

Comment from North Carolina Department of Transportation

At NCDOT, we wanted to deploy an autonomous shuttle at various locations around the state over a period of 12 months. The effort taken to secure a vehicle was extensive due to the NHTSA regulations preventing autonomous shuttles from operating on public roads in the state of NC.

We identified an opportunity to import a vehicle that could then be used as a pilot testing vehicle if approved through a NHTSA exemption application. However, this exemption process is not in place for U.S. made vehicles. We would like to be able to work with an American company such as Local Motors, to deploy Olli. However this was not possible due to the NHTSA regulations.

We think that a greater emphasis should be put on removing unintended regulatory barriers due to the era in which these standards were written. If a vehicle can accomplish the same or better level of safety without components such as rear view mirrors or steering wheels, that a traditional vehicle requires, there should be a process to approve those vehicles.