



Looking@Lakewood

Voter information for city's April 7 special election

City Council has set an April 7 special election to ask Lakewood voters whether to repeal updates to Lakewood's Zoning Code that City Council approved in October 2025 or to keep the existing Zoning Code.

This special election will occur by mail ballots, and you can use one of the 11 designated ballot drop boxes in the city to return your ballot (see list on page 8). If you want to mail your ballot, you must take it to the post office by March 30 to ensure it is received by the deadline of 7 p.m. on April 7.

Reason for election

This special election is the result of the referendum process. A referendum is a petition circulated to gather signatures to have an item placed on the ballot for the voters to decide. In other words, voters are being asked to make a decision about Lakewood laws that the City Council has approved. In this case, it's the updates to the Zoning Code, which is a set of rules that determine how property in Lakewood can be used and developed.

There are four questions on the special election ballot because City Council approved the updates to the Zoning Code in four parts, and a referendum was filed for each of the four parts. A sample ballot is available to review at LakewoodCO.gov/SpecialElection, which also has answers to frequently asked questions.

Voting "yes" on each question means a vote to repeal each part of the Zoning Code that City Council approved, and voting "no" to each question means a vote to keep the Zoning Code approved by City Council in October 2025.

Timing of election

Under the City Charter, City Council must set an election for

a referendum between 30 and 90 days from the time that the referendum is deemed to have a sufficient number of signatures to prompt a citywide vote. Because of this requirement, these referendums could not be delayed until November, when general elections occur.

Voting

Only active registered Lakewood voters will receive a mail ballot

for this special election. An active registered voter means you have voted in prior statewide general elections in November of even numbered years. If you have not voted in the last two statewide general elections in November — which means for the last four years — then you are not an active registered voter and will not receive a ballot for this special election.

If you aren't currently registered to vote in Lakewood, you

can register up to the day of the election on April 7. Voter registration is available online at VoteJeffco.com.

If you register to vote after March 30, you will have to pick up a ballot at the Lakewood City Clerk's Office at 480 S. Allison Parkway and vote by the 7 p.m. April 7 deadline because it will be too late to mail a ballot to your home.

See **SPECIAL ELECTION** page 8



Two Creeks Park is a one-of-a-kind, 3.8-acre neighborhood park shaped by decades of community vision and collaboration. Located in northeast Lakewood in Ward 2, it's the city's most recently completed park. Learn more about it on page 6.

Longtime Lakewood resident, professor named Colorado Poet Laureate



Professor Crisosto Apache

For the first time in its more than 50-year existence, Lakewood is home to the state's top poet. Crisosto Apache, a professor at the Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design in Lakewood and a longtime Lakewood resident, has been named Colorado's Poet Laureate.

Colorado was one of the first states to have a poet laureate,

naming the first one in 1919, and Apache is the state's first Indigenous and 11th Poet Laureate. The Poet Laureate represents and celebrates the breadth, history and experiences of a range of peoples who have called the region home. The Poet Laureate serves as an active advocate for poetry, literacy, literature, the arts and the humanities.

Originally from New Mexico near the Texas border and a member of the Mescalero Apache Tribe, Professor Apache, who uses they/ them pronouns, took something of a roundabout journey to this high honor. A visual artist on a scholarship majoring in two-dimensional design for painting at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, Apache took a couple of creative writing classes from Arthur Sze, now the sitting

U.S. Poet Laureate and a professor emeritus, in his first semester at school. By the end of that semester, they had changed their major to creative writing and was hooked for life.

"That was in 1990 or so, and I've been doing creative writing ever since," Apache said. "When I was younger, I wasn't very successful at sending my work out and getting it accepted. But that didn't deter me from continuing my writing."

A scholarship to Naropa University in Boulder broadened Apache's horizons and exposed them to other Native American writers and poets.

"I really appreciated my time there at Naropa," Apache said. "I continued to write, to read and to build my poetic interest."

See **POET LAUREATE** page 7

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POSTAL PATRON

MAYOR



Wendi Strom

As we begin a new spring season, I want to share an update on the work your City Council and city staff have undertaken to help guide our city in 2026. Recently, the council convened for our annual strategic planning session, a time when we step back to look holistically at where our community is, where you want us to go, and how we prioritize our efforts and resources to get there.

This year's planning process was deeply informed by the

2025 Community Survey, which provided invaluable insights into your perceptions, priorities, and expectations. We also incorporated feedback gathered through community meetings, boards and commissions, neighborhood conversations, and direct correspondence with you. Lakewood is fortunate to have residents who care about their city, and their participation plays a vital role in shaping our shared future.

One area that rose clearly to the top in last year's community survey was addressing homelessness. This issue has been a priority for the council for several years, and though much has been implemented during that time, the council unanimously reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening our approach, improving coordination, and pursuing sustainable long-term strategies.

Homelessness continues to affect communities across the region, state, and country, and Lakewood is no exception. Over recent years, the number of residents who are unhoused has increased significantly, and with state and federal funding

shifting, the pressure on local resources has grown significantly as well. Despite these challenges, our city has worked diligently to respond with compassion, accountability, and pragmatism. We have expanded partnerships with service providers, invested in data-supported outreach approaches, and taken steps to address both the immediate impacts and the root causes of homelessness.

An important step in this work is the opening of the new VOA Colorado Navigation Center (see story on page 8), which will provide shelter and support services to transition up to 100 individuals at a time into stable housing.

During our planning session, the council emphasized the need to keep building on our progress, improving coordination across local jurisdictions, nonprofits and city departments, while also continuing to improve enforcement and outreach tools to address impacts in neighborhoods. This reaffirmed focus is not just a policy priority; it's a commitment to the well-being of all who live, work, and visit Lakewood.

Beyond this key area, the council identified several additional issues including waste hauling licensing to ensure consistency, reduce neighborhood impacts, and explore opportunities to encourage more sustainable practices.

We will also be looking closely at Lakewood's local economy and revenue structure to ensure Lakewood remains financially resilient to provide services you rely on.

Finally, we will be reviewing and updating our Lakewood City Charter, which serves as the foundation for how Lakewood operates. Any proposed changes would ultimately go to voters.

To learn more about these items, or about other successes or challenges that your city is facing, I invite you to join me at our relaunch of the **State of the City** address coming up on April 15! Visit LakewoodCO.gov/SOTC.

Lakewood's strength comes from its residents, and I look forward to continuing this important work together in 2026.

Wendi Strom

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WARD 3



Ken Cruz

In a moment of profound national turbulence, we're grateful to serve Ward 3 together. We value the opportunity to work with all of you to demonstrate — locally, at least — that government can be a force for good and to make our community more sustainable, affordable, and safer.

At City Council's recent planning session, we identified top shared priorities for the coming year. These are addressing homelessness; strengthening Lakewood's economy by supporting small business attraction and retention; exploring responsible funding and revenue options to maintain services and fund these priorities; evaluating updates to our City Charter; and continuing conversations around a single-hauler waste licensing system to improve efficiency and sustainability.

A packed, standing-room-only crowd at a recent Lakewood evening workshop on composting inspired us. Across six in-person and virtual workshops, more than 400 residents showed up to learn how to reduce food waste and sign up for discounted, user-friendly composting service through the city. Lakewood residents care about cutting their methane emissions, and our sustainability staff deserve kudos for standing this program up so effectively.

The City Council's Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee has established a framework for making this a permanent committee and the work it will do. The committee will work in concert with the sustainability staff's efforts to reduce emissions, cut congestion, and help residents access free enhanced home energy assessments. Learn more and sign up for the monthly sustainability newsletter at LakewoodCO.gov/Sustainability.

If you're looking to get involved in shaping Lakewood's future, the city's boards and commissions have several openings. These groups help advise council and staff on topics such as planning, sustainability, community services, and more. Resident participation plays an important role in guiding local decisions. Learn about current openings and apply at LakewoodCO.gov/GetOnBoard.

We hear clearly the concerns about rising homelessness. We share them. Lakewood's renovated VOA Colorado Navigation Center is now open (see story on page 8). It's funded in part by a \$9.3 million state grant and provides up to 100 participants 24/7 trauma-informed beds and services to help move people off our streets, out of our parks, and into stable housing. It won't solve homelessness overnight, and we've got much more to do. But it is a critical step.

Residents can also flag encampments at LakewoodCO.gov/Request. Our Community Action Team will respond and works tirelessly to address encampments while treating everyone with dignity and compassion.

You should have received your ballot in the mail for a consequential Lakewood special election on zoning. Last fall, after two years of community engagement, City Council updated Lakewood's zoning code. A petition signed by 3 percent of voters triggered this election to determine whether to repeal those updates.

Voters will see four questions, one for different sections of the code. A "Yes" vote means repeal; a "No" vote means keep the updated ordinance. Council passed a resolution in February, by a 9-2 vote, urging a "No" vote. As the ballot language may cause confusion, please review FAQs at LakewoodCO.gov/SpecialElection to learn more and vote by April 7. Regardless of where you stand, we hope this conversation remains civil and fact-based, and we hope you vote.

Ken Cruz

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WARD MEETINGS: Council members in each ward have monthly meetings in an informal setting for residents to share ideas and learn more about their community. Find out when your council members are having meetings and sign up to receive alerts about those meetings at LakewoodCO.gov/WardMeetings.



Economic Development

Investing in Lakewood's local economy

Lakewood continues to invest in programs and partnerships that strengthen our local economy, support small businesses and encourage residents to shop and engage locally. From new rewards programs to networking events and grant opportunities, here are the latest economic development updates for Lakewood businesses and residents.



Lakewood shopping bag

Shop Lakewood with Open Rewards

Lakewood has launched a new Shop Local initiative powered by Open Rewards, a free app designed to keep dollars circulating within the community. Through the program, shoppers earn 5 percent cash back on purchases at participating local businesses. Rewards can then be redeemed at other eligible businesses in the program, multiplying the impact of every local purchase.

This pilot program focuses on supporting locally owned, retail-based businesses in areas affected by the West Colfax Transportation Safety Project and the North Dry Gulch Improvement Project.

Residents can get started by downloading the Open Rewards app, earning rewards automatically by linking a credit card or uploading receipts, then redeeming rewards via an additional purchase at a participating business. Rewards are capped at \$20 per purchase and expire six months after issuance. Learn more at LakewoodCO.gov/OpenRewards.



Connecting with local businesses through Lunch and Chats

The Economic Development Office's popular Lunch and Chats series continues to provide informal, in-person opportunities for business owners to connect with one another and city staff. These free gatherings allow local businesses to learn from expert subject-matter

speakers, share feedback, ask questions and learn about resources available to support growth and success in Lakewood.

Lunch, noon – 1:30 p.m.

- April 14..... Women in Business
- Aug. 11 Build Your Brand: Marketing Strategies for Small Businesses
- Sept. 15 Access to Capital: Financing for Small Businesses
- Oct. 13 Scaling Your Business: Lessons from Growing Companies

Register for an upcoming Lunch and Chat at LakewoodCO.gov/LunchandChats.



A recent Lunch and Chat

Grants to support business growth

The Economic Development Office offers a variety of grants designed to support local businesses and commercial property owners in making impactful improvements. The grants are designed to enhance property safety, revitalize building exteriors and signage and activate vacant or underutilized spaces. By reducing barriers to investment and encouraging

thoughtful upgrades, these programs aim to strengthen Lakewood's commercial corridors, improve public safety and support a thriving business environment.

The current grant awards range from \$2,500 - \$10,000. If your business is planning on making security improvements, exterior façade improvements (e.g., new signs, exterior painting, landscaping, parking lot improvements, etc.) or moving into a vacant space, find out more information about these grants at LakewoodCO.gov/BusinessGrants.

Business Feature Friday

Each month, Business Feature Friday shines a spotlight on one of Lakewood's businesses. These monthly social media videos help residents discover new shops, restaurants and services while celebrating the entrepreneurs who make Lakewood unique. To see past Business Feature Fridays, check out Economic Development's page on Facebook or @LakewoodEconDev on Instagram. To submit your business for a Business Feature Friday, visit LakewoodCO.gov/BusinessFeatureFriday.



Chips made by Denver Chip Co. in Lakewood

Shop Lakewood campaign and map

These campaigns continue to promote Lakewood businesses through coordinated outreach, storytelling and an interactive Shop Lakewood map that businesses can add to at LakewoodCO.gov/ShopLakewood. The map provides residents an easy way to find and support businesses across the city.

Together, these initiatives reflect Lakewood's commitment to a strong, inclusive local economy, one that supports small businesses and encourages community connection.

Economic Development Office

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Lakewood
Full of Possibilities.

City Manager
Kathy Hodgson

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Mayor Wendi Strom **2026**
STATE OF THE CITY
Lakewood, Colorado

Together We Thrive

You're invited to join Mayor Wendi Strom to reflect on the past year and look ahead to Lakewood's future.

Tickets available at LakewoodCO.gov/SOTC

April 15 | 4 - 5:30 p.m.
Lakewood Cultural Center
470 S. Allison Parkway

Host your next event at a Lakewood venue!



Whether you are looking for a location to have a beautiful wedding or reception, performance, fundraiser, business meeting or family event, we have a variety of unique spaces to suit your needs.

Let us help you find the perfect venue.

LakewoodCO.gov/Rentals



Arts, Parks & Recreation



View a video featuring the work of our volunteers by visiting LakewoodCO.gov/Volunteer.

Thank you volunteers

In celebration of Volunteer Appreciation Month, we want to give a heartfelt thank you to our amazing Heritage, Culture & the Arts volunteers. Their enthusiasm, creativity and care help bring history to life and make our programs and spaces welcoming for everyone. Whether they're greeting visitors, supporting events and performances, sharing stories or working quietly behind the scenes, their impact is felt every day. They show up with generosity and a genuine love for community. We're so grateful for all the time, energy and heart they give to make the Heritage, Culture & the Arts such a special part of Lakewood. LakewoodCO.gov/Volunteer.

ARTS & HISTORY

Plan now for Summer Concerts

Wednesdays, June 17 – July 29

Tickets for the Sounds Exciting! Summer Concert Series will be available starting Thursday, April 16! Enjoy a midweek escape to an outdoor concert at Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park with live bands, local brews, food vendor fare and amazing views.

LakewoodCO.gov/SummerConcerts

Exhibitions display school talent **FREE**

April and May

Lakewood Cultural Center and Civic Center galleries will host the annual series of shows featuring art by local students and teachers. Stop by to view the budding talent in the Jeffco Middle School Art Show (April 7 through May 4 throughout LCC) or the experienced skill in the Jeffco Teachers' Show (April 7 through May 15, Richey Gallery). Enjoy a reception with the student artists on Thursday evening, April 23.

LakewoodCO.gov/Exhibitions

Take a historic ride **FREE**

May 9 (Note the new spring date!)

Take a ride on the beautifully restored, historic Car No. 25. Hop aboard at the Federal Center and enjoy a trip back in time.

LakewoodCO.gov/HistoricTransit



PARKS

Earth Day volunteer event **FREE**

April and May

Celebrate Earth Day by getting involved in our open spaces! Volunteers will assist with



projects to keep the Bear Creek Greenbelt clean and beautiful. Lunch will be provided. Please register ahead of the event.

LakewoodCO.gov/BCLPEvents

Trout Fishing Tournament

May 2

Cast your line in the Trout Fishing Tournament at Bear Creek Lake Park. This two-person team tournament targets rainbow and brown trout, and the winner is determined by weight! Please register your team prior to the event date.

LakewoodCO.gov/BCLPEvents

Free mulch **FREE**

May 2 and 9

Lakewood residents are invited to pick up free mulch between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. on the first Saturdays in May at the city Greenhouse. Mulch is a byproduct of the city's tree trimming operations and limb drop-off events, and it has been reground to make excellent ground cover that encourages water retention.

LakewoodCO.gov/Mulch

World Migratory Bird Day **FREE**

May 9

Bear Creek Lake Park celebrates the return of migratory birds to their summer nesting sites. The event, hosted annually on the second Saturday of May, features crafts, activities and live bird demonstrations by local groups dedicated to the study and protection of these migratory birds.

LakewoodCO.gov/BCLPEvents

RECREATION

Active Adult Resource Fair **FREE**

May 8

Learn about local resources and services at this free fair at Clements Community Center. Vendors will share resources for attendees ages 55 and beyond, their caregivers and family members. Interested in being a vendor? Apply online.

LakewoodCO.gov/AARF

Active Adult Art Show **FREE**

May 1-18

Creativity has no age limit! From first-time painters to seasoned creators, this art show at Lakewood Cultural Center spotlights the incredible work from Lakewood's Active Adult art classes. Meet the artists at a reception on May 15 from 4 to 6:30 p.m.

LakewoodCO.gov/Register



Outdoor pools open

Memorial Day weekend!

Outdoor pools are expected to open May 23 for weekends only, then daily beginning May 29. The swim beach at Bear Creek Lake Park will also open Memorial Day weekend. For details on exact times, dates and locations, as well as weather updates, visit the website.

LakewoodCO.gov/Pool

Save the dates

Mark your calendars for summer fun.

April 7 Registration opens for summer classes (nonresidents April 9)

June 6 **FREE** Rockin' Block Party

June 17 Sounds Exciting! Concerts on Wednesdays

July 3 **FREE** Big Belmar Bash

Oct. 3 & 4 Cider Days



FREE Reusable Building Material Pickup Days

To keep valuable and reusable building materials out the landfill, the city's sustainability team has started Reusable Building Material Pickup Days in partnership with the nonprofit Resource Central. This new program is free for our residents and gives eligible materials a second life in another Colorado home.

On the third Wednesday of each month, Resource Central will conduct free home pickups for those who make an appointment ahead of time. The donated items will be transported to Resource Central's reuse outlet in Boulder to be resold to community members at affordable prices.

This program supports Lakewood's zero waste goal by making reuse more convenient and accessible to residents, keeping valuable materials in the local economy and increasing the availability of affordable, high quality, secondhand home improvement materials.

"Our goal is to make it easier for every Lakewood resident to choose to reuse. Having an option of a no-cost, convenient pickup service routinely in the area seems like a no-brainer, and this costs the city nothing to participate in," said Em J Jackson, Lakewood's zero waste and circularity planner.

What can be donated

This is not a junk removal service. All items must be in good working condition. Broken, heavily damaged or otherwise not-resale-worthy goods will not be accepted.

Accepted items:

- ✓ Large working appliances
- ✓ Kitchen cabinets
- ✓ Sinks and tubs
- ✓ Ceiling fans and light fixtures
- ✓ Windows and doors
- ✓ Tools and hardware
- ✓ Denailed lumber

For a complete list of accepted materials, visit ResourceCentral.org/MaterialsReuse.

How to participate

Visit LakewoodCO.gov/Pickup-Days to view all program details, review frequently asked questions and schedule a pickup. Spots are limited and by appointment only.

Upcoming Lakewood Pickup Days



- April 15
- May 20
- June 17

Frequently asked questions

Why did Lakewood choose Resource Central for this partnership?

Resource Central already offers this service in several communities throughout Boulder County. Lakewood is excited to be the newest addition to this existing program due to its proven success in other communities, the data and reporting it offers and the fact that it's FREE to both residents and to the city.

Can I drop off my donations to Resource Central's facility instead?

Yes. Using the pickup service on Lakewood's designated days is not a requirement to donate. You will still want to call ahead or email to make sure the items are acceptable for donation.

Are there other organizations who offer this service?

Habitat for Humanity Restore also offers free material pickup services in the Denver metro area, and Lakewood residents can continue to use this service as well. Resource Central's designated Lakewood Pickup Days are another opportunity for residents to conveniently choose reuse through a local organization.

New woody debris drop-off vouchers available

In partnership with Jefferson County, the city now has a voucher program that allows residents one free drop-off of woody debris at the county's SLASH sites during the SLASH season. The program's goals are to increase participation in local composting options, to keep organic

material from going to the landfill and to support community wildfire resistance and mitigation.

Jefferson County will announce the 2026 SLASH season dates this spring, and residents can expect roughly 70 days to conveniently dispose of their woody debris. While all SLASH sites will participate, the SLASH location nearest Lakewood is Tincup Ridge, 101 Rooney Road near Golden next to the Rooney Road Hazardous Waste Recycling Center, which Lakewood residents are also encouraged to use to dispose of household hazardous waste.

"There are still a lot of folks who aren't aware a local service like this exists. We hope the voucher brings new visitors in the door, and their knowledge and use of the SLASH site keeps them coming back," said Em J Jackson, Lakewood's zero waste and circularity planner. "If we run out of vouchers or you want to visit twice in the season, you can still use the SLASH site and support the program by paying the normal fees."

How to participate

Lakewood residents should visit LakewoodCO.gov/Woody to view all program details, review the frequently asked questions and claim their voucher. Sign up to receive SLASH alerts at Jeffco.us/Slash for updates on dates.

Each household is eligible to receive one free voucher per SLASH season while supplies last.

Jefferson County requests voucher holders avoid visiting the opening weekend of the season to avoid potential lines and longer wait times.

Program background

In 2025, Lakewood's Community Sustainability, Climate and Zero Waste Division offered a series of yard waste recycling events in each ward, and the division learned some key lessons that shaped the voucher program:

- Ninety percent of the material received during the events was large woody debris rather than plant waste.
- Residents were unaware of Jefferson County's SLASH program that accepts woody debris.
- Residents would have sent the debris to the landfill if not for the opportunities that Lakewood offered.

In response, Lakewood shifted to this new voucher program for residents to drop off large loads of woody debris at Jefferson County's SLASH sites this season.

In Partnership With

Lakewood's 2026 Outdoor Water Conservation Program

Save water and money with the city's Outdoor Water Conservation Program! In partnership with Resource Central, the city is offering several incentives to help you reduce water use and transform your yard into a beautiful and vibrant Colorado native landscape. Quantities are extremely limited and are available first-come, first-served.

- 1. Garden In A Box**

\$25 discount on Garden In A Box kits, with an additional discount for income-qualified households. These professionally designed kits include several perennial plants and easy instructions for planting and watering.
- 2. Slow the Flow Evaluations**

Free on-site sprinkler system evaluation to help you save money and water.
- 3. Lawn Replacement \$750 Discount**

\$750 credit toward lawn removal services or Garden In A Box kits with turf removal commitment.
- 4. Free Waterwise Yard Webinars**

Free weekly webinars from landscape and horticulture professionals to learn about how to keep your yard looking great while using less water.

For more information, visit LakewoodCO.gov/OutdoorWater

Questions? Email Sustainability@LakewoodCO.gov

Lakewood
Sustainability

Celebrate the opening of Two Creeks Park

Lakewood's new Two Creeks Park, at 7540 W. 12th Ave. in Ward 2, officially opened in November 2025 following the completion of important channel improvements to Dry Gulch.

Two Creeks Park is a one-of-a-kind, 3.8-acre neighborhood park shaped by decades of community vision and collaboration. The park features a neighborhood-designed playground, accessible trails, low water crossings for interactive play, park features from repurposed trees and 111 newly planted trees supporting Lakewood's sustainability goals.

While families have already begun enjoying their new neighborhood park, the final touches should be in place for the upcoming ribbon cutting. The city is inviting residents and neighbors to gather to celebrate this unique park space. **Join us on Thursday, June 11 at 5 p.m.** for a ribbon cutting with family-friendly activities, ice cream and a chance to learn more about the park's development.

A park with history

The vision for Two Creeks Park dates to the 1990s, when students from St. Bernadette Catholic School imagined a park in the area. That early spark of inspiration set in motion more than two decades of planning.

Lakewood's Community Resources Department worked alongside Jefferson County Parks and Open Space and area landowners to acquire vacant land for the future park. In 2013, the city engaged the community to develop an initial site plan for the park. Developing the plan was an important first step toward expanding access to nature, outdoor recreation and safer bicycle and pedestrian connections in the neighborhood.

In 2021, the city acquired the final parcel needed, a former car wash site along



Two Creeks Park

Wadsworth Boulevard. With that acquisition came an opportunity to revisit and expand the vision for the park. An updated site plan incorporated neighborhood feedback, expanded park space and addressed necessary improvements to stabilize Dry Gulch. The Colorado Department of Transportation also owns the northwest corner of the block at West 12th and Wadsworth and coordinated plans to develop a detention pond in that location.

To bring the updated vision to life, the city hired Flow Design Collaborative and Loewen Engineering to refine the 2013 site plan and incorporate current community feedback ahead of construction, which began in 2025. Community engagement included two public surveys, a pop-up event at the city's Rockin' Block Party and a community workshop hosted by the 40West Hub. Special thanks to the Two Creeks Neighborhood Organization for serving as a stakeholder committee throughout the planning process.

Two Creeks Park is located in an area of the community that needs additional parks for residents. Funding for the project came from Jefferson County Parks and Open Space, Lakewood's open space fund and a partnership with Mile High Flood District to support the city's stormwater fund for gulch improvements. The park development was further strengthened by a federal Community Development Block Grant. Learn more at LakewoodCO.gov/TwoCreeksPark.

Cybersecurity for tax season: Protect your identity and refund

Tax season can be stressful, and unfortunately it's also a peak time for scammers. Criminals often pretend to be the Internal Revenue Service or trusted tax services like H&R Block or TurboTax to steal personal information or refunds. These few simple steps from Lakewood's Information Technology team can help keep your identity and your tax return safe.

File early

Filing as soon as you can reduces the chance that a scammer could use your personal information to submit a fraudulent return in your name.

Get an IRS Identity Protection PIN

The IRS offers a six-digit Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN) that adds an extra layer of security. Only you and the IRS will know it, preventing unauthorized filings with your Social Security number. You can request one on the IRS website, [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

Enable multifactor authentication (MFA)

Turn on MFA for all your tax-related accounts, including [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov), tax preparation software and financial institutions. This verification process makes it much harder for someone to access your accounts, even if they have your password.

Watch out for scams

Be cautious of unexpected emails, texts or calls asking for personal information. Don't click unfamiliar links or open suspicious attachments. Remember, the IRS will **never** contact you first by email, text message or social media.

Share documents securely

If you're sending tax documents to a preparer, use encrypted email or a secure file-sharing service. If mailing paperwork, choose a courier or postal option with tracking.

Report suspicious activity

If you think you've encountered a scam, report it to the appropriate agency:

- Identity theft: [IRS.gov/Identity-Theft-Center](https://www.irs.gov/Identity-Theft-Center)
- IRS impersonation scams: The U.S. Treasury Inspector General at [TIGTA.gov](https://www.tigta.gov)
- Phishing or online scams: [IRS.gov/Privacy-Disclosure/Report-phishing](https://www.irs.gov/Privacy-Disclosure/Report-phishing).

Staying alert during tax season is one of the best ways to protect your identity and your refund.



Lakewood
Police Department

POLICE ON THE WATCH



The Lakewood Police Department has two great programs that work in partnership with the community to prevent and reduce crime. Residents, businesses and community members are encouraged to join these programs to become part of important crime prevention efforts.



Business Watch

The Lakewood Police Department relaunched this program in 2024 to help businesses look out for one another. Inspired by the Neighborhood Watch Program from the 1970s, it empowers businesses to stay aware, work together and reduce the risk of crime in their community.

To join, submit an application at:

LakewoodCO.gov/BusinessWatch

Once you submit your application, the program coordinator will contact you and provide some valuable information to help you get started.



Neighborhood Watch

The Lakewood Police Department is revitalizing this program after the challenges of COVID, recruiting new neighborhoods and reconnecting with existing Neighborhood Watch groups. Updates include a new program logo, quarterly captain's meetings and presentations from the police Community Action Team to keep communities informed and engaged. Learn more, download an information packet, or contact the program coordinator at:

LakewoodCO.gov/NeighborhoodWatch

Do you know your flood risk?



Flooding in Lakewood several years ago after heavy rains.

Lakewood is dedicated to protecting people, property, structures and infrastructure from floods. Some Lakewood properties lie in high-risk flood hazard areas even though they may not normally appear to be in danger, and flooding can happen at any time with little or no warning.

To understand your property's flooding risk, call 303-987-7500 or submit a request for this free service to Lakewood's Public Works Department at [LakewoodCO.gov/FloodPlainRequest](https://www.lakewoodco.gov/FloodPlainRequest). You can also write to the department or visit in-person at 470 S. Allison Parkway, 80226. Public Works staff members are also available to visit your property to discuss potential flood hazards.

Public Works can provide you with detailed floodplain information including Federal Emergency Management Agency flood insurance rate maps and studies, local community flood hazard area study maps, flood depth data, elevation certificates, landslide hazards and historic flood events. Learn about your flood risk and other National Flood Insurance Program resources online at [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov).

Tips for living in or near a flood hazard area

Insure your property

- Check to see if you have a current flood insurance policy for your property. Flood insurance is recommended for everyone because standard homeowners' and renters' insurance policies do not cover flood losses. Property owners can insure their buildings and contents, and renters can insure only their contents. There is a 30-day waiting period before policies become effective, so plan ahead.
- Lakewood participates in the Community Rating System, a federal program that provides discounted flood insurance premiums for any property owner in the city whether or not the building is in a flood hazard area. For flood insurance and premium details, contact your

insurance agent. To search for an agent by ZIP code or to get a flood insurance quote, visit [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) or contact the National Flood Insurance Program at 877-336-2627.

Protect your property

- Analyze the slope of the ground around your home's foundation. Check to see that water drains away from your foundation a minimum of seven to 10 feet on all sides.
- Check your gutters and downspouts to see that they drain away from your foundation. Use splash blocks as necessary. Make sure that your downspouts do not drain toward your neighbor's foundation. Remember, standing water in your yard can seep into a basement.
- Install sewer backflow valves or drain plugs for basement floor drains to prevent sewer backups.

Protect yourself and others from flood hazards

- Make a plan for your household, including pets, so that you and your family know what to do, where to go and what you will need to protect yourselves from flooding. Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).
- Be aware of flash flooding hazards. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground.
- During heavy rainfall, stay alert for warning signals (Lookout Alerts, television, radio, websites and social media). Evacuate if directed.
- Avoid walking or driving through flood waters. Just six inches of moving water can knock you down, and one foot of water can float many vehicles.

Build responsibly

- Always check with Lakewood Public Works at 303-987-7500 to ask about development requirements before you build, remodel, fence, regrade, fill or otherwise alter your property.
- All development within the floodplain requires a floodplain development permit from the City of Lakewood.

Protect natural floodplain functions

- Urban drainageways function as conveyance systems for storm runoff and flood events. Help keep Lakewood's gulches and streams clear and clean by properly disposing of any trash, debris, motor oil or other household hazardous items. Follow directions when using fertilizers, pesticides and weed control chemicals.
- Do not dump or throw debris into gulches, ditches or streams, including branches, grass clippings, garbage, dirt and concrete. Debris can accumulate and block drainageways and increase flooding hazards, and it is against city law to dump debris in drainageways.
- Report dumping in gulches, ditches or streams and potential problems such as blocked culverts to the Public Works Department at 303-987-7500.

Applications for neighborhood grants now open

Groups with ideas for improving public spaces in their neighborhoods may be eligible for funding through the city's annual Neighborhood Participation Program.

For more than 25 years, the city's NPP program has offered an outstanding opportunity for neighborhoods to come together to make a difference. Grants of up to \$60,000 are available for projects such as picnic areas, tree plantings or other small park improvements, with \$160,000 in total funding available in 2026.

The application process requires two steps. The process begins with a preapplication, now open online and due by May 1. Projects that meet eligibility requirements will be invited to submit a final application by July 1.

For a project to be eligible, it must have a general benefit to the neighborhood, be located on public property and come from groups representing the neighborhood. Project proposals compete directly with other proposals and are evaluated based on criteria including health and

safety, neighborhood support, maintenance requirements and similar items. Lakewood City Council makes the final selection of the projects to receive grants.

More information about the program is available at [LakewoodCO.gov/NPP](https://www.lakewoodco.gov/NPP).



Morse Park rain garden funded through the Neighborhood Participation Program.

POET LAUREATE (Continued from page 1)

Eventually, they were hired as an adjunct professor of English at Red Rocks Community College in Lakewood, and later in the same position at RMCAD. They currently serve as an associate professor of English.

When moving to the Front Range about 30 years ago, Apache said they were drawn to Lakewood for its ambience and recreational opportunities.

"What I love about Lakewood is that it does have that small town feel," Apache said. "When I first moved here, I drove around the metro area to see what places were like. But when I drove through Lakewood, it has a very different setting than most of the metro. It's very close to Golden, very close to the foothills. I like the open space that Lakewood has. There are a lot of hiking trails and a lot of outdoor activities."

Apache loves Crown Hill Park, walking along Lakewood's creeks and visiting William Hayden Park on Green Mountain.

Becoming the state Poet Laureate hadn't ever crossed Apache's mind. They were grading papers in late January when their phone rang and the caller ID showed "Jared Polis."

"In the back of my mind, I thought it was a political call, looking for funds, you know? I didn't answer it," they said. "When I was done grading, I went to check my voicemail and sure enough it was there. This was about 5 o'clock in the evening, and I'm like, 'This has got to be a joke.' I don't get calls like that, ever."

They listened to the voice mail again a couple of hours later, and it finally sunk in.

"It's not all the time you get a phone call with such an honorable appointment," Apache said.

Apache plans to hit the road extensively during their term as poet laureate, with an emphasis on reaching out to youth — perhaps not surprising given their background in education.

"I want to reach across Colorado — high schools, junior high schools — and just start introducing poetry in the classroom, in community centers and youth organizations and after-school programs."

This experience has already given them insight on what it means for others in the arts.

"When the announcement went out, the press that published my books got an influx of orders, and they sold out," Apache said. "I didn't anticipate this happening, so I just encourage people to be patient."

Know Your City Council Members



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To learn more about City Council, visit LakewoodCO.gov/CityCouncil

SPECIAL ELECTION (Continued from page 1)

You can also visit the City Clerk's Office for in-person help if you did not receive a ballot, need a replacement ballot, need an absentee ballot or need help registering to vote. The City Clerk's Office is open 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday, and 7 a.m.-7 p.m. on the April 7 Election Day.

BALLOT DROP BOX LOCATIONS

Belmar Library

555 S. Allison Parkway

Carmody Recreation Center

2200 S. Kipling St.

Colorado Christian University

8787 W. Alameda Ave. at Leprino Hall and Cedar Drive.

Foothills Fieldhouse

3606 S. Independence St.

Green Mountain Recreation Center

13198 W. Green Mountain Dr.

Jefferson County Public Health

645 Parfet St.

Lakewood Civic Center

480 S. Allison Parkway
West side of South Building

Lakewood Library

10200 W. 20th Ave.

Lakewood Link Recreation Center

1295 S. Reed St.

Ray Ross Park

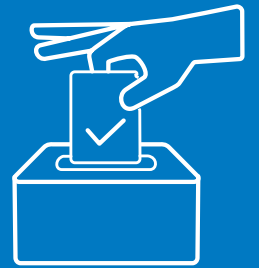
680 S. Harlan St.

Red Rocks Community College

13302 Fox Run Road
Environmental Technology Building

City Council resolution

Council passed a resolution expressing its opinion on these special election referendums.



Previous City Council resolutions similar to this one have been published in this newsletter in the past. The length of this resolution, however, limits the ability to include it in this newsletter. To read the entire resolution, please visit LakewoodCO.gov/2026-14.

VOA Colorado Navigation Center to move residents from homelessness to housing

Lakewood and Volunteers of America Colorado have partnered on an important initiative to address homelessness, opening a facility this month to provide critically needed services to permanently transition residents living unsheltered into stability and long-term housing.

In Jefferson County, homelessness increased 27 percent from 2024 to 2025, which was the highest rate increase of homelessness in the Denver metro area. On any given night, more than 1,100 residents are experiencing homelessness in Jefferson County, making the new facility an important resource to address this community challenge.

The partnership has resulted in the VOA Colorado Navigation Center at 8000 W. Colfax Ave., which opened on March 10. It operates 24/7/365 for up to 100 enrolled participants to receive professional client-centered and housing-focused case management to move beyond a crisis response for homelessness to lasting solutions.

The newly renovated facility includes redesigned dormitories, bathroom and shower facilities, patio spaces, day-use areas and professional workspace. The renovation followed trauma-informed principles to create a healthy, recuperative and safe environment for the participants and staff.

The professional case management focuses on an array of community-based services to assist participants in overcoming barriers to leaving the street. These can include employment, benefit navigation support and referrals to behavioral health, primary health care and other needs. A strong ratio of case managers to participants provides individualized attention, so the enrolled participants are provided stability off the street, not a just a bed and a meal.

Individuals are referred to the center through outreach programs including homeless navigators with the Lakewood Police Department's



Interior of VOA Colorado Navigation Center

Community Action Team. No walk-up or drop-in services are available at the center.

Lakewood selected VOA Colorado to operate the Navigation Center through an open, competitive bidding process. VOA Colorado celebrated 130 years of supporting seniors, children, veterans and families throughout the state just two days before the opening of this Navigation Center.

Each year, VOA Colorado serves more than 100,000 individual households through more than 50 programs statewide, and the VOA Colorado Navigation Center is similar to programs that VOA Colorado has successfully operated over decades in many communities throughout the state.

The center is one of several navigation centers that the Colorado Department of Local Affairs has helped fund across the metro area including ones in Aurora, Englewood and elsewhere.