

Pedal to the Medal: Students Chart Course for New Mobility Solutions

May 06, 2016

Image not found or type unknown



Plano, Texas (May 6, 2016) – Meeting neighborhoods’ needs through Mobile Community Centers. Turning car trunks into moving mailboxes. Customizing navigation systems for the blind. These are the innovative concepts from the three finalists in the [Next Generation Mobility Challenge](#), a new competition from Toyota and Net Impact to inspire millennials to develop solutions for critical mobility needs in local communities and around the world.

The public is invited to view videos created by the finalists about their projects starting today at [this link](#) and vote for their favorites. A panel from Toyota and Net Impact selected the three finalists, based on their project design, feasibility and social impact, from the winners of 15 Net Impact events at universities across the country.

- **University of Oregon – Carolyn Taclas, Keala Verigan, Sydney Quinton-Cox and James Greisen**
Taking a page from the food truck craze and the mini-communities that spring up around them, the team conceived the Mobile Community Center. The customized trucks would park in public transit hubs, like Park-n-Ride lots and bus stations, and offer a range of services to meet community needs.
- **Northwestern University and University of Illinois – Maria McKiever, Szymon Gluc and Shangyanyan Li**
With a new take on the sharing economy, this team created a system that would allow drivers to offer their car trunks to others for hire as mobile mailboxes, potentially minimizing congestion and driving time.
- **Babson College, RISD and Olin College – Esther Kim, John Mathai, Ayush Singhal and Niklaus Sugiri**
Helping to map the way, this team created StreetSmart, a mobile application that leverages existing technologies such as location services and voice recognition to create a navigation system for the blind and visually impaired.

“At Toyota, we’re committed to addressing mobility issues around the world so that more people can go more places and live better lives. We are thrilled by the ingenious solutions that the students developed during the Next Generation Mobility Challenge,” said Latondra Newton, Group Vice President and Chief Social Innovation Officer, Toyota Motor North America, Inc. “Our partnership with Net Impact reflects our approach of combining our know-how with the expertise of others, so that working together can lead to something greater than going at it alone.”

“Transportation choices have major ramifications on the environment, society, and health,” said Liz Maw, CEO, Net Impact. “For this reason, students across the country have been excited to partner with a leading innovator like Toyota to define the future of mobility.”

The judges will factor in the public vote when determining the winning team, which will be announced by May 31, 2016. The winning team will be considered for a Toyota Mobility Foundation grant and have a chance to incubate their ideas during a summer internship within Toyota’s network of mobility innovation partners. The team will also showcase their solution at the 2016 Net Impact Conference in Philadelphia this November.