

# NEW HYDROLOGY AND MAPPING

## ESTES PARK, CO

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### BACKGROUND

- While the rivers, creeks, and streams in our community are a source of beauty and are vital to the economy, we have always known that they are also a source of floods. The 2013 floods were a stark reminder of what flood risk looks like. As a result, the Town is taking action to better understand the hazards our residents face. One of these important actions is the commissioning of a hydrology study to better inform Town decisions on flood mitigation.
- The Town's consultant, Wright Water Engineers, is wrapping up a hydrology study on Big Thompson River, Black Canyon Creek, Dry Gulch, and Fall River. This hydrology study uses nationally accepted best practices to establish flood flow numbers for these watersheds. The Fish Creek hydrology study was completed separately as part of the infrastructure repair project.
- The study results will be used in the state's new floodplain mapping process and it is highly likely that the anticipated increase in flood flow numbers will have an impact on the floodplain boundaries. Many of these floodplain boundaries may expand to include more structures, including homes and businesses. These preliminary results are currently under review by peer experts, including the Colorado Water Conservation Board, FEMA, Colorado University-Denver's Dr. James Guo, a highly-regarded regional authority on hydrology, the Town of Estes Park, and local professional stakeholders.

### WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

- Our primary focus in these efforts is safety. We can all agree that the community's safety is paramount to maintaining the current way of life. The best way to continue building our vibrant community is to understand the risk we face. This study will help us understand that risk and allow us to plan and make informed decisions.
- The study results will be very important for residents and business owners interested in development and flood mitigation opportunities, as the data is part of the floodplain permitting process. The data will serve as the basis of flood mitigation projects and be a key part of all future flood mitigation decisions.
- The 1-percent-annual-chance (100-year) flood flows will be changing from the currently adopted and regulated numbers. Part of this change is because there is now 40 years of new flood related data available, as well as more sophisticated and accurate methods of determining flood flow numbers (hydrology).

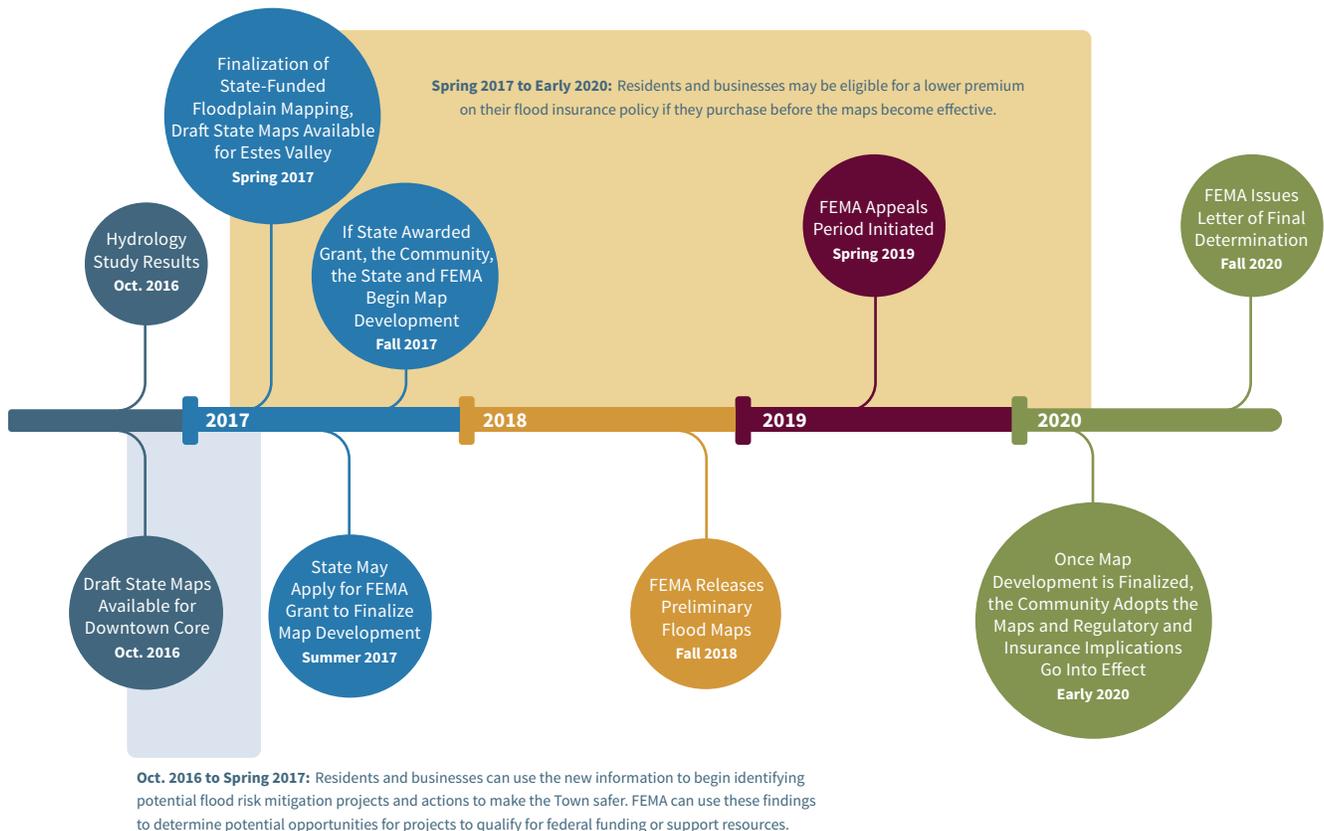
### BUILDING A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

- In 2013, our community and way of life were threatened by a flood event, but we learned a lot from that experience and are now positioned to come back stronger and more resilient. Part of that resiliency is acknowledging the risk that exists. By exercising the foresight and resolve to come together, we can better prevent our growing community and future generations from having to face that same risk.
- With the results of the hydrology study comes the opportunity to inform investments in the long term economic prosperity of the community. Knowing the risk to our community's businesses and acting accordingly will limit the disruption by a future event, thereby saving time and money in the long run.
- Flood damage is typically not covered under a standard homeowner's insurance policy. Since the Town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program though, anyone can buy flood insurance. It does not matter if a property is in the floodplain or outside of it, you can still protect your assets. Talk to your insurance agent for more information.

## WHAT COMES NEXT?

- The results of the hydrology study are the beginning of a conversation about ways we can work together to make our community safer and stronger. With a better understanding of the risk we face, we can begin identifying potential resources and projects to help our businesses and residents.
- The results of this study will help the Town make the case for mitigation if we apply for grants. It will also enhance how the Town regulates activities in the floodplain in order to provide higher levels of public safety. The results will also provide data to the state of Colorado for future floodplain updates.
- The new flood flows, or hydrology, will be available at the end of Oct. 2016. Results will first be presented to the Town Board Oct. 25, and during a public meeting Oct. 26 at 8 a.m. in the board room of the Town Hall.
- New preliminary floodplain boundary maps produced by the state will be available for the downtown core in October 2016. Final maps for the remainder of the Estes Valley will be available by spring 2017.
- Property owners can check to see if their property is located in the currently effective FEMA floodplain by entering their address on the FEMA Flood Map Service Center website, <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>.

## NEW HYDROLOGY AND MAPPING EVENTS TIMELINE



The timeline depicts the expected sequence of actions associated with hydrology and new mapping, in coordination with the state of Colorado and FEMA. Times and events are subject to change.

Learn more by visiting  
[www.estes.org/floodmitigation](http://www.estes.org/floodmitigation)



Town of Estes Park  
170 MacGregor Ave. | P.O. Box 1200  
Estes Park, CO 80517 | 970-586-5331

OCTOBER 2016