WALKABLE WASHINGTON

Transformation towards walkability is taking place all over the state of Washington. From urban, suburban and small town initiatives, the program showcases the effects of a renewed focus on creating great places for people to walk. The case studies are exceptional projects and programs showcasing how cities, counties, school districts, and community organizations throughout the state are making it safer, easier, and more inviting for people to walk.

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

We promote walkable communities and empower people throughout Washington to connect to the world by foot.

CASE STUDY

BELLEVUE ADAPTIVE TRAFFIC SYSTEM AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE TREATMENTS
BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE: To improve pedestrian safety and offer effective multimodal transportation options, the City of Bellevue has upgraded 95% of all traffic signals to an Adaptive Traffic System alongside the installation of pedestrian treatments. Stemming from the Bellevue Mobility Initiative in 2008, the City was determined to address mobility challenges associated with growth, specifically in the Downtown area. This project had four strategies to reduce or eliminate conflicts between pedestrians and drivers: Pedestrian wait time reduction, Flashing Yellow Arrow Left Turn with Protected Pedestrian Feature, Flashing Yellow Arrow for Right-Turn Movement, and Leading Pedestrian Interval.

COSTS & FUNDING: In total, the project cost $5.5 million. However, the individual pedestrian safety projects were a small fraction of the final cost as adding a safety treatment to an intersection costs between $1,000-$5,000 dollars depending on the circumstances. While most of the project was funded through City funds, Bellevue received a federal safety grant of about $180,000 dollars.

IMPLEMENTATION TIME-FRAME: The Bellevue City Council began to focus on issues of mobility in 2008 with the Bellevue Mobility Initiative. This project began in 2010 and completed in 2015. Each strategy was determined and implemented individually, and the work was split into five phases over the implementation period.
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Community outreach and educational articles were integral to the City’s engagement with residents surrounding the project. There was public comment from community members across Bellevue because the project was city-wide. As with most large projects, there was some negative feedback initially, but positive reactions outnumbered the negative ones as people become more familiar with the changes.

BENEFITS AND RESULTS: Pedestrian wait time at traffic signals has been reduced by an estimated 20-30%, which improves attractiveness for walking and discourages jaywalking. Additionally, Leading Pedestrian Interval treatments, where pedestrians are given a 3-7 second head start before traffic in the same direction is given a green light, is shown to reduce pedestrian-vehicle collisions by as much as 60%. Over the past five years there have been zero pedestrian versus left-turning vehicle collisions at intersections with the “Ped Minus” feature. It is also estimated that by converting left turns to flashing yellow and utilizing pedestrian safety features the City has reduced left turn delay by $3 million annually, with delivering overall savings to transportation users of $7.5-9 million annually.

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