



- (51) International Patent Classification:  
*B62K 3/00* (2006.01)      *B62K 5/025* (2013.01)
- (21) International Application Number:  
PCT/US2015/025338
- (22) International Filing Date:  
10 April 2015 (10.04.2015)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data:  
61/977,957      10 April 2014 (10.04.2014)      US
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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IR, IS, JP, KE, KG, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, ST, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: ELECTRICAL VEHICLE WITH CONTROL SYSTEM

(57) Abstract: A standup, electrically powered three-wheeled vehicle has safety features in its control and method of operation.

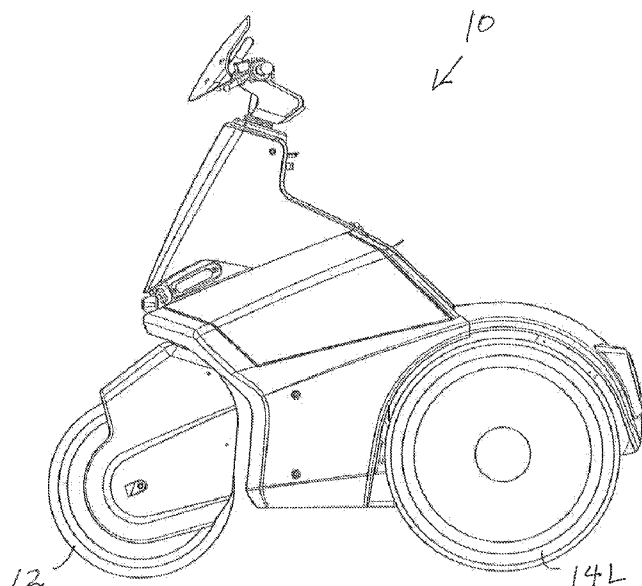


FIG. 13

WO 2015/157653 A1

**Published:**

— *with international search report (Art. 21(3))*

## ELECTRICAL VEHICLE WITH CONTROL SYSTEM

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to three wheeled electrically driven vehicles,  
5 and in particular to such devices upon which a rider stands.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Electrically powered, standup vehicles are becoming more widely used in populated  
areas for providing powered transportation over greater than walking distances without the  
10 size, cost and inconvenience of an automobile. Such vehicles provide desirable views of  
surroundings, including both scenery, pedestrians and riding surface conditions. Like any  
powered vehicles, safety issues are always a consideration even when such vehicles are used  
by responsible adults, such as public safety personnel. Therefore, it is generally desirable to  
build safety features into normal vehicle operation.

15

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One embodiment of the present invention provides electrically driven, stand-up  
vehicle, comprising: a pair of laterally opposed rear wheels for supporting the vehicle; one or  
more forward steered wheels; one or more electric drive motors coupled to the pair of rear  
20 wheels to propel the vehicle; a computerized controller for the one or more electric drive  
motors having a memory storing instructions which when executed cause the controller to:  
sense a state switch for applying forward or reverse drive power to the at least one drive  
motor; sense a speed of the vehicle; sense a rider selected level for applying drive current to  
the one or more drive motors; and enable changing of the state switch to a different forward or  
25 reverse state only when the sensed speed and the sensed rider selected level are below  
predetermined levels.

The memory may further include instructions which when executed: sense for a  
plurality of conditions of the vehicle; and enable connection of the rider selected current to the  
one or more drive motors only when the sensed plurality of conditions all agree with  
30 predetermined settings. The plurality of conditions of the vehicle may be selected from the  
group consisting of: the presence of a rider on the vehicle; fault conditions within an electrical

system of the vehicle; vehicle direction of movement; battery charge level; the absence of an external connection of charging power; and an activated braking mechanism. The instructions which sense the presence of a rider on the vehicle may sense a pair of redundant sensors.

The memory may further comprise instructions which when executed: control power  
5 to the one or more electric drive motors coupled to propel the vehicle; sense wheel speed of each of the pair of rear wheels; determine a difference in wheel speed between the rear wheels; and determine power to the one or more drive motors in response to the determined wheel speeds and difference between the wheel speeds to limit calculated lateral acceleration on the vehicle when the difference in wheel speeds represents a turn radius for the vehicle that  
10 is less than a limit depending upon sensed average wheel speed.

The one or more electric drive motors may comprise a separate respective drive motor coupled to each of the pair of rear wheels, and further wherein the memory further comprises instructions which when executed: sense user controlled steering of the one or more forward steered wheels and determine power to the separate respective drive motors in response to the  
15 sensed steering to match rotation of the rear wheels with the user controlled steering.

Another embodiment of the present invention provides a method for controlling an electrically driven, stand-up transportation vehicle, comprising: using a state switch for applying forward or reverse drive power to one or more drive motors; sensing a speed of the vehicle; sensing a rider selected level for applying drive current to the one or more drive  
20 motors; and enabling changing of the state switch to a different forward or reverse state only when the sensed speed and the sensed rider selected level are below predetermined levels.

The rider selected level may determine torque applied to the one or more drive motors.

The method may further comprise determining a forward or reverse drive power selection with a switch. The method may further comprise: sensing for a plurality of  
25 conditions of the vehicle; enabling connection of the rider selected power to the one or more drive motors only when the sensed plurality of conditions all agree with predetermined settings. The plurality of conditions of the vehicle may be selected from the group consisting of: the presence of a rider on the vehicle; fault conditions within an electrical system of the vehicle; vehicle direction of movement; battery temperature; battery charge level; the absence  
30 of an external connection of charging power; and an activated braking mechanism. Sensing the presence of a rider on the vehicle may use a pair of redundant sensors. Sensing the

presence of a rider on the vehicle may be responsive to a predetermined minimum weight sensed on the vehicle. The step of sensing an external connection for charging power may comprise sensing for an alternating current (AC) voltage on a recharging input of the vehicle.

The method may further comprise: controlling power to one or more electric drive  
5 motors connected to propel the vehicle; sensing wheel speed of each of the laterally opposed wheels; determining a difference in wheel speed between the laterally opposed wheels; and determining power to the one or more drive motors for the step of controlling in response to the determined wheel speeds and difference between the wheel speeds to limit calculated  
10 lateral acceleration on the vehicle when the difference in wheel speeds represents a turn radius for the vehicle that is less than a limit depending upon sensed wheel speed. The step of determining power may comprise determining an average wheel speed from the sensed wheel speeds of each of the laterally opposed wheels.

The plurality of conditions of the vehicle may be selected from the group consisting of: the presence of a rider on the vehicle; a selected forward or reverse drive state; fault  
15 conditions within an electrical system of the vehicle; vehicle speed; vehicle direction of movement; battery temperature; battery charge level; and a braking mechanism.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustratively shown and described in reference to the  
20 accompanying drawings, in which:

Figs. 1A and 1B show front and side view images, respectively, of a 3-wheeled standup vehicle;

Fig. 2 shows a circuit schematic suitable for use with the vehicle of Fig. 1 and constructed in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

25 Fig. 3 shows a software logic diagram of a portion of a control function suitable for use with the schematic of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 shows a software logic diagram of a portion of a control function concerning forward and reverse control of the vehicle and suitable for use with the schematic of Fig. 2;

30 Fig. 5 shows a software logic diagram of a portion of a control function concerning detecting and requiring the presence of a rider on the vehicle in conjunction with the schematic of Fig. 2;

Fig. 6 shows a backup logic circuit for requiring rider presence to enable propulsion in conjunction with the schematic of Fig.2.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5 The present invention is introduced using examples and particular embodiments for descriptive purposes. Although a variety of examples are presented to show how various configurations can be employed to achieve the desired improvements, these particular embodiments are only illustrative and not intended in any way to restrict the inventions presented.

10 Figs. 1A and 1B show a three-wheeled, stand-up, electric vehicle 10 having one front steered wheel 12, and two rear fixed driven wheels 14L and 14R. Each driven wheel 14L,14R has a separate drive and motor and is referred to herein as Left (L) and Right (R).

Fig. 2 shows a schematic diagram of circuitry suitable for controlling and propelling the vehicle of Fig. 1. Generally included are left and right drive motors 20L, 20R,  
15 power/interface assembly 21, battery 22, motor controllers 24L, 24R, a graphic user interface 26, and multiple input devices. User inputs include: a throttle 28 having an analog output indicating desired torque; a pair of brake lever switches 30L, 30R indicating activation of hydraulic brakes for front wheel 12 and rear wheels 14L,14R, respectively; a single-pole-single-throw (SPST) reverse switch 32 enabling forward /reverse mode selection; and a rider  
20 detect sensor 34 used to indicate rider presence to avoid accidental drive power unless a rider is properly mounted. Power for the vehicle 10 is controlled by a 2-position ON-OFF key switch 36 and a mode toggle switch 38 for selecting between accessory mode and drive mode. Switches 36 and 38 provide the conditions of: Off - no power applied to any electronics when key switch 36 is off; Accessory - power is provided to motor drive logic circuitry and other  
25 electronics (lights, sirens, etc) when Key switch 36 is on and toggle switch 38 is set to Accessory; and Drive - power is enabled to the motor drive bridge, and is also otherwise controlled when Key switch 36 is on and toggle switch 38 is set to Drive. All of these devices, along with additional lights and back up indicators are coupled through the power/interface assembly 21. Toggle switch 38 and reverse switch 32 may be constructed as part of a single  
30 multi-switch assembly as shown. Also shown are various external vehicle lights 39, directional indicator lights 40 L, 40 R, a reverse audio alarm 41, a computer service interface

42, a charge port 40 3A converter/charger 44 and a turn sensor 45. Turn sensor 45 measures the turn angle of the vehicle handlebars, which measurement may be used as part of vehicle control.

Control logic for the present apparatus is preferably built into the left motor controller 24L and includes software stored in memory and a processor for executing the software. The motor controllers are preferably identical and may be any suitable programmable motor controller, such as a Kollmorgen ACS48XS. Different software can be run on each controller depending upon whether it is installed on the left or right side.

Fig. 3 is a software sequence diagram describing an overall control function incorporating the functions mentioned above. The logic diagram begins with vehicle startup 50, and variables are initialized in step 51. Various fault conditions are evaluated in step 52. If a fault condition exists, the motor drives will enter a faulted state 53, and will not re-enable until the next power cycle. A predetermined speed limit is read from switches on the circuit board, and the selected motor current limit is set in step 54. Next, the drive enable signal 108(Fig. 6), is evaluated. If enable signal 108 is low, the flow loops back and evaluates for faults. If the enable signal is high, it delays briefly, then evaluates the desired torque command at 55. If the drives have not yet initialized at 56, meaning that this loop has not been completed fully, the throttle is checked to ensure it is at a command of zero at 57. If the throttle is not at zero, a warning 58 is displayed to the rider until the throttle is set to zero.

If a rider is not detected to be present, the drives are disabled at 59, and the control flow loops back. Otherwise, the control flow continues. If both of the brakes are applied at 62, the motor torque is set to zero at 60, and the drives are disabled at 61. Also, if the direction mode is neutral at 63, the motor torque is set to zero at 60, and the drives are disabled at 61. Otherwise, the torque is set based on the maximum torque, torque percent command, and direction mode at 65, the drives are enabled at 64, and the output to the motors is slewed at 66.

Although the control steps described above function in a current control or torque mode, similar programming may be used to operate the vehicle in a voltage control or speed monitoring mode. An optional adaptation of this voltage control mode would be to sense the position of turn sensor 45 (Fig. 2) and use any sensed turning of the front wheel to proportionately drive the motors 20L, 20R to match the user selected turn radius, such as in

sequence steps 65. This configuration would better enable the use of a smaller turn radius is and thereby improve the mobility of the vehicle. It would also reduce wheel slippage during turning and operability factors dependent thereon.

Fig. 4 shows a software sequence diagram of one embodiment of the reverse mode selection described above. The process 70 starts with vehicle startup 74 and setting of flags for reverse\_debounced to 0, forward\_reverse\_mode to 2(neutral) and reverse\_indicator to 0. If reverse button 32 (Fig. 2) is pressed, step 76 debounces the input to remove any input oscillations, and the requested reverse /forward mode is selected according in steps 78, 79, 80. If the requested mode is the same as the actual mode, as detected in step 81, no further action is needed. If the requested mode and the actual mode are not equal, further checks are made. The torque command is checked in step 82 to make sure that is at or below a predetermined value, such as zero. If not, the forward\_reverse\_mode is set to the value 2 for neutral. If torque is at or below the predetermined value, vehicle speed is checked in step 86 to insure that it is below a predetermined value. A sufficiently low speed determined in step 86 enables the requested mode to be entered in step 87, while too high a speed causes selection of neutral mode in step 88. The same process 70 also controls the selection of forward mode from reverse mode using the same checks of throttle torque and vehicle speed, prior to changing the drive mode. Failure of the torque and speed checks likewise results in neutral mode selection.

Another feature available on vehicle 10 is rider detection as a safety feature to insure that a rider is properly positioned on the vehicle to avoid runaway conditions and improper vehicle use. This function is provided in the present application both as a software sequence and via a parallel logic circuit. A minimum weight requirement may be built into the sensors 34 to prevent vehicle operation by juveniles.

Figure 5 is a software sequence diagram 89 which monitors rider presence from sensors 34 of Fig. 2. Evaluation of rider presence 90 includes evaluation of sensors 34 to determine a mismatch at 90a. If a mismatch is detected, a timer 90b is decremented to allow rider repositioning for a limited period of time. If the limited period of time is expired at 90c, a rider detect mismatch fault is issued at 90d. If the mismatch timer is not expired the sequence proceeds to step 91 to determine if both sensors indicate rider presence. If rider presence is determined as true 91a, a timer is reset 91b and the sequence is returned to evaluate rider presence sensor inputs at 90. If rider presence in step 91 is determined to be

false 91c, the hardware drive enable input 108 of Fig. S6 is evaluated in step 92. If the hardware drive enable input is enabled a hardware/software mismatch timer is decremented at 93. If the hardware/software timer is not expired the sequence is returned to evaluating rider presence sensor inputs step 90. If the hardware/software mismatch timer is expired a drive enable hardware fault 94 is set.

Fig. 6 shows a circuit diagram of a rider detection system 99 connected to smart motor drive 101 of Fig 2. System 99 contains redundant rider detection sensors 100a, 100b. These sensors actuate at the same time when a rider with appropriate mass mounts the vehicle. These sensors are configured so that a logical high corresponds with a detected rider. The raw output from both sensors 100a, 100b is tied to two digital inputs on the motor drive, 101/24L. Signals from sensors 100a, 100b are fed to respective hardware filters 102a and 102b. Filters 102a and 102b implement a short delay on a falling edge and no delay on a rising edge. This is intended to prevent short duration events from causing the drives to be disabled, such as when going over a bump or when the rider shifts their weight around the platform. The filtered rider detection signals are fed into a hardware logic circuit 103. Circuit 103 receives the inputs: the aforementioned filtered rider detection signals; an AC present signal 104, where a logic level high indicates AC is not present at the charger; and an input from a user switch 105 that is set to logic level high when drive mode is selected. From these inputs, the hardware logic circuit 103 generates a drive enable signal 108. If all of the inputs are logic level high (rider is present, AC is not present, drive mode selected), drive enable signal 108 is set high to indicate the motor drive should enable. Drive enable signal 108 is fed to the motor drive 101/24L such that the motor drive can enable/disable appropriately. Drive enable signal 108 is also fed to a switch circuit 106, which applies/removes power to the motor drive 101/24L from a battery supply 107 appropriately. Thus, the circuit 99 also serves as fault detection for an AC power source being attached to the vehicle when powered movement of the vehicle is attempted.

This architecture allows for several fault detection schemes. The motor drive 101/22 monitors both of the raw rider detection sensors 100a, 100b and issues a fault if these signals do not match for a given amount of time. This condition would suggest a failed sensor or faulty wiring. This condition could also occur transiently while the rider is mounting or

dismounting the vehicle. Thus, the signals from sensors 100a, 100b must not match for 10 seconds before the fault is issued.

The motor drive software in drive 101/24L has a data item for rider presence. If the rider detection signals both transition from low to high, rider presence is set to “true” immediately. If the rider detection signals both transition from high to low, rider presence is set to “false” after a delay of 2 seconds. This delay is to accommodate the delay of approximately 1 second introduced into the hardware drive enable logic 103 by the signal filters 102a, 102b. If the drive enable signal 108 is high, but the software rider presence data item is set to “false”, a fault is issued after 250 milliseconds. Thus, if the drive enable signal 108 is high, but either rider detection signal is low for a given time, a fault must have occurred in the hardware drive enable logic circuit 103, and a fault is issued.

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for controlling an electrically driven, stand-up transportation vehicle,  
comprising:  
    using a state switch for applying forward or reverse drive power to one or more drive  
5 motors;  
    sensing a speed of the vehicle;  
sensing a rider selected level for applying drive current to the one or more drive motors; and  
    enabling changing of the state switch to a different forward or reverse state only when  
the sensed speed and the sensed rider selected level are below predetermined levels.  
10
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the rider selected level determines torque applied to  
the one or more drive motors.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining a forward or reverse drive  
15 power selection with a switch.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
    sensing for a plurality of conditions of the vehicle;  
    enabling connection of the rider selected power to the one or more drive motors only  
20 when the sensed plurality of conditions all agree with predetermined settings.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the plurality of conditions of the vehicle are selected  
from the group consisting of:  
    the presence of a rider on the vehicle;  
25 fault conditions within an electrical system of the vehicle;  
    vehicle direction of movement;  
    battery temperature;  
    battery charge level;  
    the absence of an external connection of charging power; and  
30 an activated braking mechanism.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein sensing the presence of a rider on the vehicle uses a pair of redundant sensors.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein sensing the presence of a rider on the vehicle is responsive to a predetermined minimum weight sensed on the vehicle.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein the step of sensing an external connection for charging power comprises sensing for an alternating current (AC) voltage on a recharging input of the vehicle.

10

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
controlling power to one or more electric drive motors connected to propel the vehicle;  
sensing wheel speed of each of the laterally opposed wheels;  
determining a difference in wheel speed between the laterally opposed wheels; and  
determining power to the one or more drive motors for the step of controlling in response to the determined wheel speeds and difference between the wheel speeds to limit calculated lateral acceleration on the vehicle when the difference in wheel speeds represents a turn radius for the vehicle that is less than a limit depending upon sensed wheel speed.

15

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of determining power comprises determining an average wheel speed from the sensed wheel speeds of each of the laterally opposed wheels.

20

11. An electrically driven, stand-up vehicle, comprising:  
a pair of laterally opposed rear wheels for supporting the vehicle;  
one or more forward steered wheels;  
one or more electric drive motors coupled to the pair of rear wheels to propel the vehicle;  
a computerized controller for the one or more electric drive motors having a memory storing instructions which when executed cause the controller to:  
sense a state switch for applying forward or reverse drive power to the at least one drive motor;

25

30

sense a speed of the vehicle;

sense a rider selected level for applying drive power to the one or more drive motors;

and

enable changing of the state switch to a different forward or reverse state only when

5 the sensed speed and the sensed rider selected level are below predetermined levels.

12. The vehicle of claim 11, wherein the memory further includes instructions which when executed:

sense for a plurality of conditions of the vehicle; and

10 enable connection of the rider selected power to the one or more drive motors only

when the sensed plurality of conditions all agree with predetermined settings.

13. The vehicle of claim 12, wherein the plurality of conditions of the vehicle are selected from the group consisting of:

15 the presence of a rider on the vehicle;

fault conditions within an electrical system of the vehicle;

vehicle direction of movement;

battery temperature;

battery charge level;

20 the absence of an external connection of charging power; and

an activated braking mechanism.

14. The vehicle of claim 13, wherein the instructions which sense the presence of a rider on the vehicle senses a pair of redundant sensors.

25

15. The vehicle of claim 11, wherein the memory further comprises instructions which when executed:

control power to the one or more electric drive motors coupled to propel the vehicle;

sense wheel speed of each of the pair of rear wheels;

30 determine a difference in wheel speed between the rear wheels; and

determine power to the one or more drive motors in response to the determined wheel speeds and difference between the wheel speeds to limit calculated lateral acceleration on the vehicle when the difference in wheel speeds represents a turn radius for the vehicle that is less than a limit depending upon sensed wheel speed.

5

16. The vehicle of claim 15, wherein the one or more electric drive motors comprises a separate respective drive motor coupled to each of the pair of rear wheels, and further wherein the memory further comprises instructions which when executed: sense user controlled steering of the one or more forward steered wheels and determine power to the separate  
10 respective drive motors in response to the sensed steering to match rotation of the rear wheels with the user controlled steering.

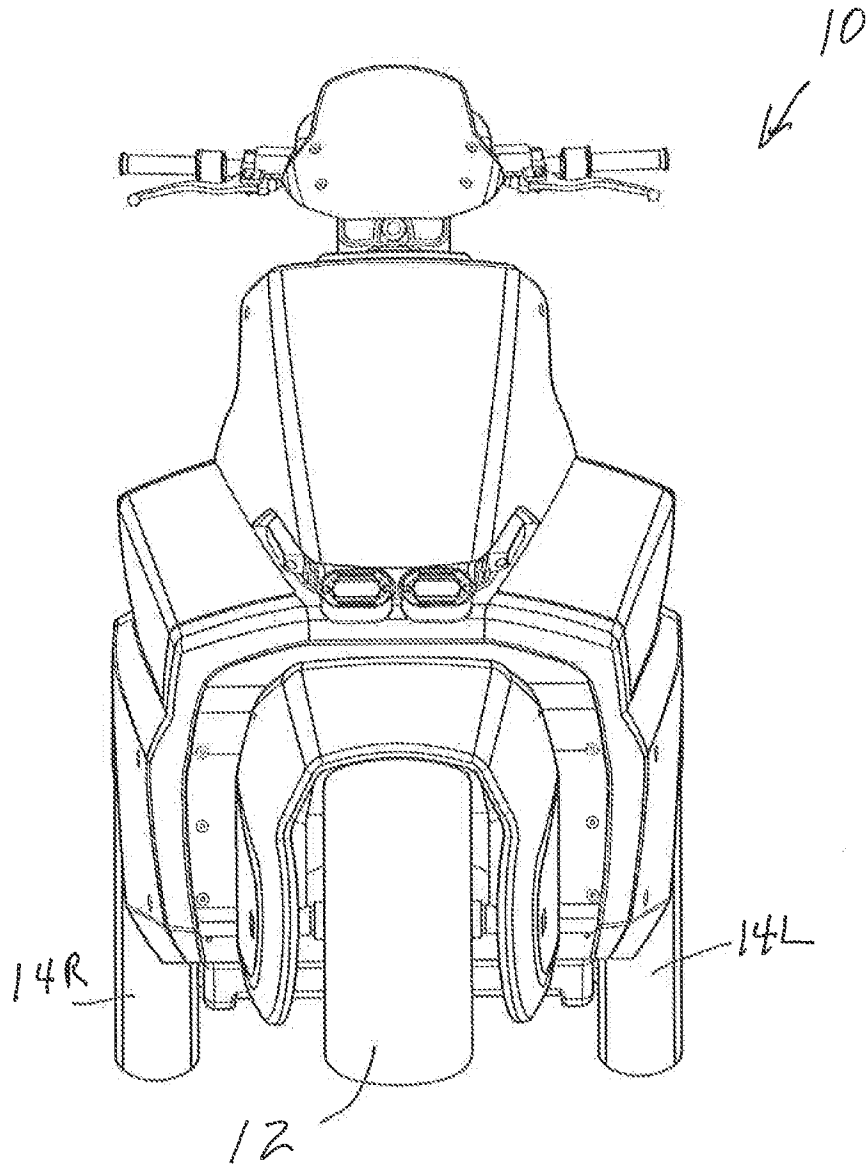


FIG. 1A

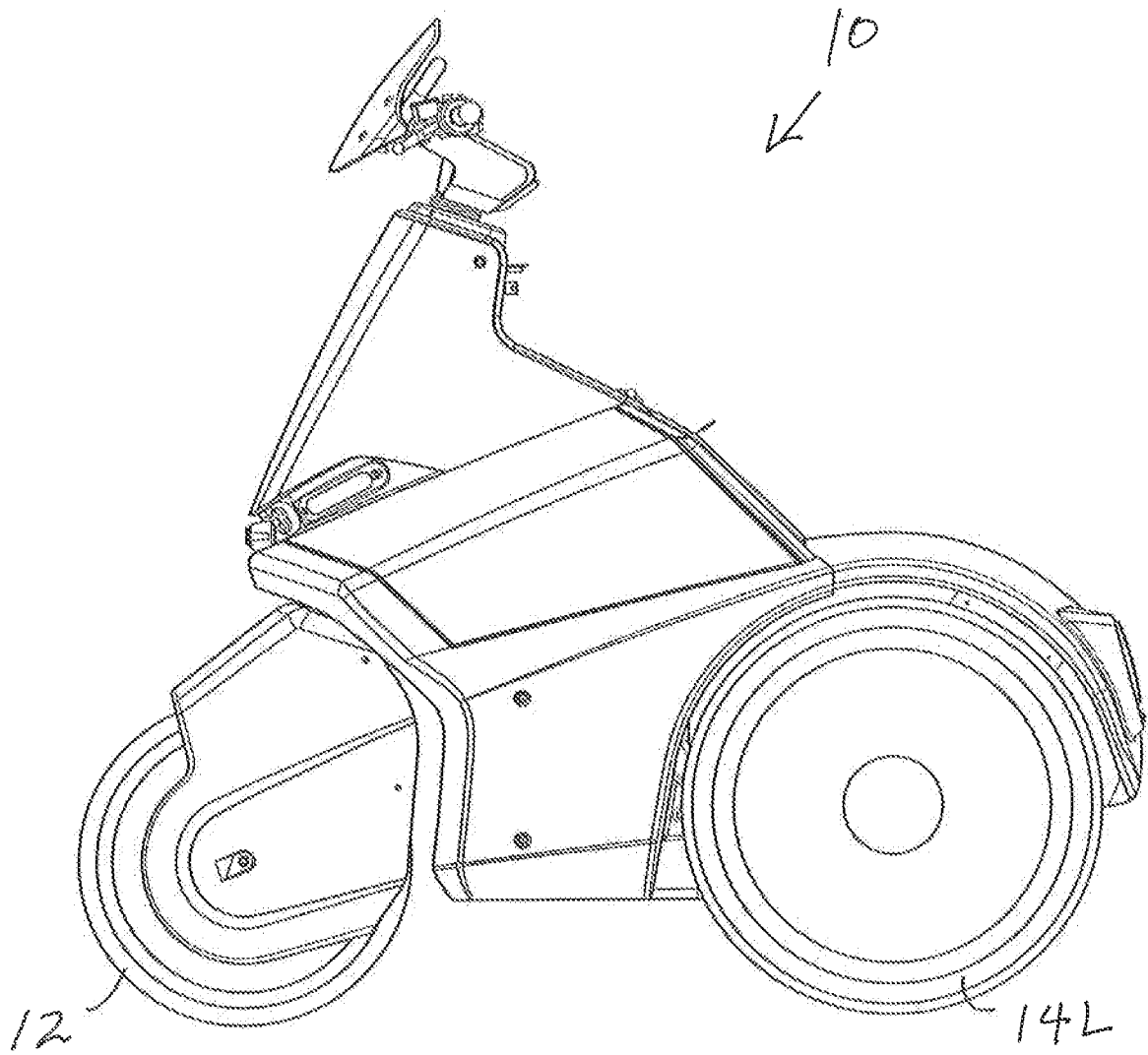


FIG. 1B

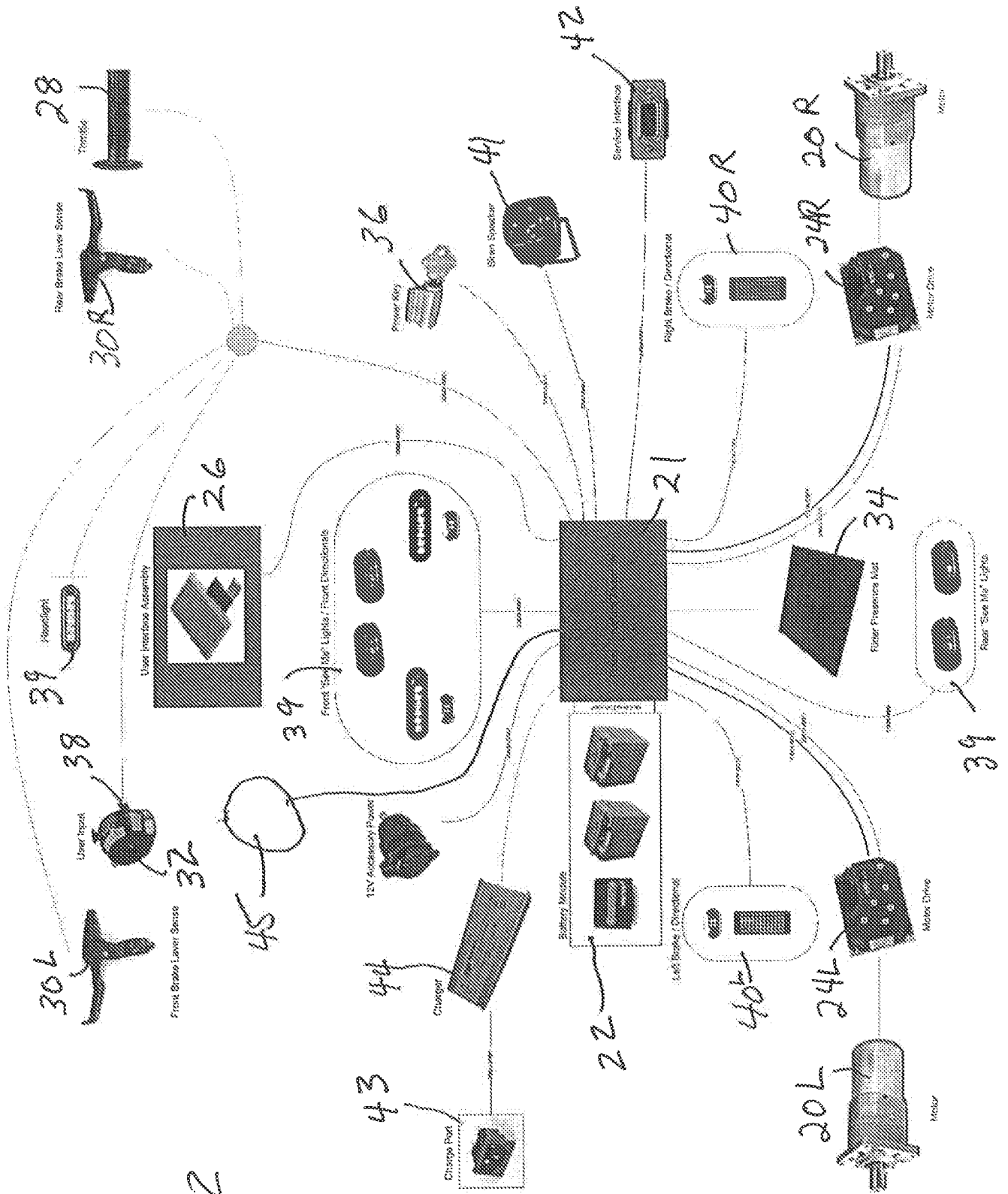
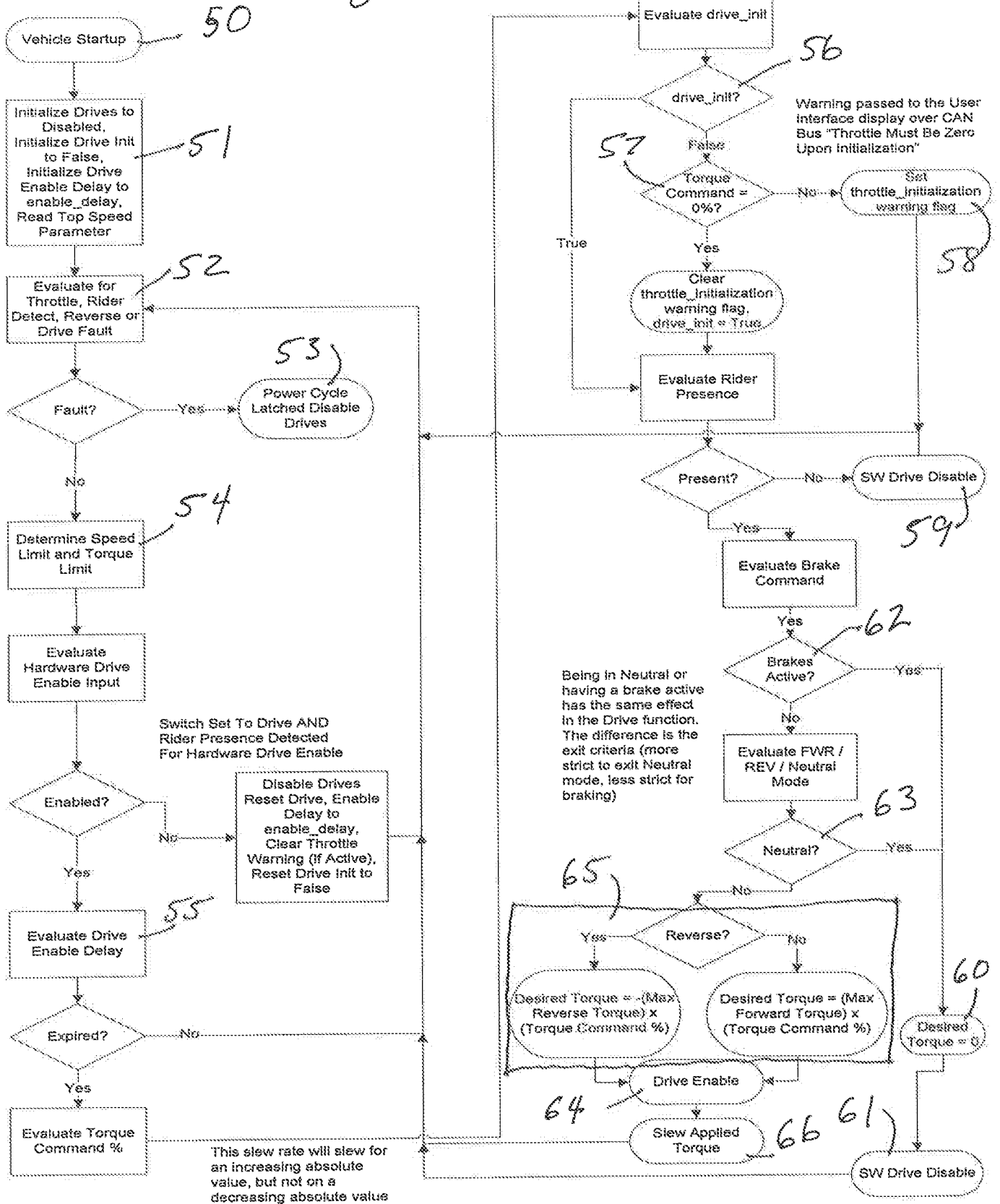
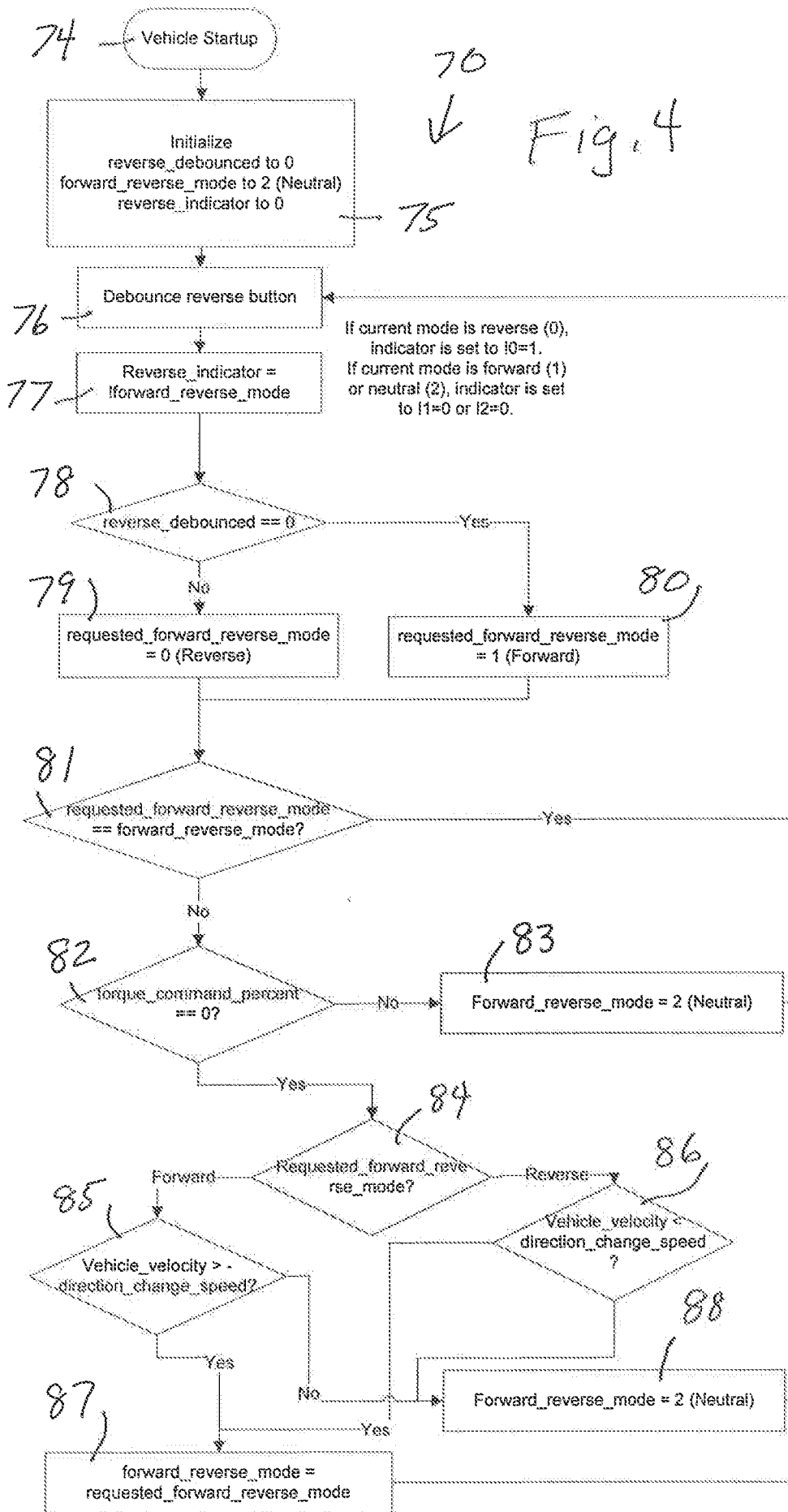


Fig. 2

Fig. 3



This slew rate will slew for an increasing absolute value, but not on a decreasing absolute value



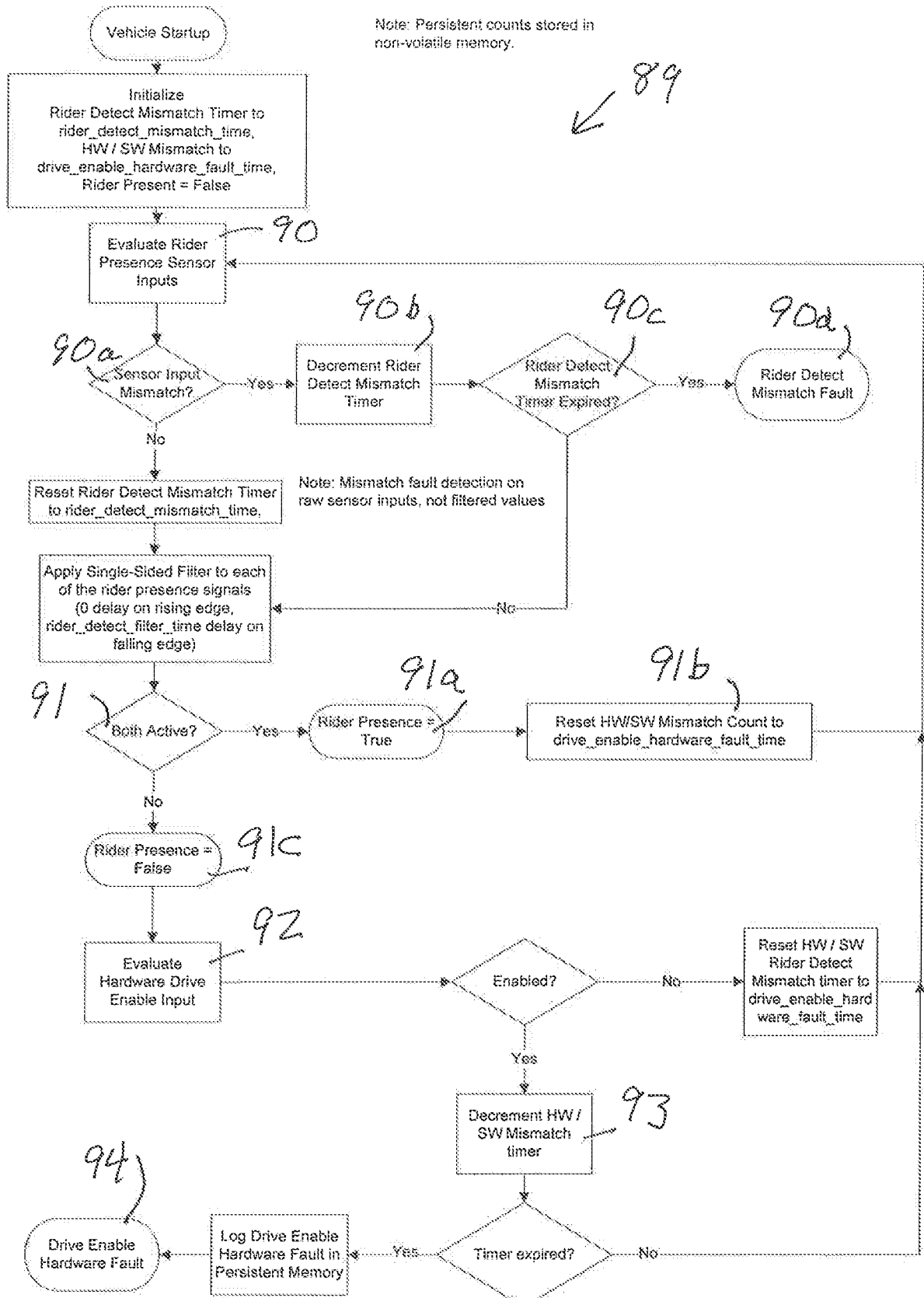


Fig. 5

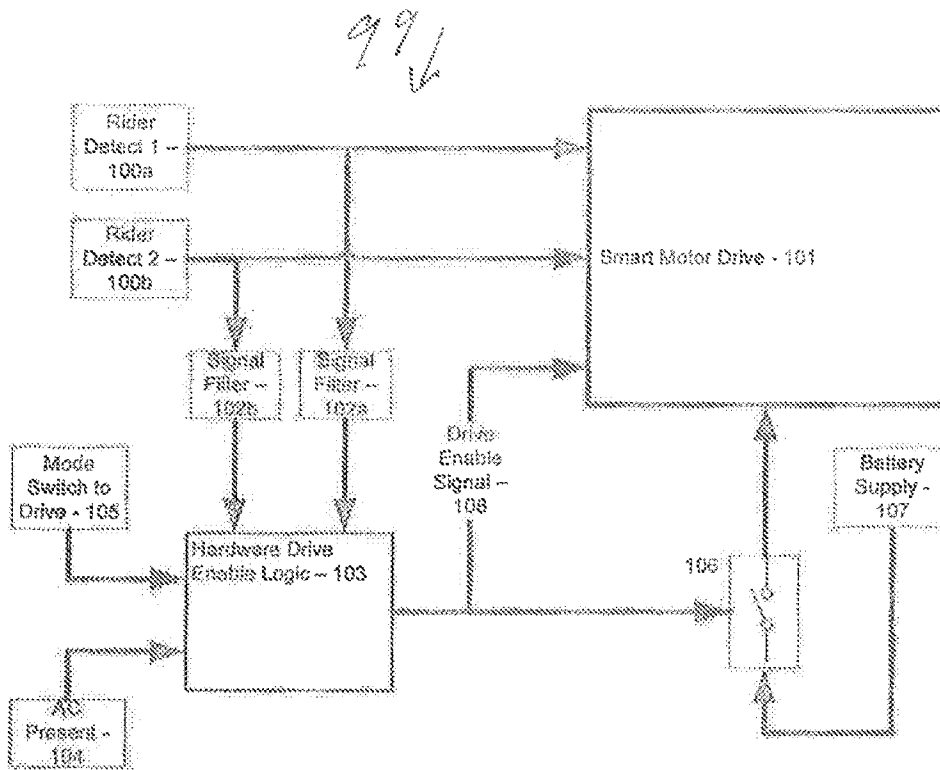


Fig. 4B

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No  
PCT/US2015/025338

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER  
INV. B62K3/00 B62K5/025  
ADD.  
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED  
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  
B62K

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)  
EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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Y	paragraph [0093]; figure 5	11-16
Y	----- GB 2 491 136 A (LOOMES DAVID [GB]; LOOMES PAUL [GB]; CANT TIM [GB]) 28 November 2012 (2012-11-28)	11-16
A	claims 1-14; figure 2	1-10
A	----- US 2014/008138 A1 (KIM JOON HYUNG [KR] ET AL) 9 January 2014 (2014-01-09) paragraphs [0036], [0043], [0044], [0045]; figures 7,10	1,11
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Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

\* Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date
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- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
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- "&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search  30 June 2015	Date of mailing of the international search report  08/07/2015
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Name and mailing address of the ISA/ European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer  Huber, Florian
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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/US2015/025338

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