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Elon Musk's Tunnel Vision

Elon Musk's newest idea is to send physical cars, in congested cities, underground so their occupants can move from point A to Point B quickly avoiding the traffic that exists on the local streets above. Most of Elon Musk's projects seemed impossible when he first proposed them, but none of his ideas have ever been boring. Like most of us Musk feels being stuck in traffic is boring and perhaps as a play on words he named this company the Boring Company; a company which designs and manufactures machines that can bore tunnels for use in transportation systems.

In Las Vegas Nevada his vision of sending people in cars through tunnels is now a sure bet since the first system with multiple stops is now open and running forty feet below city traffic. Musk definitely knows how to get things done and the Vegas convention loop was completely built in just two years at a fraction of the cost and time that is usually as-



Photo Credit: The Boring Company

Welcome to a Vegas Loop station. This one was just an escalator ride down from a Vegas Convention building. The actual tunnel is a blaze with purple lights and a line of Tesla vehicles are parked ready to take people to the other loop stations.

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sociated with the building of subway tunnels.

The Boring company engineers developed superior tunneling machines capable of boring twelve foot diameter tunnels much faster than tunneling equipment used by other companies. They designed the system so that as the tunnels are dug some of the removed material can be on the spot re-used in a concrete mix to form the concrete tunnel walls in a continuous process.

In this completed Boring Vegas Loop Tesla cars are functioning as a taxi fleet. To select your destination you use an app on your smartphone. At this moment the cars have human drivers but the goal is to soon have these cars running in full autonomous mode without anyone sitting behind the wheel. So using the app now is more a proof of concept and the app will become significant once the cars are autonomous.

On the app you indicate your entry station and which station you want to exit. Once you enter the Tesla car it will take you from your current location to your destination without stopping at other stops along the way. In a sense each car is an express vehicle and this will become very significant as more stations are built to connect significant areas of the city into a vibrant Vegas Loop system.

When I covered CES in pre-coronavirus years I had a number of

ways of getting from place to place. Remember CES took place in the convention center and many of the big hotels found on the Las Vegas Strip. To go to most of the major locations I could take convention buses, Vegas City Deuce buses that run on the strip, drive a rental car, wait on a long line for a taxi, take the monorail, or just walk. Whatever method I would choose long walks from my hotel lobby was



Photo Credit: The Boring Company

This Tesla taxi has just arrived at the station requested by its passenger. Once he exits the vehicle it will be ready to take new people to their destination.

necessary to get to the location where the above modes of transportation exist.

The Las Vegas convention center is enormous and getting to the different locations within the complex was also a major time consuming activity. With the opening of the Vegas Loop, people will have a fast way to get to the most distant parts of the convention center. Press releases indicate that the loop can perhaps convert an hour walk into a two minute ride.

The system that has recently been opened for the convention center has four stops. It is the first part of what appears to be a major undertaking to create at least 40 loop stations that could connect many major points of interest including the airport, hotels, and the convention center.

If the stations can all be built directly inside or very close to the venues I expect that the loop system will be very successful. It is important to note that, in my opinion, at this point the Vegas Loop between the convention center separate building serves more as a proof of concept that such a transportation system is viable and people will flock to use it.