

November 12, 2024

Baidu Autonomous Vehicle Trial Project in North Lantau

Objective

Baidu plans to launch an autonomous vehicle trial project in North Lantau by the end of 2024. This paper serves to introduce the trial plan to the Islands District Council.

Background

Baidu, Inc., a publicly listed company in Hong Kong, has been conducting autonomous driving technology research and development since 2013. In 2017, Baidu, Inc. launched the world's first open-source autonomous driving platform, which has undergone 10 major version updates to date. The platform gathers over 200 ecosystem partners and builds a global developer community exceeding 100,000 members. As of now, its autonomous driving systems have accumulated over 100 million kilometers of trial mileage in China with zero major accidents. Baidu, Inc. have over 5,000 autonomous driving related patents.

At present, Baidu, Inc. has established Baidu Apollo International Limited ("Baidu") in Hong Kong and submitted application for trial and pilot use of autonomous vehicles to the Transport Department. Baidu plans to introduce autonomous driving technology and pilot applications in Hong Kong through conducting trials of autonomous vehicles by phases, regions and steps in orderly and safe manners. Baidu is also establishing a local team by recruiting and nurturing talents, and facilitating collaborations among industry, academia, and research institutions. These initiatives aim to offer Hong Kong residents the opportunity to understand and experience the autonomous vehicles while fostering partnerships with stakeholders to cultivate an innovative ecosystem of autonomous driving, ultimately helping Hong Kong's advancement with new quality productive forces.

While autonomous vehicles are at the forefront of global science and technology, we proposed to conduct trial of autonomous vehicles at North Lantau, which will become Hong Kong's iconic representation of innovation and technology. Public and young generation will have the opportunity to witness, understand and appreciate about the development and application of autonomous driving technology.

Project Overview

Baidu officially submitted an application for the trial and pilot use of autonomous vehicles (under class of private car) to the Transport Department on 17 October 2024. The proposed plan involves conducting trials in North Lantau by phases, regions and steps in orderly and safe manners. The application is currently under review, and the trial is expected to commence by the end of 2024. In the initial phase of the trial route, Baidu plans to test one autonomous vehicle within the airport

landside area. Prior to initiating tests on the designated routes, thorough communication and consensus will be ensured among all relevant parties.

During the trial period, we will strictly comply with the relevant legislative requirements and conditions stipulated in the license issued by the Transport Department. The autonomous vehicles will meet the requirements of safety mileage/testing duration in each phase of the trial and will demonstrate their roadworthiness and safe to use on road. Approval from the Transport Department will be obtained before proceeding to the next trial phase.

Details

The trial will be conducted during the non-peak hours to avoid rush hours in the morning and evening periods. During the trial period, an in-vehicle backup operator (a Hong Kong citizen with over 10 years of professional driving experience and at least 100 hours of full-time training) will be required to sit in the driver's seat to monitor the autonomous vehicle's performance and take over the drive immediately if necessary, to ensure safety. Given the ongoing roadworks in North Lantau, the in-vehicle backup operator will also be able to respond promptly for re-routing or other corresponding actions to avoid potential disruption to traffic. Throughout the trial period, we will strictly control and evaluate the operational performance of the autonomous vehicles in a timely manner to ensure road safety. The autonomous vehicles will also be secured with relevant insurance coverage in accordance with the legislative requirements to protect public interests.

Conclusion

We are dedicated to ensure safety, legality and compliance throughout the trial period and are willing to accept supervision from relevant departments.

Baidu Apollo International Limited
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