

# Waterfall Corridor Timed Use Permits

Multnomah County Bicycle and Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee

December 14, 2022



# Context

- ▶ Multi-Agency Coordination
- ▶ Continuing collaboration
- ▶ Shared goals and outcomes
- ▶ Baseline data
- ▶ Results:
  - ▶ High vehicle demand, low parking supply



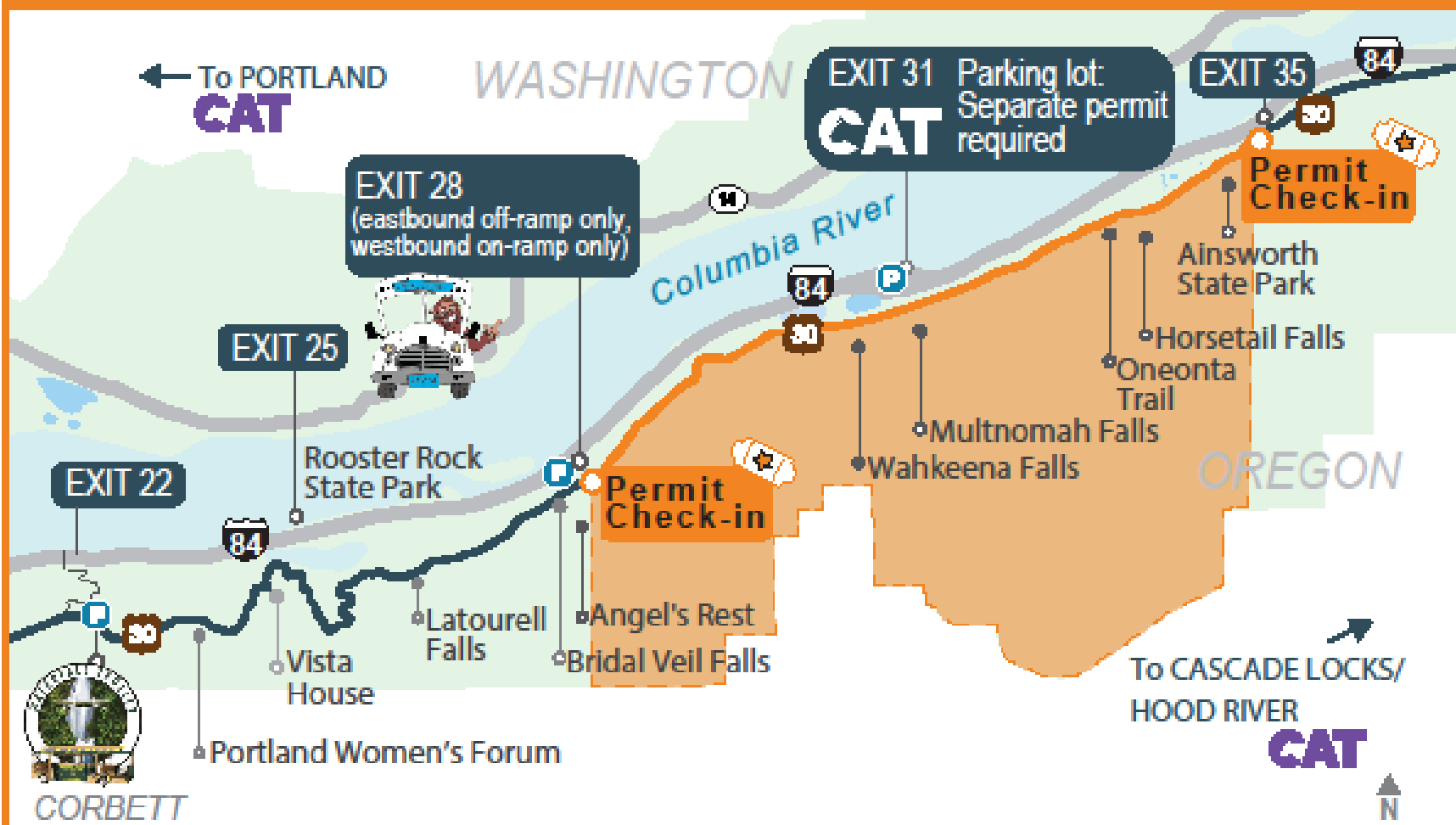
## Historic Columbia River Highway Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan



FINAL June 2019



# Pilot Goals

- ▶ Improve Safety
- ▶ Reduce Congestion
- ▶ Improve Visitor Experience





-  Federal lands accessed by required Waterfall Corridor Permit
- CAT** Public transit provider
-  Parking for shuttles/transit

-  Gray Line Waterfall Trolley:  
36901 E Historic  
Columbia River Highway  
Corbett, OR
-  Sasquatch Shuttle  
1 West Mill Road  
Bridal Veil, OR





# Pilot Details

- ▶ Waterfall Corridor Timed Use permits
  - ▶ 60 available/hour online 9 am - 6 pm
    - ▶ 540 available per day
  - ▶ 50 available/day in person (no fee)
  - ▶ 49,633 issued through rec.gov, 1,532 issued in-person
- ▶ Multnomah Falls (I-84) Timed Use permits
  - ▶ 140-85 available/hour online 9 am - 6 pm
    - ▶ 910 available per day
  - ▶ No permits available in person
  - ▶ 79,670 permits issued

# General Public Feedback

- ▶ The two permit system was confusing
  - ▶ Some bought both permits for the same time
  - ▶ Difference between I-84 and Historic Highway
- ▶ Visitors familiar with the area reported much less congestion, increased ability to park as compared with years past
- ▶ Misconception that the permits were a “fee”
- ▶ Uncertainty of pre-9 am and post-6 pm visits.



## Multnomah Falls (I-84) Timed Use Permit

Enter date to see available times, or click for ticket details.

★★★★☆ (784)



## Waterfall Corridor Timed Use Permit

Enter date to see available times, or click for ticket details.

★★★★☆ (577)

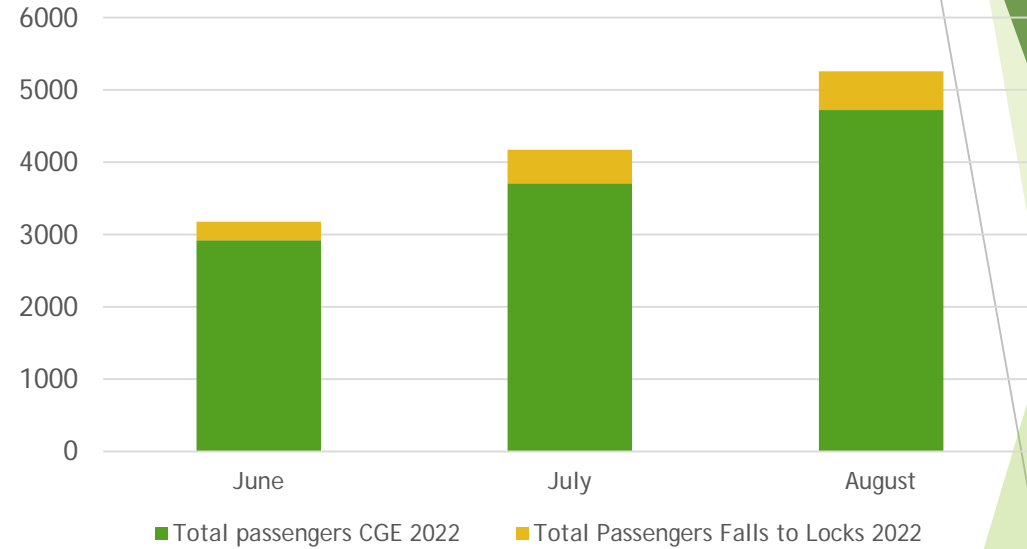


# CAT Ridership

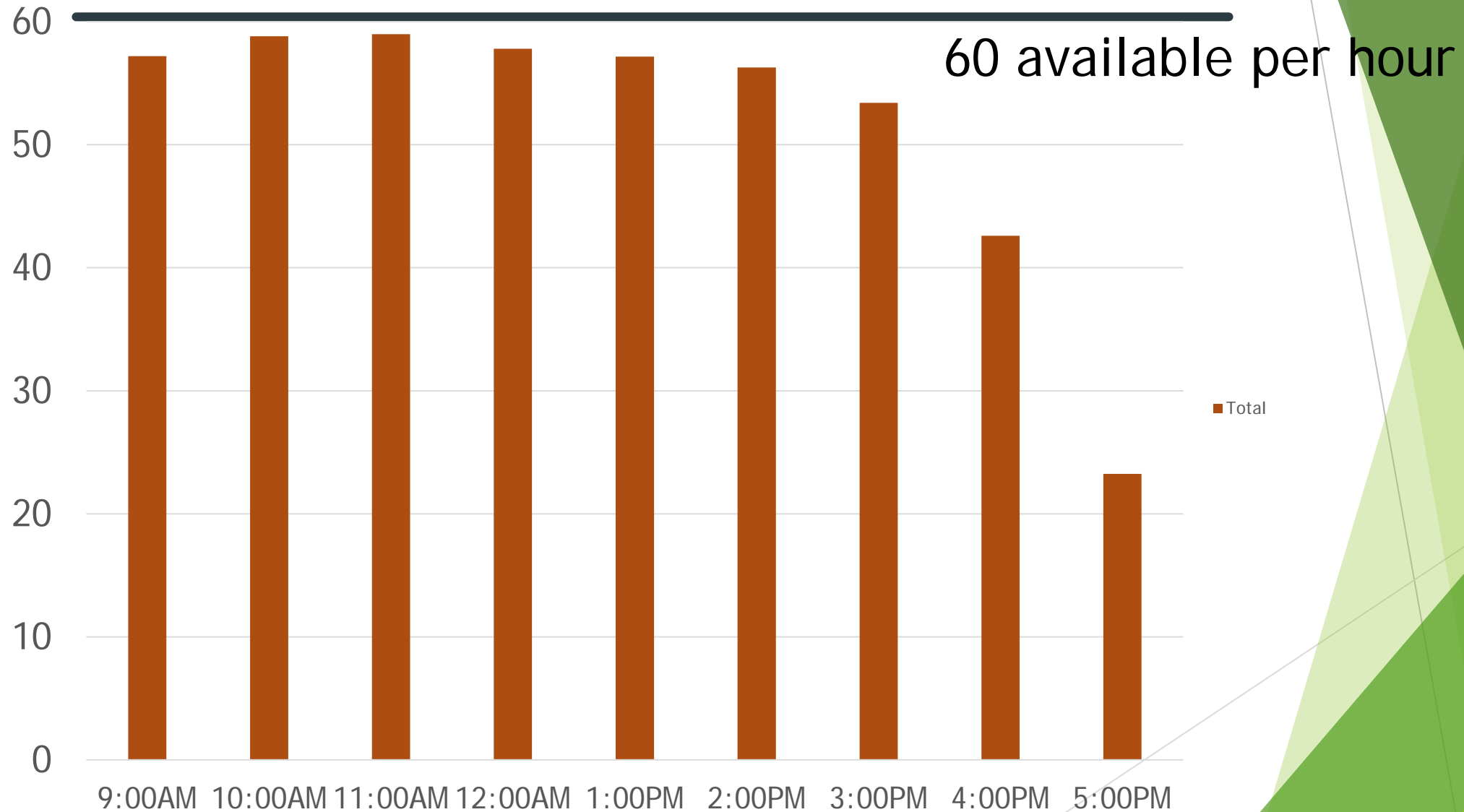
Total Passengers CGE 2021



CAT Total Passengers 2022

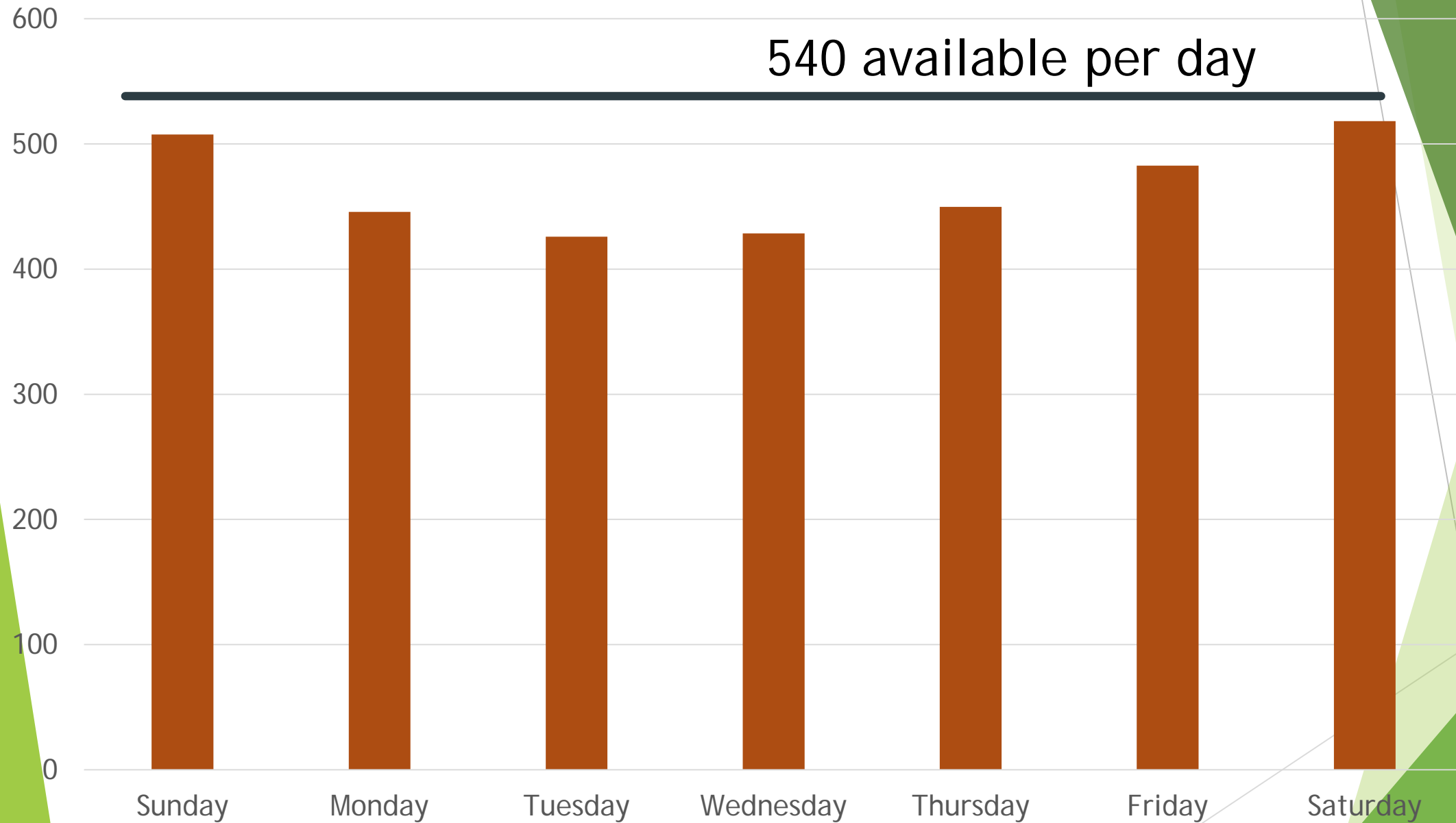


# Waterfall Corridor Average Permits per Hour



# Waterfall Corridor Average Permits by Day

540 available per day

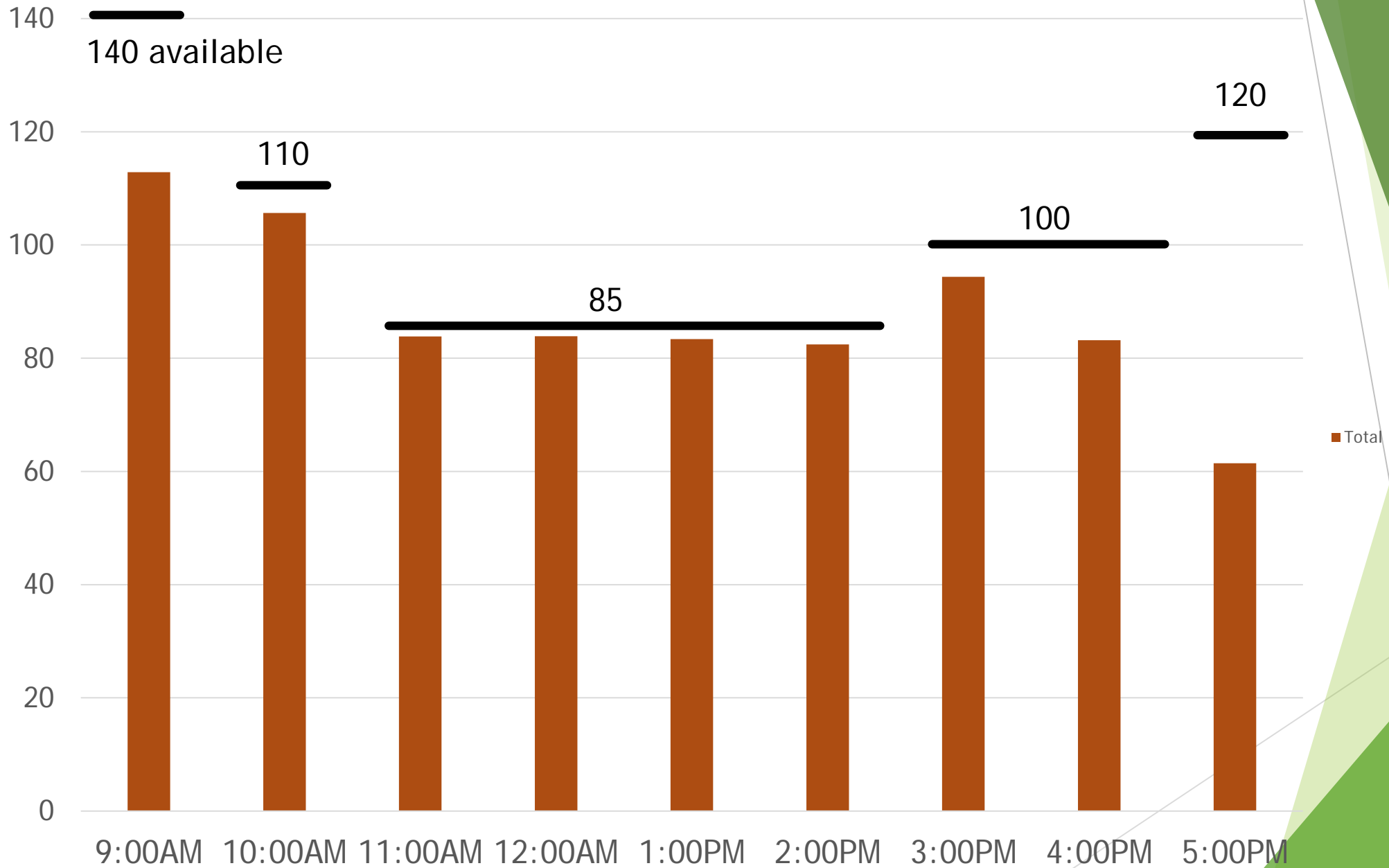




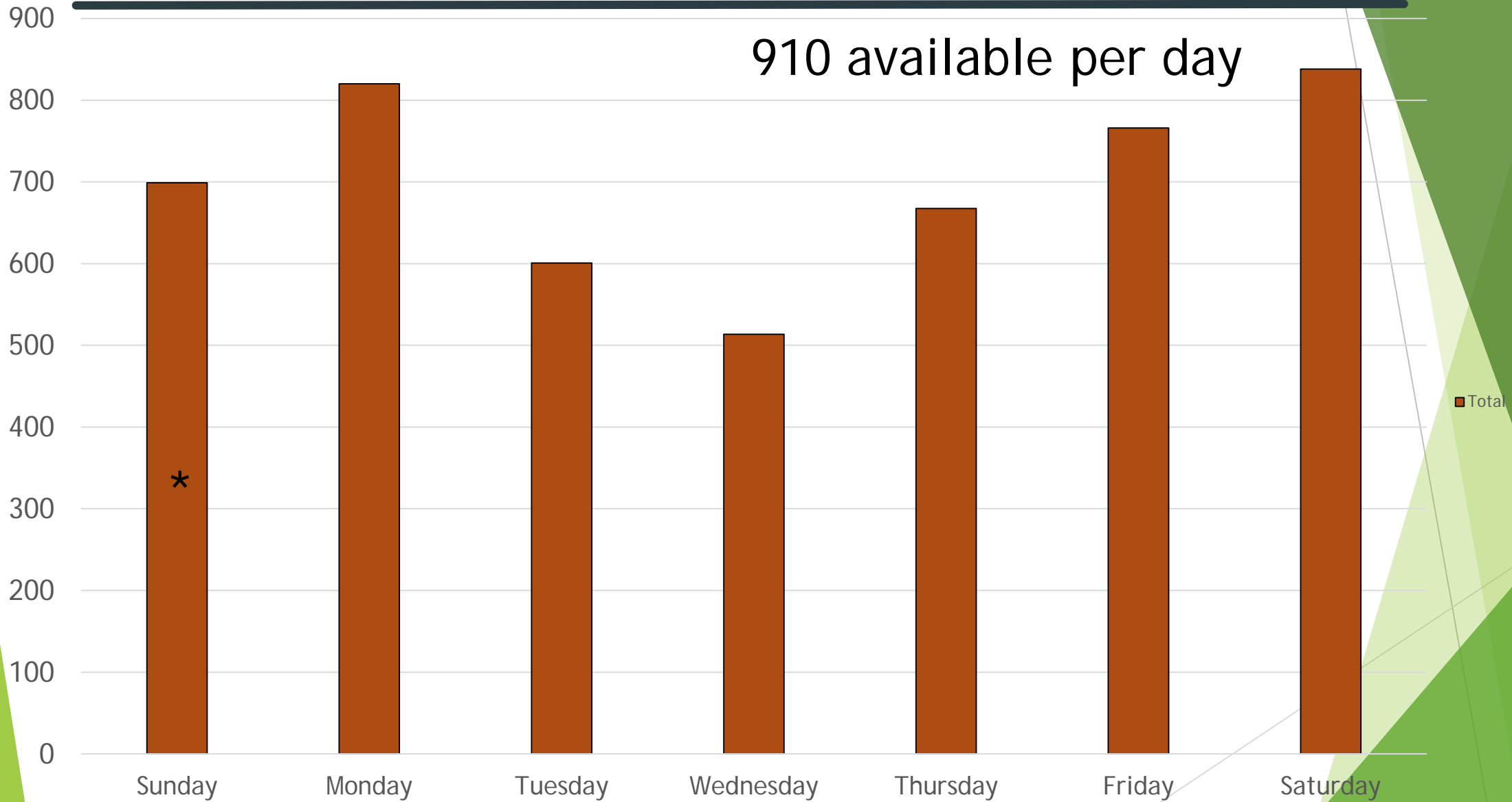
# Multnomah Falls



# Multnomah Falls Average Permits per Hour



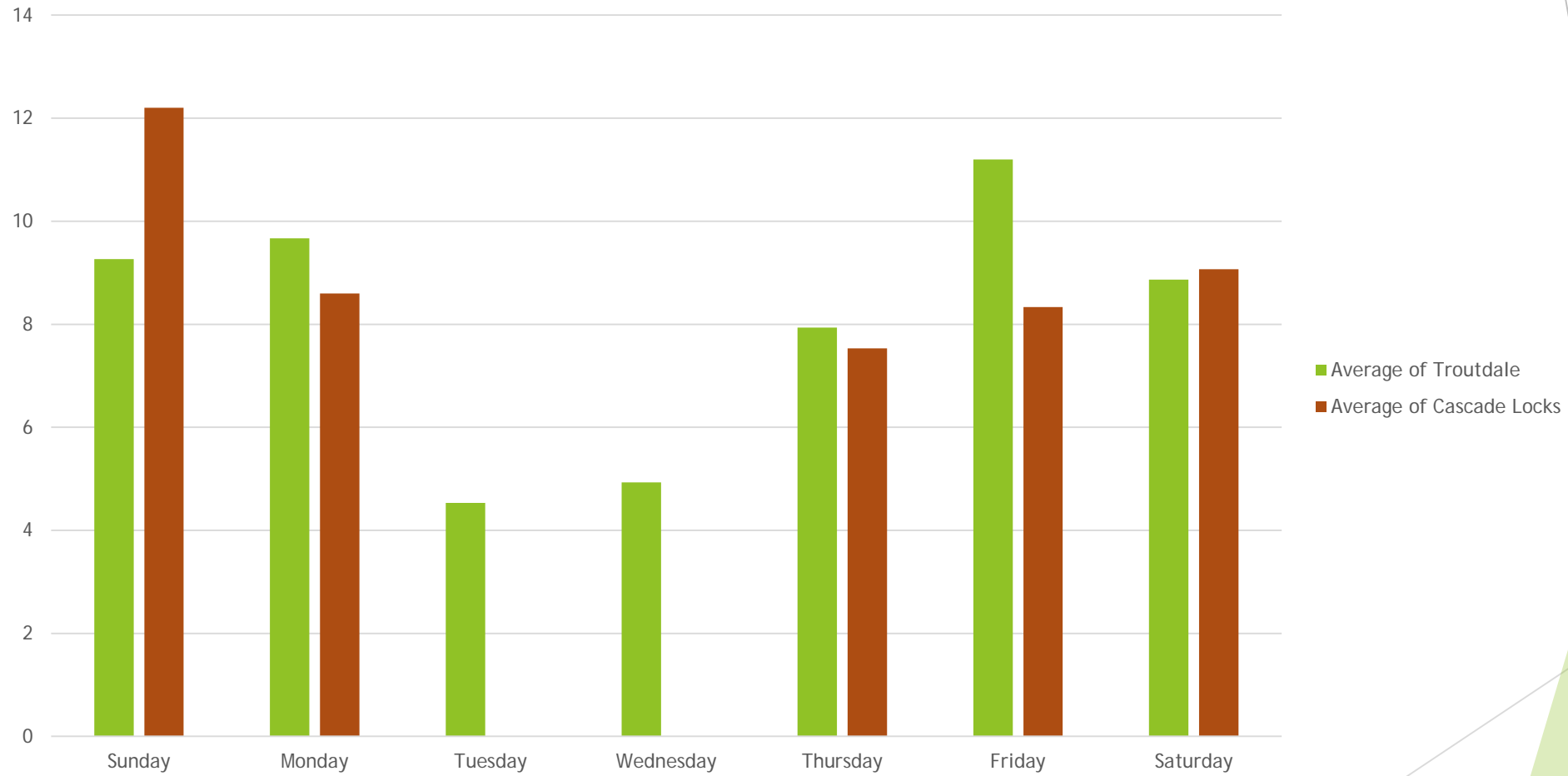
# Multnomah Falls Average Permits per Day



\* Data anomalies on Sunday, average permits likely much higher



# In-person permits Average by Day





# Goal Met: Improve Safety

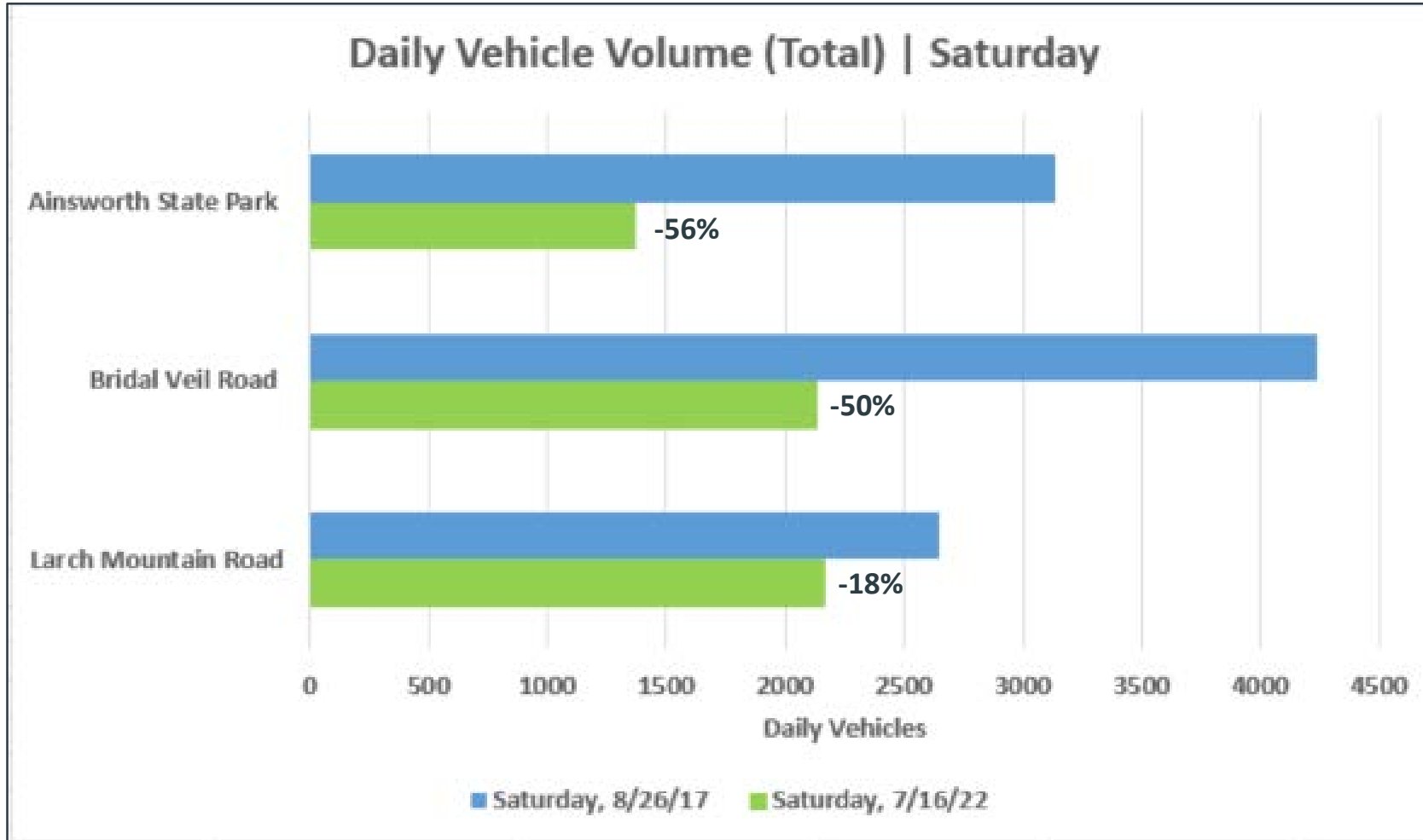
- ▶ No significant change in crash reports
- ▶ EMS/Law enforcement corridor access



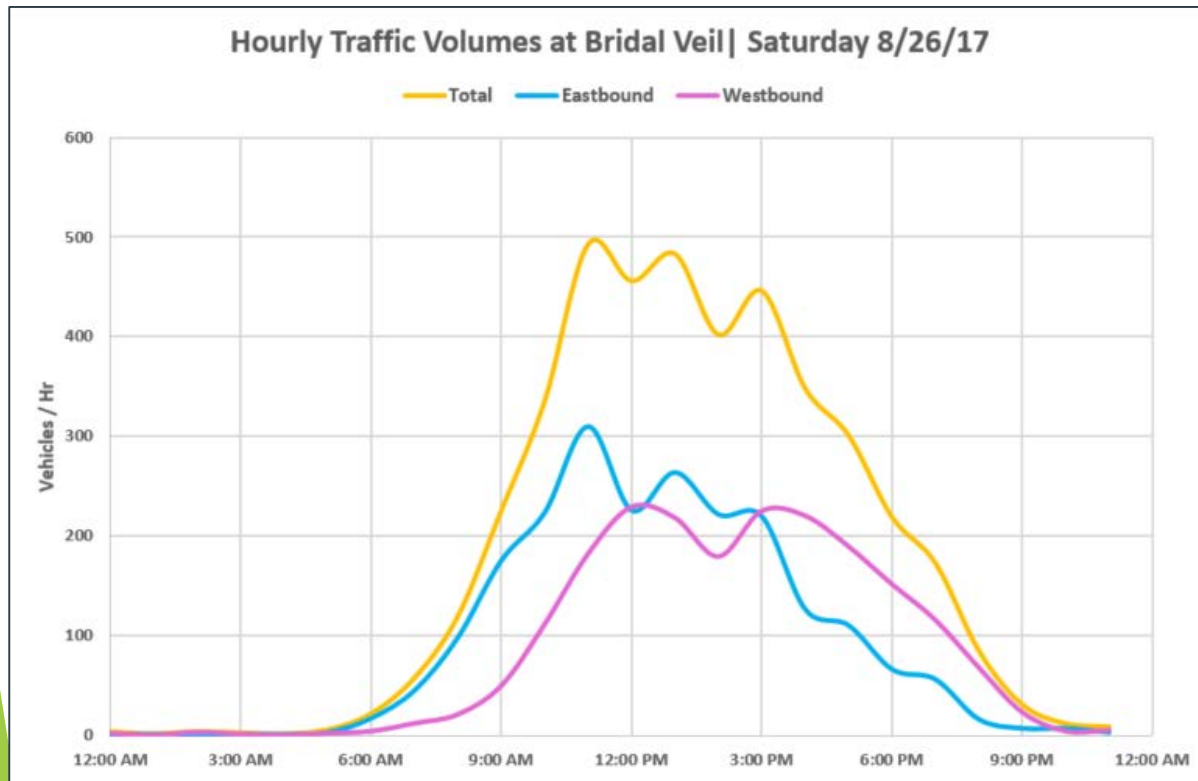
# Goal Met: Reduce Congestion

- ▶ Traffic Volumes
- ▶ User feedback
- ▶ Neighbor feedback

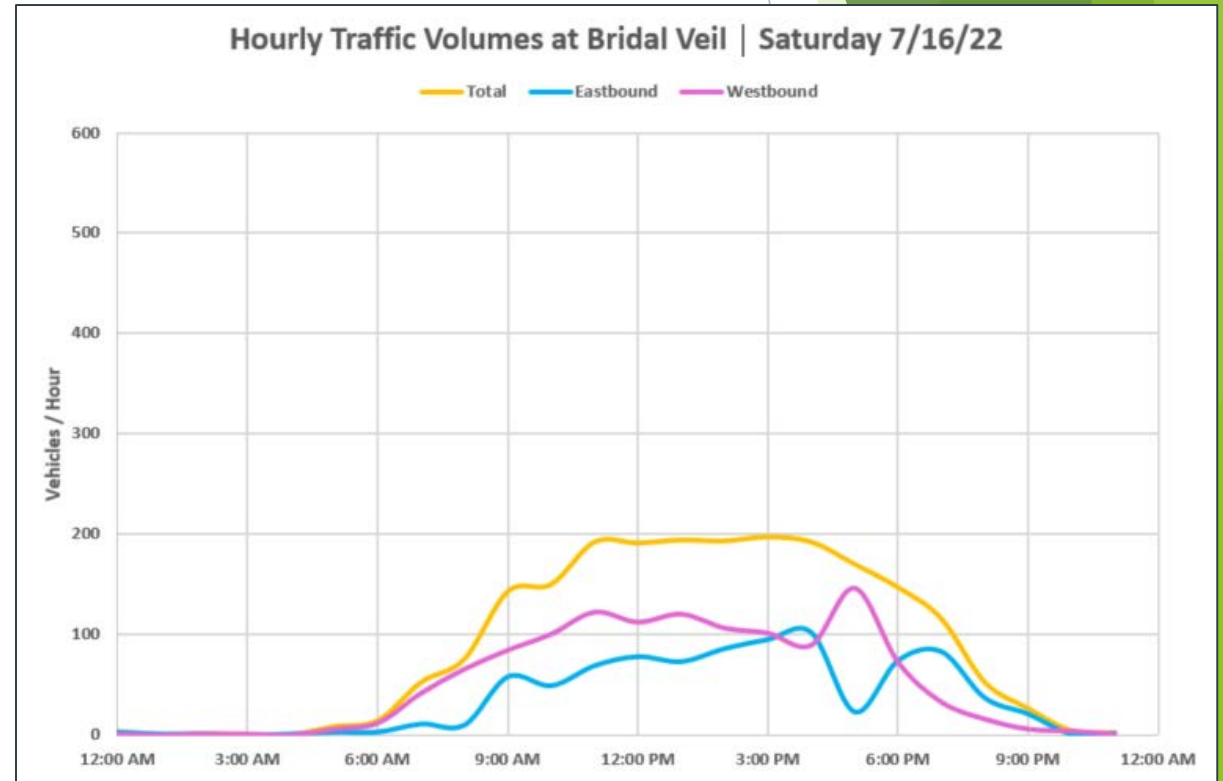
# Preliminary Traffic Results - Volumes



# Bridal Veil Road Saturday Vehicles/hour

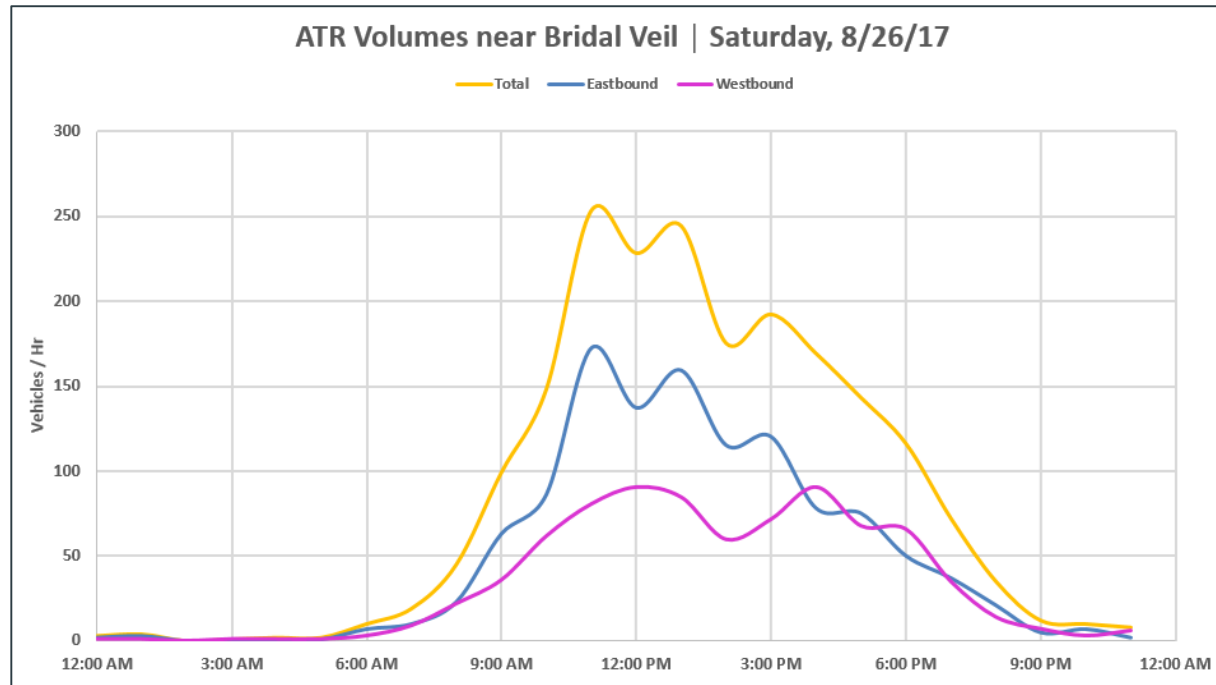


2017

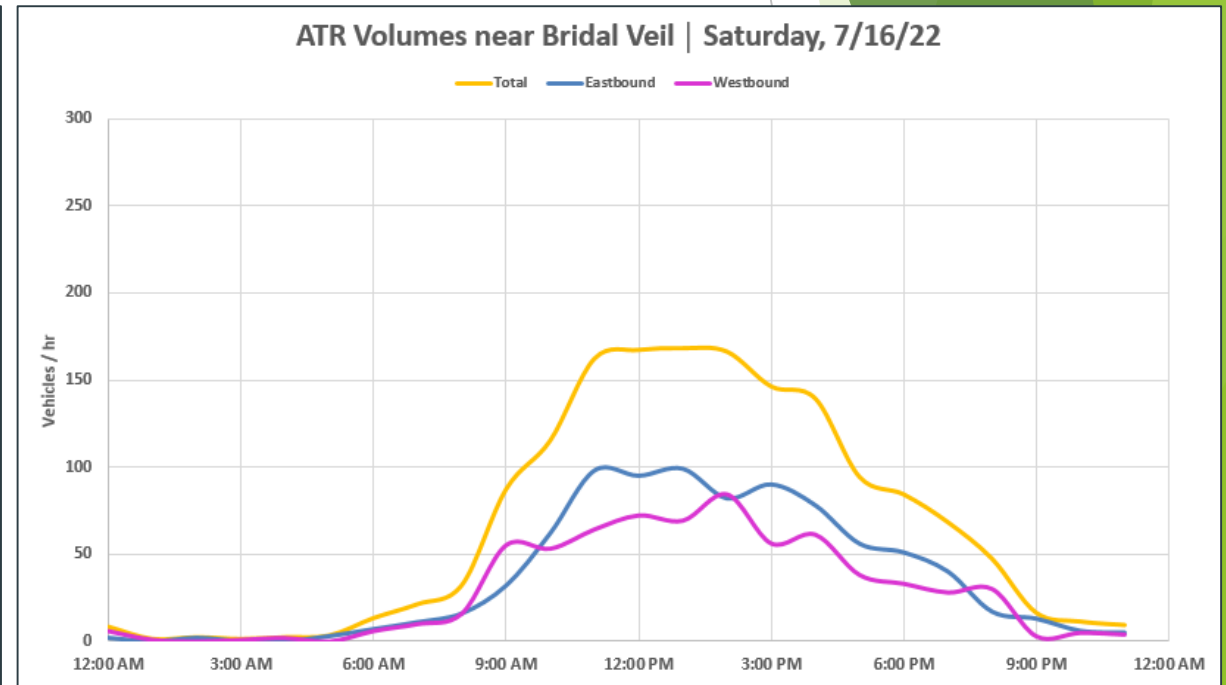


2022

# Bridal Veil Road Saturday Vehicle Volumes - ATR DATA



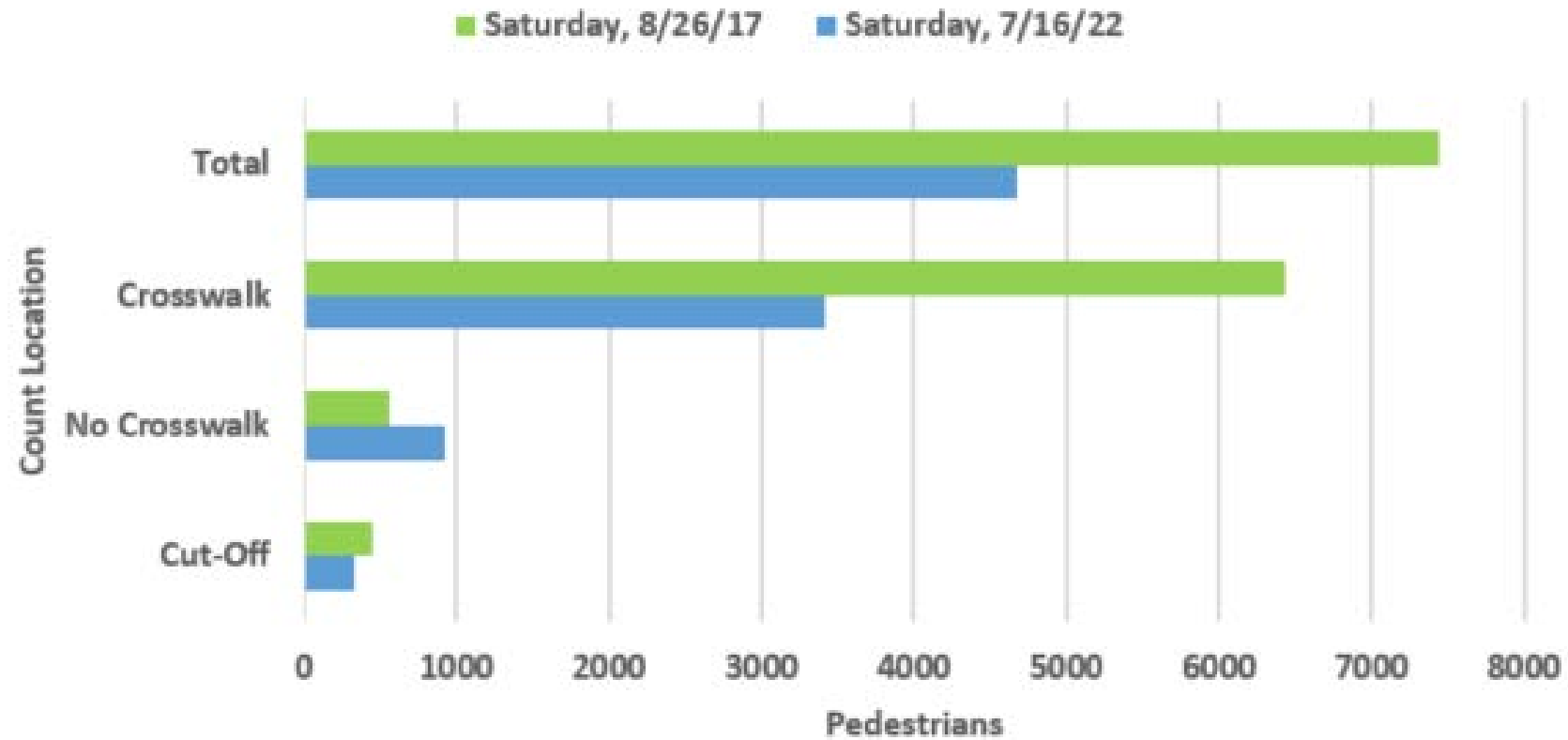
2017



2022

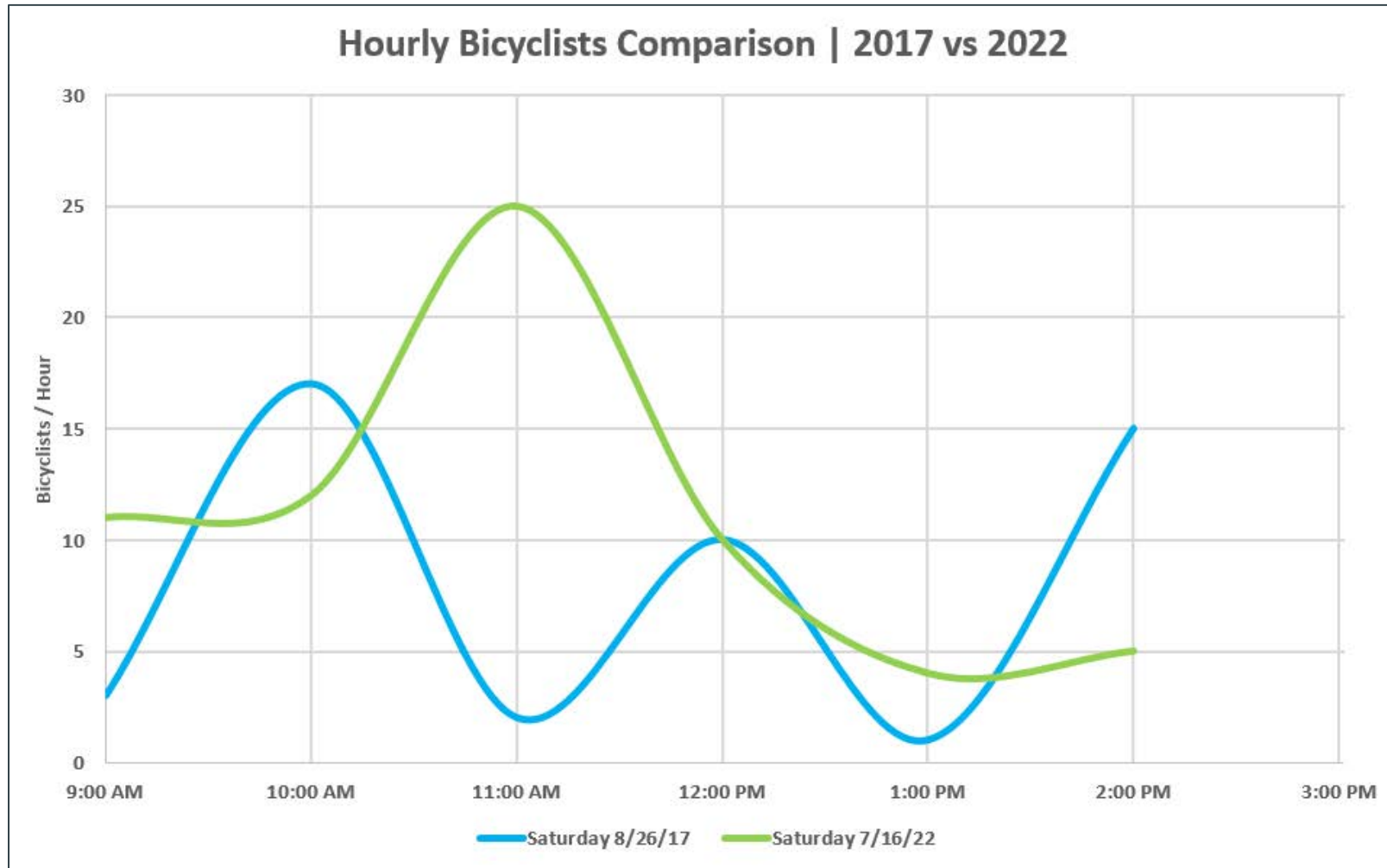
# Daily pedestrian volumes

Pedestrian Volumes at Multnomah Falls | 2017 vs 2022





# Hourly Bicyclists at Multnomah Falls



# Goal Met: Improve Visitor Experience

## ▶ Rec.gov feedback:

- ▶ It was amazing to use this system to get the permit. The Falls were amazing! It wasn't crowded.
- ▶ Very good idea smooth travel min crowds.

## ▶ General survey feedback:

- ▶ I think this is a great step toward protecting the public spaces. It's true, they are very popular. But in years past the traffic has been unbearable. Much improved.
- ▶ Permits were easy and convenient to reserve and use. Much less congestion.

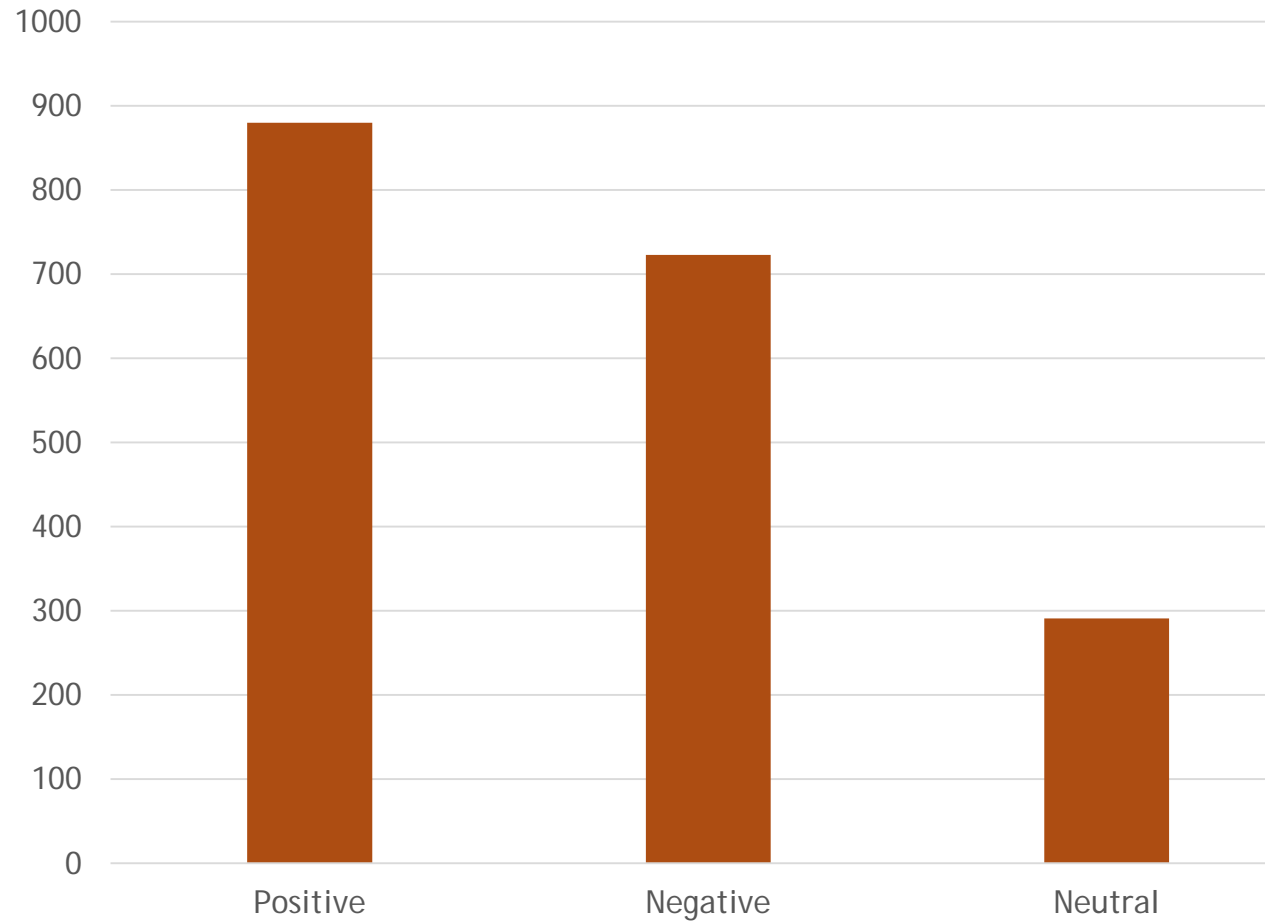
## ▶ Resident feedback:

- ▶ ...while I was (very!) skeptical at first, I will say that the pilot program this summer was well-executed and, from at least the perspectives of the residents I have spoken with, was successful. We never encountered very significant wait times and saw a marked reduction in unsafe driving, overuse, and misuse in our stretch of highway. We would gladly welcome the program again in future years.



# Comment Tone

Total Comments Received



# But not everyone agreed

## ▶ Confusing System

- ▶ Good luck trying to book a pass for more than one person. The **checkout procedure** is the worst
- ▶ We found timed tickets very **stressful**. Trying to estimate what time you would get to a particular location when you are out for the day. In the end we bought several for the same day to give us options. Be aware, visitor centre closes before last timed ticket.
- ▶ This was terrible. We were on our way to Multnomah Falls on the scenic route when we saw this sign about timed use permits, not even knowing what it referred to. Then we had to stop, **download an app and pay the fee**, delaying us about 15 minutes. Then when we got to the Falls there was **no parking anyway**, so we just kept going. Much better would have been the people assigned to stop cars to collect \$2 from every car and give them a sticker! This was a terrible way to do it! What do people from other countries, elderly, and those without smart phones do?

## ▶ No Parking Available

- ▶ Forced to pay \$2 just to drive down the highway and find out there was **no parking anywhere**. Had to drive all the way back to the interstate just to make a u turn and park in the interstate access where there was plenty of free parking.
- ▶ I had timed ticket for Multnomah Falls, but we had to skip it - **parking was full** and there was a queue of cars waiting for a parking spot. For us it means that this system doesn't work.



# What happens without the pilot?

- ▶ September 6 - NO PERMITS NEEDED! VISIT THE GORGE!
  - ▶ Long queues, increased traffic, frustration, honking, illegal maneuvers



**Joseph K.**  
Local Guide · 140 reviews · 423 photos

★★★★☆ 5 months ago

Water fall is amazing here, parking is not. Trail to waterfall is super cool, parking a car is not. Gift shop has super nice folks who help everyone, trying to park was not helpful.



**Patricia V.**  
3 reviews · 6 photos

★★★★☆ 10 months ago

Absolutely beautiful. Parking was full and we parked on the side of the road. We got broken in and our luggage got stolen.



Photo: Lizzie Keenan



# Illegal maneuvers



Video courtesy of a concerned citizen

# What's next?

- ▶ Continue to gather and evaluate pilot data
  - ▶ Speeds on the Historic Highway
  - ▶ Compile feedback/comments
- ▶ Planning for next year
  - ▶ Agencies continuing to collaborate
  - ▶ Match demand to available parking