Oakland Development Activities Meeting
August 28, 2019
Hosted by OPDC at 294 Semple Street
Project: Starship Technologies Autonomous Delivery Devices
Presenter: David Catania

DCatania presented an overview of a robotic delivery service by Starship Technologies that will be coming to University of Pittsburgh and surrounding areas in September. This is through a partnership with Sodexo and Pitt Auxiliary Services.

The business was founded by the founders of Skype to apply the same strategy to last mile delivery. 0 cost, 0 energy, 0 emissions. The last mile delivery is the most expensive. Autonomous delivery vehicle. Operate in Germany and other countries as well as some cities in the US. Overview of business models. Video Milton Keynes. In person demonstration.

Why here in Pittsburgh? Through partnership with Pitt. Anyone who downloads the app can use the service, so not only for students. Starship is working to receive operation authorization from local government through Department of Mobility and Infrastructure. They partner with Sodexo. Operate at Northern Arizona University and George Mason University.

It is 98% autonomous. There is an opportunity for human interaction, but does not require it. Monitored by human operators. Space on the sidewalk roughly the width of a person on street. 3 mph. Layers of situational awareness. Data protection. The cost for the service is $1.99 per delivery.

Q: how long to charge battery? A: charges overnight; six hours. We make our own batteries and they are all-day batteries.

Q: when will it start? A: DOMI embraced the suggestion of coming to Pittsburgh. DOMI wants to make sure there is sufficient community review. Mid-September is the goal. Staged roll out.

Q: delivery area? A: negotiating with city on that now. Within university and directly adjacent.

Q: can someone from university speak to why? A: (Julie from Pitt) this adds another element to campus. Currently at George Mason. Q: what about a kid on a bike? A: open to looking at different ways, various opportunities to save time, options for delivery.

Q: value add? A: Grub Hub is vehicle delivery – congestion, emissions. A: grocery store is still a focus. Late night delivery quieter, no car.

Q: does it make noise? A: sample demonstration. Q: beeping? A: No. Alerts are through the app. It can speak if someone is in the way, but doesn't make noise other than the hum as it moves along.

Q: what vendors? Alcohol sales? A: No. It will be campus vendors at first, such as Forbes Street Market.

Q: traffic problem – cars not able to see, people on sidewalk? A: radar system to track all cars. Designed to avoid cars.

Q: parking up to intersections is a problem here. A: device will see car. Experience shows technology works.

Q: how many units will be here? A: 25 in this installation.