

Eiheiji Town, Fukui Prefecture and Panasonic Teaming up to Test Experimental Autonomous Vehicle on Eiheiji Mai-road

Eiheiji, Japan - The Eiheiji Town Government, the Fukui Prefectural Government and Panasonic Corporation announced today that they have jointly started a field test of an experimental autonomous electric vehicle on Eiheiji Mai-road in the temple town in western Japan. The field test of Panasonic's autonomous driving EV commuter, which started on October 3, 2017, will continue to the end of March 2019.

Eiheiji Mai-road is a walking trail spanning about six kilometers and created on the former railroad track of the Eiheiji Line, once operated by Keifuku Electric Railroad Co., Ltd. The Fukui Prefectural and Eiheiji Town governments have been receiving subsidies from the national government for regional revitalization, using the funds to improve the road and creating an environment for field testing the autonomous driving EV commuter.

The area along Eiheiji Mai-road is home to Daihonzan Eiheiji Temple and to communities where the birth rate is declining and the population is aging. This field test aims to verify how autonomous cars can be used effectively to cope with local issues and needs, such as offering public transport services after the railroad line is abandoned.

Thus far, Panasonic has verified its autonomous driving technologies on an in-house driving test course (Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture) and the company premises in the Keihanna district (Seika-cho, Soraku-gun, Kyoto Prefecture) and the Kadoma district (Kadoma City, Osaka Prefecture). This is the first time for Panasonic to test its autonomous driving system in an environment equivalent to a public road. Panasonic also aims to verify how autonomous cars can be used effectively on a commercial basis in the future.

Panasonic and the Fukui Prefectural and Eiheiji Town governments will cooperate to improve the autonomous driving technologies and achieve new mobility services that will contribute to communities.

[Field test plan]

○ Current field test (October 3 to November 17, 2017)

The autonomous driving EV commuter is deployed on Eiheiji Mai-road to test autonomous driving technologies and identify technical issues, such as the following:

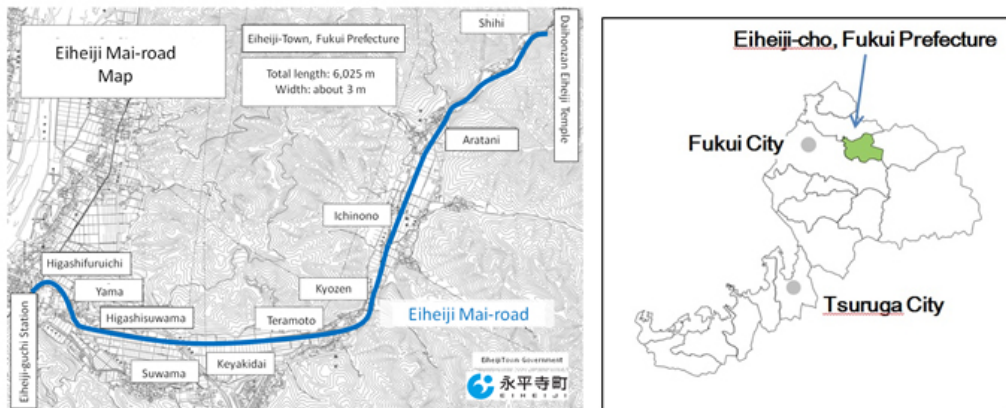
- Test operations such as positioning of the vehicle and camera detection performance in various environments (e.g., where the vehicle is close to trees and houses or under viaducts)
- Test obstacle avoidance and braking to prevent collision with pedestrians entering the road suddenly from the roadside
- Test the operation of the vehicle management system using cloud servers

○ Field test in the next fiscal year (to be conducted on an irregular basis from April 2018 to March 2019)

The autonomous driving EV commuter will be deployed on the entirety of Eiheiji Mai-road to test the autonomous driving technologies and commercialize mobility services.

[Overview of Eiheiji Mai-road]

● Eiheiji Mai-road Map



Eiheiji Mai-road is a walking trail spanning about six kilometers from the Eiheiji-guchi Station of Echizen Railway to Daihonzan Eiheiji Temple in Eiheiji-Town, Fukui Prefecture. It has been improved by the Fukui Prefectural and Eiheiji Town governments as an open lab to conduct field testing for autonomous driving. In March 2017, Eiheiji-Town was designated by the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) as an "area to conduct field tests to evaluate last-mile mobility systems under the project to demonstrate social implementation of last-mile mobility systems using autonomous cars, etc., in designated spaces."

· Website of the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST):
http://www.aist.go.jp/aist_j/news/au20170314.html (Japanese only)

[Tasks to be performed by each party in the field test]

Fukui Prefectural and Eiheiji Town governments: Improve Eiheiji Mai-road, communicate and coordinate with communities along Eiheiji Mai-road and relevant organizations, and identify issues

Panasonic: Evaluate the autonomous driving system (in-vehicle system) and server system and identify issues (e.g., accuracy of the vehicle positioning, sensing, and recognition; driving stability)

● Autonomous driving EV commuter on Eiheiji Mai-road during a field test



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