

ITEM #4: SUBMITTED PUBLIC COMMENT

There is one submitted public comment. Any other written public comments received after the preparation of this agenda will be distributed as a handout at the meeting.

Attachment 4

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**HRTPO Public Comment**  
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Name: William Christopher/Future of Hampton Roads
Date: 10/3/2019
Subject: Highly Automated and Connected Vehicles

Public Comment Input (Via E-Mail)

The Future of Hampton Roads petitions HRTPO to consider action to prepare Hampton Roads for the introduction of *highly automated and connected vehicles (AV)* on its roadways by taking a leadership role in including 1) AV working groups, 2) future mobility scenario-planning tools, and 3) public outreach “Demo Days.”

With mass production of AV projected by 2025, it is critical for municipalities to begin planning and building for 21st century connectivity. Communities must be actively engaged in assessing their own mobility requirements and deciding the size, scale, and use of AV that best fits their current and future goals.

AV Working Groups: Before regulating policies, cities and transit planners first need a “roadmap” — clear vision, strong guidelines, and evaluation methods to assess all forms of AV. As a result, cities around the country have begun to form AV working groups (committees) with a wide range of stakeholders (elected officials, state and local agencies, industry and the public) to initiate a conversation around community goals, potential policy barriers for AV implementation, and an action plan for integrating emerging technologies. By starting with an AV working group, Hampton Roads is able to outline its current goals and strategies to establish a vital benchmark against which the region can identify best practices and realize the full spectrum of potential benefits of AV. Such a group could help unravel the range of options and potential impacts to better understand what the future may look like, what choices jurisdictions should be making, and what changes to make to the regional comprehensive plan to shape the deployment of AV in supporting the community’s vision.

Future Mobility Scenario-Planning Tools: As the 20th century car model changes, it is important to quantify and capture competing transportation forces from new technologies. Scenario-planning tools (such as Mobilitics by AECOM) are designed to build out potential future scenarios of how specific mobility options (legacy and automated) are introduced and adopted. The tool is designed to help public and private agencies/engineers and planners to understand long-range transportation impacts for AV integration by quantifying competing forces to interpret options and impacts. By better understanding what the future could look like for transportation, jurisdictions are able to prepare for impacts to existing infrastructure, transit ridership, pricing schemes, parking demands, land use, etc.

Autonomous Vehicle Outreach & Education Clinics, “Demo Days”: While AVs have received much media coverage and hype, the technology remains widely misunderstood. The technology is largely viewed as expensive and unattainable for the masses. People are skeptical of a machine’s ability to be as safe as a human driver and cyber-hack free. And self-driving vehicles dare to threaten our passion for driving and are expected to displace millions of service jobs.

Secretary of Transportation (USDOT) Elaine Chao acknowledges that the public has “legitimate concerns about the safety, security, and privacy of automated vehicles” and has challenged the industry to “step up and help address these concerns and help inform the public about the benefits of automation” (AV3.0, 2018). A core USDOT strategy for integrating automated vehicles is to engage stakeholders and the public by providing accurate information through direct public outreach and demonstrations. Consumers need to understand what the technology is and is not capable of — when does it require human intervention, where can it be operated, etc.

Studies show that individuals prefer to learn about advanced driver technologies through a method that includes a demonstration. FHR encourages efforts to accelerate the awareness and education of AV technology through a series of events (public clinics, educational workshops, and informational materials) designed to create an experiential learning opportunity through direct exposure. This creates an opportunity for cities to partner with AV manufacturers and developers. One example is *Partners for Automated Vehicle Education (PAVE)* — a coalition launched to inform the public and policymakers about the current and impending impacts of AV technologies.

With intent for maximizing benefits and minimizing negative impacts, FHR encourages HRTPO to consider the above examples to help Hampton Roads and its cities better understand and adapt to the future of transportation.