



NASHVILLE AREA

Metropolitan Planning Organization**2011 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts****Summary Report**

October 4, 2011

Summary

The Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization completed a second unannounced, region-wide count of bicyclists and pedestrians, documenting approximately 5,700 bicycle and pedestrian trips at 23 sampled locations throughout five counties on September 13, 2011. The numbers were up nearly 50% from the 2009 counts, in which 3,957 bicyclists and pedestrians were counted at the same locations. The counts are organized by the Nashville Area MPO and staffed by volunteers. The data collection effort is part of the National Bicycle & Pedestrian Documentation Project which is a nationwide effort to provide data to help planners and policy makers better understand the need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Background

Non-motorized transportation planners have historically lacked a uniform way to document bicycle and pedestrian facility usage and demand. Without accurate and consistent figures on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure demand and usage, it is difficult to measure and justify the benefits of investing in facilities like sidewalks and bikeways, or to understand what factors influence trips made by walking and biking, especially when compared to the large amounts of data collected for motor vehicles.

The National Bicycle & Pedestrian Documentation Project assumes that, in order to estimate existing and future bicycle and pedestrian demand and activity, agencies like MPOs must start conducting counts and surveys in a consistent, standardized manner – similar to those used by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) for motor vehicle models.

Both the 2009 and 2011 counts help the MPO to: build the region's database of bicycle and pedestrian count information; understand the facility needs and uses of bicyclists and pedestrians; gather information on potential trends for walking and bicycling trips (by conducting counts at the same locations year-over-year); and share data with the National Bicycle & Pedestrian Documentation Project.

Findings

Nineteen percent of the people counted by trained volunteers were on greenways; the others were walking and bicycling on sidewalks and streets. The number of trips taken on sidewalks and bicycle lanes increased significantly, suggesting that more people are using these roadway facilities for daily transportation and commuting trips. The top count location overall was Belmont Boulevard and Bernard Avenue near Belmont University in Nashville, where volunteers noted over 1,300 trips: 1,177 pedestrian trips and 127 cyclist trips. The counts were conducted in Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson counties during peak commute times [7:00-9:00 a.m., and then 4:00-6:00 p.m.] on Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011.

A majority of the count locations had a 50% or more increase in bicycle and pedestrian trips over the 2009 counts. The intersection of Middle Tennessee Boulevard and East Main Street in Murfreesboro had a 92% increase in trips. Bicycle lanes were recently added to Middle Tennessee Boulevard and there is a new walkable retail development at the intersection with several restaurants and shops, and new townhomes are located just down the street. The intersection of Mallory Lane and Liberty Pike near Centennial High School and a new Whole Foods in Franklin had an 81% increase in bicycle and pedestrian trips. Cumberland Drive and South Greenwood Street in Lebanon next to Cumberland University had a 75% increase in trips and South Water Avenue and West Main Street in downtown Gallatin had an astounding 383% increase in trips. Downtown Gallatin recently underwent a complete streetscaping project that includes

pedestrian-friendly street crossings with brick paver crosswalks, as well as decorative elements such as landscaping and light poles.

Documenting the Need for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Fifty percent of trips taken in U.S. metro areas are three miles or less and nearly thirty percent of trips are one mile or less. The average person can walk one mile in about twenty minutes and can bicycle the same distance in less than half that time. Creating safe, convenient routes for those who want to walk or bicycle for short trips –to work, school, or elsewhere– is a critical component of any metropolitan region’s transportation plan.

One-third of Americans don’t own cars, and 12 percent of all trips in America are by walking or bicycling. And despite the fact that 55 percent of Americans want to bike more than they do now, drive less and walk more, 65 percent of trips under one mile are still taken by automobile due to inadequate facilities for active transportation. With Tennessee now ranked fourth in the nation for obesity rates (up from second in 2009), the MPO seeks to pursue infrastructure policies that reflect a desire for healthier options to get around communities, including safer, more convenient means to walk or cycle for routine trips.

Observations

Volunteers noted an overall increase in both bicycle and pedestrian trips, including those that appeared to be for leisure and exercise as well as those that appeared to be for transportation. The areas around Vanderbilt and Belmont Universities continue to see high numbers of bicyclists and pedestrians, primarily because of a large population traveling short distances to get to nearby destinations. Other areas of the region that have experienced bicycle and pedestrian improvements such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes and greenways, in addition to being served by land uses such as retail located near residential or offices/campuses, noted an increase in trips. Overall, it appears that the increase in bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as the increase in destination options is contributing to the rise in bicycle and pedestrian trips.

Conclusions

Investments in the non-motorized modes help increase access to transit, provide safe and reliable transportation choices for trips of short distances, promote physical activity, improve air quality, lower the region’s overall carbon footprint, and encourage infill redevelopment of existing centers and corridors that may be nearing capacity on the supporting roadway infrastructure. These outcomes support the goals of the MPO’s 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, which has three policy priorities: 1) A Bold New Vision for Mass Transit, 2) Support for Active Transportation and Walkable Communities, and 3) Preserving and Enhancing Existing Roadways. The 2035 Plan programs federal transportation dollars for regional transportation projects in the counties of Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Wilson and Williamson as well as portions of Maury and Robertson Counties.

Although the counts provide a small snapshot of pedestrian and bicycle traffic on one given weekday, they are important for several reasons since they provide insightful data that the MPO can reference when proposing or seeking to fund bicycle and pedestrian transportation projects in the MPO planning area. In addition, the data contributes to a national study that compiles data from over one hundred communities across the nation. MPO staff believes that the increase in bicycle and pedestrian trips demonstrates a desire to walk or bicycle to a destination. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are important for everyone, including car drivers, since even drivers are pedestrians as they walk from their cars to their final destinations.

Additional information

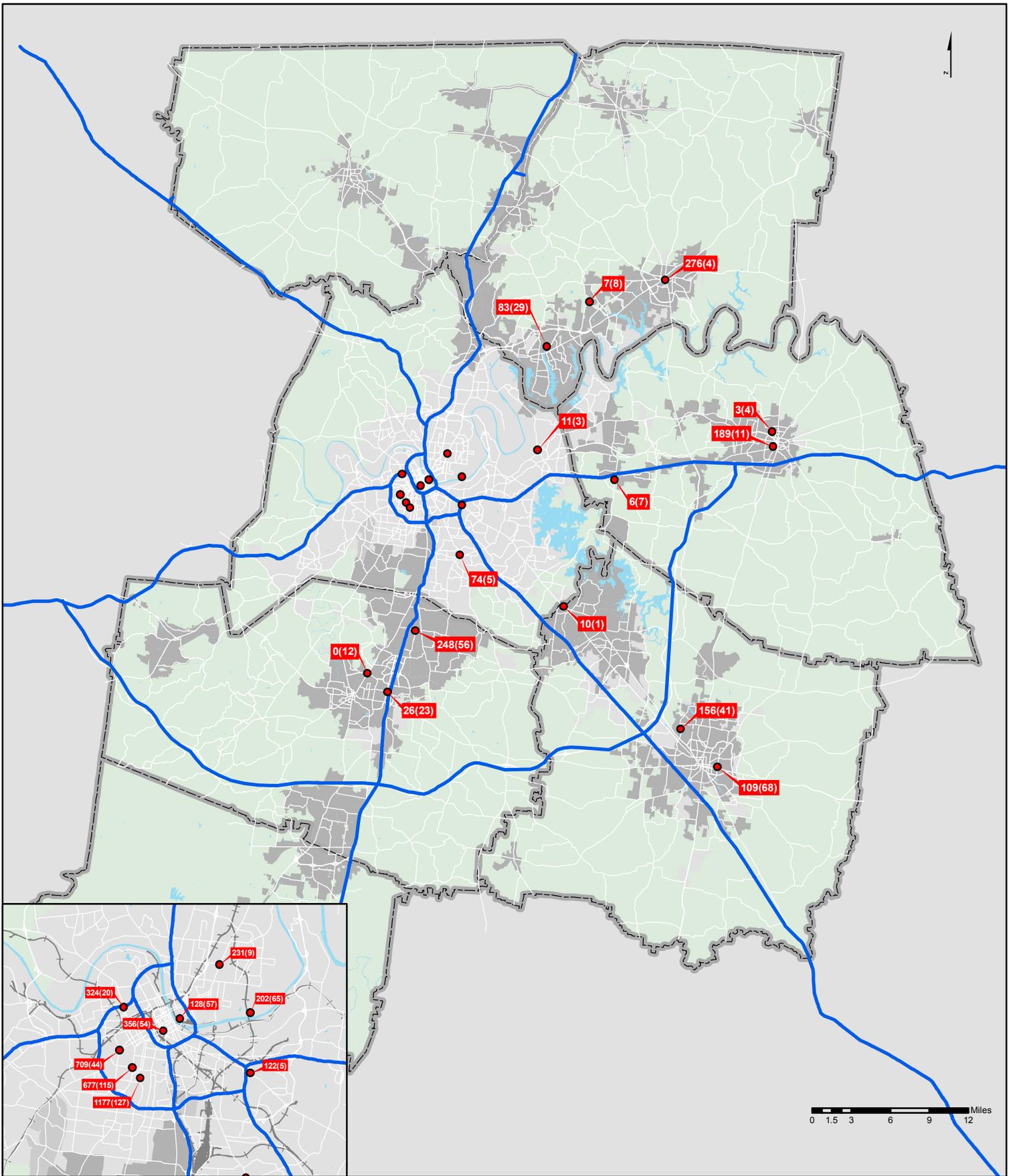
For more information on the MPO Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts and other efforts to support safety, improve population health and improve air quality by increasing active transportation trips as part of the regional transportation system, visit NashvilleMPO.org/BikePed.

Contact: Leslie A. Meehan, AICP 615.862.7211 | meehan@nashvillempo.org

2011 Nashville Area MPO Bicycle & Pedestrian Count Program Results							2009 Nashville Area MPO Bicycle & Pedestrian Count Program Results							
#	Location	AM Pedestrian Total*	AM Bicyclist Total*	PM Pedestrian Total*	PM Bicyclist Total*	Totals	AM Pedestrian Total*	AM Bicyclist Total*	PM Pedestrian Total*	PM Bicyclist Total*	Totals	% Increase 2009 to 2011		
Davidson County Summary						4515	Davidson County Summary					2953	Davidson	144%
1	21st Avenue @ Blakemore Avenue	309	37	368	78	792	334	40	385	39	798	-1%		
2	Belmont Boulevard @ Bernard Avenue	427	50	750	77	1304	228	53	341	52	674	93%		
3	West End Avenue near Centennial Park	314	23	395	21	753	156	25	189	18	388	94%		
4	Demonbreun @ 8th Avenue	132	30	224	24	410	163	19	177	16	375	9%		
5	Harding Place @ Nolensville Pike	38	1	36	4	79	15	0	54	4	73	8%		
6	Jefferson Street @ DB Todd	124	10	200	10	344	82	6	130	14	232	48%		
7	Shelby Bridge Pedestrian Bridge	31	23	97	34	185	42	17	41	13	113	64%		
8	Shelby Bottoms Greenway	87	20	115	45	267	52	6	124	38	220	21%		
9	Lebanon Road just west of OHB	3	0	8	3	14	7	1	5	6	19	-26%		
10	Murfreesboro Road near Spence Lane	44	2	78	3	127	6	0	6	1	13	877%		
11	Gallatin Road south of Douglas	105	6	126	3	240	**	**	36	12	48	400%		
Rutherford County Summary						385	Rutherford County Summary					272	Rutherford	20%
1	Murfreesboro Road in LaVergne	2	0	8	1	11	6	3	29	2	40	-73%		
2	Stones River Greenway near Thompson Ln	89	12	67	29	197	70	15	53	2	140	41%		
3	Mid TN Blvd at E. Main St	45	21	64	47	177	35	13	27	17	92	92%		
Sumner County Summary						407	Sumner County Summary					168	Sumner	141%
1	South Water @ West Main in Gallatin	226	0	50	4	280	14	2	40	2	58	383%		
2	Trail around Drake's Creek Park	50	12	33	17	112	42	3	46	7	98	14%		
3	Lower Station Camp @ Bison Road	3	0	4	8	15	1	0	3	8	12	25%		
Williamson County Summary						365	Williamson County Summary					406	Williamson	28%
1	Mack Hatcher @ Franklin Road	0	5	0	7	12	0	6	0	4	10	20%		
2	Mallory Lane @ Liberty	13	12	13	11	49	6	2	15	4	27	81%		
3	Trailhead by YMCA off Concord Road	128	16	120	40	304	154	22	152	41	369	-18%		
Wilson County Summary						220	Wilson County Summary					136	Wilson	36%
1	N. Castle Heights Avenue @ Coles Ferry Pike	1	2	2	2	7	5	2	1	7	15	-53%		
2	Cumberland Drive @ S. Greenwood Street	75	2	114	9	200	48	4	51	11	114	75%		
3	Mt Juliet Road near Providence	5	1	1	6	13	3	0	3	1	7	86%		
Nashville Area MPO Total		2,251	285	2,873	483	5,892	1,469	239	1,908	319	3,935	Average County Increase	98%	

* Totals represent the total of the 2-hour count time period (7-9AM & 4-6PM).

Count data form was not received. Numbers are estimated based on average increase from 2009 am counts in same location.



2011 BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN COUNTS
 NASHVILLE AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Pedestrian Count (Bicycle Count)