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**NEWS FROM THE  
OFFICE OF  
COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

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### **NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES RECOGNIZES LAKEWOOD'S YOUTH PLANNING EFFORTS**

The National League of Cities' (NLC) Institute for Youth, Education, and Families has invited the City of Lakewood to participate in the Municipal Leadership to Implement Comprehensive Plans for Children and Youth technical assistance initiative. In May of this year, NLC invited cities and towns that had developed a comprehensive plan or agenda for children and youth to apply for technical assistance in support of efforts to implement the plan. Nationally, the level of city interest and momentum was extraordinary and created an incredibly competitive review process in which six city teams were selected: Charleston, South Carolina, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Lakewood, Ohio, Lexington, Kentucky, Portland, Oregon, and Washington, DC.

"Under the George Administration, Youth and Recreation are a top priority," said Mayor Thomas J. George. "I am pleased the NLC has recognized Lakewood for its innovative and creative methods to address these important priorities."

In Fall 2005, the City of Lakewood was one of six cities chosen by the NLC to participate in a technical assistance process to develop a comprehensive community plan for youth and families. A Blue Ribbon Task Force designed a framework and engaged key community stakeholders in the plan development process. Through a series of meetings, youth and family surveys as well as community dialogue, the Lakewood Youth Master Plan (YMP) report was completed in September 2007.

The NLC technical assistance will help ensure the next phase of Youth Master Planning is a success. The first step in the YMP implementation plan is the formation and development of the Lakewood Youth Commission (LYC), an organization comprised of both youth and adults. The Commission will provide leadership in advocating, monitoring, evaluating and achieving the goals of the YMP. Chris Karel, YMP Community Chair says, "We've spent a lot of time preparing this plan. Now it's time to act. It's great that Lakewood was chosen -- the NLC will help us be successful." Legislation to establish the LYC was introduced to Lakewood City Council on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

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