

Council of the District of Columbia
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT
NOTICE OF PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

COUNCILMEMBER CHARLES ALLEN, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & THE ENVIRONMENT

ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC OVERSIGHT ROUNDTABLE ON

The Use and Regulation of Autonomous Vehicles

Thursday, November 14, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Roundtable in Room 120 (Track D) and via Zoom
To Watch Live:

On Thursday, November 14, 2024, Councilmember Charles Allen, Chairperson of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, will convene a public roundtable to consider the Use and Regulation of Autonomous Vehicles. This is a hybrid format roundtable, with witnesses appearing virtually via the Zoom platform and in-person in Room 120 of the John A. Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Autonomous vehicles (also referred to as “AVs” or “self-driving cars”) are vehicles equipped with technology that assists or replaces the human driver responsible for operating the vehicle. Autonomous vehicles are typically equipped with sensors (e.g., radar, cameras, and LiDar) that can detect the road, other roadway users, and obstacles. This data is then processed by the autonomous vehicle so that it can accelerate, brake, steer, and signal as needed.

Proponents of autonomous vehicles cite several potential benefits. First, and most obviously, autonomous vehicles offer convenience by relieving drivers of the need to constantly operate the vehicle. Autonomous vehicles can improve efficiency and provide cost-savings in commercial applications because they do not fatigue or require breaks. If integrated into ride-hailing fleets, autonomous vehicles can serve as another transit option for people who cannot safely operate a vehicle due to their age or disability. Finally, unlike human drivers, autonomous vehicles are not susceptible to distracted driving and the attendant safety risks, potentially reducing the number of roadway collisions.

Critics of autonomous vehicles, however, are concerned that AV automation is an imperfect replacement for human drivers who can make split-second decisions. Relatedly, there are policy and ethical questions surrounding how autonomous vehicles prioritize the safety of other roadway

users when confronted with a possible collision and who should be held liable or responsible for any collisions involving an autonomous vehicle.

The District Department of Transportation (“DDOT”) is currently developing an AV testing permit application. In the interim, the Council recently approved emergency and temporary legislation requiring that any companies testing or operating autonomous vehicles in the District provide notice to DDOT and only operate with a human test operator inside the vehicle. Given the impending release of an AV testing permit, and the potential expansion of AV operations in the District, the Committee is convening this roundtable to discuss autonomous vehicles, the potential benefits of this emerging technology, and concerns regarding their use and safety.

The Committee invites the public to provide live and written testimony. Public witnesses seeking to provide testimony at the Committee’s roundtable must thoroughly review the following instructions:

- If you would like to provide live testimony during the roundtable or submit written testimony for the record, please use the Council’s Hearing Management System at <https://lims.dccouncil.gov/hearings/>. HMS is a universal, centralized way to find out about upcoming hearings, register to testify, submit testimony, download testimony, and see how many witnesses have registered. **The deadline to register to provide live testimony through HMS is Tuesday, November 12 at 5:30pm. The hearing record closes at 5:30pm on Friday, November 29, 2024, after which you will be unable to submit written testimony.**
- Once you have identified the hearing at which you want to testify on the Hearing Management System, read the Hearing Notice at the bottom of the page for additional details on the hearing. The hearing page also shows how many witnesses have already registered under the “Witnesses” heading.
- Click the “Register to Testify” button at the upper right of the page to register to testify at the hearing. If the deadline to sign up for a hearing has already passed, or if there is no public testimony at the hearing, the button will not be available.
- If there are multiple topics to be considered at a hearing, select which one you would like to speak to by placing a checkmark next to the relevant topic or legislation. If you are testifying on behalf of an organization, select “Organization” and include your title and the organization’s name. If you are testifying on your own behalf, select “Individual.” There may be additional fields included by a Committee to gather further details.
- Select “Live Testimony” or “Record Testimony.” Select “Live Testimony” if you previously registered to testify at the hearing. If your testimony is only for the written record, choose “Record Testimony.” Please use the same name, organization information, and email address that you used if you registered to testify.
- If you are trying to submit testimony, click the “Submit Testimony” button in the upper right on the hearing page. If the deadline to submit testimony for a hearing has already passed, the button will not be available.
- You can upload testimony in either Adobe PDF, Microsoft Word, Apple Pages, or a plain text file by clicking “Upload My Testimony.” You can also type your testimony from this page by selecting “I will type my testimony here.”

- After completing the web form, you should receive a confirmation email from noreply@dccouncil.gov. Prior to the roundtable, you will receive an email from noreply@dccouncil.gov from the Committee with additional details on testifying, including the access link.
- The Committees will approve witnesses' registrations based on the total time allotted for public testimony. The Committees will also determine the order of witnesses' testimony.
- Representatives of organizations and ANCs will be allowed a maximum of five minutes for oral testimony, and individuals will be allowed a maximum of three minutes. If more than one witness is testifying on behalf of the same organization, the first witness will have five minutes, and all subsequent witnesses will have three minutes. To accommodate additional public witnesses, the Committee may reduce witnesses' allotted time for testimony but will inform witnesses if it plans to do so.
- Witnesses are not permitted to yield their time to or substitute their testimony for the testimony of another individual or organization.
- Witnesses who anticipate needing language interpretation, including ASL interpretation, are requested to inform the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than five business days before the roundtable. Please include this request in the additional field for this purpose when you register to testify. The Committee will make every effort to fulfill timely requests; however, requests received fewer than five business days before the roundtable may not be fulfilled.