

# SR 14/DOG MOUNTAIN CONGESTION AND SAFETY STUDY

Key Stakeholders Meeting #3 | January 5, 2022, 10:00 AM – noon, Zoom

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

*WA DOT 14(3), Dog Mountain Trailhead Study*

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## Discussion

### Meeting Objectives

- Share what we've heard from the public, stakeholders and core project team
- Gather stakeholder feedback on specific strategies
  - What role can your agency/organization play to move a strategy forward?
  - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Needs

### Schedule

- Draft Report Stakeholder review: The sooner the better, but accepting comments through February 4, 2022
- Online Open House #3: <https://sr14study.participate.online/> accepting comments through February 4, 2022

### What We've Heard

#### Online Open House

- 36 responses – not statistically representative
- Top concerns in the corridor
  - Speeds
  - Unsafe/illegal parking along the corridor
- We also asking respondents to Indicate the three recreation hot spots they felt have the highest safety concerns (Dog Mountain was excluded from the list of options since it's a known and previously documented concern)
  1. Klickitat Spit/Lyle TH
  2. Coyote Wall TH
  3. Beacon Rock
  4. East Coyote Wall/Syncline
  5. Catherine Creek
  6. Cape Horn/Salmon Falls Park & Ride
  7. Drano Lake
  8. Swell City to Spring Creek

## Community Conversations

We also held 2 opportunities for the public to virtually drop-in and ask questions of the project team.

### **October 14, 2021**

- Questions about public engagement.
- Two attendees expressed concerns of overcrowding at recreation sites.
- Representatives from Lyle had questions about Klickitat Spit.

### **October 20, 2021**

- Clarification on safety data
- Explanation of process/ standards for USFS fee sites
- Wants to see consideration for integrating long-term transit needs
- Signage allowed by CRGNSA Management Plan
- Enforcement Discussion

## Stakeholders

Specific feedback from:

- WSDOT
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
- USFS Natural Resource and Recreation staff

Meetings and/or conversations with:

- Tribes
- Friends of the Columbia River Gorge
- Klickitat County
- Skamania County
- Regional Transit Strategy

Updates/Comments from Stakeholders during this meeting:

*Dale Robins, RTC* – Noted that he presented draft to county elected officials and in general did not receive a lot of comments. He noted there is recognition of the congestion and safety problem, but hesitation/lack of consensus on what is the best strategy.

*Cheryl Pouley* – CTGR THPO – Need to recognize the other Tribes beyond the four Treaty Tribes

- Treaty Tribes: Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Yakama Nation, Nez Perce Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation.
- Other Tribes with ties to the Gorge: Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Cowlitz Tribe and the Siletz Tribe.

*Patty Fink* – Overall note on the transit piece, due to some transit provided by senior services divisions, they are not always able to tap into the funding/grants that would benefit recreation. This speaks to resource limitations and needs this to become part of the broader conversation of transportation/transit on the WA side of the Gorge.

## Group Discussion

Angela walked through the intent to conduct a modified SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) for each of the formal recreation sites with recurring congestion and/or safety concerns. The attendees were given the chance to prioritize which areas to focus on first and these were the results:

1. System Strategies (12)
2. Coyote Wall Trailhead / East Syncline (9)
3. Cape Horn Trailhead / Salmon Falls Park and Ride (8)
4. Dog Mountain Trailhead (7)
5. Cape Horn Viewpoint (6)
6. Catherine Creek Trailhead (6)
7. Drano Lake Boat Ramp (2)
8. Other (1) – please explain
9. Swell City (0)

\*Note: See the meeting presentation for additional details on the recreation sites

### System Strategies

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| <p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Port of Portland/PDX connection is already there just needs connection to Washington side</li> <li>• Connecting to the OR transit system</li> <li>• CAT summer program to Stevenson</li> <li>• TMA seems like a good strategy (need to define)</li> <li>• Providing transit incentives</li> <li>• Seasonal and loop routes</li> </ul>   | <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilization/effectiveness of a mountain bike shuttle</li> <li>• Available transit resources for recreation in addition to commute needs</li> <li>• Transportation Management Authority needs to consider more than just transit</li> <li>• Funding needs to sustain a comprehensive plan for recreation management; transit is one part of the whole</li> <li>• Just focusing on transit and not parking and fees makes it harder than needs to be</li> <li>• Both Klickitat and Skamania connections are primarily weekday, and do not support weekend recreation.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form TMA</li> <li>• Transit shuttles; the demand is there.</li> <li>• Service enhancements opportunities is there if funding is available</li> <li>• Look to Washington Park TMA example as a way to identify sustainable, reliable funding<br/><a href="https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/washington-park-transportation-management-associat,463206790/">https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/washington-park-transportation-management-associat,463206790/</a></li> <li>• The bike dynamic is huge though. We are about 10 years away from OR having a complete path from Portland to the Dalles and I worry about WA being left out of the economic boon.</li> <li>• Another thing we've been kicking around in OR is an "access management agency" which could address the recreation, search and rescue and transportation issues</li> <li>• Infrastructure bill funding (still learning what's available)</li> </ul> | <p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available resources (buses, staffing, funding)</li> <li>• Sustainable funding</li> <li>• Annual funding scramble</li> <li>• TMA may be more than we can manage at the time -- Transit has no role if USFS has no funds.</li> <li>• Parking needs to pay for the transit – we need to pull apart in this plan the different aspects. Ideally the visitors causing the impacts should pay for the costs of services.</li> </ul>   |

**Coyote Wall Trailhead (Courtney Road and SR 14) / East Syncline (Old Hwy 8 and SR 14)**

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| <p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SR 14 signing/stripping status should change from “in process” to “complete”</li> <li>• Shuttle system connecting to Hood River, Bingen and White Salmon</li> </ul>  | <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for a left-turn lane is needed</li> <li>• Perceived effectiveness of real-time parking status</li> <li>• With a longer drive to site, parking may be available when you leave home but not when you arrive.</li> <li>• Weakness in restricting parking is that they will just find a location in the closest location that is not restricted, and it moves the problem down the road</li> <li>• Real time parking info was one of the projects highlighted in our CGTA annual planning</li> </ul>                                       |
| <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilizing existing tools. There are some user-generated apps to provide feedback on parking availability - developed by an avid hiker</li> <li>• Bike path between Coyote Wall and White Salmon to not have cars there (road bike vs. mtn. bike is challenge)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There technically is a way to mountain bike from White Salmon to Coyote Wall...you just have to ride up and over Burdoin Mtn :)</li> <li>• Mtn. bikers use private property already; could this be via the forest service land adjacent – new trail all forest service except for some areas of private land</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking lot monitoring issues with connectivity/service connections (ODOT)</li> <li>• Level of bicycle user comfort along SR 14</li> <li>• Is it possible to make a small parking lot at the east side of Coyote Wall/west end of Old Hwy 8?; concern about formalized congestion along road; space is designated as open space so limits options. Part in RIC1 and part in RIC2.</li> <li>• Funding to meet roadway/access standards/infrastructure needs required when trying to create new trailheads or connections to public lands</li> </ul> |

**Cape Horn Trailhead / Salmon Falls Park and Ride**

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| <p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for permit system</li> <li>• Salmon Falls P&amp;R already transit-accessible.</li> <li>• Transit: one-way trail travel (no need loop to back – can be beneficial during trail closure due to falcons)</li> </ul>   | <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No parking zones can push people to other, less safe, access points</li> <li>• Any expansion of pavement should only enhance transit access. More parking just encourages more cars--opposite of the goal here.</li> </ul>                |
| <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collins parcel b/c of land ownership and NSA designation</li> <li>• Potential to create shuttle or park and ride where people can get out of their car earlier</li> <li>• Transit with built-in benefits like drop at one end of trail and pick up at other</li> </ul> | <p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SR 14 truck pullout access points are dangerous</li> <li>• Makeshift parking behavior</li> <li>• Already pushing people to other spots so needs to be looked at in combination with others.</li> <li>• Climate change (all gorge)</li> </ul> |

## Dog Mountain Trailhead

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| <p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shuttle service/reservation permit combo (if we limit use, need a NEPA process)</li> <li>• Relocation of the parking lot off the SR 14 corridor is a viable long-term solution; already have land control.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial sustainability for staff (USFS) and transit shuttle</li> <li>• Initial investment (cost)</li> <li>• New trail connections have potential natural resource impacts</li> <li>• People parking where tight shoulders and forcing people to road so leave parking as is rather than extend no parking sign to east</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit/cost of transit strategy for transit shuttle (\$20k Stevenson to Dog Mtn. during current season, maybe \$100k to expand throughout summer)</li> <li>• Encouraging people to use transit at these key sites also gets them used to using transit in other occasions</li> <li>• This plan might reference the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance Action plan for 2022, which prioritizes recreational area shuttles.</li> </ul> | <p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable funding streams for management</li> <li>• Funding for roadway improvements to state highways that access the new facility</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Would argue that new trail development requires NEPA and NSA regulations that determine and prohibit natural resource impacts.</li> <li>• User built trails are the bigger issue, instead of managed trail systems.</li> </ul> |

## Cape Horn Viewpoint

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| <p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-way parking signs and prohibiting parking on left side signs are doable, cost low (need to vet appropriate sign design)</li> <li>• WSDOT and WSP supportive of addressing safety concerns on SR 14</li> <li>• Restrict left-turn (need to vet surrounding area for alternate turn-around)</li> </ul> | <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are also now parking east of the viewpoint just beyond the bridge and walking up from there</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could be a real pullout or completely restrict this option (needs significant funding/planning/design)</li> <li>• Could extend safety improvements west</li> </ul>   | <p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot do variable speed limits in rural area and not supported by CRGNSA</li> <li>• Endemic plant species limit shifting to a different location (old study)</li> </ul> |

## Catherine Creek Trailhead

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| <p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide designated crossing of old Hwy 8</li> </ul>   | <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-going funding for real-time parking availability</li> <li>• Ability to get snowplows and service vehicles through with some of these mitigation efforts - maintenance</li> <li>• Some of these tools cannot be implemented by themselves (some need to be in place for the others to be successful) – traffic calming/speed reduction to create safer crossing environment</li> <li>• County needs a mechanism/process to identify appropriate locations for mid-block/enhanced pedestrian crossings.</li> <li>• IGA with USFS/County to collect funds</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shuttle Service from HR, WS and Bingen</li> <li>• Accessibility improvements to Universal Access Trail</li> </ul> | <p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeders</li> <li>• Transit shuttle needs to be supported by parking management and fees.</li> <li>• Transit cannot be implemented on its own, other things need to be in place</li> <li>• This site is accessed from SR 14 so funding for left-turn lane needed on SR 14/Old Hwy 8</li> </ul>  |

Ran out of time to discuss the following sites in detail:

- Drano Lake Boat Ramp
- Swell City to Spring Creek

### **Next Steps**

The project team will be accepting comments on the draft report through February 4, 2022.

Attachments: Key Stakeholder Meeting #3 PowerPoint presentation slides.