

URBAN TRANSPORT

Singapore university gets a flash-charging shuttle



Ben Coxworth | 3 hours ago



The shuttle will be used on the NTU campus for two years

Several years ago, Singapore's Nanyang Technological University was trialling an autonomous shuttle for transporting people around the campus. Now, the university is experimenting with an electric shuttle that *has* a driver, but that takes just 20 seconds to recharge.

Known as the NTU-Blue Solutions Flash Shuttle, the 22-seat vehicle is based around the existing Bluetram made by BlueSG (a subsidiary of Blue Solutions owned by the Bolloré Group).

Although it does have a rechargeable battery pack that can take it up to 30 km (19 miles) if need be, that's mainly there as a backup. Primarily, it's powered by a supercapacitor that gets recharged within 20 seconds at the stations where the shuttle picks up and drops off passengers. The charging is done via a telescopic connector, and each charge takes the vehicle just 2 km (1.2 miles), so the stations are spaced accordingly.

According to Blue Solutions, the shuttle is considerably less expensive to set up and run than traditional electric trams, as it doesn't require infrastructure such as rails or overhead power lines. A whole line's worth of charging stations can reportedly be installed within a matter of weeks.

The shuttle is being used on a 2-year trial basis, with the service being officially launched this Tuesday.

Sources: Nanyang Technological University, Blue Solutions