

**REMARKS OF LAKEWOOD MAYOR STEVE CROFT**  
**AT THE LAKEWOOD CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
APRIL 12, 2022

I want to thank my City Council colleagues for this opportunity to once again serve them and the residents of Lakewood as mayor. I'm honored by the trust you've placed in me.

I want to say thank-you to my predecessor and colleague, Jeff Wood.

I won't repeat everything that was just said at Lakewood Celebrates about Jeff's mayoral term, but I do want to highlight again the "Caring Community" video series that was one of his initiatives.

Jeff asked all of us on the council to join him in those videos, and they were a great way to highlight the helpful non-profit organizations we have in Lakewood...and to inform our residents about the opportunities to volunteer for those and other good causes in our community. So thank you Jeff for that initiative.

It's a big commitment of time to be mayor. So, on behalf of my colleagues and our residents, I want to thank you Jeff...and I want to thank some special people in my life who already know about the commitment that a Lakewood mayor makes in terms of time...and that's my family.

I am very lucky to have the love and support of my family...as all of us on the council are with our families.

They sacrifice family time...they join us at events...they share more chicken dinners than they want to remember...and they motivate us to keep working to make a positive difference in our community.

So I want to say thanks...and say that I'm proud to be joined tonight by my lovely wife Tess, who is also an active volunteer here in Lakewood...and my daughter Ana and her boyfriend Tony.

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As I view my term as mayor, I see our City of Lakewood facing a very encouraging period of renewal and reconnecting.

The signs are very hopeful that we are turning a major corner in our two-year struggle against COVID. That means the opportunity to bring back a lot of traditional Lakewood community events, like the Pan Am Fiesta next month...and the Civic Center Block Party in two months.

Who in this room is looking forward to those events happening in-person again?

These will be great opportunities for all of us to reconnect with our community...and to re-enjoy some of the best traditions that Lakewood has to offer.

While we are very hopeful that we have turned a corner with COVID and are seeing its most harmful impacts in the rearview mirror, we do need to remain watchful about future variants or other emergencies that could occur in the future. We need to learn the lessons of this pandemic...and be as prepared as we reasonably can be for emergencies that could happen again.

And we need to remember those who suffered in this catastrophic pandemic...or did not survive it. 167 Lakewood residents have died from COVID so far. That's 167 families grieving the loss of a loved one.

Many Lakewood residents are also dealing with long-term breathing, cognitive or other health impacts after contracting COVID.

And there were economic impacts too, with many businesses permanently closing during the pandemic, and with employees and business owners confronting serious financial losses.

While we enter a year of hopeful renewal and reconnection in Lakewood, as mayor, I want us to recognize those who have suffered during this very difficult time.

To that end, when we adjourn at the close of tonight's council meeting, I will ask everyone to join me in a moment of silence in the memory of our fellow Lakewood residents who have passed away from COVID.

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In line with our community's renewal and recovery from the COVID era, we are now entering a very positive period in terms of our city finances and having a secure, long-term financial outlook ahead for us in Lakewood. Not many cities can say that these days, but I am very, very glad to say that Lakewood can...both as a council member and as a resident.

The reason for that long-term financial security is the passage of Measure L...and I want to thank our residents who voted for it.

And even if you were skeptical and didn't vote for Measure L, I want you to know that we respect your views...and on the City Council we will always work hard to be good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us as your elected representatives.

That's an important and sacred civic responsibility that we all share on the council, and we take it very seriously.

This coming year, residents will see many parks and community buildings in Lakewood get needed repairs and renovations courtesy of Measure L.

There will be renovations to plumbing, roofing and electrical systems for our 50 and 60 year-old buildings. There will be new playgrounds and picnic shelters to replace those that are aging.

Work is underway now at San Martin and Rynerson parks. And the Weingart Senior Center and Mae Boyar and Palms parks are on the drawing board for repairs and renovations in the near future...with other park projects coming in the years ahead.

Lakewood residents are rightly proud of their parks, playgrounds and community buildings, and we now have the financial capability to keep them repaired, renovated and looking good, well into the future.

We also have the resources now to make some important public safety enhancements.

As we all know, there's been a nationwide spike in vehicle thefts over the past two years, including thefts of catalytic converters. And Lakewood has not been immune to that nationwide trend. While serious crime as a whole is low in Lakewood...and even dropped this past year...we've seen a troubling increase in vehicle thefts and vehicle burglaries. All of that has created some understandable unease in our community.

Thanks to Measure L, we now have the resources to respond to that problem, and to do all that we can at a city level to combat the vehicle theft problem and to make our residents feel that their property is secure, especially at night.

As you know, last month our city council passed the "Neighborhood Safety Enhancement Plan," which includes paying for extra Deputy Sheriff patrols at night...and enhancing those with Security Guard patrols...so that we can nearly double the number of patrol vehicles on the streets of Lakewood...every night.

That plan, which the full council passed unanimously, will be going into effect very soon, and will include some other helpful elements too, including rebates to encourage more Lakewood residents to install video security systems...and expanding our Automatic License Plate Reading system, which does a great job finding wanted vehicles and suspects in Lakewood.

So, even as we face challenges, there's lots of be hopeful for in Lakewood now.

And we will always face challenges. That's part of the job of being mayor and being on the city council...facing challenges and deciding the best course of action to take for our community's benefit.

As many of us have said before, we are not an island in Lakewood. We are part of the greater Los Angeles and Long Beach metropolitan area, and the issues that our broader region faces can spill over into Lakewood.

But as a city we are fortunate in Lakewood to now have the resources to take on some of those problems and to do all that we can at the local level to keep our community life in Lakewood just as good as we possibly can. That's a good position to be in.

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In closing, as mayor, I look forward in the year ahead to working with my colleagues here on the council and in partnership with our residents...our businesses...our staff...our partners in the Sheriff's Department and Fire Department...and our contract service providers...to collectively do the very best job that we can for the community we all love...and that's Lakewood.

We have a busy year ahead, but it will be busy in a good way, as we all do our part in this year of recovery and renewal to continue to make Lakewood a wonderful place in which to live, work and visit.

Thank you very much.