

Engineering an Accessible Sienna: How Toyota Collaborates with BraunAbility and VMI to Support the Disability Community

July 28, 2020

Image not found or type unknown

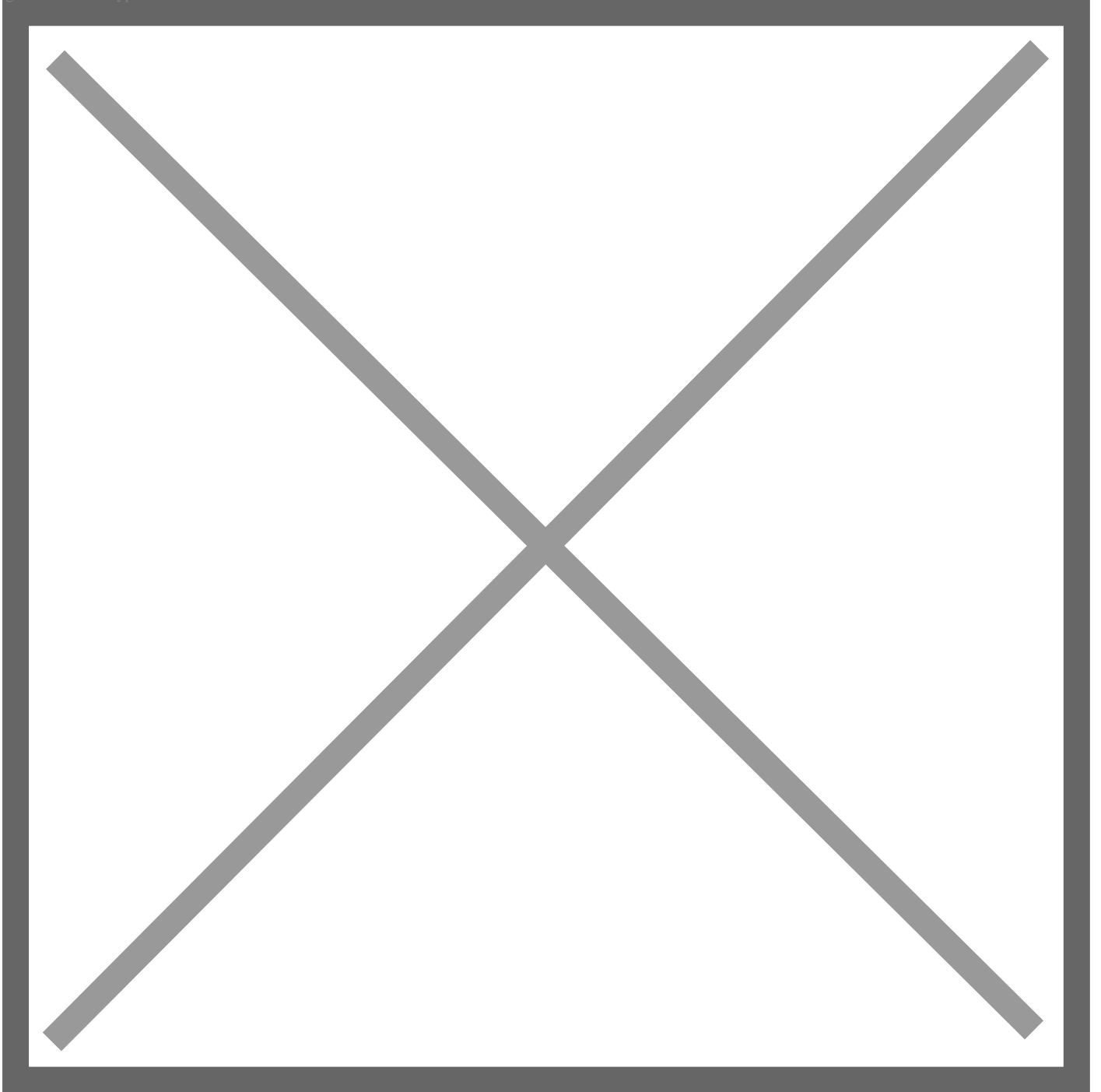


Image not found or type unknown

It's well-known that the Toyota Sienna is one of America's most beloved vehicles. But for consumers with disabilities, the Accessible Sienna, equipped with modifications such as ramps and wheelchair lifts, has become a lifeline. The vehicle has provided over 20,000 people with the freedom to move, granting them greater independence and the ability to accomplish their goals.

First introduced in 1998 as a family-friendly vehicle, the Sienna's shape and size made it well-suited for conversion to provide individuals with disabilities solutions to meet their various mobility needs. But how is a Sienna converted and tailored?

Since 2005 and 2012 respectively, BraunAbility and Vantage Mobility International (VMI), have been modifying Siennas for the disability community and adding accessible features tailored to each customer's needs. In addition to being the only two companies that work with Toyota to convert the Sienna, they share Toyota's mission and vision of "mobility for all" and equality of access through mobility.

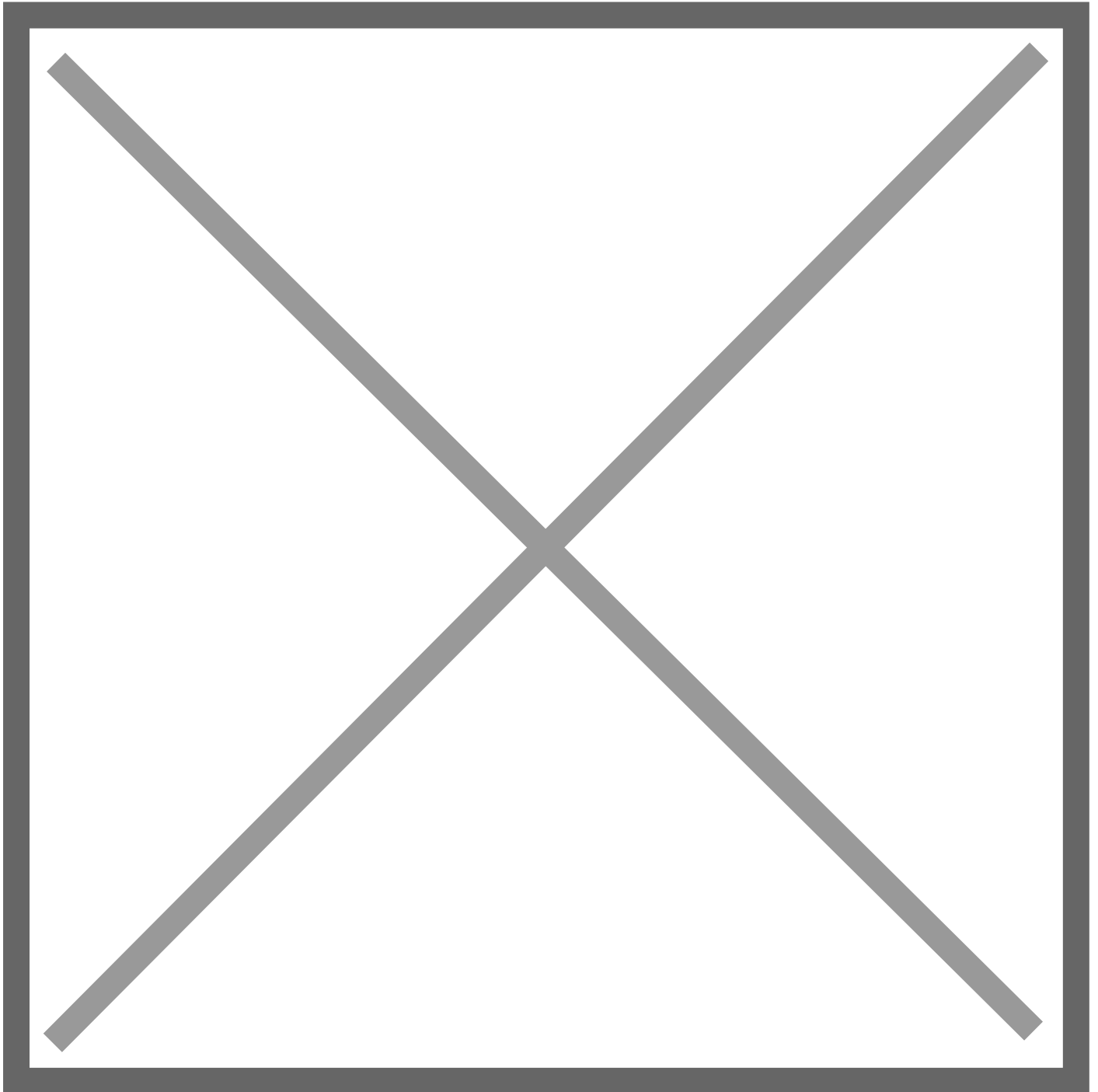


Toyota provides BraunAbility and VMI early access to new model designs, specs and vehicle prototypes and opportunities to ask Toyota engineers about the Sienna's design. This behind-the-curtain peek allows VMI and BraunAbility engineers to understand the structure and dimensions of the vehicle as they begin to plan the design for modifications.

The access to the vehicles allows BraunAbility and VMI to make more thorough and comprehensive design changes and accelerates the availability of the modified Siennas to shortly after Toyota launches the new model year. These Toyota Siennas offer many of the same top-of-the-line, advanced technologies, multimedia and

connected tech and state-of-the-art exterior designs as the models seen at traditional dealership showrooms.

The modified Siennas offer features like wheelchair accessibility via side-entry fold out or in-floor ramps or rear-entry ramps – with each option customizable to meet the needs of each individual or family. Both companies have engineered solutions to increase space within the cabin and allow many of the largest power chairs plenty of room to maneuver in the interior of the Sienna, which allows wheelchair-bound passengers the ability to rotate their chair 360 degrees without obstruction.



The modifications available are designed in part through feedback from the community. For instance, BraunAbility and VMI both conduct clinics to solicit input as part of its design process and sends out surveys to request suggestions and comments about potential modifications, as well as about barriers the disability community faces in society. VMI invites customers to test the vehicles at events and trade shows and takes into account their suggestions on improvements.

As July marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Toyota is extremely proud of the role of the Sienna to help advance the mobility of people with disabilities. Toyota thanks the great teams at VMI and BraunAbility for their work and commitment to the community. What began nearly two decades ago has grown into a robust program dedicated to converting the Sienna for wheelchair accessibility.

Just as the Sienna continues to improve with each new model offering, we look forward to the new ideas that BraunAbility and VMI bring in order to provide the most advanced and reliable vehicles to the disability community for years to come.