

## **WA 548 CALIFORNIA 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 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 Blaine Rd (WSDOT Br.#548/5) is not accessible to bike/ped traffic. It is located on a curved section of WA548 that intersects with Loomis Trail Rd. The bridge was built in 1956, is 104' long and 24' wide. According to the SR548 Route Development Plan, Feb 1997, there is a problem with erosion at the abutments due to the use of wooden piers when the bridge was first built. The wooden piers are now rotting and cannot be replaced without destroying the bridge deck. This information was reported more than 26 years ago, and the bridge is still not scheduled for replacement. There are no weight restrictions on this bridge. When biking or walking across the bridge, traffic does not yield, the vast majority of all types of vehicles try to pass due to the length of the bridge even with oncoming traffic. There is not enough room to safely have 2 vehicles and/or a bike/pedestrian crossing simultaneously.

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

The very narrow bridge deck is a barrier for any non-motorized travelers. It is 24' wide between the curbs. The current speed limit is 45mph. There is a curve in the road right before the bridge when traveling southbound that restricts drivers' view of any bike/ped traffic until they round the curve. The north end of the bridge intersects with Loomis Trail Rd to the east. Southbound traffic crossing WA 548 onto Loomis Trail Rd is hazardous to northbound bike/ped users due to the lack of visibility until the driver has already started their turn crossing the center line. The average daily traffic volume for this section of road is 4000-9400. Lack of vegetation management can also limit visibility traveling southbound.

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

We would like to see at least 1 separate 6' metal bridge installed to accommodate the anticipated growth in bike/ped use once this safety issue is solved. 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 crossing bridge is installed. This bridge is not scheduled for replacement or improvements. The population in Blaine has grown from 2,489 in 1990 to almost 6,000 in 2020, the Birch Bay population has increased from 2,656 in 1990 to 10,114 in 2020. This is an increase of 236% and 380% respectively. Birch Bay has been designated as a car dependent area and this bridge is one of the reasons. 10 major housing developments have occurred in the last 20 years with no safe bike/ped access to outside destinations. Birch Bay's growth is expected to continue as this is a major urban growth area for Whatcom County, the residents are now year round and not just an influx of summer tourists.