



MOBILITY  
INNOVATION  
CENTER  
of the  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

TECH POLICY LAB  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

## **Driverless Seattle: How the City Can Plan for Automated Vehicles**

*New Report from the University of Washington's Tech Policy Lab and the Mobility Innovation Center Touts Need for Readiness, Tackles Costs and Benefits of Automated Vehicles*

**SEATTLE, Wash.,** Feb. 28, 2017—Automated vehicles (AVs) are coming to Seattle, and now is the time for government officials to prepare for them. So say the authors of “Driverless Seattle: How Cities Can Plan for Automated Vehicles,” a new report from the Tech Policy Lab at the University of Washington, put together in partnership with Challenge Seattle, a private sector initiative led by regional CEOs, and the Mobility Innovation Center at the University of Washington.

At their best, AVs promote traffic efficiency – especially important in Seattle, whose evening rush hour congestion is among the most in the nation. They reduce the number of vehicle crashes caused by human error, and mitigate human inefficiencies in the flow of traffic. They encourage ride-sharing rather than individual vehicle ownership. Moreover, they are already here: the Tesla Model S Autopilot system is available for purchase; the ride-share company Uber is testing AVs in Pittsburgh; and Google’s AV fleet has already driven nearly two million miles autonomously.

But how will Seattle integrate AVs more broadly into its complex transportation and legal landscapes? The key, claims Ryan Calo, a law professor and one of the report’s authors, is for the city to identify an AV strategy that will guide policymakers’ decision-making processes, and initiate coalition building with regional research institutions, public agencies, NGOs, and businesses. Seattle faces a difficult question. Will the city enthusiastically promote itself as an AV innovation hub? Or will we take a more hands-off approach? Alternatively, will we put strict limits on AV use until the technology has proved itself in other municipalities? And what does each option mean from a policy standpoint?

Deciding a course of action will enable local and regional officials to make consistent policy choices, and communicate those choices effectively. “Taking these steps now,” the authors argue, “will better position Seattle to continue to thrive in an eventual world of far greater automation in transportation.”

“Autonomous vehicles are going to fundamentally change transportation in Seattle, and we need to be ready for it,” said Christine Gregoire, CEO of Challenge Seattle. “This report offers a measured, research-based approach that will help Seattle prepare for a driverless future.”

"Autonomous vehicles are coming to cities, and in Seattle we're planning today for how they will operate alongside all the other ways we get around," said Scott Kubly, director of the Seattle Department of Transportation. "This report captures the big picture and provides a solid foundation for next steps on AV policy making and implementation."

"Driverless Seattle" is the first product to come from the Mobility Innovation Center (MIC), which launched in March of 2016. A multi-disciplinary project housed at CoMotion at the University of Washington, the MIC brings together the Puget Sound region's leading business, government, and academic sectors to use technology and innovation to find transportation solutions.

### **About the Tech Policy Lab**

The Tech Policy Lab is a unique, interdisciplinary collaboration at the University of Washington that formally bridges three units: Computer Science and Engineering, the Information School, and the School of Law. Its mission is to help policymakers, broadly defined, make wise and inclusive technology policy.

### **About the Mobility Innovation Center**

The University of Washington and Challenge Seattle are committed to advancing our region's economy and quality of life by helping to build the transportation system of the future. Together, they have partnered to create a multi-disciplinary Mobility Innovation Center. Housed at CoMotion at the University of Washington, the Center brings together the region's leading expertise from the business, government, and academic sectors to tackle specific transportation challenges, using applied research and experimentation. Cross-sector teams will attack regional mobility problems, develop new technologies, apply system-level thinking, and bring new innovations to our regional transportation system.

CoMotion is the collaborative innovation hub dedicated to expanding the societal impact of the UW community.

### **About Challenge Seattle**

Challenge Seattle is a private sector initiative led by many of the region's CEOs working to address the issues that will determine the future of our region – for our economy and our families. Building on our region's history, they are focused on taking on the challenges that must be addressed to ensure our region continues to grow, transform, and thrive, while maintaining our quality of life.

### **Contact:**

Melissa Englund  
Marketing & Communications  
UW School of Law  
p: 206.685.7394  
e: [menglund@uw.edu](mailto:menglund@uw.edu)

Donna O'Neill  
Marketing & Communications  
CoMotion at University of Washington  
p: 206.685.9972  
e: [donnao3@uw.edu](mailto:donnao3@uw.edu)

###