

## 2010 ACURA ZDX



Starting with the platform and mechanical components of the MDX, Honda has created a “crossover utility vehicle with personal sports coupe styling”, meaning in fact that the ZDX is designed to accommodate two adults and their belongings. The ZDX is a bit longer (4.3 cm) and, especially, lower (13.7 cm) than the MDX. Its dimensions are the same as those of its two main competitors, the BMW X6 and Infiniti FX, except for height, which is lower. The ZDX is powered by a 3.7-litre V6 and equipped with the SH-AWD all-wheel-drive system.

### **Interior and cargo area**

This being a low vehicle with very wide doorsills, access to the front is difficult for tall people. The front seats are very comfortable but would be even more comfortable if we could adjust the angle of the rear of the cushion. Practically any driver can find a pleasing driving position. Legroom is good, but headroom is limited for tall people.

Access to the rear is even worse than to the front because of the sharp rake of the roof and a lack of space between the seat cushion and B-pillar. The bench seat can accommodate two adults, who’ll find the comfort just average because of the low seat cushion. Legroom is good, but headroom is tight, even for someone of average height. The seatback is split 60/40 and both sides fold flat to the floor, leaving a gap behind the front seats wide enough for a pet to tumble in.

Cargo capacity is average. The cargo floor is high and, because of the pronounced slant of the tailgate, ceiling height is 20.5 cm lower at the rear, going from 59.5 to 39 cm over a distance of 71 cm. The sill is high and uneven (lower in the middle than on the sides). The cargo area measures 93 cm rear seat up, 185 cm rear seat down and front seats adjusted for tall people, and 96.5 cm wide. Fortunately, there’s a relatively spacious under-floor storage area. The tailgate opens high out of the way.

### **Convenience and safety**

Interior finish is excellent and the quality of materials is impressive. Honda has taken great pains to improve sound control through numerous hours spent in the wind tunnel and through the use of composite insulators, an acoustic glass windshield, etc. Soundproofing can be considered successful except for road noise on some paved surfaces, which travels through as an unpleasant rumble. Cabin storage is plentiful throughout.

Gauges and controls are well laid out and all are illuminated at night. The heating system is efficient. The click of the turn signals is barely audible. The headlight washers are driver activated, which is good, but after the engine is switched on, they start automatically the first time the windshield washers are used, which is unnecessary because there's already a separate control.

Honda demonstrates its respect of environment through an even greater reduction of harmful metals such as chromium and lead, as well as of volatile organic compounds (VOC) and polyvinyl chlorides (PVC). The ZDX is also the first Acura to be equipped with a mercury-free navigation display screen. At the factory, a special separation line isolates different scrap materials for recycling.

Safety equipment includes six airbags (dual front, side and curtain); four-wheel disc brakes with ABS; stability control; five head restraints (active in front); and the ACE body structure, which better protects occupants in a frontal collision with a higher or lower vehicle. Visibility is good towards the front, but all the roof pillars create large, and even very large blind zones towards the rear. In addition, the junction of the slanted and vertical glassed sections of the tailgate restricts rearward visibility. The rear-view mirror creates a blind spot on an angle to the right. The top of the dash reflects off the windshield, and the metal trim reflects annoyingly off the driver-side window level with the outside mirror. The Xenon HID headlights are efficient. There is no wiper for the tailgate window.

In U.S. government crash tests, the ZDX obtained five stars out of five for front-occupant protection in a frontal impact and for all-occupant protection in a side impact. It earned four stars for rollover resistance. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety awarded the ZDX a Good rating, its highest, for driver protection in a frontal offset collision, and an Acceptable rating, its second-highest, for all-occupant protection in a rear collision.

## **Engine and transmission**

The 3.7-litre V6 develops 300 horsepower and 270 pound-feet of torque. Improvements to the engine include a more rigid cylinder block, cylinder heads with improved cooling, a new valvetrain system, a new EGR system, a larger throttle body, new intake valve springs, and more. This engine delivers lively, well-felt acceleration and pickup. However, below 3000 rpm, it seems at times that the ZDX's 2,010-kg weight is making it work hard, at which time it becomes a bit noisy. Fortunately, this V6 climbs easily through the gears.

The new six-speed automatic transmission usually functions very smoothly, especially when it climbs through the gears. When slowing sharply or coming to a stop, you can feel it downshift. It is a bit slow to downshift to second or first. It lets the vehicle be driven off in second gear. In Sport mode, it never shifts to sixth, and to fifth only at very high speed. In Manual mode, gearshifts are relatively fast. An interesting feature of this transmission is that when cornering, it will not shift to a higher gear until the vehicle exits the curve.

The SH-AWD (for Super Handling All-Wheel-Drive) system is very sophisticated. It distributes torque not just between the front and rear axles but also between the rear wheels themselves. In normal driving, it feeds up to 90% of torque to the front wheels. In heavy acceleration, it directs up to 70% to the rear wheels. In hard cornering, up to 100% of torque sent to the rear wheels can be directed to the outside wheel. Torque

distribution is instantly displayed on a screen in the dash, and we noted that in many situations, it is close to 50/50 front-to-rear. It may seem complicated, but it works, and you can feel the vehicle rotate easily around a corner in fast acceleration.

### **On the road**

The fully independent suspension has been tuned to provide a nice blend of suppleness and firmness, and it delivers a generally comfortable ride. You can feel the occasional firm reaction, but no more. Handling is very good on practically all types of pavement. The vehicle drives with a sturdy feel, and its suspension provides the kind of road sensation delivered by some European vehicles, which is not often the case in a Japanese product. It should be noted that the ZDX rides on 19-inch tires, which will be pricey to replace.

A bit heavy, especially at low speed, the power steering is stable, precise and quick. It provides a bit of road sensation. The turning radius is tight. The brakes are very powerful and smooth, with good fade resistance.

### **Inspection**

An inspection at a CAA-Quebec technical inspection centre showed that the ZDX's sturdy platform is not rust coated and that several seams are not sealed. Under the hood, which does not open wide, we noted that the windshield wiper fluid tank and power steering fluid tank are very close together, which could be confusing. The spare tire is placed under the vehicle without any protection, which is inadmissible in a vehicle at this price. The overhead camshafts are belt driven.

### **Conclusion**

Front comfort, engine performance, road compartment and limited room make the ZDX more a personal sports coupe than a utility crossover. Admittedly, its rather unusual bodylines impose serious constraints in terms of visibility and space behind the front seats. People who can live with those particularities will enjoy the experience behind the wheel of this solid, fun-to-drive vehicle.

**PROS:** lively engine, front comfort, ride, handling, stiff structure, fit and finish

**CONS:** access especially to rear, visibility, very wide doorsills, high cargo floor, room and comfort in the back, reflections in windshield and driver-side window

## **2010 ACURA ZDX**

**Engine:** 24-valve, 3.7-litre V6  
**Horsepower:** 300 hp at 6,300 rpm  
**Torque:** 270 lb-ft at 4,500 rpm  
**Transmission:** 6-speed automatic  
**Suspension:** fully independent  
**Brakes:** disc/disc  
**Wheelbase:** 275 cm  
**Length:** 488.7 cm  
**Width:** 217.4 cm (with mirrors)  
**Height:** 159.6 cm  
**Weight:** 2,013 to 2,016 kg

**Tires:** P255/50R19; P245/45R20

**Maximum towing capacity:** 680 kg

**Airbags:** dual front, plus two side and two curtain airbags

**Fuel consumption**

Natural Resources Canada rating:

City: 12.7 L/100 km (22 mpg)

Highway: 8.8 L/100 km (32 mpg)

Test result: 12.5 L/100 km (23 mpg)

Test temperature: 5°C to 18°C

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:** 5,253 kg/20,000 km

**Fuel tank capacity:** 79.5 litres

**Fuel requirement:** premium grade gasoline

**Acceleration:**

0–100 km/h: 7.6 seconds

60–100 km/h: 5.3 seconds

**Competition:** BMW X6, Infiniti FX

**Warranty:**

- Full basic coverage: 4 years/80,000 km
- Major components: 5 years/100,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 4 years/80,000 km
- Perforation damage: 5 years/unlimited km
- Emissions control system: 4 years/80,000 km (full coverage);  
8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module,  
onboard diagnostic system).

**Factory replacement parts:**

- Rear bumper: \$959
- Front brake disc: \$129
- Brake pads: \$80
- Muffler: \$685
- Front fender: \$291

**Price according to trim level:** \$55,990

**Main options:**

- Technology package: \$3,600

**Price as tested:** \$55,990

**Freight and preparation:** \$1,895

**Dealers:** Quebec: 11            Canada: 41

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