USDOT Workshop on Consumer Education and Communications around Advanced Vehicle Technologies

Summary Report

November 2019

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Event Overview

Supporting public access to accurate and clear information about Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)[1] and Automated Driving Systems (ADS)[2] can encourage their safe use and adoption. On July 15, 2019, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss current issues around terminology and language regarding automation and how they influence consumer perception of these technologies.

More than 50 leaders from consumer advocacy organizations, automotive original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), ADS developers, industry associations, and government participated in this meeting on *Consumer Education and Communications around Advanced Vehicle Technologies* held in Orlando, Florida as an ancillary meeting scheduled in conjunction with the Transportation Research Board/Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International's *Automated Vehicles Symposium*. Participants discussed current issues around the terminology used to describe both suites of technologies; how this language influences consumer perception of ADAS and ADS capabilities and limitations; and the challenges, gaps, and opportunities in educating and training the public about both ADAS and ADS.

Specifically, the workshop focused on the following questions:
- What are priority challenges for industry and other stakeholders when addressing public communications and education regarding ADAS and ADS?

- What are various groups doing now to support clear communications associated with the use of these technologies with the public and with state and local governments?

- How is industry planning to educate consumers and the public on the appropriate use of ADAS and ADS?

- Are there opportunities to standardize terminology and develop a consistent lexicon to facilitate clear communications with the public?

- Where do opportunities exist for collaboration between industry, government, academia, and the non-profit sector?

This report summarizes the workshop discussions and the views that participants provided. The views and opinions in this report do not reflect USDOT's views. However,

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[1] Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) generally refers to driver assistance features such as, automatic emergency braking, blind spot warning, and lane keeping assistance. Yet, there is currently no standard definition and terminology around this term. AAA, *Advanced Driver Assistance Technology Names*. (2019).
[2] Automated Driving Systems (ADS) is defined in SAE J3016 as the hardware and software that are collectively capable of performing the entire DDT on a sustained basis, regardless of whether it is limited to a specific operational design domain (ODD); this term is used specifically to describe a SAE Level 3, 4, or 5 driving automation system.

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USDOT will consider these perspectives in upcoming automated vehicle policy documents, guidance, and strategies

Background and Purpose

ADS are being tested on public roads and ADAS are already offered on vehicles currently available for consumer purchase, yet confusion persists among consumers, public officials, and even transportation professionals as to the capabilities and limitations of each. Language and terminology are one likely source of this confusion. Dozens of names exist for similar ADAS features that are currently on the market, while common terms describing ADS features – and even the term itself – are either vague (e.g., autonomous vehicle, self-driving vehicle) or intended for a technical audience (e.g., SAE Levels of Driving Automation). As a result, much of the existing terminology is not well understood.

Confusing or vague terminology – and lack of accessible information – about ADAS available to the public for purchase and ADS being tested on public roads may lead the public to blend the two concepts.[3] Public understanding is often informed by news coverage of high-profile incidents involving both ADAS and ADS, so imprecise or overly vague terminology can increase confusion and even may cause safety hazards. Recent studies have shown that consumers can misunderstand the capabilities and limitations of an ADAS feature in such a way that the consumers overestimate the system's capabilities and/or underestimate the extent to which a human driver remains responsible for driving while the system is engaged.[4]

As USDOT is greatly interested in the safe use of ADAS and ADS, the Department supports a dialogue with industry and interested stakeholder groups around this topic.

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[3] McDonald, A., Carney, C., & McGehee, D. (2018). *Vehicle Owners' Experiences with and Reactions to Advanced Driver Assistance Systems*. Retrieved from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety website: https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/VehicleOwnersExperiencesWithADAS_TechnicalReport.pdf

[4] Ibid.

Participants

Individuals representing the following organizations attended the workshop:

Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers

American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA)

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

American Automobile Association (AAA)

American Car Rental Association (ACRA)

American Honda Motor Co.

Aptiv/nuTonomy

Aurora

Beep

Consumer Reports

Embark

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles

Ford/Argo AI

General Motors/Cruise Automation

Global Automakers

Governor Highway Safety Association

Hyundai

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Highway Loss Data Institute (IIHS, HLDI)

Kodiak Robotics

Kodiak Robotics

Local Motors

Mercedes-Benz

National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

National Safety Council

Nissan

Nuro

Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST)

Partners for Automated Vehicle Education (PAVE)

Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) International

Starsky Robotics

Subaru

Toyota

Toyota Research Institute

TuSimple

Uber

USDOT Volpe Center

Volvo Cars

Waymo

Representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Transportation facilitated the meeting.

Introductory Remarks and Presentations

The workshop began with introductory remarks from the USDOT and presentations from several organizations that are active in automotive technology consumer education.

USDOT – Finch Fulton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy

Finch Fulton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, welcomed participants to the workshop. He cited U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao's previous calls to action on the issue of clearly communicating the capabilities and limitations of ADAS and ADS in order to build trust in emerging technologies, and to ensure the safe use of systems that are available today. In July 2018, Secretary Chao issued a challenge to industry partners to take the lead on consumer education issues related to vehicle automation.[5] Industry partners have recently responded to this challenge by forming Partners for Automated Vehicle Education (PAVE). Also notable are efforts by SAE, Consumer Reports, AAA, and others.

Mr. Fulton reviewed the objectives and format of the workshop, as well as its scope in addressing terminology and education issues around vehicle automation at all SAE levels. He cited safety concerns stemming from confusion over the capabilities and limitations of currently available ADAS technologies and confusion between these systems and ADS currently undergoing testing. Mr. Fulton emphasized the USDOT's belief in the use of clear, accurate, and accessible communications and education to enable the safe use and adoption of advanced vehicle technologies.

Partners for Automated Vehicle Education – Tara Andringa, Coalition Manager

Tara Andringa, Coalition Manager for PAVE, discussed the group's formation and its initial efforts. PAVE was launched in January 2019 with the mission of addressing mistrust, hype, and confusion that are prevalent about ADS-equipped vehicles. PAVE unites a diverse group of partners around two core beliefs: (1) ADS-equipped vehicles have the potential to improve the safety, mobility, and sustainability of transportation and (2) public understanding is necessary to achieve those benefits.

PAVE's efforts are rooted in four main pillars:

1. **Communications Campaign** – Including a web presence, social media, outreach events, and earned media. PAVE recognizes that competing nomenclatures can lead to consumer confusion, particularly between technologies that are

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[5] https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/7-10-2018-autonomous-vehicle-symposium

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available today and technologies that are only available on prototype vehicles undergoing testing.

2. **Hands-on Public Demonstrations** – PAVE has joined SAE in hosting public demonstration days to provide first-hand exposure to ADS-equipped vehicles in order to demystify them and discuss societal impacts.

3. **Policy-Maker Workshops** – PAVE is currently working with academic partners to develop day-long workshops to educate state and local policy-makers on ADS-equipped vehicles.

4. **Dealer and Customer Service Training** – PAVE is in the process of developing training programs for dealer and customer service personnel.

Consumer Reports – Kelly Funkhouser, Head of Connected and Automated Vehicles

Kelly Funkhouser, Head of Connected and Automated Vehicles at Consumer Reports, discussed her organization's research into terminology and education around ADAS and its efforts to alleviate confusion among consumers.

Ms. Funkhouser started by providing an overview of the availability of ADAS and related features across model year 2019 vehicles. Though most models can be equipped with a wide array of these features, less than half present ADAS as standard equipment and some models continue to lack these features even as options.

Ms. Funkhouser discussed the resources consumers may consult in researching a new vehicle or feature, including NHTSA's vehicle information number (VIN) decoder and the "window sticker."[6] She noted how the window sticker may be insufficient for conveying information about ADAS to the average consumer. For instance, the window sticker will indicate whether a feature is standard or optional on the model, but not whether it is actually installed on a specific car. Additionally, feature names may vary across manufacturers and these names alone may be insufficient for conveying the functional differences between different systems.

Consumer Reports launched an initiative with AAA, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, MIT, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, J.D. Power, the National Safety Council, and the University of Iowa National Advanced Driving Simulator, to standardize the use of key terms across publications, websites, and other documents. A recently released report by AAA documents the full array of terms and names applied to

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[6] As required in 15 U.S.C. §1232 – Label and entry requirements; sometimes referred to as "Monroney label", which first introduced labelling and disclosure requirements for new vehicles.

available ADAS.[7] AAA and Consumer Reports have partnered to maintain this resource as an up-to-date dictionary of prevailing and recommended terms.

Ms. Funkhouser also discussed challenges and risks associated with consumer education on the changing functionality of ADAS. For instance, she expressed concerns about the need to provide instructions and/or training to vehicle owners following an over-the-air software update that affects vehicle or system functionality.

In concluding her remarks, Ms. Funkhouser suggested that USDOT and vehicle OEMs should try to encourage the installation of advanced safety features as standard equipment, agree to a standardized set of terms to describe those features, and require documentation of the features installed on specific vehicles.

Society for Automotive Engineers International – Grayson Brulte

Grayson Brulte, a representative for SAE International, provided a brief overview of SAE Demo Days, which are demonstration days that SAE has hosted to educate the public about the future of automated vehicles. To date, these demonstration days have been hosted in Los Angeles, California; Tampa, Florida; Detroit, Michigan; and Babcock Ranch, Florida. SAE surveys participants before and after their ride to better understand the impact of hands-on experience on their attitudes toward automated vehicles. As an example of the results, Mr. Brulte cited a survey finding that 82 percent of attendees indicate that they are "ready for automated vehicles," which is a significantly higher level of interest than revealed in similar surveys of the general public.

SAE International has produced several videos providing an overview of their demonstration days, the Tampa highlight video is available at: https://www.sae.org/news/video/content/12372/. The landing page with an overview of the Detroit event is available at: https://www.sae.org/attend/demo-days/wcx.

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[7]See *Advanced Driver Assistance Technology Names: AAA's recommendation for common naming of advanced safety systems*, available at: https://www.aaa.com/AAA/common/AAR/files/ADAS-Technology-Names-Research-Report.pdf

Key Themes

The following sections summarize key themes, strategies, and recommendations discussed during the workshop.

Communicating about Automation to Consumers and the Public

Current terminology for Advanced Driver Assistance Systems varies widely across the industry, causing confusion for drivers.

Workshop participants discussed how the terms used to describe many ADAS features are overlapping, inconsistent, and confusing for average consumers and the general public. Participants noted the following specific challenges:

- Different manufacturers may use different terms to describe the same feature.
- Manufacturers may use similar terms to describe functionally different systems, making them indistinguishable to some consumers. This issue persists both across manufacturers and within a single manufacturer's product lineup (and even on a single vehicle). An example is the use of multiple, similar-sounding names that all relate to lane-keeping but perform distinct functions and are activated by different in-vehicle displays for the driver.
- Manufacturers may package and market multiple ADAS features under a single, brand-specific name that conveys limited information about the functionality or capabilities of the individual systems. Conversely, some terms may be too technical and not appropriate for effectively describing features to the general public.

Drivers are not always aware of the Advance Driver Assistance Systems installed on a vehicle they are driving. They may not know how to use the features and may not understand their capabilities and limitations.

Workshop participants discussed how it is not always clear to drivers or vehicle owners which distinct ADAS features are installed on a particular vehicle. Without specific instruction from a dealership, rental agency, or car sharing service, or prior experience with ADAS features, drivers do not necessarily know whether certain ADAS features are present on a vehicle and may even be surprised by their activation. One participant shared an anecdote about a driver who mistakenly believed a vehicle malfunction was causing her to be electrically shocked, only to find out that the vehicle was equipped with a lane departure warning system that issued haptic (vibrating) feedback to the driver through the seat.

In addition, some participants believed that consumers who buy or rent a vehicle with ADAS features may receive limited or no training or instruction on the proper use of

those systems. Workshop participants discussed how consumers may not receive sufficient instruction on the use of their vehicle's advanced features, leading to potential misuse of the technology. Some participants pointed to the presence of detailed instructions in the owner's manual, although participants were divided on whether the majority of drivers read their owner's manual thoroughly.

Multiple terms are used to describe Automated Driving Systems. They are used interchangeably and often without regard for their specific meaning.

Several participants pointed to current public confusion stemming from the use of multiple terms to describe vehicles equipped with ADS. Terms such as autonomous vehicles, automated vehicles, driverless vehicles, and self-driving vehicles are all used in public conversation. Although these terms may have distinct meanings to a technical audience, participants noted that they tend to be used interchangeably by the public and in the media, contributing to the confusion. At times, these terms are used to describe vehicles available for purchase today and with lower levels of automation. As a result, some participants believed this could lead the public to believe that ADAS are capable of functioning at a higher level of automation that is currently only being designed for and tested on ADS-equipped vehicles.

The public is unclear on the distinction between Advanced Driver Assistance Systems and Automated Driving Systems. These technologies are related, but distinct.

Many workshop participants highlighted concerns that the public may not understand or recognize the differences between Advanced Driver Assistance Systems and Automated Driving Systems. For example, some participants were concerned that users of Levels 0, 1, and 2 ADAS may assume higher levels of capability and/or lower levels of driver engagement than the actual levels for which they are designed and intended. This could lead to situations in which drivers do not use the system correctly. Participants discussed how this form of confusion can introduce safety risks. Participants also believed that the general public may also confuse Levels 3 and 4 ADS with ADAS that are currently on the market. This could lead to associating negative events involving Levels 0, 1, and 2 ADAS currently available today with ADS features under development and potentially developing mistrust of ADS.

"Overselling of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems now creates an issue for Automated Driving Systems down the road, because it will hinder consumer acceptance."

Workshop participants discussed how the public may not be aware of how ADS are being publicly tested now (i.e., with safety operators and manual backup controls), versus how their operation could evolve in the future (i.e., operated as part of a shared service with no expectation that human occupants will ever need to assume operation of the vehicle). Participants cited this as one explanation behind the relatively low levels

of trust and tempered levels of interest in vehicle automation revealed in consumer surveys.

Finding Common Ground in Terminology for the Public

A single, shared reference document that is simple, but technically accurate, can improve public communications.

Multiple participants identified the need for a single, shared resource that documents public-facing terminology aligned with established technical/industry-facing terms. Several industry participants indicated that they are beginning to work together to standardize terminology, but that a more widespread approach with formal documentation will be needed.

The group generally agreed that any standardization of terminology should be simple and clear for a public audience, but also technically accurate. Participants emphasized the importance of involving communications experts and other non-technical groups to help develop terms intended for the general public. Groups involved directly with consumers or the government in particular can offer relevant expertise on developing effective approaches and language for communicating with non-technical audiences.

It is possible to standardize terms, while maintaining flexibility for brand differentiation.

Participants emphasized that any shared terminology should maintain flexibility for companies to use brand-specific names. One participant pointed to over-the-counter medications as offering a potentially useful model, where a single substance may be known by a scientific name (e.g., acetylsalicylic acid), a generic name (e.g., aspirin), and a brand name, depending on the context. Several participants discussed how this could be a useful approach in establishing different terms for technical purposes and for consumer-facing audiences. It was noted that different groups may be better suited to developing standardized terms for each purpose.

Sharing the Responsibility on Consumer Education

Participants discussed strategies to improve consumer education around both ADAS and ADS, including effective approaches to driver training on new technologies.

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems

Incorporate Advanced Driver Assistance Systems-focused content into driver training.

Workshop participants noted there may be a need to adapt existing driver training curricula and content to reflect safe use and/or contribute to an accurate understanding of ADAS features. Some participants stated that many driving instructors may also be

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unfamiliar with ADAS features. It was noted that the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators has started developing a model curriculum focused on ADAS features to address this gap. Participants also highlighted an opportunity for driving schools to expand their market by offering technology-focused instruction to experienced drivers. Participants also pointed to opportunities for driving schools to collaborate with vehicle manufacturers to offer training on ADAS.

Driver training should leverage a range of delivery mechanisms and needs to highlight system limitations in addition to capabilities.

Workshop participants generally agreed that ADAS demonstrations – both live and virtual – can be effective in highlighting their capabilities and training consumers. Participants discussed innovative training approaches that may be easier than a ride-along in actual vehicles, but more effective than standard print or video tutorials. For example, a vehicle manufacturer representative discussed their use of virtual reality demonstrations and interactive electronic displays at dealerships.

Participants stressed the importance of interactive training for consumers and the need to focus equally on the limitations and performance boundaries of available systems. It was noted that purely focusing on capabilities enables users to make false assumptions about the limitations of a particular system and may lead to misuse and increased safety risk. Moreover, drivers may not encounter the boundaries of a particular system's capabilities (e.g., conditions under which an automatic emergency braking system may not activate in time to prevent a rear-end collision) in typical driving. Demonstrations could offer an opportunity to highlight where those limitations exist in a controlled setting.

Dealership interactions offer an opportunity to assess consumer understanding of the technology and provide information, tutorials, and demonstrations.

Workshop participants noted that purchasing a vehicle can be an overwhelming experience for buyers and, as a result, may not be the ideal time to provide a lengthy tutorial on ADAS features. Participants discussed the value of encouraging follow-up dealership visits to review key ADAS features with customers and to answer technical questions. Representatives from multiple vehicle manufacturers highlighted the fact that their dealerships will often offer a vehicle's first service, such as an oil change, for free, in part to incentivize return visits early in a customer's ownership experience. In addition to the value of separating feature tutorials from the purchase process, participants also suggested that this approach offers the benefit of giving vehicle owners time to try new features on their own, leading to more informed questions. At least one vehicle manufacturer discussed how they survey customers as part of this initial service visit and collect information on the extent to which customers are aware of and use

features on their vehicle. Some workshop participants commented that expanding this approach beyond one manufacturer could be highly valuable.

Training and education opportunities should be considered at the point of use, in addition to the point of sale.

As some participants believed that many consumers will first experience ADAS features in a rental car, participants reflected on how training opportunities should be considered not only at the point of sale, but at the point of use. Partnerships with car rental companies, car sharing services, and other services through which consumers use vehicles for short periods of time could be a valuable path for disseminating educational information about ADAS features.

Automated Driving Systems

Demonstrations and other opportunities to support hands-on engagement with the technology is important for public education.

Multiple organizations present at the workshop shared their experience in engaging with the public and with public officials through live events and demonstrations. SAE highlighted their series of SAE Demo Days and described how these events help the public build an understanding of and comfort with this emerging technology before it becomes available to the public for use or purchase. ADS developers also emphasized the value of exposing the public to their vehicles as a way to "demystify" them. Workshop participants generally agreed that live demonstrations and interactions with the public will continue to be an important approach for educating the public and setting expectations about the future of ADS. It was noted that demonstrations can also bring an opportunity to strengthen core messages through earned media coverage.

Explore the range of communications platforms available, including social media and online mechanisms.

Some workshop participants discussed the importance of using a range of communications platforms and approaches, such as informative online videos and social media, to capture a wider audience. In addition, it may be important to identify different information delivery mechanisms for specific audiences. For example, one ADS technology developer discussed how they provide more explanation around vehicle testing and safety procedures when educating public officials.

"First, figure out the technical reality. Then, translate it into consumer-friendly terminology. Finally, find the megaphone."

Automated Driving System developers testing in the same location could coordinate their messaging with the local community to prevent unnecessary confusion.

Several workshop participants identified the potential risks of conveying conflicting information to the public in areas where multiple companies are conducting tests on public roads. They suggested that, where appropriate, companies that are developing similar technologies and testing in similar regions could coordinate their messaging so that they are presenting more consistent information to the public, local officials, and the first responder community. Participants agreed that although not all information presented needs to be the same, there is value in harmonizing basic information to inform accurate expectations about the technology and support public understanding, acceptance, and trust.

Tell the whole story and talk about mobility implications of Automated Driving Systems, in addition to safety.

Though safety is often most prominent in public discussions about the future of ADS, several workshop participants highlighted the importance of also communicating about potential mobility and accessibility benefits. They discussed the positive responses received from the public to presenting information about the benefits of the technology.

Voluntary Safety Self-Assessments could be a useful tool to support public communications.

The USDOT currently encourages companies developing ADS to publish Voluntary Safety Self-Assessments (VSSAs) that document their approach to 12 elements considered by industry to be critical for safety. As of the workshop, 15 companies had publicly released a VSSA. Several workshop participants suggested that NHTSA consider how these documents are supporting consumer education needs and how they might be improved as a consumer education resource in the future.

"When we are talking about Levels 4 and 5, we need to talk about how vehicles are being tested now, working toward higher levels of automation with safety drivers. The [Voluntary Safety Self-Assessment] may be a good vehicle for doing that. We need to lift information from those and share them more broadly."

Proposed Actions

Participants discussed several ways to make progress in clarifying terminology and enhancing consumer education around ADAS and ADS. Suggestions included:

- **Explore ways to continue the dialogue and provide a venue for action.** Participants agreed on the importance of continuing the dialogue and convening stakeholders around this topic. Some suggested that the USDOT play a role in facilitating the conversation.

- **Collaborate with each other to harmonize language and terminology.** Participants agreed that some level of standardization around terminology is critical to support clear communications with the public and public officials. Some suggested that greater USDOT participation is needed in this area.

- **Further explore opportunities to improve or incentivize training.** Participants agreed that there is room to explore innovative approaches to encourage consumers to undergo training or education on ADAS, whether through dealership interactions or online mechanisms. Some suggested further study could be useful in this area.

- **Identify partners that can help engage with local communities.** Participants agreed that identifying and enlisting diverse groups to engage local communities is important to broaden the communications message. One participant discussed their successes in working with advocacy groups for the disabled and elderly to help communicate with multiple audiences.

- **Explore opportunities to more readily identify ADAS features installed on a particular vehicle.** Participants noted that standardized information about an individual vehicle (e.g., the window sticker) reveals little about the ADAS features actually installed on it. Some stated that USDOT could explore opportunities to encode information about ADAS features into a vehicle's VIN, or other mechanisms for systematically identifying the presence of advanced safety and driver assistance features.

Appendix: Workshop Agenda

Monday, July 15, 2019
Location: Room Canary 2, Automated Vehicle Symposium, Orlando World Center Marriott, 8701
World Center Drive, Orlando, Florida, 32821

Time	Topic	Speaker
9:00am	**Welcome and Opening Remarks**	Finch Fulton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, U.S. DOT
9:10 am	**Communicating about Automation to Consumers and the Public: Current Landscape** ● *What are today's challenges?* ● *What is currently being done to address key issues?*	Tara Andringa, Coalition Manager, PAVE Kelly Funkhouser, Head of Connected and Automated Vehicles, Consumer Reports Grayson Brulte, SAE Representative
9:30am	**Finding Common Ground in Terminology for the Public** ● *Discuss expectations around standard terminology* ● *Differentiating between industry terms, publicly accessible terms, and the need for both.* ● *Discussing current issues regarding Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)*	Facilitated Discussion Moderator: Sujeesh Kurup, Office of the Secretary of Transportation - Policy
10:15am	**Break**	All
10:30am	**Sharing the Responsibility on Education** ● *Identifying roles in who educates and through what means* ● *Exploring opportunities for partnering*	Facilitated Discussion Moderator: Sujeesh Kurup, Office of the Secretary of Transportation - Policy
11:10pm	**Establishing an Action Plan** ● *Discussing milestones and near-term goals* ● *Discuss action plan and next steps for the group*	Facilitated Discussion Moderator: Finch Fulton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, U.S. DOT
11:30am	**Adjourn**	

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