TEXAS PARTNERSHIP CHOSEN AS PROVING GROUNDS FOR AUTOMATED VEHICLES
Research institutions partner with cities, regions, and TxDOT to advance development of connected and automated vehicle technologies

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AUSTIN – The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has named Texas a national Automated Vehicle (AV) Proving Ground for the testing of connected and automated vehicle technologies. The designation establishes Texas as a leader in the research and development of new transportation technologies that could make roads safer and less congested.

The Texas AV Proving Grounds Partnership includes the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), The University of Texas at Austin's Center for Transportation Research (CTR), Southwest Research Institute (SwRI) and 32 municipal and regional partners with a shared interest in the mobility and safety challenges facing the introduction of autonomous and connected vehicles to public roadways.

"With five of the nation's 15 fastest-growing cities in Texas and our population expected to potentially double by the year 2050, Texas must be a leader in new technology that addresses transportation challenges," said Texas Department of Transportation Deputy Executive Director Marc Williams. "This partnership puts Texas at the forefront of automated vehicle technologies that likely will shape the future of transportation around the world."

Selected from an applicant pool of more than 60, the Texas AV Proving Grounds Partnership joins nine other designees in a community of practice that will be instrumental in helping the DOT provide critical insights into optimal big data usage and further develop guidelines for developing automated vehicle technologies. In working collaboratively, the ultimate goal is to offer services that connect people to places of opportunity.

"The partnership of CTR with TTI, SwRI, and TxDOT in this AV proving ground effort is recognition of the cutting-edge research and academic-public agency-industry collaborative efforts being undertaken in Texas in the area of connected and automated vehicles," said Dr. Chandra Bhat, Director of UT Austin's Center for Transportation Research.

"There are many technology, policy, regulatory, privacy, legal, and security challenges that still need to be resolved, and the proving ground is an important and exciting opportunity for us to identify and resolve these challenges before going mainstream with AVs. In the long run, the proving ground will enable us to have a progressive vision to inspire new pathways to addressing safety, mobility, resiliency, and reliability considerations on our transportation systems, and ensure an equitable, inclusive, system that enhances the quality of life for all Americans."

Texas offers a full and varied range of testing environments, from high-speed barrier-separated managed lanes to low-speed urban environments such as university campuses, medical districts, transit bus corridors and border crossings. Both closed-course facilities and real-world urban and freight test sites will be used in evaluating emerging transportation technologies. By implementing a pilot-learn-scale model of deployment, Texas is prepared to safely conduct testing and operations in an iterative manner as the technology develops.

The partnership builds upon the momentum of USDOT's Smart City Challenge and is a direct outcome of the [Texas Mobility Summit](#) held last month. The Summit, hosted by TxDOT's Texas Technology Task Force, brought together nine teams representing 10 cities and three research institutions to galvanize key leadership in developing innovative solutions to the state's mobility challenges. The resulting alliance is dedicated to openly sharing best practices as a cornerstone of the effort.

Members of the Texas partnership are contributing their facilities, expertise and talents as a part of a larger Texas network of proving grounds and test-bed sites. Proving grounds offer controlled environments on research campuses where the complete life-cycle development of AVs can be assessed and include the Texas A&M University System RELLIS Campus and Texas A&M's Proving Grounds, The University of Texas at Austin Campus and the SwRI Campus in San Antonio. Urban and freight test beds in the following cities offer real-world environments where a variety of scenarios may be explored:

- **Austin Area –** Austin-Bergstrom International Airport and Riverside Drive corridor
- **Houston Area –** Texas Medical Center, Houston METRO HOV lanes, and Port of Houston
- **Dallas/Fort Worth/Arlington Area –** UTA campus, Arlington streets, I-30 corridor and managed lanes
- **San Antonio Area –** Fredericksburg Road/Medical Drive corridor and bus rapid transit system
- **El Paso Area –** Tornillo/Guadalupe Port of Entry

The rapid rate at which this technology is progressing will ultimately require a formal testing plan to be developed and approved by the appropriate state and local agencies, including the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Department of Motor Vehicles. Until then, initial testing will take place on closed research proving grounds.

One of the strengths of the Texas partnership is that AV testing, for both TxDOT and private companies, is already underway at the research proving grounds, well ahead of the USDOT's January 2018 launch goal.

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