



# Pittsburghers for Public Transit

**Pittsburghers for Public Transit**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Who:** Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT), residents of Four Mile Run and Hazelwood, ATU Local 85 and other advocacy organizations including BikePgh, Sierra Club, Access Mob, and Pittsburgh United.

**What:** Regional advocacy organizations will be calling on Pgh City Council to require that the Knight Foundation Autonomous Vehicle (AV) grant be used to have a holistic discussion of prospective AV impacts, and not simply used to advertise AV technology. Pittsburghers for Public Transit and others will specifically raise the need for the city to host public discussions about AV impacts to labor, the environment, pedestrian and driver safety, land use, data privacy and mobility for all residents, and call for this grant to evaluate whether AVs are the most equitable and economical way to address our region's transportation and pedestrian safety needs.

**When:** Wednesday 5/29 10 am- 11:30 pm

**Where:** Pittsburgh City County Building 5th Floor Council Chambers (414 Grant St)

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Two weeks ago, testimony from Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT) and a resident of Four Mile Run in front of Pittsburgh City Council resulted in council-members voting to delay disbursement of a \$410,000 grant from the Knight Foundation. This grant was supposed to be used for outreach to residents of Hazelwood, Glen Hazel and Greenfield -- the communities facing the possibility of an autonomous microtransit shuttle deployment -- to "find out what the community needs and how autonomous vehicles may help." PPT and neighborhood residents voiced the concern that "educating" residents about why AVs are the solution to community needs is in fact PR work for AV companies, and not meaningful community engagement.

PPT and other advocacy organizations believe it is critical to have this long-overdue public conversation about the possible impacts of AV, and believe that the Knight grant could catalyze this process. However, the discussion with residents must encompass all of the impacts of AVs-- impacts to jobs, the environment, pedestrian and bicycle safety, land use, mobility

equity, and data privacy-- because these effects will not be felt in isolation. Moreover, those anticipated harms and benefits should be weighed against the level of public subsidy required to support AV deployment, for residents to gauge whether this is the best use of our limited shared resources. Advocacy organizations and residents will call on Pittsburgh City Council to set conditions around the use of this grant to ensure that the first public conversation on AVs is effective and equitable.