

Mobilus welcomes arrival of first automated rapid transit system into Iskandar Malaysia

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The arrival of the first ART system into Iskandar Malaysia, Johor. The image is taken upon its unloading at the Johor Port Container Terminal, Johor Port.

KUALA LUMPUR (Jan 20): Mobilus Sdn Bhd has welcomed the arrival of the first automated rapid transit (ART) system into Johor, which is set to be the site for a bus pilot testing programme to be launched in Iskandar Malaysia in the first quarter of 2021. Mobilus is a 51:49 joint venture company established between Ireka Corp Bhd and CRRC Urban Traffic Co Ltd, a member of CRRC Group.

According to Ireka group managing director Datuk Lai Voon Hon in a press release today: "The arrival of the ART is a great step forward for our urban transportation business in the year ahead. The planning for the ART Bus Pilot Testing Programme in Iskandar Malaysia, which will showcase seven other bus manufacturers, is well underway after some delays due to the pandemic in 2020, and now we hope to have the project up and running by early 2021.

"This will be one of the test lines for the larger Iskandar Malaysia Bus Rapid Transit (IMBRT) project, a comprehensive transit system for Iskandar Malaysia covering a network of more than 2,000km in Phase 1."

ART is a medium capacity transit system for urban passenger transport using leading edge technology and allows for higher passenger capacity at a lower cost of implementation, compared to traditional light-rail systems, and it operates on clean sources of energy such as electricity or hydrogen.



The operation of the ART system in China.

The multi-carriages are equipped with sensors that read the virtual tracks on the road, enabling it to automatically navigate its own route, travelling up to 70km per hour and carrying more than 300 passengers with three carriages. The capacity of an ART vehicle is expandable to approximately 500 passengers with five carriages.

Lai added that the implementation of the ART pilot project will be a key stepping stone towards helping improve public transportation in Iskandar Malaysia and further promote the rapid development of the regional economy and society.

All eyes will be on this initiative, which will be independently evaluated to assess its roadworthiness in Malaysia so that subsequent government approval can be sought to run the system here. Malaysia will be the first country in the region to potentially adopt this technology.

In conjunction with the bus pilot testing programme, a technical feasibility study will be undertaken by the Malaysia Institute of Transport (MITRANS), an institute of Universiti Teknologi MARA. At the end of the bus pilot testing programme in Johor, MITRANS will provide a feasibility report on the adoption of ART as a new urban transport system with reference to the current road infrastructure and the public transport environment in Malaysia.

Currently, ART is being rapidly adopted in various cities across China, with the latest being in Yibin, Sichuan. The T1 Line, first of seven lines for the city, was officially launched in December 2019 after a trial period. The T1 line runs for 17.7km through the central business district of Yibin, and connects to the high-speed railway terminus in that city. It is reported that more than 25,000 daily commuters are currently using the line, and traffic congestion in the city has reduced by 20% since the opening of the ART T1 Line.