



Driverless cars could make GTA congestion worse in the short term, report says

A new [report](#) from the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario says they could make traffic worse for now.



ROBIN VAN LONKHUIJSEN/AFP/Getty Images

The WEPod is being tested in the Netherlands. The shuttle can hold six people and is considered the first self-driving electric shuttle to run in regular traffic. Such shuttles could be a potential solution to traffic woes, a new report says.

By: May Warren Metro Published on Mon Oct 31 2016

Think driverless cars will ease GTA congestion and parking woes?

Get your head out of the fast lane, warns a new report commissioned by the **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario**.

Instead of making things better, the car of the future could actually make traffic worse in the short term.

Toronto-based transportation consultant and report author Bern Grush said he wants to “dispense with the mythology” around driverless cars.

“We imagine step-by-step driverless cars will get better and better and then we will all have one in our garage,” he said. “That’s inaccurate.”

True driverless cars — the ones that drop you off then come back later to pick you up — are at least 20 years away, the reports says.

The first round of cars expected to hit the roads, probably in the neighbourhood of 2020, will be “semi-autonomous,” meaning they’ll drive themselves while you’re doing other things, like watching a movie or working, but you’ll still have to be behind the wheel and take control at times, the report says.

That convenience could push more people onto roads and make living further away from downtown more palatable — two factors in increased congestion and sprawl.

But there is a way for new technology to combat some of those issues, Grush says. They’re called “robo-shuttles” — and the province needs to start investing now, his report says.

As opposed to semi-autonomous cars, the shuttles are truly driverless and travel on specific routes. They could encourage people to take public transit by picking them up at home and dropping them at places like suburban Go stations, completing the so-called “last mile” of transit, Grush said.

The shuttles are already being piloted in places like the Netherlands, said Andy Manahan, executive director of the **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario**, an alliance of labour and management groups.

Similar models are being tested in Britain and France, but Manahan hasn’t heard “anything concrete” come out of the province just yet.