Autonomous Task Force

If time is the catalyst for change, then technology is the fuel. As the country’s infrastructure technology continues to advance, new policies being implemented by Colorado are positioning our state as a national leader. Colorado has formed a new taskforce focused on Automated Mobility. Legislation passed in the 2017 legislative session formalized the formation of a group of state agencies to develop policy surrounding automated vehicles. Members of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Colorado State Patrol and Colorado Department of Revenue make up the new taskforce.

The Taskforce is uniquely positioned to review applications for autonomous technology on Colorado’s roads. Their mission is to find the balance between encouraging innovation and protecting public safety. The group will also provide policy direction for the state, incorporating federal guidance and other states’ policies when useful. The taskforce will also serve as the administrative body that develops and oversees the approval process for deployment of autonomous vehicles.

Per Senate Bill 17-213, autonomous vehicles must comply with all the rules of the road and if they do not, the manufacturer needs approval before deploying any vehicles or technology. As autonomous vehicle technology continues to advance the Taskforce will determine the geographic area where an autonomous vehicles may travel and how it will work around the specific safety issues, such as inability to comply with the Move Over law. Other limitations for these vehicles may include, controlled access to certain streets, requiring a person to be in the vehicles for the first 500 miles travelled, and coordination with local law or enforcement during deployment.

The Taskforce is reviewing two opportunities for automated technology in the state already. The first is CDOT’s autonomous attenuator truck. This truck is designed to protect highway maintenance crews working on highway shoulders where in Colorado on a monthly basis (and in some states, weekly) drivers crash into these protective vehicles instead of hitting the road crews. CDOT’s truck is the first to utilize technology that takes the worker out of the driver’s seat to become fully autonomous. The second project the taskforce is looking at is Easymile’s autonomous shuttle that will ferry passengers from Denver International Airport to various hotels close by. The shuttle is still in the approval process, but represents an exciting possibility for the future of transit.

Summit Sellout

Once again the Colorado Transportation Summit almost sold out! This is the fourth year the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has hosted this important meeting and the 2017 version promises to be the biggest one yet with 1,000 attendees. The Transit Alliance is partnering with CDOT and will hold their annual meeting in conjunction with the Summit. The American Road and Transportation Builders Association Western Regional Meeting will also join the meeting and will be providing their CEO, Dr. Pete Ruane who will deliver the keynote address. Governor John Hickenlooper is also scheduled to address the group for the 3rd year in a row. Full details on what happened at the Summit in the November edition of Interchange.