

Ensure AVs meet the promise of their potential



Autonomous vehicles (AVs) are already operating as private taxis on the nation's public roads in certain cities. While AVs can be an opportunity for users to get where they need to go, especially for non-drivers, the technology could also be a great danger to public health, safety, and the environment if not properly regulated. The federal government should take steps to ensure that communities have the necessary tools to ensure the safe and smooth deployment of AVs.

Policies to improve the state of the system

- 1. Prioritize safety, promote transparency, and make data public for analysis.** Operator secrecy surrounding autonomous vehicles' issues has led to distrust and uncertainty about the role that these vehicles might play in the future.
 - General operations data and data on incidents, including collisions, malfunctions, or other anomalies, should be made publicly available in accessible formats and in regular, monthly reports to relevant jurisdictions.
 - The federal government should audit new vehicle models with advanced driver-assistance systems to ensure that autonomous vehicles with levels of autonomy of level 2 or higher are safer than human drivers and do not allow unsafe behavior, such as distracted driving or speeding.
- 2. Preserve local oversight and control:** As seen with dockless bike and scooter share systems, local governments are best equipped to assess the impact autonomous vehicles are having on their communities. Localities should be allowed to determine how autonomous vehicles are deployed and operated on their streets.
- 3. Penalize AVs that operate empty.** Some of the potential uses of AVs include ride-hailing and sending a personal vehicle home after dropping off an owner. This would result in many vehicles on the roads operating as empty, zero-occupancy vehicles, which is both inefficient and leads to increased congestion. To encourage efficient use of AVs, USDOT should develop a method for taxing owners/operators for the time their vehicle is operated without any passengers.

For questions or more information, please contact our policy team at info@smartgrowthamerica.org

