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December 19, 2016

Anthony R. Foxx, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590
Email: automation@dot.gov

RE: Automated Vehicle Proving Grounds Letter of Interest – Site: CITY OF IRVINE

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I would like to express my interest in the City of Irvine being considered as a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Designation of Automated Vehicle Proving Grounds. We have the public agency knowhow, we have the space, and we have an ongoing ethic of innovation and excellence.

Irvine is home to the Orange County Great Park, on a section of the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro (MCAS El Toro). The City of Irvine-owned Great Park is approximately 1,300 acres and is an arts and sports recreational hub.

I believe the closed runway at the former base that served the Marine Corps from 1943-1999 is an ideal testing location. Irvine's preliminary Automated Vehicle Providing Grounds Application includes expansive runway, hangars, roads and buildings on the former MCAS El Toro that could be made available for testing and associated activity. For a period to be determined, the former base would provide a concrete runway that is nearly ¾-mile long and nearly a football field wide.

Should the DOT select Irvine as a top contender, and as we learn more about designation requirements, I would pursue City Council consideration to be a qualified proving ground for the safe testing, demonstration, and deployment of automated vehicle technology.

The City of Irvine is uniquely situated to bring a portfolio approach, which could include partners from government, education, and the private sector to come together to join the Community of Practice. Irvine, the County of Orange's largest city in terms of geography, is fortunate to have a number of eligible entities that include city roads,

highway corridors and campuses (corporate and academic), as well as a closed runway at the former MCAS El Toro that is regularly used for autocross courses, vehicle testing, and driving schools.

Additionally, prior to the DOT's outreach for Solicitations of Proposals, Irvine staff met with one of Alphabet's divisions, Google Lab, to discuss mutual interests in advancing technology to major communities such as Irvine. That discussion included traffic congestion and the self-driving car as a model of possible traffic relief and safety. Also, staff has already set up a January 2017 meeting with the Dean of the Engineering School at UC Irvine – one of the nation's leading public research universities – along with two professors who have done research on autonomous vehicles. Self-driving cars in urban areas and a possible partnership between the City and UCI are the scheduled discussion points. Staff also is planning a trip to San Francisco, once the conflict between that city and the State Department of Motor Vehicles is resolved over permitting, to drive in one of Uber's fleet of autonomous cars.

Our City is a leader in business (No. 1 in jobs-to-population ratio in the nation), public safety (the safest city in American of more than 250,000 people, according to FBI statistics), and in educational support of the very same young people who will be leaders in technology breakthroughs.

Irvine is located in the heart of Orange County with a population of more than 260,000 residents. Irvine is home to more than 26,000 businesses and more than 200,000 jobs. Irvine comprises 66 square miles of neighborhoods, schools, dining, shopping and recreation experiences, and cutting edge workplaces. Moving people about our community more efficiently is among our highest priorities.

Irvine is in a position to foster the safe deployment of advanced automated vehicle technologies. Being a safe city touches on virtually every facet of municipal operations in Irvine – visionary planning, enlightened leadership, public and private partnerships, and an engaged community – the cornerstones of our success. Irvine's commitment to public safety goes beyond experienced, well-trained police officers and innovative policing strategies. Our holistic approach to create a safe community includes myriad health and wellness programs for families, community, and business outreach; proactive land-use policies; regular maintenance of public facilities; roads and parks; and student achievement support.

We urge your consideration of the City of Irvine's Automated Vehicle Proving Grounds Application to develop and share best practices around safe testing, demonstration, and deployment of automated vehicle technology.

While I do believe that the City of Irvine is well-suited for such a program, given that I only learned of this opportunity on December 16, I am not yet in a position to commit Irvine to financial and other obligations without the approval of the City Council. I look

forward to learning more about the responsibilities and obligations of being such an Automated Vehicle Proving Grounds site.

If you have questions about our interest in this project, please contact Craig Reem, Director of Public Affairs and Communications, at 949-724-6077 or creem@cityofirvine.org.

Sincerely,

Sean Joyce
City Manager

Enclosure

cc: Irvine City Council

Potential Automated Vehicle Technology Proving Ground Sites for U.S. DOT – Irvine, California

Proposed Proving Ground Site and Location: City of Irvine-owned Orange County Great Park – formerly Marine Corps Air Station El Toro.

Type of Proving Ground (test track/facility, race track, city/urban core, highway corridor, or campus): Nearly ¾-mile closed runway that is nearly a football field wide at the former airbase, used by the Marine Corps from 1943-1999.

Characteristics of the Site: The City of Irvine controls the lease with a contractor that currently, and regularly, uses the runway for autocross courses, vehicle testing, and driving schools. The runway, on the City of Irvine-owned Orange County Great Park, is connected by a roadway. The local street network into the Great Park consists of the I-5 Freeway, Sand Canyon Avenue, and entry points at Marine Way and Great Park Boulevard. All vehicle types can be accommodated.

Responsible Party(ies) and Partners: The City of Irvine would be the lead agency on the project, per City Council approval. Partners could be UC Irvine, one of the nation's leading public research universities that has ongoing research on autonomous vehicles, as well as Irvine's technology businesses, incubators, and tech associations. Among those businesses are major auto industry offices that include Kia, Hyundai, Mazda, and Ford. Additionally, the Orange County Transportation Authority, the County of Orange's transportation division that provides bus service countywide and an extensive shuttle service within the City, likely would be involved.

Possible spectrum of AV testing: Accessibility to and from the Orange County Great Park is key. It is located in the center of the sixth-largest county in the United States (more than 3 million residents) and is near two the onramps of the nation's busiest freeways – the I-5 and 405. The Great Park, besides its runway, has hangars, roads and buildings at the current park that served the former Marine Corps airbase. Additionally, Irvine is the county's largest city in terms of geography; its 66 square miles include well-maintained roadways of varying speed limits, topography, and access to urban as well as residential community streets. John Wayne Airport is adjacent to the City of Irvine. A major university, UC Irvine, is within City limits. Testing data using any or all of the above would be provided.

Why site is a strong candidate for proving ground: The Orange County Great Park runway already is used to create numerous driving and driving safety scenarios as an ongoing testing ground. Its proximity to regional streets, two major freeways, and John Wayne Airport would allow easy access to those vendors who test and to all parties to observe long-term results.

Safety Management Plan Concept: The Orange County Great Park's closed runway is a self-contained venue with adjacent park roadways and buildings to provide testing without any perceived public concern about driverless cars. A designated safety officer, using established operations management plans already in place at the Great Park, would be attached to this project, per City Council approval.