Pursuing Data-Driven and Equity-Centric Transportation Projects: Challenges and Opportunities for Local Actors

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- Event is being recorded and the recording will be posted online afterward.

- Slides are also available online at Urban.org.

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Shifting transportation investments away from personal vehicles has important racial equity implications

- People of color are underrepresented as vehicle owners, even though they bear the brunt of **pollution from vehicle emissions** and **injuries and fatalities from vehicle collisions**.

- White, highly educated, and high-income residents have **greater access to public transit** in many cities.

- Low-income Americans **walk and bike more** than higher-income Americans, and **cycling is growing fastest** among people of color.

Competitive federal grants are increasingly calling for data- and equity-driven applications
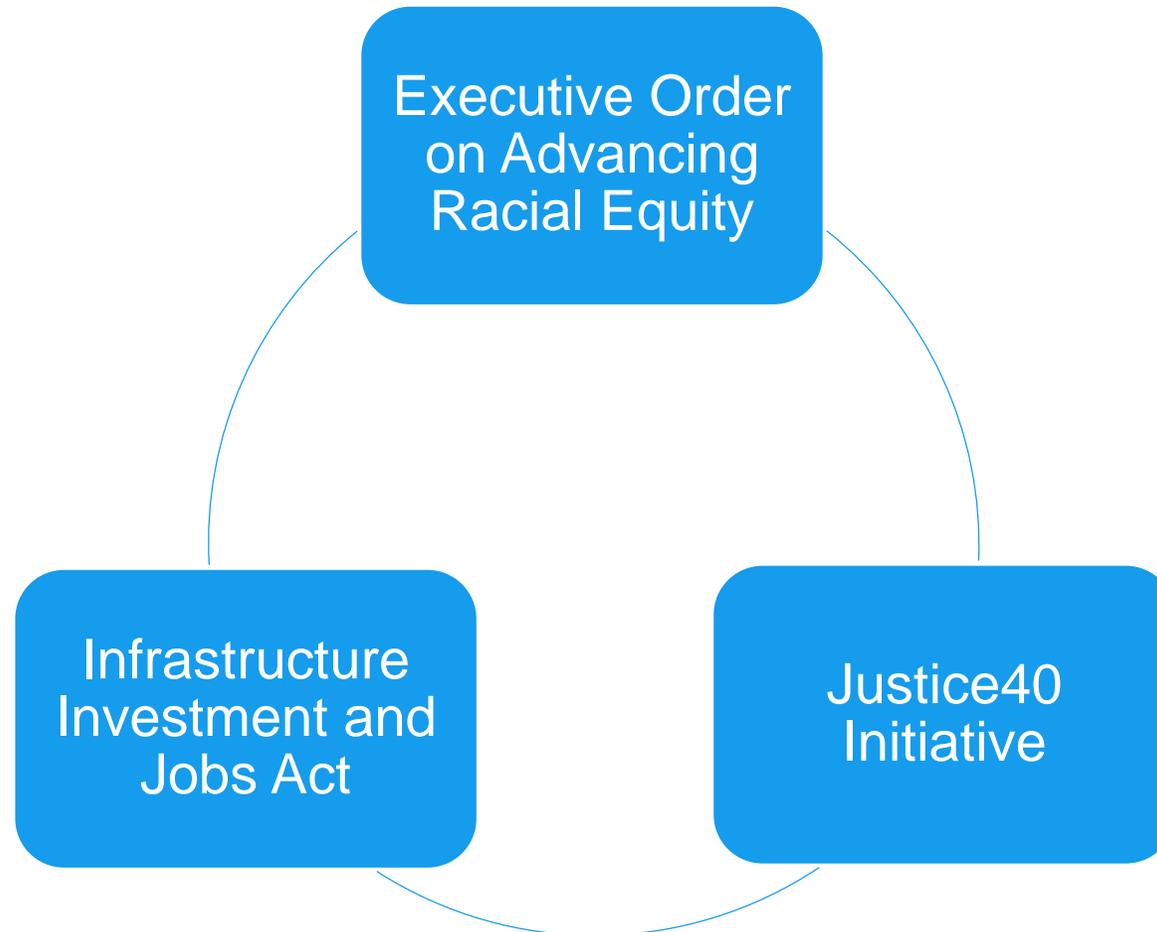
Lessons from interviews with local leaders

- **20 interviews** with experts working in **transportation** and **brownfields revitalization**

- Local and regional government agency representatives, community based organizations, and consultants

- We asked questions about **data-related challenges**, **embedding equity** into the application cycle, and **lessons learned** throughout the process

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Key takeaways

- Applicants struggle to **quantify racial equity and environmental justice** metrics, especially given lack of clarity from federal agencies.

- Applicants had difficulties in **accessing and analyzing necessary data sources**.

- How, when, and for whom **community engagement** is done varied widely.

Data guide for local actors applying for federal funding for public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects

- Intended for local governments or organizations who are interested in **advancing racial equity** through federally-funded **public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects**

- Features data sources that can help local applicants make **evidence-informed project selection** decisions and answer **key equity-centric questions**

- Does not serve as an application guide or step-by-step process on pursuing IIJA or other federal grants

Six categories of data

Demographic
Race, sex, income, among other demographics, and socioeconomic indicators such as poverty rates

Mobility & Connectivity
Vehicle ownership, commuting time and means of transportation, transit access, walkability, infrastructure

Health & Safety
Pollution and air quality, life expectancy, access to health services, pedestrian- and cyclist-involved vehicle crashes

Economic
Income, employment rates, and business trends

Environmental
Emissions and pollution, tree cover and green space, natural hazard risk, water quality

Housing
Housing costs and quality, dimensions of housing instability such as eviction, neighborhood change and gentrification

Common priorities in Notices of Funding Opportunities for IIJA programs

- Identifying **disadvantaged communities** to prioritize for investments

- Reducing **greenhouse gas emissions** from transportation

- Reducing transportation and housing **cost burdens**

- Increasing **mobility**, **connectivity**, and **accessibility**, particularly for non-motorized travelers

- Creating and accessing **good-paying jobs**

Example: Indicators for increasing mobility, connectivity, and accessibility, particularly for non-motorized travelers

Demographic
Poverty rates, racial demographics, demographics on people with disabilities (ACS)

Mobility & Connectivity
Number of vehicles per household (Federal Highway Administration) and walkability (National Walkability Index)

Health & Safety
Crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists (DOT FARS)

Economic
Jobs within a half-mile of a transit stop (AllTransit)

Environmental
Tree cover along walkable roads (EnviroAtlas)

Housing
Residential segregation by dissimilarity and exposure indices by race and ethnicity (Decennial Census)

Panelists

- **Kirsten Mote**, AVP and Director of Smart Mobility Planning, Modern Mobility Partners

- **Maria Schaper**, Associate Director of Transportation Planning, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

- **Vineet Gupta**, Director of Policy and Planning, Boston Transportation Department

Q&A