June 8, 2018

The Honorable Tim Brown
Chief Executive Officer
Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments
300 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Toledo, OH 43604

Dear Mr. Brown,

As autonomous vehicle technology races to the forefront of the transportation domain, the
time has come for Northwest Ohio area transportation stakeholders to ensure they join in
autonomous vehicle-related conversations, and that they have a seat at the table for
discussions. Although no one can predict right now what the impact on society as a whole will
be, we do know the technology will have an extraordinarily far-reaching impact on business and
industry.

According to DriveOhio, a collaboration between government, research and private industry
partners to build Ohio’s infrastructure for smart mobility, “There’s no better place than Ohio to
design, test and deploy smart mobility technologies.” On May 9th, Ohio Governor Kasich signed
an executive order to open all Ohio roadways for autonomous vehicle testing. Projects across
Ohio support the testing of autonomous and connected vehicles and the deployment of smart
mobility technologies. Work has already begun here in Northwest Ohio. The Ohio Turnpike is
outfitted end-to-end with fiber-optic cable, and sensors will be installed along a 60-mile stretch,
making it ideal for open-road testing. In addition, Smart Mobility Summits are being held across
the state and Ohio recently awarded $5 million for Smart Mobility Infrastructure project. The
DriveOhio tagline “We Accomplish More Together Than Alone” is one that should be
embraced by Northwest Ohio transportation stakeholders.

The overarching significance is the number of lives that will be saved through the prevention of
car crashes. The National Safety Council estimated in 2017 automotive fatalities topped 40,000
for the second consecutive year. In addition, the economic and societal costs of collisions are a
staggering $836 billion every year. Advanced autonomous vehicle technology will result in
fewer deaths, better traffic flow, improved fuel economy and allow us to achieve a higher level
of road use efficiency.

Consumer trust is a critical component to the widespread acceptance of autonomous vehicle
technology, and efforts to educate the public must be a priority. In 2017, AAA partnered with
The University of Toledo to advance communications about autonomous vehicle technology in
Northwest Ohio through a speaker series titled “Technology Takes the Wheel.” The first public
seminar held on Feb. 7 offered a general overview about autonomous vehicle technology. The
second seminar on April 13 focused on cybersecurity. The third seminar scheduled for June 21
will focus on public transportation. Attendance for the first two seminars exceeded 700 and reached a wide-ranging and diverse audience.

There is a critical need for local area transportation stakeholders to develop a master plan to prepare Northwest Ohio streets for the eventual deployment of autonomous vehicles. Through recent discussions, senior leaders with AAA, TARTA and The University of Toledo are requesting that TMACOG serve as the facilitator for an autonomous vehicle steering committee. We ask that the TMACOG board to take this into consideration. Should you have any questions please contact any of the signatories below.

Sincerely,

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