

Good evening, My name is Bonnie Nguyen, and I'm a candidate for Lakewood City Council Ward 3. As an EMT, I've seen firsthand how small details in our city's codes can have big impacts on our community's safety.

If you've ever been to a popular drive-through, you've likely seen the line of cars spill onto our streets. In-N-Out burger, wasn't so in and out. It's more than just an inconvenience—it's concerning that this kind of traffic congestion is right next to an ER, next to Wadsworth Blvd, next to a major intersection—it's a serious public safety hazard that can block access to and from a critical facility for residents and first responders.

We know this issue was so severe for months after it opened that the Lakewood Police was heavily involved in managing the traffic—a problem the business should have handled themselves. Why were taxpayer resources being allocated to manage a problem the "Director" created without community input?

Our zoning code is supposed to prevent this, but it fails. In Article 17.8.7.3, it only mandates a minimum of four stacking spaces for a restaurant drive-through. It did not account for the type of business or data that has long shown the ridiculously long lines and congestion it would bring. This kind of development is handled through a standard administrative review process by the Planning Department—a system designed to allow developers to work directly with a single official and their team. It bypasses the community and hands over significant power to an unelected "Director."

This isn't a mistake, but a symptom of a larger problem. Our zoning code leaves too many critical decisions to the vague discretion of a single

unelected official. For example, the code allows the 'Director' to determine requirements based on a 'queuing study,' but it doesn't specify who pays for or reviews that study. This lack of transparency invites biased, developer-funded plans.

This is how you get a plan that works on paper but fails in practice, forcing the public to live with its consequences. We are seeing this issue repeated in the proposed zoning updates. Residents are speaking out because they know the "Director" has too much authority when approving projects that go against the community's wishes—like R-M zoning on land that borders a park and failing to protect our tree canopies. Our trees provide more than just health benefits; they are vital in our city's infrastructure, filtering air pollutants, cooling neighborhoods, reducing storm runoff, encouraging walkability—the list is endless, **all** are benefits that outweigh unchecked developer profits. When we protect our trees, our open spaces, and return power to the people, we create a healthier community, which means less strain on our healthcare system and the overworked healthcare providers and first responders.

The decisions that affect our daily lives should be made by the community, not by one person, especially an unelected person. Thank you.