Discussion Theme Summary

We wrote this summary of the situation assessment discussion by organizing the discussion comments into themes and summarizing those themes, as well as integrating information gathered from attendees through polls during the meeting.

The 119 attendees of the situation assessment meeting on bike, pedestrian, and accessibility infrastructure data came from a variety of organizations: various federal government agencies (32%); state or local departments of transportation or metropolitan planning organizations (22%); academia (17%); nonprofit organizations (10%); private companies/corporate organizations (8%); industry or professional associations (8%); and other type of organizations (3%). There was no representation from tribes or tribal governments. Attendees' organizations typically produce data, consume data to achieve a variety of outcomes (e.g., navigation, research, planning), or assist other organizations – directly or indirectly – in producing and consuming data.

Attendees think the purpose of bike, pedestrian, and accessibility infrastructure data is to improve planning and implementation for these kinds of infrastructure, especially related to accessibility and safety; to improve navigation (i.e., trip planning) for those using bicyclist, pedestrian, and accessibility infrastructure; and to support more research and analysis.

Attendees saw collaboration around data standardization and interoperability as underlying the ability to do more and better research; improve planning, decision-making and performance management; and ultimately support policy and investment decisions.

According to attendees, the best possible outputs from a collaboration around these data include the adoption of data standards, clarifying data collection methodologies, and the development of end products – such as publicly accessible data covering the nation, data production and consumption tools, and adjacent or derivative data products – which fulfill specific use cases. Attendees are interested in outcomes like clarified data governance around bicycle, pedestrian, and accessibility infrastructure data collection and maintenance.

Attendees voiced uncertainty about every part of bicycle, pedestrian, and accessibility infrastructure data, including data collection, standardization, licensing, access, integration, quality, curation, archiving, and more. Attendees understood there to be a data gap: data often doesn't exist, and when it does exist, it suffers from poor quality, due in part to lack of standardization and the ground truth being constantly in flux. Attendees felt that the availability of data was representative of both geographical and modal challenges. They also felt that institutional, legal and other barriers were a greater impediment to collecting the data than technological challenges.

Attendees noted that – for successful collaboration – it is necessary to include knowledge, expertise, and experiences related to the process of creating, using, and maintaining these data, with special emphasis on end users of the data, those who have had prior success in collaborative data governance, and those who can help fund work in this space.