



Downtown Survey: How Many Employees? What are the seasonal implications for transportation?

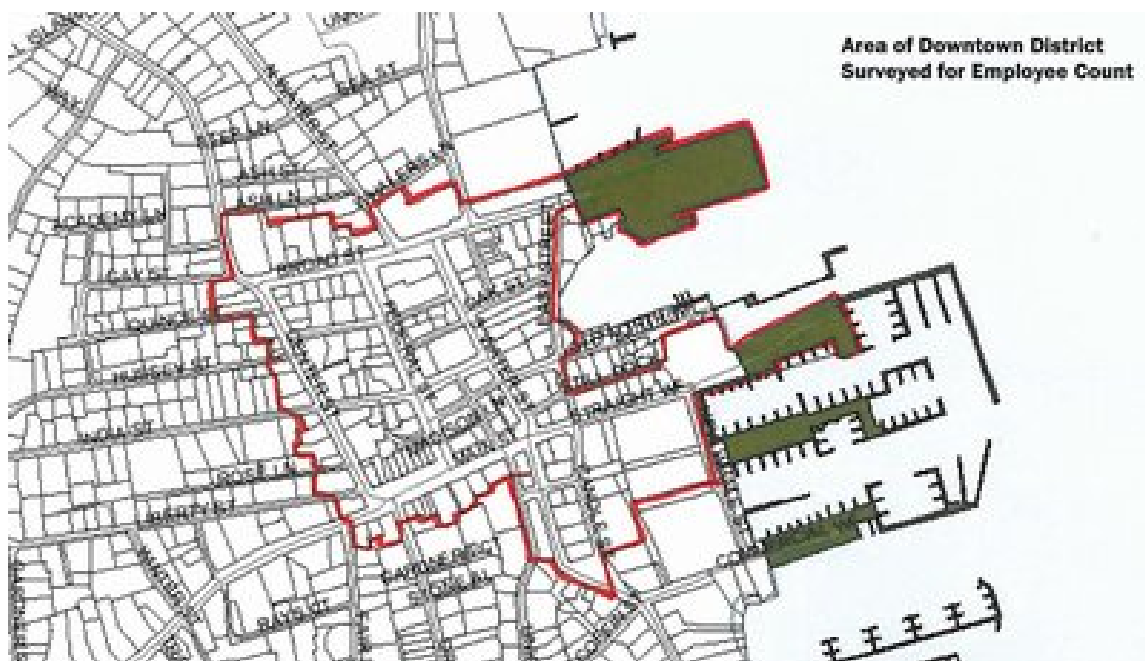
Background

During the summer of 2009, ReMain Nantucket commissioned a formal study by **The University of Connecticut Center for Transportation and Urban Planning** to better understand attitudes about the use of public transportation during the summer season, to identify and quantify the barriers that exist, and to develop a set of recommended strategies for increasing the use of public transit. At the same time, the Town of Nantucket conducted an evaluation of parking utilization in the downtown area.

What was outside the scope of both the UConn study and the Town's parking study was *finding the number of employees who work in the downtown district*. To fill this gap, ReMain Nantucket conducted an informal survey of businesses and organizations to determine how many people work in the *central downtown area*, taking seasonal variability into account. While the primary purpose of the study was to understand the number of employees working in the downtown, some of the businesses surveyed were willing to supply additional information which may be helpful in discussions regarding downtown parking issues.

Study Area

We surveyed those streets in the downtown which have most of the shops and restaurants: Broad; Cambridge; Centre to Broad; Chestnut; Easy; Federal; India to Black-Eyed Susan's; Main to Centre; Oak; South Water; Straight Wharf; Salem; Union to Force 5 Sports; Washington to Greenhound.



Process

A simple questionnaire was presented to businesses either in person or by telephone. A few businesses may have been missed in the data collection phase; a significant number of hotels and some restaurants are located just outside the district surveyed, are therefore not included in the data. No residences were included in the survey.

Our thanks to the Town Association: work of its volunteers in compiling many address and contact details for downtown businesses provided a starting place for our data collection. The survey was conducted by Peggy Tramosch and Henry Toole over a period of three months. Spreadsheets with the data details are available from ReMain.

Results

Given this process, the results of the survey provide a general overview, not a scientific analysis. The totals reflect the number of people employed by a business rather than the number who work each shift. We recognize, of course, that work shift schedules are important to understand when thinking about how employees come and go throughout each day, but such information was beyond the scope of this simple survey. For the survey totals, we refer to the number of employees during the PEAK summer season and the OFF-PEAK season. Businesses employing staff during the extended shoulder seasons (roughly after Columbus Day and before Memorial Day), even if not truly "year-round," have been included in the totals for Off-Peak Season employees. There is no consensus on what constitutes closing for the winter as this varies from just after Stroll, after Christmas, others after New Year's, or randomly, as business dictates.

Observations

Almost three times as many people work in the downtown during the Peak Season as work in the downtown during the Off-Peak Season.

Roughly 43% of the stores surveyed and 61% of the restaurants surveyed reported having no employees during the Off-Peak Season.

Of the government agencies responding, the Police Department accounts for 85 of the total Peak Season employees and 42 of the Off-Peak; a majority of these employees will move to the new police station on Fairgrounds Road when construction is completed.

86% of businesses responding provide no parking.

Restaurants had the highest fluctuation in the number of employees between Peak and Off-Peak; offices showed the least fluctuation.

Only 9% of the employers responding said that they did provide NRTA passes to their employees. However, those businesses most dependent on a year-round workforce were significantly more likely to do so.

Within the survey area, three vacant storefronts were observed, and not included in any of the totals.

Number of Employees

Number of businesses surveyed	Number of businesses with ONLY Peak season employees	Type of business	Peak Season Employees	Off-Peak Season Employees
137	59	Stores	661	215
8	0	Hotels/B&Bs	79	44
31	19	Restaurants	785	108
31	0	Offices	303	269
5	0	Government	143	91
212	78	Totals	1,971	727

Data regarding on-site parking

Type of business	Number of Respondents	Limited parking provided	No parking provided
Stores	82 of 137	8	74
Hotels/B&Bs	1 of 8	0	1
Restaurants	19 of 31	1	18
Offices	23 of 31	9	14
Government	5 of 5	0	5
Totals	130 of 212	18	112

Data regarding Employer provided NRTA passes

Type of business	Number of Respondents	Number providing NRTA passes	% providing NRTA passes
Stores	92 of 137	4	4.3%
Hotels/B&Bs	4 of 8	0	0%
Restaurants	21 of 31	0	0%
Offices	20 of 31	6	30%
Government	4 of 5	3	75%
Totals	141 of 212	13	9.21%