

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

## 2014 Legislative Agenda

Increase Funding for WSDOT's Safe Routes to Schools Program

Include Pedestrians in any Statewide Transportation Funding Package

Reform the Rules of the Road Requirement that Pedestrians Completely Leave the Roadway Every Time a Car Approaches



### increase funding for WSDOT's Safe Routes to Schools program

Since its inception in 2005, this program provides technical assistance and resources to cities, counties, school districts, and state agencies for efforts to encourage more children walking and bicycling to school safely.

- This Safe Routes to Schools program funds small-scale capital improvements to improve safety near schools such as sidewalks, traffic calming, and road crossings. It also provides assistance to municipalities for enforcing school zone safety through efforts such as crossing guards, neighborhood watch programs, vehicle speed feedback signs, and law enforcement assistance.
- Lack of physical activity has a terrible impact on children's health, including increased obesity rates. Walking to school every day is a great way to give students some badly-needed physical activity and instills walking as a life-long habit. A morning walk also helps them concentrate better at school.

## 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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promoting walkable communities



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- More students must walk to school due to reductions in yellow bus service because of funding constraints. The Safe Routes to Schools program helps ensure that these children can safely walk to school.
- The need is great. During the 2013-2015 biennium, the Washington State Department of Transportation received 124 grant applications totaling \$60 million. However, due to limited funding it could only support 41 grant requests worth \$18 million.
- The Safe Routes to School program gets results. Individual projects have increased school walking rates by an average of 20 percent. Motorist speeds and travel citations have gone down at participating schools. A total of 75,000 feet of sidewalks near schools have been built.
- Reform the school pupil transportation funding formula in order to level the playing field between various transportation modes. Currently, school districts receive state subsidies based on how many students ride yellow school buses. Districts should also receive equal funding to account for students that walk or bicycle to school, which would reduce their transportation costs. Every yellow school bus eliminated provides an annual cost savings of \$37 thousand per bus.

include pedestrians in any statewide transportation funding package

If and when the state legislature enacts a new transportation funding package, this package must include funding for pedestrian improvements and programs.

- People are walking more, so we need to provide them safe pedestrian facilities. The percentage of people walking at least once for ten minutes or more in the previous week rose from 56 percent (2005) to 62 percent (2010). Nationally, 2.5 percent of workers walked to work.
- Despite the fact that 13.6 percent of Washington traffic fatalities are people either walking or biking, the state allocates only 0.5 percent of its transportation budget towards walking and biking projects.

reform the rules of the road requirement that pedestrians completely leave the roadway every time a car approaches

Current state law (RCW 46.61.250) requires pedestrians walking along roadways lacking sidewalk to move completely off the roadway when cars approach. Feet First advocates changing this law to only require pedestrians to yield the right-of-way by moving to the extreme side of the road.

- Requiring pedestrians to completely leave the roadway is unnecessary and unreasonable. Almost all low-traffic volume rural and residential streets have ample room for a car to pass a pedestrian on the paved surface.





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- Unpaved roadway shoulders are usually a poor place to walk; often they are unsafe. These shoulders frequently feature mud puddles, drainage ditches, uneven surfaces, and steep embankments. Forcing people to walk here unfairly punishes them for the lack of an adequate pedestrian walkway and further discourages them from walking.
- People with disabilities are often unable to completely and safely remove themselves from the paved roadway surface.
- The states of New York and Wisconsin have already reformed their own laws to allow walkers to stay in the roadway provided they make way for vehicles.



Above photo of 2013 Safe Speeds Bill signing by Bicycle Alliance of Washington.



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