

Written testimony regarding your/PBOT's Transportation System Plan Update, Stage 3:

Your section regarding autonomous vehicles fails to consider that a very major use of autonomous vehicles will be for the purpose of transporting cargo -- such as groceries, take-out food, items fetched from brick-and-mortar stores, and tools being rented (or shared). Your current wording focuses only on using autonomous vehicles for the purpose of transporting people.

In particular your plan seems to regard a vehicle with zero passengers as a wasted transportation resource. Consider that currently many vehicles that appear to be transporting one person are actually transporting cargo, and the person driving is only needed because the vehicle cannot yet drive itself.

I am not alone in recognizing this perspective as important. About five years ago two independent brainstorming groups were brainstorming details about autonomous vehicles, and both groups independently arrived at the conclusion that in the future most vehicles will not be carrying people, and that many of the vehicles that do carry one or more people will be doing it for the purpose of in-person social (not business-oriented) interaction.

Peeking into the future, consider that future innovations will enable more and more people to work from locations that are close to where they live, and that will reduce commuting.

Expressed as a broader perspective, as communication technology improves, transportation of people is needed less and less.

In summary: Carrying cargo, not people, will be a very common use of autonomous vehicles.

In advance, thank you for recognizing this more accurate perspective of the future of transportation.

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