



# The World's Mobility Future, Built Here

*A look at the ambitions of Zoox to create autonomous mobility from the ground up*

**T**he future of mobility is taking shape right here in Foster City.

Zoox, an autonomous vehicle company that moved here in 2018, is developing a fully-autonomous fleet of vehicles designed for a “Mobility-as-a-Service” future—one in which a moving around cities will be easier, more efficient, and accessible. Instead of selling you a personal car that sits idle for most of its life, Zoox wants to sell you the service, where you only pay for what you use.

Since its 2014 founding on the grounds of the Stanford Linear Accelerator (SLAC), Zoox has pursued its mission to help cities solve safety, mobility, and sustainability challenges. To do this, Zoox is taking a radically different approach to autonomous vehicle development—rather than incremental additions to vehicles that are optimized for human drivers, Zoox is building a new vehicle and system optimized around an AI driver.

In 2016, Zoox, then based in Menlo Park, needed room to grow.

Following early rounds of funding, the company began looking for a new headquarters space that would accommodate its growing workforce and ambitious mission.

That’s when Zoox set its sights on Foster City.

“We needed to find a location that could accommodate a fast-growing workforce from across the Bay Area and a facility that could handle both hardware and software development simultaneously,” said Jesse Levinson, Zoox co-founder and Chief Technology Officer. “Foster City helps us attract a workforce from San Francisco, the East Bay, and the South Bay.”

The company renovated a former pharmaceutical facility on Chess Drive and relocated there in 2018. Today, the company employs nearly a thousand people who are building a fully-autonomous battery-electric vehicle, the AI software stack that makes it drive, and the service platform that will allow it to operate in cities.





“Zoox is at the forefront of the next wave in mobility,” said Aicha Evans, Zoox Chief Executive Officer. “The transition from human-driven vehicles to AI will be as big as the transition from the horse and carriage to the gas-powered automobile.”

Zoox is currently testing its autonomous driving software and sensor configuration on modified Toyota Highlanders with safety drivers. The Highlanders are retrofitted with the sensors the AI system needs to perceive and detect other objects on the road and predict what those objects will do next.

“The software and the test vehicles have both been brought-up and developed in Foster City,” Evans said. “Our location here allows us to take what we develop and put it on the road for testing in San Francisco in an efficient manner.”

A 2018 Bloomberg Businessweek feature on Zoox showed how its Highlander fleet can navigate autonomously from its Foster City headquarters to its operations base in San Francisco. Zoox vehicles are able to handle almost any scenario—from San Francisco’s narrow, steep, and windy roads, to freeways, tunnels, six-way intersections and unprotected left turns.

Zoox is developing the vehicle, software, and service in unison because society’s demands are changing. Cities are becoming increasingly congested, polluted, and fraught with safety risks for road users. The battery-electric vehicles will be shared, meaning fewer vehicles on the road servicing more people.

*“The Zoox vehicle will make the steering wheel—the first thing that could kill you today in a conventional car crash—obsolete. It will also have 360-degree perception, removing the need for things like rear-view and side-view mirrors.”*

Mark Rosekind, Zoox Chief Safety Innovation Officer and former administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)



## Preparing for the Future

While most other developers in the AV industry are working exclusively on AI software to make the vehicles drive, Zoox has designed a fully-autonomous battery-electric vehicle powered by machine vision from the ground up—in addition to AI software.

Zoox has not revealed details of the vehicle as of publication, but the company has stated that the first product that will be deployed is a four-passenger vehicle that has seats that face each other and doors that slide open.

Evans says that Foster City is integral to its plans for growth. Today, Zoox operates out of three Foster City properties. It plans to continue prototyping its new vehicle, developing its state-of-the-art AI software, and expanding testing here.

As for when you’ll be able to see the state-of-the-art fully autonomous vehicle on Foster City roads, Evans and Levinson say to “stay tuned.”

# ZOOX

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## 36,560

The number of people killed in car crashes in the U.S. in 2018

## 94%

A 2017 study from the NHTSA showed that human driver error caused 94 percent of over two million crashes in the US

## 66%

The UN forecasts that by 2050, just over two-thirds of the world’s population will live in megacities

## 96%

Today’s conventional human-driven cars, through a private ownership model, sit parked for 96% of their lives on average