



Date: Thursday, April 17, 2025
Time: 3:30 PM
Location: Hybrid - In-Person: Estes Valley Community Center Classroom, 660 Community Dr, Estes Park, CO 80517 or Virtual, Zoom Link: https://larimer-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TwYIDm78RrOEN--9kRvL8g

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee met at the Estes Valley Community Center and virtually via Zoom at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at which time the following business was transacted.

Committee members present included: David Converse, Mike Kennedy, Drew Webb, Scott Stewart, and Nataly Handlos. Doyle Baker joined the meeting at 5:39 p.m.

Staff present included: Matt Lafferty, Michael Whitley, Christine Luckasen, Ryane Oswandel, and Christina Scrutchins.

Board of County Commissioners present included: Jody Shadduck-McNally

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Amendment: Move Commissioner Shadduck-McNally's updates to occur prior to the work session's annual compliance training.

Member Kennedy moved, and Member Webb seconded the motion to adopt April 17, 2025, agenda of the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee as amended. Member Baker was not present for this item. The motion carried (5-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Kennedy moved, and Member Webb seconded the motion to approve the January 16, 2025, minutes of the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee, as presented. Member Baker was not present for this item. Motion carried (5-0).

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally provided updates on budget challenges stemming from property tax revenue caps, with the County prioritizing staff input, efficiency, and service quality. Federal engagement continues, including meetings with all three congressional representatives, efforts to unfreeze infrastructure grant funds, and updates on a \$10 million federal acquisition grant. Two bills addressing rising homeowners' insurance costs—especially affecting Estes Valley—are in progress in coordination with the State Insurance Commissioner. A public session on this topic will be held Tuesday, May 27, from 5:30–7:30 p.m. at the Larimer County Office of Emergency Management near Shields Street in Fort Collins, with a virtual option being pursued. A biomass study has concluded, supporting wildfire mitigation through alternative fuel load strategies. The youth resource center reported over 7,000 visits in its first year, with 78% drive-ups, and will soon allow youth stays longer than 23 hours.

Additional focus areas include careful siting of accessory dwelling units to avoid obstructing viewsheds or disrupting sensitive riparian or wildlife zones. Larimer County continues to lead the state in Great Outdoors Colorado funding, with over 5,000 acres conserved this year through easements on family ranches. Collaborative land preservation work is ongoing near Rabbit Mountain on the Larimer–Boulder County line, protecting high-biodiversity areas and indigenous cultural sites. The Commissioner also acknowledged growing attention to utility right-of-way maintenance under power lines as part of broader wildfire mitigation.

STAFF UPDATES

Staff Member Whitley explained that the standing agenda item for public comment on non-agenda topics was removed at the direction of the Board of County Commissioners, who prefer residents to communicate directly via phone, email, or community conversations. This change applies across advisory bodies. Committee members raised concern, noting that residents often see the committee as their local representative. Whitley clarified that members represent individual perspectives, not the entire Estes Valley population. Staff Member Lafferty added that in quasi-judicial matters, public comments can influence decisions, but advisory roles do not equate to full community representation. The committee emphasized the need for clearer guidelines on when public input is appropriate and requested earlier notification of applications to avoid improper discussion. The Columbus Hotel project was cited as an example of confusion due to limited information. Whitley announced that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee is now the only advisory group staffed by the County Planning Division, as the Red Feather Lakes and LaPorte committees were discontinued due to low case volume and high staffing costs. Lafferty noted that with preparation, travel, and participation, staffing one meeting can cost thousands of dollars. Committee members acknowledged the importance of staying focused on relevant matters and asked that public expectations of the committee's role be clarified.

COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

Committee Member Handlos expressed interest in incorporating transportation-related elements into the committee's work plan, particularly as they relate to workforce access, housing, and cost of living. Drawing on a transportation background, Handlos emphasized the importance of considering not only where development occurs, but also how people will travel to and from those locations—especially commuting to work, as an integral part of long-term planning.

STATUSES OF CASES PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED BY THE ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Staff Member Whitley reported that there have been no changes since the last meeting. No cases previously reviewed by the committee have moved forward, and there are currently no new cases scheduled.

TABLED DISCUSSION ITEMS FROM JANUARY 16, 2025

ITEM NO. 1 – ANNUAL WORK PLAN

[View Staff Presentation](#)

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

The committee reviewed and discussed the draft work plan, reaching consensus on several revisions and clarifications. Members supported retaining the committee's role in reviewing and providing recommendations on land use applications and relevant Larimer County land use code amendments affecting the Estes Valley. There was agreement that maintaining this involvement allows for proactive engagement, especially when community concerns arise. Regarding coordination with the Town of Estes Park, members discussed the importance of being informed about Town code amendments that could impact unincorporated areas. A previous suggestion to appoint an EVPAC liaison to the Town's Planning Commission was withdrawn following staff clarification that such a role could create confusion or misrepresent county authority. Instead, members were encouraged to independently attend Town meetings and report back as individuals. The committee also expressed a desire to

increase public awareness of EVPAC's role and meetings. Several members proposed submitting articles to local newspapers or partnering with staff to issue approved press releases, with the understanding that all public messaging would require internal review and coordination with the County Manager's Office.

Discussion also emphasized the need to continue monitoring short-term rentals, given their ongoing relevance and visibility in the community. In a broader conversation about transportation, housing, and cost of living, the committee expressed interest in understanding how land use planning intersects with these policy areas. Staff confirmed that the County is updating its Transportation Master Plan and Housing Needs Assessment and encouraged EVPAC to engage with those efforts as appropriate. As a result, the committee revised the final work plan item to read: "Review and provide comment on policy documents and master plans that implement the Comprehensive Plan and affect land use in the Estes Valley."

MOTION

No action was taken on this matter.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 1 – LARIMER COUNTY CODE AMDTS –ESTES VALLEY EMPHASIS, FILE NO. 25-CODE0283

Member Handlos was not present for this item.

Member Baker was present for this item.

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND STAFF DISCUSSION

Staff Member Lafferty presented proposed changes to align the Estes Valley's regulations on accessory living areas (ALAs) with Larimer County's broader Land Use Code. The proposal would remove separate ALA provisions from the Estes Valley section and instead refer directly to the County's existing code. This approach followed discussions with Town staff, committee members, and the public, who generally favored consistency with the County's framework. Two additions were proposed based on feedback from Commissioner Shadduck-McNally: encouraging property owners to site detached ALAs in a way that avoids blocking neighboring mountain views when possible and requires awareness of wetland and riparian setbacks through Codex mapping to ensure compliance with environmental standards.

Committee members discussed several aspects of the proposed language, expressing concern over the enforceability of subjective terms such as "to the maximum extent practical." Suggestions were made to clarify and strengthen language, particularly around preserving existing views and the single-family character of neighborhoods. Members also reviewed size limitations, which exceeded at 75% of the primary residence or 1,200 square feet on larger lots—and restrictions on short-term rentals, which prohibit ALAs from being used for stays under 30 days. Staff confirmed that the ALA process remains administrative unless code standards are not met, and that while Estes Valley is not required by state law to adopt these changes, aligning with state guidance could help secure grant funding for affordable housing. Staff emphasized that the current proposal is a policy choice, not a mandate.

An additional discussion covered short-term rental licensing, potential conflicts with existing STR properties, and the need for public clarity around what is and isn't permitted. The committee sought clarification on the geographic applicability of the proposed changes, which would apply to all of unincorporated Larimer County, including the Estes Valley Planning Area. Members asked for examples of site-specific constraints—such as lot coverage limits, septic system placement, and fire protection requirements—that may affect the feasibility of building ALAs. Questions were also raised about how structures like enclosed walkways impact classification, with staff noting such scenarios may shift a detached unit to attached status. The committee was asked to provide a recommendation on whether to support the proposed language as written, suggest edits (e.g., removing or modifying the

viewshed language), or submit an alternative recommendation to be forwarded to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

MOTION

Member Stewart moved, and Member Webb seconded the motion that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee adopt the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners approve Item No. 8 - Amend Article 13.0 – Supplemental Regulations for the Estes Valley by amending §13.6.2.B.2.a – Accessory Dwelling Units by 1) re-titling the subsection to Accessory Living Area and 2) eliminating the existing standards and provisions within the subsection and replacing them with a reference to §3.4.5.A. Accessory Living Area standards of the Land Use Code. Furthermore, to Amend Table 13-6: Accessory Uses and Structures Permitted in the Residential Zoning Districts to change the Additional Requirements reference for Accessory Living Area, and to amend §3.4.5.A.4. Site Standards by adding additional standards, of the Larimer County Code Amdts – Estes Valley Emphasis, File No. 25-Code0283. The motion carried (5-0).

MOTION

Member Baker moved, and Member Webb seconded the motion that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee adopt the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners approve Item No. 1 - Amend Article 13.0 – Supplemental Regulations for the Estes Valley by incorporating references within Article 13.0 to ensure other Articles of the Land Use Code are being administered and to address misspellings and missing text, of the Larimer County Code Amdts – Estes Valley Emphasis, File No. 25-CODE0283. The motion carried (5-0).

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND STAFF DISCUSSION

The committee discussed a proposed amendment to the supplemental regulations for the Estes Valley Planning Area that would require land divisions on parcels greater than 30 acres to follow Larimer County's conservation development standards. A committee member noted the difficulty locating specific supporting language in the Estes Valley Comprehensive Plan, referring only to a general statement about retaining county zoning unless exceptions are identified. Staff Member Lafferty agreed to confirm and provide the exact language, stating that the provision was drawn directly from the plan. He explained that the 30-acre threshold was established in 2000, when Larimer County adopted conservation development standards requiring clustering of development on larger parcels and preserving residual open space. While these standards have applied countywide for 25 years, the Estes Valley had previously been excluded, and this amendment seeks to align it with the rest of the county.

Committee members raised questions about the appropriateness of a 30-acre threshold in a more geographically limited area like the Estes Valley. One member suggested that a lower threshold might better serve local conditions and promote more equitable development opportunities, particularly for those unable to meet the higher acreage requirement. Lafferty acknowledged the concern but noted that many of the larger parcels—particularly in the northeastern part of the valley—lack public water and sewer infrastructure, which inherently limits the feasibility of high-density development. He emphasized that the conservation development model remains appropriate for such areas and estimated that several hundred properties would be subject to the amendment, affirming that it would apply broadly rather than disproportionately affecting a small number of landowners.

MOTION

Member Baker moved, and Member Webb seconded the motion that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee adopt the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners approve Item No. 2 - Amend Article 13.0 – Supplemental Regulations for the Estes Valley by incorporating

language to §13.4.2. and §13.4.3. regarding when the standards contained within those subsections apply and when standards of Article 5.0 apply, of the Larimer County Code Amdts – Estes Valley Emphasis, File No. 25-CODE0283. Member Stewart was not present for this motion. The motion carried (4-0).

MOTION

Member Webb moved, and Member Kennedy seconded the motion that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee adopt the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners approve Item No. 3 - Amend Article 13.0 – Supplemental Regulations for the Estes Valley by amending 13.6.1.D to acknowledge that approving preexisting lodging facilities by the provisions in 13.6.1.D. should only occur when no other procedure/process is available, of the Larimer County Code Amdts – Estes Valley Emphasis, File No. 25-CODE0283. Member Stewart was not present for this motion. The motion carried (4-0).

MOTION

Member Webb moved, and Member Kennedy seconded the motion that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee adopt the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners approve Item No. 4 - Amend Article 13.0 – Supplemental Regulations for the Estes Valley by deleting §13.6.2.B.4.d, amending 13.6.2.B.4.e., and deleting 13.6.2.B.4.f. to redefine the allowances for accessory buildings and structures on residential properties, of the Larimer County Code Amdts – Estes Valley Emphasis, File No. 25-CODE0283. Member Stewart was not present for this motion. The motion carried (4-0).

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND STAFF DISCUSSION

The committee requested clarification on whether lighting regulations apply to existing properties. Staff Member Lafferty explained that Larimer County's site lighting regulations are generally enforced at the time of development or when exterior lighting is updated. The Board of County Commissioners has determined that existing lighting may remain as-is and does not require compliance with current standards unless changes are made. Therefore, property owners are only required to meet lighting regulations if they install new fixtures or modify their existing lighting systems.

MOTION

Member Webb moved, and Member Kennedy seconded the motion that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee adopt the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners approve Item No. 5 - Amend Article 13.0 – Supplemental Regulations for the Estes Valley by amending §13.7.6. – Exterior Lighting to strike the standards therein and provide reference to the Countywide lighting standards in Article 4.0 – Development Standards, §4.10. – Exterior Lighting, of the Larimer County Code Amdts – Estes Valley Emphasis, File No. 25-CODE0283. Member Stewart was not present for this motion. The motion carried (4-0).

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND STAFF DISCUSSION

The committee requested clarification on proposed changes to the sign code for the Estes Valley Planning Area. Staff Member Whitley explained that currently, the Larimer County Land Use Code includes detailed sign regulations categorized by zoning district, but these standards are not explicitly linked to the Estes Valley zoning districts. The proposed amendment would resolve that disconnect by referencing the appropriate Estes Valley zoning districts within the existing sign code framework, allowing the County's residential, commercial, and mixed-use signage standards to apply consistently in the Estes Valley. This amendment does not introduce new standards; rather, it clarifies which existing County standards apply to each Estes Valley zoning district.

Committee members asked whether this change would require existing signs to be modified. Staff confirmed that it would not. Similar to lighting regulations, sign standards only apply when changes or new signage are proposed. Existing signage may remain as-is unless altered. Political signs were also discussed in depth. Staff emphasized that political signage is regulated separately and would not be affected by this amendment. Current standards allow political signs 45 days prior to an election, and staff noted that while regulations exist, enforcement is typically minimal. Staff also reiterated that political signs are not tied to zoning districts, and that flags such as U.S. or state flags are not considered signage under the code.

The committee raised questions about the differences between the County's sign standards and those used by the Town of Estes Park, particularly concerning lighting and size. While staff could not provide a direct comparison, they noted that the County's sign code includes detailed provisions based on zoning type. For example, residential zones do not allow illuminated signs, and commercial areas restrict electronic signs, flashing lights, and require directional lighting during limited hours. Staff indicated that the County's sign code underwent a thorough and detailed adoption process and is believed to be at least as restrictive as the Town's. The proposed amendment aims to bring clarity and consistency to how sign standards are applied within the Estes Valley without altering political signage rules or retroactively affecting existing signs.

MOTION

Member Stewart moved, and Member Webb seconded the motion that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee adopt the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners approve Item No. 6 - Amend Article 8.0 -Signs to add references linking the Estes Valley zone districts into the sign regulations, of the Larimer County Code Amdts – Estes Valley Emphasis, File No. 25-CODE0283. Member Stewart was not present for this motion. The motion carried (3-1).

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND STAFF DISCUSSION

The committee inquired about the ability to transfer short-term rental licenses within specific zoning districts in the Estes Valley. Staff Member Lafferty confirmed that license transfers are permitted only in the A and A1 (Accommodations) zoning districts. Under current regulations, licenses in these zones may be transferred without limitation on the number of times, including to non-family members. This is in contrast to other zones, where short-term rental licenses are not transferable except in a one-time transfer between family members. When asked to clarify the practical implication, Lafferty confirmed that within the accommodations zoning districts, licenses may be freely transferred, reflecting the commercial nature of these areas as established under the Estes Valley short-term rental regulations.

MOTION

Member Webb moved, and Member Kennedy seconded the motion that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee adopt the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners approve Item No. 7 - Amend Article 3.0 – Use Regulations, §3.3.5.B.2. ee. Transfer of Short-term Rental License to add a new item iii. to include language allowing transfer of short-term rental licenses when such uses are in the EV-A Estes Valley Accommodations/Highway Corridor or EV-A1 Estes Valley Accommodations/Low Intensity zoning districts, of the Larimer County Code Amdts – Estes Valley Emphasis, File No. 25-CODE0283. Member Stewart was not present for this motion. The motion carried (4-0).

OTHER BUSINESS

Member Converse announced that this meeting marked Member Kennedy's final appearance with EVPAC, as his term concludes at the end of June. Member Kennedy expressed appreciation, stating it had been a pleasure and an honor to serve on the committee, and commended the group for its

thoughtful work. Committee members thanked him for his contributions, noting his wisdom and experience will be missed.

ADJOURN

With there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.



ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Annual Work Plan



ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2024 WORK PLAN



EVPAC is a committee of Estes Valley residents, property owners, and business owners for the purpose of providing an organized forum that is open for public participation and is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the identity and quality of the Estes Valley area. The committee works on land use and planning matters.

Topics of focus for 2024 include:

- Prioritize Comprehensive Plan Action Items (within EVPAC's scope)
- Continue to monitor Short-Term Rentals (review, enforcement, etc.)
- Follow along with the Town's Land Development Code Changes. Coordinate and align when appropriate.