Pedestrian Count Summary

December 2014 Update

An interactive map and charts showing summer and holiday pedestrian counts Downtown is available at; http://downtownseattle.com/Resources/PedestrianCountGraph

Methodology and Purpose

Each year, the Downtown Seattle Association and the Metropolitan Improvement District conduct two waves of pedestrian counts: the summer tourist season (August) and the holiday season (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). Except during major events, sites are counted annually on the same day of the week, the same week of the year.

The “Editor’s Note” on the last page of this document provides further explanation on pedestrian count methodology.

Pedestrian counts offer an opportunity to gain a sense of the unique traffic patterns at each site and can signal changes in the area. Pedestrian counts are a common, inexpensive and simple way of measuring overall volumes at a given site and across geographies. It is important to note that, though this study tracks individual sites over several years, individual pedestrian counts represents a snapshot in time influenced by several factors. Changes in the immediate vicinity such as road or building construction, special events and transit access may affect a particular site while broader trends such as office occupancy, local employment, land use changes and residential density may influence pedestrian counts over a larger area.

Key Findings

- The only site to see a major decrease (Broadway & E John Street) was next to a major transportation construction site.
- The largest increases were at sites that had previously been affected by construction and the only decrease was at a site currently under construction.
- For most sites, there tends to be more pedestrian traffic overall during summer.
- Downtown pedestrian traffic is up year-over-year (21%).
- This year’s count at 6th & Pine has the distinction of the largest pedestrian volume recorded at any site since counts began, with over 10 thousand pedestrians counted over a 4.5 hours.
**Summary**

Seventeen sites have been counted since 2011 and eight have consistently been counted since December 2006. The following chart shows the aggregate counts for these eight sites, illustrating how overall “Downtown” pedestrian traffic has changed each year from 2009 to 2014. The eight “core” sites are marked with an asterisk (*) in the summary table on page 6.

In the chart below, overall traffic appears to trend up overall for these eight sites. Variability in pedestrian traffic does need to be taken into account. With some exceptions, both year-over-year changes each year and long-term changes since 2009 are consistent with day-to-day fluctuations. However, long-term trends in the data for these eight sites suggest a relatively steady increase in pedestrian traffic Downtown over the course of these annual counts. This is the case in particular for the holiday counts, which occur the second week of December during the busiest shopping season of the year.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Holiday</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>26,913</td>
<td>33,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>26,832</td>
<td>29,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>29,288</td>
<td>33,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>31,948</td>
<td>31,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>31,093</td>
<td>39,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>35,743</td>
<td>40,373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Note that while a number of protests occurred Downtown in the days leading up to the December 2014 pedestrian counts, no major protests occurred during the counts themselves. It is difficult to say if perceptions regarding protest activity had any impact on these counts.
Pedestrian Count Trends

For a description of each site, see “Site Descriptions” on page 8

Year over Year Trends
A look at fluctuations in the data over time suggests that 12 percent of the difference in counts from one year to the next could be due to “background” changes in the day-to-day flow of pedestrian traffic. For sites showing a change greater than 12 percent from the previous year, potential reasons for the change are explored below, starting with those showing the greatest year-over-year increase:

Belltown (5th Ave & Bell St)
NW Corner
December 2013-2014: 606% increase
During the 2013 count, this site was relatively inaccessible due to construction of the final stages of Bell Street Park. The park is now open. As a result, the 2014 count represents a major increase year-over-year. Not only is the park now open, there is also construction across the street, which may encourage pedestrian traffic to use the west sidewalk along 5th Avenue. The 2014 count represents a 23 percent increase relative to the average for counts prior to construction of Bell Street Park.

Waterfront (Alaskan Way & Pike Street Hillclimb)
West Side
December 2013-2014: 197% increase
This site, near the Seattle Aquarium and the main pedestrian access between the Waterfront and Pike Place Market, has seen a great deal of fluctuation in pedestrian traffic volume. This pattern may have been influenced by impacts from construction of a new seawall along the waterfront. Although an increase over 2013, pedestrian volume in 2014 was similar to that seen in 2012.

South Lake Union (Westlake Ave & Harrison St)
SE Corner
December 2013-2014: 42% increase
The 2014 count at this site was a 42 percent increase from the previous year and a larger volume of pedestrian traffic than any year since counts began there. With the exception of the 2013 counts, this site has seen steady increases each year. With more residents and office workers moving into the neighborhood, the area has transformed from what was once a light industrial area with very little pedestrian traffic to a vibrant urban neighborhood at the north end of Downtown. With new workers and residents, amenities such as restaurants, salons, spas, and fitness centers contribute to the increased neighborhood vitality and the foot traffic that comes with it.
West Edge (2nd Ave & Pike St)
SE Corner
December 2013-2014: 30% increase
This site saw a year-over-year increase in 2014. However, the pedestrian volumes here were on par with the average for the site. A similar number of pedestrians were counted in 2012. A challenge at this site that could affect the counts is that a number of individuals cut across the surface parking lot located here rather than traversing the corner where the count occurs. This may contribute to variability in the counts from year to year.

Uptown (1st Ave N & Mercer St)
NE Corner
December 2013-2014: 28% increase
Although this site tends to be the most variable among those counted, this year’s count recorded the highest volume of pedestrian traffic since counts began here. This year’s count represents a 43 percent increase from the average December count for this site.

Retail Core (7th Ave & Stewart St)
NE Corner
December 2013-2014: 24% increase
This site, heavily weighted toward commuter traffic, has stayed relatively steady for several years. However, this year the site experienced a 24 percent increase in pedestrian volumes. This was the first time since 2006 that a significant increase was recorded at this site. This may be due to increased office occupancy in the area.

Retail Core (6th Ave & Pine St)
NE Corner
December 2013-2014: 23% increase
With over 10 thousand pedestrians over 4.5 hours of counting, the December 2014 count at 6th & Pine has the distinction of recording the largest volume of pedestrian traffic among any site since these counts began. The largest increase at this site occurred during the (4:00 to 5:30 pm) evening commute shift.

Retail Core (5th Ave & Olive St)
SE Corner
December 2013-2014: 22% increase
After three years of relatively steady traffic, this site saw a 22 percent increase this year. This site could be affected by transit ridership (it is near a major commuter bus stop as well as the South Lake Union Streetcar terminus). Changes in the area that may have also had an impact include the addition of a food cart across the street to the north at McGraw Square, new street level businesses in the Medical Dental Building on the same block as the count site, and remodeling and new tenancy within Westlake Center (across the street to the west).
International District (5th Ave & Weller St)
SE Corner
December 2013-2014: 19% increase
After the departure of Amazon.com from the Union Station complex, counts at this site fell and remained flat for several years. 2014 is the first year since 2009 that an increase in pedestrian traffic was recorded here. Traffic in December 2014 was similar to that seen in 2010. Both summer and holiday traffic were up year-over-year.

First Hill (Minor Ave & Madison St)
SW Corner
December 2013-2014: 13% increase
For the 2014 December counts, this site saw a modest increase. The count this year was about 17 percent above average for the site. Some developments in the area over the past few years that may have contributed to an increased count include hospital expansions and a new apartment tower.

Capitol Hill (Broadway & E John St)
SE Corner
December 2013-2014: 32% decrease
This site is on the corner of a major construction site (Capitol Hill Station). Construction at the site and street construction nearby on Broadway as well as construction of several apartment buildings within a couple blocks of the site likely all contribute to changes in pedestrian traffic flow over time.

Waterfront (Alaskan Way & Seneca St)
West Side
December 2013-2014: Not Available
This site was inaccessible in December 2014 due to construction.
### Pedestrian Counts: December 2013 vs. December 2014

(All sites)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Intersection</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Percent Change**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>5th &amp; Bell / NW</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>1,158</td>
<td>606%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaskan Way &amp; Pike Street Hillclimb / W</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>1,181</td>
<td>197%</td>
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<td>Westlake &amp; Harrison / SE</td>
<td>2,289</td>
<td>3,249</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
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<td>2nd &amp; Pike / SE</td>
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<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Ave N &amp; Mercer St / NE</td>
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<td>28%</td>
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<td>7th &amp; Stewart / NE*</td>
<td>2,603</td>
<td>3,226</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th &amp; Pine / NE*</td>
<td>8,867</td>
<td>10,929</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th &amp; Olive / SE</td>
<td>6,190</td>
<td>7,546</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; University / NE*</td>
<td>2,712</td>
<td>3,235</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th &amp; Weller / SE*</td>
<td>2,248</td>
<td>2,684</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison &amp; Minor / SW</td>
<td>1,561</td>
<td>1,766</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th &amp; Pine / SE*</td>
<td>4,737</td>
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<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st &amp; Yesler / SE*</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>2,407</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denny &amp; Westlake / SE*</td>
<td>4,831</td>
<td>5,080</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th &amp; Pike / SE*</td>
<td>2,897</td>
<td>2,899</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway &amp; E John St / SE</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>-32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for all sites:</strong></td>
<td><strong>48,148</strong></td>
<td><strong>58,415</strong></td>
<td><strong>21%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sites marked with a single asterisk are those that have been counted since these pedestrian counts began in December 2006 (“core sites”).

**+/− 12 percent is within “normal” day-to-day pedestrian count variation. Please see the previous section for potential explanations regarding sites with more than a 12 percent change.
### 2014 December Pedestrian Counts
(All sites)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>7:30 - 9:00 am</th>
<th>11:30 - 1:00 pm</th>
<th>4:00 - 5:30 pm</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th &amp; Pine / NE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>10,929</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th &amp; Olive / SE</td>
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<td>7,546</td>
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<td>5,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denny &amp; Westlake / SE</td>
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<td>5,080</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; Pike / SE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th &amp; Union / SW</td>
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<td>3,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westlake and Harrison / SE</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; University / NE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,235</td>
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<td>2,684</td>
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<td>1,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway and E John St / SE</td>
<td></td>
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<td>632</td>
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Unless noted, the research data presented in this document was generated by the Metropolitan Improvement District's Business Development & Market Research team, in corporation with the Downtown Seattle Association. Please credit MID/DSA when using this data for external purposes. For more information, please email info@downtownseattle.org or call (206) 623-0340.
Map of Pedestrian Count Sites

The map below shows the sites in this count with the sizes of the dots indicated their relative volume of pedestrians during the December 2014 counts.
Site Descriptions

A general description for each site appears below. They are ordered as they appear on the map, reading the map from east to west, then north to south.

1st Ave N and Mercer St / NE Corner – the counters at this site are stationed at a corner near the entrance to a Metropolitan Market. A large number of cultural institutions distinguish this from other pedestrian count sites. Nearby restaurants and bars cater to tourists and evening crowds as well, making this site less oriented toward daytime worker traffic than most other pedestrian count sites.

Westlake and Harrison / SE Corner – The Westlake and Harrison pedestrian count site is in the heart of South Lake Union along a main north-south thoroughfare connecting the neighborhood to the rest of Downtown. There is a northbound bus stop a few feet from the count site and streetcar stops for both north and southbound trolleys within a block. Microsoft and Group Health have office space on the block. Nearby there are several new buildings occupied by Amazon.com as well as several new restaurants.

Broadway and E John St / SE Corner – At the eastern edge of our “Center City” Downtown boundary, this site is in the heart of Capitol Hill on one of its main cross streets. The corner where the count is conducted is the site of a major construction project. Currently, the entire block is a staging area for the Capitol Hill Light Rail Station. Eventually, the surface parcels will be developed into mixed-use developments. There are several new apartment buildings on nearby blocks, including The Lyric, a 234-unit apartment complex one block to the north. There is an eastbound bus stop nearby on E. John Street.

Denny & Westlake / SE Corner – This is the same corner as a Whole Foods grocery store. There has been a significant amount of new construction in the area in recent years, with Amazon.com now occupying much of the office space. There are also several new residential buildings nearby and the Pan Pacific Hotel. There are two bus stops and a streetcar stop on the same block as this site.

5th and Bell / NW Corner – This site is across from a major new condominium development to the east and a new community center to the south. It is also at the eastern terminus of a new “Bell Street Park” which runs along Bell Street from 1st to 5th Avenues. The site is a block from two private universities and only a few blocks south from the Seattle Center along the monorail path.

7th & Stewart / NE Corner – This site is at the Southwest corner of a U.S. Courthouse that occupies the entire block. A large plaza with staircases and landscaping features separates the count site from the courthouse building. There is a bus stop for westbound buses at this site; a major stop for buses from all three major service providers (Sound Transit, Community Transit and Metro King County Transit).
5th & Olive / SE Corner – Near the terminus of the South Lake Union Streetcar and across the street from McGraw Square to the north and Westlake Center to the west, this busy site is located directly in front of a Bartell Drug store. The block-face to the north includes the entrance to a health club and the Medical Dental Building. The block-face facing west includes an entrance to the flagship Nordstrom’s store and an entrance to the transit tunnel’s Westlake Station. The Seattle Monorail’s southern terminus is a block to the south in front of Westlake Center.

4th & Pine / SE Corner – Situated approximately halfway between Pike Place Market and Pacific Place Mall, this site is in the heart of Downtown’s retail core. It is at the northwest corner of Westlake Park, adjacent to the park fountains. The counter faces Macy’s catty-corner to the site and directly to the north is a Starbucks and the plaza that marks the south end of Westlake Center. The park itself often has public events such as concerts or the holiday carousel. In addition, there are often youth loitering about, particularly during the summer. In the nearby park is a play space for families with small children. There is a commuter bus stop to the south about halfway down the block.

6th & Pine / NE Corner – This site is at the southeastern corner of Pacific Place, the largest shopping center Downtown with 335,000 square feet of retail spanning a full block including restaurants and a movie theatre in addition to several floors of underground parking. Along with the count site at 4th and Pine (two blocks to the west), this site is located on Pine Street, a major thoroughfare between Capitol Hill, Interstate 5 and the Downtown core. One block to the west is Nordstrom flagship store while other adjacent blocks host several smaller retail storefronts.

7th & Pike / SE Corner – Located on the northwest corner of the Washington State Convention Center block, this site is near several hotels (most notably The Seattle Sheraton across the street to the west). It is catty-corner from a large arcade and movie theater complex and across the street to the north is a large restaurant (Cheesecake Factory).

2nd & Pike / SE Corner – This site is located in front a surface parking lot. There is a large parking structure to the north and a Target store and residential tower (Newmark Condominiums) across the street to the west. The site is one block east of Pike Place Market. There are currently plans in the design phase for future development for several nearby parcels, including the surface lot.

5th & Union / SW Corner – This site is located in front of Rainier Square. At the other corners of the intersection are a Brooks Brothers store, Specialties Cafe & Bakery and a Chase Bank. The 5th Avenue Theatre is about a half block to the south on the other side of 5th Ave. The site is on a block with a major construction project planned. As a result, tracking at this site could offer a glimpse into pedestrian traffic before, during and after construction at Rainier Square.

Madison & Minor / SW Corner – located in the First Hill hospital district, this site is in front of a Starbucks and on the only Downtown thoroughfare running uninterrupted from Elliott Bay to Lake Washington. It is catty-corner from the new 237 unit Coppins Well apartment tower. Across the street to the north is a McDonald’s and to the east is a bank branch. The Swedish Hospital campus occupies this and several adjacent blocks. The nearest bus stop is an eastbound stop on the same blockface, near Boren Avenue one block to the west.
Alaskan Way and Pike Street Hillclimb / West Side – This site is on the west side of Alaskan way, near the entrance to the Seattle Aquarium and across Alaskan way from the Pike Place Hillclimb (a pedestrian access between the Waterfront and Pike Place Market). Besides the aquarium, the waterfront itself is a main attraction here. There is a waterfront park and a nearby shopping center (Miners Landing), which is also home to the Seattle Great Wheel. This site is approximately three blocks north of the other waterfront pedestrian count site at Alaskan and Seneca.

2nd & University / NE Corner – This site is at the southwestern corner of the Benaroya Hall block, at the edge of the “Garden of Remembrance” a public plaza leading to the entrance to the bus tunnel’s University Street Station. Across the street is the Seattle Art Museum (SAM). On the same block as SAM is the former home of Washington Mutual and current home of Russell Investments (among other firms). Traffic at the site is influenced by both the presence of cultural institutions and a large population of workers in nearby office towers.

Alaskan & Seneca / West Side – This site was excluded from the December 2014 count due to construction prohibiting access to the count location – Facing Alaskan Way, this count site is in front of a bicycle rack located between Elliott’s and Argosy Cruises. A crosswalk is located near the site and about a block south is the Washington State Ferry terminal. The site sees heavy tourist traffic in the summer and December pedestrian count shifts often capture holiday cruise passengers heading for Argosy. It is also about a block south of the Seattle Great wheel and about three blocks south of the other waterfront pedestrian site in front of the Seattle Aquarium (Alaskan & Pike Street Hillclimb).

1st & Yesler / SE Corner – A Starbucks cafe is located at this corner. It is also across from the Pioneer Square pergola and is on the route typically taken by Seattle Underground tours. Several restaurants are nearby, including many on the same block that cater to a lunchtime crowd (Subway, Jimmy Johns). The site is proximate to a major transportation construction project that will result in the removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and reconfiguration of nearby streets.

5th & Weller / SE Corner – This site is located at the entrance to a food court located in a major local grocery store (Uwajimaya). To the west is a large office space complex called Union Station. There are several eateries in the area in addition to those inside the food court. In front of Union Station is a major bus station (International District Station) located under a public plaza. On the other side of Union Station, a busy 4th Avenue separates the International District from the Amtrak station, CenturyLink Field and Pioneer Square, all of which are accessible via a footbridge over the BNSF railway.
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 residential density.

The counts in this study are for one corner of an intersection and include traffic travelling in any direction across that area of sidewalk. At each site, individuals are stationed with manual hand counters for the duration of their shifts. Counters are instructed to count any individual traversing their assigned corner either on foot or in a conveyance device (skateboard, wheelchair, bicycle, etc). Children who are travelling with others and who appear to be too young to be travelling alone are not counted in these tallies. Those traversing the corner in conveyance devices on the street are considered “vehicle traffic” and are not counted (unless they enter the sidewalk). Testing over several years indicates that these instructions produce 3 percent or less difference between different counters at the same site over the same period.

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. Analysis of variance was examined for the five years prior to these counts. For sites not adjacent to major construction projects during that period, a “normal” variance was approximately 12 percent overall and as high as 20 percent for individual sites. Some of the variance may be explained by circumstances such as closed sidewalks, weather and other factors. However, much of this variance may simply be due to random fluctuation in day-to-day pedestrian traffic flows. Therefore, for analysis purposes, a 12 percent or less difference year-over-year is not considered a significant change.

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 three percent.

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 counts in concert with our Street Level database and Neighborhood Profiles to gain a better sense of the area. We also 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 receiving a cost estimate for customized counts please contact Elliott Krivenko at 206-613-3255.