

AUTOMOTIVE

Toyota furthers autonomous testing with Lexus concept car

January 7, 2019



Toyota's P4 concept vehicle. Image courtesy of Toyota

By STAFF REPORTS

Toyota Corp.'s Research Institute is rolling out a new automated driving test vehicle that is based on the Lexus LS, enabling it to test concepts that augment or replace humans behind the wheel.

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Per Toyota, the TRI-P4 is smarter than its predecessors, with better processing power and more extensive sight on the road. Unveiled at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas on Jan. 7, Toyota will put the TRI-P4 into production this spring.

AI driver

The Lexus LS has steering technology that enables more responsive turning. This makes for a smoother ride in an autonomous vehicle.

Compared to previous test vehicles, the P4 has two new sensors on the front and back of the car, as well as two additional cameras on the sides of the vehicle.

Image sensors and the car's radar now have a longer range as well.

Additionally, its processors act faster to react to the sensing data. The P4 is also faster at machine learning, allowing it to get smarter in less time.

The autonomous car's brain is located in a computer box in the trunk. Compared to previous models, this box has been moved to create more trunk space for cargo.



Toyota's P4 vehicle. Image courtesy of Toyota

This car will be used to test two autonomous concepts for Toyota.

"Our Chauffeur development is focused on full autonomy, where the human is essentially removed from the driving equation, either completely in all environments, or within a restricted driving domain," said Ryan Eustice, senior vice president of automated driving at TRI, in a statement. "Guardian, on the other hand, is being designed to amplify human performance behind the wheel, not replace it.

"The introduction of the new P4 platform will help us accelerate the development of both tracks when it joins our fleet this spring," he said.

While autonomous driving is still years away from being used on the roads, some automakers are moving the technology forward with test programs.

For instance, Germany's Volkswagen Group is looking to make urban parking less stressful and time consuming with a pilot program that leverages autonomous technology.

The automotive group is testing out autonomous parking at Hamburg Airport with Volkswagen, Porsche and Audi vehicles, aiming to eventually allow consumers to leave finding a spot to their cars. In cities, drivers can spend upwards of 40 hours per year parking, a figure that Volkswagen seeks to cut with its vision for the future ([see story](#)).

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