



King County

Department of Local Services
Road Services Division

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Categorical Exemption

Project Name: Baring Bridge #509A Replacement Project

Project Number: 1136000

Project Location: Baring Bridge is located on NE Index Creek Road and spans the South Fork Skykomish River. It is west of U.S. Highway 2, within the unincorporated King County community of Baring, Washington. The bridge is within the SE Quarter of Section 2 in Township 26N and Range 10E, Willamette Meridian and on page 483 (row 6, columns H and J) of the Thomas Brother's Guide. The site's geographic coordinates are 47.765241, -121.480537.

Project Description: Baring Bridge #509A is a King County-owned and maintained timber suspension bridge providing sole access to about 170 properties, including more than 40 residences of Baring. It was originally built in 1930, was designated a Historic Landmark by King County in 1999, a national landmark in 2019, and is currently the only vehicular timber and cable suspension bridge in Washington State that still carries load-limited traffic. During its lifespan, it was repaired and reconstructed several times, including major rehabilitation work in 2017; however, the bridge remains load-limited, structurally deficient, and functionally obsolete. Washington State uses a Bridge Condition Rating System with a scale ranging from 0 to 9, with a level 7 (or greater) rating indicating a good condition, a level 5-6 rating indicating a fair condition, and a level 4 (or less) rating indicating a poor condition. The superstructure and substructure of Baring Bridge are both rated as level 4.

King County Road Services Division (Roads) implemented a long-term effort to plan, select, design, and construct a new Baring Bridge as a solution to maintain reliable and safe access to the isolated properties it serves. The new bridge will be in approximately the same alignment as the original bridge, which necessitates removal of the existing bridge. The new steel truss bridge will meet current engineering standards and will be constructed in the existing right-of-way.

The project will provide temporary erosion control, permanent riverbank scour protection, stormwater treatment, compensatory flood storage, native plantings, and an on-site interpretive exhibit showcasing the history of the original Baring Bridge, its engineering, and relationship to the timber and mining industries.

The project is federally funded for construction. Temporary project impacts will be mitigated onsite. Appropriate permits, approvals, and property instruments will be acquired for the project prior to construction. Construction will be done by a contractor and is anticipated to require three years.

SEPA Exemption:

King County determined that this project is categorically exempt from SEPA under WAC 197-11-800 (27) ***Structurally deficient city, town and county bridges. The repair, reconstruction, restoration, retrofitting, or replacement of a structurally deficient city, town or county bridge shall be exempt as long as the action:***

SEPA Categorical Exemption

Page 2 of 2

(a) Occurs within the existing right of way and in a manner that substantially conforms to the preexisting design, function, and location as the original except to meet current engineering standards or environmental permit requirements; and

(b) The action does not result in addition of automobile lanes, a change in capacity, or a change in functional use of the facility.

"Structurally deficient" means a bridge that is classified as in poor condition under the state bridge condition rating system and is reported by the state to the national bridge inventory as having a deck, superstructure, or substructure rating of four or below. Structurally deficient bridges are characterized by deteriorated conditions of significant bridge elements and potentially reduced load-carrying capacity. Bridges deemed structurally deficient typically require significant maintenance and repair to remain in service, and require major rehabilitation or replacement to address the underlying deficiency.

Determination Completed by:

Signed by:

Katie Merrell

5/20/2025

Katie Merrell, Environmental Engineer
Environmental Unit
Maintenance Section, Road Services Division
King County Department of Local Services

Date