San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors approve legislation for a transportation technology permitting program. Companies must receive a permit before testing new tech in public. While the criteria used to approve permits is not clear yet, the Office of Emerging Technology values shared data, public safety and privacy, and job creation.

Walmart partners with Nuro for an automated vehicle (AV) grocery delivery pilot in Houston, TX. Nuro’s vehicles will delivery online grocery orders to a select group of customers who opt into the service. Nuro will use its R2 vehicles, which carry only goods (no drivers or passengers), as well as Toyota Priuses. The pilot is slated to start in 2020.

Workers at Spin vote to unionize. Worker authorization cards were ratified on December 5th, likely making Spin the first scooter sharing company in the U.S. to form a union. Spin has welcomed unionization; however, other companies have been less enthusiastic. This news follows the passage of Assembly Bill 5 in California, which ensures gig workers are treated as W-2 employees.

Lyft launches a car rental service in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area. Select users can now rent vehicles in-app. Amenities of the service include: 1) $20 in ride credit to and from the rental vehicle, 2) refueling of the vehicle at “local market price,” 3) unlimited miles, and 4) optional gear such as car seats and tire chains.

Mercedes-Benz and Bosch launch a shared automated vehicle (SAV) service in San Jose, CA. SAVs will transport passengers in S-class vehicles on a fixed route between West San Jose and the downtown area. A select group of people will receive access to an app through which rides can be booked. Each vehicle will have safety drivers present.

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