

Why did we stop? Old guy crossing Jefferson, slowly, we had tons of time...

Kevin and I are riding on Jefferson heading to work; wide 4-lane road, and this old guy, I mean stooped-over old guy, is slowly making it across the road. Not in a crosswalk. You're thinking geez, what's this guy doing? Who's looking after him? So we're doing 20mph or so, and by the time we pass him, he's made it just past the middle of the road. Nowhere close to us. Perfectly safe.

Except that we didn't pass him. I yelled to Kevin to stop; he looked at me quizzically, wondering, why? There's no safety issue; we're nowhere near him and it would seem he'd take another minute to get to where we are.

Here's why we stopped. Nobody's looking for an old guy crossing the road nowhere near an intersection. They might, however, see a couple of people on bikes, with not one but TWO bright tail lights. And if they're focused on us, they might not see the other guy. But... if WE stop, they (the cars behind us) are going to have to stop. Well hopefully anyway! And a car in the other lane might wonder why we stopped, and look around, and see the old guy.

That's one of the reasons why the law says nobody gets to proceed through a crosswalk, as long as there's someone in any part of it. You stopping, whether on a bike or a car, sends a signal to others that there's a reason to stop. It greatly reduces the chance of a pedestrian getting run over. Just something to think about, next time you see someone crossing the street in front of you. Even if you can squeeze by, maybe you shouldn't.