

**Corridor Spotlight: MLK, Jr. Blvd**

The City of New Orleans recently completed a \$5.5M project to improve Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard from Claiborne Avenue to St. Charles Avenue, including sidewalk repairs, crossing and accessibility enhancements, drainage improvements, and addition of conventional and protected bike lanes to better support the needs of all users of this busy corridor.



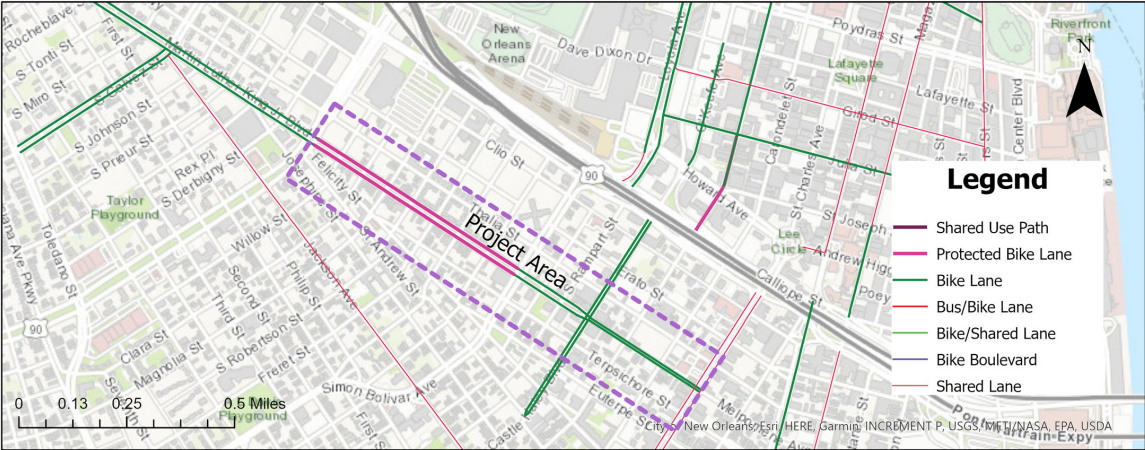
Photo Credit: Virginia Brisley, DPW



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This *Count Dat* Data Highlight spotlights preliminary findings from recent enhancements to pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety along this hub of Central City connection and activity.

**MLK, Jr. Boulevard Bicycle Facilities and Connections**

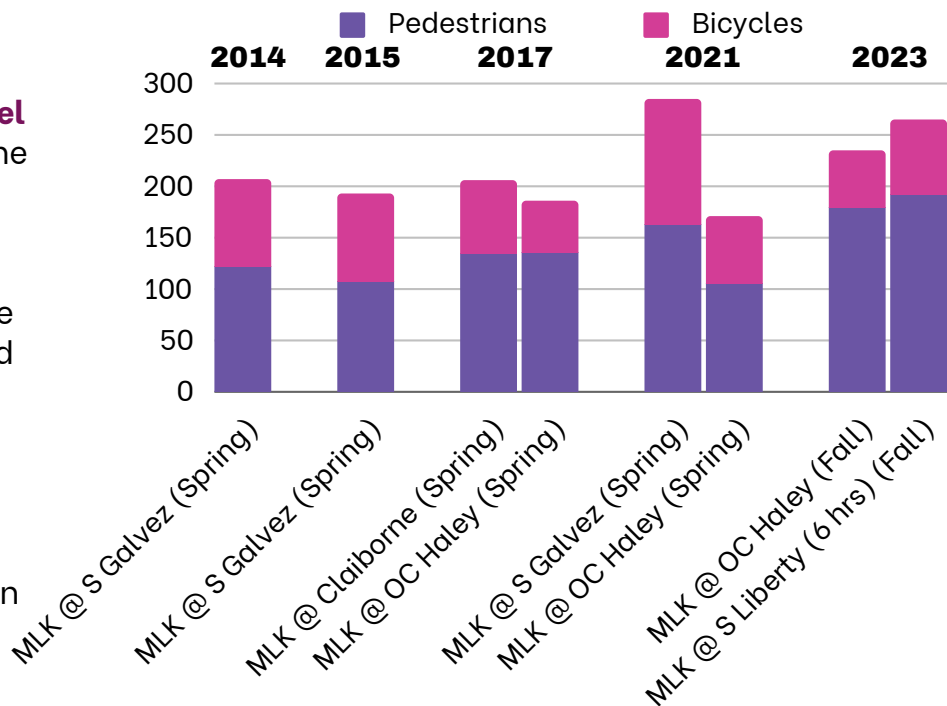


# User Volumes and Characteristics

In order to better understand demand for walking, bicycling, and rolling on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, UNOTI has collected preliminary data **measuring user volumes, characteristics, and travel orientation** at several locations along the corridor since 2014.

Eight-hour manual pedestrian and bicycle counts were conducted to gauge usage of the corridor by pedestrians and bicyclists. At all four locations, in every year and season, steady activity was observed. In 2023, overall **activity near O.C. Haley Boulevard was up 37%** compared to the previous count. Meanwhile, observed volumes were even higher at nearby S. Liberty St, despite only 6 hours of observations completed due to weather.

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Volumes - MLK Jr Blvd Manual Counts**



## Characteristics of People Walking and Bicycling MLK Jr. Blvd

	MLK @ O.C. Haley				MLK @ S. Liberty	
	Spring, 2021		Fall, 2023			
	Peds	Bikes	Peds	Bikes	Peds	Bikes
Male	59%	58%	66%	77%	59%	96%
Female	41%	42%	34%	23%	41%	4%
Adults	90%	92%	91%	100%	86%	95%
Kids (up to 14)	10%	8%	9%	0%	14%	5%
Mobility Aids	5%		2%		1%	
<b>Travel Orientation</b>						
On-Street	4%	89%	6%	96%	5%	71%
On-Street, in Bike Lane	n/a	n/a	6%	96%	5%	58%
On-Street, right-way	n/a	85%	n/a	84%	n/a	53%
On Sidewalk	96%	11%	94%	4%	86%	26%
On Neutral Ground	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9%	3%
Wearing helmets		23%		14%		7%

Manual count observations indicate that user characteristics vary depending on location along the corridor, and may vary by season. More women were observed bicycling on the portion of the corridor near O.C. Haley, while **a significant share of pedestrians (14%) and bicyclists (5%) near S. Liberty were estimated to be 14 years or younger.**

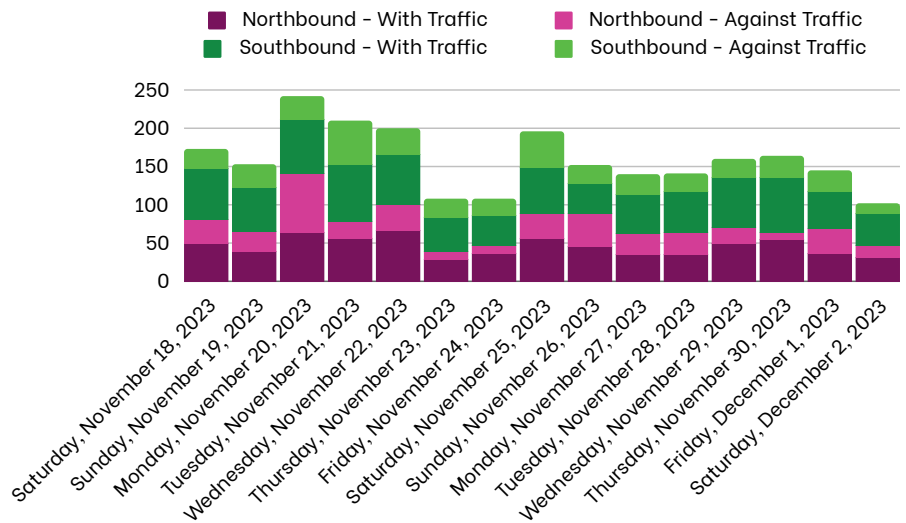
Relatedly, bicyclist travel orientation reflects that while the majority of riders travel on-street, and in the bike lane, **a larger than typical (26%) share (including many children) continue to use the sidewalk.**

Helmet use along this corridor is relatively low, which may indicate an opportunity for outreach and support, especially among young riders.

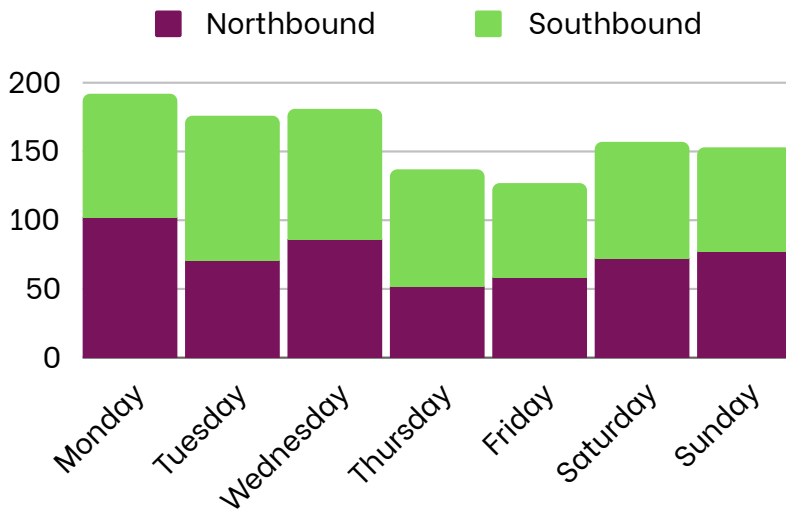
# Hourly and Daily Cycling Trends

In addition to manual observations, 24-hour automated tube counts were collected along the protected portion of the bike lanes. As noted above, a sizeable share of bicyclists (estimated at 42%) continue to ride on the sidewalk, the wide neutral ground path, or in the street outside of the bike lane (possibly related to periodic obstructions from debris and garbage receptacles observed). Thus, these counts can be presumed to underestimate total bicycle volumes.

Raw Daily Bicycle Volumes - MLK Jr Blvd Protected Bike Lane

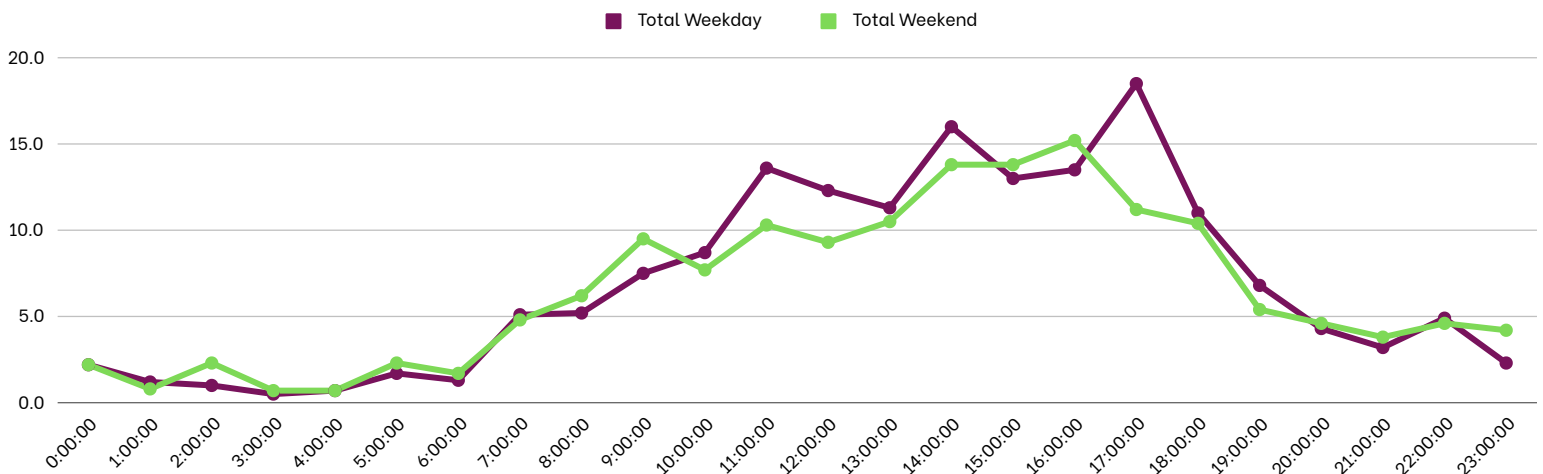


MLK Jr. Blvd Average Daily Bicyclists by Day of Week



However, in-lane bicycle activity on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard during this period (collected in late November) reflects a roughly even split between northbound and southbound cycling, and **robust activity 7 days a week**. Usage patterns are similar on both weekdays and weekends, with **all-day use likely reflecting a variety of commute and utilitarian trip purposes**.

MLK Jr. Blvd Average Hourly Bicyclists by Hour of Day





# A Win for Accessibility

A key goal of the MLK, Jr. Boulevard improvements was to bring the project area into compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for accessibility. The following enhancements were completed, making this busy, multimodal corridor more accessible to people using mobility aids, older adults, families, and transit users:

- **12 intersections improved** with ADA-compliant curb ramps (including neutral ground crossings). Prior to this project, only three intersections were compliant.
- **8 RTA bus stops improved** with ADA-compliant waiting areas.

## ADA-Compliant Bus Stop Improvements, MLK Jr., Blvd at S. Claiborne



Photo Credit: Virginia Brisley, DPW

## ABOUT

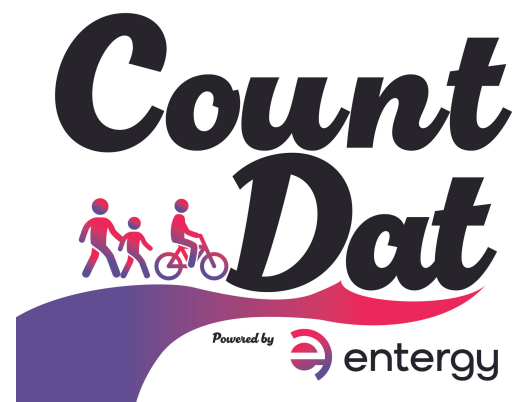
**Count Dat** is a project of the UNO Transportation Institute, in collaboration with the City of New Orleans and Bike Easy, sponsored by the Entergy Charitable Foundation. Our mission is to support rigorous data collection, analysis, and dissemination to measure the impact of infrastructure investments, document success, and identify opportunities to support safe, livable streets for all .

Find more information about *Count Dat* and resources for active transportation in New Orleans at

<https://bikeeasy.org/tips-guides/count-dat/>

For information about pedestrian and bicycle counts or the Count Dat initiative, Contact:

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**JANUARY 2024**