

City of
Portland, Oregon

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Ted Wheeler, Mayor
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April 19, 2017

TO: Leah Treat
Director, Portland Bureau of Transportation

FROM: Mayor Ted Wheeler
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner-in-Charge of Transportation

RE: Launching Portland's Smart Autonomous Vehicles Initiative

Portland is one of the world's leading cities partnering with the private and university sectors in developing innovative technology solutions that improve our quality of life. We believe Portland should do this again by developing best practices for testing autonomous vehicles (AVs). Portland can show how to "do AV right" by working with transportation providers and the public to implement testing and piloting of this technology, while advancing public safety, protection of the environment and transportation access for everyone, regardless of income. With the right policies and protections in place, we believe autonomous vehicles should be tested in Portland in 2017.

Autonomous vehicles have the potential to be a truly transformative technology. They could benefit our communities by reducing crashes, improving first and last mile connections for public transit riders, and reducing the high cost of owning a private vehicle. They also have the potential to significantly increase traffic congestion, vehicle miles traveled, and climate pollution. The protections and rules of the road adopted by state and local governments will substantially determine how much benefit and how much burden we experience.

It is also important that cities provide clear leadership as AV technology is tested and piloted before widespread use. AVs operating on city streets with pedestrians, people in wheelchairs, and bicyclists pose different challenges than AVs operating on open stretches of I-5 and I-84. Local streets must continue to be managed by the local agencies which know them best.

In order to ensure that autonomous vehicles work with and for Portlanders, we are directing the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) to launch the Smart Autonomous Vehicles Initiative (SAVI). This initiative formally invites technology innovators to work with the city to ensure new transportation technologies advance our safety, equity, climate, and job goals.

Portland's SAVI should:

- Spur innovation and guide this emerging transportation technology to serve community goals;
- Show how autonomous vehicles can advance our Vision Zero goal to eliminate all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2025. AVs must show that they can and will drive at safe speeds and stop for pedestrians, bicyclists, disabled people, emergency vehicles, red light, and stop signs.
- Prioritize fleet autonomous vehicles that are electric and shared. Shared electric autonomous vehicles are most likely to reduce congestion, climate pollution, and travel costs for low and moderate income Portlanders;
- Establish a clear permitting process for public or private sector partners to apply to PBOT to test autonomous vehicles at specific times, in specific locations, in Portland;
- Encourage testing new technologies to benefit low and moderate income Portlanders and high value trips like public transit and freight.

Therefore, we are directing PBOT to take four actions to advance SAVI within the next 60 days:

1. Propose for City Council and public consideration Interim Transportation System Plan (TSP) **policies** that ensure connected and autonomous vehicles will serve Portland's safety, equity, climate change, and economic goals;
2. Publish a **Request for Information (RFI)** that invites AV testing specific to advancing safety, equity, climate, and economic goals;
3. Adopt an **Interim Administrative Rule** that provides a clear path to permit innovators to apply to test, pilot or deploy AVs in Portland; and
4. Develop **public engagement**, reporting, and evaluation plans that ensure Portland residents, workers, and businesses have opportunities to shape the "rules of the road" for AVs in Portland.

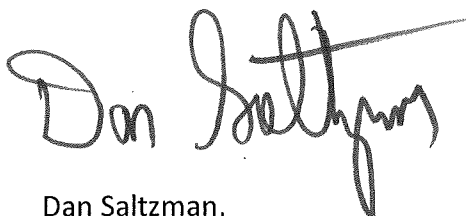
We also recognize the importance of partnering with state, regional, and local authorities to establish a phase-in process to learn from testing autonomous vehicles before widespread deployment. In a letter on March 29, 2017, Portland requested our state legislators use five principles to evaluate and shape state autonomous vehicle legislation. We suggest starting with a state, regional, and local agency work group to evaluate and recommend state autonomous vehicle policies and protections to the 2018 legislature.

We have a choice to be passive and let autonomous vehicles happen to us, or take the initiative and make them work for us. Portland will make AVs work for us.

Sincerely,



Ted Wheeler,
Mayor



Dan Saltzman,
Commissioner