

BPSSC September 2018 Bicycle Pedestrian Count Summary

Overview

This is the first year that the Stevens Point Bicycle and Pedestrian Street Safety Commission has conducted the count. The previous two years, the Stevens Point Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee sponsored the count. Prior to that, Portage County personnel coordinated the count. This is an all-volunteer effort, with the 36 observers and the coordinator being volunteers. The volunteers were generally from two groups: local citizens who are avid pedestrians or bicyclists and UWSP students recruited by their professors to participate in an attempt to give students exposure to their field of study: Health/Wellness or Statistics.

Decisions on Procedure

Dates: After considering rationale for alternate dates, BPSSC decided to follow the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project recommended count dates again this year, which put the count in mid-September. The commission decided to continue with both a mid-week count (Wednesday afternoon) and a weekend count (Saturday morning) to balance commuter data and recreational data. For the third straight year, the weekend count fell on a busy weekend, with Art in the Park adjoining the Farmers' Market downtown and the MS Walk near campus.

Data: Following the recommendation of the Wisconsin Bike Fed in its report on Stevens Point's Bronze Medal Community designation a year ago, the commission decided to count by gender again this year. Following last year's precedence, the commission decided not to record directional counts this year.

Sites: The commission decided to resume counting at the I-39 Underpass at Joerns Drive, a site not counted last year due to construction on the Hoover Street overpass that blocked access to the underpass. We also decided to count at Minnesota and Stanley. We had decided to count there last year, but the volunteer at the site mistakenly went to *Michigan* and Stanley. Feeling that the Minnesota site is of greater interest, we counted at this site for the first time.

Count Comments

Understand that we are still looking to get more baseline data on bike-ped traffic in Stevens Point. Exercise caution in making generalizations from these individual counts. There are many variables which may affect the counts, with the day's weather being an especially significant one. However, for the third straight year, the count days were marked with excellent weather. Weather has not been a significant factor in year-to-year differences.

Two-day Totals: In the 28 total 2-hour observations, **we observed 1,014 bicyclists and 3,233 pedestrians**, down slightly from the 2017 totals of 1,067 bicyclists and 3,297 pedestrians.

Gender Breakdown: The Wednesday count saw 71% of the bicyclists being male, 29% female. The Saturday count was 65% male, 35% female. This is very consistent with last year's percentage of 70% of the bicyclists being male, 30% female on Wednesday and 63% male, 37% female on Saturday. The pedestrian count showed 53% male pedestrians Wednesday (47% female), with the Saturday count showing 65% of the pedestrian being female. These percentages match last year's almost exactly. Many of the pedestrians observed Saturday are attending Art in the Park or on the MS Walk, which followed a new route this year but still passed a count site.

Individual Site Observations: On Wednesday, there were more pedestrians and bicyclists at the beacon at Franklin and Division than at the light at 4th and Division. The total pedestrian and bicycle traffic at these two busy crossings were down compared to last year.

Overall, bicycle and pedestrians counts at or near Division Street especially were down. One possible explanation is the decrease in the UWSP enrollment this year. Many of the pedestrians and bicyclists crossing Division appear to be students.

Bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the Green Circle Trail at Patch continues to increase.

The observer at Wisconsin/Jefferson and Division noted that most of the bicycle traffic there was on the sidewalk traveling along Division, not crossing Division.

Coordinator Observations

Every year during the count hours, I bicycle around town to visit the volunteers at each site. Two things stood out to me on my Wednesday ride this year.

One was as I attempted to cross Hoover from Patch to get to the new path leading to Joerns Drive and the underpass. Turning left from Patch requires the cyclist to be in the bike lane between cars turning left and cars turning right. Mind you, I have a high tolerance for traffic around me. However, with me being between car lanes on Patch, with southbound cars coming off the new Hoover overpass at higher-than-previous speeds, with northbound cars turning left from Hoover onto Patch, *and* cars coming out of the Delta Dental parking lot turning both ways, it was indeed a crossing that I felt was very dangerous for a bicyclist. It wasn't nearly as bad on Saturday morning. However, in the future in traffic, I think I'll turn right and use a left turn lane to go into the business park.

The other intersection that stood out was at Minnesota and Stanley. After speaking with the volunteers, I attempted to cross Stanley Street northbound from the stop sign at Minnesota. Traffic was relatively heavy (4:00 or so), and I needed to cross four lanes of traffic, two each way. I'm fairly fast on a bicycle and made it across fairly easily at the first safe break in traffic. However, I wondered if slower bicyclists or *any* pedestrians could ever cross there during those afternoon hours. (On my Saturday ride, I opted to ride down Stanley rather than cross it, even though traffic was lighter.)

Overall, I want to say that Stevens Point is a great city to call home. I hope these counts help keep it a safe city in which to walk or bicycle.

Submitted by Bill Fehrenbach, Volunteer Count Coordinator
Stevens Point Bicycle and Pedestrian Street Safety Commission
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