Nuts and Bolts of a Pedestrian and Cyclist Count Program
Put your hand up if...

• To your knowledge, your community **collects** pedestrian or bicycle count data.

• You have **done a manual count** of pedestrian or bicycles count, or have **used automated counters**

• In your role, you **use** or **could benefit from** pedestrian or bicycle **count data**

• You have heard of Eco-Counter.
What we do

Information about walking and cycling

Automated counters

Data management tools
All kinds of ways to count

PYRO-Box

Urban POST

CITIX

ZELT

TUBE

PYRO in Post / MULTI

Mobile MULTI

Eco-DISPLAY Classic
What is the Eco-Counter perspective?

- Over 500 organizations
- Specializing in pedestrian and bicycle counting for 15+ years
- Clientele network across cities, counties, MPOs and state DOTs
  - Including New Hampshire!
- View of partnership models
- View of established ped/bike count programs 5+ years in North America
Why Count?

• Establish a baseline
• Observe demand and trends
• Evaluate a project
• Inform operations / management
STRATEGIES

• Pilot project
• Integrate with transportation network
• Partnership or governance model
• Comprehensive plan
1. Pilot Project

- Trial period
- Test technology, sites or management
- Reporting process evolves
- Goals: baseline + evaluation

Pro: quick, flexible learning period, limited risk
Con: next steps can be undefined, funding sources vary,
Hamilton, Ontario

- Started in 2011 with portable pedestrian counters
- “Graduated” to tube counters in 2013
- Helped to identify permanent sites for 2014/15
- Focused on permanent counters off-road 2016
- On-road bike counts continue where facilities exist, rotating locations
- Over 6 years, 100 sites, with 1-week samples for consecutive seasons
2. **Integrate with network**

- Link to AT infrastructure projects
- As sidewalks, bikeways, trails are built
- Data infrastructure concept
- Goals: trends, evaluation, operations

**Pro:** parallel processes for deployment, can be high-prov

**Con:** requires early buy-in, capital vs. operational dollars
Boulder, Colorado

- Started with signature project
- First focused on bikes, then pedestrians
- Added permanent counter to corridor projects
- Starting to add retrofit site
- Currently rely on TMC for short-duration counts
3. Partnership or governance

• Share ownership
• Distribute roles and responsibilities
• More organizations involved/aware

Pro: shared engagement and expertise
Con: responsibilities and ownership can be unclear
Hawaii Institute of Public Health

• Based on active transportation as means of physical activity
• Initial project: pedestrian and bike display on Honolulu’s first protected bike lanes
• Expanded to be inclusive to 4 counties state-wide
• Funding for portable counter and training to get started
4. Comprehensive Plan

- Site selection
- Installation
- Ownership / maintenance
- Data collection / reporting

Pro: inclusive approach, many stakeholders, pre-determined outcomes
Con: time to develop + deploy
COMPASS Idaho

- Key project of newly-formed AT working group in 2014
- Met regularly to discuss all things related to data and counters
- Installed 8 permanent counters in early 2015, need to be fair
- Adding sites to network each year
- View of on-going demand
COMPASS Idaho

- Working group developed process for count requests
- Managed in-house: install and data reports, 1 month interval
- Started in 2016 with 20-30 requests, 100+ requests in 2017
- Current challenge: person hours, site review,
- Considering shift to a counter library
- Challenge/concerns: proper installation, care of equipment
MORE EXAMPLES
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

- Population: 250,000
- First protected bike lanes
- Long-term pilot project > 1 year
- Everything temporary
- Move or reuse counters per expansion and construction
Shippagan + Bathurst
New Brunswick

- Shippagan: New Brunswick Trails
  - Pop: 2500 people
  - Multi-use counter
  - Motivated to understand ATV impact
  - Daily 60 / 40 – bike / ped
  - Very few ATV < 10 in a month

- Bathurst: Daly Point Nature Reserve
  - Pop: 12,000 people
  - Trail counter at park entrance
  - City purchased, managed by reserve
  - Year-round visitor since Jan 2017
  - Avg 75 daily, ranges 100 to >500
Lane COG, Oregon

- Biggest cities: Eugene (150,000) and Springfield (60,000)
- 7 years in development
- First few years: focus on cycling, short-duration
- Next phase: pedestrian counts
- Used to apply for federal funds, installed permanent stations
- Partners with Eugene for technical expertise
Calgary, Alberta

- Large city, auto-oriented, 1M
- 5 years in development
- First projects to test technologies, short-term bike counts
- Key project: pilot downtown bike grid (2 years)
- Supplement to all other data collection
- Good practices: public data, cross-department collaboration, defined plan
Ottawa Ontario

- Large city, capital district, 1M
- 8 years in development
- First pilots: permanent bike count stations (urban sites)
- Shift to rural and trail sites
- Key practices to success: design standards, maintenance program, rotating contractors
- Gradual expansion from 10 to 30 sites
Other practices and ideas

- PILOT: part of grant applications
- NETWORK: site selection by key corridors: bridges, trails, signature projects
- PARTNER: complement to manual counts by volunteers
- PLAN: counter specifications within project tender
TIPS AND ADVICE
Key factors to successful program

• Ownership
  • Remember the goal
  • Be willing to take the lead

• Awareness:
  • Share your data!
  • Centralize information

• Manageability:
  • Keep long view, one step at a time
  • Adjust approach to staff/org strengths
  • Balance gaining experience vs. more sites
**Words of wisdom**

| Have a story | Have a story to tell from the data. It’s okay to start small. People respond well to information presented in a clear way.  
– Ellen Currier, Lane County COG |
| Be patient | Be patient. There will be setbacks, but I never heard a comment that the audience did not want this data  
– Steve Molloy, Hamilton |
| Don’t get discouraged | Don’t get discouraged by other cities. It may seem a lot to learn, but you get something really valuable with 24h data.  
– Tom Laws, COMPASS |