Self-driving vehicles. Drivers on demand. Data-driven infrastructure. Vehicles that respond to passengers and to the environment... A sea of change is happening in transportation, and mobility of the (near) future will be radically different than today — greener, more comfortable and more efficient. Innovations are rolling out of laboratories, businesses and city halls on four, two, (or zero) wheels at an accelerating pace, exploring the future of urban mobility.

The global spotlight is focused on transportation technology and design — the machines that move people — yet there are a host of unanswered questions as transitions toward future technologies are made. This year, California began issuing drivers licenses to self-driving cars, but insurance companies still can’t find who is at fault when something goes wrong. Cities are debating whether ride sharing systems should be banned from their streets, while taxi companies organize strikes around the world to protest citizen-driver services like Lyft and Uber. Policy and innovation must go hand in hand for innovations to take hold.

The Road Ahead will be a forum on all dimensions of future urban mobility, bringing leading theorists, dreamers, and practitioners into conversation and debate — from designers to financiers, from policy makers to provocateurs. One full day of conversation and presentation will seek to showcase innovations, address challenges, and holistically explore the future of moving from A to B - from self-driving, sharing, policy, legality and risk to society at large.

Speakers include cutting-edge researchers from MIT and Harvard, leaders in the transportation industry, protagonists of start ups in mobility and public officials.

08.45 Breakfast and coffee

09.00 Welcome

09.20 Opening Remarks

09.30 Session 1. Game Changers in Mobility

Alternate models of sharing and reconfigured access to mobility are fundamentally disrupting the transportation paradigm in cities. With the emergence of companies like Uber and ZipCar, citizens are rethinking private car ownership, while bike share systems are competing with traditional public and private transportation options, and start up companies are creating innovative new service models. Yet these citizen-centric developments might come into conflict with traditional incumbents such as taxis, car companies and regulators. In this session, the mobility game changers themselves will add their voices to the debate.

Questions: How are ownership models evolving? How are incumbent modes at risk/enhanced? How do people access mobility options (and how do we make it equitable)? What are the financial aspects? How are public and private interests at conflict, or complementary?

Format: Pecha Kuchas for 30 minutes. Panel Discussion for 30 minutes
Session 2. Driverless Cities

While visions of self-driving vehicles have been the providence of science fiction, the attention of many has been captured by recent examples like the DARPA Challenge and the Google Self-Driving Car. Tesla’s Autopilot features get that company’s offerings to near self-driving to consumers in the coming months, and the State of California has begun offering licenses to “drivers” of autonomous vehicles. Unanswered, however, are the questions of regulation and safety. This session seeks to tease out the larger, societal implications of the technology to understand the truer nature of the “self-driving future”.

Questions: Who’s responsible in the case of an accident, and can you sue code? Beyond advances in technology and cars, what will be the urban impact of autonomous vehicles? What impacts on policy, regulation and finance are present with this new technology? How do we deal with risk, and who’s at fault? How does the city change in its form? Do we need as many roads? What are the projective? How is this in conflict, enhanced by the trends we see today with new drivers, including with new ownership trends?

Format: Pecha Kuchas for 30 minutes; Panel Discussion for 30 minutes

10.30 Coffee

Session 3. Data Driven Mobility

Urban spaces are creating an unprecedented amount of data, from mobile phone data about individuals to the traces created automatically from machine-to-machine interactions. This session seeks to explore how the ubiquity of “big data” and increasing prevalence of situated technology is changing how decisions are made about policy, urban planning and citizen behavior with regard to mobility.

Questions: How does that data show the mobility patterns of our city? How does that enable us to design/create better transit systems? What new dynamics and options in mobility are being created? How is data being collected, and what are the privacy considerations? What is the agency of the individual? Are individuals simply consumers (of their own data)?

Format: Pecha Kuchas for 30 minutes; Panel Discussion for 30 minutes

11.45 Lunch & Break out Discussion

Topics: Participants split into groups with the main speakers and explore some of the key questions from the morning session, through open discussion and debate.

12.00 Session 4. Ambient Mobility

Greatest innovation might not by systems themselves but how they interface with each other. Ubiquitous computing and new technologies are enabling the creativity of pioneers and inventors in creating new options and experiences that enhance the process of getting from point A to B. We explore the new mobility portfolio & intermodal innovations, as well as the visions driving a new future not yet written.

Questions: What the opportunities gained from these new modes/inventions? What are the challenges to innovation/disruption? What are the friction-points in mobility today? How do policymakers nurture an innovative ecosystem, and how can cities able to be living laboratories to these innovations?

Format: Pecha Kuchas from researchers

15.00 The Next Mile: The Senseable City

Format: Pecha Kuchas from researchers

16.00 Drink & Drive [The Conversation Forward]