

Uber introduces Express Pool service, which sounds kind of like a bus

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First, Uber framed itself as an alternative to taxis. Now the San Francisco ride-hailing company is rolling out a new service that sounds kind of like a bus.

The ride-hailing company is introducing Express Pool to several cities

this week. It's a lower-cost service for passengers who are willing to share rides with strangers and begin and end their journeys at specified pickup and drop-off locations.

Similar to Uber's communal Pool service, customers book Express Pool rides using Uber's mobile app and are matched with other passengers traveling the same direction. But instead of offering door-to-door pickup and drop-off, which can often lead to convoluted routes and backtracking, Express Pool directs passengers to walk to convenient spots and deposits them within a few blocks of their destination.

The result is a service that's more affordable for passengers and more efficient for drivers, said Ethan Stock, Uber's product lead on Express Pool.

"People loved the price, but they had mixed feelings about the experience," Stock said of Uber Pool.

Uber Pool's penchant for directing drivers in circles to pick up additional passengers is a frustration for both drivers and passengers, Stock said.

"That was something important for us to fix with this product," he said.

By directing passengers to pickup locations, the company expects to cut down on travel time and make Uber rides more efficient. Drivers will continue to be paid for their time and distance traveled, with a bonus for every additional passenger they pick up. Passengers should expect lower fares, the company said.

While Uber's chief executive, Dara Khosrowshahi, recently expressed interest in the company someday running a city's bus service, Stock was quick to point out the differences between Express Pool and buses.

"Buses have fixed pickup and drop-off, fixed routes, fixed time schedules, and they're extremely high-capacity vehicles," he said. Express Pool, which relies on passenger vehicles, is dynamic, with new routes created each time a [passenger](#) requests a ride.

The [service](#) was first tested in San Francisco and Boston in November, and will launch Wednesday in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Denver. It expands to Philadelphia, Washington and Miami on Thursday. It is currently not available for airport pickups, though Stock said the [company](#) is working on adding that feature.

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