

Dec 14, 2020

Panasonic to Conduct Field Test of Home Delivery Service by Compact, Low-Speed Robot in Fujisawa Sustainable Smart Town



Osaka, Japan –Panasonic Corporation starts a field test of a delivery service for residential areas by a compact, low-speed robot in Fujisawa Sustainable Smart Town in Fujisawa City, Kanagawa Prefecture. The first phase of the test involving a self-driving robot on public roads has already started in November and will last until the end of the year. The second phase, in which the robot provides a home delivery service to residents in the area, will take place from February 2021. By offering a new form of delivery service using robots that work closely with humans, the company aims to contribute to creating a vibrant community where people and mobility coexist.

While people’s lives have become more convenient with the growth of e-commerce and new home delivery services such as food delivery, there has been a serious shortage of home delivery staff to support such services. There is also an urgent need to address the “new normal” that includes non-face-to-face and non-contact interactions.

As a provider of mobility solutions that focus on people’s daily lives, Panasonic aims to invigorate people, communities, and the earth. Panasonic has also worked alongside residents, partner companies, and local governments over the past six years to operate Fujisawa Sustainable Smart Town, seeking to improve the quality of life in the town since its opening in 2014.

With this trial, Panasonic is accelerating its efforts to launch the new delivery service while working closely with the town’s residents. The company hopes to take advantage of the technology and knowhow it has acquired through the development of autonomous-driving robots and ride-sharing services offered on the company premises.

This initiative will be conducted based on Japan’s Action Plan of the Growth Strategy (July 2020), which outlines the country’s policy of conducting demonstration drives of remote monitoring/operation-type delivery robots on public roads so low-speed and compact autonomous-driving robots can be implemented in society. Panasonic participates in the public-private council to promote deliveries by autonomous-driving robots sponsored by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and part of the company’s R&D and field test activities are being supported by NEDO(New Energy and Industrial

Technology Development Organization)'s technology development project for promoting new delivery services using autonomous-driving robots.

■ Outline of Field Test for Delivery Service in Residential Areas

[Phase 1] Demonstration drive of autonomous-driving robot on public roads

< Purpose >

- To test technology and identify issues for driving on public roads

< Content >

- The control center and autonomous-driving robot will be connected via a public internet network, and the operator of the control center will monitor the conditions around the robot on a regular basis.
- The autonomous-driving robot will run on its own while avoiding obstacles. In situations where it is difficult to avoid obstacles automatically, it will switch to remote control, with driving controlled from the control center.



(Front)

(Side)

Autonomous-driving Robot (Image)

< Time Period >

November 25-December 24, 2020

< Place >

From Shonan T-SITE in Fujisawa Sustainable Smart Town to around the residential area on the south side of Active Park. The remote control center will be set up in Shonan T-SITE.

[Phase 2] Test of delivery service using autonomous-driving robot

< Purpose >

- To test the acceptability of the new delivery service experience using robots

< Content >

- Reduction of labor for delivery services through the use of robots
- Non-face-to-face delivery of packages and products using a smartphone app
- Communication using the interactive function between the robot and the remote control center

< Time Period >

February-March 2021 (planned)

< Place >

The driving route and the location of the remote control center will be decided at a later date based on the results of the Phase 1 demonstration drive of the autonomous-driving robot on public roads.

* As of now, the company has not obtained a road use permit from relevant ministries and agencies for the Phase 2 test of the delivery service.

■ About the permit for conducting demonstration drives for autonomous-driving robots on public roads

To conduct demonstration drives using autonomous-driving robots on public roads, it is necessary to apply for a road use permit at the police station overseeing the area after consultations with the National Police Agency and related prefectural police based on the procedures issued by the National Police Agency for demonstration drives of automatic delivery robots (nearby monitoring/operation-type and remote monitoring/operation-type) on public roads.

As for the Phase 1 demonstration drive of the autonomous-driving robot on public roads to be conducted before the end of 2020, the company has obtained a road use permit from Fujisawa Police Station to use the remote monitoring/operation-type autonomous-driving robot, following the relaxation of the safety standards for road trucking vehicles by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. With the permit, the company has been conducting demonstration drives with the cooperation of Kanagawa Prefecture and Fujisawa City.

■ About Fujisawa Sustainable Smart Town

Fujisawa Sustainable Smart Town is an urban development project located on the former site of Panasonic's factory in Fujisawa City, Kanagawa Prefecture, with the participation of 18 groups including Panasonic and Fujisawa City. As a real smart town where more than 2,000 people live, it is working on sustainable urban development while also aiming to solve issues facing society and the community through the implementation of mechanisms jointly designed by the companies, local governments, and residents involved with the town, and through the creation of new services.

Official website: <https://fujisawasst.com/EN/>

Media Contact:

Panasonic Corporation Brand Strategy Division Global Communications Office

<https://news.panasonic.com/global/contacts/>

About Panasonic

Panasonic Corporation is a worldwide leader in the development of diverse electronics technologies and solutions for customers in the consumer electronics, housing, automotive, and B2B businesses. The company, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2018, has expanded globally and now operates 528 subsidiaries and 72 associated companies worldwide, recording consolidated net sales of 7.49 trillion yen for the year ended March 31, 2020. Committed to pursuing new value through innovation across divisional lines, the company uses its technologies to create a better life and a better world for its customers. To learn more about Panasonic:

<https://www.panasonic.com/global>.

**The content in the following news releases is accurate at the time of publication but may be subject to change without notice. Please note therefore that these documents may not always contain the most up-to-date information.*