

Waymo ramps up self-driving fleet with 'thousands' of cars

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John Krafcik, CEO of Waymo, is seen at the 2017 North American International Auto Show with a customized Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid used for its autonomous ridesharing service

Former Google car unit Waymo said Tuesday it was ordering "thousands" of vehicles from Fiat Chrysler for the expansion of its autonomous ride-hailing service across several US cities.

Waymo, a unit of Google parent Alphabet, said the additional Chrysler Pacifica vehicles to be delivered from late 2018 will be used for expanding its self-driving taxi program, which is launching this year in Phoenix, Arizona.

A statement from FCA and Waymo offered no details on timing or location but noted that the self-driving cars have been tested in 25 US cities including Atlanta, San Francisco, Detroit and Kirkland, Washington.

"With the world's first fleet of fully self-driving vehicles on the road, we've moved from research and development, to operations and deployment," said John Krafcik, Waymo's [chief executive](#).

"The Pacifica Hybrid minivans offer a versatile interior and a comfortable ride experience, and these additional vehicles will help us scale."

Waymo previously ordered 100 of the FCA vehicles in 2016 and another 500 last year as part of a collaboration to build [autonomous cars](#) at scale using hardware and software from the technology group.

The companies said they have used the vehicles in more than four million miles (6.4 million kilometers) of on-road testing, and billions of miles in simulations.

"In order to move quickly and efficiently in autonomy, it is essential to partner with like-minded technology leaders," said Sergio Marchionne, FCA's chief executive.

"Our partnership with Waymo continues to grow and strengthen; this represents the latest sign of our commitment to this technology."

The expansion is the latest in a race for leadership in autonomous ridesharing, which involves most major automakers, [technology](#) developers and services such as Uber and Lyft.

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