



King County Historic Preservation Program  
Department of Natural Resources & Parks  
201 S. Jackson, Suite 6700, Seattle, WA 98104

## KING COUNTY LANDMARKS COMMISSION

### FINDINGS OF FACT AND DECISION

#### *Type III CoA #24.17 - Baring Bridge #509A*

#### SUMMARY

The King County Landmarks Commission (Commission) approved CoA #24.17, an application to remove and replace the landmarked Baring Bridge, located at NE Index Road, Baring.

Property Description: The Baring Bridge is a 334' one-lane wood and cable suspension bridge crossing the south fork of the Skykomish River on Index Road, a half mile southeast of the town of Baring off of U.S. Highway 2.

Public Hearing Record: CoA #24.17 was an application submitted by the King County Roads Services Division (RSD) to demolish the landmark Baring Bridge and replace the bridge with a new steel truss bridge. The application was submitted citing a threat to public health and safety under KCC 20.62.080 and KCLC Rules and Procedures, part VI section H. A public hearing notice was sent out through email to the property owner (applicant) and known interested parties, and signs advertising the KCLC review action were posted on site. The Commission held a public hearing to review CoA application #24.17 on November 21, 2024 and continued the hearing to the King County Landmarks Commission (KCLC) regular meeting on February 27, 2025. Both the hearing and its continuation were held as hybrid Zoom conference virtual meetings and in a physical meeting space at the King Street Center in Pioneer Square, Seattle.

The CoA application; a site map of the designated property; photographs and drawings; (5) public comment letters as well as information from prior RSD presentations to KCLC were submitted to commissioners prior to the meeting. A staff recommendation was presented at the hearing. Representatives from RSD presented their alternatives analysis and conclusions regarding bridge removal and replacement conducted in the years prior to their CoA application. Community members were present at the hearing and hearing continuation – one testified against the landmarked bridge removal, another testified against the proposed replacement bridge design selection. After reviewing the applicant's submitted information, staff recommendations, and public testimony, the King County Landmarks Commission approved CoA #24.17 with a suite of mitigation conditions.

The Commission made the following findings in support of its decision:

## FINDINGS

1. The Baring Bridge was designated in 1999 as a King County Landmark under **Criterion A3** for its now rare design and engineering type, as the only remaining vehicular timber and steel cable suspension bridge in King County.<sup>1</sup>
2. In 2019, the Baring Bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
3. The Baring Bridge presents a major and imminent threat to public safety, particularly through the load-bearing and dimensional limitations of the bridge which impede the provision of emergency services to the west side of the river, as well as by the bridge's ongoing risk of collapse;
4. The applicant has conscientiously evaluated and presented all reasonable available alternatives to demolition, and no alternative exists aside from removal and replacement which would rectify the threat to public safety; and
5. The costs associated with reconstructing the timber bridge would be an inappropriate use of public funds, given the relatively short life cycle of wood bridges, the high costs associated with constructing a second bridge in addition to maintaining the Baring Bridge as pedestrian-only, and the fact that reconstruction of the existing bridge cannot rectify the load constraints that contribute to the public safety threat.

## MITIGATION MEASURES *(CoA Conditions of Approval)*

1. The applicant shall fund a HistoryLink entry for the Baring Bridge #509A;
2. The applicant shall install one accessible on-site interpretive exhibit showcasing the history of the Baring Bridge, its engineering, and relationship to the timber and mining industries;
3. The applicant shall salvage segments of the 1930 and 1976 main suspension cables for display as part of the on-site interpretive exhibit design;
4. The applicant shall digitally record the Baring Bridge #509A using high-quality photographs, lidar/3D scanning techniques, and capture the experience of the crossing the bridge through video;
5. The applicant shall pay \$120,000 into a mitigation fund, managed by the King County Historic Preservation Program, earmarked for surveying, restoring and/or documenting historic properties within King County.

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<sup>1</sup> As of the date of these Findings, the Baring Bridge is the only wooden vehicular suspension bridge extant in Washington State.

## MINUTES AND EXHIBITS

The following exhibits are part of the record:

Exhibit No. 1: Type III CoA Application #24.17

Exhibit No. 2: Staff reports and hearing presentation materials; applicant hearing presentation materials (*November 21, 2025, February 27, 2025*)

Exhibit No. 3: Public comment letters submitted to KCLC prior to public hearing(s)

Exhibit No. 4: November 21, 2024; February 27, 2025 public hearing minutes and audio recordings

All exhibits are on file in the King County Historic Preservation Program office, 201 S. Jackson, Suite 5700, Seattle, WA.

## KING COUNTY LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Dean Kralios, Chair  
King County Landmarks Commission

March 4, 2025

Date

TRANSMITTED this 4<sup>TH</sup> day of March to the following parties and interested persons:

Tom Minichillo, Archaeologist, King County Roads Services Division

Patricia Warren

Steve & Trudy Warren

Bill Hudis

Luke Moore

Elli Gull

Chris Moore, Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

Maureen Elenga, Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Dean Kralios, Chair, King County Landmarks Commission

## NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL OR RECONSIDER

Appeal. Any person aggrieved by a decision of the King County Landmarks Commission may, within 24 calendar days of the issuance of this Certificate of Appropriateness, appeal the decision to King County Hearing Examiner. Written notice of appeal shall be filed with the Historic Preservation Officer and shall be accompanied by a statement setting forth the grounds of the appeal, supporting documents and arguments, and an appeal fee of \$250. (KCC 20.62.110 A)

Reconsideration. Any person aggrieved by a decision of the King County Landmarks Commission may, within 20 calendar days of mailing of notice of the decision, petition the Commission for reconsideration on the grounds the decision was based on 1) error or omissions of fact; or, 2) that new information bearing on the decision, and not reasonably available to the Commission at the time of the decision, is available. The written petition must be filed with the Historic Preservation Officer and must be accompanied by 1) a statement setting forth the grounds for the petition; and, 2) any supporting documents. Within 70 calendar days of a petition for reconsideration, the Commission shall review the record, and may, at its discretion, render a revised decision. The Commission may, at its discretion, hold another public hearing on the landmark nomination.