

**TAM BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

August 24, 2017

Autonomous vehicles: new developments

The AV news comes more often now. The sector seems to be heating up. Here are several highlights:

**Malcom Dougherty interview:** In this KQED transcript, he shows himself to be well-informed about AV trends and a prudent steward of Caltrans' funds. He says that Caltrans doesn't even have the money at present to fill its many potholes, which makes him disinclined to install costly AV roadway devices, and all the more so as they will likely be fast outmoded. However, during road maintenance and repairs, Caltrans will remove existing lane lines made of Bott's dots\* and in their place lay down 6" white lines, which AV's can "see" more easily. I surmise the change has been urged by freight haulers, which are eager to begin using AV technology.

<https://www.kqed.org/science/2017/08/07/with-self-driving-cars-californias-highways-will-need-an-upgrade/> (\* a different source)

**Public transit:** Ten days ago the I.J. published a letter from me about ride-share and the need for Golden Gate Transit to somehow "think different". I wished I'd had a specific idea to suggest to the bridge district, and I felt rather rueful about its lack. But -- the very next day! I came across an article about a Silicon Valley team who are developing a new public transit concept. It's scheduled to be tested in Dubai early next year. While this may not be the answer for Marin County, I found it gave rise to new thought processes, thus it might be of use to that extent.

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/business/article/Next-up-in-self-driving-transportation-modular-11735725.php> See also: <https://www.startengine.com/startup/next-future-transportation> (I.J. letter is attached.)

**Meanwhile, concerning ride share:**

**Lyft makes nice:** Lyft appears to be trying to make itself as ubiquitous in daily life as CocaCola was for many decades. Lyft emphasizes that human drivers will be with us for a long time (which I believe is likely true) and suggests helpful services these drivers can provide. The California Bicycle Coalition's four-day Summit in October names Lyft as a major sponsor. (I've sent a few details to Mollie Graham.)

**Uber continues its corporate soap opera:** Board members are now suing one another. The federal judge in the approaching trial for theft of intellectual property threatens to instruct the jury that Uber has refused to comply with pretrial discovery. Uber's co-defendant is taking the fifth. Stay tuned!

*Cindy Winter*  
Cindy Winter  
cinhiver@gmail.com

Readers' Forum

I.J. 08/14/17

**Large buses can't solve the 'last-mile' problem**

The recent drop in Golden Gate bus ridership may be caused by increased difficulties, due to congestion, in getting from home to a convenient transit stop. That is the so-called "last mile" dilemma, and may be what is causing groups of commuters to turn to Lyft and Uber.

Or perhaps, neighbors may be organizing carpools with one of them as driver.

But once in a rideshare car, it can be a hassle to get out at a transit stop, and wait for a bus. The occupants may instead prefer to continue all the way to the door of their employment.

That is the "last-mile" problem on the other end.

Cellphones and their apps, laptops, the expanding opportunities made possible by "the cloud" all provide a wide-open frontier of new flexibility.

Whatever the many advantages of Golden Gate buses, "flexibility" is not an adjective that comes to mind.

AC Transit's pilot program seems a wise effort. Here in Marin, once SMART begins service, the Transportation Authority of Marin has ready to roll a pilot program that uses Lyft to take train riders to

and from stations. While the expectation is that these programs have a decent chance of success (otherwise they would not have been started), I see them as efforts that cannot not be made, because the only way to learn is by trying.

Times are changing. If we are to change with them, we must experiment.

About a year ago, several eminent California transportation planners met in San Diego to discuss what the fast-developing vehicle automation might mean for the future. How, they wondered, can transportation be planned when the crystal ball is so murky?

After an entire day of brainstorming, the best they could advise was, "Stay flexible."

Easier said than done, of course. . . But a year later, I believe the two-word advice these experts provided was better than they perhaps realized a year ago. A flexible approach, keeping an open mind, trial and error are now imperative.

TAM and AC Transit are to be commended for their efforts. While Golden Gate Transit has long provided valuable services, it appears that the bridge district, too, would do well to engage in some unfamiliar studies and testing. It won't be easy, it never is, but I am confident they can succeed.

— *Cindy Winter, Greenbrae*