



# Downtown Estes Loop Project Frequently Asked Questions

**February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

The following lists a number of questions received at recent project-related meetings as well as through the project hotline, email address and website. These FAQs build upon the questions in the November 2014 FAQs posted on the project website ([www.downtownestesloop.com](http://www.downtownestesloop.com)). The intent is to continue adding to the set of FAQs as new questions and topics arise over the course of the project.

## **Project-Related Questions:**

*Question 1:* How is this project funded and is the project funded through loans?

*Response:* In September 2013, this Downtown Estes Loop Project was selected for inclusion in the Colorado Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) for ROW and construction costs up to \$13 million. The FLAP program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFLHD). FLAP provides funding for work on public facilities that are located on, are adjacent to, or provide access to federal lands. The project identified in the application included reconfiguring existing two-way roadways to one-way to ease traffic congestion and improve safety for both vehicles and pedestrians between Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP).

In addition, the Town received funding (\$4.2 Million) under the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships (RAMP) Program. The RAMP Program funding is designed to promote public-private partnerships including the transfer of ownership of certain CDOT roadways to a local agency with demonstrated support and willingness to take ownership and maintenance. Under this program, the Town will take ownership and maintenance from CDOT of West Elkhorn Avenue (from Moraine Avenue west to US 34), and the \$4.2 Million will constitute the local match for the larger FLAP project.

Neither the RAMP nor FLAP funding are in the form of loans that would require repayment to the state or federal government.

*Question 2:* How are potential alternatives evaluated?

*Response:* A two tiered screening process was developed with input from members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which includes team members from Central Federal Lands, CDOT and the Town of Estes. The preliminary screening considered a variation of 10 alternatives; evaluation criteria consisted of traffic operations, safety, community resources and cost. The secondary screening considers variations of four alternatives and includes several factors such as impacts to parking and displacement of residential and commercial property.

The anticipated environmental impacts of the alternatives that are carried forward as a result of the screening process will undergo detailed analysis during the development of the Environmental Assessment (EA). We anticipate releasing a Draft EA for public comment this summer. The screening results and the environmental process will be the main focus of the March 2015 public meeting.

*Question 3:* Would the speed limit change on study area streets (Elkhorn, Moraine and Riverside) with the alternatives under evaluation?

*Response:* Existing posted speed is 25 MPH through downtown and on Riverside and will remain 25 MPH under the No Action or any Build Alternative. Any new alignment along Riverside will be designed to a 25 MPH speed and the curvilinear alignment would reduce the potential for speeding.





## Downtown Estes Loop Project Frequently Asked Questions

**Question 4:** If right-of-way (private property) needs to be acquired to build the selected alternative, how will property acquisition be handled? What is the negotiation process?

**Response:** FHWA Central Federal Lands is the lead agency for this project. However, CDOT will take ownership of the right-of-way acquired for this project. Thus, CDOT will lead the acquisition process in accordance with state and federal procedures. The acquisition of any property must comply with state and federal requirements, including the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (referred to as the Uniform Act). The Uniform Act is a federally mandated program that applies to all acquisitions of real property or displacements of persons resulting from federal or federally assisted programs or projects. It was created to provide for and ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all such persons.

Additionally, the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution provides that private property may not be acquired for a public use without payment of just compensation. All impacted owners will be provided notification of CDOT's intent to acquire an interest in their property, including a written offer letter of just compensation specifically describing those property interests.

In certain situations, it may be necessary to acquire improvements (usually buildings) that are located within a proposed acquisition parcel. In those instances where the improvements are occupied, it becomes necessary to relocate those individuals from the acquired property (residential or business) to a replacement site. The Uniform Act provides benefits to these individuals to assist them both financially and with advisory services related to relocating their residence or business operation.

Any person scheduled to be displaced shall be furnished with a general written description of CDOT's relocation program that provides information related to eligibility requirements, advisory services and assistance, payments, and the appeal process. CDOT will also provide notification that the displaced person(s) will not be required to move without at least 90 days advance written notice. For residential relocatees, this notice cannot be provided until a written offer to acquire the subject property has been presented, and at least one comparable replacement dwelling has been made available.

The link below to the FHWA website includes the full language of the Uniform Act and a set of FAQs concerning relocation.

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/real\\_estate/uniform\\_act/policy\\_and\\_guidance/uafags.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/uniform_act/policy_and_guidance/uafags.cfm)

The following link to CDOT's website provides information on Property Acquisition:

<https://www.codot.gov/business/manuals/right-of-way/Supplemental%20Information/row-brochures/Acq-Eng.pdf/view>



**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Transportation