

Connected and Autonomous Vehicles. Preface

PARKES, Stephen <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4379-2058>> and FERRARI, Edward <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5506-7670>>

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Citation:

PARKES, Stephen and FERRARI, Edward (2022). Connected and Autonomous Vehicles. Preface. Regional Studies Policy Impact Books, 4 (1), p. 3. [Article]

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Preface

Cities and regions continue to grapple with a multitude of social, environmental, and economic challenges that impact on their residents. These challenges have been further compounded by the climate crisis (and the need to deliver on net zero commitments) and the Covid-19 pandemic, which has stretched local government resources even further whilst posing fundamental questions about the role of cities within their regions.

It is onto this backdrop that the next stage of the emergence of CAVs will play out. Much of the attention on CAVs currently focuses on the trials being undertaken in controlled environments or on the range of benefits that CAVs will arguably bring. Yet the prospect of more highly connected and autonomous vehicles also has the potential to be extremely disruptive and present further challenges for urban policymakers. In approaching this Policy Expo, we believed it was important to explore what the transition to CAVs would mean more broadly for cities and regions. Specifically, what might the implications be for those places and stakeholders that are not currently engaged in trials? How will the agendas of those imagining post-automobility futures or seeking to enhance the liveability of their environments be affected by the technological, regulatory and consumer push for CAVs?

The uncertainty and extended time horizons over which the deployment of CAVs is playing out and the lack of resources available might understandably be reason for local policymakers to delay engaging with this issue. However, we argue that it is imperative that engagement happens now so that local policymakers have a chance to shape and proactively plan for the advent of the mass adoption of CAVs, rather than have it imposed on them. It is important that they are enabled to do so.

Stephen Parkes and Ed Ferrari

Sheffield, February 2022