

Waymo autonomous expands further

Heads up, humans—the presence of self-driving vehicles on our roads continues to grow by volume, footprint and mission, in many ways.

SERVICE AREA EXPANDS AGAIN—AND AGAIN

In late spring, Waymo doubled the size of its fully autonomous Waymo One ride-hail service—with no human driver—to 180 square miles connecting downtown Phoenix with Chandler, Tempe and parts of Mesa and Scottsdale, becoming the largest contiguous autonomous vehicle service area in the world, also opening a second Sky Harbor International Airport pick-up and drop-off location at the 24th Street SkyTrain Station.

This summer, they added another 45 square miles of Metro Phoenix, now covering 225 square miles stretching further north in Phoenix, as far as Gainey Ranch in Scottsdale, south to South Mountain Village and east to more of downtown Mesa, including Camelback Mountain, McCormick Ranch, The Farm at South Mountain and various resorts.

They also continue to test vehicles on the freeways with employees and an autonomous specialist behind the wheel. Serving over 10 thousand trips per week to public riders (not including employees), they intend to hit 10 times that volume by next summer.

WAYMO-UBER PARTNERSHIP

Waymo and Uber have a new multi-year strategic partnership to make the Waymo Driver system available via the Uber platform, starting in Phoenix. Both companies were founded in 2009, each in its own ways revolutionizing access to mobility. They will now combine Waymo's autonomous technology with the massive scale of Uber's ridesharing and delivery.

This integration will launch publicly later this year with a set number of Waymo vehicles across their expanded operating territory, for both deliveries and ride-hailing. Uber users can access Waymo on Uber and Uber Eats apps, or directly through the Waymo One app.

WAYMO BIKE SAFETY FEATURE

According to the City of Phoenix, one of the most common collisions with bicyclists is when a vehicle's door opens into moving traffic, aka "dooring." Waymo has introduced new methods to reduce these incidents, employing the same sensing technology as the Waymo Driver autonomous system.

Waymo One riders are presented with audio

and visual cues that alert them if a cyclist (or other road user such as pedestrian, vehicle, scooter and more) is approaching as they exit the vehicle.

Easy-to-interpret iconography is also displayed on the lidar atop Waymo One cars to help alert other road users that a vehicle door might open and a rider might be hopping in or out.

WAYMO GOES ALL-ELECTRIC

Waymo has now deployed the Jaguar I-PACE and its fifth-generation Waymo Driver system in the East Valley and retired the previous-generation Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid platform from its service. This transition makes the Waymo One ride-hailing fleet all-EV in all of its service territories. ■

