



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Research and Technology Subcommittee Field Hearing:
Smart Mobility: It's a Community Issue
Friday, October 25, 2019

I want to thank Chairwoman Stevens for organizing this important hearing. As a longtime Member of both the Science, Space, and Technology Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I have great interest in how technologies are being developed and deployed to improve mobility, mitigate congestion, and reduce the environmental impact of transportation.

I am from one of the nation's big cities, Dallas, that has been investing heavily in both public transit and so-called micro-transit options such as scooters and bike shares. Texas is known for our love of big cars and we are continuing to expand our roadways to accommodate increasing traffic. However, we also recognize that we must invest in more comprehensive and forward-looking mobility solutions. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area gained more new residents in 2018 than any other metro area. As economic opportunities continue to expand in Texas, this trend will likely continue. We must find new and innovative ways to move all of our city's residents around safely, efficiently, and quickly, taking into account the unique needs of different segments of our population. Moving goods around efficiently will also be important to maintaining our economic growth.

As cities like Dallas continue to experiment with new mobility solutions, we must build partnerships with other cities to share data and best practices. We must also look to our neighbors in less dense communities outside of our city limits to ensure connectivity and flow of people and goods between the cities and suburbs, and to help share lessons that may be applied across diverse communities.

The suburbs will face their own unique challenges. Most suburban communities have limited or no public transit options. In many suburban communities, the population is aging, and increasingly, those individuals want to age in place. We must develop and implement mobility solutions that ensure that people who can no longer drive themselves have safe and easy transportation to supermarkets, medical appointments, and other essential services. In many cases, these solutions will involve public-private partnerships, including with ride hail companies.

However, we must proceed with caution. Younger people may be perfectly comfortable using a smart phone to order a ride and jump in a car with a stranger behind the wheels. Older people may be less comfortable with both the technology and the idea of getting in an unfamiliar vehicle. Understanding these attitudes and receiving community input into the design of new mobility solutions will be essential.

Today's hearing brings together an important and diverse set of perspectives from the public sector, the private sector, and the research community. This is an important discussion and will not be the only hearing this Committee will hold on the future of smart cities and communities. I thank the panel for contributing their time and expertise to our Committee.