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Vision for the future

In April 1962 the Ford Motor Company exhibited a concept car that featured some extremely forward-looking details at the Seattle World Fair. Responsible for the future concept were the designers Alexander Sarantos "Alex" Tremulis and James "Jim" Powers.

Due to the fact that the car featured a front twin axle, just the look itself contrasted the car from previous vehicles. With the steerable tandem front axle the designers wanted to show the advantages compared to a single axle. Those advantages were a reasonable improved deceleration due to the additional disk breaks at the additional wheels, a better power transmission to the road and guaranteed road grip in aquaplaning situations. But their vision of the far future was also shown by other features of their concept car and especially one feature fascinates even today – an early navigation system. The obligatory steering wheel of a car was replaced by touchscreen controls. Less forward-looking were the fitted blinds

of the rear window, which should darken the passenger compartment and also provided noise reduction. The forward-looking features of the car most probably amazed the visitors of the fair. With some imagination most of the features were quite comprehensible, but this definitely did not apply to the drive of the car. The Ford engineers planned to fit their car with an nuclear drive. Ford remained short on empirical values of this until then unknown type of drive in the automotive industry, as the exhibited car was just a show car and therefore not in a running condition. At the first glance the visitors were lost with the type designation "Seattle-ite XXI". It was a pun in relation to the exhibition venue Seattle, the word satellite and the 21st century.

As we know today, the designers of Ford hit the mark of the future automotive world with their navigation system. But with their steerable twin axle and especially with their nuclear drive the designers were completely wrong.

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