Traffic light tech will be tested in UK, allows cars to leverage signal change

May 26 2018, by Nancy Owano

Credit: AECOM

What would you say about smart traffic lights that always turn green?

Recipe for disaster? A reader comment on another site took issue with a headline suggesting lights would always turn green, saying, "Obviously the lights won't 'always' turn green. If they turned green for both traffic streams at the same time there would be chaos."

Actually, smart lights will be put to the test in the UK whereby traffic light technology will communicate with a driver's smartphone to make sure the driver can arrive as the signal changes. The scheme is from engineering firm AECOM.

The benefit of the lights is that it can address the patience-draining stop and go traffic that so many bear during peak travel hours. "AECOM's lights will actually be able to communicate wirelessly with vehicles as they approach. That will allow them to pass along timing information and help vehicles determine what speed will allow the driver (or passengers, in autonomous level 4 or 5 situations) to cruise along with minimal stoppages," wrote Lee Mathews in *Geek.com*.

Taking on start-stop traffic is beneficial as it causes less wear in the brakes, said *The Telegraph*, as well as helps to decrease emissions. The lights advise motorists of the speed they should drive at in order to arrive at the next set of lights when they turn green.

Francesca Marshall of *The Telegraph* said the concept is one of five shortlisted entries into a competition regarding roads for driverless cars. The competition is hosted by the National Roads Commission (NIC), Highways England and Innovate UK. NIC chairman Sir John Armitt said: "We can see for ourselves the progress in developing cars for the future, with trials of driverless cars taking place across the country. "We now need to make sure the technology on our roads keeps up."

The smart traffic lights join other shortlisted ideas in the competition, including the flexible use of kerbsides, segregated driverless zones, and

sat-navs learning through artificial intelligence, the NIC reported.

Marshall said the scheme is to be tested using a simulation model of the A59 in York.

Heather Hawkins, principal consultant at AECOM, said they were eager to get started, to better understand "the potential impact of vehicle-to-infrastructure technologies on our local road network in York."

More information: www.aecom.com/

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