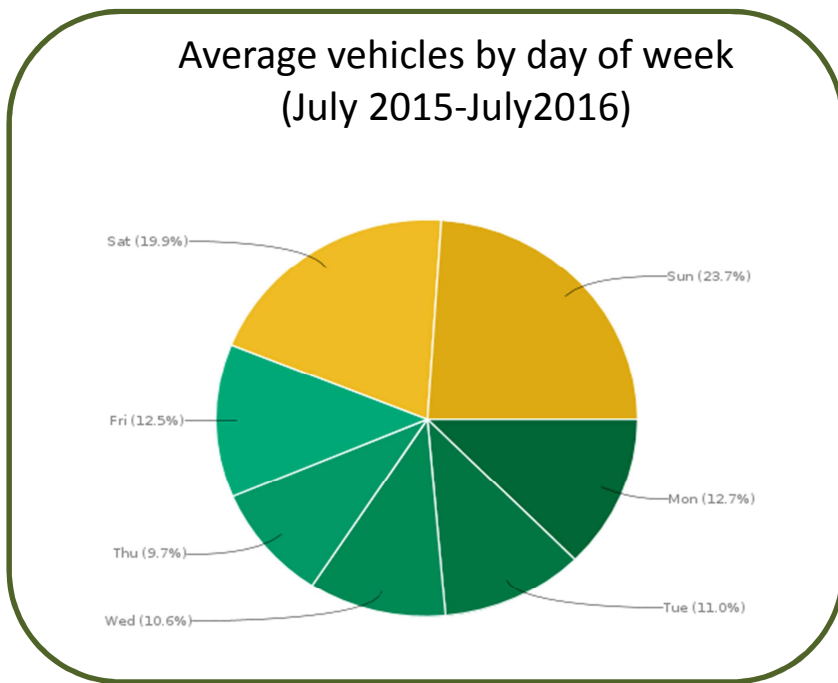**Background**:
Conservation of Bobcat Ridge remains a top priority; any efforts to accommodate parking demand will be carefully weighed to minimize the risk of impacts to natural resources and wildlife while maintaining visitor satisfaction.

- Natural Areas parking lots are carefully planned with visitor carrying capacity of the site in mind. Capping the number of parking spots preserves the visitor experience and minimizes the risk of resource impacts including wildlife disturbance.
- According to the 2016 Natural Areas Resident Survey (Fort Collins & Larimer County):
  - 41% of visitors feel that natural areas are "slightly crowded"
  - Only 4% noted that "more parking" would make their visits more enjoyable
  - 90% of visitors are very satisfied/satisfied with their natural areas experiences.
- Visitation at Bobcat Ridge is increasing; it is becoming a very popular site.
  - Annual visitation estimated at 44,000 in 2013 grew to 75,000 in 2016
  - Daily estimate of 120 visitors/day in 2013 to 204 visitors per day in 2016
  - Parking lot has reached capacity 18 times in 2015 and 9 times as of September 2016

Average vehicles by day of week (July 2015-July2016): Sun (23.7%), Mon (12.7%), Tue (11.0%), Wed (10.6%), Thu (9.7%), Fri (12.5%), Sat (19.9%)

- Increasing demand for outdoor recreation by a growing population is a regional issue as evidenced by recent media attention, as well as the numbers of vehicles turned away from local open space properties. For example, Larimer County's Horsetooth Mountain Open Space is turning away 200-1,000 vehicles on weekend days during peak season.
- The existing parking lot at Bobcat Ridge accommodates 46 cars, 2 handicap spaces, and 8 horse-trailer parking spaces.
- The existing parking lot has a footprint of 1.29 acres, and maximizes buildable area. Expansion of this lot is constrained due to topography and historic structures.

- Current efforts to manage periods of high demand for parking include public outreach (social media, website, etc.), parking attendant services, and coordination between Horsetooth Mountain Open Space and Lory State Park to direct visitors to areas with available parking.

Options Considered:
1. Maintain the status quo.
2. Increase targeted communications to manage peak demand.
3. Invest in Smart Parking technologies to support Option 2
   Feasible technologies might include:
   a. An online reservation system similar to that used for National Park Service camping reservations
   b. Smart signage on roadways before visitors reach Bobcat Ridge
   c. Live webcam monitoring
4. Cost share with regional partners to develop limited shuttle service.
5. Add five additional spaces to existing infrastructure.
6. Explore the addition of another parking lot off County Road 32C.

Draft Recommendation:
Based on current information and findings, Natural Areas recommends a combined approach that pulls from elements of options 2, 3, and 5.

Option 2: Increase targeted communications to manage peak demand.
Natural Areas recommends providing parking information on busy parking days as the first step to proactively manage peak parking demand.

Option 3: Invest in Smart Parking technologies to support Option 2.
Public outreach for the management plan includes questions about the community's preferences for various parking information sources. Public feedback will guide recommendations and implementation.

Option 5: Add five additional spaces to existing infrastructure
Due to existing infrastructure, the addition of five spaces can be done within the existing parking lot footprint, and is within the site's visitor carrying capacity.

Based on Boulder County's experience, **Option 4** (shuttle) is not financially feasible at this time, and would require significant coordination among regional partners. A shuttle may be a topic of interest for future study.

In the unlikely event that management objectives change to favor significant expansion of parking, **Option 6** could concentrate parking in the already "developed" eastern portion of the site. A feasibility study would be necessary to fully assess the benefits and costs of such a proposal.