Pedestrian Count Summary

Summer 2012 Update

Presently, two waves of pedestrian traffic data are accumulated during the course of a calendar year: the summer tourist season (August) and holiday (December). Three shifts are conducted each count day: 7:30 to 9:00 am (morning rush), 11:30 to 1:00 pm (lunch) and 4:00 to 5:30 pm (evening rush). Data are currently gathered at Seventeen geographically dispersed sites throughout Downtown Seattle. In 2010, the number of counts was reduced from three waves per year to two, eliminating a highly variable spring count. An interactive map and charts showing all of these summer and holiday waves are available at [http://downtownseattle.com/Resources/PedestrianCountGraph](http://downtownseattle.com/Resources/PedestrianCountGraph)

Summary

For the summer 2012 count, pedestrian traffic was counted at seventeen sites throughout Downtown Seattle. Nine of these sites have been regularly counted since pedestrian counts began in December of 2006. The following chart shows the aggregate counts for these sites, illustrating how overall “Downtown” pedestrian traffic has changed each year from 2006 to 2012.

* 2007 Holiday Count at 6th and Pine adjusted to reflect seasonal average due to scheduling conflicts that year skewing the count.
Findings from this year's summer count include the following:

- Summer 2012 saw a slight decrease in traffic overall when compared to the previous year.
- Nearly all sites tend to see more pedestrian traffic in August than in December.
- The difference between the summer and holiday counts is most pronounced at sites along the waterfront, with the summer counts consistently well above those in December.
- Sites in the Retail Core and Waterfront neighborhoods tend to see the highest counts in the summer.
- During the summer waves, 5th and Olive (near the South Lake Union Streetcar terminus at McGraw Square) saw the highest level of traffic in both August 2011 and August 2012.
- Besides 5th and Olive, sites at 6th and Pine and 4th and Pine continue to be the busiest in all seasons, especially during the Holiday wave.

### Summer 2011 versus summer 2012

An analysis of the year over year variances for the summer waves indicates that a “normal” variance is between 6 and 12 percent. Those sites with a twelve percent change or less between summer 2011 and summer 2012 included the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersection / Corner</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Year-over-year change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denny &amp; Westlake / SE</td>
<td>2,906</td>
<td>3,095</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th and Bell / NW</td>
<td>1,325</td>
<td>1,364</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; University / NE</td>
<td>4,298</td>
<td>4,082</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaskan &amp; Seneca / W</td>
<td>6,178</td>
<td>5,854</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th &amp; Pine / NE</td>
<td>7,366</td>
<td>6,871</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st &amp; Yesler / SE</td>
<td>3,423</td>
<td>3,186</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th &amp; Pike / SE</td>
<td>3,119</td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison &amp; Minor / SW</td>
<td>2,245</td>
<td>2,033</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westlake and Harrison / SE</td>
<td>2,843</td>
<td>2,495</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For sites with a variance greater than 12 percent, potential reasons for the change are explored starting in the following section.
## Pedestrian Counts: August 2011 vs. August 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersection / Corner</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaskan Way and Pike Street Hillclimb / W</td>
<td>5,172</td>
<td>6,678</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; Pike / SE</td>
<td>5,486</td>
<td>6,562</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th &amp; Weller / SE</td>
<td>2,343</td>
<td>2,723</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th &amp; Stewart / NE</td>
<td>2,791</td>
<td>3,161</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denny &amp; Westlake / SE</td>
<td>2,906</td>
<td>3,095</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th and Bell / NW</td>
<td>1,325</td>
<td>1,364</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; University / NE</td>
<td>4,298</td>
<td>4,082</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaskan &amp; Seneca / W</td>
<td>6,178</td>
<td>5,854</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th &amp; Pine / NE</td>
<td>7,366</td>
<td>6,871</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st &amp; Yesler / SE</td>
<td>3,423</td>
<td>3,186</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th &amp; Pike / SE</td>
<td>3,119</td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison &amp; Minor / SW</td>
<td>2,245</td>
<td>2,033</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westlake and Harrison / SE</td>
<td>2,843</td>
<td>2,495</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th &amp; Pine / SE</td>
<td>6,896</td>
<td>5,916</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th &amp; Olive / SE</td>
<td>8,168</td>
<td>6,913</td>
<td>-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway and Olive / SE</td>
<td>1,219</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Ave N and Mercer St / NE</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>1,387</td>
<td>-37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Waterfront (Alaskan Way and Pike Street Hillclimb)

#### West Side

**Summer 2011-2012: 29% increase**

The largest increase between summer 2011 and summer 2012 was at the site closest to the Seattle Aquarium, just across the street from the Pike Street Hillclimb. Since this site was added in 2011, there are not enough data points to determine if this is comparable to an “average” year for this site. This site may be affected by traffic from cruise ships, tours and other tourism related traffic. The 2012 count was conducted during Seafair Fleet Week which may have contributed to increased pedestrian traffic over the previous year.
**West Edge (2nd & Pike)**  
*Southeast Corner*  
*Summer 2011-2012: 20% increase*  
This site saw a year-over-year increase. Since this site was added in 2011, there are not enough data points to determine if this is comparable to an “average” year for this site. While the lunchtime shifts were comparable between the summers of 2011 and 2012, there was a notable increase in both the morning and evening commute hours.

**Chinatown – International District (5th & Weller)**  
*Southeast Corner*  
*Summer 2011-2012: 16% increase*  
After two years of decreases, the site at 5th and Weller has seen some recovery in pedestrian traffic. This site was likely affected by the departure of a major anchor tenant from the neighborhood (Amazon.com). However, new tenants in the area such as the Cobalt Group may have a positive impact on pedestrian traffic. This site is heavily influenced by lunchtime traffic as it is directly adjacent to the Uwajimaya food court.

**Denny Triangle (7th & Stewart)**  
*Northeast Corner*  
*Summer 2011-2012: 13% increase*  
For the second summer in a row, this site saw an increase. While the immediate area had notable vacancies in 2010, office space has largely filled up in this area. Many new office towers in adjacent blocks such as 818 Stewart, 1918 Eighth Avenue, and West 8th are now almost fully occupied.

**Retail Core (4th & Pine)**  
*Southeast Corner*  
*Summer 2011-2012: 14% decrease*  
This summer’s 4th & Pine count was about ten percent lower than the average summer count for this site. The lunchtime shift for this site has been somewhat variable over the six summers counts have been conducted here. Changes could be due to a combination of varying levels and types of lunchtime activity during the summer at Westlake Park.

**Retail Core (5th & Olive)**  
*Southeast Corner*  
*Summer 2011-2012: 15% decrease*  
The site at 5th and Olive is across from Westlake Center, the Westlake terminus for the South Lake Union Streetcar and in front of a Bartell Drugs location. This site saw a year-over-year decrease. Since this site was added in 2011, there are not enough data points to determine if this is comparable to an “average” year for this site. There was a slight decrease in afternoon bus service to the nearby commuter bus stop in February 2012 which may have contributed to a decrease. Nearly all of the year-over-year decrease was during the 4-5:30pm shift.
**Capitol Hill (Broadway & E John)**
Southeast Corner
*Summer 2011-2012: 17% decrease*
While the site at Broadway & E John (Olive Way) next to the new light rail construction site has shown a year-over-year decrease, the 2011 summer count was one of the highest on record. The 2012 count is similar to the average for counts conducted at this site.

**Uptown (1st Ave N and Mercer St)**
Northeast Corner
*Summer 2011-2012: 37% decrease*
The Uptown site at 1st Ave N & Mercer Street has proven to be highly variable from one count to the next. This may be due to the area being less influenced by the typical 9-5 (employee) pedestrian traffic. The site is proximate to the Seattle Center and several other cultural attractions. Restaurants, bars and residential buildings are the more prominent features of this area rather than office buildings. The 2012 summer count was below the average for previous years for this site.

The chart on the following page shows the 2012 data for all sites counted.
2012 Summer Pedestrian Counts

- 5th & Olive: 6,913
- 6th & Pine: 6,871
- Alaskan Way / Pike Street Hillclimb: 6,678
- 2nd & Pike: 6,562
- 4th & Pine: 5,916
- Alaskan & Seneca: 5,854
- 2nd & University: 4,082
- 1st & Yesler: 3,186
- 7th & Stewart: 3,161
- Denny & Westlake: 3,095
- 7th & Pike: 2,850
- 5th & Weller: 2,723
- Westlake and Harrison: 2,495
- Madison & Minor: 2,033
- 1st Ave N and Mercer St: 1,387
- 5th & Bell: 1,364
- Broadway and Olive: 1,008

Colors represent:
- Blue: 7:30 - 9:00 am
- Red: 11:30 - 1:00 pm
- Green: 4:00 - 5:30 pm
Editor’s Note
Collecting seasonal pedestrian traffic information over time provides a sense of the unique traffic patterns at each site and can signal changes in the area. However, any traffic count should also consider factors beyond the specific patterns at that location and time.

While explanations offered in this report may not account for all changes observed, historical activity suggests that pedestrian traffic is affected by factors such as office occupancy, construction, transit access, land use and resident density.

Counts are scheduled to match as closely as possible the conditions of previous years. Weather, the day of the week, the week of the count and level of event activity in an area can all affect pedestrian patterns. These factors are all taken into consideration when scheduling counts. Counts are not scheduled for days when large events such as conventions or sporting events may influence traffic patterns.

Another factor that cannot be ignored is normal day-to-day variability in pedestrian traffic volume. Sites are also selectively tested for variation in counts by stationing two different counters at the same time and place. Inter-counter differences have been less than 3%.

Who uses our data?
We regularly receive requests for pedestrian count data from real estate brokers, neighborhood organizations, transportation planners, developers and others. Some individuals looking to site retail operations Downtown use the pedestrian count in concert with our Street Level database and Neighborhood Profiles to get a better sense of the area. We often receive calls from other Business Improvement Districts looking to create their own pedestrian count program. For questions regarding published data points, methodology or analysis, or interest in customized counts (for a fee) please contact Elliott Krivenko at 206-613-3255.