

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE WORK GROUP



W.A.V.E.

The Washington Autonomous Vehicle Edition – Volume 1, Issue 2

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter! Highlights from this edition include an important National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) policy update regarding autonomous vehicle (AV) crash reporting, a recap of the May 25, 2021 AV Workgroup Executive Committee meeting, **and details on the TRB's Automated Road Transportation Symposium** that took place in early July.

Autonomous Vehicle News

- [Argo AI introduces new Lidar technology for autonomous delivery and ride-hail services](#)
- [Cruise gets license to operate in San Francisco | TechCrunch](#)
- [AV Transit Projects Are Evolving to Full-Scale Deployments | GovTech](#)
- [Waymo and J.B. Hunt partner to bring autonomous trucks to Texas in new pilot | TechCrunch](#)



National Policy Update

The federal government is now requiring AV companies to [report crashes and incidents involving self-driving and driver-assist systems to the NHTSA](#), per the Detroit News. This policy comes as the NHTSA is investigating the role of **Tesla's Autopilot system** in several fatal crashes over the past few years that have claimed 10 lives. The new directive orders AV companies to report crashes involving cars equipped with AV technology at SAE levels 2 and above within one calendar day after the company learns of the crash, as well as report other incidents involving AVs monthly. Failure to comply with this order may result in minimum fines of \$22,000 per day. The full text of the NHTSA Standing General Order on AV Incident Reporting can be found [here](#).

May 25th Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee meeting on May 25th was a very productive forum for updates on research and technological advancements as well as on the future of AVs in Washington state and nationwide. The meeting acknowledged the passage of [Substitute Senate Bill \(SSB\) 5460](#), which will implement recommendations from the AV Work Group. The meeting included presentations from the University of Washington Technology Law and Public Policy Clinic on AV legislative research and suggestions for Washington state, representatives from the trucking industry on AV Freight Mobility, and the Utah Department of Transportation on their recent autonomous shuttle pilot.

Executive Committee members also participated in a work session during the meeting to build on future path progress to date and refine the focus of the Work Group through its sunset at the end of 2023. During this time of uncertainty and change in the AV industry, this work session was an opportunity for the Work Group to establish a clear direction for the Work Group and its subcommittees going forward. Executive Committee members were asked **to rank the Work Group's principal objective, as well as objectives within the key areas of AV testing** including public awareness and communication and whether to prioritize funding for near-term or long-term AV technologies.

The meeting agenda, materials, and summary can be found on the AV Work Group's website:

<https://avworkgroupwa.org/committee-meeting/executive-committee-meeting-9>

Automated Road Transportation Symposium

Convened by TRB, the 2021 Automated Road Transportation Symposium (ARTS21) was held virtually from July 12-15, 2021. It was the continuation of TRB's annual summer symposia on automated vehicle systems, now in its 10th year. A broad cross-section of technical and policy topics were covered during the four-day event, providing attendees with many opportunities to learn, engage, and provide input to this international conversation. A number of representatives from this Working Group participated in the event, including presentations and panel engagement from the Washington State Transportation Commission and Department of Transportation.

A key trend during the conference was the growing refinement and delineation of use cases within the AV space. The movement of freight was frequently mentioned in the context of more immediate return on investment and near-term readiness. There was a palpable excitement in the air as numerous speakers and public officials discussed the opportunities for truck platooning, truck automation, and advanced safety applications in freight movement. The presence of transit in the conversation was also much stronger than in prior years, and instead of focusing solely on the first/last mile applications enabled by low-speed AV shuttles, there was new conversation that included driver assistance and automation for larger motor coaches (buses). Although robo-taxi services and personal automobile automation remained a large portion of the exchange, as it usually has over the years, the buzz was heavy surrounding the movement of goods over the long haul, mid-range, and even personal delivery devices.



Another key trend was the continued focus on safety as the highest priority. Panelists from around the globe discussed various aspects of promoting a culture of safety in the development, testing, and deployment of vehicle automation. Private companies wanted to reassure public agencies that safety is important, and to not enact overly prescriptive regulations that might inhibit innovation; while public agencies frequently asked private companies to **“prove your safety elements” rather than simply asking us to trust them. The metrics in proving systems are safe** were discussed in several sessions and remain a challenge that can only be addressed collaboratively. Arriving at objective analytics for most use case scenarios is still evolving, and many speakers reinforced the importance of sharing data as openly and broadly as possible. There was an acknowledged and welcomed expectation that NHTSA will eventually have more comprehensive regulations in place - but until they are enacted, we have to keep an open dialogue and find a responsible balance between flexibility and accountability.

This conference reinforced that plenty of AV research is still needed, the number of stakeholders involved continues to grow, research needs and other outcomes should be documented, and diversity of use cases will remain both an opportunity and a challenge. The good news is that the transportation community clearly seeks to leverage every opportunity where automation can enhance safety, mobility, environmental stewardship, and equity.

[More information regarding the three-day event can be found here.](#)

Upcoming Executive Committee Meetings

- Tuesday, July 27, 2021 from 9AM to 3PM
- Tuesday, October 5, 2021 from 9AM to 3PM
 - *The date of this meeting is subject to change pending potential for an in-person gathering.*

Topics and panelists for the July 27 meeting can be found on our website at avworkgroupwa.org.