

Honda, GM plan driverless taxis in Tokyo in 2026

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Japan's Honda and US auto titan General Motors announced on Thursday that they planned to launch a driverless taxi service in Tokyo in 2026, helping tackle labor shortages in an aging society.

Co-developed by San Francisco-based [self-driving](#) car operator Cruise, the project will offer "an entirely new kind of mobility experience" in

Japan, Honda said in a statement.

"This will be a major step toward the realization of an advanced mobility society," its chief executive Toshihiro Mibe said.

The project is also aimed at "helping address [societal issues](#) facing Japan, such as the taxi and bus driver shortage", Honda added.

Autonomous vehicles are being pushed by Japan's government as the country battles a rapidly aging population and persistent labor shortages.

In 2020, Japan became the first country in the world to allow a vehicle capable of taking full control in certain situations to operate on public roads.

Auto giants from Toyota to Nissan are also trialing self-driving buses and taxis.

Honda's newly announced service will feature a "vast cabin space" capable of accommodating six passengers, stripped of a driver's seat and a steering wheel.

It will "pick up customers at a specified location and drive them to the destination, entirely through self-driving", with customers able to complete the whole process on a [smartphone app](#), according to Honda.

"Dozens" of the driverless cars are expected to be launched in Tokyo in early 2026, with the developers then hoping to expand the project to a fleet of 500, and to areas outside central Tokyo.

"The benefits of AVs ([autonomous vehicles](#))—from safety to accessibility—are too profound to ignore," Mary Barra, chair and CEO of GM, said.

But [self-driving cars](#) are no stranger to controversy, with safety under scrutiny as operators including Cruise increasingly gain traction in California.

Honda, GM and Cruise aim to establish a [joint venture](#) dedicated to their new initiative in 2024, pending regulatory approvals.

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