Racine Smart Transit & Autonomy Research Project

July 2020

Background

For generations, the City of Racine has been nicknamed "Invention City" because of the extraordinary ingenuity of its people and the number of products that were invented here and positively impacted the quality of life for millions of people around the world. In 2019, the Racine Common Council adopted a resolution to pursue Smart Cities designation and encourage the City to leverage technology to make our community more equitable, sustainable, and economically competitive.

The City of Racine successfully competed with over 130 municipalities across Canada, the United States, and Mexico to be designated a North American Smart City. Using that designation, the City of Racine attracted hundreds of national, state, and local partners to participate in a series of Smart Cities events and initiatives highlighting everything from 5G and other high-frequency low-latency connectivity, digital infrastructure, and the Internet of Things (IoT) to 21st Century workforce development and smart mobility.

Racine Smart Transit & Autonomy Research

The Racine Smart Transit Research & Autonomy research project is an outgrowth of the Racine Smart Cities Initiatives. For the first time in history, UW-Madison will open an office in the City of Racine. This internationally acclaimed institution will partner with City officials, Gateway Technical College's faculty and students, and the private sector to advance smart transit, including autonomy. This Racine Smart Cities Initiative will generate a 2:1 match and any commercialization of related research will occur in Racine. Additionally, as a result of this Smart Cities research and development partnership, UW-Madison already is partnering to access other public- and private-sector grants that will be invested locally.

The City of Racine already has been investigating electric vehicles for its fleet, including electric buses, which will continue to be driven by City officials and our public transit professionals as part of reducing carbon emissions and creating a more environmentally sustainable public transit system for residents. The Racine Smart Transit & Autonomy research project will allow the City to experiment with transportation technology and be among the first Wisconsin cities to explore ways to expand public transit service options.

As its contribution to this cutting-edge public-private research project, the City of Racine will invest its resources in the purchase of an electric, multi-passenger vehicle and related equipment, which the City will continue to own. UW-Madison and Gateway Technical College will be contributing faculty, staff, and student time and other resources to this research effort.