



Town of Estes Park
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Town Board votes to continue NEPA Environmental Assessment Future of Downtown Estes Loop project will not be referred to the voters

At its August 11 meeting, the Estes Park Town Board voted to proceed with the Downtown Estes Loop NEPA Environmental Assessment. The board voted to retain its authority to proceed with the study and project when all the available data is provided, and will not refer the decision to voters. This decision came after the board considered comments from local residents and organizations, representing both sides of the decision whether or not to send the future of the project to a public vote. The board's decision also came after Town Administrator Frank Lancaster updated the board on new developments with the project study and estimated costs.

Currently, Central Federal Lands Highway Division and its consultant are preparing the Environmental Assessment (EA) of the one-way loop and the "do nothing" alternatives. Lancaster relayed new concerns by the agency leading the project, Central Federal Lands Highway Division, about significant cost overruns if the three undersized bridges in the project area were replaced with specifications to withstand a 100-year flood event. Pending hydrology studies needed to complete a full design and cost estimates will delay the release of the NEPA findings until approximately spring of 2016. Preliminary estimates show replacing all three bridges to withstand a 100-year flood, as well as completing necessary channel widening downstream, could cost roughly twice the total of the current budget. The project team is also investigating the possibility of adding third alternative to the NEPA Environmental Assessment which may not include one-way roads. More information will be released when available.

Over the past nine months, the Town, together with its partners – Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFLHD) and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) – have conducted a public EA process including scoping, alternatives development and environmental analysis to evaluate transportation improvement options along three primary roadways through downtown Estes Park: Elkhorn Avenue, Moraine Avenue and East/West Riverside Drives. The NEPA screening analysis shows the one-way couplet as the best "build" alternative and the only alternative that can be pursued with current funding. Additional information on the NEPA study for the potential Downtown Estes Loop project may be found on the project website: www.downtownestesloop.com or by contacting the project team at info@downtownestesloop.com or [970-480-7045](tel:970-480-7045). Video of the August 11 Town Board meeting is available via www.estes.org/videos.

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