

LTA extends driverless car test circuit by 55 km

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SINGAPORE is extending the length of roads that driverless vehicles can be tested on by more than four times. In doing so, it is paving the way for self-driving cars to pass through residential estates for the first time.

But this new demarcation does not necessarily mean that autonomous vehicles (AVs) will soon ply through housing estates; trial participants need to get the green light from relevant authorities before their driverless cars can run in these neighbourhoods.

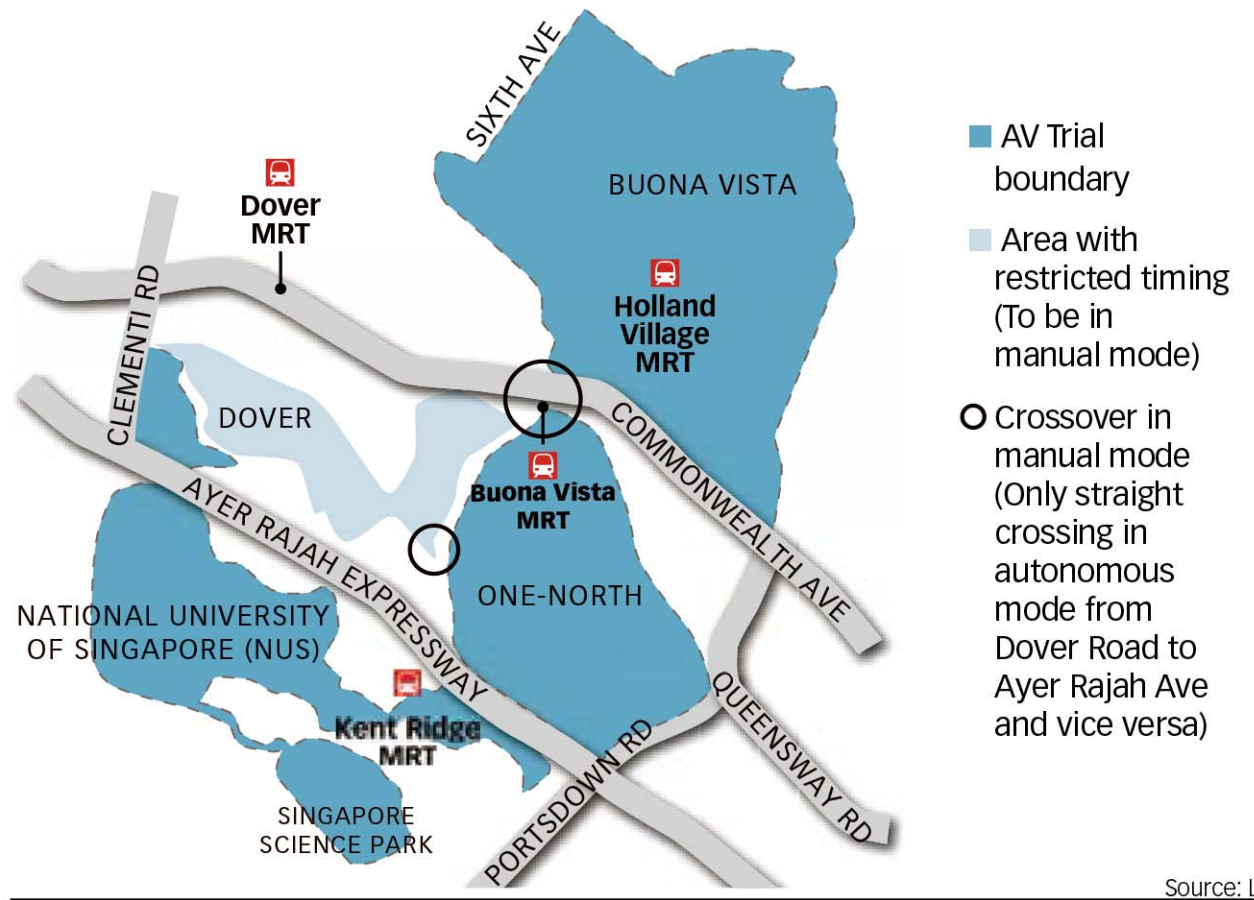
The Land Transport Authority (LTA) said that starting Friday, AVs can also be tested in National University of Singapore (NUS), and Singapore Science Park 1 and 2, Dover, and Buona Vista. These areas are adjacent to the one-north business park in Buona Vista, which is currently the designated test bed for driverless cars.

The first AV trials in Singapore started in July 2015. In September 2016, LTA doubled the length of the test routes within one-north from six kilometres to 12 kilometres. The newly-added areas “present a larger test bed, and will add another 55 kilometres to the existing AV trial routes. This will allow AV trial participants to experience more on-road scenarios which will help accelerate technology development”, said the release.

A map provided by LTA shows that the expanded areas include U-Town in NUS, but does not include National University Hospital. An area enclosed by Dover Road

Autonomous automobiles

LTA expands driverless vehicles trial areas



Source: LTA

and North Buona Vista Road is also earmarked for testing, but vehicles on trial need to be in manual modes at specific times of the day, specifically during peak hours.

To conduct trials in the mixed-use, residential estates in Dover and Buona Vista, trial participants will first have to show LTA and the Traffic Police that they can handle more dynamic traffic environments in autonomous mode.

To inform the public, signboards will be put up in the test areas to indicate that trials are being carried out. All AV test vehicles will continue to sport decals and markings for easy recognition by road users, said LTA. “Deploying AVs for shared

transport will help enhance our first- and last-mile commute and bring greater mobility to the elderly and other commuters who may have difficulties in taking public transport today,” said LTA’s chief technology officer Lam Wee Shann.

Singapore is also expected to launch a research centre for AVs in the coming months. The Centre of Excellence for Testing & Research of AVs – NTU (Cetran) and Test Circuit, will be completed in the second half of this year, Leow Thiam Seng, group director for JTC’s Cluster Group, told *The Business Times* in a previous interview. The 1.8-hectare area will allow manufacturers to test their driverless cars to see how they react to real-world situations.