

Jetsons become a reality in flying car hub project

America's first hub for electric "flying cars" will be built in Florida, laying the foundations for a new travel industry that could be worth \$1.5 trillion by 2040 (Jacqui Goddard writes).

The "vertiport" in Orlando, the world's theme park capital, will allow tourists and

commuters to cruise the skies in electric taxis reminiscent of *The Jetsons*, the futuristic 1960s cartoon.

"This is truly the Jetsons coming to reality in central Florida's backyard," said Buddy Dyer, the mayor of Orlando.

The 5,202 sq m facility, due to be completed by 2025, will be close to Orlando

International Airport and facilitate vertical take-off and landing aircraft (VTOLs) currently under development by Lilium, a German company.

Lilium's vehicles will travel up to 300km on a one-hour charge. They will carry four people plus a pilot, though the aim is for the vehicles to be self-flying.

Passengers wanting to

book a ride will use their smartphones, just as they do with Uber or Lyft.

In 1940 Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company, predicted: "Mark my words, a combination airplane and motorcar is coming."

A report last year by equity analysts at Morgan Stanley Research said

electrified, urban air mobility services will be "common" by 2040.

"Ford was teased for the statement but now, decades later, the same technologies that power drones and steer autonomous vehicles could launch 'flying cars' from the pages of sci-fi comics to the skies of our cities," it stated.

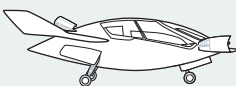
They said the sector

could be worth \$1.5 trillion in just 20 years' time.

VTOLs produce no direct emissions but their electricity is generated at power plants.

In September Lilium announced a partnership with Dusseldorf and Cologne/Bonn airports for them to become "flying car" hubs.

Winging it



Take off/landing **Vertical**
Speed **300kph (186mph)**
Flying time **60 mins**
Passengers **4**
Wingspan **10.9m (36ft)**
Engines **36 (in wings)**



