

# Toyota AI Ventures Invests in YPC Technologies Through 2020 "Call for Innovation"

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LOS ALTOS, Calif. (October 20, 2020) — [Toyota AI Ventures](#), Toyota’s early-stage venture capital fund, today announced its investment in YPC Technologies, a robotic kitchen startup based in Montreal, Canada. The funding follows YPC Technologies’ participation in the 2020 Toyota AI Ventures “[call for innovation](#)” focused on smart, connected cities that launched earlier this year in partnership with [Toyota Research Institute – Advanced Development \(TRI-AD\)](#) and [Toyota Research Institute \(TRI\)](#).

Toyota AI Ventures views cities as a platform for innovation, and this year’s global call for innovation focused on attracting and investing in early-stage startups that are building solutions for smart and connected cities in the areas of artificial intelligence, robotics, autonomy, mobility, cloud, or data. The call allowed Toyota AI Ventures, TRI-AD, and TRI to discover startups across a variety of different verticals that are solving real-world problems.

Based in Tokyo, Japan, TRI-AD is overseeing Toyota’s Woven City, which will serve as a living laboratory for innovations such as mobility and robotics. “Urban communities face complex challenges to long-term sustainability,” said Dr. James Kuffner, CEO of TRI-AD and chief digital officer and member of the Board of Directors of Toyota Motor Corporation. “There is an immense need for more inventors, thinkers, and creators to help the cities of our world better support happy, healthy human life.”

“At TRI, we’re always searching for ways to amplify human ability and help improve quality of life,” said Dr. Gill Pratt, CEO of TRI and chief scientist and executive fellow of Toyota Motor Corporation, and a member of the Toyota AI Ventures board of directors. “Through the call for innovation, we got a first-hand look at how startups like YPC Technologies are addressing the needs of people in urban communities, and we’re encouraged and excited by their efforts.”

“We applied to the call for innovation because we were excited about the opportunity to be a part of Toyota AI Ventures’ vision for a smart city,” CEO and co-founder of YPC Technologies Gunnar Grass said. “We believe that in the future, cities around the world will have hyperlocal, automated kitchens to produce fresh, restaurant-quality food next to the consumer, and we’re thrilled to have the support of Toyota AI Ventures as we continue to grow our company.”

“We received a significant number of qualified applicants through the call, and YPC Technologies captured our attention from the beginning. Gunnar and the founding team have a compelling solution that tackles food preparation efficiency, at scale, yet without sacrificing variety or quality,” said Jim Adler, founding managing director of Toyota AI Ventures. “It’s easy to imagine automated kitchens becoming a fundamental part of the local, smart city market ecosystem. We are thrilled to support the YPC team as they move their robotic kitchen into that ecosystem.”

YPC is the twenty-eighth portfolio company announced by Toyota AI Ventures, and the investment is part of a \$1.8M seed round that YPC announced today. The round was co-led by Hike Ventures and returning investor Real Ventures, with participation from Uphill Capital and multiple angel investors.

More information about YPC Technologies and other companies in the Toyota AI Ventures portfolio is available on the Toyota AI Ventures [website](#).