

Reporting from the Rural Mobility Web(Sem)inar on March 26th, digital.

Digitalisation: rural mobility in the digital age – the future of rural mobility.

Background

Due to the spread of COVID19, the fifth and last Rural Mobility Seminar of MAMBA project was transformed into a webinar. The hosts, Christoffer Pettersson-Hernestig and Felix Sunnesson, of Trelleborg Municipality, with the help of Natalia Muntean, from Nordregio, guided the participants through a variety of topics such as autonomous vehicles and technology, and resilient thinking and planning. The participants discussed ideas and visions of rural mobility in the future throughout the webinar.

New technology that could act as a solution to the challenges of rural mobility and ideas about what the future could hold if the private and public sectors, together with grassroots organisations would join forces were among the topics that the speakers addressed during the event.

Intro, Trelleborgs Municipality, Sweden.

Essential takeaways from the MAMBA project were presented by Christoffer Pettersson-Hernestig with notes from Doris Scheer on a digital stage this time. As the project is reaching its end, the audience was given a summary of every phase of MAMBA.

To view the presentation, click [here](#).

Social Counselling, Diakonisches Werk Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.

Annika Schmiedek-Inselmann, from Diakonisches Werk Schleswig-Holstein, presented the **social counselling service that they have developed on the island of Hallige Hooe. One key lesson is the critical role community plays during crises, and the Diakonishes Werk is teaching the inhabitants of Hallig-Hooe how to be more self-sufficient, how to take care of themselves and their neighbours. For example, if someone is wounded, people should be able to take care of each other before professional help arrives.**

To view the presentation, click [here](#) (same presentation as for the intro).

Pilot with driverless pods for disabled people, Aurrigo, UK.

Dr Richard Fairchild, Operations Director at Aurrigo, presented a pilot with driverless pods aimed for disabled people. The project is already running in Brighton and involves blind veterans. This kind of pilot has never been done before and will open up many new opportunities for mobility challenged groups. Dr Fairchild also presented the benefits of autonomous vehicles and how technology could solve some mobility issues in rural areas. Cars are still one of the preferred mobility options in rural

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areas, but with driverless buses/cars/vehicles, personal transports can be more accessible between different contexts – urban to rural; rural to urban – with this technology.

To access the website, click [here](#).

Study of rolling bus stops in rural areas, Skellefteå Municipality, Sweden.

Petra Bassioukas Hanseklint, Traffic engineer at Skellefteå Municipality, presented a new concept that could work in rural areas: self-driving “rolling bus stops”, which would provide more comfort and security during trips. To make the journey safer and more pleasant in all different weather conditions, an autonomous bus takes residents from smaller rural villages and drives them to connecting hubs, along the high ways, where the regional buses take the passengers to an end destination. With the new self-driving technology, there is a substantial opportunity for the area of transport on-demand services to develop. The autonomous vehicles do not need fixed routes to function; instead, they are flexible and can program their ways. However, as of today, they are quite slow, reaching only 17 km/hour. So the use of such a bus today needs strategic thinking. These vehicles can be used as transport modes on short distances, while faster and more reliable transportation will take passenger further. The study is only visionary, but hopefully, these kinds of mobility solutions will be implemented in rural areas in the near future.

To see the presentation, click [here](#).

Tomorrow’s rural mobility today, Resilient Regions, Sweden.

Magnus Qvant, CEO/Secretary General, & Sylvia H Olsson, Operations manager, at Resilient Regions, discussed the crucial impact of new technologies upon how our society develops and functions. By embracing technologies such as autonomous and self-driving vehicles, innovative opportunities for a more resilient community are created. The motor-driven, car-like vehicle transformed the streets of New York at the beginning of the 1920s and replaced horse wagons within thirteen years. Innovative technology exists and is being implemented right now. Magnus and Sylvia asked themselves and the audience; what are the resources needed to implement and organise this technology? Who is responsible for errors, and what is people’s attitude towards driverless vehicles?

Summary of the presentation, click [here](#).

Results from the rural mobility study, Skånetrafiken, Sweden.

Jonas Johansson, business developer at Skånetrafiken, presented an overview of mobility in the rural regions of Skåne and discussed strategies to develop further public transportation, based on results from a study the institution carried on.

Presentation, click [here](#).

Outro, Trelleborg Municipality, Sweden.

The Rural Mobility webinar did not only bring MAMBA project partners closer but also offered inspiration to other people as to what new technologies could bring. With this event, MAMBA was

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able to reach a broader audience, with around 100 persons joining the webinar and sharing information. This webinar proves the potential of digitalisation and that the future will not only change physical mobility but that the future will probably offer new digital tools to keep rural areas alive. Also, new digital services and tools related to innovative technologies could solve some mobility issues in rural areas. One key factor is to bring back work opportunities into rural areas while reducing commuting. When rural areas are digitally connected, digital jobs and working from home can flourish.

Seeing this new way of coming together and discussing challenges and solutions is precisely one of the results MAMBA is aiming to achieve. People blossom when they can discuss and share their ideas and knowledge with others. It is great to see the possibilities brought by digital solutions and how these can support and develop new ideas when it comes to mobility and service in rural areas.

For the full recording of the webinar, click [here](#).