Manual Count Program: Background and Methodology

Introduction:
Each year, Hennepin County recruits volunteers to count people walking and biking from 4:00-6:00 pm during the second week of September. The data is then used to calculate estimated daily traffic (EDT) at each site, which means that 2-hour counts are extrapolated to understand larger trends in walking and biking. The counts are conducted in accordance with the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project.

Materials and methodology:
Hennepin County staff provide volunteers with the forms needed to conduct the counts. The forms include a map with two screen lines and instructions, as well as two count forms (one for each screen line).
Volunteers are directed to count pedestrians defined as individuals walking, crawling, using wheelchairs, electric scooters, children being carried or in a stroller, skaters, roller bladers, skateboarders, skiers, kick scooters, and segways. Volunteers were instructed not to count motor scooters or golf carts. An individual walking a bicycle is considered a pedestrian.

Count locations:
Count locations are chosen for one or more of the following reasons:

- County roads: count site is located on at least one Hennepin County road
- Near county projects: future projects are planned at location and counts will measure volumes before and after project implementation
- High activity area: location is a common route for bicyclists and pedestrians and/or is near a commercial node
- Near planned improvements or bicycle gaps

Data processing:
The methodology used to calculate EDT for a 24 hour period comes from the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project, a nationwide model of data collection and analysis for nonmotorized counts. The Project methodology assumes that 20% of daily bicycle traffic and 18% of daily pedestrian traffic occurs between 4:00-6:00 pm.