Central Iowa Trails

Central Iowa is home to over 600 miles of trails connecting dense, urban cores to natural, rural landscapes. There are trails for all types of uses, including walking, biking, running, cross country skiing and horseback riding. Trails range from loops through parks to long-distance regionally designated routes.

The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) annually provides federal funding to regional trail projects through its Surface Transportation Program Set-Aside (STP Set-Aside). This program has helped fund some major trails in the region, including the High Trestle, Gay Lea Wilson, and Chichaqua Valley Trails, among others.

2015 Trail Counts

In 2015, the MPO continued the Central Iowa Trail Count Program with counters located at 28 sites selected by communities throughout Central Iowa and reported to the MPO. Counts were conducted for between 36 and 280 days, depending on the site location. The MPO and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Roundtable will use the data to help determine where future trail investments may be needed.

Approximate number of users counted at trail locations during 2015

630,000

Trail counters are available to all members of the MPO and the Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA). To request the use of a trail counter please contact the MPO.

Trail Count Locations

28 Count Locations in 2015
TOP 10 COUNT LOCATIONS IN 2015

1. **High Trestle Trail (Greentree Park)**
   - Count: 29,801
   - Days Active: 57
   - ADT: 316.8

2. **Raccoon River Valley Trail (Perry)**
   - Count: 79,963
   - Days Active: 202
   - ADT: 295.9

3. **Clive Greenbelt (City Hall)**
   - Count: 44,131
   - Days Active: 140
   - ADT: 295.4

4. **Heart of the Warrior Trail (Waukee)**
   - Count: 16,216
   - Days Active: 61
   - ADT: 261.7

5. **Walnut Creek Regional Parks (Urbandale)**
   - Count: 65,625
   - Days Active: 238
   - ADT: 249.4

6. **Raccoon River Valley Trail (Dallas Center)**
   - Count: 49,363
   - Days Active: 184
   - ADT: 221.4

7. **Great Western Trail (County Line Road)**
   - Count: 55,691
   - Days Active: 280
   - ADT: 194.4

8. **Clive Greenbelt (Alice’s Road)**
   - Count: 21,628
   - Days Active: 140
   - ADT: 145.4

9. **Raccoon River Valley Trail (Adel)**
   - Count: 24,628
   - Days Active: 177
   - ADT: 131.8

10. **Raccoon River Valley Trail (Waukee)**
    - Count: 27,650
    - Days Active: 184
    - ADT: 130.5

Based on count locations chosen by requesting communities and reported to the MPO in 2015.
Regional Averages

Using trail counters placed at sites in 2015 and reported to the MPO, data was pulled to find hourly, daily, and monthly averages for trail usage in the region. The charts below display breakdowns of these averages.

**Hours of the Day**

Weekday use is highest in the evening, while Weekend use is spread more evenly between 9:00am and 3:00pm. Typically, weekends see more traffic than weekdays.

**Days of the Week**

EACH LOCATION SAW AN AVERAGE OF **121** TRAIL USERS PER DAY IN 2015

In 2015, **August** saw more traffic than any other month.

**Months of the Year**

In 2015, **August** saw more traffic than any other month.
**Guidebook for Developing Pedestrian & Bicycle Performance Measures - March 2016**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently released a guide for the development and application of pedestrian and bicycle performance measures. The guide provides an overview of performance management in transportation planning and national context on the state of pedestrian and bicycle performance measures. The guide includes a toolbox of 30 potential performance measure for pedestrian and bicycle planning focused around seven goals.


**Incorporating On-Road Bicycle Networks into Resurfacing Projects - March 2016**

The installation of on-road bicycle facilities during roadway resurfacing projects can be an efficient and cost-effective method for the expansion of the multimodal transportation network. In March, FHWA released a guide for the inclusion of bicycle facilities during roadway resurfacing projects. The guide provides an overview on the potential benefits of including bicycle facility installation as part of roadway resurfacing. Development and timing of resurfacing projects as they relate to bicycle infrastructure considerations are discussed.

The guide also discusses potential pitfalls that may arise during the resurfacing project and provides potential solutions for navigating through the project. Case studies for projects throughout the United States provide evidence of the effectiveness of bicycle improvement inclusion during resurfacing projects.

City of Des Moines

The City of Des Moines has counted trail users annually since 2011 as part of the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project. In 2015, volunteers counted users at 27 location on trails and streets. Counts are collected over three days and extrapolated using a standardized methodology to estimate the annual trail usage on trail segments within the City of Des Moines.

More information on the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project and the City of Des Moines trails can be found here:

http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/Pages/Trails.aspx

3,288,400
Estimated number of trail users at 15 trail locations counted during 2015

City of West Des Moines

The City of West Des Moines currently counts trail users at four locations within the City. In 2015, three locations provided data for estimating trail usage.

The City of West Des Moines anticipates increasing its trail count program with the addition of three locations in the near future. Expanding the count program within the City will provide additional data on how the trails are utilized and where additional trail connections may be needed to meet the demand for trail activities.

220,145
Estimated number of trail users at 3 trail locations counted during 2015