

Hyperloop startup says superfast rail a reality

August 2 2017, by Thomas Urbain



A prototype of the Hyperloop One pod, seen in a July file picture, which passed another key milestone in the startup's quest for a near-supersonic transport system

The near-supersonic rail system known as hyperloop has passed another key milestone on its path to become reality, the US startup Hyperloop

One said Wednesday.

Hyperloop One, which is developing a [system](#) theorized by entrepreneur Elon Musk, said that a test last week of a full [hyperloop](#) system at its private facility in the desert near Las Vegas was a success, hitting record speeds.

"That's a huge milestone for us," said Hyperloop One co-founder and executive chairman Shervin Pishevar.

"Now we've shown that the hyperloop actually works. And now this is the dawn of the commercialization of the hyperloop. So from this point on we move to the commercialization process."

During what the startup referred to as Phase 2 testing, a pod fired through a tube depressurized to the equivalent of 200,000 feet (60,000 meters) above sea level reached an unprecedented speed of 192 mph (310 kilometers per hour).

All components were successfully tested, including motors, controls, the vacuum system, and the magnetic levitation that lets pods zip along tracks without touching them, the company said.

"We've proven that our technology works, and we're now ready to enter into discussions with partners, customers and governments around the world about the full commercialization of our Hyperloop technology," said chief executive Rob Lloyd.

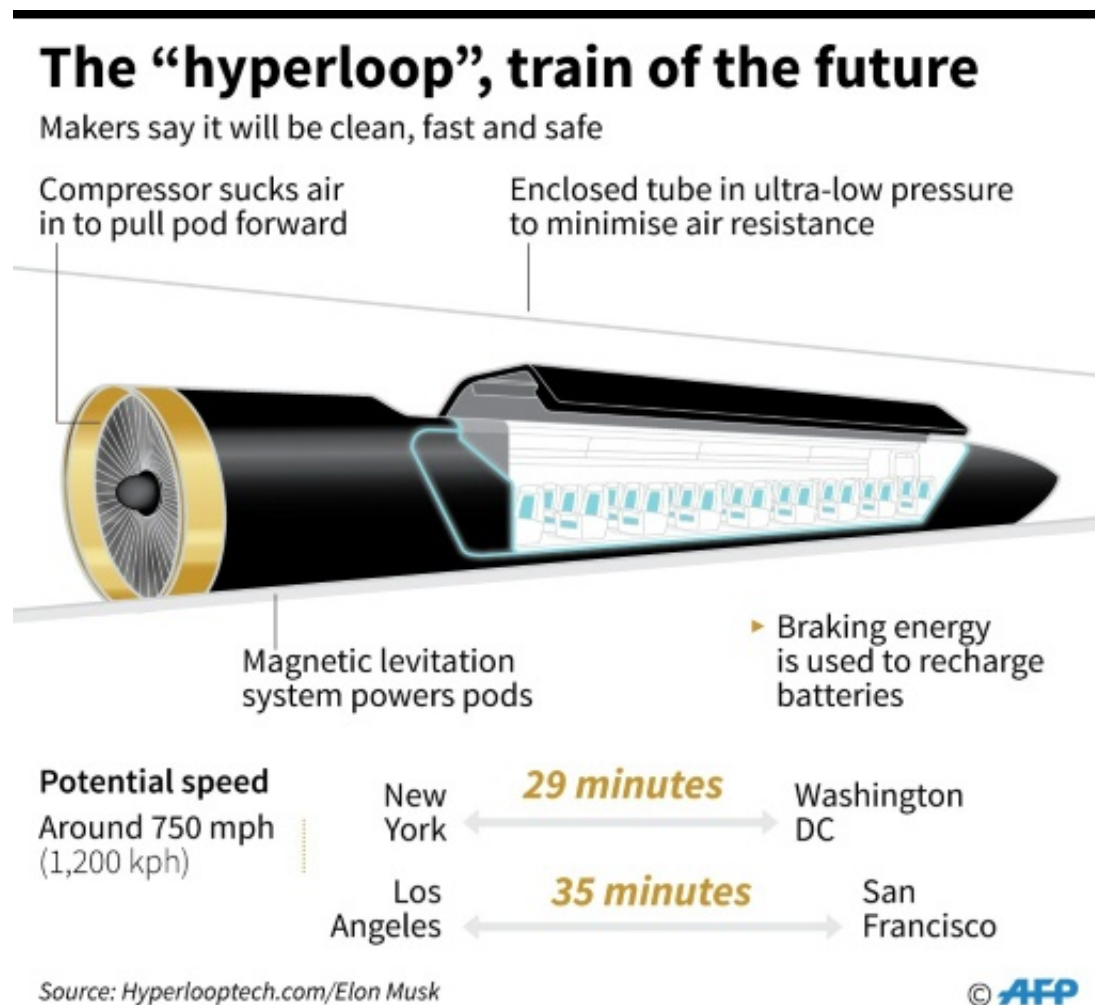
Hyperloop One had originally promised a full-scale demonstration by the end of 2016, after a successful test of the propulsion system.

Pishevar said Wednesday that he now sees the system "getting operational in the new few years."

Hyperloop One engineering chief Josh Giegel said the company is now starting "production level development—how we take this prototype and actually scale it to making hundreds or thousands of units and then actually deploying that around the world."

Likely born abroad

The hyperloop system is designed to send pods carrying cargo or people through low-pressure tubes for long distances at passenger jet speeds.



Factfile on the "Hyperloop" transport system theorized by US entrepreneur Elon

Musk

Hyperloop One early this year disclosed a list of locations around the world vying to put near-supersonic rail transit system to the test.

Viable submissions had to be condoned by government agencies that would likely be involved in regulating and, ideally, funding the futuristic rail.

It was expected to be several years before a hyperloop system was up and running. The startup set a goal of having one running by 2021.

Pishevar told AFP he expected the first hyperloop system to be built outside the US because "the speed at which other governments work" could be an advantage.

Hyperloop One, which has raised more than \$160 million, was set on an idea laid out by billionaire Elon Musk, the entrepreneur behind electric car company Tesla and private space exploration endeavor SpaceX.

Pods would rocket along rails through reduced-pressure tubes at speeds of 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) per hour.

Hyperloop One says the system offers better safety than passenger jets, lower build and maintenance costs than high-speed trains, and energy usage, per person, that is similar to a bicycle.

Port colossus DP World Group of Dubai last year invested in the concept, joining backers including French national rail company SNCF, US industrial conglomerate General Electric and Russian state fund RDIF.

Musk's involvement in hyperloop is for now limited to potentially building the tunnels with his latest startup—The Boring Company.

Tunneling is certainly an option, but building hyperloop tubes above ground, perhaps where traditional rail lines already exist, would be faster and cheaper, according to Hyperloop One executives.

Several companies are now exploring the market, including Northeast Maglev, Hyperloop One and Hyperloop Transportation Technologies.

Musk said last month he'd received tentative approval from the government to build a conceptual "hyperloop" system that would blast passenger pods down vacuum-sealed tubes from New York to Washington but stopped short of offering details.

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