

Deschutes National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study

Preliminary Summary of Issues



This handout outlines several transportation issues in the DNF that will be analyzed in greater detail. The issues were drawn from the 2009 Transportation Assistance Group (TAG) assessment and the 2009 TRIP application. The issues focus primarily on the summer season to focus on non-motorized alternative transportation issues.

Bicyclists: Safe non-highway connections between Sisters, Bend, and Sunriver do not exist. Bicyclists mainly use shoulders on high-volume roads. Cycling is an increasingly popular activity in the region, but a lack of safe facilities makes cycling to and in the forest prohibitive for many potential cyclists.

Pedestrians: A safe pedestrian facility network to provide connections to key locations and attractions is limited and in many locations, non-existent.

Safety: There are safety concerns during the summer, particularly for cyclists riding on highway shoulders with high speed cars, and for pedestrians crossing highways from parking areas to trailheads.

Parking Congestion: During the summer, desire for parking is higher than the number of spaces available. This is common at popular trailheads, such as Phil's trailhead and at Tumalo Falls. When parking lots are full, visitors often park illegally on the roadway shoulders and stop their cars in the roadway to wait for the next available parking space, thereby impeding traffic.

Signage, Wayfinding & Traveler Information: There is limited coordinated wayfinding and visitor information for visitors, bicyclists and pedestrians. Additionally, there is not easily accessible information on DNF for visitors when arriving to the cities in the area (Sisters, Redmond, La Pine, Bend).

Degradation of recreation, historical and natural resources: When trailhead parking is full, visitors may park along roadside shoulders trampling vegetation and compacting and eroding soil. Additionally, this can spread invasive species. More vehicles along roads may result in more wildlife collisions.

Partnerships: Congestion in the winter, parking and lack of alternative transportation facilities affects multiple agencies, jurisdictions, and organizations which can make coordinated improvements more challenging to implement.

Roadway Congestion: Roadway congestion is an issue in winter related to the ski areas. Limited mobility during these peak times delays emergency response times. Car and pedestrian congestion on the roadways can impair emergency vehicle functions and delay response times.

Visitation & Growth: With anticipated growth in population and tourism, congestion and related safety and natural resource issues are likely to grow worse over time. According to the Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan, the Deschutes County population will increase approximately 45 percent by 2025. With the local population accounting for over 50% of visits to DNF, population growth in the surrounding communities is likely to exacerbate issues with congestion. Additionally, Oregon statewide tourism to the area is increasing. Data (Longwoods International, 2007 & 2010) show between 2007 and 2009, there was a 24 percent increase in visitation to the Central Oregon region.