Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and offer Zipcar’s perspectives on automated vehicles.

My name is Justin Holmes and I lead public policy for Zipcar North America. Zipcar is the world’s leading car sharing network, with operations in over 500 cities and towns across nine countries. Zipcar was founded here in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2000. Our global headquarters remains here, located in Boston’s Fort Point.

At Zipcar, we believe in the promise of automated vehicles not only to dramatically improve passenger and pedestrian safety, but to transform our cities. Many studies estimate that a future of automated vehicles, and the new services they will enable, will bring the potential to dramatically reduce personal vehicle ownership, which in turn will reduce the need for parking, reduce congestion, support climate goals and increase access to mobility.

This future world -- served by connected, shared, automated and likely electric-powered fleets -- completes the dramatic shift in personal mobility already underway today. Increasingly, residents in cities around the world think of mobility as a service, and pay for the trip, not the car. At Zipcar, we pioneered this world of “shared mobility” when we were founded seventeen years ago.

Our founders understood that personally owned vehicles, which sit idle 95% of the time, are inefficient. They believed that by enabling our members to access a vehicle only when they need one -- in favor of owning it -- they could live more simply and responsibly. The result would be more cost-effective, more efficient and more sustainable transportation in cities around the world.

Today, according to research from the University of California, Berkeley, each vehicle Zipcar puts on the road takes away the need for up to 13 personally owned vehicles by enabling our members to live car-free or car-light. And because of that lifestyle, each Zipcar member reduces their personal carbon emissions by nearly one ton. We believe this impact will be dramatically accelerated by a future of automated vehicles.

Zipcar is not building an automated vehicle. We are however preparing for this future, together with a range of future partners and enablers.

We support the need for safe testing which, over time, should include providing access for consumers to experience this technology first-hand in a safe, managed, fleet environment. We believe this is critical for adoption.
We believe that the future will be anchored by strong collaboration between public and private sectors, particularly in cities. We support the needs of cities to make responsible decisions about their curb space and right-of-way, especially so they may prioritize people over vehicles.

As a company headquartered here in the Commonwealth, we believe Massachusetts can and should play a leading role in support of this technology, enabling a strong private sector ecosystem and nurturing it through a collaborative process that includes strong industry participation.

And lastly, we believe that in order to realize the positive social and environmental benefits of automated vehicles, they must be shared. While consumer demand and innovative business models like ours already support shared mobility, we believe it is imperative for leaders in government to actively support the growth of shared services today, in advance of automated technology. A world of personally owned, zero occupancy vehicles in our cities may bring lasting harm to our regional transportation system. By nurturing shared options today, we help create a stronger ecosystem of options so consumers are better positioned to choose the right mode of transportation for the right trip.

At Zipcar, we are driven by a mission to enable simple and responsible urban living. We look forward to more opportunities to collaborate with you all as we work toward this future.

Until then, see you on the road.

Thank you.