

STATE OF THE CITY
Remarks by Lakewood Mayor Diane DuBois
February 7, 2018

Thank you very much for that introduction.

That was a creative and intriguing video, wasn't it? Let's give another big round of applause to our talented City TV crew who produced that video.

I'd also like to have us give a big round of applause to the person who helped us put a good ending on that video. He's a long-time Lakewood resident...one of our most famous residents ever...the one and only...Barry Hansen, aka Dr. Demento. Welcome Dr. Demento!

I'd next like to thank my city council colleagues for their tremendous support during my year as mayor. Steve, Todd, Jeff and Ron....I really am lucky to have such an awesome group of people to work with.

A "State of the City" speech like I'm about to present is really a report card to you--the residents and business members of our community.

What was the past year like...what's coming in the year ahead...and--very importantly--how does our long term situation look?

You've just heard about some of the "off-beat" and "humorous" secrets of Lakewood. Now I'm going to give you my report card on Lakewood by focusing on some of the more public policy-related "secret ingredients" of Lakewood.

I'll talk about those secret ingredients that affect us today...and give you my opinion on what the future holds for those ingredients.

Not surprisingly, our secret ingredients were first set in place right at the beginning of our city.

Lakewood was designed in a remarkable and thoughtful way. Our original planners in the late 1940s and early 1950s built what were then innovative "service roads" and "tree-lined median strips" to protect our residential homes and our many, many children from busy boulevards. They also set aside land for a park in every neighborhood of town. Those two decisions alone are "secret ingredients" that have helped keep Lakewood a wonderful, livable community for over six decades.

In terms of the future, those protective service roads and medians are not going anywhere, and we safeguard and enhance our parks today with as much vigor as any generation in Lakewood has.

I'm very proud to be part of a city council...and a community of residents like you here today...that have supported so many wonderful improvements to our parks in the past few years.

As you saw in the video, this past year, we continued with park projects--large and small--and we will do the same in the new year.

Two projects are notable for their long-term financial implications.

We are getting very near completion with our big \$11 million project at Bolivar Park to construct an underground reservoir that will capture and clean stormwater runoff from a nearby flood control channel.

Lakewood's really on the cutting edge with this effort.

And thanks to our talented city staff, we secured 100% funding for the work from the State of California.

A similar project will go into Mayfair Park later this year.

What's really valuable financially about these clean-water projects is that many cities in the future will have to use their own funds to pay for them.

But we've been able to get a big allotment of state funding...over \$20 million total...to build them because we were ready and able to get started quickly when some limited state funding became available. That will end up saving us millions of dollars in the future.

That "secret ingredient" of good city staff who can skillfully get grants and take on creative new projects is something that Lakewood has benefitted from in the past...and I'm confident that we will in the future too.

As you saw in the video, Lakewood benefitted for many years in its staff guidance from having California's longest-serving city manager with a single city for a record-breaking 41 years of high-quality stable service.

Let's recognize that "Energizer Bunny" of city managers...our record-breaking...original "Lakewood kid" Howard Chambers!

We're going to benefit in the future from good staff too. Not only did Howard leave behind a legacy of staff with a commitment to good service, but he helped the city council hire an excellent replacement for him, and that's our electric-guitar-hero, new city manager Thaddeus McCormack. Thaddeus, where are you? The city council has been very impressed with Thaddeus' work, his creativity, and his commitment already in the 5 months he's been with us.

As an aside, Thaddeus had to take on one unexpected new project right around Christmas that became a minor test of his crisis management abilities. After 40 years of service...almost working as long as Howard...the boiler that heats city hall broke down just a week before Christmas. Some of us joked that maybe Howard had done it on his way out the door, sort of a lump of coal present for Thaddeus. But Thaddeus and our Public Works team are managing the situation. We have a bid out right now for a new boiler. And in the meantime, we have some temporary heaters in city hall. They look like the robot from "Lost In Space." They don't say "Danger Will Robinson"... but stop by sometime and get a warm up if you need one.

Another secret ingredient to Lakewood's success in the past...that will continue into the future...is something that many cities have adopted over the decades, but it was invented right here in Lakewood. And that's the "contract city" model of government, or what's also known in public administration circles as "the Lakewood Plan."

The "Lakewood Plan" is the governing method of creatively and smartly using a combination of private sector contractors, public agency contractors, and staff directly employed by a city to deliver the best possible service to residents.

Lakewood's founders in 1954 got our city off to a great start by inventing the Lakewood Plan. It's allowed us to provide high-quality, cost-effective services to our residents for over 60 years.

I'd like to highlight some of Lakewood's partners in our contract city model who are here today.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department was the original key component of the Lakewood Plan, and the men and women of the department protect and serve us today just as ably as they did over 60 years ago. What a wonderful partnership!

And instead of having to create our own fire department from scratch, Lakewood has benefitted in the past--and will in the future--from being part of a regional Fire Protection District that provides us with top-notch fire and emergency services from the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Aren't we lucky to have them?

The Lakewood Plan has also been a success because of our private-sector contract partners.

These are the businesses that take care of our street lights...our trash and recycling...our street sweeping...our tree trimming...and many other services. Let's hear a round of applause for our private-sector contract partners!

The Lakewood Plan has been successfully adopted by many cities in our region and around the country since it was created in 1954.

It has also been an enduring subject of study by scholars as they continue to research and consider the best way that the federal, state, county and local levels of government can relate

to each other, collaborate and determine which entity is best suited to deliver or oversee which services to citizens.

We're fortunate to have one of those scholars here today.

He's just written an article about the Lakewood Plan in the highly-respected Fordham University "Urban Law Journal." He's a professor of public policy at USC...a city council member from Rolling Hills Estates...a former president of the California Contract Cities Association...and someone I've had the good fortune to know and admire for many years. I thought we would all benefit from hearing a bit about how the Lakewood Plan continues to serve as a model for city governments and some of the challenges that the Lakewood Plan continues to face.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming to the podium Professor Frank Zerunyan.

REMARKS BY PROF. ZERUNYAN

CONTINUED REMARKS BY MAYOR DUBOIS

Along with our public and private contractors and our employees, the City of Lakewood has another partner that's a key ingredient in making our community great. And that's the men and women and organizations that comprise our business community...be it the businesses at Lakewood Center or the many businesses spread out around our town.

You provide the shopping opportunities, the jobs, the financial support for community groups, and the all-important sales tax dollars that keep our city services funded.

As you saw in the video, we had many businesses make investments in Lakewood in 2017 and several more announce plans to renovate or open in 2018...including a big new business that I'd like to announce right now.

The Fortune 500 clothing chain, Burlington Coat Factory—which now just goes by Burlington—has announced that they will open a new store in the 42,000 square-foot former Sports Authority building at Lakewood Center.

Burlington is a growing company that attracts lots of customers, and they are known for their charitable giving too. You'll see some interior and exterior renovations under way in the coming months and they expect to open up in September. Isn't that great news?

It's not easy running a business--big or small. It's demanding of your time and energy, and you're responsible 24 hours a day for what happens to your organization and your employees.

As a symbol of our city partnership with you in the business community, we continue to invest city time and money to encourage our residents to "Shop Lakewood...and Stay Lakewood

Loyal.” This past year, we worked with the Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce to update the graphics and logo we use for the Shop Lakewood program. You’ll be seeing the new graphics on street banners around town in 2018.

And on your chair when you arrived here today you were the first people in Lakewood to get the brand-new Shop Lakewood shopping bags. Please use those “early and often” to “Shop Lakewood...and Stay Lakewood Loyal!”

We’ve updated something else in Lakewood recently, and I have the pleasure to announce it here today.

For over 30 years, the city ran a program called “Lakewood Beautiful” where we honored homeowners who made a concerted effort to beautify their yards and the exterior of their homes.

It was an effort to encourage all homeowners to think along those lines and do as much as they could to keep their homes, their neighborhoods, and our entire city looking good.

In 2015, we put Lakewood Beautiful on temporary hiatus while we focused more time and resources on the drought and on encouraging residents to take water-saving steps in their homes and yards.

While we remain concerned about water conservation, we felt it was time to bring back Lakewood Beautiful to remind our residents how much we value their efforts to keep their homes and yards in good shape.

So I’m pleased to announce here today that the Lakewood Beautiful program will start up again, with nominations opening next month AND we will be adding an exciting new category to the program this year.

We will now have a category to recognize recently remodeled or rejuvenated homes and yards. This “most improved” award will honor homeowners who have made a determined effort to change the front-facing exterior and landscaping of their property for the better over the past 3 years.

The new award will be called the Jackie Rynerson “Transformation Award” – in honor of one of our original Lakewood residents who helped organize her fellow citizens to form the city in 1954. Jackie served as a City Council Member from 1978 to 1990, and she created the original Lakewood Beautiful program as a way to inspire and honor Lakewood homeowners.

So, be on the lookout for more material about the “new and improved” and “renovated” Lakewood Beautiful program once our publicity and nomination period starts up next month.

Last but not least, as we look at the “secret ingredients” that make Lakewood a wonderful place to live and work, I want to end on the most important ingredient and that is THE PEOPLE who live and work in Lakewood especially those of you who volunteer your time for various causes during the year.

Maybe you’re a Neighborhood Watch captain...or a Volunteer on Patrol...helping to keep our community safe.

Maybe you take part in Volunteer Day. Or in the Lakewood Community Run, which is right around the corner on March 3rd. Maybe you volunteer throughout the year with Meals on Wheels, Project Shepherd, Soroptimists, Pan American Association, Pathways Volunteer Hospice, Rotary, Lions or Women’s Club, or your church or youth group.

No matter what you volunteer on...thank you for what you do to make Lakewood a strong, caring community in the process. In the end, you and your time and energy are the most valuable special ingredients we have to make our city a great place to live and work in. That’s been the case since our community’s founding, it holds true today, and I am very confident it will remain true, creating a very bright future ahead for Lakewood.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the City of Lakewood.