



City of Lakewood City Council

Council At Large
Sarah Kepple, President
Thomas R. Bullock III
Angelina Hamilton Steiner

Ward Council
Kyle Baker, Ward 1, Vice President
Bryan Evans, Ward 2
Cindy Strebig, Ward 3
Matthew Bixenstine, Ward 4

Noticed 06/30/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE – FINANCE COMMITTEE

Finance Committee will meet Monday July 6, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium at Lakewood City Hall, 12650 Detroit Ave. The meeting is open to the public.

The meeting will be livestreamed on [the City's website](#).

The agenda is as follows:

Approval of the minutes of the June 29, 2026 Finance Committee meeting.

Communication from President Kepple regarding Council Budget Priorities for the 2027 City budget. (*referred to Finance 6/15/26*)

Kyle Baker, Chair

Tom Bullock, Cindy Strebig; Members

FINANCE COMMITTEE

PUBLIC COMMENT PROTOCOL

The public is invited to comment on agenda items by submitting a written comment in advance of the meeting using the [eComment platform](#). New users must create an eComment account. Committee Chairs may also accommodate in person public comment.

ADA PROTOCOL

Individuals with disabilities who require accommodations for participation in meetings must request accommodations at least 3 business days ahead of the scheduled meeting. Contact Michelle Nochta at (216) 529-5906 or michelle.nochta@lakewoodoh.gov.



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June 15, 2026

Lakewood City Council
Lakewood, Ohio

Re: Council Budget Priorities

Dear Colleagues,

Attached to this communication is a summary of the twenty-five Council Budget Priority Worksheet drafts submitted following Council's retreat on May 11th. Priorities address a wide range of topics, some which build upon existing investments, whereas others offer brand new ideas. Some priorities include an estimated budget, and others are more policy focused and budget neutral.

Some of these priorities were developed by councilmembers individually, some in small groups of no more than three councilmembers, and some in collaboration with staff or community stakeholders. The goal of identifying and announcing Council's priorities early is to ensure that Council and the Administration have ample time to collaborate prior to the introduction of the City's 2027 budget.

As the next step in this process, I propose that this communication be referred to Committee where the priority drafts can be discussed in greater detail, the Administration can better understand their impact on the City's 2027 budget, and the public may provide input.

In preparation for that discussion, councilmembers are encouraged to continue researching their priorities, speaking with appropriate staff and external stakeholders, and refining budget estimates. I expect that the drafts may be revised and refined based on the public discourse and continued research, and that final versions will be completed in time so that they may be included in the proposed 2027 budget when it is introduced this fall. It is my hope that this process will allow for a smooth and collaborative budget season.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kepple
President of Council
Member of Council At Large

Topic	Estimated Budget	Budget, Policy or Both	Baker	Bixenstine	Bullock	Evans	Kepple	Strebig	Steiner
<p>Large Tree Preservation</p> <p>The idea is to set up a framework whereby large trees are afforded some protections on the basis that a large tree on a property provides benefits beyond property lines and that Lakewood values its urban tree canopy. Pulling from other peer cities, this priority seeks to set up a system whereby in order to take down trees of a certain size on private property, a permit would need to be granted by the City. There would be exceptions for dangerous trees that pose imminent harm to public safety.</p>	?	Policy	Member						
<p>Speed Enforcement in School Zones</p> <p>Recent data shows that speeding in school zones during school hours is quite common. While Lakewood Police have done a tremendous job in ramping up speed enforcement (particularly in school zones), the behavior persists as police can only stop one person at a time. The idea is to have targeting speed cameras in certain school zones, not as a funding mechanism, but as a behavior deterrent.</p>	10,000	Budget & Policy	Member	Member					
<p>Traffic Calming Review & Enhancement</p> <p>Review the current Traffic Calming Program, determine original goals and progress, and evaluate changes (if necessary). Even evaluate whether Traffic Calming Program should be codified into the Lakewood Codified Ordinances. Consider lowering thresholds based upon neighborhood support. Provide funding for additional interventions. Coordination with CASE.</p>	?	Budget & Policy	Member			Member			Member
<p>Youth Athletics</p> <p>I am currently coordinating with members of the Lakewood City School Board to explore the potential of splitting funding to the Lakewood Athletic Boosters (501(c)(3) non-profit organization) ("LAB") to hire an Executive Director to help support all competitive youth sports in Lakewood. The idea is for the City and the School Board to enter into a services agreement with the LAB whereby the LAB hires an Executive Director with the funding. The commitment would be for at least 2-3 years.</p>		Budget & Policy	Member						
<p>Affordability & Property Tax Relief</p> <p>The global affordability crisis impacts Lakewood residents in a variety of ways. Notably, some residents -- including fixed-income seniors and low-income homeowners -- are feeling financial strain due to higher property taxes, as property values in Cuyahoga County jumped an average of 32% following the 2024 reappraisal. This initiative seeks to explore ways to offer targeted property tax relief to our most vulnerable residents.</p>		Policy		Member			Member		

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<p>Safer Streets, Together Campaign</p> <p>Safer Streets, Together' (working title) is a 90-day public education campaign aimed at spreading awareness regarding the shared responsibility of motorists, cyclists/scooter riders and pedestrians in ensuring our streets are safe for everyone. This campaign seeks to support our complete streets initiative by promoting small safety actions as part of a cultural shift. A key element will be action-oriented messaging that discourages high-risk behaviors and encourages safe behaviors.</p>		Policy		Member					Member
<p>Styrofoam Recycling</p> <p>Styrofoam serves as a major detriment to our environment, with an estimated 2.3 million tons ending up in landfills nationally each year. This initiative calls for partnering with local business Edgewater Surf to establish drop-off recycling of EPS foam at the Lakewood Recycling Center. Edgewater Surf densifies EPS foam, using a small amount to make surfboards, and shipping the rest of the processed material to a partner company (Soprema Inc.) to be converted into new foam insulation.</p>	5,000	Budget & Policy		Member			Member		Member
<p>Ward 4 Voter Turnout/Community Engagement</p> <p>Ward 4 has historically lagged behind the rest of Lakewood in voter turnout, and the recent primary election proved no exception. During the election held on May 5, roughly 18% of registered voters in Ward 4 voted compared to nearly 30% citywide. This initiative seeks to formulate a comprehensive, non-partisan plan, consisting of both short-term and long-term strategies, to reduce this gap and improve voter turnout within Ward 4.</p>	?	Policy		Member					Member
<p>Capital Budgeting Reform</p> <p>Develop and propose amendments to the City's current Capital Budget Processes, (norms, practices, rules, procedures, and ordinances) to increase Council oversight and to make a greater proportion of capital budget decision making subject to Council oversight and decision making.</p>	NA	Policy	Member		Member				

Topic	Estimated Budget	Budget, Policy or Both	Baker	Bixenstine	Bullock	Evans	Kepple	Strebig	Steiner
Crossing Guards: Coverage Expansion Add financial capacity for 16 additional crossing guards (+1 each at 6 elementary schools; +3 each at 2 Middle Schools; +4 at Lakewood High School), estimated at \$8,000 annually per crossing guard. Explore management and financial model in which Lakewood City Schools would contract with the City to provide staffing for a portion of these positions (to be decided), helping to overcome personnel bottlenecks. This extra capacity will allow for coverage gaps to be filled, improving safety.	128,000	Budget & Policy	Member		Member				
Expanded Parks Bathroom Access Expand Parks bathroom access beyond current practices. Specifically: install remote access/code controlled electronic locks for restrooms at Cove & Edwards Parks, currently open only for athletic events; install new Port-O-Johns (including one ADA Accessible unit) for the busy season at Wagar Park and Merl-Bunts Park, currently not present at all; and begin design for a gender neutral family bathroom to be permanently installed at Wagar Park. Cost estimate ranges from \$28,410 to \$81,622	81,622	Budget & Policy			Member		Member		
Short Term Rental Regulations Develop policy principles to guide development of regulations for short term rentals (STRs). Draft and deliberate upon regulations. If permitted, staffing for increased City oversight, permitting, and inspection in theory would be offset by permit fees. (In reality, there may be start-up costs in personnel time.) Also: retain data tracking services for STRs. (Lakewood's likely annual cost for Granicus STR monitoring is \$18-32k/year, with a first-year total of \$38-62k with set up fees.)	62,000	Budget & Policy	Member		Member	Member			
Grant Support for SRTS Coordinator Grant support for partial match for a Safe Routes To Schools (SRTS) Coordinator, envisioned as jointly funded by the City, Lakewood City Schools, and Healthy Lakewood Foundation (who have not yet been formally approached).	25,000	Budget & Policy			Member				
Affordable Housing Housing market trends in Lakewood are rapidly pricing out individuals, families, and seniors that either already live her or would love to make Lakewood their home. Existing tools to combat rising housing costs are both limited in scope and often do not help our most vulnerable populations.	150,000	Budget & Policy		Member		Member	Member		

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Block Clubs Block Clubs can be a relatively easy and cost-efficient way to communicate with our constituents. More than that, they can and should be a building block of our community, building personal relationships and trust amongst both new and long-time residents.	100,000	Budget & Policy		Member		Member		Member	
Mental Health Response Team Mental Health issues are a priority for many communities, few more so than Lakewood. While our safety services do an admiral job responding to emergency calls where mental health plays a substantial role, they are limited in how they can effectively deal with immediate circumstances. A dedicated team of trained responders would be better equipped to deal with acute issues due to mental health issues and also free LPD to spend more time on law enforcement issues elsewhere in the community.	600,000	Budget & Policy				Member		Member	Member
Public Art Advancement: Bernice Pyke Park Public Art is an important part of the DNA of Lakewood, and it's time we advanced our efforts in making our community a regional center for community-funded arts. We've done a great job with murals and other 2D projects, but it's time to move on to sculptural, place- based projects that better align with the overall vision of our community. The initial target of this investment is a celebration of women in Lakewood's history at Bernice Pyke Park	100,000	Budget & Policy			Member	Member	Member		
Handball The goal is to establish a community handball court, ideally on public property, that is freely accessible to those who wish to play.	50,000	Budget & Policy					Member	Member	Member
Home Improvement Loan Programs The Housing Enhancement Loan Program (HELP), sponsored by Cuyahoga County, traditionally offered a 3% interest rate reduction on a fixed rate equity loan to eligible homeowners undertaking repair and rehabilitation projects. With that program paused and the increased cost of repairs, this priority is to identify how the City could modify an existing City program, such as the Home Improve or establish a new program to help homeowners with low/moderate income complete home improvements affordably.	1,000,000	Budget & Policy	Member			Member	Member		

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Charter Amendment Education Anticipating that City Council may vote to place some or all of the Charter amendments currently before Committee of the Whole on the ballot in November 2026, this priority is to help voters understand the purpose of each amendment, and the impact of each if passed. Some potential strategies are producing print materials and mailing information to voters, public information sessions, and social media information sharing.	na	Budget & Policy					Member		
Citywide Composting The City of Lakewood through its Climate Action Plan (CAP) has a goal of achieving 95% organic material trash diversion to composting by 2030 and reducing food waste generation by 50%. Building upon existing infrastructure for composting which has been in existence in Lakewood since 2019, Lakewood has an opportunity to achieve this goal. Through a city-wide composting program, we can ensure that composting is accessible to Lakewood residents and that we reach our goals laid out in the CAP.	50,000	Budget & Policy			Member	Member			Member
Implementation of Racial Equity Plan The City of Lakewood via resolution created an Anti-Racism Task Force to advise and work with the administration to ensure the value of anti-racism is foundational and unambiguously expressed in all city objectives involving safety, housing, education, culture and community wellness. This was a strategy, first initiated in direct response to the George Floyd protests in 2020, and is intended to ensure that Lakewood lives up to its values of being an inclusive and welcoming community.	?	Budget & Policy					Member	Member	Member
Lakewood Community Circulator In 2009, due to low ridership and high costs, Lakewood's Community Circulator was disbanded. This elimination of a publicly popular service, has left a void in the community. Despite this, the service remains in public conversation and has high public support. An opportunity exists to tackle the challenge of low ridership, high costs, and high public support, and deep dive into the Transit Feasibility Study Report from 2024 and work on implementing the recommendations from Iteris.	?	Budget & Policy		Member		Member			Member
Expansion of Winter Sidewalk Maintenance Winter 2025/2026 seemed to be a particularly tough winter as it seemed there were periods without a break in the weather providing for time to clear not only roads but sidewalks. Due to the effects of climate change, we can expect that winter weather will continue to be brutal, harsh, and long. This presents a perfect opportunity to prepare our community to be ready for the harsh winter and maintain safe and accessible sidewalks.	?	Budget & Policy		Member	Member				Member