

Life Interrupted: Mobility After a Pandemic

COVID-19 has been shaping our lives for over a year. Since September of 2020, our team of five students with our mentor and liaisons have been studying the pandemic's effects to find how Ford can better enable the new adaptive uses and reuses of vehicles which have arisen as a result.

Olin College Ford SCOPE 2020-2021

COVID-19 is a catalyst

Accelerating some trends. . .

- » Working from home was already on the rise before the pandemic.
- » Major car companies began announcing plans to switch portfolios to entirely EVs.
- » Digital marketing and a cohesive online presence was becoming increasingly vital, even before COVID-19.

. . .and reacting with others to create new ones

- » Some were taking to "van life" before, but after the first round of COVID-19 lock-downs, cargo vans outfitted as living spaces soared in popularity as newly remote workers sought adventure and independence.
- » Drive-in movies and road trips had a renaissance.
- » Car rallies, church services, and parade birthday parties sprang up as a way to connect safely.

4 insights for navigating a COVID-19 changed future

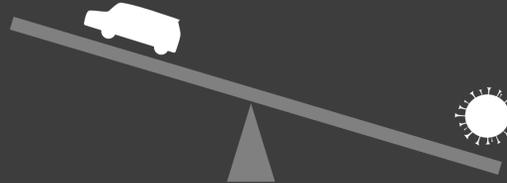
Built Ford Safe

Due to COVID-19, the meaning of safety has come to include safety from germs and viruses; as such, consumers have adopted new behaviors to stay healthy. Most minimize in-person interaction and rely far more on web services when shopping, and want transportation to feel effective in protecting them against pathogens. Consumers now view protecting their health as a priority they are willing to pay for.



Designed for Balanced Living

The pandemic upset the balance of people's lives, and many turn to their vehicles to adapt. With lines between workspace and living space blurring, and classic third spaces closing, the ability to balance the multiple uses of vehicle has become essential. As the balance finds its new level, consumers will need vehicles which help them navigate the future.



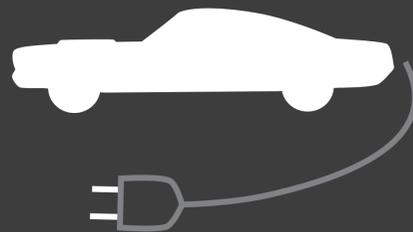
Better uses, driven by you

As COVID-19 forced Americans to stay apart, while also keeping them in crowded homes, they found ways to use their vehicles to socialize, work, or be alone. These new needs within a vehicle led to an increase in creative uses that let consumers see new possibilities for their vehicle. Now that these new uses and interactions are in the public consciousness, many will want vehicles designed to enable them.



Ford Electric: your future looks familiar

Consumers' desires to be sustainable have increased as many took to the outdoors during the COVID-19 pandemic and saw the impact driving less has on the environment. Despite heightened awareness around sustainability and an interest in electric vehicles consumers still have worries about range, maintenance, accessibility, and cost which are only exacerbated by the unfamiliarity of the technology. Our interviews affirmed that electric is the future, and while early adopters look for high tech, most people want familiarity.



Our team researched and designed using human-centered practices, creatively adapting tools for remote use. We conducted co-designs and experiences both digitally and in person, reaching people across the country and testing experiences ourselves. We iterated through rounds of data gathering, design, and synthesis, all the while responding to the ever-changing COVID-19 situation. Our path of exploration led us to the above insights, as well as opportunity spaces, ideas, and a toolbox documenting what worked in our remote human centered design process. All of this is documented in a book we delivered to Ford at the end of the year.