



# Gainesville Wants to Be the First City in the Country with Self-Driving Buses

Insights

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According to its' Office of Mobility, the city of Gainesville, Florida is expected to make autonomous electric buses available as a new form of public transportation by the end of the year – which would make Gainesville the first city in the country to have self-driving buses on public roads. While a few other communities around the country have AVs that run in designated lanes, this would be a major step forward for the autonomous vehicle movement.

The current phase of testing began in early January 2020 after Gainesville obtained permission from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to operate two AVs for the next six months on public roads. The currently operate in the early morning hours in the city's downtown district. The AVs are being tested to see how they cope with difficulties such as negotiating roundabouts, rain, a plastic bag tumbling across its path, or a passenger unloading from the shuttle. In the second phase of testing, the AVs will go to and from the University of Florida's Turlington Hall.

The AVs are 14 feet high, 10 feet wide, and 19 feet long. There is enough room in the AVs for six passengers to stand and six to sit. They are suited for trips of less than 4 miles, can move up to 30 miles per hour, but will not exceed 15 miles per hour for safety reasons. The AVs are available on demand 24 hours a day. They were developed in Europe by Transdev North America, which currently has other AV projects underway in Colorado, California, France, and the Netherlands.

Transit authorities will want to closely monitor the testing of AVs for public transportation purposes. Besides the obvious safety aspect of any such program, it is imperative to consider the labor implications. When a transit authority considers automation, a duty to bargain with labor over the decision to automate and a duty to bargain over the effects of the decision may arise. In fact, the Transportation Trades Department is already pushing to require transit agencies to provide employees with advanced notice of any planned deployment of automated vehicle technologies and the impact these technologies will have on their current workforce.

An employer contemplating automation changes in the future should look to negotiate provisions reserving such decisions to management when first negotiating or renegotiating its collective bargaining agreements. Additionally, employers should monitor the progress of AV services in order to ensure that their policies and procedures related to data privacy, confidential information, remote work, and workplace safety are adequately up to date to address potential issues that may arise due employees being able to work while traveling

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Employers considering automation or electrification of their vehicle fleets who are looking for additional information can join Fisher Phillips for a [webinar](#) on February 5, 2020 regarding issues arising from automation and electrification of vehicle fleets.

### ***Related People***

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