

First European on-demand self-driving bus to be piloted in Trondheim



Trondheim's first self-driving bus outside the Spektrum

Trondheim, 14/05/2020

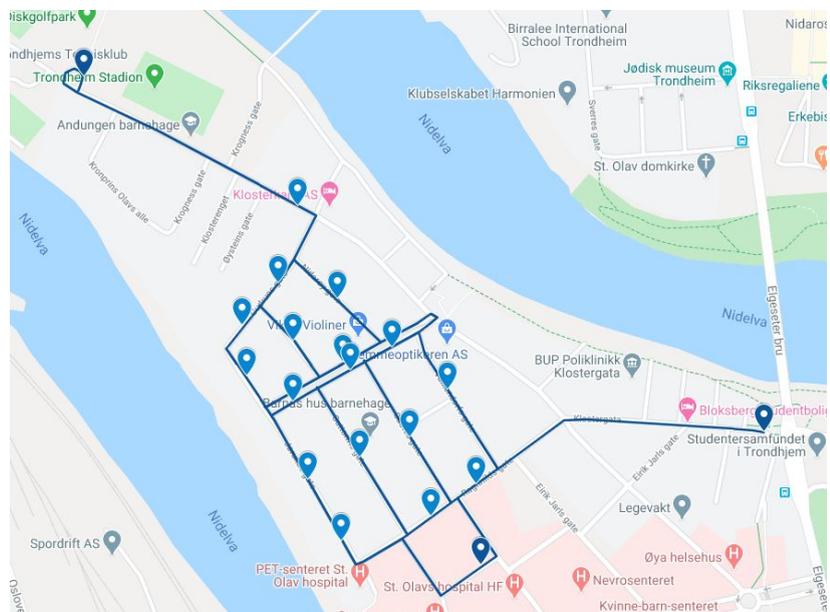
This week saw the beginning of tests for Trondheim's first self-driving bus service. The project was welcomed by Trondheim Municipality, Vy, Miljøpakken and AtB, who are directing this prestigious pilot project. It is arranged by Applied Autonomy.

The bus is scheduled to run as part of Trondheim's bus network in the Øya neighbourhood for two months, starting August 17th. Painted in AtB's colours, the bus is four metres long, three metres high, and seats 6 passengers.

For the first time in Europe, the project sees the combination of a self-driving bus with an on-demand solution which allows passengers to call the bus for individual journeys.

During the test period, the bus will cover the area between St. Olav's hospital, Trondheim spektrum and the top of Klostergata (near the student's association). There are nearly 20 stops foreseen in the Øya neighbourhood as shown on the map, but the bus will only service those stops which have been requested by passengers via an app, which allows passengers to specify a pick-up point and a destination. The stops are set up so that the maximum walking distance between them is 200 metres.

Map of all possible bus stops on the route



The use of self-driving buses for such custom-tailored transport solutions has been touted as a possible future solution for connecting residential areas and neighbourhoods on the outskirts of cities which are normally not served by regular buses to transport hubs and transfer points.

The bus, which is provided by technology company EasyMile, navigates using an array of sensors, amongst them GPS and Lidar, and drives at a top speed of 16 km/h. While the bus won't have a driver, there will still be staff on board: A safety operator will ensure the safety of the passengers and other members of traffic. The self-driving bus will be open to anyone who requests it via the app, and is subject to the usual bus tariffs.

Before operations can commence in August, there will be a set-up period without passengers, led by Applied Autonomy, a Norwegian autonomous transport technology provider. The company, which will deliver the project's technical solutions, has previously successfully conducted a number similar pilot projects, amongst them a 5.5 kilometer long bus route from Kongsberg train station to Kongsberg technology park which has been running for the past two years.

Applied Autonomy is also responsible for training five safety operators, who are employees of Vy buss.

The project's aim is to investigate whether flexible, self-driving buses can play a role in future public transport systems, and contribute to making public transport more attractive, underlines the project leader. Together with insights acquired from similar projects, AtB is hoping to build knowledge and gather experience on how the technology works. We're on the cusp of a transport revolution and this project provides an opportunity for the community to be part of the journey and the learning process. To see the benefits and see the future.



The self-driving bus in its garage tent, where it is charged and stored