



March 29, 2022

To: House Committee on Transportation
From: R.E. "Tuck" Duncan, Executive Director
Kansas Public Transit Association
RE: SB 546

I appear today as a proponent of SB546.

Among other matters the bill would create the Autonomous Vehicle Advisory Committee (AV Advisory Committee). The bill would direct the membership of the AV Advisory Committee include legislators, other appointees, and organization representatives: ● Legislators: ○ Two senators appointed by the President of the Senate; ○ One senator appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate; ○ Two members of the House appointed by the Speaker of the House; and ○ One member of the House appointed by the Minority Leader of the House; ● Agency officials or their designees: ○ Director of Vehicles; ○ Secretary of Transportation; ○ Superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol; and ○ Two members appointed by the Chairperson of the Kansas Corporation Commission; ● Appointees of the Governor: ○ Two from labor organizations; ○ One each from various industry-related groups: – Light duty motor vehicle manufacturers, original equipment manufacturers, original equipment manufacturers trade association, heavy-duty motor vehicle manufacturers, automated driving system developers, automated driving system developers trade association, automated driving system manufacturers, and on-demand transportation network companies; ● Municipality organization appointees: ○ One appointed by the League of Kansas Municipalities; and ○ One appointed by the Kansas Association of Counties; and ● Organization representatives appointed by: ○ ABATE; ○ Kansas State Troopers Association; and ○ Kansas Sheriffs Association.

As an industry that will be integrating on-demand, autonomous vehicles (AVs) into existing public transportation and operating autonomous public transit we should be at the table in these discussions. Attached is an article as to how one system is already putting this technology to use.



Autonomous vehicles (AVs) hold great promise to contribute to global sustainability by expanding access to mobility. The introduction of autonomous buses and shuttles will be a turning point for public mobility in the USA.

We respectfully request that the AV Advisory Committee include a member appointed by the Kansas Public Transit Association.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of these matters.

On-demand autonomous public transportation service marks major milestone

More than 28,000 trips booked during Arlington RAPID's first year

Friday, Mar 18, 2022 • Herb Booth :

Arlington RAPID, the first program in the United States to integrate on-demand, autonomous vehicles (AVs) into existing public transportation, has provided more than 28,000 trips in its first year of service to residents, University students and visitors around Downtown Arlington and The University of Texas at Arlington campus.

Arlington today announced that the innovative AV pilot program will expand service later this year, providing convenient, dependable public transportation through at least 2024, thanks to additional grant support from the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

Since March 2021, the city has operated Arlington RAPID (Rideshare, Automation, and Payment Integration Demonstration) in partnership with Via, May Mobility and UT Arlington through a grant provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The pilot program offered shared rides in AVs operated by May Mobility through the city's on-demand public transit system, Via Arlington.

Arlington RAPID—the city's third successful AV transportation pilot project

since 2017—was one of only 25 projects to receive funding in 2020 through the FTA's Integrated Mobility Innovation Program. Deployment funded by the grant ended today, March 18.

“The city of Arlington continues to prove itself as a national leader on autonomous vehicle testing and deployment,” Arlington Mayor Jim Ross said. “Thanks to the FTA's Integrated Mobility Innovation grant, the city and its partners were able to build upon the country's vital autonomous vehicle research and improve access to school, work and everyday needs for thousands of people, including those who require mobility assistance, through on-demand public transportation access.”



Arlington RAPID's fleet of autonomous vehicles, including a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, will continue to be available to riders through the Via app or by calling Via's customer service line at 817-784-7382. Beginning Monday, March 21, the new hours will be noon to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Via's standard fares apply to rides taken on Arlington RAPID by the general public. Because of UTA's participation in the pilot program, dedicated funds from the FTA grant previously allowed the University's students to book rides at no charge. Beginning Monday, March 21, the new discounted rate for UTA students is \$1 off the standard fare per trip.

“UTA continues to provide cutting-edge mobility services to support our student’s transportation needs,” said Greg Hladik, executive director for Auxiliary Services at UTA. “It was very promising to watch how the student body responded to these self-driving shuttles and adopted them for their daily travel needs within the service zone. This pilot has taught us there are several applications on a college campus to incorporate self-driving technology into the traditional campus mobility network.”

The original goal of the RAPID project was to provide a blueprint for combining on-demand public transit and autonomous technologies to develop effective, efficient, safe and accessible transportation for all riders.

The RAPID service area is currently bounded by Division Street to the north, Mary Street to the east, Mitchell Street to the south, and Davis Drive to the west. In all, more than 18 miles of downtown streets have been mapped for the vehicles to take the most efficient path to pick up and drop off riders. During its first year of service, Arlington RAPID reported a 98% rider satisfaction rating and 99% on-time performance; additionally, the vehicles were able to operate fully autonomously 80% of the time.

First-year results show that more than 60% of riders used Arlington RAPID to access essential destinations like medical facilities,

school or employment opportunities, which demonstrates the success of the service as part of the existing on-demand public transit network. It helped fill critical transportation gaps and expand equitable access to transit across the city.

“Arlington RAPID demonstrates how innovation and investment in the future of public transit are critical to advance equity in our communities,” said Daniel Ramot, co-founder and CEO of Via. “We are proud to continue our long-term relationship with the city of Arlington in the next phase of the RAPID program and to be a model for other municipalities as they consider autonomous vehicles as a new option to improve public transportation access.”

This month, the North Central Texas Council of Governments awarded the city a new grant that will allow Arlington RAPID to operate for two additional years and add vehicles with higher seating capacity and technology to move toward removing the human operator.

“May Mobility and Arlington share a commitment to creating great transit through shared, on-demand autonomous vehicles,” said Edwin Olson, CEO of May Mobility. “May is excited to continue serving the Arlington community, and the learnings from this successful deployment will not only help advance our AV technology, but also enhance our service offerings at future sites around the world.”



For additional information refer to: **METRO Magazine: Autonomous Vehicles in Public Transit Today ... and in the Future.**

<https://ridebeep.com/2021/11/03/autonomous-vehicles-in-public-transit-todayand-in-the-future/> and

https://www.mcgill.ca/maxbellschool/files/maxbellschool/policy_lab_2020_-_connected_autonomous_vehicles_in_public_transit.pdf