

COMPARISON OF THE COL 2010 QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY AND THE 2011 COL FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY FORUMS AND FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY CITIZEN SURVEY.

Council has tasked CFAC to bring additional/expanded recommendations based on the Fiscal Sustainability Forums and Fiscal Sustainability Citizen Survey (FSCS). Our post-March Council Study Session felt that there might be commonality to be found between the 2010 Quality of Life Survey (QLS) and the current activities.

The first issue to be examined is whether the populations of the two efforts are comparable, or even similar. The table below provides some insight with respect to a possible answer to this question based on information common to all three activities.

Question/Subject/Issue	2010 QOL Survey*	Fiscal Sustainability Forums*	Fiscal Sustainability Citizen Survey*
How long have you lived in Loveland?	68% > 10 years	Not Collected/Tabulated	58% > 10 years
What is your age range?	78% >= 45 (41%: 45-64) (37%: 65+)	Not Collected/Tabulated	64 % >= 45 (45%: 45-64) (19%: 65+)
In what part of town do you live?	73% NW/SW (38% NW) (35% SW)	Not Collected/Tabulated	69% NW/SW (34% NW) (35% SW)

* Most prevalent response. (Demographic information was solicited by “show of hands” during the Forums. It is my personal recollection that the responses, and the makeup of the attendees that I observed, represented a population generally similar to that represented in the Fiscal Sustainability Citizen Survey.)

The 2010 QLS is somewhat puzzling. The questionnaire is of a forced response nature, and a “strongly agree/agree” response is correlated with high quality of life. On an overall basis, the City considers itself to provide a “high” quality of life to its citizenry. However, when reading the individual, written comments to each question; a sense that things in Loveland are “not so great” seems to be evident. Since these responses require more thought, time and effort on part of the respondent; it seems that those should be accorded more weight than the selected answers to the questionnaire.

That said, it also seems logical to assume that where the response to the QLS is “high”, i.e., a “strongly agree/agree” rating of 80 (my arbitrary choice) or more might represent those areas/activities/items that the Citizenry value. A check of these against the Fiscal Sustainability Forums and Survey results that indicate “must have” or valued services (e.g., those supported by responses to the TABOR questions), might then identify consensus items.

Conversely, an area of the QSL that is markedly “low”, i.e., a “strongly agree/agree” rating of 45 or less, or (if appropriate to the nature of the question) a “high” “strongly disagree/disagree” rating of 50 or higher (again, both my arbitrary choices) might represent those areas/activities/items that the Citizenry would like to see more resources devoted.

Given these criteria, only two areas of “common ground” can be found.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Questions 1., 3., 4., 6., 7., 9., 11., 12., 14., and 17. (40% of all of the QLS questions) of the QLS relate to infrastructure – police, fire, streets, and water/sewer. All of these received a rating of 80 or higher.

The Forums prioritized protection of the existing infrastructure as the second-most important budget objective, and maintaining quality of services that are provided as third-most important. The FSCS ranked these as most-important and second-most important, respectively.

Conclusion/Recommendation to Council: Reduction in public safety and infrastructure services and/or quality of the existing infrastructure should be exempt from budget reduction.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The QSL indicated that the COL is not meeting the needs of its citizens with respect to the creation of jobs and the attraction of new employers. The Forums and the FSCS ranked “invest[ing] in projects that generate more existing revenue” as the second-most and most, respectively, methods to balance the budget. Similarly, they all ranked “increase existing revenue sources” as the third-most important method. Presumably, activities/projects that result in increased property taxes, sales taxes, and building permits/planning department fees meet this objective; and would also result in increased local employment.

Conclusion/Recommendation to Council: Do not reduce the City’s focus on economic development. Increase the recovery of Planning Department Costs, eliminate/reduce/shorten the period of sales tax “breaks”, and considerate a moderate increase in related fees (building permits, etc.).

OTHER COMMENTS

The QLS did not focus on any fiscal issues. However, given the demographic of the populations, it should be considered that the recommendations and priorities developed from the Forums and the FSCS fairly reflect the approach a majority of COL’s citizens would support.

CONCLUSION

There is nothing to suggest that the CFAC proposals summarizing the results of the Forums and the FSCS that have been previously presented to Council should be amended.