

SR 14/DOG MOUNTAIN CONGESTION AND SAFETY STUDY

Key Stakeholders Meeting #2 | September 30, 2021, 10:00 AM – noon, Zoom

WA DOT 14(4), Congestion and Safety Mitigation Plan

WA DOT 14(3), Dog Mountain Trailhead Study

Discussion

Welcome

Angela Rogge, David Evans and Associates, Inc. (DEA) kicked off the meeting by welcoming the stakeholders in attendance and recapping the purpose the planning study. DEA is leading the Consultant team with public involvement assistance from EnviroIssues. The study is funded through Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and includes a partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop a congestion and safety study for SR 14 and the Dog Mountain Trailhead to reduce congestion and improve safety in the corridor.

The Core Project Team (CPT) includes:

- Angela Rogge (DEA, Consultant PM): angela.rogge@deainc.com, 503-499-0566
- Seth English-Young (WFL FHWA, Contracting Officer): seth.english-young@dot.gov, 360-619-7803
- Stan Hinatsu (USFS): stan.hinatsu@usda.gov
- Laurie Lebowsky (WSDOT): LEBOWSL@wsdot.wa.gov

Angela reminded the group the focus of the study is to address congestion and safety as it relates to accessing federal lands, which is consistent with how the study is funded through the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). FLAP supplements State and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators.

Meeting Objectives

- Review draft strategies
- Gather stakeholder feedback on feasibility and timing

Schedule

- Online Open House #2 October 11, 2021 – November 1, 2021: <https://sr14study.participate.online/>
- Virtual Drop-In Community Conversations (zoom links will be available on project website)
 - October 14, 2021, 4PM-6PM:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84352494488?pwd=L1pzR0VuQzJlZTA5MS9ZOUt2T0g2QT09>
Meeting ID: 843 5249 4488, Passcode: 418283
Call-in: 1-253-215-8782, 84352494488#
 - October 20, 2021, 4PM-6PM:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86201016118?pwd=ODFCV1ZlcUpVWjBFSURSbGFk3N4Zz09>
Meeting ID: 862 0101 6118, Passcode: 378025
Call-in: 1-253-215-8782, 86201016118#

- Stakeholder Meeting #3: Thursday, December 9, 2021, 10AM – noon (zoom details TBD)
- Online Open House #3 January 17, 2022 – February 4, 2022

Review Baseline Conditions

Angela noted important historical context to the study area.

- For SR 14, there is a plan from 1997 that still has a lot of valuable information. Many of the projects identified in that plan are still viable, although very specific to the state highway.
- Specific recreation areas are more congested than others. As mentioned in our first stakeholder meeting, we focused some special attention on sites that experience recurring congestion and safety concerns.
- Throughout this study process, Agencies have continued to move forward and implement improvements when they can. We have tried to capture that progress in our documentation and applaud it!
- Dog Mountain had a previous project done in the early 2000's that developed improvements to the existing parking lot site, however a Phase 1 Environmental Initial Site Assessment was conducted to evaluate potential sources of hazardous substances. A level 2 hazmat assessment was recommended as the next step, which ultimately had a role in shelving that project and pushing the USFS to look at alternate trailhead locations.

Strategy Focus Areas

See the presentation slides for details

- **Recreations Areas:** Sites that experience recurring instances of parking overflow where specific targeted strategies are being considered
- **Dog Mountain Trailhead:** Consistent with the FLAP application, Dog Mountain a closer review: we are looking at options to modify the existing parking site and provide a new trailhead and parking lot to the west. Note this is still pre-NEPA. Goal is to understand the fatal flaws and where mitigation would be required.
- **System:** The corridor-wide discussion presents management strategies that could enhance the SR 14 corridor from a system approach
- **SR 14 Segments:** Based primarily on geographic and landscape characteristics. The analysis of the segments focuses specifically ways to address safety on the highway.

Zoom Chat and Group Discussion

Stakeholder	Area/Topic of Discussion	Comment	Response
Renee Tkach, Friends of the Columbia Gorge	Ozone climbing area (chat)	What about the climbing wall area called Ozone, that has increasing congestion and no management?	Angela: Not specifically a hotspot in our current plan, but one of those areas where we want to be strategic about balancing management and calling too much attention to it. Toolkit safety strategies should still be applicable.
Renee Tkach, Friends of the Columbia Gorge	Truck pullout Cape Horn lookout/pullout	There's also another access point in that area, the Truck Pullout Cape Horn Pullout that goes to the waterfall which experiences similar safety/congestion concerns.	Angela: This is the kind of feedback we want, so thank you. It's an area that hasn't been a specific focus but noted as an emerging issue.
Sophie Miller, Skamania Co Senior Services	Cape Horn TH (chat)	This parking site gets very crowded and has caused issues for our transit bus to enter and maneuver the lot.	Angela: Noted – will include as a related concern to the congestion problem.
Mike Beck, Skamania Co	Cape Horn TH	Skamania County received an application for a quarry (outside of the scenic area) that proposes up to 500 trips/day heavy truck traffic down salmon falls road/SR 14 intersection that may impact this trailhead and crossing.	Angela: Noted.
Nathan Hovinghoff, Washington State Patrol	Drano Lake Boat Ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't think we have any issues striping over the no parking zone, good safety area Don't know why we'd extend the parking area more east, to maybe calm traffic coming out of there Passenger cars don't seem to be a big concern Good example of something that worked in the past and will continue to work Good site distance and long site distance wouldn't prohibit a "no passing zone" through this area. 	Angela: Appreciate this feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passenger cars on south side of SR 14 can be a concern because it means pedestrians are crossing the highway Safety data in previous 5 years did not identify fatalities or serious injury crashes in this stretch. However, there is increasing potential for collision or conflict with increased congestion. Will consider comments to revise Drano Lake recommendations.
Dave Burkey, WSDOT	Coyote Wall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did some survey data out here, east bound left turn lane would help but would have to narrow lanes, so we don't plan to move forward with it at this time. Looking into cost 	Angela (regarding SR 14 intersection improvements): There are instances where left turn lanes would be awesome, but we'd have to look at if the space is there to safely make that happen.
Patty Fink, CAT	Coyote Wall (chat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are recommending a shuttle - will you also recommend what improvements might be needed to accommodate a bus or stop at/near the site? 	Angela: Our system strategies relating to transit recommend improving transit service and infrastructure, particularly at hot spots.

Stakeholder	Area/Topic of Discussion	Comment	Response
Dale Robins, RTC	Catherine Creek (chat)	Is there an accident problem at Catherine Creek?	<p>Angela:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year crash data did not indicate crash history on Old Highway 8, however the intersection of SR 14/Old Hwy 8 had a higher crash rate when compared to other study intersections in the corridor. There are complaints about speeding around here, people crossing the road wherever, or walking down the middle of old highway road using it as a path instead of a road. Traffic calming would be beneficial through this area to protect the safety of peds and slow the through traffic down Popular road for motorcycles
Pat Baird, Nez Perce Tribe	Catherine Creek (chat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any traditional use studies to identify significant Tribal resources and the impacts that the current recreational access and proposed improvement may be having on them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stan Hinatsu (USFS): No specific studies have been done at this time (that aware of). This study is more of a planning feasibility study. Before any strategies are implemented, will have to review potential natural/cultural resource impacts. Angela: The outcome of this study would allow agencies/organization to “pick up the torch” and pursue next steps at each of these sites We recognize that this concern for impacts from broad recreation use to Tribal resources is more than just archaeological resources/investigations.
	Additional hot spots	<p>Area to add to the list: White Salmon Bridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SR 141 Alt at SR 14 Significant amount of river rafting and kayaks coming out of the water there Lots of traffic with fishing too, parking can be crazy, everyone haphazard Should be added to the list of hotspots 	<p>Angela: The locations near That specific location was called out in the SR 14 plan from 1997, so we'll take a closer look to make sure we're capturing all the nuances.</p> <p>Nathan Hovinghoff (WSP): Collisions still prevalent in that intersection even with all the stuff added to help</p>
Dave Burkey, WSDOT	Additional hot spots	Like White Salmon Bridge, same thing can be said coming into Lyle at Klickitat Bridge	Angela: We've been tracking this area.
Mike Beck, Skamania Co	Bikes (Chat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have a general question about planning for bike traffic – SR 14 is used by bicyclists for recreation, but I didn't hear any mention about planning for bike traffic in this effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See response to Patty Fink's below

Stakeholder	Area/Topic of Discussion	Comment	Response
Patty Fink, CAT	Bikes (Chat and discussion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you seen mike's question about bikes, I have the same question Specifically with Catherine Creek, it's a big biking area. If people can bike there to bike, it might help solve some of the issues. 	<p>Angela:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would likely carry forward recommendations from 1997 plan, which includes widening SR 14 in specific sections where feasible. Will talk to the project team first. The tools necessary to mountain bike are typically different than road cycling. Mountain bikes are designed for trails and won't perform as well on the road. Improvements to SR 14 would still benefit road cyclists.
Dan Bell, Friends of the Columbia Gorge	Dog Mountain Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the colored dashed lines in the picture? 	<p>Angela: This represents areas where our engineering team thought the ground was the most level or most likely for potential single parking lot or small, connected parking lots/pockets of parking.</p>
Patty Fink, CAT	Dog Mountain Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you consider taking away parking all together and making access to the site transit only? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you go out to the community, maybe put that as an option (due diligence) That kind of strategy really kind of meets the CRGNSA goals because where you're asking people to park helps get people to places like Stevenson and allowing the town to encourage economic development and allow people to have a broader economic activity. There isn't a lot of economic activity at Dog Mountain but it costs USFS to provide the amenities for the population that visits. 	<p>Angela:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a part of our initial consideration and hasn't been vetted in the study process. What has been discussed is maybe providing a trailhead and repurposing the existing parking lot to be shuttle only. <p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted to add for consideration. There may be access concerns with this option. There are National Parks and other places that have made transit only locations. Want to note for Dog Mountain, want to still be able to address current congestion and safety concerns while continuing to study trailhead relocation.

Stakeholder	Area/Topic of Discussion	Comment	Response
Larry Mallo, Washington State Parks	Dog Mountain vs National Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Parks can control access and don't necessarily have a highway running straight through it. There would still be a concern of people pulling on the side of the highway; some people are just travelling through and don't know there's a specific shuttle and they'll just stop without knowing better People are going to do what they're going to do sometimes and we need to account to some of that Need to make a distinction between this site and what's more applicable at a national park 	<p>Angela:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helpful insights and agree we can't look at it in isolation. There is a highway running by and communities on both sides will want access Even if it were transit only, there needs to be infrastructure to stop people from parking, and this study is working to understand the mitigation required/feasibility of certain strategies, improvements and infrastructure. We recognize there are a lot of visitor access interests throughout the gorge and want to look at a variety of strategies: Expanding ITS component, parking availability, or reservations, increasing shoulder before parking lot, channeling into parking lot.
Kathy Fitzpatrick, MCEDD	Dog Mountain vs Multnomah Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you including on-going experimental learning process at Multnomah Falls parking lot, it now has a reservation system developed through a strong partnership with ODOT, CAT, and others. There has been a lot of work this summer, is the data out yet? Look at what they're doing across the river to provide similar strategies in WA Dog mountain isn't unique 	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not sure on the Multnomah Falls findings at this point. Dog Mountain does have a permit system currently, but it is set up differently than Multnomah Falls.
Dave Burkey, WSDOT	Dynamic signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing is impossible, they're mostly used throughout the state on mountain passes Don't know if it'd work on these cases. It's usually better to provide warning signs with advisory speed signs Changeable messages are hard to enforce and don't carry a lot of weight with public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laurie Lebowsky (WSDOT): With dynamic signs, w. Would need a change in the scenic area plan Angela: Agreed. Need clarity on how dynamic signage works within the confines of the CRGNSA guidelines. Knows they're not preferred. Angela: Appreciate the insight on feasibility/usefulness
Dave Burkey, WSDOT	Dynamic signs (chat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point of clarification VMS - Variable Message Sign (large permanent overhead signs). PCMS = portable changeable Signs (smaller portable message signs on shoulder with limited message allowance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Stakeholder	Area/Topic of Discussion	Comment	Response
Emily Reed, CGTA	Shuttle (chat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be great if that shuttle could stop at Dalles Mt Ranch trail as well. Would need a place to pull over on both sides And to stop at wineries, museum, etc. le make it easier (and more appealing) to leave the car home all together when visiting the Gorge for a hike, post-hike beer, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would need infrastructure so that the transit could safely drop people off Agree that it's important to recognize often people are doing more than just "one stop" when they visit the Gorge.
Nathan Hovinghoff, Washington State Patrol	Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone reach out to small towns nearby? 	Angela: They are stakeholders and have all been invited to participate in Stakeholder meetings. Note that many of the improvements are focused outside of the urban areas.
Patty Fink, CAT	General: Environmental concerns and congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad question regarding climate change SR 14 and I-84 are generally the only ways in and out of gorge from Portland metro area Are there current capacity issues and what are the overall capacity issues on both SR 14 and I-84 Will we need to change something in 20 years? Sounds like a super long time, but we're seeing more accidents and congestion now, and wondering if part of the study has been looking at overall traffic flow and potential for increased traffic congestion Looks like it would be hard to build your way out of traffic congestion 	<p>Angela:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study is focused on access to public lands, but we did look at traffic projections for SR14 We see an increase in traffic in the corridor, mostly near the urban areas. This study is hoping to recognize we can't build our way out of congestion Understood by team and most people on the call, have the framework that we can't just increase parking lots, we need to come up with other components and shift behavior
Renee Tkach, friends of the Columbia river gorge	General: Environmental concerns and congestion (chat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Recreation Intensity Classifications will limit ability to build to solve congestion. The RICs aren't working, as we can see at all these sites. 	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are limitations on the ability to expand to fix congestion They're there and that's a whole other conversation still part of the framework and still soemthing we have to consider when coming up with solutions
Aiden Forsi, CRGC	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As we're looking to our next review of the Management Plant, anything our group comes up with as a major restrictive issue to implementing improvements, bring that up with us and we can tackle it. 	Angela: Thank you. Off the top of my head, some of the recreations sites overlapping multiple RICs adds some confusion to which "governs".

Stakeholder	Area/Topic of Discussion	Comment	Response
Dale Robins, RTC	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great presentation and list of potential strategies. As always funding will limit implementation of strategies. 	Noted, and thank you.
Pat Baird, Nez Perce Tribe	Tribal concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned that no one is looking into tribal resources Gorge has huge issues with impacts to tribal resources from recreational activities/sites and it doesn't seem like anyone is dealing with it Concerned that increasing access is making it worse for tribal resources Is anyone looking into it? Anyone dealing with it? Anyone at all in this project? There is a difference in performing archeological studies vs. cultural Suggests we look into whole landscape not specific site specific No one's dealing with tribal cemeteries being crossed to get to the river This requires a broader view than looking at a couple isolated locations for transportation improvement These are not new issues for us Real travesty this project gets so far and so big without people thinking about What you're doing is going to have impact on us even if it's not transportation issue Hugely problematic 	<p>Angela:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This specific planning study will identify potential for impacts from targeted strategies to address recreation congestion/concern, the follow-up phases (prior to implementation) would coordinate with tribal resources This study unfortunately doesn't currently address your concerns for the whole landscape, but it's important to recognize the broader implications. Will work with our team to follow-up <p>Stan Hinatsu (USFS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The USFS and State Parks are aware of impacts in the gorge from recreation This study doesn't directly address the broader concerns but impacts to tribal resources and natural resources is a big concern we are considering in our study. The Gorge is somewhat of an overwhelming situation that we are dealing with, overwhelming recreation Trying to improve to decrease impact on landscape We are aware of the complex issues and are trying to figure out how we can reduce those impacts in specific locations. <p>Aiden Forsi, CRGC: Can't speak widely on it, but we're looking at access to tribal properties (not specific to cemeteries) and we are starting some conversations about that broader issue of tribal resources and areas.</p>

Stakeholder	Area/Topic of Discussion	Comment	Response
Patty Fink, CAT	Tribal concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being intimately involved, I can't speak on that but I can speak as a resident of the gorge and is concerned about unfettered car access in the gorge. • Believes transit will allow people to enjoy the gorge without directly impacting and damaging the area because it can control where they go and how they go • Want to know how transit can help address concerns and overall residents of the gorge 	
Christian Nauer, CTWSRO	Tribal concerns (chat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks Pat. This office (Warm Springs THPO) is also concerned with effects to tribal resources, including but not limited to potential effects to Historic Properties, Historic Properties of Religious and Cultural Significance, Treaty fishing rights etc. We expect a full and thoughtful consideration of such effects during this process. 	Noted. Project team will follow-up with Tribes.
Kathy Fitzpatrick, MCEDD	Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're focused on access and we need to focus on equitable access • Equity needs to be highlighted further • A priority for the USFS is to serve access equitably for everyone. That is what transit does, helps everyone access the gorge • Don't know if there's a place to highlight it with the transportation • Transportation in this country we all know has not been equitable. We need to mitigate the inequitable impacts of transportation • Angela, you mentioned unspoken assumptions about not being able to build our way out of this • I think that's really important it be included in the final report 	Angela: The report will note the limitations of building out of congestion.

Next Steps

The project team will be accepting comments on the draft strategies throughout the month of October.

The project team will consider the comments to prepare a draft report to identify:

- Risks/Tradeoffs
- Applicability to SR 14 and regulatory environment
- Anticipated safety benefit
- Potential conflicts with the land use code and CRGNSA Management Plan requirements
- Planning-level cost estimates

Attachments: Key Stakeholder Meeting #2 PowerPoint presentation slides.