Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Working Group for Autonomous Vehicles

December 15, 2016
Meeting Summary

1) Secretary Stephanie Pollack opened the meeting, welcoming Group members and public attendees. Group members shared names and some relevant areas of interest and experience.

2) Review of agenda items.

3) Review of Massachusetts Executive Order No. 572 – role of the Working Group, and the process for MassDOT’s development of Guidance

4) Secretary Pollack described the autonomous vehicle industry and gave a high-level review of current trends.

5) Assistant Secretary Kate Fichter shared information on SAE levels of automation, terminology, the types of technologies employed in automated vehicles, and the Federal Automated Vehicles Policy and the Model State Policy contained therein.

6) Assistant Secretary Fichter provided an overview of the AV industry and testing process in Massachusetts. Efforts began in conjunction with the City of Boston and include components of NHTSA’s Federal AV Policy guidance. The process for MassDOT’s development of Guidance is described in the Executive Order, with an MOU and Application component.

7) MassDOT received the first completed application and it is currently in review.

8) Testing facilities - sites such as Devens and Union Point offer a variety of facilities, variety of types of testing going on (components, full vehicles, manufacturers, etc)

9) The group had a discussion about public safety issues including existing statutes and regulations around operation of a vehicle.

10) The group discussed some of the issues pertaining to the RMV including the gradual roll-out of new vehicle types and the potential need to supplement the existing permitting and licensure processes.

11) Some issues relating to insurance were mentioned; to follow up the Group should identify and solicit feedback from experts in the field. The Group may seek to develop a list of issues and considerations, and may request public input in this effort.

12) Senator Thomas McGee spoke to the rapid pace of development in the industry, and the need for the government to develop expertise and work with law enforcement and first responders.

13) State Traffic Engineer Neil Boudreau spoke to some issues pertaining to roadway infrastructure, and the range of situations a fully autonomous vehicle will need to interpret and respond to.
14) Hans Olson, Assistant Undersecretary for Homeland Security Senior Advisor, Anti-Terrorism and Cyber Security, at EOPSS shared some thoughts pertaining to cybersecurity and personal information.

15) There was some discussion around original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) vs. alterers, and what distinctions might be made between the types of autonomous vehicles. OEMs include companies such as Toyota, Nissan, and Tesla, whereas alterers include companies which “add-on” components to (or “retrofit”) existing vehicles produced by OEMs.

16) Joseph Sabella mentioned support for inviting panelists and experts to present to the Group, and suggested motor companies and OEMS should be included.

17) Alison Felix of MAPC suggested the Group be mindful of the interface between autonomous vehicles and public transit, and should encourage the use of alternative fuel vehicles for AVs. In addition, she mentioned that electric vehicle (EV) corridors are being developed, and may be complimentary to the Signal Phase and Timing (SPaT) Challenge by the US DOT for Direct Short Range Communications (DSRC) which support “connected vehicles”.

18) As next steps, MassDOT will develop Guidance based around MOU and Application, and any new guidance from federal government, and will welcome input and feedback from the Working Group and public on this. The Working Group will plan to bring in people to provide stakeholder input.