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Miami-Dade is Readying Autonomous Vehicle Infrastructure

by Luis Andre Gazitua with Gazitua Letelier

In last week's newsletter, we brought you the story of how developing effective transportation plans remains a challenge for Miami-Dade County. Thanks to Senator Jeff Brandes (R-Pinellas), we have this broader look at those challenges – and opportunities – for autonomous vehicle solutions over the next 20 years, in the following article written by Luis Andre Gazitua with the Gazitua Letelier firm in Miami:

Miami-Dade County is positioning itself to be a leader in smart infrastructure. Mayor Carlos Gimenez has concluded that the coming revolution of driverless vehicles is likely to dramatically change how people travel on roadways. These changes have motivated him to re-evaluate rail infrastructure programs in order to create infrastructure that can serve future transportation needs. To that end, Mayor Gimenez's office has been working closely with local government agencies to advance the Strategic Miami Rapid Transit (SMART) Plan, Miami-Dade County's largest transportation project.

The SMART Plan presents public transportation opportunities for autonomous vehicles through a new network of express buses which will connect six rapid transit corridors. These new rapid transit corridors will expand Miami's existing transit system with high-tech infrastructure more conducive to autonomous vehicles.

With respect to private transportation, Miami-Dade County is already researching and planning for the future of autonomous vehicles. In June 2017, the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) released a report which evaluated existing and future technologies in transportation infrastructure.^[1] The report estimates that autonomous vehicles will account for approximately 25 percent of all privately-owned vehicles by 2035.

The Florida legislature has also done its part in opening the door for autonomous vehicles. Florida's most recent legislation, passed in 2016, limits regulation and expands the ability of autonomous vehicles to operate on public roads without a driver in the vehicle. With statewide and local support from government agencies and elected officials, Miami is one of the most ambitious and promising cities for autonomous vehicles.

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