Tools to Document Demand for Active Transportation

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Reasons for measuring/monitoring demand

Immediate Response
Source: @bikeberlin13 via NACTO COVID-19 Transportation Response Center Photos

Long-Term Investment
Source: Seattle DOT, PBIC Image Library

Measuring Impact

pedbikeinfo.org
@pedbikeinfo
May 28, 2020
What tools are available?

- Bicyclist & Pedestrian Counts
- Motor Vehicle Volumes
- Field Observations & Audits
- Surveys & Community Feedback
What strategies has your community used to measure changes in walking/bicycling while social distancing guidelines have been in place?

- Bicyclist & Pedestrian Counts: 14%
- Motor Vehicle Volumes: 12%
- Field Observations & Audits: 25%
- Surveys & Community Feedback: 6%
- Other: 43%

Source: America Walks/PBIC Webinar registration poll; Percent of total responses
Bicyclist and Pedestrian Counts

• Allows communities to measure changes in bicycling and walking activity

• Established programs with **continuous and short-duration** counts are best, but **manual counts** can provide useful metrics and establish a baseline

• Resources:
  • Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Programs Info Brief (PBIC)
  • NCHRP Report 797
  • Collecting Network-Wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Data (Washington State DOT)
Example: Changes in Walking/Bicycling in Memphis

• Automatic counters documented spikes in bicycling and walking activity
• Increases in activity on both trails and on-street locations
• Counters allow City to look back 5-6 years to compare with historical trends and “baseline” measures
• Moving forward, established count program enables monitoring of trends as conditions change

Source: City of Memphis' Bikeway and Pedestrian Program, BikePedMemphis.com
Motor Vehicle Counts and Volumes

• Document decreases in motor vehicle traffic

• Important to understand differences between AADT data and trip data gleaned from cell phone locations and other sources (long-term trends vs short term “snapshots”)

• Where can this be found?
  • State and City DOTs
  • Third party/vendor platforms

Source: Dan Burden, PBIC Image Library
Example: COVID-19 Traffic Volume Trends (ITE)

- Central portal of traffic volume changes amid COVID-19, ranging from 30 to 60 percent decreases across multiple road types
- Comparisons of March/April 2020 to historic averages
- Data collected from states, provinces, regions and cities in US and Canada
- Portal provides direct links to data sources and reports

Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers
Field Observations and Audits

• Assessing current conditions and how road users are using street space

• What to look for?
  • Space for pedestrians to safely pass
  • Motorist behaviors (e.g. speeding, yielding)
  • Others?

• Resources and prompts:
  • FHWA Road Safety Audit Prompt Lists
  • PBIC Audit Tools

Source: Sree Gajula, PBIC Image Library
Surveys to Gather Community Feedback

• Ask people what is changing and what they need
• Perceptions of safety problems and feedback from community members should be considered alongside other data in decisionmaking

Considerations for Surveys and Community Input

**Question selection and framing**
- What you ask and how you ask it will impact the quality of feedback you get.

**Consider distribution and blind spots**
- Consider who is (and isn’t) seeing your survey. How can existing networks help distribute more broadly?

**Use existing sources**
- Can existing request lines, social media, and public-facing feedback tools supplement the survey data?
Poll: Which of these tools would help you make the **most compelling case** for changes in your community?

- Counts of bicyclists and pedestrians
- Tracking reductions in motor vehicle volumes
- Field observations / audits
- Surveys of community members
Where you can go from here:

• Learn from what other communities have done, both their successes and challenges.

• Consider how community organizations can mobilize to champion policy and other responses, and support transportation agencies in making those changes.

• Use at least one tool for monitoring the demand for bicycling and walking and use it to tell a story about what you’re seeing in your community.