

# If Toyota succeeds, flying cars could be a reality in the next few years

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In this May 26, 2017, photo, staff operate a Lexus luxury concept "yacht" in Tokyo Bay, Japan. With a design inspired by a dolphin and evocative of a Lexus car, it's being promised as a commercial product in the next few years. Photo from AP/Eugene Hoshiko

TOYOTA, Japan — Cars may be leaving the roads and heading for the skies as soon as the year 2020.

Toyota Motor Corporation is working on a "flying car."

The Japanese automaker is working with another company to make the airborne automobile.

For now, however, the vehicle is just being tested. It has aluminum framing and eight propellers. It barely gets off the ground and crashes after several seconds.

Toyota has given nearly \$400,000 to a new company called Cartivator Resource Management. Together, they're working on the flying car, which is called "Sky Drive."

## Sky Drive Still Needs A Lot Of Work

It had a test flight on Saturday. The flying machine is about the size of a car and is loaded with batteries and sensors. It blew up a lot of sand and made a lot of noise.

Sky Drive got up about five feet high for a few seconds. Then, it tilted and fell to the ground. It had basketballs attached to its bottom to cushion its fall. After several attempts, the trip had to be canceled. One of the covers got loose from the frame and broke, damaging the propellers.

Tsubasa Nakamura is leading the flying car project. The goal of Cartivator is to help people easily move from driving to flying, he says.

"I always loved planes and cars. And my longtime dream was to have a personal vehicle that can fly and go many places," he told The Associated Press.

The group is now working on a better design with the money from Toyota. The plan is to have the first flight with a human on board in 2019. No one has ridden on Sky Drive yet, as that would be too dangerous.

## More Than Just Cars

The company Toyota usually makes cars. However, it has tried for a long time to build things other than automobiles.

In recent years, Toyota has spent money to study and build new kinds of robots. Toyota is working in Japan to use robots to help sick people to walk. The company also just spent money to make cars that drive by themselves and talk with each other.

Akio Toyoda is president of Toyota today. In the 1890s, his great-grandfather Sakichi Toyoda started out building the loom, a machine that weaves cloth. The company started to make cars later on.

Today, Toyota thinks computer software is a central part of how cars work. Cars will have different new tools to help us in everyday life, said car expert Takaki Nakanishi.

## Toyota Dips Its Toe In The Water

Toyota is also in the business of making Earth-friendly vehicles, such as electric cars. These use less fuel, like gasoline, or no fuel at all. Burning gasoline creates greenhouse gas, which traps heat in the air around the Earth, causing the planet to get warmer.

These days, Toyota is traveling not only in the skies but also on the water.

Toyota started making boats in 1997. It now offers four kinds and has sold a total of 845 boats.

Reporters in Tokyo recently got to ride on an expensive new Lexus boat. It is powered by two gas engines. It has a slick, curvy design, inspired by a dolphin, and it could be available for sale in the next few years.

One of its more fascinating features is its anchor, which gets pulled by a chain into a tiny door. The door opens and closes on its own.

### **American Interest In Luxury Boat**

The engine, shiny like a metal sculpture, can be seen through the clear surface on the floor of the boat.

A price was not given. Many Americans have already expressed interest, according to Toyota.

Shigeki Tomoyama was in charge of making this luxury boat. The project started about two years ago under direct orders from Toyoda.

"He asked us to create a space that can work as a secret hiding place in the middle of the ocean," Tomoyama said. "We went for the wow factor, which requires no words."

## Quiz

- 1 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-5] and the final section, "American Interest In Luxury Boat."  
What is the relationship between these two sections?

- (A) Both outline problems Toyota has faced with vehicles.
- (B) Both compare different types of Toyota vehicles.
- (C) Both explain how Toyota vehicles have changed over time.
- (D) Both describe vehicles Toyota hopes to sell in the future.

- 2 If this article was organized in chronological order, which section would come FIRST?

- (A) "Sky Drive Still Needs A Lot Of Work"
- (B) "More Than Just Cars"
- (C) "Toyota Dips Its Toe In The Water"
- (D) "American Interest In Luxury Boat"

- 3 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-5].

Select the paragraph which explains that Toyota has been unsuccessful at flying its car so far.

- 4 Read the paragraph from the section "More Than Just Cars."

*In recent years, Toyota has spent money to study and build new kinds of robots. Toyota is working in Japan to use robots to help sick people to walk. The company also just spent money to make cars that drive by themselves and talk with each other.*

Which of the following is the MOST accurate explanation of this paragraph?

- (A) Toyota is working on more than one kind of technology that might help people in the future.
- (B) Toyota has decided to build flying cars because it failed at being able to build successful robots.
- (C) Toyota has made a lot of money from its new robots and cars that can talk and drive themselves.
- (D) Toyota plans to stop wasting so much money on technology that does not work very well.