

## Residents to vote on Boulder County rural subdivision paving

By Amy Bounds Camera Staff Writer

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Larry Bryan raises his hand to stop a dump truck as it puts down road material on part of Shelf Road near the Eldora ski area outside of Nederland. Boulder County repairs and maintains main roads, but only budgets money to patch potholes and remove snow on its subdivision roads. To repave or rebuild those roads, the county is proposing that property owners foot the bill through an improvement district. ( MARK LEFFINGWELL )

### Subdivision paving, by the numbers

**150 miles:** the amount of paved roads in the more than 100 subdivisions that exist in unincorporated Boulder County

**70 percent** of those roads are in poor or fair condition

**\$25 million:** the cost to bring those roads up to good condition in the next 15 years

**\$1.5 million to \$2 million:** the added cost each year of

Those living in Boulder County's rural subdivisions have an opportunity to let the county know whether they want to pay \$130 a year, for the next 15 years, to get their roads repaired.

Boulder County is mailing advisory ballots to about 10,200 residents in about 100 subdivisions Tuesday. Residents who own more than one affected property will receive a separate ballot for each one. The ballots will include a postage-paid return envelope that must be postmarked by Aug. 17.

"People want to solve the problem soon, and they want it done fairly," said George Gerstle, county transportation director. "I'm hopeful people will think about the proposal in that way."

The Boulder County commissioners have said they want to see a majority of residents in support before voting to create a local improvement district. Properties that use a public paved road in an unincorporated subdivision for any portion of their primary access route would be included in the district.

<p>delay</p> <p><b>Proposal details</b></p> <p><b>Plan:</b> Create a local improvement district that would pay the cost to repave and chip-seal each public paved road in unincorporated Boulder County subdivisions.</p> <p><b>Cost for each property:</b> \$130 a year for 15 years, a total of \$1,950 over 15 years</p> <p><b>Total resident contribution:</b> \$20.6 million</p> <p><b>County contribution:</b> \$4.3 million</p>	<p>If the proposal is rejected, county officials said, the county would continue with the status quo, leaving it up to individual subdivisions to form a local improvement district for road repairs.</p> <p>"This approach is more systematic and it's cheaper to keep a road in good shape than to wait until it has fallen into disrepair," Gerstle said.</p> <p>Over the last 15 years, subdivision roads have steadily deteriorated, and now the county is working with subdivision residents to figure out how to pay for repairs.</p> <p>The Boulder County Transportation Department maintains subdivision roads -- which includes patching potholes and removing snow -- but the county has no dedicated funding for repaving or rebuilding those roads. That's because a 1995 update to the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan directed the county staff not to provide "urban services," such as paving, in unincorporated areas.</p> <p>The current proposal came after months of meetings from a working group -- including county staffers and residents -- as well as public meetings, a study session with the county commissioners and a May resident survey.</p>
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The county also was considering fixing all the roads within five years, asking residents to pay \$407 a year for five years or \$219 a year for 10 years to cover the costs.

But Gerstle said property owners asked to keep the annual cost low. Spreading the cost over 15 years allows the county to rehabilitate roads when it's most cost effective and also allows the county to do more of the work instead of relying on contractors, he said.

The first phase of the proposed repairs would be to resurface the roads in the worst shape. Next would be chip-seal coating the roads in fair and good condition, extending their life by five to seven years.

In the second phase, roads that were initially resurfaced would receive a chip-seal coat, while those roads that were chip-sealed would be resurfaced.

County officials said the proposal isn't a permanent solution, but would allow the county to quickly address the problem before roads get worse -- and require more expensive repairs. At some point, officials said, an improvement district would need to be created that provides perpetual road care.

Critics of the plan say the county has neglected to adequately fund the transportation department over the years and should pay some or all of the project's cost.

Unincorporated Boulder County resident Greg Klinkel said he's glad to see the county making an effort to address the deteriorating roads, but he doesn't think residents should foot the bill.

"It's fiscal irresponsibility on the part of the county," he said. "Property owners should reject this plan and ask the county commission to cover the cost out of our of normal property-tax revenues."

Affected residents who don't receive a ballot by the end of the week can call the county transportation department at 303-441-3900 or send an e-mail to [transportation@bouldercounty.org](mailto:transportation@bouldercounty.org).