

Renault to pursue autonomous minibuses but not cars

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You'll still need to keep your hands on the wheel of a Renault car for the foreseeable future.

French automaker Renault said Wednesday it will pursue developing autonomous minibuses for public transit but would stick to driving

assistance features for personal cars for the time being.

It announced it will demonstrate the readiness of the technology for public transport by running a shuttle bus service, together with its partner WeRide, at the Roland-Garros tennis tournament in Paris later this month.

Renault offers driving assistance features on many of its models that allow drivers to remove their hands from the [steering wheel](#) but they must keep their eyes on the road and be ready to take control of the car at any instant.

"Further automation of some functions, with the aim of achieving complete vehicle autonomy, seems unlikely for the time being, given current regulations, customer expectations and the cost of the complex technology involved," Renault said in a statement.

The firm said there was a huge gap in technological complexity to get to the point where drivers don't need to pay attention to the road.

"At this stage, the induced cost to be borne by customers, in relation to the driving benefits, would make demand insufficient or even anecdotal," it said.

But that cost proposition is different when applied to public transportation, and this is where Renault said it would focus.

"When it comes to public transportation, Renault Group intends to be a real player in sustainable and autonomous mobility," it said.

Renault said it is developing an electric, robotised, and pre-equipped minibus platform that will host various automation solutions from its specialist partners.

It announced a new collaboration with autonomous driving firm WeRide for large-scale commercial deployment of vehicles capable of managing driving situations on their own within a defined area. While these vehicles do not have an on-board operator they still have remote supervision.

Renault said it would show off the capability of the autonomous minibusses at the Rolland Garros tennis tournament in Paris later this month.

"As a premium partner of the tournament, Renault is innovating with WeRide by setting up a trial of electric and autonomous shuttles that will facilitate access to the Roland-Garros stadium while demonstrating the maturity of new technologies for automated [public transport services](#)," said Renault.

The minibusses will ferry visitors between a [parking lot](#) and the stadium complex.

"Renault Group... will be in a position, well before the end of this decade, to propose a highly relevant range of autonomous, low-carbon minibusses to meet the growing needs" of transportation authorities in low emissions zones, said the company's chief technology officer, Gilles Le Borgne.

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