Driverless buses and shuttles to be tested in 3 towns from 2022

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Things are about to change in the way people in Singapore get around.

Punggol, Tengah and Jurong Innovation District will be the first three towns in Singapore to have self-driving scheduled buses and on-demand shuttles to ferry commuters come 2022, said a joint statement from the Land Transport Authority and Ministry of Transport on Wednesday (Nov 22).

The deployment of the autonomous vehicles (AV) will be part of the Land Transport Authority’s (LTA’s) pilot initiative to provide convenient last-mile connectivity for residents, workers and students.

The vehicles will initially travel on less crowded roads to complement human-driven public buses, said the statement.

LTA is also exploring the use of autonomous buses for express transit link to connect the North-East Line to the North-South, East-West and Thomson East Coast Lines.

Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan who announced this at the opening of the first test centre for driverless vehicles here said: “AV technology can greatly enhance the accessibility and connectivity of our public transport system particularly for the elderly, families with young children, and the less mobile.”
One big perk: Commuters will be able to hail the autonomous on-demand services via their mobile phones. On-demand shuttles can also be used to serve the Seletar Aerospace Park.

“Through the pilot deployment, we can gain insights into how we can design infrastructure, organise services and formulate regulations to better facilitate the safe use of AVs in Singapore,” added Mr Khaw.

The new 2-hectare test centre is located just outside the Nanyang Technological University and will put self-driving vehicles through their paces with a test circuit replicating Singapore’s roads and traffic conditions, reported The Straits Times.