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**Study Shows Foot Traffic on Some
Downtown Minneapolis Skyways Is Above Historical Average,
Pedestrian Traffic is at All-Time High on Nicollet Mall Key Block,
Five Skyway Locations Have Volumes Above 10,000 per Day**

The 20th Annual Minneapolis Downtown Pedestrian Count study, conducted in October 2010 by consultant Peter Bruce of Pedestrian Studies, shows traffic volumes at **four locations are between 3 and 23 percent above historical average volumes.** The four locations are along the west side of Nicollet Mall where traffic, significantly affected by worker/vendor traffic between Target Corporation offices in nearby buildings, has stayed strong over many years. The four locations with volumes above their historical averages were in Fifty South Sixth Street, City Center, Gaviidae Common and Retek on the Mall buildings.

Nicollet Mall traffic volume on a key block matched its previous high mark of 25,000 per day.

Volumes at 16 other skyway locations are at or slightly below historical average levels for various reasons, highlighting the complexity of downtown foot traffic patterns.

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Minneapolis skyways and sidewalks experienced a variety of impacts on pedestrian traffic volumes and showed a wide range in percentage changes. In the warm fall of 2010, the median change in skyway traffic volumes at 20 locations was down 10 percent from historical average. When the volumes were **adjusted for the unseasonably warm weather** which kept more people out of the skyways, the 2010 **median was estimated to be unchanged from the historical average.**

In the 2010 study of downtown Minneapolis pedestrian traffic, daily volumes **above 10,000 per day were recorded at five locations in the skyway system:**

Retek on the Mall skyway over 9 th Street	16,245
City Center – Gaviidae Common	14,915
City Center – Macy’s Store	13,673
TCF Bank/TCF Tower – Baker Center	12,025
Northstar Center West Skyway Junction with Escalator	11,768

Skyway by Target Store Maintains Its Number One Ranking in the Study

Over the last four years, the Retek on the Mall building skyway over 9th Street which connects the Target Store to the downtown office core, has recorded a steady volume of approximately 16,200, 11 percent over the historical average at this location. In the current study, this was the busiest skyway location.

Traffic in the Heart of City Center is 7 Percent Above Historical Average

The busiest skyway intersection in the study was in City Center where skyways to Gaviidae Common and to Macy’s meet. Combined daily volume at this location was 28,588. This is 7 percent above the historical average volume compiled over 10 years during the 20-year study. New stores have been opening at this intersection over the past several years as City Center has filled a large share of its renovated retail space.

Changes Vary By Location Due to Changes in Employment and Retail Activity, New Bus Lanes/Stops, Twins Games, and Northstar Train

Building traffic volumes at other locations ranged from 2,500 to 10,000 per day. Skyway volumes were down an average of 12 percent due to lower numbers of workers in nearby buildings; lower counts of commuters walking from/to parking facilities; decreases in retail stores; and customers purchasing lunches, other services and merchandise.

One unusual factor causing skyway traffic volumes to rise in 2008-09 and decrease in 2010 was the 2008-09 street and sidewalk reconstruction project along Marquette and Second avenues, which deterred use of sidewalks. New bus lanes/bus stops and attractive sidewalks were finished by 2010 and commuter and other traffic returned fully to those streets last year.

On the west side of downtown, the buzz around the new ballpark of the Minnesota Twins and the new transit hub serving the North Star Train has also caused pedestrian activity to rise. This is true not only on game days when traffic shoots up by thousands per hour, but also on non-event days as people explore the entertainment district around the ballpark.

Nicollet Mall Traffic at Historical High

“The volume of Nicollet Mall sidewalk traffic on our study’s bell weather block (8th-9th Street) is now equal to the highest volume measured in the last decade: 25,000 pedestrians per day,” says Bruce. The sidewalk traffic on one key block, between 8th and 9th Street, has been regularly measured by his firm since the early 1990’s, due primarily to financial sponsorship from nearby building owners. The Minneapolis Downtown Council has also played a role in supporting traffic measurements on this and other Nicollet Mall blocks. The traffic on the block is greatly affected by the pedestrian experience walking to/from destinations such as the Target store, Macy’s store, IDS Center and sidewalk dining opportunities along the south end of Nicollet Mall. Weather plays a key role in persuading pedestrian traffic to use the sidewalk versus the parallel chain of skyways above ground level.

Bruce says, “Changes in bus routes along Nicollet Mall have had also some impact on the traffic volumes over the last few years, but the details are not yet fully understood due to lack of research.”

Traffic projections by Bruce, indicate that depending on location, volumes will decrease, hold steady, or increase in 2011. The report projects that blocks which contain a high proportion of moderate-priced food service tenants, reduced vacancies of office space, or have retail spaces within walking distance of Target Field, will see the most gains in traffic volume. **Sample counts in summer 2010 by Pedestrian Studies showed many blocks near Target Field enjoyed foot traffic volumes of 3,000 - 5,000 before each Twins game. One location next to Target Center recorded 10,000 pedestrians before a game.**

Copies of the 20th Annual Downtown Minneapolis Pedestrian Count are available for a fee from Peter Bruce, Pedestrian Studies, 612-827-8080 or pedestrianstudies.com.

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About Pedestrian Studies

Located in Minneapolis MN, Pedestrian Studies is a national consulting firm which specializes in the analysis of retail, transit-related and leisure foot traffic patterns. The firm is contracted to measure traffic volumes, study traffic movements and patterns, interview pedestrians about their activity, and project changes in traffic. Clients of Pedestrian Studies include developers, property owners and managers, governments, commercial districts, businesses and transportation interests. Specialized studies provide clients with strategies for determining shopper characteristics and attracting more foot traffic to specific locations. Other studies help clients examine the impacts of special events, public art, weather, construction and transit. His work also addresses needs of smaller cities. Recently, he helped the city of Buffalo, MN design and program an electronic screen retail information kiosk which was installed on the city's main street.

About Peter Bruce

Consultant and owner of Pedestrian Studies, Peter Bruce founded the company in 1991 in the Twin Cities. Understanding how people shopping behavior and leisure walking behavior respond to the urban environment has been his major professional focus. Bruce's studies have included projects in places ranging from Los Angeles to New York City to Houston TX to Winnipeg CANADA. His work has included twenty annual Downtown Traffic Counts in both Minneapolis and Saint Paul, traffic projection studies, shopper intercept studies, retail recruitment projects, and traffic shaping projects such as sidewalk amenities.