



Notice of Motion

West Rouge Automated Shuttle Trial - Lessons Learned

Moved by: Commissioner Jennifer McKelvie

Seconded by: Chair Jaye Robinson

Summary

The City of Toronto, TTC and Metrolinx have jointly agreed to conclude the West Rouge Automated shuttle trial in Toronto due to several reasons that are expected to continue delaying service to the public past the February 28, 2022 planned end date. The service provider Local Motors has recently ceased operations and is no longer available to provide technical and operational support. In addition, the Ministry of Transportation has suspended its approval to operate the trial in Toronto due to an unrelated incident with a Local Motors shuttle in December 2021.

The trial was the culmination of research and preparation by the project partners to learn more about the future of automated shuttles in public transit delivery in Toronto and the potential future benefits of such neighbourhood-based service for residents and transit riders. The shuttle service trial was planned to connect the West Rouge neighbourhood and Rouge Hill GO Station. The shuttle vehicle underwent testing in mixed traffic on local and arterial roads, experiencing a variety of weather conditions including rain and snow.

Despite not offering service to the public, the City and its partners tested the automated shuttle service for two months in the fall of 2021 and gathered data about how automated vehicle technologies operate, their different requirements when compared to conventional transit vehicles, the current limitations of the technology and the range of solutions available in the market. The insights gained from the trial will support future decision-making and planning for automated vehicles in transit and the broader transportation system.

This project was an excellent example of micro-transit that should be considered in areas of the City where access to transit is limited. The insights gained from the trial must be leveraged to support future decision-making and planning for automated vehicles in transit and the broader transportation system. On that basis, I am requesting the Commission build on the knowledge gained through the automated shuttle, to both advance the application of autonomous vehicle technology and to find practical, near-term solutions to solve the first and last mile challenge.

Recommendation

1. That TTC staff, in collaboration with City of Toronto transportation staff, provide a presentation at the May 2022 Board meeting on the lessons learned from the West Rouge Autonomous Vehicle trial;
2. That TTC staff report back to the Board by July 2022 on the feasibility of micro-transit to increase ridership and decrease greenhouse gas emissions; and
3. That the TTC's new Innovation and Sustainability Program develop an Autonomous Vehicle (AV) Strategy aimed at further evaluating and deploying AV technology.

Date: February 1, 2022