

Community Opinion Survey



Loveland Fire Rescue Authority developing funding proposal to address staffing, training and wildfire risk

The Loveland Fire Rescue Authority (LFRA) was established in 2012 when the City of Loveland and the Loveland Rural Fire Protection District entered into an intergovernmental agreement to share in the funding and services of the Authority. LFRA is the fire department for both the city and the rural areas of Larimer County surrounding Loveland.

LFRA is governed by a five-member board that includes two Loveland City Council members, the Loveland City Manager and two rural district board members. The Loveland Council members and the rural board members are elected within their jurisdictions and then are appointed to represent their jurisdictions on LFRA's board.

This is a unique governance and operations model for a fire department, but it benefits the residents, local businesses and region as a whole by providing a balanced funding model to support a properly staffed, trained and equipped fire department that has the resources to address the emergency response needs of the urban, suburban, rural and mountain areas covered by LFRA.

▶ Visit lfra.org for more information

▶ Take survey at bit.ly/LFRAsurvey



LFRA provides structural fire protection, basic emergency medical care, technical rescue, wildfire protection and other services across 187 square miles and includes the City of Loveland and the communities within the Loveland Rural Fire Protection District. A map of LFRA's service area and a list of communities is inside.

LFRA serves a resident population of just over 109,000, which increases considerably during certain times of the year with tourists and outdoor enthusiasts.

LFRA currently has 107 uniformed (sworn) employees, 14 civilian support staff and 20 volunteers. The agency operates from 10 fire stations, with seven staffed 24/7. Two reserve stations are staffed by LFRA volunteers. LFRA also operates a station 40 hours per week (and as needed) at the Northern Colorado Regional Airport.

LFRA facing staffing and training challenges

LFRA's Challenges

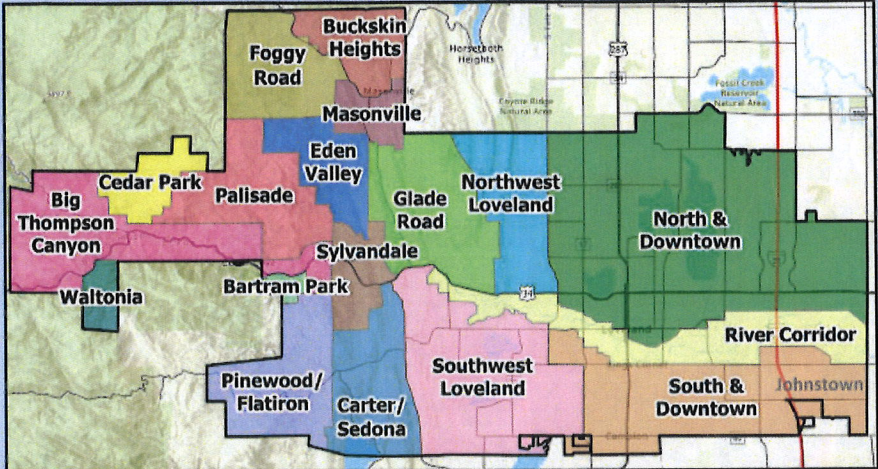
Our community is growing, and the demand for LFRA services is increasing. Larimer County's population increased by 20 percent from the 2010 to 2020 U.S. Census, and northern Colorado is expected to continue growing over the next two decades. At the same time, visitation to the Big Thompson Canyon and Rocky Mountain National Park areas jumped to nearly 5 million visitors last year.

Along with this growth comes an increase in emergency calls. In 2012, LFRA responded to just over 6,137 calls per year; the Authority now averages over 11,000 calls for service per year. We are handling this increase in call volume and population growth with nearly the same number of personnel and equipment as in 2012. This directly impacts the availability of resources and daily workload on the firefighters.

This increase in call volume is putting a great deal of stress and strain on our firefighters—and the Authority's budget. The Authority must maintain minimal staffing levels at its 24/7 stations year-round. This has required the Authority to utilize overtime to ensure coverage at these stations. In situations where firefighters need to be out for training, military leave, illness or injury, the Authority then has to assign other firefighters to fill in—taking time away from their family and compromising their ability to recharge, while also costing the Authority additional overtime.

Along with staffing, the Authority must upgrade its training

Loveland Fire Rescue Authority Service Area



The Loveland Fire Rescue Authority provides service to the City of Loveland and the communities that make up the Loveland Rural Fire Protection District, including:

Campion	Hidden Valley	Sedona
Carter Lake area	Indian Creek	Springer Valley
Cedar Park	Johnstown	Storm Mountain
Eden Valley	Namaqua Hills	Waltonia

facility to ensure the readiness of our firefighters to meet the needs of our community. Doing so will allow the Authority to prepare and train its firefighters and officers to effectively manage a wide variety of emergency responses. The training center was originally planned for redevelopment in 2018 but had to be delayed because of a budget shortfall. LFRA is now at least five years behind schedule to modernize its training facility—that delay represents a quarter of a firefighter's career. Further delays will directly affect LFRA's ability to train and develop current and future firefighters and officers.

Wildfire risk growing

Finally, wildfires and wildfire risk continue to grow. There have been several wildfires recently

that have significantly impacted our region, including the Kruger Rock, Cameron Peak, Calwood and High Park fires. Unfortunately, wildfires and wildfire risk are not going away in our state—and the risk continues to move eastward through our rural district area and toward the City of Loveland. The Marshall Fire in Boulder County was an example of how quickly a catastrophic fire can move through an area similar to Larimer County and Loveland.

The Authority needs to continually improve its staffing, training and equipment to be prepared for the increasing risk of wildfires, as well as providing a focused effort on wildfire prevention through fuels reduction and public education for community members to take steps to reduce their own risk.

LFRA developing two-part proposal with mill levy in rural district and sales tax in City of Loveland

Current Funding and Funding proposal

Since LFRA combines two jurisdictions into one fire and emergency authority, it must also combine funding sources from the city and the rural district. LFRA's budget for 2023 is \$22.4 million, with the City of Loveland providing 82 percent of the funding and the rural district contributing 18 percent.

As part of the following funding proposal, LFRA is proposing a modest increase through a rural-district mill levy to address the higher cost per service call in the rural areas.

LFRA is developing a funding proposal to implement its strategic plan and address its critical operational challenges. The current proposal includes an increase in the property tax mill levy in the rural district and the creation of a dedicated sales tax within the City of Loveland. The goal of this two-part funding proposal would be to create a more equitable funding split between the two jurisdictions from a City of Loveland sales tax and a rural district's mill levy. The proposal includes:

1. Increasing the Loveland Rural Fire Protection District from 8.708 mills to 11.186 mills.

- 2.478 mill levy increase would cost an estimated \$83.01 per year – or less than \$6.92 per month – for a \$500,000 home within the district.
- 11.186 mill levy rate would keep the district's tax rate less than half the Larimer County rate of 22.425 mills and lower than neighboring fire districts like Berthoud FPD at 13.850 mills and Front Range Fire Rescue at 11.642 mills.

2. Establishing a dedicated sales tax of 0.37 percent within the City of Loveland.

- This is an additional 37 cents on a \$100 purchase.
- This would increase Loveland's sales tax rate to 3.37 percent. When combined with Larimer County

at 0.80 percent and the State of Colorado at 2.9 percent, the overall sales-tax rate for the City would be 7.07 percent.

- This would still represent a lower sales-tax rate compared to the City of Fort Collins at 7.55 percent and Longmont at 8.715 percent.

If approved by voters in both jurisdictions, the new funding will be prioritized to:

- Hire, train, and equip additional sworn firefighters to meet minimal staffing levels for the Authority's current and future service demands.
- Modernize and equip the existing training facility with the necessary instructional props and facilities to provide realistic training for firefighters and fire officers of all experience levels.
- Provide equipment, staffing, training and mitigation resources to address wildfires and to reduce wildfire risk across the Authority's service area.

Loveland Regional Mill Levy Summary

	Mill Levy
Larimer County	22.425
Wellington Fire Protection District	14.999
Berthoud Fire Protection District	13.850
Front Range Fire Rescue	11.642
Loveland Rural Fire Protection District (proposed)	11.186
Poudre Valley Fire Protection District	10.824
City of Loveland	9.564
Loveland Rural Fire Protection District (current)	8.837

Loveland Regional Sales Tax Summary

	Total Sales Tax
City of Longmont	8.715%
City of Fort Collins	7.55%
City of Loveland (proposed)	7.07%
City of Loveland (current)	6.70%



Community Input Needed

In order for LFRA's Board and administration to refine its funding proposals, we need input from our residents. LFRA is asking community members to complete this short survey about the Authority's priorities and funding proposals. The Board and administration will use the information gathered as part of this survey—as well as public input gathered through community meetings and other outreach—to decide whether to place a mill levy question on the 2023 ballot.

Community Opinion Survey

Please take a few minutes to read the questions below, review with other household members, and complete the survey. All surveys are anonymous, and your response will in no way be associated with your name. To take this survey, please do one of the following by **June 23, 2023**:

- Take this survey online at <http://bit.ly/LFRASurvey>
- Mail to or drop off at 1423 West 29th Street, Loveland 80538
- Email the survey to LFRA-Survey@LFRA.org

Q1. In general, how would you rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highest, the job that Loveland Fire Rescue Authority does protecting the community and providing emergency and firefighting services?

1 2 3 4 5 Unsure

Q2. In your opinion, should LFRA's proposal to increase staffing to address coverage issues, limit overtime and improve operational response be a high, medium or low priority, or not a priority at all?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High priority | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium priority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low priority | <input type="checkbox"/> Not a priority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No opinion | |

Q3. Should LFRA's proposal to redevelop and upgrade its training facility to better prepare for a variety of emergency situations and to provide training to current and future firefighters be a high, medium or low priority, or not a priority at all?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High priority | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium priority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low priority | <input type="checkbox"/> Not a priority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No opinion | |

Q4. Should LFRA's proposal to improve its wildfire capabilities to provide equipment, staffing, training, and mitigation resources to address wildfires and help reduce wildfire risk be a high, medium or low priority, or not a priority at all?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High priority | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium priority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low priority | <input type="checkbox"/> Not a priority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No opinion | |

Q5. Please select a statement below that most closely represents your opinion of LFRA's needs and funding proposal:

- LFRA needs to address the challenges presented by increases in service calls, staffing and training needs, and wildfire risk and should seek an increase in funding to make those improvements.
- LFRA should maintain current staffing levels and not seek improvements to service unless an alternative funding source can be secured in the future.
- Other, please explain:

Q6. If an election were held today, would you vote "yes" in favor, or "no" to oppose, the following potential question:

Shall Loveland Rural Fire Protection District taxes be increased by up to \$1,455,687 in 2024 and in each year thereafter from an increase in the district's mill levy imposed to a rate of 11.186 mills with such tax proceeds to be used for the following district operational and capital expenses to maintain service levels in the district, address staffing needs, and improve training for professional firefighting staff, including:

- *Hiring, training, and equipping additional sworn firefighters to meet minimal staffing levels for the Authority's current and future service demands.*

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- *Modernizing and equipping the existing training facility with the necessary instructional props and facilities to offer realistic training for firefighters and fire officers of all experience levels.*
- *Providing equipment, staffing, training, and mitigation resources to address wildfires and to help reduce wildfire risk across the Authority's service area.*

and shall all expenditures be made by the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority board with the requirement that the funds will be subject to an annual independent audit published on the Authority's web site, and shall the proceeds be allowed to be collected by the district and spent notwithstanding any other limitation provided by law?

- Definitely Yes
- Probably Yes
- Probably No
- Definitely No
- Unsure

Q7. If you selected No or Unsure on either of the proposed ballot questions, please provide the most important reason for that decision from the list below:

- LFRA should maintain current staffing levels and not seek improvements to service unless an alternative funding source can be secured in the future.
- Concerned about upcoming increase in property taxes.
- Generally do not support tax increases.
- Property taxes are already too high in the District.
- Need more information.
- Concerned with priorities that LFRA has identified.
- Other important uses of taxes such as schools or roads.
- Other, please explain:

Q8. What are your concerns, if any, regarding LFRA's funding proposal, as well as any comments about the Authority?

Finally, a few questions for demographic purposes:

Q9. Are you female or male?

- Female
- Male
- I'd rather not say

Q10. What age range do you fall within?

- 18-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65 or older
- I'd rather not say

Q11. How long have you lived in the District?

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21 years or longer
- I just moved here

Q12. What is your ZIP Code?

- 80515
- 80525
- 80526
- 80528
- 80534
- 80537
- 80538
- Other: _____

Q13. How would you prefer to receive information about LFRA's proposal and other information from the Authority?

- Public Meetings/Town Halls
- Regular e-mails to established list
- Facebook
- Nextdoor
- District web site
- No preference

If you selected e-mail, please consider providing your e-mail address to the Authority:



Loveland Fire Rescue Authority
410 East 5th Street
Loveland, CO 80537

Please Open: COMMUNITY SURVEY INSIDE and important information about Loveland Fire Rescue Authority

Your input will shape how LFRA moves forward

The Loveland Fire Rescue Authority Board of Directors is considering a mill-levy question in the Loveland Rural Fire Protection District and a dedicated sales tax for the City of Loveland to fund LFRA. The funding questions may appear on the November 2023 ballot. The Board will use the information gathered as part of this community opinion survey – as well as other public input – to decide whether to place the questions on a spring ballot.

Quick survey about LFRA

Please take a few minutes to fill out the included survey and comment on LFRA’s funding proposals. Consider this a town hall meeting around your kitchen table. The survey should take only a few minutes to complete and can be found online at the address below.

Questions and Comments

If you have questions about Loveland Fire Rescue Authority, Loveland Rural Fire Protection District and the Authority’s budget, please contact:

Tim Sendelbach, Fire Chief
(970) 962-2827 | LFRA-Survey@LFRA.org

LFRA Board of Directors

The Loveland Fire Rescue Authority is governed by a five-member Board that oversees the budget and policy decisions made by the Authority. The Board includes representatives from the Loveland Rural Fire Protection District and City of Loveland.

Jeff Swanty, Board Chair
Loveland Rural Fire Protection District

John Fogle, Board Vice Chair
City of Loveland Council Member

Steve Adams
City of Loveland City Manager

Richard Ball
City of Loveland Council Member

Dave Legits
Loveland Rural Fire Protection District

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