**FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation University Course**

**Module: 7 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Data for Planning**

**Assignment: Field Counting Exercises**

Assignment source:

Dill, Jennifer and Tara Goddard. *Pedestrian Observation and Data Collection Curriculum Guide.* NITC-ED-999. Portland, OR: Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC), 2018. Available at: <https://trec.pdx.edu/research/project/999/Pedestrian_Observation_and_Data_Collection_Curriculum>

**PURPOSE**

The field counting exercises provide students with hands-on experience collecting valuable pedestrian data. Current pedestrian data collection efforts often lack elements of behavior and interactions between roadway users. Behavioral data can help students and practitioners understand interactions between pedestrians, other road users, and their environment, and provide the foundations for behavioral traffic theory and agent-based models.

The exercises in the *Pedestrian Observation and Data Collection Curriculum Guide* include behavioral components in addition to elements of traditional traffic counts. The *Pathway Counts* assignment covers manual pedestrian counts along a pathway. The *Intersection Counts* assignment introduces students to counting pedestrians and bicyclists at intersections. In the *Crossings/Interactions with Drivers* assignment, students collect behavioral data about drivers yielding to pedestrians.

**PROCESS**

The *Pedestrian Observation and Data Collection Curriculum Guide* describes each assignment and provides instructors with guidance for site selection, count logistics, and reading materials.

**DELIVERABLES**

Students should provide completed count forms and a 2- to 3-page summary of observations for each count.

**GROUND RULES FOR CONDUCTING FIELD WORK**

1. Safety first. Do not put yourself in harm’s way to collect data. Online map imagery may be substituted for photographs from the field as needed to ensure student safety.
2. Travel and collect data in groups of two or more students. Team members must work together to find data collection times that ensure no team member has to collect data alone. Conducting fieldwork alone is not permitted, for reasons of safety, accountability, and accuracy of data.
3. Do not conduct field work after dark. When visibility is poor, you jeopardize your safety and the quality of the data you are collecting.
4. If members of the public are curious about what students are doing, students should inform them they are university students working on a class project. They may engage with neighbors wanting share their thoughts and ideas about mobility in the study area, but not initiate such conversations.
5. Do not block or otherwise interfere with traffic (motorized or not).
6. Students may take photos but must do so respectfully and carefully. Do NOT take photos of people, their homes, or their vehicles without their permission.