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## Community Meeting Notes

### Wednesday, January 7, 2026

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(These notes were generated by AI from a recording of the meeting and checked by a fallible human for accuracy. If you find an error, please notify us at [acteam@alamedaconnects.org](mailto:acteam@alamedaconnects.org))

#### 1) City Leadership & Strategic Governance (Mayor Wendi Strom)

- a) Mayor Wendi Strom provided a deep dive into the administrative "engine" of Lakewood for the coming two years. She emphasized that while December appeared quiet, it was a period of intense preparation for 2026.
- b) Two-Year Policy Cycle: For the first time, the City Council is moving away from annual planning to a two-year priority cycle. On February 6th and 7th, 2026, the council will hold a planning workshop to negotiate approximately 20 total policy goals (roughly two per council member). This shift includes a "check-in" every six months to ensure staff capacity isn't overwhelmed, and that goals remain realistic based on available resources.
- c) The 8000 West Colfax Navigation Center: A major milestone was reached as Volunteers of America (VOA) officially signed the contract to manage the city's new Navigation Center. Scheduled to open in early February 2026, the facility will provide 103 beds and wrap-around services for the unhoused. This replaces the previous partnership with Recovery Works.
- d) Environmental & Safety Warnings: The Mayor highlighted a severe lack of snowpack, describing the landscape as "dry and crispy." She issued a formal request for residents to water their tree canopies, as drought-weakened trees are becoming hazards during high-wind events.
- e) Sustainability Milestones: Under the leadership of MJ Jackson, the city's new waste and circularity lead, Lakewood is expanding food scrap composting. This initiative was modeled after a successful pilot at Rose Stein Elementary, where students helped divert significant waste from landfills.
- f) Community Engagement Dates: January 29, 2026: A rescheduled community input meeting at Lakewood Link regarding the future of William Hayden Park.
- g) April 2026: The Mayor will deliver the annual State of the City address.

#### 2) Educational Innovation: The New America School (Principal Eric Rowe), Harlan and Alameda

- a) Principal Rowe presented a vision to transform the West Alameda corridor into a "living classroom" for his 62 students, many of whom are newcomers or students who have struggled in traditional environments.
- b) 2029 Legislative Mandate: Rowe highlighted that by 2029, Colorado state law will require every graduating senior to have earned 12 college credits and completed one full year of quality work-based learning.



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- c) The "Learner-Centered Ecosystem": Rome is moving away from a desk-and-chair model toward an "ecosystem" where students spend significant time in the community.
  - d) Go-Kart Project: Students recently partnered with an Arvada-based group to build electric go-karts, applying physics and engineering in a hands-on setting.
  - e) Peer Tutoring: Students currently spend six hours a week at Deane Elementary, serving as tutors and mentors.
  - f) Call to Action for Businesses: Rowe explicitly asked the BID members to provide "Problems of Practice." Instead of traditional "busy work" internships, he wants local businesses to present real challenges (e.g., marketing hurdles, inventory issues) that his students can solve as part of their curriculum.
  - g) Facility Access: The school's event space on South Harlan has a capacity of 350 people. Rowe invited community groups to utilize the space by contacting facility manager Adrian Chavez.
- 3) Public Safety & Technical Modernization (LPD & West Metro)
- a) There is a shift toward technology-led policing and health-conscious fire response.
  - b) The "Drone as a First Responder" (DFR) Program: Agent Quinn Pratt-Cordova detailed the success of the current three-drone fleet (stationed at the PD, St. Anthony's Hospital, and Colorado Mills).
  - c) Response Speed: Drones often arrive at high-priority calls (like reports of a "man with a gun") within 90 seconds, allowing dispatch to de-escalate situations before officers even step out of their cars.
  - d) Expansion Goals: The department aims to double the fleet to six drones to ensure citywide coverage. Each drone has a 45-minute battery life and is launched strictly in response to 911 calls.
  - e) Traffic Enforcement on Kipling: Due to a spike in fatalities and drivers clocked at 100+ mph, the LPD has initiated a zero-tolerance speed enforcement zone on Kipling, particularly near the Federal Center and school zones.
  - f) Staffing & Mental Health: The Community Action Team (CAT) is now full with eight agents. Furthermore, the city is hiring more dedicated mental health clinicians to handle follow-up casework, ensuring that patrol officers are not tied up with long-term social service needs.
  - g) West Metro Fire Operations: the department responded to 40,407 calls in 2025, with 70% being medical-related.
  - h) Shift Change Reform: Based on internal sleep studies, West Metro moved its shift change from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM. This allows firefighters to better rest and prevents crews from being in "transition mode" during the 8:00 AM peak traffic hour.
  - i) Resource Allocation: A ladder truck was moved from Station 8 (Jewell and Garrison) to Station 10 (285 and Kipling) to better cover high-density developments in the southern part of the district.
- 4) Community Partners
- a) Marcus Johnson (Lakewood Economic Development):



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- i) Economic Support: In 2025, Lakewood awarded approximately \$233,000 in grants to 52 businesses for façade, ADA, signage, and security improvements.
- ii) Corridor Growth: New businesses that recently opened include Wolf and Wildfire Wine Bar and Badass Coffee of Hawaii in Belmar.
- iii) Major Asset: Marcus highlighted Kaiser Permanente as a primary employer asset, noting its January 11th open house and January 12th ribbon cutting (Ceremony at 5:30 PM).
- iv) Outreach: Sign up for newsletter with 2,000 subscribers accessible via QR code
- b) Miriam Alvarez (West Metro Chamber):
  - i) Business Networking: Miriam promoted upcoming connection opportunities, including the Chamber Lunch Club at Olive Garden on January 9 and the "121 Days" networking event on January 21.
  - ii) Cultural Synergy: Attendees noted the link between the business community and local culture, specifically mentioning upcoming shows at the Lakewood Cultural Center like *"The Little Mermaid"* and *"South Pacific"*.

5) Alameda Connects & The BID (Business Improvement District)

Tom Quinn and Rachel Griffin provided a comprehensive look at the history, structure, and diverse community impacts of Alameda Connects (AC) and the Alameda Corridor Business Improvement District (ACBID).

- a) Organizational Structure: AC vs. ACBID
  - i) While the two entities work under a unified mantle to make the West Alameda corridor a vibrant destination, they are separate legal organizations with distinct roles.
  - ii) Alameda Connects (AC): Founded in 1997, AC is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization. It is funded by membership dues and grant revenue and is governed by a volunteer board. To facilitate fundraising, it utilizes the Nonprofit Development Center as a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor.
  - iii) The ACBID: Created by a Lakewood City Ordinance in 2003, the BID is a quasi-governmental entity with codified boundaries running from Sheridan Boulevard to Carr Street. It is funded by a 5.72 property tax mill levy that commercial property owners voted to impose upon themselves.
  - iv) The Relationship: The BID contracts with Alameda Connects for services. Property tax revenue from the BID pays for AC personnel to administer programs and manage corridor priorities.
  - v) The Team: The daily operations are managed by Tom Quinn (Executive Director), Clare Johnson (Office Manager), Rachel Griffin (Outreach Director), and Sacha Gragg (Digital Media Manager). The board includes President Jeanine Maxey, along with Kate Curtis and Doug Wells present today.
- b) Grant Programs: Reinvesting in the Corridor
  - i) In 2025, the organization awarded grants to 11 local businesses. These programs require recipients to post a banner thanking BID taxpayers and to promote their results on social media.



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- ii) Securing Alameda (Safety Grant): This program provides up to \$5,000 for security improvements such as cameras or lighting. Eligibility is based on a free Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessment provided by the Lakewood Police Department.
  - iii) Small But Mighty Grants: These are low-match or no-match grants of \$500 for community-building projects.
  - iv) Greening & Beautification: Grants support façade improvements, sustainability and signage.
  - v) 2025 Recipients:
    - Ye Olde 121 Public House (Wadsworth): Signage rebrand
    - Kaiser – Mural
    - Valkarie Gallery: Visitor engagement
    - Consultants for Children: Staff education
    - Old 121 Brewhouse (Oak St.): Security improvements
    - Alameda Water and Sewer: Illumination and signage
    - Boulevard Bottleshop: Security improvements
    - Gold Crown Fieldhouse: Security improvements
    - Injectables by Selena: Security improvements
    - New America School: Mural and exterior façade improvements
    - Telluride Truffle: Planters
- 6) Outreach, Engagement, and Destination Marketing
- a) The organization has significantly expanded its digital and physical presence to connect with the 500 businesses located within the BID.
  - b) Interactive Impact Map: The website now features a zoomable map that distinguishes the Impact Ecosystem (1st Ave to Mississippi Ave) from the core BID boundaries. It highlights paid members (green hearts) and honorary members (blue dots).
  - c) The "Alameda Tabloid": This new podcast series is hosted on the organization's YouTube channel.
  - d) Honorary Membership Program: Launched to improve inclusion, all 472 BID businesses are now honorary members, granting them a window decal, an annual e-newsletter feature, and invites to networking meetings.
  - e) Newsletter: Now reaches 3,300+ subscribers with a 30% open rate, significantly higher than the 23% national average.
- 7) Corridor Maintenance and Public Art
- a) The BID manages the physical identity of the corridor through rigorous maintenance and cultural investments.
  - b) Beautification & Maintenance: The BID maintains one of the state's largest stands of Blue Grama (Colorado's state grass). They also partner with Serve Spot Lakewood for trash and graffiti removal.
  - c) Public Art & History:
    - i) History Icons: The Ed Tipper history icon marker was installed in November 2025 to honor local Veteran history.

- ii) Storm Drain Art: A collaborative program with Belmar to turn functional infrastructure into art.
- d) Sustainability: Hosted a Sustainability class to its business members.

## Community Calendar

### January 2026

- Jan 6 – Jan 4, 2027: Building History – Window exhibition at historic outbuildings (Heritage Lakewood).
- Jan 9: West Metro Chamber Lunch Club – Networking at Olive Garden, Co Mills (11:30 AM).
- Jan 9–25: South Pacific – Performance series at the Lakewood Cultural Center (Various times).
- Jan 11: LPD Field Training Commencement – 11 new recruits begin training.
- Jan 11: Kaiser Permanente Mural Celebration – Community Open House at Lakewood Medical Offices (12:00 PM – 3:00 PM).
- Jan 12: Kaiser Permanente Ribbon Cutting – Official Tour & Ribbon Cutting at Lakewood Medical Offices (5:00 PM – 7:00 PM).
- Jan 20 – June 6: Who Lives Here? – Gallery exhibit at Heritage Lakewood Visitor Center.
- Jan 20 – Oct 31: Volunteers Live Here & Birds Live Here – exhibits at Heritage Lakewood.
- Jan 21: "121 Days" Business Networking – local business owners and BID members.
- Jan 23 – Feb 1: The Little Mermaid – Performance series at the Lakewood Cultural Center.
- Jan 28: Not Til Now – Live storytelling and comedy at Lakewood Cultural Center (7:00 PM).
- Jan 29: Ward 3 Breakfast Meeting – City Council budget/policy talk at Sunrise Sunset (8:30 AM).
- Jan 29: William Hayden Park Public Input Session – "The Link" (6:00 PM).
- Jan 30: Comedy for CASA – Phil Palisoul at Lakewood Cultural Center (7:30 PM).
- Jan 31: Peter and the Wolf – Lakewood Symphony Orchestra Family Concert (Time TBD).

### February 2026

- Early February: Navigation Center Grand Opening – New facility at 8000 W. Colfax opens.
- Feb 4: Alameda Connects Community Meeting – West Metro Fire Admin (7:30 AM – 9:00 AM).
- Feb 5–8: Hello, Dolly! – Presented by Co Christian University at Lakewood Cultural Center.
- Feb 6–7: City Council Priority Planning Retreat – Two-day policy roadmap workshop.
- Feb 12: Alameda Connects Monthly Meeting – Real-Time Crime Reporting & Drones.
- Feb 13–22: South Pacific – Performance series at the Lakewood Cultural Center.
- Feb 14: The Secret Garden – Missoula Children's Theatre (1:00 PM & 3:30 PM).
- Feb 19: Kings Return – A cappella quartet performance at Lakewood Cultural Center (7:30 PM).
- Feb 26: The Beatles Songbook – Colorado Jazz Repertory Orchestra at Cultural Center.
- Late February: Sustainability Rollout – Composting program expansion city-wide.

### March – May 2026

- Mar 4: Alameda Connects Community Meeting – West Metro Fire Admin (7:30 AM – 9:00 AM).
- Mar 7: Blarney on Belmar – Signature BID community celebration.
- Mar 13–15: The Magic of Kevin Spencer – Sensory-inclusive magic at the Cultural Center.
- Mar 13–29: A Chorus Line – Performance Now Theatre Company at Lakewood Cultural Center.



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- Apr 1: Alameda Connects Community Meeting – West Metro Fire Admin (7:30 AM – 9:00 AM).
- Apr 10: San Jose Taiko: Rhythm Journey – Japanese drumming at Lakewood Cultural Center.
- Apr 25: Luca Stricagnoli – Acoustic guitar performance at Lakewood Cultural Center.
- April TBD: State of the City Address – Annual address by Mayor Wendi Strom.
- May 6: Alameda Connects Community Meeting – West Metro Fire (7:30 AM – 9:00 AM).
- May 8: Active Adult Resource Fair – Clements Community Center/Clement Park area.
- May 9: Car No. 25 Open House – Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park interurban car rides.
- May 15–16: Lakewood Symphony Orchestra – Season finale at the Cultural Center.

Summer & Fall 2026

- June 3: Alameda Connects Community Meeting – West Metro Fire (7:30 AM – 9:00 AM).
- June 6: Rockin' Block Party – Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park (5:00 PM – 11:00 PM).
- June – August: "Sounds Exciting!" Summer Concert Series
- Oct 3–4: Lakewood Cider Days – Heritage festival at Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park.