Traffic Safety Culture Research Roadmap

Traffic safety culture is often used as a shorthand for road user behaviors, like speeding or wearing seatbelts, but the research literature paints a different picture. Traffic safety culture, according to Girasek (2012), is the "social climate in which traffic safety is highly valued and rigorously pursued." Traffic safety culture includes the social norms that inform road user behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as the organizational values different traffic safety agencies follow when designing the built environment and selecting projects to fund. Traffic safety culture is the complex, interconnected system that supports safe and equitable transportation.

The *Traffic Safety Culture Research Roadmap* is intended to help you understand traffic safety culture and to identify relevant research needs that will help you build a positive traffic safety culture. The ultimate goal of this roadmap is to help your agency do traffic safety culture work so that you can prevent deaths and serious injuries while providing a transportation system that meets all road users' needs. To help agencies do this, we have developed 20 traffic safety culture research need statements spanning 4 domains.

Defining Traffic Safety Culture

While definitions of traffic safety culture do exist, these definitions tend to focus on individual behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs. The definition domain of research will help you:

- Develop a common language for discussing traffic safety culture.
- Align your organization's mission and goals with your values.
- Build relationships with partners.

Measuring Traffic Safety Culture

While some measurement tools do exist, there are a huge number of qualitative and quantitative data sources we overlook. This domain will help you:

- Identify potential indicators of a positive traffic safety culture.
- Learn from others about what works.
- Collect data to measure cultural growth.

The ultimate goal of this roadmap is to help your agency do traffic safety culture work so that you can prevent deaths and serious injuries while providing a transportation system that meets all road users' needs.
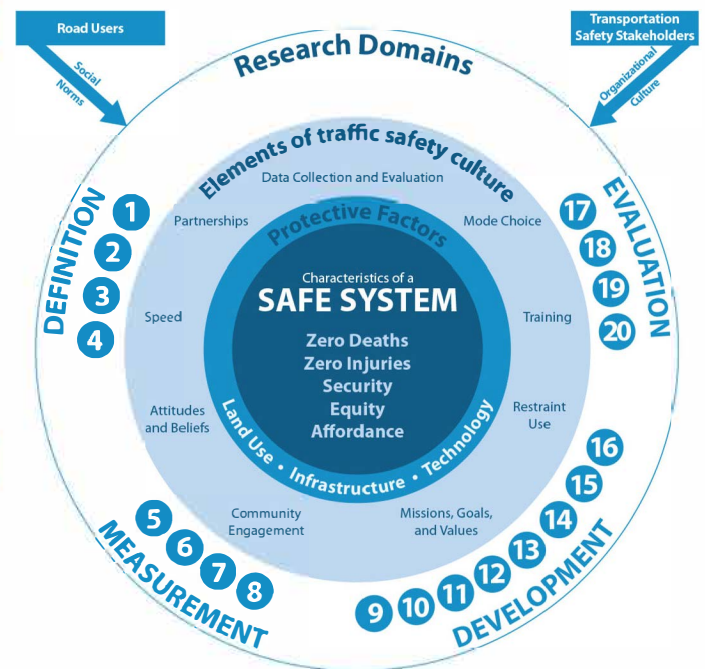
Developing Traffic Safety Culture

The development domain is the core of the traffic safety culture research roadmap. These research ideas will help you:

- Develop new projects to shift your local culture to safer road user behaviors.
- Sustain traffic safety efforts.
- Empower the next generation of traffic safety experts.

Evaluating Traffic Safety Culture

There is little research evaluating the long-term relationship between traffic safety interventions and culture. This domain will help you:

- Develop a program for evaluating your projects against traffic safety culture goals.
- Identify challenges and barriers.
- Identify new research needs and areas where

For more information on this project, see:
https://apps.trb.org/cmsfeed/TRBNetProjectDisplay.asp?ProjectID=4972

Traffic Safety Culture Research Roadmap

Research Needs

Definition

We reviewed over 250 references to help you answer questions like:

- What is traffic safety culture, and why does it matter to us and our partners?

  - See **RNS 1** (Developing a process to establish shared traffic safety culture goals) and RNS 2 (Linking intra-agency traffic safety culture goals).

- How do my organization's values affect traffic safety outcomes in my community?

  - See **RNS 3** (Developing tools to assess organizational traffic safety culture).

Development

We held three workshops to refine project ideas and identify development projects to address your questions.

- What data is out there and what data is missing that I can develop into safety performance measurements?

  - See **RNS 9** (Guidance on planning and implementation of transformative traffic safety culture) and **RNS 14** (Developing a database of standard traffic safety culture data).

- What can I do to make sure traffic safety efforts survive changes in leadership and funding?

  - See **RNS 10** (Enduring policies for sustaining traffic safety culture efforts and programs).

Measurement

We interviewed over 30 traffic safety experts to figure out what you might need to measure.

- How does an individual's behaviors connect to their community's values and the projects we fund, and how do we even measure that?

  - See **RNS 6** (Annual traffic safety culture measurement and assessment tool).

- How do we know if we're producing an equitable transportation system?

  - See **RNS 8** (Building community-led traffic safety culture coalitions).

Evaluation

We surveyed practitioners about their readiness to do traffic safety culture work and developed research ideas to help you evaluate your processes.

- How do we know if our traffic safety culture projects are working?

  - See **RNS 18** (Methods of evaluating the impact of roadway investments on traffic safety culture).

- How do I know if I'm using the best practices and providing an equitable transportation system?

  - See **RNS 20** (Building a long-term monitoring framework for benchmarking traffic safety culture progress).