

**Public Notice
Notice of Intent
To prepare an Environmental Assessment for
St. Vrain Improvement Project
Longmont, Colorado**

Public notification is hereby given by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the intent to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) for a proposed project in the City of Longmont, Boulder County, and Weld County, Colorado. The City of Longmont has requested assistance from FEMA for the proposed flood improvement project for a reach of the channel of St. Vrain Creek.

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing and NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) scoping meeting will be held by the City of Longmont Council on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the City Council Chambers (350 Kimbark Street). An open house will be held from 4:30 – 6:45 at the same location where the project will be presented and available for review and discussion with City staff and the City's contractors who will be preparing the environmental assessment. The purpose of the public hearing is to invite comments from interested citizens regarding the proposed improvement project.

This notification is provided pursuant to NEPA, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management, and Executive Order 11990 – Wetlands Protection, and Federal agency implementation procedures including 44 C.F.R. Parts 9 and 10.

FEMA is considering funding the project through the Public Assistance Alternative Procedures Pilot Program (PAAP), which provides funds for the planning and the implementation of flood recovery and mitigation projects prior to a disaster event. Funding these plans and projects reduces overall risks to the population and structures, while also reducing reliance on funding from future disaster declarations. In accordance with NEPA, an EA will be prepared to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed project on the human and natural environment. The EA will also address any connected actions that will be carried out using non-FEMA funding sources.

BACKGROUND

The City of Longmont is located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and over the years has suffered multiple flood events caused by storm runoff. The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings and other structures. The City of Longmont has identified the need to mitigate future flood events associated with St. Vrain Creek from Airport Road to Boulder Creek, in Boulder and Weld counties. The 2013 flooding event affected buildings outside the St. Vrain Creek channel in the reach that will be analyzed.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is intended to increase the capacity of the existing channel to convey storm runoff and thereby minimize flood damage to improved property. The project includes two reaches that will be analyzed, the Sandstone Ranch Reach and the City Reach, described here.

The purpose of the proposed project in the Sandstone Ranch Reach is to reconstruct the destroyed section of the St. Vrain Greenway from Dry Creek to Sandstone Ranch and stabilize the creek channel. This will include analysis of trail design, drainage improvements, greenway pedestrian bridges over St. Vrain Creek where needed, landscaping, irrigation and associated greenway amenities associated with the original greenway, along with options to stabilize the creek channel (including channel location vegetation and erosion control). A goal of this project is to design and reconstruct this reach utilizing natural channel design for environmental and water quality enhancement opportunities. These goals will guide design to leverage the existing riparian corridor and add features that improve aquatic habitat, preserve minimum stream flows, restore vegetation, stabilize creek banks, and re-establish riparian amenities.

The purpose of the proposed project in the City Reach is to increase the capacity of the St. Vrain Creek to pass 100-year flood flows and to do it in such a manner as to meet the goal of enhancing the St. Vrain Greenway as an environmental, social and economic asset to the City of Longmont. This goal will work to greatly improve safety in the community; restore and enhance the valuable recreation, riparian and transportation corridor; and enhance economic development opportunities along the St. Vrain Greenway and throughout the core of the community that will no longer be in the 100-year floodplain.

The majority of the proposed project is within or adjacent to the floodway and 100-year (area subject to the 1% annual chance of flood) floodplain of St. Vrain Creek. The proposed project may affect both non-jurisdictional and jurisdictional wetlands, state-protected species, and federally-protected species. All required federal, tribal, state and local permits and approvals, including a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit from the regulatory office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be needed prior to construction.

COMMENT PERIOD

A public comment period related to the Proposed Action will remain open for 30 days following publication of this notice. In addition to this initial comment period, a final opportunity for public review and comment will be provided when the Draft EA becomes available. Interested parties may submit comments or request additional project information by contacting:

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