

Peer Exchange Summary: The Rise of the Curb: Expanding Mobility While Protecting Space (Nashville, TN)



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About the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM)

The National Center for Mobility Management is a national technical assistance center funded through a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration, and operated through a consortium of three national organizations—the American Public Transportation Association, the Community Transportation Association of America, and Easterseals Inc. The mission of the Center is to promote customer-centered mobility strategies that advance good health, economic vitality, self-sufficiency, and community.

The Rise of the Curb: Expanding Mobility while Protecting Space

Complete Streets are an essential component of mobility management. Transit agencies are increasingly recognizing the value of curb management as new mobility options and travel patterns lead to increased and varied demands for this space. The curbside facilitates access to essential activities such as goods, people, enhanced mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities, and increased community activation. However, there is more competition for the curb as traditional bus service competes with transportation network companies, dockless bikes and electric scooters, pedestrians, and soon, autonomous vehicles that necessitate universal design concepts and other policies that develop new and enhanced priorities for curbside use and expanded mobility hubs.

Improved curbside management and creating more mobility hubs will make it easy to access a wide range of travel options for different trip types. Considering local context, a relative prioritization of travel modes and right-of-way functions can be developed on a corridor-by-corridor or even block-by-block basis.

Attendees: Jameson Auten; Kevin Kane; John Lancaster; Nate Conable; Steve Davis; Rich Weaver; Lucy Galbraith; Chis O’Claire; Matt Sibul; Ron Brooks; Mark Donaghy; Catherine Prince; Adelee Le Grand; Gary Thomas; Elizabeth Presutti; Catherine Prince; Nadine Lee; Rich Weaver; Zach Smith

Welcome and Introductions

Steve gave framed the day’s discussion and provided some points to consider regarding managing the curb:

- Curbside management is about creating an organization scheme that improves safety for all users including the strategy, policy, implementation, and design.
- Currently, curb policy is driven by adjacent curbside use with adjacent property owners feeling like they own the space and not the city. This, in turn, has made projects difficult to advance moving forward and the curb underutilized over time.
- One of the first things is to think about what the primary uses are for the curb.
- The Seattle DOT has done that with its flex zones and prioritizing mobility, access for people, commerce, activation, greening and storage. The goal of these policies has been to identify the synergies of all of these and how we make mobility seamless for the customer.

Lucy Galbraith, Director – Transit Oriented Development, Metro Transit, Minneapolis, MN

Lucy shared resources and examples from Minneapolis regarding curb space management, while reiterating that these conversations have been going on for some time. Today, bikeshare, scooters, TNCs and dockless devices are now a consideration. In addition, Lucy mentioned:

- Cities are complex in terms of what needs to get in and out (people, cars, delivery trucks, etc.).
- The Twin Cities have a shared mobility collaborative that is focused on improving shared mobility and have begun to tackle the issue around the curb.
- NACTO has also published a document on curb appeal is a helpful resource and growing in popularity with transportation planners and other stakeholders.

Mobility hub concepts

- Minneapolis has natural mobility hubs where things come together with intermodal transfers and those where trains, buses, and BRT are naturally close together.
- As we look at mobility hubs, there are ways to think about variations; ways to do them so they are incorporated into a development. (e.g. Marq 2)
- The cities need to think about land-use and its impacts because cities get to shape themselves.

Questions we need to ask:

- What are the options for dealing with this?
- What are the operational options that change our space specifications?

Nadine Lee, Deputy Chief Innovation Officer, Los Angeles County Metro, Los Angeles, CA

Staff at the Office of Extraordinary Innovation at LA Metro spend a lot of time thinking about what the city should be in ten years. Deciding how curb management fits into the overall mobility space is

important, and you must look at how everything will work together. When engaging partners or stakeholders, it's helpful to remember:

- Partnerships are critical as well as having everyone understand the goal and their part in what's needed.
- Government is too often afraid to act, and transit agencies are afraid to fail. But its good to fail and fail fast. One lesson the department has learned is that being transparent when trying new things makes people more forgiving because they were clued in and a part of the process.
- Residents rely on the government to make the right decisions (which may or may not be supported) and that the government has a responsibility to use its authority judiciously.

Catherine Prince, Mobility Project Manager, City of Fort Lauderdale, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Catherine leads urban design on construction projects for the City of Fort Lauderdale and shared her experience in implementing a project involving close coordination between the City of Fort Lauderdale and the transit agency. The City of Fort Lauderdale is working on vision zero projects for the city including the need to know who the users are and how to accommodate everyone in the right of way. Catherine discussed a complete streets project along one of the city's main corridor that incorporated a bike lane Catherine noted a few highlights from the project:

- Five rideshare zones along a larger area of about 8 blocks
- Able to get UPS to use e-bike zone
- The idea of taking a lane for bikes was not welcomed by people
- The city saw a reduction in serious fatalities and crashes
- The project provided more capacity for delivery trucks and people.
- There was a learning curve at the city DOT regarding the needs of transit agencies on complete streets

Roundtable Discussion

Working with the private sector

There are a lot of times where there are no clear leaders when in developing partnerships with a new mobility provider. Transit agencies need to monitor and stay in the conversation. If you let the market decide everything, there will be places that they don't serve When writing an RFP, the transit agency can give stakeholders incentives to achieve the outcomes that you want to achieve. Transit agencies are often used to fill a leadership void and should be the leader in mobility issues. Examples of where transit is taking the lead include:

- Salt Lake City has a burgeoning bike share system, but the city and the agency want to see it expand in different parts of the city. The transit agency is working on an RFP for the whole bike sharing industry to include tricycles and electric bikes.
- It's important to set the rules of engagement for other mobility providers. You can give them a permit and tell them how you want them to operate and let the market dictate who wins. Dallas had five bikeshare companies come to the city at the same time. The transit agency began doing MOUs with bikeshare companies to give them a designated space on the platforms.
- Any company that goes to King County has to recognize Orca Lift, the agencies reduced transit fare program, because of the commitment regional leaders have made to ensure equitable access

to transportation. It is the key piece of the puzzle that allows the agency to make sure that all customers are served.

Who owns the curb space?

Traditionally, business owners have felt like the curb space was theirs, but we are starting to move past that and push back on the idea of ownership. There are examples of best practices across the country, and every successful example means that there is more to point to:

- One best practice is re-think freight delivery schemes outside of main corridors where it's not so busy. Cities can market this to businesses as increased reliability and getting a reliable space. Benefit to having more access to bike and transit users are that they spend more money than car users.
- Washington, D.C. is doing a lot of work in terms of freight loading schemes and parking issues:
 - The city has developed an almost fully permitted system for delivery zones.
 - You can buy the permit online even if you're a moving truck as the city makes it known where space is restricted, which spaces are occupied, and which spaces are free.
 - The city is currently doing a pilot on better locating TNCs in popular pick-up spots and a pilot on restricting parking at popular spots after 9 PM on the weekends.
- In Minneapolis, a hotel in the city had to formally agree not to use curb space for loading freight during rush hour, which benefitted both the hotel guests and passerby on the sidewalk.

Partnerships with city governments and transit agencies

Cities should consider innovative projects like slugging to improve mobility. Bus stops across the country have people waiting while cars pass by. A robust carpooling system can be implemented safely to improve mobility where it makes most sense.

There is an assumption that transit is against bikes, but that is not the case. Transit vehicles should be acknowledged for moving more people than bikes.

Majority of corridors are not a full capacity except during peak times. Outside of transit operating hours, curb space could be used for TNCs like the pilot in Washington, DC on weekend nights.

We may need to redefine the definition of a corridor. Sometimes, it may not make sense to put a bike lane there. Redefining how we see a corridor study to expand how we see the boundaries are important. Though there is a lesson to be learned from bike advocates. No matter what the city does or where the corridor is, the bike advocates generally advocate for the need for bike lanes and to protect cyclists. And in most cities, these groups have the ear of the decisionmakers.

In Des Moines, the city is redesigning streets downtown from one-way to two-way configurations. This process involves working with the bike community and the transit agency to determine the best place for each mode. To help the city and other stakeholders better understand transit's needs, the agency brought them in to drive buses in 10-foot lanes because it's so difficult. LA Metro did a similar exercise with the transit and bike communities. The bus drivers rode bikes to look at the impact of bus and bike safety on the roads.

Large-scale events and transit

Cities attract large-scale events to their downtowns that may impede access to transit and its performance. For instance, bus drivers may not know which streets are blocked, and customers may not know where to board if their stop is inaccessible. Leadership APTA has studied mega events that may be used as the basis for a future paper on best practices for transportation management plans around big event venues.

Spatial mismatch between employment and housing

There are many job opportunities at distribution centers. Transit is getting pressure to serve these areas, but its hard to serve them because jobs and housing are miles away. In Dallas, a Transportation Management Association has been established to mitigate transportation challenges to employment centers. Some major companies have been reluctant to join because they don't want to pay for it. The agency is using a combination of microtransit and app-based solutions to serve areas. Victor Valley Transit Authority is using vanpool to serve workers in distribution centers.

Its important for agencies to be at the table when major employers are thinking of locating jobs outside of transit-rich areas. And agencies should talk to their counterparts at the city about not subsidizing companies in locations that are not located near transit.

King County is incentivizing vanpools as well as a way to use the Orca card to get on-demand services for first-last mile connections to employment. One item to consider is that employers don't want to be on the same shuttle with other employers because of competition and not having one company poach another's employees.

Resources:

NACTO - [Curb Appeal: Curbside Management Strategies for Improving Transit Reliability](#)

International Transport Forum - [The Shared-Use City: Managing the Curb](#)

Fehr & Peers - [San Francisco Curb Study](#)

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