

DATA RESULTS

FALL 2009 PRESIDIO TRAFFIC CALMING STUDY

If you have questions about the Presidio Traffic Calming Study Results, please call the Public Affairs Office at (415) 561-5418.

Background

In the 2002 *Presidio Trust Management Plan* (PTMP), the Presidio Trust committed to mitigating traffic impacts as Presidio occupancy and visitation grew. The Trust has implemented a number of strategies, including the *PresidiGo* shuttle; the Presidio Transportation Demand Management program, which includes permitted and paid parking; and an array of traffic-calming measures, such as speed tables and stop signs.

In March 2009, the Trust updated traffic counts at all Presidio gates for the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Main Post Update to the Presidio Trust Management Plan. The study also measured the traffic that cuts through the Presidio for destinations outside the park. It was found that traffic volumes are so far consistent with the increases anticipated in PTMP given current occupancy of the Presidio, but approximately 50 percent of the traffic is cut-through traffic. This suggests that the Trust has effectively controlled traffic related to Presidio growth, but that the problem of cut-through traffic may in fact be greater than anticipated. Without actions specifically targeted to deter cut-through traffic, it could surpass park-related traffic. The new Doyle Drive-Presidio interchange at Girard will increase this likelihood by making some Presidio roadways, in particular Presidio Boulevard, even more attractive as cut-through routes.

The Presidio Trust conducted a traffic management study for a three-week period (September 29 to October 21, 2009) to evaluate the effect of various measures, including partial closure of Presidio Boulevard, on the volume of cut-through traffic through the park.

Methodology

Stop signs, speed cushions, and temporary road closures were implemented throughout the park. The study consists of two types of data analysis: comparison of traffic volumes in various locations inside and outside the park before and during the study, and comparison of cut-through patterns during the study to cut-through patterns from March 2009.

Before the trial began, from September 16 through September 22, bi-directional traffic counts were collected with machine counters at several locations including the gates and locations where Presidio Boulevard traffic was expected to be diverted. In the third week of the trial, from October 14 through October 20, these same data were gathered again.

In addition, on Thursday, October 17 and Saturday, October 19, the license plate survey conducted on a Thursday and Saturday in late March 2009 was repeated to determine how cut-through traffic patterns changed as a result of the study measures. As part of the license plate survey, individuals positioned at each gate recorded the last four digits of vehicle license plates

entering each gate and leaving each gate. For consistency with previous studies, data were collected between 10 am and 6 pm on Thursday and between 10 am and 4 pm on Saturday.

Study Results

The study results indicate that total daily traffic through the gates decreased from 72,124 / 71,049 (weekday / weekend) in September to 54,561 / 53,052 in October during the temporary closures – a decrease of approximately 25 percent (see Figure 1). Weekday daily traffic volumes were lower at nearly all gates, but slightly increased at the Arguello Gate and on the Richardson slip ramp. Although traffic through the Arguello Gate increased only slightly, much of the traffic on westbound West Pacific Avenue turned onto Arguello, suggesting that traffic volumes on Arguello north of West Pacific were further increased above the levels captured by counters at the Arguello Gate. The total volume through the Lombard Gate decreased, indicating that the decrease in cut-through traffic from the Presidio Gate and other gates significantly outweighed the increase from Park-based traffic forced to use other gates, including the Lombard Gate. Figure 2 illustrates the change in total daily weekday traffic at all locations.

The total volume of traffic on West Pacific Avenue did not change substantially, and in fact, decreased slightly on weekdays. The increase in volume traveling in the westbound direction was outweighed by a more significant reduction in eastbound traffic – cut-through traffic that was not able to travel from the Arguello Gate to the Lombard Gate via West Pacific Avenue and Presidio Boulevard.

Traffic increased at some other locations measured, most notably Divisadero Street. The daily weekday traffic volume on Divisadero Street increased by 2,771 daily vehicles or 24%, but the increase was more pronounced during the morning and midday hours (see Figure 3).

Figure 4 illustrates the change in weekend daily traffic at all locations. Weekend differences are strikingly similar to changes experienced on weekdays. Slightly greater reductions were observed at the 25th Avenue and Marina gates, likely due to these gates being closed for a portion of Sunday, October 18 for the Nike Women's Marathon.

The Trust has more extensive historical data for the weekday PM peak commute hour. Figure 5 illustrates the change in PM peak hour volumes over recent years by gate. Traffic volumes have increased over time at some gates and decreased at others. The construction of the slip ramp in 2004 is likely responsible for the reduction in volume through the Lombard Gate. The greatest variability in traffic volumes continues to be at the 25th Avenue and the Merchant road entrances, as well as at the Golden Gate Bridge Plaza. The volumes at these gates are likely more sensitive to San Francisco tourist activity. The portion of Lincoln Boulevard between the Golden Gate Bridge and the 25th Avenue entrance also serves as an alternative route by which motorists bypass congestion on Highway 1 (Veterans Boulevard).

For the purposes of the study, cut-through traffic is defined as traffic entering one gate and leaving another within 15 minutes. The total cut-through traffic decreased from 18,040 to 7,433 over eight hours on a weekday, and from 17,774 to 7,060 over six hours on a Saturday (see Figure 6). After the Presidio Gate, the reduction in cut-through traffic was most pronounced at the Lombard Gate (see Figures 7 and 8). The reduction in cut-through traffic translated to a far

greater percentage of traffic through the gates as being Presidio-based. In March 2009, cut-through traffic accounted for approximately half the daily traffic through the gates. In October 2009, during the study period, only 24% of the traffic through the gates was cut-through traffic.

Public Feedback

The Trust received over 700 public comments on the study. There were favorable comments – primarily from cyclists, hikers and runners who regularly use the park for recreation. However, most respondents were opposed to the closure of Presidio Boulevard because it forced them to use less convenient routes to their destination – whether it be within the Presidio or not. All comments received are available for review in the Presidio Trust Library.

Next Steps

The Traffic Calming Study has contributed to the Trust’s baseline information about traffic in the park and its relation to park uses. Over the next four years, the Doyle Drive reconstruction project will have a significant impact on traffic and circulation patterns throughout the park. Lincoln Blvd will be closed for about one year, Halleck Street will subsequently be closed for approximately 18 months, and two ramps providing highway access between Doyle Drive and Highway 1 will effectively be closed for the duration of the project. Mason Street, Halleck Street and McDowell Avenue will become major detour routes, and closure of the ramps will add additional pressure to park roadways as motorists try to find alternative routes between the Marina and Richmond districts. While Doyle Drive is under construction, the Trust will continue to make improvements to calm traffic and to reduce the impact of the Doyle reconstruction on the Presidio community, visitors to the park, as well as on Presidio neighbors. The Trust will also continue to implement traffic-calming measures such as stop signs, speed tables, chicanes, and vertical delineators, to slow traffic in the park and to make the Presidio less desirable as a cut through. Some of the minor road closures considered in the study may be implemented after applicable environmental and historic preservation compliance processes. Modifications to the use of Presidio Boulevard, however, including closing it, would not be considered until after Doyle Drive reopens and there has been sufficient time to assess the effect of the new Girard Road interchange on local traffic conditions. Any such action would only be undertaken after a formal opportunity for public comment.

We believe that the benefits of the Girard interchange to surrounding neighborhoods and the Presidio community are greater than potential disadvantages; nonetheless, we recognize the potential for the Girard interchange to increase the amount of traffic through the Presidio Boulevard Gate. If this is indeed the case, the Trust will work with the both the park community and the surrounding neighborhoods to develop measures to mitigate the problems. Any measures that the Trust may wish to pursue and adopt would be subject to environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act as well as to review under the National Historic Preservation Act, both of which include extensive public participation in the decision-making process.

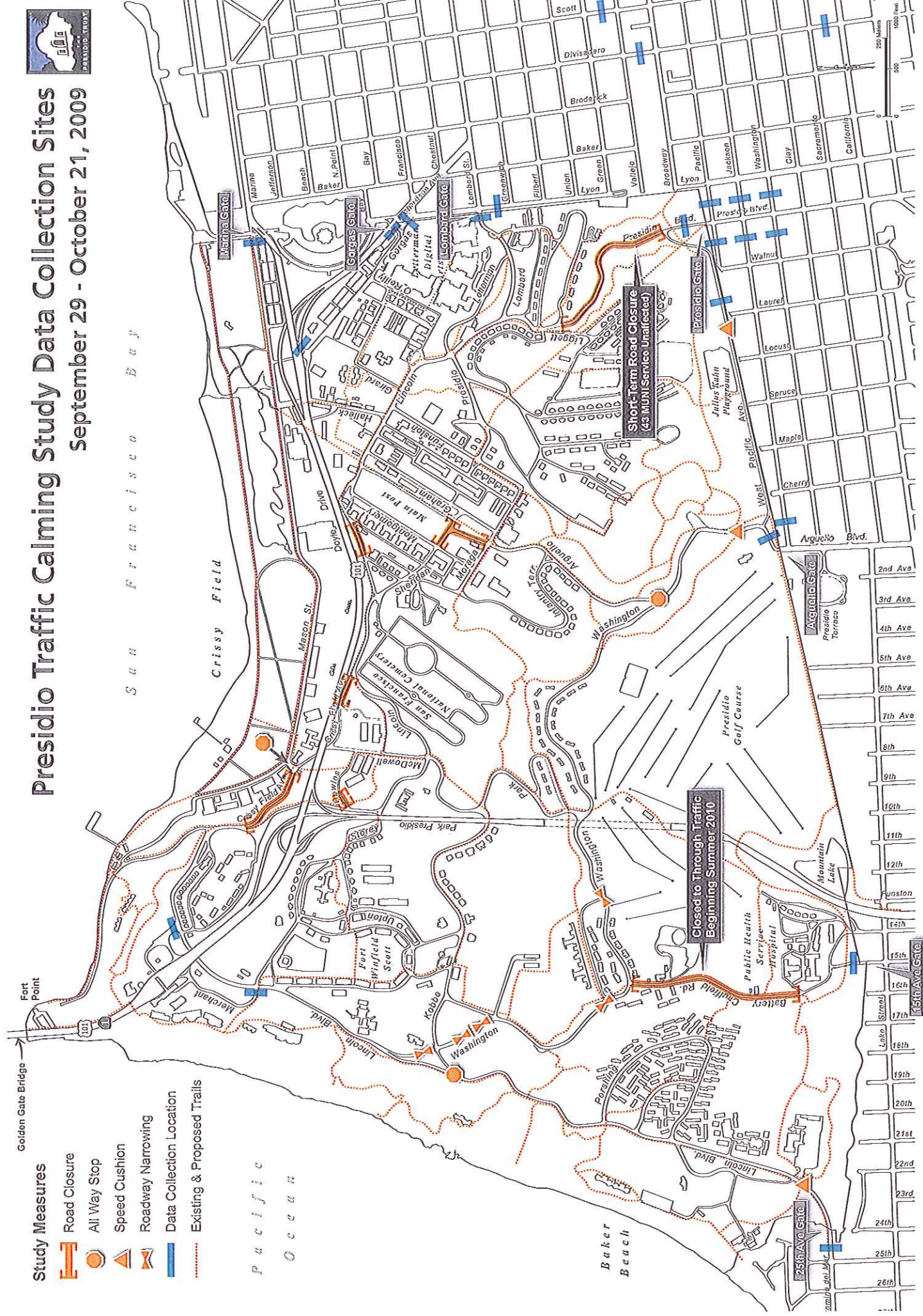
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Presidio Traffic Calming Study Data Collection Sites

September 29 - October 21, 2009

S a n F r a n c i s c o B a y



Study Measures

-  Road Closure
-  All Way Stop
-  Speed Cushion
-  Roadway Narrowing
-  Data Collection Location
-  Existing & Proposed Trails

Short-Term Road Closure
(45 MUNI Service Unaffected)

Closed to Through Traffic
Beginning Summer 2010



Figure 1. Total Daily Traffic Through Gates

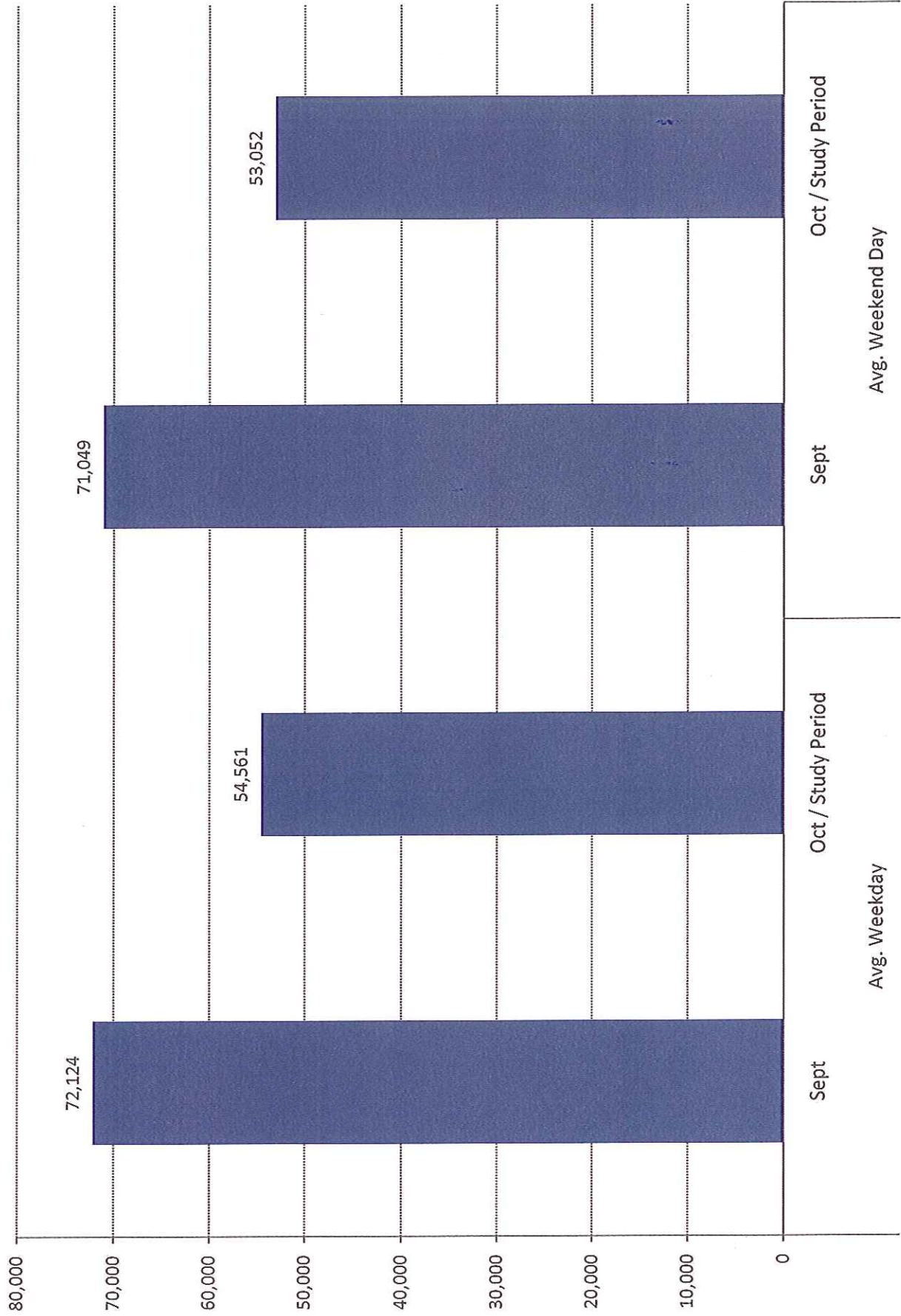


Figure 2. Weekday Daily Traffic Volumes

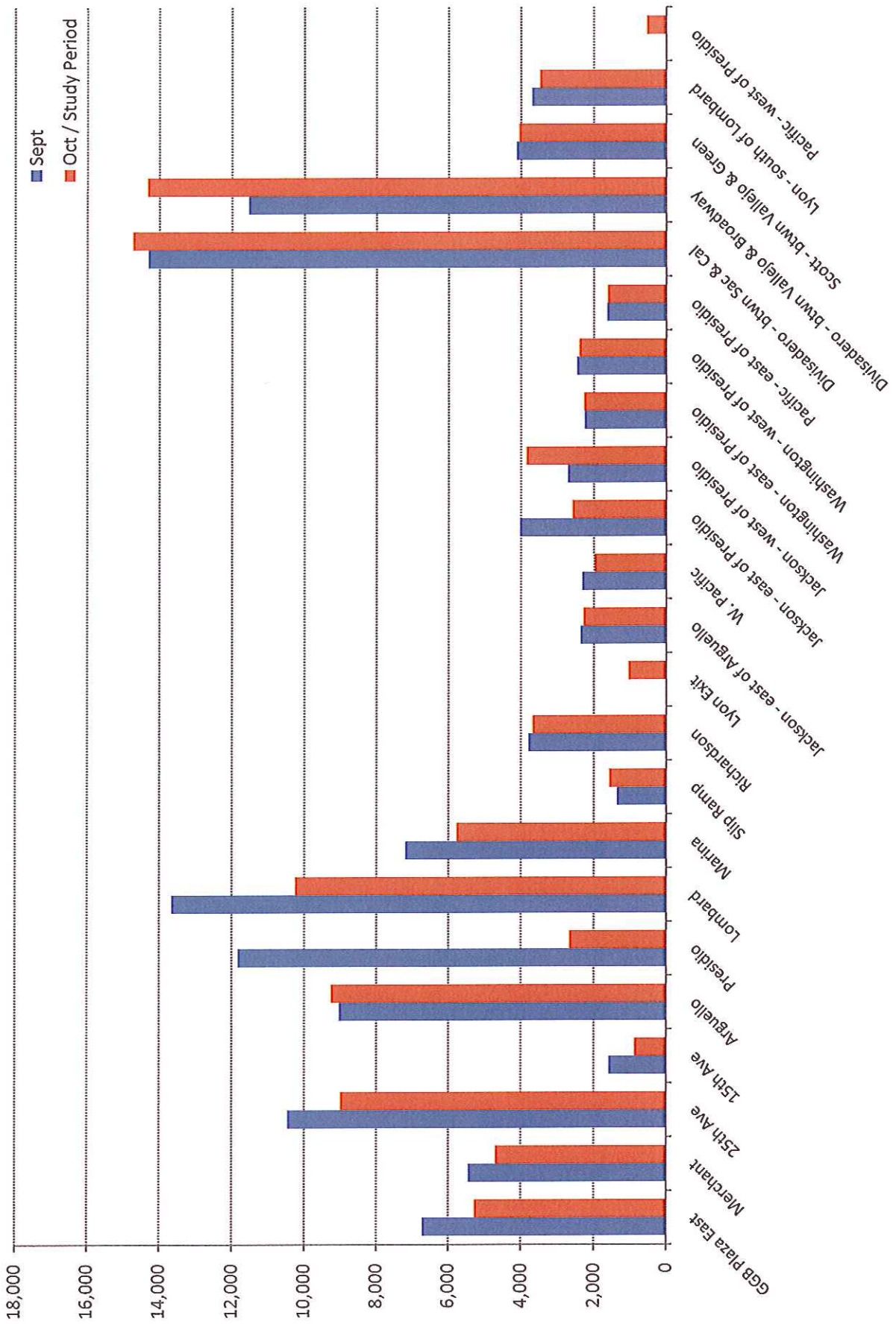


Figure 3. Average Weekday Traffic on Divisadero

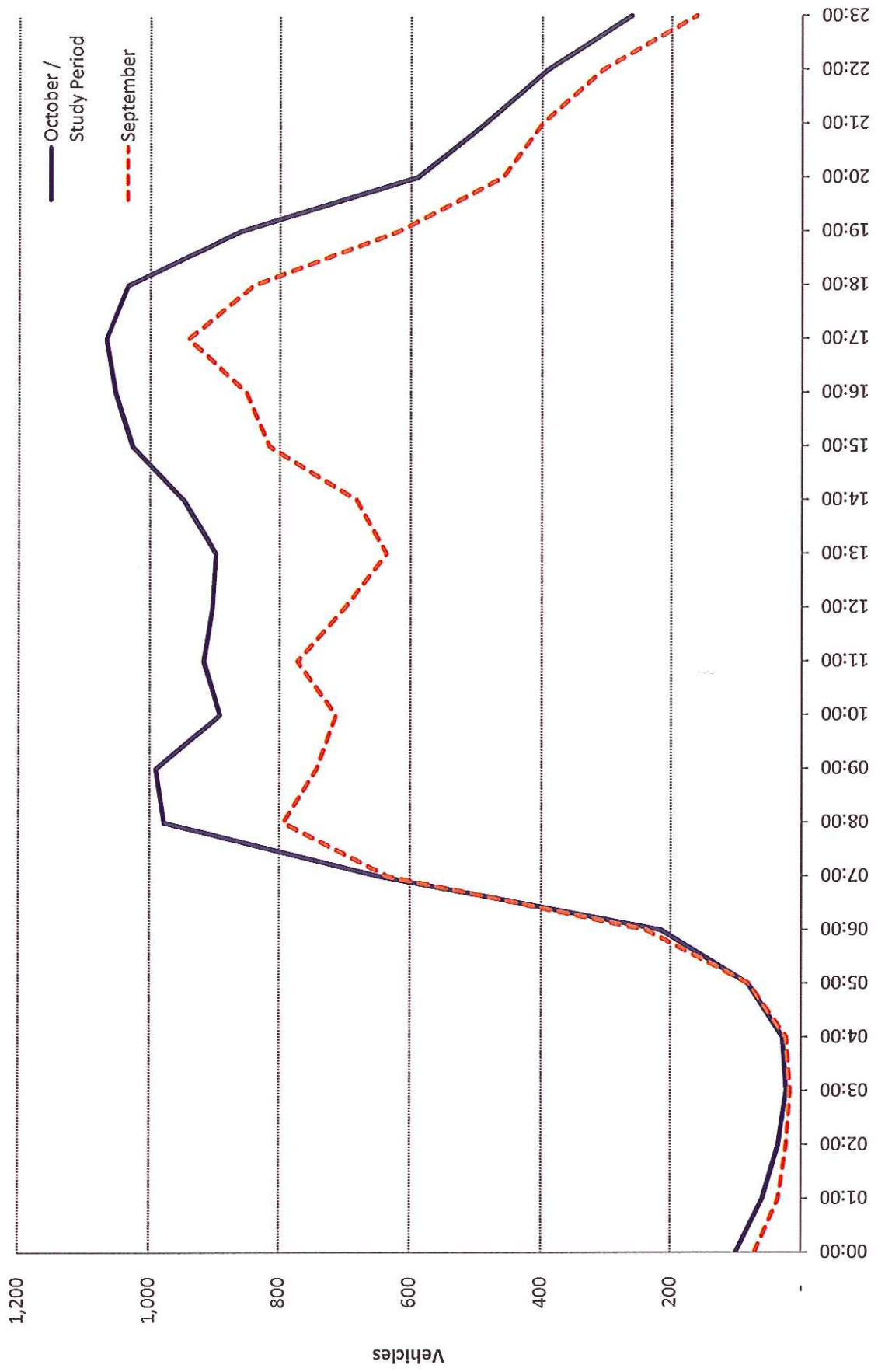


Figure 4. Weekend Daily Traffic

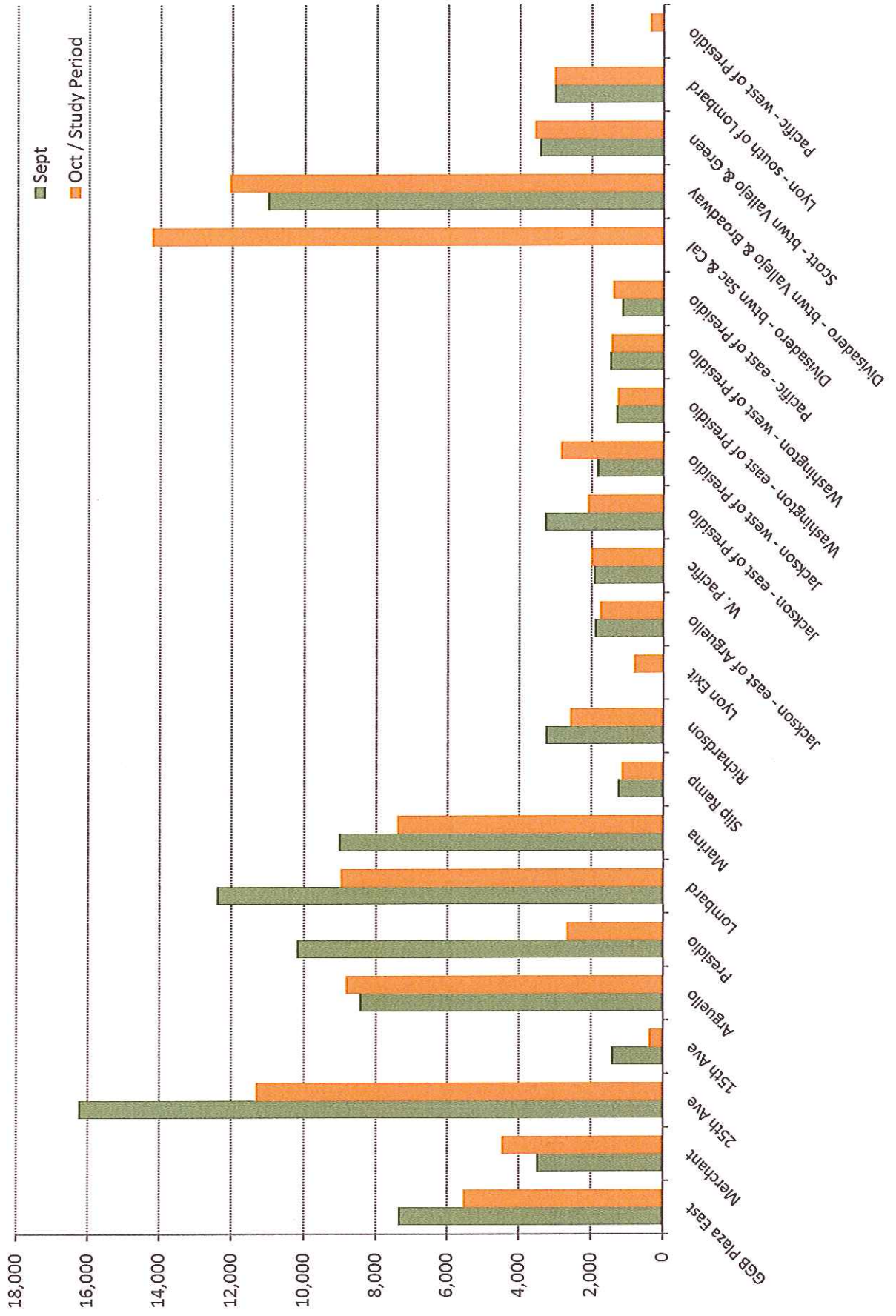


Figure 5. Weekday PM Commute Hour

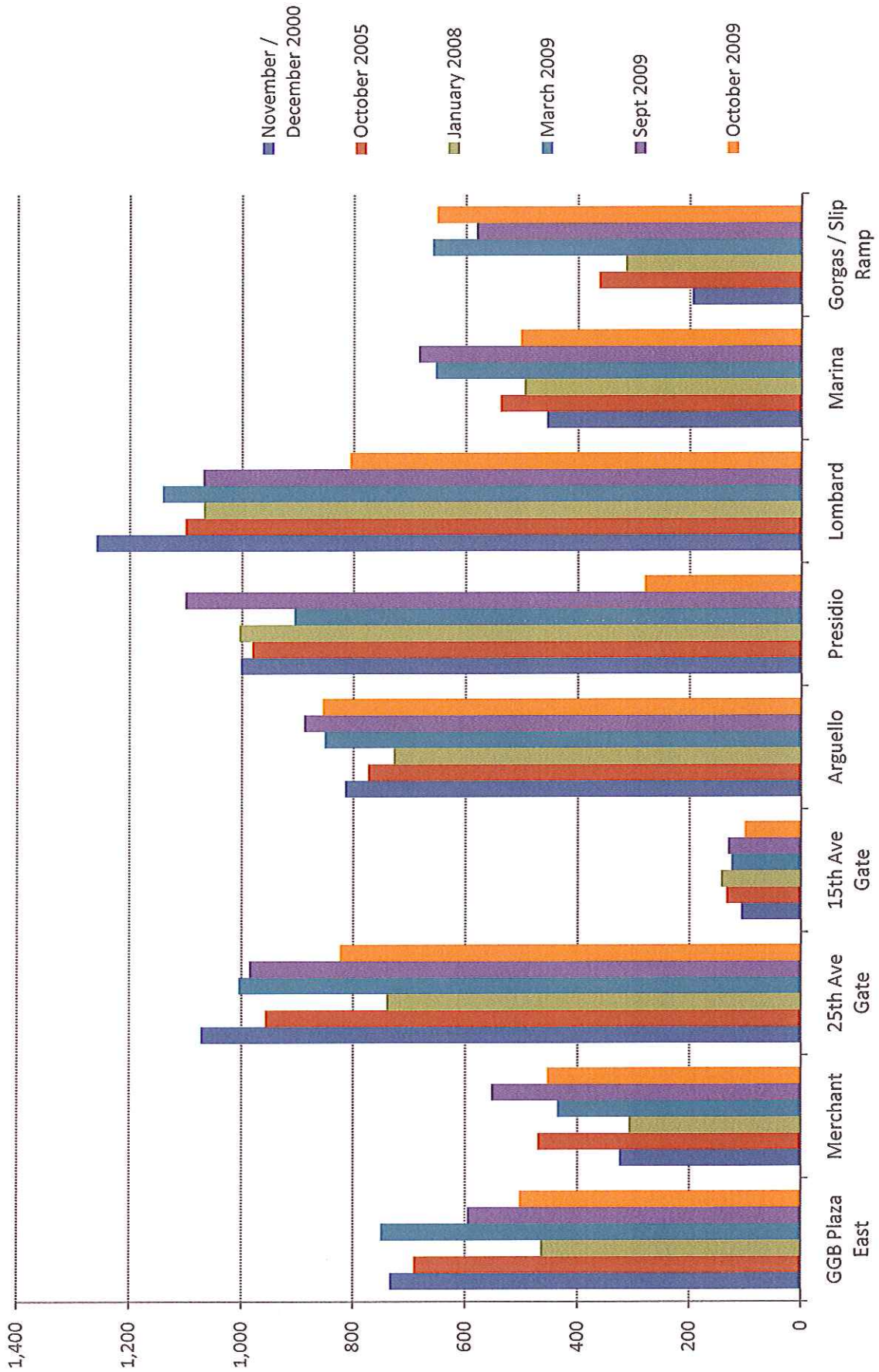


Figure 6. Cut-Through Traffic

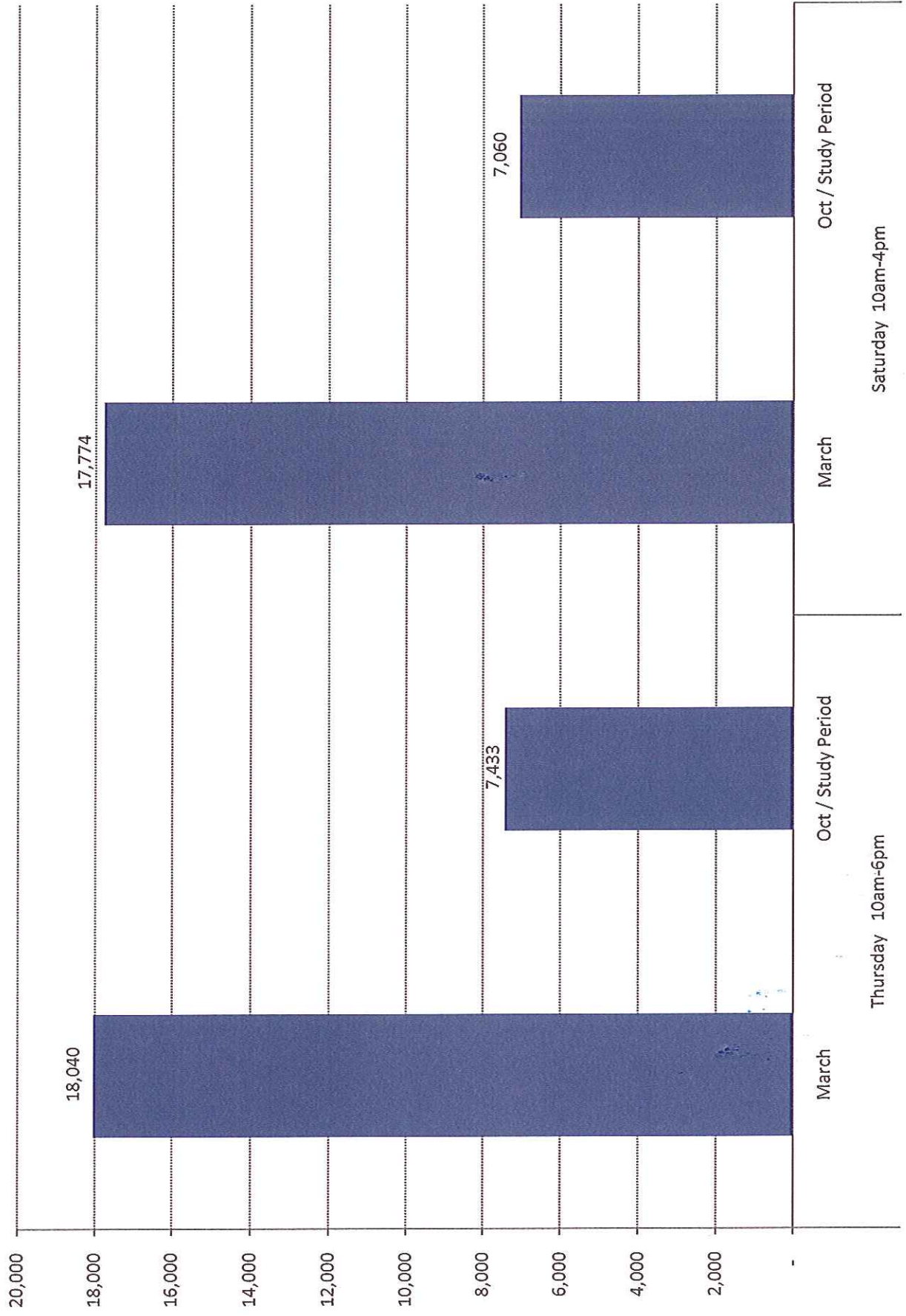


Figure 7. Thursday Cut-Through Traffic: 10am - 6pm

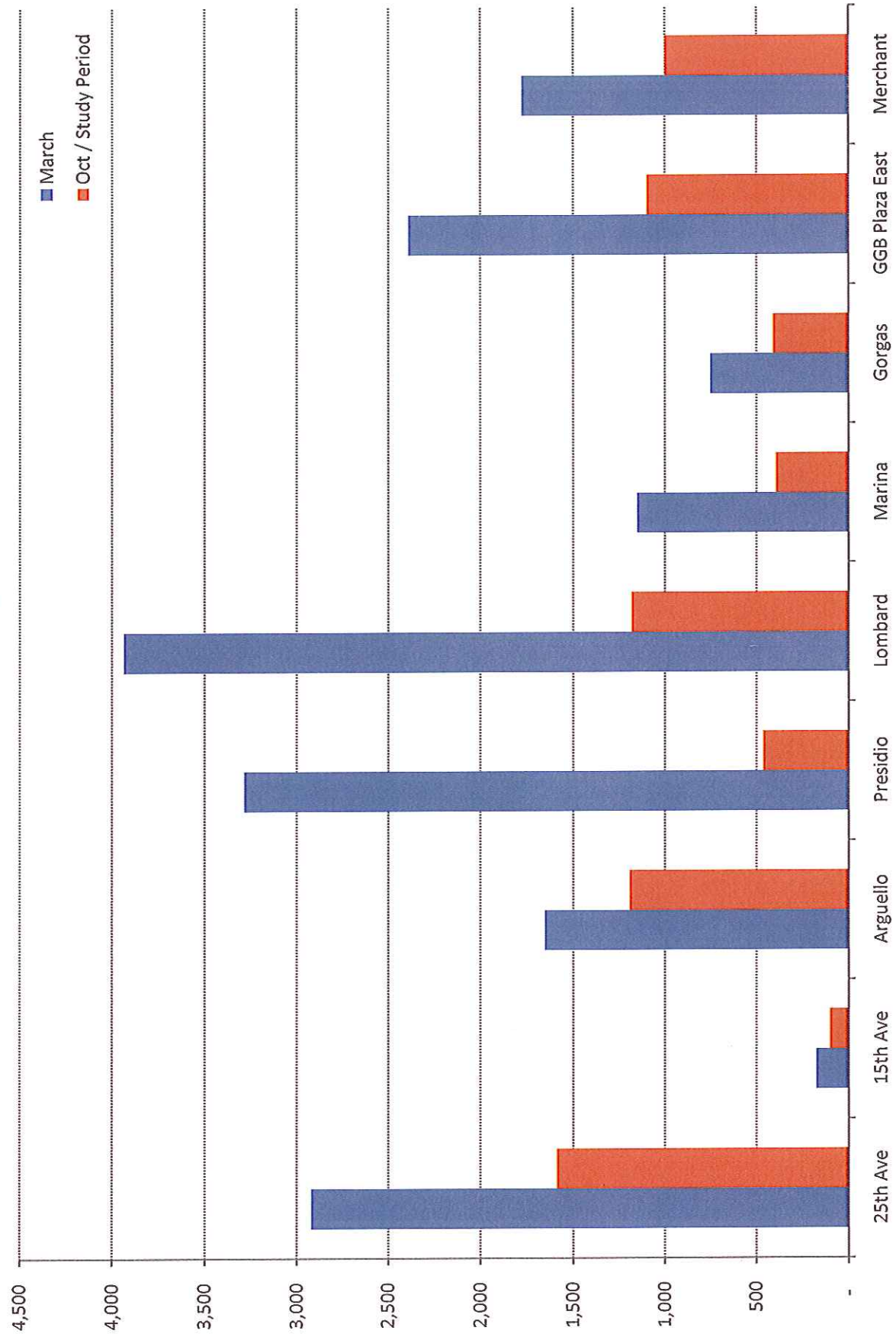


Figure 8. Saturday Cut-Through Traffic: 10am - 4pm

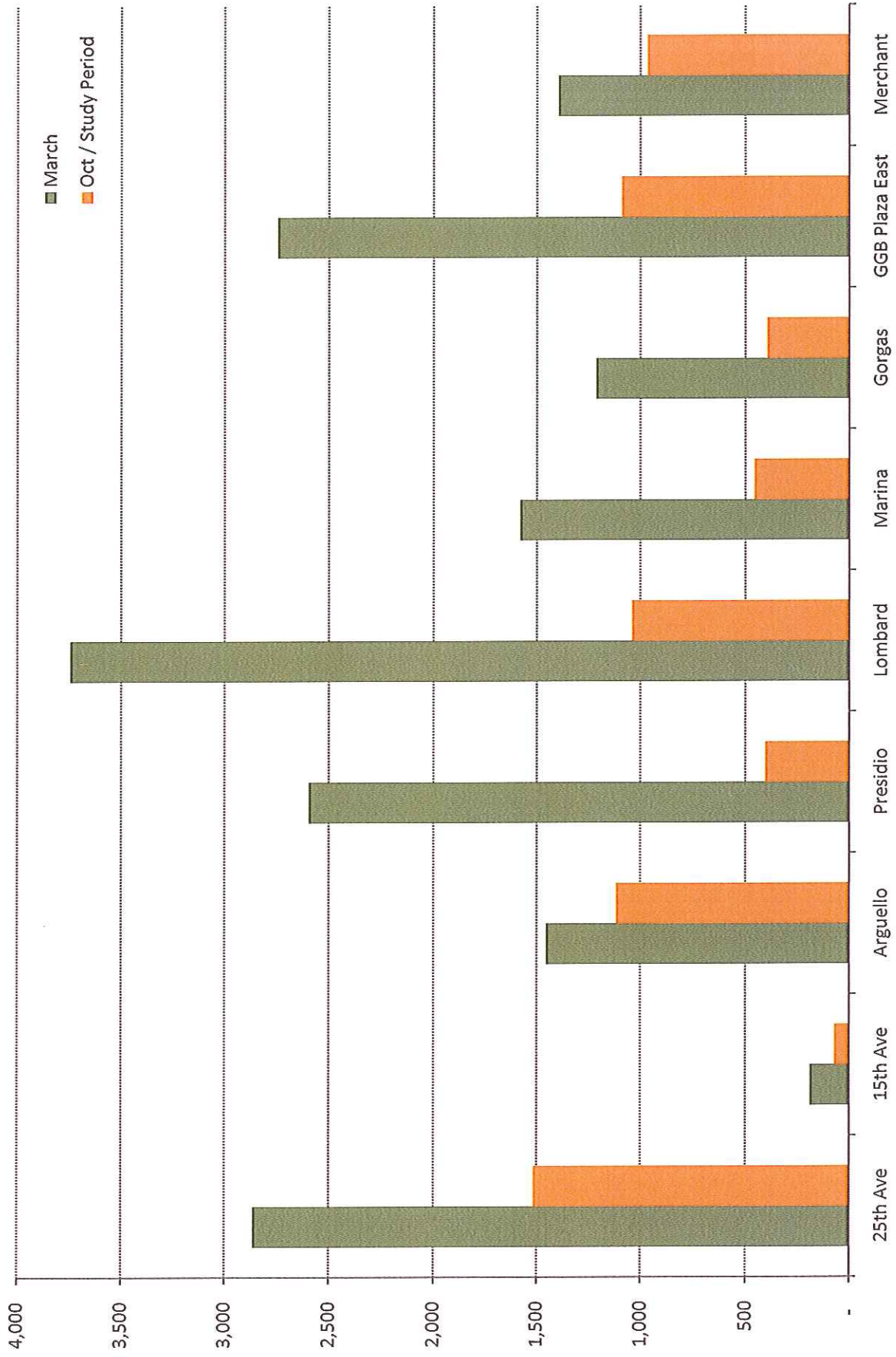


Figure 9. Daily Traffic Through Gates

