

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Joint Committee on Labor and Civil Service and
Transportation and Public Utilities

City Hall, Room 400
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, May 12, 2026
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

CHAIR JAMES HARRITY
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY J. YOUNG
COUNCILWOMAN NINA AHMAD
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE-RICHARDSON

Mr. Kunkel, The Clerk

P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIR HARRITY: Good morning.

Good morning, everyone.
We're going to start getting together now. You're all right, sister? Don't rush. We're good.

Good morning, everyone.
This is a public hearing of the Joint Committee on Labor and Civil Service and Transportation and Public Utilities regarding Resolution No. 260091.

I am going to start off.
We are here today to discuss the future of autonomous rideshare vehicles in our city. Rideshare plays a critical role in helping residents get where they need to go, often filling gaps in our public transportation system, while also providing essential income for thousands of working families across Philadelphia.

1 As Waymo begins pilot
2 activity here, it's important that
3 we examine the impact this emerging
4 technology before it becomes fully
5 operational on our streets. At
6 today's hearing, we will seek to
7 answer the important questions
8 surrounding workforce protections,
9 rider safety, emergency response
10 coordination, and oversight
11 measures.

12 I want to note that we
13 invited Waymo, as well as the
14 rideshare networks that currently
15 operate in our city to give
16 testimony today. While it would be
17 -- while it would have been more
18 beneficial to have them available
19 for questions, they have submitted
20 written testimony for our
21 consideration. While innovation and
22 technology can bring opportunities,
23 we also have a responsibility to
24 ensure these advancements are

1 implemented safely and in a way that
2 protects workers and the public
3 alike.

4 All right. I note for the
5 record that a quorum of the
6 committee is present. This hearing
7 is now called the order. Any of my
8 colleagues have anything to say,
9 opening? Anyone? All right,
10 Mr. Steven?

11 Mr. Kunkel, will you please
12 read the title of the resolution
13 being considered today?

14 THE CLERK: Authorizing the
15 Committee on Labor and Civil
16 Service, and the Committee on
17 Transportation to hold joint
18 hearings regarding the arrival of
19 driverless rideshare vehicles in the
20 city of Philadelphia and its impact
21 on labor, the local economy, and
22 public safety.

23 CHAIR HARRITY: Mr. Kunkel,
24 will you please call the roll.

1 THE CLERK: Councilmember

2 Ahmad.

3 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD:

4 Present.

5 THE CLERK: Councilmember

6 Brooks.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

8 Present.

9 THE CLERK: Councilmember

10 Driscoll. Councilmember Gilmore-

11 Richardson.

12 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

13 RICHARDSON: Present.

14 THE CLERK: Councilmember

15 Harrity.

16 CHAIR HARRITY: Present.

17 THE CLERK: Councilmember

18 Jones. Councilmember Landau.

19 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

20 Present.

21 THE CLERK: Councilmember

22 Lozada.

23 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

24 Present.

1 THE CLERK: Councilmember

2 O'Neill.

3 COUNCILMEMBER O'NEILL:

4 Present.

5 THE CLERK: Councilmember

6 O'Rourke. Councilmember Phillips.

7 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

8 Present.

9 THE CLERK: Councilmember

10 Squilla. Councilmember Young.

11 CHAIR HARRITY: Okay.

12 Would any members of this committee

13 like to make any remarks at this

14 time? I think we went through that.

15 Do you have anything to say? Oh,

16 yeah. That's what I think. Yeah.

17 Will the clerk please call

18 the first panel of witnesses to

19 testify today.

20 THE CLERK: Anna Kelly,

21 Senior Policy Advisor EV and

22 Parking, OTIS.

23 CHAIR HARRITY: Okay. Good

24 morning. Please state your name for

1 the record and proceed with your
2 testimony.

3 MS. KELLY: Good morning.
4 My name is Anna Kelly, Senior Policy
5 Advisor for EV and Parking with the
6 Office of Transportation and
7 Infrastructure Systems.

8 Good morning, Councilperson
9 or Chairperson Harrity and members
10 of both committees. Thank you for
11 the opportunity to appear before you
12 today to discuss the important topic
13 of autonomous vehicles in
14 Philadelphia. As I mentioned, my
15 name is Anna Kelly. I'm a Senior
16 Policy Advisor for EV and Parking at
17 the Office of Transportation and
18 Infrastructure Systems.

19 In 2022, the Pennsylvania
20 legislature passed Act 130, which
21 established guidelines to allow
22 certified driverless vehicles to
23 operate commercially in the state.
24 PennDOT regulates the autonomous

1 vehicles technology. The State's
2 Public Utilities Commission, and the
3 Philadelphia Parking Authority
4 manage the commercial licensing of
5 the autonomous vehicle commercial
6 operations.

7 While the city is entirely
8 preempted in regulating this
9 technology by state law, city
10 agencies are actively preparing for
11 commercial autonomous vehicle
12 operations in Philadelphia. Waymo
13 has been actively testing and
14 mapping in Philadelphia under a
15 PennDOT permit since the summer of
16 2025.

17 Staff from the Office of
18 Transportation and Infrastructure
19 Systems and the Commerce Department
20 have met periodically with Waymo
21 representatives to request
22 information about the rollout and to
23 discuss training resources for the
24 city and for city staff.

1 To date, Waymo has
2 completed testing and is working
3 through the permit process with
4 PennDOT and PPA to initiate
5 commercial operations. We've been
6 assured by Waymo that the commercial
7 launch will be after the upcoming
8 events in the summer of 2026,
9 including the Semiquincentennial and
10 the World Cup.

11 While early studies show
12 some safety benefits to highly
13 autonomous vehicles, depending on
14 the type of technology utilized,
15 it's essential that the city takes
16 steps to prepare for this new
17 technology. Consultations with peer
18 cities and guidance from national
19 transportation groups led the city
20 to develop an intergovernmental
21 working group, which includes OTIS,
22 Streets, Commerce, Police and Fire,
23 to meet regularly to prepare for
24 Waymo's rollout. We're also in

1 frequent communications with PennDOT
2 regarding Waymo's progress towards
3 commercial launch.

4 Other cities have reported
5 issues with Waymo vehicles
6 interfering with emergency response
7 or with road closures. This working
8 group will facilitate efficient
9 responses to incidents and
10 communication between the city and
11 Waymo and will be in place in case
12 of other future entrants into the
13 commercial autonomous vehicle market
14 in Philadelphia.

15 Currently, the working
16 group is coordinating with PennDOT
17 and Waymo to schedule trainings for
18 city staff so that our first
19 responders are prepared when they
20 encounter a Waymo in the field.
21 While the city is preempted from
22 regulating this new technology, we
23 are prepared to work as a united
24 front to ensure that -- to ensure

1 the safety of Philadelphians as
2 autonomous vehicles launch in the
3 city.

4 Thank you for the
5 opportunity to appear before you
6 today. I'm happy to take any
7 questions at this time.

8 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.
9 Thank you so much. I just have a
10 few questions to start. Your
11 testimony states the city developed
12 an intergovernmental working group
13 to meet regularly for the Waymo
14 rollout. Can you tell us what type
15 of agenda items will be up for
16 discussion and if the group has met
17 yet? Can you tell us about the
18 issues discussed in the meeting to
19 date?

20 Also, the city is working
21 with PennDOT to schedule training
22 for the city staff. Can you tell me
23 what type of training will be taught
24 and what city agencies along with

1 our first responders will be
2 trained?

3 MS. KELLY: Sure. So our
4 first working group is scheduled for
5 later this month. The agenda for
6 that working group is still in
7 progress, but our plan is to discuss
8 with the first response agencies
9 what kinds of trainings would be
10 helpful for their staff and to talk
11 about scheduling those trainings.
12 And then we've -- we're working, as
13 I mentioned, consistently with
14 PennDOT.

15 They are sort of the
16 primary point of contact since they
17 do the permitting with Waymo. So
18 they're working with Waymo to
19 schedule these trainings and we're
20 coordinating to make sure that we
21 can make sure city staff can attend.

22 I think you also asked
23 about what type of training. This
24 hasn't been established yet, would

1 be open to thoughts. We want to
2 make sure that city staff can
3 actually interact physically with
4 the vehicles to understand what it
5 would be like if they are -- if they
6 encounter one in the field. We've
7 been told by Waymo that they will
8 come to Philadelphia and complete
9 these trainings.

10 CHAIR HARRITY: Okay. So
11 you don't know about any of the
12 training that'll be done through
13 PennDOT, is what you're saying and
14 --

15 MS. KELLY: We'll --

16 CHAIR HARRITY: -- and
17 Waymo?

18 MS. KELLY: We'll
19 coordinate with PennDOT to bring the
20 trainings here. Yeah.

21 CHAIR HARRITY: Okay. So
22 there's really no rules yet, is what
23 you're saying?

24 MS. KELLY: Sorry, say that

1 one more time.

2 CHAIR HARRITY: There's no
3 rules yet, but they're actually out
4 there driving on our streets. So --

5 MS. KELLY: So they're
6 permitted by PennDOT. So they're
7 working through the PennDOT permit
8 process, and the city is entirely
9 preempted in being able to regulate
10 them. So what we're doing is trying
11 to prepare for trainings to make
12 sure that we're ready when this
13 technology does arrive commercially.

14 CHAIR HARRITY: Yeah,
15 because I'd like to know how -- if
16 they violate the driving code, how
17 do we ticket a driverless vehicle?
18 You know, I'm sure there's a lot of
19 other questions, but I'm going to --
20 we have a big committee here, so I'm
21 going to let my colleagues. Anyone
22 have any questions for this witness?

23 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: I
24 have a question.

1 CHAIR HARRITY:

2 Councilwoman Ahmad, and then

3 Councilwoman Lozada. Rue? And then

4 Councilwoman Rue Landau.

5 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And

6 then Brooks.

7 CHAIR HARRITY: And then

8 Brooks.

9 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Okay.

10 CHAIR HARRITY:

11 Councilwoman -- I'm sorry,

12 Councilwoman Ahmad.

13 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Good

14 morning. Thank you for being here

15 and your testimony. So this is a

16 state authorizing them to be able to

17 be on our streets. What is

18 Philadelphia getting out of this?

19 What is the cost benefit analysis

20 for us? And what can we do to say,

21 no, we don't like this, and this is

22 our city? So we are preempted by

23 the state just because they can say

24 they have some streets they maintain

1 here. I don't -- I do not
2 understand this.

3 MS. KELLY: Yeah. So I can
4 only speak to what was authorized in
5 Act 130 --

6 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah.

7 MS. KELLY: -- in 2022 at
8 the state level which did authorize
9 statewide for these autonomous
10 vehicles to operate in city streets.
11 And -- so as a result, our response
12 is to get as prepared as we can and
13 bring together all of the agencies
14 to react. But yes, we are entirely
15 preempted by the state.

16 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So is
17 there an -- so any change we want to
18 that authorization would have to
19 come from the state --

20 MS. KELLY: Correct.

21 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: --
22 meaning our state legislature would
23 have to amend whatever PennDOT has
24 allowed, because our voices are not

1 being heard at all in this process.
2 So the question the Chairman asked
3 was about how do we hold them
4 accountable? That's really a very
5 big issue. There's nobody to hold
6 accountable. What is that
7 accountability and consequence
8 perspective? We as drivers have
9 accountability and ticketed all the
10 time, right? So how come this
11 particular mode of transportation is
12 going to escape that? And that's a
13 safety -- biggest concern, is a
14 safety concern.

15 And the other concern,
16 parallel concern, is that -- which
17 we just had a press conference we
18 talked about was, we need to invest
19 in public transit in order for
20 people to get around, in order for
21 environmental justice purposes, all
22 of these things.

23 And so we are -- actually,
24 our rights are being abrogated by

1 allowing this to come in. So I'm
2 just wondering, is the city going to
3 push back? Is the City Solicitor
4 going to do something? Because
5 there is a case to be made that
6 without the voices of all people,
7 they are pushing something on us
8 that we may or may not be ready for.
9 And there needs to be a
10 conversation. I don't know if you
11 have purview to respond to that end.
12 I'm just asking you this to put it
13 on the record.

14 MS. KELLY: Yeah,
15 absolutely. I guess what I'll say
16 is we share your concerns, and I can
17 definitely bring that back to city
18 agencies.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So we
20 would -- what we would like is a
21 legal person here, right, to answer
22 the questions about how do we --
23 when a state mandates something,
24 what is -- what are our rights? Are

1 our rights are being subrogated --
2 sub, you know, they're getting lower
3 than the state's rights to allow
4 this to happen. The second
5 question, which again, I'm not --
6 PPA is not here, they're answering
7 -- they wrote a testimony, written
8 testimony. So when a transportation
9 network company does a trip and
10 there's a per trip surcharge, are --
11 is this, which goes to the School
12 District, is this going to also have
13 that kind of surcharge?

14 MS. KELLY: I unfortunately
15 don't have --

16 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Okay.

17 MS. KELLY: -- the answer
18 to that question, but can refer it
19 to finance and budget or PPA as
20 appropriate.

21 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So
22 before we -- before we have our
23 streets inundated with these things,
24 right, that could cause us harm that

1 was going to make our jobs -- that
2 -- job loss, that is going to hurt
3 the environment. Even if these are
4 electric, it still hurts because
5 there's a large energy usage to do
6 this.

7 So all of those things need
8 to be taken into consideration
9 before we do anything. And for us
10 not to be able to do that, seems to
11 be a real -- a legal issue that I
12 would love our city to respond to
13 because the Legal Department, the
14 City Solicitor, you know, checks
15 everything we do about what impact
16 we have with our bills.

17 So we would like to make
18 sure if we can get a response on
19 that. I'd appreciate that. Thank
20 you, Chair.

21 MS. KELLY: Yes.

22 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.
23 Councilwoman Lozada.

24 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with
2 what my colleagues have said here,
3 but also just thinking about what is
4 happening around us nationally. And
5 the fact that as of January 2027,
6 there are a lot of people that are
7 going to lose their benefits, and
8 they're going to be required to do
9 some of these entry level jobs,
10 right?

11 Some of these jobs that
12 don't require for them to have a
13 college degree, right? And these
14 types of jobs, these, you know, the
15 -- my husband is a truck driver, and
16 I hear from him and his friends all
17 the time; trucks move the world,
18 trucks keep cities running. These
19 are the kinds of jobs that could
20 potentially be lost -- be lost if we
21 don't -- if we don't look at this
22 and analyze it in a way that is
23 beneficial to those individuals who
24 don't oftentimes have the

1 opportunity to get those higher
2 paying jobs.

3 And so, have you all been
4 looking at the impact that it will
5 have on everyday people? And how
6 many jobs and wages are going to be
7 lost? Opportunities are going to be
8 lost? Have we looked at that? I
9 was just -- I was -- I was -- if the
10 stores -- this weekend, and I can't
11 tell you the number of stores that I
12 went into that no longer have
13 cashiers. Everything is self-
14 checkout, self -- and, I have
15 nothing -- for all of those tech
16 folks, I have nothing against
17 technology, right?

18 But I do have something
19 against the fact that we are losing
20 these entry level jobs, and then
21 government is saying, You have to
22 go to work. Well, what do we want?
23 We want people to get -- go to work,
24 or we want people -- we want

1 computers to do the work. Which one
2 is it? Have we done that? Have we
3 analyzed the impact that it will
4 have on jobs and wages and
5 opportunities for everyday folks?

6 MS. KELLY: So, yeah, I'll
7 say we share your concerns,
8 absolutely. You know, the Parker
9 Administration is a pro worker
10 administration, and as the Office of
11 Transportation and Infrastructure
12 Systems, that's been -- we've been
13 focused on the safety implications.

14 But I can absolutely take
15 this back to, whether it's our
16 working group or the conversations
17 we're having with peer cities. We
18 are staying updated with peer cities
19 and the impacts they're seeing, you
20 know, some cities are quite far --
21 farther down the road than we are.
22 We can definitely get that together
23 and get that back to you.

24 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: And

1 I recognize that you guys are the
2 Office of Transportation, and you
3 have a certain lane, but you also,
4 as a -- as a office of the city of
5 Philadelphia, we have a
6 responsibility to look at this
7 holistically, right?

8 MS. KELLY: Absolutely.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: And
10 so in the Office of Transportation,
11 we need to figure out how many of
12 those jobs are going to be lost in
13 the transportation field that will
14 impact our citizens?

15 MS. KELLY: Yes. We can
16 definitely look into that.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:
18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you,
20 Councilwoman Lozada, for that.
21 That's exactly what I'm talking
22 about. There's not enough
23 information. You haven't answered
24 one question; no disrespect. But,

1 you know, I would think that when
2 you're coming in front of us and you
3 knew we were going to be asking, I
4 mean, just the normal questions;
5 who, what, when, where, how. That's
6 the information that we would want
7 and need.

8 The fact of the matter is,
9 these things are driving on our
10 streets, and we have no say. And
11 we're worried about safety. We're
12 worried about jobs. There are
13 60,000 jobs, that's the number.
14 That's what we're in jeopardy of.
15 Councilwoman Rue Landau.

16 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: One
17 more time.

18 CHAIR HARRITY: Oh, yes.
19 I'm sorry. Councilwoman Lozada.

20 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I
21 apologize. You mentioned in your
22 testimony that other cities have had
23 issues as it relates to these Waymo
24 vehicles interfering with emergency

1 response and road closures.

2 MS. KELLY: Uh-huh.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Can
4 you talk to us a little bit about
5 that. What were some of those
6 interferences and how have those
7 cities responded to those?

8 MS. KELLY: Yeah,
9 definitely. So what we've seen in
10 other cities is -- I will use San
11 Francisco as an example, when there
12 are power outages, sometimes when
13 the traffic lights and signals go
14 down, especially if there's a lot of
15 them in a row, the vehicles freeze
16 and don't know how to react. So
17 they'll stop in the middle of the
18 roadway.

19 So in conversations with
20 other cities, you know, they've
21 developed trainings for their first
22 responders to understand how to
23 actually interact with the vehicles.
24 Because one of the challenges is

1 that if there's no one in the
2 driver's seat, it's difficult to
3 direct the vehicle where you need it
4 to go as a first responder.

5 So we've been having a lot
6 of conversations with these cities
7 and how they've effectively trained
8 their first responders to react in
9 these situations. And yeah, just
10 say we absolutely share your
11 concerns and we're doing the best
12 that we can to get our first
13 responders prepared in a situation
14 where we're completely preempted and
15 the timeline for all of this. So
16 just want to say, sure.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:
18 That's extremely dangerous. People
19 have died as a result of traffic
20 accidents with a person behind the
21 wheel, right? Can you imagine what
22 could potentially happen if a
23 vehicle doesn't stop in an event of
24 an -- in the event of an emergency?

1 We have to -- I mean, all of these
2 things are things that we need to
3 think about. And how many cities
4 have these vehicles actively
5 operating in their -- in their
6 spaces?

7 MS. KELLY: So I believe
8 they're commercially licensed in
9 around nine cities, and are testing
10 in more cities at this point.

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: How
12 many?

13 MS. KELLY: I believe it's
14 nine. yeah. But I would -- I would
15 defer to whatever Waymo submitted in
16 their most recent --

17 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: And
18 do we know the percentage or the
19 number of accidents or emergencies
20 that have occurred that we've not
21 been able to, or that they have not
22 been able to respond to?

23 MS. KELLY: In terms of --
24 we can -- I can look into that and

1 get back to you. There's some --
2 the studies are quite new since this
3 technology is quite new. But we can
4 absolutely look into that and get
5 back to you.

6 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

7 Mr. Chair, the -- these are, I
8 think, questions that, you know, the
9 Office of Transportation should be
10 prepared to discuss. I mean, they
11 are -- they are everyday
12 conversations, they are common sense
13 questions that we're asking.
14 There's nothing that we're asking
15 here that it's not a question that
16 should have been asked at the
17 beginning of this process. And so
18 it's a little bit frustrating.

19 I understand that Waymo
20 should have been here, right? It's
21 a little frustrating that we don't
22 have those answers, and they're
23 asking us to consider these types of
24 opportunities.

1 And so I'd like to request
2 that, you know, within the -- at
3 least within the next 30 days, we
4 get a response regarding, you know,
5 emergencies, jobs, you know,
6 permitting processes. Who is using
7 this? What cities are using this?
8 How is it operating and functioning
9 in their -- in their towns? So that
10 we can better assess the requests
11 that is being made of us.

12 CHAIR HARRITY: Absolutely.
13 And just a follow up question would
14 be for me, are the first responders
15 being trained right now?

16 MS. KELLY: In
17 Philadelphia?

18 CHAIR HARRITY: Yes.

19 MS. KELLY: Not yet. We're
20 hoping to --

21 CHAIR HARRITY: But they're
22 already on the road driving. So
23 before -- apples before the cart,
24 right?

1 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

2 Uh-huh.

3 CHAIR HARRITY: All right.

4 Councilwoman Landau, please.

5 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: They

6 should never have been allowed to.

7 CHAIR HARRITY: Right.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Good

9 morning. Thank you for being here.

10 I think you're hearing our

11 frustration that Waymo is not here.

12 MS. KELLY: Yep.

13 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

14 Waymo was invited to this Joint

15 Committee Hearing to come and

16 explain itself to us, and did not

17 show up. And because of that, we're

18 left with a lot of questions that

19 are unanswered. This was our

20 moment. This is -- we gave them a

21 request, they're saying -- and they

22 did exactly what they are doing.

23 They hide behind the non-human

24 response of submitting some

1 paperwork. You got all these
2 workers here who might be out of a
3 job, who might get cut wages.

4 You've got all of us who
5 have very serious questions to ask,
6 and Waymo is not here to answer.
7 And that is -- that is shameful.
8 And we will try to ask our questions
9 through other avenues; you, and some
10 of the experts we have today. And
11 if we can't get answers, we are
12 absolutely submitting our questions
13 in writing to Waymo, and they need
14 to respond and/or we're going to
15 pull them right back here.

16 You know, this --
17 everything with rideshare started in
18 Philadelphia as you might recall.
19 For those of us who remember, we had
20 taxis driving on our streets, doing
21 great. They're -- they've got
22 standards, they've got regulations.
23 And suddenly Uber showed up, started
24 driving, and didn't yet have the

1 permission to drive, but they came
2 to our streets and drove first and
3 got permission later. And that was
4 outrageous, and we were very
5 disturbed about that. And then we
6 got Lyft, and we've got more
7 rideshares, and they did create
8 these wonderful jobs.

9 But to have autonomous
10 vehicles come to our city to try
11 this -- try this again, you know,
12 while they're already showed up
13 here. They're taking video of every
14 single aspect of our city of
15 Philadelphia, because they're
16 driving first, starting first, and
17 getting permission as they're going
18 along is absolutely outrageous. And
19 it is a huge violation of our
20 privacy.

21 I'm the head of the Tech
22 Committee. I want to know what are
23 -- where are you -- what are you
24 doing with this video that you are

1 -- that you are collecting 24/7
2 every single day? Where are you
3 storing it? Who are you going to
4 share it with? What do you do in
5 case of emergencies? We've seen
6 problems in Philadelphia where
7 across all of our communications
8 airways, we tell people there is a
9 -- you know, there's been a
10 horrifying plane crash in the
11 Northeast, keep away from that area.

12 Are these autonomous
13 vehicles going to keep away from an
14 emergency area? Are they going to
15 be able to protect us? Are they
16 going to keep us safe? There are so
17 many questions to ask, and they are
18 not here to answer them. I'm not
19 going to torture you with these
20 questions. I do want to know,
21 though, when did they start talking
22 to you? Are you talking to real
23 humans? And what is the timeline
24 and the plan for them?

1 MS. KELLY: Yeah. I just
2 want to say again, and we share your
3 concerns and our, you know, also,
4 you know, having, you know,
5 challenges reacting to this new
6 reality and are doing our best to
7 get these agencies together to build
8 a response.

9 So they -- Waymo started
10 testing in the summer of 2025, as I
11 mentioned, and we heard from them
12 then. We have spoken with them, I
13 believe two times at the -- at this
14 stage. So, yeah. And I guess the
15 other thing I would mention is
16 PennDOT does have much more regular
17 contact with them as they are the
18 permitting agency. So as your
19 questions are recorded and we go
20 looking for them, I'd be happy to
21 refer them to PennDOT. They will
22 have a much more detailed log of the
23 status of their permit application.

24 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

1 Okay. Want to just double down on
2 this request though. Philadelphia
3 has the chance right now to stand up
4 and be strong in these negotiations.
5 We do not have to sit back and let
6 this happen to us in a way. You
7 don't get a pass, no pass here.

8 They are going to listen to
9 us and what we need in Philadelphia,
10 and I think we need to stand strong.
11 This isn't some tsunami that is
12 happening to us right now. We have
13 power and control here, and we also
14 need to tell PennDOT that this is
15 our city, and we're taking care of
16 our city. Thank you.

17 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you,
18 Councilwoman Landau. Councilwoman
19 Brooks.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:
21 Thank you so much. So my question
22 is, is there a plan for incidents
23 that were created -- that can be
24 created by rideshare cars? And

1 where do we report these problems?

2 I'm a little disappointed to hear

3 that all of this is happening.

4 We're being very reactive where

5 we've seen across the country,

6 people have been ahead of this

7 before it even happened, and we've

8 kind of been silent until now.

9 So I want to thank

10 Councilmember Harrity and the -- and

11 the committee for bringing this up.

12 So that's one of my questions. And

13 the other one is, I know that the

14 funds from PPA are delivered to our

15 School District. I remember

16 firsthand working with the taxi

17 drivers when their medallion program

18 money was going to the School

19 District.

20 So how would the increase

21 in this driverless impact the

22 funding available to our School

23 District, regardless of the tax rate

24 changes?

1 MS. KELLY: So the -- your
2 second question I'll need to touch
3 base with finance and budget and get
4 a response. In terms of incidents,
5 because PennDOT regulates these
6 vehicles, the formal incident report
7 will all go through them. We are --

8 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: But
9 who do we report it to?

10 MS. KELLY: So it'll be
11 reported to -- so if there's a -- if
12 there's like a traffic incident, we
13 can ticket and enforce rules against
14 these vehicles in the same way that
15 we do with any other vehicle. We're
16 just not allowed to treat them any
17 differently than we would any other
18 car on the road, according to the --
19 to the regulations. So there will
20 be like a ticketing and enforcement,
21 as you would any other vehicle.

22 And then PennDOT has a --
23 an incident report process that the
24 incidents will go through. We are

1 also recording incidents that we see
2 as they're piloting and testing, and
3 have been compiling a list of those
4 incidents that we've seen with the
5 piloting and testing so far.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

7 Okay. And the second question, I
8 should submit in writing as well, so
9 we can get a clear answer from
10 finance?

11 MS. KELLY: Yes, I can get
12 an answer for you from budget --

13 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

14 Thank you so much.

15 MS. KELLY: -- and finance,
16 yes.

17 CHAIR HARRITY: You good,
18 Councilwoman?

19 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: I'm
20 good. Thank you.

21 CHAIR HARRITY: I would
22 also ask the -- who's liable? Who's
23 liable insurance-wise? They are
24 doing this pilot now driving around,

1 smacking in the cars, smacking into
2 this. Who's going to pay for it?
3 The city or Waymo? Councilwoman
4 Lozada.

5 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I
6 just have -- I just want to know,
7 can you share with us what is the
8 current commitment that the city of
9 Philadelphia has with Waymo? What
10 do you guys agree on?

11 MS. KELLY: So because
12 we're entirely preempted by the
13 state, we don't have any ability to
14 enter into a -- any kind of
15 agreement with them. We are
16 basically speaking with them as much
17 as we can to get the information
18 that we can get. But because we're
19 entirely preempted, there -- we
20 cannot have a regulating or any
21 other kind of relationship with them
22 at this stage.

23 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: So
24 the city hasn't said to them, before

1 we consider this, or if we consider
2 this, we are going to commit to X
3 number of jobs, X number of
4 investments, X number -- we've done
5 none of that? We've not said any of
6 that? Or we've not asked them for
7 any of that? That's not been part
8 of the conversation?

9 MS. KELLY: So
10 unfortunately, because we are
11 preempted by the state legislature,
12 we cannot -- we have -- we don't
13 have leverage to be able to request
14 any of those things.

15 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Got
16 it. We need to make a deal. Okay.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:
18 Okay. I think, you know,
19 considering that we are in a
20 position right now where government
21 is trying to find money to save our
22 schools and invest in a lot of other
23 needs that we have as a city, when
24 we have corporations like this

1 coming into our city to say that
2 they want to do something like this
3 --

4 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Yes.

5 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: --

6 that is huge --

7 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Yes.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: --

9 we have to use it as leverage,
10 right? We have to be able to take
11 advantage of these opportunities.
12 And again, I don't understand how we
13 continue to allow people to come
14 into our city, and we're just going
15 to say, here, open our -- here's
16 our road. How much are the permits?

17 MS. KELLY: I'm sorry, say
18 that again?

19 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: How
20 much are the permits? How much is
21 Waymo paying per permit to do their
22 testing on our streets?

23 MS. KELLY: I am not sure,
24 but I can get that back to you.

1 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Oh,
2 my God.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: I
4 think it's PennDOT that's --

5 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Is
6 that -- is that -- are they paying
7 it to the city of Philadelphia, or
8 are they getting their permit
9 through per -- through PennDOT?

10 MS. KELLY: Through
11 PennDOT, yeah, exactly. And the --
12 and the public -- the State Public
13 Utilities Commission as well.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:
15 Thank you. Thank you.

16 CHAIR HARRITY: Are you
17 good? Councilman Phillips,
18 anything?

19 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:
20 No. I'm good.

21 CHAIR HARRITY: All right.
22 And listen, I think you see our
23 frustrations here --

24 MS. KELLY: Absolutely.

1 CHAIR HARRITY: This is not
2 you, right? You're just the person
3 that they sent the -- I don't know
4 even what you would call it. It's
5 not answering questions, but, you
6 know, I get it. You're thrown in
7 here. We will be calling PennDOT to
8 find out what's going on. I am
9 definitely -- this is, again, just
10 another thing of the city of
11 Philadelphia being dictated by the
12 state of what we can and what we
13 cannot do in our neighborhoods.
14 That's not fair to anyone. So
15 again, I apologize that you had to
16 sit here and take this, but that's
17 where we're at. Yeah.

18 MS. KELLY: I understand
19 your frustration and appreciate the
20 questions and we will get the -- get
21 them back to you as quickly as we
22 can.

23 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:
24 Thank you.

1 CHAIR HARRITY: Yeah,
2 because we're going to be calling
3 back anyway, so just so you know, be
4 prepared. Thank you. So thank you.

5 Mr. Kunkel, will you please
6 call the next panel to testify?

7 THE CLERK: Dr. Sorelle
8 Friedler, professor of Computer
9 Science, Haverford College,
10 nonresident senior fellow, the
11 Brookings Institution. Dr. Matthew
12 Stamm, Associate Professor in the
13 Department of Electrical and
14 Computer Engineering, Drexel
15 University.

16 CHAIR HARRITY: Okay. Good
17 morning. How are you? Thank you
18 for coming today. Please state your
19 name and begin with your testimony.

20 MS. FRIEDLER: Hi. It's
21 good to be here today. I'm Sorelle
22 Friedler. I'm a Philly resident.
23 And so I wanted to start by just
24 thanking you all for doing this

1 important work. I'm a Computer
2 Science professor at Haverford
3 College.

4 I was formerly the
5 assistant director for Data and
6 Democracy at the White House Office
7 of Science and Technology under the
8 Biden administration where I worked
9 on AI policy. I've had the
10 opportunity to speak with some of
11 you at a previous hearing about AI,
12 and I wanted to start by delivering
13 the same message that I had for you
14 then; which is that AI is not
15 designed to work all the time. What
16 I mean by that is that the
17 guarantees we make about AI are
18 statistical, so if a company has a
19 system that works 99 percent of the
20 time, they'll say, Great, and roll
21 it out.

22 AI governance, the
23 important work that you all are
24 doing here today is about figuring

1 what to do -- figuring out what to
2 do when it doesn't work, right?
3 What are the safeguards that we need
4 in place to prevent extreme failures
5 when they happen? Self-driving cars
6 have been stopped in the street by
7 puddles, gone the wrong way down a
8 one-way street, stopped on rail
9 tracks when there was an oncoming
10 train, and gone right past school
11 buses while they stopped to drop off
12 children.

13 These are just a small
14 number of the ways self-driving cars
15 have been unable to handle normal
16 road conditions. Emergency first
17 responders have called self-driving
18 cars a safety issue since they
19 blocked the streets and don't
20 respond to hand signal directions.

21 When a self-driving car
22 gets stuck, the car or rider places
23 a call to an off-site call center,
24 potentially across the country or

1 the world. Those call center
2 workers, in some cases, then remote
3 control the car even though they
4 might not be licensed to drive in
5 the us. There needs to be a clear
6 plan for how companies handle when a
7 self-driving vehicle encounters an
8 unexpected problem.

9 And it should, at a
10 minimum, include local employees and
11 a public record of incidents.
12 Before these vehicles are released
13 onto our streets, there should be an
14 independent audit to determine
15 whether they'll be able to
16 successfully drive in Philadelphia.

17 Sidewalk delivery bots
18 should also be considered in this
19 conversation. A recent Philly
20 Inquirer article describes a woman
21 being bumped into from behind by a
22 delivery bot at 15th and Locust.
23 When she tried to determine who to
24 report this to, she faced a

1 bureaucratic morass. Philly
2 residents should be able to easily
3 report incidents and concerns to the
4 city about self-driving cars and
5 sidewalk delivery bots.

6 In closing, I want to be
7 clear about where the technology for
8 self-driving cars is at this point.
9 These cars cannot yet handle all
10 road conditions that humans can.
11 Human drivers are not brought to a
12 standstill by a puddle. What that
13 means is that self-driving car
14 companies are asking to train and
15 test their products based on our
16 city and our data. They'll take
17 video of our streets, often with us
18 in the video, and save it to add to
19 their bank of training data as they
20 continue to try to make their
21 products work. The key question
22 confronting the city is whether we
23 want to be live test subjects for
24 these companies for free and without

1 oversight. Thanks for inviting me
2 here today.

3 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
4 for your testimony.

5 Sir, please state your name
6 and begin with your testimony.

7 MR. STAMM: Good morning.
8 My name is Matthew Stamm of Drexel
9 University. Thank you for the
10 opportunity to provide testimony
11 today regarding Resolution 260091
12 introduced by Councilmember Harrity.
13 I'm a professor at Drexel
14 University.

15 My primary appointment is
16 in the Department of Electrical and
17 Computer Engineering, and I also
18 hold an affiliate appointment in the
19 Department of Computer Science. I'm
20 providing testimony to lend my
21 expertise and help answer -- excuse
22 me, help answer the Council's
23 questions related to artificial
24 intelligence and autonomous

1 vehicles. My specific sub-field
2 within AI is not autonomous
3 vehicles, though I do a familiarity
4 with the broader area.

5 By way of background, I
6 earned my PhD in electrical and
7 computer engineering from the
8 University of Maryland in 2012, and
9 I've been a professor at Drexel
10 University since 2013, where I
11 direct a research lab that actively
12 conducts research in AI, machine
13 learning, signal processing, and
14 media authenticity.

15 To provide information
16 regarding my credibility as an AI
17 researcher, I'm the recipient of an
18 NSF Career award and have been
19 funded under multiple DARPA programs
20 aimed at developing advanced AI
21 systems. My research has received
22 several recognitions, including
23 being named to Stanford University's
24 annual list of top two percent

1 scientists worldwide, being selected
2 for Popular Science magazine's
3 Brilliant 10 list, et cetera.

4 I do not have a specific
5 opinion about Waymo. More
6 generally, I believe that autonomous
7 vehicles have the long-term
8 potential to substantially improve
9 vehicular safety. However,
10 decisions about adopting and
11 expanding the use of autonomous
12 vehicles should depend on accurately
13 assessing their performance and
14 conducting rigorous safety
15 evaluations. I would be happy to
16 answer any questions to the best of
17 my knowledge given my expertise.

18 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
19 so much for your testimony. I am -
20 Rue, do you have questions? I'm
21 sure -- I'm going to pass it over to
22 my technologically advanced
23 colleague, Rue Landau. Quetcy, do
24 you have questions after?

1 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I

2 do.

3 CHAIR HARRITY: Rue,
4 Quetcy, Nina, Brooks. Okay. And
5 then -- yeah.

6 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:
7 Thank you both so much for being
8 here and I've worked with both of
9 you. And thank you for sharing your
10 insights in Philadelphia of what
11 you've been learning about AI, its
12 uses, and the concerns we should all
13 have. Since Waymo is not here, any
14 autonomous driving vehicle companies
15 are not here, I was hoping you could
16 answer some of our questions, at
17 least from maybe a national
18 perspective of what you know.

19 And so my questions really
20 have to do with the light detection
21 and ranging technology that it uses
22 with these laser pulses to measure
23 distance and create 3D maps.

24 Can you -- do you have --

1 can you detail for us the specifics
2 around the system? What it records?
3 Where it is storing any of this
4 information? Is there any
5 safeguards in place for data
6 security? And do you know if any of
7 these companies have undergone
8 independent cyber security audits of
9 its vehicle symptoms -- systems, and
10 rider data infrastructure if they're
11 publicly available?

12 And then do you know
13 anything about whether these
14 companies have any data sharing
15 policies with federal agencies like
16 ICE? How are we going to keep our
17 data secure? So that's a -- that's
18 a good start.

19 I thought that one of the
20 things -- one of the most important
21 things I've heard today, other than,
22 you know, the pain of seeing Waymo
23 submit written testimony without
24 even somebody's name on it, Doc, was

1 you said, Are we going to be live
2 test subjects for these companies
3 for free and without oversight?"

4 And so I would like to
5 start with where -- what data are
6 they collecting? Where is it stored
7 and how long is it stored and who
8 are they sharing it with?

9 MR. STAMM: I am not an
10 employee of Waymo, nor have I ever
11 worked with them, so I can't answer
12 that specifically. In general, what
13 they would likely collect is LiDAR
14 data, which is a laser sensor that's
15 going to create -- it'll send out a
16 little pulse and watch it bounce
17 back and use this to create a 3D map
18 of their environment.

19 Additionally, these often
20 incorporate something called
21 navigate by vision, though typically
22 that means exclusively navigate by
23 vision. This is using a video
24 camera to record the scene or to

1 analyze it live and identify what
2 objects or other important
3 phenomenon are in the road. This is
4 almost certainly analyzed locally on
5 the vehicle, but is potentially sent
6 off to a central station to monitor
7 things like position, road
8 conditions, et cetera.

9 There is a substantial
10 possibility that some amount of this
11 is stored and subsequently used for
12 analysis, which may also potentially
13 be shared with others. I cannot
14 speak specifically to Waymo's
15 policies.

16 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

17 Thank you.

18 MS. FRIEDLER: I would add
19 that I absolutely agree with you
20 that they should do an independent
21 cyber security audit. I can't say
22 whether they have, right?

23 MR. STAMM: Yes.

24 MS. FRIEDLER: But I

1 absolutely agree that they should.
2 I would also just, you know, add
3 texture to what my colleague said,
4 which is that, you know, when they
5 have been talking about the process
6 that they're undergoing right now,
7 right, of mapping the city, I think
8 it's important to understand that
9 they don't mean mapping like a flat
10 map you might unfold, right? Or
11 read on your phone. They mean a
12 like live 3D map of the city, right?

13 Understanding where all of
14 the buildings are, using, you know,
15 the LiDAR and those sorts of
16 computer vision systems to sort of
17 understand in 3D and with images
18 what our city looks like.

19 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:
20 We've been -- there's been a lot of
21 stories coming out recently that AI
22 is moving so fast that it has -- is
23 surpassing -- it's training itself
24 almost, and that it is -- there are

1 more instances where it is avoiding
2 human commands to tell it to not use
3 AI. It overrides that. It does it
4 anyway.

5 What do -- with all the
6 work and the studies that you do,
7 are we -- what happens if we get to
8 this world where AI is so far ahead
9 of humans that even for the absolute
10 emergency, let's assume for
11 argument's sake, there is some
12 emergency command centers somewhere
13 in America where they can, you know,
14 shut off OEMO. And we don't even
15 know that because they didn't show
16 up today. But assuming that moment,
17 what happens if the AI technology
18 just gets to the point of ignoring
19 the humans? What can we imagine
20 happens then?

21 MS. FRIEDLER: So I guess I
22 am not -- I don't even think it is
23 necessary to go to that sort of
24 future-facing concern to be worried,

1 right? I -- for example, especially
2 given the absence of the independent
3 cyber security audit that you
4 described -- am extremely worried
5 that there are off-site call centers
6 that can remote control these
7 vehicles, right?

8 I don't believe that it
9 would require actually serious cyber
10 capabilities in order to hack into
11 that, right? Many of these call
12 centers are, for example, in the
13 Philippines or elsewhere in the
14 world, I think you could simply pay
15 somebody off to remote control the
16 vehicle, right? Perhaps they have
17 protections in place to keep that
18 from happening in some way, right?

19 But again, they're not here
20 to answer those questions, so I
21 don't know. But it strikes me that
22 given that these cars do have that
23 sort of remote control capability
24 already, that we should already be

1 quite worried about exactly who or
2 what is driving these vehicles.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

4 Thank you, thank you so much.

5 MR. STAMM: To amplify what
6 my colleague said, completely -- AI
7 systems that can operate completely
8 independently where they're able to
9 maybe think as the way you and I
10 would say, it's not clear if that is
11 possible and when that would arrive.
12 But that does not mean there are not
13 substantial potential risks for
14 these systems. We shouldn't be
15 worried about something like a
16 thinking sentient machine. We
17 should be more realistically
18 concerned about, these are machines
19 that are able to operate on their
20 own, but they don't think.

21 As a result, there's a
22 number of ways that you can inject
23 cyber security attacks or find just
24 ways in which these systems act;

1 there's a bug or a flaw that may
2 have potential real consequences.
3 Because this research is moving
4 very, very fast, and we are
5 identifying new cyber security risks
6 or emerging AI risks, basically by
7 the day.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

9 Thank you so much. Appreciate it.

10 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.

11 Councilwoman Lozada.

12 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

13 Thank you. Thank you for being with
14 us this morning. You've heard us
15 say this morning that we believe
16 there are safety concerns around
17 this. I've read in your testimony
18 that you confirm, right? That
19 sometimes technology is not going to
20 always work.

21 Based on your professional
22 background and your research, I know
23 that you're not Waymo, but I'm sure
24 that in all of the research that

1 you've done, I'm going to assume you
2 could give us a general idea of the
3 impact that it has on jobs. The
4 impact that it has on emergency
5 situations in different cities. Can
6 you share that with us?

7 MS. FRIEDLER: Sure. So I
8 think one of the important things to
9 remember about AI systems, that's
10 certainly also true for self-driving
11 cars, is that when they fail, they
12 don't necessarily make the same
13 failures that a human would, right?
14 So, you know, a human, yeah,
15 sometimes we're going to speed,
16 right? But if we see a puddle in
17 the middle of the street, we're not
18 going to slam on the brakes, like,
19 we know it's a puddle and we just
20 keep driving.

21 And that type is sort of
22 strange and unexpected failure mode,
23 right? Because the car is not going
24 to react to things the way a human

1 would and isn't going to make the
2 same mistakes, can cause real
3 problems, right? So one of the
4 fairly common ways as I understand
5 it, that Waymo does get into small
6 accidents is essentially by being
7 rear-ended, perhaps because it
8 slammed on the brakes for a puddle,
9 right? And you can understand why
10 human drivers might be surprised at
11 that.

12 MR. STAMM: To echo that,
13 excuse me, some of these systems do
14 have long-term potential to improve
15 safety. So if you have an
16 autonomous system, you can mitigate
17 things like driver fatigue,
18 distraction, or intoxicated driving.
19 However, at the same time, like my
20 colleague did mention, they're
21 capable of making mistakes that
22 would not make sense to a human.

23 We often refer to these in
24 technical parlance as

1 hallucinations. We -- the machine
2 will see something and effectively
3 misinterpret it, sometimes causing
4 it to make very rapid decisions,
5 like it may see a puddle or strange
6 markings on the road that it
7 misinterprets as a person or a sign
8 to - instruct it to speed up.

9 There needs to be
10 significant safety measures to
11 prevent this and redundant systems.
12 I can't speak specifically to how
13 Waymo has done this. I do believe
14 they're using both vision and LiDAR
15 so that redundancy helps. However,
16 this needs to be married with
17 significant policy safety measures
18 and very rigorous testing.

19 With regards to the
20 economic impacts, I should mention
21 that I'm not an economist. We've
22 seen transformational technology
23 make pretty large changes to the
24 economy before. This is probably no

1 different, but that will almost
2 certainly result in loss of jobs,
3 potentially creation of other jobs.
4 And that's something that I think
5 that the City Council should think
6 about with experts in this area.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

8 Thank you for that. Is Waymo the
9 only auto -- how many companies do
10 you know of that have these
11 driverless technology products?

12 MR. STAMM: Zero. Oh,
13 sorry.

14 MS. FRIEDLER: Oh, I was
15 just going to say, so there are
16 other companies that have driverless
17 capabilities, but that might not be
18 integrated with rideshare, right?
19 So like Tesla has like a self-
20 driving mode where they expect that
21 the person behind the wheel will
22 somehow be able to compensate for
23 the self-driving vehicle if it, you
24 know, makes a mistake, right?

1 MR. STAMM: Yeah, I was
2 going to say, Waymo is probably the
3 most prominent autonomous rideshare
4 vehicle. This technology has been
5 researched pretty heavily for a very
6 long time. And there are a number
7 of different companies experimenting
8 with this, both from traditional
9 direct or consumer-oriented
10 vehicles, as well as other
11 autonomous vehicles like Sidewalk
12 food delivery or product delivery
13 that are currently operating.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:
15 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you,
16 Mr. Chair.

17 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.
18 Councilwoman Ahmad.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank
20 you so much, Chair. Good morning
21 still to both of you. Thank you for
22 your testimony. I wanted to know
23 from the AI perspective of, are
24 there overrides one can do to a

1 Waymo operating? So would the city
2 of Philadelphia be able to have its
3 own override mechanism to, you know,
4 do something to Waymo that we don't
5 like it's doing, right? From the
6 outside, like, is there a way to do
7 that? That's a question for you and
8 you. And another question for you
9 specifically because you mentioned
10 an audit, what kinds of things would
11 we look for in an audit? We would
12 like to know that, so please.

13 MR. STAMM: So it's
14 possible to put in an override that
15 really, frankly doesn't have --
16 doesn't -- the fact that this is an
17 AI enabled technology doesn't impact
18 that. That would be more of how the
19 system is designed and implemented
20 and probably legal restrictions.

21 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And
22 the reason I ask you is because I
23 started off my questions about the
24 legality of making us -- subjecting

1 us to this, right? Without us
2 having any oversight. This is our
3 city, and we get to decide what is
4 going to be on our streets. We get
5 to decide -- we get to decide how
6 our constituents' jobs are going to
7 be impacted.

8 So it's almost like -- so
9 technically speaking, one could come
10 into an environment like the city of
11 -- city limits of Philadelphia and
12 have deactivated the use of a Waymo
13 in our city. We can -- I mean, the
14 state can tell us they can come, and
15 we can say, well, these are -- this
16 is how our streets are going to be
17 policed technologically.

18 MR. STAMM: That is
19 different. That would require
20 something being built into the
21 system that would enable a third
22 party to say, I'm deactivating
23 Waymo. To do some -- if Waymo did
24 not design that into, that would be

1 viewed more almost as like an attack
2 on the --

3 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah

4 --

5 MR. STAMM: -- autonomous
6 system.

7 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Oh,
8 they're attacking us.

9 MR. STAMM: There would be
10 -- that would probably run into FCC
11 compliance issues amongst --

12 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah.

13 MR. STAMM: -- other
14 things. But it is possible to
15 engineer in something such that
16 basically a turnoff switch is
17 enabled.

18 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah,
19 I'm just thinking of every available
20 method we could have to slow this
21 down so our city has some agency in
22 deciding what happens in our city.
23 That's really a fundamental
24 question, right? So thank you.

1 MS. FRIEDLER: So in terms
2 of an independent audit, I think
3 it's useful to think about these
4 sort of like financial audits,
5 right? In order to do this well,
6 you would need access to the
7 internal company data, simply
8 because they're the ones who have
9 the complete records of all of the
10 miles driven in Philadelphia by
11 these cars, right?

12 And you would want to be
13 able to see those so that you could
14 directly independently, from
15 whatever reports the company is
16 giving you, right, generate your own
17 reports about what the sort of
18 safety incidents were, what the
19 things that were maybe almost safety
20 incidents, right? But didn't quite
21 make it to their ledger sheet.

22 You know, you would want to
23 be able to directly examine all of
24 that data and also, frankly, to get

1 access to the information to answer
2 all of the privacy questions that
3 Councilmember Landau was raising,
4 right? To understand, you know,
5 what are their cyber security
6 practices? What are their data
7 storage practices, right? What
8 information about all of us are they
9 storing regularly? Who are they
10 sharing that with, right?

11 In addition to being able
12 to answer all of these various
13 safety questions, and in addition to
14 answering the questions about, sort
15 of, who has access to these remote-
16 control car capabilities? How are
17 those triggered? What happens when
18 a car gets stopped in the middle of
19 the road by a puddle, right?

20 And you would want to be
21 able to conduct that audit within
22 the bounds of Philadelphia, right?
23 Because one of the things that I
24 think is tricky, and just, sort of,

1 without having direct access to the
2 data, hard to quantify and hard to
3 directly understand, are there
4 various claims about safety, right?
5 Are these claims about safety
6 functionally using many highway
7 miles driven, to make it look like
8 they are safer than they might be?
9 If what we really care about are
10 surface street roads in Philadelphia
11 --

12 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah.

13 MS. FRIEDLER: -- right?

14 You know, frankly, right? The
15 safety on the Philadelphia Turnpike
16 is just not really relevant to our
17 city streets --

18 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah.

19 MS. FRIEDLER: And so you
20 would want to be able to directly do
21 the safety analyses that you care
22 about, right? Not the ones the
23 company wants to put in front of
24 you.

1 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Has
2 there been any such independent
3 audit in other cities?

4 MS. FRIEDLER: I, at least,
5 could not find one that was city
6 specific, right? I was able to find
7 some independent assessments of the
8 publicly released data, but not that
9 was sort of broken down by highway
10 streets versus city streets. There
11 might be one, and I might not have
12 found it, I don't know if you've
13 seen them.

14 MR. STAMM: I -- I'm not
15 sure.

16 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And
17 this is a question that we asked the
18 previous witness from the
19 administration. What is your
20 perspective? What it is -- what are
21 we going -- what does the city gain
22 when we allow Waymo? Like other
23 cities have got Waymo, and what are
24 they getting out of it? What is our

1 benefit to the -- no one has been
2 able to articulate that to me. Do
3 you have any sense of what that
4 might be, like, what are we getting
5 out of this? We didn't ask for it
6 to be here. So what is our cost
7 benefit analysis? What are we
8 getting?

9 And I don't know -- this
10 may be a rhetorical question, since
11 no -- Waymo is not here, the
12 administration should definitely
13 know this cost benefit analysis
14 answer. Whether or not they have
15 the ability to control it, because
16 the state has mandated this through
17 PennDOT, that doesn't matter.

18 Our due diligence is to say
19 something is being forced on us.
20 This is the scenario. What is it --
21 what is it going to cost us from the
22 perspective of work, from the
23 perspective of safety, from the
24 perspective of our own autonomy.

1 The city of Philadelphia should have
2 put all of this into action and
3 given us a report for us to
4 consider, why would we, you know,
5 for us to say -- and so we have to
6 look at legal ways of slowing this
7 down. And we would love the support
8 of the industry to help us think so
9 we're -- we are not asking obtuse
10 questions, we're asking things that
11 are relevant. That's where I think
12 your expertise comes in.

13 If we were to have a, you
14 know, to do some sort of an audit,
15 even if it's not put to work, we can
16 create our own audit with the own
17 questions, including what benefits
18 do Philadelphians get. We would
19 love your support with the Chairman
20 here to think through this process,
21 so our constituents know that we
22 have done the due diligence, even
23 though they're pushing this on our
24 throats. Thank you so much for your

1 expertise and your testimony. Thank
2 you, Chair.

3 CHAIR HARRITY:

4 Councilwoman Brooks.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

6 Thank you. So what impact do you
7 think increased driverless cars will
8 have on employment in a city like
9 Philadelphia? And how will this
10 impact workers' pay and benefits,
11 even for those who are not directly
12 replaced by automation?

13 MR. STAMM: Again, I am not
14 an economist. I'm a technical
15 expert, but I would assume that if
16 this successfully rolled out, you
17 don't have to pay a driverless car
18 to drive. So that would likely
19 reduce the number of employment
20 opportunities for taxi drivers and
21 rideshare drivers, like those
22 driving for Uber and Lyft.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Have
24 you seen in other places or studies

1 -- I know you guys do research in
2 other places, how this has affected
3 employment?

4 MR. STAMM: I don't have
5 specific knowledge of that.

6 MS. FRIEDLER: No, I
7 haven't seen that either.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:
9 Okay.

10 MS. FRIEDLER: But again,
11 we're -- we're not economists.

12 MR. STAMM: Yeah.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: I
14 got you. I got you. Have you seen
15 other cities take action around
16 riderless cars that you would
17 recommend that we adopt? And what
18 are other cities doing to protect
19 and support around this type of
20 work? Have you seen any of that?

21 MS. FRIEDLER: So
22 unfortunately, some of what I've
23 seen is other cities attempting to
24 ask Waymo to address concerns that

1 they found in their city. I believe
2 it was Austin asked Waymo to pause
3 during school hours because the
4 driverless cars kept running right
5 by the school buses when they were
6 letting off kids, like ignoring the
7 stop sign that gets put out. And
8 Waymo claimed to have fixed it and
9 did not -- and did not halt
10 operations during school drop off.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: It's
12 interesting -- it's interesting that
13 you mentioned Austin. I was just
14 sharing with my colleagues. I was
15 just in Austin, and every time I
16 tried to call a rideshare, they were
17 trying to send a Waymo. And you
18 have to decline it.

19 That was the first option
20 that you had in Austin. And I --
21 that's the first time I had the
22 opportunity to see them everywhere;
23 everywhere. And my fear is Austin
24 is not Philadelphia, and how it has

1 taken over what, you know, rideshare
2 looks like, and services look like.

3 And I thank you so much for
4 being here for that, but those are
5 the questions. And I'm glad you
6 mentioned Austin because now I need
7 to double back with my folks in
8 Austin to figure out what's being
9 done there around that, specifically
10 how we can slow this down in
11 Philadelphia. Thank you.

12 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.
13 And that was a very interesting
14 point there too.

15 Councilman Young, do you
16 have anything? Councilman Young.

17 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
18 you. So my question is on the lines
19 of Councilmember Brooks. Just want
20 to know, like, what type of
21 safeguards you think that if, you
22 know, we should implement around
23 schools, parks, rec centers, things
24 like that. You know, if we're going

1 to have -- if these cars are here,
2 right? If it's not stopping at stop
3 signs and run school zones, is this
4 something we could do as a body to
5 implement some safeguards?

6 MR. STAMM: My first
7 reaction would be that current
8 driver safety laws and regulations
9 are designed around a human driver.
10 You would likely need to reconsider
11 how these should be designed, given
12 that there may be a non-human driver
13 navigating these streets. This is
14 something that has moved very, very
15 fast and we have not necessarily --
16 the legal system moves much slower.
17 It will be important to understand
18 that.

19 I think safety should be
20 the primary concern. However, I do
21 think an important secondary concern
22 should be concerning how data is
23 collected, stored, and used. It may
24 be somewhat impractical to store

1 video of every Waymo that's
2 captured, just due to data size
3 constraints. However, we've seen
4 socially a pretty rapid progression
5 from the ability to collect public
6 data being very, very difficult and
7 expensive to be somewhat ubiquitous.
8 And we have certainly witnessed many
9 companies, technology companies;
10 pivot within their mission. I do
11 not suspect that Waymo intends to do
12 that, but I would think that there
13 would be -- there would be need to
14 be some important investigation into
15 the policy for how that data is
16 stored, shared, and utilized. And
17 it would probably be smart to
18 consider legislation in that area.

19 MS. FRIEDLER:
20 Unfortunately, there is some
21 evidence that these self-driving
22 cars are actually worse at detecting
23 pedestrians when they're kids,
24 right? In other words, our kids are

1 especially at risk for being hit by
2 these vehicles, and that has
3 happened, right? Kids have been hit
4 by these vehicles. And so, you
5 know, I think we just need to think
6 about what we can do given,
7 obviously, the non-responsiveness
8 from Waymo, right, and given the
9 situation that we're in with the
10 state, to try to, you know, put in
11 place protections around schools,
12 right? You know, think about
13 trainings with crossing guards.
14 It's an incredibly unsatisfying
15 answer.

16 MR. STAMM: And to maybe
17 add one other thing, many of the
18 safety studies around driverless
19 vehicles are centered -- my
20 colleague mentioned this before --
21 around long-distance drives on
22 highways, where it does seem that
23 that autonomous vehicles can provide
24 some potentially significant safety

1 benefits. There's been fewer
2 studies in dense urban environments,
3 particularly in east coast cities
4 like Philadelphia, where -- whose
5 roadways are not designed initially
6 around cars. I think it probably
7 behooves us to look closely at
8 safety conditions here and around
9 edge conditions such as low light,
10 strange objects that may not be in
11 the training data, and possibility
12 for other conditions that can cause
13 these vehicles to act in ways that
14 the people designing them did not
15 anticipate.

16 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
17 you, Mr. Chair.

18 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you,
19 Councilman. I thought of something
20 after Councilmember Brooks talk --
21 spoke about Austin, Texas. Where
22 are all these Waymos going to be
23 parking? Because we have a problem
24 in Philadelphia with parking, and as

1 she said, there's going to be a lot
2 of -- she said they were all over
3 the place. I would imagine when
4 they're not doing rides, they're
5 sitting in a parking spot, taking up
6 a parking spot that could be used
7 for businesses and stuff like that.

8 MS. FRIEDLER: Yeah. So
9 there's a number of possible
10 problems there, right? So one is,
11 since these are self-driving cars,
12 they don't necessarily have to park,
13 right? But if they're not parking,
14 then they're, sort of, driving in
15 circles around the street increasing
16 congestion, right?

17 CHAIR HARRITY: Exactly.

18 MS. FRIEDLER: So, you
19 know, if they're not parking, then
20 they're potentially adding to
21 traffic. In some cities, when
22 Waymos have instead sort of rented
23 out a Waymo parking lot, right, then
24 what they've found is that when

1 there's a lot of Waymos that are not
2 receiving rides, for example 3:00
3 a.m 4:00 a.m. in the morning,
4 they've had problems with nuisance
5 from the noise of the Waymos honking
6 at each other in the parking lot.

7 CHAIR HARRITY: They're
8 sensing each other. I get it.

9 MS. FRIEDLER: So, you
10 know, essentially these are not
11 human drivers, right, who follow,
12 like, our usual sort of parking
13 expectations. And so you can end up
14 with some strange situations that
15 might be a nuisance for the city.

16 CHAIR HARRITY: I -- that
17 -- to the other thing, has anybody
18 mandated that they must have a
19 driver in there and in the other
20 cities that -- you know what I'm
21 saying? Like, I don't -- I don't
22 even see -- how do we ticket these
23 people? How do we ticket a vehicle
24 if it's of not obeying the traffic

1 laws? Who is doing it? Again, if
2 there's an accident, who is paying
3 the fines? Who's paying for the
4 vehicle damage?

5 Councilwoman Landau, you
6 good? Okay, you're good. Any other
7 questions for this panel? Seeing
8 none, thank you for your testimony.

9 MS. FRIEDLER: Thank you,
10 all so much.

11 MR. STAMM: Thank you.

12 CHAIR HARRITY: Mr. Kunkel,
13 could you please call the next panel
14 to testify?

15 THE CLERK: Will Vera,
16 president of Transit Workers United
17 and Tim Vinuchin, Pennsylvania, vice
18 president of the SEIU.

19 CHAIR HARRITY: I think
20 it's actually Rob who is speaking.
21 That's -- you have the older
22 testimony thing. The new one is --

23 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Rob
24 Burns.

1 CHAIR HARRITY: Rob Burns
2 will testify for Tim.

3 THE CLERK: Rob Burns will
4 testify for Tim.

5 CHAIR HARRITY. There we
6 go. Welcome my brothers. Thank you
7 for taking time out of your busy
8 schedule serving our members. Could
9 you please state your name and begin
10 with your testimony.

11 MR. VERA: All right. Good
12 morning, everyone. Laborers in the
13 house.

14 AUDIENCE: Yeah.

15 MR. VERA: And I say that
16 proud. My name is Will Vera. I'm
17 actually President of Local 234
18 Transport Workers Union. You guys
19 heard it, it's United. I always
20 thank God for the ability to be at
21 this platform.

22 I want to thank
23 Councilmember, I have the
24 opportunity to meet some of you and

1 some of you I have not met yet, but
2 I do look forward to building a
3 relationship with you guys. I'm
4 also here in solidarity with all
5 workers. Now, last week we put
6 together something for me to say, it
7 was by my attorney and by my PR guy.

8 To be honest with you, when
9 I read it, I felt robotic. And I
10 just want to come to you and just be
11 real with you guys. And
12 Councilmember Lozada, the reason why
13 they can't answer how many jobs
14 we're going to lose is because they
15 don't know, and they don't care.

16 You know, I'm probably
17 telling my age, but I didn't, never
18 thought that we would be living the
19 age of The Jetsons. And that's
20 where we are right now. Google and
21 every other tech company is making
22 these cartoons into reality.

23 And if you think they're
24 going to stop with this private, you

1 better believe they're going to move
2 to the public. And they're already
3 planning to make it into public
4 transit. This isn't the forum for
5 bus revolution, but SEPTA is laying
6 out lines to go straight, because a
7 bus can't make 24 turns. You need a
8 person behind a bus.

9 The impact of the economy,
10 like the gentleman said, I'm not an
11 economist, but I think we all know
12 that workers and taxes, they go
13 together. The marketing community,
14 they're putting out these real
15 pretty stories, but they're leaving
16 out the real-life stories.

17 Some of the things you've
18 heard from some of the other -- from
19 testimonies, but these vehicles have
20 gotten and stuck in flood waters.
21 These vehicles have driven through
22 active crime scenes. 2023, a car
23 even ran over a person and drag them
24 20 feet.

1 As the other person
2 testified, in Texas they're having a
3 problem with these buses going
4 around school buses that are picking
5 up kids. We even had an ambulance,
6 not here in the city of Philadelphia
7 yet, but an ambulance was blocked by
8 a Waymo vehicle while it was heading
9 on its way to a shooting.

10 A couple years back on
11 Torresdale Avenue, there was a Route
12 56, it was about three o'clock in
13 the morning, and there was a little
14 toddler somehow got out their house
15 and was standing on the corner. But
16 it took for a bus operator, human
17 being, to pull that bus over, grab
18 this toddler, and save it. A robot
19 isn't going to do that. The robot's
20 either going to drive by or take him
21 to his final destination. We need
22 human oversight and intervention,
23 and there's no question about that.
24 These vehicles will face water main

1 breaks, traffic lights going down,
2 construction. Our bus operators
3 assist ADA. Thankfully it's not
4 here this year, or I don't --
5 listen, with us pushing back it's
6 never going to get here. But this
7 is one of the biggest tourist
8 cities, our bus drivers supply
9 important information for every
10 tourist that comes in and out of
11 Philadelphia.

12 As I speak with my
13 international union, one of the
14 biggest things that we're concerned
15 about is the ability to hack into
16 these autonomous vehicles. If you
17 guys remember a little while back,
18 one of our three major credit
19 bureau, Equifax, was hacked into.
20 Who would've thought that could
21 happen? 2020 SEPTA got hacked into,
22 why won't they do it again? Just
23 last week, Canvas -- my son's a
24 student, Canvas got hacked into and

1 their finals all got delayed. They
2 have a thing called RAOs, it's
3 Remote Assistance Operators, they're
4 located in the Philippines. So when
5 this Waymo vehicle goes down, they
6 have to wait for someone from the
7 Philippines to reach out to them.

8 And the last thing I'll say
9 is this, three weeks ago I was
10 heading home, driving down Delaware
11 Avenue, and I reach where Penn
12 Treaty Park is on my right side, I
13 believe that's Columbia. And I
14 looked to my left and a Waymo
15 vehicle hit a pedestrian. There was
16 ambulance, there was police, but
17 there's no public record of the
18 accidents. Still this morning, I'm
19 trying to find where this accident
20 is. Why is that not reported? Is
21 Google the parent company -- one of
22 the big companies that they can just
23 push this down so you can't find it.
24 I don't know what their requirements

1 are to report accidents. I pulled
2 over, I went and talked to the
3 police officer, he said, Can I help
4 you? I said, Yeah, you know they
5 just banned these in New York.
6 These things are no good.

7 And so I want to thank you
8 for your time. And I stand with all
9 workers. These things -- we really
10 need to not allow them to go,
11 because if they come, public transit
12 is next. And they're already in the
13 Navy Yard if you guys don't know
14 this. Thank you, Councilmembers.

15 CHAIR HARRITY: Please
16 state your name and begin with your
17 testimony.

18 MR. BURNS: Okay. Good
19 morning. Rob Burns, political
20 director for SEIU 32BJ. Here on
21 behalf of Tim Vinuchin, he had to
22 leave after the hearing. First, I
23 just want to thank you all for
24 leading on this issue and inviting

1 us to testify. So 32BJ is the
2 union, along with some of the
3 partners in this room, that are on
4 the cusp of organizing 75,000 gig
5 workers into the union in
6 Massachusetts. This is work that we
7 are doing all over the country, and
8 we see the difference in places like
9 New Jersey, New York, Maryland, and
10 Virginia that have stopped and
11 installed Waymo from being
12 implemented.

13 Before we hand over our
14 streets to commercial autonomous
15 vehicles, we need to fully
16 understand what's at stake for
17 Philadelphia. This isn't
18 theoretical. Thousands of rideshare
19 drivers in our city rely on that
20 income to support their families.
21 That money gets spent right here;
22 gas stations, car washes, mechanics,
23 grocery stores. When those drivers
24 earn, Philadelphia businesses earn.

1 But when you replace those workers
2 with fleets owned by companies like
3 Waymo, backed by Google, that whole
4 model changes. Instead of thousands
5 of local workers circulating money
6 through our neighborhoods, you're
7 talking about revenue leaving the
8 city and going to a handful of
9 massive corporations based thousands
10 of miles away. That means less
11 support for small business here and
12 less money in people's pockets.

13 And we need to be honest
14 about what that means for workers.
15 This is about displacement. It's
16 about telling thousands of people
17 who built their lives around this
18 work that they're no longer needed.
19 Not because the work went away, but
20 because it became more profitable to
21 cut them out. So the real question
22 is, what kind of economy are we
23 building? One where technology
24 makes people's lives better and

1 creates opportunity? Or one where
2 it concentrates wealth and pushes
3 working people out? We can't accept
4 a future where entire groups of
5 workers are pushed aside without a
6 plan, without protections, and
7 without a path forward. Right now,
8 decisions are being shaped in
9 Harrisburg and by tech companies,
10 but it's Philadelphia workers and
11 neighborhoods who will live with the
12 consequences.

13 We're being asked to accept
14 unproven systems on our streets
15 without clear answers. How will
16 these vehicles handle dense city
17 traffic, emergency situations, or
18 construction zones? And when
19 something goes wrong, who is
20 responsible? This city runs on
21 working people. We answer to our
22 neighbors, not Silicon Valley.
23 People deserve to know what this
24 could cost them, not just what it

1 promises. We need to get this
2 right. That means doing a real
3 transparent study of the economic
4 impact, including job loss, small
5 business effects, tax revenue, along
6 with traffic and public safety,
7 before these vehicles are widely
8 allowed on our streets not after the
9 damage is done. Because once those
10 jobs are gone, and once that money
11 leaves our communities, it's not
12 going to come back. Thank you.

13 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.
14 Thank you for your testimony. Any
15 questions from my colleagues for
16 these witnesses?

17 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Just
18 has a couple. Thank you so much for
19 being here for your incredibly
20 poignant and passionate testimony.
21 It's essential. The workers and our
22 neighbors are the most important
23 peeps here, and they're not
24 disposable. You know, humans are

1 not disposable. We have to keep
2 providing opportunities for people.
3 I am curious in your organizing
4 whether or not you have had
5 conversations with either PennDOT or
6 Waymo?

7 MR. BURNS: So we have not
8 begun an organizing process here in
9 Pennsylvania. I know that we've had
10 some conversations in other
11 jurisdictions across the country,
12 but we have not yet began talking to
13 PennDOT.

14 MR. VERA: I have not yet,
15 but I would love to hear that
16 PennDOT's involved because I will
17 have a conversation with PennDOT.

18 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I
19 was going to ask the same question.
20 The only thing I will add is, has
21 the city of Philadelphia Department
22 of Transportation or anyone else
23 reached out to you about, you know,
24 how this could potentially impact

1 the workers? What are some of the
2 concerns that they believe you all
3 have as your people do this every
4 day, and you are the experts, right?
5 We're always talking about subject
6 matter experts, you know, have they
7 had -- has anyone reached out to
8 say, Hey, how would this autonomous
9 car industry impact you and your
10 membership? And how do you believe
11 it's going to have an impact on our
12 city? Has anyone reached out to
13 you?

14 MR. VERA: No. I think
15 it's purposeful that they're silent.
16 Some people don't know, 2019, a
17 trailer -- a tractor, it was a
18 butter, was delivered about 40,000
19 pounds of butter, 2019. We're seven
20 years later. It went from
21 California to Quakertown in three
22 days. A lot of people don't know
23 about this. So I don't see -- so I
24 just got a contract with SEPTA, and

1 I tried to get autonomous language
2 in there, but they wouldn't give me
3 any. So they're going to remain
4 silent until they can just roll it
5 out. Just like we said here,
6 they're -- how is our first
7 responders not trained? You can't
8 tell me Waymo vehicles are not
9 getting stuck. They are. So, no,
10 they haven't. They haven't spoken
11 to us and because they know there's
12 opposition, they want to paint the
13 pretty picture.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Have
15 you all done an assessment on the
16 impact that this could have on your
17 membership? Have you all done one?
18 And if you haven't, are you
19 considering doing one so that when
20 you're called to the table, I'm not
21 going to say if. I'm hopeful that
22 there are people who are listening
23 that understand that there's an
24 expectation that the subject matter

1 experts need to be brought to the
2 table. And when they call you to
3 the table, I would hope that you all
4 are prepared to have a conversation
5 about the impact that it will have
6 on jobs and your membership. Have
7 you done one? And if not, are you
8 considering having one conducted?

9 MR. VERA: Yeah. Well,
10 that's one of the major things that
11 we will be speaking about when our
12 contract is up in two years;
13 technology. And we've been working
14 with our international union who's
15 based out of Washington D.C. Just
16 -- I was -- I was in a meeting, a
17 president's conference in January,
18 and we put a committee together. So
19 I put three people from my local and
20 we are talking, and actually they
21 are coming down in the month of June
22 to do a presentation to my, what we
23 call JEB, which is my section
24 officers as well as my board, so

1 that they can see just where we
2 stand right now with technology.
3 So, no, I don't have an assessment,
4 but I won't go into next rounds of
5 negotiations. There's two things
6 that I'm going into and it's pension
7 and technology.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

9 Thank you.

10 MR. VERA: Yes.

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR HARRITY: Yeah, thank
14 you. You said it, that you -- we
15 know what's going to happen. You
16 know what I mean? This is the
17 start, eventually they'll come for
18 you guys. I remember, I think it
19 was last year or something, there
20 was a big thing with the
21 longshoremen. They wanted to
22 replace them with robots or
23 something like that. And they
24 actually got it into their contract

1 that there needed to be people
2 there. We see it all over the
3 place. The turn play, they got rid
4 of all those, my son worked there.
5 And they got rid of all them, toll
6 collectors up there, to make it, you
7 know, person-less. So I'm nervous
8 about all this technology because
9 I'm nervous about my neighbors. I'm
10 nervous about them supporting their
11 families. I'm nervous for my
12 grandkids and my son. You know what
13 I'm saying?

14 MR. VERA: Yeah.

15 CHAIR HARRITY: Like, are
16 they going to be replaced at some
17 time --

18 MR. VERA: Yeah.

19 CHAIR HARRITY: You know, I
20 have a lot of concerns. Any other
21 questions for my colleagues?

22 Councilwoman -- Councilman Young and
23 then Councilwoman Brooks.

24 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank

1 you. So you cited SEPTA's
2 ransomware attack, what cyber
3 securities should we -- you know,
4 should be required before any of
5 these systems get integrated into
6 our public transit or any cab
7 operations?

8 MR. VERA: I am no expert
9 at that, like --

10 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Okay.

11 MR. VERA: -- you know, I
12 wouldn't even want to give you an
13 answer that makes no sense to me,
14 you know. But what's scary though
15 is that, I mean, you guys look
16 around, there's a lot of countries
17 that don't like us. And they're
18 going after everything. And so even
19 when cyber security gets better,
20 hackers get better. So it's an --
21 it's a back-and-forth game. So for
22 me to say that's not something that
23 I can. But I want to thank all you
24 guys for all these questions because

1 this -- you're giving me homework,
2 so --

3 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: No,
4 and I -- and I appreciate it. So --
5 but what -- can you describe to us
6 what other, like, specific duties
7 will be impossible or unsafe with an
8 autonomous vehicle?

9 MR. VERA: When it comes to
10 buses?

11 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Yes.

12 MR. VERA: I just think of
13 the whole customer service aspect
14 that we have, again, trying to
15 navigate. You know, yesterday I was
16 taking a walk preparing for this,
17 and I'm driving down -- I'm walking
18 down Dale Avenue, and I don't know
19 if you guys saw on the news. There
20 was a New Jersey State trooper that
21 got into an accident, right? I have
22 two bus routes that go down that
23 bus, so it would be a human driver
24 that would know to take a detour, to

1 get the bus around, to get back on
2 route safety. So that aspect.

3 We may have -- when I think
4 of our trains, our Broad Street
5 line, our Market Street line, right?
6 Those are probably, in my opinion,
7 some of the two most unsafe
8 transportation we have when it comes
9 to unruly passengers, people
10 smoking, people doing everything
11 they want. If we don't have a human
12 being on the bus, it's going to turn
13 to the wild, wild west, even on our
14 buses. So I hate to say it, but we
15 have -- sometimes people get
16 molested on buses. People get
17 bullied on buses, and it is nothing
18 for a bus driver to stop the bus,
19 open up both doors, and call 911.
20 ADA, we assist with -- I don't want
21 to just pick out wheelchairs because
22 we have people with hidden
23 disabilities as well. Little kids,
24 we have children that their safest

1 place is school because their homes
2 are so messed up that they look
3 forward to getting on the bus and
4 saying good morning to the bus
5 driver. So we bring a level of
6 customer service. Language
7 barriers, you know, I'm not going to
8 say I speak every language, but I
9 could stand there and say, can you
10 write this down? So there's just a
11 lot that we need a human being
12 behind the bus to be able to do.
13 And those are just some of my
14 immediate thoughts.

15 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
16 you. Thank you for that.

17 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
18 Councilman. Councilwoman Brooks?

19 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:
20 Nope. I -- they actually answered
21 that.

22 CHAIR HARRITY: All right.
23 Councilwoman Lozada, did you have a
24 follow up?

1 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I
2 just wanted to follow up and ask, I
3 asked you about city conversation,
4 anybody else talking. Have you
5 reached out to any of our state
6 counterparts to have a conversation
7 about your concerns?

8 MR. VERA: No. So it
9 wasn't until last week that somebody
10 approached me about what's my take
11 on Waymo. Because I just got
12 elected in October. So I really
13 went in deep, went right into
14 negotiations, went into
15 ratifications, just went into
16 creating a culture that we have
17 amongst my staff. And, you know, I
18 want to thank them for most of them
19 being behind me right now in
20 support. And so it was just last
21 week that someone approached me and
22 said, what do you take on? And
23 said, Hey, there's a hearing on
24 Tuesday, would you be willing to

1 speak? So this is my first time
2 really speaking besides receiving
3 information from International.

4 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

5 Okay.

6 MR. VERA: Yeah.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

8 Thank you.

9 MR. VERA: Yeah.

10 CHAIR HARRITY:

11 Councilwoman Landau.

12 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Just
13 two quick ones, when we were talking
14 about job loss and the effects on
15 both of your constituencies, your
16 workers, I want to make sure that
17 we've been clear about what we're
18 going to ask the state for and the
19 city for, and we would love for you
20 to also partner with us. It's not
21 just about job loss, but the full
22 economic impact. Because that's
23 even bigger. That it's, you know --
24 it -- humans are taking hits; humans

1 lose their jobs, but people pay
2 taxes. You know, there's so many
3 other ways in which what happens
4 when somebody loses the job and then
5 can't do this, the ripple effect
6 that happens with it.

7 And the last thing is, we
8 cannot underscore enough. There has
9 been -- there have been stories on
10 this. The fact that Waymos cannot
11 handle people with disabilities of
12 all types. And we need more ways
13 for folks to get around, to do it
14 safely, to do it compassionately,
15 and to do it in a way that upholds
16 their dignity and respect. We don't
17 want these autonomous vehicles here,
18 just ignoring them and not helping
19 them out at all. Thank you.

20 CHAIR HARRITY: Any further
21 questions from my colleagues?
22 Seeing none, I thank you for your
23 testimony, man. Thank you guys for
24 taking the time to come down here

1 for us today. You know, this is all
2 for me about the workers of
3 Philadelphia and about keeping my
4 neighbors employed. So thank you
5 for your time.

6 MR. VERA: Thank you.

7 MR. BURNS: Thank you.

8 CHAIR HARRITY: Mr. Kunkel,
9 will you please call the next panel
10 to testify?

11 THE CLERK: Stephan
12 Hernandez rideshare driver, member
13 of the SEIU; Alex Kaufman, Phoenix,
14 Arizona Waymo rider; and Mustafa
15 Toure, full-time rideshare driver,
16 People's First Transportation
17 Alliance.

18 MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Good
19 morning, everyone.

20 CHAIR HARRITY: Good
21 morning. State your name for the
22 record, and please begin your
23 testimony.

24 MR. HERNANDEZ: Good

1 morning. My name is Stephan
2 Hernandez. I am a full-time
3 rideshare driver. I'm here to speak
4 for the thousands of hardworking
5 people in our city who rely on
6 driving Uber, Lyft, DoorDash, and
7 other rideshare delivery apps. For
8 many of us, this isn't side money,
9 this is rent money. This is food on
10 the table. It is how we take care
11 of our families. For me, I take
12 care of my two nephews and my two
13 nieces. I am their guardian and I
14 provide for them; school supplies,
15 school clothes, and outdoor
16 activities, food, everyday trips.
17 Giving them a good life in general.
18 They are my reasons -- they are my
19 reasons I spend 14 hours a day or
20 more working. I do not need to tell
21 anyone that this is -- life is
22 cheap. You get reminded of that
23 every time you flip up your tank,
24 you rent -- your rent check is due,

1 or you're at a grocery store.

2 For me, I'm looking into
3 going to welding school. My goal
4 was to drive the rideshare app for a
5 little while just to pay for that.
6 I have a plan to build a foundation
7 for myself, my family, and driving
8 for rideshare apps is a part of
9 that. But with it being my primary
10 source of income at the time and
11 having so many people to provide
12 for, losing it to a robot will mess
13 up my entire plan. It is just -- it
14 is not just me, there are thousands
15 of rideshare and delivery drivers
16 working in Philadelphia right now.
17 So that is thousands of families who
18 rely on this income every month.
19 Families like mine's who would be at
20 risk if these jobs disappeared. I
21 was working at the airport for the
22 last few months and was let go from
23 that job, so as of now, driving is
24 my main source of income. While I'm

1 looking for a new 32BJ union job,
2 there are many union members who
3 work full-time and depend on these
4 jobs to make ends meet.

5 Now, companies like Waymo
6 want to bring driverless cars into
7 our community. I recognize that new
8 technology can bring improvements
9 and make life easier in some ways,
10 but at the same time, cars do not
11 need drivers. Cars do not need
12 paychecks. Every ride that goes to
13 a robot is a ride taken away from a
14 real person, someone trying to work
15 an honest job. We need policies to
16 ensure that as technology advances,
17 workers are not left behind. In a
18 city where many people are already
19 struggling, replacing workers with
20 machines does not move us forward.

21 How can we put money back
22 into cities if every penny we earn
23 is going towards surviving? I rent
24 in Philadelphia, I'm from

1 Philadelphia, and I want to stay in
2 Philadelphia. But 2,500 every month
3 for rent alone is impossible long
4 term. Both of my neighbors drive
5 for a rideshare. I'll be willing to
6 bet Everyone here knows someone who
7 is dependent on rideshare X. It
8 pushes our most vulnerable neighbors
9 behind. Philadelphia must stand up
10 for its workers and make sure the
11 future of transportation does not
12 come at the cost of the people who
13 keeps the city moving. I hope you,
14 the City Council, take this
15 seriously and work with your
16 counterparts at the state and
17 federal level to look at the impact
18 bringing driverless vehicles would
19 have on the economy, the safety, and
20 the future of the city of
21 Philadelphia. Thank you for your
22 time.

23 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
24 for your testimony. Will the next

1 person please state your name and
2 begin your testimony?

3 MR. TOURE: Good morning,
4 Council members. My name is Mustafa
5 Toure. I'm a full-time rideshare
6 driver here in Philadelphia. Every
7 single week, I put gas in my tank, I
8 pay for my own maintenance, I carry
9 my own insurance, and I do it all to
10 keep this city moving. This is not
11 a side hustle for me, this is my
12 job; my only job. And I spend my
13 money here in the region. I eat at
14 restaurants in this city. I am not
15 spending my earning somewhere else;
16 I'm cycling them right back into the
17 community. Drivers like me are
18 small businesses. We are part of
19 this local economy. And when you
20 multiply my situation by the more
21 than 60,000 drivers, many of them
22 full-time operating in the city,
23 that is real economic weight.

24 Now seeing that driverless

1 cars could take my passengers and
2 take my income, and there is nothing
3 stopping that from happening. No
4 warning, no transition, no
5 replacement income. I do not have a
6 second job to fall back on. I have
7 a family depending on what I earn,
8 behind that will in a flexible way
9 that works for us. The companies
10 pushing this vehicle will not feel
11 the loss. I will, my family will,
12 and these cities will too, because
13 drivers who are not earning are not
14 spending. I am grateful that you
15 are all with us. I am asking what
16 happens to the people who will be
17 displaced? Right now, there is no
18 answer to that question. And the
19 green light for robots should not
20 come at the expense of my human
21 drivers. We built our lives around
22 this work. We deserve more than
23 being erased by a software update.
24 Thank you.

1 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
2 for your testimony. Will the next
3 person please state your name and
4 begin your testimony?

5 MS. KAUFMAN: Hello. My
6 name is Alex Kaufman, and I have a
7 video as part of my testimony first.

8 (Video played as follows:)

9 MALE REPORTER: Yeah.
10 Chandler woman's first Waymo trip
11 going viral.

12 FEMALE REPORTER: New video
13 tonight shows her vehicle making a
14 bold move while trying to make a
15 turn, forcing some of the traffic
16 around her to stop. Take a look.

17 WOMEN VOICES IN CAR: Oh,
18 my gosh. It's like -- it's like
19 inching slowly. No, no, it's going
20 to go after this car. It's not. It
21 better not because Oh my God! Oh, my
22 God! Holy. Oh, my God! My God, my
23 God! My God! My God! Oh, my God! Oh,
24 my God! Oh, my God! Oh, my God!

1 Sorry.

2 FEMALE REPORTER: Oh, no,
3 that is scary. I would've been
4 saying a few other words along with
5 that, the woman is from -- this is
6 -- this video rather is from a woman
7 --

8 MALE REPORTER: Did Uber
9 post this?

10 FEMALE REPORTER: Oh, yeah,
11 good point. Josephine --

12 MALE REPORTER: It's like
13 psyops.

14 FEMALE REPORTER: Yeah.
15 She says that this was her first
16 time ever -- oh, man, using a
17 driverless taxi service. Not a
18 great first time. As you can see,
19 it was a lot more thrilling than she
20 wanted. When the car stopped in the
21 intersection while trying to turn,
22 multiple lanes of traffic were
23 oncoming. And the TikTok post has
24 gone viral with 170,000 likes. We

1 did reach out to Waymo, they say
2 they take incidents like this very
3 seriously, and they are
4 investigating.

5 (End.)

6 MS. KAUFMAN: As you can
7 see in the video, this past March, I
8 took a walk --a ride in a Waymo in
9 Phoenix, Arizona with my sister and
10 her friend to a music festival. The
11 Waymo app was offering a first ride
12 credit for first time users, which
13 made it cheaper than Uber and Lyft
14 options. And my friend had taken it
15 many times with no issues. So we
16 decided to take one. The Waymo was
17 parked in a parking lot off the side
18 of a busy road with three lanes of
19 traffic on each side of the median.
20 There was another car at the median
21 waiting to make a left hand turn
22 into the entrance that our car was
23 in. It was also 5:00 p.m. around
24 rush hour. And cars in all three

1 lanes were driving around 50 miles
2 -- 50 to 60 miles per hour.

3 The Waymo failed to yield
4 to the car, waiting to make a left,
5 and started inching out into
6 traffic. We were very panicked as
7 we realized the Waymo was going to
8 attempt to make a left turn across
9 the three lanes of traffic while the
10 cars were too close for it -- for it
11 to be safe. After inching out, the
12 Waymo decided to pump the gas, but
13 then got confused by the situation
14 and decided to stop in the middle of
15 the road perpendicular to oncoming
16 traffic. We thankfully did not get
17 hit, but there were multiple cars
18 that had to slam on their brakes to
19 avoid a fatal collision.

20 In the situation, I believe
21 a safe move would've been made --
22 would have made a right turn onto
23 the road and then make a U-turn when
24 it was safe to do so. If the other

1 drivers had not been paying
2 attention, my sister, my friend and
3 I would've been seriously injured or
4 worse. We felt very uneasy the rest
5 of the ride to the festival,
6 although it went smoothly after
7 that. We contacted Waymo about the
8 incident. They gave us a \$10 ride
9 credit to use for our next ride.
10 Then after contacting them again,
11 refunded us in full and then gave us
12 a \$40 credit to use for a future
13 ride. Thank you.

14 CHAIR HARRITY: Okay.
15 Well, thank you all for your
16 testimony. Do my -- any questions?
17 Yeah. Councilwoman Lozada.

18 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: How
19 easy was it for you to report to
20 Waymo? What -- I mean -- I don't
21 know. I think I'm a chicken in cars
22 just to begin with, right? I don't
23 like -- I don't -- I hate it. But
24 how easy was the process for you to

1 be able to report your experience?
2 And, okay, they gave you \$10, that
3 was -- that's not enough, at least
4 not for me, right? The fear that I
5 -- that you experienced in the car
6 at that moment, not knowing if
7 you're going to even get through it,
8 but what was -- what was their
9 response aside from giving you this
10 coupon or discount?

11 MS. KAUFMAN: So it was
12 actually my sister that booked the
13 ride on her app. So she was able to
14 go into the app and then report an
15 issue with the ride. And then she
16 basically wrote what happened and
17 sent it in. But I actually DM'd
18 Waymo on Instagram with the video
19 and that's when they reached out,
20 they said, Hey, we credited \$10 to
21 your account. And I said, "Watch
22 the video again, please refund us in
23 full. And they said, Okay, we're
24 going to escalate this to our team.

1 My sister ended up getting a
2 response on her end too. And then
3 Waymo actually asked if she would be
4 available to call because they
5 wanted more details on what happened
6 after reviewing the video. And it
7 was fairly easy to contact them
8 though.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

10 Okay. But you were able to speak to
11 a human?

12 MS. KAUFMAN: Yes. A human
13 contacted her, yes.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

15 Okay. I was curious. Thank you.

16 CHAIR HARRITY: A human
17 eventually contacted her.

18 MS. KAUFMAN: Yes.

19 CHAIR HARRITY: Out of
20 battery maybe?

21 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: I'm
22 going to share this.

23 CHAIR HARRITY: No, I was
24 going to call you. Councilwoman

1 Landau.

2 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

3 Thank you all for your testimony,
4 especially for the drivers and
5 machinists. This is -- we -- your
6 jobs are so important for us, and we
7 understand how much this is really
8 about your lives. I'm struck by
9 knowing that there is some emergency
10 joystick user out there somewhere,
11 nationally or internationally, that
12 could jump in in an emergency
13 situation, yet you, in the backseat
14 of this car, didn't have that
15 emergency panic button to just, you
16 know, alert them to some way. Like
17 something is going deeply wrong
18 here, and you're just sitting there
19 like you were trapped. It sounds
20 awful, sorry that happened to you.
21 But we know that our wonderful
22 drivers here would never, ever, ever
23 let that happen to you.

24 CHAIR HARRITY: Yeah. I

1 think I'm back in action here.

2 Yeah, there you go. Thank you again
3 for your testimony. Councilman
4 Young.

5 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
6 you, Mr. Chair. Did Waymo ever
7 provide you with information like
8 what went wrong with the incident?

9 MS. KAUFMAN: No, we never
10 really gotten any information
11 besides it was a technology issue,
12 and they said they would look into
13 it, but we never got any further
14 information than that.

15 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Okay.
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIR HARRITY: That would
18 be why they called you and got her
19 to explain what happened. That's
20 their liability. They were covering
21 their rear in other words, by doing
22 that. I appreciate you testifying.
23 Yeah, next time get a lawyer though,
24 because - yeah, that's exactly what

1 they were doing, was prying
2 information so that they can defend
3 themselves when somebody sues them.
4 But thank you. And that was -- I'm
5 okay in cars; I drive fast, right?
6 But I don't know about that, with
7 all those hot -- all those lanes.
8 You know what I mean? Yeah. That
9 was just harrowing, so.

10 And for you guys, thank you
11 for coming in and telling your
12 story. That's what it's about.
13 Safety -- the safety is definitely
14 key, but jobs for me are also a very
15 important part of this. And my
16 neighbors being able to feed their
17 children is another. So thank you
18 all for your testimony.

19 Anybody else have any
20 questions for this panel? Man, I'll
21 tell you what, thank you for taking
22 your time and going viral, I'm sorry
23 it's for that, but I know that's an
24 accomplishment because I've never

1 gone viral in anything. But, you
2 know, so I'm sorry that it was a
3 harrowing experience that happened
4 for, but kudos for actually thinking
5 to take the video in the first place
6 so you would have some evidence of
7 it. So thank you again.

8 Mr. Kunkel, I believe we're
9 now going to transition into public
10 comment. Okay? Yeah. Please do
11 the written testimony first.

12 THE CLERK: The written
13 testimony includes Corinne O'Connor,
14 deputy executive director of the
15 PPA; Angeline Jefferson public
16 policy manager at Lyft, Government
17 Relations for Waymo; Senia Lopez,
18 Transit Forward Philadelphia; Paige
19 Carbone, regional executive director
20 of MADD; Denise Brown, written
21 public comment.

22 CHAIR HARRITY: Okay.
23 Mr. Kunkel, that -- we are now going
24 to transition into public comment.

1 I believe we are going to do a
2 two-minute limit, so please adjust
3 your testimony to do it just to
4 accommodate getting it in through
5 time so that we don't have to break
6 and give the stenographer -- so
7 thank you.

8 Mr. Kunkel, please call the
9 first witness to testify in public
10 comment.

11 THE CLERK: Miguel Johnson,
12 Mama Duba, Steven Elliot, Sianna
13 Harris, Yesenia Lopez.

14 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
15 all for taking the time out of your
16 schedule to come down here and
17 testify today. Could the first
18 person called, please state your
19 name and begin with your testimony.

20 MR. JOHNSON: Hello. My
21 name is Miguel K. Johnson. And I
22 spent with Waymo -- to be -- to be
23 fair. I did give an interview to
24 Technically Philly about Waymo about

1 a year ago -- about a year ago. And
2 my opinion then was that I wouldn't
3 mind testing it in a safe
4 environment.

5 For example, maybe on --
6 maybe on like the 5K track in fair
7 -- in FDR Park, but on the streets
8 of Philadelphia. We have people who
9 can't drive, so I assume that a
10 machine isn't going to be as
11 helpful. Also in Philly, I think
12 our focus has to be on, yes,
13 protecting the jobs -- the jobs of
14 individuals here who rely on
15 rideshare for their -- for their
16 jobs as well as for public
17 transportation, but also focusing on
18 making sure that our city invests in
19 SEPTA, not Waymo.

20 We are a city that -- if
21 we're going to be a city that's
22 looking at trends of other cities,
23 because that's what Waymo is; Waymo
24 is a trend. It's like -- it's like

1 flying taxis. It looks cool, people
2 think it's okay, it makes the city
3 look modern.

4 You know what else makes
5 the city look modern? Efficient
6 public transit. A city that
7 actually invests in -- we have
8 cities now that are trying to get
9 what Philadelphia already has.
10 Philadelphia has the largest
11 operating trolley network in North
12 America. Why are we not investing
13 more in our trolleys and instead
14 putting something -- perhaps putting
15 something into Waymo. Waymo -- the
16 fact that they're not even here
17 shows us what we already need to
18 know -- need to know.

19 We can't allow for
20 corporations to come into our city
21 regardless of what Harrisburg says.
22 You know, Harrisburg does a whole
23 other issue. Regardless of what any
24 of -- any other entity says, because

1 we, as a city, have our own
2 sovereignty in this matter. And we
3 want to make sure that we as a city
4 do what's necessary for our people
5 and our workers.

6 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.
7 Please state your name and begin
8 with your testimony.

9 MR. ELLIOT: My name is
10 Steven Elliot. Good morning,
11 Council members. I'm a Philadelphia
12 resident living with Parkinson's
13 Disease. For me, transportation is
14 not just about convenience; it's
15 about independence and safety.
16 There are days when my mobility is
17 limited: when getting in and out of
18 a car is difficult, when I rely on a
19 driver to give me a hand to make
20 sure I'm steady and to help me
21 safely reach my destination. With
22 Waymo, that human support matters.
23 With driverless vehicles, that
24 support disappears. There's no

1 driver to help, no one to notice if
2 I'm struggling, no one to assist if
3 something goes wrong. That's not a
4 small change. For people like me,
5 that is a difference between being
6 able to move through the city safely
7 and being put in a vulnerable
8 position.

9 So when we talk about this
10 technology, we have to ask, who is
11 it designed for? Because right now
12 it does not feel like it is designed
13 for people with disabilities and who
14 need assistance, and it does not
15 feel safe. I understand that -- I
16 understand that the city may not
17 have the power to approve or deny
18 these vehicles, but you do have the
19 power to speak for the people who
20 live here. So I'm asking you to do
21 that. Tell PennDOT not to issue
22 licenses for driverless vehicles in
23 Philadelphia. Tell them that this
24 technology is not ready and it does

1 not meet the needs of residents like
2 me. Because safety is not just
3 about avoiding accidents, it is
4 about making sure people are
5 supported, protected, and will not
6 -- not left behind. Right now,
7 driverless vehicles do not meet the
8 standard. Thank you.

9 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
10 for your testimony. Please begin --
11 state your name and begin with your
12 testimony.

13 MR. DUBA: Good morning,
14 Councilmembers. My name is Mamu
15 Duba, and I represent the Muslim
16 Uber Drivers Association here in
17 Philadelphia. For many of us,
18 driving is not just work, it is how
19 we survive. We are immigrants, we
20 are providers. We work long hours
21 to support our families and build a
22 life here. This job gives us
23 stability, flexibility, and dignity.
24 And now we are being told that

1 driverless vehicles could replace
2 us. That means thousands of drivers
3 in the city could lose their income,
4 not in the distant future, but very
5 soon. And there is no plan for what
6 happens to us next; no transition
7 plan, no protections, no guarantee
8 of another job that pays the same.
9 We are being asked to accept that
10 our jobs can disappear while
11 companies experiment with technology
12 that is still not proven to be safe.
13 That's not right. We are against
14 technology -- we are not against
15 technology; we are against being
16 replaced without a plan.

17 We are asking for something
18 very simple; do not move forward
19 until you understand that the impact
20 on the workers. And right now, that
21 means stopping this before it
22 starts. I understand the city does
23 not control the licensing, but you
24 do have a voice, so I'm asking you

1 to use it. And like brother Sam had
2 mentioned, please tell PennDOT not
3 to issue licenses for the driverless
4 vehicles in Philadelphia. Tell them
5 these vehicles are not welcome here,
6 not until workers are protected, and
7 our jobs are secure because once
8 these jobs are gone, they're gone
9 for good. Thank you.

10 MS. LOPEZ: Do I just go?
11 Okay.

12 CHAIR HARRITY: Please
13 state your name and begin with your
14 testimony for the record. Sorry
15 about that.

16 MS. LOPEZ: No, you're
17 good. It's my, you know, long time
18 listener, first time caller. Hello.
19 My name is Senia Lopez. I am a
20 lifelong resident of the Northeast,
21 and I am here as an Organizer with
22 215 People's Alliance and also as
23 the Northeast Philly Fellow for
24 Transit Forward Philly. While there

1 are so many reasons we heard about
2 today, why my community and I are
3 against the pushing of autonomous
4 vehicles onto us, I want to speak
5 specifically about the implications
6 this has on our already overcrowded
7 roads and are already underfunded
8 and underutilized public transit
9 system.

10 Earlier this year, I was at
11 a conference in Pittsburgh where
12 operators from the Transit Workers
13 Union presented on what other cities
14 are already starting to do with
15 autonomous vehicles. It was truly
16 an eye-opening and terrifying
17 experience. Self-driving buses may
18 sound like it's maybe a step too far
19 or something we're not going to do
20 yet, but this technology is already
21 being tested in over 35 cities
22 worldwide. And Councilmember Lozada
23 talked about the, you know, tractor
24 trailers and those things that are

1 already becoming autonomous too.

2 There are a lot of implications
3 here.

4 If we allow Waymo and
5 similar businesses to set up shop
6 here in Philadelphia, we will be
7 setting a dangerous precedent to
8 allow the rapid expansion of
9 autonomous vehicles. Similarly to
10 other AI technology, I feel like we
11 all blinked and now it's being
12 integrated into every aspect of our
13 lives. We didn't get to opt in, but
14 it feels like we are at a moment
15 where we can opt out. Autonomous
16 vehicles threaten public transit. A
17 University of Michigan study showed
18 that the introduction of these
19 rideshares, nationally reduced
20 public transit use by over five
21 percent. Autonomous vehicles would
22 make this worse. Autonomous
23 vehicles worsen our car-centric
24 transportation system -- Oh, my

1 goodness -- while presented as a
2 solution. We envision a
3 transportation system that connects
4 our communities, improves our
5 quality of life, makes it safer and
6 more affordable to get around, and
7 reduces environmental and community
8 health impacts. Autonomous vehicles
9 only threaten that vision rather
10 than helping achieve it.

11 There's also a very human
12 element of what our transit
13 operators do. I spoke to a long
14 time bus driver recently about how
15 often they have to help in medical
16 emergencies, both minor and
17 absolutely major. Whether it's
18 passengers on their bus or road
19 incidents that they just view from
20 their seat. My long-term bus driver
21 has helped the community countless
22 times with reporting things like
23 traffic light outages, dangerous
24 snow mounds on the curbs. Plus I

1 would be particularly saddened by
2 losing human interaction there.
3 This is absolutely a safety issue
4 and a jobs issue, but this is a
5 quality-of-life issue. I really
6 think about people like my
7 grandmother who already hates to use
8 her phone more than she has to
9 having to deal with this kind of
10 technology.

11 I don't fully understand
12 the legal language here, but I've
13 been told that we could be asking
14 members of Committee to introduce a
15 non-privileged resolution, asking
16 the legislator to amend Act 130 to
17 remove Philadelphia as a
18 participating municipality within
19 this bill. And I want to finish
20 with just adding that, when I was
21 doing some of the research for my
22 points here in this statement, I had
23 the immense displeasure of being hit
24 with Google AI search results about

1 Waymo. And of course they did not
2 highlight the issues mentioned here
3 today. I am very, very concerned
4 about this consolidation of, you
5 know, knowledge and data that the
6 search engines also own the
7 companies they're reporting on. And
8 I think that it's really great that
9 we're actually listening to experts
10 here today. Thank you.

11 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
12 for your testimony.

13 Please state your name and
14 begin your testimony.

15 MS. HARRIS: Hello. I'm
16 Sianna Harris. I'm a recent
17 graduate from Temple University.
18 Hello, Councilmembers. My
19 experience as a college student and
20 also a volunteer in the city of
21 Philadelphia, like many others,
22 includes countless tales of issues
23 with public transit and rideshare
24 services alike.

1 Most recently, I can recall
2 several instances of unexpected
3 delays and cancellations at SEPTA
4 subway stations due to system errors
5 and even being unable to travel
6 certain locations due to limited
7 public transportation. Like most
8 college students, when faced with
9 these problems, I've turned to
10 rideshare services, which are not
11 always reliable due to canceled
12 rides and overall safety concerns
13 about traveling in a stranger's
14 vehicles.

15 And while I believe that
16 Waymo's autonomous vehicles would be
17 extremely beneficial to college
18 students and the greater
19 Philadelphia communities as these
20 self-driving cars have reported
21 significantly lower crash rates than
22 human drivers, along with creating
23 safer travel experiences for women
24 and vulnerable groups. And that in

1 the city of Philadelphia it's
2 crucial to be able to navigate
3 freely and independently. And
4 having a system of transportation
5 that allows for users to not have to
6 rely on others will build
7 confidence, self-reliance, and
8 increase the accessibility of
9 transportation in the city of
10 Philadelphia. I also feel that as
11 members of -- as political
12 officials, we have a choice to make
13 in whether we increase spending in
14 the infrastructure in place, to make
15 our definitive stance on whether we
16 want these autonomous vehicles in
17 our city. And I think without
18 putting in serious money to update a
19 lot of our infrastructure, it is
20 inevitable that people start to turn
21 to these autonomous vehicles. And I
22 think whether that be in supporting
23 Waymo or updating SEPTA systems, we
24 have a choice to make in how we

1 provide our most vulnerable
2 populations with access to safe and
3 reliable transportation.

4 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
5 for your testimony.

6 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

7 CHAIR HARRITY: Mr. Kunkel,
8 will you please tell -- please call
9 the next witnesses to testify.

10 THE CLERK: Reverend Ian
11 Harris, Madison Nardy, Sam Elliot,
12 Nikia Navarro, Virginia Lynn Hogman,
13 Jonathan Lee.

14 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
15 all. Please state your name and
16 give your testimony. Please keep it
17 brief. We have a hard stop at
18 12:30.

19 MS. NARDY: Okay. Good
20 afternoon. My name is Madison
21 Nardy. I'm the executive director
22 of 215 Peoples Alliance. We
23 organize residents across Northeast
24 Philly. Last week I came before

1 Council to speak about the proposed
2 rideshare tax because working people
3 should not be forced to balance the
4 budget on our backs while
5 corporations like Waymo continue to
6 extract wealth from our communities.

7 The expansion of autonomous
8 vehicles threatens jobs, raises
9 safety concerns, and contributes to
10 the further disinvestment in public
11 transit. Working people are already
12 struggling with rising costs of gas,
13 groceries, rent, and healthcare
14 while wages continue to stagnate,
15 all while trying to survive on a
16 public transit system that has been
17 systemically underfunded for
18 decades.

19 And despite that
20 disinvestment, SEPTA still moves
21 hundreds of thousands of people
22 every single day with a fraction of
23 the funding of other major transit
24 systems.

1 So instead of seriously
2 investing in public infrastructure
3 people actually rely on, we are
4 using public streets and public
5 resources to help usher in another
6 job-stealing tech corporation that
7 gives nothing back to the
8 communities they profit from. What
9 real economic benefit does this
10 bring to our city when the long-term
11 outcomes is job loss, reduced tax
12 revenue, and more strain on already
13 underfunded public services? And
14 let's be honest about what this
15 really is.

16 Autonomous vehicles are not
17 a public necessity for working
18 people. This is a luxury product
19 being pushed by wealthy tech
20 corporations. And while today this
21 is being framed as a rideshare
22 issue, we all know automation will
23 not stop there.

24 Today, it's rideshare

1 drivers, tomorrow it's SEPTA
2 workers, school bus drivers,
3 delivery drivers, truck drivers, and
4 anyone whose livelihood depends on
5 driving for work.

6 When corporations eliminate
7 jobs, entire communities feel the
8 impact; workers lose incomes,
9 neighborhoods lose local spending,
10 cities lose tax revenue, and public
11 services lose funding. Less wage
12 tax revenue means less money for
13 schools, libraries, transits, and
14 services working people rely on
15 every day while corporations
16 continue extracting wealth and
17 leaving the public to deal with the
18 consequences. And honestly, I think
19 it says a lot that Waymo is not here
20 to testify before the people that
21 they claim they want to serve. If
22 they truly care about our
23 communities, they would be willing
24 to answer questions publicly about

1 the real consequences of this
2 technology. We are headed towards a
3 future where more and more of our
4 lives are becoming automated,
5 isolated, and transactional while
6 corporations call it innovation, and
7 working-class communities are left
8 dealing with the social and economic
9 consequences. Stop exploiting our
10 communities in the name of
11 innovation for the rich. This is
12 bigger than rideshare apps --

13 CHAIR HARRITY: Please --

14 MS. NARDY: I got two
15 sentences left --

16 CHAIR HARRITY: Round up.

17 MS. NARDY: This is bigger
18 than rideshare apps. It's more --
19 it's about what kind of economy and
20 city we are building. Philadelphia
21 should be investing in its people,
22 public transit infrastructure, and
23 good union jobs that sustain our
24 communities, not helping

1 corporations replace workers in the
2 name of convenience and profit.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.
5 That was very good, speeded that up.
6 Yeah, I love it.

7 Please state your name and
8 begin your testimony.

9 MS. HOGMAN: My name is
10 Lynn Hogman. I'm a longtime
11 resident of West Philadelphia. I'm
12 here to urge City Council to
13 consider enacting legislation
14 requiring that all vehicles on the
15 city's streets have a driver capable
16 of operating the vehicle. As was
17 testified by the first witness, it
18 is true that the city is preempted
19 from regulating the technology of
20 automated vehicles, but that statute
21 does not prohibit everything. If
22 you look at that statute, you will
23 see that it also expressly permits
24 the city to regulate its streets and

1 traffic, provided that it does not
2 discriminate against highly
3 automated vehicles. It would appear
4 that an ordinance requiring a driver
5 in all vehicles operating on the
6 streets could be permitted under
7 that statute.

8 Moreover, requiring a
9 driver in all vehicles is important
10 in Philadelphia because as this was
11 testified, experience in other
12 cities has shown that automated
13 vehicles cannot operate properly
14 without a driver in many
15 circumstances. For example, in San
16 Francisco, driverless vehicles
17 stopped and blocked traffic when
18 traffic lights were out to a -- due
19 to a power outage and over 60 of the
20 vehicles had to be moved manually.
21 These types of events are not
22 compatible with Philadelphia streets
23 or its mass transit system. We are
24 a city with numerous one-lane

1 streets. Indeed, these one-lane
2 streets are not just single isolated
3 blocks, but also include major three
4 streets, such as 47th Street in West
5 Philadelphia. Without a driver to
6 operate and move the vehicle,
7 stopped automated vehicle on a
8 one-lane street completely blocks
9 all traffic. In addition, trolleys
10 that operate on rails are a key part
11 of SEPTA. These trolleys cannot go
12 around a stopped vehicle, therefore,
13 a vehicle that stops on any of the
14 streets on which the trolleys run
15 blocks that trolley line until there
16 is a -- unless there is a driver to
17 move the vehicle. The risk of
18 shutting down a trolley line is not
19 hypothetical. Power outages that
20 affect traffic lights are common,
21 but do not prevent trolleys from
22 running. In fact, we just had one
23 last month on Baltimore Avenue where
24 the 34 T2 trolley runs, and the

1 trolleys run properly despite the
2 traffic lights being up. If there
3 were driverless vehicles on the
4 streets, they would've stopped when
5 the traffic lights went out and shut
6 down an entire trolley line. Thank
7 you.

8 And I apologize for not
9 having a copy of the preemption
10 statute. I didn't realize I was
11 going to testify about that until
12 the first witness. If any of you
13 need a copy of the preemption
14 statute, I'd be happy to send it to
15 you. Thank you.

16 CHAIR HARRITY: Yes. We
17 would love a copy, please.

18 MS. HOGMAN: Okay. To your
19 office or all offices?

20 CHAIR HARRITY: You can
21 send to me, I'll send to everybody,
22 or everybody if you want.

23 MS. HOGMAN: I'll do that
24 today. Thank you.

1 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.

2 Please state your name and
3 begin your testimony.

4 MS. NAVARRO: Good
5 afternoon. My name is Nikia
6 Navarro, and I am testifying today
7 as a parent of a low vision child.
8 He is my little boy, my youngest
9 son. A few years ago I moved my
10 family from Boston to Philadelphia
11 -- don't judge me -- because of the
12 incredible care at CHOP. Like many
13 parents of children with
14 disabilities, I came here hoping for
15 answers, hoping for treatment, and
16 ultimately hoping for a cure for my
17 son's low vision condition. While I
18 wait and pray for that cure, I also
19 have to prepare for reality. As a
20 parent, one of the hardest things to
21 think about is the fact that I will
22 not be around for ever to ensure my
23 son's safety, mobility, and
24 independence. Technology is not

1 simply convenience for families like
2 mine, it is hope.

3 In the face of this hope, I
4 just want to share truth about bias.
5 Black males experience highly
6 significant rideshare cancellation
7 rates, often double or triple white
8 riders. Studies found Black males
9 with African American surrounding
10 names face cancellation rates up to
11 three times higher than their white
12 counterparts. Particularly in low
13 density suburban areas, especially
14 in suburban areas, and always in
15 cities.

16 With that said, evidence
17 that suggests discrimination based
18 on Black-sounding names, and in some
19 cases, profile pictures, oftentimes
20 have 35 percent longer wait times
21 before the cancellation. Back to
22 that hope. My hope is that my child
23 can one day move through the world
24 safely and not be canceled on.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you
3 for your comments.

4 Mr. Kunkel, will you please
5 call the next person to testify?

6 THE CLERK: Mitch Channon,
7 James Douglas, and Karik Simmons.

8 MR. CHANNON: Hi. Thanks
9 for the opportunity to testify.
10 Long time no see Councilmember
11 Driscoll. I'll keep it really
12 brief. My name is Mitch Channon.
13 I'm a member of 215 People's
14 Alliance. I also live in Northeast
15 Philly. I use SEPTA as my main mode
16 of transportation. I also do use
17 Lyft and Uber occasionally,
18 especially for places that aren't
19 easily accessible by SEPTA or if my
20 bus or my train doesn't come, which
21 happens more than I would like.

22 The main thing I wanted to
23 share, I don't know if this has been
24 said during the hearing yet, but a

1 few months ago I saw a social media
2 post from Senator Laughlin from Erie
3 reposting something about cyber cabs
4 and saying, This is the future of
5 transportation. Giving more money
6 to SEPTA would be like funding horse
7 watering stations.

8 And so I just want to speak
9 to -- a little bit more about the
10 potential impact on public transit.
11 So first, it appears to me that the
12 proliferation of this technology is
13 -- the story that's circulating, is
14 that this is the replacement for
15 public transit. And I -- I'm really
16 worried about how that narrative is
17 gaining holds in state capital
18 that's already pretty averse to
19 funding SEPTA.

20 Second, where I live in
21 Northeast Philly, the traffic is
22 terrible. I would like to
23 understand better if there has been
24 any analysis of the potential impact

1 on transit ridership. If the price
2 point for Waymo is lower than the
3 price for Uber and Lyft, do we
4 expect an increase in ridership for
5 Waymo, a reduction in ridership for
6 SEPTA? And then what is the impact
7 on congestion in my neighborhood, in
8 Center City and other neighborhoods
9 across the city?

10 There's no way to solve the
11 problem of basic geometry with
12 autonomous vehicles. Buses, trains,
13 trolleys transport far more people
14 in a given space than cars ever can,
15 and I think that's another reason
16 why this technology is wrong for
17 Philly.

18 And at a minimum there
19 needs to be really serious
20 investigation of the likely impact
21 on public transit of allowing this
22 to happen. And don't be like
23 Senator Laughlin. Thank you.

24 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank you.

1 Thank you. Sir, please state your
2 name and begin with your testimony.

3 MR. LEE: Yes. My name is
4 Jonathan Lee. Today, I represent
5 two organizations. One is called
6 iRISE, and the other one is AI for
7 Philly. I've been pushing STEM in
8 the hood for 33 years, trying to get
9 more of my race of people involved
10 with artificial intelligence, large
11 language models, robotics, et
12 cetera. I see that as a platform to
13 reduce gun violence, recidivism, et
14 cetera.

15 I actually rode in a Waymo
16 out in San Francisco, and it was
17 funky fresh, but I was scared as
18 hell. I said, how do I get out of
19 this thing if this thing
20 malfunctions? How do I get out of
21 it? So that was a learning
22 experience for me.

23 I definitely applaud City
24 Council. I think in the 33 years

1 I've been pushing STEM in the hood,
2 this is the best City Council and
3 mayor that we have ever had. And
4 I'm not saying it to be superficial,
5 I am very much impressed.

6 And Waymo coming into
7 Philadelphia, what are you going to
8 put in the hood to help reroute our
9 children that are addicted to
10 playing video games? What are you
11 going to help us with social media
12 -- how are you going to help us with
13 social media platforms that are kids
14 are utilizing to shoot and kill one
15 another? What are you going to do
16 Waymo or Alphabet or Google?

17 When I looked at the
18 numbers, \$16 billion investment
19 round valuing the company at \$126
20 billion. What's coming into inner
21 city to help our folks? They're
22 swimming in digital technology, but
23 we lack on ramps. And this is what
24 they call us the region of Eds and

1 Meds. Come on. So I love
2 you-all. Rue Landau, Nina
3 Ahmad, Quetcy Lozada, I mean,
4 you-all got jiggy with it today.
5 And under your leadership
6 Councilman Jim Harrity. I am
7 very impressed. Thank you.

8 CHAIR HARRITY: Thank
9 you for your testimony.

10 Mr. Kunkel, is there
11 anyone else to testimony --
12 testify?

13 THE CLERK: There are
14 no more public commentators.

15 CHAIR HARRITY: No more
16 public comment, okay. This
17 concludes the business before
18 the Joint Committee on Labor and
19 Civil Service and Transportation
20 and Public Utilities today.
21 Thank you very much everybody
22 for your attendance.

23 (Joint Committee on Labor and Civil Service and
24 Transportation and Public Utilities public hearing
25 concluded at 12:30 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I hereby certify that the proceedings
and evidence are contained fully and accurately in
the notes taken by me of the above case, and this
copy is a correct transcript of the same.

Samanda J. Rios

Samanda J. Rios

Court Reporter
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City of Philadelphia

Meeting Calendar

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Criteria : Begin Date: 5/4/2026, End Date: 5/28/2026

Date	Time	Meeting Body	Meeting Location	
<u>May 2026</u>				
5/4/2026	10:00 AM	Committee of the Whole	Room 400, City Hall	BUDGET
5/5/2026	10:00 AM	Committee of the Whole	Room 400, City Hall	BUDGET
5/6/2026	10:00 AM	Committee of the Whole	Room 400, City Hall	BUDGET
5/7/2026	10:00 AM	CITY COUNCIL	Room 400, City Hall	
5/11/2026	10:00 AM	Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs	Room 400, City Hall	
5/12/2026	10:00 AM	Joint Committees on Labor and Civil Service & Transportation and Public Utilities	Room 400, City Hall	
5/12/2026	1:00 PM	Joint Committees on Legislative Oversight and Transportation & Public Utilities	Room 400, City Hall	
5/13/2026	10:00 AM	Committee on Finance	Room 400, City Hall	
5/13/2026	1:00 PM	Committee on Rules	Room 400, City Hall	
5/14/2026	10:00 AM	CITY COUNCIL	Room 400, City Hall	
5/15/2026	9:30 AM	Committee on Rules	Room 400, City Hall	
5/27/2026	1:30 PM	Committee on Licenses and Inspections	Room 400, City Hall	
5/28/2026	10:00 AM	CITY COUNCIL	Room 400, City Hall	