

# Yosemite National Park

## California

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Visitor Access Plan Update, Spring 2024 Newsletter

### From the Superintendent

Greetings Yosemite community,

I extend my sincere thanks to each one of you who took the time to share your thoughts, attend our meetings, and contribute your valuable input to our visitor access planning effort. Your engagement is critical to the success of this important work and process. We've received thousands of letters from people all over the world who deeply care about Yosemite and are invested in this process with us. Working toward a long-term solution is a park priority, and as we evaluate and analyze a range of options, we are integrating your insights into the planning process. We encourage you to stay actively engaged in the next steps and read up on the summer reservation pilot this year, as we want everyone to enjoy a safe and successful visit! Look out for more updates, as we plan to share additional information later this summer.

Warm regards,

Cicely Muldoon  
Park Superintendent

### Why Is This Plan Needed?

This plan is needed to address a range of issues associated with high visitation, including road and parking congestion, long waits at entrances, vegetation impacts, and human waste issues.

### What Is the Purpose of This Plan?

Providing a welcoming environment for all visitors, preserving thousands of years of human history and connection, and protecting the park's nationally significant resources are all primary focus areas for Yosemite National Park. Managing use at the park is increasingly complex due to growth in day-use visitation and changing use patterns. The purpose of the plan is to protect Yosemite's exemplary natural and cultural resources while providing equitable visitor access to world-class experiences and ensuring operational sustainability.

## Public Engagement

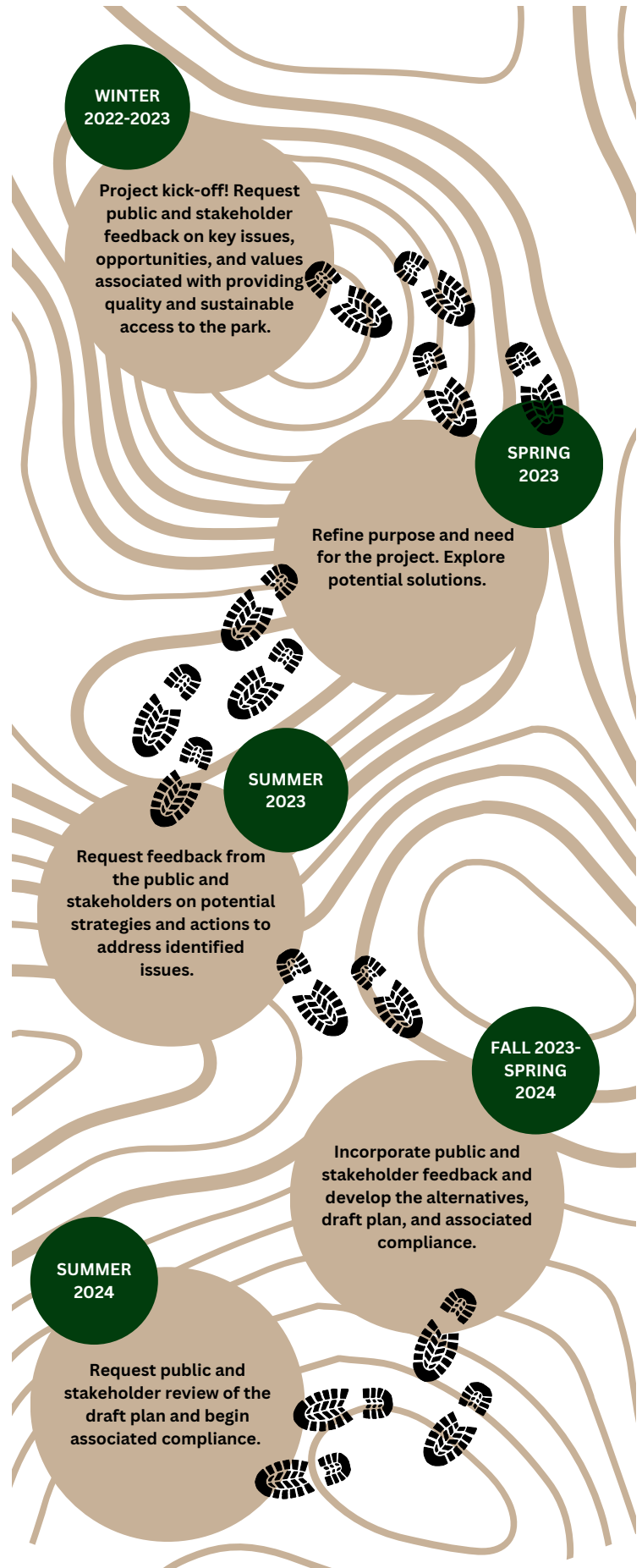
Two public comment periods gathered input from a wide range of interested individuals and groups. The first, from December 9, 2022, to February 3, 2023, gathered input on values and experiences in Yosemite. The second, from July 6 to September 6, 2023, asked for input on preliminary strategies to manage visitor use. At a virtual public meeting on July 19, 2023, park staff shared some potential strategies and facilitated questions on the plan. More details on the public engagement process are available in the Public Comment Summary Report at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=347&projectID=113113&documentID=136124>.

## Planning Process and Time Line

The National Park Service is evaluating several strategies, including reservation systems, enhanced trip planning, entrance station upgrades, transit improvements, and infrastructure updates. Yosemite National Park is committed to engaging with all stakeholders—including gateway communities, partners, members of the public, and state, local, and Tribal governments—to identify responsive and adaptable solutions and to conduct compliance and planning processes.



## Project Time Line



WINTER  
2022-2023

Project kick-off! Request public and stakeholder feedback on key issues, opportunities, and values associated with providing quality and sustainable access to the park.

SPRING  
2023

Refine purpose and need for the project. Explore potential solutions.

SUMMER  
2023

Request feedback from the public and stakeholders on potential strategies and actions to address identified issues.

FALL 2023-  
SPRING  
2024

Incorporate public and stakeholder feedback and develop the alternatives, draft plan, and associated compliance.

SUMMER  
2024

Request public and stakeholder review of the draft plan and begin associated compliance.

## Key Themes from Public Comments

The National Park Service received a total of 1,684 pieces of correspondence from 9 countries, 45 states, and 58 organizations during our summer 2023 comment period. A total of 3,470 individual comments were derived from these correspondences, and the following key themes were identified.

### Current Visitor Experience

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Commenters expressed displeasure with overcrowding and traffic congestion and voiced concerns about the impacts on visitor experience and safety. Comments highlighted widespread illegal and out-of-bounds parking and lack of enforcement. The strain on the park infrastructure and impacts on the park's natural and cultural resources was a recurring concern. Additionally, commenters focused on current accessibility issues across the park, including limited options for persons with disabilities and extended wait times for shuttles.



### Reservations

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A reservation or timed-entry system received significant support as a visitation management strategy. However, there is no agreement on how the reservation system should be implemented, with different ideas on timing, duration, location, fairness, exemptions, and enforcement. Commenters were also worried about potential barriers, like technology, language, age, and disabilities, to accessing the reservation system.

### Transportation Improvements

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Commenters expressed support for exploring diversified modes of transportation in and around the park. Suggestions for improving transportation and travel included transit options from surrounding communities and within the park and improvements to roadways, parking lots, and associated infrastructure.



### Other Management Strategies

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Commenters suggested other infrastructure upgrades, such as modernizing entrance stations and improving bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the park to mitigate congestion. Other suggestions included trip planning improvements, such as enhancing cellular service and internet connectivity, using technology to convey real-time traffic and parking conditions, and advertising less-visited areas of the park. Lastly, commenters suggested road, parking, and campground infrastructure improvements in and outside the park to increase capacity.



## How Can I Participate?

Yosemite National Park will be seeking public review and comments on the draft strategies for the plan later this year. Please check the project website (<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=113113>) for updates.

## Summer 2024 Pilot

Starting this spring through the end of October, Yosemite is under a pilot reservation system. All visitors will need a reservation to enter the park during peak hours. Here are a few things you need to know about the reservation system in 2024:

1. April 13 through June 30: A reservation is required from 5:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays, and on holidays (May 27 and June 19).
2. July 1 through August 16: A reservation is required from 5:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every day.
3. August 17 through October 27: A reservation is required from 5:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays, and on holidays (September 2 and October 14).
4. All reservations are sold online at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). You need a credit card and email address to purchase a reservation. Most permits went on sale January 5th, but beginning April 7th, an additional quota is released daily at 8:00 a.m. Pacific daylight time, one week in advance of a visit.
5. Two reservations are available online—full day and half day (for park entries after 12:00 p.m.).
6. If you have reservations for lodging in the park, wilderness permits, or Half Dome permits, you do not need to secure an additional reservation.
7. Learn more and plan your summer trip at <https://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/reservations.htm>.

After successful reservations pilots in 2020, 2021, and 2022 and a challenging summer in 2023 without reservations, park staff are looking for other ideas that could be tested during this planning and evaluation phase and to apply lessons learned from previous reservation pilots. Summer 2024 in Yosemite incorporates weekend-only periods (Saturday, Sunday, and holiday Mondays) during the early and late peak seasons, additional afternoon entries, and an overall increase in the number of reservations available. These updates will enable staff to fully test the reservation system during a time without pandemic restrictions or major construction.



Please share this information with community members, colleagues, and families. We want to help everyone prepare and plan for a successful and safe trip to Yosemite!