

Abstract

Mobility is currently dramatically changing with new vehicles such as automated vehicles and smaller city cars. Automated transit networks and shared vehicles are starting to provide mobility on demand. Uber, Lyft and other companies are providing a taxi-like experience to assist with first mile – last mile solutions. Solar and electric vehicles are being explored as a transportation energy source providing full sustainability. How can all of the emerging changes in transportation affect a small rural University town?

Providing mobility for the elderly, mobility challenged and for those who cannot drive a car is one of the key benefits to these new technologies. A University town such as Carbondale, IL where many students do not own a car is a perfect location to consider these applications. Minimizing the number of vehicles needed while providing timely accessibility is another key feature of these systems. Parking can be reduced or at minimum not increased, saving the University and town this cost. The town and University could become bike friendly and existing streets and pathways could be transformed into green systems assisting with better water drainage and providing pleasant safe walking/biking paths. The TEC Campus and the Main Campus could now be connected for greater departmental interactions and easier class scheduling. The list of positive outcomes is amazing.

The university and town could be transformed as the best small university town in America. Come and engage in the discussion and learn about the new technologies and how they can transform our University and town.