

Larimer County Community Leaders Survey 2010

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Executive Summary

The Larimer County 2010 Community Leaders Survey was conducted and analyzed March through May 2010. The primary purpose of the survey was to provide valid and reliable information to assist the Larimer County Commissioners and managers in establishing future discretionary budgets.

The general findings from the survey are:

- The most important service category is Safety, the least important is Managing Growth.
- Discretionary budgets suggested for increases are Jobs and Economic Vitality and Environment and Natural Resources: the budget for Safety is suggested to be cut.
- From an individual service perspective Community Leaders are most concerned about finding alternatives to incarceration. This worry stems from the cost of the jail and its overcrowded situation. Child protection is also seen as problematic.
- Services that the Community Leaders targeted for budget reductions focused on land-related issues such as managing land code violations, food and land use extension services, and controlling noxious seeds and plant invasions.
- Suggestions for moving forward in a constrained budget environment were varied, but a couple of themes emerged. The first was to strategically partner with other governmental, for-profit, and not-for-profit organizations. Second, if budget cuts are necessary they should be carefully made and should be planned to have minimal affect on the high quality of life in the County. Finally, the County should communicate the need to maintain budgets to citizens and even carefully select certain issues (such as jail funding) for ballot initiatives.

The Survey

Survey Objectives

The Community Leaders Survey was developed to provide an informed opinion of services offered by Larimer County. The Community Leaders were selected by County officials based on their extensive knowledge of the County and how it operates. All of the Community Leaders are known by the County. They were asked to rate the importance of groups of services offered by the County and then to make decisions on discretionary budget allocation of the services. This survey is one of several instruments used by the Larimer County Commissioners and managers as a reference point for decision making.

The specific objectives of the Community Leaders survey are to:

- Provide informed opinions regarding the importance of services offered by the County.
- Provide informed opinions regarding the allocation of discretionary budgets.
- Provide, for validation purposes, a reference point for the 2010 Citizen Survey.

Methodology

135 Community Leaders were chosen by the Larimer County Commissioners and managers as individuals who, based on their interaction with the County, could provide more informed opinions of topics than could typical County citizens. Each Community Leader was contacted by a Larimer County representative and asked to participate. Virtually all those asked agreed to take the survey. Each Community Leader was then emailed a request, encouraging them to participate and promising confidentiality. In addition, two reminder emails were sent. The survey could be completed in one sitting or it could be saved and accessed at a later date. Of the 135 Community Leaders contacted, we received 86 complete responses, a very high response rate of 64%. See Table 1 (p. xx) for a summary of the respondents.

An online survey was developed because it was felt that the respondents would prefer to take the survey electronically. The items used in the survey were based on specific input from the County Budget Office. The items were grouped into seven service categories: Environment and Natural Resources, Health and Well-Being, Jobs and Economic Vitality, Managing Growth, Safety, Statutory General Government, and Transportation. See Appendix 1 (p. xx) for examples from the survey and Appendix 2 (p. xx) for a listing of each service within its respective category.

The online survey was designed such that, after being introduced to the service categories and the individual services that comprised the categories, respondents were asked to perform four exercises:

- First, the Community Leaders were given 100 “importance points” to allocate amongst the seven service categories.
- Second, to validate the first exercise, respondents were asked to rate the importance of the same seven service categories on a 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important) scale.
- Third, respondents were given the seven categories’ discretionary budgets, based on percentage of the total discretionary budget, and were asked to reallocate the budget.
- Fourth, respondents were given the seven categories one at a time, with the 46 individual services listed by category. They had two tasks. First, to place each individual service into one of three boxes: increase the budget of this service, leave the budget of this service the same, or decrease the budget of this service. Second, once the services were allocated to each box they were asked to rank the service by importance.

Finally, following the exercises a series of open end questions was asked to obtain a richer understanding of respondents’ attitudes and feelings about the County.

Survey Results

The results were tabulated and analyzed and are now discussed.

Allocation of 100 Importance Points. Respondents allocated 100 importance points amongst the seven general categories. Three statistical groups emerged. The most important service categories were Safety, Jobs and Economic Vitality, Health and Well-Being, and Transportation. These four cannot be statistically distinguished in importance, but are more important than the other three service categories. The second most important service categories were Statutory General Government, and Environmental and Natural Resources. These two cannot be statistically distinguished in importance, but are less important than the first group and more important than the final service category, Managing Growth. See Table 2 (p. xx) for the results of this exercise.

Importance Scores. Respondents rated each of the seven general categories on importance based on a 1 to 7 likert scale. The results were very similar to the first exercise as again, three statistical groups emerged. The most important service categories were Safety, Health and

Well-Being, Transportation, and Jobs and Economic Vitality. These four cannot be statistically distinguished from one another in importance, but are more important than the other three service categories. The second most important service categories were Environment and Natural Resources and Statutory General Government. These categories are less important than the first group and more important than the final general service, Managing Growth. See Table 3 (p. xx) for the results.

These first two exercises to determine the importance of County services provide almost identical interpretations, thus, they validate one another. We can say with good confidence that Safety, Health and Well-Being, Transportation, and Jobs and Economic Vitality are, in the opinion of the Community Leaders, more important than the other service categories; Managing Growth is seen as the least important.

The final two exercises addressed how the Community Leaders would allocate a discretionary budget.

Discretionary Budget Allocation. In this exercise (see Table 4, p. xx) the community leaders were given the same seven service categories, but this time each category's discretionary budget, based on its percentage of the total, was provided as a reference point. The leaders were asked to divide 100% amongst the seven categories, based on how they believed the discretionary budget should be allocated.

For this task the community leaders recommended that two of the lowest budget categories, Jobs and Economic Vitality (1% of current discretionary budget) and Environmental and Natural Resources (1%) both be substantially increased, to 9.1% and 5.8% respectively. These were the two largest gains.

Three other service categories were also recommended for increases: Health and Well-Being (11% to 13.4%), Managing Growth (2% to 4%), and Statutory General Government (8% to 8.8%).

Two service categories were recommended for decreases in discretionary budget: Transportation (18% to 17.1%) and Safety (59% to 41.8%).

Sorting Task. The final exercise involved all 46 individual services offered by the County. As mentioned above, respondents sorted each service into one of three boxes, indicating whether they wished to increase its budget, decrease its budget, or leave it unchanged. An additional ordering of the tasks within each category occurred, but we do not discuss the findings due to the small frequencies of each budget box/ranking combination. The results are indicated in Table 5 (p. xx). In general, the services that the Community Leaders recommended for increases more than others, with the percentage of those recommending an increase, are:

1. Providing alternatives to jail such as work release programs, community service, and home detention (57.8%)
2. Providing residential and non-residential treatment for mental health and substance abuse problems (56.0%)
3. Maintain non-city roads and bridges (50.6%)
4. Provide foster care, adoption, and child protection services (50.0%)
5. Providing employment and training services for all employers and job seekers, including economically disadvantaged youth and the hard-to-employ (48.2%)
6. Helping the hard-to-employ move from temporary assistance to the permanent workplace (48.2%)

The services that the community leaders recommended for decreases more than others, with the percentage of those recommending a decrease, are:

1. Providing advice and managing complaints on all possible land code violations (55.4%)
2. Providing extension education in food safety, nutrition, family economics, 4H youth development and gardening (46.4%)
3. Providing extension information and services for agriculture, horticulture, land use, and livestock education (42.4%)
4. Providing services for healthy living including overseeing proposed developments and environmental policy, and providing information on toxic waste and other pollutants (39.3%)
5. Controlling noxious weeds on properties and roadsides and working with landowners to protect from invasion of non-native plants (37.6%)

Open End Comments

A key addition to this year's survey was a section for the Community Leaders to make open end comments. We prompted with questions and they responded as they liked (see Appendix 1 for how the questions appeared on the survey and all *verbatim* comments are listed in Appendix 3, p. xx). The reader may want to note that analyzing open ends is subjective; here is a summary of the questions and their responses:

What are the 3 or 4 most important things that Larimer County does? Opinions were mixed on this question, reflecting, I believe, the many services provided by the County. Virtually every function of the County was mentioned, including those services that most feel are unimportant. From this we might conclude that there are virtually no superfluous services performed by the County. Still, conclusions can be drawn.

- Community Leaders feel that the County's primary function is to keep citizens safe. This comes in a variety of ways, but for the most part they take this literally to include law enforcement and the criminal justice system, including operating and maintaining the jail.

- Second, Community Leaders want the County to provide health-related services. Primarily this means conducting restaurant inspections, and protecting our supplies of clean water and air.
- Third, Community Leaders expect the County to adequately perform the mechanics of local government. This includes performing the day-to-day services required by citizens such as keeping records, providing licenses and permits, and running elections.
- Social services were also felt to be very important, such as child protection and helping the underemployed. Some were concerned about non-city land related services such as land use planning, protection of open spaces and looking out for the rights of citizens that live outside the city limits.

What can Larimer County do better? First, I note that the Community Leaders took a very practical path in answering this question, avoiding the chance to simply list everything and say, “do a better job.” Instead, many respondents mentioned that the County already does a very good job particularly given such trying conditions, and that all should realize that the County cannot be everything to everybody. That said, there were many things that County Leaders suggested for improvement. In general order:

- Issues surrounding the jail were particularly worrisome. The main issue driving these concerns is the cost of operating the jail and the cost of supporting the sheriff’s department. There was a general feeling that the sheriff’s department has grown too large and powerful. It appears to be more concerned with strict law enforcement, adding to the burden of the jail, than on taking a more balanced approach. Some of this feeling may be a reaction to the sheriff’s personality and his politicization of law enforcement. Community Leaders want to see less of a focus on confinement and more on cost reduction through alternatives such as treatment programs.
- Second, child protection is a concern. The issue of foster care, protection, and enforcing child support was seen as being performed inadequately and the Community Leaders recognize the importance of this area. This topic appears to be a passionate issue for both citizens and Community Leaders.
- Third, Community Leaders would like to see a focus on “smart” economic development. This includes attracting new business, adequately funding the Workforce Center, and particularly helping find jobs for those in the lower income brackets. At the same time, some are worried about offering too many tax breaks and unimpeded growth.
- Fourth, environment and land protection were also emphasized. Concern over land protection (from 4-wheel drives, jeeps, unnecessary growth, sprawl, etc.) suggested the importance of land use planning.

Over the next few years Larimer County will face more budget constraints. What advice might you have for the County on how it can deal with these challenges? Community Leaders provided a variety of suggestions, sometimes opposite. The prime issue was one that was, at least to me, surprising.

- Community Leaders suggested that the County focus on partnering with other entities in order to tackle future budget constraints. This creative idea took many different forms, but the general consensus was that two heads, and sets of resources, are better than one. Amongst those that Community Leaders suggested partnering with included other counties in the region, for-profit businesses, not-for-profit organizations, Fort Collins, and other cities within the County. Interestingly, CSU was not mentioned.
- Given that the budget is a function of the services offered by the County, many comments focused on determining the right mix of services, and how their budgets are allocated. These comments were diverse:
 - Focus on making as many services as self-supporting as possible by increasing efficiencies (e.g., it was suggested that overtime is used too much) and raising the fees charged citizens to access these services.
 - Carefully define the mission of the County and the core services that contribute directly to this mission. Prioritize these services and reduce the rest. Suggestions on how to reduce the rest included privatizing or selling some of the services that were not self-supporting. Use the idea of essential services that fit the mission statement of the County as a guide for budget reallocation.
- The overall budget was mentioned and relative changes were suggested. These took two opposite forms, increasing or not cutting expenditures, and cutting expenditures.
 - Regarding how to cut expenditures two methods were suggested. One approach focused on “a little off the top,” where most all services would be maintained in order to maintain the County’s quality of life. Others felt this approach was inadequate and suggested targeted cuts of any nonessential service.
 - Other Community Leaders weren’t convinced that now is the time to cut budgets for fear of the consequences (e.g., becoming another Colorado Springs, setting the community on a downward spiral that will be difficult to recover from). These Community Leaders preferred to see selected and “smart” fee and tax increases to make up for holes in the budget. Crafting clearly understood and compelling ballot measures was seen as a vehicle for success. A general consensus was that citizens would recognize the value of such measures and support them.
- Interesting comments were made by multiple Community Leaders about the importance of communications in these times. They felt that it is more important than ever to ensure that citizens know just what the County faces. This, in turn, would make citizens more likely to fight budget cuts and support tax initiatives.

Table 1: Description of Community Leaders Sample

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Sample</i>
Larimer County Work Investment Board	28
Non-County government managers	20
County Advisory Board	15
Private sector	11
Northern Colorado Economic Development Council	11
City and County elected officials	8
Non-profit organizations	3
Local media representatives	2

<i>Location</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Sample</i>
Fort Collins	61
Loveland	20
Estes Park	6
Wellington	5
Other	8

Table 2: Allocation of 100 Service Points

<i>Group</i>	<i>Service Category</i>	<i>Points</i>
Highest importance*	Safety	18.0
	Jobs and Economic Vitality	17.4
	Health and Well-Being	16.5
	Transportation	14.9
Second Highest	Statutory General Government	11.9
	Environmental and Natural Resources	11.8
Lowest Importance	Managing Growth	9.5

*Statistical groupings based on differences at $t = \frac{(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2)}{\sqrt{\frac{s^2}{n_1} + \frac{s^2}{n_2}}}$; tested at 90% confidence

Table 3: Importance Scores

<i>Group</i>	<i>Service Category</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Highest importance*	Safety	6.1
	Health and Well-Being	5.9
	Transportation	5.6
	Jobs and Economic Vitality	5.5
Second Highest	Environmental and Natural Resources	5.1
	Statutory General Government	4.8
Lowest Importance	Managing Growth	4.4

*Statistical groupings based on differences at $t = \frac{(x_a - x_b)}{s_{x_a - x_b}}$; tested at 90% confidence

**based on a scale of 1 = Not at all important; 7 = Extremely important

Table 4: Discretionary Budget Allocation

<i>Service Category</i>	<i>Actual (%)</i>	<i>Reallocated (%)</i>	<i>Change (%)</i>
Environmental and Natural Resources	1	5.8	+4.8
Health and Well-Being	11	13.4	+2.4
Jobs and Economic Vitality	1	9.1	+8.1
Managing Growth	2	4.0	+2.0
Safety	59	41.8	-17.2
Statutory General Government	8	8.8	+.8
Transportation	18	17.1	-.9

Table 5: Budget Change Sorting Task

<i>Environment and Natural Resources</i>	<i>Incr. (%)</i>	<i>Stay the same (%)</i>	<i>Decr. (%)</i>
Providing forestry information and assistance to including disease prevention, pest control, and vegetative and landscape management	15.7	63.9	20.5
Maintaining parks and open lands such as Horsetooth Reservoir and The Devil's Backbone	27.7	56.6	15.7
Maintaining and operating The Ranch - Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Complex	14.1	51.8	34.1
Providing landfills, recycling programs, and other solid waste management systems (not including trash collection)	36.6	59.8	34.1
Controlling noxious weeds on properties and roadsides and working with landowners to protect from invasion of non-native plants	23.5	38.8	37.6
<i>Health and Well-Being</i>	<i>Incr. (%)</i>	<i>Stay the same (%)</i>	<i>Decr. (%)</i>
Providing public health services such as immunization clinics, tracking infectious disease, home visits, and health screenings	35.3	57.6	7.1
Conducting restaurant inspections and other services related to food safety and water quality	10.7	77.4	11.9
Providing services for healthy living including overseeing proposed developments and environmental policy, and providing information on toxic waste and other pollutants	16.7	44.0	39.3
Monitoring, investigating, and inspecting to prevent threats to clean air, water, and land from all sources of pollution	32.1	50.0	17.9
Providing and overseeing emergency response, and supporting response infrastructure with information, equipment, and training	29.8	60.7	9.5
Providing birth and death certificates and health statistics	2.4	66.7	31.0
Providing residential and non-residential treatment for mental health and substance abuse problems	56.0	32.1	11.9
Providing extension education in food safety, nutrition, family economics, 4H youth development and gardening	10.7	42.9	46.4

Providing temporary substance abuse detoxification prior to incarceration	34.9	36.1	28.9
Providing financial management and family living information for low-income families to promote self-sufficiency and financial stability	33.3	39.3	27.4
Promoting child health through education, information, and training on best practices and risky behaviors for low income families and residents	38.1	50.0	11.9
Providing information and services to senior citizens, such as home delivered meals and energy assistance	24.1	66.3	9.6
Providing support services to military veterans	29.3	48.8	22.0
Providing long term care and medical and financial assistance to those in need	27.4	53.6	19.0

<i>Jobs and Economic Vitality</i>	<i>Incr. (%)</i>	<i>Stay the same (%)</i>	<i>Decr. (%)</i>
Providing employment and training services for all employers and job seekers, including economically disadvantaged youth and the hard-to-employ	48.2	44.7	7.1
Providing extension information and services for agriculture, horticulture, land use, and livestock education	12.9	44.7	42.4
Helping the hard-to-employ move from temporary assistance to the permanent workplace	48.2	41.2	10.6

<i>Managing Growth</i>	<i>Incr. (%)</i>	<i>Stay the same (%)</i>	<i>Decr. (%)</i>
Providing land use planning, zoning enforcement, and building Inspections	12.9	62.4	24.7
Managing nontraditional land use programs, such as clustering homes, to encourage the preservation of open spaces	25.9	45.9	28.2
Providing animal control services	8.2	72.9	18.8

<i>Safety</i>	<i>Incr. (%)</i>	<i>Stay the same (%)</i>	<i>Decr. (%)</i>
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Responding to non-city public safety problems and enforcing laws	22.9	62.7	14.5
Operating the jail for all of Larimer County (including the cities in the County)	25.3	56.6	18.1
Providing alternatives to jail such as work release programs, community service, and home detention	57.8	31.3	10.8
Prosecuting criminal cases	32.5	61.4	6.0
Programs to transition offenders back into the community	24.1	61.4	14.5
Providing a temporary place for juveniles in conflict with law enforcement or in conflict with their families	35.7	52.4	11.9
Providing foster care, adoption, and other child protection services	50.0	41.7	8.3
Establishing and enforcing child support orders	35.7	57.1	7.1
Providing medical investigation of all deaths not resulting in natural causes	4.8	65.5	29.8
Providing protection and rescue from wildfires and forest fires	12.0	69.9	18.1
Providing advice and managing complaints on all possible land code violations	2.4	42.4	55.4

<i>Statutory General Government</i>	<i>Incr. (%)</i>	<i>Stay the same (%)</i>	<i>Decr. (%)</i>
Conducting surveys of property and right-of-ways and resolving boundary disputes	1.2	63.5	35.3
Registering voters and conducting elections	11.9	78.6	9.5
Issuing vehicle registrations, titles, and license plates	8.3	82.1	9.5
Determining property market values for tax purposes and providing an appeals process	8.2	80.0	11.8
Collecting property taxes and keeping records of property tax bills and payments	12.9	82.4	4.7
Communicating with residents about County services	14.3	53.6	32.1
Recording and maintaining official records such as real estate deeds and marriage licenses	2.4	83.3	14.3

<i>Transportation</i>	<i>Incr. (%)</i>	<i>Stay the same (%)</i>	<i>Decr. (%)</i>
Coordinating and planning the current and future transportation needs of the county	42.4	48.2	9.4
Maintaining non-city roads and bridges	50.6	44.7	4.7
Constructing and maintaining stormwater and drainage systems and monitoring stormwater quality outside of city limits	18.8	63.5	17.6

Appendix 1: Examples from the Online Survey

Introductory page

As a Larimer County Community Leader, we thank you for helping out with our 2010 budgeting process. At Larimer County we conduct community scans to ensure that we are considering all budget requirements and possibilities. This is particularly important as funds continue to become more restrictive.

Your opinions are particularly useful to us given your knowledge of the community and your status as an "outside observer."

We will ask you to make some choices about the relative importance of County services and how budgets should be allocated. We realize that you don't have enough information to make perfect choices, just do the best you can.

The instructions should be self-explanatory. Should you have questions, feel free to contact our survey designer at 491-5224, or at dave.gilliland@colostate.edu.

Continue

Example of Service Categories and Services Listed

Environment and Natural Resources: These services are designed to foster a sense of community and to provide safe and enjoyable outdoor recreation.

- Providing forestry information and assistance to County residents
- Solid waste management programs
- Maintaining parks and open lands such as Horsetooth Reservoir and the Devil's Backbone
- Maintaining and operating The Ranch - Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Complex
- Weed management control

Health and Well-Being: These services are designed to protect citizens' health and welfare and provide support for the disadvantaged.

- Disease prevention and control
- Food safety and institutional sanitation
- Overseeing policy and information to support a pollution-free environment
- Protecting from water, air, and environmental pollution
- Managing all aspects of emergency response services
- Providing birth and death certificates
- Mental Health Center support
- Managing 4-H and related youth programs
- Detoxification services for the recently arrested
- Self-sufficiency programs
- Providing financial management education for low income families
- Providing education for maternal and child health for low income families
- Senior and disabled assistance
- Veterans services

First importance exercise

Consider the seven service categories and reward points to each based only on its relative importance. This exercise has nothing to do with budgets or efficiencies, only the importance of each service. The importance points must total to 100.

Environment and Natural Resources	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Health and Well-Being	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Jobs and Economic Vitality	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Managing Growth	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Safety	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Statutory General Government	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Transportation	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Total	<input type="text" value="0"/>

Second importance exercise

Again, consider the seven service categories. How important are the categories? This exercise has nothing to do with budgets or efficiencies, only the importance of each service. For each, click on the button that best represents your opinion.

	Not at all Important		Average Importance			Extremely Important	
Environment and Natural Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health and Well-Being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jobs and Economic Vitality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing Growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Statutory General Government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Budget allocation exercise

Beside each service we list its current percentage of the total discretionary County budget. For instance, Health and Well-Being is currently assigned 11% of the total discretionary budget.

With the budget numbers in mind, please reassign the County budget based on your assessment of the relative importance of the services. This exercise has nothing to do with costs or efficiencies, only importance.

Environment and Natural Resources (1)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Health and Well-Being (11)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Jobs and Economic Vitality (1)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Managing Growth (2)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Safety (59)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Statutory General Government (8)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Transportation (18)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Total	<input type="text" value="0"/>

Example of sorting task

Environment and Natural Resources

Drag each service into the appropriate box. Then rank the services within each box from most to least important.

Items

Providing forestry information and assistance services including disease prevention, pest control, and vegetative and landscape management

Maintaining parks and open lands such as Horsetooth Reservoir and the Devil's Backbone

Maintaining and operating the Ranch - Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Complex

Providing landfills, recycling programs, and other solid waste management systems (not including trash collection)

Controlling noxious weeds on properties and roadsides and working with landowners to protect from invasion of non-native plants

The budget for this service should be increased

The budget for this service should remain the same

The budget for this service should be decreased

Open End Questions

What are the 3 or 4 most important things that Larimer County does?

What can Larimer County do better?

Over the next few years Larimer County will face more budget constraints. What advice might you have for the County on how it can deal with these challenges?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

Appendix 2: List of Service Categories and Individual Services

Environment and Natural Resources

- Providing forestry information and assistance to including disease prevention, pest control, and vegetative and landscape management
- Maintaining parks and open lands such as Horsetooth Reservoir and The Devil's Backbone
- Maintaining and operating The Ranch - Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Complex
- Providing landfills, recycling programs, and other solid waste management systems (not including trash collection)
- Controlling noxious weeds on properties and roadsides and working with landowners to protect from invasion of non-native plants

Health and Well-Being

- Providing public health services such as immunization clinics, tracking infectious disease, home visits, and health screenings
- Conducting restaurant inspections and other services related to food safety and water quality
- Providing services for healthy living including overseeing proposed developments and environmental policy, and providing information on toxic waste and other pollutants
- Monitoring, investigating, and inspecting to prevent threats to clean air, water, and land from all sources of pollution
- Providing and overseeing emergency response, and supporting response infrastructure with information, equipment, and training
- Providing birth and death certificates and health statistics
- Providing residential and non-residential treatment for mental health and substance abuse problems
- Providing extension education in food safety, nutrition, family economics, 4H youth development and gardening
- Providing temporary substance abuse detoxification prior to incarceration
- Providing financial management and family living information for low-income families to promote self-sufficiency and financial stability
- Promoting child health through education, information, and training on best practices and risky behaviors for low income families and residents
- Providing information and services to senior citizens, such as home delivered meals and energy assistance

- Providing support services to military veterans
- Providing long term care and medical and financial assistance to those in need

Jobs and Economic Vitality

- Providing employment and training services for all employers and job seekers, including economically disadvantaged youth and the hard-to-employ
- Providing extension information and services for agriculture, horticulture, land use, and livestock education
- Helping the hard-to-employ move from temporary assistance to the permanent workplace

Managing Growth

- Providing land use planning, zoning enforcement, and building inspections
- Managing nontraditional land use programs, such as clustering homes, to encourage the preservation of open spaces
- Providing animal control services

Safety

- Responding to non-city public safety problems and enforcing laws
- Operating the jail for all of Larimer County (including the cities in the County)
- Providing alternatives to jail such as work release programs, community service, and home detention
- Prosecuting criminal cases
- Programs to transition offenders back into the community
- Providing a temporary place for juveniles in conflict with law enforcement or in conflict with their families
- Providing foster care, adoption, and other child protection services
- Establishing and enforcing child support orders
- Providing medical investigation of all deaths not resulting in natural causes
- Providing protection and rescue from wildfires and forest fires
- Providing advice and managing complaints on all possible land code violations

Statutory General Government

- Conducting surveys of property and right-of-ways and resolving boundary disputes

- Registering voters and conducting elections
- Issuing vehicle registrations, titles, and license plates
- Determining property market values for tax purposes and providing an appeals process
- Collecting property taxes and keeping records of property tax bills and payments
- Communicating with residents about County services
- Recording and maintaining official records such as real estate deeds and marriage licenses

Transportation

- Coordinating and planning the current and future transportation needs of the county
- Maintaining non-city roads and bridges
- Constructing and maintaining stormwater and drainage systems and monitoring stormwater quality outside of city limits

Appendix 3: Open End Comments Organized by Topic

What are the 3 or 4 most important things that Larimer County does?

- PUBLIC SAFETY, TRANSPORTATION, OPEN LANDS FOR PUBLIC USE AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT
- Safety of individuals in the community / Health care services to the underprivileged / Employment opportunities
- Provide health and human services to those in need - and provide programs for our children (especially at-risk kids), protect our land and environment and manage growth, and preserve the beauty and safety of our community.
- Road maintenance / Major law enforcement and crime prevention / Workforce Center
- commissioners chats in rural areas; Office on Aging programs; commitment to quality of life; open space planning and parks funding
- Public safety / Protecting children / Health inspections, particularly restaurants / Providing immunizations, particularly to at risk populations who can't afford them.
- Assess and collect property taxes to utilize in the running of the county programs for the benefit of all citizens. / Monitor and protect our county public properties. / Give citizens outside city boundaries a voice and a representative in their property and way of life needs.
- Public Safety / Regional transportation leader to several municipalities.] / Health Services
- Maintaining County roads and bridges / Human Services i.e. Child Protection / Assessing and collecting taxes / Public Safety
- 1)Providing social services, food stamps, TANF, Child Welfare etc. / 2)Maintaining the roads and bridges / 3)Managing the elections / 4)Managing records, birth, death, marriage, property records etc.
- Health and Human Services / Law Enforcement / Transportation / Parks and Open Lands
- Protect the public from a law enforcement perspective. / Plan, build and maintain infrastructure. / Help the truly needy.
- work center / human services / public health and environment
- Provide support for youth / Provide support for unemployed adults / Provide opportunities for unemployed youth
- Law enforcement, road improvement and maintenance and land use planning.
- Safety; statutory records;
- Preserve open space / Police - safety / Services for underprivileged
- Land Use planning, basic services, rural protection (forestry and open lands)
- court system, elections, public records, public safety.
- Public safety, infrastructure, human services, planning
- Public Safety; Law enforcement in non-incorporated areas of the county; Health and welfare through Larimer County Health Department; manage open lands and outdoor recreation areas.
- Child Health & protection / Child care assistance for families / Employment & job seeking / Jail
- roads / jail / records / courts
- Safety / Health / Statutory General Government / Transportation / Environment
- From the school perspective we are interested in assuring students and families are safe and receive services that can permit them to be successful in school.
- Public Safety, transportation, long range planning for growth and infrastructure, public government
- Public Safety / Child protection (preventing child abuse, providing foster care, etc. -- not sure how much is State responsibility vs. County) / Land Use and Transportation Planning / Basic Infrastructure - Road, bridges
- Provides services and resources to low-income members of the community, maintains public structures, works with the community to identify needs and meet those needs, administers CCAP for the county

- Providing a safe environment outside of the city limits / Protecting citizens' health and welfare / Providing employment and training services / Efforts to support the economic vitality of the region
- manages growth outside city limits / provides open space and parks / general county government such as licenses, recording, etc. etc.
- Health and Human/Social Service Programs / Job training and employment services / Law enforcement in the unincorporated area / Construction and maintenance of roadways and bridges / Landfill and recycling
- statutory general government, 2) safety (law enforcement, roads and bridges, citizens health and welfare) 3) equip residents to be self sufficient (jobs, knowledge/information and economic vitality)
- Health and Human services / Environmental Services / Law enforcement, sherriff, wild fire, search and rescue / Zoning and code enforcement / Food Bank services
- Provide Safety. / Manage property assessments and code enforcement / Manage transportation corridors and all related issues
- Implement the functions of state government at the local level. / Manage land use practices to prevent sprawl and costly, unplanned development. / Provide for the public safety.
- Public safety & criminal justice system. / Health and human services. / Voter services - elections. / Assessor and property records.
- Has great Parks & Recreation / Safety & Security to residents / Has a center for Mental Health / Has bike trails in most of the areas
- Provides health and human services. Manages and implements Workforce program. Assesses land value and distributes property taxes.
- Law Enforcement Services / Prosecuting Crime/Managing the Jail / Property Tax Collection / Health Services
- Provide services that are an extension of the state (tags, property taxes, human services), Provide emergency support to the county and maintain our transportation infrastrucutre outside city limits.
- Provides a clean and safe environment for residents. / Upgrades and fixes the streets and roads and keeps them safe for residents. / Provides a variety services for elderly and low income residents. / Continues to provide transportation choices for residents.
- takes steps to assure that the quality of life and economic health of the community is stable and attractive to residents.
- Maintain records. / Maintain the jail system. / Maintain health/vaccinations. / Voting centers. / Maintain landfills.
- Maintain safety and health issues. / Balance the needs of the public and private sectors.
- Statutory services - because no one else does / Transportation and land use planning - because someone needs to be thinking about the future / Safety - but with less focus on the jails and more on prevention and rehab
- Provides safety services to it's residents. / Supports those looking for a good job to pay their way. / Preserve our natural resources and quality of life.
- Public safety / 2. Social services / 3. Transportation
- Job services for unemployed / preservation and management of open space and parks
- Provide a safety net for elderly, mentally ill, and less fortunate members of the community. Operate jail. Law enforcement. Maintain bridges.
- fire and sheriff's patrol, election management and recording property
- Safety for residents / Helping those who can't help themselves / Transportation / County services
- Supports development of workforce to provide workers to explore new ways of earning income.
- provides parks and open space, works in conjunction with municipalities to resolve regional issues, provides health services to the county, and provides economic development/growth to the region.
- Protect people from crime, protect citizens' health, manage growth and development so that it doesn't harm future generations. In particular, this means protecting water resources and making wise decisions about traffic and pollution.
- 1) Protection services for the community (e.g., police, fire, etc.) / 2) Provide health care support services / 3) Provide workforce support / - Job search / - Job training / 4) Transportation / 5) Education

- Base level of service - statutory items. Public Safety. Landfill. Zoning.
- Safety, regulations, and support the poor and disadvantaged.
- Safety / Health / Human services / Infrastructure/land management
- Parks and Recreation / Property Valuation / Road Maintenance
- basic services for roads, law enforcement, health services for those in need / good land use planning w its cluster development and open space program helps to manage growth - which seldom pays its way anyway
- Child protection, human services, health services, and employment related.
- Protect the community's health and safety / Roads and bridges / Keep this a desirable place to live (environment, parks)
- Safety, roads and Bridges, workforce development (not economic development), human services
- Child and family welfare issues..... / public safety--- sheriffs / road and bridge repair and maintenance
- Providing the jail and public safety, courts, etc., providing outdoor recreation and parks, open spaces, operating the Ranch.
- Workforce Center. Elections. H1N1 response

What can Larimer County do better?

- PROVIDE BETTER CODE ENFORCEMENT TO CORRECT PAST AND CURRENT VIOLATIONS
- Promote workforce center capabilities to the communities / Work directly with employers for financial funding on community issues / Offer tax incentives to draw more employers to Northern Colorado
- Recognize that education and infrastructure that permit the flow of goods, are the basis for a solid economy. Working to maintain the best educated populace with good infrastructure will attract business. No need for economic development programs beyond that.
- Less law enforcement!
- Prevent unsightly housing developments, respond quickly and follow up with child and adult abuse cases, and work hard to prevent projects that will negatively impact our environment.
- Less law enforcement of small time acts such as speeding, petty complaints, etc. / More involvement in job creation and economic development.
- improve emergency response in Estes Park outside of city limits; increase Sheriff staffing in rural areas; include and engage leaders in Estes Park in county projects, areas, services; make more of a county presence in Estes park;
- Pay attention to public needs ahead of staff conveniences. I felt the proposal to change visitation procedures at the jail benefited staff more than it reduced public cost, for example.
- I think that the county does a pretty good job with protecting the area - the national forest, the lakes, the open spaces. We might need to have some regulation on such things as four wheelers, jeeps, etc. off roads in the national forest. Because they are combustion vehicles, the possibility of fire, etc. is always present. Also, they often make trails where none exist and are hard on the land and the wildlife. / The county cannot be everything for everyone. There are other programs for some of the child welfare, substance abuse, etc. that overlap. We need to determine which are not served by any other venue and attend to those- not duplicate efforts that might be covered by another entity. It is a great idea to serve all, but when the funds are not there, we have to be more selective.
- They need one main environmental person for the county to make sure they are in compliance with regulations. Things are falling through the cracks and could become more expensive issues.
- More accurate commercial and residential property value assessments. / / Eliminate wasteful spending especially on personnel who are not effective or detrimental to the County Department within which they work. / / Coordinate and fund mutually beneficial projects with the Cities of Larimer County.
- Slow down the growth rate. We cannot grow forever and it is about time that we learned to live in a stable environment. We do not need more people and more businesses. Anything that continues to grow

without any boundaries will soon become too big to keep living. We must learn to live with what we have and quit trying to be bigger. We just need to keep trying to be better in how we treat all the citizens of the county.

- Fund Parks and Open Lands better. You are too reliant on fee revenues. Need to have sufficient funding to manage and maintain these critical assets. / / Find ways to reduce the cost of the jail. Too much emphasis on incarceration. Do not incarcerate non-violent offenders with addiction or mental health problems. Find them treatment. The Sheriff needs to go, he's keeping the County in the dark ages. / / Don't be so afraid to ask voters to raise taxes. The County is beginning to fail in providing critical services. Don't become a Colorado Springs. Recognize resource problems for what they are and deal with them. The significant shortage of resources cannot be fixed by tightening your belt. You provide very important services and you need more funding for them.
- Everything, your survey is just like the last one. You want to talk about priorities but you don't want to talk about effectiveness.
- child welfare
- attract new businesses / coordinate youth services to include all opportunities for youth in need
- land use planning
- less land regulations
- Manage development of lands outside city. The county should force such development into cities as much as possible. Maybe even consolidating, or contracting permitting services to cities, based on regions.
- collaborate with other stakeholders more
- The Sheriff's office is becoming too big. It is becoming an entity of its own.
- alternative jail system, foster and child care, and (regrettably) mental and substance abuse intervention.
- Improve communication on County services to residents inside and outside incorporated City limits; Continue to reach outside of Fort Collins to provide services to both city and county residents. Improve communication on County priorities to citizens - the organization seems out of touch with your constituents primarily due to the wide range of services and the size of the County.
- Prevent people from going to jail by increasing substance abuse program availability, child health & protection, child care assistance. / Partner with other local government and groups regionally.
- Focus on economic growth; Good school system; Good support of CSU
- Primary Job Growth
- Increase spending on transportation, public safety and long range planning/infrastructure.
- Planning for Growth / Looking for ways to invest in the future rather than just responding to needs / Find ways to reduce jail cost rather than assuming that it must increase -- explore more alternatives to incarceration
- Provide for low-income residents better, encourage job growth in areas that provide living wages and not just low-income jobs, offer more and better opportunities for job training and education, provide additional funding to areas like childcare (CCAP) and affordable housing
- enforce the county land use plan, i.e., make sure that development is consistent with the plan and the code.
- Complementary and consistent fee structures w/cities in the county / Remain diligent fostering partnerships w/other public and private entities and look for ways to consolidate services (administrative services; dispatch; open space operations)
- Provide a better environment for commercial agriculture in order to help preserve what Ag Lands we now have. This would include tax and permit (fee and requirement) reductions. Providing incentives to bring agricultural support businesses to the county. Relaxing disincentives for rural businesses to locate here. Reviving and promoting the county's Right to Farm Act and Code of the West. This would not include relaxing environmental standards or safety standards.
- Collaborate with other counties on regional issues: / transportation, economic development, Northern Colorado perception, safety response systems, etc. / Develop and economic development strategy in conjunction with the city entities in Larimer County.

- Exercise the county's 1041 powers for projects like NISP and uranium mining.
- The county is already doing a remarkably good job, considering the numerous challenges and funding limitations.
- Invite & encourage businesses to establish offices in the county / Generate high level jobs in the county / Encourage high school students to pursue higher education / Proper transportation facility
- Resource Agriculture Extension Services with larger budget. Promote beginning and new-farmer programs that incorporate the use of Open Lands for local food production. Allow small scale agri-businesses (including production and processing) on 35 acre lots and eliminate regulatory barriers that currently make this expensive and difficult for landowners to accomplish.
- Prioritize both money and efforts in a manner that helps the majority of the County residents. / Use common sense and not Political agendas to make decisions. / Do not be overly influenced by the vocal minority.
- Delivery of Health Services / Assessors Office
- Generally a very well run County. No suggestions.
- Communicate with public on spending by department and monitor the possible waste of tax dollars by department.
- Hold County Commissioners more accountable for their behavior and understanding of what the community needs - as opposed to their view of each other and how they can slow progress for other commissioners.
- enhance transportation infrastructure
- More De-tox centers closer to downtowns. / Develop better/more efficient recycling centers.
- Provide the essential services and leave some of the extras for times when there are more funds available.
- Expand its council to 5 members
- Look at ways to provide basic services as a lower cost.
- Improve budget management by focusing on County services people need and expect; seek to reduce/eliminate services that don't meet that test / 2. Institute constant process improvements and efficiency improvements--benchmark County processes against other counties
- communicate with community about services provided
- de-politicize sheriff's office
- Support livable wages and decent conditions for workers.
- Everything. continuous improvement is the requirement of any business/municipality. Getting in front of the inevitable in relation to youth issues, water, and transportation are critical.
- County government should be more watchful of how taxing districts deliver services to non-city residents. For example, the Poudre River Public Library District spends all of its money inside Fort Collins while many rural residents are paying taxes to support the district. Rural residents have no clout without the backing of county government.
- Have more child care support services.
- Better transportation planning. Less open space going forward.
- Plan for our future transportation needs.
- The county might consider outsourcing many of its responsibilities as a means of lowering costs and either maintaining or improving quality. I am not saying that the county provides poor-quality services, I just know that continuous improvement can get lost in government. A system to evaluate and identify those things that could be done better elsewhere could be implemented, and then the allocation of the resources necessary to make the transition successful would be a valuable investment.
- Communicate what they do to residents so they understand where their tax dollars go and how important tax collection is to the vitality of our area
- protect agricultural land and water, encourage more rural enterprise and viable farms and ranches (for long term food security and reduced carbon footprint, and lower service costs), more preventative health care,
- Communicate with state and federal government about local needs.

- Be honest - if we need to raise taxes in order to keep our community healthy, safe, and a good place to live, just tell us, and tell us why, and let us decide whether we want to do that. / / There are many things we could be doing preventively that would benefit our community enormously in the future (e.g., provide people in the criminal justice system with the evaluations to determine if their issues are partly mental illness and substance use disorder-related, and if so, provide effective interventions).
- More partnerships with local government, private sector and non-profits. Seek to leverage resources and work together more to create financial sustainability for the future. Be more involved with the school districts and leveraging maintenance of parks and facilities.
- educate people on the importance of education, provide family planning services, work to provide affordable single payer health insurance, save tax payer money by operating efficiently. We must invest in our country to create jobs.
- Manage the conflict between landowners and residents.
- educate the community about the ongoing reasons for over crowding at the detention center and the need for a substance abuse center in our community that is not privately funded.

Over the next few years Larimer County will face more budget constraints. What advice might you have...

- PROVIDE SUNSET REVIEW OF CURRENT PROGRAMS TO ELIMINATE LESS NEEDED OR UNNECESSARY OR DUPLICATE PROGRAMS
- Offer tax incentives to draw larger base of employers to the community / Advocate workforce center capabilities to employers in community / Set up a long-term plan to bring ownership of community issues to residents and employers (request greater volunteer participation/financial aid from employers, etc.)
- Recognize what services the county should truly be in and those it should let others handle. Also, many services should be self supporting, and in those cases make sure that they are, such as licenses. Maybe other services should such as open space belong with the city or city.
- That a little off the top from all services, rather than completely eliminate a service
- Prioritize and get rid of the extras, I guess. I know it is extremely tough to cut a budget when it is already 'bare bones.' Responding to the results of this survey will be a good start.
- evaluate administrative staffing; provide more line level staffing; obtain community input;
- See above for not duplicating use of funds. Also, if the subdivisions in the county are going to pay to maintain their own streets, perhaps they could be gated if they wanted, so the county is not responsible for any of their maintenance. That would deter commuters from cutting through subdivisions and instead use public roads such as highways and county roads. / Operating The Ranch should be pretty self-sufficient. Maybe need promoters that go after some events that will bring in good revenue to help pay for the "free" events like the fair and rodeo- which should be free to the public.
- Need more coordination between the different groups and departments so there is more efficiency.
- Law enforcement is over the top on what they (Sheriff) need to perform their job. / Overtime is out of control and unnecessary. / It has become similar to what you would classify a union shop.
- Get rid of the pre trial services program. It is unnecessary and can be handled by bond agents at a savings to the county of over a million dollars a year. / / Have a more realistic view of how often roads need to be repaved. There are instances where a road has been repaved one year and then repaved again the next year without regard to the fact that it was unnecessary. Maybe repaving is not the right term, the roads seem to get the new tar and gravel put on too often, this may not be repaving, but it is done before it is needed. If it is done on some schedule then the schedule needs to be adjusted or someone needs to view a stretch of road before it is done to determine if it is actually needed.
- Privatize The Ranch (sell it) or find a way to cover expenses without a tax subsidy. / / Ask voters for a tax increase. Put together a critical services package. Survey voters to find out what they will support. Put it

on the ballot. The message should be that now is the time to reinvest in ourselves to preserve and enhance our wonderful way of life. If the Commissioners won't support this, get rid of them.

- Become more effective. Learn to do more with less. You always say more \$ or cuts in service. That is just not going to cut it in the future because money will decrease but the people will not accept less service, so start focusing on how to do it better.
- develop a vision of what we want Larimer County to be.
- increasing taxes is not the answer. Budget reconsiderations and reallocations is. While none of us like to cut money back in any category, it is a necessity in difficult times.
- increase taxes for special uses.
- work on defeating the statewide referendums.
- Look at eliminating/changing/enhancing processes - way things are done - and improving methods to control costs through electronic media and software programs. That's what a lot of business have done to control costs during these time.
- Slow the growth of the government...especially the sherriffs dept
- communicate all cuts with explanation of cause and advance notice. spell out the reasons as often and as dispassionately as you can. like any tax-based entity, it is helpful for the electorate to know if the county is approaching this as a ratchet-down across all services and departments, OR, if Larimer is going to only do those things which it can do well and so, cut specific services.
- Ask for a revenue increase
- Prioritize essential services over those that do not directly impact the health and welfare of County residents while also remembering that we choose to live in Colorado due to the life style that it offers its residents.
- Inform the public of the challenges and realities of costs of providing services and the revenue sources. Create a process to encourage public involvement.
- Instead of trying to help everybody, sort out and help only those who really need it. / Shrink government back to its fundamental essential services.
- Do a better job of assessments - both in valuations, appeals and collections / Help the economic development - rather than focus on shrinking expenses, focus on job retention, education and attraction - which will help drive revenues/tax collections
- Increase fees
- Evaluate non essential programs to determine merit for continued support and work to reduce costs and build efficiencies to the extent possible. Strive for transparency in all financial matters.
- Look for investments -- things that enhance property values and solve problems rather than just managing problems / Don't overlook issues that will be more costly to deal with in the future if neglected now (such as deferred maintenance, noxious weeds, increased gang activity)
- Its time for this county, and this state, to recognize the financial difficulties our current budget process and tax system have created and move to fix it. This county needs to pass some local tax initiatives to fund vital services and advocate for changes to Colorado Tax Law on a statewide, state constitutional level. To do this the county needs to work on educating the citizens of this county on the needs and why tax revenue is necessary.
- Be open and transparent about the situation / Solicit input from residents
- figure out alternative ways so that public safety, i.e., jail system is not so expensive. I do not know how, but there must be alternatives to accomplish less expensive sentencing and incarceration.
- Obviously, reduce expenses wherever, whenever possible. Also, look to adjoining counties and municipalities to evaluate opportunities to share services, overhead, etc. Closely watch salaries and benefits (e.g., don't get yourself in the predicament that cities and counties have gotten themselves in to)
- Define the county's mission and the county's "core services" / Continue to foster excellent working relationships w/other elected and appointed officials and build on the strong partnering relationships that exist. / Continue to foster and support the skills and expertise of strong, committed professional managers throughout the organization

- identify the 'must haves' to accomplish the long-term vision of a viable, sustainable collaborative county -- determine which services and products move us in that direction and focus the efforts on those. A large chunk of the county budget funds the SO and the jail - with little long-term benefit. What are the proactive measures we can take to help ensure that those dollars can be spent more wisely?
- Must increase income in order to sustain services. This is easier said than done, I know. Cutting services could become necessary, but it is important not to cut services that affect lower income people. The jail needs to be looked at very seriously. Non violent criminals cannot take up space. Need to reduce the number of inmates, not increase the size of the jail.
- Get back to the core functions of the county and start with fully funding them first...then add priorities as budget allows. Eliminate low return activities.
- Increase revenues. / Fight the diversion of county revenues through tax increment financing.
- Tax increases are never popular, but may be necessary. Gallagher creates an unfair burden on commercial property taxes, so increasing sales tax would seem to be a fairer mechanism for providing increased funding. / Increase emphasis on programs that will minimize pretrial costs and incarceration, and will put people back in the workforce.
- The county should evaluate its priorities. / City beautification is important but should not take priority before generation of jobs. Opening lots of shopping malls & generating employment for floating population does not help generate revenues. / The city hAS A WEALTH of unemployed educated workforce which is unemployed currently due to job cuts. If city attracts businesses which can hire these talents this will be helpful.
- Be objective about the decisions that must be made and be guided by future needs and not past uses of funds.
- Look at Best Practices around the State and Country to improve efficiencies. / Take a regional approach and see how Larimer County might partner with Weld and Boudler Counties to share services and save money.
- Focus on core services first and foremost.
- As with private businesses the county needs to assess the efficiency of each department and redesign accordingly.
- Pay attention to staffing levels and fringe compensation - eliminate all benefits/comp models that are in excess of the private sector - tax payers do not like to see county employees with better vacation, retirement and job security. Does not create the impression that the county is operating in the 'real' world.
- Prioritize services (similar process to survey but with more data on services, who uses them and value to the community)
- Be more efficient in daily workings. / Set priorities based on a modern, efficient way of working. / Have more health clinics and substance abuse centers.
- The safety and health issues are critical. These problems create additional problems and increase serious problems. We need to focus on those issues.
- share information about the budget - I've never seen the percentages until now. It helps me understand what the priorities are.
- How can the existing funding be used to provide assistance to the largest portion of the population? / Dollar for dollar what makes the most impact for people in need? / Keep basic or required services basic and easier to access electronically.
- With outreach to County residents, seek to reduce/eliminate lowest priority services / 2. Aggressively pursue ways to provide services in more efficient, cost-effective ways; investigate outsourcing and implement if it is more efficient and effective than performing those functions in-house
- Continue to get community involvement as with this survey. Don't try to do it all at once. Prioritize goals, and generate plans to meet them in a realistic manner.
- Clearly communicate budget constraints and needs. Help citizens understand the options and consequences of reduced services.
- charge families and individuals in county jail incarceration for their expenses

- Promote job growth
- Be careful on curtailing of county services especially the human services safety net.
- Raise property taxes on residential properties to increase the income stream, and get rid of non-productive/non value adding services.
- The county needs to ask voters to continue the taxes already in place.
- Support education initiatives for K-12 schooling.
- Don't be afraid to cut programs. A County cannot and should not be everything to everybody. The private sector will find a way to compensate for services the County stops. / / I would also do this in a targeted fashion. A percentage cut across the board, while noble, is a foolish way to make sure the County is providing the highest quality of the services they choose to provide.
- Eliminate excess spending where ever it will not decrease services. One place may be to decrease jail terms and provide other consequences for crimes that are not a threat to others.
- Again, find new and better ways to get things done - collaborate with business and nonprofits in the community to offload those services that can be done outside of government.
- Keep people informed
- too much is spent on law enforcement, wildfire (keep homes out of fire-prone areas) / Rural roads are maintained at too high a level, then people drive too fast. People should not expect urban level services in rural areas. Spend less on fancy law enforcement and communications equipment. We tend to get spoiled expecting services everywhere and unrealistic levels of communication, response, snowplowing, and protection from everything. Rural communities/residents and community can be encouraged to work together to reduce some of these expectations and costs and not depend on the County for everything.
- Get creative. Look for new revenue streams.
- Be very, very careful about cutting essential services, because it could set our community in a downward spiral. Be sure you know the consequences of the decisions you are making. And if our community needs more taxes, find the least painful ways they might be levied, and ask our community if we are willing.
- Engage the stakeholders from the Start. The BOCC and other elected officials need global input from County wide stakeholders meetings. The BOCC should have County staff research and see how counties throughout the country are addressing budget shortfalls. think more regionally on jails and detention programs and facilities. Can we partner with Weld or Washington or other counties...Show the voters ROI and unintended consequences of poor money management.....and good money management ...Communicate directly and often...educate....the voters need to know the costs and benefits and the choices that will have to be made. Get buy in from the other elected officials and have them educate County employees. Your biggest detractors will be the county employees who may lose their job.
- if we cannot create good jobs there will not be income to the county to provide quality of life services. we must raise the standard of living in the county and we at present going the other way. / / the county must make it easier to have good, high quality companies operate here, and again education needs a tremendous amount of support.
- The Sheriff is too political. Need a tax for a jail, but need a Sheriff perceived as more balanced and in line with the times. He seeks controversy.
- Good communication with citizens about the hard choices that are needing to be made.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

- All in all the county does a solid job.
- I appreciate the opportunity to complete this survey. This demonstrates to me and to Larimer County that the 'powers that be' are eager to be responsive to the needs and desires of the community during difficult economic times.

- We live in a location with premier sights, weather, places to go and things to do. We all need to work together to get the most out of each benefit we have without duplicating. Do we have a task force that has a representative from each of the town/cities/county to work together on all common issues?
- Thank you
- I appreciate the way Natural Resources is handling the Red Mountain open space compared to labor intensive model that the City of Fort Collins is using at Soapstone.
- Thanks for seeking my input and good luck.
- Your survey does not provide an opportunity to answer questions the way people want to. You bunch dis similar things together to get the answers you want. / For example in natural resources you lump open space with parks. I think open space is over funded and parks under funded.
- Not at this time
- No, I'm happy I'm where I'm at and think the county does a good job.
- Good luck.
- Keep these information programs coming.
- Thank you for the opportunity....
- Thanks for asking for my opinion. It's important to include public input into budgeting of public funds.
- People have grown to expect more from government than what is sustainable. Cut back on services, fees and taxes and encourage enterprise and production to occur. Then people will have more to handle their needs on their own and develop a sense of pride and independence.
- Larimer County is a great place to live and I'd hate for us to tax and cut services to find our way out of this recession. We need to augment job growth and help stimulate the economy. The challenge is to find that balance between economic growth and vitality with quality of life. More partnerships between the public and private sector would be great to see...they do exist, but perhaps more emphasis should be given to partnerships with the county, cities, CSU, Front Range Community College and the private sector.
- I did not adjust your budget priorities. Even a simple exercise like this one does not give enough information to make the hard choices. I believe you are managing resources wisely.
- Glade Reservoir is a huge land use issue that seems to get little attention other than the "winner take all" fight between the pro and con forces. If it is going to happen, it should happen in a way that significantly enhances Hwy 287 from a safety standpoint, creates greater recreation opportunities, creates more open space, trails, etc. The County has a huge interest in making sure it is done right, if it happens at all. I don't see that discussion taking place. It appears that either the environmental interests will win and Glade will not occur (unlikely), or that the Water District will eventually win and the project will go through with little vision and many opportunities missed (very likely). There is a great opportunity for County leadership here.
- This county has a great network of non-profits that are willing to work with you, but non-profits are not the solution in and of themselves, and neither is the government. A strong partnership with business needs to be built and a the community needs to address the issues we are facing in an educated manner with all parties at the table.
- Share the results of this survey and perhaps gather this same information from a larger sample of residents
- Keep up the good work and services provided to the citizens!
- Thanks for asking. It's a privilege to live in a county where the decision makers clearly care about the products and services they provide and ask for input and suggestions.
- Appreciate the continuing efforts of the commissioners, county manager and staff to reach out to the county residents and municipalities, stay connected with our needs, and provide support when needed. Thank you.
- Good luck.
- No
- Keep up the good work. LarCo government is well managed and serves residents of the County well with fiscal minded practices and transparency.
- This survey seems to be very well thought out and I am very interested in the results!

- The County is well-managed - the staff is professional and well-trained. The County has low debt - keep it that way. In these times of a tough economy and a recovery that will be slow, the County should do all it can to help with job growth. Create a business friendly environment. Thank you for all you do to make N. Colorado a great place to live.
- Larimer county is doing a good job at this time but some of the projects, such as the Mason Street project, seem to be a little extravagant considering budget concerns.
- The Workforce Center is doing a great job...but with the level of unemployment in the nation - things need to be restructured, at least for a couple of years, so they can meet the demands of the people who come to them for help.
- Larimer County is impressively run, appears efficient and effective. It seems responsive to county needs and is massively overloaded with basic statutory requirements. The voting centers are fantastic; the landfill efficiently run; the workforce center is effective and hardworking. Not sure I'd cut anything-seems like the county is a model for efficiency and effective governing.
- Thanks for the hard work that Larimer County does. It is a difficult job and we support your actions and diligence on behalf of the county.
- Thank you for the opportunity to provide my perspectives
- The last portion of this survey was difficult -- it would have been helpful to have an indicator of relative amount spent on each area in order to assess whether more or less should be spent on a particular area. / / Thank you for involving the community in this process. good luck.
- Continue to consider the needs of those who are least able to help themselves.
- no
- Encourage involvement in business in a positive way to our county. Elected officials should enact policies to save and create jobs.
- Overall a great county with good leadership but we have been through good times for a long time and now is the true test of the county.
- Thanks for taking the time to do surveys and consider the results.
- Good luck and seeking information in this fashion is very helpful.
- I learned more about all the things the county government does from this survey.
- Thanks for the opportunity to give feedback. It was difficult not knowing how many resources are already dedicated to the activities to evaluate which need more or fewer resources. It was also difficult not knowing what monies from state and federal levels could be better allocated to accommodate some of the priorities, and some of the items I indicated needed fewer resources.
- This is in most respects a progressive county with good professional staff, officials and citizen boards and commissions. It is a good place to live and work. Elected officials can't know everything needed for good decisions in these complex times and so must continue to recruit, appoint and respect good non-partisan boards to advise them. Maintaining a high level of civic involvement, transparency and good information can help us through problematic times and to make adjustments in how we use resources.
- Thanks for all the good work you do and for caring about our citizens and our county.
- Thanks very much for asking our opinion. The truth is that the county provides ESSENTIAL services, and there is very little "fat," if any.
- Please communicate, communicate, communicate to the citizens, seek partnerships for sharing costs and resources, see how it is being done elsewhere and make the other elected officials understand the message and speak with the BOCC not against them.....PS.....if the Elected are all of the same party line they need to act like it. Sometimes it seems in Larimer County there is more variation among Republicans than between Republicans and Democrats.
- Ralph Nader says that americans expect less from their government than any country in the world. I expect great things from our government but not war or military but education, health care, good roads, good utilities, investing in our citizens, etc.
- Well run County, I'm especially impressed with Frank Lancaster, Gary Buffington and Bob Herrfeldt, work with all three quality people. We're blessed to have 'em. You are doing a great job with running outdoor

assets and Open Spaces. Great compromise on the Big T. for public access. Our parks and lands are the best!

- I wish you luck!