

Downtown pedestrian traffic set to remain below 2019, despite an increase in leisure trips to downtowns at the weekend, as the return to the office stalls

Key Facts

- Pedestrian traffic in US downtowns strengthened in June 2022, to -26.3% below 2019 in June -from -27.8% in May.
- The gap from 2019 has now narrowed by nearly a half from January 2022 when traffic was -42.9% below 2019 level.
- Downtown pedestrian traffic from Monday through Friday weakened to -32.2% below 2019 from -31.7% in May, whilst strengthening over Saturday and Sunday to -12.2% below 2019 from -16% in May.
- Pedestrian traffic over the weekend during June in large city centers was just -10.3% below 2019 versus -23.6% from 2019 in smaller downtowns.
- On the Sunday preceding the Memorial Day public holiday downtown pedestrian traffic was +2.1% higher than on the equivalent day in 2019 (June 2nd 2019) and +0.7% higher than on the day before Memorial Day in 2019 (Sunday May 26th 2019).
- In the absence of a significant proportion of employees returning to full time office working, downtown pedestrian traffic is likely to remain at least a fifth lower than the 2019 level.

2022 vs 2019
Downtown Index



2022 vs 2019
Downtown Index



The Full Commentary

In spite of rising price inflation, the post Covid recovery of downtowns continued in June, with pedestrian traffic strengthening to -26.3% below the 2019 level from -27.8% in May. The gap from the 2019 has now narrowed by nearly a half from January 2022 when traffic was -42.9% below the 2019 level.

However, in June it seems that the drift back to the office stalled, and it was an improvement in weekend traffic in US downtowns that drove the increase in activity. During weekdays traffic marginally weakened to -32.2% below 2019 from -31.7% in May when it had strengthened from -36.1% below 2019 from April, whilst over Saturday and Sunday the gap from 2019 narrowed to -12.2% from -16% in May.

Home working is clearly becoming firmly established, and whilst suppressing pedestrian traffic during the week day period, it appears to be fuelling a desire amongst consumers to make trips to downtowns during weekends. However, the appeal of larger downtowns for leisure trips is evident, with pedestrian traffic over the weekend during June in large city centers just -10.3% below 2019 versus -23.6% from 2019 in smaller downtowns.

SPRINGBOARD.

Downtown Pedestrian Traffic | United States June 2022

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Weekend traffic was boosted in June by an uplift in activity in downtowns on Sunday in the first week of the month, preceding the Memorial Day public holiday on Monday May 30th. On this one day alone traffic was +2.1% higher than on the equivalent day in 2019 (June 2nd 2019) and +0.7% higher than on the day before Memorial Day in 2019 (Sunday May 26th 2019).

Despite the desire of consumers to make trips to downtowns for leisure, in the absence of a significant proportion of employees returning to full time office working, downtown pedestrian traffic is likely to remain at least a fifth lower than the 2019 level.

Diane Wehrle, Marketing & Insights Director
Named as a Top 100 Rethink Retail Influencer for 2022 #TRI2022



NOTES TO EDITORS:

Springboard is the leading provider of insights on bricks and mortar retail activity, tracking and forecasting pedestrian traffic and delivering performance metrics across retail destinations since 2002. Springboard has the most comprehensive pedestrian traffic data using the latest generation automated technology. Globally, Springboard records over 44 million pedestrian traffic counts per week at 2,160 counting points in 1,100 shopping locations. Springboard partners with leading brands across the world and is relied upon by global media and government bodies. [Click here](#) to access our latest U.S. Retail Consumer Reports. Diane Wehrle specialises in delivering intelligence and insights on both current retail performance and long term retail trends to retailers, hospitality occupiers, landlords, investors and place managers, and was recently named as one of the world's 100 top retail influencers in 2022 by Rethink Retail for the second year running.

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