

## Objective R-2: Develop infrastructure and expand visitor services to support increased demand

**THE NEED:** The most significant challenges for increasing visitorship are improving visitor information and reducing unwanted and illegal activities is the lack of infrastructure in the corridor. Developing infrastructure that will guide visitors to the area to make the right decisions is important as demand for use of the area increases. Investment in and location of infrastructure is complex and will require collaboration by landowners throughout the corridor to accomplish, as the topography and other natural features in the corridor make location of infrastructure challenging.

### WE HEARD YOU!

Public and stakeholder input included:


- Expanding visitor services and information
- Enhancing infrastructure:
  - Parking
  - Roads
  - Signage
  - Public restrooms

Visitor services such as information, restrooms and parking are extremely limited throughout the corridor. A parking lot, restroom and information kiosk have been constructed in Wilkeson and another small parking lot is adjacent to the Foothills Trail in Carbonado. The Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition supports another small parking lot near the Fairfax Bridge. Mount Rainier National Park maintains a set of vault toilets at the Carbon River entrance to the park, adjacent to the existing parking area. The lack of visitor services is a significant issue both for visitors, who often get lost and are frustrated by the lack of facilities and for locals, who face pressure from visitors parking in unauthorized and unsafe locations and must deal with garbage and litter left behind. While Mount Rainier National Park staffs a ranger contact station near the Carbon River entrance, this location has no public restrooms and does not provide access to water for visitors.




## Roads and bridges

Improvements to road and bridge maintenance, trash clean-up, and additional access points are necessary for the safety of residents and visitors. These items form some of the foundation for other actions in this plan.

	ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS
➤	<b>R-2-1</b> Form a road maintenance work group between landowners and agencies responsible for roadways in the corridor.	Parks	Pierce County Planning and Public Works and Parks Departments, WSDOT, NPS-MORA, USFS
➤	<b>R-2-2</b> Repair the roadway inside Mount Rainier National Park near the Carbon River entrance.	NPS-MORA	TBD
➤	<b>R-2-3</b> Encourage local organizations, residents, recreational groups, and visitors to participate in Adopt-a-Highway (state) and Adopt-a-Road (county) volunteer litter clean-up programs.	TBD	Friends of the Carbon River, Carbon River Forum, WSDOT, Pierce County Planning and Public Works
➤➤➤	<b>R-2-4</b> Build a pedestrian bridge over the Carbon River connecting future recreational properties, such as Fairfax Townsite, Foothills Trail, etc.	Parks	Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition
➤➤➤	<b>R-2-5</b> Explore options to improve roads to and across the Manley Moore bridge for access to the Fairfax Townsite (see R-1-11).	Pierce County Planning and Public Works	TBD




## Roadway signage

Residents, area visitors, and landowners have identified signage leading to and through the corridor as a major challenge. Visitors often seek Paradise or Sunrise entrances to Mount Rainier National Park and find their way to the Carbon River entrance which has extremely limited visitor services and no cellular phone service. Improving roadway signage will reduce the number of visitors who find their way to the Carbon River corridor by accident and improve their ability to find the services and destinations they seek. For signage related to visitor information and services, see Objective I-1.

	ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS
➤	<b>R-2-6</b> Develop a signage work group to take a holistic approach to wayfinding to and through the corridor and recommend appropriate signage improvements.	TBD	Town of Wilkeson, Town of Carbonado, Pierce County, WSDOT, NPS-MORA, USFS
➤	<b>R-2-7</b> Improve safety at the Fairfax Bridge by mitigating hazardous parking in the area.	Pierce County Planning and Public Works	Parks, Pierce County Sheriff
➤➤	<b>R-2-8</b> Install new signage in the corridor based on the work group recommendations (contingent on R-2-6).	WSDOT, Pierce County Planning and Public Works	Towns, NPS-MORA, USFS
➤➤	<b>R-2-9</b> Install signage at seasonal road closure locations to explain closure and rules to visitors.	USFS	WSDOT


**Visitor center**

Visitors to this area need maps, brochures and sometimes permits before proceeding into an area without cell service, restroom facilities, gas stations, food, or water. To catch visitors before they end up in this challenging situation, Mount Rainier National Park plans to pilot a visitor contact center on property they own in the Town of Wilkeson, in collaboration with other partners. Wilkeson, the last location for reliable cell service in the corridor, is also the location of the last restaurants and a gas station before the road dead ends at the National Park. If the Park determines through the pilot that there is adequate need, they will consider plans for a permanent visitor center in Wilkeson through a formal planning process.

	ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	PARTNERS
	<p><b>R-2-10</b> Pilot a temporary visitor contact station in Wilkeson (see action P-2-7).</p>	<p>NPS-MORA</p>	<p>Friends of Carbon Canyon, ForeverGreen Trails, Parks, Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition, Town of Wilkeson</p>
	<p><b>R-2-11</b> Explore establishing a permanent inter-agency visitor contact station in Wilkeson.</p>	<p>NPS-MORA</p>	<p>Town of Wilkeson, USFS, Parks</p>

## Restrooms and parking

The only public restrooms in the corridor are in the Town of Wilkeson, and vault toilets just inside the Carbon River entrance to Mount Rainier National Park. Existing parking lots are inadequate and do not provide clear information about the attractions a visitor can access from their locations. To enhance the visitor experience and to provide more visitor services and information, the following actions have been planned:

	ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	PARTNERS
➤	<b>R-2-12</b> Expand existing parking, add wayside signs and benches, and rebuild the arch at the Carbon River entrance to Mount Rainier National Park.	NPS-MORA	TBD
➤➤	<b>R-2-13</b> Expand the existing parking lot in Carbonado to include a restroom and informational signage.	Town of Carbonado	Pierce County, Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition
➤➤➤	<b>R-2-14</b> Expand parking at Tolmie Creek.	USFS	NPS-MORA

### In order to move actions for this topic forward, the following will be needed:

- ✓ Coordination between agencies to improve road maintenance in the corridor.
- ✓ Collaborative partnership to study signage needs leading to and through the corridor.
- ✓ Funding for revisions to signage in the area.
- ✓ Coordinated approach to sign installation between agencies responsible for signage.
- ✓ A partnership agreement between Parks and the Town of Carbonado regarding parking lot and restroom needs.
- ✓ Visitation studies and visitor surveys at the Fairfax and Tolmie Creek locations to determine what the needs are at those locations.
- ✓ Funding for additional parking lots, restrooms, and signage.