

ACCESS TO COMMERCIAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS PHASE 2

Project ID Number	14370
Category	Transit
FFY 2021 Total Budget	\$75,000

Purpose

This study will serve as a follow up to FFY 2019's *Transportation Access Studies of Central Business Districts*. There is a growing need to ensure that commercial business districts (CBD) can be accessed by users of all transportation modes—including walking, biking, taking transit, using ridehail services, or driving—and growing evidence to suggest that CBDs perform better economically when access by walking, biking, or transit is adequately prioritized. Research from across the region and country has shown that those who arrive by these modes will visit a CBD more frequently, visit more businesses per trip to the CBD, and spend more money in the CBD over time than those who arrive by driving.

However, planners and municipal officials often encounter reluctance from the business community when infrastructural reconfigurations necessary to support more diverse modes of access are proposed, because some business owners may believe the success of their business relies on the ability of their customers to have access to ample nearby street parking. Additional data gathering in this area can help planners' and municipal officials' decision-making efforts in their work to improve access to CBDs, and help make the case to the business community that investments in transportation improvements for non-driving modes are also investments in the economic vitality of the neighborhood overall.

Approach

In the FFY 2019 study, MPO staff conducted surveys of business owners in select CBDs, asking for their perceptions of their customers' travel and spending patterns. Staff then surveyed customers at these businesses as to their actual travel and spending patterns.

Phase 2 of this study will build upon the FFY 2019 work, with surveys conducted in a new set of case study locations, to build a larger sample dataset. Staff will also make the tools used in the survey work accessible to municipalities and other stakeholders, so that they can carry out similar data collection themselves.

FFY 2021 Anticipated Outcomes

The results of this study will be documented and presented in a report. Staff will also produce a toolbox that will be made available to municipalities and other partners for conducting CBD-access studies.