

Lyft puts driverless cars to work in Boston

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Autonomous cars developed by the US tech firm nuTonomy, such as one seen here in Singapore in 2016, will be hitting the streets of Boston as the ridesharing group Lyft deploys self-driving vehicles

Lyft on Wednesday began rolling out self-driving cars with users of the smartphone-summoned ride service in Boston in a project with technology partner nuTonomy.

The launch of the driverless test program stemmed from a collaboration

between Lyft and nuTonomy announced earlier this year.

"As the pilot progresses, select Boston passengers in Seaport area will be matched with nuTonomy self-driving vehicles when they request rides through the Lyft app," the companies said in a release.

"We want to let members of the public experience driverless vehicles firsthand, so they can better understand the impact this new technology will have on their lives."

The companies will also gather feedback from passengers to improve the system.

Alphabet's Waymo last month said that its self-driving cars are hitting the road without anyone behind the wheel in a test in Arizona.

The former Google car unit has been testing autonomous cars for years, but with a driver behind the wheel to take over if needed.

Waymo announced that a portion of its fleet in the Phoenix area will operate in fully autonomous mode with the cars handling all the driving. The testing will initially be limited to part of Phoenix, Arizona.



In this Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2016, file photo a nuTonomy autonomous vehicle is driven during its test drive in Singapore. Lyft and its Boston-based partner nuTonomy, which builds autonomous software, announced Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2017, that a pilot project has begun sending self-driving cars to pick up commuters in Boston's Seaport District, a burgeoning technology hub. (AP Photo/Yong Teck Lim)

The launches are part of a competitive race to a ride-sharing future, with established automakers such as Ford and BMW and ride-sharing groups Uber and Lyft in the mix.

French firm Navya last month unveiled an electric-powered, self-driving Autonom Cab designed to provide local rides for people in urban centers.

A startup created by former engineers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, nuTonomy deployed a small number of vehicles for the

world's first self-driving taxis last year in Singapore.

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