Chapter 13
The Whole Flying Cars Thing:
Sky Frontiers of the Future

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the latest mode of personal and public transportation and considers its impact on society, from daily life to career. It comes with no surprise that our fascination with flying has been prominent for more than 100 years, if not from the birth of human civilization.
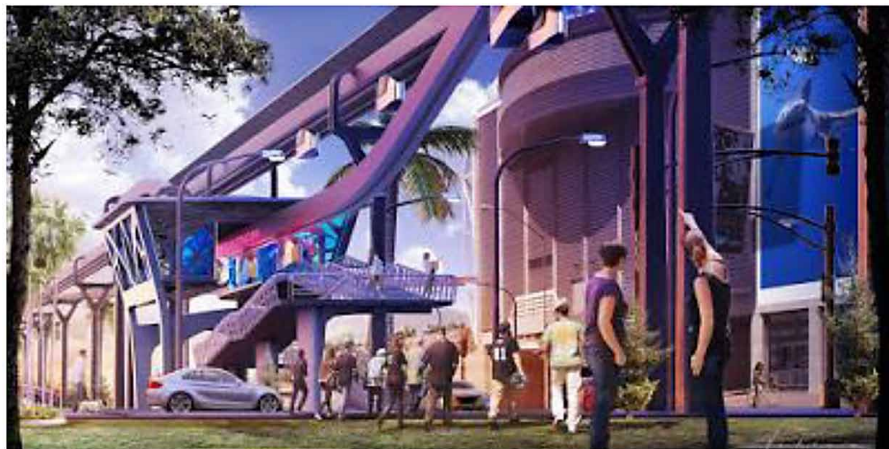
IMAGINE . . .

Lisa was graduating from college, and really had her heart set on a local reporting job at the city desk. She feared that she would not be selected for reasons unrelated to her reporting and producing skills. She had a fear of heights, and her job would involve her flying around the city quickly to report on breaking events. Realizing it was essential to her career, she attempted to confront her fears directly. She enrolled in a pilot training class while in college. She passed the written exam but failed her flying test. At the very least, she had hoped to overcome her uneasiness with taking to the sky. Increasingly, jobs in journalism at smaller operations required their reporters to obtain their pilot license. However, for some reason, she could not conquer her fear, especially when most of the flying cars approached speeds of 300 miles per hour. Of course, she could travel by flying taxi or the monorail, and some of the bigger news companies had their own air vehicles. But due to liability issues, it was best that the reporter was able to cope during a flight emergency. There had been some major accidents that could have been avoided if the reporter knew some basic flying skills. With a society increasingly reliant on fast transportation, she realized that she would unlikely be able to cover the metro beat. On the bright side, Lisa was a skillful reporter and knew that she would ultimately find another position, but it was disappointing all the same.

Figure 1. Station on the upper deck of a highrise (above).
Illustration courtesy of **Ron Swenson** *(Solarskyways).*

Figure 2. Park area under the highway (below).
Illustration courtesy of **Ron Swenson** *(Solarskyways).*

INTRODUCTION

In 1940, Henry Ford predicted, "Mark my words. A combination airplane and motorcar is coming. You may smile, but it will come." Nearly one hundred years later, flying cars are being developed in the heart of Silicon Valley. Many of us have been raised on novels, television shows and movies that have foreshadowed the future, from *The Jetsons*, to *Back to the Future*, *Blade Runner* and *The 5th Element*.

Silicon Valley's Super Skyway

This future has arrived in the technology hub of the world. So, what is ahead for humanity? Already under development, there are a plethora of flying crafts, from flying taxis, personal copters and even

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