

4 CORRESPONDENCE, CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

4.1 Overview

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Central Federal Lands (CFL) (the lead agency), together with the Town of Estes Park and CDOT, received substantial input from community stakeholders and the public in identifying the project purpose and need, design alternatives for consideration and transportation issues of concern through downtown Estes Park. CFL's intent was to develop an open and collaborative process to gather input and to provide multiple forums for public comment and dialogue. This input helped improve the process in an effort to develop a project that will help accomplish the transportation needs of downtown.

The project team implemented a multi-pronged outreach process beginning with a public involvement plan. This plan identified the methods of outreach aligned with important milestones in the NEPA process. Through the EA process, the project team held public and small group meetings, established a Technical Advisory Team (TAC), and met one-on-one with resource agencies and stakeholder representatives. The public information program provided information about the project and public meetings through mailings, a project website, advertisements in local newspapers, social media, and a telephone hotline. The Town Public Information Office helped distribute information about the project through Town communication channels.

This chapter describes the public involvement process implemented as part of the Environmental Assessment.

4.2 Public Involvement Plan

A public involvement plan specific to this project was developed as part of project initiation in close consultation with the FHWA Central Federal Lands, Town of Estes Park and CDOT. The plan's purpose was to create a process that ensured consistent distribution of project information and ongoing involvement and input from public and agency stakeholders, interested parties, and affected members of the public.

A number of public involvement opportunities, communication methods and outreach efforts were employed to involve and inform the community over the course of the project.

4.3 Scoping

4.3.1 Public Scoping Meeting

Two open houses were held on October 8, 2014 to introduce the project and gather public feedback on issues of concern. The first open house was held from 12:00 to 2:00 PM. It was announced to the general public; in addition, targeted outreach in the form of a mailed letter was sent to residents and businesses located along the study area roadways. A second open house for the general public was held from 4:00 to 6:00 PM on the 8th. Both meetings were held at the Estes Park Museum Meeting Room, 200 Fourth Street. The open houses were announced through press releases, newspaper advertisements, the project website (www.downtownesteshoop.com), the town email list, the project email list and social media. Per

the sign-in form, 123 persons attended the first open house and 104 persons attended the second open house. The meetings provided information to the public concerning:

- Project History (design options evaluated prior to this project)
- State and federal funding sources allocated to the project
- Design options presented as part of previous studies
- Environmental and community considerations
- Tentative project schedule

4.3.2 Agency Scoping

Agency scoping letters were distributed via email in November 2014 from the Central Federal Lands Highway Division to all interested federal, tribal, state and local agencies to invite their participation and input into the process. Representatives from the following agencies received letters:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- National Park Service
- U.S. Postal Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (State of Colorado)
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Larimer County

The following tribal governments received letters:

- Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
- Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma
- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
- Comanche Nation of Oklahoma
- Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
- Eastern Shoshone Tribe
- Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma
- Northern Arapaho Tribe
- Northern Cheyenne Tribe
- Oglala Sioux Tribe
- Rosebud Sioux Tribe
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North & South Dakota
- Ute Indian Tribe
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

Copies of the letters as well as any response letters received are included in *Appendix C: Agency Coordination*.

4.4 Technical Advisory Committee

A Technical Advisory Committee composed of Central Federal Lands, CDOT, and the Town of Estes Park (with support from the consultant team) was formed early in the project. The TAC met approximately monthly through the duration of the project to discuss the environmental process, design, public outreach and other relevant project updates.

4.5 Meetings

The following describes public meetings and small group meetings hosted by the project team, as well as Town Board and Town Hall meetings led by Town staff and administration. Though not official public forums hosted as part of the EA process, the Town Board and Town Hall meetings were important means for receiving input and addressing community concerns throughout the process.

Materials presented at these meetings are included in *Appendix D: Comments and Coordination*.

4.5.1 Public Meetings

October 8, 2014 Open Houses: See description in Section 4.3 above.

March 25, 2015 Public Meeting: A public meeting was held from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Estes Park Event Center (1125 Rooftop Way) to present the alternatives screening process. A presentation was given, followed by public comments.

4.5.2 Small Group Meetings

Small group meetings were held on December 10th and 11th, 2014 to discuss specific topic areas, including residential/neighborhood needs, economics, environmental and multi-modal transportation. The meetings began with a presentation by the project team followed by small group discussion on specific topic areas. As part of this presentation, initial design alternatives were presented and attendees provided feedback on those alternatives (along with new alternatives for consideration).

4.5.3 Property Owner Meetings

Project team members held individual meetings with potentially affected property owners along the corridor alignments. Meetings with individual property owners who may require full relocation took place on February 18, and March 25, 2016. Additional meetings with adjacent property owners in Piccadilly Square and tenants at the Children's Park parking lot were held on May 10, 2016. The purpose of each meeting was to discuss the project purpose and study area, the potential impacts to the property owner, the next steps in the project, and an overview of the right-of-way process (Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act). CDOT will hold more in-depth meetings with each property owner as the project moves into the right of way and final design phases.

4.5.4 Town Board Meetings

This project was placed on the Agenda for both Town Board study sessions and Town Board meetings. Specific dates are as follows:

- **Town Board Study Session, March 18, 2015:** The purpose of this meeting was to present the Board with an update on project activities to-date, with a focus on the alternatives screening process. The project team gave a presentation, and then answered questions from the Town Board.
- **Town Board Meeting, April 15, 2015:** A special meeting of the Town Board was held to discuss the alternatives screening process and the recommendation from the NEPA project team to proceed through the EA process with the No Action and Alternative 1 (Couplet). The Town Board heard comments from the public and then took action to proceed with the EA process.
- **Town Board Meeting, August 11, 2015:** The Town Board reviewed a draft resolution which, if approved, would set an election to refer a measure to the electorate during the Coordinated Election in November (2015) for the Downtown Estes Loop and set ballot language. At the meeting, the board voted to complete the NEPA process, understand all of the facts and the implications, and then make a decision on behalf of the community.

4.5.5 Town Hall Meetings

Town Hall Meeting, January 15, 2015: The Town of Estes Park hosted a Town Hall meeting on January 15th, 2015 at Town Hall. The meeting provided an opportunity for downtown businesses to ask questions and express to peers and Town officials their opinions on traffic-related issues and the project as a whole. Town staff gave a brief presentation on the background and status of the project and then opened the floor for public comment.

4.6 Avenues for Public Comment

4.6.1 Project Website

As part of initiation of the project, a website was developed (www.downtownestesloop.com) and updated over the course of the project. The website included a project description, project partners, schedule, meeting materials, meeting summaries and public involvement opportunities. An editable comment form was provided to collect input directly through the website. Approximately 12,000 users visited the site a total of 15,000 times since the website went “live” in October 2014.



4.6.2 Project Email Address

A project email address (info@downtownestesloop.com) was created at the beginning of the project to. All emails were received the project team and documented in a matrix. Any that requested a response were replied to promptly.

4.6.3 Project Hotline

A project hotline (970-480-7045) was created by the project team early in the project to accept questions and comments. Phone call content and caller information was documented in a spreadsheet. A team member returned the call if a response was requested.

4.7 Project Updates

4.7.1 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Newsletters

A set of FAQs were initiated in November 2014 (following the first set of public meetings) to address questions asked by the community on a variety of topics. Each question included a response developed by the project team. The FAQs were updated in February 2015, and May 2015. The FAQs were posted on the project website and emailed to the project email list, as well as a contact list maintained by the Town. Copies of the FAQs are included in *Appendix D: Comments and Coordination*.

A newsletter was published in March 2015 to provide an update on the project, review the project background and summarize activities completed to-date. A newsletter with FAQ attached was issued in March 2016 with a project update.

4.7.2 Social Media

The Town of Estes Park's Facebook page was updated to include meeting and other project-related announcements.

4.7.3 Project Email List

The project team compiled an email list of all attendees from project-related meetings, as well as those who requested addition to the email list. Project announcements, including frequently asked questions, newsletters, and meeting notifications, were sent to this list. This list grew over the course of the project; at the time of EA publication the list totaled 175 individuals. In addition, project announcements were distributed through an email distribution list managed by the Town of Estes Park.