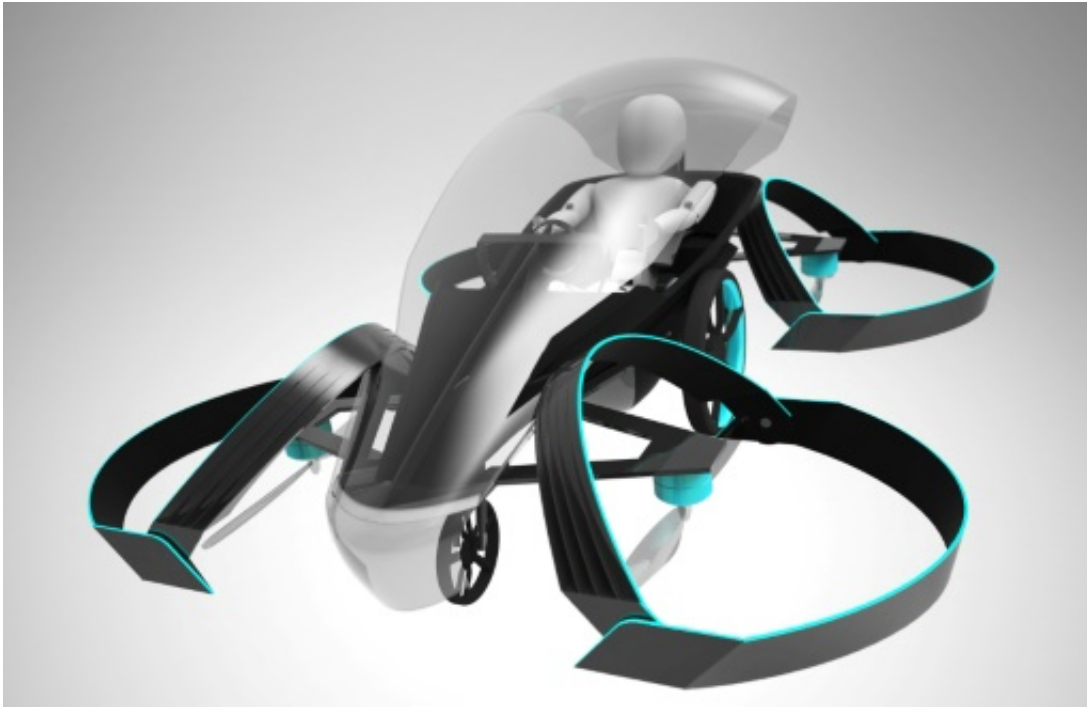


Riding high: Toyota eyes 'flying car' future

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A computer-generated image released by CARTIVATOR Resource Management on May 15, 2017 shows the flying manned vehicle dubbed 'SkyDrive'

Toyota has its sights set on a Blade Runner future as the Japanese automaker backs a move to launch a flying car in time for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

The company is giving about 42.5 million yen (\$375,000) to the Cartivator project, which is developing the three-wheeled sci-fi car that

relies on drone technology to take flight.

The manned vehicle, dubbed SkyDrive, will have four sets of propellers and—at 2.9 metres (9.5 foot) long and 1.3 metres wide—is aiming to be the world's smallest flying car, according to the project.

A promotional video graphic shows the little car lowering its retractable wings before zipping off for a flight around Tokyo and then lighting the flame at the Olympic stadium.

The car is expected to have a top flight speed of around 100 kilometres (62 miles) an hour, hovering some 10 metres off the ground. It will have a top land speed around 150 kilometres an hour.

A group of young engineers from the auto and aerospace industries are working on the project, which is being funded by a number of investors including Toyota subsidiaries.

The group is hoping to launch a manned prototype by the end of next year so it can be used to light the Olympic flame when Japan's capital hosts the Games.

Other firms, including ride-sharing service Uber and a Silicon Valley startup reportedly backed by Google co-founder Larry Page, are moving to put in place a system of flying cars to move people around cities.

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