

WSDOT Action Plan - Safer People, Safer Streets



November 2014

This Action Plan summarizes the priority actions identified at a statewide meeting that brought together representatives from all divisions, offices, and regions of WSDOT as well as partner agencies and organizations to discuss ways to improve conditions for biking and walking in response to [FHWA's Safer People, Safer Streets](#) initiative. This Plan is also part of and consistent with [Results WSDOT](#) and [Results Washington](#) efforts to shift the way we do business to get the most capacity of the entire multimodal transportation system, leverage our limited funding and engage with communities and partners.

Understanding the Issues

On average, there are about 400 fatal and injury traffic crashes each year that involve pedestrians and bicyclists, and school-aged children and adults older than 65 represent a disproportionately high share of these crashes.

Vulnerable Road Users - In 2013, pedestrian and bicyclist traffic fatalities made up about 16 percent of all traffic fatalities statewide. When involved in a traffic collision, pedestrians and cyclists are seriously injured or killed over 93 percent of the time. Motor vehicle drivers and occupants are seriously injured or killed 39 and 30 percent of the time respectively. Nationally and in Washington State, pedestrian and cyclist deaths have been rising while overall traffic fatalities have declined since 2009.

Urban and Community Centers - The majority of biking and walking occurs in urban areas, and these activities are on the rise. Statewide counts show that biking and walking increased in downtown areas and mixed-use neighborhoods. Additionally, more than 85 percent of collisions involving pedestrians or bicyclists occurred in urban areas since 2009. About half of all fatal traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists occur on state highways and the majority of these are concentrated in community commercial centers, transition areas approaching these centers, and intersections (referred to in WSDOT research and recent publications as "Main Street Highways").

Speed - Motor vehicle speeds are a factor contributing to the severity of pedestrian and bicyclist traffic crashes. A report titled "A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Pedestrians" by the National Cooperative Highway Research Council affirms that a pedestrian who is hit by a vehicle traveling at 40 mph has an 85 percent chance of being killed; at 20 mph, the fatality rate is only 5 percent. The posted speed limits were 35 mph or greater for the majority of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities that occurred across the state in the past ten years.

Action Plan – WSDOT’s Safer People, Safer Streets Priorities

To address these trends and move toward the State and WSDOT goals for a safer and more multi-modal system, WSDOT has identified and prioritized the following short term actions:

- Establish a funding program for roadway reconfiguration – complete streets projects
- Pursue funding partnerships and communicate the need for improving conditions for biking and walking early in developing preservation and improvement projects, especially in community centers and transition areas.
- Use Practical Design tools and resources
- Expand data collection - collect before and after data whenever WSDOT constructs pedestrian and/or bicycle facility improvements
- Evaluate Level of Service (LOS) standards for inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities/capacity
- Establish teams of bicycle and pedestrian experts in key offices within each WSDOT Region (Planning, Traffic, Design, Local Programs), recognizing that one full time employee or less is not enough support to meet current needs in any WSDOT Region
- Conduct a statewide public education campaign to increase awareness and educate drivers, cyclists, pedestrians
- Identify and formalize critical or priority areas (e.g. Main Street Highways, community core areas, transition zones, intersections) and direct limited funding to these priorities

Results Washington Goals:

- Reduce number of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities on public roadways from 84 in 2012 to zero by 2030
- Increase the percentage of Washingtonians using alternative transportation commute methods to 33% by 2015
- Maximize existing capacity of strategic corridors by increasing people and/or goods moved per corridor mile.

Additional Actions:

- Address limitations and barriers for use of WSDOT Right of Way for bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Use Least Cost Planning to integrate bicycle and pedestrian facilities into WSDOT plans
- Plan and design bicycle and pedestrian connections for better modal integration with transit
- Develop a model (dichotomous key) that includes case studies to help identify appropriate design solutions

Please provide comments on this Action Plan to:

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