

powered by feet first



feet first policy

taking a stance to advance walkability

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Failure to Yield

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

Failure to yield the right of way to pedestrians is considered a serious traffic violation under Washington State law. Yet, due to a long-established culture that assumes the preeminence of motorized vehicles on our roads, it is a traffic offense that is rarely cited. This is certainly the case when compared to jaywalking. Of the 28,530 tickets issued for moving violations in Seattle in 2011, just 376 were issued for failure to yield. That same year, 1,635 citations were issued to pedestrians for infractions such as [jaywalking](#).

why it matters to walking

Several jurisdictions including Seattle, Kirkland, and Redmond, have run failure to yield "stings" where law enforcement agencies send pedestrian decoys out into crosswalks and ticket drivers who don't stop. The Washington State Traffic Safety Commission has sometimes provided grants to fund these operations. These actions have some limited deterrent effect which can be amplified with media coverage, although the deterrent effect of enforcement actions is usually location-specific and fades with time. Police resources are simply too limited to have enforcement everywhere continuously.

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.



feet first
promoting walkable communities



Failure to Yield

Failure to yield continues to be a major problem in Seattle. A 2009 Seattle Police Department crosswalk sting found that one third of all drivers violated this law, and this behavior is a significant contributing factor to pedestrian accidents. In 2012, half of all Seattle pedestrian collisions involved the driver failing to grant the right of way, and, unsurprisingly, most of these collisions resulted in injury.

feet first position

Correcting the imbalance between motorized vehicles and people walking, as well as creating safer roads and crosswalks for all users, will require a comprehensive approach involving education, enforcement, technology, and roadway design. Driver education classes should have a required focus on pedestrian safety, including failure to yield. Public service announcements and similar awareness campaigns can also help.

Feet First suggests use of red light cameras at intersections to aid in failure to yield citations as officers in Los Angeles are currently considering. Current Washington state law limits their use to issue citations for speeding, running red lights, and failing to stop at railway crossings, and a change in state law would be needed to allow the addition of citations for failure to yield the right of way to pedestrians.

Where conditions allow, Feet First supports rechannelizing four-lane arterial roadways to three lanes (one through lane in each direction), which would reduce failure to yield

incidents because four-lane arterial roadways create a dangerous situation for a person walking in the crosswalk when drivers in the curb lane block visibility for the driver in the adjacent lane.

Furthermore, Feet First encourages accurate, well-developed, and complete gathering and analysis of necessary pedestrian collision data.

resources

Failure to yield in the Revised Code of Washington:

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=308-100-130>

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=46.61.055>

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=46.61.190>

Crosscut and Seattle Post-Intelligencer stories on police ignoring drivers who fail to yield:

<http://crosscut.com/2011/12/13/transportation/21672/>

[Crosswalk-carnage-Why-do-cops-still-ignore-drivers/](http://blog.seattlepi.com/seattle911/2009/03/31/police-target-drivers-who-fail-to-yield-to-pedestrians/)

<http://blog.seattlepi.com/seattle911/2009/03/31/police-target-drivers-who-fail-to-yield-to-pedestrians/>

SDOT 2012 Traffic Report:

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportationdocs/2012TrafficReportfinalv3.pdf>

Story on Seattle sting operation:

http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2009168367_crosswalksting04m.html

