Planning for Autonomous Vehicles in the Atlanta Region

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Before we begin, let’s take a brief detour through time.
Peachtree Street (1907)
Suburbia (1950s)
The Downtown Connector (1961)
The Downtown Connector (1980s)
The Atlanta Region (Present Day)
Will the impact of autonomous vehicles on our world be as dramatic?
Less need for new roads due to more efficient use of existing capacity?
Or greater demand for road capacity due to new and longer trips?
How will it change the delivery industry?
Massive financial investment in smart infrastructure capabilities?
Will we even need signs and traffic signals?
What do we do with all those unnecessary parking garages?
Who owns the data and how is it used?
Atlanta is one of the world’s most dynamic metropolitan areas, competing globally on the strength of our diverse population, robust economy, myriad cultural assets and attractive lifestyles. We will “win the future” through intensive collaboration that honors and leverages the uniqueness of our communities.
There is no single path to win the future
Traditional scenario modeling process
Looking at the world differently through exploratory scenario planning
Identifying drivers of change
Key drivers of change for the Atlanta region

- Autonomous Vehicles
- Spatial, Racial and Economic Equity
- Climate Change Regulations
- Aging of the Population
- Transportation Finance Structure
- Water Supply
- Intelligent Infrastructure & Technology
- Ridehailing Services
- Port Traffic
Timeframes for 25% market penetration
Plausible, not predictive
“I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.”

- Thomas Watson, IBM Chairman (1943)

Predicting the future is not easy
Developing alternate futures
Fitting the drivers of change together
If the potential of autonomous vehicles matches the hype and they become commercially viable and readily available within the foreseeable future....

Identifying plausible relationships
Will older adults be early adopters of this new form of transportation which allows them to maintain their personal independence? Or will they be intimidated by the technology?
If an autonomous fleet is available “on call”, will people need to own their own vehicle? How would this change our spending habits? What happens to local governments with budgets that depend on traffic violations as a major source of revenue?
Identifying plausible relationships

Would an autonomous vehicle fleet drive traditional transit services out of business? Or would it serve a much needed “last mile” connectivity function? Will lower income individuals be able afford access to the fleet?
Four plausible futures for the Atlanta region
The actual future? Who knows?
What Atlanta’s planners and officials believe:

- **More Likely:**
  - Full Steam Ahead: 43%
  - Technology Reigns: 31%

- **Less Likely:**
  - Fierce Headwinds: 10%
  - Green Growth: 16%
That was interesting, but...

So?

What!!
Supporting local and state initiatives
Developing policy direction
Integrating into the ARC work program
Planning for Autonomous Vehicles in the Atlanta Region

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