

You are here and the future is now

By Haley Shapley

Revolutionary technology aims to make the world more secure, efficient and livable.

Technology can accomplish a variety of objectives, from good to bad to everything in between, but one of the best uses of innovative advancements is to help make the everyday of life easier. Inventors and engineers around the world are developing new ways to make communities more livable — think safer streets, better commuting and errands run automatically. Our world may not look exactly like *The Jetsons*, but it's getting a lot closer. Visit one of these five cities to get a firsthand look at how once far-fetched ideas aren't being pushed off until tomorrow — they're happening today.

Dubai

There's a new sheriff in town in Dubai, and he's unlike anyone you've ever seen — well, unless you've watched the movie *RoboCop*. That's because this officer is a robot, capable of identifying wanted criminals, collecting



evidence and watching for suspect activity. If the experiment is successful, the Dubai Police department plans to roll out many more nonhuman officers, expanding the robotic segment of the patrolling force to 25 percent by 2030.

Pittsburgh

Don't be surprised if you see a car without a driver in Pittsburgh — this is a hot spot for autonomous automobiles. Thank the combination of engineering brainpower supplied by Carnegie Mellon University and the city's ideal testing conditions with various road types, weather and traffic patterns. Ride-sharing service Uber has been trying out self-driving cars here since mid-2016, and self-driving startup Argo AI calls the Steel City home. (Ford, which plans to release cars without a steering wheel or pedals by 2021, has invested a whopping \$1 billion into Argo AI.)



Chicago

Chicago debuted the Array of Things in 2016. Described as a “fitness tracker” for cities, it’s a network of sensors that provides information on the environment, infrastructure and activity. Wondering what the most populated route is for walking to the El late at night? Or whether asthma is affected by factory schedules? Or maybe what neighborhood is the quietest? By collecting data on everything from foot traffic to flooding to sky color, scientists hope to provide answers to questions like these, ultimately improving the livability of the city.

Washington, D.C.

Hungry for lunch or a snack but just can't get away from your desk? Robots to the rescue! Startup Starship Technologies has developed “personal couriers” that fetch the things you want. Delivery service Postmates began piloting the bots — which are designed to blend into pedestrian traffic and avoid obstacles — in Washington, D.C., where they make short trips to local restaurants and convenience stores. Upon the bot's arrival at its destination, the recipient unlocks the compartment with a code that's sent once the order is placed.

Seattle

Seattle got a little brighter this summer, with an influx of vibrant green, orange and yellow bicycles scattered along the sidewalks. While bikesharing isn't a new concept, the implementation in the Emerald City is. There's no station where they need to be docked, and each ride is only \$1. Anyone can grab a bike and go after scanning a QR code that unlocks the back wheel. Plus, each bike — from companies LimeBike, Spin and Ofo — has a GPS that provides data that will help with planning bike lanes and determining demand going forward. [S](#)