Lakewood Station Breaks Ground

After years of planning and deliberating with Sound Transit, the City of Lakewood and transit officials around the Puget Sound region celebrated an important milestone on Monday, March 26, 2007. Lakewood Mayor Claudia Thomas hosted a delegation of area VIPs at the Lakewood Station groundbreaking on Pacific Highway Southwest. The station will offer the following:

- A bus transit center opening in 2008. The first bus will depart before 3:00 a.m., taking riders to destinations throughout the region, including SeaTac Airport.
- A four-level parking garage for the riders who drive to the transit center. The 620-space garage is much needed in this area. The Tacoma Dome Station parking garages are full, and the 512 Park-and-Ride lot is beyond full at 110-percent capacity.
- Sounder commuter rail service starting as early as 2010. Once the transit center opens, Lakewood riders will have an easy connection to Sounder by connecting bus service to the Tacoma Dome Station. The service will be timed to link up with the train. This will be a great boon to those who commute in the mornings to Puyallup, Sumner, Auburn, and points north.
- Mayor Thomas emphasized the benefits of the project at the groundbreaking, “when we selected this site for Lakewood Station, we knew that it would transform the area. It’s already been a great catalyst to economic development. We see new businesses springing up before we’ve even broken ground, such as the new Ford dealership across the street and the La Quinta Hotel just south of here.”

The City is building sidewalks and bike lanes to connect the transit station with the surrounding area. The paths will be landscaped with native plants to create an attractive and safe pedestrian corridor for the riders who will use this facility everyday. Three agencies will serve the new transit center: Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, and Intercity Transit. Buses will bring people to locations such as Pacific Lutheran University, McChord Air Force Base, and Saint Clare Hospital.

Riders will have expanded bus connections between Lakewood and Olympia, Lacey, DuPont, Tacoma, and Seattle. Intercity Transit and Pierce Transit will be making the important connections between Pierce and Thurston County at this location. Sound Transit will continue to connect Pierce and King Counties.

LAKEWOOD’S FIRST SUMMIT: OUR FAMILIES. OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE

On February 24, over 250 residents came together at Pierce College for a half-day gathering to discuss how to make Lakewood the best place anywhere for families, children, and youth to live. This first ever summit was sponsored by the Clover Park School District, the City of Lakewood, Pierce College, and Lakewood’s Promise. It began on a high note with inspirational songs and an outpouring of community pride from the nationally recognized Lakes High School Choir.

Author and physician Dr. Rebera Foston captured the group with an emotional conversation on how it takes “the whole village to keep the village whole.” Dr Foston mixed poetry with real life stories of Lakewood and elsewhere to show how community action can make life-changing differences in the lives of children.

Over 50 community groups including Boys & Girls Club, Centro Latino, Greater Lakes
City Council Highlights

The Lakewood City Council meets every Monday evening except on federal holidays when meetings are generally postponed a day, and on fifth Mondays of the month. Your City Council took action on a variety of issues over the last two months. Activity from April will be highlighted in the next issue of Lakewood Connections.

FEbruary

- Adopted the recommendations of the Personal Care Facilities and Home-Based Business Task Force and Planning Advisory Board relative to the placement of residentially-based personal care facilities and home-based businesses within residential districts.
- Vacated a portion of 47th Avenue SW right-of-way to improve parking for the Lakewood Ford dealership.
- Authorized an agreement with the Humane Society for Tacoma and Pierce County for animal sheltering services from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2008.
- Authorized an agreement with The Transpo Group, Inc. for up to $659K for engineering services for roadway and storm drainage improvements on Pacific Highway from Gravelly Lake Drive SW to Bridgeport Way SW.

March

- Amended Lakewood Municipal Code with respect to harassment.
- Amended Lakewood Municipal Code relative to the definition of harassment, as defined by State law.
- Appointed Sam Wagner to serve on the Citizens Transportation Review Committee through November 5, 2007.
- Authorized $588K contract to Tucci and Sons, Inc. for the 2007 road overlay and patching program.
- Modified Lakewood Municipal Code to formalize a Human Services Funding Advisory Board.
- Modified Lakewood Municipal Code relative to membership residency for serving on various citizen advisory boards and committees.
- Adopted the City of Lakewood employee wellness program.
- Amended the council’s rules of procedure.
- Appointed Mary Green, Sydna Koontz, Debbie LeBean, Gloria Grubert, Phyllis Souza and Susan Hart to the Human Services Funding Advisory Board.
- Approved the Lakewood Sound Transit Station artwork design by artist Mark Calderon.
- Amended the Council’s appointment procedure for citizens’ advisory boards, committees and commissions relative to attendance and public comments.
- Authorized contract with S & W Utilities Contractors, Inc. for $207K to construct a right-turn lane on Lakewood Drive onto 74th Street W.
- Authorized an agreement with The Transpo Group, Inc. to develop the City of Lakewood’s travel demand model and non-motorized transportation plan.
- Authorized an agreement with KPG for engineering services for roadway and storm drainage improvements on Pacific Highway from 108th Street SW to State Route 512 interchange.

Council Member Column

As we all know, perception is reality and when it hits home it’s difficult to be objective. If you received a ticket while driving too fast in a school zone, you might not be able to appreciate the fact that slowing down is of utmost importance. However, equally important is that the total number of accidents has been reduced by 16.3 percent since the inception of the program.

Although your neighborhood may have been the site of gang activity or another violent crime, you should know that since we became a city there has been a decrease in violent crime of over 30 percent.

What do the cities of Fife, Tacoma, Puyallup, Kent, Auburn, and Gig Harbor have that Lakewood does not? The answer is higher rates of crime by as much as 176 percent.

We incorporated, in part, due to our citizens’ concern about the high rate of crime. Since incorporation, the decline in crime has been steady and dramatic. The city council, along with its boards, has chosen to take a holistic approach to our efforts to battle crime. The numbers of officers and crime prevention programs in Lakewood have increased measurably. However, we recognize that the increase in the number of officers is not the only solution. Economic redevelopment is rapidly progressing through the underdeveloped I-5 corridor neighborhoods with new roads, new businesses and the new Sound Transit Station, just to mention a few projects. Many redevelopment activities will continue to take place in these areas; 65 percent of Lakewood’s crime and 70 percent of its violent crime have historically occurred here, so continued private and public investment is essential for improved business climate and livability.

Dealing with the crime in our city is a partnership between the citizens, law enforcement, city staff and the council. We invite you to come to any of our council meetings to share your perception and learn more on how you can participate further in helping us solve these challenges.

–Helen McGovern
Lower Crime Rate and a “Vision” for Tillicum

Major redevelopment efforts don’t take place overnight. However, it was a significant milestone on April 2 when the Lakewood City Council authorized the development of a neighborhood plan for Tillicum. This significant step immediately followed the completion of the Vision for Tillicum by BCRA, a local architectural and land use planning firm, headed up by Jeff Brown, a Lakewood resident. The plan was essentially a contribution by BCRA, with no pre-commitment by the city for its implementation.

What is exciting about the vision is its implications for all of Lakewood as Tillicum positions itself for redevelopment. The decision a few years ago to establish sewer line connections to both Tillicum and American Lake Gardens/Woodbrook was the precursor that set the stage for changes in two very challenged areas of the city, both somewhat isolated by Interstate 5 and our two neighboring military bases. Tillicum in particular is uniquely situated, between the freeway and American Lake, with remarkable lake exposure, and adjacent to two major employers – the US Army Madigan Hospital and Camp Murray, the Washington National Guard headquarters.

While Tillicum may have had an interesting history as a place for Tacoma residents to situate their summer cabins, it endured troubled times for many years as a predominately low income neighborhood with more than its share of crime, in particular illegal drug and gang activity. However, as an emphasis area for the Lakewood Police Department, it has turned around in recent months, so that the crime rate is no longer the worst but actually the best or at least the most improved. Both the sewer project and the lowered crime rate are setting the stage for a very progressive vision for Tillicum’s future, where it will not be a drain on the city’s police resources but instead a new destination neighborhood where people choose to live safely in a central location along the shores of one of the area’s most beautiful lakes.

The Tillicum vision includes redevelopment of the Union Avenue corridor, adjacent to I-5, to serve the neighborhood, and also the Maple corridor connecting Union to both Harry Todd Park and the lake. Higher density would be encouraged along the two corridors, and the entrance to the park would be realigned so that it would mirror the historic gate to Fort Lewis that is clearly visible just across the freeway. A two-mile trail for walkers and joggers would circle the newly developed area and connect with the park.

The community’s commitment to safety, which is already being demonstrated, would become the foundation for the Tillicum quality of life in the future. There was substantial community input and participation in BCRA’s development of the Tillicum vision. The city is committed to continued community involvement in the neighborhood plan, which will be the next step to guiding the successful implementation of Tillicum’s redevelopment.

Continued from page 1

Mental Health, St. Clare Hospital, and the YMCA provided information about community programs that many participants said they were unaware of and were pleased to learn about. Following a box lunch, summit participants broke into discussion groups on either Saying Yes to Early Childhood Learning or Ganging Up on Gangs. The breakout sessions generated animated discussions about issues affecting children, and many felt a real energy from Lakewood neighbors to solve problems within the greater Lakewood community. Suggestions and feedback cards completed by participants were filled with comments asking for more time together to talk about issues, solutions and suggestions in terms of how to get more people involved. Many participant comments applauded the large number of residents who gave up a Saturday for children. Others said they were pleased that the Clover Park School Board and City Council were working together. Several comments reflected how participants are pleased to see the community working together for kids.

The School Board and City Council are encouraged with the feedback of these participants, their positive comments, and are considering how to move forward with many of the ideas. There are many hundreds of people – too many to list individually – who worked for over six months to organize and host this first summit. Our community’s priority and passion for helping children was obvious, as is the enthusiasm and desire to develop all of this good feedback into plans and action. Let’s keep the summit’s enthusiasm and spark alive and make Lakewood the best community anywhere for children and families. Community leaders are thinking about making this an annual event and additional information will be forthcoming.
American Lake Park Boat Launch

It has taken almost a year to get all of the permits and processes finished for the American Lake Park boat launch project, and now we are ready to proceed.

We originally planned to extend the boat launch portion about 40 feet this winter and follow up with the upland improvements. Since it took so long to get the permits, our window of opportunity to fix the boat launch before boating season was lost. As such, we will do upland improvements first, and complete the boat launch improvements later in the season when the water level drops. Upland site improvements will include removing structures on the property, adding parking, redoing the circulation pattern to open up access to the three launch ramps, and adding transient dock facilities, landscaping, lighting, and other park amenities. The project is currently out to bid, and we hope to start construction soon.

We will keep American Lake Park open all season, but the boat launch area will be shut down during construction. We apologize for the inconvenience, but we can’t delay the project due to grant funding timelines, which total over $800,000. We expect the final product will be worth the wait. Boaters who require access to American Lake are encouraged to use the public boat launch on the south side of the lake near Camp Murray. A required vehicle use permit can be obtained by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Please contact for more information: www.wdfw.wa.gov

Ward Hill Building Removal and Restoration

The city is hopeful that it can soon take down the Ward Hill Building, located at Fort Steilacoom Park with funds earmarked by the City, Council, and State. The city hosted a community meeting on April 24 to discuss the historical significance of this site; citizens shared their ideas to preserve and enhance the area after the building is removed. If you have information you’d like to share, please complete a survey located on the city’s web site, or call 253-589-2489 and one will be mailed to you. Let us know if you would like to be contacted regarding future meetings regarding this topic. Special thanks to Pierce County Parks and the State of Washington for their support of this community project.

Happy Anniversary to the New Senior Activity Center

The Lakewood Senior Activity Center will celebrate its one-year anniversary at our new location with an open house on Thursday, May 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. “We have tripled our programs and take pride in our Center’s accomplishments,” said Elizabeth Scheid, center program coordinator. We invite you to share in the activity center’s success by taking a tour of our facility and exploring the many programs and services we have to offer.

We will have program demonstrations, art displays and provide free blood pressure checks, hearing aid cleaning, fall prevention information, eye-glass cleaning, art displays and demonstrations, as well as other information and services.

Upcoming Center events include: Mother’s Day Tea, Men’s Breakfast, Senior Spelling Bee, and many trips and tours. Come visit your new Senior Activity Center, located in the Lakewood Community Center at 9112 Lakewood Dr. SW in Lakewood, or call 798-4090 for more information or to register for programs.

Please visit www.cityoflakewood.us for latest schedule on recreation events such as Adult Co-ed Soccer, Youth Dance and Cheer Classes. Also, visit the website for lifeguard opportunities at the cities lakefront parks. Now hiring!
2007 Pavement Overlay and Patching Program

Over the next several months, city contractor Tucci & Sons, Inc. will be performing pavement rehabilitation in several locations throughout the city, including:
1) Interlaken Bridge: The bridge surface will be ground off and replaced with new hot-mix asphalt pavement. The bridge will need to be closed up to 10 days for this work.
2) Interlaken Drive (east of the bridge): A few areas of the asphalt shoulder will be removed and replaced.
3) 112th Street (56th Avenue to Bridgeport Way): A strip of failed pavement in the eastbound travel lane will be replaced.
4) Custer Road and Bridgeport Way intersection: Rutting will be removed by grinding and replacing asphalt pavement. This work will be performed at night.
5) Lakewood Drive (north of Steilacoom Blvd to Flett Creek): Overlay entire roadway width with hot-mix asphalt pavement. This work will be performed at night.
6) 108th Street (Main Street to Bridgeport Way): Selective patching in several areas.

Pacific Highway Improvements – Phase 2 (Intersection of Bridgeport Way and Pacific Highway and 47th Avenue to Railroad Bridge)

Construction began on April 16th and will last for approximately six months. Improvements will include:
1) Replacing the signal at Bridgeport Way and Pacific Highway
2) Installing a median island for future Bridgeport Way
3) Installing a gateway, which includes: curbs, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, illumination, landscaping, and three new signals at the future Lakewood Commuter Rail Station

American Lake Gardens / Tillicum Sewer Extension Project

The design is progressing on the American Lake Gardens / Tillicum Sewer Extension Project. The Environmental Assessment completed for the project will be available for review in June 2007. The city appreciates everyone’s patience as commute times and routes will invariably be impacted.

6-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

City staff and the Citizen Transportation Review Committee are developing the annual update to the TIP. This document outlines the capital improvement projects the City intends to complete over the next 6 years. To provide input, please contact Desiree Winkler at 983-7795 or dwinkler@cityoflakewood.us.

Nuisance Abatement Information and Procedure

Nuisance properties are unsafe and negatively impact entire neighborhoods. Each year the city takes action to demolish dangerous buildings and to remove junk and trash from properties. Most of these situations are resolved when the property owner agrees to remedy the problem and perform the work.

In a very small number of cases, however, the property owner is unable or unwilling to fix the problem. In these situations, the city may perform an abatement, where the city contracts to have the work done and attempts to collect the costs of that work from the property owner.

Lakewood seeks voluntary compliance whenever possible. Typically the city becomes aware of problematic properties through citizen complaints. Other times enforcement action is initiated by the city’s building official, or a police or code enforcement officer.

Usually the city starts these cases with a courtesy notice to the property owner. In the notice the problem is described, and the owner is asked to fix the problem. When a courtesy notice goes unanswered, the city may cite the property owner, or person in control of the property, with a civil infraction. If the civil infraction goes unanswered or if the property owner cannot be located, the city may post the property as a public nuisance.

Posting a property as a public nuisance gives notice to the person responsible for the property, informing them of the problem, and requesting that they fix the problem within a set period of time. If the problem is not fixed in a timely manner, typically within thirty to ninety days, the city may take action to expend public funds to make the property safe.

Legal requirements must be met before the city can enter private property to remove a dangerous building or condition. Depending upon the type of nuisance, the city might need authorization from Superior Court. When the property contains a dangerous building, the city’s building official is authorized to solicit bids and secure, repair, or demolish the building.

After expending funds on an abatement, the city will seek to obtain a lien against the property for the cost of the abatement. Abatement liens can be authorized through a superior court judgment, and the City Council may authorize a lien for the cost of abating a dangerous building.

Once a judgment of lien is obtained, it is filed with Pierce County, which can collect a nuisance abatement lien in a manner similar to the collection of property taxes. If the property is sold, the city’s lien must be paid. Abated properties also tend to end up in foreclosure for unpaid taxes, and the city’s lien may be satisfied when the property is sold at tax auction.

Do you qualify? Down Payment Assistance, Home Repair Programs, and Lead Hazard Control Grant

Down Payment Assistance: Up to $7,000 is available in a 0% interest loan with payments deferred for up to 20 years, for qualified applicants to buy a single family home in Lakewood.

Emergency Minor Home Repair: A maximum lifetime grant of up to $5,000 is available to qualified Lakewood homeowners to assist with emergency minor home repairs, such as replacement of a furnace, stove, refrigerator, water heater, or for structural repairs.

Major Home Repair: If you are a qualified Lakewood homeowner and your home needs a new roof or new windows or a new furnace or plumbing repairs or electrical repairs up to $12,000, a 0% loan with payments deferred for up to 20 years may be available.

Housing Rehabilitation: If your home needs all of the following: new roof,
Fire Chief
Paul Webb
Recognized
with
Proclamation
The Lakewood City Council recognized Fire Chief Paul Webb’s distinguished service to Lakewood over the past 38 years on March 19 with an official proclamation. He has been very active in the community with his service to the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, Lakewood United, Keep Lakewood Beautiful, Clover Park Rotary, and in many memorable community fundraising activities with his friend and “partner in crime” Police Chief Larry Saunders. Chief Webb returned the favor by presenting a framed, historic newspaper to the city. He officially retired on March 31.

Relay for Life
Join our Lakewood community in the fight against cancer by raising funds for the American Cancer Society to find a cure. Get involved in the annual Relay for Life held June 1 and 2 in Harry Lang Stadium at Clover Park High School starting at 6:00 p.m. Friday night. Relay runs 18-hours ending at noon on Saturday. For information on how you can get help, contact Cathy Lensing at 460-8908.

Primley Park Lakewood’s Newest Jewel
Shortly after incorporation, the city learned that it had inherited a small parcel of open space from Pierce County that was intended for eventual use as a park. The city did not have the time or resources to do much with the property until a small group of neighbors came forward with the desire, funds, and energy needed to fix it up. Resident Eileen Kelley deserves much of the credit for spearheading neighborhood involvement and city interest. She estimates that over 2,000 hours have been invested by over 125 different volunteers as well as $26,000 in private and public funds. Playground equipment for toddlers will soon be installed and the neighborhood is planning a dedication on Sunday, June 3 at 2 p.m.. The park is still in need of donated benches and ferns. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Eileen at 582-6273.

Councilmember McGovern and Mayor Thomas recognize Chief Webb

Sandy and Jean Mazzei:
Lakewood’s Volunteers of the Year!
The City of Lakewood is fortunate to have many outstanding volunteers who have given generously of their time and talent for the greater good of our community. Congratulations to Sandy and Jean Mazzei, recipients of the 2006 Bill Harrison Volunteer of the Year Award. At the April 16th City Council meeting, Councilmember Helen McGovern was joined by former Mayor Bill Harrison in honoring Mr. and Mrs. Mazzei for their service since 1996. They have been credited with removing well over 7000 illegally placed signs since 2000 – when they started counting – as well as hundreds of balloons from public rights-of-way, utility poles and traffic islands. The Mazzeis contributed to the safety of pedestrians, drivers, and utility workers and have helped the City maintain a high standard of tidiness in these areas.

Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Mazzei!

Continued from page 5
furnace, plumbing and electrical repairs, this program may help you. Qualified Lakewood homeowners may be eligible to receive a home repair loan of up to $65K depending on homeowner equity, in a 0% interest loan with payments deferred for up to 20 years.

Lead Hazard Control Grant: Lead Hazard Control Grants of up to $9,122 per unit are available for low-income housing units that contain lead-based paint hazards and are occupied by children under age 6, or such children who visit regularly at least 60 hours per year.

Visit www.cityoflakewood.us or call 589-2489 to see if you qualify.
Lakewood Crime dropped in 2006

Lakewood crime dropped in 2006 for the third straight year. The decrease is 4.2 percent from 2005 and nearly 24 percent since incorporation.

Lakewood is the 13th largest city in Washington, and its 2006 crime rate ranked 12th among the 30 largest cities in Washington. Only four of the eleven major South Sound cities had lower crime than Lakewood in 2006.

Crime in South Sound Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Crime Rate 2006*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>6,135</td>
<td>127.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tacoma</td>
<td>199,600</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Puyallup</td>
<td>36,360</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>85,650</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>48,955</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gig Harbor</td>
<td>6,765</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lakewood</td>
<td>59,800</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Federal Way</td>
<td>86,530</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Olympia</td>
<td>43,740</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lacey</td>
<td>34,040</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>University Place</td>
<td>51,140</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Violent crime rates were up 4.8 percent in Lakewood. This is mostly a reflection of gang activity. Similar trends were experienced in Tacoma (up 2.3 percent) and unincorporated Pierce County (up 5.4 percent). Since incorporation, Lakewood has reduced violent crime rates by 30 percent.

Lakewood began experiencing a gang crime surge in the early spring of 2006, and by June 2006, violent crime rates had risen 22 percent over the same period for 2005. The Lakewood police launched a major gang emphasis beginning in May-2006. By December 2006, the Lakewood Police Department (LPD) had made 113 gang-related arrests and compressed the surge to 4.8 percent. The LPD is continuing its gang suppression program and intends to achieve a reduction in violent crime in 2007.

Major efforts to reduce crime in Ponders and Tillicum show continued progress. Since 2002 in Ponders, violent crime is down 47 percent, property crime is down 37 percent, prostitution is down 79 percent, and drug crime is down 68 percent. More recent efforts in Tillicum and Woodbrook have also been successful. Since 2004 violent crime is down 32 percent, property crime is down 15 percent, prostitution is down 81 percent, and drug crime is down 17 percent.

In 2007, Lakewood police will initiate a Weed and Seed program in northeast Lakewood, similar to the strategy used to clean up Tillicum and Ponders. Information on this strategy was published in the January Connections and is available on the city website: www.cityoflakewood.us.

Lakewood vehicle accident rates dropped 16.3 percent in 2006. The downward trend in accidents is continuing this far in 2007 as well. We attribute this to improved school zone enforcement measures allowed by the introduction of camera-based enforcement.
Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, however please confirm events with sponsors. Occasionally, City board and committee meetings are cancelled or rescheduled. Please call City Hall to verify: 589-2489. Additional meeting information is located on the City’s website. Jeff Brewster is the City’s new Communications Director and would appreciate input on this issue of ‘Lakewood Connections’ and ideas for future editions. He can be contacted at jbrewster@cityoflakewood.us or 589-2489.