

DRAYTON HARBOR ROAD – CALIFORNIA CREEK BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

Where do you think active transportation needs are greatest?

I am focusing on Blaine Rd, WA548, Whatcom County Bridge #38 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 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 California Creek Bridge on Drayton Harbor Rd, Whatcom County Bridge #38 is part of the Coast Millennium Trail. It is not accessible to bike/ped traffic. This bridge was built in 1933, is 110' long and has a 22' bridge deck. Due to the length of the bridge, vehicle traffic does not yield and passes the bike/ped users, even with oncoming traffic. The speed limit is 45mph. It is extremely nerve wracking as a bike/ped user to cross this bridge with vehicle traffic. The bridge deck is at least 25' - 40' above water level in the middle of the bridge. This bridge is one of 3 bridges connecting Blaine and Birch Bay that are responsible for Birch Bay being defined as a car dependent area.

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

The barrier at this location is the narrow bridge deck that makes it inaccessible to bike/ped traffic without fearing for your personal safety as vehicles travel by at 45mph. There is no sight line impairment, but vehicle traffic does not wait for bike/ped users to travel the 110' feet to cross the bridge before trying to pass, even with oncoming vehicle traffic of all sizes. This bridge is not scheduled for improvements within the next 10-20 years. With the population of both communities growing at an exponential rate we need a safe bike/ped solution to this barrier as soon as possible. We are creating a park on the west side of the bridge that will have off road trails connecting to Lincoln Road. Once the park and the off-road route is completed bike/ped users will need a safe solution to cross California Creek.

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

We would like to see 2 separate 6' metal bridges installed to accommodate the anticipated growth in bike/ped use once this safety issue is solved. The creation of the park will make it safer for bike/ped traffic to travel between Birch Bay and Blaine. We are asking for 2-6' bridges after talking to a local manufacturer of dock ramps, as that is the standard engineered width. It would also be more affordable than a 10' wide bridge as it would have to be specially engineered for the additional width and the length needed to span the creek. At a bare minimum we would like motion sensor activated rapid flashing beacons to warn oncoming traffic to yield to bike/ped traffic while on the bridge before a permanent solution of a separate bike/ped crossing bridge is installed.