

Yosemite National Park

Visitor Access Planning – FAQs

July 2023 – September 2023

Public FAQs

Why is this plan needed?

The park has seen increasing impacts to natural and cultural resources, diminished quality of visitor experiences, increased visitor and staff safety concerns, and a heavy strain on the park's facilities and ability to perform daily operations. The NPS believes that managed access and related strategies are needed in high-demand areas where other strategies have not been sufficient to ensure high-quality experiences, visitor safety, and resource protection.

How will the plan be developed?

This process will leverage the park's extensive planning, including previously identified capacities for many areas of the park and related infrastructure updates (e.g. intersection realignments, meadow protection curbing, parking additions, and circulation improvements). This process will consider key issues related to visitor experiences, natural and cultural resource protection, and vehicular crowding and congestion. The planning process will provide recommendations for supporting high-quality public access to the park while providing positive visitor experiences and protection of natural and cultural resources into the future.

When will public input occur?

The first round of public input occurred from December 9, 2022 to February 3, 2023. This first series gathered public and community feedback about strategies for managing visitor access in order to inform this process. The second of multiple opportunities over the planning process for the public and stakeholders to share input on how Yosemite should, if at all, manage access in the future will begin on July 6, 2023. The second round of public involvement will solicit ideas on draft management concepts that were developed following the December public involvement. We are committed to a transparent civic and stakeholder engagement process. When it comes to visitor use management decisions at NPS, we know that engagement is about mobilizing people to do the hard work of making change—together. Yosemite is committed to engaging with all stakeholders—including gateway communities, partners, members of the public, and state, local, and tribal governments—to identify solutions, and to conduct compliance and planning processes.

What is managed access?

Managed access is a suite of tools that help pace the timing and volume of visitation into areas to optimize access, ensure quality experiences, and protect resources. Examples of managed access include reservation systems, timed and ticketed entry, campground

reservations, and more. Some examples of managed access strategies that have been in place for many years include wilderness and Half Dome permits. Managed access and related strategies are not a standalone solution. This plan will carefully evaluate many different tools and techniques that would be most effective to help Yosemite improve how visitors get to and experience the park's significant resources and features.

Why are peak hours reservations for day use not in place for Summer 2023?

After three consecutive years of summer day-use reservation programs, the park announced in Fall 2022 that it does not plan to implement a temporary day-use reservation system in summer 2023. In 2022 there were notable changes to both parking and roadway flows were being built and implemented. By allowing for an unconstrained level of visitation to access the park it allows the NPS to observe and test the efficacy of those changes and document if/what issues still persist after the implementation of these parking lot and roadway configuration changes. No decisions have been made about potential reservation pilots for 2024.