Japan: Total Mobility Project Converts Standard Auto to Solar

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Solar Car Conversion. Credit: Digital World Tokyo

The Prefecture of Fukushima, Japan and the Total Mobility Project have announced the creation of a solar powered auto converted from a standard Mazda Roadster. The joint efforts of government and citizen groups are attempting to address the needs of its aging and retirement age citizens.

A project sponsored by the Prefecture of Fukushima, Japan and a group focused on providing aging seniors a better lifestyle, Total Mobility has converted a Mazda Roadster into a solar driving machine. The combined efforts of government and private sector technology are seeking to provide affordable accessibility to the city for the projected large number of retirement age Japanese workers.

The Prefecture of Fukushima lies approximately 186 miles North of Tokyo, Japan. The region is noted for its aesthetic beauty, culture and

industry. This region of Japan has appreciated rapid growth and prosperity due to its attraction of business and industries. It has four seasons, and celebrates Japanese traditions. The region has much to offer in terms of medical services and activities. It has a university and a medical school.

As its population begins to age and retire the citizen groups and government of Fukushima decided to endeavor to make the city more Senior friendly. There exists a good transportation system, but an aging population needs some customize tweaking. Hence, the name of the project, Total Mobility. This concept takes into account the undeniable aging process and potential limitations of many retirees facing the limitations of a fixed retirement income.

As reported by Nikkei dot net and Digital World Tokyo, a group has developed a conversion package to transform a Mazda Roadster into a solar powered vehicle. The cost of the conversion is estimated to cost around $21,000. The price tag at the present time may be a bit steep, but this is a concept that down the road will likely see trimming of costs.

The gist of the conversion required the group to remove the engine and gas tank and replace them with a battery and an electric motor. The next step involved placing seven solar panels across the hood of the automobile. At this point the solar powered auto is able to run for close to 19 miles and travel at the speed of up to 62 MPH. The savings in fuel costs for the average driver who travels around 38 miles per day would be roughly $1600 per year.

The concerns of any aging population is to attempt to calculate fixed expenses as their earning capacity is reduced. Since it appears fuel costs and related transportation cost will increase in the foreseeable future, this project has merit. A renewable source of energy like solar power appears to be one way to harness an unpredictable cost of human

existence.