

WA 548 DAKOTA CREEK BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

Where do you think active transportation needs are greatest?

I am focusing on Blaine Rd, WA548, for this grant application. I have pinpointed the Dakota Creek Bridge and the California Creek Bridge that are in our District Boundaries. I will also submit a survey for the California Creek Bridge on Drayton Harbor Rd. and also on the Blaine Rd for ROW improvements from Grandview Rd to the Bell Rd/Peace Portal Intersection.

Briefly tell us more about the location you chose. Please add details about the area, what the experience of walking, biking, and rolling is like, what the challenges are and what you think could be better.

The Dakota Creek Bridge (WSDOT Br.#548/10) is located on the main route, WA548 (Blaine Rd.) that connects the communities of Blaine and Birch Bay. It was built in 1956, is 182' long and 24' wide. It has a very narrow bridge deck with no designated lanes for non-motorized users and is not safe for bike or pedestrian traffic. The speed limit on the bridge is 35mph. Vehicle traffic does not yield to bikers or pedestrians and frequently pass the biker or pedestrian brave enough to cross the bridge while there is oncoming traffic. The Birch Bay area has been designated a car dependent area and this is one of three bridges that is responsible for that designation. This bridge has been scheduled for replacement at least 2 times during the past 10 years and it has not happened and is currently not listed for replacement. The bridge is a combination of wood approaches and steel used for the middle span. It has a 15T weight limit restriction.

There is no way to commute from Blaine to Birch Bay without crossing over at least 2 of these 3 bridges on a one-way trip. None of these bridges are accessible to non-motorized traffic. This creates a serious safety concern for anyone trying to bike, walk or roll between the communities.

Please describe the problem or barrier you experience at this location.

There is currently no bike/ped access available to safely cross this bridge. You have to deal with vehicles of all sizes that travel 35-45mph across the bridge that do not yield to bikes or pedestrians and frequently try to pass with oncoming traffic. Dakota Creek is 50'-75' below the bridge deck. Blaine is unique in that all the schools, K-12, Primary, Elementary, Middle and High School are all on one campus in the City of Blaine. These schools also serve the Birch Bay Community, which has double the population of the City of Blaine. This leaves the students no option but to be bused or driven to school in order to arrive safely. The grocery store, post office, main library are all located in Blaine. We need help creating alternative ways for our non-motorized users to cross these three bridges to connect our communities as the bridges are not scheduled for replacement in the near future. None of the current WTA bus stops have crosswalks to safely cross the street.

Please describe the changes you'd like to see at this location (long response)

We would like to have at least 1-6' wide separate bike/ped metal crossing bridge parallel to the Dakota Creek Bridge. This improvement is crucial to accommodate the anticipated growth in bike/ped use once this safety issue is resolved and to remove the car dependent label for Birch Bay. Our goal is to have the new bike/ped bridge cross the creek between Dearborn Ave. on the south side to Washington Ave. on the north side. At a bare minimum we would like to have motion sensor rapid flashing beacons installed to warn traffic to yield to bike/ped traffic while it is on the bridge deck before the permanent recommended solution is completed. The 182' length of this bridge makes it exceptionally scary to cross as a bike/ped user with any vehicular traffic present. Your consideration of our project for a SWCC Grant is appreciated.