



Draft Memorandum for the Record Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

May 27, 2020, Meeting Minutes

2:30 PM–3:10 PM, Zoom

Lenard Diggins, Chair, representing the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Ridership Oversight Committee

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

Lenard Diggins called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. For attendance list, see page four.

2. Transportation Access to Central Business Districts and The Future of the Curb—*Andrew Clark, MPO Staff*

Andrew Clark, MPO staff, presented on the results of two Boston Region MPO studies funded in the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). He said the studies are part of a larger conversation on how to allocate curb space and how to facilitate access to central business districts (CBDs).

A. Clark listed the objectives of the CBD study, in which staff sought to understand:

- How mode choice varies in the different types of CBDs in the region
- How customers access CBDs in the region
- How merchants perceive their customers to arrive

A. Clark said the literature review for the CBD study returned some key findings:

- Most CBD customers do not drive
- Most CBD customers are within walking distance
- Non-driving CBD customers visit more frequently and spend more money over time

A. Clark said the CBD study designed a model that identified CBDs in the region and then classified each based on transit service type and overall density. He said data collection showed that merchants have some inaccurate perceptions about how customers access the CBD and how much they spend relative to travel mode. A. Clark said that, although they align

with national trends, the conclusions of the CBD study are based on small sample sizes collected on one day only, so more data collection is needed to support decision-making.

A. Clark said the objectives of the Future of the Curb study were to understand how demand for curb space is changing and how cities are reconfiguring their curbs to accommodate changing demands.

A. Clark said the literature review for the curb space study looked closely at cities like Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR, for insight into new curb management strategies. He discussed some causes of the changing demands on curb space:

- Ride-hailing industry causing demand for passenger pick-up and drop-off spaces
- More e-commerce increasing demand for loading and unloading zones
- Efforts to improve access, safety, and mobility for people using alternative modes of transportation
- Non-transportation-related curb space demands from community activation and greening efforts

A. Clark said Portland's curb management strategy is focused on maximizing total person-throughput, not vehicle throughput, of the existing street network.

A. Clark discussed some key takeaways from the Future of the Curb study:

- Start by defining goals for a segment of curb lane, assign the curb's function, and then measure success according to those goals.
- Other cities have tested strategies for making better use of curb space.
- There is an emphasis on pilot programs and flexibility.
- Municipalities should monitor, evaluate, and adjust curb regulations and management strategies to respond to changing demands.

Discussion

Laura Wiener, City of Watertown; Andy Reker, City of Cambridge; and A. Clark discussed best practices for managing and regulating loading zones to improve efficiency and reduce negative impact on other uses of the same curb space.

A. Reker and A. Clark discussed unexpected findings that emerged from the merchant and customer surveys that were conducted as part of the CBD study.

L. Diggins and A. Clark discussed the option of installing curb extensions that reach bus lanes so that buses can unload and load directly from the bus lane. They also discussed plans for follow-up studies to both the CBD and Future of the Curb studies.

3. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion carried.

Attendees

Member Municipalities	Representatives and Alternates
City of Cambridge	Andy Reker
City of Watertown	Laura Wiener

Member Citizen Advocacy Groups	Representatives and Alternates
MBTA Ridership Oversight Committee	Lenard Diggins

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff
Matt Archer
Andrew Clark

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