft Prevention Authority website, LockDownYourCar.org, provides a wide range of resources from prevention tips to resources if your car is stolen. It also includes a map with current data showing theft hot spots in the state, which can be zoomed to the individual street level. It's also working to launch a tool on the website to create a self-assessment for "auto theft risk." [A](#)

"The key is the key to reducing auto theft."

- Lakewood Commander Mike Greenwell

Follow the tips below to do all you can to stop auto thefts.



Never leave your car running unattended.



Keep all valuables in the trunk or hidden from view.



Always keep your car doors locked, when driving or parked.



If you are approached, do not roll down the windows or open a door.



Always park in well-lit areas.



Don't store firearms or other valuables in your car.



When buying a used vehicle, always check the VIN to ensure it hasn't been stolen. Visit the National Insurance Crime Bureau for more information.



Purchase a steering lock available at local auto parts store or a GPS/Tracking device.



Avoid leaving documents with your address in glove box. (Only keep the half of the registration slip without your address in your car.)



Know the year, make, model and color of the car, the license plate number and Vehicle Identification Number (the "VIN").



Don't keep a spare set of keys in the car for any vehicles.



Manage your risk; buy comprehensive insurance that covers stolen vehicles. Also consider getting gap insurance.

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POSTAL PATRON



MAYOR




Adam Paul

Earlier this year at its annual planning session, City Council set the goals for the city based on your input and collaboration, and you can see these at Lakewood.org/CouncilDashboard. By setting the priorities, the city manager can implement them by directing city staff. This is the process prescribed by the City Charter, the city’s constitution designating and

separating the powers of council and staff. As the charter also requires, a balanced budget has been submitted and approved by council. My role, in combination with council members, is to work together, as no one council member can direct staff. A majority of council must also approve the policies and direction provided to the city manager. With the help of Lakewood’s dedicated staff, the council’s goals are the focus of the recently adopted 2023 budget. We are investing your dollars in improvements and maintenance of existing transportation assets and working on new park acquisitions and upgrades, sustainability throughout the city, public safety, innovative programs to address homelessness, the police’s co-responder program for mental health and much more.

Review the annual budget at Lakewood.org/budgets. During the height of the pandemic, the city cut \$17 million from its budget, mostly through staff vacancies. A key function of the city, however, is to provide the community with the highest level of service, and the 2023 budget will begin to backfill positions that are critical to providing you even better service. Lakewood is a bright spot for what can be done when residents, businesses, service clubs, schools and faith-based partners come together. When we begin to see one another as neighbors, we tear down political, social, economic and other divisions, resulting in care and concern for each other. By working as neighbors, we help the most vulnerable, ensuring that

as we decrease suffering, we increase hope, kindness and understanding. Only one thing can overcome hate and that is love. I see it every day in Lakewood, and we must continue to lead the way. I’m proud of this community, and while not perfect, when we care for one another by being neighborly, we will continue to thrive. As we approach the holiday season, let us reflect and be thankful for what we have and help those in need.


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We are building an inclusive community.

WARD 1



Charley Able

From Applewood to Alameda Avenue and from Wadsworth to Simms/Union, parking problems continue to plague both commercial areas and neighborhoods in Ward 1 as well as across other areas of Lakewood. A couple of years ago, City Council decided to call for a citywide study of parking patterns and approved funding for the project.

But when the pandemic-related slowdown struck, the proposal hit a snag, according to City Manager Kathy Hodgson. “When COVID hit ... especially around some of the high-density, high-traffic schools, there weren’t the cars to study,” Hodgson said. “We couldn’t get a clean example of what we were trying to solve.” Now that the COVID outbreak is more controlled, the long-awaited project is under way. “We did have to delay, but we have met with the firm who was initially selected in the past few weeks, and we are moving forward with it,” said Deputy City Manager Ben Goldstein.

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Jeslin Shahrezaei

The leaf peeping is better in Lakewood than the mountains. There, I said it. But it’s true. I have really enjoyed the beautiful, mature trees around Lakewood this fall as they have put on a spectacular show of colors. Part of this beauty is credited to the amount of trees in Lakewood. According to the recent tree canopy survey, there are four trees for every

one resident in Lakewood. The city’s tree canopy creates an ecosystem valued at \$26 million and covers 4,509 acres or about 16% coverage across Lakewood. Learn more at Lakewood.org/TreeCanopyMap. We will continue to see investment in the tree canopy with the 2023 budget, which City Council approved in October. The commitment in the budget will support the ambitious goal in Lakewood’s Sustainability Plan to achieve 30% tree canopy coverage by 2025. The funding will support tree planting programs to be rolled out for residents in 2023. Stay tuned for more details!

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WARD 2



Sharon Vincent

In this last Looking@Lakewood for 2022, we are taking a look back at a productive year in Lakewood. This year was a big year for investments in parks. O’Kane Park’s tennis courts are being upgraded, which will accommodate both tennis and pickleball. In the Two Creeks neighborhood, the park’s



Sophia Mayott-Guerrero

master plan is underway following extensive public participation, with refinements to the plan occurring over the next few months and implementation to follow. Mountair Park’s unused baseball stands will be removed, and plans for the area will be discussed. Moving on to the area north of Colfax, Walker-Branch

Park has a new master plan that will be phased in conjunction with Edgewater. Finally, the West Colfax community-supported sculpture park at Colfax and Wadsworth has been completed. (See a list of all park projects at LakewoodTogether.org/MoneyAtWork.) We are sad to see that Molholm Elementary School is on the list that is slated for closure. The teachers are to be commended for giving their students the best education while dealing with the school closure. If anyone has time, they have an “adopt a teacher” program. Talks with some who have already volunteered show that the teachers have been extremely grateful for the help and support they have received.

The budget has passed, and the positive impact will assist our ward. This year’s budget focuses on improving our response to the growing population of residents without homes, investments in sustainability, and improvements to the city’s aging infrastructure. We wish you well this holiday season and look forward to 2023.

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WARD 3



Anita Springsteen

Although we claim to strive for diversity and inclusivity in Lakewood, the makeup of our city staff (and City Council) does not reflect this alleged goal. For instance, only 1.7% of staff is African American and 12.3% is Hispanic/Latino. When broken down by gender, we employ only 4 African American women and 35 Latinas full time. There are only 285 full-time

employees who are women versus 521 men — making for unequal treatment.

Not only does this fail to reflect local, state, and national demographics, it discourages change and diverse influx into our city. For instance, we might attract more diverse residents/businesses and encourage equality if our police force reflected wider demographics (such as hiring an African American female or transgender police chief).

Until our hiring practices and mindset change, we are merely paying lip service to prioritizing diversity — which is something that enriches us all. This is not Mayberry. Let’s get with the times.

Anita Springsteen
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Rebekah Stewart

Council recently passed Lakewood’s 2023 Budget, and I’d like to highlight the investments to improve our alternative transportation infrastructure and connectivity. We expect to have an additional 4.4 miles of sidewalks or shared use paths in 2023 in alignment with Connect Lakewood and the Bicycle Master Plan. In Ward 3 specifically, there will be sidewalks and improvements on Sheridan

between Florida and Jewell as well as the east side of Wadsworth along the new Peak View Park.

All streets slated to undergo improvements will also be evaluated for adding or enhancing bike lanes. Citywide, there are pedestrian improvements being added along Kipling, lighting and path improvements on the 40 West ArtLine, and significant pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements as part of the West Colfax Safety Project.

While I acknowledge that there is significantly more to be done as we work toward our sustainability goals, I want the community to know that you have a council committed to progress and innovation in our transportation investments.

Rebekah Stewart
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WARD 4



Barb Franks

With just over a year left on my second term, I have started preparing for my final Lakewood City Council annual planning session.

Thanks to everyone that reached out over the years to share your values and priorities for our city. Please continue to reach out over the next few months so I can

most effectively represent our communities’ priorities.

Interested in having a one-on-one conversation to dig into a topic of interest or concern, or interested in running for office and want to get personal insights into what it is like to serve on City Council? Sign up for a virtual office hours session with me via a link on the Ward Meeting page on the city’s website.

There is also a wealth of information on the city website. Check out the Request Lakewood customer service hub at Lakewood.org/RequestLakewood and Lakewood.org/council.

Wishing you a Happy Holiday Season!

Barb Franks
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Rich Olver

I’ve been trying to understand how best to use the gift of my election. I took office expecting to champion a couple causes/issues by working together with the involved city staffers, but I’ve run into roadblocks. It seems that the city wants council members to be a simple rubber stamp, instead of digging in and getting their hands dirty. Here’s a

quote from a department director after I asked to be included in staff discussions about a topic in which I’m an expert: “It would not be best practice to invite an elected official to join an internal staff meeting.” This has been pretty much the attitude of the city. Stay away and don’t be involved. Be a figurehead. That attitude doesn’t fly with council members who spent time and money getting elected to try to improve our lives, and is why I fight with the city so often. I’m working to have the city and council members work closer. It’s an uphill battle.

Rich Olver
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WARD 5



Wendi Strom

As the chair of the Budget and Audit Board, I’m happy to report that this year’s budget season is complete. As the budget largely illustrates what dollars go to each department, it’s not clear what we are actually spending those dollars on. Here are a few ways:

- **Homelessness response:** A new interdepartmental homelessness response that will address the needs of our unhoused and improve our response and cleanup efforts.

- **Public safety:** The addition of several new support roles for our sworn officers to better tailor our responses, improve efficiency, and increase the number of our co-responders in mental health and medical calls.
- **Safety on our streets:** Increasing sidewalk connectivity with an additional 4.4 miles of sidewalks or shared use paths.
- **Sustainability:** Continuing to convert our streetlights to LED bulbs, supporting vehicle electrification, and adding staff dedicated to ensuring the city is not overwatering in our parks.

For more context on specific projects across the city, there is a list available at Lakewood.org/budgets by clicking on the “budget” bar and then scrolling to the Capital Improvement and Preservation Plan Projects Budget.

Wendi Strom
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Mary Janssen

The September crime forum was productive. Guest speaker Aurora City Council member Dustin Zvonek described his city’s recent municipal code revisions to deter crime.

Looking forward, I’d like to request that Lakewood City Council approve a Public Safety Committee as we don’t have one.

Recent changes in state law created some problems. What was once a felony is now a misdemeanor.

Personal recognizance bonds are issued and ignored. Law enforcement professionals are discouraged when the system is broken, but their lives are on the line more than ever. While we can change municipal code, many of the changes need to occur at the state level. We’ll need to be vocal at the state Capitol when the legislative session opens, and I ask you to join me. Once elections are over, let your elected state representatives know that safety should be a priority.

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Economic Development

What do you think economic development is?

When we ask this question at business association meetings, we often receive a range of answers, highlighting both the creativity of Lakewood's community members and the sprawling nature of economic development. Economic development is the intentional practice of improving a community's economic well-being and quality of life. We, the City of Lakewood's Economic Development Division, facilitate this by encouraging diverse job growth, attracting capital investment and facilitating growth in the local economy.

Jobs

Naturally, our goal of creating jobs is beneficial for the community because it provides residents with opportunities to earn income. When businesses are doing well, they hire more employees, which ultimately benefits Lakewood residents either through direct employment or by generating tax revenues that pay for city and other services that residents receive. Furthermore, when employees have income that they can spend in our local economy, then those payroll dollars circulate in Lakewood. At Lakewood Economic Development, we work with our workforce partners to ensure we have a skilled labor force, as this is something that businesses look for when they are making a decision to locate or expand here.

Growing the economic base

The final element, and potentially the most misunderstood, is growth in the tax base. Rather than increasing tax rates, growing the tax base refers to increasing the amount of business being done in Lakewood. The more companies that do business in Lakewood, the more tax revenue is collected, and ultimately the more the city can spend on public improvements like streets, sidewalks, parks, and services that residents need.

Economic development in action

To give an example of economic development, imagine a small, local business looking to expand. The business is currently operating at capacity and needs to hire another employee to meet demand, so it hires a Lakewood resident. In addition to the new employee, the business needs another machine for the employee to produce more of the business's product. But the business won't have any extra funds until it sells more products, so it secures a loan to pay for the new equipment. After the business hires the new employee and purchases the necessary equipment, it is able to nearly double its output, which generates more revenue and sales tax. The city uses the sales tax for services to residents and businesses, which ends up attracting more businesses and customers to the city. This example illustrates the interdependence



From left: Laura Moody, Katie Faltys, Robert Smith, Eric Scott & Isabella Nunez

Capital investment

Capital investments are the dollars coming into the city to pay for buildings or other items that companies need, and this money helps fuel the economy. Typically, these are investments used to fund a company's growth through assets such as real estate or equipment. These investments can come from a range of sources including private banks, venture capital firms, and the federal government. Lakewood even has its own capital investment programs that local businesses are encouraged to use for their company's growth. Capital investment can also include attracting new commercial buildings and shopping areas, supporting remodels and renovations for new and expanding businesses, and creating site improvements.

and cyclical nature of economic development. This example can also be applied to manufacturers, retail business, service jobs, and high-skilled employment.

Our Economic Development Division constantly strategizes ways to help the business community, and that support ranges from grant and mentorship programs to collaborating with strategic partners in the community to offer additional services. We are dedicated to sustaining a strong economic base while maintaining our community's quality of life and vitality. [A](#)

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Seeing Your Money at Work



Lakewood, you really love your parks, open space and trails, and we want to show you all the work that's been done to help you enjoy the great outdoors. We also want to see what these projects have meant to you.

We've created the Your Money at Work website to update you on how your tax dollars are put to work in support of the city's outdoor green spaces. But we want to make it a little more interesting. Each month, you can participate in a photo contest where you can also tell us your story about how you use these projects or what memories you have made there. A winner will be named each month to receive a prize package.



The monthly photo contest will run through December and start again next April to continue through November 2023. Find out what the project of the month is at LakewoodTogether.org/MoneyAtWork to get started with your photo and story. You can also be on the lookout for Your Money at Work yard signs and banners around the city, or stay tuned to the city's website and social media channels (Lakewood.org/SocialMedia) for the location of each month's chosen project.

And there's more. Participate in monthly trivia or visit the story map, where you can see the projects in an accessible way if you can't get there in person. Ask us a question and check out the videos on projects and Mayor Adam Paul's "Thank You" message.

It often takes several resources to create these amenities — to buy the land, put in trails and update playgrounds. Review the list of all the funding sources that support these amenities on the website. The sources include the city's Open Space Fund, which is Lakewood's share of Jefferson County's open space tax of 0.5% approved by voters in 1972 to support parks and open space. They also include state and federal funds, grants, donations and money available because Lakewood voters approved lifting the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) limits on the city budget.

The city has been able to expand its portfolio of parkland by 117 acres since 2018 because of these resources, and banners will be posted at or near sites of new park purchases during the Your Money at Work effort. Check out the list of park purchases on the Lakewood Together site along with lists of recently completed and in-progress park projects. It's all available at LakewoodTogether.org/MoneyAtWork. [A](#)



Lakewood
Full of Possibilities.

City Manager
Kathy Hodgson

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Lakewood.org

ARTS, PARKS & Recreation

UPCOMING EVENTS & Holiday Happenings

NOVEMBER

Festive Winter Classes

Register now!

Workshops on card making, treat baking, and more. Financial assistance available through Lakewood Possibilities Fund.

View catalog and register: Lakewood.org/Programs

Mayor's Tree Lighting

November 15, 5-8 p.m.

Tree lighting, cocoa and debut of Camp Christmas experience.

Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park

FREE event. Reservation required.

More information and reservations:

Lakewood.org/TreeLighting

Camp Christmas

Nov. 17-Dec. 24, Timed tickets available.

An over-the-top holiday extravaganza by Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park

Tickets range from \$8-\$25.

More information and purchase:

Lakewood.org/CampChristmas



DECEMBER



Punch Card Sale

Dec. 1-30

Pick up a 5-visit punch card.

Redeem through Feb. 28, 2023.

Any Lakewood Recreation Center

On sale for \$15.

Purchase: Lakewood.org/RecPass

Rocky Mountain Stocking Stuffers

Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m.

Award-winning musicians present holiday favorites.

Lakewood Cultural Center

Tickets start at \$25. Limited tickets available.

Purchase: Lakewood.org/LCCPresents

Holiday Pottery & Art Sale

Dec. 10, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Unique art and pottery made by students and instructors.

Washington Heights Arts Center

More information: Lakewood.org/HolidaySale

Winter Solstice Celebration

Dec. 21, 6-8 p.m.

Guided night hike with a campfire and yule log!

Bear Creek Lake Park

\$5 registration required.

Purchase: Lakewood.org/WinterSolstice

Christmas Tree Recycling

Dec. 26-Jan. 9, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

FREE tree recycling for residents.

Lakewood Greenhouse, 9556 W. Yale Ave.

More information: Lakewood.org/Holiday

JANUARY

Post Holiday Fitness Sampler

Jan. 2, 8 a.m.-11:30 p.m.

Sample a variety of 20-minute fitness classes for FREE.

Carmody Recreation Center

More information: Lakewood.org/FitSampler



Enter to WIN a Lakewood Recreation Gift Card!

MONDAY MILE

Jan. 2 – Feb. 6



A six-week challenge to start the new year off right.

Walk, run or roll a mile on Monday and enter for a chance to win!

Lakewood.org/Walk

A NEW SEASON!

BCLP Annual Pass

On sale Dec. 1

Annual park passes available. Fees support visitor experience and protect resources.

Purchase online or at BCLP Entrance Station or Visitor's Center.

\$80 General, \$50 Senior, \$30 Additional Vehicles.

Lakewood.org/BCLPpass



Winter/Spring Class Registration

Registration opens Dec. 6 for Residents, Dec. 8 for Nonresidents

Sign up for programs happening Jan-May, 2023.

Financial assistance available through Lakewood Possibilities Fund.

View catalog and register at

Lakewood.org/Programs

Campground Registration Opens

Jan. 2 at 12:01 a.m.

Reservations for April 1-Oct. 31, 2023

Campground featuring 47 campsites,

3 cabins, 2 yurts, and one group site.

\$35-65 /night

Bear Creek Lake Park

Lakewood.org/Camp

Check off your list!

SHOP LOCAL.
SHOP LAKEWOOD.

✓ Useful gifts:

In December, buy a 5-visit rec center punch card for just \$15.

✓ Gifts that give all year:

2023 Annual Passes for Bear Creek Lake Park are on sale Dec. 1.

✓ Entertaining gifts:

Tickets for LCC Presents spring season start at just \$25.

✓ Handmade gifts:

Shop the holiday pottery sale at Washington Heights on Dec 10.



Lakewood.org/HolidayEvents



Free help to lower water, heating bills

Lakewood has a new program in partnership with Mile High Youth Corps to help qualified Lakewood families lower their water and heating bills with a free energy audit that can include two free water-saving toilets and other water and energy fixture upgrades. Lakewood residents interested in saving thousands of gallons of water a year and reducing their bills can call 720-974-0500, option 2 or visit MileHighYouthCorps.org/free-install-services.

Wildlife photo contest

Sustainable Eiber is excited to sponsor the second annual Wildlife of Lakewood Photography Exhibit 2023. Lakewood residents are invited to submit their original photos by Feb 1, 2023. Photos must be taken in Lakewood within the past three years. The exhibit will be in the Corner Gallery of Lakewood Cultural Center in March 2023. For full details, visit WildlifeOfLakewood.org.

Performance assistants needed

Did you know that volunteers play a critical role in Lakewood’s community events, performances and programs? The first people you often see when you arrive are volunteers. At the Lakewood Cultural Center, we are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to work as performance assistants who welcome patrons, usher and scan tickets. Volunteers make the theater experience special by going the extra mile to provide exceptional customer service. If you’re interested, please contact volunteer@lakewood.org.

Drop by to recycle

Lakewood’s Quail Street Recycling Center is open for drop-in recycling from 10 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. and 1:15 to 4 p.m., Monday-Saturday. No appointment is necessary. Visit the center at 1068 Quail St. to recycle cardboard, scrap metal, glass bottles and jars, aluminum beverage cans, paper and plastic bottles. For a full list of what can be recycled at the center, visit Lakewood.org/recycling.





INSPIRATION AWARD WINNERS RECOGNIZED

Six recipients of the annual Mayor’s Inspiration Awards were recognized at the Sept. 26 City Council meeting.

Katie Gill
(A Reflection of Altruism)

Israel Ontiveros-Platt
(A Reflection of Bravery)

Shirley Bradsby
(A Reflection of Consistency)

Shermita West
(A Reflection of Leadership)

Hedy Margolis
(A Reflection of Compassion)

Joy’s Kitchen
(A Reflection of Nourishment)



“To inspire is to ignite passion for community.”
- Mayor Adam Paul

Learn more about the good work they have done in the community at Lakewood.org/MayorsAwards. Nominations for next year’s awards open on April 15, 2023.





IDLING IS EXPENSIVE >>>
up to a gallon or more of fuel per hour, depending on vehicle size



IDLING POLLUTES >>>
a gallon of fuel creates about 20 lbs. of greenhouse gases



IDLING THREATENS HEALTH >>>
breathing vehicle emissions increases risk of respiratory illness

Idling uses more fuel than restarting your engine

- Idling wastes **6 BILLION GALLONS OF FUEL** each year in the U.S.



LAKEWOOD POPULATION	AGE		ETHNICITY	ECONOMIC		
2010-July 2020: 9% increase from 143,294 to 156,248 2020-2021: 177 new residents	Population change 2016-2020: Largest increase in age group 65 and older; smallest increase in age group 10-17. Population change 2020-2030: Largest increase in age group 65 and older.		White alone: 66.3%* Hispanic & Latino alone: 22.7% Asian & Pacific Islander alone: 3.9% Black/African American alone: 1.8% American Indian & Alaskan Native alone: 0.7% Two or more ethnicities: 4.2% <i>* The percent of white alone with inclusion of Hispanic or Latino is 85.3%.</i>	Percent change in number of jobs 2010-2020: 4.2% loss Percent of households spending 30% or more of income on housing: 35%		
CITY OF LAKEWOOD EMPLOYEES IN 2021:	White Alone: 83.3%	Hispanic or Latino: 12.4%	Black / African American: 1.7%	Asian & Pacific Islander: 1.1%	Two or more ethnicities: 1.1%	American Indian & Alaskan Native: 0.4%

West Metro Fire Rescue awarded international reaccreditation



West Metro Fire Rescue has again received “accredited agency” status from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, an honor it has received since 2012 and one that only 301 fire service agencies around the world have been given.

This reaccreditation marks the third time that the commission has evaluated West Metro, focusing on the level of service provided to residents and businesses as well as the district’s commitment to the community. West Metro Fire provides fire protection to Lakewood residents and businesses.

Accredited agencies are described as being community-focused, data-driven, outcome-focused, strategic-minded, well organized, properly equipped, and properly staffed and trained. In addition to the accreditation, West Metro is also ISO Class 1 certified, making it one of just 114 agencies to achieve both accreditation and the top ISO rating.

“The accreditation process is detailed and exhaustive, and it doesn’t allow us to rest on our past successes,” said West Metro Fire Chief Don Lombardi. “It demands that we continue to improve our response times and quality of service. Being reaccredited means our focus is where it should be: on how well we live up to our commitment to protect lives and property.”

The commission accreditation process is voluntary and provides fire agencies an improvement model to assess their response to emergency incidents and internal performance. An on-site visit from a peer team, made up of members from other fire agencies, evaluates the agency based on eleven categories including response times, training, resource deployment and public education.

Agencies must also compile a strategic plan and conduct a comprehensive community risk/hazard assessment for this process. Part of West Metro’s strategic plan focuses on potential challenges in emergency response across the fire district, and the plan has assisted in determining where best to place resources. As a result, the district added a new ambulance (medic) in August at West Metro Station 17, bringing the total number of medics to 13. Medic 17 will provide service to the busy north side of the district, enhancing response for medical and fire calls. West Metro is planning to add more ambulances and crews in the early part of next year.

“The majority of our calls are medical emergencies,” said Chief Lombardi. “And with an aging population in many areas of the district, we’ve seen increasing demand on West Metro medic crews. Our citizens need us to step up.”

The accreditation process occurs every five years. West Metro’s reaccreditation is effective through August 2027.

Outdoor fire pits

It may be that good fences make good neighbors, but limiting the use of outdoor fireplaces, chimineas and fire pits might help as well.

These fire-burning devices have become popular in backyards, but the smoke they generate can be bothersome to neighbors, particularly if the smoke is sucked into swamp coolers or billows through open windows. For some residents, the smoke becomes a health issue, and Lakewood encourages those who use the fire-burning devices to reach out to their neighbors to see if there are any concerns.

Safety guidelines also state that the devices should be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and used more than 15 feet from a structure or combustible material. The guidelines also say that the fire must be attended at all times and must be properly extinguished with a fire extinguisher, water, dirt or other proper material.

West Metro Fire Rescue investigates complaints and will check that the devices are in compliance with safety guidelines. For safety information on these outdoor devices, visit the “Home & Community Safety” section at [WestMetroFire.org](https://www.westmetrofire.org).

Taking steps to reduce the amount of smoke and unpleasant fumes from your outdoor fire will also help.

TIPS FOR USING OUTDOOR FIRE PITS AND OTHER DEVICES

- Use wood seasoned for at least six months that is kept dry. Don’t burn wet or “green” unseasoned wood. Don’t burn leaves, twigs or living greenery, which are prohibited.
- Start fires with newspaper, dry kindling or all-natural fire starters. Never use gasoline, kerosene or charcoal starter.
- Build efficient fires that encourage airflow. For most devices, a smoldering fire is not safe or efficient.
- Consider using manufactured logs and choose those made from 100 percent compressed sawdust.
- Follow the manufacturer’s instruction for the device.
- Remove ashes regularly and put them into a covered, metal container. Store the container outdoors on a nonflammable surface.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy.
- Check your local air quality forecast before you burn.

2023 budget focuses on needed items

The 2023 annual budget that City Council approved in October has two primary areas of focus: investing in the city's infrastructure such as sidewalks, drainage improvements and transportation needs, and addressing staffing shortages.

The \$276 million budget also reflects the city's continued work to tackle the challenges created by those living without housing and the city's priority in creating a more sustainable community. The annual budget is available for review at [Lakewood.org/budgets](https://lakewood.org/budgets).

In 2023, the city will have 24 transportation-related projects including more than four miles of new sidewalks. Half of the projects will be designed next year, and half of the projects are ready for construction in 2023 including building the park entrance and

access for Peak View Park at Wadsworth Boulevard and Morrison Road.

The city is investing \$30.7 million in infrastructure needs, made possible by the \$21.6 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds it received in the last two years and more than \$9 million available from reduced city expenses over the last two years. The federal rescue funds will be spent over multiple years, and they are helping to pay for sidewalk construction, deferred maintenance resulting from a lack of funds, and other important projects.

When it comes to staffing, the economic pressures of the pandemic resulted in the city making budget cuts by keeping numerous staff positions vacant. The community has felt the impact of these vacancies because they affected the services

provided to residents. The 2023 budget will fill more than 30 positions, allowing the city to better meet the needs for services in the community.

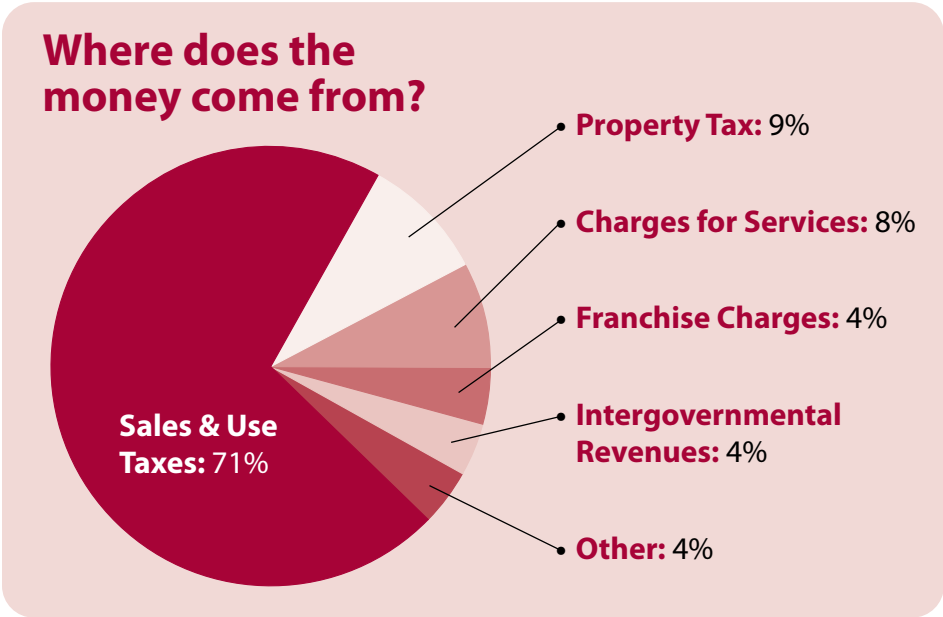
Next year's budget also builds on the city's 2022 hiring of a homeless coordinator, whose mission is to improve the city's response to issues surrounding homelessness. The 2023 budget includes funding for cleaning up camping locations used by residents lacking housing. The city also is working to identify a site for a navigation center, which would include both short-term and long-term housing and support services for those without permanent housing.

Additional support is also included for the Police Department's co-responder program that sends mental health experts on calls with police agents, which has already been used more than 700 times in the last 18 months, and for the department's two homeless navigators who have had more

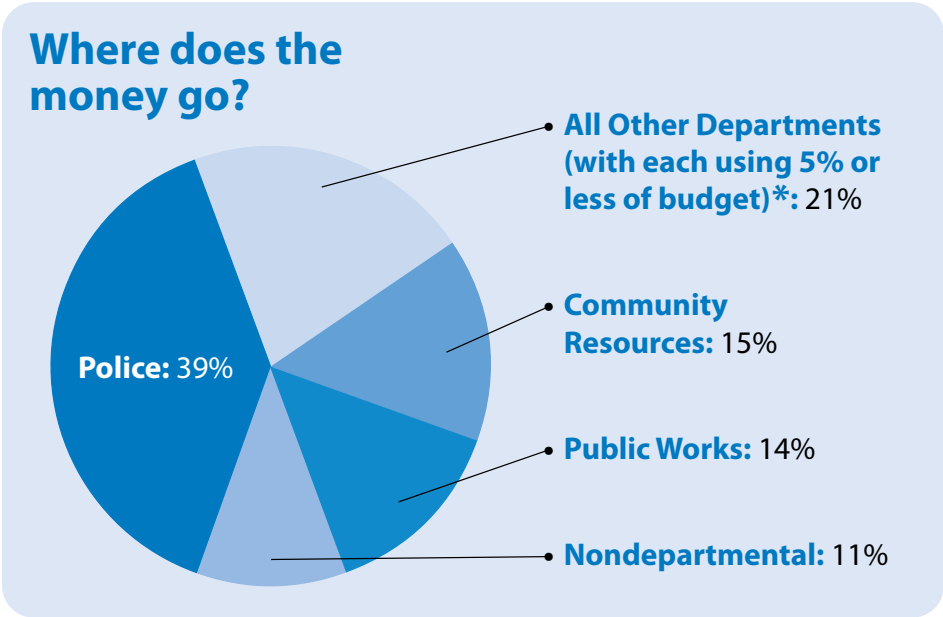
than 3,000 contacts since 2020 while working to help move those living on the streets into housing.

On the sustainability front, a staff person will be added to review how developments are meeting the city's updated sustainable development standards. The city will also continue its program to replace streetlight bulbs with energy-efficient ones, and work will continue on providing more resources for ways to save water and lower energy bills for residents and businesses, with the city having already connected with 350 businesses about energy audits.

Other items in the budget include making improvements to parks and continuing to pay for the Police Department's body-worn camera program. Funds the city has available because voter's approved lifting the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) limits on the city's budget are helping to pay for these items along with transportation improvements. [A](#)



Based on the city's General Fund

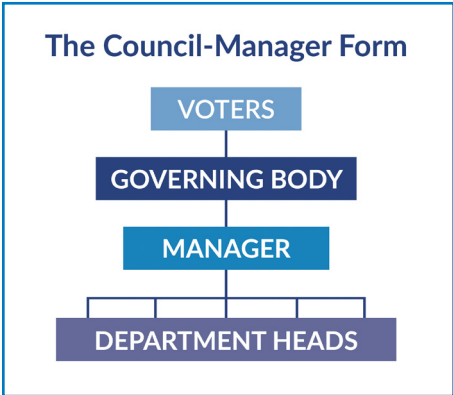


Based on the city's General Fund

* Planning, Municipal Court, Finance, City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, Human Resources, City Clerk's Office, City Council.

Who runs the city?

Because cities across the country have different ways of operating, it can be difficult for residents to understand how local governments like the City of Lakewood are structured. The confusion often comes from having large cities in the news such as New York City or even Denver, where the mayor is the chief executive officer managing city departments and services.



Lakewood, however, is different than those large cities. Under the City Charter approved by Lakewood voters decades ago, the city uses the council-manager form of government. This is the most

popular form of city government in the United States. Under this structure, the elected city council sets the policy and direction for the city and then hires a professional city manager who puts those policies into action by directing and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the city's departments and staff members.

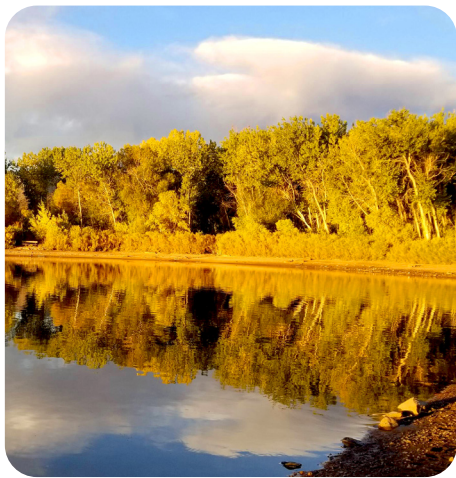
This form of government grew in popularity at the turn of the 20th century as a way to combat corruption and unethical activity. Several cities at the time went through scandals showing that when elected officials were in charge of running cities, "patronage" jobs were handed to political allies, and politics were emphasized over delivery of services.

The shift to the council-manager structure occurred because it promotes nonpolitical management of the services residents rely on such as street maintenance, parks and public safety. It recognizes the critical role of elected officials mapping out a collective vision for the community and establishing the policies to create that vision. But it also recognizes the need for a highly

qualified city manager to be devoted exclusively to the delivery of services to residents. The city manager is hired based on skills and experience and not on political allegiances. It's a structure that is similar to many corporations in which the board of directors hires an experienced chief executive officer who has broad authority to run the company.

In Lakewood, the elected body consists of the mayor and 10 council members, all of whom have equal authority — though the mayor presides over council meetings. Neither the mayor nor any member of Lakewood City Council is involved in the daily operations of the city, in hiring and firing personnel within departments or managing city departments and staff.

Two council members are elected from each of Lakewood's five geographical wards, while the mayor is elected "at-large" by voters across Lakewood. City Council's role involves providing direction to the city manager, approving the annual budget, holding public hearings, passing ordinances that become law in the City Code and approving resolutions covering city business.



The 11 members who serve on City Council are Lakewood residents — like any other resident — juggling responsibilities for jobs, homes, families and friends. Unlike in other cities, serving on Lakewood City Council is not a full-time job, but council members spend many hours attending meetings, talking with community members and working to find solutions while maintaining the vision for where the community is headed in the future. It's a demanding job that requires dedicating a significant portion of time and attention to fulfill its duties. [A](#)