

Script: The Future of High-Speed Transportation

Attention oncoming riders, I'm Trace and this is D-News. We're back to talk about Elon Musk's plan to get you from Francisco to LA faster than you can watch a full episode of "French". Seriously, it's that fast!

The hyperloop is a futuristic transport system. A combination of a bullet train, a Jetson's transport tube, and a maglev train. It was designed to link cities less than a thousand miles apart. The loop would run back and forth between the two cities, elevated on earthquake resistant pylons and would be topped with solar panels. The 350 mile trip could be made in 35 minutes. Meaning the capsules within would be traveling around 1290 kilometers per hour. Using Musk's open source design, a capsule could depart either station every two minutes, carrying 14 passengers or 3 cars, depending on the configuration. Using the Space X CEO's design, the Hyperloop would float in the tube, similar to an air hockey puck, bank around turns like current high speed rails and be pulled along by the tube's built-in magnetic rings. Only required, by the way, every 110km. It's cheap to ride, it's convenient, it's friggin fast. And Wink explained it pretty well in an earlier video, but until the hyperloop becomes a reality, what super high-speed systems do we have now for traveling less than a thousand miles?

Currently, the fastest non-flight system that will get you from point A to point B is the JR Maglev MLX01 in Japan. It set the world record for train speed back in 2003, achieving over 580kph, using magnetic levitation. Using superconducting electromagnets arranged in a figure 8 pattern, the train floats above the track, though it has rubber wheels for slower speeds. This was only done on a test track, however, so the fastest operating train is the TGV in France. It's got a top speed of 570 kilometers per hour. Funny thing though, France has enjoyed 320kph trains since 1981. Yeah, 30 years! We were still driving around at like 55 miles per hour back then. The Japanese company that makes the MLX01 says they could get reliable safe speeds of 500kph in the next decade or so. If you go off the rails, speeds drop considerably. The fastest commercial land transport would likely happen on the German autoban where the recommended speed is 130kph, however, there are still sections that remove that limit all together, with drivers pegging their BMWs at like 300kph. Though the 2.4 million dollar Bugatti Veyron Super Sport can go 429kilometers per hour, the problem is other cars can't, so they would get in the way.

The tech and science world are having a field day discussing this superfast Hyperloop project but there are currently zero plans to actually build it. Musk did say he is thinking of building a demonstration prototype, but for now, he is calling the design open-source. In the hope that the state of California will consider replacing their current plans, which are slower, costlier and old-school rail, with this cool hyperloop. I guess we'll have to wait and see....