

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



MEETING DATE: August 24, 2021

ITEM NUMBER: 6.B

SECOND READING:

{{customfields.ResoOrdNumber}}

TYPE OF ITEM: General Business

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SUBJECT/AGENDA TITLE:

Rate Study - Electric & Storm Drainage Rate Proposal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On June 1 and June 29, 2021, staff provided Council with introductory information on the current electric and storm drainage rate studies. These presentations included general background on rate study methodology, operating and capital costs, and rate design.

This communication presents the results from the cost of service models from both utilities, which show the revenue requirements for each customer class. This communication will also address rate design alternatives for each customer class that will collect the required revenue in alignment with Council and utility goals. Also included are the recommended changes for the Electric Community Investment Fee (ECIF) rates.

Additionally, Council discussed the potential impact of the rate adjustment to the residential customer class including low and fixed income residents. Further information is provided regarding the potential impacts on an average residential bill as well as current programs in place for assistance.

Link to Council Work Plan: There is no direct link to the Council Work Plan. Electric and storm drainage service are core services. Proposed changes to the Longmont CARES program support Council Work Plan Goal A3.2 – Assist those in need in our community.

History of Previous Council Direction: During the June 29, 2021 meeting, Council directed staff to bring cost of service analysis for 1) electric, including various funding levels associated with the AMI project; and 2) storm drainage, including a scenario representing the City's

receipt of the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant, as well as a scenario without the receipt of the BRIC grant.

The following is a schedule of past and future presentations regarding the rate studies:

Topic	Timing	Council Action
Introduction/Operating Expenses	June 1	Information
Capital Programs	June 29	Information
Proposed Rates & Fees	August	Direction on whether to prepare ordinances
Rate Ordinances	September/October	Potential Council Adoption

COUNCIL OPTIONS:

Electric Rates:

- 1) Direct staff to prepare ordinances for proposed electric rates
- 2) Provide other direction to staff

Electric Community Investment Fee Rates:

- 1) Direct staff to prepare ordinances for proposed electric rates
- 2) Provide other direction to staff

Storm Drainage Rates:

- 1) Direct staff to prepare ordinances for selected options for storm drainage rates & rebates
- 2) Provide other direction to staff

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS:

Electric rate option 1 is recommended. Electric Community Investment Fee rate option 1 is recommended. Storm Drainage rate option 1 is recommended.

FISCAL IMPACT & FUND SOURCE FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Electric and storm drainage rates are the primary funding source for the Electric Fund and the Storm Drainage Fund, respectively.

BACKGROUND AND ISSUE ANALYSIS:

Electric Cost of Service

Operating and capital expenses developed during the recent budget process have been entered into the cost of service model and are used to determine the revenue requirements for the electric utility. The costs were then unbundled by function: power supply, distribution, and customer related. The final step was to allocate the unbundled costs to the various customer classes. The methodology utilized for cost of service follows current

industry practices and incorporates wholesale rate structure changes from Platte River Power Authority (PRPA).

The electric utility is proposing a two-year rate schedule (2022 & 2023). This will allow staff to revisit rate setting for 2024 and beyond to take advantage of renewable sources that continue to increase (beyond 50% of the energy mix), emerging advanced energy monitoring and control technologies (AMI and related), and incorporation into the City's new Customer Information System (CIS).

The electric cost of service model has identified a revenue requirement of \$82.6 million (average of 2022 and 2023 annual estimated expenses). Electric sales revenue, at the current rates, is estimated to be \$78.1 million, leaving a shortfall of \$4.5 million. To cover this, the electric utility needs an overall average rate increase of approximately 4% per year for 2022 & 2023; however, the actual costs of each rate class vary as reflected in the table below. This table shows the percentage increase needed to meet the revenue requirements for each customer class.

Customer Class	Cost of Service	Revenue Under Existing Rates	Estimated Revenue Increases	
			2022	2023
Residential	\$ 38,892,000	\$ 37,784,000	2.5%	2.5%
Commercial - Energy	\$ 8,953,000	\$ 8,331,000	5.0%	5.0%
Commercial - Demand	\$ 22,812,000	\$ 20,944,000	5.6%	5.6%
Commercial - Coincident	\$ 11,072,000	\$ 10,163,000	5.6%	5.6%
Unmetered Energy	\$ 102,000	\$ 95,000	5.0%	5.0%
General Fund – Energy/Demand*	\$ 801,000	\$ 776,000	3.2%	3.2%
Total	\$ 82,632,000	\$ 78,093,000	4.0%	4.0%

Proposed Electric Rates

Electric rates are generally composed of two or three components specifically tailored to each rate class: a monthly service charge, an energy usage charge based on the kilowatt hours (kWh) consumed, and for some rate classes, a demand charge based on the maximum kilowatt (kW) demand in a billing period.

For this two-year Electric rate schedule, the monthly service charge will be unchanged while the energy usage and demand charges will be adjusted to collect the required revenue. By doing this, Longmont Power & Communications (LPC) customers will have more control over the actual increase in their monthly electric bill. The less energy a customer uses the lower

the impact they will experience as the fixed portion of their bill will remain unchanged from the current rate.

Major factors affecting the cost of service shown above are:

- \$1 million contribution to reserves, which are used to maintain 60 days operating costs, plus 15% of the 5-year funded CIP projects. Reserve balances help ensure the long term financial health and security of the utility.
- \$1.4 million for increased Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects. As discussed with Council on June 29th, this includes proactive replacement of aging infrastructure, grid modernization, and developing and deploying distributed energy resources.
- \$1.3 million for increased operating expenses other than wholesale energy. As discussed with Council at the June 1st meeting, this includes expenses such as personnel, professional & contracted services, franchise fee (8.64%), and transfers to the General Fund for services provided such as HR, accounting, and legal.
- \$1.7 million for increased wholesale energy costs from PRPA, which represents an annual rate increase of 3.2%. Although PRPA's wholesale energy rates are increasing, they have the lowest rates of any wholesale provider in the region.
- (\$890,000) reduction associated with the new Customer Information System (CIS). In the previous rate study, the CIS was funded at \$1.14 million per year and in this rate study the funding has been reduced to \$250,000 per year.

Residential Rate Classes – There are three classes of residential rates: Residential Energy (RE), Residential Demand (RD), and Residential Self Generation (RGEN). All three classes include a fixed monthly customer charge and a per kilowatt hour (kWh) energy charge. The RD class includes a demand charge and the RGEN class includes a generation credit.

Residential Energy (RE)	Adopted	Proposed	
	2021	2022	2023
Monthly Customer Charge	\$ 16.40	\$ 16.40	\$ 16.40
Summer Energy Charge per kWh			
Tier 1 (0-750 kWh)	\$ 0.0846	\$ 0.0873	\$ 0.0901
Tier 2 (751-1500 kWh)	0.0997	0.1029	0.1062
Tier 3 (1501+ kWh)	0.1295	0.1336	0.1379
Non-Summer Energy Charge per kWh			
Tier 1 (0-750 kWh)	\$ 0.0769	\$ 0.0794	\$ 0.0819
Tier 2 (751-1500 kWh)	0.0906	\$ 0.0935	\$ 0.0965
Tier 3 (1501+ kWh)	0.1177	\$ 0.1215	\$ 0.1254
Residential Energy Average Rate Adjustment		2.5%	2.5%

	Adopted	Proposed
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Residential Demand (RD)	2021	2022	2023
Monthly Customer Charge	\$ 16.40	\$ 16.40	\$ 16.40
Summer Usage Charges			
Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0516	\$ 0.0530	\$ 0.0544
Demand Charge: Maximum kW, per kW	\$ 8.25	\$ 8.47	\$ 8.70
Non-Summer Usage Charges			
Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0469	\$ 0.0482	\$ 0.0495
Demand Charge: Maximum kW, per kW	\$ 7.50	\$ 7.70	\$ 7.91
Residential Demand Average Rate Adjustment		2.5%	2.5%

Residential Self Generation (RGEN)	Adopted	Proposed	
	2021	2022	2023
Monthly Customer Charge	\$ 21.60	\$ 21.60	\$ 21.60
Summer Energy Charge per kWh			
Tier 1 (below prior year's monthly average consumption for the RE class)	\$ 0.0842	\$ 0.0877	\$ 0.0913
Tier 2 (above prior year's monthly average consumption for the RE class)	0.0846	0.0881	0.0917
Generation Credit	0.0842	0.0877	0.0913
Non-Summer Energy Charge per kWh			
Tier 1 (below prior year's monthly average consumption for the RE class)	\$ 0.0765	\$ 0.0796	\$0.0829
Tier 2 (above prior year's monthly average consumption for the RE class)	0.0769	0.0801	0.0834
Generation Credit	0.0765	0.0796	0.0829
Residential Self Generation Average Rate Adjustment		2.3%	2.4%

Commercial Rate Classes – There are three classes of commercial rates: Commercial Energy (CE), Commercial Demand (CD), and Commercial Coincident Demand (CCD). The CE class is the “small commercial” class, the CD class is the “mid to large commercial” class, and the CCD class is the “industrial” class.

Commercial Energy (CE)	Adopted	Proposed	
	2021	2022	2023
Monthly Customer Charge	\$ 27.00	\$ 27.00	\$ 27.00
Summer Energy Charge per kWh			
Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0873	\$ 0.0926	\$ 0.0982
Non-Summer Energy Charge per kWh			

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Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0794	\$ 0.0842	\$ 0.0893
Commercial Energy Average Rate Adjustment		5.0%	5.0%

Commercial Demand (CD)	Adopted	Proposed	
	2021	2022	2023
Monthly Customer Charge	\$ 128.00	\$ 128.00	\$ 128.00
Summer Usage Charges			
Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0518	\$ 0.0549	\$ 0.0581
Demand Charge: Maximum kW, per kW	\$ 14.91	\$ 15.74	\$ 16.62
Non-Summer Usage Charges			
Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0471	\$ 0.0499	\$ 0.0528
Demand Charge: Maximum kW, per kW	\$ 13.55	\$ 14.31	\$ 15.11
Commercial Demand Average Rate Adjustment		5.6%	5.6%

Commercial Coincident Demand (CCD)	Adopted	Proposed	
	2021	2022	2023
Monthly Customer Charge	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Summer Usage Charges			
Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0517	\$ 0.0546	\$ 0.0577
Demand Charge: Maximum kW, per kW	\$ 4.40	\$ 4.65	\$ 4.92
Coincident Demand Charge: Coincident Peak kW, per kW	\$ 12.10	\$ 12.79	\$ 13.52
Non-Summer Usage Charges			
Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0470	\$ 0.0497	\$ 0.0525
Demand Charge: Maximum kW, per kW	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.23	\$ 4.47
Coincident Demand Charge: Coincident Peak kW, per kW	\$ 11.00	\$ 11.63	\$ 12.29
Commercial Coincident Demand Average Rate Adjustment		5.6%	5.6%

Other Rates (General Fund & Unmetered Energy) – Municipal General Fund customers are City customers paid for from the General Fund. For these users, the rates reflect only the wholesale cost of providing energy. The increases reflected below are only those increases for purchased power from PRPA. Unmetered Energy is a rate primarily applied to security lighting. The amount charged is based on projected wattage of the installed fixture.

General Fund Energy (GFE)	Adopted	Proposed	
	2021	2022	2023
Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0670	\$ 0.0691	\$ 0.0713
General Fund Energy Average Rate Adjustment		3.2%	3.2%
General Fund Demand (GFD)	Adopted	Proposed	

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	2021	2022	2023
Energy Charge: All kWh consumed, per kWh	\$ 0.0382	\$ 0.0394	\$ 0.0407
Demand Charge: Maximum kW, per kW	\$ 11.15	\$ 11.51	\$ 11.88
General Fund Demand Average Rate Adjustment		3.2%	3.2%

Unmetered Energy (UE)	Adopted	Proposed	
	2021	2022	2023
Energy Charge: Monthly energy & maintenance charge per installation			
1-49 watt	\$ 7.75	\$ 8.15	\$ 8.55
50-149 watt	9.35	9.85	10.35
150-249 watt	12.70	13.35	14.05
250+ watt	15.25	16.00	16.80
Power Supply	58.10	61.00	64.05
Unmetered Energy Average Rate Adjustment		5.0%	5.0%

Electric Community Investment Fee (ECIF)

The ECIF was implemented in 1994. Its purpose is to recover the full cost associated with the construction of off-site electric main feeders and substation capacity required as a result of new development. The ECIF is collected through the building permit process. Approximately \$18.3 million collected since inception, and \$13 million has been spent on main feeders and substation capacity increases over the past 26 years. The present fund balance is \$4.8 million. In addition to the ECIF charges, LPC also collects the entire cost associated with any on-site infrastructure specifically required to serve development. This “development pays its own way” philosophy enables LPC to keep development costs out of the rate base, contributing to lower electric service rates for all electric customers.

It is important to note that the ECIF funds high-capacity facilities that usually are installed prior to the full development of the load to be served. For example, a feeder extension may be required at a cost of \$50K or more to serve the initial phase of a development that initially contributes less than half that cost in ECIF. Only when the development builds out and the last lot is served will the fund be fully compensated. The addition of a substation transformer is an outlay of about \$2.0 million with a small portion of the full capacity utilized in the initial loading period. The cost is recovered over a long time period as lots are connected.

In general, to develop the ECIF schedule, LPC staff estimates the cost of the off-site infrastructure required to serve the ultimate projected electric load of the City of Longmont (outlined by the City’s Comprehensive Plan), then allocates these costs based upon the estimated electric load of each new service. Staff has recently updated the construction costs for these facilities and it has been determined that existing fees will not adequately cover the cost to meet load projections; therefore, staff is recommending 9.5% rate increase

in 2022 to account for increased labor, equipment, and material costs for the last 4 years. This increase will be applied to each fee. See attachment for updated ECIF fee schedule.

In 2022, Staff will engage a consultant to assist with a more extensive review of current methodology and best practices moving forward.

Storm Drainage Cost of Service

The rate study for the storm drainage utility proposes a three-year rate schedule. Based on the operating and capital expenses previously discussed with Council, the storm drainage utility has a revenue requirement of approximately \$29.8 million over this period. On June 29, two revenue requirement scenarios were presented. The City was not awarded the grant funding through FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. Though staff will continue to pursue grant funding options, only the funding scenario without grant funding was used to develop rates. The following table represents the total proposed funding of the storm drainage fund for 2022-2024 including operating expenses, debt and proposed debt, capital expenses, and sufficient reserve to meet requirements.

While the amounts presented for a proposed rate increase reflect the minimum needs of the storm drainage fund, the total needs for the utility to address aging infrastructure and flood mitigation efforts will need to be revisited at the end of the three-year rate schedule period. This timeframe is concurrent with the completion of the Storm Drainage Master Plan, which will provide detailed information about the needs of the City's storm drainage system and possible solutions. When the Storm Drainage Utility was formed in 1984, much of the existing infrastructure had already been installed and begun to age and deteriorate. The Storm Drainage Master Plan will include asset management components to address aging infrastructure, which is in poor condition and potentially dangerous. While tremendous progress has been made in floodplain protection, storm sewer assets have not been sufficiently updated over this time period. To adequately meet the revenue needs of the system, it may become necessary to consider additional sources of revenue, including further rate increases, new or redirected tax revenues, or additional options.

	2022	2023	2024
<i>Operating</i>	\$4,838,000	\$4,983,000	\$5,133,000
<i>Debt</i>	\$2,446,000	\$2,444,000	\$2,448,000
<i>Proposed Debt*</i>		\$1,008,000	\$1,008,000
<i>Capital</i>	\$828,000	\$1,555,000	\$2,282,000
<i>Reserve Requirement</i>	\$500,000	(\$130,000)	\$420,000
Total	\$8,612,000	\$9,860,000	\$11,291,000

*Note: The annual payment amounts for a potential 2023 Revenue Bond are an estimate of payments

Understanding this need, the costs associated with each customer class have been developed using industry standard cost of service methods. A rate increase will allow the City to continue work to improve and maintain our storm drainage system.

Proposed Storm Drainage Rates

Major factors that influence the revenue requirement shown above are:

- \$2,016,000 for the first two years of debt service payments on a proposed bond issuance of \$15 million (subject to voter approval) to complete improvements for the Resilient St Vrain Project through the Hover Street crossing.
- \$4,665,000 investment in asset management of storm sewer infrastructure
- Continued investment in master planning efforts, which will result in the identification of future investment needs in asset management.
- Inflationary adjustments to operating expenses (3% annually). Current revenues are not sufficient to cover any increase in these expenses.
- Funding of potential rebate on storm drainage rates for low-income households (details below).

The following two options for rate increases would achieve sufficient revenue over the proposed three-year rate schedule.

Option 1:

Rates will increase for all user classes by the same percentage each year with the largest increase in rates occurring in 2022. This maintains the current rate structure.

User Class	2021	2022	2023	2024
All	\$13.05	\$14.90	\$16.70	\$18.85
% Increase		14.2%	12.1%	12.9%
\$ Amount of Increase		\$1.85	\$1.80	\$2.15

Option 2:

The cost will be divided among three user classes. Residential and commercial user classes will increase by the same percentage each year while multifamily remains the same as the current rate over this period. This rate structure utilizes an allocation of cost based on user class averages for impervious surface area and trip generation.

User Class	2021	2022	2023	2024
Residential	\$13.05	\$15.75	\$18.25	\$21.50
Multifamily	\$13.05	\$13.05	\$13.05	\$13.05
Commercial	\$13.05	\$15.75	\$18.25	\$21.50

% Increase (Residential & Commercial Only)	20.7%	15.9%	17.8%
\$ Amount of Increase (Residential & Commercial Only)	\$2.70	\$2.50	\$3.25

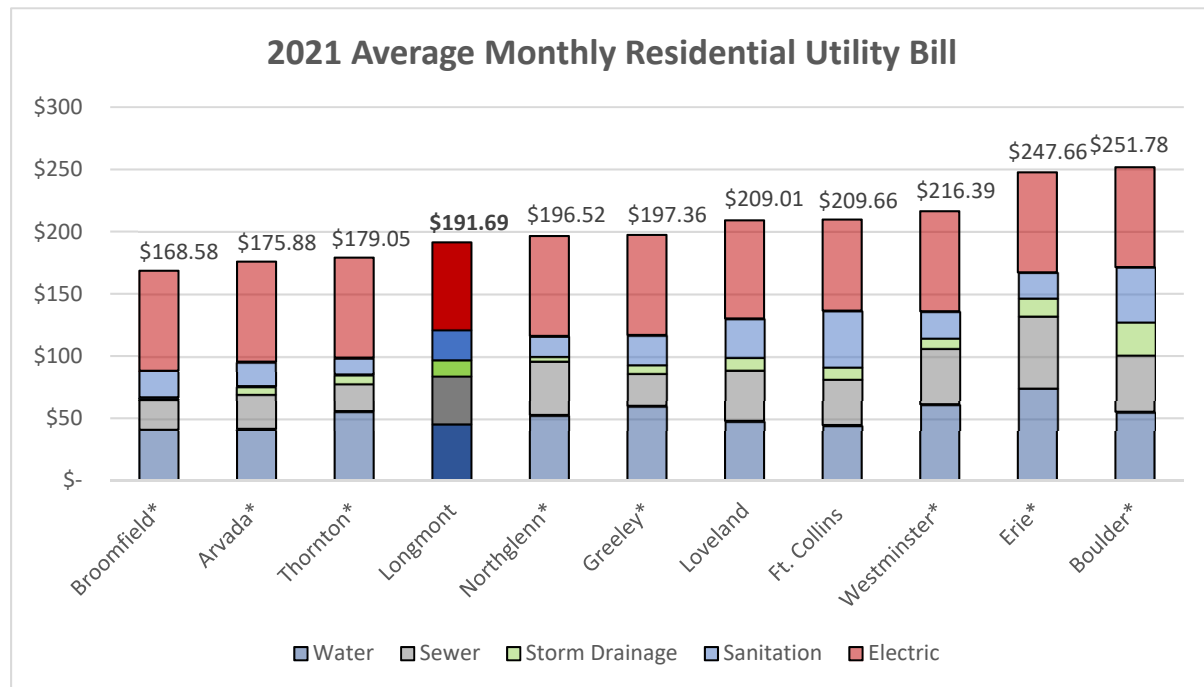
There are significant risks associated with delaying replacement of key storm drainage system assets. The capital program has been proposed in its current form to fund the highest priority infrastructure projects, though they likely do not represent the total storm drainage system needs. Option 1 is recommended because it maintains the simple and predictable structure users know today.

The Storm Drainage Plan Investment Fee (paid by developers in conjunction with building permit fees) will be updated along with the Water and Wastewater System Development Fees in the coming months.

Residential Utility Bill Impact

Residential Utility Bills Today

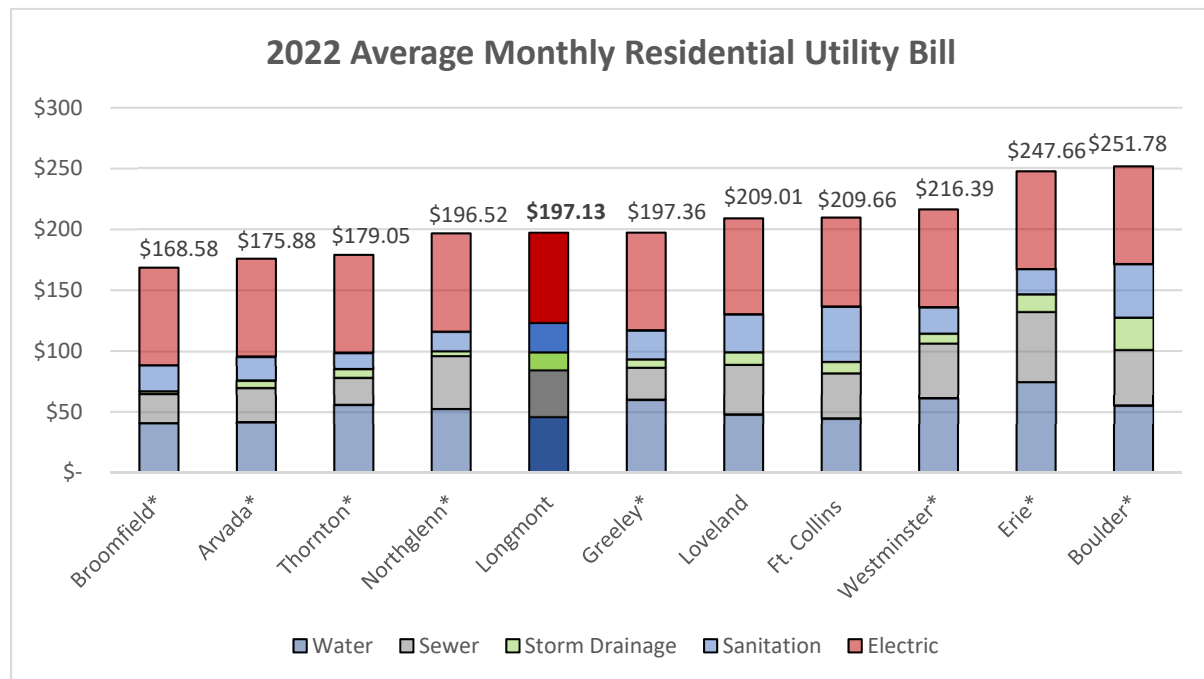
Longmont's utility bills provide excellent value. 2021 rates are low compared to other Front Range communities and a broad range of reliable services are provided. Electric and water rates in particular are among the lowest for comparable communities, which contributes to the overall affordability of utility bills in Longmont.



*Electric is Xcel Energy

Option 1 Average Monthly Residential Utility Bill for 2022:

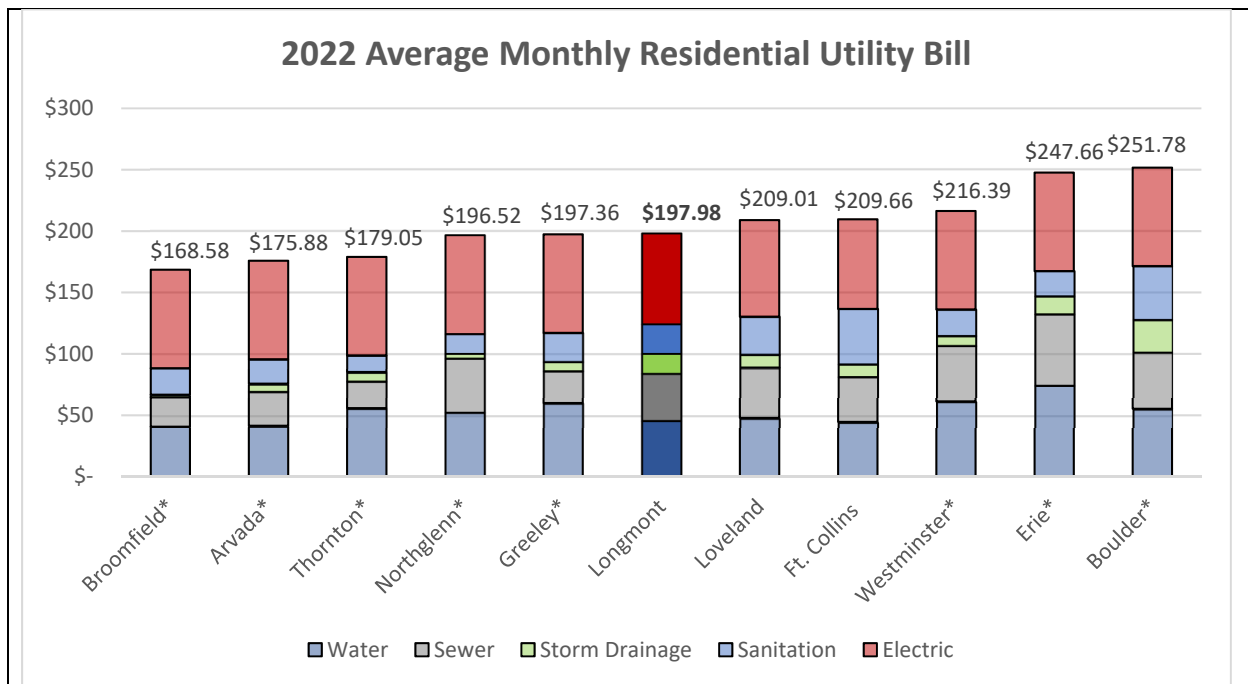
This table represents the proposed rate increases for both electric and storm drainage. The storm drainage rates increase by the same percentage among all customer classes.



*Electric is Xcel Energy

Option 2 Average Monthly Residential Utility Bill for 2022:

This table represents the proposed rate increases for both electric and storm drainage. The storm drainage cost will be divided among three user classes. Residential and commercial user classes will increase by the same percentage each year while multifamily remains the same over the same period.



*Electric is Xcel Energy

Efficiency & Assistance Programs

The City of Longmont offers residents opportunities to lower their bills by using energy and water more efficiently. Programs such as Efficiency Works assists homeowners and businesses in identifying options for efficiency upgrades, as well as rebates and discounts available for more efficient appliance solutions.

LPC is a participant in Colorado's Affordable Residential Energy Program (CARE), which is available to income-qualified residents and provides free home energy audits and energy efficiency upgrades to reduce energy usage and make homes more comfortable.

The City also makes significant investments in electric and water efficiency programs, which can help control bills and support environmental sustainability goals. Efficiency programs can be viewed at <https://www.longmontcolorado.gov/departments/departments-n-z/utilities/efficiency-resources>.

Several partner agencies are able to provide assistance each year for utility payments, including federal assistance for heating costs through LEAP or crisis assistance through the OUR Center. A full list of assistance agencies is available at <https://www.longmontcolorado.gov/departments/departments-n-z/utilities/assistance-agencies>.

Residents may also qualify for the income-based assistance program, Longmont City Assistance and Rebate System (Longmont CARES) available at <https://www.longmontcolorado.gov/community/financial-assistance-and-rebate-programs>. Through Longmont CARES, residents receive rebates on the following items: sales tax, property tax or rent, park & greenway maintenance fee, electricity, and water. This program has seen increased enrollment and assistance provided in 2020.

Program Year	# of Participants	Average Rebate per Participant	Total Rebate Amount
2019	184	\$287	\$52,881
2020	711	\$387	\$275,415

The electric rebate is \$8 for each month the customer paid an electric bill in the previous year. LPC is proposing to increase the monthly rebate amount to \$8.50 in 2022, and \$9 in 2023. This equates to a 5% increase each year. The chart below displays the financial impact of the proposed increases in the rebate amount. Though the number of participants for 2020 was only 711, the City's future target number of participants is 1,800, which is the number used in the following charts.

Program Year	Target # of Participants	Monthly Rebate per Participant	Total Rebate Amount
2022	1,800	\$8.00	\$172,800
2023	1,800	\$8.50	\$183,600
2024	1,800	\$9.00	\$194,400

Storm Drainage rates are not currently included in the Longmont CARES program. Staff recommends extending a rebate to qualifying residents. The following options reflect the monthly increases that would be incurred by residents, which would be offset by the rebate.

For Rate Option 1:

The amount of the rebate is the entire amount of the proposed rate increase.

Year	2022	2023	2024
Amount of Increase	\$1.85	\$3.65	\$5.80

*These amounts are cumulative. The amount of increase per year is listed in Storm Drainage Cost of Service table for Option 1.

The target estimated amount of the rebate amount for each year is provided in the following table:

Program Year	Target # of Participants	Monthly Rebate per Participant	Total Rebate Amount
2022	1,800	\$1.85	\$39,960
2023	1,800	\$3.65	\$78,840
2024	1,800	\$5.80	\$125,280

For Rate Option 2:

The amount of the rebate is the entire amount of the proposed rate increase.

Year	2022	2023	2024
Amount of Increase	\$2.70	\$5.20	\$8.45

*These amounts are cumulative. The amount of increase per year is listed in Storm Drainage Cost of Service table for Option 2-.

The target estimated amount of the rebate amount for each year is provided in the following table:

Program Year	Target # of Participants	Monthly Rebate per Participant	Total Rebate Amount
2022	1,800	\$2.70	\$58,320
2023	1,800	\$5.20	\$112,320
2024	1,800	\$8.45	\$182,520

Community Outreach

There are a number of opportunities available to engage the public around utility bills. Several recent community events have highlighted the information in utility bills, as well as opportunities to save money.

In September 2020, the Sustainable Business Program hosted a webinar for businesses on reading commercial utility bills, which included money-saving tips. A recording is available here: <https://youtu.be/kdPdN4FzXJY>. Additional resources for businesses can be accessed by signing up for the Sustainable Business Program, or by joining the mailing list.

Correspondingly, a March 10, 2021 webinar entitled, “How to Read and Reduce Your Household Utility Bill,” provided similar information for residential bills. A recording is available here: <https://youtu.be/e8R4G6VTjM4>.

In addition to information on reducing utility bills, the City releases messaging throughout the year in collaboration with the Keep It Clean Partnership regarding best practices for reducing stormwater pollution. Similarly, the City releases information to residents regarding



best practices for flood control. This includes information on the importance of obtaining flood insurance, insurance discounts available for residents, and the importance of being prepared during peak flooding season. The City also hosts open houses when appropriate to notify and educate residents on any changes to the Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Messaging for these projects is broadcast through a variety of city channels, including City Line, City Talk, LPC-NextLight's "More Power to You" blog, social media, the City's website, and outreach activities during community events. Additionally, information regarding potential rate changes will be available in both English and Spanish on a City webpage and through citywide locations with high contact with residents.

ATTACHMENTS:

Att 1 - ECIF Rate Schedule