

Field Hearing: Smart Mobility: It's a Community Issue
Subcommittee on Research and Technology
U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens
Livonia City Hall, 33000 Civic Center Drive, Livonia
Friday, October 25, 2019 at 10 a.m.
David Coulter, Oakland County Executive

Testimony

Good morning, esteemed members of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology.

I am honored to be here and grateful to Congresswoman Stevens and her congressional colleagues for the invitation to testify today about Smart Mobility technology.

My name is David Coulter. I am the county executive for Oakland County, Michigan which is home to Fiat-Chrysler Headquarters and Engineering Center, General Motors Proving Grounds, Nissan Research and Development Center, and hundreds of suppliers and other companies working on the development of Smart Mobility technologies.

Oakland County is also home to 1.25 Million residents and 1.14 Million registered vehicles.

That's about 912 cars for every 1,000 residents which exceeds the average for the rest of the U.S.

The Road Commission for Oakland County, which is a separate entity from county government, maintains the largest county road system in Michigan with 1,800 traffic signals; 2,700 miles of county roads; and 90,000 road signs.

In 1967, Oakland County had 6.8 deaths for every 100 million vehicle miles of travel.

Fifty years later in 2017, that number was reduced to 0.53 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

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That's a huge improvement over five decades, but we still have a ways to go to prevent fatal and injury traffic crashes.

The goal is to reduce, if not outright eliminate, traffic fatalities.

Oakland County believes the solution lies in public-private partnerships that will enable cars to utilize Smart Mobility technology to talk to each other and the road infrastructure around them.

Today, I'd like to give you a snapshot of how Oakland County is partnering with other governments, non-profits, and private industry to advance Smart Mobility development.

Our biggest project to date involves P3 Mobility, a Toronto, Ontario-based company which was selected by Oakland County to develop a business plan for a connected vehicle infrastructure using Smart Mobility technology.

The contract between Oakland County and P3 Mobility was signed on January 23, 2019.

Our partnership with P3 Mobility is launching a pilot to use Roadside Units placed at intersections to test both Smart Mobility technology and multiple revenue generating opportunities.

Advanced safety technologies provide consumers with improved vehicle innovations that save lives.

These new technologies can eliminate 94% of fatal crashes involving human error.

If a successful business model can be developed, this will guide Oakland County in generating revenue to offset the costs of the deployment of connected vehicle

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infrastructure to Oakland County's 1,600 signalized intersections and create a safer road system.

This pilot program has explored funding options with traditional infrastructure financing entities but has experienced resistance.

We believe that resistance will continue until a state or federal vehicle safety mandate is established and/or the industry further advances Smart Mobility technology to make it more cost effective.

There are other Smart Mobility projects occurring around Oakland County.

The Michigan Department of Transportation is utilizing its modernization of I-75 in Oakland County from 8 Mile Road to M-59 to install Smart Mobility technology infrastructure so cars can receive information about road conditions on the freeway on weather and road conditions, back-ups, and curve warnings ahead.

It is worth noting that the auto companies will use this stretch of I-75 as a test bed for Smart Mobility technology.

Another MDOT Smart Mobility project that runs through Oakland County worthy of mention is Roadside Units which will be placed up Woodward Avenue from downtown Detroit to Pontiac.

These Roadside Units will make drivers aware of real-time traffic information, will perform green light prioritization to move more traffic through an intersection, and offer a safety message network which will alert drivers to traffic threats such as vehicles approaching an intersection at a high rate of speed.

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Related Smart Mobility infrastructure projects by MDOT are also either underway or will be in the near future on major Oakland County roadways and freeways such as:

Telegraph Road, M-59, I-696, I-96, among others.

As you can see, Smart Mobility is of immeasurable value to Oakland County and its businesses and residents because it will improve traffic safety and quality of life and attract jobs by driving business development.

Oakland County is proud to be on the leading edge of the development of Smart Technology.

We will continue to work with our public, private, and non-profit partners to move Smart Mobility solutions forward.