CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A trackless ride system, comprising:
    a. a ride path area comprising a plurality of predefined optional vehicle traversal paths about the ride path area;
    b. a controllable trackless ride vehicle dispatchable and maneuverable along the optional vehicle traversal paths, the controllable trackless ride vehicle comprising:
        i. a track navigator;
        ii. a dynamically controllable ride vehicle motive system; and
        iii. an independent vehicle controller operatively in communication with the track navigator and the ride vehicle motive system;
    c. a wireless ride communicator operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller, the ride communicator comprising:
        i. a set of wireless rider communicators associatable with a set of trackless ride vehicle riders; and
        ii. a facility mounted sensor adapted to capture discrete input from the set of wireless rider communicators, the discrete input comprising a status of a predetermined set of non-ride vehicle related events associated with the set of trackless ride vehicle riders; and
    d. a central control unit operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller.

2. The trackless ride system of claim 1, wherein the facility mounted sensor comprises a non-contact facility mounted sensor.

3. The trackless ride system of claim 2, wherein the sensor comprises a radio frequency identifier (RFID) receiver, a motion recognizer, a facial feature recognizer, or a voice recognizer.

4. The trackless ride system of claim 1, wherein the communicator further comprises a vehicle mounted rider interface operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller and configured to allow a rider of the set of trackless ride vehicle riders to control an predetermined aspect of traversal of the wireless, trackless ride vehicle about the ride path area.

5. The trackless ride system of claim 4, further comprising a facility mounted sensor/interface operatively in communication with the vehicle mounted rider interface.

6. A trackless ride system, comprising:

   a. a plurality of dynamically selectable predefined paths within a predefined ride vehicle path area; and
   b. a plurality of wireless, self-dispatching trackless ride vehicles maneuverable along the plurality of dynamically selectable predefined paths, at least one wireless, self-dispatching trackless ride vehicle comprising:
      i. a dynamically controllable trackless ride vehicle motive system;
      ii. a navigator operatively in communication with the dynamically controllable trackless ride vehicle motive system;
      iii. an independent vehicle controller operatively in communication with the navigator;
      iv. a spatial positional determinator operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller; and
      v. a predetermined array of multi-dimensional peripheral object detection sensors operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller.

7. The trackless ride system of claim 6, wherein the spatial positional determinator comprises a GPS-based spatial positional determinator.

8. The trackless ride system of claim 6, wherein one of plurality of wireless, self-dispatching trackless ride vehicles is configured to advance along a dynamically selectable predefined path of the plurality of dynamically selectable predefined paths pursuant to a set of ride path selection decision points defined by a set of multi-dimensional peripheral objects which are detectable by the detection sensors.

9. The trackless ride system of claim 6, further comprising:

   a. a vehicle mounted rider interface configured to allow a rider to control a predetermined set of ride path characteristics, the vehicle mounted rider interface operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller; and

   b. a set of geographic tags defining a set of decision points which, based at least partially on input from the rider, are usable as input to the independent vehicle controller to aid in selection of a predefined route for a self-dispatching trackless ride vehicle of the plurality of self-dispatching trackless ride vehicle to traverse.

10. The trackless ride system of claim 6, further comprising:

   a. a facility mounted sensor/interface configured to allow a rider to control a predetermined set of ride path characteristics, the facility mounted sensor/interface operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller; and

   b. a set of geographic tags defining a set of decision points which, based at least partially on input from the rider, are usable as input to the independent vehicle controller to aid in selection of a predefined route for a self-dispatching trackless ride vehicle of the plurality of self-dispatching trackless ride vehicle to traverse.

11. The trackless ride system of claim 6, further comprising:

a. a vehicle mounted rider interface configured to allow a rider to control a first predetermined set of ride path characteristics, the vehicle mounted rider interface operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller;

b. a facility mounted sensor/interface configured to allow the rider to control a second predetermined set of ride path characteristics based on a status of a non-ride vehicle system, the facility mounted sensor/interface operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller; and

c. a set of geographic tags defining a set of decision points which, based at least partially on input from the rider, are usable as input to the independent vehicle controller to aid in selection of a predefined route for a self-dispatching trackless ride vehicle of the plurality of self-dispatching trackless ride vehicle to traverse.

12. A method of dispatching a trackless vehicle along a set of predetermined ride paths of a trackless ride system comprising a ride path comprising a plurality of optional predefined paths; a controllable wireless, trackless ride vehicle dispatchable and maneuverable along the ride path, the wireless, trackless ride vehicle comprising a controllable, motive trackless ride vehicle track navigator and an independent vehicle controller operatively in communication with the track navigator; a communicator operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller, the communicator comprising a vehicle mounted rider interface adapted to capture discrete input from a predetermined set of wireless, trackless ride vehicle riders associated with the trackless ride vehicle; and a central controller operatively in communication with the independent vehicle controller, the method comprising:

a. using the independent vehicle controller to receive a rider path selection request from a rider associated with the trackless ride vehicle to advance the trackless ride vehicle onto an optional predefined path of a plurality of optional predefined paths via the vehicle mounted rider interface;

b. upon receipt of the rider selection request, validating the rider selection request against a predetermined set of validation criteria; and

c. upon validation, commanding the trackless ride vehicle to proceed onto the requested optional predefined path.

13. The method of dispatching a trackless vehicles receiving of claim 12, further comprising receiving the rider selection request while the trackless ride vehicle is in transit along a predefined path of the plurality of optional predefined paths.

14. The method of dispatching a trackless vehicles receiving of claim 12, further comprising sending current status information related to a predetermined number of other trackless vehicles active on the network to the trackless vehicle on-board controller, through a wireless connection, so that each independent trackless ride vehicle can use the current status information to present possible available optional predefined paths of the plurality of optional predefined paths at a defined decision point along the ride.

15. The method of dispatching a trackless vehicles receiving of claim 12, further comprising sending the rider selected request signal to the central controller while the trackless ride vehicle is currently traversing its current predefined path.

16. The method of dispatching a trackless vehicles receiving of claim 12, further comprising sending the rider selected request signal to the central controller while the trackless ride vehicle is stopped at a stationary point within the ride.

17. The method of dispatching a trackless vehicles receiving of claim 12, further comprising broadcasting a current status by each trackless vehicle at an interval defined by current elapsed time by that trackless vehicle on a unique predefined path of the plurality of optional predefined paths.

18. The method of dispatching a trackless vehicles receiving of claim 12, wherein, if no rider selected request is made and no resulting signal is sent to a central controller, using the independent controller to make the rider selected request programmatically by way of ordinal or randomized selection.

19. The method of dispatching a trackless vehicles receiving of claim 12, further comprising: a. receiving at least one status of a non-ride vehicle related system; and b. selecting a subset of predefined paths from the plurality of optional predefined paths based on the received status of the non-ride vehicle related system.

20. A method of dispatching a trackless vehicle of a plurality of trackless vehicles about a predefined path from a set of optional predefined paths, the method comprising:

a. receiving a rider identifier associated with a rider who is associated with a trackless vehicle by an on-board trackless vehicle controller, the rider associated with the trackless vehicle being a rider about to board the trackless vehicle or a rider who has boarded the trackless vehicle;

b. upon receipt of the rider identifier, validating the rider identifier;

c. identifying a predetermined set of optional predefined paths available to and associated with the validated rider identifier;

d. upon validation and identification,

    i. selecting one predefined path from the predetermined set of optional predefined paths; and

    ii. commanding the trackless vehicle to proceed onto the selected predefined path.