Case Study

Walkable Washington

The Walkable Washington program grew out of the Feet First Cities Program. It showcases exceptional pedestrian-oriented improvements, community groups and outreach programs; maintains a statewide network for key contacts and stakeholders including an annual symposium; and provides assistance with Safe Routes to School, walking audits and other educational activities and programs.

Renton Avenue South Construction Project
Renton, WA

Description and purpose
In 2002, improvements to Renton Avenue South were identified by the community as a way to revitalize the area with a “boulevard feel” that welcomes pedestrians and cyclists and encourages visits to local businesses. King County and the City of Renton are partnering to improve Renton Avenue South between 75th Avenue South and 76th Avenue South in the West Hill area. The project will add sidewalks, landscaping and on-street parking, as well as a bicycle lane to the east side of Renton Avenue South. A gateway sign at the intersection of Renton Avenue South and 76th Avenue South will be installed as part of this project. The project is a great step forward in improving automobile and pedestrian circulation and safety, as well as promoting equity and social justice within a highly mixed neighborhood.
Costs and funding
This project is funded by two grants - one secured by the City of Renton from the Washington State Department of Commerce and the other secured by the King County Road Services Division from U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development Block Grant funding. The two grants have a combined amount of $1,125,500.

Implementation time-frame
All main construction has been completed and the program is in its last phase of designing and putting up a gateway sign. The program is expected to be finished in April 2014.

Community involvement
Renton Avenue South is located in a highly integrated neighborhood with mixed ethnicities and income. The King County and the City of Renton actively sought public input into design of the sidewalks starting from 2011. The community outreach took about two years and included methods such as website advocacy, mailing, public open-house meeting, attending meetings of community associations, and door-to-door visits to property and business owners. Three particular associations that King County reached out to are Westhill Business Association, Westhill Community Council, and Skyway Solution.

Benefits and results
New pedestrian sidewalks, planters, bike lanes and parallel parking spaces along the east side of Renton Avenue South are constructed with this project. The improvements to Renton Avenue South are expected bring economic development and infrastructure investment, such as the building of a new public library, to the area.

The project also fulfills the purpose of creating a pedestrian-friendly environment and promoting social equity and justice, creating new opportunities for the people of Skyway.

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Resources
Renton Avenue South Construction Project, King County Transportation Page
http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/Roads/Construction/ConstructionProjectsOther/RentonAvenueSouth.aspx

Photo courtesy of King County.