

## Beacon Rock State Park Entrance Road Realignment

### Project description:

With guidance from a previously completed predesign report and public comments, this project will design and permit a safe entrance and road realignment to Beacon Rock State Park facilities with safer driving conditions for Washington State Route 14 (SR14) motorists. A roundabout at the intersection of Washington SR14 will slow traffic, provide a clearly defined parking lot with controlled ingress and egress that will make exiting and merging more predictable. This project will provide controlled turning into Hamilton Mountain Trailhead Access Road, bring Hamilton Mountain Trailhead Access Road up to standard for two-way traffic, a welcome center, and comfort station centrally located in the parking lot.

A tunnel will prevent pedestrians from crossing SR14. The pedestrian tunnel will direct visitors through a safe passage under the highway that connects Beacon Rock, campgrounds, Hamilton Mountain Trail, and day-use areas all together.

The project also modernizes park utilities, repairs degraded internal park roads, and renovates the caretaker house and maintenance shop.

Beacon Rock State Park is a very popular recreational destination due to the proximity to the metropolitan area of Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. Beacon Rock sees over 300,000 visitors per year with increasing annual use. Visitors flock to Beacon Rock for technical rock climbing, the scenic beauty of the Columbia River Gorge, and over twenty miles of hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails. The park also has popular boating and camping facilities that all combine to attract both overnight and day-use visitors.

The current parking is directly along the side of Washington State Route 14, causing pedestrians to cross in front of and interact with vehicles traveling along State Route 14. With the highway bisecting the park, it results in dangerous pedestrian crossings over the highway to visit the park headquarters or access other trails within the park. This particular location, the park headquarters and Kueffler Road, is problematic as it has limited sightlines in each direction. This interaction with park visitors creates great safety risks to both drivers and pedestrians accessing park facilities. Every year accidents requiring emergency responses are reported in this area due to the entrance, parking, and highway route through the park.

This entrance road realignment design will greatly reduce accidents along this section of SR14, creating a safer entrance and trail head parking for visitors. The preferred concept chosen in predesign considered public requests to slow SR14 traffic through the park, create additional parking, as well as establish safer access for buses and recreational vehicles. Additional parking will create numerous community benefits for residents and visitors from the Portland area. Providing better access to disadvantaged communities and communities of color will help to reduce nature deprivation. Access to nature among those of all ages, social groups, and abilities can alleviate some of the most important problems in public health, including: obesity, stress, social isolation, injury, and violence.

## YOUR LETTERHEAD

January 27, 2025

Secretary Peter Buttigieg  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington D.C. 20590

To the Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

I am pleased to support Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainable and Equity (RAISE) grant request for the design and permitting of the Entrance and Road Realignment project at Beacon Rock State Park located in Skamania County, Washington.

Beacon Rock State Park is a very popular recreational destination. Due to the proximity to the metropolitan area of Portland, Oregon. Beacon Rock sees over 300,000 visitors per year with increasing annual use. Visitors flock to Beacon Rock for technical rock climbing, the scenic beauty of the Columbia River Gorge, along with over twenty miles of trails. The park also has popular boating and camping facilities that all combine to attract both overnight and day use visitors.

The current parking is directly along the side of Washington State Route 14 (SR14) causing pedestrians to cross in front of and interact with vehicles traveling along State Route 14. With the highway bisecting the park it results in dangerous pedestrian crossings over the highway to visit the park headquarters or access other trails within the park. This particular location at the park headquarters and Kueffler road is problematic as it has limited sightlines in each direction. This interaction with park visitors creates great safety risks to both drivers and pedestrians accessing park facilities. Every year accidents requiring emergency responses are reported in this area due to the entrance, parking, and highway route through the park.

WSPRC's project will greatly reduce accidents along this section of SR14, creating a safer entrance and trail head parking for visitors. The preferred concept chosen in predesign took into account public requests to slow SR14 traffic through the park, create additional parking, as well as establish safer access for buses and recreational vehicles. Additional parking will create numerous community benefits for residents and visitors from the Portland area. Providing better access to disadvantaged communities and communities of color will help to reduce nature deprivation. Access to nature among those of all ages, social groups, and abilities can alleviate some of the most important problems in public health, including obesity, stress, social isolation, injury, and violence. Supporting this project helps the WSPRC in taking the next crucial step of providing a safe entrance, parking, and highway realignment to Beacon Rock State Park. These

improvements will reduce safety risks and costly accidents that accrue emergency response, property damage, and cleanup expenses.

Thank you for the consideration you can give to this application, which will allow for this important project to be shovel ready. Please do not hesitate to contact me should I be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

(Enter Name)

(Enter Title)