

The Apple Car Is Coming – Here Are Eight Things You Need to Know

By [Mike Peterson](#)

2019-01-16 - iDropNews



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Apple is working on a car. Or, *maybe* it's simply working on a complex set of technologies *related* to automobiles and driving... In any case, the endeavor (codenamed Project Titan) has been a facet of the Apple news sphere for years. Despite the fact that Project Titan is a poorly kept secret, it still remains murky.

With that being said, there have been quite a few patents, hires, reports and other rumors revealing certain aspects of the initiative. Continue reading to learn eight things you need to know about the Apple Car.

It'll Likely Be an Actual Car

Originally, the goal of Apple's Project Titan was rumored to be the development of an actual Apple Car, the vehicular version of an iPhone, so to speak. But after a series of roadblocks, Project Titan shifted its focus to what Apple CEO Tim Cook called "autonomous systems."

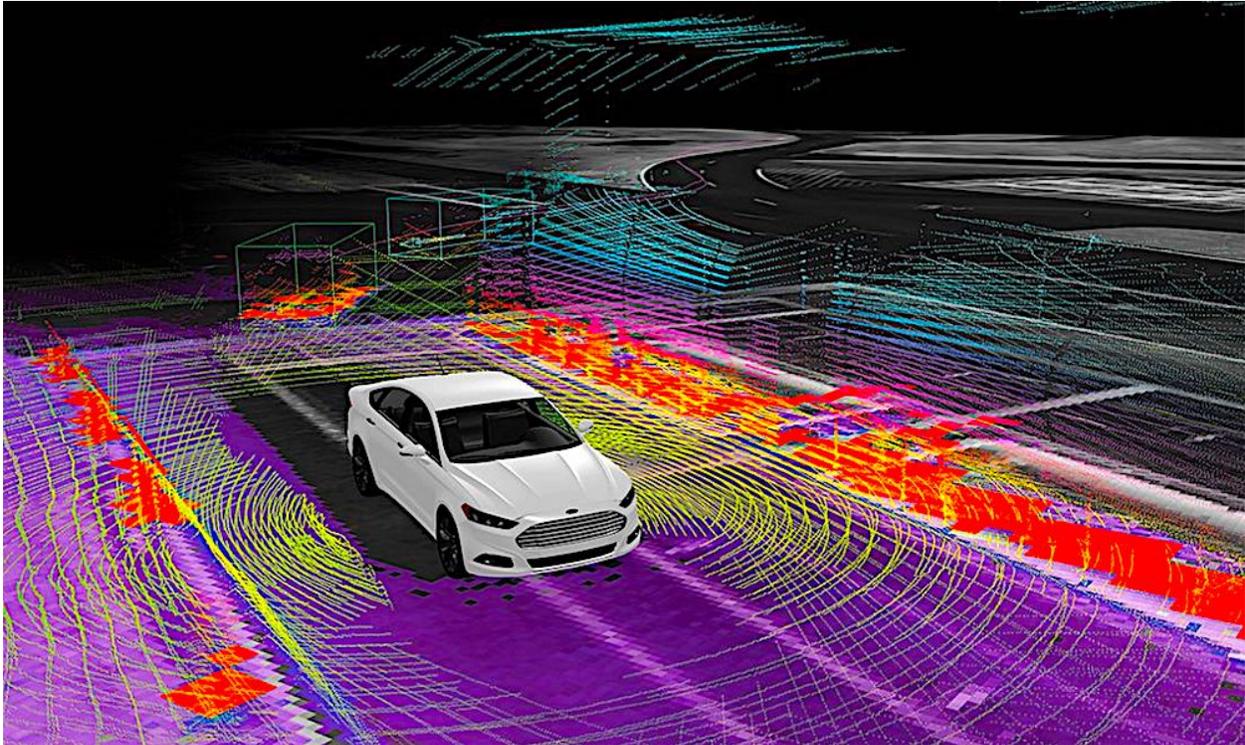
Still, more recently, Apple has seemingly had a renewed interest in **actual** car tech. Back in August, it patented technology related to sunroofs and intelligent seats. There have been other indications that an actual Apple vehicle could debut eventually, too, including a research note by oft-accurate Ming-Chi Kuo.



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It'll Drive Itself

Whether or not Apple launches an Apple Car or simply underlying systems, we do know that Project Titan is working on autonomous vehicle technology. In other words, whatever form it may take, the Apple car project is more specifically an Apple *self-driving* car project.



Consumer Reports

Apple has filed a number of patents related to the tech. The company has even offered a few rare glimpses into its machine-learning automobile systems. And the technology is even being tested on public roads in California, since Apple currently fields one of the largest fleets of self-driving vehicles in the state.

Top-Tier Talent Is Behind It

Apple is taking its car project seriously if its various hires are any indication. The Cupertino tech giant has brought on some top-tier talent from across the automobile field to make its self-driving vehicle a reality. While Apple has undoubtedly hired even more engineers, the following are just a few notable examples.

Back in June 2018, Apple hired an ex-Waymo and NASA engineer who was “instrumental” at Google’s Project Waymo. In August, Apple rehired a former alumnus who had gone to work for Tesla. A few months later, it hired another senior Tesla designer. And way back in 2016, Apple poached the technical director for Porsche’s racing division.

It Could Incorporate Virtual Reality

Virtual reality and driving seem like two technology categories at odds with each other. But, of course, reliable self-driving car technology could change that. If your car can safely drive itself to your destination without any input, you’re free to do whatever you want.



Ubisoft / Renault

Apple has caught on to that fact. A patent filed in April 2018 even details a virtual reality system that can play various “scenes” onto the vehicle’s windshields (or interior displays). One example given in the patent could include a VR scenario that transforms your commute into a horrifying escape from zombies.

It May Be Much Larger Than Expected

Last summer, an ex-Apple engineer was indicted for stealing trade secrets related to the company’s self-driving car project. While that wasn’t great for Apple and its secrecy culture, court documents related to the case did reveal quite a few interesting details about Project Titan.



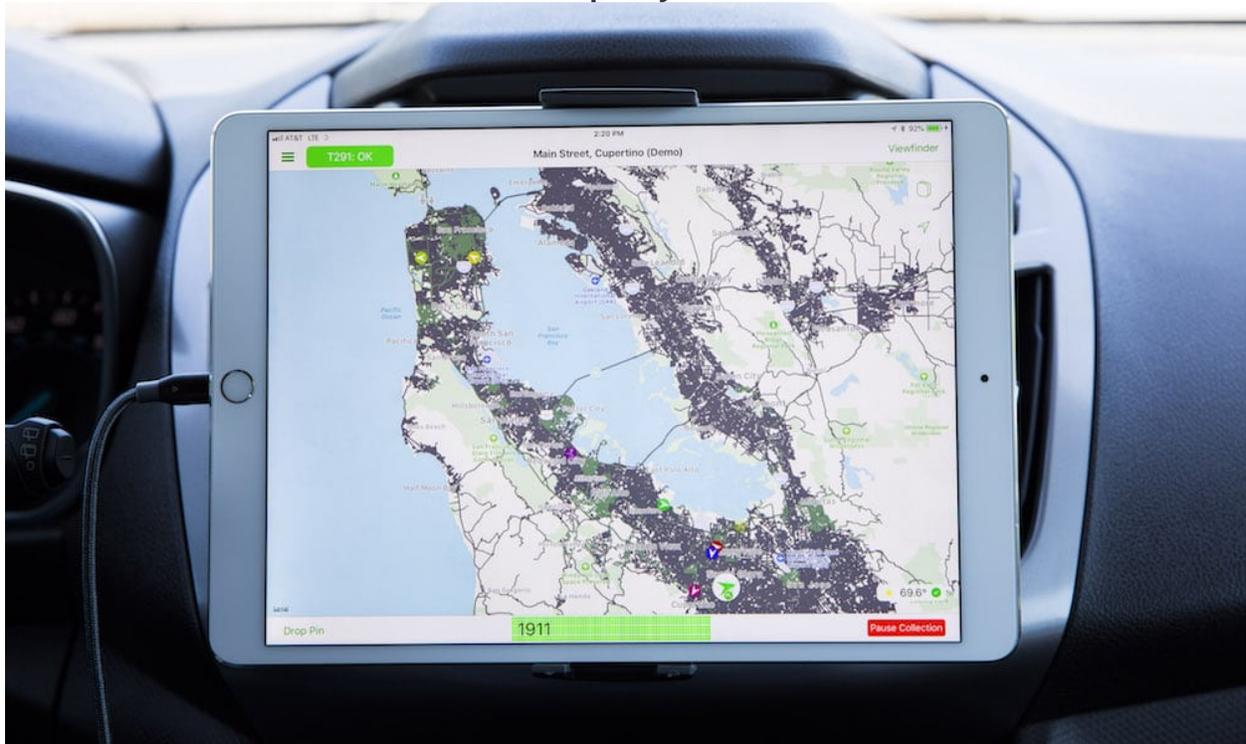
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For example, those documents indicate that Apple had about 5,000 employees working on the car project, up from just about 1,000 two years earlier. That details its scope, as well as how much it has grown. Documents also revealed that Apple has prototype car technology, its Project Titan staff are segmented into teams, and that the project has produced “copious” amounts of data.

Apple Maps Revamp Is Likely Related

Among a suite of sensors and machine-learning technology, self-driving car tech also relies heavily on mapping data. That’s why Apple’s complete overhaul of

its Apple Maps platform is likely not unrelated to the firm's autonomous vehicle project.



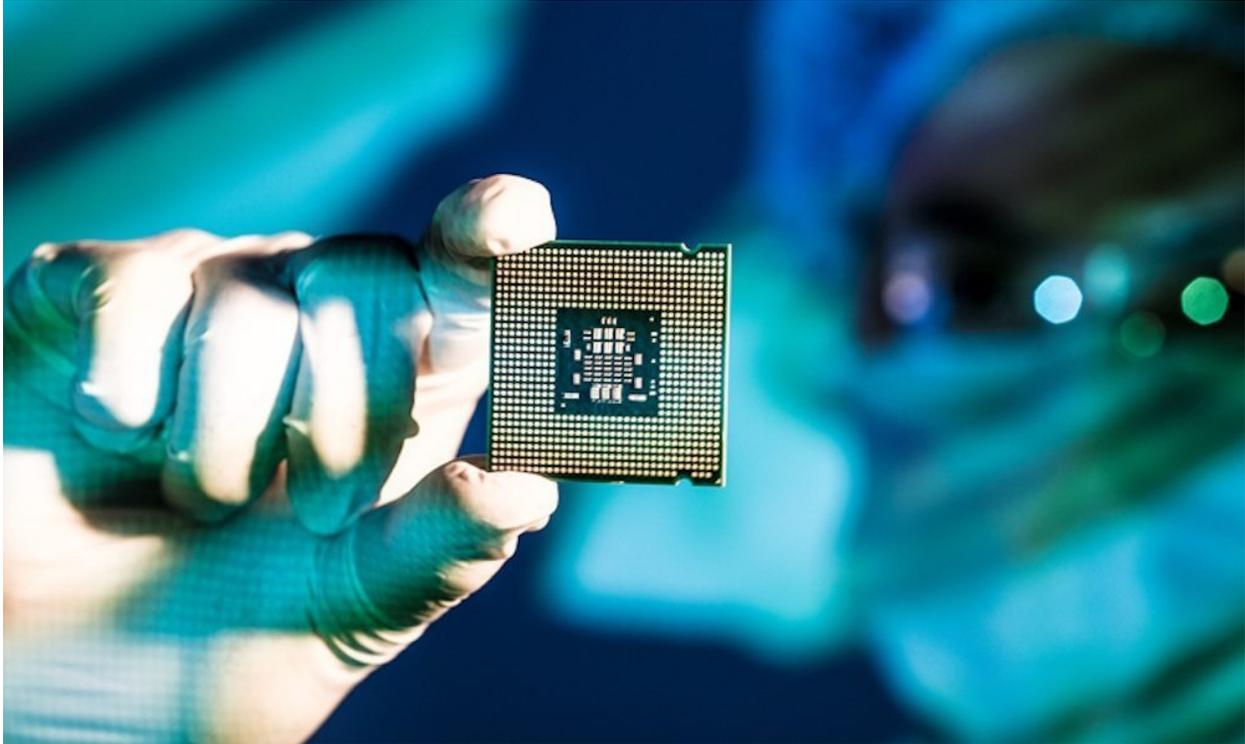
TechCrunch

Apple is painstakingly collecting first-party data both on foot and using special Apple Maps vehicles (you can track the company's efforts here). Some of the fruits of that effort showed up in iOS 12, but Apple is still hard at working improving Apple Maps. When you consider the timing of the two projects, it's hard to say it's just a coincidence.

It Could Boost Apple's Chipmaking

As mentioned earlier, Apple is developing and testing a suite of first-party technology related to autonomous systems. But an easily overlooked report from October

2018 hints that even some of the smallest components of the Apple Car or Apple Car System could be “Designed by Apple in California.”



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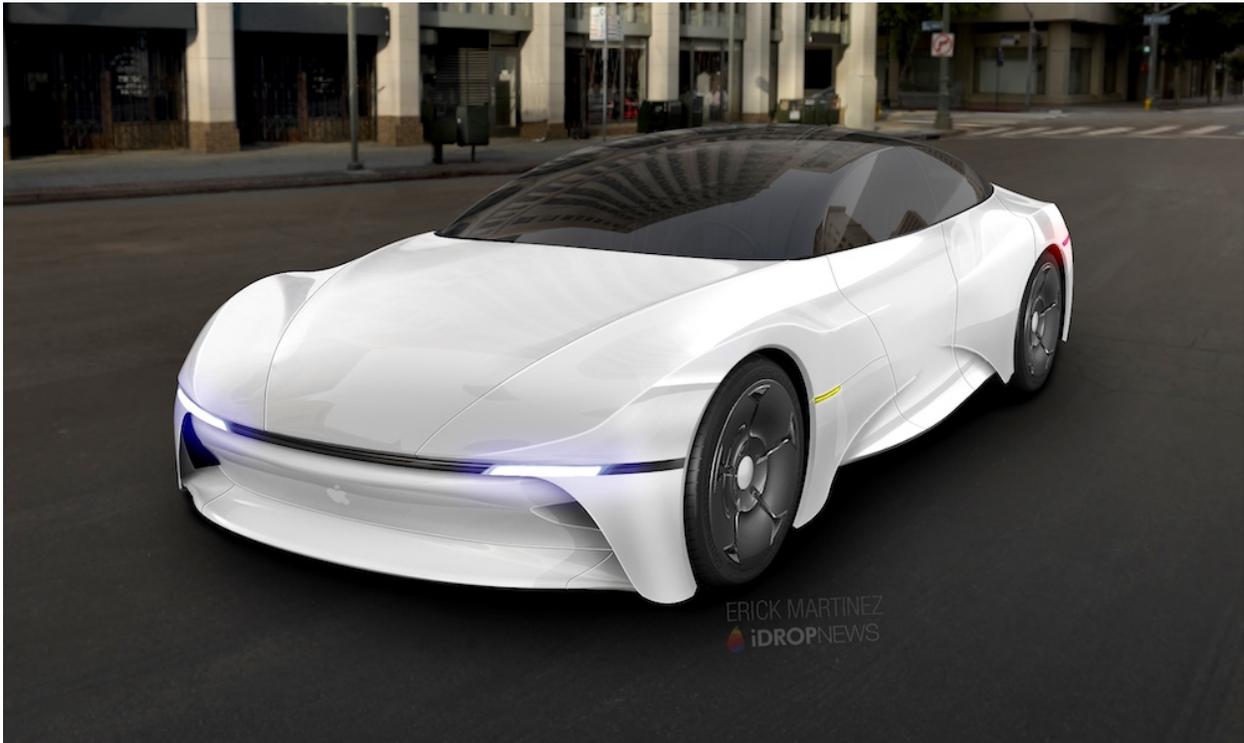
Specifically, TF Securities analyst Ming-Chi Kuo suggested in a research note that Apple could tap long-time partner TSMC to produce Apple-designed chips for the Apple Car system. Based on Apple’s increasing supply self-reliance, and its ambitions of becoming a chipmaking powerhouse, this makes perfect sense.

Release Date? Before 2025

Of course, all of this secretive development is probably most exciting for Apple aficionados or technology watchers. For the average consumer, the idea of an

Apple Car or Apple-designed car system won't really hit home until Tim Cook (or someone else) stands on stage and *actually* announces it.

We just don't know when that might be, however. But some analysts and tech industry watchers have made educated guesses. In August 2018, TF Securities analyst Ming-Chi Kuo said that the Apple Car system (which could take the form of a consumer product) would ship to customers between 2023 and 2025.



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original article:

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