Holiday 2010 Pedestrian Count Summary

Two waves of pedestrian traffic data are accumulated during the course of a calendar year: the summer tourist season and the holiday season. 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). We presently gather data counts at fourteen geographically dispersed sites throughout Center City Seattle.

**Seasonality**

- Downtown pedestrian traffic is generally higher in the summer than in the Holiday season.
- Retail Core locations at 6th and Pine and 4th and Pine tend to be the busiest sites, especially during the holiday (December) wave.
- The site seeing the greatest difference between summer and holiday is the Waterfront (Alaska and Seneca) with an average traffic 74 percent higher in the summer.
- 6th and Pine saw the most traffic during the Holiday 2010 count followed by 4th and Pine.

**Comparisons with previous counts**

- Regardless of season, the site at 6th and Pine has consistently been the busiest, followed by 4th and Pine.
- 6th and Pine tends to be more consistent in the level of pedestrian traffic compared to other Retail Core sites from year to year.
- The Denny Triangle site at 7th and Stewart has remained the most consistent overall over the four years these counts have been conducted.
- Analysis of year over year variances indicates that a “normal” variance for the holiday wave is between 8 and 12 percent. Those sites with a twelve percent or less change between the December 2009 and December 2010 waves include the following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International District (5th &amp; Weller)</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitol Hill (Broadway and Olive)</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD/Retail Core (6th &amp; Pine)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Hill (Madison &amp; Minor)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptown (1st Ave N &amp; Mercer)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denny Triangle (7th &amp; Stewart)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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- Changes at these sites may be accounted for by natural variation occurring in pedestrian traffic on any given day. For sites with more significant changes, potential reasons are explored in the section that follows.

Sites with the most significant changes:

**Increases**

**South Lake Union (Westlake and Harrison)**

*Holiday 2009-2010: 59% increase*

This is the second year in a row an increase of this magnitude has been seen at this site. It is also the second year in a row that this site has seen the largest increases in pedestrian traffic year-over-year among all pedestrian count sites. This increase in traffic is likely due to significant construction completion and leasing activity in the area. This has been a very active area for new development in recent years. In the past two years alone nearly 1,500 residential units, over 500 hotel rooms and an 80 room temporary housing facility for Cancer Care Alliance have been completed in the South Lake Union and Denny Triangle neighborhoods. In addition, Amazon.com continues to build their 11-building 1.7 million square foot campus spanning several blocks along Terry and Boren Avenues. With new residents, restaurants and office tenants, it is likely that this neighborhood has seen an increase in pedestrian traffic that will continue.

**Denny Triangle (9th and Westlake)**

*Holiday 2009-2010: 38% increase*

The 9th and Westlake site has seen consistent year-over-year increases in traffic since counts began; including years when other sites generally saw decreases in overall traffic. The present increases are likely due to the same causes listed above for Westlake and Harrison, most notably recent relocations by Amazon.com (both at 2201 Westlake and at the recently completed campus buildings nearby) and PATH, an international global health non-profit.
**Waterfront (Alaska and Seneca)**  
*Holiday 2009-2010: 29% increase*
While the holiday count at this site was up over 2009, it was below the four-year average for this site. Most of this increase occurred during the lunchtime count. One possible explanation for this variation in holiday counts at the waterfront could be an increase in holiday activities.

**West Edge (2nd and University)**  
*Holiday 2009-2010: 22% increase*
The increase at the 2nd and University site was strongest during the morning and evening commute times. In the waves following the departure of Washington Mutual as an anchor tenant, this site saw consecutive year-over-year decreases in 2008 and 2009. With new office leases nearby, including Russell Investments and Nordstrom, traffic increases are likely due to an increase in employee activity in the area. A 103,442 square-foot retail/parking space purchase was announced recently 2 blocks from this site. A Target store is expected to move into that site, which may have an impact on future pedestrian counts there.

**Retail Core (7th and Pike)**  
*Holiday 2009-2010: 14% increase*
The 7th and Pike site in front of the Convention Center entrance saw a modest increase year-over-year and was above average for holiday counts at this site. Counts at this site can be affected by convention attendance as well as large groups visiting nearby attractions such as Gameworks or the Cheesecake Factory.

**Decreases**

**Retail Core (4th and Pine)**  
*Holiday 2009-2010: 21% decrease*
Several factors could have influenced a decrease at this site. First, the weather was notably wetter in 2010 on the day of the count. Second, pedestrian traffic was periodically impeded during the day, first by sidewalk maintenance and later by various cause solicitors handing out flyers or soliciting donations.

**Pioneer Square (1st and Yesler)**  
*Holiday 2009-2010: 15% decrease*
This site saw its second year-over-year decrease in 2010 for both the summer and holiday waves. The area has lost some retail tenants recently, which may have contributed to decreased foot traffic. However, some new tenants have also moved in so the total number of businesses has remained relatively stable.
Editors Note

By collecting seasonal pedestrian traffic information over time, we are able to get a sense of the unique traffic patterns at each site and can be alerted to significant changes in the area. However, any traffic count analysis should consider factors beyond the specific patterns at that location and time. While the explanations offered above may not account for all the changes we have observed, our history with this activity suggests that pedestrian traffic is affected by factors such as weather, construction, transit access, land use and resident density. Another factor that cannot be ignored is day-to-day variability in pedestrian traffic volume. This is especially pronounced during the holiday shopping season. We also selectively test for variation in counts by 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, transportation planners 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. In the past, we have also been contacted and hired to conduct custom pedestrian counts. Please contact us at info@downtownseattle.org or (206) 623-0340 with any questions.