



Walkability Assessment: Entertainment Zone

Methodology

Over the course of the early June to early July, the DowntownDC Business Improvement District's (DBID) Public Space Management Department (PSM) examined the conditions and quality of life issues within the Entertainment Zone (ETZ). The boundaries of the area include Massachusetts Avenue to Pennsylvania Ave, 11th Street to 6th St. The survey was conducted during the midday peak period (typically commercial districts have three AM, midday, PM). These are coordinated during high activity to capture the relationship between multiple users of public spaces including pedestrian, motorist, and commercial activity. Additionally, a nighttime or PM peak survey is likely needed to further examine the activity within the ETZ's public spaces.

The ETZ, consisting of 65 blocks within the DBID's core and has one of the highest levels of activity in the Central Business District (CBD) area. The questionnaire listed below highlights the items considered while examining these blocks in primarily a CBD location. Based on the number of items documented and severity of conditions each block was given a rating of 1 to 4 (poor to excellent). The rating system calculates the number of given in each the 19 questions and takes the total sum divided by 76 (highest total rating). This survey can be broken down into six various categories listed below: 1). Aesthetic; 2). Alleyway Activity*; 3). Crime & Disorder; 4). Roadway Activity; 5). Sidewalk Activity; 6). Other Physical Infrastructure

Table 1.0 Walkability Survey Areas

Category	Conditions	Percentage of Total	Most Common Type
Aesthetic	186	25%	Painting** (116)
Alleyway Activity	21	2.8%	Pavement Damage (11)
Crime & Disorder	92	12.4%	Homelessness (39)
Damaged Infrastructure	251	33.7%	Tree Box Maintenance (93)
Roadway Activity	60	8.1%	Permanent Restoration (18)
Sidewalk Activity	134	18%	Paver Tripping Hazard (110)
Total	744	-	Painting** (116)

* Data already available on alleyways prior to the study

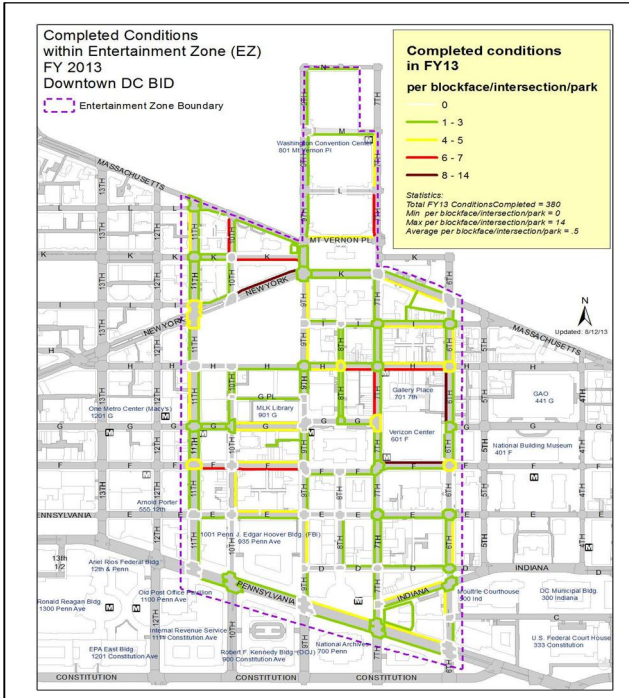
**Painting of fire hydrants, street poles, and traffic control boxes

Results & Findings

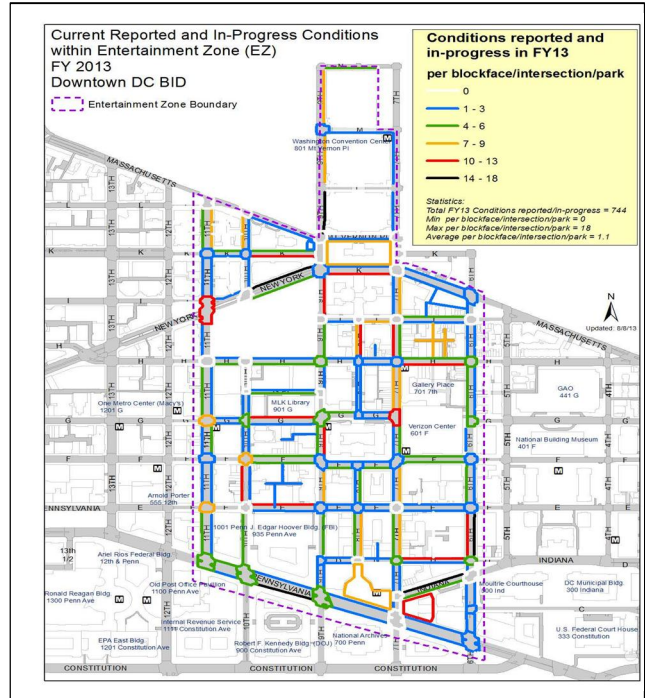
During the study PSM found roughly 744 conditions that were either newly documented or were still present based on previous reports such as tripping hazards on sidewalks. Throughout the course of FY 12 and FY 13 exactly 380 conditions have been resolved in the ETZ. Only 4 of the 65 blocks (6.2%) were in conditions that warranted a score under 70 with nearly 15 conditions or more documented. 28% of the ETZ witnessed 10 or more conditions on the entirety of the block. Nearly 25% of blocks inspected had seven to ten conditions and issues identified on them. Roughly 47% of the blocks within the ETZ had 6

or fewer conditions associated with it. These are illustrated in Map 1.0 and Map 1.1 below. Also, the density of issues reported in the ETZ lie in the heart of the 7th St Corridor and areas adjacent to the Verizon Center.

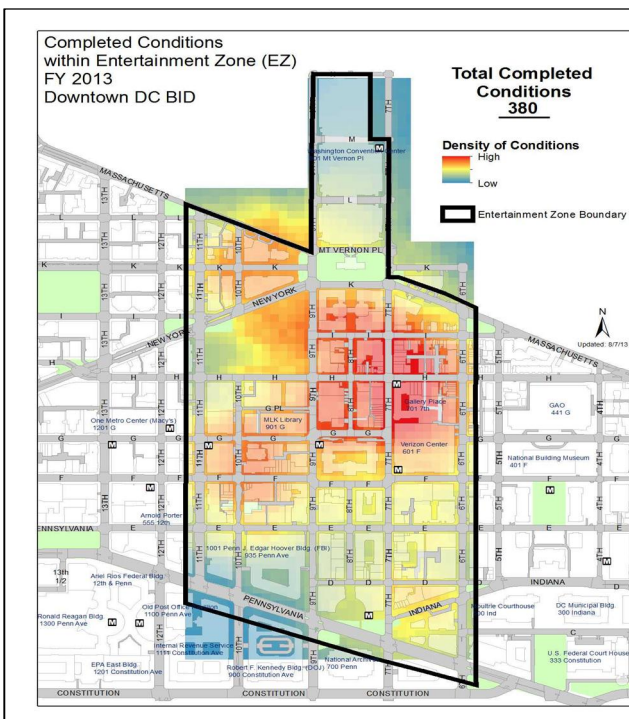
Map 1.0 ETZ Completed Conditions



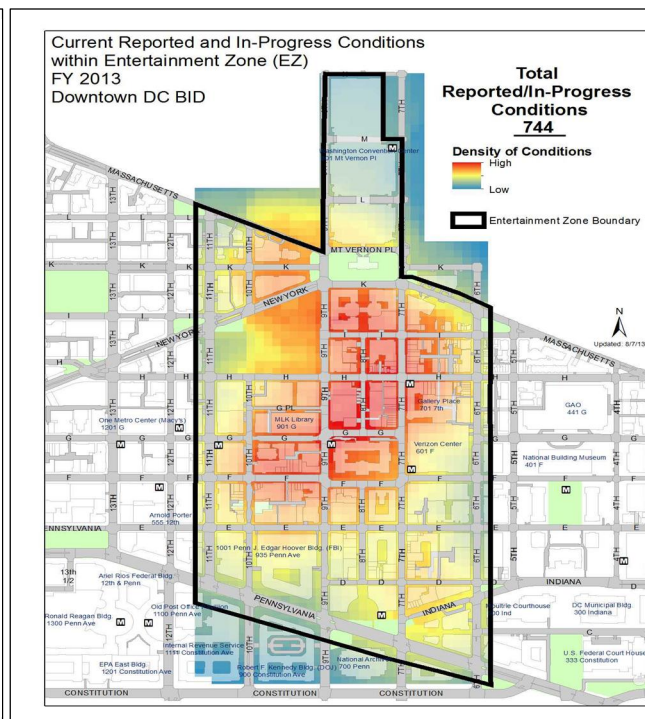
Map 1.1 ETZ Outstanding Conditions



Map 2.0 ETZ Density of Completed Conditions



Map 2.1 ETZ Density of Outstanding Conditions



In Figure 1.0 are each of the areas considered when examining locations within the ETZ. Since data was already available on alleyways, it was also included in the study. Of the six categories the majority of issues documented were in other physical infrastructure (34%). This included damage to things like parking meters, street poles, and u-poles. The asset which had the most conditions associated with it was tree box (37%) which included conditions such as damage to tree fences, iron grate damage, and excessive vegetation.

Figure 1.0 Walkability Assessment Questionnaire

Location:	Yes	No	Rating	If Yes, Provide Comments
1. Were the sidewalks within the block adequate for walking?				
a. Sidewalks were damaged or cracked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
b. Sidewalk was level absent of lifted pavers and uneven locations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
c. Bicyclists were seen riding on sidewalk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
d. Presence of signage, vendors or objects in pedestrian path	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
e. Sidewalk was clean and free of debris	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2. Was the street adequate for motor vehicles, cyclist, and other modes of transportation?				
a. Roadway was absent of potholes, utility cuts, and cracked asphalt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
b. Crosswalk boundaries were maintained well and were clearly visible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
c. Crosswalk signals were visible and allocated enough time to cross street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

d. Crosswalk signals were delayed too long between alternating lights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
e. Drivers and bicyclists yielded properly while crossing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
f. Corners of sidewalk had ADA compliant ramps and were in good condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
g. Jaywalking by pedestrians at intersection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
h. Vehicular violations (bicycle or motor vehicle)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
i. Illegally parked vehicles (commercial, private)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3. Did you feel safe during the walk?				
a. Presence of aggressive panhandling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
b. Presence of homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
c. Presence of loitering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
d. If during evening hours, was area well lit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
e. Absent of putrid smells, exhaust and air pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
f. Area absent of vacant and abandoned properties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Survey was developed with guidelines from FHWA, AARP, and University of South Carolina walkability assessment tools and methodologies

Assessment of sidewalk conditions and activity was a large part the study and encompassed nearly 300 individual items. Of these 300 roughly 155 were identified as aesthetic related conditions such as fire hydrant, street pole and traffic control box painting. Sidewalk related trip hazards totaled to 113 unique locations that needed to be addressed. Of the three types of pavers considered (brick, London paver, customized) nearly half were brick (51%), with both London pavers (46%), and customized sidewalks

(3%) consisting of the rest. All of brick and London paver issues have been submitted to the Department of Transportation's Street and Bridge Maintenance Division to date. Also included in the sidewalk portion of the assessment were the number of signs and advertisements obstructing the pedestrian right-of-way (ROW). During the study, 14 locations had a-frame or sandwich board signs that were considered within the ROW as potentially having an impact on pedestrians.

Furthermore, roadway activity when looking at how pedestrians, motorists and bicyclists interacted was rather mild. In the locations that witnessed violations nearly 85% were pedestrians jaywalking. The range of pedestrian countdowns was 20 to 65 seconds in 80% of the intersections. Of the bicyclist violations noted were primarily failure to yield during pedestrian crossings and illegal turns during red lights. Illegally parked vehicles (all double parked commercial vehicles) were primarily found along the 600-800 blocks of 7th St and the 600-800 blocks of E St. These vehicles could pose more of a security threat especially in areas around the Verizon Center. Crosswalks also became noteworthy since nearly every intersection had worn markings. Although nominal in some cases these crosswalk markings may be particularly important in busy areas like the ETZ. During this assessment of crosswalks over two-thirds (68%) had at one side of the intersection in need of repainting or repair.

Lastly, quality of life related items such as presence of homelessness, panhandling, loitering and other solicitors were taken into consideration. Most of the disorder related items noted included homelessness which included 39 distinct locations in the ETZ. In comparison, the DBID daytime homeless counts usually document 140 individuals, so on average nearly a third of the daytime population is within the ETZ. Moreover there were five locations in which solicitors of interest groups were present, along with four locations of loitering which had seven or more individuals in one specific location. These areas were specifically at bus stops and metro entrances around the 7th St Corridor which is generally identical to anecdotal accounts of the area.

700 Block of 8th St



Block was absent of items blocking pedestrian right-of-way (ROW), had clean sidewalks, smooth roadways and zero quality of life issues such as panhandling or solicitation

600 Block of F St



Block had substantial space for pedestrians, limited amount of roadway hazards, a minute level of disorder with one homeless individual documented.

600 Block of Indiana Ave



Location had several sidewalk issues including trip hazards and gum stains; crowded sidewalk with vendors and construction activity

900 Block of E St



Pavers on both sides of the block posed trip hazards; crowding of signage and other elements; panhandling and homelessness present

Conclusion

These assessment can be useful is providing a snapshot of a particular area with various levels being measured. However, in these types of projects moving forward a more objective view may be needed to gain better understanding of outside opinions of the DBID and the ETZ. Also, conducting an AM and PM study would allow for a more detailed picture of a single average day along with gaining a sense of elements such as lighting and its impacts on walkability. A seasonal project of this nature might also be useful in gathering data about trends during different times of the year and measuring the length of time that conditions persist in one location. Lastly, fully deploying staff to assist in the study may also be more efficient with various perspectives on the experience being documented.