Google expects partners for self-driving car project

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Google's Self Driving Car Project CEO John Krafcik speaks at the Automotive News World Congress in Detroit, Michigan, January 12, 2016

Google plans to partner with automakers on its self-driving car project, but is not yet ready to announce anything concrete, the head of the project said Tuesday.

"We are going to be partnering more and more and more," Google self-

driving project chief executive John Krafcik said at a conference held in the shadow of the Detroit Auto Show.

As the project evolves, Google is going to need a "lot of help" expanding self-driving cars, said Krafcik, a longtime auto executive, most recently at Hyundai.

Major automakers will be able to help it produce "at scale," Krafcik said.

Google has been testing self-driving cars in two US states, California and Texas.

Other automakers, including Audi, BMW, Lexus, Mercedes and Tesla, have also been working on bringing self-driving capacities into vehicles.

Krafcik was tight-lipped about details of the program, declining to tell a moderator how many Google staff work on the project or to estimate when self-driving cars might reach the general public.

The chief motivation is to expand mobility to more people, including the elderly and disabled, Krafcik said.

The tech giant also sees the technology as critical to addressing deadly car crashes.

Short-term goals include improving the technology's performance in bad weather and in complex traffic scenarios.

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