Android Auto gets a big UI revamp

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- The new Android Auto. The big change is the system bar at the bottom, which can now show tiny app controls. Here are music controls.
- With the music open, you'll get turn-by-turn information in the bottom bar.
- For reference, Android Auto currently looks like this.
- This used to be the Android Auto home screen, but now it lives under the "bell" icon.
- This is the new home screen, a grid of app icons.
- Here's an incoming call.

Google I/O is going to kick off later today, but before the big show starts, Google has pushed out an early announcement: Android Auto is getting a new look. Google's update won't arrived until "This summer," but we get screenshots today showing all the significant new additions.

Google says "The new interface is built to help you get on the road faster, show more useful information at a glance, and simplify common tasks while driving." In previous versions of Android Auto, a system bar at the bottom of the screen housed five app icons: Maps, Contacts, Home, Music, and a "car" screen (which didn't have much use). The new version removes the app shortcuts from the system bar's navigation and instead

turns it into a mini app bar. There’s a “Home” button” on the left, notification and voice buttons on the right, and a middle section that intelligently displays a tiny interface from either navigation or your media app. With the Map open, you’ll get music controls at the bottom. With the music open, you’ll see your next turn information.

Android Auto

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With most of the app navigation abilities removed from the system bar, Android Auto is switching to a tried-and-true app grid for app navigation. This grid of apps is now the new home screen, and the familiar list of notifications and suggestions (Android Auto’s old home screen) now live under the bell button.

The whole app gets a darker color scheme, and Google notes that it should be more flexible and stretch to fit more car screens properly. Google also mentions that Android Auto will now start playing media when you first start the car, and it will start up your navigation app of choice.

Android Auto typically goes a long time between upgrades, and a big reason for that is the legal red tape that comes with updating a car infotainment system. Google needs the OK from tons of safety governing bodies around the world before it can do a rollout, so pushing any new code is pretty much a nightmare.

Google is sharing these screenshots ahead of Google I/O, which should have a bit more information about the new Android Auto UI. While this is all just referring to the Android Auto app, which requires a tethered Android phone and a compatible car, we’re also hoping to learn more about the baked-in version of Android Auto (sometimes called Android Automotive”), which

will be installed directly to the car hardware.

We’ll be on the lookout for more Android Auto news, and we’ll leave you with Google’s new promotional video:

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