

AGENDA
LAKEWOOD CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION
FEBRUARY 12, 2024
5:30 P.M.

THIS MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELED

~~For more information about the Council Study Session, please use either one of the following links:~~

~~City of Lakewood Website: <https://www.Lakewood.org/CouncilVideos>~~

~~or~~

~~Lakewood Speaks: Lakewoodspeaks.org~~

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The report on cold weather sheltering is being delayed, allowing for more time to better understand the impacts of the following areas:

- Significant Operations changes were recently made as a result of occupancy limits put in place by fire and building officials.**
- Jefferson County has recently engaged with the City of Lakewood to a greater degree, including hiring new staff focused on cold weather sheltering.**
- With additional operational nights anticipated in the near future, a more comprehensive data set will be compiled, including statistics related to the use of overflow options.**

STAFF MEMO

DATE OF MEETING: FEBRUARY 12, 2024 / AGENDA ITEM NO. 3

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Benjamin Goldstein, Deputy City Manager
Subject: **Lakewood Cold Weather Shelter Update**

SUMMARY STATEMENT: On January 8, 2024, City Council approved a request by two members to hold a study session on Lakewood’s efforts to support the unhoused during cold weather events. The request identified three primary questions which are addressed below and will be further addressed during staff’s presentation on February 12. No City Council action is required for this item.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The City of Lakewood and this City Council should be proud of all that has been accomplished during the last year and in particular with what was done during the mid-January cold snap. Sheltering the unhoused is a new service that has not been previously provided by the city and remains a work in progress. The city is still in a transition as it works toward a fully operational navigation center with a purpose-built shelter. That said, Lakewood is leading the way among all its peers and should be looked at differently than somewhere like Denver, as Lakewood is not a City/County and has not historically provided these types of services.

Over the past year, Lakewood has sheltered over 500 individuals who were experiencing homelessness during a extreme weather event. These individuals were not only provided with a save place to stay and food, but also access to supportive services to help them out of homelessness. The City of Lakewood’s approach to homelessness is based on evidence and goes beyond just providing temporary housing. These services will ultimately be provided through a regional navigation center, which can act as a one stop shop for those looking for support in finding permanent housing.

The three questions that City Council identified are outlined below:

How does Lakewood’s Extreme Weather Shelter get activated?

Like many other shelters in the area, Lakewood uses a temperature threshold of 20 degrees for activation. Precipitation is not used as a threshold because it is harder to predict in advance and the city needs to provide 48 hours of notice to our partners. Multiple staff members constantly reviews future forecasts for activation criteria. It is worth noting that because the city is still in a transition phase, an emergency declaration is utilized to suspend city rules to allow for the shelter’s operation.

How does the city communicate with the public when cold weather shelters are activated?

Because this is a new service for the city, there have been many learning opportunities, and communicating with those in need has been no exception. The city recently launched a new website, Lakewood.org/shelter, which now serves as a one-stop shop for those seeking information about services for the unhoused. This website also prominently displays the shelter's status. Staff has dramatically increased the use of social media to help communicate with residents and sends out an “activation alert” to community partners who also serve these residents. Signage was installed at the shelter location noting the status for that evening. In addition to all the means of communication previously noted, Lakewood’s Homeless Navigators and Community Action Team Agents (CAT) continue to utilize direct communication with individuals experiencing homelessness. In some

cases, this even involves voluntary transportation to the shelter.

What are the plans for the future?

Ultimately, the city is working toward a regional navigation center, which would include a purpose-built space for extreme weather sheltering. This topic is already calendared for the regular meeting on February 12, 2024, and as a result, an extensive staff memo on this topic can be found as part of those meeting materials.

BUDGETARY IMPACTS: There is no budget impact associated with this presentation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Staff does not have a recommendation associated with this presentation.

ALTERNATIVES: City Council could choose not to hear the presentation or to delay it until a future meeting.

PUBLIC OUTREACH: This item has been promoted through the regular communication channels to be considered by the Lakewood City Council.

NEXT STEPS: None

ATTACHMENTS: None

REVIEWED BY: Kathleen E. Hodgson, City Manager
Benjamin B. Goldstein, Deputy City Manager
Alison McKenney Brown, City Attorney