Community Walking Audits in Redmond, WA
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Community Walking Audits, Redmond WA

Feet First was hired by the City of Redmond to produce three walking audit reports. These audits identify safe and unsafe areas for walking, identify possible safety improvements, and educate the public on the city’s goals for creating a more walkable community.

The walking audits will be used to identify and prioritize future projects for funding. Additionally, the recommendations can be incorporated into the updates of the City of Redmond’s Transportation Master Plan (December 2011), the Comprehensive Plan (December 2011) and the Pedestrian and Bike Master Action Plans (Early 2012).

It requires a significant level of effort and planning to ensure that all who live and work in Redmond can easily and safely walk to and from home, school, parks, community recreation, and work. Providing walkable communities reduces driving, which in turn reduces air pollution, thereby creating healthier and more vibrant communities. Planning for people brings jobs, housing, recreation, and shopping in closer proximity and offering the opportunity to connect urban villages and centers via efficient transit and pedestrian systems. Changing people’s travel patterns and behavior requires a deeper understanding of how travel choices are made so that the conditions that support positive change can be developed.

These audit reports will help to create new or improved systems to help more school children get around on foot, thereby helping to combat childhood obesity. Childhood obesity rates have more than tripled in the past thirty years, while the number of children walking and biking to school has declined. In 2009, less than 13% of U.S. students between the ages of five and fourteen walked or biked to school, compared to 48% in 1969.¹ Childhood obesity is associated with cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

What is a walking audit?
A walking audit is an opportunity for community members to gain firsthand knowledge of students’ walking environment and to jointly develop improvement strategies. Parents, students, school staff, district transportation and health staff, city staff, and other community members walk commonly used routes and take notes on the experience. Audit recommendations can often be applied to other schools in the district.

¹ 2009 National Household Travel Survey, U.S. Department of Transportation
Methodology

The following steps were undertaken to produce this walking audit:

1) Information Gathering: The three walking routes were selected based on the outlined goals of the Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) grant, current city capital infrastructure priorities, transit connections, trail connections, collision data, and representative income levels as well as identified barriers. Additionally, the treatments of the areas selected could inform other parts of the city when making decisions on how to create a more walkable area.

2) Ground-Truthing: Feet First visited each neighborhood and compared map data and in-person observations. Notes and photographs were taken on pedestrian infrastructure-related assets and issues. Based on these observations, points of interest were chosen and maps were prepared for the community walking audits.

3) Scheduling: Dates were set for the audit based on availability of the Redmond community participants, community partners, and City of Redmond planning contacts. Two of the audits were conducted in the morning and afternoon of June 11, 2011 to observe weekend pedestrian and vehicle patterns. The Downtown walking audit took place in the afternoon on June 16th. Each audit lasted one and one-half hours.

4) Outreach: Outreach was conducted by Feet First through fliers, press releases, and emails. The stakeholders in attendance represented a cross section of the city including community members, council members, business owners, apartment managers, school officials, parents, students, and city planning and public works employees (specific names of individuals are noted under Community Participation).

5) Group Participation: Audit participants were given maps, clipboards, and digital cameras. They recorded their observations by writing on the maps and taking photographs.

6) Reporting: Feet First collected the comments and cameras, then compiled the findings into this report. The report was circulated among the city, district, and school staff for review.
List of Participants
Redmond Community Walking Audit participants included:

**Avondale Walking Audit**
Ruby Gardner, Resident
Twila Guilliams, Resident
Nancy Fudge, Manager of the Friendly Village
Tricia Thomson, COR Public Works
B Sanders, COR Planning
Peter Dane, COR Public Works
John Stilin, Councilmember
David Carson, Councilmember
Jeff Churchill, COR Planning
An Tran, Resident
Pat Vache, Councilmember

**Benjamin Rush Elementary School Walking Audit**
Hank Margeson, Councilmember
Michele Robbins, Citizen Academy
B Sanders, COR Planning
Peter Dane, COR Public Works
Brad Stolz, Principal of Benjamin Rush Elementary School
Holly Clark, Parent of Benjamin Rush Elementary School
Taylor Clark, Student of Benjamin Rush Elementary School
Chuck Dermody, Citizen Academy
Terry Marpert, COR Planning

**Downtown Redmond Walking Audit**
Jason Rigden, Resident
Heather Rigden, Resident
William Riley, Resident
Pat Vache, Councilmember
Carolyn Hope, COR Parks and Rec
Rick Driftmier, Driftmier Architects, Business Owner
Passion Julinsey, Resident
Julianne Rossiter, Citizen Academy
David Rossiter, Citizen Academy
Phil Hutchinson, Resident
Marie Mc Ewen, Resident
Nick Almquist, COR Police
Elena Hernandez Garcia, Resident
Aparna Varadharajan, Resident
Gary Lee, COR Planning
Mike Nelson, Nelson Properties, Business Owner
Kim Allen, Councilmember
Hank Margeson, Councilmember
Joel Pfundt, COR Public Work
Avondale Walking Audit

Date: Saturday, June 11, 2011
Time: 10am-12pm
Number of Participants: 11

Avondale was selected as it provides challenges for walkability. This corridor has moderate housing density with major retail services nearby, yet the high vehicle volumes may discourage some people from walking. While this corridor is unique in some ways, there are a number of others in the city that have similar attributes (for example, Willows Road, and West Lake Sammamish Parkway) where the topography has funneled all modes of transportation (vehicles, transit, bike and pedestrians) onto a single corridor.

**Top Observations for the Avondale Walking Environment**
1. High vehicle speeds/volumes.
2. Short crossing signals.
3. Trash/Recycle bins impeding the sidewalk.

**Top Recommendations for Midway Elementary**
1. Enforce speeding and reduce the speed limit to 30 MPH.
2. Fix the drainage issue at Union Hill and Avondale.
3. Educate residents about keeping sidewalks clear of bushes, garbage and recycle bins.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Observation Pt.</th>
<th>Community Asset</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>Enforcement</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Field Observations</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Image</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avondale &amp; 92nd</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good landscaping on the westside of Avondale. Short crossing time along Avondale. Garbage and recycling containers impeding sidewalk. The street is noisy making it unappealing for people for walking.</td>
<td>Lengten the crossing signals. The crosswalks need to be restriped. Send out letters to residents from the City and Solid Waste educating residents about clearing sidewalks of trash and recycle bins for pedestrians. Consider charging residents who do not remove garbage and recycling containers.</td>
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<td>Ugly power boxes along Avondale. There is also graffiti in numerous places along Avondale north of Union Hill.</td>
<td>Identify the ROW along Avondale. Work to create a barrier between the sidewalk and the power boxes. For the future adopt standards that require all of the power boxes throughout the City to be the same color and barrier near sidewalks, which is paid by the utility company. Request resident clear the graffiti on their fence. The PW should work with officers on to enforce tagging.</td>
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<td>Avondale &amp; 85th</td>
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<td>Cars drive in bike lane right after 85th. Trees at Bear Creek need to be trimmed. The sidewalk is wet by a poor drainage issue. Nice landscaping in the median. Trash and benches are dirty. Weeds need to be taken out and trees need trimming. All intersections along this route have compromised pavement. the sidewalk is severely wet on Avondale near Union Hill.</td>
<td>The city should provide regularly schedule maintenance to trim the trees along Bear Creek. Fix the drain at Avondale and Union Hill needs. Resurface the intersection at Avondale and Union Hill. The weeds need to be pulled and trees trimmed. Placemnt of signs should be managed not to eliminate readability of other signs such as the truck sign covering up the bike lane ends sign. This 'bike lane ends' sign should be placed in a different location.</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>Field Observation Pt.</td>
<td>Community Asset</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Enforcement</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Field Observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avondale and Union Hill</td>
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<td>ramps and crosswalks don't match at Avondale and Union Hill. Pick up old recycle bins. Bus stop on east side of the street is unsafe to cross to Redmond Hills.</td>
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<td>Trail between Union Hill and Redmond Way</td>
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<td>The trail is very pleasant and a nice respite from the traffic along Avondale and Redmond Way. However, there surprisingly were not that many people walking on the trail. Next, the current benches should be improved along the trail. Need sign at Redmond Parkway to explain where the trail continues.</td>
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<td>170th and Redmond Way</td>
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<td>Redmond Parkway and 170th the signal is not long enough for seniors and children crossing. Bus stop at O'Reilly's needs a shelter. Compared to Avondale, Redmond Way is quieter and speeds are lower. The sidewalks are wide. The planter strip provides more separation then just the bike lane along Avondale.</td>
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Benjamin Rush Walking Audit

Date: Saturday June 11, 2011
Time: 1pm-3pm
Number of Participants: 9

Benjamin Rush Elementary was selected to focus on walkability to and from school, local parks, and downtown. The unique route selected provided the opportunity for participants to discuss different treatments and how the Bridle Crest Trail connects to 148th.

Walking Audit Top Observations:
1. Lot of foliage covering signs and sidewalks impeding walking.
2. Rolled curbs encourage parking on sidewalk.
3. Need for better signage to community assets e.g. trail and park.

Walking Audit Top Recommendations:
1. Educate residents about clearing sidewalks and proper parking.
2. Add crossing guard at 148th.
3. Install crosswalk near bus stop at Old Redmond Apartments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Observation Point</th>
<th>Intersection</th>
<th>Community Asset</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Enforcement</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Field Observations</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Image</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front of Benjamin Rush Elementary</td>
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<td>Plenty of access points to school grounds. The school has pedestrian signs. At NE 61st and 152nd there should be a sign letting cars know they are entering a school zone. The rolled curbs vs. vertical curbs encourage cars to park on the sidewalks, which block pedestrians.</td>
<td>Add signs at NE 61st and 152nd indicating school zone. City could work with the school to support a walking school bus project as a part of a Safe Routes to School program. Change policy that does not allow for rolled curbs.</td>
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<td>152nd and Bridle Trail</td>
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<td>Bridle Crest Trail is great. The current sign is pushed back and is difficult to see from the sidewalk on 152nd. There needs to be improvements at 148th for kids to cross to access the trail and go to school safely. Blackberries bushes were seen encroaching on trail.</td>
<td>Provide more signage and a map by the trail at 152nd indicating points of interest and accessibility to 148th. Provide crossing guards at 148th. Blackberries should be cut back along the trail.</td>
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<td>154th &amp; 61st</td>
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<td>The bike lane disappears due to ‘traffic calming’ island. The winding streets and wide streets and rolled curbs encourage speeding, which is unfriendly for pedestrians.</td>
<td>Enforce the speeding in this area. Provide crosswalk at NE 61th and 154th.</td>
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<td>Field Observation Point</td>
<td>Intersection</td>
<td>Community Asset</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
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<td>3 154th &amp; 61st</td>
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<td>The lower part of the trail designed for horses feels unsafe, because person walking is out of sight. There are no lights in this area. Lights along this route are too high to be pedestrian scaled. There was a lot of graffiti seen along the side of the bridge.</td>
<td>Encourage pedestrians to walk on the upper part of the trail using signage. Clean up graffiti. Enforce tagging policies.</td>
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<td>4 Along 152nd and the entrance to Spirit Park</td>
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<td>The ped crossing signs for crosswalk are blocked by trees and shrubs. There is no sign on 152nd indicating access to Spiritbrook Park. Landscape maintenance issues along 152nd at 67th. Spirit Park is a nice community asset and provides easy access to school for students.</td>
<td>Add a sign along 152nd indicating Spiritbrook Park. Send letters to neighbors along 152nd at 67th indicating their responsibility for keeping the sidewalk clear. City should trim trees blocking the pedestrian sign north of school and south of Spirit Park.</td>
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<td>5 68th &amp; 152nd</td>
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<td>The sidewalk is sunken. There are shrubs encroaching on the sidewalk and a recycle bin on sidewalk. Tree roots are lifting up the sidewalk. Sidewalks on 152nd are too narrow and street is too wide causing cars to speed.</td>
<td>There needs to be a crosswalk at 68th and 152nd. The City should work with the Solid Waste department to educate residents about keeping their sidewalks clear and placing recycling bins on the street instead of the sidewalk.</td>
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<td>Field Observation Point</td>
<td>Intersection</td>
<td>Community Asset</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Redmond and 70th</td>
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<td>Bike lane on 155th makes a safe buffer from the cars. Nice sidewalks and wide lovely greenbelt. There is multi-use housing on both sides of the street. There are four lanes of traffic and bus stops along 155th. There is no easy access to cross from the bus to the apartment complex.</td>
<td>A crosswalk is needed at Old Red Apartments to provide safe connectivity to housing and the bus stop.</td>
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Downtown Walking Audit

Date: Thursday, June 16, 2011
Time: 5:30pm-7:00pm
Number of Participants: 19

Downtown Redmond is realizing the vision of a vibrant, walkable, mixed-used center. However, unique treatments are necessary to support walking as a viable transportation mode. Additionally, providing a more walkable downtown will support the economic vitality of local businesses and enhance its unique character.

New projects have been built in Downtown recently, mostly with mixed use buildings meeting the city’s pedestrian regulations. Projects vary from The Veloce and Red 160 apartment buildings to recent improvements to NE 83rd Street and NE 85th Street. Remodeling projects and pedestrian crosswalk upgrades are important to contributing to a livable and walkable Downtown. The city is the process of transforming the older part of Downtown to make the area more walkable. This was one of the areas reviewed on the walking audit.

Walking Audit Top Observations:
1. There is clear distinction between the new and old downtown areas.
2. There are good cut throughs to community assets (such as the transit center, and the skate park).
3. Drivers are, for the most part, mindful of pedestrians.

Walking Audit Top Recommendations:
1. Study the possibility of installing a roundabout at 80th and Leary.
2. Provide signage and remove newspaper stands blocking sidewalk in the historic Leary area.
3. Provide wayfinding for the path adjacent to the municipal building.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Observation Pt.</th>
<th>Community Asset</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>Education</th>
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<th>Field Observations</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pathway near Redmond Municipal Campus</td>
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<td>The park space on municipal campus is a great community asset.</td>
<td>Remove the gravel on the walkway west of the courthouse.</td>
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<td>Walkway between 158th and 161st</td>
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<td>This narrow walkway provides nice art along the pathway. Wayfinding is needed along the pathway. The area near the daycare is overgrown by the blackberries. Laurel bush is intruding on the path by the King County Courthouse. Needs low-level lighting, it’s too dark at night to walk. Needs to have benches and trash cans along the pathway. The smooth pavement, brick walkway breaks the design for pedestrian use. Nice tree canopy.</td>
<td>Provide wayfinding along pathway. Provide benches and trash bins. Identify the property owner where the blackberry bushes are and ask for them to be cut back.</td>
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<td>NE 83rd and 161 Ave NE</td>
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<td>Some uneven walkways, drop-off into planting area NE 83rd and 161 Ave NE. The countdown walk signals are helpful.</td>
<td>The sidewalk and the planting area should be level to reduce potential pedestrian injury.</td>
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<td>Field Observation Pt.</td>
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<td>3 83rd and 161st</td>
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<td>Good crossing prompts to look both ways at 83rd and 161st. Good hub of activity at the transit center providing 'eyes on the street'. Nice pedestrian walkway south providing good connectivity to/from the transit center.</td>
<td>Along 161st and 83rd the metal grates covering the tree roots need to be secured and the bricks need to be replaced.</td>
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<td>4 80th and 162nd</td>
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<td>This is a nice walkway connection between Redmond Way and the Transit Center. There is a pet waste station, which is a nice touch. There is graffiti on the wall by the west side of the trail. Good used of different walkway material. Good human-scaled lighting along pathway. There is plant overgrowth on the sidewalk next to the Chamber Building. The trash bins are unsightly and smell. Some trash bins are in the fire lane.</td>
<td>Clean up the graffiti on the wall by the west side of the trail. Cut back the overgrowth on sidewalk. Work with property owner to create an area for trash bins to be out of public view and the fire lane.</td>
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<td>5 80th and Leary</td>
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<td>3-way intersection on 80th and Leary makes it difficult to know which direction cars are going, dangerous for pedestrians.</td>
<td>Add signage for both vehicles and pedestrians. The lines on the road should be better marked. A crosswalk should be installed on 80th west of 164th. The City should look at putting in a roundabout in this at the 80th and Leary intersection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Observation Pt.</td>
<td>Community Asset</td>
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<td>80th and Leary</td>
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<td>It is difficult to cross adjacent to Acapulco Fresh. The signal box at 80th and Leary is an eyesore. This corridor needs more signage to point out the history along Leary. The area is currently not comfortable to walk.</td>
<td>Support a safe crossing by providing pedestrian flags and more enforcement and sting operations to support cars stopping for pedestrians in this area. Paint the signal box with colors or better representation of the area. Add more wayfinding that incorporates the history of the area.</td>
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<td>80th and Leary</td>
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<td>Old newspaper stands on Leary at 80th clutter the sidewalk.</td>
<td>Remove the newspaper stands. Strengthen current regulations allowing type of street furniture including newspaper stands, encroaching on public ROW.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleaveland and Leary</td>
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<td>The flower pots along the streets are beautiful. The bar at Leary and Cleaveland overflows with people smoking and blocks people walking along sidewalk. Weeds in the tree openings and sidewalk cracks. It is difficult to cross adjacent to Acapulco Fresh. There is graffiti on the side of the building.</td>
<td>Remove the graffiti. The owner of the bar should be educated about public ROW and be asked to have a designated place for people to smoke alongside the building. The City should work with business owners to create an adopt a block program to keep their sidewalk/tree opening clear of weeds and debris.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Observation Pt.</td>
<td>Field Observations</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
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<td>5 Cleaveland and Leary</td>
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<td>Currently this is not a comfortable place to walk. Provide more uniform signage in this area that supports the historic district and identity building on some of the key pieces like the clock and kiosk already in the area.</td>
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<td>6 164th and Cleaveland</td>
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<td>Weeds and trash in the tree openings and sidewalk cracks. Mid-block crosswalk at Gilman is dangerous to cross. This area needs better signage/lights/flags to slow traffic down and make it more inviting for pedestrians. Bad storefronts. Sidewalks are narrow, or broken; uncomfortable for walking. Parking too close to the intersection blocks sightline. Put together an Adopt a Block Program. Encourage businesses to participate in keeping their block clear of debris and make sure the weeds and trash are clear. Place signage/lights/flags at Gilman to slow traffic down and safer for pedestrians to cross. As this part of Downtown gets developed require property owners to have inviting storefronts that support a more livable and walkable area. Support sidewalk cafes and design standards to increase the width of sidewalks.</td>
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Contacts & Project Information

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Feet First is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Feet First promotes walkable communities through advocacy, community organizing, research, and education.