



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

AUTONOMOUS DRIVING WORK GROUP

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Secretary of Transportation

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Autonomous Driving Workgroup

[2025 Va. Acts ch. 498 \(HB2627\)](#) & [2026 Va. Acts ch. 738 \(HB1124\)](#)

July 24, 2026 Meeting

Minutes – DRAFT

Meeting date, time, and location:

Friday, July 24, 2026, 1 pm

VDOT Lockwood Auditorium, 9120 Lockwood Blvd, Mechanicsville, VA 23116

Workgroup convened by:

Deputy Secretary of Transportation Laura Schewel

Workgroup members present in person:

Delegate David Reid

Senator Lamont Bagby

Senator J.D. “Danny” Diggs

Virginia State Police (Lieutenant Shawn Gobble)

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

(Assistant Commissioner Patrick Harrison)

Virginia Department of Transportation

(Assistant State Traffic Operations Engineer Mena Lockwood)

Workgroup members participating or monitoring remotely (in accordance with the workgroup’s electronic participation policy, adopted at the May meeting, from office locations in their districts, due to the distance of more than 60 miles between the member’s residence and the meeting location):

Senator Kannan Srinivasan

Delegate Jackie Hope Glass

Delegate Briana Sewell

Delegate Terry Austin

Delegate Jason Ballard (through his LA)

Summary:

A range of stakeholders were present, including many of the representatives present at prior meetings. There is no known, complete list of attendees.

The meeting began with opening remarks by Deputy Secretary Schewel. She noted that the labor and workforce consultants conducted a roundtable discussion earlier in the day and that labor and workforce issues would be presented at the August 28 meeting.

Because only 5 members were present at the beginning of the meeting, the workgroup did not vote initially on the May meeting minutes, instead deferring that vote to August.

The meeting proceeded to the following:

Policy options presentation and discussion
(facilitated by VTTI, agency representatives, and Office of the Secretary of Transportation)

See the presentation in the meeting materials (at the Agenda link on the Commonwealth Calendar meeting page) for details about the recommendations and options presented. The workgroup and stakeholders proceeded with presentation and discussion topic by topic in that presentation.

The discussion included the following subjects and remarks:

- Levels of automation, with all of the options and recommendations concerning Level 4 (which defaults to a minimal risk condition on its own, rather than transferring driving to a human driver in the vehicle like level 3).
- Personal vs. commercial use, and clarification that the recommendation is to permit only commercial / non-personal use (which would include fleet vehicles, whether used for ride share, delivery, or other purposes).
- Permit phases and processes for changes to permits and data reporting.
 - Industry representatives voiced concerns about restrictions on their operating autonomy, such as separate state design requirements, limits on use cases, and limits on weight classes.
 - The scope of potential legislation is a developing area. Trucking stakeholders now may wish heavy vehicle classes of AVs to be included.
- What it would entail to successfully complete a pilot permit phase.
 - Industry representatives noted that a certification that AVs will comply with the rules of the road is difficult because rules may interact with each other in variable ways.
 - Industry representatives questioned what thresholds would be used for

phased testing with vehicle miles traveled (VMT) milestones, noting that California's thresholds seemed arbitrary. Deputy Secretary Schewel stated that the desire was to find a minimum meaningful threshold statistically.

- Industry representatives expressed willingness to provide data but expressed a hope that collisions involving AVs but caused by human drivers would not be held against the AV companies.
- The indicators and statistics that would be used to assess safety, which would include but not necessarily be limited to VMTs and crashes. A category of data known as “surrogates” includes things like unplanned disengagements, remote assistance instances, and near misses, although this does not seem to have been explored much in other states.
 - Industry representatives expressed concern about being measured against an “unimpaired” human driver, asserting that was an entirely subjective concept, that humans aren't measured that way, and that it makes an apples-to-apples comparison of AVs to human drivers difficult because humans do not always report things the way technology does.
- Whether pilot testing and performance data could or would be manipulated. Data necessarily comes from the AV companies. There was a desire for the pilot miles to be representative of the applied-for operating design domain (ODD). Industry representatives stated that the dynamic environment of operating on roads makes mileage a better explainer of performance capability than particular testing setups.
- Whether the pilot testing and performance data is audited. Industry representatives stated that NHTSA has the ability to audit and is not shy about exerting its oversight, and also noted their willingness to meet periodically with regulators to review and discuss information.
- What ongoing data reporting would be required and what reported data would be confidential.
 - NHTSA does not require some of the possible options. Industry representatives expressed concerns about a state addressing safety and establishing related requirements beyond NHTSA requirements.
 - The more fields that can be standardized and not require narrative, the easier reporting will be.
 - There are two separate issues: what data must be reported and then how much of it is protected from public release.
- What credentials or qualifications would be required for remote personnel.
 - Note the distinction between remote assistance (which is an AV obtaining a particular determination or bit of guidance from a remote human) and remote operation (which is a person actually driving the AV remotely).
 - Labor representatives noted that different licensing or qualifications is required for different vehicle classes (*e.g.*, a CDL) and expressed views that remote personnel should have qualifications equivalent to drivers, and that

public transit should have a backup human driver.

- When an AV permit could be suspended or revoked (prior to a later hearing and appeal process). Should the only constraints be safety, or should there be discretion that allows the permitting/regulatory authority (expected to be DMV) to consider law enforcement interactions, performance in unusual traffic event scenarios, and other factors?
 - Industry representatives expressed a preference that immediate suspension be tied to safety.
 - It was noted that it is important for businesses to have predictability and also that there be an ability for discussions with the permitting/regulatory authority.
- Determining responsibility/liability when a vehicle has both an automated driving system (ADS) and a human driver in the vehicle.
 - A trial lawyers representative stated that if the ADS is engaged/activated, and there has been negligence, the permit holder should be responsible, and that it should not be incumbent on a person who is injured to need to file suit and do discovery to determine who's responsible for the AV's actions. Discussion between stakeholders ensued.
- How existing types of businesses and related regulations might be adapted to include AVs. There was a desire to use current frameworks and permit structures.

As the scheduled 3 pm end of the meeting approached, the discussion paused for public comment. There was one such comment, from Bradley David Calhoun of Ember Initiatives Community Services and Wellness Solutions, a community-based disability service provider in Richmond area, working with adults with intellectual disabilities. Mr. Calhoun noted that transportation is important to people with disabilities and that AVs can help but only if disability access is incorporated at the beginning. He asked that the workgroup continue to include people with disabilities and providers in discussions and provide more information to them.

When issues discussion resumed, it then included:

- Local authority
 - A member noted that we do not allow localities to regulate transportation network companies (TNCs) or individual drivers. The only category of entity also regulated by localities is taxicabs.
 - A representative of the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority noted that the prohibition on local regulatory authority is what led to the airports' participation in the workgroup, out of a desire to preserve their authority because most airports are locally operated and should have a carveout from such a prohibition.
- Fees and costs for AV permits and registrations, including whether fees should be charged at the permit level or related to individual AV registrations. What existing or new taxes would apply. Whether AV companies would be required to

register or garage their vehicles in Virginia.

- An industry representative stated that there can be administrative burdens and churn with respect to vehicle registration and expressed a preference that revenue be addressed, reasonably, at the permit level.
- A representative from the Virginia Association of Counties stated that there should be a local law enforcement interaction plan and that AVs should provide some amount of money toward road maintenance.
- Deputy Secretary Schewel noted that there are different levels of relevant costs: (1) the costs to agencies of regulation and implementation (usually addressed during the legislative process under the fiscal impact rubric), (2) costs specific to AVs, such as specialized training for law enforcement, and (3) supporting the transportation system.
- Whether there should be an ongoing body or committee related to AVs, either an interagency workgroup or a full-blown advisory body involving external appointed representatives.
 - Other states have found value in at least having a mechanism or structure for the relevant agencies to address the area on an ongoing basis.
 - This workgroup will end with submission of its report in the fall.

After the presentation and discussion ended, Deputy Secretary Schewel concluded the meeting at approximately 3:41 pm.

There were no votes taken during this meeting.

The meeting was streamed live (for viewing only, not remote participation) on [YouTube.com/@VDOTLIVE](https://www.youtube.com/@VDOTLIVE), and (as with [prior meetings](#)) [a recording of the July 24 meeting](#) may be viewed there for complete information regarding the discussion and content of the meeting.

The agenda was posted on July 17, and the presentation was added on July 22, on the [Commonwealth Calendar page for this meeting](#) and continue to be available to view or download from the “Agenda” link there.

Anyone interested in providing written comments continues to be able to do so at <https://publicinput.com/autonomousdriving>

The final, currently-scheduled, in-person public meeting will take place on August 28, with information to be made available at [its Commonwealth Calendar meeting page](#).