

## Downtown Estes Loop – Public Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) Release

The Downtown Estes Loop Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on April 19, 2017 by Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFLHD). The FONSI concerns the improvements of a 0.9 mile loop consisting of Elkhorn Avenue, Moraine Avenue and Riverside Drives. These improvements consist of "Phase 1" of the proposed action analyzed in the 2016 Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Downtown Estes Loop Project. The EA also analyzed future unfunded improvements including reconstruction of the Rockwell and Riverside Bridges and future channel/floodplain improvements. The future unfunded phases discussed in the EA do not have a funding source or anticipated dates for implementation; these future phases are not included in the April 19, 2017 FONSI/NEPA decision document.

Phase 1 implementation includes:

- Pavement rehabilitation and signing/striping improvements along East Elkhorn Avenue and Moraine Avenue
- New signalized intersections at Elkhorn Avenue/East Riverside Drive/Virginia Drive and Elkhorn Avenue/Moraine Avenue/Big Horn Drive
- Reconstructed and reconfigured Moraine Avenue/Crags Drive/West Riverside Drive intersection to a new roundabout intersection
- Reconstruction and realignment of West Riverside Drive from the intersection of Moraine Avenue/Crags Drive/West Riverside Drive to 100 feet south of the East Riverside Drive/Rockwell Drive intersection
- Reconstruction of a new Ivy Street Bridge on the Riverside Drives alignment
- Channel and floodplain improvements downstream of Ivy Street to the existing Rockwell Street Bridge
- Pavement rehabilitation and signing/striping improvements along East Riverside Drive from 100 feet south of the East Riverside Drive/Rockwell Intersection to the Elkhorn Avenue/East Riverside Drive/Virginia Drive intersection
- Reconfigured and repaved Post Office Parking Lot
- Park replacements and enhancements along Baldwin Park and the Big Thompson River
- Full right-of-way acquisitions and relocations of the seven properties identified for full acquisition and relocation as described in the EA.

The FONSI document identifies the selected alternative, summarizes changes made since the release of the Environmental Assessment (EA), includes copies of comments received during the public comment period and responses, and lists the environmental commitments that will be implemented. The FONSI and its appendices will be posted on the project website ([www.downtownestesloop.com](http://www.downtownestesloop.com)) on the Environmental Documentation page for public download and viewing.

Per requirements of 23 CFR 774.5(a)(2)(ii), the public was notified and had an opportunity for public review and comment on the effects to park lands during the EA and Section 4(f) public comment period.

CFLHD coordinated with the Town of Estes Park with their intent to make a *de minimis* impact finding. A special meeting of the Town Board was held November 29, 2016 to discuss the project and the *de minimis* finding. New renderings of the Riverside Drive and Riverside/Baldwin Park areas were also presented to better illustrate the Park Replacement plan. At that meeting, the Town Board voted in concurrence with CFLHD's determination that the impact on Baldwin Park and Children's Park is *de minimis*. The Town of Estes Park provided written concurrence that the project does not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f).

### Project Background

This project originated through the Town's 2013 application for Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) funds to explore a one-way couplet along Elkhorn Avenue, Moraine Avenue and Riverside Drive. Approximately \$17.2 Million in funds were subsequently awarded through a combination of FLAP funds and CDOT RAMP (Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships). An EA was then initiated in the Fall of 2014, beginning with the development of a purpose and need statement: *Improve access to RMNP by reducing travel time and congestion, and improve safety through Downtown Estes Park*. A multi-tiered screening process led to the decision to evaluate the environmental impacts of the No Action and the Proposed Action (One-Way Couplet) in the EA. A public meeting was held in March 2015 to present the alternatives analysis findings, followed by Town Board action in April 2015 to continue the EA process. The EA was released for public comment on July 5 and the comment period went through August 5, 2016. The project team hosted a one-on-one question and answer session on July 14, 2016 at Town Hall to answer technical questions on the EA. A public hearing for the project was held on July 20, 2016 at the Estes Park Event Center. Public comments could also be submitted in writing at any time during the 30-day comment period. Together, the three agency partners— Central Federal Lands Highway Division, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and the Town of Estes Park – are committed to delivering a project that helps alleviate congestion and improve overall connectivity between the Town and Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP).

Additional information on this study may be found on the project website:

[www.downtownestesloop.com](http://www.downtownestesloop.com) or by contacting the project team at [info@downtownestesloop.com](mailto:info@downtownestesloop.com) or 970-480-7045.