



Downtown Estes Loop Project Frequently Asked Questions

May 15th, 2015

Project Status

- 1) Has Alternative 1 already been selected? Is it a “done deal”?

Response: The NEPA process will proceed with environmental analysis of both the No Action and Alternative 1. A public hearing will be held during the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). Subsequent to this comment period, the project team will develop a decision document. A decision on the selected alternative will be documented in the decision document in the Fall/Winter of 2015/2016.

- 2) Since the Town Board voted to proceed with the EA process at their April 15th Meeting, what are the next steps in the study?

Response: The next step is to take the No Action and Alternative 1 through a detailed evaluation of potential environmental impacts (noise, air quality, hydrology & floodplains, economics, parks, and many others, consistent with FHWA guidance (<http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/pd2implement.asp>). This information, along with the purpose and need statement and alternatives screening process, will be compiled in the Draft EA. The Draft EA is anticipated for release Early Fall 2015.

- 3) Many have commented that the Town needs a Master Plan for the entire downtown area. What efforts are underway to initiate a Master Plan?

Response: Per a Town news release dated April 7th, 2015: The Town of Estes Park was awarded \$295,800 in state and federal grants for development of a downtown neighborhood plan and a study of the hydrology of Fall River, Black Canyon Creek and Big Thompson River. The downtown neighborhood plan received funding through the State Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund. The project objectives of the downtown neighborhood plan are to create an overall vision for downtown development for the next 20 years, integrate flood hazard and resiliency planning with transportation and parking, infrastructure planning, sense of place (urban design), and economic resiliency into a unified plan, and to incorporate public outreach and engagement in all aspects of the downtown neighborhood planning process. This planning process is tentatively expected to take place from Summer of 2015 through Spring of 2016.

- 4) How is Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) involved in this study?

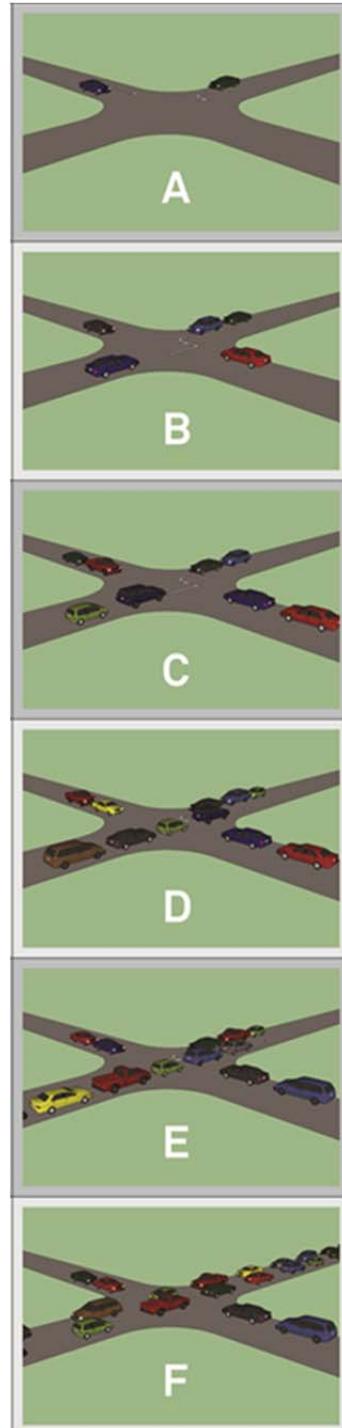
- a. *Response:* In April 2013, Rocky Mountain National Park wrote a letter of support for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) application. Since that time, RMNP representatives have attended public meetings associated with this project and discussed the project with Town and FHWA Central Federal Lands (CFL) staff. RMNP has maintained a neutral position on route alternatives but supports the completion of the EA and the public involvement process.

Traffic Analysis and Accommodations

5) What is the definition of Level of Service (LOS)?

Response: LOS of an intersection is a qualitative measure of capacity and operating conditions and is directly related to vehicle delay. LOS is given a letter designation from A to F, with LOS A representing very short delays and LOS F representing very long delays. Typically, LOS D is considered the limit of acceptable operation in an urban environment.

LOS	Average Vehicle Delay (seconds)	Description
A	0-10	Free-flow traffic, low delays
B	10-20	Reasonable free-flow
C	20-35	Stable flow, significant number of vehicles stop at signals
D	35-55	Congestion noticeable, longer delays
E	55-80	Near capacity, unstable flow
F	> 80	Unacceptable very high delay, traffic exceeds capacity





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- 6) Are improvements such as signage at 34/36 and within downtown, return of the Barnes Dance traffic signalization, and the potential for hiring summer police officers either not included (or precluded) as part of this project?

Response: New signage at 34/36 is planned to help direct RMNP traffic to both Park entrances. The Town is coordinating with CDOT on these improvements and CDOT plans to install them in 2015. This signage project would also provide improved signs to RMNP along area roadways to help direct traffic to RMNP.

The Town is currently working with CDOT to temporarily re-install the Barnes Dance for a period of time in the Summer of 2015. To explain the history on the Barnes Dance: in 2008, the traffic signals in town were programmed to allow for the Barnes Dance which stopped traffic in all four directions approximately every 100 seconds. In 2010, the Barnes Dance was eliminated, giving signal time back to vehicles.

The addition of police officers to direct traffic in the peak season is not precluded under any scenario. The Town currently employs four Community Service Officers each summer whose duties include traffic direction during peak season. Police Auxiliary volunteers also assist with traffic direction during peak season to help alleviate congested intersections.

Bridges and Floodplains

- 7) Will this project only rebuild two bridges (as identified in the original FLAP grant application to FHWA Central Federal Lands)?

Response: The FLAP application was received (by FHWA) and included the replacement of two bridges. The project was scoped prior to the flood in September 2013. Regulatory flood flow rates have been updated and accepted by CDOT and the Town. The project will analyze hydrology and hydraulics within the project corridor which includes three bridges. Bridge impacts to the floodplain will be determined and replacement of up to three bridges will be considered in context with the overall cost of the project.

- 8) What is the status of new floodplain mapping and how does that relate to this project?

Response: In December 2013, the Colorado Department of Transportation/Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) retained a consultant to develop a hydrology study of the Big Thompson River from Lake Estes to Loveland and the Fall River basin in and above Estes Park. This map shows the existing areas in the floodplain as well as new areas if no mitigation work is initiated. As part of the next step, a detailed hydrology and hydraulics (H&H) study is needed to determine specific floodplain boundaries.

- 9) If Alternative 1 is selected, would it solve the floodplain issues downtown?

Response: No. Six bridges were identified for replacement in the recent floodplain study, as well as extensive channel improvements. Thus, Alternative 1 would assist in reducing the size of the expanded floodplain (existing or future boundary), but would not remove the downtown entirely from the new floodplain.



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Economics

10) What will be included in the Economic Analysis section of the EA?

- a. *Response:* The Economics section of the EA will follow the requirements set forth in FHWA's Technical Advisory (T 6640.8A). It will begin with a description of the existing economic conditions and key factors with an emphasis on Downtown Estes Park and the potential effects of the No Action Alternative and Alternative 1. As part of the environmental consequences section, the analysis will include potential impacts to those businesses that are permanently impacted or access is impacted during construction. It will include any known effects on the local economy, vitality of existing businesses, and on any established business districts under each alternative. Strategies to avoid and/or reduce economic effects and optimize Downtown economic conditions for both alternatives will be provided. *Refer to the attached scope of work outline for the Economics Section of the EA.*

It is important to note that detailed analysis of indirect effects on individual businesses (changes in sales, sales tax generation and other effects) involves consideration of a wide range of factors that cannot be fully quantified without speculation. Speculative analysis is not included as it is not anticipated to result in a higher level of practical estimations of the indirect impacts.

We welcome feedback throughout this process. Please send questions and comments to:

Project Email: info@downtownestesloop.com, Project Hotline: 970-480-7045 or Via the Project
Website: <http://downtownestesloop.com/contact-us/>



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ATTACHMENT: ECONOMIC SECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

SCOPE OF WORK OUTLINE

The Economics section of the EA will describe existing economic conditions and key factors with an emphasis on Downtown Estes Park and the potential effects of the No Action Alternative and the Build Alternative (Alternative 1: One Way Couplet). The analysis will include potential impacts to those businesses that are permanently impacted or access is impacted during construction. The analysis of potential indirect effects will be qualitative and broad and will determine consistency with town transportation, land use, and community planning and studies. Strategies to avoid and/or reduce economic effects and optimize Downtown economic conditions for both alternatives will be provided.

The **Affected Environment** discussion will:

- Provide an overview of economic conditions in the Estes Valley, the Town of Estes Park and Downtown and the importance of Downtown Estes Park
- Characterize past, present and anticipated future motor vehicle travel trends and visitation as key indicators of economic demand and market conditions
- Address fluctuations in traffic in relation to broad economic factors (recession, gas prices, etc.) and local conditions (fires and flood)
- Characterize the importance of Downtown business visibility, accessibility and mobility by vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians
- Characterize overall spending conditions (retail sales), trends and City sales tax data over time.
- Estimate market demand and supply by business type and generally identify the Downtown's economic strengths and weaknesses.
- Analyze sales tax data compared to other resort destinations in Colorado to assess competitive markets and market place conditions
- Evaluate population and housing data to evaluate past, present and future market potential
- Summarize Downtown parking needs and parking capacity
- Characterize 2040 market Conditions and identify critical economic development factors

The **Environmental Consequences** discussion will address the beneficial and adverse effects of the No Action Alternative and the Build Alternative (One Way Couplet Alternative) in a qualitative manner. The discussions will:

- Describe short term and temporary economic effects caused by construction
- Define the economic impact caused by displacement of businesses and residences
- Clarify the parking effects caused by net reductions in available parking.
- Characterize how anticipated 2040 traffic volumes and directional changes will be accommodated and corresponding direct and indirect effects on Downtown Estes Park business visibility, accessibility, parking and mobility, including out of direction travel in terms of new development/redevelopment and overall tax revenues, public expenditures, employment opportunities, and retail sales during peak and off-peak periods.



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The **Mitigation Measures** discussion will identify measures to avoid and/or minimize specific adverse impacts of the alternatives.

Note: Detailed analysis of indirect effects on individual businesses (changes in sales, sales tax generation and other effects) involve consideration of a wide range of factors that cannot be fully quantified without speculation. Speculative analysis is not included as it is not anticipated to result in a higher level of practical estimations of the indirect impacts.