

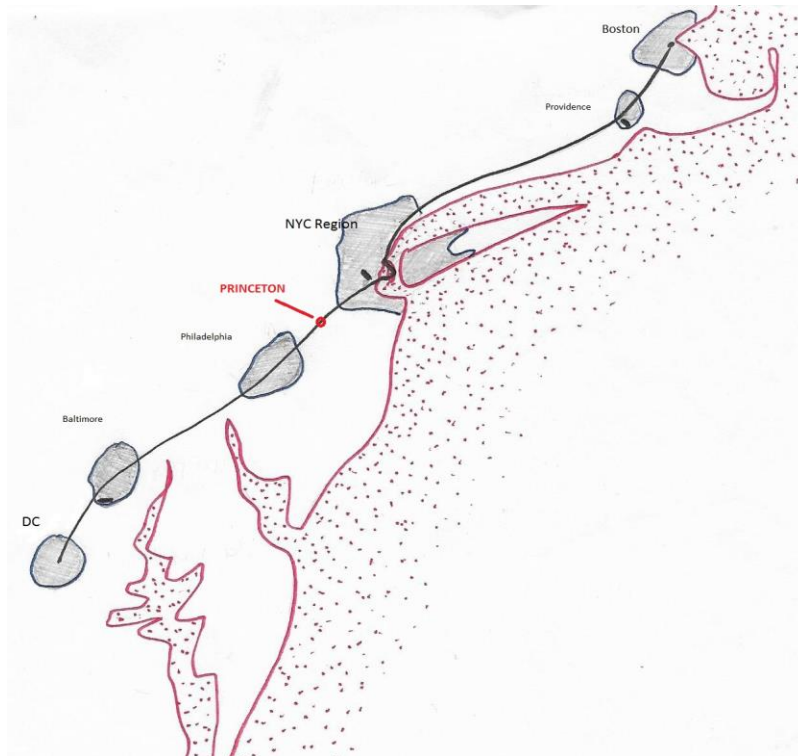
Synopsis of the 1st

SMART, SELF-DRIVING CAR SUMMIT

May 17-18, 2017

Princeton University, New Jersey

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The compelling case for robocars – vehicles with no driver or attendant, not even a steering wheel and foot pedals -- is that foreseeable savings in lives, injuries and car repair/replacement are more than the costs of accommodating them. Participants at the Smart, Self-driving Car Summit at Princeton University last May 17-18 agreed that we are about to take the first steps in the digital transformation of urban mobility, empowered by robocars.

Organizations never before seen at APM/PRT conferences gathered on Princeton's beautiful campus midway down the *Bos-Wash* (Boston-to-Washington DC) corridor. With easy access via

Amtrak, US Highway 1, and I-95, Princeton is a cerebral center that holds sway in the financial towers of Manhattan and the power corridors of Washington DC.

In addition to transportation technologists, urban visionaries and car insurers were:

- AAA – a policy person for the northeast
- Axial Capital Partners – looking for value in underused roads
- Auto car dealerships
- Car insurer statisticians

- Several City, County, State and Federal officials
- Global Autonomous Vehicle Partnership – charitable investors seeing robocars benefits
- HNTB – mainstream infrastructure consultants working on *SmartColumbus*
- News reporters and policy pundits

- State motor vehicle registries – California and New Jersey
- Verizon – pushing for common data sets for huge dataflow needs
- Wall Street and philanthropic investment gurus



Figure 1 Public art adorns and protects Princeton's manicured campus. – photo by Robert Johnson

There were also robocar manufacturers, transport providers, European researchers of automated transit and a modest contingent of PRT proponents. Talks were energetic, intense at times, and occasionally operatic.

The focus was on automated vehicles. There was much talk of *fleets* of them -- as opposed to individually owned cars. Stan Young of the Denver-based US National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) advanced the concept of AMDs – campus-sized automated mobility districts. More attention to infrastructure is needed. That term has three levels. Most visible is dedicated, wired and electrified guideways. Second is sophisticated and self-learning communication networks. Third is supportive public policies – coordinating zoning, traffic management and parking policies. Who takes care of landscaping?



Figure 2 Searching for wise policies, Professor Kornhauser makes a point at the Princeton Summit

“We are at ground zero,” stated Summit Chair Alain Kornhauser, beamingly confidently as he opened the proceedings announcing the 2nd Robocar Summit, to be held May 16-17, 2018. He ended calling the first one an “enormous success”, especially pleased with Ford interest. Many participants were excited by the deliberations to label it a “landmark” event. Though not in attendance, Harvard GSD professor Charles Harris summed up the program as “awesome”.

Where are Robocar Projects Emerging

Public demonstrations and trial services with robocars are taking place in so many places that it’s hard to keep track of them. At the Summit there was more attention to where comprehensive project plans are emerging. Houston’s University District is studying robocars for district circulation under the leadership of Sam Lott, retired from KHA and teaching at Texas So. Univ. KHA, NREL, 2getthere and Oceaneering are on the team, ready to start trials with two vehicles along a pedestrian walk. Phase I will extend to nearby LRT station and bus center. If found acceptable and robust, it could further expand to include hundreds of vehicles.

The flag of a glitzier project is being waved in affluent Beverly Hills adjacent to Los Angeles. Hope for a robocar project seems to be appended to \$32m fiber network project. The co-chair of a mayor-appointed task force, Grayson Brulte gave a poetic presentation, asserting that robocars will not increase congestion but will serve Rodeo Drive!

Brian O’Looney of Miami-based Torti Gallas described Babcock Ranch, a planned community near Ft Myers FL in fast-growing southwest Florida. The vision is that robocar services akin to automated golf carts will first connect a residential area to the town center. This will expand to serve all “hamlets”. Then all cars would be removed!

An insurance executive pointed out that snow and ice are problems. Winter-challenged regions will face another economic disadvantage to sunnier climes.

Other Summit Tidbits

Inspired by a Swedish initiative to eliminate all traffic fatalities, New York City has adopted a Vision Zero policy for its fleet of over 30,000 vehicles (police, fire, public works, etc.). NYC spends \$860m/year on this fleet and is confident that it can influence the market.



Figure 3 Robocar supplier Matt Lesh (left) shares a smile with Swedish PRT analyst Ingmar Andreasson.

Confident with successful closure of Seine-severing highways in favor of green space and pedestrian access, Paris is creating four auto-free districts. Access by street vehicles will be minimized in favor of green modes – walking, biking and transit. Many European cities and towns are adopting de-vehicularization policies.

There was disappointingly little news from Silicon Valley. Maybe next May, 2018.

Mark your calendar!

The 2nd

Princeton SmartDrivingCars Summit

May 16-17, 2018