

SR-14 AND DOG MOUNTAIN CONGESTION AND SAFETY STUDY

Online Open House 2 – Comment Summary

Updated: 11/22/2021

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is partnering with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop a congestion and safety study for Washington State Route 14 (SR 14) and the Dog Mountain Trailhead. As part of developing this study, the agencies are conducting a public involvement process to gain input from stakeholders in the area.

SURVEY SUMMARY

In fall of 2021, these agencies conducted an online open house with an accompanying survey to share with the public an overview of the types of strategies for consideration as part of the plan study and gather feedback and concerns on the proposed strategies along the project focus areas (recreation sites). The survey was open from October 11 to November 1, 2021 and received 36 responses. These agencies also held Community Conversation events wherein the public was invited to attend a Zoom meeting to learn more about the status of the project and ask questions to the project team. Two public meetings were held on October 14 and October 20, 2021.

The results of this survey are not statistically representative, meaning the respondent sample is not predictive of the opinions of any specific community. This report summarizes the comments collected from community members using the survey and community conversations.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

SR 14 Travel Patterns and Concerns

- Most respondents had the highest concern for safety for the Klickitat Spit/Lyle Trailhead. The second highest safety concern was about the Coyote Wall Trailhead.
- Respondents noted a variety of safety concerns in the corridor including unsafe speed and unsafe/illegal parking along the corridor.
- Respondents provided several specific suggestions for improving safety and congestion in the corridor including suggestions on parking infrastructure and alternative access to recreation areas. These are discussed below in the detailed question summary.

Dog Mountain Trail Access and Congestion

- Respondents are concerned with both parking congestion and hiker congestion at Dog Mountain Trail.

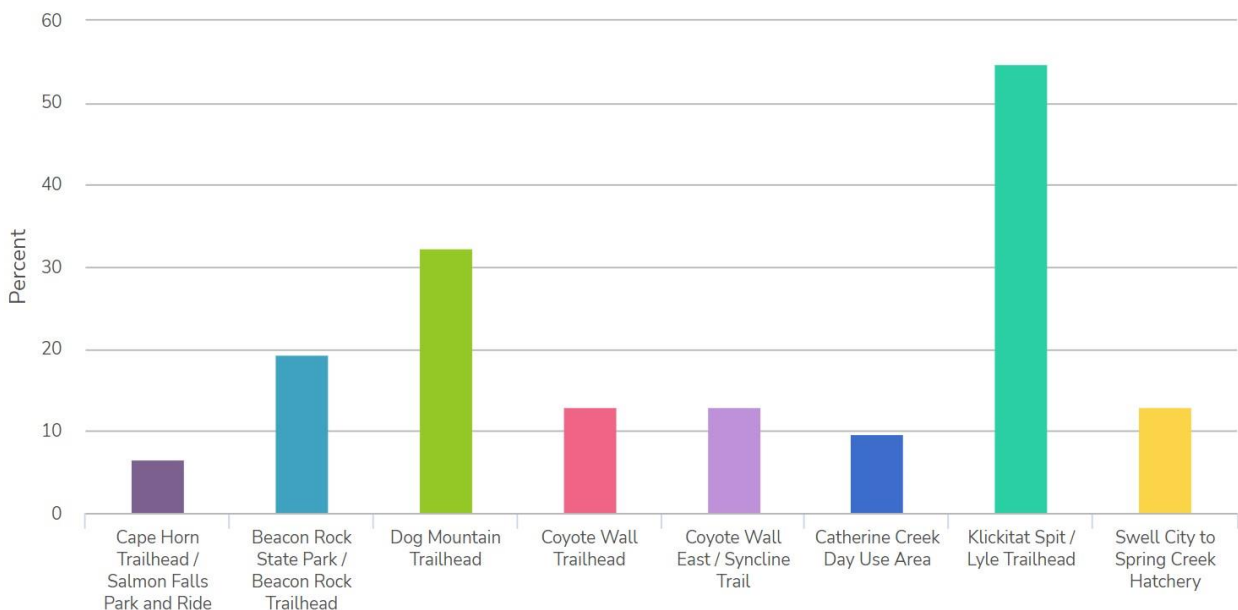
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES BY QUESTION

Question 1: Indicate the three recreation hot spots you feel have the highest safety concerns (1 = highest priority)

Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score	No. of Rankings
Klickitat Spit / Lyle Trailhead	1		34	13
Coyote Wall Trailhead	2		29	14
Beacon Rock State Park / Beacon Rock Trailhead	3		21	9
East Coyote Wall Parking Area	4		15	10
Catherine Creek Day Use Area	5		14	7
Cape Horn Trailhead / Salmon Falls Park and Ride	6		10	5
Drano Lake Boat Ramp	7		10	5
Swell City to Spring Creek Hatchery	8		7	5

■ Lowest Rank ■ Highest Rank

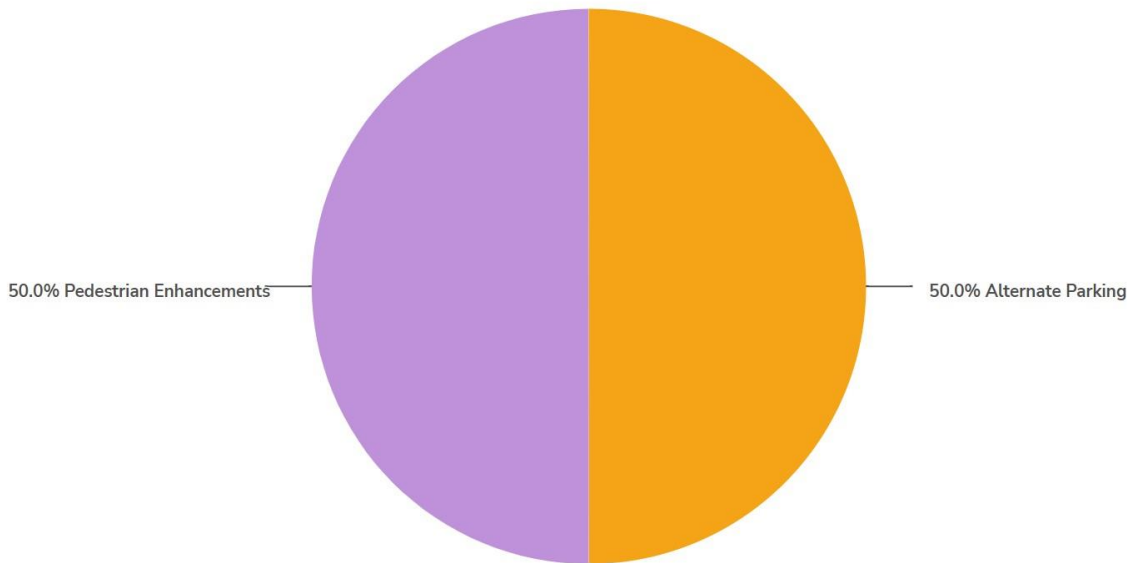
Question 2: Indicate which recreation site you would like to provide your thoughts on about strategies that would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select multiple)



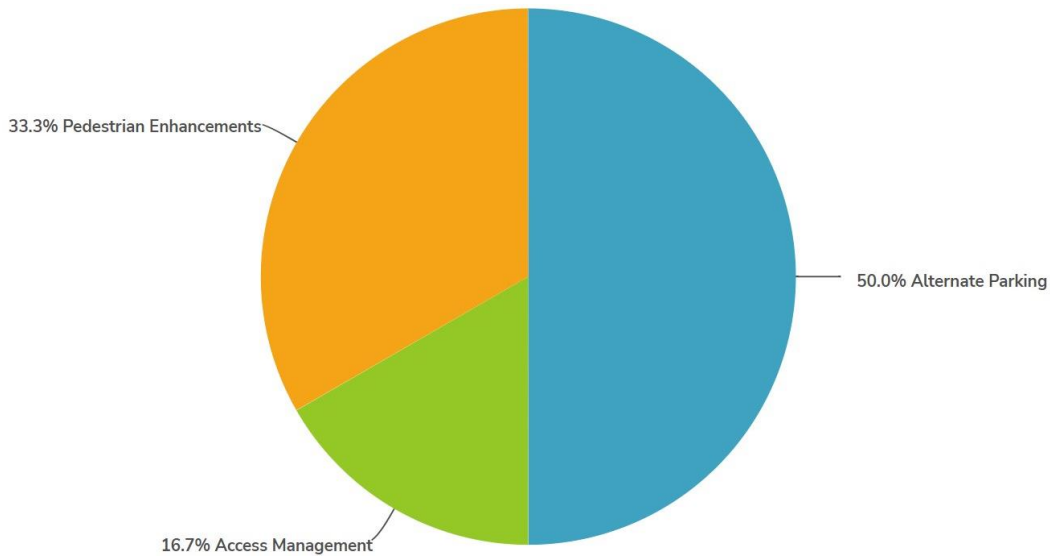
The following are responses about the specific recreation sites for which participants had the option to provide their thoughts. The mitigation strategies options provided included:

- Wayfinding
- No Parking Zones
- Permit/Reservation System
- Alternate Parking
- Access Management
- Shuttle
- Pedestrian Enhancements
- Other (respondents had option to provide comments)

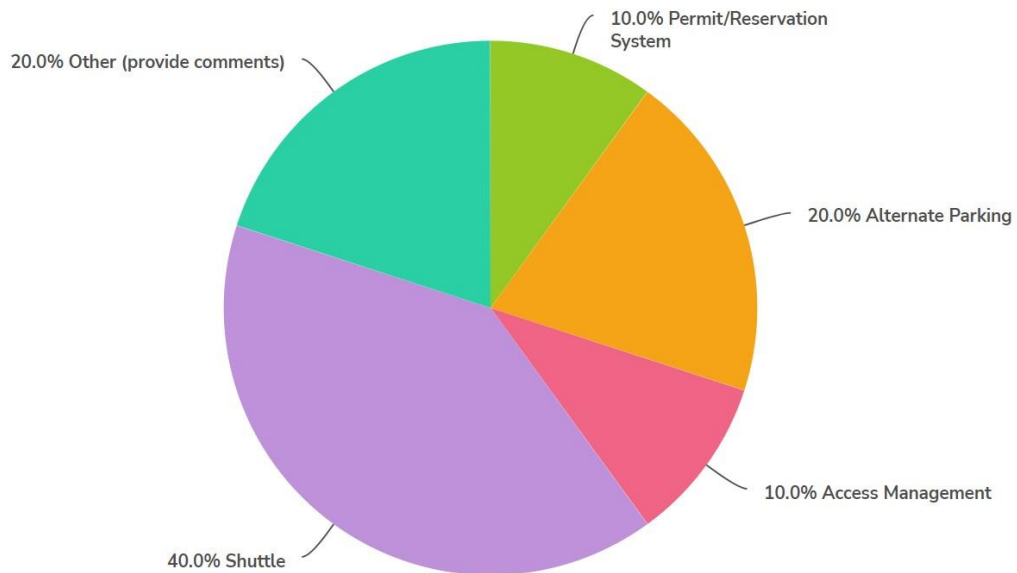
Question 3: For the Cape Horn Trailhead / Salmon Falls Park and Ride, please indicate which strategy you think would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select one) (n=2)



Question 4: For the Beacon Rock State Park / Beacon Rock Trailhead, please indicate which strategy you think would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select one) (n=6)



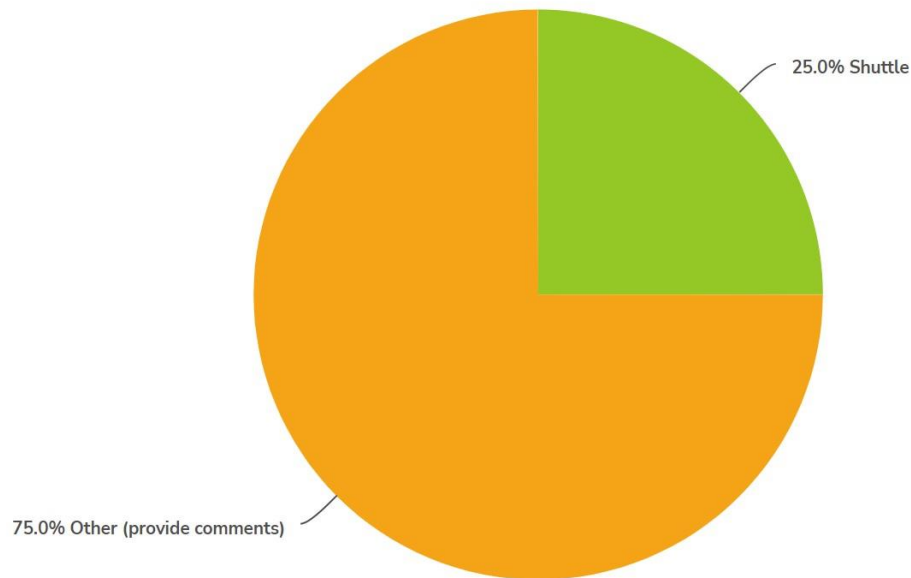
5. For the Dog Mountain Trailhead, please indicate which strategy you think would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select one) (n=10)



Question 6: For the Drano Lake Boat Ramp, please indicate which strategy you think would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select one)

- No responses were recorded from participants.

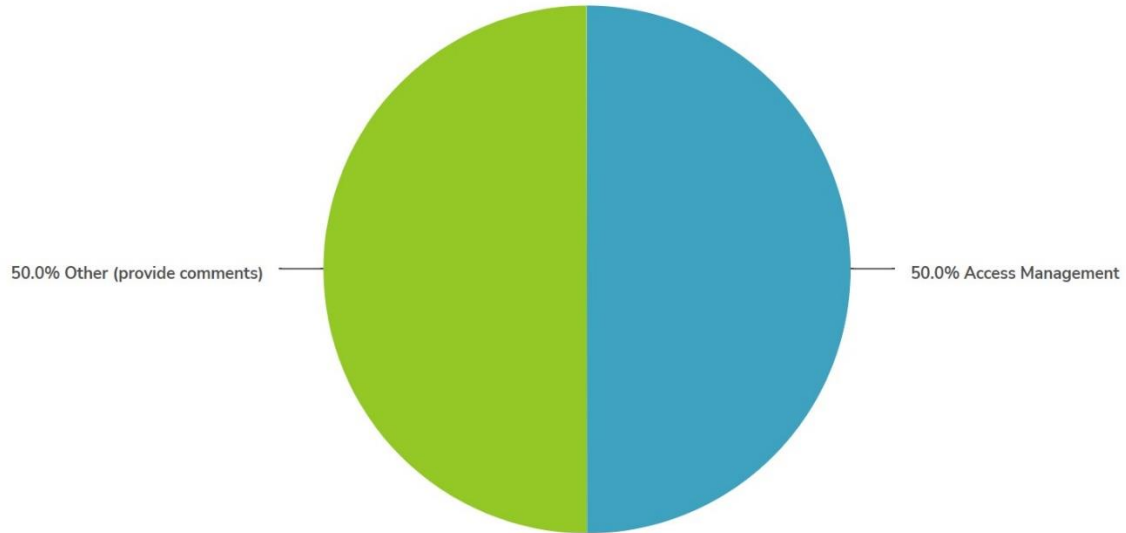
Question 7: For the Coyote Wall Trailhead, please indicate which strategy you think would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select one) (n=4)



Participants who chose “Other” had the option to write in an answer. Responses included:

- One respondent suggested speed and congestion signage and additional parking along SR 14 shoulders.
- One respondent suggested additional off-highway parking.
- One respondent agreed with permit/reservation system if it was free of cost.

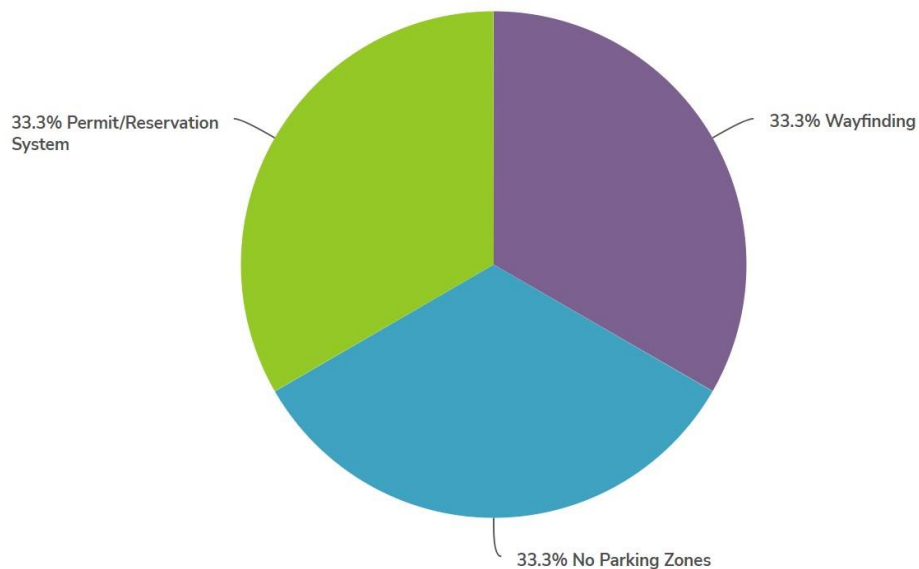
Question 8: For the Coyote Wall East / Syncline Trail, please indicate which strategy you think would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select one) (n=4)



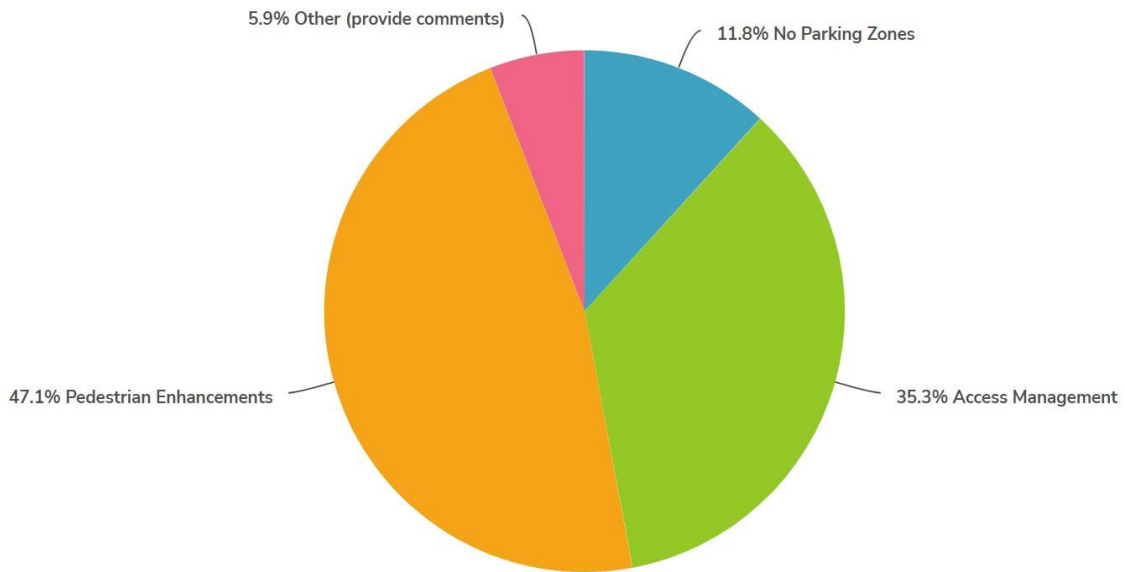
Participants who chose “Other” had the option to write in an answer. Responses included:

- One respondent suggested speed and congestion signage and a left turn lane in the eastbound lane to reduce collisions.
- One participant suggested additional parking.

Question 9: For the Catherine Creek Day Use Area, please indicate which strategy you think would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select one) (n=3)



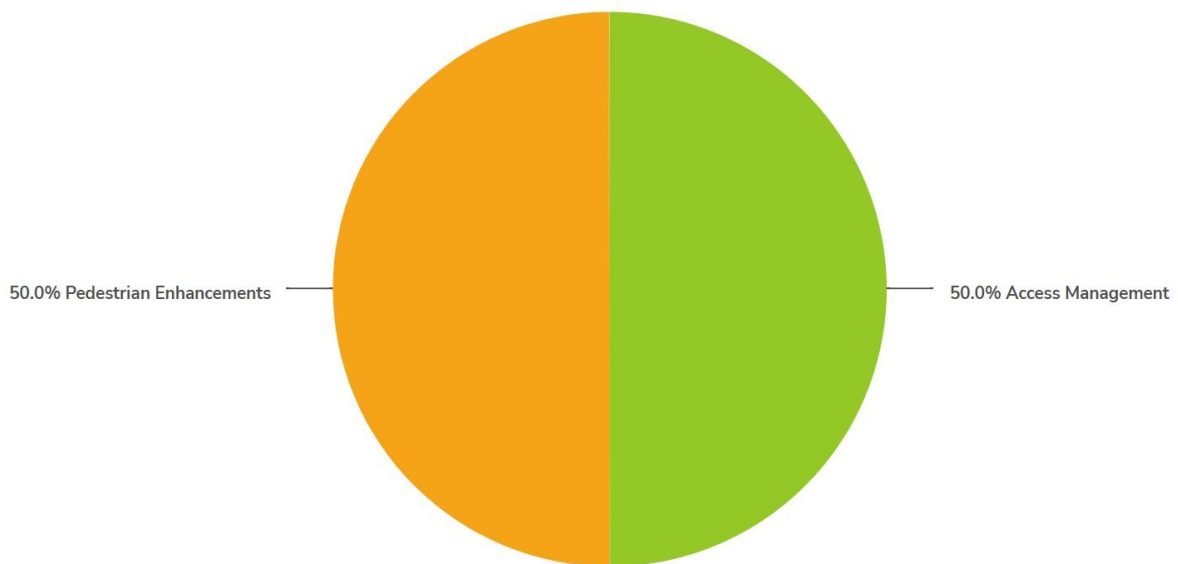
Question 10: For the Klickitat Spit / Lyle Trailhead, please indicate which strategy you think would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select one) (n=17)



Participants who chose “Other” had the option to write in an answer. Responses included:

- One participant suggested additional parking.

Question 11: For the Swell City to Spring Creek Hatchery, please indicate which strategy you think would provide the most initial benefit to safety and/or congestion. (select one) (n=4)



Question 12: What else you would like the project team to know or consider? (n = 20)

Respondents provided the following comments to this open-ended question:

SR 14 Safety and Congestion

- Respondents noted speeding issues at several sites along SR 14:
 - A respondent suggested reducing speed limits near recreation sites noting that some areas have a 60mph speed limit with no turn lanes.
 - A respondent noted heavy traffic and high speeds of traveling vehicles are a safety concern. They suggested implementing traffic cameras and speeding fines.
 - Three other respondents also had safety concerns over speeding drivers along SR 14.
 - Two respondents have specific safety and speeding concerns in the part of SR 14 near the town of Lyle.
- Respondents noted the need for safer parking options near the Klickitat Spit since it is one of the few safe launches in the Gorge for wind-sports.
 - A respondent also suggested the need for improved signage and pedestrian access.
 - Respondents noted that the railroad crossing is a safety concern and limits access to the Klickitat Spit.
- A respondent noted that shuttles can cause accessibility issues for people with physical disabilities. They also noted that paid parking permits could present a financial barrier to communities.
- One respondent noted that they would like to see a greater focus on transit and bicycle access on SR 14.

Dog Mountain Trail Access

- One respondent noted that they feel that the Dog Mountain trail is heavily trafficked, and that additional parking or shuttle service would create a usage too high for the trail.
- One respondent noted that Dog Mountain trailhead tend to overflow during peak usage hours on the weekends. They suggest strategies to encourage users to visit during off-peak hours, such as shuttles for weekday and evening trail access.

Interactive Map Tool Comments (n = 14)

Respondents were also presented with an interactive map of the corridor where they could drop comments at specific geographic locations. Their comments are summarized below.

- There were several comments against reservation systems to recreation sites:
 - A respondent suggested that the Cape Horn trailhead instead should implement additional parking access.
 - One respondent noted that fees, reservations and restrictions should not apply to local residents.
- Two respondents were in favor of the reservation systems.
 - The respondents noted that access to Dog Mountain and Catherine Creek has improved. They also noted that adding additional parking or shuttles could create an overflow issue.

Community Conversation public meetings

The project team hosted two-hour public meetings on October 14 and October 20, 2021. Summarized below are the questions and comments received from attendees during their respective dates.

October 14, 2021 (11 attendees):

- An attendee asked about the methods and previous outreach dates the project team has conducted. This was the first time the attendee had heard of the study and were particularly interested in further outreach to hiking communities in the project area.
 - Another attendee specifically asked about communication with Friends of the Gorge.
 - The project team response that several outreach periods have occurred, and that the project has been in touch with residents and communities in the project area.
- Two attendees expressed concerns overcrowding at recreation sites.
 - The project team responded that reservation and permit systems could mitigate safety concerns such as parking near recreation sites.
- One attendee mentioned they would like to see better access to the Klickitat Spit.
- Representatives from Lyle want to see the Klickitat Spit resource protected but also mitigate the congestion surrounding the shoulder of SR14.

October 20, 2021 (5 attendees):

- Topics discussed and input shared:
- An attendee asked whether crash rates along the project area of SR 14 were specific to the recreation driveways or segments.
 - The project team responded that crash rates for segments excluded intersection-related crashes and were also developed for major intersections.
- Attendees expressed concerns with the use of fees in recreation area.
 - The project team responded that the USFS doesn't normally impose fees for purpose of mitigating usage of a recreation site. There are guidelines and amenities in place that must be met before fees implemented.
- An attendee suggested that the final report should summarize how to integrate long-term transit needs.
- Attendees asked about enforcement from Washington State Patrol along the corridor. They also noted that parking enforcement could push visitors to park in a more dangerous location to avoid fees.
- Real-time information
 - Comment: the limiting factor will be the CRGNSA management plan guidelines
 - Would want to know what it would really take from a financial, structural and engineering standpoint
 - For VMS, the project team is looking specifically within urban areas as the team understands the limitations of the CRGNSA on providing these signs in the rural setting