



Sustainable Neighborhoods Program expanding in 2026



Weir Gulch Gardens Sustainable Neighborhood hosted a bike tour as part of its sustainability efforts for its residents.

More neighborhoods will have a chance to join Lakewood's award-winning Sustainable Neighborhoods Program as applications to join the program will open in January 2026, so get ready and get organized.

"Being a part of our Sustainable Neighborhood group has made me feel like an active, productive part of our community," said Kristi Reeves from the South of 6th neighborhood. "I've made some great friends, and it's been fun to meet lots of good folks who want to contribute and improve our neighborhood."

The program will add two neighborhoods to the 10 current neighborhoods. The program launched in 2012 after a yearlong pilot program, and it gives residents the opportunity to become active partners in making Lakewood a vibrant and sustainable community.

"The Sustainable Neighborhoods Program is based on the simple principle of having residents directing how they want to accomplish sustainability. This approach is the very definition of grassroots organizing and the highest form of civic engagement," Mayor Wendi Strom said in June while accepting the All-America City Hall of Fame Award from the National Civic League for the program.

Volunteers in each neighborhood plan and implement activities, programs and events in their neighborhoods based on their passions and interests in sustainability. With these resident-led and resident-driven efforts, the

city's role is to provide support, resources, training and recognition along the way. Neighborhoods earn credits toward certification as a Participating Sustainable Neighborhood or an Outstanding Sustainable Neighborhood. Once a neighborhood achieves the outstanding level, City Council recognizes the neighborhood, and signage is placed in the neighborhood displaying that outstanding status.

Attend an informational open house 6-7:30 p.m. Jan. 27 in the Orchard Room at Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park, 801 S. Yarrow St., to learn more about the program, the application process and selection criteria. Applications will be available online Jan. 12 at SustainableNeighborhoodNetwork.org/Lakewood. The

deadline to apply will be March 2, with the launch of the two new neighborhoods expected around Earth Day 2026 in April.

The current 10 Sustainable Neighborhoods welcome participation from all residents in and near their neighborhoods, and the teams in the neighborhoods are always looking for new people to join their efforts. The current neighborhoods are Applewood, Belmar, Eiber, Green Mountain, Lake Lochwood Village, Morse Park, O'Kane Park, Southern Gables, South of 6th and Weir Gulch Gardens. Find a map of the neighborhoods, along with contact information for getting involved if you already live in one of the neighborhoods, at SustainableNeighborhoodNetwork.org/Lakewood.

Free yard waste recycling events

To provide more opportunities for residents to divert organic waste from the landfill, Lakewood has been hosting a series of free Yard Waste Recycling Events in every ward this fall.

When and where? Remaining events, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.	
Oct. 25	Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church, 11500 W. 20th Ave.
Nov. 1	Ray Ross Park, 680 S. Harlan St.
Nov. 8	Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design, 1600 Pierce St.

Who can come?

This event is open to Lakewood residents only. Register in advance at Lakewood.org/YardWaste. Registration is free and helps us plan for traffic, waste volume and staffing to ensure everyone has a smooth drop-off experience.

What can you bring?

Limit one truck load or trailer per visitor. Material can be loose, bagged or bundled with twine.

ACCEPTED:

- **Plant matter:** weeds, flowers, plants, vines, grass clippings.
- **Woody debris:** twigs, sticks, brush, bark, pine needles, pine cones, mulch.
- **Limbs/branches:** up to 4-feet long and 3-inches in diameter.
- **Pumpkins:** no wax, paint or other decoration.

NOT ACCEPTED:

- **Bags of leaves** (incidental leaves are okay): Leaving the leaves on your lawn and garden cycles nutrients back into the soil and provides critical protection for insect life over winter. For excess leaves, use Lakewood's Leaf

Recycling, Nov. 15-30. Details at Lakewood.org/LeafRecycling.

- **Stumps:** Wood larger than 4-feet long and 3-inches in diameter. Large woody debris can be taken to Jeffco's Tin Cup Ridge SLASH Site through Oct 26.
- **Trash, plastic, dirt, rocks, food scraps.**

Additional information

- Events are free, but participating nonprofits may collect cash donations on-site for their volunteer efforts.
- Don't arrive early because this creates dangerous traffic backlogs.
- Attend any event even if it's not in your ward.
- SCRAPs, a local hauler, will take yard waste to an Arvada facility where it will be composted into nutrient rich soil. SCRAPs has an annual compost sale.

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POSTAL PATRON

Yard Waste & Pumpkin Composting (FREE)

Saturdays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. | Oct. 25 - Nov. 8, 2025

5 Events
1 in each
ward

Lakewood
Residents
Only



LAKEWOOD
Composts

Details and Registration at
Lakewood.org/YardWaste



Lakewood
Community Sustainability,
Climate & Zero Waste

MAYOR



Wendi Strom

As Lakewood’s mayor, I am continually inspired by the spirit of service, creativity, and compassion that exists in our community. This September, we had the privilege of celebrating two extraordinary expressions of that spirit: the 2025 Mayor’s Inspiration Awards and our third annual Love Lakewood Day. Both events showcased the very best of who we are and reminded us why Lakewood is such a special place to call home.

The Mayor’s Inspiration Awards honor individuals, youth, businesses, and organizations whose contributions uplift our city through civic engagement, inclusiveness, innovation, and

collaboration. This year’s nine honorees exemplify those values in tangible ways.

Doug and Judy Whitten, longtime leaders of the Southern Gables Neighborhood Association, were recognized for their tireless efforts to build a welcoming and connected neighborhood. From organizing monthly luncheons and National Night Out events to spearheading composting initiatives and youth volunteer programs, the Whittens make Southern Gables, and Lakewood, stronger, greener, and more neighborly!

We also honored Westerra Credit Union, founded by teachers, for its efforts to support education. It has funded school programs, particularly for science, technology and math at Lakewood High School, conducted classroom supply drives at Slater and Westgate elementary schools, and tailored financial literacy programs for kids. Westerra’s story is a testament to the kind of impact a business can have in a community.

These are just a couple examples of the recipients’ contributions to our city this year. Each one has made inspiring changes in our city, and I extend my deepest gratitude to each of them for their dedication and hard work.

(See all 2025 recipients on page 3 and learn about past winners at Lakewood.org/MayorsAwards).

Equally inspiring was the energy and unity displayed during Love Lakewood Day on Sept. 20. This citywide volunteer event, organized by Serve Spot Lakewood, brought together 400 residents from all walks of life to complete service projects across more than 20 locations. From painting schools and cleaning up public spaces to creating messages of appreciation for teachers and preparing meals, volunteers tackled projects that might otherwise go undone due to limited resources.

One standout moment came at Foothills Elementary, where the Green Mountain High School boys soccer team helped landscape a portion of the school grounds, a task that would have taken staff months to complete. In just a few hours, a group of caring neighbors transformed a space that will now better serve students for years to come.

Love Lakewood Day is more than just a day of service; it’s a movement. It reflects our shared commitment to making Lakewood a great place, lifting each other up, and investing in the future of our schools and neighborhoods. I want to thank every volunteer, organizer,

sponsor, and partner who made this year’s event a success. Your efforts are deeply appreciated and truly transformative.

In our world today, we are polarized, but we don’t have to be. Whether it’s nominating someone for next year’s Inspiration Awards (the window opens in April), joining a neighborhood cleanup, or simply checking on a neighbor, every act of kindness contributes to the health and feeling of belonging in our community. We can all choose to be a light and the reason that someone else feels safe, seen, and supported.

Lakewood thrives not just because of the work that city staff and our City Council does. It thrives because of our residents, our volunteers, and our changemakers. You remind us that leadership isn’t about titles; it’s about action. It’s about showing up, caring deeply, and working together to build a city where everyone feels seen, supported, and empowered.

On behalf of the City Council and the entire Lakewood community, thank you for your service, your heart, and your inspiration. Let’s continue to love Lakewood — every day.

Wendi Strom
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WARD 1



Jeslin Shahrezaei

Regional collaboration is key to Lakewood’s success, and we’ve seen some exciting examples worth highlighting.

In September, the City Council approved an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that brings together Jefferson County and the cities of Lakewood, Arvada, Edgewater, Golden, Westminster, and Wheat Ridge to coordinate a cold weather shelter strategy for the 2025–2026 season. This shared effort reflects our region’s commitment to ensuring that our community’s most vulnerable neighbors are not left without shelter during Colorado’s harshest winter nights.

In August, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) awarded Lakewood a \$1.5 million grant to support the development and implementation of an energy benchmarking policy and future building performance standard for commercial, multifamily, and public buildings between 10,000–50,000 square feet. These policies will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the metro area, and the grant provides funding for the program through 2029. Learn more at Lakewood.org/BPP. Council member Jeslin Shahrezaei serves as Lakewood’s appointee to DRCOG and sits on its Executive Committee, helping ensure

Lakewood’s voice is strong in shaping regional solutions.

Looking a little further back to August 2024, Lakewood joined Jefferson County and other local stakeholders in adopting the **Jefferson County Housing Blueprint**, a plan designed to expand affordable housing options, specifically focused on households earning 60–120 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) (\$55,000–\$156,000 for one-four person households). This initiative grew out of the county’s 2022 Housing Needs Assessment, which called for regional collaboration to address the housing crisis. Learn more about the blueprint at www.Jeffco.us/2655/Housing. Council member Glenda Sinks serves on Lakewood’s Housing Policy Commission and has helped advance City Council’s understanding of how this regional partnership can support the innovative work coming out of Lakewood’s Housing Policy Commission.

Looking ahead, Lakewood will continue to play an active role in regional partnerships. Lakewood is the largest city in Jefferson County and the fifth largest in Colorado,

our leadership matters. This is showcased in commitments to address housing needs, improve transportation along major corridors like C-470, I-70, West Colfax and West Sixth avenues, as well as building resilient communities across city lines.

These are just a few examples of the many regional solutions Lakewood continues to support. In early October, City Council will host a Legislative Breakfast with our state leaders to discuss issues that matter most to our community. Building and maintaining these collaborative relationships, both locally and at the state level, is essential to Lakewood’s ongoing success.

Lakewood City Council remains committed to fostering partnerships that reflect our shared values and strengthen the entire region. Together, we can ensure that Lakewood and our neighbors continue to thrive.

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Glenda Sinks

Nine recognized for outstanding contributions to Lakewood



City Council recognized the moving stories of nine local individuals, organizations and businesses during its recent celebration of the 2025 Mayor's Inspiration Awards. Across all five wards, these recipients of this year's award have performed amazing work to make the city a better place.

Gerald Hilton is the president of Elks Lodge No. 1777 located in the West Colfax Avenue corridor. In his time there, he has focused on veteran assistance, providing clothing, bedding and furniture to veterans who are formerly homeless. His lodge has partnered with the city on the annual West Metro Veterans Fair for 13 years, and he is known for coming to every event and community gathering with a smile on his face.

Felix Cook Sr. was recognized in memoriam. Rising from beginnings in a one-room schoolhouse, he lived a truly impressive life, mentoring many along the way. He lived in Lakewood for more than 50 years, and City Council recognized him with a proclamation last March shortly after his passing. Lakewood is extremely lucky that he was part of our community.

Amber Varwig is a longtime advocate for the less fortunate in Lakewood. She is the founder of the Lakewood Left mutual aid group, which provides a community meal every Friday to residents experiencing homelessness. The group makes sure no one walks away hungry, and she and the group have been instrumental in ensuring residents have shelter on especially cold nights.

Doug and Judy Whitten are fixtures in the Southern Gables neighborhood in southern Lakewood. They are pivotal in distributing neighborhood dues to deserving people and organizations, and they organize the annual National Night Out event with the Lakewood Police Department in their neighborhood. They also help with the neighborhood's leaf pickup event every fall for residents who can't do it themselves.

Ellen Rucker has run a food pantry and clothing bank out of Mountair Christian Church in northeast Lakewood every week for the past eight years, and she does it with enthusiasm and joy. Regardless of weather, she is out there, helping people who need help. Her efforts aid more than 200 residents every month.

40 West Arts District, created in 2011, has done much to change the trajectory and perception of the West Colfax corridor through programs such as the 40 West ArtLine, First Friday events, artists in residence, Curated at the Mills collaboration with Colorado Mills mall and more. Lakewood is honored by the passionate commitment and service of the 40 West team members and are lucky to work alongside them.

The Chanda Center for Health and its founder Chanda Hinton have been a force for good in the disability community for 20 years. Pulling from her own life experiences, Hinton and the center use integrative therapies and services to improve the quality of life, reduce costs and increase autonomy for those with disabilities. They have been instrumental in shaping the health care landscape in Colorado and showing the importance of accessibility and equity.

Westerra Credit Union, founded by teachers, has always understood the important role of education. In Lakewood, it has supported science, technology, engineering and math focused special education programs at Lakewood High School and funded classroom supply drives at Slater and Westgate elementary schools. It has also tailored financial literacy programs for kids, offered fraud prevention seminars for seniors and expanded into Spanish-language programs.

VL Builders, a Lakewood-based home remodeling company, has jumped headfirst into volunteerism, partnering with local groups on toy drives for kids, creating handmade gifts for local seniors, volunteering with the Food Bank of the Rockies and more. In Lakewood, the company supported the Police Department's recent pancake breakfast, and the team actively seeks out ways to connect with the local community.

Keep an eye out for next year's nomination in April to nominate any individual, organization or business that does great things for the community. Check out previous years' winners and more at Lakewood.org/MayorsAwards.

Connect with the community.
Spread holiday cheer.

- Help greet guests.
- Arrange displays and assist with purchases.
- Computer & Excel skills are especially helpful.

Seeking Store Volunteers

Each holiday season, the **Museum Store** at Heritage Lakewood is a gift-buying destination! We're also hosting the **Holiday Pop Up Market** at the Lakewood Cultural Center Nov. 1 – Dec. 22. Help is needed at both locations. Training is provided.

Email Volunteer@Lakewood.org to get involved.

HERITAGE LAKEWOOD
BELMAR PARK

LAKEWOOD
CULTURAL CENTER

Our shops support local artists.

Lakewood
Full of Possibilities.

City Manager
Kathy Hodgson

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Lakewood.org

Stay Informed

Sign up for LookoutAlert to receive important emergency notifications.

Lakewood's outdoor sirens will be deactivated at the end of this year as we move to **a more reliable way to keep you safe.**

LookoutAlert powered by Smart911 is the **official emergency notification system** for Lakewood and Jefferson County. It delivers **timely, detailed alerts** about severe weather, wildfires, floods, and other emergencies — right to your phone.

SCAN HERE

Scan the QR code to sign up today or visit LookoutAlert.co.

Need help? Call the LookoutAlert Assistance Line at **720-230-2270**.

LookoutAlert
EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

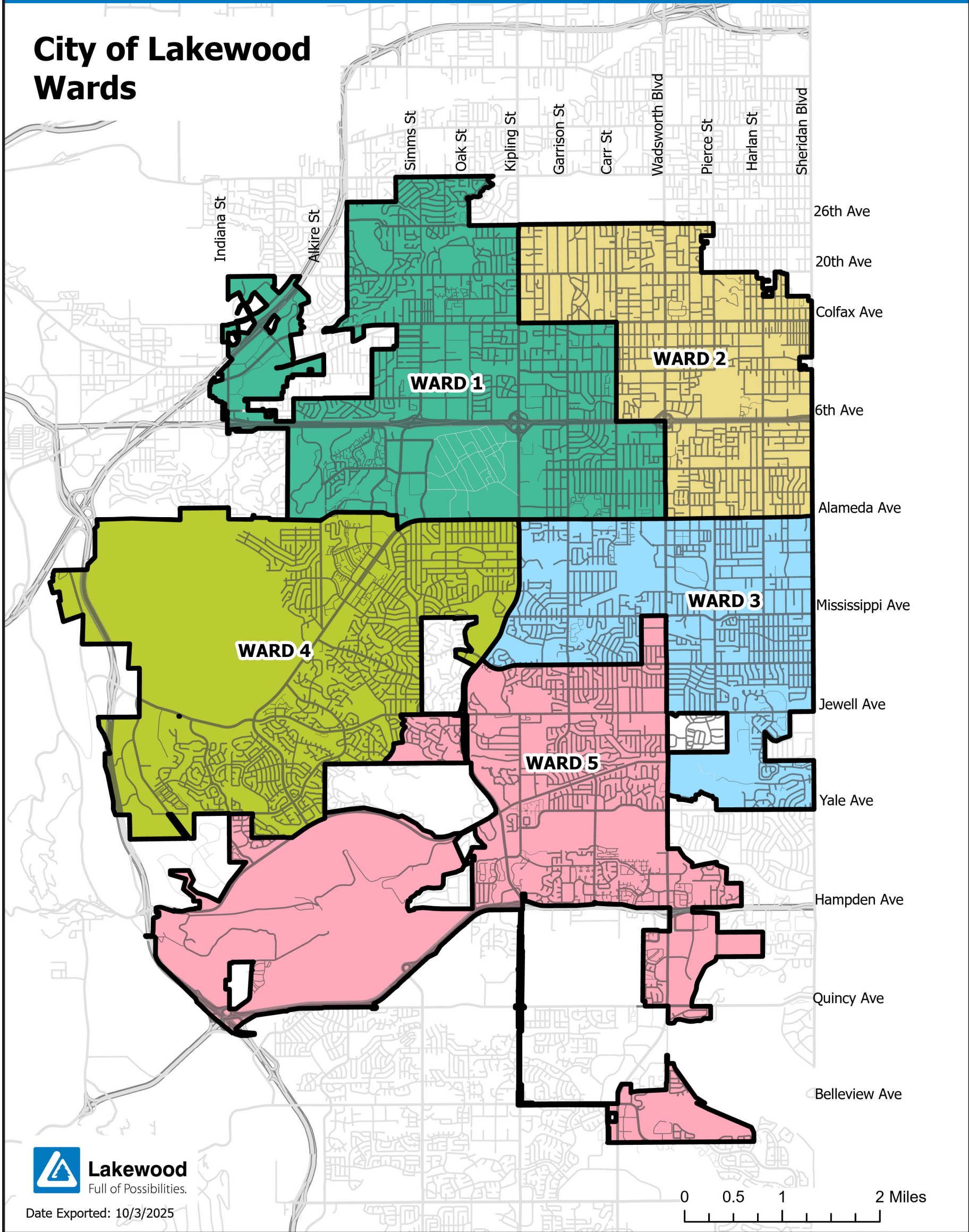
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Message and data rates may apply. Text messages are sent on an as-needed basis. Go to smart911.com for privacy and terms information.

CITY OF LAKEWOOD • VOTER'S GUIDE

City of Lakewood Wards



Voter Service and Polling Centers in Lakewood

- Belmar Library**
555 S. Allison Parkway
• 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday, Oct. 27-Nov. 3
(except 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 1.)
• 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 4.
- Red Rocks Community College**
Environmental Tech Building
13302 Fox Run Road
• 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Nov. 3
• 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Election Day, Nov. 4

BALLOT DROP-OFF LOCATIONS IN LAKEWOOD

24 hours from Oct. 10-Nov. 3 and until 7 p.m. on Election Day, Nov. 4

- Belmar Library**
555 S. Allison Parkway
- Carmody Recreation Center**
2200 S. Kipling St.
- Colorado Christian University**
By Leprino Hall off of Cedar Drive
8787 W. Alameda Ave.
- Green Mountain Recreation Center**
13198 W. Green Mountain Dr.
- Jeffco Public Health**
645 Parfet St.
- Lakewood Civic Center**
West side of South Building
480 S. Allison Parkway
- 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**
Environmental Technology Building
13302 Fox Run Road

City Council elections Nov. 4

The Nov. 4 election for Lakewood City Council is coming to your mailbox, making it easy to participate in choosing your Lakewood elected representatives.

This election will elect one council member from each of the city’s five wards, but you will only vote for a council candidate for the ward in which you live. Learn which ward you live in by checking the map on page 4 or entering your home address at [Lakewood.org/MyNeighborhood](https://lakewood.org/MyNeighborhood).

Elections for Lakewood City Council are nonpartisan, which means no party affiliations are shown with candidates.

This election is by mail ballot only, and active, registered Lakewood voters will receive a mail ballot, which began to be mailed on Oct. 10. Absentee or replacement ballots are also available by contacting the Jefferson County Clerk's Office or VoteJeffco.com.

You can register to vote or update your registration online at ColoradoSOS.gov and in-person at Jefferson County Clerk's Office.

Voter Service and Polling Centers will open on Oct. 27, where you can also register to vote including on Election Day, Nov. 4. The centers also allow you to vote in person, get a replacement mail ballot, drop off a mail ballot or use voting equipment accessible for those with disabilities.

See the list for places to drop off your ballot in Lakewood once you have filled out your ballot. If you mail your ballot through the U.S. Postal Service, you must mail it by Oct. 27 for it to be received by the 7 p.m. deadline on Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Watch the League of Women Voters candidate forum on-demand at Lakewood.org/VoterInformation.

Important dates to remember:

- Oct. 10** – Ballots begin to be mailed to all active, registered Lakewood voters. Check the status of the mailing of your ballot under “Track Your Ballot” at BallotTrax.ColoradoSOS.gov/voter.
- Oct. 10** – 24-hour ballot drop boxes open. Find locations under “Find a drop box” at VoteJeffco.com.
- Oct. 27** – Last day to submit a voter registration application and still receive a ballot in the mail at your home. If you miss this deadline, you can register in-person through Nov. 4 and vote at a Voter Service and Polling Center.
- Oct. 27** – First day for Voter Service and Polling Centers to open, offering voter registration, drop-off for mail ballots and other voting services. Find locations under the “Voting Sites” at VoteJeffco.com.
- Oct. 27** – Last day to return your ballot by mailing through the U.S. Postal Service. After this date, you must drop your ballot in a 24-hour ballot drop box or visit a Voter Service and Polling Center.
- Nov. 4** – Election Day. Ballots must be received by 7 p.m.

Where to go or call for voting information:

Lakewood City Clerk’s Office 480 S. Allison Parkway, first floor 303-987-7080 Lakewood.org/Elections	Jefferson County Election Office 3500 Illinois Street, Suite 1100 303-271-8111 VoteJeffco.com
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CITY OF LAKEWOOD • COUNCIL SEAT CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES



Ward 1 Jeslin Shahrezaei

Occupation: Nonprofit Executive Director
Best way for voters to contact you:
jshahrezaei@lakewood.org
Your website/social media: jeslin4lakewood.com

- 1) Why would you be an effective council member?**
In my first term, I’ve worked hard to deliver real results for our community. Together, we’ve reduced residential speed limits to make our streets safer, added 18 acres of new park space in Ward 1, and secured investment in Lakewood’s co-responder program to better support public safety. I’ve also made it a priority to be available and accessible — meeting with

residents often to hear concerns and shape policy that reflects our community’s needs. I’m proud of what we’ve accomplished and I’m excited to keep building on this progress in a second term.

- 2) What do you think are the most important issues facing the city?**
Lakewood is Colorado’s fifth biggest city, and like many growing communities, we’re facing some big challenges — especially around housing. Two generations ago, much of Lakewood was farmland. Today, we have unique neighborhoods and busy transit corridors, and in another generation, our city will look different again. The key is making sure we guide that change thoughtfully. We need to allow for more housing options while also protecting the character and history that make Lakewood special. This balance — honoring who we are while planning for the future — is one of the most important issues we face, and it’s something I’m committed to working on with our community.
- 3) Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.**
City Council’s role is to set the vision and priorities that guide the day-to-day work of staff. Each year, at our annual planning retreat, we work together to find consensus on the values and priorities we want to focus

on over the next 12–24 months. Staff then uses that direction to shape their work plans. You can see this in action in the 2026 Budget Book, where each department highlights upcoming projects and how they connect to Council’s goals. Just as important, our role as Councilors is to be out in the community — listening, learning, and bringing residents’ voices into City Hall. At times, that means acting as trustees, making decisions in the best long-term interest of the city, and at other times as delegates, carrying forward the will of the community.

- 4) How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?**
Over the past four years, I’ve learned that a big part of this job is listening to residents’ frustrations and concerns. Local leaders are meant to be accessible, and I’ve made it a priority to be available and create space for people to share their views. We won’t always agree, but it matters that people feel heard and have the right information. When the toughest issues come up, I’ve found that honest conversations with community members often bring us back to a shared value: making sure Lakewood is the best it can be. That vision may look a little different from neighborhood to neighborhood, but it’s a good guide when navigating disagreements.



Ward 2 Liz Black

Occupation: Executive Director, 40 West Arts District
Best way for voters to contact you:
info@lizforlakewood.com
Your website/social media:
www.lizforlakewood.com / LizforLakewood (Instagram and to a lesser extent, Facebook)

- 1) Why would you be an effective council member?**
I have lived, worked, and raised a child in Ward 2 for over 10 years, which I think gives me a unique perspective on issues related to this community. I have served as the Executive Director of 40 West Arts District for almost a decade, and our work directly relates to

community engagement, neighborhood resilience, access to amenities for residents, and supporting small businesses to succeed. I have been a part of everything from sweeping our walkways, to grant writing and planning our vision for the future. Finally, I am extroverted, compassionate, and joyous which makes me well suited to working with different people.

- 2) What do you think are the most important issues facing the city?**
I want to embody a vision of hope for the City of Lakewood, versus coming from a place of fear. City planning has a profound effect on the human experience. Our physical spaces can encourage health, vitality, and connectedness or detract from it, which is why parks, open spaces, pedestrian and bike access, and pedestrian-convenient local businesses are so important. Additionally, climate change planning is essential to our future. Shade spaces like tree-lined streets, parks, and accessible multi-modal transportation are critical to tackling these challenges. I know that we have other priorities, I have lived and worked along West Colfax for over 10 years. But I am a true believer in change at the local level and I intend to lead from a place of possibility.
- 3) Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.**
City Council acts almost like a non-profit Board of Directors in my opinion, which I have extensive experience with, both serving on

the Board of Directors for Athena Project, and acting as Executive Director (or comparable to the City Manager) for 40 West Arts. In this regard, City Council takes input and feedback from residents to set the vision and overall policy for the City of Lakewood. The City Manager acts to lead, operate, and manage the City on a day-to-day basis, and to interact directly with each department. City Council and the City Manager work closely together, and City Council strives to represent the voice of community.

- 4) How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?**
Always, I want to listen and learn. That has been a cornerstone of my approach in the arts district, and I think my track record of fairness, compassion, and bringing other voices to the table is well-documented. I have worked with a number of leaders, business owners, and residents for over 10 years and I think they would say that I am fair and collaborative. With that said, City Council is responsible for leading a vision for Lakewood and holding true to that identity. Change can be unsettling, but City Council has been tasked (and voted into office) to steer and guide policy. We would not have a public fire service, worker protections, or the right for women to vote without passionate, pioneering individuals, even when it felt impossible to some.



Ward 3
Ken Cruz

Occupation: Ward 3 City Councilor | Business Owner
Best way for voters to contact you:
info@cruzforlakewood.com
Your website/social media: cruzforlakewood.com,
https://m.facebook.com/KenCruzForLakewood/
https://www.instagram.com/kencruzforlakewood

1) Why would you be an effective council member?
In March 2025, I was elected in a special election to represent Ward 3. In just five months, I’ve worked to show what effective leadership looks like, listening, acting, and building bridges. I launched a Listening Tour across Ward 3, meeting neighbors in parks, libraries, cafés, and breweries. Those conversations gave residents space to share concerns, opportunities,

and ideas for our city. What I heard directly informed my work at City Hall. I hosted eight zoning code roundtables, with one more scheduled, so residents could engage meaningfully in the city’s zoning rewrite. Out of those discussions came 15 amendments I co-created with the community, amendments that added guardrails, improved clarity, and reflected real neighborhood input. To make the process more accessible, I also pushed for breaking the zoning code into four sections so residents could digest it more easily, and I’m advocating for translation into Spanish so more voices are included.

2) What do you think are the most important issues facing the city?
Lakewood faces serious challenges, but the way we approach them matters as much as the policies themselves. I believe we need to tackle housing affordability, homelessness, economic vitality, sustainability, and transportation, and we must do it while also healing divisions and rebuilding trust between residents and city government. Housing affordability is front and center. Too many neighbors are spending over 30% of their income on rent or mortgages, and seniors who want to downsize have too few options. We need to support a range of housing types, including accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and smaller-scale housing options, so people of all incomes and ages can find a home in Lakewood.

Homelessness is also pressing. It’s not only about shelter but also dignity, services, and safety. That’s why I created the Unhoused Advisory Circle, which is becoming a full city committee. This ensures that lived experience guides how we approach policy and services. I also helped with regional conversations with the county and nearby cities to create a severe-weather plan to protect unhoused residents.

3) Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.
Lakewood’s council-manager system is designed to balance professional administration with community representation. The mayor and ten council members share equal authority in setting policy, passing ordinances, adopting the budget, and ensuring city values are reflected in decision-making. The city manager, in turn, oversees daily operations and implements what the council decides.
4) How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?
Conflicting perspectives are natural in any community. What matters is how we handle them. Too often, division grows when communication is absent or reactive. My approach is to be proactive, share information early, create opportunities for dialogue, and make sure residents feel heard before decisions are made.



Ward 3
Bonnie Nguyen

Occupation: EMT, Health & Wellness Coach, CPR/AED Instructor
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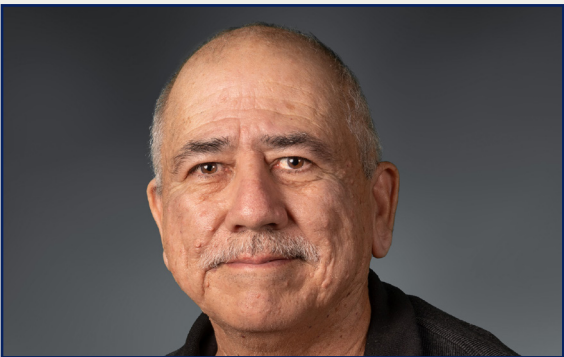
1) Why would you be an effective council member?
I would be an effective council member because I have a unique, hands-on perspective that comes from nearly a decade of experience as an EMT, a community volunteer, and a first-generation Vietnamese-American. My time as a first responder gave me a front-row seat to not just our city’s challenges, but others as well—from traffic congestion to the impact of rapid growth on public safety resources.

My approach is rooted in my personal journey. I’ve been homeless, underpaid, lived paycheck to paycheck, lost a job-faced many injustices. These experiences have taught me resilience and a deep understanding of what many in our community face. I will bring that same resilience and dedication to advocate for our community as a public servant, a daughter, a sister, fur & feathers mom, a friend, and a neighbor.

2) What do you think are the most important issues facing the city?
Based on what I’ve gathered, the most important issues facing the city are true public safety, environmental protection, and housing affordability. These issues are deeply interconnected, and my platform provides a beginning blueprint for addressing them. True public safety requires an accountable police force and well-supported first responders. Environmental protection isn’t just a political issue; it’s a public health issue. Protecting our open space, parks, and mature trees will allow our community to thrive and be a healthy place for all of us. There needs to be a smarter approach to housing affordability that fixes our city’s core infrastructure (water, sidewalks, etc.) first. Then attract businesses which will create jobs, then we build the right kind of housing to meet those needs—real housing affordability is a result of financial stability, a reduction in crime, and effective solutions for homelessness. These aren’t issues that Lakewood must address alone, let’s also work

with our neighboring cities and stop sweeping issues under the rug or making it another community’s problem.

3) Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.
My understanding of the City Council member’s role is to ensure our community’s voice is heard in every decision. This means advocating for policies that empower our residents, demanding greater transparency from city officials, and pushing back against backroom deals that benefit developers at the expense of our neighborhoods. The role of a City Council member is to represent the community, not just govern it. People are only open to change if they can be included in the process early and fairly.
4) How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?
Conflicting perspectives are inevitable, it doesn’t mean we cannot find common ground or innovative compromise. I believe our shared commitment to a better Lakewood can be our compass. I will listen to all perspectives to find solutions that put our community’s well-being first—to ensure that my platform’s ideas are also my community’s ideas. Let’s proactively protect Lakewood with community-led voices through as many town hall meetings as necessary!



Ward 3
Pete Roybal

Occupation: Retired
Best way for voters to contact you: Email
Peteroybal2025@gmail.com
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1) Why would you be an effective council member?
I have a proven record of community involvement and leadership. I care deeply about Lakewood’s future and believe in listening, problem-solving, and working collaboratively. I will be accessible, transparent, and committed to bringing practical solutions and accountability to City Council.
2) What are the most important issues facing the city?

- Infrastructure: Roads, sidewalks, and public spaces need consistent upkeep.
- Housing & Development: Growth must be balanced and sustainable.
- Homelessness: Partner with organizations for compassionate, effective solutions.
- Quality of Life: Protect parks, open space, and community programs.

3) Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.
City Council sets policies, approves budgets, and represents residents. The City Manager handles daily operations. My role is to listen, set priorities, and ensure staff carries them out responsibly.
4) How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?
I will listen to all sides, weigh long-term impacts, and seek balanced solutions. When compromise isn’t possible, I’ll clearly explain my decision so residents know their concerns were heard



Ward 4
Ariel Manzanares-Scisney

Occupation: Private Educator & Global Macro Investor
Best way for voters to contact you: Text Message
Your website/social media:
Instagram: @arielmiscisney
X: @sciarieel
Truth Social: @amscisney

- 1) **Why would you be an effective council member?**
As a lifelong Lakewood resident, I understand the history, evolution and culture of our city as people have come and gone from around the globe. As a 30-year-old Zillennial, I have a vested interest in the prosperity of Lakewood families for

NEXT 30 years. Finally, as a debt-free financially independent person, I can afford the time to serve my community without special interests.

2) **What do you think are the most important issues facing the city?**
My main concerns with Lakewood have to do with demographics and job security as they relate to the affordability crisis facing all Americans. Unfortunately, much of this temporary economic pain is going to be felt by Lakewood, because more than half of our residents depend on some form of government employment or federal assistance. Here’s the problem with that;
America is \$37 Trillion in Debt. America doubled her population of elderly seniors, but stagnated her population of young workers, hence why our top 3 expenditures in government are social security, Medicare, and finally paying the interest on our debt, ALL BEFORE our bloated military budget. Everything is more expensive because banks print dollars out of thin air to support people who take on debt, to use money they don’t have, to pay for things they don’t need, to impress people they don’t know. Meanwhile, my investment portfolios are performing at 30-40% on the year. I’m WINNING in this economy, so it’s my responsibility to help my neighbors win as well by educating them on how our economy works.
WE NEED MORE ENTREPRENEURS!

- 3) **Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.**
A city council is the legislative and policy-making body of a city, responsible for enacting laws, approving the annual budget, and setting taxes and service rates. Council members represent constituents, monitor city agencies, and make decisions on community goals, land use, and major projects. They also appoint city officials & serve on committees. They are the small local government that protects citizens from the large federal government.
- 4) **How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?**
Transparency and communication are key. Ideally, the City Council will be able to synthesize the perspectives of all residents after holding Ward meetings, checking online discourse, and chatting with constituents at casual community events. After taking all perspectives into account, the City Council should be able to make a cogent argument backed by data, combining logos, ethos, and pathos together to make a solid case for the decisions they are making. Even if residents FEEL a certain way about a subject, hopefully they will at least understand our reasoning for making decisions.



Ward 4
Desirée González

Occupation: Intelligence Consultant / Musician
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- 1) **Why would you be an effective council member?**
I will be effective because I already do the work most candidates only talk about. For years, I’ve tracked decisions in council chambers, commissioner meetings, and courts. I’ve filed records requests, exposed waste, and held leaders accountable.
When neighbors raise concerns about unsafe streets or housing conditions, I don’t just “raise

awareness.” I gather data, file paperwork, and push until action happens. My lived experience of being ignored by institutions fuels my persistence: outrage alone is noise, but outrage turned into ordinances and budget priorities creates change. I focus on transparency and measurable results. That means dashboards residents can read, open hearings where whistleblowers are safe to speak, and policies shaped by what neighbors actually ask for. At my core, I show up, stay until the work is done, and deliver results.

2) **What are the most important issues facing the city?**
Lakewood is growing, but many residents feel less safe, less stable, and less heard.

- Public safety: Families deserve transparency in law enforcement and accountability for failures.
- Housing: Rising rents and unsafe conditions demand stronger renter protections and truly affordable housing.
- Mental health & addiction: Lakewood has crisis response teams, but capacity is limited. We need stronger investment in prevention, follow-up care, and community-based programs that keep people out of jail and ER beds.
- Infrastructure: Safer streets, sidewalks, and lighting are everyday needs, not luxuries.
- Budget integrity: Tax dollars must reflect community priorities, not insider deals.

- At the heart, these issues are about restoring trust — in government, housing, safety, and the city’s promises.
- 3) **Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.**
The city manager runs daily operations. Council sets the vision, allocates the budget, and ensures accountability. Our job is to pass ordinances that reflect community needs, set measurable goals, and use the budget as a moral document that prioritizes residents over special interests.
Council must also oversee the manager’s performance, demand transparency, and protect whistleblowers. Above all, it serves as the bridge between residents and government.
- 4) **How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?**
Conflict is not failure — it’s an opportunity. I’ll start by listening to all sides, including renters, workers, and seniors often left out of debates. I’ll ground discussions in facts and independent data, then broker compromises that balance safety, equity, and quality of life.
If consensus isn’t possible, I’ll explain my vote clearly and publish the evidence I relied on. My commitment is that decisions will never be swayed by money or political connections, but by what best serves Lakewood’s long-term welfare.



Ward 4
William (Bill) Furman

Occupation: Architect/Project Manager – Jacobs
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https://www.facebook.com/billfurman4lakewood

- 1) **Why would you be an effective council member?**
I was born and raised in Lakewood, and I’m excited to raise my kids in a community that thrives. My time on council, and as an architect working with municipalities across the country, has prepared me to address our critical issues while positioning us for success by dealing

with change directly. I understand competing concerns of policy, collaboration, compromise, fiscal responsibility, strategic vision, community engagement, and representation. I know the role and responsibility, and I have vision, and a willingness to listen.

2) **What do you think are the most important issues facing the city?**
Housing, homelessness and economic development are linked. We, like our neighboring communities need to address both a massive lack of affordable, attainable housing, and attainable middle market housing. This ranges from the permanently supportive housing for the homeless, to ownership opportunities in middle market housing those working in our community can afford. Addressing housing needs is essential in driving economic development. These solutions are not easy to achieve but they are the way forward, to face the problems that will dampen our economic vitality if we do not face them directly.

3) **Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.**
The focus of the council is setting policy, voting on legislation, and budgets, while representing and engaging with the community to create transparency and convey the city’s vision. The challenge is to work to understand the concerns of the people of the ward, as those views may be disparate and divided. Understanding the

- concerns of the community and working to represent that while also working for what is best for the vision and vitality of the city. The vision of the people and council is implemented by the city manager and the professional staff of the city. Participating in a council that seeks to steer the city to address problems that evolve faster than we can pivot relies on understanding what the problems will be and not merely what it is today. The city staff are experts in their field, and a positive collaborative relationship with them leads to the most efficient way to address issues and take advantage of opportunities.
- 4) **How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?**
It is clear that on almost every policy matter we will have a spectrum of views leading to conflicting perspectives. The role of a councilmember is to engage with the community to parse out our residents’ views on policies. Once we have a sense of the community’s leaning, we must then use our professional judgement and knowledge of the policy to advocate and vote based on a balance of what the community wants and what is best for continued success of the city, in alignment with the city’s guiding documents. Advocacy is more key than the vote, as we only represent one vote, we need to be advocates with our fellow council members if we wish to push policies forward or halt them.

CITY OF LAKEWOOD • COUNCIL SEAT CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES



Ward 5
Paula C. Nystrom

Occupation: Retired
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1) Why would you be an effective council member?
Having served in this role for 19 months, I have had an opportunity to get to know fellow councilors, city staff and members of the public. The knowledge and experience gained in the process has been very informative and helpful. My City Council experience is complimentary to my years of leadership in the military and in the civilian sector. I am focused on constantly learning and expanding my experience. This in turn helps me in understanding issues,

communicating with others, working towards solutions that are beneficial to my constituents, as well as the city in general.
I am passionate about helping others and improving our quality of life in Lakewood. I earned an MBA from the University of Miami, while working full time. This helps enhance my perspective and understanding of complex issues. I also strive to look at the big picture strategy when assessing implications of issues, enroute to finding a solution.

2) What do you think are the most important issues facing the city?
Transparency in city government continues to be a focal point of mine, and my constituents. Ensuring robust communication of issues, decisions, and changes that are implemented, will go a long way towards improving transparency. It is also imperative that residents’ ideas and input, are incorporated in city strategies, to increase engagement and understanding of the path forward.
The City of Lakewood, and the Denver Metro area unfortunately is considered a “non-attainment area” with respect to our air quality. It is imperative that improvement is made for the health and welfare of all residents. This is a complex problem that won’t easily be resolved, but with new the council led Sustainability Committee, and dedicated city staff, we can advance new programs and policies that will facilitate progress.
Affordable housing and ownership opportunities are important in Lakewood, and across the nation. Many cities have been successful in focusing on

revitalizing underutilized properties, to allow for more housing and services, as well as improving the quality of life for residents. Incorporating this strategy in Lakewood is essential and achievable.
As a veteran, I am very passionate about helping people, and a key focus of mine is homelessness. A disproportionate number of homeless people are veterans. Ideally no one should be without proper housing. This is a huge challenge, and it is imperative that progress is made in this area.
3) Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.
As stated in the city charter, the council’s role is to set policy for implementation by the staff. I think enhancing communication and collaboration between staff, councilors and the community, will improve engagement and successes that embrace residents perspective and concerns.

4) How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?
My focus in addressing constituents’ concerns requires listening, empathizing, and follow up. I strive to understand concerns that are raised, and to provide information relevant to the situation. Improving understanding on both sides of an issue, clearing up misconceptions, and whenever possible incorporating changes and improvements is how I approach to conflict resolution.



Ward 5
Karen Gordey

Occupation: Self Employed
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Your website/social media:
https://karenforlakewood.com/

1) Why would you be an effective council member?
I’m currently an entrepreneur, however I bring over 20 years of Corporate America experience. I started in entry-level customer service and worked my way up to the executive level. I became known as the change agent who fixed broken departments by asking tough questions and implementing permanent solutions. To better understand our city, I completed the Lakewood Citizens Planning Academy and then

served three and a half years on the Lakewood Advisory Commission, including Vice Chair. I’m running because Lakewood deserves thoughtful leadership; leaders who know how to get things done and who truly listen to the people they serve.

2) What do you think are the most important issues facing the city?
▪ Infrastructure – for example, the roads, public spaces, sidewalks etc need to be kept up.
▪ Quality of life: Not just protecting open space also assisting the other wards gain open space. As well we need to get the crime rate back down.
▪ Growth & Zoning – Growth is going to happen however we need to ensure we are taking a common sense approach. Infrastructure, including water and electric needs to be in place before growth can occur.
▪ Homelessness – We need to ensure we have enough Community Action Team (CAT) resources with the Lakewood police department. As well, partner with organizations to ensure we have compassionate solutions.
3) Because Lakewood has the council-manager form of government, please explain your understanding of the role of City Council.
City Council represents the people, sets policy, approves the budget and holds city staff accountable.

4) How would you handle conflicting perspectives from residents when they don’t agree on how the city should address an issue?
I will listen to all sides of the issues and then clearly explain why I made the decision I made so that the citizens know I am listening to them.



Ward 4
Nick Munden

Write-in candidate. To vote for him, you write his name on the blank line in Ward 4 on your ballot. He did not provide responses to the questionnaire.

END OF VOTER'S GUIDE The candidates' responses to this Looking@Lakewood questionnaire are not edited for content, spelling, grammar, punctuation or typos.

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New and improved
website coming in 2026.

New city website coming in 2026

Lakewood is preparing to launch a new website in 2026 designed to provide residents with a more user-friendly and secure digital experience.
The new site will feature a redesigned homepage and improved organization, making it easier for users to find resources and services. From getting city news to paying a utility bill, the updated website will provide faster, clearer pathways to the information residents need.
As part of the new website, the city will also transition to a .gov domain. All levels of government

are eligible for .gov domains, which signal trustworthiness and authenticity to the public.
This transition will help combat phishing and impersonations while enhancing cybersecurity through mandated security features of the DotGov program, administered by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. This shift is designed to build public confidence in government services and ensure a clear, secure channel for residents to access official information. The city’s existing web address will continue to work and will redirect to the new site

when it is launched.
Earlier this year, the city conducted a community survey to learn how residents use the current site and what improvements they would like to see. Staff also completed a detailed review of the website’s structure and consulted with digital experts for guiding the redesign. This effort reflects Lakewood’s commitment to improving communication, accessibility and transparency, and the city will share more information as the launch date approaches.