

# First Self-Driving, 3D-Printed Smart Bus Hits the Streets of Washington, DC



Photo credit: Local Motors

By Katie Pohlman | [EcoWatch](#)

Public transportation users in Washington, DC, can now hitch a ride on a [self-driving, 3D-printed](#) bus.

Olli, created by Arizona-based [Local Motors](#), officially hit the streets of the nation's capital Thursday. Using an app similar to Uber or Lyft, ride-seekers can order the bus to pick them up and drop them off at their destinations of choice.

And it gets better. Olli is [electric-powered](#) and 3D-printed, reducing the vehicles footprint before and after it hits the road, Local Motors wrote in a [release](#). The bus can even talk to riders.

“Olli offers a smart, safe and sustainable transportation solution that is long overdue,” [John B. Rogers Jr.](#), Local Motors CEO and co-founder, said.

Local Motors teamed up with IBM Watson Internet of Things, making Olli the first vehicle to have the capability to analyze and learn from transportation data. The self-driving bus is equipped with 30 sensors that collect the data, allowing it to make quick decisions, according to Local Motors. Sensors will be added and adjusted to fit passengers’ needs and local preferences.

“Olli with Watson acts as our entry into the world of self-driving vehicles, something we’ve been quietly working on with our co-creative community for the past year,” Rogers said.

Using IBM Watson technology, the bus will be able to answer questions about how it works, where it is going and how it makes decisions, Local Motors said. Passengers will also be able to ask Olli about destinations, such as “Olli, can you take me downtown?”

Local Motors claims Olli can even answer questions about recommendations of local destinations and historical sites.

“Cognitive computing provides incredible opportunities to create unparalleled, customized experiences for customers, taking advantage of the massive amounts of streaming data from all devices connected to the Internet of Things, including an automobile’s myriad sensors and systems,” Harriet Green, general manager of commerce and education for IBM Watson Internet of Things, said.

Olli has a unique assembly process. Parts of the self-driving bus are created at local 3D printing shops, [Inhabitat reported](#). The parts will be assembled at Local Motors sites.

“We hope to be able to print this vehicle in about 10 hours and assemble it in another hour,” Rogers said.

Local Motor's long-term plan is to establish hundreds of micro-factories across the globe, which will produce Ollies designed for local needs. The company has [micro-factories—which uses less](#) space, energy and materials—in Berlin, Germany; Chandler, Arizona; Knoxville, Tennessee; and a new one in National Harbor, Maryland.

Despite being just officially introduced, Local Motors is working with dozens of cities in at least 50 countries who are interested in the technology, according to Inhabitat.

The original Olli will stay at Local Motors' Maryland facility for the summer. Interested members of the public can interact with the vehicle at select times throughout the season.

Additional Ollies will be built at the company's headquarters near Phoenix.

Watch Local Motors' video about Olli:

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