



Toyota i-Road Take Two

20 November 2015

Two-seater urban electric vehicle joins test programme

Toyota is launching further trials of a two-seater version of its i-ROAD short-range urban electric vehicle. The nimble three-wheeler is joining the Open Road project, which has been running in Japan since July with a single-seat model.

i-ROAD'S ability to carry two on board is already being put to the test in Europe, where the vehicle is playing a central role in a three-year connected public transport pilot scheme, Ha:mo by Cité Lib, in Grenoble, France. With the benefit of official type certification from the Japanese government, its performance can now be put under closer scrutiny.

The Japanese i-ROAD are being loaned for one-month periods to motorists who will specifically be using them to carry two people, for example on commuter, shopping and school runs. Toyota will use feedback and data from the tests to assess how i-ROAD can meet different mobility requirements.

i-ROAD has undergone some modifications to meet Japanese requirements, including changes to its reflectors and vehicle width indicators. It has also been fitted with an "approaching vehicle" audible warning.

The local authority in Shibuya, Tokyo, has expressed interest in i-ROAD's urban-friendly performance and will be conducting further trials with Toyota to look at the possibility of using it for a new community-based programme.

Meanwhile in Silicon Valley in the USA, the Toyota Onramp 2015 conference challenged a group of innovators and entrepreneurs to come up with ideas for how i-ROAD could be used in different ways in a Smart Mobility Challenge.

Jason Weiner took first prize with an M-i-ROAD concept, by which the vehicle can be driven as an electric bike or a car to suit different user groups, such as teenagers who don't hold a car licence and senior citizens. Weiner was awarded \$15,000 and the chance to develop his idea further in collaboration with Toyota.