

# **CITY OF LAKEWOOD**

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

### **OVERVIEW OF SERVICES**

Lakewood's Community Development Department recommends and implements policies that guide the community's physical and economic development in order to create a safe, healthy, and attractive place to live and work. The Department ensures the city's viability through enforcement of land-use, construction, health, safety and environmental regulations.

The Department has a staff of 20 employees, headed by Community Development Director David Bugher. It includes four primary work groups: Planning; Building; Code Enforcement, and Business Licensing. All are located on the second floor of City Hall at 6000 Main St. SW.

#### Planning

The Planning Division is made up of two sections, Long-Range and Current Planning. Principal Planner Dan Catron manages these sections.

The Long-Range Planning Section administers long-range planning projects such as the *City of Lakewood Comprehensive Plan* and subarea plans throughout the city. Senior Planner Deborah Johnson manages this section.

The Current Planning Section processes land development applications in conformance with the City's long-range planning goals and policies. This section employs business licensing, environmental, subdivision, and zoning codes. Senior Planner Marc Amrine manages this section.

#### Building

The Building Division reviews new construction projects to ensure that they meet health and safety requirements specified in the Uniform Building Codes and other construction codes. Additionally, the Building Division maintains the land use, building, and business licensing database for the city. Building Official K.C. Ellis manages this division.

#### Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement Division enforces various ordinances that promote the health, safety, and appearance of existing buildings and neighborhoods. Community Development Director David Bugher manages this division.

## **LONG RANGE PLANNING**

### **WHAT WE DO**

Long Range Planning staff facilitates the development and implementation of Lakewood's comprehensive plan. This plan is a vision for achieving a greater city for the years ahead. It is set in the context of carrying out the state *Growth Management Act* at the local level, as developed through meetings with individual citizens, community groups, and appointed and elected bodies.

The Long-Range Planning Section's goal is to help create an increasingly cohesive and attractive community that its citizens are proud to call home. The Section strives to protect our natural resources and provide quality planning that is vital for Lakewood's future growth while working in partnership with other City departments, citizens, and neighboring jurisdictions. Staff also participates in regional planning projects involving other jurisdictions in Pierce County to identify opportunities to jointly address land-use and growth issues on a regional scale.

The Long-Range Planning Section also serves as support staff for the Planning Advisory Board (PAB). The PAB is the primary advisory body to the City Council in keeping the comprehensive plan up to date and relevant to the community's needs, as well as the adoption or implementation of programs under the plan, including subarea plans, zoning and environmental regulations, and review of the capital facilities plan.

### **SERVICES WE PROVIDE**

Creation of and any subsequent amendments to long-range plans for the entire city or portions thereof

Creation of and any subsequent amendments to regulations that carry out long-range plans (e.g., zoning, environmental, etc.)

Development agreements

Policy studies

Research

Outside agency coordination (Clover Park School District, Pierce County, military, state agencies, etc.)

Census/demographics/population information

Public information and outreach

Annexations

## **CURRENT PLANNING**

### **WHAT WE DO**

The Current Planning Section applies environmental, subdivision, and zoning codes to achieve a livable city that balances the needs of residents, businesses, and the natural environment.

Current Planning provides project review services and coordinates the City's development processes with other departments and agencies. The goals of Current Planning are to preserve and enhance community quality of life and the natural environment; promote the development of economic vitality and diversity; and promote the cost-effective delivery of public services. This section facilitates preapplication conferences with applicants to inform them of site considerations at the earliest possible stage and holds public meetings to gather input related to development proposals. Sometimes, the City must carefully balance differing public viewpoints with basic property rights and what is allowed by law. Public input, staff comments and other relevant information are compiled by Current Planning into reports for Hearing Examiner, Planning Advisory Board and City Council consideration, as appropriate.

### **SERVICES WE PROVIDE**

#### **Processing of Land Use Permits:**

- Conditional use permits
- Administrative use permits
- Temporary use permits
- Shoreline development permits
- Site development permits
- Major and minor variances
- Preliminary and final subdivisions
- Short plats
- Binding site plans
- Boundary line adjustments
- Certificates of compliance (legal lot confirmations)
- Home occupation permits
- Community design and development review
- Environmental review
- Appeals of decisions to the Hearing Examiner
- Extensions of discretionary reviews upon request and approval
- Zoning code amendments upon Planning Advisory Board or City Council request
- Business license review
- Zoning interpretations
- Written inquiry research and written responses
- Zoning certifications
- Preapplication conference review and dockets
- Public information and outreach
- Staff support for the Hearing Examiner
- Hazardous trees on private property

## **Enforcement**

Business license appeals

Shoreline issues

Illegal tree removal on private property

Noncompliance with conditions of discretionary permits and environmental review

## **BUILDING DIVISION**

### **WHAT WE DO**

The Building Division provides plan review and construction inspection services in accordance with the latest version of the Uniform Building Code adopted by the City Council. The Building Division enforces minimum standards to safeguard health, property and public welfare by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, and location and maintenance of all buildings and structures. In addition, the Building Division performs all permit intake, including planning permits, building permits, and business license permits.

### **SERVICES WE PROVIDE**

#### **Building Code Functions**

Permit intake

Predevelopment application inspections (daycare facilities and group homes)

Development reviews

Building plan review

Inspections

On-site training for contractors

Assignment of street addresses

Relocation permits

Occupancy permits

Demolition permits

Mobile home set-up permits

Plumbing and mechanical permits

Unique services (Clover Park School District preconstruction inspections, Weed & Seed inspections, etc.)

#### **Business Licensing**

General business license intake

Home occupation permit intake

Garage sales permits

Rental housing complex business licensing intake

Specialty license permit intake:

- Solicitors and peddlers

- Theaters

- Commercial kennels, hobby kennels, grooming parlor or pet shop licenses

- Pawnshops and secondhand sales

- Carnivals and circuses

- Wrecking yards

- Public dances, cabarets, dance halls, and teenage dances

- Outdoor public music festivals

- Massage businesses

Bondsmen  
Adult cabarets  
Pamorams and peep shows  
Massage parlors and bathhouses

## **SERVICES WE DO NOT PROVIDE**

### See Lakewood Water District for:

Water meters  
Water hook-ups  
Connection fees  
Backflow prevention inspections

### See Pierce County Public Works & Utilities for:

Sewer pretreatment reviews

### See Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department for:

Septic tank permitting  
Food service (restaurant and other) inspections  
Food handling permits

### See Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Agency for:

Asbestos removal and permitting

### See Lakewood Fire District No. 2 for:

Uniform Fire Code plan review and inspection  
Fire sprinkler systems  
Fire alarm/detection systems

### Utility Service Providers:

For electrical permits, issuing agency varies depending on utility service provider and/or location. Issuing agencies include Tacoma City Light, Lakeview Light & Power, or state Department of Labor and Industries. The department maintains a map that shows utility provider boundaries. The map is on display on the second floor at City Hall

## **CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

### **WHAT WE DO**

The Lakewood City Council has adopted regulations specifically designed to alleviate blight and public nuisances, and to maintain a clean environment for all citizens in our community. The Code Enforcement Division does this by working in partnership with citizens.

The mission of the Code Enforcement Division is to promote and maintain a safe and desirable living and working environment. The Division helps maintain and improve the quality of our community by:

- Administering a fair and unbiased enforcement program to correct violations of municipal codes and land use requirements.
- Working with residents, neighborhood associations, public services agencies and other City departments to:
  - Facilitate voluntary compliance with City laws and codes.
  - Encourage property and business owners to maintain, improve and reinvest in their property and businesses, thus improving the overall quality of life in Lakewood.

### **SERVICES WE PROVIDE**

The Code Enforcement Division investigates complaints received from citizens, staff, and other agencies, and may also initiate investigations and enforcement in order to implement City enforcement priorities.

#### **Typical complaints handled by Code Enforcement**

Nuisances affecting public health  
Unpermitted and prohibited signs  
Unlicensed businesses  
Unpermitted land uses  
Illegal auto activity, including illegal vehicle service and repair  
Dilapidated fences  
Vehicles on blocks  
Abandoned refrigerators  
Graffiti  
Accumulations of trash, junk and discarded waste material on residential and commercial properties  
Dilapidated and filthy buildings, structures, and properties  
Uncontrolled vegetation  
Unpermitted yard sales  
Illegal businesses operating in residences  
Unpermitted mobile food trucks  
Outdoor storage of unlicensed and apparently inoperative vehicles on private property

Parking of commercial vehicles on private property in residential zones  
Improperly stored recreational vehicles  
Illegal occupancy of a recreational vehicle

### **Special Coordinated Enforcement**

There are occasions where the City must employ aggressive enforcement techniques to confront serious crime, blight, and unsafe housing and building conditions within the city. Where this is necessary, the Code Enforcement Division may work with the Lakewood Police Department, the Building Division, the Fire Marshal, the City Attorney and other inspectors from other public agencies to form special emphasis teams. Examples of such enforcement include Weed and Seed, dangerous buildings and property abatements, and illegal automotive and wrecking activities.

### **COMPLAINTS HANDLED BY OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

#### Lakewood Police Department

Abandoned vehicles on City streets and adjacent rights-of-way  
Noise complaints

#### Lakewood Fire Department

Unsafe power lines  
Hazardous material storage  
Hazardous material spills (first point of contact)

#### City Building Division

Unmaintained buildings  
Buildings with structural, electrical, plumbing, mechanical and other code violations  
Illegal building additions and remodels without permits  
Unmaintained construction site with active building permit on file  
Illegal conversions of garages and other structures into dwelling spaces  
Private swimming pools

#### City General Services Department/Community Development Block Grant Program

Housing repairs/rehabilitation for low-income owner-occupied single-family units  
City landlord/ tenant laws  
Fair housing discrimination laws

#### City Engineering Department

Street maintenance  
Garbage collection (inadequate service)  
Problems with public alleys  
Trash and junk dumped on the public street  
Unmaintained street lights, public streets and sidewalks  
Problems with storm water systems

Assistant City Manager's Office  
Animal control

Finance Department  
Claims for damages

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department  
Cleanliness of restaurants  
Public swimming pools  
Surface sewage from septic systems  
Pushcart vendors for food related issues  
Complaints of rats and mice

Outside Departments/Agencies  
Contamination of lakes and streams (state Department of Ecology)