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 docket
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
Panoramas 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)