

## A MESSAGE FROM THE U.S. DOT VOLPE CENTER DIRECTOR

The year 2020 marks the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) Volpe National Transportation Systems Center's 50th year advancing transportation innovation for the public good. This publication celebrates our five decades of cross-modal partnerships and sustained commitment to public service.

Our golden anniversary is an opportunity to look back on the impact of our accomplishments, and look forward to a bright future. It is a transformative time. An anchor tenant in the heart of Kendall Square, Cambridge, we have witnessed and contributed to the amazing transformation of our neighborhood. When we opened in July 1970, the area was rather desolate with a few aging factories and the F&T Diner. Today, Kendall Square is considered "the most innovative square mile on the planet" and the U.S. DOT's new, state-of-the-art facility and our future home is under construction.

U.S. DOT established the Transportation Systems Center—TSC—to support the nation's strategic transportation goals and the priorities of the Secretary of Transportation. This followed an abrupt transition—the Center originally served as NASA's Electronics Research Center, but the nation needed us to refocus on the complex transportation challenges at hand. In 1990, the Center was named for John A. Volpe, former U.S. Transportation Secretary and governor of Massachusetts.

The hallmark of the Volpe Center's first 50 years is a top-notch, multidisciplinary, multimodal, and proactive workforce that tackles tough challenges and informs decision making across the transportation enterprise. During our startup decade, the Center established itself as a unique multimodal transportation system resource. We successfully transitioned from a traditional research and development engineering organization to a systems center able to address public and social policy, transportation economics, and technology advances.

During the 1980s, we expanded our sponsor base, transitioning to a more comprehensive approach that incorporated analysis and assessment of transportation systems for U.S. DOT and other agencies, including the U.S. Department of Defense. The 1990s were

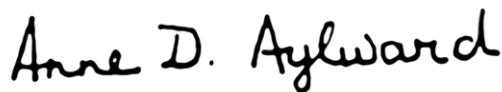
marked by widespread political, military, economic, and technological change and we adeptly shifted to meet new national priorities.

In the 2000s, we continued to support efforts to enhance transportation safety across all modes by applying our capabilities in safety management systems, cyber and physical security, and the resilience of the Global Positioning System. In the 2010s, we used our data and system engineering expertise in a decade defined by big data collection and analysis, and fast-spreading automation technologies. And in 2019, U.S. DOT and U.S. DoD renewed a long-standing Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Volpe Center, which ensures our continued collaboration and partnership across DoD commands and offices.

As a leader in transportation systems, analysis, and innovation, the Volpe Center continuously seeks synergy across our projects and works to transfer best practices and technologies throughout the transportation enterprise. Since its founding, the Volpe Center has convened government, private sector, and academic leaders on emerging and future transportation challenges.

On our 50th anniversary, we recognize our U.S. DOT partners and other dedicated colleagues who have been part of this amazing journey. We hope you will take this moment to appreciate the transportation innovations that together we have brought to the nation.

We look forward to collaborating with you over the next half-century and beyond.



**Anne D. Aylward, Director**

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center  
Kendall Square – Cambridge, MA  
January 2020