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.

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.

Arlington Gifford Sidewalk Project
Arlington, WA

Description and purpose

In the city of Arlington, sidewalks on two blocks of Gifford St. were reconstructed to replace the previous sidewalks that were in poor shape or were non-existent. The sidewalks on Gifford St. span between Presidents Elementary and Haller Middle School and are heavily used by students walking to and from school.

Costs and funding

The sidewalks on the two blocks of Gifford St. were completed in 2010 at a cost of $111,000 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 grant funds.
Challenges and Solutions:
The Gifford St. project was pretty straightforward, with the only challenge being to build the sidewalks to match existing grading in residents’ front yards. For example, a five-foot wide sidewalk was needed to satisfy the American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, and this meant that grading was often needed below the existing grade of a yard. A retaining wall was built along the front yard of one house to remedy grading issues, and in other areas, the sidewalk was widened.

Community involvement
No formal community involvement or town meetings were performed with this project. A notice was posted to inform the public that the sidewalks were going to be built. During construction the City coordinated with individual homeowners on restoration work that was occurring in their front yards.

Innovations:
Public outreach is an ongoing learning opportunity for all municipalities, as every neighborhood reacts differently to construction projects. Although the Gifford neighborhood was very supportive of the sidewalk project, the City would have liked to provide more project specific information to the residents ahead of the project. With more recent projects in Arlington, the City has begun providing “What to Expect” letters to residents outlining project disruptions and timelines.

Benefits and results
The project resulted in safer routes for children traveling between two schools.

Project Contacts
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Resources
City of Arlington, Gifford Sidewalk Construction Project

Map of Project