

Focus | **ROBOTIC PARKING GARAGES**

# a PLACE for YOUR TOYS

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Several million years ago — or maybe it was just 45 years ago — kids my age could buy a cute toy high-rise parking deck (see one example at right) that would automatically park their Hot Wheels cars.

Now, it's 2014 and real, live parking decks like this are a thing, right here in Southern California. Can the birth of SkyNet be far behind?



## HOW THEY WORK

The process, frankly, couldn't be simpler. Which is part of the point: The aim for most of these decks is to have the driver in and on her way in just two or three minutes.

**7** When the driver returns, she runs her ticket — and perhaps a debit card as well — through the card reader. The entire process reverses, depositing her car within a parking bay.

**8** The departing driver doesn't even have to back out of the deck, thanks to a turntable built into the floor of the bay.

Typically, a door might have a "ready" or "up" light, much like you'd find by an elevator.

**1** A driver pulls up to the parking deck, choosing one of several entry bay doors.

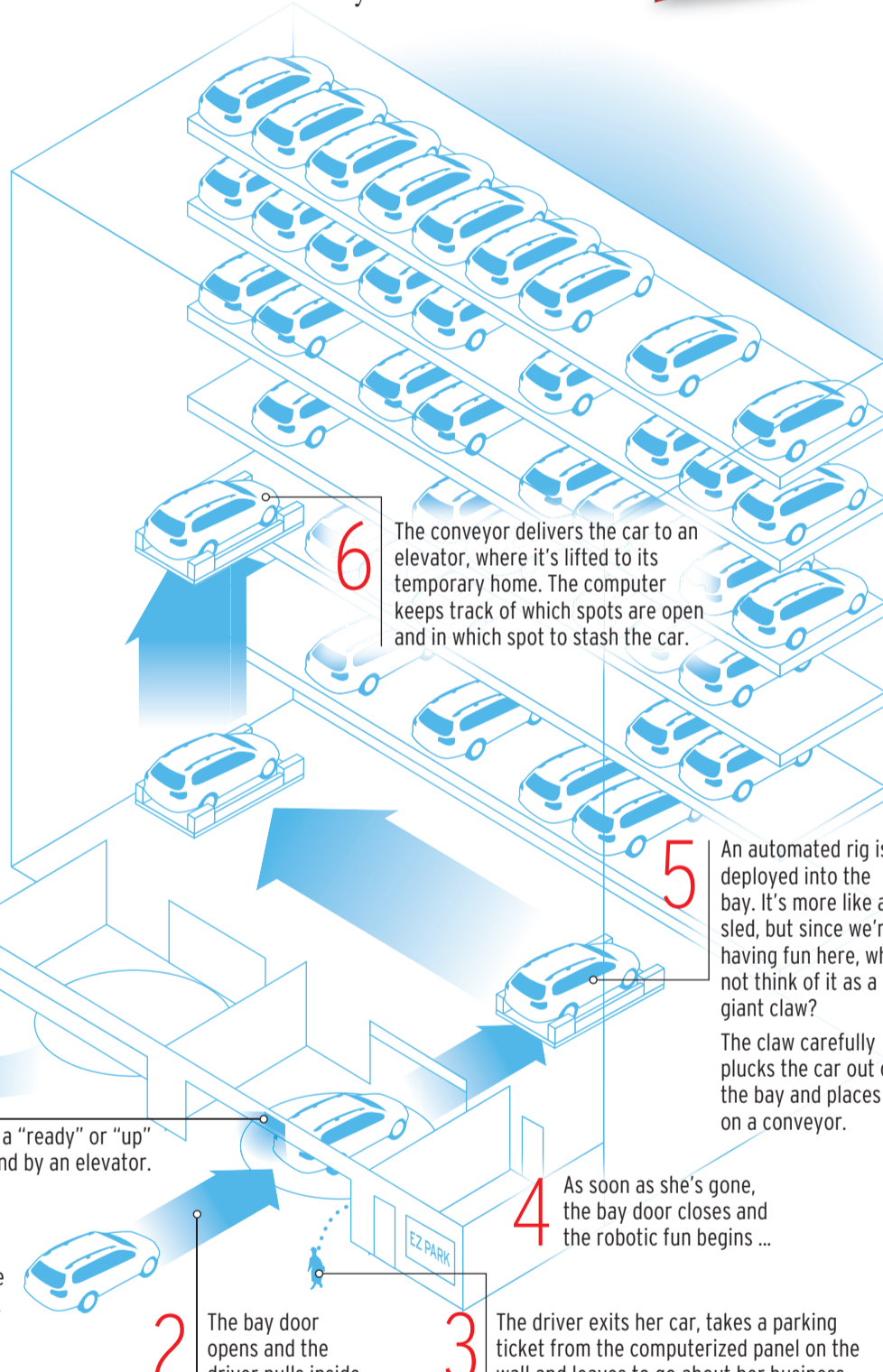
**2** The bay door opens and the driver pulls inside.

**3** The driver exits her car, takes a parking ticket from the computerized panel on the wall and leaves to go about her business.

**4** As soon as she's gone, the bay door closes and the robotic fun begins ...

**5** An automated rig is deployed into the bay. It's more like a sled, but since we're having fun here, why not think of it as a giant claw? The claw carefully plucks the car out of the bay and places it on a conveyor.

**6** The conveyor delivers the car to an elevator, where it's lifted to its temporary home. The computer keeps track of which spots are open and in which spot to stash the car.



## TAKEN TO EXTREMES

Now, close your eyes and imagine what would happen if that same concept were applied to a *giant* garage: One that could hold hundreds of vehicles.

Do you have that image in your head? Good — now, open your eyes. Did your imagination match this picture of the Autostadt in Wolfsburg, Germany?



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The Volkswagen company uses that 20-story automated parking deck to store cars as they come off the assembly line and before they can be shipped to dealers. The company even offers guided tours of the deck.

## WHERE TO FIND THEM

These technological marvels don't exist in Riverside or Orange counties or in Long Beach — yet — but seven are either built, underway or proposed in Los Angeles. While each project uses somewhat different technology, the basic concept is the same.

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| <p><b>UCLA SANTA MONICA OUTPATIENT SURGERY CENTER EVALET</b></p> <p><b>WHAT:</b> 385 stalls for a surgery center</p> <p><b>WHERE:</b> 1223 16th St. in Santa Monica</p> <p><b>STATUS:</b> Opened May 2012</p> <p><b>WHO:</b> San Francisco-based Nautilus Group</p> <p><b>COST:</b> \$8 million</p> | <p><b>THE SAVANNAHS APARTMENT BUILDING AUTO PARKIT</b></p> <p><b>WHAT:</b> 17 stalls in a high-end, eight-unit apartment building</p> <p><b>WHERE:</b> 14309 Burbank Blvd. in Sherman Oaks</p> <p><b>STATUS:</b> Opened Feb. 21, 2013</p> <p><b>WHO:</b> Los Angeles real estate developer Christopher Alan, who partnered with Dasher Lawless, Omron Automation &amp; Safety, Design Systems Inc., SEW Eurodrive, ConXtech and others</p> <p><b>COST:</b> \$22,000 per stall</p> | <p><b>LOTUS GARDEN AFFORDABLE APARTMENTS CARMATRIX</b></p> <p><b>WHAT:</b> 17 stalls in a semi-automated parking garage for a 60-unit affordable housing complex. The garage also contains 46 traditional parking spaces.</p> <p><b>WHERE:</b> 715-721 Yale St. in Chinatown</p> <p><b>STATUS:</b> Construction finished in November. Awaiting approval from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety.</p> <p><b>WHO:</b> Denver-based Harding Steel</p> <p><b>COST:</b> \$18,000 per stall</p> | <p><b>WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY HALL</b></p> <p><b>WHAT:</b> 200 stalls for public parking and city employee parking</p> <p><b>WHERE:</b> West Hollywood City Hall at 8300 Santa Monica Blvd.</p> <p><b>STATUS:</b> Construction will finish fall 2015.</p> <p><b>WHO:</b> Unitronics</p> <p><b>COST:</b> \$16 million (includes the garage, photovoltaic panels, community plaza plus design and engineering)</p> | <p><b>ABBOT KINNEY HOTEL</b></p> <p><b>WHAT:</b> 160 stalls in an underground garage for an 87-room hotel</p> <p><b>WHERE:</b> 1033 Abbot Kinney Blvd. in Venice</p> <p><b>STATUS:</b> The application was approved by the Venice Neighborhood Council in February and is headed to the Los Angeles Department of City Planning.</p> <p><b>WHO:</b> Architect David Hertz FAIA</p> <p><b>COST:</b> Unknown</p> | <p><b>PROPOSED MIXED-USER IN VENICE</b></p> <p><b>WHAT:</b> 242 stalls in an underground garage for a mixed-user with 26 condos and four commercial units</p> <p><b>WHERE:</b> 1414 Main St.</p> <p><b>STATUS:</b> The application was denied by the Venice Neighborhood Council and is headed to the Los Angeles Department of City Planning.</p> <p><b>WHO:</b> Brian Silveria and Jason Teague</p> <p><b>COST:</b> Unknown</p> | <p><b>PROPOSED MIXED-USER IN SANTA MONICA</b></p> <p><b>WHAT:</b> More than 100 stalls in an underground garage for a mixed-user with 77 apartments and ground-floor retail</p> <p><b>WHERE:</b> 525 Colorado Ave. in Santa Monica</p> <p><b>STATUS:</b> Project is being re-designed.</p> <p><b>WHO:</b> San Francisco-based Nautilus Group</p> <p><b>COST:</b> Unknown</p> |
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Sources: City of West Hollywood, AutoEvolution, The Autostadt, Staff reports

LIST COMPILED BY LAUREN JOW, STAFF REPORTER