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Loblaw deploys Canada's first autonomous delivery fleet

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Loblaw Cos. Ltd. and Gatik announced a multi-year partnership to deploy a fleet of autonomous delivery vehicles in Toronto. Beginning January 2021, Gatik will provide Loblaw with a safe, reliable, contactless delivery solution for transporting multi-temperature goods from its automated picking facility to retail locations across the Greater Toronto Area. This deployment marks the first autonomous delivery fleet in Canada.

This announcement follows the successful completion of a 10-month on-road pilot in Toronto, with one autonomous delivery vehicle. To meet Loblaw's unique retailing needs, Gatik upfits Ford Transit 350 box trucks with refrigeration units, lift gates, and its proprietary autonomous self-driving software for urban, suburban and highway driving. Gatik will be operating its vehicles, five in total, for Loblaw

up to seven days a week, 12 hours a day, on five routes operating on public roads with fixed pick-up and drop-off locations. All vehicles will have a safety driver as a co-pilot.

“Loblaw is one of Canada’s leading grocery retailers and we are proud to be selected to play a key role in enhancing the safety and efficiency of its already robust supply chain,” said Gautam Narang, CEO and co-founder of Gatik. “Retailers know the biggest inefficiencies in their logistics operations often exist in the middle-mile, typically between automated picking facilities and retail locations. This is where Gatik lives and succeeds, and is the reason we’re able to offer immediate value to our customers. We are delighted to partner with Loblaw in addressing this critical piece of their supply chain.” To date, Gatik has completed more than 30,000 revenue-generating autonomous deliveries for multiple customers across North America.

“As more Canadians turn to online grocery shopping, we’ve looked at ways to make our supply chain more efficient. Middle-mile autonomous delivery is a great example,” said Lauren Steinberg, senior vice president, Loblaw Digital. “With this initial roll-out in Toronto, we are able to move goods from our automated picking facility multiple times a day to keep pace with PC Express online grocery orders in stores around the city.”

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