Federal agencies and State governments use a variety of geospatial information, linked by data to specific geographic locations, to support their missions. Geospatial data describe locations of objects, events, phenomena, and other characteristics, such as the location of a specific address or an earthquake. They are generally represented in vector datasets by points, lines, polygons, or other geographic features or phenomena.

In October 2018, Congress passed the Geospatial Data Act¹ (GDA) to codify the committees, processes, and tools used to develop and manage the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. The act requires inspectors general of covered agencies,² including the Department of Transportation (DOT), to report to Congress at least once every 2 years on their agencies’ collection, production, acquisition, maintenance, distribution, use, and preservation of geospatial data. This year’s report is due by October 4, 2022.

We will coordinate with other covered agencies’ Offices of Inspector General through the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency on our approach to this audit. The objective of this review will be to assess DOT’s progress since our 2020 GDA audit³ in implementing the requirements outlined

² A covered agency is any executive branch department, as defined in section 101, Title 5 of the United States Code, that collects, produces, acquires, maintains, distributes, uses, or preserves geospatial data on paper or in electronic form to fulfill its mission, either directly or through a relationship with another organization such as a State or local government.
in the act. Specifically, we will assess the Department’s progress in implementing its responsibilities (1) as a lead covered agency under section 756(b) and (2) as a covered agency under sections 759(a) and 759(b) of the act.

We plan to begin work immediately and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at the Headquarters of DOT and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in Washington, DC. If you have any questions, please call me at (202) 366-1518 or Nathan Custer, Program Director, at (202) 366-5540.

cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1
    FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100