

Pedestrian Count & Survey

Salt Lake City - June 2012



Count & Survey Locations



Edison Street

Summary

During the month of June, six midblock streets and walkways were monitored for foot traffic. Four counts were conducted at each site; three on weekdays during the following time periods: 8:00 to 9:00 am, 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., and 5:00 to 6:00 p.m., and one on Saturday from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Each site in the count was a mid-block walkway, or street that cuts through the large Salt Lake City blocks. We anticipated that midblock walkways are used by many pedestrians because they are convenient. However, we did not know the extent of their use or whether the quality of the pedestrian environment impacted the level of use.

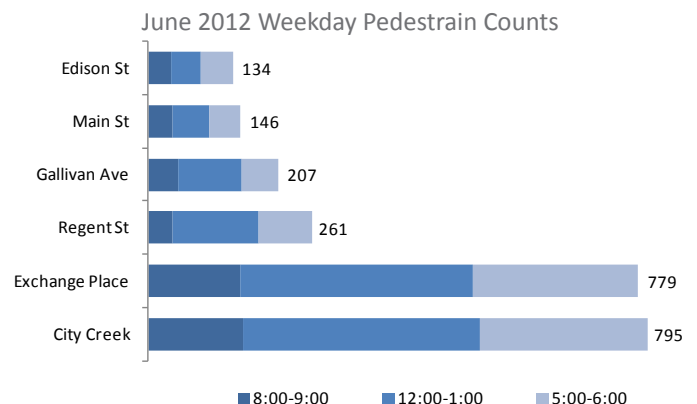
- (1) City Creek East, Regent Street Extension at 100 South
- (2) Regent Street at 200 South
- (3) South of 222 Main Street
- (4) 40 Gallivan Avenue
- (5) Edison Street 300 South
- (6) East Exchange Place

The Pedestrian count was an opportune way to measure foot traffic in the downtown area. Researchers were positioned at the locations listed below and counted pedestrians who crossed in front of them. On average, foot traffic ranged from 46 people per hour on Edison Street to 265 people per hour at City Creek.

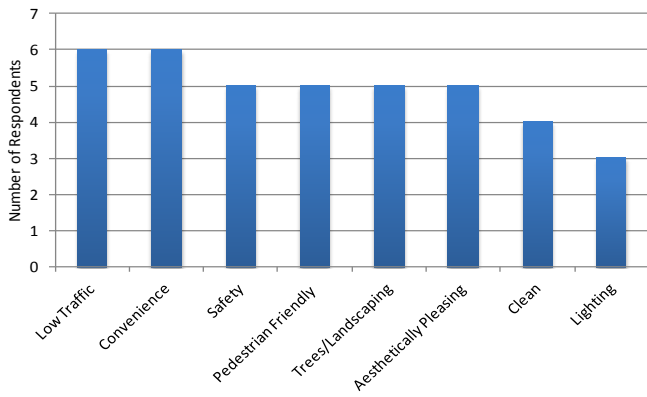
During the counts, on-the-street surveys were also administered to determine public opinion in regard to the streets they traveled by foot. Pedestrians felt that low traffic volumes, convenience, and safety among other things were important elements of the mid-block streets and walkways.

The Data

The data shows that City Creek had the highest volumes followed by Exchange Place, Regent Street, and Gallivan Ave. Examining how the different volumes relate to the built elements of the streets, we found that City Creek offers more pedestrian-friendly elements than any other street and has the highest volumes. However, Exchange Place has less pedestrian-friendly features than the designed Gallivan Avenue but draws a significantly higher amount of people, likely a result of its proximity to many workplaces.



Pleasing Pedestrian-Oriented Elements

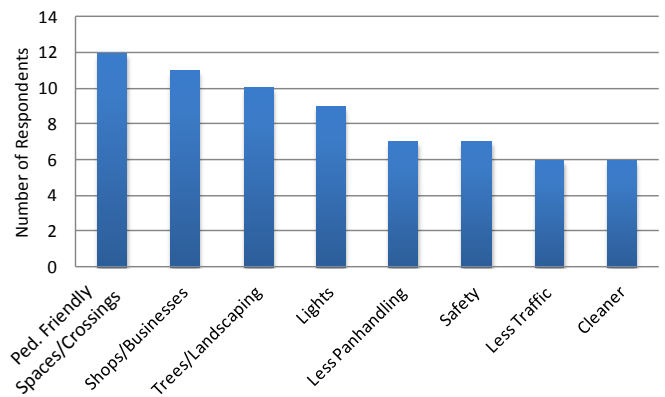


These assumptions were substantiated by survey data which indicated that the built elements people liked most were pedestrian-oriented or made travel easier because of their convenience.

What it Means

Based on count and survey data we can assume that the two greatest factors contributing to the use of a street are convenience and pedestrian-oriented elements. These factors are represented by counts of almost 800 people per count day at City Creek and Exchange place while all other streets failed to surpass 300 people per count day. Therefore, if the same

Desired Improvements



When pressed to identify what they would change, respondents were generally able to expand their general ideas in “pedestrian-friendliness” to more specific elements.

elements used at City Creek were implemented in other sites, it is predicted that foot traffic would reach similar numbers of pedestrians as City Creek. Or in the case of Exchange Place, improvements would continue to draw convenience users but bring new users also.



City Creek Midblock Walkway

What makes a street or walkway “pedestrian friendly” or “aesthetically pleasing” was not always enumerated by survey participants. Certainly sidewalk improvements with clear, smooth travel paths, can be included amongst these desired improvements. When pressed, some suggested trees and

landscaping contributed to a walkway’s friendliness while others suggested activity and maintenance. Street trees, while a simple solution, are costly and require maintenance. Without a dedicated steward –property or business owner– to water and look after the street trees, they do not make the best “Phase

One” improvements. However, planters and hanging plants are simple and relatively inexpensive investments. Building maintenance, including washed windows and neat paint, can also be an inexpensive venture.

Although pedestrian thru-traffic will continue to account for a percentage of midblock activities, improvements that encourage stationary activities (i.e. benches, tables and chairs,

Where to Start

Perceived safety is critical to the success of midblock streets where activity levels are generally low. Pedestrian-scale lighting, business activity, and cleanliness all contribute to perceived safety. Midblock businesses should be encouraged through improvement district grants or loans to make their entrances obvious and inviting through the use of signage, lighting, planting, window displays, and outdoor seating. The University, City and RDA can play a unique role in the activation of vacant properties by activating empty and underutilized storefronts with creative uses like temporary galleries, public engagement hotspots, and displays for student work.

food trucks, and programmed events) increase street life. People attract people. Select streets could make the jump to City Creek-like numbers with minor improvements that are Lighter, Quicker, and Cheaper, a strategy promoted by Projects for Public Spaces. Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper improvements are projects that can be completed with minimal effort, for a small amount of investment, in a three-month timeframe.

For midblock streets that allow vehicular traffic, controlling traffic speed or limiting vehicular access may provide a pleasing atmosphere to pedestrians. This could be achieved using simple barriers, bollards, or street paint. The sheer existence of midblock walkways and streets contributes to pedestrian convenience, and policies to require their implementation should continue to be enforced. Planned events, like block parties, where the street is closed to thru traffic, could beget future pedestrian activity by drawing attention to the street and its businesses.



Gallivan Avenue Midblock Walkway

Gallivan Avenue was built as a pedestrian-friendly space but lacks programming and the attention to design detail that would make it a fun and inviting space. Situated between Main and State Streets, it has a great potential for walking convenience, especially with the Plaza at State Street development located across State Street from Gallivan Avenue now under construction. By implementing Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper design features such as string lighting, planters, signage, or other simple pedestrian-oriented elements, we can transform an already good public space into a great space.

Exchange Place also has the potential to become a more pedestrian friendly space through improved walkability. As previously mentioned, the site draws a lot of business traffic but lacks a more diverse use. Using the same lighter, quicker, cheaper format; elements could be added that would draw a greater mixed-use. Bringing food trucks in a few days a week, providing movable tables and chairs, allowing for Intersection Repair or street painting (see [Portland's Intersection Repair program](#)), and numerous other simple projects could change the way the street is used and viewed by pedestrians.



Exchange Place Midblock Walkway

Simple changes to Gallivan Avenue and Exchange Place are short-term projects and could be started today and completed in three months time. With successional layering of short-term interventions and perhaps larger, long-term infrastructure investments, Downtown midblock streets have the potential to become attractive, unique, lively places. Edison and Regent

streets -because of adjacent redevelopment projects- provide opportunities for larger infrastructure investments on a larger schedule. Regardless of the project, what we do today will improve walkability in Salt Lake City for tomorrow and years to come.