

## Strategy being developed to solve financial challenges ahead

Loveland residents, the City's citizen financial sustainability committee, the Citizen Finance Advisory Commission, City staff and Loveland City Council are working together to address an anticipated \$3.5 million revenue shortfall next year and for several years ahead. The shortfall may necessitate revenue increases or cutbacks in the type, quantity or quality of City government services residents have come to expect.

Unlike the state and national budgets, the City's charter requires that the City budget be balanced—revenue must cover expenses; a budget deficit is prohibited.

### The problem

The shortfall will not have major impact on the City's utilities services—water, power, trash/recycling, stormwater. It will, however, affect the General Fund that supports police; fire; street, traffic and facility maintenance; parks; recreation; cultural activities; bus service; technology; planning and zoning; and overall City administration.

Basically, the General Fund covers the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the many individual services provided by these City operations. This includes personnel costs; equipment and vehicle supplies and maintenance; street and traffic control upkeep; leisure services



offered by the library, museum, Rialto, City parks; and of course, the public safety activities of the police and fire departments.

Like the rest of the nation though not as severe, Loveland's economy has taken a step backwards during the past few years. Instead of the annual revenue increases the City had enjoyed for many years, City revenue has declined in the past few years while the cost of maintaining City services has not.

### The reasons

Why has the shortfall occurred and is expected to continue? There are several reasons, but these are the most significant:

- The City's major source of revenue—sales tax—has declined to 2007 levels as Loveland residents

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[More about sustainability inside](#)

## CRC makes landscapes beautiful and sustainable

The Center for Resource Conservation (CRC) in cooperation with Loveland Water & Power, is offering Loveland residents two great ways to efficiently beautify their landscapes this spring.

### Slow the flow Colorado:

Residents can take advantage of a brand new CRC program designed to optimize sprinkler operations to green up lawns while still being water efficient.

This free pilot program enables Loveland Water & Power residential customers to have their automatic, underground sprinkler systems inspected by trained water auditors



who inspect for performance and efficiency. After the inspection, residents will receive a customized watering schedule and tips for easy do-it-yourself sprinkler maintenance.

Inspections run from June through August and take about two hours. A limited number of audits are available. To request an inspection, complete the online request form at [www.conservationcenter.org](http://www.conservationcenter.org) or call CRC, (303) 999-3820, ext. 217.

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## Annual Pancake Breakfast & Plant Sale – April 16

Everyone is invited to enjoy a delicious breakfast of pancakes, sausage, ham, juice, and coffee, and then browse for that perfect piece of greenery for the home, landscape, or office. Attendees can enjoy live entertainment while eating and browsing.

The event goes from 8 to 11 a.m. at the Chilson Senior Center, 700 E. Fourth St.

Tickets are available in advance or on the day of the event at the Senior Center.

Adults: \$4 in advance, \$5 at the door; Children (12 & under): \$2.50 in advance; \$3 at the door.

Call 962-2783 for more information.



**Strategy being developed to solve financial challenge ahead** (continued from page 1)

have tightened their belts and spent less during the weak economy.

- Use tax revenue has declined dramatically. Use tax, similar to sales tax, is paid to the City by developers and construction firms for materials used in building homes and commercial property. Also, revenues from fees for property development have fallen dramatically.
- Because the value of real estate is expected to fall, the City's revenue from property tax will lessen.
- The City is receiving less State of Colorado revenue.
- The cost of providing the same level of City services creeps upward every year.

**Reserves restricted**

City finances are very complicated. By law and convention, some monies are restricted for specific uses. Most of Loveland's healthy financial reserves can't be withdrawn to pay for a traffic light or police salaries. They were collected for specific uses and can only be spent for those uses, often associated with future growth; "bricks and mortar" capital expenses such as new streets, pipelines and fire stations. Recent major City projects including the Chilson Center and library expansions had been planned for years and paid for with existing funds already set aside for those purposes.

The good news is that because of the weakened economy, lower construction costs have resulted in savings or extra features for those projects within the budgeted limits.

Even if the City could dip into some of those funds it would not solve the problem. The revenue /expenses scale will be out of balance beginning next year. Taking money from a "savings account" might balance the scale one time, but next year the scale would be out of balance again.

Ongoing, sustainable solutions are needed. Revenue must increase or expenses must decrease—or both—for the next several years.

**Process has begun**

Efforts are already in progress to find a solution to the imbalance. The public, City employees, local business persons, members of City boards and commissions as well as city council members are involved in discussing ideas and exploring options. Three public forums took place last month.

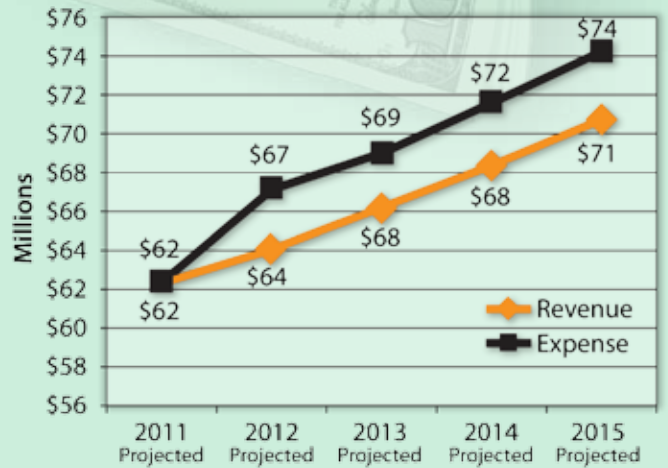
At the forums, participants were provided an overview of the City budget process and outline of General Fund services to provide

an understanding of the challenges ahead. The forums then focused on the services themselves, with each participant using an electronic voting device to provide feedback on priorities.

Using the ideas, options and priorities expressed by everyone involved, a strategy is being developed to accomplish financial sustainability for the years ahead. That strategy will be reviewed and discussed by Loveland City Council, leading toward a strategy approval determination scheduled for May.

The involvement of the community has been an important part of the strategy development and will remain an important part of the future steps toward financial sustainability for City services to the community.

**Projected City Revenue/Expenses**



**What not to put down the drain**

It's amazing what is flushed down Loveland's sinks, drains and toilets to the sewer.

Flushing items other than toilet paper down the toilet and dirty water down drains can present a hazard and potential health problems to the family, the "household plumber," and City employees. Over time, unacceptable items flushed down drains and toilets will lead to a sewer back-up causing potential property damage plus public health and safety hazards.

Disposable does not mean flushable. Even if a product's manufacturer claims or indicates it may be flushed, putting it down the drain can cause problems.



**Sewer cloggers**

Accumulated debris surrounds a pump being removed for maintenance at a City sewer vault. A close look at the debris reveals string, fishing line, a feminine hygiene product, a floor sweeping rag, a syringe and lots of other less-identifiable materials. Disposal of improper materials down a household's toilet or sink drain can lead to sewer backups in the home, costly line cleaning or repair, and very expensive and unpleasant maintenance on sewer system equipment.

**Below are some common items that should never go down the drain or toilet:**

Acne pads	Flammables	Pesticides
Band aids	Grease & oil	Plastic
Cardboard	Hair	Q-tips
Coffee grounds	Insecticides	Rags
Condoms	IV bags	Razor blades
Cotton balls	Kitty litter	Small toys
Dental floss	Medications	Toothpicks
Diapers (disposable/cloth)	Needles	Wipes of any kind
Drinking straws	Nursing pads	"Swiffer" type cleaning supplies
Egg shells	Paint	
Feminine hygiene products	Paper towels	
	Fruit/vegetable peelings	

**Hazardous waste pick-up for seniors & disabled**

Loveland seniors and disabled can sign up for a door-to-door pick up of household hazardous waste products to be picked up Tues., May 3. Scheduled pickups will be limited to the first forty residents who call. To sign up, call Waste Management Curbside, "At Your Door Special Collection" at 1-800-HHW-PKUP (449-7587). Leave a brief message including name, address and phone number.



Items for pick-up include adhesives, old batteries, cleaners with ammonia or bleach, liquid drain openers, house paint, old nail polish and polish remover, lawn and garden pesticides, and automotive products such as antifreeze and brake/transmission fluid. This special collection helps seniors and disabled residents dispose of these items in an environmentally-responsible way.

For more information call 962-2772.

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## Tornado touchdown tests emergency recovery planning

This time, it was a tornado on a pogo stick. First touching down in downtown Loveland, it touched down again at CSU and then in downtown Fort Collins. Fifty people died, 250 were injured and 300 buildings were damaged or destroyed as the whirling winds cut a 1,200 ft. wide swath through Larimer County.

Happily, the disaster was just a very realistic exercise staged by Homeland Security's Emergency Management Institute in Emmittsburg, Maryland. Last time—in 2008—the exercise was flash flooding of both the Big Thompson and Cache La Poudre rivers.

Like last time, the tornado exercise involved about 75 staffers from government and quasi-government agencies from Larimer County. Unlike last time, this 4-day training session focused on disaster recovery as opposed to disaster response.

### Many involved

Attending the exercise were, of course, police, fire and sheriff personnel from the communities affected. But because this was a recovery operation drill, a much broader group was involved. Response to a disaster is a short-term operation. The recovery phase may take weeks, months or even years with many people from many departments involved.

Executive managers and elected officials may be calling upon the governor or even the president to issue disaster declarations and send help. Decisions must be made on priorities for lifeline restorations—power, water, gas, access to hospitals, establishment of shelters and much more.

Local Public Works staffers are needed to clear and repair roads and bridges, and deal with enormous amounts of debris. Temporary debris storage sites must be established. And later, what happens to those mountains of rubble?

Building officials and engineers must visit and inspect hundreds of

damaged structures—homes, shops, apartment buildings, industrial sites—to determine if re-entry or continued use is safe. Coordination between the school district, churches, the Red Cross and others must occur to establish, supply, maintain and secure shelters. Long-term housing will also likely be needed.

Interaction with other communities and the private sector is needed for the many extra workers and equipment needed for cleanup, repair or replacement of perhaps everything in the twister's path. Finance officials will have to determine what they can pay for—and what they can't.

Communications between members of the recovery teams and with the public must be accurate and efficient. All must know what is happening, what's ahead and what to avoid.

### Ripple effect

And then there's the ripple effect. While the actual tornado (or flood or earthquake or act of terrorism) may have directly affected only 2 percent of the landscape, the entire region is affected.

- Where do the students of a damaged school go?
- Are the employees of a destroyed business now jobless? Will they be able to buy food, make the car payment, pay the mortgage?
- How will the banks deal with these unpaid bills?
- Have the patients of a destroyed doctors office lost their medical records forever? Will getting a new prescription be a challenge? Is specialized medical equipment no longer available?
- Can security be maintained along the swath to keep looters and curiosity seekers away from the damaged area?
- Are there health, environmental and hazardous materials concerns

associated with the piles of debris?

The list could go on and on. It's important to know that emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation plans exist with government and other agencies throughout Larimer County.

### Different scenarios

The plans look at "What if" scenarios and how to deal with them. The visits to the Emergency Management Institute campus in Maryland give all the participants an opportunity to exercise and then evaluate those plans, their roles and their skills.

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#### For Your Refrigerator – Clip and Post

### Emergency Information Sources

Some or all of these sources may be utilized during an emergency or special situation. The nature of the situation will dictate what sources will be utilized. Setup and staffing for some resources will not occur immediately.

#### City of Loveland Info Sources:

[www.cityofloveland.org](http://www.cityofloveland.org) Official City website  
 1610 AM radio City's AM radio station  
 Channel 16 cable TV City cable TV channel  
 Phone 962-2020 Info line/call center  
 Phone 911 Emergency police/fire

(non-emergency: 667-2151)

Emergency Notification: signup at  
 phone calls/e-mails [www.LETA911.org](http://www.LETA911.org)

Emergency Alert System (EAS)

Emergency messages on TV & radio  
 City of Loveland Twitter Brief messages  
 City of Loveland YouTube Info via video

#### Other sources:

[www.larimer.org](http://www.larimer.org) Larimer County website  
 Phone 211 Area assistance phone info line  
[www.firstcall211.org](http://www.firstcall211.org) 211 website

## Ninth Annual Spring Waterway Clean-up Event – April 16

In celebration of Earth Day April 22, the City's Stormwater Division is once again sponsoring its Annual Spring Waterway Clean-up event. This yearly event gives citizens the opportunity to participate in actively improving Loveland's water quality, beautifying natural areas and being good stewards of the environment.

Last year about 264 volunteers removed approximately 79 cubic yards amounting to nearly 10 tons of trash and debris from designated waterways. This year, event coordinators are

hoping to remove even more trash from area waterways.

Volunteers will meet at designated locations at 9 a.m. rain or shine.



For more information or to volunteer, e-mail [stormwater@ci.loveland.co.us](mailto:stormwater@ci.loveland.co.us) or call 962-2772.

## Want some culture? Cultural Services can help

### Addressing History: The Pioneering Women of Loveland in Period Costume

March 24-Sept. 11



Opening Reception: 7 p.m., Thurs., March 24

This exhibit features artist Fran

Robison's hand-crafted porcelain dolls representing the first women who came to the Big Thompson Valley. Twelve dolls will be clothed in three different authentic period costumes dating from 1760 through 1915. Dresses will change in May and July.

Loveland Museum/Gallery, 503 N. Lincoln Ave.

### The Camera Man starring Buster Keaton

7 p.m., Sat., April 9

Comic genius Buster Keaton is featured in this classic, silent film. Live music accompaniment by the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra.

Tickets: \$10, not rated, 69 minutes

Rialto Theater, 228 E. 4th Street, 962-2120.



### Annual Thompson School District Student Art Show

Celebrate National Youth Art Month with the annual ArtSteps student art show, displaying the talents of Thompson School District students, through April 10 at the Loveland Museum/Gallery.

The ArtSteps program was created by the Loveland Museum/Gallery and the Thompson School District to affirm community appreciation for young artists by displaying their artwork in a professional setting, as well as fostering relationships between local artists and

students, and also to provide a lasting web of creative impetus that will support students from elementary school through high school.

### Loveland Photographer Robert Campagna's Eye Dance on display



Photo by Robert Campagna

Robert Campagna has been an artist-in-residence for the Thompson School District since October, 2000. He traveled with over 800 students during more than 45 workshops, to photographically explore the region within 40 miles of Loveland.

The fifty black and white photographs featured in Eye Dance: In Honor, Beauty & Place represent the hidden treasures that were encountered on these excursions. The people and places portrayed in the photos represent the sudden beauty, the serendipity and the generosity encountered on these journeys.

This exhibit runs through Sun., April 10 at the Loveland Museum/Gallery.

### 9th Annual Teen Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt at Hammond Amphitheater-North Lake Park

8 p.m., Fri., April 22 (or 8 p.m., April 29 if inclement weather on April 22)

Ages 13-18, FREE

Teenagers can return to a childhood favorite. Bring your own flashlight and search in the dark for eggs that hold candy and other prizes.

For more information on these events call the Loveland Museum/Gallery, 962-2410.

### Tornado touchdown tests emergency recovery planning

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It's important for citizens to realize that after a disaster, things will never be the same. Changes will occur, some for the better, some for the worse.

And most important is for citizens to understand that having their own plan for a possible emergency is paramount. If a tornado, flood, blizzard, explosion or whatever were to occur, are you prepared to hunker down, evacuate, or be without power, heat, water or food for a few days? Do you have a plan for before, during and after an event?

There's only so much first responders or recovery personnel can do. Being prepared is your best defense. A particularly good source on being ready is [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov). A few minutes at that website could change your future.

### CRC makes landscapes beautiful and sustainable

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#### Garden-in-a-Box:

The ever-popular Garden-in-a-Box program helps Loveland residents plant beautiful, low-maintenance xeriscapes without the headache of all the research and planning. These professionally designed, pre-planned xeriscape gardens come with plants, design layout, and planting and maintenance instructions.

Three designs are available. Each one has between 30 and 36 plants that come in 2 or 4 inch pots, depending on the design. Through Water & Power's collaboration with CRC, the gardens, which cover about 100 square feet, cost from \$65 to \$120 – significantly below retail price.

To reserve a Garden-in-a-Box unit, Loveland residents must pre-order and pre-pay. There are a limited number and are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations are now being accepted. All gardens must be picked up the morning of Sat., May 14, at Loveland Water and Power's Service Center. On the day of pick-up, volunteers will be on hand to answer questions about planting the Garden-in-a-Box. No gardens will be available for sale on the day of pick-up. All orders, requests and questions should be directed to CRC, (303) 999-3820 ext. 217 or visit CRC's website at [www.conservacioncenter.org](http://www.conservacioncenter.org).

### What not to put down the drain (continued from page 2)

There are very few sewer lines in perfect condition and imperfections can cause some items to be snagged inside the pipelines. The result is money out of a household's wallet, directly or indirectly.

Homeowners and tenants may not realize they are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the sewer line from their building to the connection to the City sewer main line, located in the street or public right-of-way. Furthermore, many insurance policies do not cover a sewer backup unless specific sewer backup coverage has been added to the policy.

If a sewage back-up or stoppage occurs, the City may not assume full financial responsibility for damages resulting

from sewage backups if the stoppage occurred in the property owner's pipeline or if the stoppage was caused by the customer.

What can be done to avoid backups? Avoid putting items other than toilet paper down the sewer as they will eventually build up and cause a backup. Avoid planting trees and large shrubs above a sewer line. Contact trash collection firms for advice on proper disposal of trash. Contact a local pharmacy to learn proper disposal of medications or needles.

Proper disposal measures will reduce or prevent exposure to potential health hazards, costly claims and repairs, unnecessary insurance premium increases, and potential rate increases.

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