

PUBLIC SPACE & PUBLIC LIFE APPENDIX

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the fall of 2018, University of Oregon students and staff volunteers were deployed to observe how people were using 13th Avenue and its adjacent open spaces. **This chapter details the process and outcome of that in-depth study of public space and public life.** The study set the tone for the 13th Avenue concept design with a focus on the human experience, and will allow the project's success to be measurable and adapted over time.

CONTENTS

- A. Studying Public Space and Public Life
- B. Public Life Key Findings
- C. Survey Data

A. Studying Public Space and Public Life



Why study public life?

Public life is the social activity that takes place in everyday public spaces on campus - on streets, in quads and plazas, and in spaces between buildings. It is what people create together when they learn, work, and live their lives outside of their homes, classrooms, workplaces, and cars.

Universities regularly collect data on traffic and parking requirements. Policy and open space design evolve from the metrics that we collect, so it's no surprise that the planning process is often better suited to address the behavior of vehicles than the needs of people in the public realm. **To adopt a people-centered approach, we first need to recognize that we should 'measure what we care about.'**

A growing number of campuses and municipalities now count and observe how people use public space: how they choose to move through campus, where they prefer to stay, the activities they engage in, and the types of people who are represented (or under-represented) in a space.

Measuring public life allows for a more intentional approach to planning and design in the public realm. With this tool, universities can optimize their often vast amounts of campus open space for human comfort, social interaction, respite, and all forms of mobility with a more holistic understanding of how people can benefit from thoughtful public space design.



Public life as engagement

The University of Oregon already takes a **data-driven approach to campus planning**. The 'My Campus Survey', deployed in 2015, was an effective online tool for gathering data quickly from students and staff. The engagement gathered over 1,300 responses and identified peoples' favorite open spaces, indoor spaces, and campus amenities, and tracked self reported patterns of behavior on campus.

The **Public Space and Public Life survey (PSPL) augments this data-driven approach in two ways**. First, by using direct observation, it adds a higher fidelity of understanding about how people actually behave in campus open spaces. Second, it provides a deeper and more personal form of engagement with students, both surveyors as well as those who spend time in open spaces.

The two techniques complement each other well. The My Campus Survey is both efficient and broad in scope, which makes it ideal for informing larger planning efforts and identifying potential areas of focus. PSPLs provide that focus. **The methodology identifies key opportunities in specific open spaces based on actual patterns of user behavior, and can be used to guide spatial design and programming on a more detailed level.**

More than just a data gathering tool, the PSPL methodology is also an **effective strategy for student and community engagement**. Students, staff, and volunteers deployed in the survey were able to observe the value of people-first design first hand. Student surveyors became knowledgeable about how public space influences public life and were given the opportunity to participate in the making of the spaces that they love. The PSPL experience often encourages volunteers to become advocates and stewards of the public realm once a project design team has dispersed.

Measure, test, refine

The University of Oregon incorporated Christopher Alexander's 'A Pattern Language' into its planning principles long ago. Thoughtful design principles are already used as one method among a varied toolbox of strategies to effectively define the character of campus open spaces. The PSPL adds to that toolbox by rooting design decisions in human behavior and inserting flexibility into the process.

Measuring public life allows for an iterative, evidence-based approach to placemaking. By beginning the public space design process for 13th Avenue with a PSPL, the University was able to **articulate project goals based on specific desired public life outcomes**. The team generated design options for the corridor which were guided by evidence of how people use space. Potential solutions were then set up to be testable on the ground.

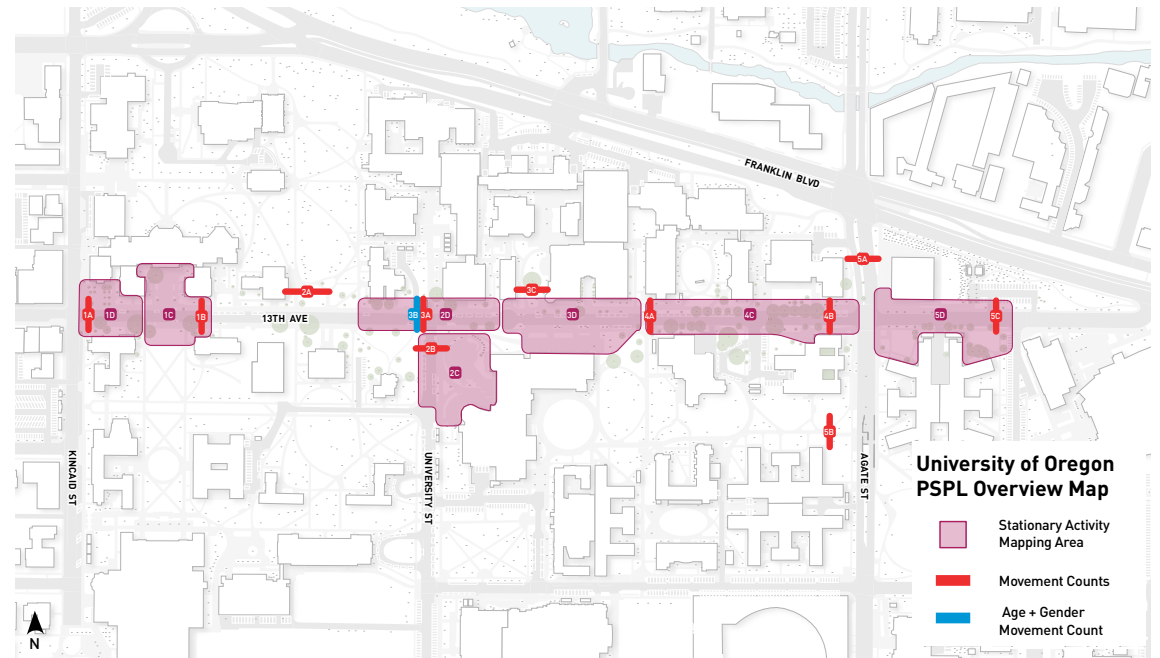
In the future, the University can **gauge success of the design using these public life metrics** by comparing post-implementation public life studies with data collected during the baseline survey described here. Through a cyclical process of observing and refining, this evidence-based design approach for the 13th Avenue corridor can follow an adaptive buildout process which takes into account the evolving needs of a University population over time.



Studying Public Space and Public Life

The Survey

After a training in Gehl's PSPL survey methodologies and a people-centered approach to placemaking, a group of 30 student and staff volunteers were deployed across 13th Avenue over two long days to observe how people used and moved through the 13th Avenue corridor. During every hour of each four-hour shift, surveyors conducted movement counts, stationary activity mapping, and age and gender counts.



2 DAYS
Thursday, Oct. 18
Saturday, Oct. 20

30 VOLUNTEERS

11 MOVEMENT COUNTS

8:00 - **12:00**
AM AM

7 STATIONARY ACTIVITY MAPPING LOCATIONS

Counting People Moving

Counting the volume of people moving through a space provides valuable insights into how design can respond to demand, and where design improvements should be prioritized. Movement counts were taken at seven locations along 13th Avenue, revealing unique patterns of activity spread along the corridor. The resulting data showed how busy the corridor is on different days, displayed the popularity of different modes of travel, and highlighted the peak hours of activity at each distinct location surveyed.

MODE OF PEOPLE MOVING
PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS, PEOPLE ON WHEELS — **COUNT FOR 10 MINUTES**

NAME: Jane Smith DATE: 10/1/18
TIME START: 8:00 am TIME STOP: 8:10 am MICROCLIMATE: Sunny

MODE CATEGORIES	TALLY	TOTALS
WALKING/RUNNING <small>(use your count)</small>		4
ON BIKE <small>(use your count)</small>		4
WALKING WITH BIKE		2

MODE CATEGORIES	TALLY	TOTALS
SUPPORTED <small>(e.g. in wheelchair, using a walking cane or assist)</small>		3
SKATEBOARD		4
SCOOTER		2
VEHICLES <small>(use your count)</small>		0
OTHER <small>(use your count)</small>		0

LOCATION: Agate St at Jaqua Academic Center ID: 5A

PROCEDURE: **COUNT FOR 10 MINUTES**
 1) Count all people moving across the horizontal and East-Courtyard side of the street.
 2) Observe people between street front and sidewalk (including people on bicycles) and count them as if they were walking. Do not count people on other types of vehicles (e.g., scooters, skateboards) or people who are standing.
 3) Count for 10 minutes. When done, fill in the tally on the tally sheet as well as your notes.



Mapping People Staying

Stationary activity mapping provides insights into who is choosing to spend time in public space and where they prefer to stay. It also tells us how they are using it - the activities they are engaged in and the way they're occupying the site's amenities, whether standing, sitting, or lying down. The survey shows which sites attract a healthy range of uses, and which fall short. The mix of activities present in each location reveals whether a space is functioning as intended. It also suggests how the life of one location fits into the broader ecosystem of open spaces, and whether or not the public realm adequately caters to a diverse audience.

MAPPING STATIONARY PEOPLE - INDIVIDUAL COUNT
POSTURE, ACTIVITIES, GENDER AND AGE — THE COUNT IS A MAP SHEET

DATE: _____ LOCATION: Hamilton Hall at E 13th Ave ID: 5D

NAME: _____

TIME START: _____

MICROCLIMATE: _____

NOTES: _____

PERSON / POSTURE	ACTIVITIES	GENDER	AGE
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			

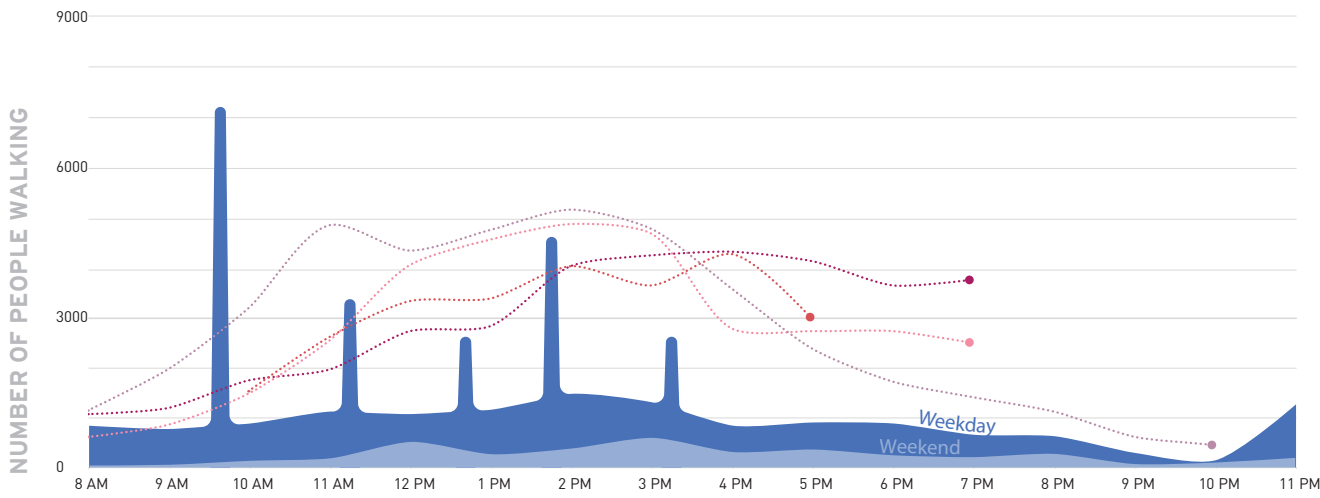


B. Public Life Key Findings



1. Passing periods are on par with global cities - but otherwise 13th is quiet

Thirteenth hosts world class crowds, ten minutes at a time, five times a day during class exchanges when pedestrian volumes can increase by as much as 800% compared to the baseline. Yet most of the time the street is relatively quiet, especially on weekends. During peak times, crowding can become dangerous when speeds mix and the rules are unclear. The rest of the time, the space must feel comfortable with low volumes of people. **How can a future design accommodate both levels of intensity + extend activity into the weekend?**



Peak
Pedestrian
Volume

- 
7,200
Ped
- 
4,400
Ped
- 
4,300
Ped
- 
4,900
Ped
- 
5,200
Ped

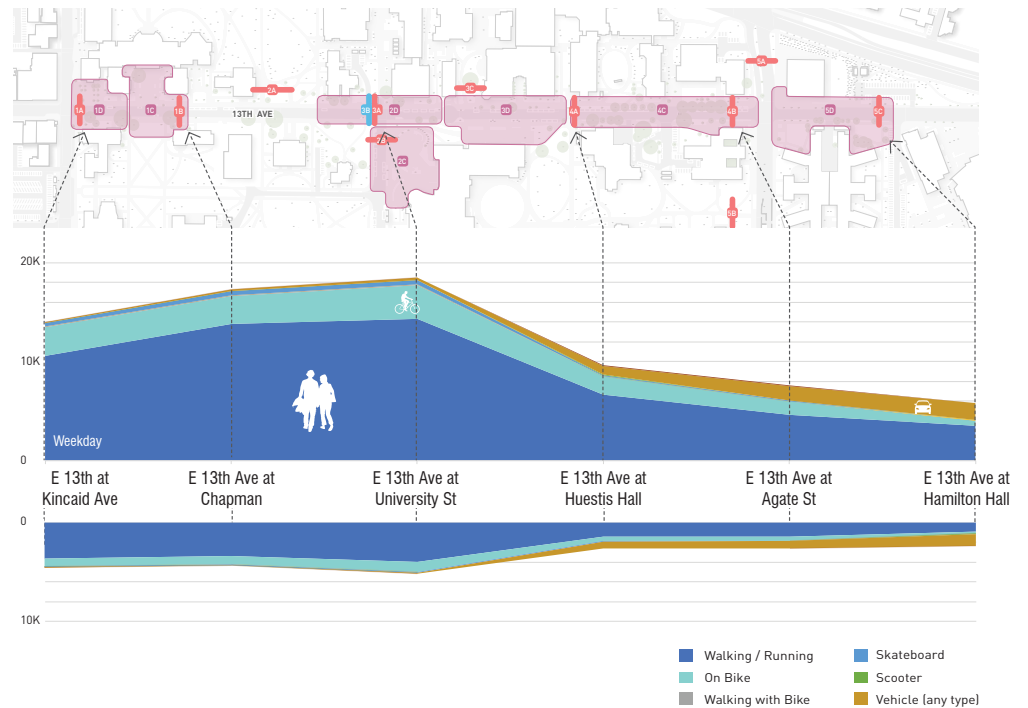
2. The current design of 13th Avenue doesn't match its use

Despite the fact that 13th Avenue is mostly used as a walking and biking promenade, it is still designed mostly as a street prioritizing cars. This pattern persists up and down the street. On the east side where the street design is more catered to vehicles, pedestrians dominate. On the west side, where the curbside condition suggests walking should dominate, unauthorized parking persists, detracting from the safety and character of 13th as a people space. **How might the future design of 13th Avenue reflect its use?**

Use Profile

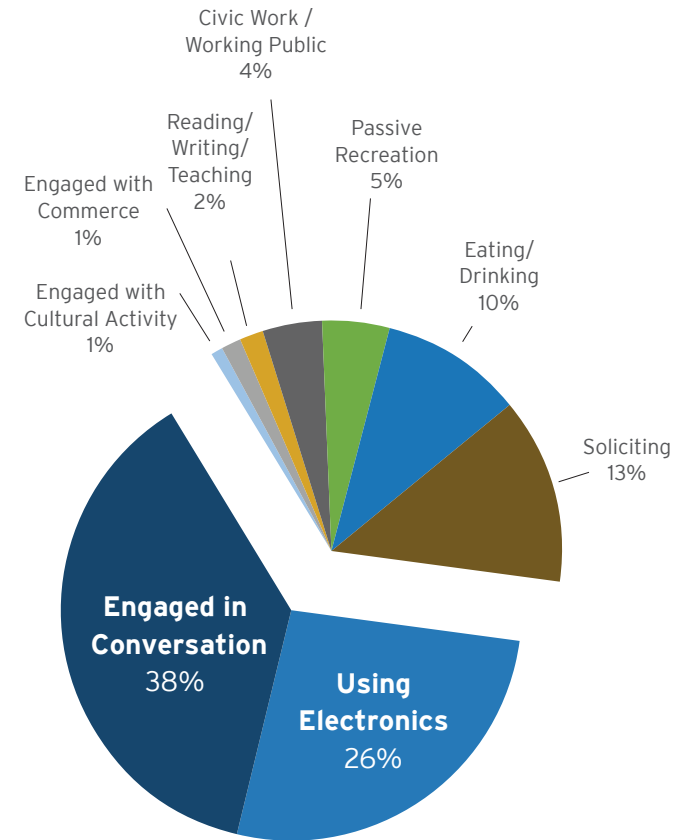


Space Allocation



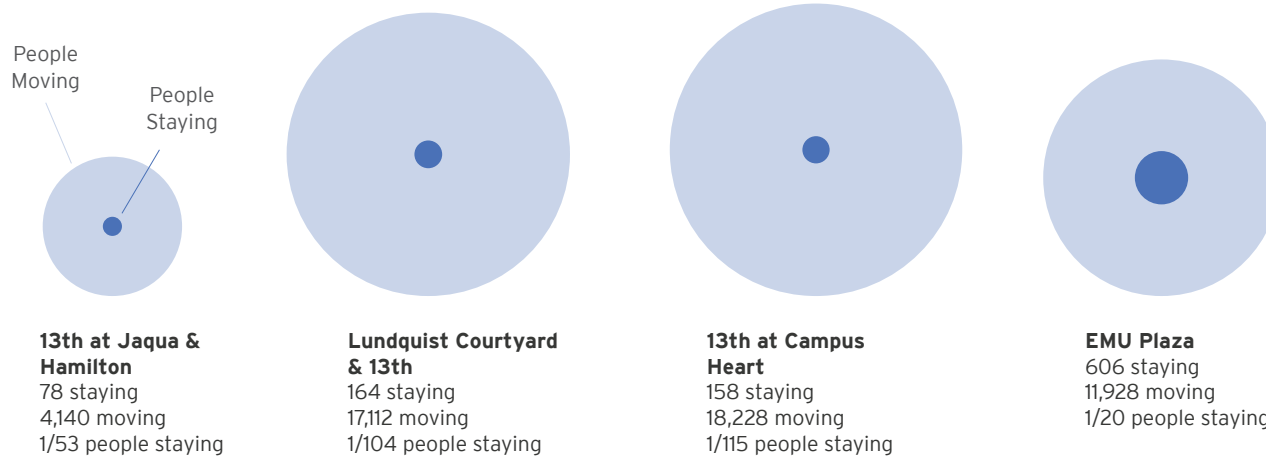
3. Not many people stop, but when they do, they stop to talk

Spaces adjacent to 13th Avenue don't attract many people to stop and stay. But, when people do choose to spend time on 13th, they are engaging with their cell phones or talking to one another. We found few formal or informal academic activities taking place on 13th Avenue other than getting to and from academic buildings. **How might a future vision for 13th Avenue make socializing more comfortable, and create invitations for activities related to the academic mission of the institution?**



Staying activity across all of 13th Avenue

Public Space Stickiness



4. There is a mismatch between amenities and spaces with comfortable microclimate

13th Avenue has lots of opportunities to find sun on cool mornings, dappled shade on sunny afternoons, and warmth on cold nights, but some of the most comfortable places don't have the amenities to keep people there. In a climate like U of O's where it can rain on 1/3 of class days, matching amenities to microclimate is an important way to help people enjoy public spaces throughout the year. **How might a vision for 13th Avenue take advantage of positive elements of microclimate?**

Amenities ❌ Few places to sit and stay that take advantage of microclimate

Microclimate ✅ Sun, shade and rain cover

Amenities ✅ Comfortable landscape

Microclimate ❌ North side in shade



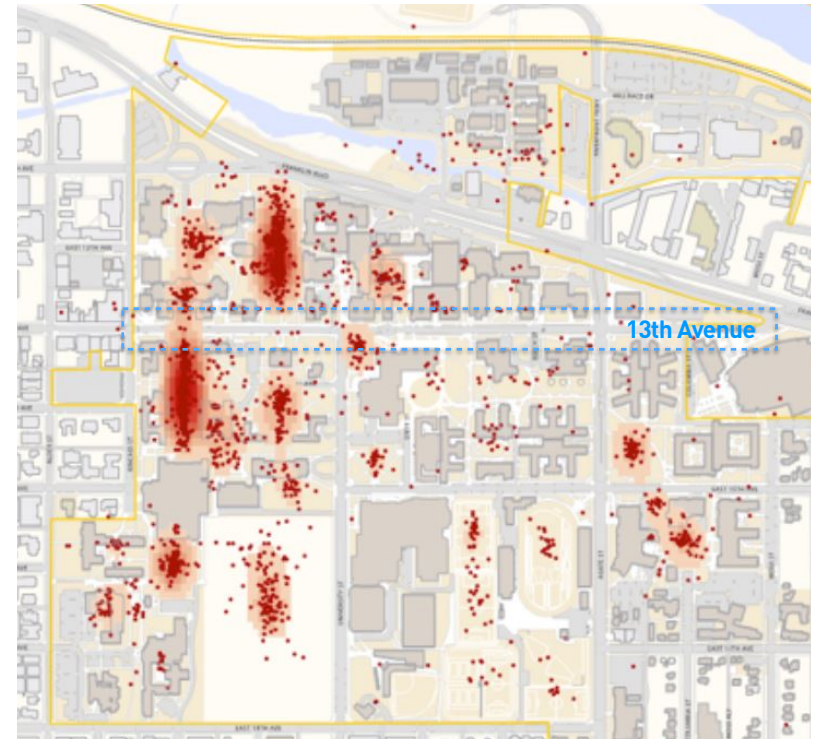
5. During busy times occupiable edges are mostly full

Of the few people spending time along 13th, nearly all gravitate toward occupiable edges out of the through zone in eddies where public life can unfold. Quiet enclosed spaces are especially sought out, but large stretches of 13th lack places to escape from the flow. **How might a vision for 13th Avenue make edges inviting and provide more of them?**



6. 13th isn't seen as a "favorite place", yet it's where people spend the most time

In a survey of students' favorite places, 13th Avenue didn't come up. Yet, it is a space that nearly every student passes at least once a day. **How might this space become a favorite place unto itself?**



Students' 'Favorite Places' (MyCampus Survey, '15)

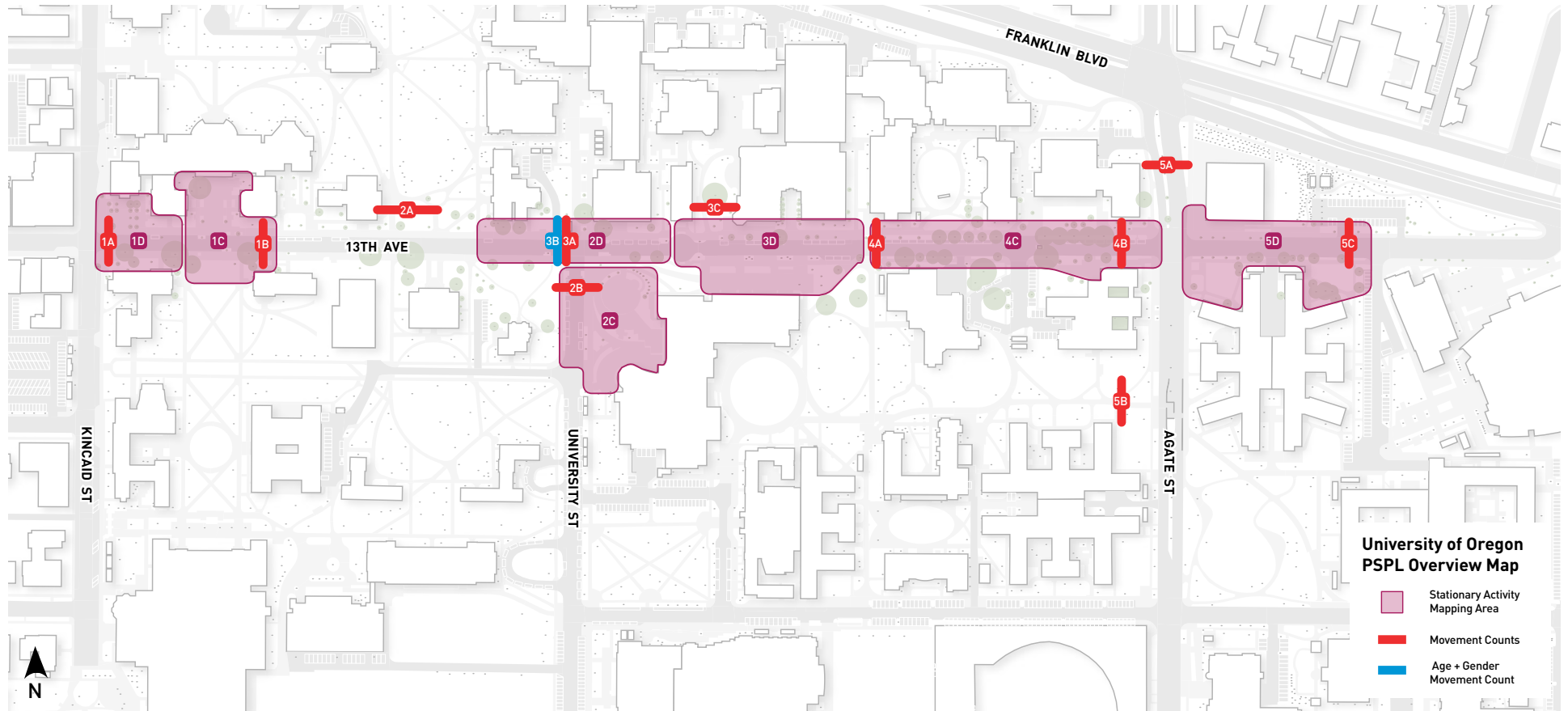
C. Survey Data



Public Space and Public Life Survey Data

The following pages include a detailed breakdown of the public space public life survey analysis by survey location. This section includes counts of people moving, and analyses of staying activities by time and location.

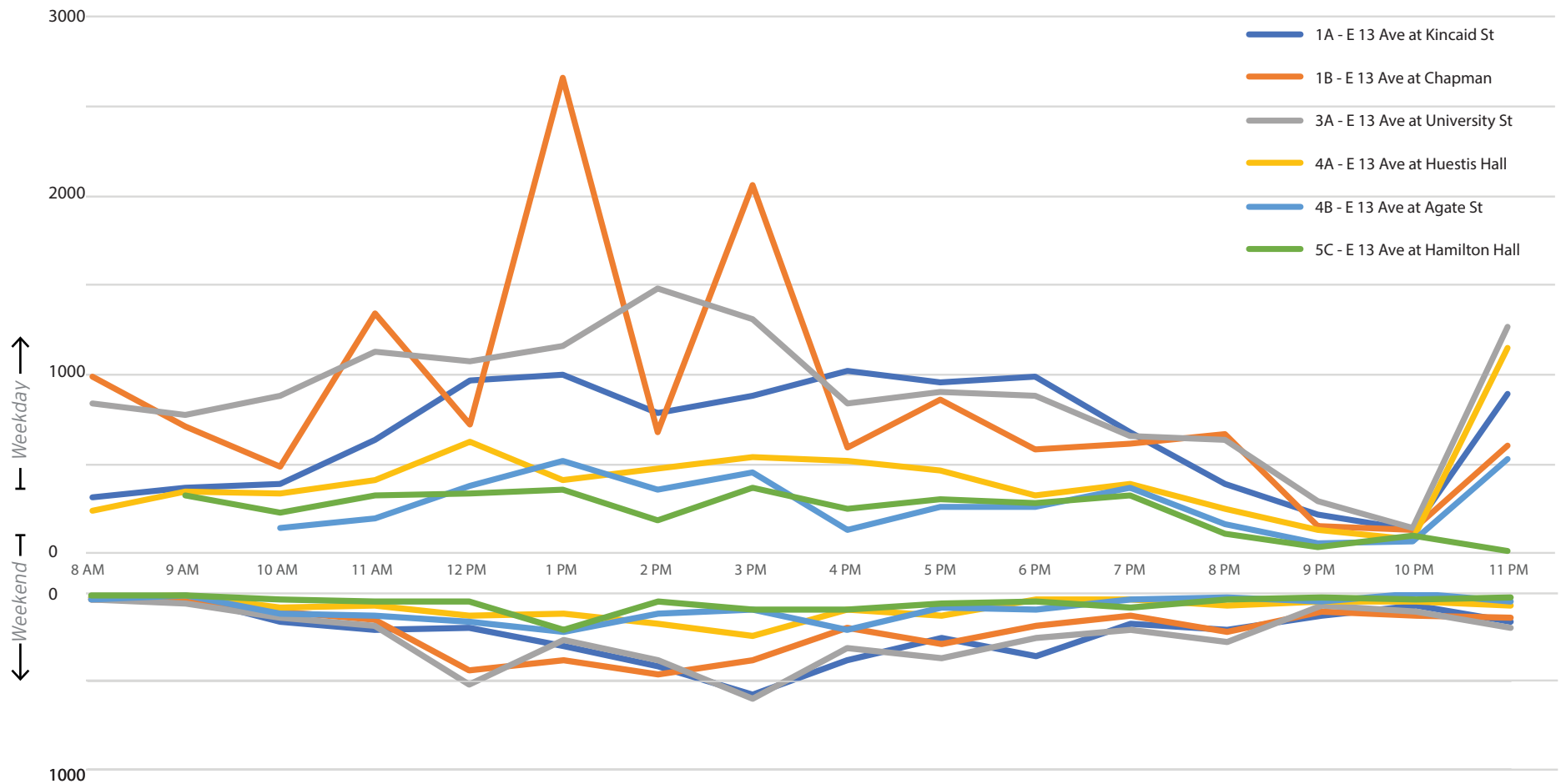
- 1A - E 13Th Ave At Kincaid St
- 1B - E 13Th Ave At Chapman
- 1C - Lillis Business Complex At E 13Th Ave
- 1D - E 13Th Ave Gateway
- 2A - East Fenton Hall Open Space
- 2B - University St At E 13Th Ave
- 2C - Erb Memorial Union Plaza
- 2D - Friendly Hall To Volcanology Hall At E 13Th Ave
- 3A - E 13Th Ave At University St
- 3B - E 13Th Ave At University St
- 3C - Volcanology Hall Courtyard
- 3D - Volcanology Hall To Huestis Hall On E 13Th Ave
- 4A - E 13Th Ave At Huestis Hall
- 4B - E 13Th Ave At Agate St
- 4C - Huestis Hall To Agate St On E 13Th Ave
- 5A - Agate St At Jaqua Academic Center
- 5B - Mc Alister At Agate St
- 5C - E 13Th Ave At Hamilton Hall
- 5D - Hamilton Hall At E 13Th Ave



Where people move on 13th Avenue

The movement data plotted in the graph below shows that volumes of people vary widely between different count locations along the 13th Avenue corridor. At the Campus Heart (3A), a pattern of life is revealed that remains high consistently throughout the day with a midday spike, though additional counts, detailed in the pages that follow, show passing period volumes that

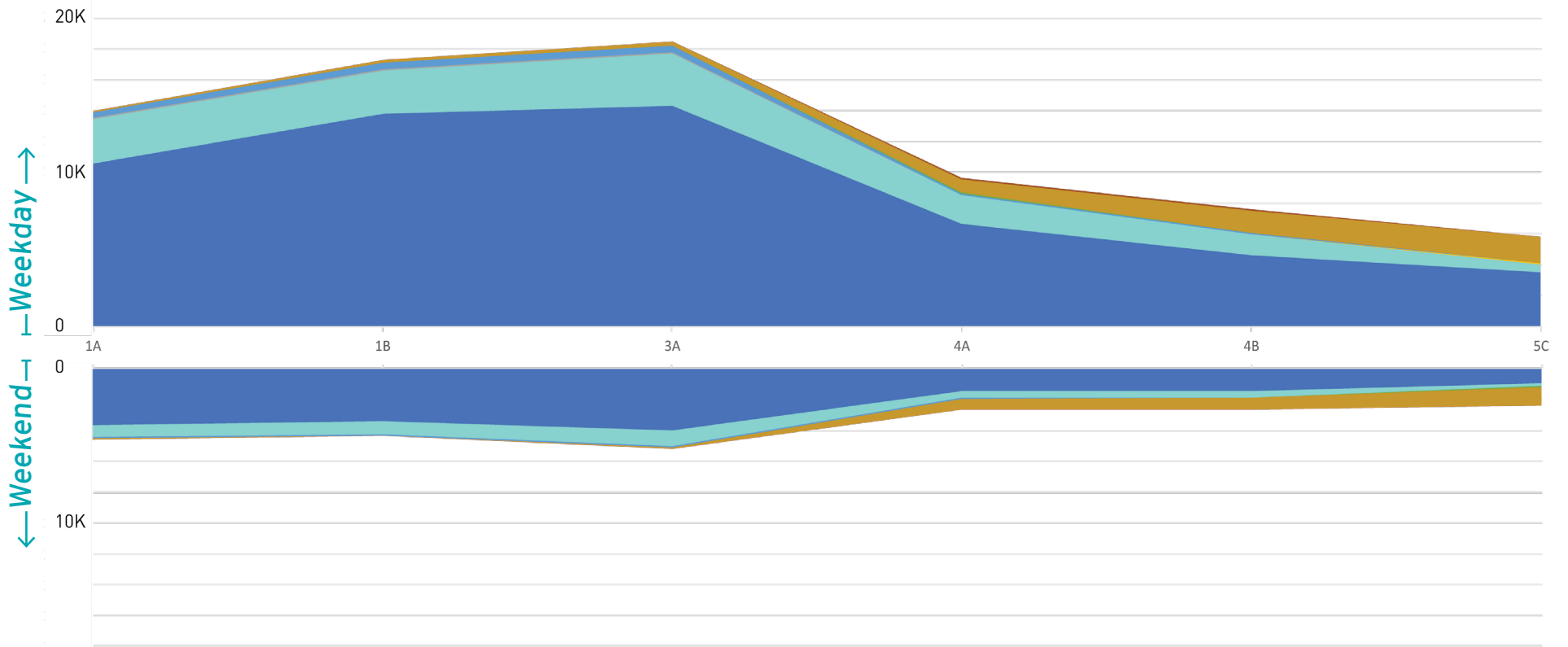
exceed typical hourly volumes by up to 8X. Volumes of people staying, detailed at the end of this section, reveal where people are choosing to stay and the types of activities they engage in at each location. These activity splits show that each of the spaces along 13th Avenue serve different needs, for slightly different groups of people, but they also reveal a lack of staying activity overall. At the busiest locations, fewer than 1% of those moving decided to stop and stay.



People Moving

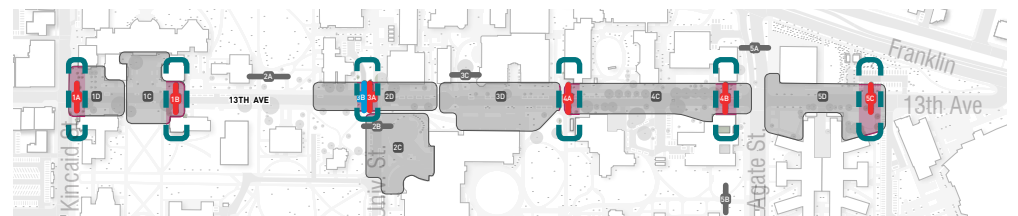


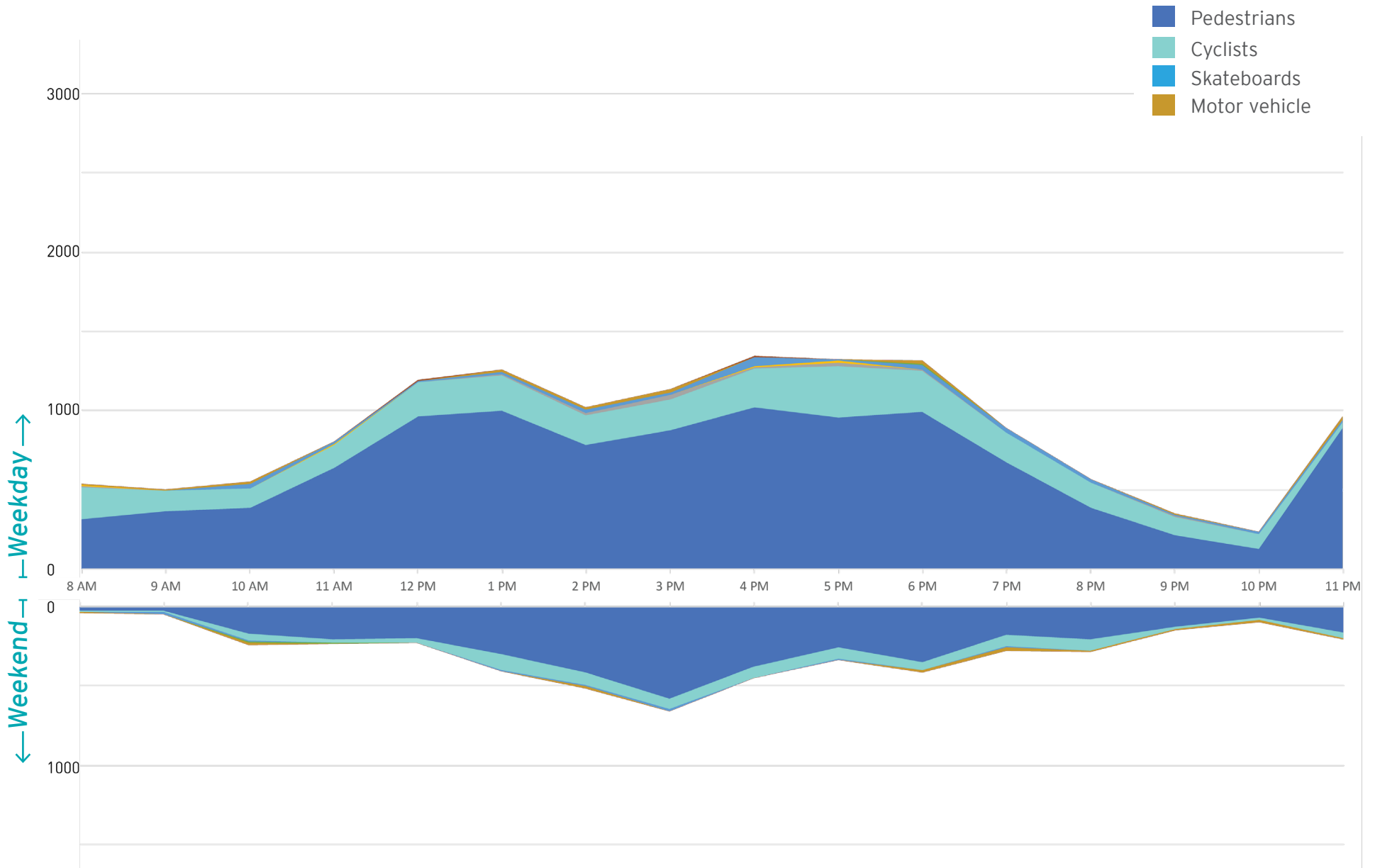
- Pedestrians
- Cyclists
- Skateboards
- Motor vehicle



COUNT TYPE: *People moving*

COUNT LOCATION: *All 13th Avenue count locations*

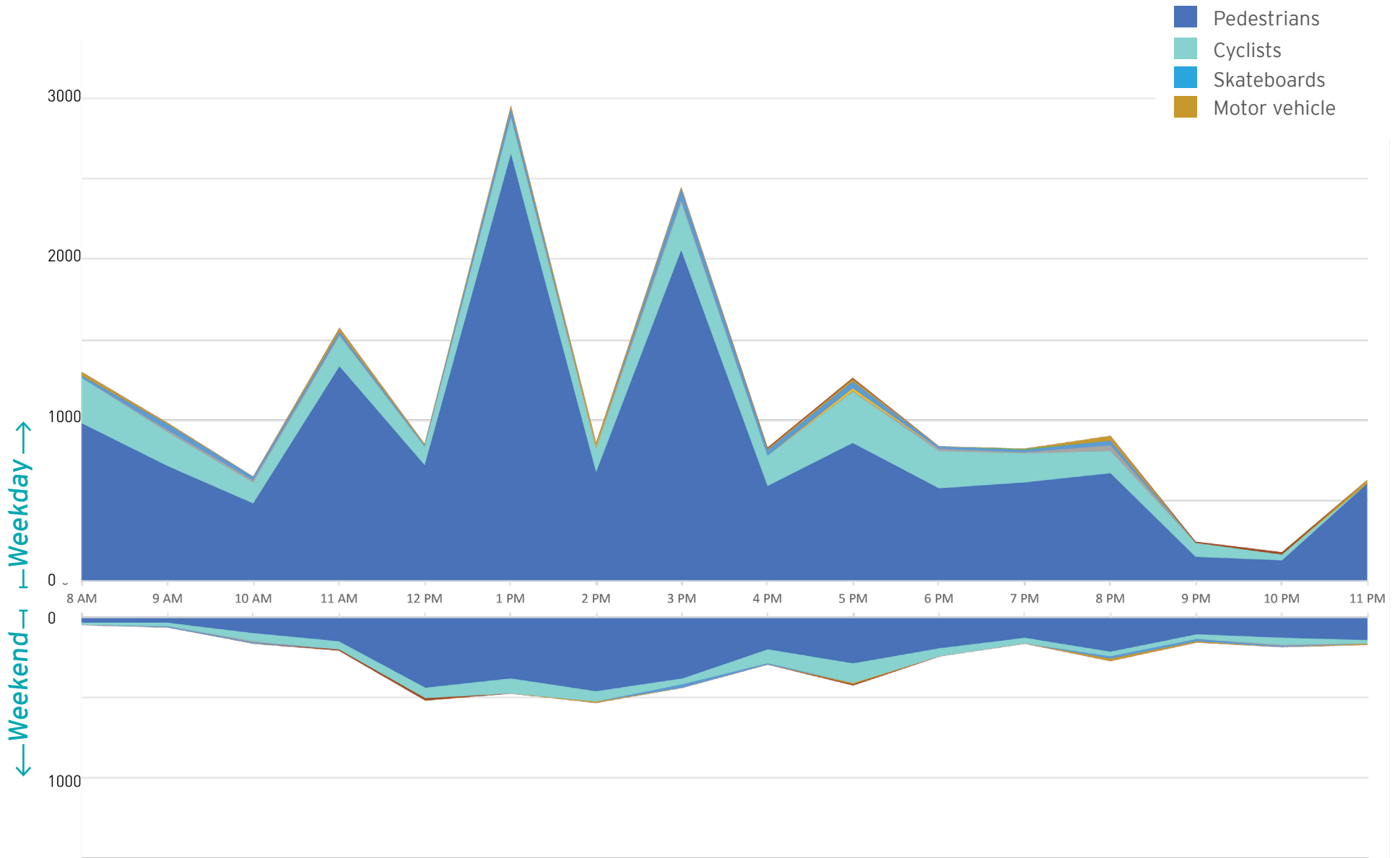




COUNT TYPE: *People moving*

COUNT LOCATION: *E13thAveatKincaid Street*

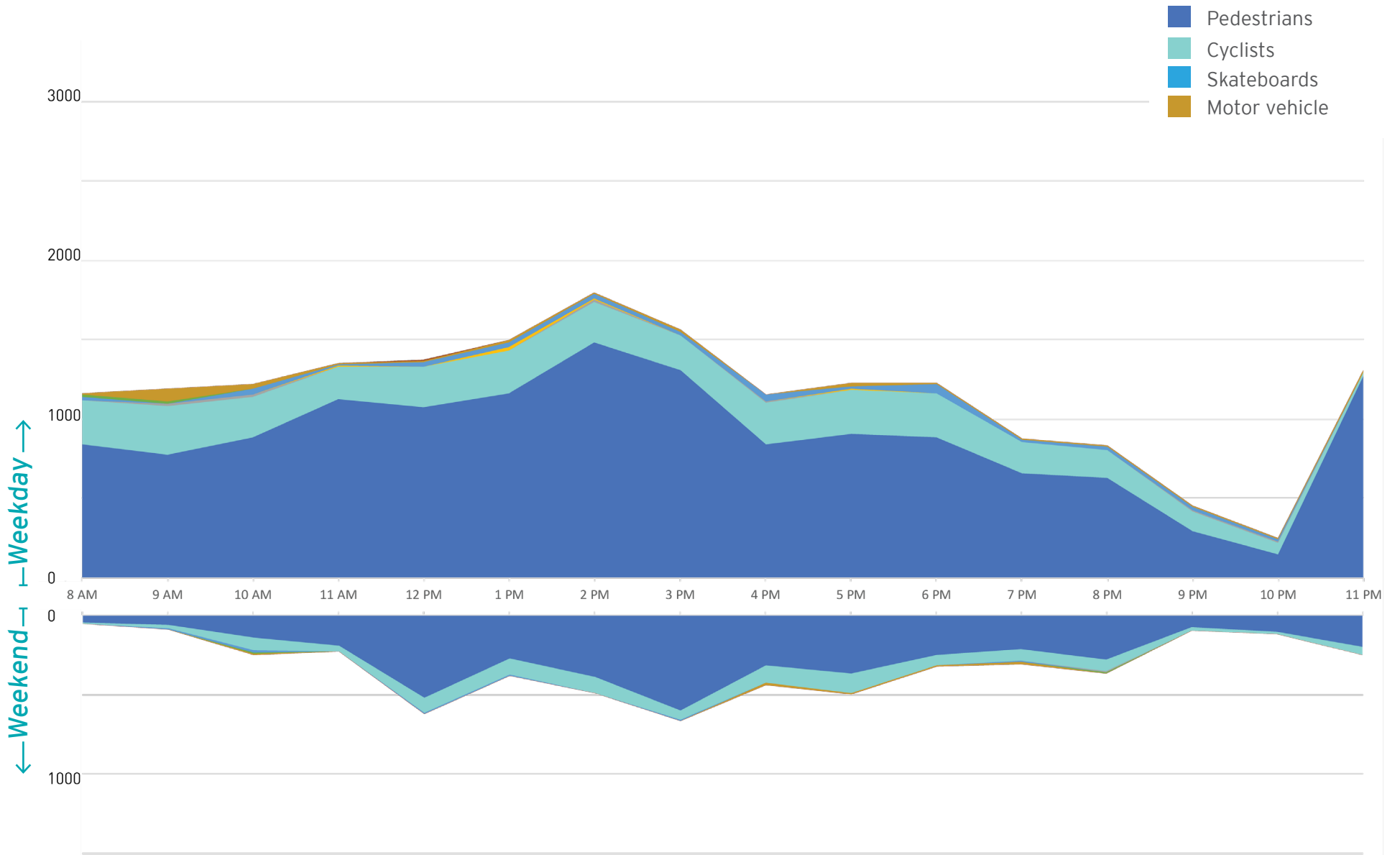




COUNT TYPE: *People moving*

COUNT LOCATION: *E 13th ave at chapman*

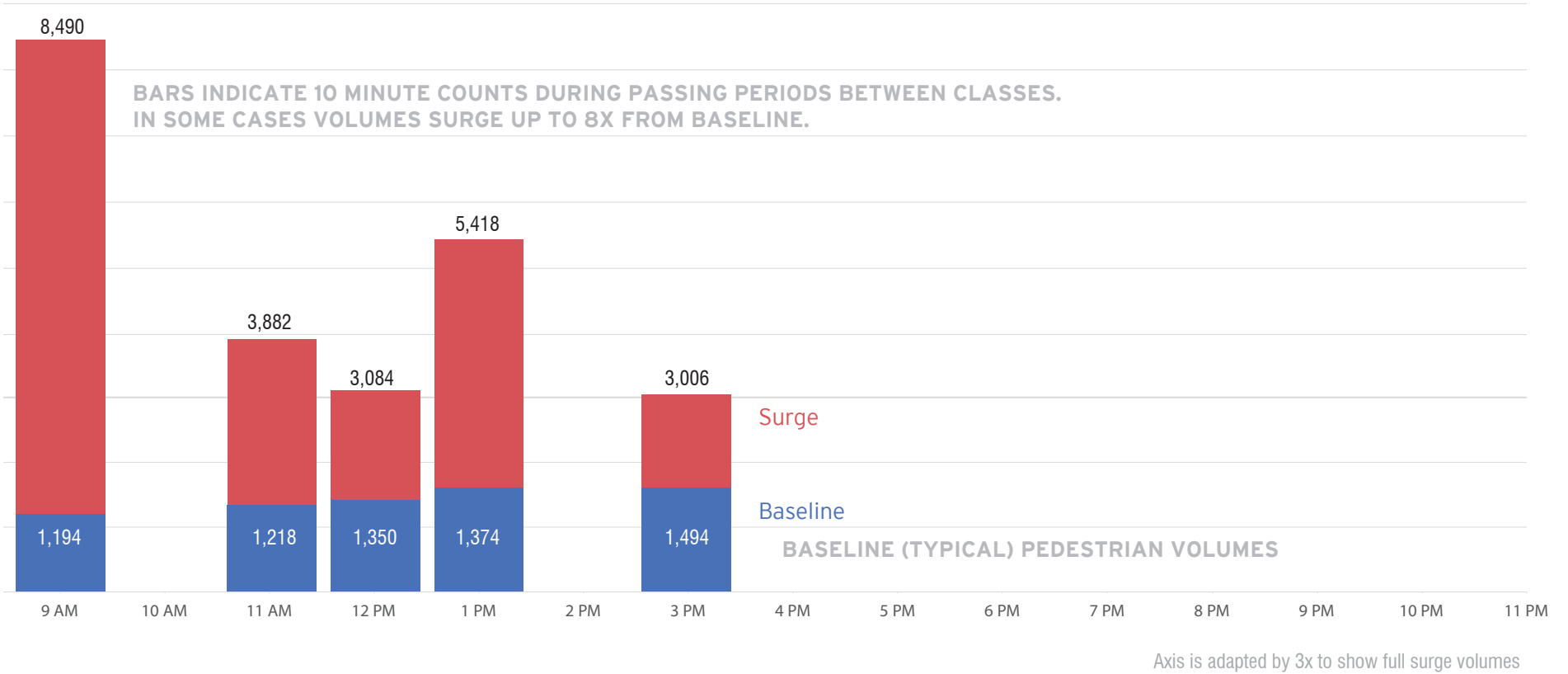




COUNT TYPE: *People moving*

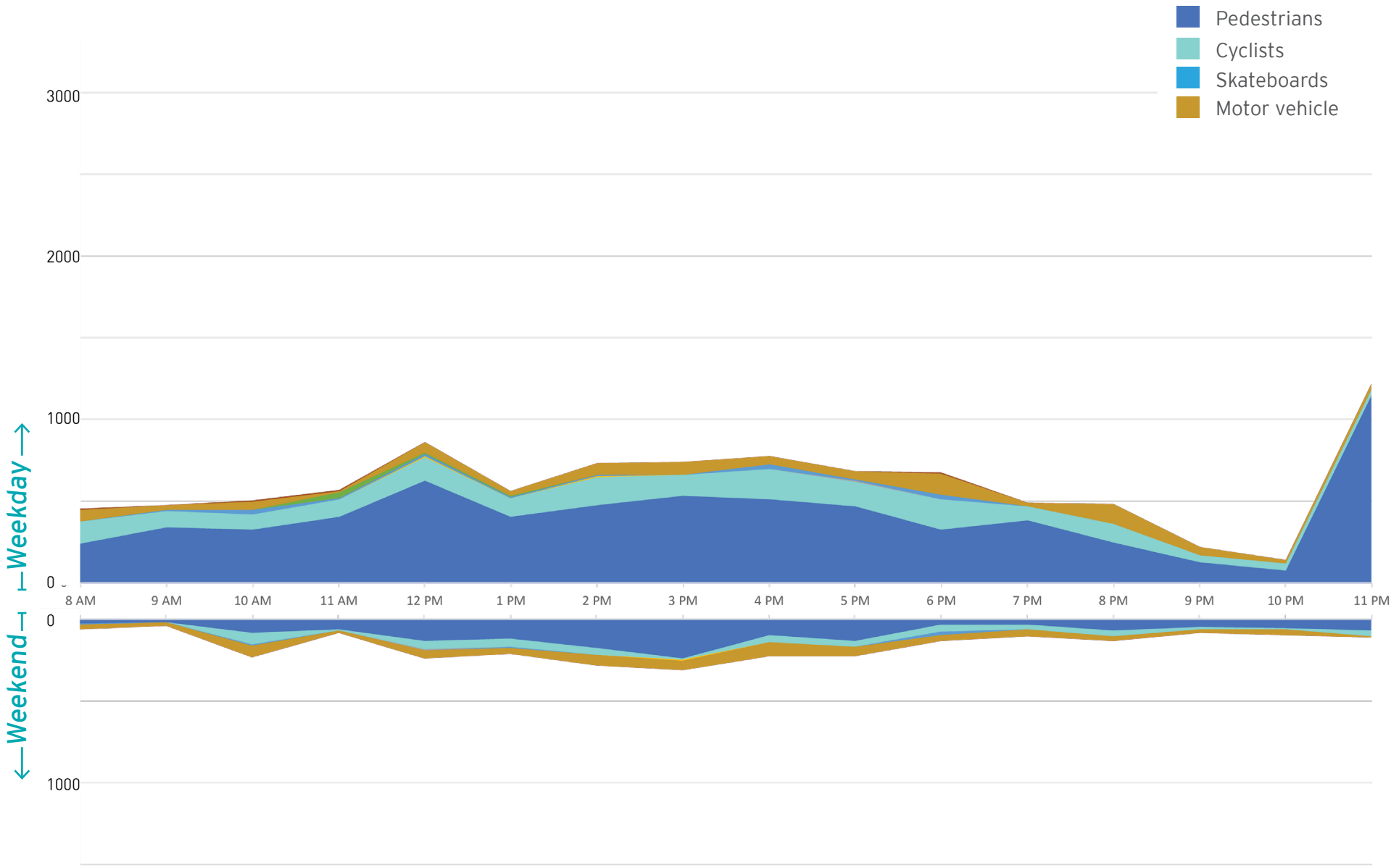
COUNT LOCATION: *E 13th Ave at University St*





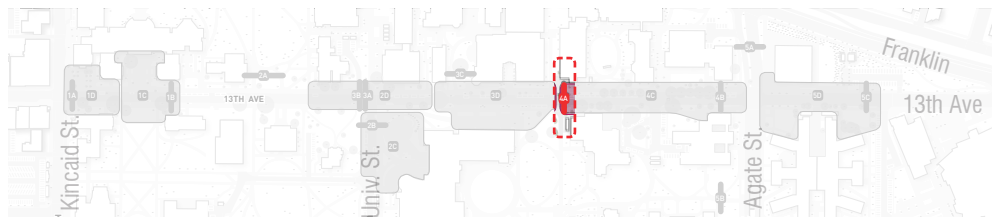
COUNT TYPE: **Weekday People moving w/surges**
 COUNT LOCATION: **E 13th Ave at University St**



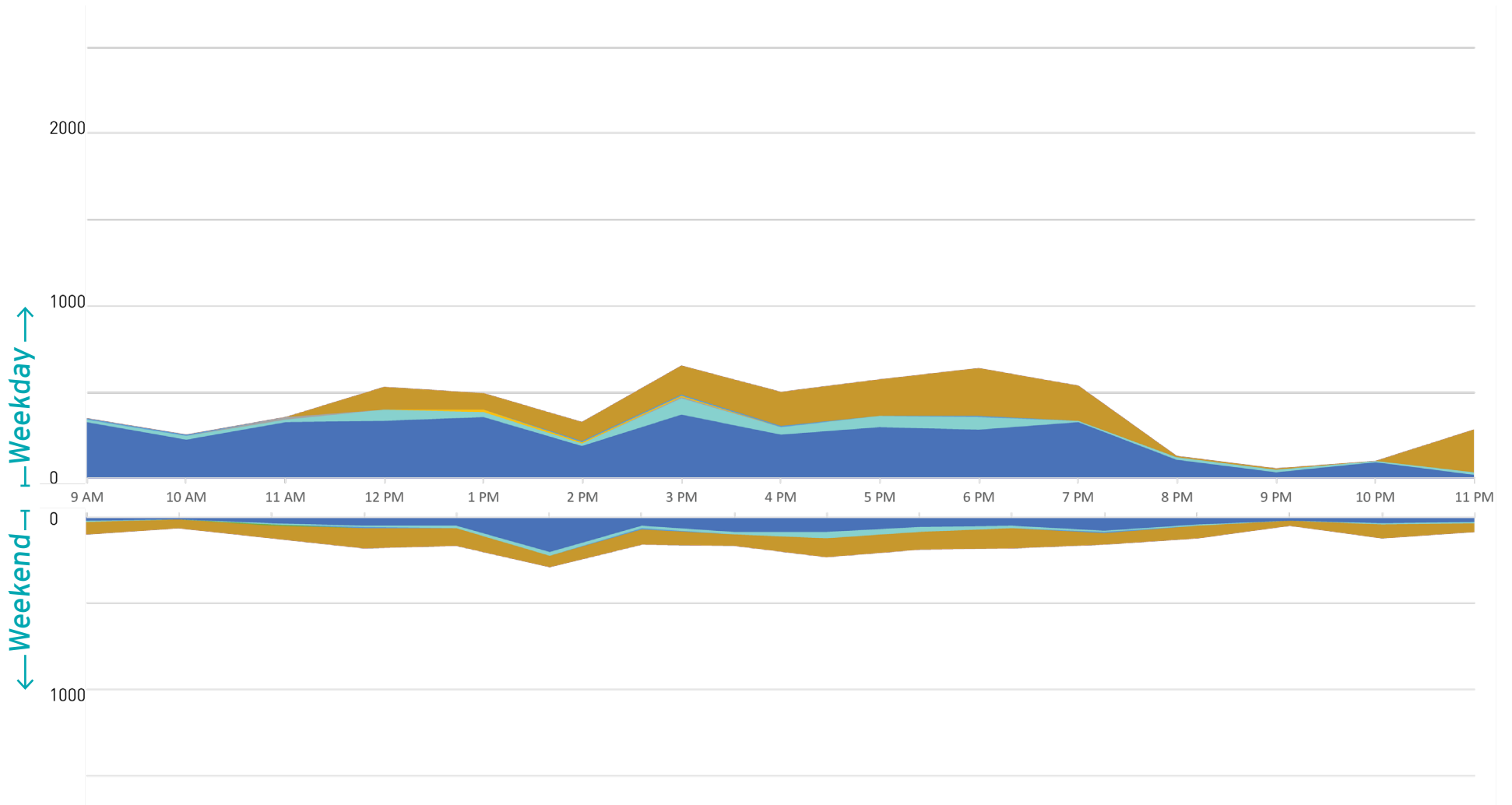


COUNT TYPE: *People moving*

COUNT LOCATION: *E13thaveatHuestis Hall*



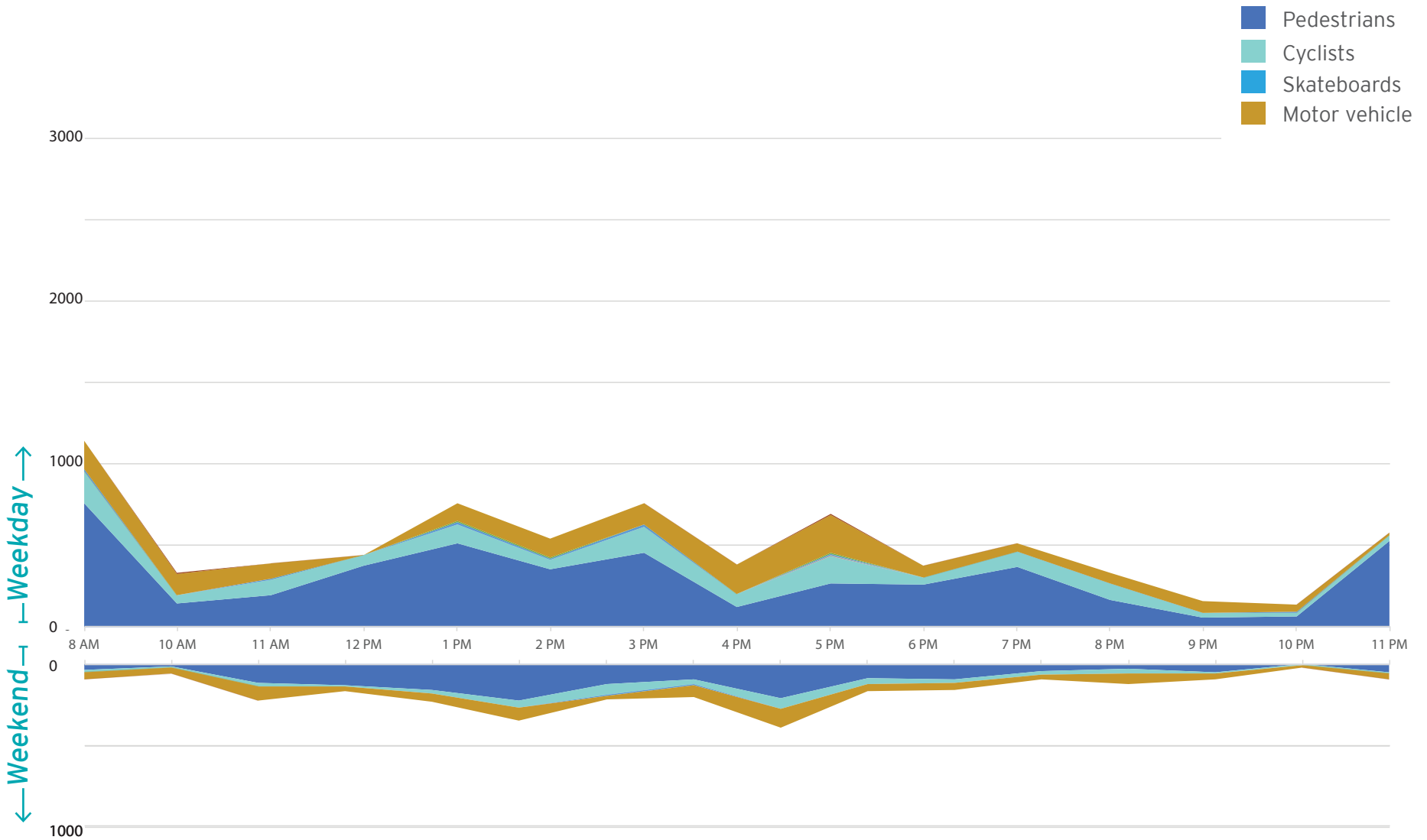
- Pedestrians
- Cyclists
- Skateboards
- Motor vehicle



COUNT TYPE: *People moving*

COUNT LOCATION: *E 13th ave at
Hamilton Hall*

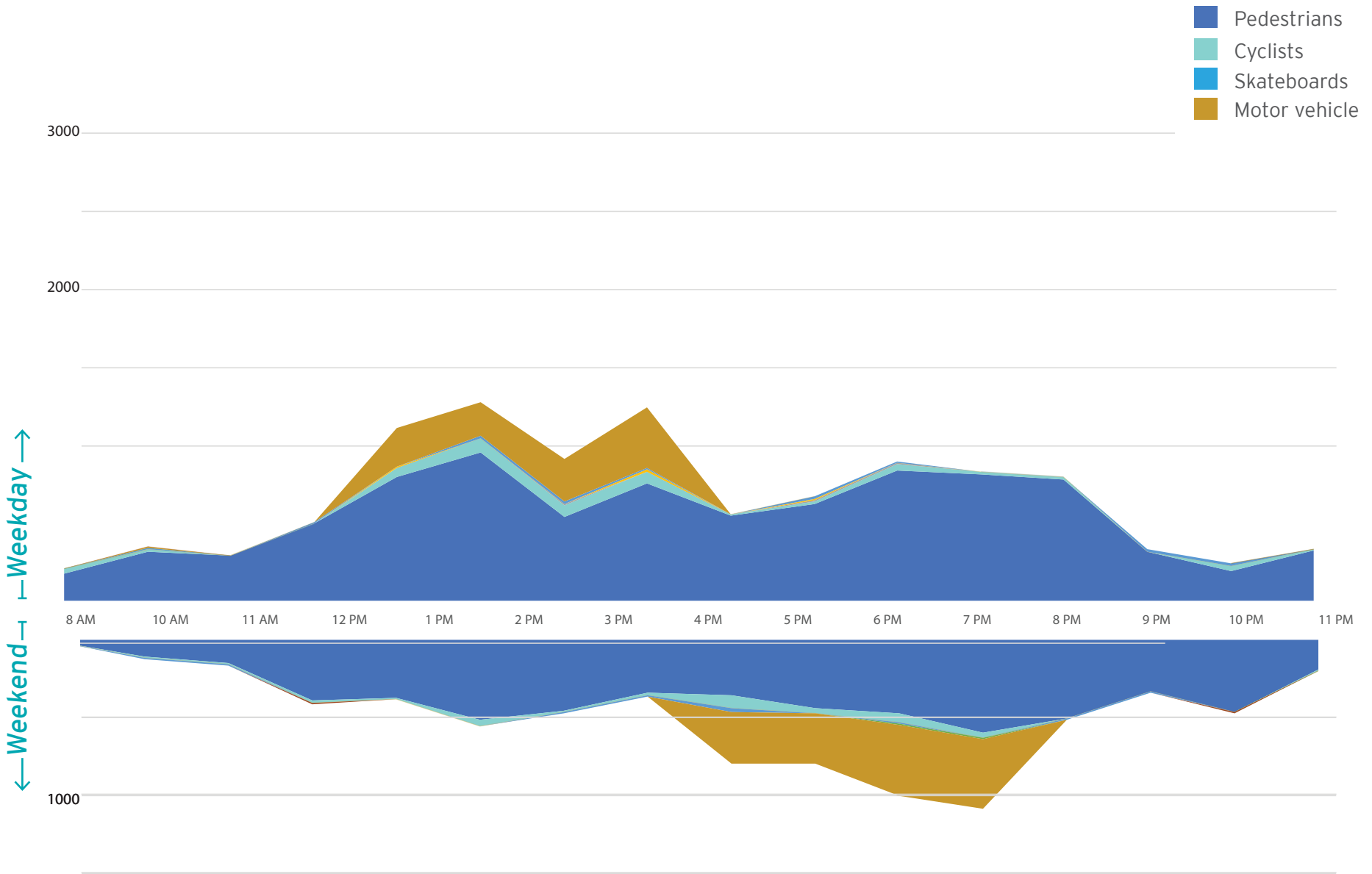




COUNT TYPE: *People moving*

COUNT LOCATION: *E 13th Ave at Agate St*





COUNT TYPE: *People moving*

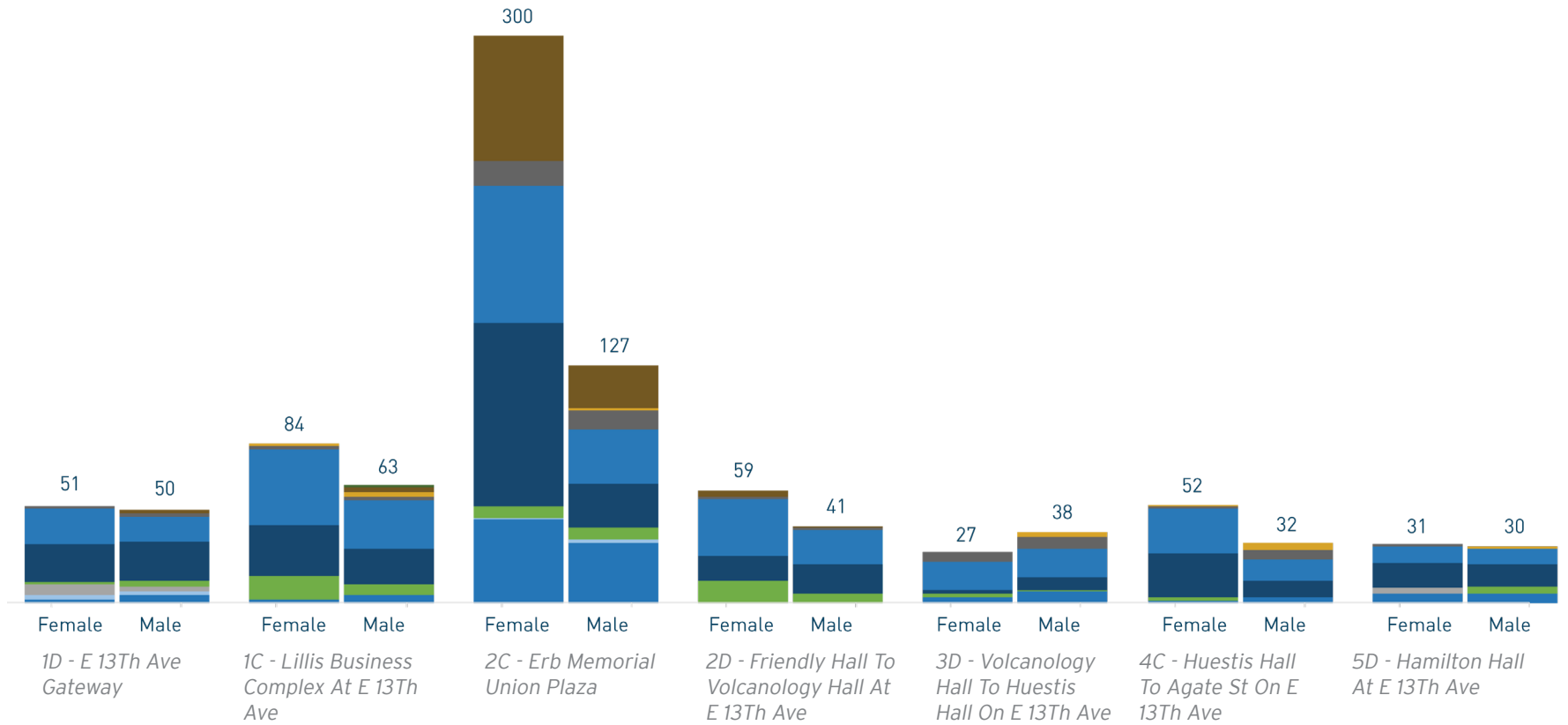
COUNT LOCATION: *Mc Alister at Agate St*



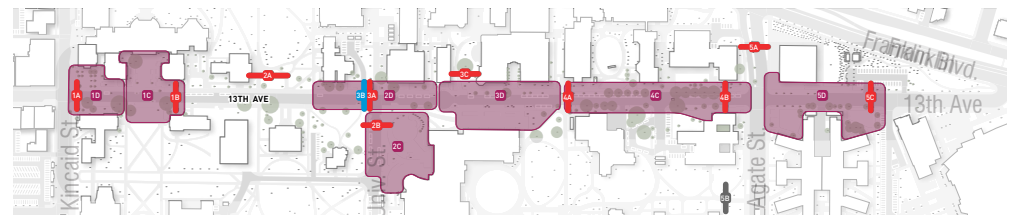
People Staying

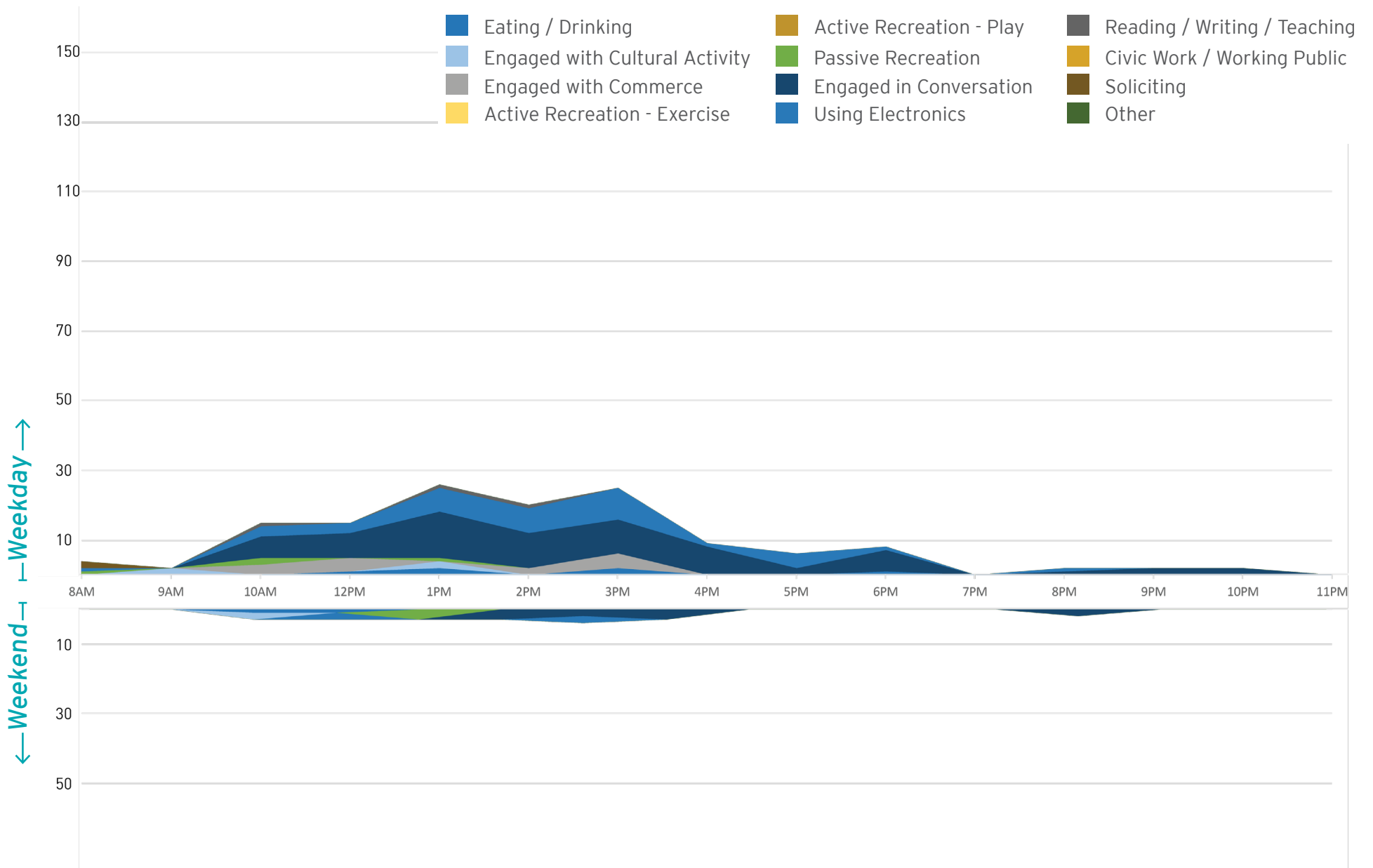


- Eating / Drinking
- Engaged with Cultural Activity
- Engaged with Commerce
- Active Recreation - Exercise
- Active Recreation - Play
- Passive Recreation
- Engaged in Conversation
- Using Electronics
- Reading / Writing / Teaching
- Civic Work / Working Public
- Soliciting
- Other



COUNT TYPE: *People staying*
 COUNT LOCATION: *All locations*

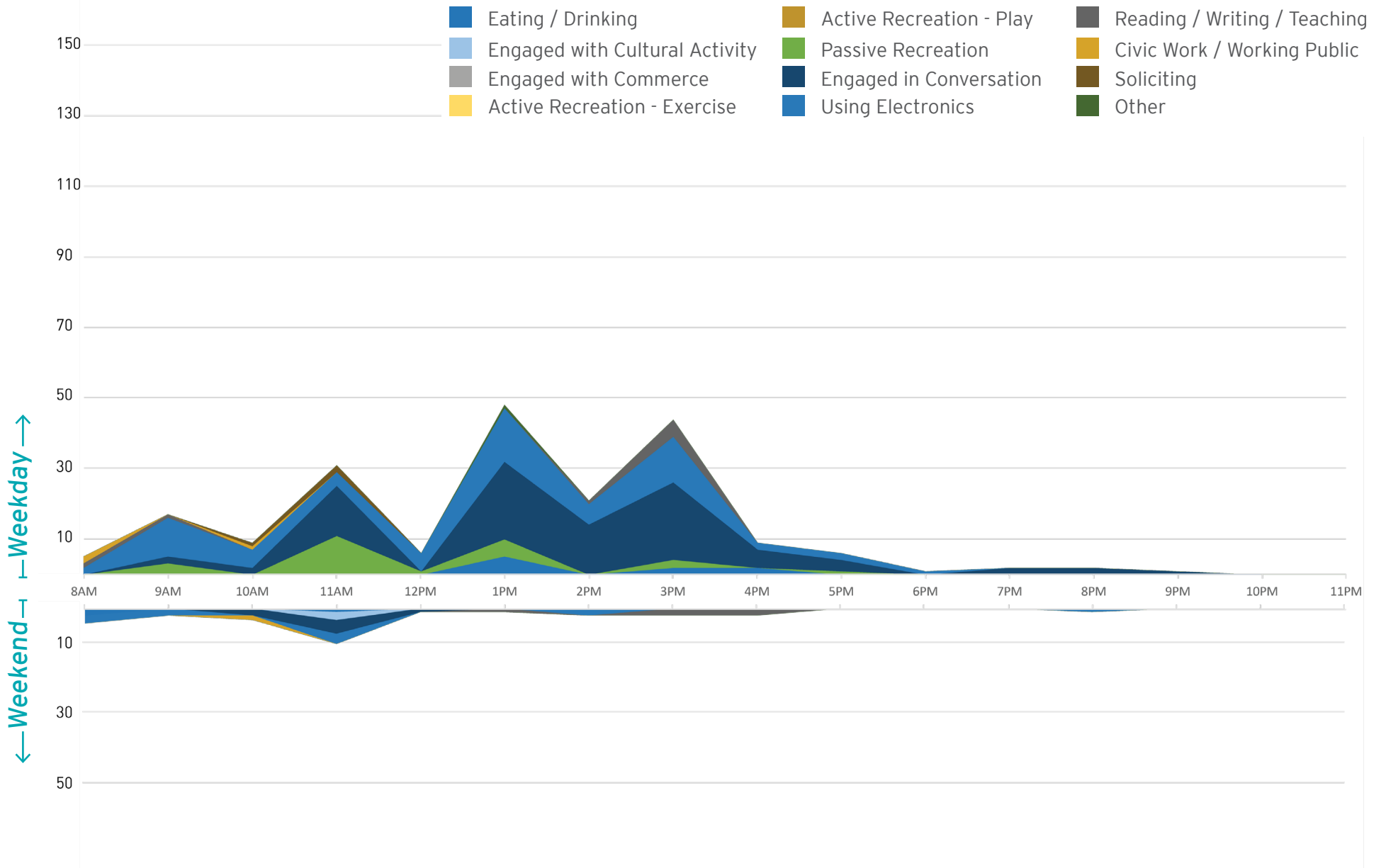




COUNT TYPE: *People staying*

COUNT LOCATION: *E 13th Ave Gateway*

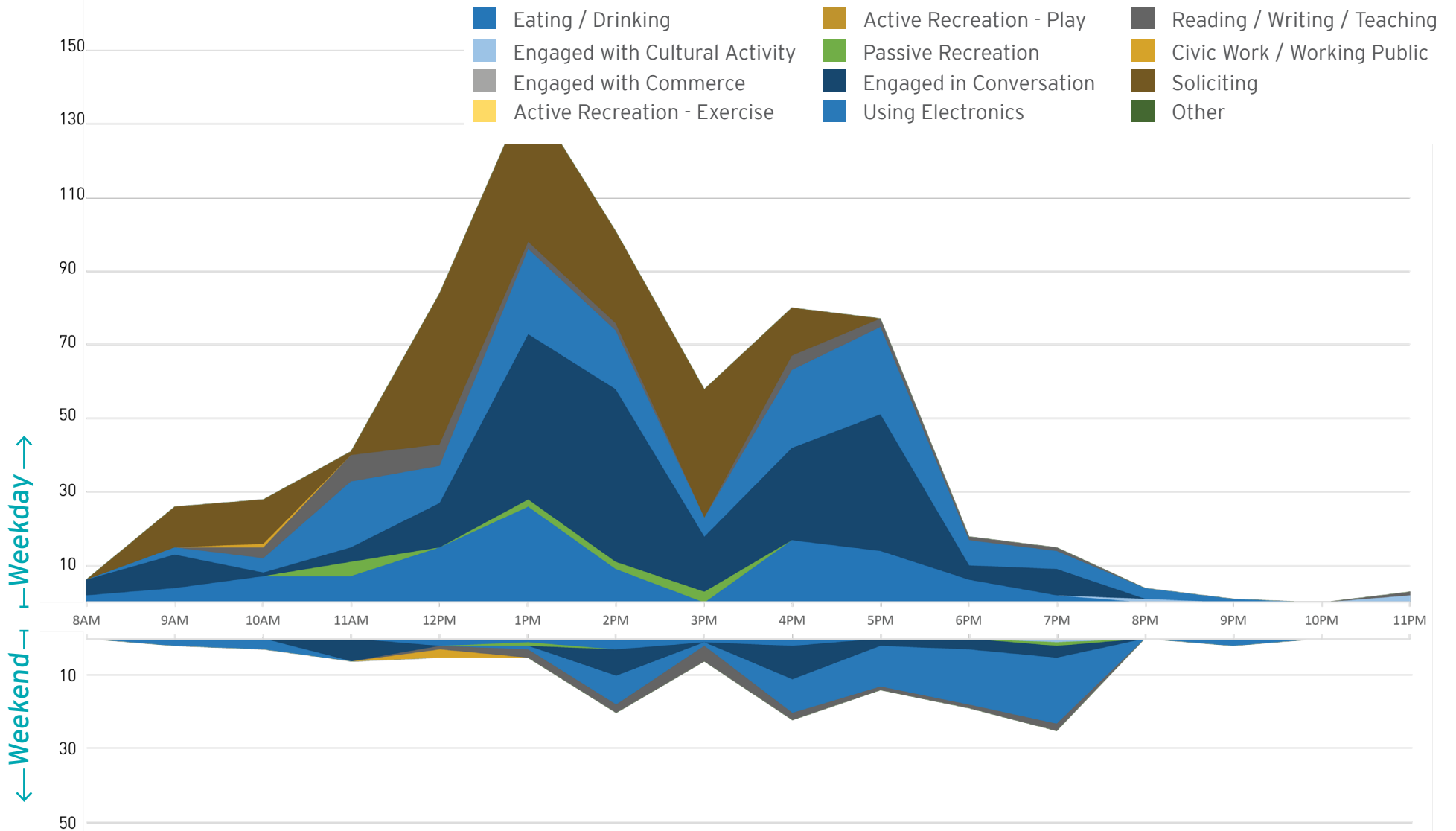




COUNT TYPE: *People staying*

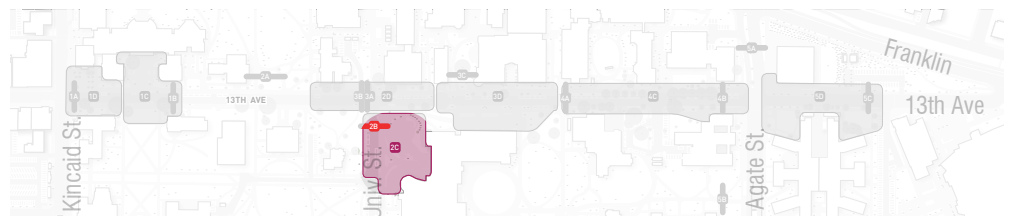
COUNT LOCATION: *Lillis Buisness Complex at E13th Ave*

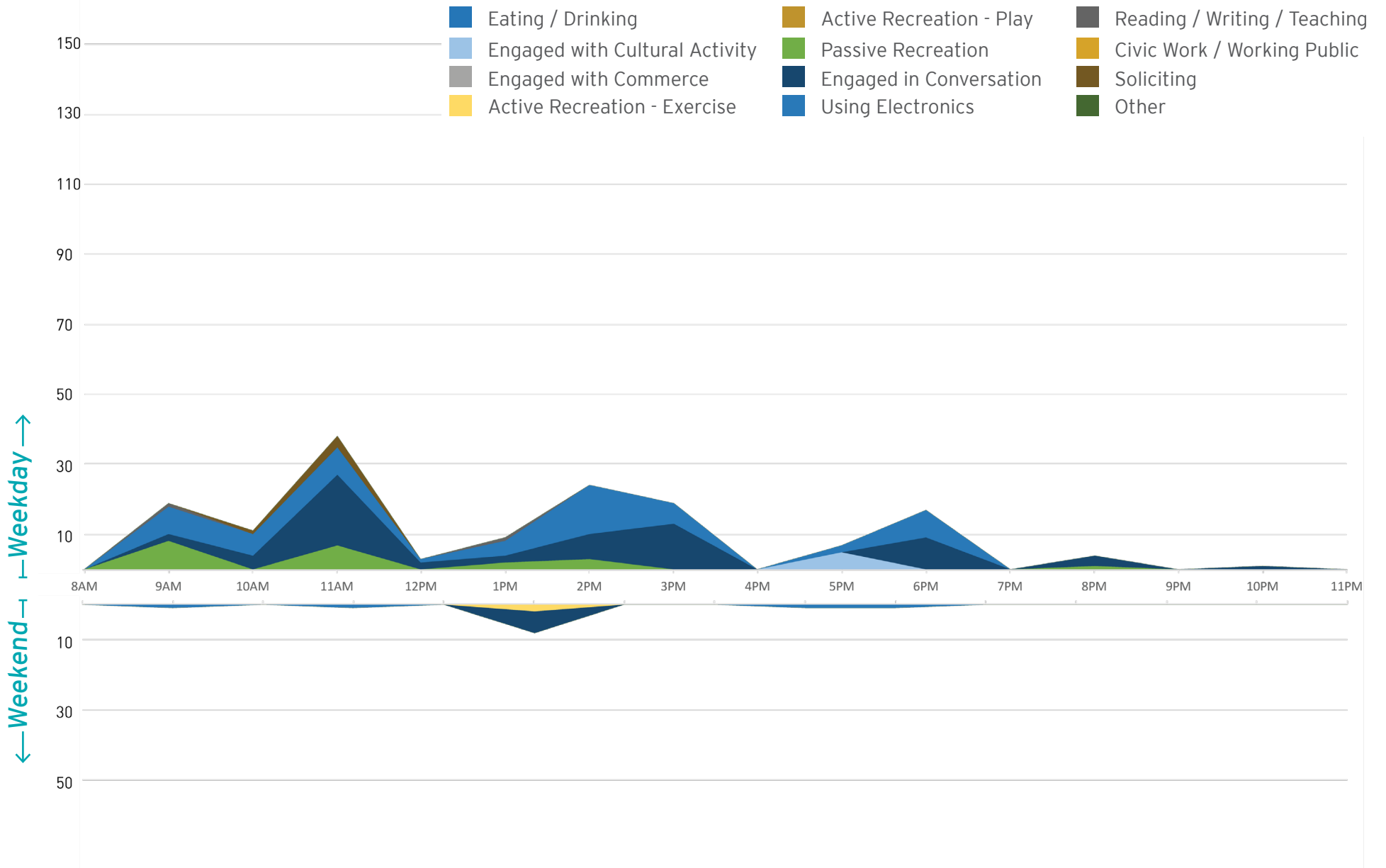




COUNT TYPE: *People staying*

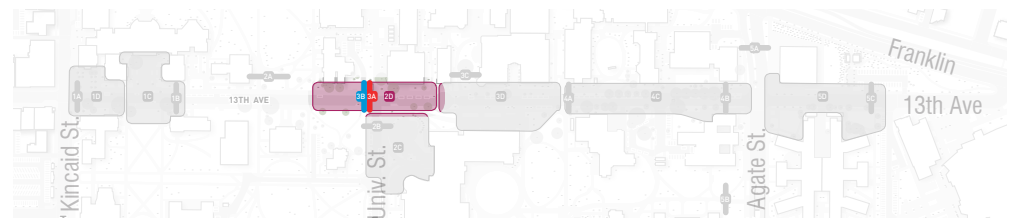
COUNT LOCATION: *ERB Memorial Union Plaza*

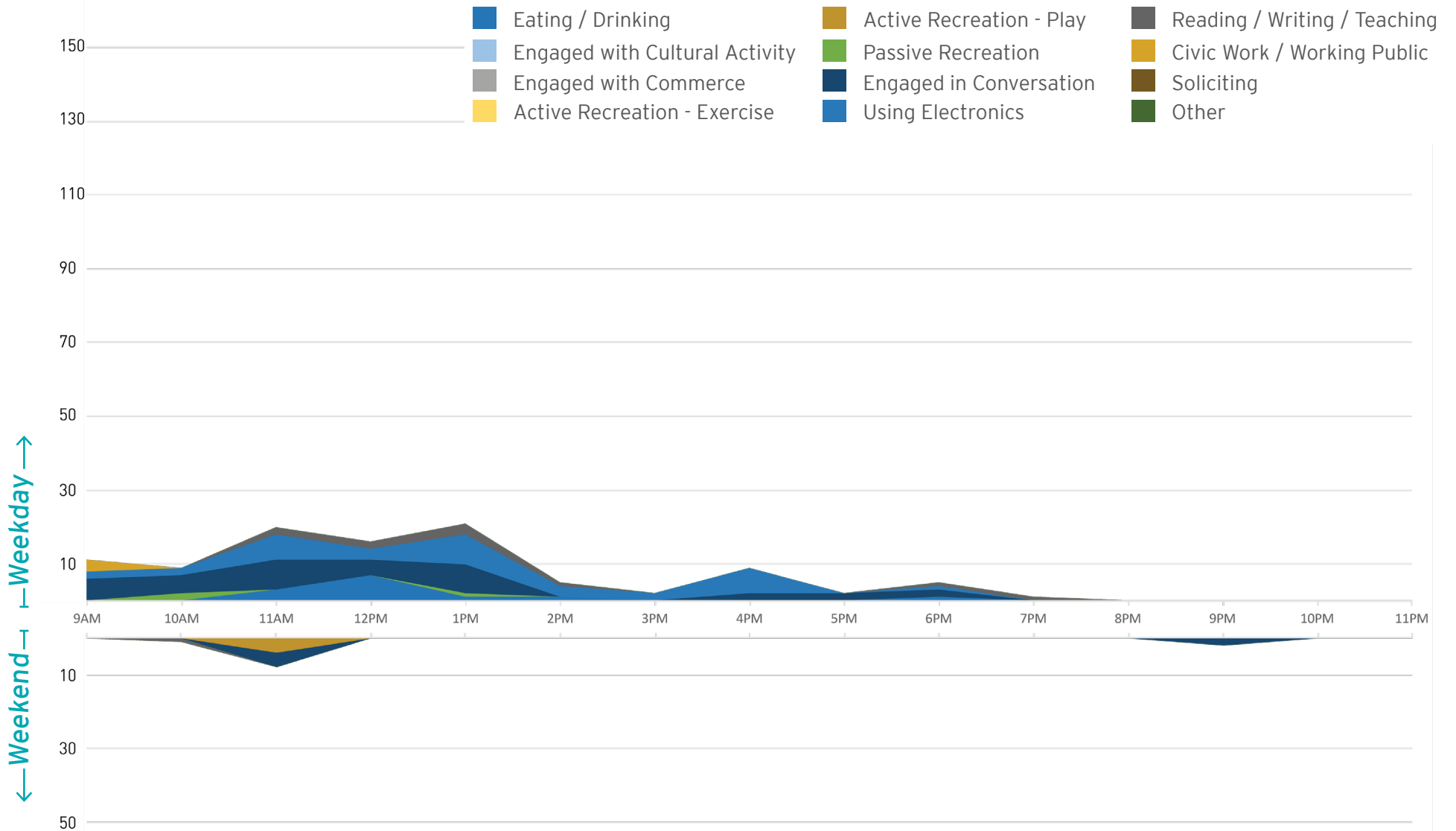




COUNT TYPE: *People staying*

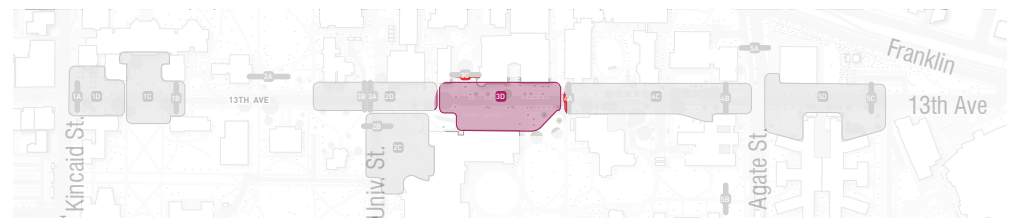
COUNT LOCATION: *Friendly Hall to
Volcanology Hall
at E 13th Ave*

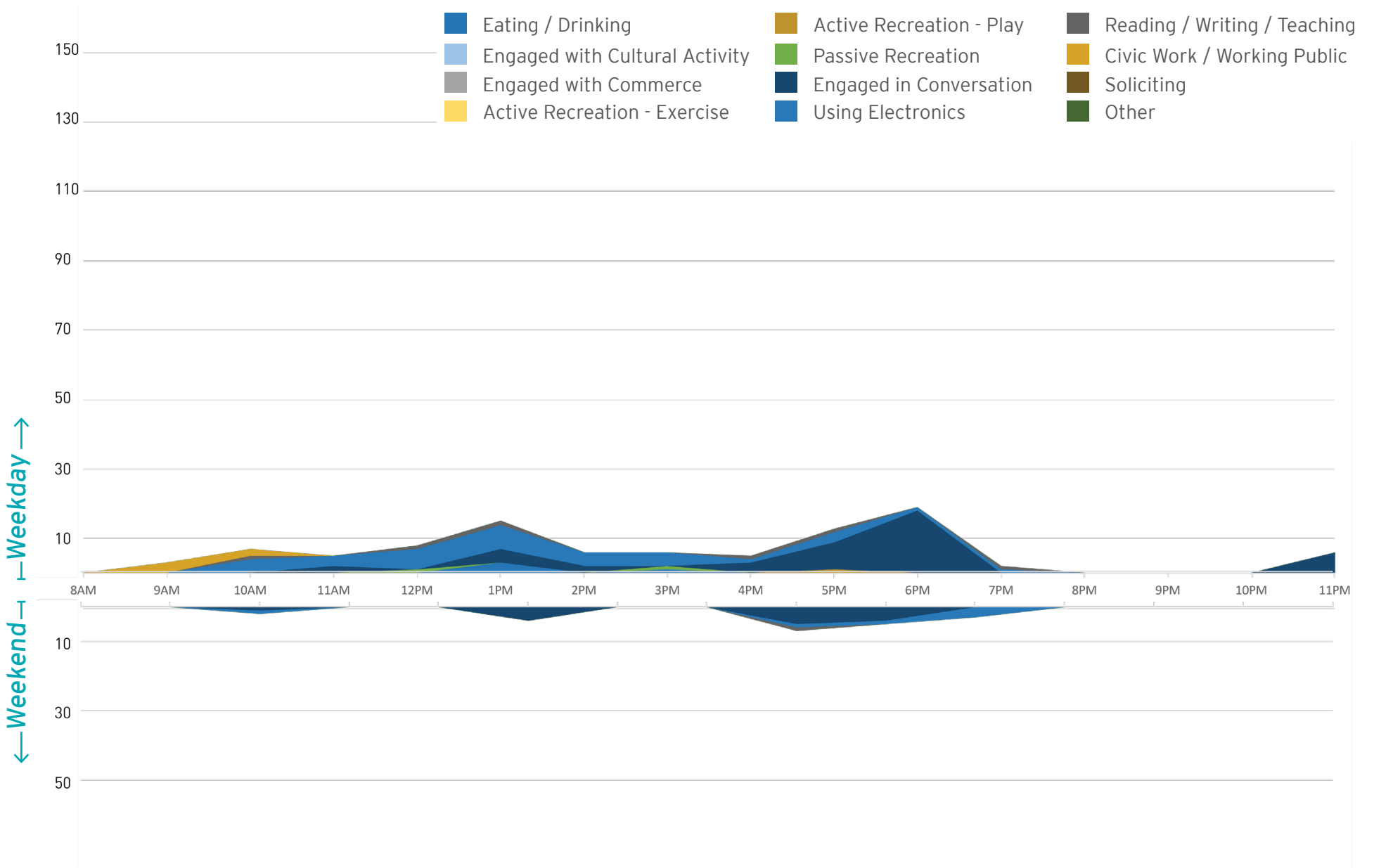




COUNT TYPE: *People staying*

COUNT LOCATION: *Volcanology Hall to Huestis Hall on E 13th Ave*

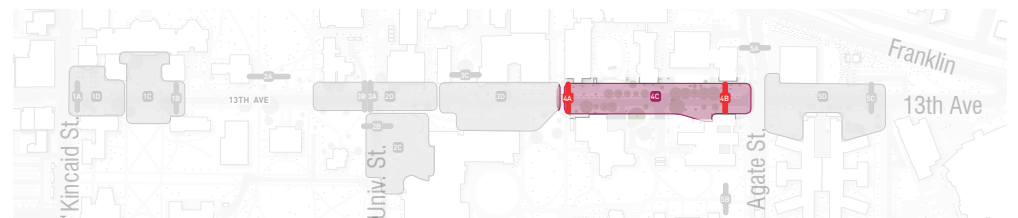


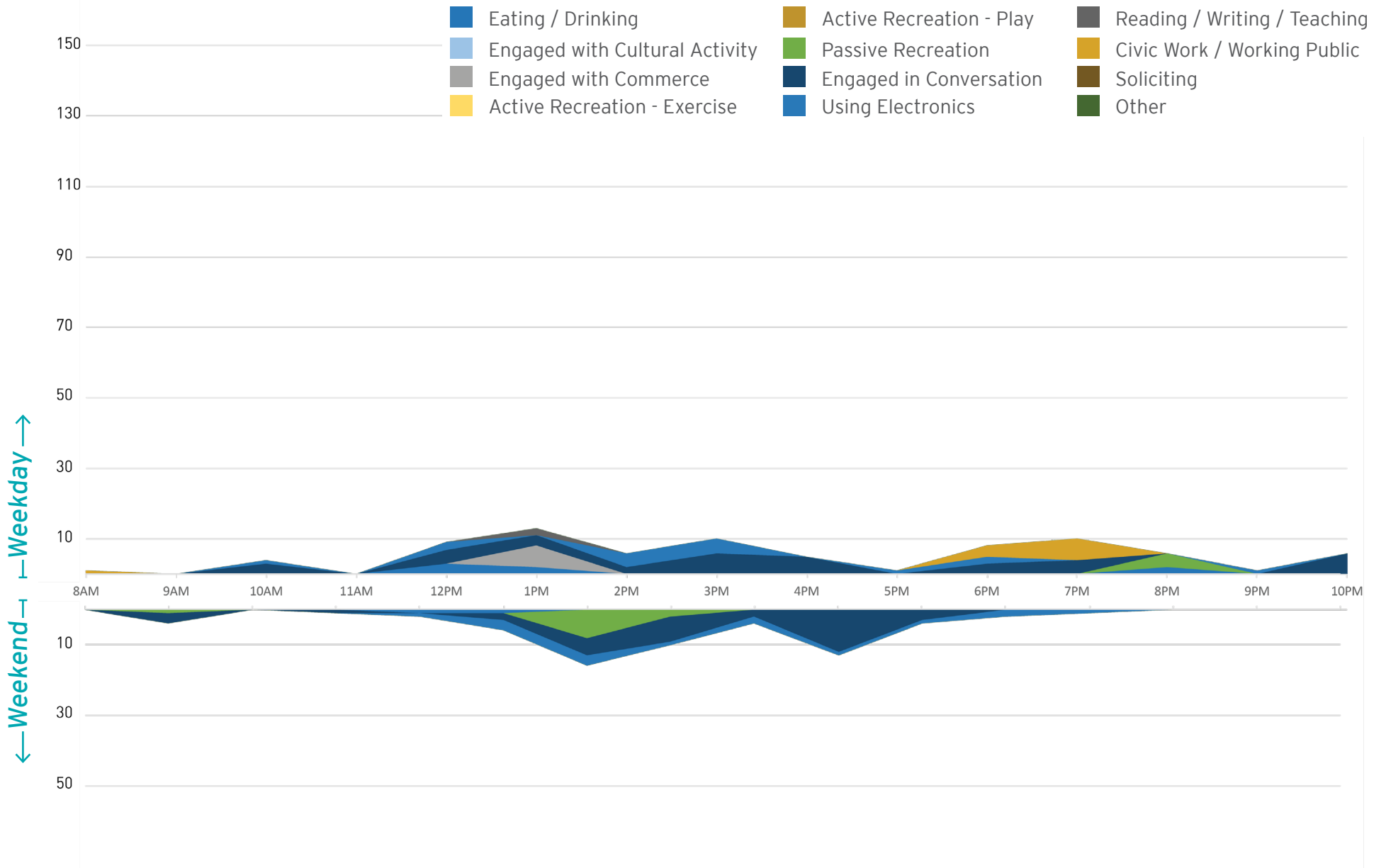


COUNT TYPE: *People staying*

COUNT LOCATION:

HuetisHall to Agate St on E 13th Ave





COUNT TYPE: *People staying*

COUNT LOCATION: *Hamilton Hall at E 13th Ave*

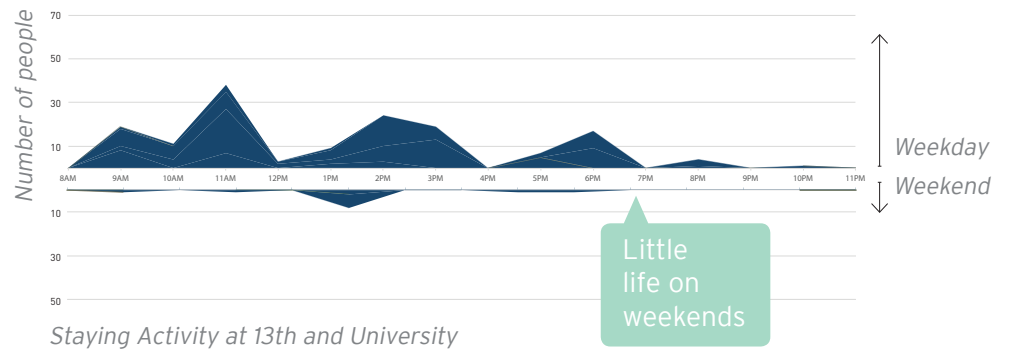


Additional Analysis

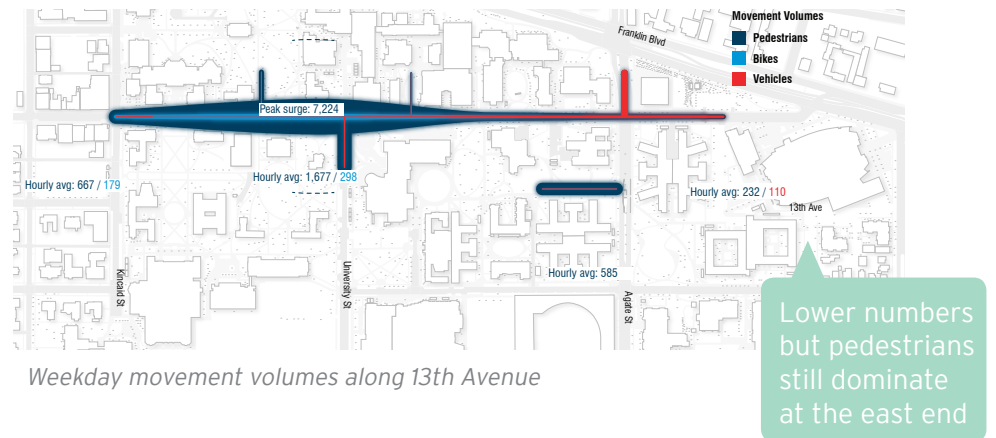


There are Luge Fluctuations in People Moving and Staying

WHEN 13TH IS BUSY, IT IS VERY BUSY... WHEN IT IS QUIET, IT IS VERY QUIET

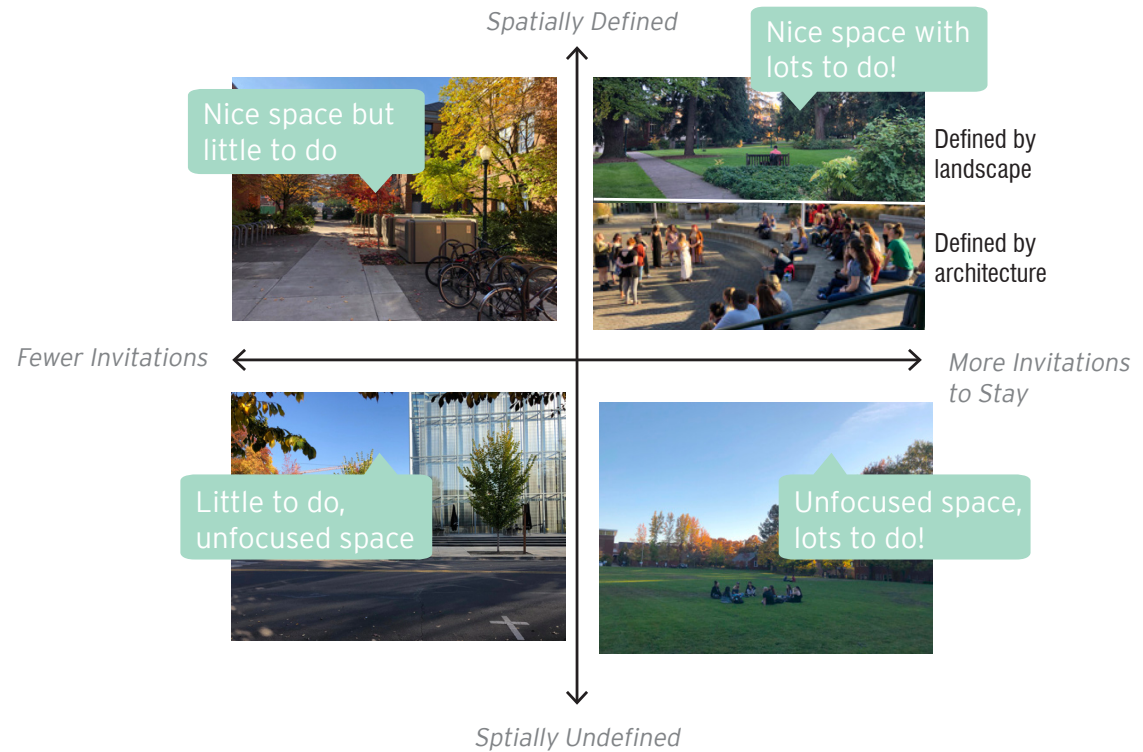


LOTS OF PEDESTRIANS AND FEW CARS ON 13TH



Well Loved Open Spaces are Defined by Enclosure and Invitations to Stay

WELL LOVED OPEN SPACES ARE DEFINED BY ENCLOSURE AND INVITATIONS TO STAY

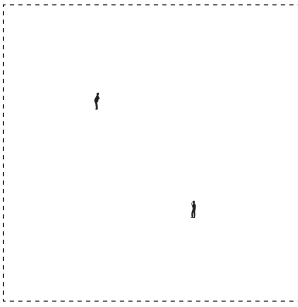


Some Places Feel Extremely Busy, Yet Have Very Few People Actually Stopping To Stay

PEOPLE MOVING ≠ PEOPLE STAYING.

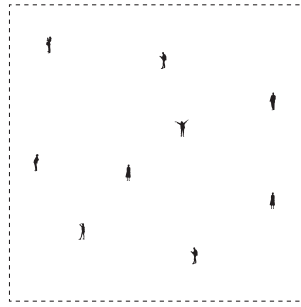
13th at Jaqua & Hamilton

~2 ppl/10k sf at peak
(1pm)



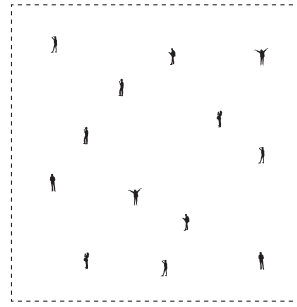
Lundquist Ct & 13th

~9 ppl/10k sf at peak
(1pm)



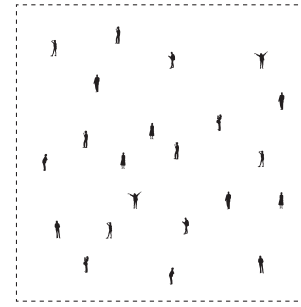
13th at Campus Heart

~13 ppl/10k sf at peak
(11am)



EMU Plaza

~22 ppl/10k sf at peak
(1pm)



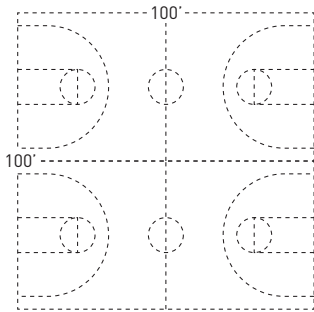
Less Dense ←

Low "stickiness" of people moving, fewer than 1% stay

→ Most dense

Scale Reference

Two basketball courts



Reference:

Victor S. Park, Seattle

~38 ppl/10k sf hourly average

