

Singapore to trial driverless buses booked with an app

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On the buses: Singapore is leading the charge for autonomous vehicles

Singapore will next week begin a public trial of driverless buses that can be booked with an app, part of ambitions to roll out autonomous vehicles across the city-state.

Well-organised and [high-tech](#), Singapore has become a testbed for self-driving vehicles, developing home-grown technology and inviting [foreign companies](#) to trial their own.

Four driverless mini-buses will follow a 5.7 kilometre (3.5-mile) route on the resort island of Sentosa from August 26 to November 15 for the public trial, said ST Engineering, the Singaporean company behind it.

Visitors can use an app on their phones to book the shuttles, which will pick them up and take them to selected destinations such as a golf club, the beach and an historic fort.

Those without mobile phones can book the shuttles from kiosks along the route, with the free service operating on weekdays for four hours. The buses will have a driver to take control if necessary.

At a demonstration on Tuesday, two of the vehicles negotiated a roundabout with little difficulty and stopped at intersections on a main road to allow cars to pass.

They can operate in moderate rain—but have to stop during heavy downpours, which are common in the tropical, Southeast Asian city.

Vincent Chong, president and chief executive of ST Engineering, said the buses were equipped with "advanced, multi-sensor technology" and "built to operate in complex [urban environments](#)".

The company aims to roll out the shuttles in a few years time to other parts of Singapore to transport people from home to subway stations and back, and hopes they can help tackle a shortage of drivers in the city-state.

In 2016, US software firm nuTonomy became the world's first company

to launch driverless taxi trials in public in Singapore, beating rival Uber by weeks.

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