



Town of Estes Park
P.O. Box 1200
Estes Park, Colorado 80517
www.estes.org

Kate Rusch
Public Information Officer
krusch@estes.org
970-577-3701

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Open houses planned for “Downtown Estes Loop” road realignment project

The Town of Estes Park, together with its partners – Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFLHD) and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) – are initiating the project development process including public outreach, environmental analysis and preliminary engineering for the downtown road realignment project – “the Downtown Estes Loop.” The project includes three primary roadways: Elkhorn Avenue, Moraine Avenue and Riverside Drive through downtown Estes Park.

A community open house will take place Wednesday, October 8 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Estes Park Museum Meeting Room, 200 Fourth Street. Community members from outside the downtown area are encouraged to attend this initial meeting and provide input on the project. Recognizing that downtown residents, businesses and property owners may have more specific questions, these individuals are invited to an open house October 8 from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. at the Museum, prior to the larger, community open house. This will allow agency staff and consultants to focus on questions and comments specific to the downtown area. Invitations to this event are being mailed to all available tenant and property owner addresses along the primary project roadways in the study area.

Public input is critical to finding a design solution that meets the needs of the overall community. The project team will be inviting individuals and organization representatives to participate in stakeholder groups focused on residents/neighborhood needs, economy/businesses, technical/utilities, environmental/history, and multi-modal transportation. Future public outreach will include open houses, stakeholder group meetings, and one-on-one meetings with property owners along the right-of-way of the proposed concept.

The “Downtown Estes Loop” project builds on previous transportation planning studies as well as an outreach process conducted in the Spring of 2013 to gather input on the community’s priorities for improving transportation downtown. The public weighed in on several transportation-related project options, one of which was the conversion of traffic through the core downtown area from two-way to one-way traffic, creating a loop to increase capacity by approximately 40 percent. This one-way

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couplet option was the majority of the participating public's preferred solution to increase traffic flow. The Town Board voted to proceed with a competitive grant application to build the one-way couplet. The application was successful, and the Town was awarded \$13 million from the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), administered through the CFLHD, as well as \$4.2 million through the CDOT Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships (RAMP) program. These funding programs present Estes Park with a unique opportunity to make major transportation and congestion improvements at no net cost to the local government – with the added potential for other community benefits as a result of the project.

A website is currently under development; please check in frequently for updates: www.downtownestesloop.com. To sign up for our mailing list or submit a comment, please contact the project team at info@downtownestesloop.com or 970-480-7045. More Town news is available at www.estes.org, www.facebook.com/townofestesparkco and www.twitter.com/townofestespark.

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