

powered by feet first



feet first policy

taking a stance to advance walkability

Contact us for information about
Feet First policies

314 1st Avenue S
Seattle, WA 98104
www.feetfirst.org
info@feetfirst.org
206 652 2310

Bicycle Pedestrian Coexistence

Policy

where we stand

Advocacy is a major component of the work Feet First does. These policy papers, prepared by our Policy Committee, convey Feet First's position on key issues of interest to increase safe and easy ways for people to choose to go by foot.



background

Walking and bicycling share much in common. They both promote good health and environmental sustainability. Moreover, bicycle and pedestrian advocates are natural allies who often work in together supporting policies and capital improvements that benefit nonmotorized transportation. However, there are times when cyclists and walkers come into conflict.

A major source of conflict results from the fact that pedestrians and bicyclists have different capabilities and needs. Cyclists generally move faster, which many pedestrians find intimidating wherever they have to share space with them. Cyclists also sometimes fail to yield to pedestrians when they have the legal right-of-way, such as at a crosswalk. On the other hand, people walking sometimes move in an unpredictable manner, which can create a collision hazard. Beyond the tangible threat of injury is the issue of pedestrians' perception of danger and how this affects their confidence in walking; they worry that they and their children and pets will be injured

Mission

who we are - what we do

Feet First promotes walkable communities and envisions people walking every day for their health, transportation, environment, community, and pleasure.



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Bicycle Pedestrian Coexistence

why it matters to walking

Shared use off-road trails are a common venue for conflict. Although all users are generally supposed to stay to the right except to pass, walkers sometimes unexpectedly meander all over the trail. For their part, cyclists sometimes pass pedestrians too closely and too fast. This can be very intimidating to the pedestrian and can lead to crashes due to inattention on the part of either party. Painted stripes to delineate pedestrian and bicycle spaces can be confusing and are frequently ignored. Bicycle speed limits are not particularly effective either, in part because many bicycles lack a speedometer.

A more promising approach involves trail projects which physically separate wheeled and foot traffic in high-conflict sections of trails. An example is the Burke-Gilman Trail rebuild through the University of Washington Campus which offers separate lanes for bicyclists and pedestrians. Another trail feature that improves safety at pedestrian crosswalks traversing a trail involves “tabling,” or raising the level of the crosswalk to a higher level than the trail. This creates a “speed hump” for bicycle traffic, thereby better focusing bicyclists’ attention on the crosswalk and prompting them to slow down and yield to people crossing the trail.

A similar situation can be found in other shared spaces such as college campuses. Some colleges have responded by designating “dismount zones” in high pedestrian areas. Bike parking and bollards located strategically around the perimeter of these zones along with signage communicates that cyclists are entering a no-cycling area. Too many roadways have been built without adequate

provision for bicycles. As a result, some cyclists feel safer riding on sidewalks. However, this creates a problem for pedestrians, particularly when cyclists ride too fast and fail to yield the right-of-way to people walking. Although there are circumstances where it makes sense for cyclists to use sidewalks, the ultimate goal should be to design roadways that are safe and convenient for bicyclists so that they don’t need to use the sidewalk.

Street design sometimes involves trade-offs between the interests of people who bike and those who walk. For example, walkers generally benefit when roadways are designed with narrow travel lanes, curb bulbs, and refuge medians, design treatments that reduce pedestrian crossing distance and discourage speeding. However, these very design elements may leave less space for drivers to safely pass cyclists if they must share the same travel lane.

feet first position

Feet First supports the long-term goal of establishing a seamless network of safe and convenient bicycle lanes, cycle tracks, and off-road trails. Providing good options for bicyclists will reduce conflicts with people walking on sidewalks.

Feet First supports capital projects that separate wheeled and foot traffic in high-conflict sections of trails as well as other design feature such as tabling at trail and cycle-track crossings. We also support the designation of bicycle dismount zones in high-conflict shared spaces or any area where bicycle riding is inappropriate. The design of multi-modal complete streets must weigh the tradeoffs between people who walk



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Public education, signage, and enforcement are all vital. All trail users should be educated on the importance of staying to the right-hand side of trails. Cyclists must also learn that they are required to yield the right of way to pedestrians at all legal road crossings. Cyclists should be discouraged from making a habit of biking on sidewalks; if they must use the sidewalk, they need to slow down, exercise caution, and yield to people walking. In like manner, pedestrians should be discouraged from walking or jogging in the bike lane.

resources

University of Washington Burke-Gilman Trail Corridor

Study: <http://f2.washington.edu/cpo/sites/default/files/file/>

[UW BGT Final Report Rev2 2011-07-26.pdf](#)

Boise State University Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan:

<http://transportation.boisestate.edu/docs/BicyclePedestrianMasterPlan2010.pdf>

Reducing Conflict Between Bicycle Riders and Pedestrians:

<http://www.hybridbikesrev.com/read/reducing-conflict-between-bicycle-riders-and-pedestrians/>

WashCycle: The Myth of the Scofflaw Cyclist:

<http://washcycle.typepad.com/home/2008/07/the-myth-of-the.html>

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