

WA 548 BLAINE ROAD ROW 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 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.

WA 548 ROW's from Grandview Rd to Bell Rd/Peace Portal Intersection: we would like improvements to the ROW's to create a safe bike/ped route to connect the communities of Birch Bay and Blaine. According to a WSDOT NW Region Active Transportation Bay to Bay Trail Assessment the ADT volume from Bell Rd intersection to Drayton Harbor Rd is 7,600 vehicles. The ADT volume from Drayton Harbor Rd to the Alderson Rd intersection is 4,000-9,400 with a speed limit of 45mph. There are currently no ROW improvements on any section of the road safe enough for bike/ped traffic. There is the yellow safety line then grass or a ditch. Population growth the last 20 years has been exponential in both communities and these improvements are desperately needed to remove the car dependent designation for the Birch Bay area.

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

The barrier along this stretch of WA548 is the lack of any ROW improvements to create a safe environment for bike/ped users to travel alongside vehicles traveling 45mph. This is one of the most direct routes that connect the communities of Blaine and Birch Bay. There are some challenges to creating a safe bike/ped environment along this route. We have 2 bridges that are not accessible along with wetlands. There is enough ROW available along the entire length of this section of WA548 available to develop a 10' wide path on each side to create a degree of separation from high-speed traffic and create a safer environment for our non-motorized traffic. The population growth in this area should initiate a change from it being considered a rural area to an urban area and get projects like the ones we are requesting put on the current TIP plans.

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

We would like to have the road reclassified from a Class IV- share the road to a Class I – Separated bike/ped facility due to the increased vehicle traffic and the exponential population growth seen in the area with no signs of slowing down. We would then ask to have the ROW's improved on each side to safely accommodate bike/ped traffic. The existing available ROW's range from 70' to 40'. The vast majority of the section has 60' ROW's with a very small section near the California Creek Bridge having the 40' easement. In 1997 the ADT volume at the Alderson Rd intersection was 1,300, in 2019 it was at 4,000-9,400. The Whatcom County Rural Transportation Plan recommended widening SR548 to 4 lanes from Birch Bay-Lynden Road to Peace Portal. The improvements we are asking for are need dependent and not as ambitious as a 4-lane highway. At a minimum, we would like to see the improvements made from Alderson Rd to Bell Rd/Peace Portal.