

2020 Super Tuesday Results

The 2020 Super Tuesday count involved counting the number of people bike riding at 46 intersections, mainly in the City of Adelaide and City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters areas. Click [here](#) for a map showing the intersections counted, along with discussion and the historical counts at the intersections.

This was the first year since 2015 that the count has taken place on the same date as the rest of southern Australia (i.e. excluding Queensland and the Northern Territory) – the first Tuesday in March. This date has proved problematic in the past because it clashed with the Supercar race, which closes several streets in City, both encouraging the use of bicycles to avoid traffic congestion and closing several important bicycle routes. This year the race was transferred to earlier in the year, avoiding this problem. The only significant commuter bike routes that were closed were through Botanic Park (closed due to WOMADelaide) and Rundle Park (closed due to the Garden of Unearthly Delights).

The 2020 count also involved a record number of 58 volunteers, due to several of the larger or more complex intersections using two volunteers. Eight locations were counted for the first time:

- The River Torrens Linear Path, at Felixstow
- East Terrace/ South Terrace, Adelaide
- West Terrace/ South Terrace, Adelaide
- Morphett Street/Hindley Street, Adelaide
- King Street/ Railway Terrace, Mile End
- Magill Road/ Osmond Terrace, Norwood
- Rugby Street/ Baliol Street, College Park
- Port Road/ Gaol Road, Adelaide.

The key trends and observations from the 2020 Super Tuesday count include:

- A reduction in the number of cyclists of almost 9% from the numbers counted in 2019, which was an increase of 11% over 2018. Possible reasons for this are discussed below.
- A dramatic shift of cyclists from Port Road (and possibly Hawker Street) to the Outer Harbor Greenway, now that the Greenway has been completed at its City end.
- A dramatic decline in the number of cyclists on the Westside Bikeway.
- Although a lower count than in last year, a continued long-term growth in popularity of the Keswick Bikeway.

CHANGES IN CYCLING NUMBERS

39 intersections had comparable count data for both 2019 and 2020. The total count for these were 9,951 (2019) and 9,096 (2020) – a decline of 8.6%. This is a dramatic turnaround from 2019, when the count was 11% higher than the year before.

An obvious possible reason for this decline is the Covid-19 pandemic. Although a general shutdown of restaurants etc., was not ordered for almost three weeks after the day of the count, public concern was growing as the extent of the problem was becoming clear.

The impact of Covid-19 would be particularly felt on cycling to university. The campuses were relatively subdued, with students being encouraged to attend orientation lessons on-line rather than on-campus. About a quarter of South Australia’s university enrolments are of overseas students, and the bulk of these are from China. This year students were banned from travelling from China to Australia.

However, there is little evidence from the count itself to support Covid-19 being a major factor. Two of the few intersections with higher counts than last year were close to the university precinct on North Terrace. The Pulteney Street intersections with North Terrace and Pirie Street experienced increases of 3% and 4% respectively (though the numbers entering the University of Adelaide campus at North Terrace did decline from 36 to 28). While Frome/ Pirie experienced a 3% decline, this was a smaller decline than the overall average.

Nor does the permanent counter on the Frome Bikeway*¹ provide evidence of an impact from Covid-19 before the shutdown was ordered. Figure 1 below juxtaposes the weekly figures for 2019 and 2020, with the week of the count indicated by a star. This suggests similar weekly counts in both years.



Figure 1: 2019 (left) and 2020 (right) [weekly count data, Frome Bikeway](#)

In each case the graphs cover the first 16 weeks of the calendar year. The dramatic impact of Covid-19 in the last few weeks of the 2020 graph is obvious. In 2020 the week of the count was significantly lower than the week before. This may have been due to health concerns.

A second possible explanation is the weather. The day of the count this year experienced what was probably the coldest morning ever experienced for a Super Tuesday count. Temperatures were about 12 degrees during the count itself. It was also windy at the start of the count. This contrasts with 2019, when temperatures were about 10 degrees warmer and the weather calm. (One of those counted in 2020 told the volunteer that he had delayed his morning ride until the day warmed up.)

¹ There are about 10 permanent counters in the Adelaide metropolitan area. Two maintained by the City of Charles Sturt. One is on the River Torrens Linear Path between Findon Road and Holbrooks Road. The other on the Outer Harbor Greenway in Woodville. Both are providing valuable data, but have not been used here, the former because the high levels of recreational cycling on the RTLP obscure the commuter cycling that the Super Tuesday count is trying to gauge; the latter because the dramatically different condition of the Outer Harbor Greenway between the 2019 and 2020 counts makes any comparative data misleading. The other permanent counters are maintained by the State government. Their data is not publicly available.

An analysis of the intersection data has been undertaken in an effort to distinguish recreational cycling from commuter cycling, on the assumption that recreational cycling would be more susceptible to the weather than commuter cycling. Many observations and numerous intersections have led to the further assumptions that the recreational cyclists are (a) wearing lycra and without panniers and backpacks, and (b) are riding along non-radial major arterial roads.²

The results are displayed in Table 2, which indicates the number of through (i.e. non-turning) cyclists on the major roads. Numbers are small in each case, but the pattern is quite consistent, with only two of the nine locations recording higher number in 2020 and the overall reduction more than a third.

	2019	2020	Change
Park Terrace at Hawker St	25	5	-80%
Greenhill at Porter St	76	46	-39%
Portrush at Beulah Rd	12	7	-42%
Fullarton at Beulah Rd	19	10	-47%
Hackney at Richmond St	23	26	13%
Dequetteville Tce at Rundle St	19	17	-11%
Fitzroy at Braund Rd	19	22	16%
Fullarton at Grant Ave	23	5	-78%
TOTAL	216	138	-36%

Table 2: Through cyclists on major roads

The evidence of Table 2 is also supported by the observation of the volunteer at the bottom of the Crafers Bikeway. “Commuter” cyclists (identified as those with backpacks or panniers) were actually slightly higher in 2020: 18 versus 15 in 2019. The count of the non-commuters was 74 in 2019 and 58 in 2020 – a decline of 22%.

The analysis supports weather being a contributory factor for the reduction in cycling. While both days were dry, Super Tuesday 2019 was possibly the most pleasant weather experienced, while 2020 was the coldest and most blustery. In that sense, both days were aberrations.

It should be noted that despite the decline, the 2020 count was still higher than in 2018 and previous years.

FEMALE CYCLING

Each year volunteers are asked to count the numbers of bike riders who are female, if they can. This year 24% of those counted were identified as female, which is typical of recent years. Of the 21 larger counts (i.e. more than 200 cyclists), the top three were all on the Frome Bikeway, indicating the continuing popularity of that route for females. Each of these intersections recorded 30% or more female cyclists.

² Of course there will be other recreational cyclists who do neither of these. Unfortunately they cannot be identified. Also, there will be some commuter cyclists who wear lycra without luggage on non-radial arterial roads.

The lowest proportion (14%) was recorded at the Sir Douglas Nicholls (zoo) Bridge. This is surprising, given that this is part of an off-road route, which typically appeals to female cyclists.

MOST POPULAR LOCATIONS AND ROUTES

The following are the top ten intersections and the numbers counted for both 2019 and 2020. Those marked with an asterisk were not counted in 2020.

	2019		2020	
1	West Tce/ Sir Donald Bradman Dr	580	Pulteney/ Pirie	556
2	Frome/ Pirie	545	Frome/ Pirie	529
3	Pulteney/ Pirie	534	West Tce/ Sir Donald Bradman Dr	456
4	Greenhill/ King William	486	Greenhill/ King William	449
5	Greenhill/ Porter	484	Pulteney/ Flinders	436
6	King William/ Sturt	458	Greenhill/ Porter	404
7	Frome/ Flinders*	418	King William/ Sturt	401
8	Pulteney/ Flinders	407	Pulteney/ South Tce	367
9	Pulteney/ South Tce	403	Frome/ Victoria Drive	346
10	East Tce/ Rundle*	361	Dequetteville Tce/ Rundle	332

Table 1: Top 10 locations, 2019 and 2020

** not counted in other year*

The highest two locations in 2020 both have high north-south and east-west movements. There are typically about 140 cyclists using Pirie Street to ride into the CBD from the east, while about 190 and 240 respectively ride from the south on the Frome Bikeway and Pulteney Street by the time they reach Pirie Street.

King William Street, fed by the Mike Turtur Bikeway is the other important route from the south, with about the same numbers as Pulteney Street.

The River Torrens Linear Path (about 250) Rundle Street (240) and Grant Avenue (260) are the main feeders from the east.

West Terrace/ Sir Donald Bradman Drive has high movements from the southwest, fed by the Keswick Bikeway (about 270), as well as about 120 from the west on Sir Donald Bradman Drive. Port Road contributes about 150 from the west. It is likely that the River Torrens Linear Path is the most important route from the west but no data is available to demonstrate this.

There are simply no popular cycling routes from the north. Frome/Victoria Drive is the only site on the northern side of the CBD in the top 10. It had almost 250 cyclists riding from the north on Frome Road but, judging from earlier counts at Frome Road/War Memorial Drive, probably less than half of these had come from North Adelaide via Frome Road. The rest had joined Frome Road at the zoo from the River Torrens Linear Path.

Of the other routes from the north, King William Road provided about 75 cyclists and Montefiore Road 140. But it is probable that the bulk of those on Montefiore Road joined the road just across the bridge from the River Torrens Linear Path. A 2014 count at the intersection of Montefiore Road and War Memorial Drive found only 28 cyclists coming down the hill from Jeffcott Street, joined by 17 who turned onto the road from War Memorial Drive.