

FIRST OF SUCH TRIALS ON PUBLIC ROADS

Driverless car trials in one-north to start in March

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SINGAPORE – The first trials of driverless vehicles on public roads, using a 6km route within one-north business park, are expected to start in March, said the Land Transport Authority (LTA) yesterday, as it listed some of the requirements that interested parties will have to meet to get the approval to conduct them.

For instance, the autonomous vehicles (AV) must pass safety assessments and be installed with data recorders that keep track of information, such as the date and time of tests, speed and whether the driverless mode has been activated. The AVs will not be allowed to run autonomously when outside the test area, the LTA added.

In a joint statement yesterday with one-north master planner and developer JTC Corporation, the LTA said the test route, which connects Biopolis, Fusionopolis and Mediapolis, will encompass light and heavy traffic routes that will allow successful applicants to test their vehicles' navigation controls in a real-world environment.

Said LTA CEO Chew Men Leong: "The trials in one-north will give us the opportunity to learn and understand the technical capabilities and infrastructural requirements for AVs to operate safely on public roads."

The LTA said the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology, in collaboration with National University of Singapore, Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) and ST Kinetics, are in talks to apply for their AVs to be tested in one-north.

A*STAR's executive director of the Institute for Infocomm Research, Dr Lee Shiang Long, said the on-road testing would "allow us to test, analyse, verify and refine our AV research R&D in a real environment".

Last year, trials of AVs were run in other areas, such as the Chinese and Japanese Gardens. NUS Department of Mechanical Engineering's associate professor Marcelo Ang said the trial at the gardens last October received "very positive" responses from participants. "The one-north area is the next step and closer to real-life traffic conditions ... We want to show the public how safe AVs are ... (they are) actually safer than human drivers, since computers do not get tired."



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Mr Chew Men Leong
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