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## Driverless shuttles: another step toward smarter urban mobility?

Thu, 2017-01-26 13:25 -- Doug Peeples

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*Don't expect to see driverless shuttles tooling through city streets tomorrow. Why not? Among other reasons, fully autonomous vehicles aren't legal in most states and they don't have a long track record – yet. But Council Associate Partner Transdev and its partner EasyMile have been running their driverless passenger shuttles in several European cities and elsewhere for some time and are now taking their show on the road in the U.S. to drum up interest. It's one more step toward what will almost certainly be a very different future for urban mobility. Our articles on autonomous vehicles have been among the most popular pieces we publish. So we thought you'd like to know about this development.*

*And that legal issue? In early December Michigan passed a package of what is considered to be the most permissive self-driving car **legislation** in the country. — Doug Peeples*

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The small shuttle that showed up at a Sarasota, Florida shopping mall earlier this week looks a little different. The front and rear are the same, primarily because there's no driver – and no on-board controls a driver could use. It's the EZ10, an electric passenger shuttle that relies on software, GPS, cameras and radar and laser technologies to keep it on course.

Transit management services company Transdev and partner EasyMile, which builds the **12-passenger shuttle**, started their tour at The Mall at University Town Center and seem to be getting what they wanted: attention and interest, according to an article in YourObserver.com,

"Long term, this is where we see the transit system going in Sarasota, linking public transit to private properties. You can go anywhere. It's pretty amazing," said Todd Mathes, director of development for Benderson Development which owns the UTC mall. He added that his company is very interested in taking advantage of technology to serve its customers. "The automated shuttles would be a phenomenal get at UTC. The system is completely scalable so, given the opportunity to partner with Transdev and EasyMile, we might see more and more units come online as demand reaches capacity."

Dick Alexander, executive VP of business development for Transdev subsidiary Transdev North America, said that while no contracts have been signed shuttles may be operating at the mall by summer. He said the two companies would need to iron out numerous details regarding routing and customer interaction and other related issues. But he agreed Florida would be a good location for the shuttles.

Alexander added that for now the shuttles would be limited to private use on private property (businesses and campuses, for example) because autonomous vehicles aren't legal on public roads.

**For more on urban mobility...**

The **Transportation** chapter of the Smart Cities Readiness Guide offers guidance, case studies, best practices and more on smart transportation systems.

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