

Nissan's Electric Vehicle Tilts into Corners

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ATSUGI, Japan — Nissan's Land Glider electric vehicle tilts from side to side, sashaying into curves by up to a 17-degree angle, as though showing off in a fashion statement that it's zero-emissions.

The wheel segments of the car can move separately from the cabin, allowing the car, still an experimental concept model, to sway and swerve, almost like a motorcycle.

Nissan Motor Co. project design director Takashi Nakjima says Land Glider is designed to be a "personal city commuter."

In a demonstration for reporters, the car glided around on a test course at Nissan's design center, outside Tokyo, leaning slowly to one side, and then the other, as it turned tight corners.

Just 110 centimeters (43 inches) wide, Land Glider has sensors to calculate speed and level of lean required for corners, and can maneuver through narrow streets and fit into tight parking spaces, according to Yokohama-based Nissan.

People aboard sit in a line, one behind the other, not next to each other as in traditional two-seaters.

Reporters got a preview look of the "concept model" but no test drive, of the Land Glider. There are no immediate plans for commercial production.

It will have its world premiere at the Tokyo Motor Show, opening to media Oct. 21, two days before its formal opening. The show runs through Nov. 4 in the Tokyo suburb of Chiba.

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Japanese rivals Toyota Motor Corp. and Honda Motor Co. are also showing nifty electric vehicles at the show.

Toyota's FT-EV II has a roomy cube design, a relatively conventional look for electric cars. But Honda's EV-N is small and cute with an intentionally old-fashioned car shape.

"We feel exploratory efforts in electric vehicles have entered a new stage" with Land Glider, Nakajima said.

Japanese automakers say electric vehicles will largely be used initially for limited range, commuter travel.

Nissan is among the first to offer an electric vehicle, set to go on sale in Japan, the U.S. and Europe next year — the rather regular-looking Leaf.

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