

RENAISSANCE AND NEW TRANSPORT SYSTEMS



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ULTra. A personal rapid transit system

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Abstract

ULTra is a Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system — a new form of urban transportation using small, silent, electric vehicles driven by computers through a dedicated network of guideways. ULTra's zero-emission vehicles combine the best elements of public and private transport, providing on-demand individual service while using significantly less energy than other forms of public transit. This year the first public ULTra system — which is also the first commercial PRT system anywhere in the world — will open at London's Heathrow Airport.

As part of the CIVITAS Renaissance Project, ULTra PRT is investigating the potential for the ULTra system to be part of a future transport solution for historic cities, with the City of Bath chosen for this feasibility study. The study has analysed the diverse range of design and business case challenges in incorporating a system like this in a historically sensitive location such as Bath, incorporating novel elements such as an international design competition to give architects and designers from around the world the chance to submit their visions of how ULTra PRT could be adapted to the context of Bath.

As a UNESCO World Heritage site with thousands of years of history, Bath offers one of the most challenging possible environments in which to study a PRT application, and the results of the study will help inform similar historic urban environments elsewhere in the world.

Biographical Summary



John is a mathematician who transitioned from theoretical physics to transport after completing a PhD in Mathematical Sciences at Durham University in early 2008, which followed the completion of an MPhys in Mathematics and Physics at Warwick University in 2004. With a desire to work in cutting edge research that would bring significant benefit to the world around him, the aims and environment at ULTra PRT were a natural complement for his skills and personality. At ULTra PRT, where he has worked for the past two years, John is the Head of Systems Research.