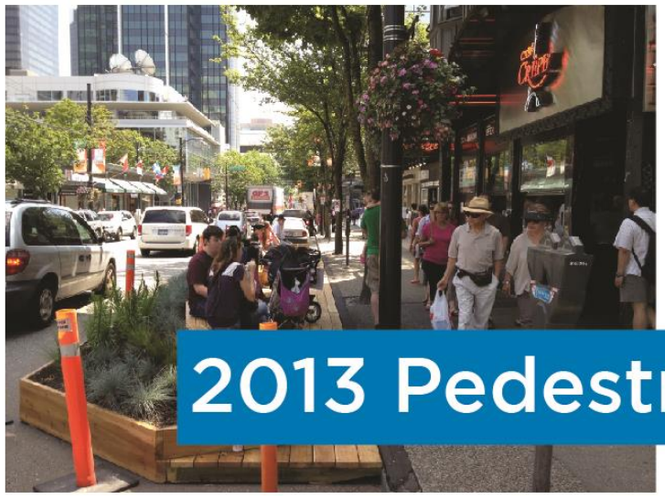
SUMMARY



2013 Pedestrian Volume and Opinion Survey

CITY OF VANCOUVER

MAY 2015

SUMMARY

The 2013 Pedestrian Survey collected volume data for people walking on a variety of Vancouver's commercial streets and surveyed the opinion of people walking to determine their travel patterns, main mode of transportation, and experiences using walking facilities. Building on the 2008 survey, volume data was collected on 400 blocks on 60 commercial streets and on-street and online opinion surveys were conducted.

PEDESTRIAN VOLUMES

Volume counts were generally carried out on the same commercial streets as in 2008 with some locations added to provide greater resolution. The counting locations include commercial streets downtown, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), and Neighbourhood Centres around the city. Locations were added to the 2008 location list for a finer counting mesh on commercial high streets such as Commercial Drive, Cordova Street, and Denman Street, often at the request of BIAs. The number of blocks counted outside the downtown peninsula is slightly lower than 2008, but still accounts for over a quarter of the total locations.

Overall, a total of 798 sidewalks were counted on weekdays between the hours of 10am and 6pm (the same time periods as in 2008). There were two typical volume distributions during the day – walking volumes either exhibited two peaks during the count period, one near 12pm and the other near 4pm or 5pm, or volumes increased steadily from morning until the end of the count period.

Based on the streets that were counted in 2013 and 2008, pedestrian volumes on the downtown peninsula have increased by slightly over 4% from 2008. Volumes outside the downtown peninsula have increased by 3% from 2008. Citywide, volumes have increased by 4%. These results appear to be consistent with the findings of TransLink's 2011 and 2008 Trip Diary Surveys. Table 1 shows the walking mode share in Vancouver for the past three Trip Diary Surveys (2004, 2008, and 2011). The walking mode share increased slightly from 2004 to 2011. The decrease from 2004 to 2008 may be due to a difference in survey methodology since the 2004 trip diary survey was done in the spring and the 2008 and 2011 surveys were done in the fall. The survey results also appear to be consistent with the results of the 2011 Statistics Canada National Household Survey, which also found a small increase in the proportion of people walking to work.

Table 1. Vancouver Walking Mode Share

	2004	2008	2011
Walking Mode Share (24 hours)	16.6%	15.4%	17.0%

(Source: TransLink's 2004, 2008, and 2011 Trip Diary Survey)

Although overall pedestrian volumes have increased since 2008, results varied for individual blocks and BIAs. The busiest blocks in 2013 have changed slightly since 2008, but are still all located downtown. They include sections of Robson, Granville, Burrard, and Georgia Streets. Granville Street (from Pender to Robson) and Georgia Street (from Howe to Hornby) were the highest ranked blocks in 2013, surpassing Robson Street which previously held the top busiest spots. Burrard Street ranked about the same as in 2008. The shift from Robson Street to Granville Street is probably due to the Canada Line construction on Granville Street in 2008, the opening of the reconstructed Granville Mall, and the return of bus routes on Granville Street downtown. Table 2 shows the 10 busiest blocks in the downtown peninsula and Figure 1 shows downtown walking volumes by block.

On several of the downtown peninsula's busiest streets, the number of people walking exceeded the number of people being moved by vehicles. For example, along the 900 block of Robson Street pedestrians made up 65% of all people moving along the street while people in automobiles made up 35%.

In general, busy walking streets outside of the downtown had lower volumes than busy walking streets in the downtown; however some locations outside of downtown still ranked highly. The busiest locations outside of the downtown were clustered around the intersections of East Broadway and Commercial Drive, and West Broadway and Cambie, which are both major transit interchange locations. Table 3 shows the 10 busiest blocks outside of the downtown peninsula.

The pedestrian volume data serves as a benchmark for changes on individual streets, sub-areas, and the city as a whole. The data will also be used by staff for a number of engineering and planning applications, such as:

- Informing planning decisions around future rapid transit stations,
- Making operational decisions on sidewalk widths,
- Providing reference volumes for new pedestrian infrastructure,
- Special event planning (such as 800 Block Robson programming),
- Assisting businesses by identifying high foot traffic locations, and providing a baseline to monitor the success of marketing and promotional initiatives.

Table 2. 10 Busiest Blocks in the Downtown Peninsula

Block Rank	Total (10am-6pm)	Block
1	25,042	Granville, S of Georgia (700 block)
2	18,689	Granville, S of Pender (500 block)
3	17,960	Georgia, E of Howe (700W block)
4	17,354	Granville, S of Dunsmuir (600 block)
5	17,266	Burrard, S of Georgia (700 block)
6	17,238	Robson, E of Seymour (500 block)
7	16,812	Granville, S of Robson (800 block)
8	16,651	Burrard, S of Melville (600 block)
9	16,544	Georgia, E of Hornby (800W block)
10	16,468	Robson, E of Burrard (900 block)

Figure 1. 2013 Walking Volumes in the Downtown Peninsula, 10am-6pm

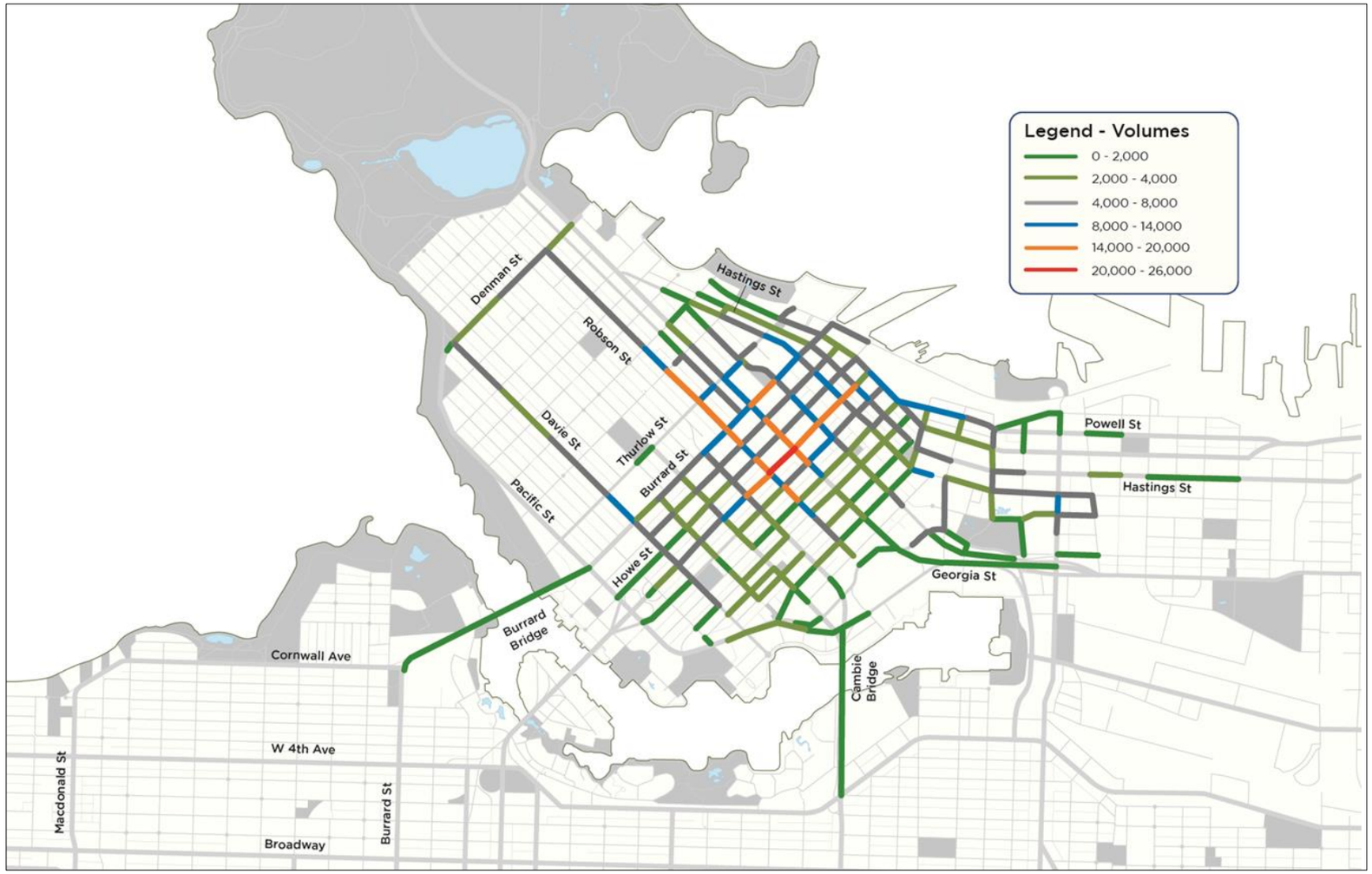


Table 3. Busiest Blocks Outside of the Downtown Peninsula.

Block Rank	Total Pedestrians (10am - 6pm)	Block
1	7,638	Commercial, S of 8th Ave (2400 block)
2	7,620	Commercial , S of Broadway (2500 block)
3	6,715	Cambie, S of 8th Ave (2400 block)
4	6,473	Commercial, S of Kitchener (1400 block)
5	6,211	Broadway, E of Laurel (800W block)
6	6,140	49th, E of Cambie (400W block)
7	5,906	Cambie, S of Broadway (2500 block)
8	5,899	Granville, S of Broadway (2500 block)
9	5,799	4th, E of Vine (2200W block)
10	5,577	Commercial , S of Grant (1500 block)

PEDESTRIAN OPINIONS

As in 2008, an opinion survey was carried out on streets in the Metro Core (the downtown peninsula and Broadway Street from Clark Drive to Burrard Street) and in seven Neighbourhood Centres. A shorter version of the survey was also available online for the month of November 2013. Over 1300 pedestrians (1189 on-street and 157 online) provided information on their transportation choices, opinions on walking facilities, and any specific concerns. On-street respondents also provided trip-specific information, such as origin and destination.

In the Metro Core, 90% of people surveyed started their trip in Vancouver, of which 68% started their trip in the downtown peninsula. 57% of trips were business related (work, shopping, restaurants, services) and 59% of pedestrians walked the entire distance (the remaining 41% used another mode, such as transit, for the remainder of their trip). As in 2008, these results suggest that the majority of pedestrians in the Metro Core complete their trip entirely on foot.

Most pedestrians surveyed in Neighbourhood Centres (92%) began their trip in Vancouver (only 6% of these trips originating in the downtown peninsula). 58% in Neighbourhood Centres were business related and 51% walked the entire distance. These results are generally consistent with the Metro Core. The smaller percentage of pedestrians who walked the entire distance may be attributed to less dense and less mixed land use patterns.

In general, people were satisfied with crossing conditions at signalized crosswalks, the amount of space on sidewalks, streetscape character, and the behaviour of other people walking on the sidewalk. These results are consistent with those from 2008. People surveyed on-street in the Metro Core and online were more satisfied with curb ramp placement and quality than those surveyed in Neighbourhood Centres, and slightly more people surveyed in the Metro Core were satisfied with sidewalk amenities. People were less satisfied with crossing at un-signalized crosswalks and with the behaviour of cyclists and drivers. In the open-ended “general concerns” responses, common issues included:

- Sidewalk maintenance,
- Sidewalk cleanliness (street cleaning and availability of garbage and recycling containers),
- Lighting,
- Lack of amenities and weather protection, and
- Improving curb ramps at crossings.