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(71) **Applicant:** ZOOX, INC. [US/US]; 2180 Sand Hill Rd., 2nd Floor, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (US).

(72) **Inventors:** LEVINSON, Jesse Sol; Zoox, Inc., 2180 Sand Hill Rd., 2nd Floor, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (US). **SIBLEY, Gabriel Thurston**; Zoox, Inc., 2180 Sand Hill Rd., 2nd Floor, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (US). **REGE, Ashutosh Gajanan**; Zoox, Inc, 2180 Sand Hill Rd., 2nd Floor, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (US).

(74) **Agents:** **DIVINE, David A.** et al.; Lee & Hayes, PLLC, 601 W. Riverside Ave. Suite 1400, Spokane, WA 99201 (US).

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(54) Title: AUTOMATED EXTRACTION OF SEMANTIC INFORMATION TO ENHANCE INCREMENTAL MAPPING MODIFICATIONS FOR ROBOTIC VEHICLES

(57) Abstract: Systems, methods and apparatus may be configured to implement automatic semantic classification of a detected object(s) disposed in a region of an environment external to an autonomous vehicle. The automatic semantic classification may include analyzing over a time period, patterns in a predicted behavior of the detected object(s) to infer a semantic classification of the detected object(s). Analysis may include processing of sensor data from the autonomous vehicle to generate heat maps indicative of a location of the detected object(s) in the region during the time period. Probabilistic statistical analysis may be applied to the sensor data to determine a confidence level in the inferred semantic classification. The inferred semantic classification may be applied to the detected object(s) when the confidence level exceeds a predetermined threshold value (e.g., greater than 50%).

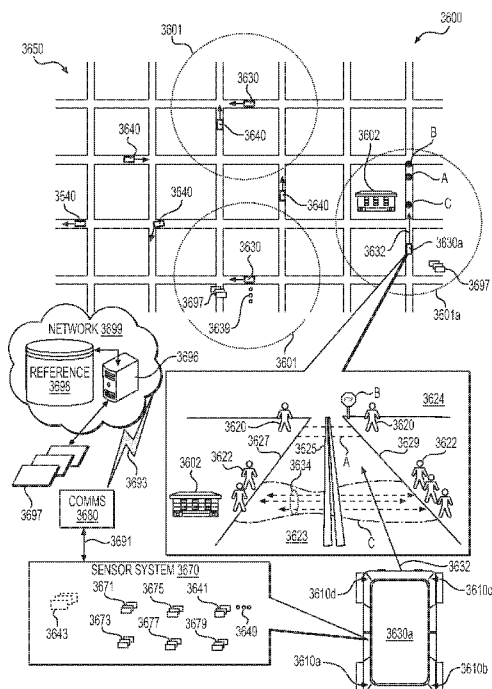


FIG. 36



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**AUTOMATED EXTRACTION OF SEMANTIC INFORMATION TO
ENHANCE INCREMENTAL MAPPING MODIFICATIONS FOR
ROBOTIC VEHICLES**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This PCT international application is a continuation of U.S. Application No. 14/932,940, filed November 4, 2015, which is related to U.S. Patent Application No. 14/932,959 filed November 4, 2015, entitled "Autonomous Vehicle Fleet Service and System," both of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties for all purposes.

FIELD

[0002] Various embodiments relate generally to autonomous vehicles and associated mechanical, electrical and electronic hardware, computer software and systems, and wired and wireless network communications to provide incremental mapping modifications to an autonomous vehicle fleet.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Environments in which an autonomous vehicle may be tasked to navigate may change over time due to changes in patterns of use (e.g., by pedestrians) and road infrastructure (e.g., traffic signs, traffic lights, road markings, etc.). Autonomous vehicles that rely on outdated data or untimely data updates may not be optimally configured to safely navigate in environments (e.g., roadways) in which change is occurring over time. Patterns of use from pedestrians and/or other vehicles (e.g., human driven vehicles) may change and present a danger of collision or near collisions with pedestrians or other vehicles. As one example, some pedestrians may jaywalk to take a short cut across a street. If many pedestrians decide to jaywalk across the street, the danger of a collision between a jaywalker and the autonomous vehicle may be increased. The autonomous vehicle may be configured to recognize and act appropriately in regards to legitimate pedestrian cross-walks (e.g., that are painted or otherwise visually indicated), but may not recognize an impromptu pedestrian cross-walk that exists due to behavior of pedestrians. However, safe operation of the autonomous vehicle or a fleet of autonomous vehicles may require that collisions with pedestrians, even though they may legally be in the wrong by jaywalking, be avoided with the same urgency applied to pedestrians

who cross streets at legally designated cross-walks. Moreover, changes in other objects that may be present in an environment may also require the autonomous vehicle to be configured to adapt to those changes. Accordingly, correct and timely classification of objects and/or behavior patterns by objects in an environment over time may be necessary for safe and efficient operation of autonomous vehicles and/or fleets of autonomous vehicles.

[0004] Thus, what is needed is a solution for implementation of automatic object classification in autonomous vehicles, without the limitations of conventional techniques.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] Various embodiments or examples ("examples") of the invention are disclosed in the following detailed description and the accompanying drawings:

[0006] FIG. 1 is a diagram depicting implementation of a fleet of autonomous vehicles that are communicatively networked to an autonomous vehicle service platform, according to some embodiments;

[0007] FIG. 2 is an example of a flow diagram to monitor a fleet of autonomous vehicles, according to some embodiments;

[0008] FIG. 3A is a diagram depicting examples of sensors and other autonomous vehicle components, according to some examples;

[0009] FIGs. 3B to 3E are diagrams depicting examples of sensor field redundancy and autonomous vehicle adaption to a loss of a sensor field, according to some examples;

[0010] FIG. 4 is a functional block diagram depicting a system including an autonomous vehicle service platform that is communicatively coupled via a communication layer to an autonomous vehicle controller, according to some examples;

[0011] FIG. 5 is an example of a flow diagram to control an autonomous vehicle, according to some embodiments;

[0012] FIG. 6 is a diagram depicting an example of an architecture for an autonomous vehicle controller, according to some embodiments;

[0013] FIG. 7 is a diagram depicting an example of an autonomous vehicle service platform implementing redundant communication channels to maintain reliable communications with a fleet of autonomous vehicles, according to some embodiments;

[0014] FIG. 8 is a diagram depicting an example of a messaging application configured to exchange data among various applications, according to some embodiment;

[0015] FIG. 9 is a diagram depicting types of data for facilitating teleoperations using a communications protocol described in FIG. 8, according to some examples;

[0016] FIG. 10 is a diagram illustrating an example of a teleoperator interface with which a teleoperator may influence path planning, according to some embodiments;

[0017] FIG. 11 is a diagram depicting an example of a planner configured to invoke teleoperations, according to some examples;

[0018] FIG. 12 is an example of a flow diagram configured to control an autonomous vehicle, according to some embodiments;

[0019] FIG. 13 depicts an example in which a planner may generate a trajectory, according to some examples;

[0020] FIG. 14 is a diagram depicting another example of an autonomous vehicle service platform, according to some embodiments;

[0021] FIG. 15 is an example of a flow diagram to control an autonomous vehicle, according to some embodiments;

[0022] FIG. 16 is a diagram of an example of an autonomous vehicle fleet manager implementing a fleet optimization manager, according to some examples;

[0023] FIG. 17 is an example of a flow diagram for managing a fleet of autonomous vehicles, according to some embodiments;

[0024] FIG. 18 is a diagram illustrating an autonomous vehicle fleet manager implementing an autonomous vehicle communications link manager, according to some embodiments;

[0025] FIG. 19 is an example of a flow diagram to determine actions for autonomous vehicles during an event, according to some embodiments;

[0026] FIG. 20 is a diagram depicting an example of a localizer, according to some embodiments;

[0027] FIG. 21 is an example of a flow diagram to generate local pose data based on integrated sensor data, according to some embodiments;

[0028] FIG. 22 is a diagram depicting another example of a localizer, according to some embodiments;

[0029] FIG. 23 is a diagram depicting an example of a perception engine, according to some embodiments;

[0030] FIG. 24 is an example of a flow chart to generate perception engine data, according to some embodiments;

[0031] FIG. 25 is an example of a segmentation processor, according to some embodiments;

[0032] FIG. 26A is a diagram depicting examples of an object tracker and a classifier, according to various embodiments;

[0033] FIG. 26B is a diagram depicting another example of an object tracker according to at least some examples;

[0034] FIG. 27 is an example of front-end processor for a perception engine, according to some examples;

[0035] FIG. 28 is a diagram depicting a simulator configured to simulate an autonomous vehicle in a synthetic environment, according to various embodiments;

[0036] FIG. 29 is an example of a flow chart to simulate various aspects of an autonomous vehicle, according to some embodiments;

[0037] FIG. 30 is an example of a flow chart to generate map data, according to some embodiments;

[0038] FIG. 31 is a diagram depicting an architecture of a mapping engine, according to some embodiments;

[0039] FIG. 32 is a diagram depicting an autonomous vehicle application, according to some examples;

[0040] FIGs. 33 to 35 illustrate examples of various computing platforms configured to provide various functionalities to components of an autonomous vehicle service, according to various embodiments;

[0041] FIG. 36 is a diagram depicting implementation of automated extraction of semantic information based on sensor data from an autonomous vehicle, according to some examples;

[0042] FIG. 37 is an example of a flow diagram to automate incremental changes to mapping data based on an inferred semantic classification, according to some embodiments;

[0043] FIG. 38 is a diagram depicting an inferred semantic classification implemented in mapping data for autonomous vehicles in a fleet of autonomous vehicles, according to some examples;

[0044] FIG. 39 is a diagram depicting implementation of automated extraction of semantic information based on sensor data over a period of time, according to some examples;

[0045] FIG. 40 is a diagram depicting implementation of automated extraction of semantic information based on heat map data over a period of time, according to some examples;

[0046] FIG. 41 is a diagram depicting generation of heat map data from sensor data generated by a sensor system of an autonomous vehicle, according to some examples; and

[0047] FIG. 42 is a diagram depicting implementation of automated extraction of semantic information based on sensor data over a period of time, according to some examples.

[0048] Although the above-described drawings depict various examples of the invention, the invention is not limited by the depicted examples. It is to be understood that, in the drawings,

like reference numerals designate like structural elements. Also, it is understood that the drawings are not necessarily to scale.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0049] Various embodiments or examples may be implemented in numerous ways, including as a system, a process, an apparatus, a user interface, or a series of program instructions on a computer readable medium such as a computer readable storage medium or a computer network where the program instructions are sent over optical, electronic, or wireless communication links. In general, operations of disclosed processes may be performed in an arbitrary order, unless otherwise provided in the claims.

[0050] A detailed description of one or more examples is provided below along with accompanying figures. The detailed description is provided in connection with such examples, but is not limited to any particular example. The scope is limited only by the claims, and numerous alternatives, modifications, and equivalents thereof. Numerous specific details are set forth in the following description in order to provide a thorough understanding. These details are provided for the purpose of example and the described techniques may be practiced according to the claims without some or all of these specific details. For clarity, technical material that is known in the technical fields related to the examples has not been described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the description.

[0051] FIG. 1 is a diagram depicting an implementation of a fleet of autonomous vehicles that are communicatively networked to an autonomous vehicle service platform, according to some embodiments. Diagram 100 depicts a fleet of autonomous vehicles 109 (e.g., one or more of autonomous vehicles 109a to 109e) operating as a service, each autonomous vehicle 109 being configured to self-drive a road network 110 and establish a communication link 192 with an autonomous vehicle service platform 101. In examples in which a fleet of autonomous vehicles 109 constitutes a service, a user 102 may transmit a request 103 for autonomous transportation via one or more networks 106 to autonomous vehicle service platform 101. In response, autonomous vehicle service platform 101 may dispatch one of autonomous vehicles 109 to transport user 102 autonomously from geographic location 119 to geographic location 111. Autonomous vehicle service platform 101 may dispatch an autonomous vehicle from a station 190 to geographic location 119, or may divert an autonomous vehicle 109c, already in transit (e.g., without occupants), to service the transportation request for user 102. Autonomous vehicle service platform 101 may be further configured to divert an autonomous vehicle 109c in transit, with passengers, responsive to a request from user 102 (e.g., as a passenger). In

addition, autonomous vehicle service platform 101 may be configured to reserve an autonomous vehicle 109c in transit, with passengers, for diverting to service a request of user 102 subsequent to dropping off existing passengers. Note that multiple autonomous vehicle service platforms 101 (not shown) and one or more stations 190 may be implemented to service one or more autonomous vehicles 109 in connection with road network 110. One or more stations 190 may be configured to store, service, manage, and/or maintain an inventory of autonomous vehicles 109 (e.g., station 190 may include one or more computing devices implementing autonomous vehicle service platform 101).

[0052] According to some examples, at least some of autonomous vehicles 109a to 109e are configured as bidirectional autonomous vehicles, such as bidirectional autonomous vehicle ("AV") 130. Bidirectional autonomous vehicle 130 may be configured to travel in either direction principally along, but not limited to, a longitudinal axis 131. Accordingly, bidirectional autonomous vehicle 130 may be configured to implement active lighting external to the vehicle to alert others (e.g., other drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, etc.) in the adjacent vicinity, and a direction in which bidirectional autonomous vehicle 130 is traveling. For example, active sources of light 136 may be implemented as active lights 138a when traveling in a first direction, or may be implemented as active lights 138b when traveling in a second direction. Active lights 138a may be implemented using a first subset of one or more colors, with optional animation (e.g., light patterns of variable intensities of light or color that may change over time). Similarly, active lights 138b may be implemented using a second subset of one or more colors and light patterns that may be different than those of active lights 138a. For example, active lights 138a may be implemented using white-colored lights as "headlights," whereas active lights 138b may be implemented using red-colored lights as "taillights." Active lights 138a and 138b, or portions thereof, may be configured to provide other light-related functionalities, such as provide "turn signal indication" functions (e.g., using yellow light). According to various examples, logic in autonomous vehicle 130 may be configured to adapt active lights 138a and 138b to comply with various safety requirements and traffic regulations or laws for any number of jurisdictions.

[0053] In some embodiments, bidirectional autonomous vehicle 130 may be configured to have similar structural elements and components in each quad portion, such as quad portion 194. The quad portions are depicted, at least in this example, as portions of bidirectional autonomous vehicle 130 defined by the intersection of a plane 132 and a plane 134, both of which pass through the vehicle to form two similar halves on each side of planes 132 and 134. Further, bidirectional autonomous vehicle 130 may include an autonomous vehicle controller 147 that

includes logic (e.g., hardware or software, or as combination thereof) that is configured to control a predominate number of vehicle functions, including driving control (e.g., propulsion, steering, etc.) and active sources 136 of light, among other functions. Bidirectional autonomous vehicle 130 also includes a number of sensors 139 disposed at various locations on the vehicle (other sensors are not shown).

[0054] Autonomous vehicle controller 147 may be further configured to determine a local pose (e.g., local position) of an autonomous vehicle 109 and to detect external objects relative to the vehicle. For example, consider that bidirectional autonomous vehicle 130 is traveling in the direction 119 in road network 110. A localizer (not shown) of autonomous vehicle controller 147 can determine a local pose at the geographic location 111. As such, the localizer may use acquired sensor data, such as sensor data associated with surfaces of buildings 115 and 117, which can be compared against reference data, such as map data (e.g., 3D map data, including reflectance data) to determine a local pose. Further, a perception engine (not shown) of autonomous vehicle controller 147 may be configured to detect, classify, and predict the behavior of external objects, such as external object 112 (a "tree") and external object 114 (a "pedestrian"). Classification of such external objects may broadly classify objects as static objects, such as external object 112, and dynamic objects, such as external object 114. The localizer and the perception engine, as well as other components of the AV controller 147, collaborate to cause autonomous vehicles 109 to drive autonomously.

[0055] According to some examples, autonomous vehicle service platform 101 is configured to provide teleoperator services should an autonomous vehicle 109 request teleoperation. For example, consider that an autonomous vehicle controller 147 in autonomous vehicle 109d detects an object 126 obscuring a path 124 on roadway 122 at point 191, as depicted in inset 120. If autonomous vehicle controller 147 cannot ascertain a path or trajectory over which vehicle 109d may safely transit with a relatively high degree of certainty, then autonomous vehicle controller 147 may transmit request message 105 for teleoperation services. In response, a teleoperator computing device 104 may receive instructions from a teleoperator 108 to perform a course of action to successfully (and safely) negotiate obstacles 126. Response data 107 then can be transmitted back to autonomous vehicle 109d to cause the vehicle to, for example, safely cross a set of double lines as it transits along the alternate path 121. In some examples, teleoperator computing device 104 may generate a response identifying geographic areas to exclude from planning a path. In particular, rather than provide a path to follow, a teleoperator 108 may define areas or locations that the autonomous vehicle must avoid.

[0056] In view of the foregoing, the structures and/or functionalities of autonomous vehicle 130 and/or autonomous vehicle controller 147, as well as their components, can perform real-time (or near real-time) trajectory calculations through autonomous-related operations, such as localization and perception, to enable autonomous vehicles 109 to self-drive.

[0057] In some cases, the bidirectional nature of bidirectional autonomous vehicle 130 provides for a vehicle that has quad portions 194 (or any other number of symmetric portions) that are similar or are substantially similar to each other. Such symmetry reduces complexity of design and decreases relatively the number of unique components or structures, thereby reducing inventory and manufacturing complexities. For example, a drivetrain and wheel system may be disposed in any of the quad portions 194. Further, autonomous vehicle controller 147 is configured to invoke teleoperation services to reduce the likelihood that an autonomous vehicle 109 is delayed in transit while resolving an event or issue that may otherwise affect the safety of the occupants. In some cases, the visible portion of road network 110 depicts a geo-fenced region that may limit or otherwise control the movement of autonomous vehicles 109 to the road network shown in FIG. 1. According to various examples, autonomous vehicle 109, and a fleet thereof, may be configurable to operate as a level 4 ("full self-driving automation," or L4) vehicle that can provide transportation on demand with the convenience and privacy of point-to-point personal mobility while providing the efficiency of shared vehicles. In some examples, autonomous vehicle 109, or any autonomous vehicle described herein, may be configured to omit a steering wheel or any other mechanical means of providing manual (i.e., human-controlled) steering for autonomous vehicle 109. Further, autonomous vehicle 109, or any autonomous vehicle described herein, may be configured to omit a seat or location reserved within the vehicle for an occupant to engage a steering wheel.

[0058] FIG. 2 is an example of a flow diagram to monitor a fleet of autonomous vehicles, according to some embodiments. At 202, flow 200 begins when a fleet of autonomous vehicles are monitored. At least one autonomous vehicle includes an autonomous vehicle controller configured to cause the vehicle to autonomously transit from a first geographic region to a second geographic region. At 204, data representing an event associated with a calculated confidence level for a vehicle is detected. An event may be a condition or situation affecting operation, or potentially affecting operation, of an autonomous vehicle. The events may be internal to an autonomous vehicle, or external. For example, an obstacle obscuring a roadway may be viewed as an event, as well as a reduction or loss of communication. An event may include traffic conditions or congestion, as well as unexpected or unusual numbers or types of external objects (or tracks) that are perceived by a perception engine. An event may include

weather-related conditions (e.g., loss of friction due to ice or rain) or the angle at which the sun is shining (e.g., at sunset), such as low angle to the horizon that cause sun to shine brightly in the eyes of human drivers of other vehicles. These and other conditions may be viewed as events that cause invocation of the teleoperator service or for the vehicle to execute a safe-stop trajectory.

[0059] At 206, data representing a subset of candidate trajectories may be received from an autonomous vehicle responsive to the detection of the event. For example, a planner of an autonomous vehicle controller may calculate and evaluate large numbers of trajectories (e.g., thousands or greater) per unit time, such as a second. In some embodiments, candidate trajectories are a subset of the trajectories that provide for relatively higher confidence levels that an autonomous vehicle may move forward safely in view of the event (e.g., using an alternate path provided by a teleoperator). Note that some candidate trajectories may be ranked or associated with higher degrees of confidence than other candidate trajectories. According to some examples, subsets of candidate trajectories may originate from any number of sources, such as a planner, a teleoperator computing device (e.g., teleoperators can determine and provide approximate paths), etc., and may be combined as a superset of candidate trajectories. At 208, path guidance data may be identified at one or more processors. The path guidance data may be configured to assist a teleoperator in selecting a guided trajectory from one or more of the candidate trajectories. In some instances, the path guidance data specifies a value indicative of a confidence level or probability that indicates the degree of certainty that a particular candidate trajectory may reduce or negate the probability that the event may impact operation of an autonomous vehicle. A guided trajectory, as a selected candidate trajectory, may be received at 210, responsive to input from a teleoperator (e.g., a teleoperator may select at least one candidate trajectory as a guided trajectory from a group of differently-ranked candidate trajectories). The selection may be made via an operator interface that lists a number of candidate trajectories, for example, in order from highest confidence levels to lowest confidence levels. At 212, the selection of a candidate trajectory as a guided trajectory may be transmitted to the vehicle, which, in turn, implements the guided trajectory for resolving the condition by causing the vehicle to perform a teleoperator-specified maneuver. As such, the autonomous vehicle may transition from a non-normative operational state.

[0060] FIG. 3A is a diagram depicting examples of sensors and other autonomous vehicle components, according to some examples. Diagram 300 depicts an interior view of a bidirectional autonomous vehicle 330 that includes sensors, signal routers 345, drive trains 349,

removable batteries 343, audio generators 344 (e.g., speakers or transducers), and autonomous vehicle ("AV") control logic 347. Sensors shown in diagram 300 include image capture sensors 340 (e.g., light capture devices or cameras of any type), audio capture sensors 342 (e.g., microphones of any type), radar devices 348, sonar devices 341 (or other like sensors, including ultrasonic sensors or acoustic-related sensors), and LIDAR devices 346, among other sensor types and modalities (some of which are not shown, such as inertial measurement units, or "IMUs," global positioning system ("GPS") sensors, sonar sensors, etc.). Note that quad portion 350 is representative of the symmetry of each of four "quad portions" of bidirectional autonomous vehicle 330 (e.g., each quad portion 350 may include a wheel, a drivetrain 349, similar steering mechanisms, similar structural support and members, etc. beyond that which is depicted). As depicted in FIG. 3A, similar sensors may be placed in similar locations in each quad portion 350, however any other configuration may be implemented. Each wheel may be steerable individually and independent of the others. Note, too, that removable batteries 343 may be configured to facilitate being swapped in and swapped out rather than charging in situ, thereby ensuring reduced or negligible downtimes due to the necessity of charging batteries 343. While autonomous vehicle controller 347a is depicted as being used in a bidirectional autonomous vehicle 330, autonomous vehicle controller 347a is not so limited and may be implemented in unidirectional autonomous vehicles or any other type of vehicle, whether on land, in air, or at sea. Note that the depicted and described positions, locations, orientations, quantities, and types of sensors shown in FIG. 3A are not intended to be limiting, and, as such, there may be any number and type of sensor, and any sensor may be located and oriented anywhere on autonomous vehicle 330.

[0061] According to some embodiments, portions of the autonomous vehicle ("AV") control logic 347 may be implemented using clusters of graphics processing units ("GPUs") implementing a framework and programming model suitable for programming the clusters of GPUs. For example, a compute unified device architecture ("CUDA")-compatible programming language and application programming interface ("API") model may be used to program the GPUs. CUDA™ is produced and maintained by NVIDIA of Santa Clara, California. Note that other programming languages may be implemented, such as OpenCL, or any other parallel programming language.

[0062] According to some embodiments, autonomous vehicle control logic 347 may be implemented in hardware and/or software as autonomous vehicle controller 347a, which is shown to include a motion controller 362, a planner 364, a perception engine 366, and a localizer 368. As shown, autonomous vehicle controller 347a is configured to receive camera

data 340a, LIDAR data 346a, and radar data 348a, or any other range-sensing or localization data, including sonar data 341a or the like. Autonomous vehicle controller 347a is also configured to receive positioning data, such as GPS data 352, IMU data 354, and other position-sensing data (e.g., wheel-related data, such as steering angles, angular velocity, etc.). Further, autonomous vehicle controller 347a may receive any other sensor data 356, as well as reference data 339. In some cases, reference data 339 includes map data (e.g., 3D map data, 2D map data, 4D map data (e.g., including Epoch Determination)) and route data (e.g., road network data, including, but not limited to, RNDF data (or similar data), MDF data (or similar data), etc.

[0063] Localizer 368 is configured to receive sensor data from one or more sources, such as GPS data 352, wheel data, IMU data 354, LIDAR data 346a, camera data 340a, radar data 348a, and the like, as well as reference data 339 (e.g., 3D map data and route data). Localizer 368 integrates (e.g., fuses the sensor data) and analyzes the data by comparing sensor data to map data to determine a local pose (or position) of bidirectional autonomous vehicle 330. According to some examples, localizer 368 may generate or update the pose or position of any autonomous vehicle in real-time or near real-time. Note that localizer 368 and its functionality need not be limited to "bi-directional" vehicles and can be implemented in any vehicle of any type. Therefore, localizer 368 (as well as other components of AV controller 347a) may be implemented in a "unidirectional" vehicle or any non-autonomous vehicle. According to some embodiments, data describing a local pose may include one or more of an x-coordinate, a y-coordinate, a z-coordinate (or any coordinate of any coordinate system, including polar or cylindrical coordinate systems, or the like), a yaw value, a roll value, a pitch value (e.g., an angle value), a rate (e.g., velocity), altitude, and the like.

[0064] Perception engine 366 is configured to receive sensor data from one or more sources, such as LIDAR data 346a, camera data 340a, radar data 348a, and the like, as well as local pose data. Perception engine 366 may be configured to determine locations of external objects based on sensor data and other data. External objects, for instance, may be objects that are not part of a drivable surface. For example, perception engine 366 may be able to detect and classify external objects as pedestrians, bicyclists, dogs, other vehicles, etc. (e.g., perception engine 366 is configured to classify the objects in accordance with a type of classification, which may be associated with semantic information, including a label). Based on the classification of these external objects, the external objects may be labeled as dynamic objects or static objects. For example, an external object classified as a tree may be labeled as a static object, while an external object classified as a pedestrian may be labeled as a dynamic object. External objects labeled as static may or may not be described in map data. Examples of external objects likely

to be labeled as static include traffic cones, cement barriers arranged across a roadway, lane closure signs, newly-placed mailboxes or trash cans adjacent a roadway, etc. Examples of external objects likely to be labeled as dynamic include bicyclists, pedestrians, animals, other vehicles, etc. If the external object is labeled as dynamic, and further data about the external object may indicate a typical level of activity and velocity, as well as behavior patterns associated with the classification type. Further data about the external object may be generated by tracking the external object. As such, the classification type can be used to predict or otherwise determine the likelihood that an external object may, for example, interfere with an autonomous vehicle traveling along a planned path. For example, an external object that is classified as a pedestrian may be associated with some maximum speed, as well as an average speed (e.g., based on tracking data). The velocity of the pedestrian relative to the velocity of an autonomous vehicle can be used to determine if a collision is likely. Further, perception engine 364 may determine a level of uncertainty associated with a current and future state of objects. In some examples, the level of uncertainty may be expressed as an estimated value (or probability).

[0065] Planner 364 is configured to receive perception data from perception engine 366, and may also include localizer data from localizer 368. According to some examples, the perception data may include an obstacle map specifying static and dynamic objects located in the vicinity of an autonomous vehicle, whereas the localizer data may include a local pose or position. In operation, planner 364 generates numerous trajectories, and evaluates the trajectories, based on at least the location of the autonomous vehicle against relative locations of external dynamic and static objects. Planner 364 selects an optimal trajectory based on a variety of criteria over which to direct the autonomous vehicle in way that provides for collision-free travel. In some examples, planner 364 may be configured to calculate the trajectories as probabilistically-determined trajectories. Further, planner 364 may transmit steering and propulsion commands (as well as decelerating or braking commands) to motion controller 362. Motion controller 362 subsequently may convert any of the commands, such as a steering command, a throttle or propulsion command, and a braking command, into control signals (e.g., for application to actuators or other mechanical interfaces) to implement changes in steering or wheel angles 351 and/or velocity 353.

[0066] FIGs. 3B to 3E are diagrams depicting examples of sensor field redundancy and autonomous vehicle adaption to a loss of a sensor field, according to some examples. Diagram 391 of FIG. 3B depicts a sensor field 301a in which sensor 310a detects objects (e.g., for determining range or distance, or other information). While sensor 310a may implement any

type of sensor or sensor modality, sensor 310a and similarly-described sensors, such as sensors 310b, 310c, and 310d, may include LIDAR devices. Therefore, sensor fields 301a, 301b, 301c, and 301d each includes a field into which lasers extend. Diagram 392 of FIG. 3C depicts four overlapping sensor fields each of which is generated by a corresponding LIDAR sensor 310 (not shown). As shown, portions 301 of the sensor fields include no overlapping sensor fields (e.g., a single LIDAR field), portions 302 of the sensor fields include two overlapping sensor fields, and portions 303 include three overlapping sensor fields, whereby such sensors provide for multiple levels of redundancy should a LIDAR sensor fail.

[0067] FIG. 3D depicts a loss of a sensor field due to failed operation of LIDAR 309, according to some examples. Sensor field 302 of FIG. 3C is transformed into a single sensor field 305, one of sensor fields 301 of FIG. 3C is lost to a gap 304, and three of sensor fields 303 of FIG. 3C are transformed into sensor fields 306 (i.e., limited to two overlapping fields). Should autonomous car 330c be traveling in the direction of travel 396, the sensor field in front of the moving autonomous vehicle may be less robust than the one at the trailing end portion. According to some examples, an autonomous vehicle controller (not shown) is configured to leverage the bidirectional nature of autonomous vehicle 330c to address the loss of sensor field at the leading area in front of the vehicle. FIG. 3E depicts a bidirectional maneuver for restoring a certain robustness of the sensor field in front of autonomous vehicle 330d. As shown, a more robust sensor field 302 is disposed at the rear of the vehicle 330d coextensive with taillights 348. When convenient, autonomous vehicle 330d performs a bidirectional maneuver by pulling into a driveway 397 and switches its directionality such that taillights 348 actively switch to the other side (e.g., the trailing edge) of autonomous vehicle 330d. As shown, autonomous vehicle 330d restores a robust sensor field 302 in front of the vehicle as it travels along direction of travel 398. Further, the above-described bidirectional maneuver obviates a requirement for a more complicated maneuver that requires backing up into a busy roadway.

[0068] FIG. 4 is a functional block diagram depicting a system including an autonomous vehicle service platform that is communicatively coupled via a communication layer to an autonomous vehicle controller, according to some examples. Diagram 400 depicts an autonomous vehicle controller ("AV") 447 disposed in an autonomous vehicle 430, which, in turn, includes a number of sensors 470 coupled to autonomous vehicle controller 447. Sensors 470 include one or more LIDAR devices 472, one or more cameras 474, one or more radars 476, one or more global positioning system ("GPS") data receiver-sensors, one or more inertial measurement units ("IMUs") 475, one or more odometry sensors 477 (e.g., wheel encoder sensors, wheel speed sensors, and the like), and any other suitable sensors 478, such as infrared

cameras or sensors, hyperspectral-capable sensors, ultrasonic sensors (or any other acoustic energy-based sensor), radio frequency-based sensors, etc. In some cases, wheel angle sensors configured to sense steering angles of wheels may be included as odometry sensors 477 or suitable sensors 478. In a non-limiting example, autonomous vehicle controller 447 may include four or more LIDARs 472, sixteen or more cameras 474 and four or more radar units 476. Further, sensors 470 may be configured to provide sensor data to components of autonomous vehicle controller 447 and to elements of autonomous vehicle service platform 401. As shown in diagram 400, autonomous vehicle controller 447 includes a planner 464, a motion controller 462, a localizer 468, a perception engine 466, and a local map generator 440. Note that elements depicted in diagram 400 of FIG. 4 may include structures and/or functions as similarly-named elements described in connection to one or more other drawings.

[0069] Localizer 468 is configured to localize autonomous vehicle (i.e., determine a local pose) relative to reference data, which may include map data, route data (e.g., road network data, such as RNOF-like data), and the like. In some cases, localizer 468 is configured to identify, for example, a point in space that may represent a location of autonomous vehicle 430 relative to features of a representation of an environment. Localizer 468 is shown to include a sensor data integrator 469, which may be configured to integrate multiple subsets of sensor data (e.g., of different sensor modalities) to reduce uncertainties related to each individual type of sensor. According to some examples, sensor data integrator 469 is configured to fuse sensor data (e.g., LIDAR data, camera data, radar data, etc.) to form integrated sensor data values for determining a local pose. According to some examples, localizer 468 retrieves reference data originating from a reference data repository 405, which includes a map data repository 405a for storing 2D map data, 3D map data, 4D map data, and the like. Localizer 468 may be configured to identify at least a subset of features in the environment to match against map data to identify, or otherwise confirm, a pose of autonomous vehicle 430. According to some examples, localizer 468 may be configured to identify any amount of features in an environment, such that a set of features can one or more features, or all features. In a specific example, any amount of LIDAR data (e.g., most or substantially all LIDAR data) may be compared against data representing a map for purposes of localization. Generally, non-matched objects resulting from the comparison of the environment features and map data may be a dynamic object, such as a vehicle, bicyclist, pedestrian, etc. Note that detection of dynamic objects, including obstacles, may be performed with or without map data. In particular, dynamic objects may be detected and tracked independently of map data (i.e., in the absence of map data). In some instances, map data and 3D map data may be viewed as "global map data" or map data that has been

validated at a point in time by autonomous vehicle service platform 401. As map data in map data repository 405a may be updated and/or validated periodically, a deviation may exist between the map data and an actual environment in which the autonomous vehicle is positioned. Therefore, localizer 468 may retrieve locally-derived map data generated by local map generator 440 to enhance localization. Local map generator 440 is configured to generate local map data in real-time or near real-time. Optionally, local map generator 440 may receive static and dynamic object map data to enhance the accuracy of locally generated maps by, for example, disregarding dynamic objects in localization. According to at least some embodiments, local map generator 440 may be integrated with, or formed as part of, localizer 468. In at least one case, local map generator 440, either individually or in collaboration with localizer 468, may be configured to generate map and/or reference data based on simultaneous localization and mapping ("SLAM") or the like. Note that localizer 468 may implement a "hybrid" approach to using map data, whereby logic in localizer 468 may be configured to select various amounts of map data from either map data repository 405a or local map data from local map generator 440, depending on the degrees of reliability of each source of map data. Therefore, localizer 468 may still use out-of-date map data in view of locally-generated map data.

[0070] Perception engine 466 is configured to, for example, assist planner 464 in planning routes and generating trajectories by identifying objects of interest in a surrounding environment in which autonomous vehicle 430 is transiting. Further, probabilities may be associated with each of the object of interest, whereby a probability may represent a likelihood that an object of interest may be a threat to safe travel (e.g., a fast-moving motorcycle may require enhanced tracking rather than a person sitting at a bus stop bench while reading a newspaper). As shown, perception engine 466 includes an object detector 442 and an object classifier 444. Object detector 442 is configured to distinguish objects relative to other features in the environment, and object classifier 444 may be configured to classify objects as either dynamic or static objects and track the locations of the dynamic and the static objects relative to autonomous vehicle 430 for planning purposes. Further, perception engine 466 may be configured to assign an identifier to a static or dynamic object that specifies whether the object is (or has the potential to become) an obstacle that may impact path planning at planner 464. Although not shown in FIG. 4, note that perception engine 466 may also perform other perception-related functions, such as segmentation and tracking, examples of which are described below.

[0071] Planner 464 is configured to generate a number of candidate trajectories for accomplishing a goal to reaching a destination via a number of paths or routes that are available. Trajectory evaluator 465 is configured to evaluate candidate trajectories and identify which subsets of candidate trajectories are associated with higher degrees of confidence levels of providing collision-free paths to the destination. As such, trajectory evaluator 465 can select an optimal trajectory based on relevant criteria for causing commands to generate control signals for vehicle components 450 (e.g., actuators or other mechanisms). Note that the relevant criteria may include any number of factors that define optimal trajectories, the selection of which need not be limited to reducing collisions. For example, the selection of trajectories may be made to optimize user experience (e.g., user comfort) as well as collision-free trajectories that comply with traffic regulations and laws. User experience may be optimized by moderating accelerations in various linear and angular directions (e.g., to reduce jerking-like travel or other unpleasant motion). In some cases, at least a portion of the relevant criteria can specify which of the other criteria to override or supersede, while maintain optimized, collision-free travel. For example, legal restrictions may be temporarily lifted or deemphasized when generating trajectories in limited situations (e.g., crossing double yellow lines to go around a cyclist or travelling at higher speeds than the posted speed limit to match traffic flows). As such, the control signals are configured to cause propulsion and directional changes at the drivetrain and/or wheels. In this example, motion controller 462 is configured to transform commands into control signals (e.g., velocity, wheel angles, etc.) for controlling the mobility of autonomous vehicle 430. In the event that trajectory evaluator 465 has insufficient information to ensure a confidence level high enough to provide collision-free, optimized travel, planner 464 can generate a request to teleoperator 404 for teleoperator support.

[0072] Autonomous vehicle service platform 401 includes teleoperator 404 (e.g., a teleoperator computing device), reference data repository 405, a map updater 406, a vehicle data controller 408, a calibrator 409, and an off-line object classifier 410. Note that each element of autonomous vehicle service platform 401 may be independently located or distributed and in communication with other elements in autonomous vehicle service platform 401. Further, element of autonomous vehicle service platform 401 may independently communicate with the autonomous vehicle 430 via the communication layer 402. Map updater 406 is configured to receive map data (e.g., from local map generator 440, sensors 460, or any other component of autonomous vehicle controller 447), and is further configured to detect deviations, for example, of map data in map data repository 405a from a locally-generated map. Vehicle data controller 408 can cause map updater 406 to update reference data within repository 405 and facilitate

updates to 2D, 3D, and/or 4D map data. In some cases, vehicle data controller 408 can control the rate at which local map data is received into autonomous vehicle service platform 408 as well as the frequency at which map updater 406 performs updating of the map data.

[0073] Calibrator 409 is configured to perform calibration of various sensors of the same or different types. Calibrator 409 may be configured to determine the relative poses of the sensors (e.g., in Cartesian space (x, y, z)) and orientations of the sensors (e.g., roll, pitch and yaw). The pose and orientation of a sensor, such as a camera, LIDAR sensor, radar sensor, etc., may be calibrated relative to other sensors, as well as globally relative to the vehicle's reference frame. Off-line self-calibration can also calibrate or estimate other parameters, such as vehicle inertial tensor, wheel base, wheel radius or surface road friction. Calibration can also be done online to detect parameter change, according to some examples. Note, too, that calibration by calibrator 409 may include intrinsic parameters of the sensors (e.g., optical distortion, beam angles, etc.) and extrinsic parameters. In some cases, calibrator 409 may be performed by maximizing a correlation between depth discontinuities in 3D laser data and edges of image data, as an example. Off-line object classification 410 is configured to receive data, such as sensor data, from sensors 470 or any other component of autonomous vehicle controller 447. According to some embodiments, an off-line classification pipeline of off-line object classification 410 may be configured to pre-collect and annotate objects (e.g., manually by a human and/or automatically using an offline labeling algorithm), and may further be configured to train an online classifier (e.g., object classifier 444), which can provide real-time classification of object types during online autonomous operation.

[0074] FIG. 5 is an example of a flow diagram to control an autonomous vehicle, according to some embodiments. At 502, flow 500 begins when sensor data originating from sensors of multiple modalities at an autonomous vehicle is received, for example, by an autonomous vehicle controller. One or more subsets of sensor data may be integrated for generating fused data to improve, for example, estimates. In some examples, a sensor stream of one or more sensors (e.g., of same or different modalities) may be fused to form fused sensor data at 504. In some examples, subsets of LIDAR sensor data and camera sensor data may be fused at 504 to facilitate localization. At 506, data representing objects based on the least two subsets of sensor data may be derived at a processor. For example, data identifying static objects or dynamic objects may be derived (e.g., at a perception engine) from at least LIDAR and camera data. At 508, a detected object is determined to affect a planned path, and a subset of trajectories are evaluated (e.g., at a planner) responsive to the detected object at 510. A confidence level is determined at 512 to exceed a range of acceptable confidence levels associated with normative

operation of an autonomous vehicle. Therefore, in this case, a confidence level may be such that a certainty of selecting an optimized path is less likely, whereby an optimized path may be determined as a function of the probability of facilitating collision-free travel, complying with traffic laws, providing a comfortable user experience (e.g., comfortable ride), and/or generating candidate trajectories on any other factor. As such, a request for an alternate path may be transmitted to a teleoperator computing device at 514. Thereafter, the teleoperator computing device may provide a planner with an optimal trajectory over which an autonomous vehicle may travel. In situations, the vehicle may also determine that executing a safe-stop maneuver is the best course of action (e.g., safely and automatically causing an autonomous vehicle to a stop at a location of relatively low probabilities of danger). Note that the order depicted in this and other flow charts herein are not intended to imply a requirement to linearly perform various functions as each portion of a flow chart may be performed serially or in parallel with anyone or more other portions of the flow chart, as well as independent or dependent on other portions of the flow chart.

[0075] FIG. 6 is a diagram depicting an example of an architecture for an autonomous vehicle controller, according to some embodiments. Diagram 600 depicts a number of processes including a motion controller process 662, a planner process 664, a perception process 666, a mapping process 640, and a localization process 668, some of which may generate or receive data relative to other processes. Other processes, such as processes 670 and 650 may facilitate interactions with one or more mechanical components of an autonomous vehicle. For example, perception process 666, mapping process 640, and localization process 668 are configured to receive sensor data from sensors 670, whereas planner process 664 and perception process 666 are configured to receive guidance data 606, which may include route data, such as road network data. Further to diagram 600, localization process 668 is configured to receive map data 605a (i.e., 2D map data), map data 605b (i.e., 3D map data), and local map data 642, among other types of map data. For example, localization process 668 may also receive other forms of map data, such as 4D map data, which may include, for example, an epoch determination. Localization process 668 is configured to generate local position data 641 representing a local pose. Local position data 641 is provided to motion controller process 662, planner process 664, and perception process 666. Perception process 666 is configured to generate static and dynamic object map data 667, which, in turn, may be transmitted to planner process 664. In some examples, static and dynamic object map data 667 may be transmitted with other data, such as semantic classification information and predicted object behavior.

Planner process 664 is configured to generate trajectories data 665, which describes a number of trajectories generated by planner 664. Motion controller process uses trajectories data 665 to generate low-level commands or control signals for application to actuators 650 to cause changes in steering angles and/or velocity.

[0076] FIG. 7 is a diagram depicting an example of an autonomous vehicle service platform implementing redundant communication channels to maintain reliable communications with a fleet of autonomous vehicles, according to some embodiments. Diagram 700 depicts an autonomous vehicle service platform 701 including a reference data generator 705, a vehicle data controller 702, an autonomous vehicle fleet manager 703, a teleoperator manager 707, a simulator 740, and a policy manager 742. Reference data generator 705 is configured to generate and modify map data and route data (e.g., RNDP data). Further, reference data generator 705 may be configured to access 2D maps in 2D map data repository 720, access 3D maps in 3D map data repository 722, and access route data in route data repository 724. Other map representation data and repositories may be implemented in some examples, such as 4D map data including Epoch Determination. Vehicle data controller 702 may be configured to perform a variety of operations. For example, vehicle data controller 702 may be configured to change a rate that data is exchanged between a fleet of autonomous vehicles and platform 701 based on quality levels of communication over channels 770. During bandwidth-constrained periods, for example, data communications may be prioritized such that teleoperation requests from autonomous vehicle 730 are prioritized highly to ensure delivery. Further, variable levels of data abstraction may be transmitted per vehicle over channels 770, depending on bandwidth available for a particular channel. For example, in the presence of a robust network connection, full LIDAR data (e.g., substantially all LIDAR data, but also may be less) may be transmitted, whereas in the presence of a degraded or low-speed connection, simpler or more abstract depictions of the data may be transmitted (e.g., bounding boxes with associated metadata, etc.). Autonomous vehicle fleet manager 703 is configured to coordinate the dispatching of autonomous vehicles 730 to optimize multiple variables, including an efficient use of battery power, times of travel, whether or not an air-conditioning unit in an autonomous vehicle 730 may be used during low charge states of a battery, etc., any or all of which may be monitored in view of optimizing cost functions associated with operating an autonomous vehicle service. An algorithm may be implemented to analyze a variety of variables with which to minimize costs or times of travel for a fleet of autonomous vehicles. Further, autonomous vehicle fleet manager 703 maintains an inventory of autonomous vehicles as well as parts for accommodating a service schedule in view of maximizing up-time of the fleet.

[0077] Teleoperator manager 707 is configured to manage a number of teleoperator computing devices 704 with which teleoperators 708 provide input. Simulator 740 is configured to simulate operation of one or more autonomous vehicles 730, as well as the interactions between teleoperator manager 707 and an autonomous vehicle 730. Simulator 740 may also simulate operation of a number of sensors (including the introduction of simulated noise) disposed in autonomous vehicle 730. Further, an environment, such as a city, may be simulated such that a simulated autonomous vehicle can be introduced to the synthetic environment, whereby simulated sensors may receive simulated sensor data, such as simulated laser returns. Simulator 740 may provide other functions as well, including validating software updates and/or map data. Policy manager 742 is configured to maintain data representing policies or rules by which an autonomous vehicle ought to behave in view of a variety of conditions or events that an autonomous vehicle encounters while traveling in a network of roadways. In some cases, updated policies and/or rules may be simulated in simulator 740 to confirm safe operation of a fleet of autonomous vehicles in view of changes to a policy. Some of the above-described elements of autonomous vehicle service platform 701 are further described hereinafter.

[0078] Communication channels 770 are configured to provide networked communication links among a fleet of autonomous vehicles 730 and autonomous vehicle service platform 701. For example, communication channel 770 includes a number of different types of networks 771, 772, 773, and 774, with corresponding subnetworks (e.g., 771a to 771n), to ensure a certain level of redundancy for operating an autonomous vehicle service reliably. For example, the different types of networks in communication channels 770 may include different cellular network providers, different types of data networks, etc., to ensure sufficient bandwidth in the event of reduced or lost communications due to outages in one or more networks 771, 772, 773, and 774.

[0079] FIG. 8 is a diagram depicting an example of a messaging application configured to exchange data among various applications, according to some embodiments. Diagram 800 depicts an teleoperator application 801 disposed in a teleoperator manager, and an autonomous vehicle application 830 disposed in an autonomous vehicle, whereby teleoperator applications 801 and autonomous vehicle application 830 exchange message data via a protocol that facilitates communications over a variety of networks, such as network 871, 872, and other networks 873. According to some examples, the communication protocol is a middleware protocol implemented as a Data Distribution Service TM having a specification maintained by the Object Management Group consortium. In accordance with the communications protocol, teleoperator application 801 and autonomous vehicle application 830 may include a message

router 854 disposed in a message domain, the message router being configured to interface with the teleoperator API 852. In some examples, message router 854 is a routing service. In some examples, message domain 850a in teleoperator application 801 may be identified by a teleoperator identifier, whereas message domain 850b may be identified as a domain associated with a vehicle identifier. Teleoperator API 852 in teleoperator application 801 is configured to interface with teleoperator processes 803a to 803c, whereby teleoperator process 803b is associated with an autonomous vehicle identifier 804, and teleoperator process 803c is associated with an event identifier 806 (e.g., an identifier that specifies an intersection that may be problematic for collision-free path planning). Teleoperator API 852 in autonomous vehicle application 830 is configured to interface with an autonomous vehicle operating system 840, which includes sensing application 842, a perception application 844, a localization application 846, and a control application 848. In view of the foregoing, the above-described communications protocol may facilitate data exchanges to facilitate teleoperations as described herein. Further, the above-described communications protocol may be adapted to provide secure data exchanges among one or more autonomous vehicles and one or more autonomous vehicle service platforms. For example, message routers 854 may be configured to encrypt and decrypt messages to provide for secured interactions between, for example, a teleoperator process 803 and an autonomous vehicle operation system 840.

[0080] FIG. 9 is a diagram depicting types of data for facilitating teleoperations using a communications protocol described in FIG. 8, according to some examples. Diagram 900 depicts a teleoperator 908 interfacing with a teleoperator computing device 904 coupled to a teleoperator application 901, which is configured to exchange data via a data-centric messaging bus 972 implemented in one or more networks 971. Data-centric messaging bus 972 provides a communication link between teleoperator application 901 and autonomous vehicle application 930. Teleoperator API 962 of teleoperator application 901 is configured to receive message service configuration data 964 and route data 960, such as road network data (e.g., RNDF-like data), mission data (e.g., MDF-data), and the like. Similarly, a messaging service bridge 932 is also configured to receive messaging service configuration data 934. Messaging service configuration data 934 and 964 provide configuration data to configure the messaging service between teleoperator application 901 and autonomous vehicle application 930. An example of messaging service configuration data 934 and 964 includes quality of service ("QoS") configuration data implemented to configure a Data Distribution Service™ application.

[0081] An example of a data exchange for facilitating teleoperations via the communications protocol is described as follows. Consider that obstacle data 920 is generated by a perception system of an autonomous vehicle controller. Further, planner options data 924 is generated by a planner to notify a teleoperator of a subset of candidate trajectories, and position data 926 is generated by the localizer. Obstacle data 920, planner options data 924, and position data 926 are transmitted to a messaging service bridge 932, which, in accordance with message service configuration data 934, generates telemetry data 940 and query data 942, both of which are transmitted via data-centric messaging bus 972 into teleoperator application 901 as telemetry data 950 and query data 952. Teleoperator API 962 receives telemetry data 950 and inquiry data 952, which, in turn are processed in view of Route data 960 and message service configuration data 964. The resultant data is subsequently presented to a teleoperator 908 via teleoperator computing device 904 and/or a collaborative display (e.g., a dashboard display visible to a group of collaborating teleoperators 908). Teleoperator 908 reviews the candidate trajectory options that are presented on the display of teleoperator computing device 904, and selects a guided trajectory, which generates command data 982 and query response data 980, both of which are passed through teleoperator API 962 as query response data 954 and command data 956. In turn, query response data 954 and command data 956 are transmitted via data-centric messaging bus 972 into autonomous vehicle application 930 as query response data 944 and command data 946. Messaging service bridge 932 receives query response data 944 and command data 946 and generates teleoperator command data 928, which is configured to generate a teleoperator-selected trajectory for implementation by a planner. Note that the above-described messaging processes are not intended to be limiting, and other messaging protocols may be implemented as well.

[0082] FIG. 10 is a diagram illustrating an example of a teleoperator interface with which a teleoperator may influence path planning, according to some embodiments. Diagram 1000 depicts examples of an autonomous vehicle 1030 in communication with an autonomous vehicle service platform 1001, which includes a teleoperator manager 1007 configured to facilitate teleoperations. In a first example, teleoperator manager 1007 receives data that requires teleoperator 1008 to preemptively view a path of an autonomous vehicle approaching a potential obstacle or an area of low planner confidence levels so that teleoperator 1008 may be able to address an issue in advance. To illustrate, consider that an intersection that an autonomous vehicle is approaching may be tagged as being problematic. As such, user interface 1010 displays a representation 1014 of a corresponding autonomous vehicle 1030 transiting along a path 1012, which has been predicted by a number of trajectories generated by a planner.

Also displayed are other vehicles 1011 and dynamic objects 1013, such as pedestrians, that may cause sufficient confusion at the planner, thereby requiring teleoperation support. User interface 1010 also presents to teleoperator 1008 a current velocity 1022, a speed limit 1024, and an amount of charge 1026 presently in the batteries. According to some examples, user interface 1010 may display other data, such as sensor data as acquired from autonomous vehicle 1030. In a second example, consider that planner 1064 has generated a number of trajectories that are coextensive with a planner-generated path 1044 regardless of a detected unidentified object 1046. Planner 1064 may also generate a subset of candidate trajectories 1040, but in this example, the planner is unable to proceed given present confidence levels. If planner 1064 fails to determine an alternative path, a teleoperation request may be transmitted. In this case, a teleoperator may select one of candidate trajectories 1040 to facilitate travel by autonomous vehicle 1030 that is consistent with teleoperator-based path 1042.

[0083] FIG. 11 is a diagram depicting an example of a planner configured to invoke teleoperations, according to some examples. Diagram 1100 depicts a planner 1164 including a topography manager 1110, a route manager 1112, a path generator 1114, a trajectory evaluator 1120, and a trajectory tracker 1128. Topography manager 1110 is configured to receive map data, such as 3D map data or other like map data that specifies topographic features. Topography manager 1110 is further configured to identify candidate paths based on topographic-related features on a path to a destination. According to various examples, topography manager 1110 receives 3D maps generated by sensors associated with one or more autonomous vehicles in the fleet. Route manager 1112 is configured to receive environmental data 1103, which may include traffic-related information associated with one or more routes that may be selected as a path to the destination. Path generator 1114 receives data from topography manager 1110 and route manager 1112, and generates one or more paths or path segments suitable to direct autonomous vehicle toward a destination. Data representing one or more paths or path segments is transmitted into trajectory evaluator 1120.

[0084] Trajectory evaluator 1120 includes a state and event manager 1122, which, in turn, may include a confidence level generator 1123. Trajectory evaluator 1120 further includes a guided trajectory generator 1126 and a trajectory generator 1124. Further, planner 1164 is configured to receive policy data 1130, perception engine data 1132, and localizer data 1134.

[0085] Policy data 1130 may include criteria with which planner 1164 uses to determine a path that has a sufficient confidence level with which to generate trajectories, according to some examples. Examples of policy data 1130 include policies that specify that trajectory generation is bounded by stand-off distances to external objects (e.g., maintaining a safety buffer of 3 feet

from a cyclist, as possible), or policies that require that trajectories must not cross a center double yellow line, or policies that require trajectories to be limited to a single lane in a 4-lane roadway (e.g., based on past events, such as typically congregating at a lane closest to a bus stop), and any other similar criteria specified by policies. Perception engine data 1132 includes maps of locations of static objects and dynamic objects of interest, and localizer data 1134 includes at least a local pose or position.

[0086] State and event manager 1122 may be configured to probabilistically determine a state of operation for an autonomous vehicle. For example, a first state of operation (i.e., "normative operation") may describe a situation in which trajectories are collision-free, whereas a second state of operation (i.e., "non-normative operation") may describe another situation in which the confidence level associated with possible trajectories are insufficient to guarantee collision-free travel. According to some examples, state and event manager 1122 is configured to use perception data 1132 to determine a state of autonomous vehicle that is either normative or non-normative. Confidence level generator 1123 may be configured to analyze perception data 1132 to determine a state for the autonomous vehicle. For example, confidence level generator 1123 may use semantic information associated with static and dynamic objects, as well as associated probabilistic estimations, to enhance a degree of certainty that planner 1164 is determining safe course of action. For example, planner 1164 may use perception engine data 1132 that specifies a probability that an object is either a person or not a person to determine whether planner 1164 is operating safely (e.g., planner 1164 may receive a degree of certainty that an object has a 98% probability of being a person, and a probability of 2% that the object is not a person).

[0087] Upon determining a confidence level (e.g., based on statistics and probabilistic determinations) is below a threshold required for predicted safe operation, a relatively low confidence level (e.g., single probability score) may trigger planner 1164 to transmit a request 1135 for teleoperation support to autonomous vehicle service platform 1101. In some cases, telemetry data and a set of candidate trajectories may accompany the request. Examples of telemetry data include sensor data, localization data, perception data, and the like. A teleoperator 1108 may transmit via teleoperator computing device 1104 a selected trajectory 1137 to guided trajectory generator 1126. As such, selected trajectory 1137 is a trajectory formed with guidance from a teleoperator. Upon confirming there is no change in the state (e.g., a non-normative state is pending), guided trajectory generator 1126 passes data to trajectory generator 1124, which, in turn, causes trajectory tracker 1128, as a trajectory tracking controller, to use the teleop-specified trajectory for generating control signals 1170 (e.g.,

steering angles, velocity, etc.). Note that planner 1164 may trigger transmission of a request 1135 for teleoperation support prior to a state transitioning to a non-normative state. In particular, an autonomous vehicle controller and/or its components can predict that a distant obstacle may be problematic and preemptively cause planner 1164 to invoke teleoperations prior to the autonomous vehicle reaching the obstacle. Otherwise, the autonomous vehicle may cause a delay by transitioning to a safe state upon encountering the obstacle or scenario (e.g., pulling over and off the roadway). In another example, teleoperations may be automatically invoked prior to an autonomous vehicle approaching a particular location that is known to be difficult to navigate. This determination may optionally take into consideration other factors, including the time of day, the position of the sun, if such situation is likely to cause a disturbance to the reliability of sensor readings, and traffic or accident data derived from a variety of sources.

[0088] FIG. 12 is an example of a flow diagram configured to control an autonomous vehicle, according to some embodiments. At 1202, flow 1200 begins. Data representing a subset of objects that are received at a planner in an autonomous vehicle, the subset of objects including at least one object associated with data representing a degree of certainty for a classification type. For example, perception engine data may include metadata associated with objects, whereby the metadata specifies a degree of certainty associated with a specific classification type. For instance, a dynamic object may be classified as a "young pedestrian" with an 85% confidence level of being correct. At 1204, localizer data may be received (e.g., at a planner). The localizer data may include map data that is generated locally within the autonomous vehicle. The local map data may specify a degree of certainty (including a degree of uncertainty) that an event at a geographic region may occur. An event may be a condition or situation affecting operation, or potentially affecting operation, of an autonomous vehicle. The events may be internal (e.g., failed or impaired sensor) to an autonomous vehicle, or external (e.g., roadway obstruction). Examples of events are described herein, such as in FIG. 2 as well as in other figures and passages. A path coextensive with the geographic region of interest may be determined at 1206. For example, consider that the event is the positioning of the sun in the sky at a time of day in which the intensity of sunlight impairs the vision of drivers during rush hour traffic. As such, it is expected or predicted that traffic may slow down responsive to the bright sunlight. Accordingly, a planner may preemptively invoke teleoperations if an alternate path to avoid the event is less likely. At 1208, a local position is determined at a planner based on local pose data. At 1210, a state of operation of an autonomous vehicle may be determined (e.g., probabilistically), for example, based on a degree of certainty for a classification type and

a degree of certainty of the event, which is may be based on any number of factors, such as speed, position, and other state information. To illustrate, consider an example in which a young pedestrian is detected by the autonomous vehicle during the event in which other drivers' vision likely will be impaired by the sun, thereby causing an unsafe situation for the young pedestrian. Therefore, a relatively unsafe situation can be detected as a probabilistic event that may be likely to occur (i.e., an unsafe situation for which teleoperations may be invoked). At 1212, a likelihood that the state of operation is in a normative state is determined, and based on the determination, a message is transmitted to a teleoperator computing device requesting teleoperations to preempt a transition to a next state of operation (e.g., preempt transition from a normative to non-normative state of operation, such as an unsafe state of operation).

[0089] FIG. 13 depicts an example in which a planner may generate a trajectory, according to some examples. Diagram 1300 includes a trajectory evaluator 1320 and a trajectory generator 1324. Trajectory evaluator 1320 includes a confidence level generator 1322 and a teleoperator query messenger 1329. As shown, trajectory evaluator 1320 is coupled to a perception engine 1366 to receive static map data 1301, and current and predicted object state data 1303. Trajectory evaluator 1320 also receives local pose data 1305 from localizer 1368 and plan data 1307 from a global planner 1369. In one state of operation (e.g., non-normative), confidence level generator 1322 receives static map data 1301 and current and predicted object state data 1303. Based on this data, confidence level generator 1322 may determine that detected trajectories are associated with unacceptable confidence level values. As such, confidence level generator 1322 transmits detected trajectory data 1309 (e.g., data including candidate trajectories) to notify a teleoperator via teleoperator query messenger 1329, which, in turn, transmits a request 1370 for teleoperator assistance.

[0090] In another state of operation (e.g., a normative state), static map data 1301, current and predicted object state data 1303, local pose data 1305, and plan data 1307 (e.g., global plan data) are received into trajectory calculator 1325, which is configured to calculate (e.g., iteratively) trajectories to determine an optimal one or more paths. Next, at least one path is selected and is transmitted as selected path data 1311. According to some embodiments, trajectory calculator 1325 is configured to implement re-planning of trajectories as an example. Nominal driving trajectory generator 1327 is configured to generate trajectories in a refined approach, such as by generating trajectories based on receding horizon control techniques. Nominal driving trajectory generator 1327 subsequently may transmit nominal driving trajectory path data 1372 to, for example, a trajectory tracker or a vehicle controller to implement physical changes in steering, acceleration, and other components.

[0091] FIG. 14 is a diagram depicting another example of an autonomous vehicle service platform, according to some embodiments. Diagram 1400 depicts an autonomous vehicle service platform 1401 including a teleoperator manager 1407 that is configured to manage interactions and/or communications among teleoperators 1408, teleoperator computing devices 1404, and other components of autonomous vehicle service platform 1401. Further to diagram 1400, autonomous vehicle service platform 1401 includes a simulator 1440, a repository 1441, a policy manager 1442, a reference data updater 1438, a map data repository 1420, a 3D map data repository 1422, and a route data repository 1424. Other map data, such as 4D map data (e.g., using epoch determination), may be implemented and stored in a repository (not shown).

[0092] Teleoperator action recommendation controller 1412 includes logic configured to receive and/or control a teleoperation service request via autonomous vehicle ("AV") planner data 1472, which can include requests for teleoperator assistance as well as telemetry data and other data. As such, planner data 1472 may include recommended candidate trajectories or paths from which a teleoperator 1408 via teleoperator computing device 1404 may select. According to some examples, teleoperator action recommendation controller 1412 may be configured to access other sources of recommended candidate trajectories from which to select an optimum trajectory. For example, candidate trajectories contained in autonomous vehicle planner data 1472 may, in parallel, be introduced into simulator 1440, which is configured to simulate an event or condition being experienced by an autonomous vehicle requesting teleoperator assistance. Simulator 1440 can access map data and other data necessary for performing a simulation on the set of candidate trajectories, whereby simulator 1440 need not exhaustively reiterate simulations to confirm sufficiency. Rather, simulator 1440 may provide either confirm the appropriateness of the candidate trajectories, or may otherwise alert a teleoperator to be cautious in their selection.

[0093] Teleoperator interaction capture analyzer 1416 may be configured to capture numerous amounts of teleoperator transactions or interactions for storage in repository 1441, which, for example, may accumulate data relating to a number of teleoperator transactions for analysis and generation of policies, at least in some cases. According to some embodiments, repository 1441 may also be configured to store policy data for access by policy manager 1442. Further, teleoperator interaction capture analyzer 1416 may apply machine learning techniques to empirically determine how best to respond to events or conditions causing requests for teleoperation assistance. In some cases, policy manager 1442 may be configured to update a particular policy or generate a new policy responsive to analyzing the large set of teleoperator interactions (e.g., subsequent to applying machine learning techniques). Policy manager 1442

manages policies that may be viewed as rules or guidelines with which an autonomous vehicle controller and its components operate under to comply with autonomous operations of a vehicle. In some cases, a modified or updated policy may be applied to simulator 1440 to confirm the efficacy of permanently releasing or implementing such policy changes.

[0094] Simulator interface controller 1414 is configured to provide an interface between simulator 1440 and teleoperator computing devices 1404. For example, consider that sensor data from a fleet of autonomous vehicles is applied to reference data updater 1438 via autonomous ("AV") fleet data 1470, whereby reference data updater 1438 is configured to generate updated map and route data 1439. In some implementations, updated map and route data 1439 may be preliminarily released as an update to data in map data repositories 1420 and 1422, or as an update to data in route data repository 1424. In this case, such data may be tagged as being a "beta version" in which a lower threshold for requesting teleoperator service may be implemented when, for example, a map tile including preliminarily updated information is used by an autonomous vehicle. Further, updated map and route data 1439 may be introduced to simulator 1440 for validating the updated map data. Upon full release (e.g., at the close of beta testing), the previously lowered threshold for requesting a teleoperator service related to map tiles is canceled. User interface graphics controller 1410 provides rich graphics to teleoperators 1408, whereby a fleet of autonomous vehicles may be simulated within simulator 1440 and may be accessed via teleoperator computing device 1404 as if the simulated fleet of autonomous vehicles were real.

[0095] FIG. 15 is an example of a flow diagram to control an autonomous vehicle, according to some embodiments. At 1502, flow 1500 begins. Message data may be received at a teleoperator computing device for managing a fleet of autonomous vehicles. The message data may indicate event attributes associated with a non-normative state of operation in the context of a planned path for an autonomous vehicle. For example, an event may be characterized as a particular intersection that becomes problematic due to, for example, a large number of pedestrians, hurriedly crossing the street against a traffic light. The event attributes describe the characteristics of the event, such as, for example, the number of people crossing the street, the traffic delays resulting from an increased number of pedestrians, etc. At 1504, a teleoperation repository may be accessed to retrieve a first subset of recommendations based on simulated operations of aggregated data associated with a group of autonomous vehicles. In this case, a simulator may be a source of recommendations with which a teleoperator may implement. Further, the teleoperation repository may also be accessed to retrieve a second subset of recommendations based on an aggregation of teleoperator interactions responsive to

similar event attributes. In particular, a teleoperator interaction capture analyzer may apply machine learning techniques to empirically determine how best to respond to events having similar attributes based on previous requests for teleoperation assistance. At 1506, the first subset and the second subset of recommendations are combined to form a set of recommended courses of action for the autonomous vehicle. At 1508, representations of the set of recommended courses of actions may be presented visually on a display of a teleoperator computing device. At 1510, data signals representing a selection (e.g., by teleoperator) of a recommended course of action may be detected.

[0096] FIG. 16 is a diagram of an example of an autonomous vehicle fleet manager implementing a fleet optimization manager, according to some examples. Diagram 1600 depicts an autonomous vehicle fleet manager that is configured to manage a fleet of autonomous vehicles 1630 transiting within a road network 1650. Autonomous vehicle fleet manager 1603 is coupled to a teleoperator 1608 via a teleoperator computing device 1604, and is also coupled to a fleet management data repository 1646. Autonomous vehicle fleet manager 1603 is configured to receive policy data 1602 and environmental data 1606, as well as other data. Further to diagram 1600, fleet optimization manager 1620 is shown to include a transit request processor 1631, which, in turn, includes a fleet data extractor 1632 and an autonomous vehicle dispatch optimization calculator 1634. Transit request processor 1631 is configured to process transit requests, such as from a user 1688 who is requesting autonomous vehicle service. Fleet data extractor 1632 is configured to extract data relating to autonomous vehicles in the fleet. Data associated with each autonomous vehicle is stored in repository 1646. For example, data for each vehicle may describe maintenance issues, scheduled service calls, daily usage, battery charge and discharge rates, and any other data, which may be updated in real-time, may be used for purposes of optimizing a fleet of autonomous vehicles to minimize downtime. Autonomous vehicle dispatch optimization calculator 1634 is configured to analyze the extracted data and calculate optimized usage of the fleet so as to ensure that the next vehicle dispatched, such as from station 1652, provides for the least travel times and/or costs-in the aggregate-for the autonomous vehicle service.

[0097] Fleet optimization manager 1620 is shown to include a hybrid autonomous vehicle/non-autonomous vehicle processor 1640, which, in turn, includes an AV/non-AV optimization calculator 1642 and a non-AV selector 1644. According to some examples, hybrid autonomous vehicle/ non-autonomous vehicle processor 1640 is configured to manage a hybrid fleet of autonomous vehicles and human-driven vehicles (e.g., as independent contractors). As such, autonomous vehicle service may employ non-autonomous vehicles to meet excess demand, or

in areas, such as non-AV service region 1690, that may be beyond a geo-fence or in areas of poor communication coverage. AV/non-AV optimization calculator 1642 is configured to optimize usage of the fleet of autonomous and to invite non-AV drivers into the transportation service (e.g., with minimal or no detriment to the autonomous vehicle service). Non-AV selector 1644 includes logic for selecting a number of non-AV drivers to assist based on calculations derived by AV/non-AV optimization calculator 1642.

[0098] FIG. 17 is an example of a flow diagram to manage a fleet of autonomous vehicles, according to some embodiments. At 1702, flow 1700 begins. At 1702, policy data is received. The policy data may include parameters that define how best apply to select an autonomous vehicle for servicing a transit request. At 1704, fleet management data from a repository may be extracted. The fleet management data includes subsets of data for a pool of autonomous vehicles (e.g., the data describes the readiness of vehicles to service a transportation request). At 1706, data representing a transit request is received. For exemplary purposes, the transit request could be for transportation from a first geographic location to a second geographic location. At 1708, attributes based on the policy data are calculated to determine a subset of autonomous vehicles that are available to service the request. For example, attributes may include a battery charge level and time until next scheduled maintenance. At 1710, an autonomous vehicle is selected as transportation from the first geographic location to the second geographic location, and data is generated to dispatch the autonomous vehicle to a third geographic location associated with the origination of the transit request.

[0099] FIG. 18 is a diagram illustrating an autonomous vehicle fleet manager implementing an autonomous vehicle communications link manager, according to some embodiments. Diagram 1800 depicts an autonomous vehicle fleet manager that is configured to manage a fleet of autonomous vehicles 1830 transiting within a road network 1850 that coincides with a communication outage at an area identified as "reduced communication region" 1880. Autonomous vehicle fleet manager 1803 is coupled to a teleoperator 1808 via a teleoperator computing device 1804. Autonomous vehicle fleet manager 1803 is configured to receive policy data 1802 and environmental data 1806, as well as other data. Further to diagram 1800, an autonomous vehicle communications link manager 1820 is shown to include an environment event detector 1831, a policy adaption determinator 1832, and a transit request processor 1834. Environment event detector 1831 is configured to receive environmental data 1806 specifying a change within the environment in which autonomous vehicle service is implemented. For example, environmental data 1806 may specify that region 1880 has degraded communication services, which may affect the autonomous vehicle service. Policy adaption determinator 1832

may specify parameters with which to apply when receiving transit requests during such an event (e.g., during a loss of communications). Transit request processor 1834 is configured to process transit requests in view of the degraded communications. In this example, a user 1888 is requesting autonomous vehicle service. Further, transit request processor 1834 includes logic to apply an adapted policy for modifying the way autonomous vehicles are dispatched so to avoid complications due to poor communications.

[0100] Communication event detector 1840 includes a policy download manager 1842 and communications-configured ("COMM-configured") AV dispatcher 1844. Policy download manager 1842 is configured to provide autonomous vehicles 1830 an updated policy in view of reduced communications region 1880, whereby the updated policy may specify routes to quickly exit region 1880 if an autonomous vehicle enters that region. For example, autonomous vehicle 1864 may receive an updated policy moments before driving into region 1880. Upon loss of communications, autonomous vehicle 1864 implements the updated policy and selects route 1866 to drive out of region 1880 quickly. COMM-configured AV dispatcher 1844 may be configured to identify points 1865 at which to park autonomous vehicles that are configured as relays to establishing a peer-to-peer network over region 1880. As such, COMM-configured AV dispatcher 1844 is configured to dispatch autonomous vehicles 1862 (without passengers) to park at locations 1865 for the purposes of operating as communication towers in a peer-to-peer ad hoc network.

[0101] FIG. 19 is an example of a flow diagram to determine actions for autonomous vehicles during an event, such as degraded or lost communications, according to some embodiments. At 1901, flow 1900 begins. Policy data is received, whereby the policy data defines parameters with which to apply to transit requests in a geographical region during an event. At 1902, one or more of the following actions may be implemented: (1) dispatch a subset of autonomous vehicles to geographic locations in the portion of the geographic location, the subset of autonomous vehicles being configured to either park at specific geographic locations and each serve as a static communication relay, or transit in a geographic region to each serve as a mobile communication relay, (2) implement peer-to-peer communications among a portion of the pool of autonomous vehicles associated with the portion of the geographic region, (3) provide to the autonomous vehicles an event policy that describes a route to egress the portion of the geographic region during an event, (4) invoke teleoperations, and (5) recalculate paths so as to avoid the geographic portion. Subsequent to implementing the action, the fleet of autonomous vehicles is monitored at 1914.

[0102] FIG. 20 is a diagram depicting an example of a localizer, according to some embodiments. Diagram 2000 includes a localizer 2068 configured to receive sensor data from sensors 2070, such as LIDAR data 2072, camera data 2074, radar data 2076, and other data 2078. Further, localizer 2068 is configured to receive reference data 2020, such as 2D map data 2022, 3D map data 2024, and 3D local map data. According to some examples, other map data, such as 4D map data 2025 and semantic map data (not shown), including corresponding data structures and repositories, may also be implemented. Further to diagram 2000, localizer 2068 includes a positioning system 2010 and a localization system 2012, both of which are configured to receive sensor data from sensors 2070 as well as reference data 2020. Localization data integrator 2014 is configured to receive data from positioning system 2010 and data from localization system 2012, whereby localization data integrator 2014 is configured to integrate or fuse sensor data from multiple sensors to form local pose data 2052.

[0103] FIG. 21 is an example of a flow diagram to generate local pose data based on integrated sensor data, according to some embodiments. At 2101, flow 2100 begins. At 2102, reference data is received, the reference data including three dimensional map data. In some examples, reference data, such as 3D or 4D map data, may be received via one or more networks. At 2104, localization data from one or more localization sensors is received and placed into a localization system. At 2106, positioning data from one or more positioning sensors is received into a positioning system. At 2108, the localization and positioning data are integrated. At 2110, the localization data and positioning data are integrated to form local position data specifying a geographic position of an autonomous vehicle.

[0104] FIG. 22 is a diagram depicting another example of a localizer, according to some embodiments. Diagram 2200 includes a localizer 2268, which, in turn, includes a localization system 2210 and a relative localization system 2212 to generate positioning-based data 2250 and local location-based data 2251, respectively. Localization system 2210 includes a projection processor 2254a for processing GPS data 2273, a GPS datum 2211, and 3D Map data 2222, among other optional data (e.g., 4D map data). Localization system 2210 also includes an odometry processor 2254b to process wheel data 2275 (e.g., wheel speed), vehicle model data 2213 and 3D map data 2222, among other optional data. Further yet, localization system 2210 includes an integrator processor 2254c to process IMU data 2257, vehicle model data 2215, and 3D map data 2222, among other optional data. Similarly, relative localization system 2212 includes a LIDAR localization processor 2254d for processing LIDAR data 2272, 2D tile map data 2220, 3D map data 2222, and 3D local map data 2223, among other optional data. Relative localization system 2212 also includes a visual registration processor 2254e to

process camera data 2274, 3D map data 2222, and 3D local map data 2223, among other optional data. Further yet, relative localization system 2212 includes a radar return processor 2254f to process radar data 2276, 3D map data 2222, and 3D local map data 2223, among other optional data. Note that in various examples, other types of sensor data and sensors or processors may be implemented, such as sonar data and the like.

[0105] Further to diagram 2200, localization-based data 2250 and relative localization-based data 2251 may be fed into data integrator 2266a and localization data integrator 2266, respectively. Data integrator 2266a and localization data integrator 2266 may be configured to fuse corresponding data, whereby localization-based data 2250 may be fused at data integrator 2266a prior to being fused with relative localization-based data 2251 at localization data integrator 2266. According to some embodiments, data integrator 2266a is formed as part of localization data integrator 2266, or is absent. Regardless, a localization-based data 2250 and relative localization-based data 2251 can be both fed into localization data integrator 2266 for purposes of fusing data to generate local position data 2252. Localization-based data 2250 may include unary-constrained data (and uncertainty values) from projection processor 2254a, as well as binary-constrained data (and uncertainty values) from odometry processor 2254b and integrator processor 2254c. Relative localization-based data 2251 may include unary-constrained data (and uncertainty values) from localization processor 2254d and visual registration processor 2254e, and optionally from radar return processor 2254f. According to some embodiments, localization data integrator 2266 may implement non-linear smoothing functionality, such as a Kalman filter (e.g., a gated Kalman filter), a relative bundle adjuster, pose-graph relaxation, particle filter, histogram filter, or the like.

[0106] FIG. 23 is a diagram depicting an example of a perception engine, according to some embodiments. Diagram 2300 includes a perception engine 2366, which, in turn, includes a segmentation processor 2310, an object tracker 2330, and a classifier 2360. Further, perception engine 2366 is configured to receive a local position data 2352, LIDAR data 2372, camera data 2374, and radar data 2376, for example. Note that other sensor data, such as sonar data, may be accessed to provide functionalities of perception engine 2366. Segmentation processor 2310 is configured to extract ground plane data and/or to segment portions of an image to distinguish objects from each other and from static imagery (e.g., background). In some cases, 3D blobs may be segmented to distinguish each other. In some examples, a blob may refer to a set of features that identify an object in a spatially-reproduced environment and may be composed of elements (e.g., pixels of camera data, points of laser return data, etc.) having similar characteristics, such as intensity and color. In some examples, a blob may also refer to a point

cloud (e.g., composed of colored laser return data) or other elements constituting an object. Object tracker 2330 is configured to perform frame-to-frame estimations of motion for blobs, or other segmented image portions. Further, data association is used to associate a blob at one location in a first frame at time, t_1 , to a blob in a different position in a second frame at time, t_2 . In some examples, object tracker 2330 is configured to perform real-time probabilistic tracking of 3D objects, such as blobs. Classifier 2360 is configured to identify an object and to classify that object by classification type (e.g., as a pedestrian, cyclist, etc.) and by energy/activity (e.g. whether the object is dynamic or static), whereby data representing classification is described by a semantic label. According to some embodiments, probabilistic estimations of object categories may be performed, such as classifying an object as a vehicle, bicyclist, pedestrian, etc. with varying confidences per object class. Perception engine 2366 is configured to determine perception engine data 2354, which may include static object maps and/or dynamic object maps, as well as semantic information so that, for example, a planner may use this information to enhance path planning. According to various examples, one or more of segmentation processor 2310, object tracker 2330, and classifier 2360 may apply machine learning techniques to generate perception engine data 2354.

[0107] FIG. 24 is an example of a flow chart to generate perception engine data, according to some embodiments. Flow chart 2400 begins at 2402, at which data representing a local position of an autonomous vehicle is retrieved. At 2404, localization data from one or more localization sensors is received, and features of an environment in which the autonomous vehicle is disposed are segmented at 2406 to form segmented objects. One or more portions of the segmented object are tracked spatially at 2408 to form at least one tracked object having a motion (e.g., an estimated motion). At 2410, a tracked object is classified at least as either being a static object or a dynamic object. In some cases, a static object or a dynamic object may be associated with a classification type. At 2412, data identifying a classified object is generated. For example, the data identifying the classified object may include semantic information.

[0108] FIG. 25 is an example of a segmentation processor, according to some embodiments. Diagram 2500 depicts a segmentation processor 2510 receiving LIDAR data from one or more LIDARs 2572 and camera image data from one or more cameras 2574. Local pose data 2552, LIDAR data, and camera image data are received into meta spin generator 2521. In some examples, meta spin generator is configured to partition an image based on various attributes (e.g., color, intensity, etc.) into distinguishable regions (e.g., clusters or groups of a point cloud), at least two or more of which may be updated at the same time or about the same time. Meta spin data 2522 is used to perform object segmentation and ground segmentation at

segmentation processor 2523, whereby both meta spin data 2522 and segmentation-related data from segmentation processor 2523 are applied to a scanned differencing processor 2513. Scanned differencing processor 2513 is configured to predict motion and/or relative velocity of segmented image portions, which can be used to identify dynamic objects at 2517. Data indicating objects with detected velocity at 2517 are optionally transmitted to the planner to enhance path planning decisions. Additionally, data from scanned differencing processor 2513 may be used to approximate locations of objects to form mapping of such objects (as well as optionally identifying a level of motion). In some examples, an occupancy grid map 2515 may be generated. Data representing an occupancy grid map 2515 may be transmitted to the planner to further enhance path planning decisions (e.g., by reducing uncertainties). Further to diagram 2500, image camera data from one or more cameras 2574 are used to classify blobs in blob classifier 2520, which also receives blob data 2524 from segmentation processor 2523. Segmentation processor 2510 also may receive raw radar returns data 2512 from one or more radars 2576 to perform segmentation at a radar segmentation processor 2514, which generates radar-related blob data 2516. Further to FIG. 25, segmentation processor 2510 may also receive and/or generate tracked blob data 2518 related to radar data. Blob data 2516, tracked blob data 2518, data from blob classifier 2520, and blob data 2524 may be used to track objects or portions thereof. According to some examples, one or more of the following may be optional: scanned differencing processor 2513, blob classification 2520, and data from radar 2576.

[0109] FIG. 26A is a diagram depicting examples of an object tracker and a classifier, according to various embodiments. Object tracker 2630 of diagram 2600 is configured to receive blob data 2516, tracked blob data 2518, data from blob classifier 2520, blob data 2524, and camera image data from one or more cameras 2676. Image tracker 2633 is configured to receive camera image data from one or more cameras 2676 to generate tracked image data, which, in turn, may be provided to data association processor 2632. As shown, data association processor 2632 is configured to receive blob data 2516, tracked blob data 2518, data from blob classifier 2520, blob data 2524, and track image data from image tracker 2633, and is further configured to identify one or more associations among the above-described types of data. Data association processor 2632 is configured to track, for example, various blob data from one frame to a next frame to, for example, estimate motion, among other things. Further, data generated by data association processor 2632 may be used by track updater 2634 to update one or more tracks, or tracked objects. In some examples, track updater 2634 may implement a Kalman Filter, or the like, to form updated data for tracked objects, which may be stored online in track database ("DB") 2636. Feedback data may be exchanged via path 2699 between data

association processor 2632 and track database 2636. In some examples, image tracker 2633 may be optional and may be excluded. Object tracker 2630 may also use other sensor data, such as radar or sonar, as well as any other types of sensor data, for example.

[0110] FIG. 26B is a diagram depicting another example of an object tracker according to at least some examples. Diagram 2601 includes an object tracker 2631 that may include structures and/or functions as similarly-named elements described in connection to one or more other drawings (e.g., FIG. 26A). As shown, object tracker 2631 includes an optional registration portion 2699 that includes a processor 2696 configured to perform object scan registration and data fusion. Processor 2696 is further configured to store the resultant data in 3D object database 2698.

[0111] Referring back to FIG. 26A, diagram 2600 also includes classifier 2660, which may include a track classification engine 2662 for generating static obstacle data 2672 and dynamic obstacle data 2674, both of which may be transmitted to the planner for path planning purposes. In at least one example, track classification engine 2662 is configured to determine whether an obstacle is static or dynamic, as well as another classification type for the object (e.g., whether the object is a vehicle, pedestrian, tree, cyclist, dog, cat, paper bag, etc.). Static obstacle data 2672 may be formed as part of an obstacle map (e.g., a 2D occupancy map), and dynamic obstacle data 2674 may be formed to include bounding boxes with data indicative of velocity and classification type. Dynamic obstacle data 2674, at least in some cases, includes dynamic obstacle map data.

[0112] FIG. 27 is an example of front-end processor for a perception engine, according to some examples. Diagram 2700 includes a ground segmentation processor 2723a for performing ground segmentation, and an over segmentation processor 2723b for performing "over-segmentation," according to various examples. Processors 2723a and 2723b are configured to receive optionally colored LIDAR data 2775. Over segmentation processor 2723b generates data 2710 of a first blob type (e.g., a relatively small blob), which is provided to an aggregation classification and segmentation engine 2712 that generates data 2714 of a second blob type. Data 2714 is provided to data association processor 2732, which is configured to detect whether data 2714 resides in track database 2736. A determination is made at 2740 whether data 2714 of the second blob type (e.g., a relatively large blob, which may include one or more smaller blobs) is a new track. If so, a track is initialized at 2742, otherwise, the tracked object data stored in track database 2736 and the track may be extended or updated by track updater 2742. Track classification engine 2762 is coupled to track database 2736 to identify and update/modify tracks by, for example, adding, removing or modifying track-related data.

[0113] FIG. 28 is a diagram depicting a simulator configured to simulate an autonomous vehicle in a synthetic environment, according to various embodiments. Diagram 2800 includes a simulator 2840 that is configured to generate a simulated environment 2803. As shown, simulator 2840 is configured to use reference data 2822 (e.g., 3D map data and/or other map or route data including RNDF data or similar road network data) to generate simulated geometries, such as simulated surfaces 2892a and 2892b, within simulated environment 2803. Simulated surfaces 2892a and 2892b may simulate walls or front sides of buildings adjacent a roadway. Simulator 2840 may also pre-generated or procedurally generated use dynamic object data 2825 to simulate dynamic agents in a synthetic environment. An example of a dynamic agent is simulated dynamic object 2801, which is representative of a simulated cyclist having a velocity. The simulated dynamic agents may optionally respond to other static and dynamic agents in the simulated environment, including the simulated autonomous vehicle. For example, simulated object 2801 may slow down for other obstacles in simulated environment 2803 rather than follow a preset trajectory, thereby creating a more realistic simulation of actual dynamic environments that exist in the real world.

[0114] Simulator 2840 may be configured to generate a simulated autonomous vehicle controller 2847, which includes synthetic adaptations of a perception engine 2866, a localizer 2868, a motion controller 2862, and a planner 2864, each of which may have functionalities described herein within simulated environment 2803. Simulator 2840 may also generate simulated interfaces ("I/F") 2849 to simulate the data exchanges with different sensors modalities and different sensor data formats. As such, simulated interface 2849 may simulate a software interface for packetized data from, for example, a simulated LIDAR sensor 2872. Further, simulator 2840 may also be configured to generate a simulated autonomous vehicle 2830 that implements simulated AV controller 2847. Simulated autonomous vehicle 2830 includes simulated LIDAR sensors 2872, simulated camera or image sensors 2874, and simulated radar sensors 2876. In the example shown, simulated LIDAR sensor 2872 may be configured to generate a simulated laser consistent with ray trace 2892, which causes generation of simulated sensor return 2891. Note that simulator 2840 may simulate the addition of noise or other environmental effects on sensor data (e.g., added diffusion or reflections that affect simulated sensor return 2891, etc.). Further yet, simulator 2840 may be configured to simulate a variety of sensor defects, including sensor failure, sensor miscalibration, intermittent data outages, and the like.

[0115] Simulator 2840 includes a physics processor 2850 for simulating the mechanical, static, dynamic, and kinematic aspects of an autonomous vehicle for use in simulating behavior of

simulated autonomous vehicle 2830. For example, physics processor 2850 includes a content mechanics module 2851 for simulating contact mechanics, a collision detection module 2852 for simulating the interaction between simulated bodies, and a multibody dynamics module 2854 to simulate the interaction between simulated mechanical interactions.

[0116] Simulator 2840 also includes a simulator controller 2856 configured to control the simulation to adapt the functionalities of any synthetically-generated element of simulated environment 2803 to determine cause-effect relationship, among other things. Simulator 2840 includes a simulator evaluator 2858 to evaluate the performance synthetically-generated element of simulated environment 2803. For example, simulator evaluator 2858 may analyze simulated vehicle commands 2880 (e.g., simulated steering angles and simulated velocities) to determine whether such commands are an appropriate response to the simulated activities within simulated environment 2803. Further, simulator evaluator 2858 may evaluate interactions of a teleoperator 2808 with the simulated autonomous vehicle 2830 via teleoperator computing device 2804. Simulator evaluator 2858 may evaluate the effects of updated reference data 2827, including updated map tiles and route data, which may be added to guide the responses of simulated autonomous vehicle 2830. Simulator evaluator 2858 may also evaluate the responses of simulator AV controller 2847 when policy data 2829 is updated, deleted, or added. The above-description of simulator 2840 is not intended to be limiting. As such, simulator 2840 is configured to perform a variety of different simulations of an autonomous vehicle relative to a simulated environment, which include both static and dynamic features. For example, simulator 2840 may be used to validate changes in software versions to ensure reliability. Simulator 2840 may also be used to determine vehicle dynamics properties and for calibration purposes. Further, simulator 2840 may be used to explore the space of applicable controls and resulting trajectories so as to effect learning by self-simulation.

[0117] FIG. 29 is an example of a flow chart to simulate various aspects of an autonomous vehicle, according to some embodiments. Flow chart 2900 begins at 2902, at which reference data including three dimensional map data is received into a simulator. Dynamic object data defining motion patterns for a classified object may be retrieved at 2904. At 2906, a simulated environment is formed based on at least three dimensional ("3D") map data and the dynamic object data. The simulated environment may include one or more simulated surfaces. At 2908, an autonomous vehicle is simulated that includes a simulated autonomous vehicle controller that forms part of a simulated environment. The autonomous vehicle controller may include a simulated perception engine and a simulated localizer configured to receive sensor data. At 2910, simulated sensor data are generated based on data for at least one simulated sensor return,

and simulated vehicle commands are generated at 2912 to cause motion (e.g., vectored propulsion) by a simulated autonomous vehicle in a synthetic environment. At 2914, simulated vehicle commands are evaluated to determine whether the simulated autonomous vehicle behaved consistent with expected behaviors (e.g., consistent with a policy).

[0118] FIG. 30 is an example of a flow chart to generate map data, according to some embodiments. Flow chart 3000 begins at 3002, at which trajectory data is retrieved. The trajectory data may include trajectories captured over a duration of time (e.g., as logged trajectories). At 3004, at least localization data may be received. The localization data may be captured over a duration of time (e.g., as logged localization data). At 3006, a camera or other image sensor may be implemented to generate a subset of the localization data. As such, the retrieved localization data may include image data. At 3008, subsets of localization data are aligned to identifying a global position (e.g., a global pose). At 3010, three dimensional ("3D") map data is generated based on the global position, and at 3012, the 3 dimensional map data is available for implementation by, for example, a manual route data editor (e.g., including a manual road network data editor, such as an RNDF editor), an automated route data generator (e.g., including an automatic road network generator, including an automatic RNDF generator), a fleet of autonomous vehicles, a simulator, a teleoperator computing device, and any other component of an autonomous vehicle service.

[0119] FIG. 31 is a diagram depicting an architecture of a mapping engine, according to some embodiments. Diagram 3100 includes a 3D mapping engine that is configured to receive trajectory log data 3140, LIDAR log data 3172, camera log data 3174, radar log data 3176, and other optional logged sensor data (not shown). Logic 3141 includes a loop-closure detector 3150 configured to detect whether sensor data indicates a nearby point in space has been previously visited, among other things. Logic 3141 also includes a registration controller 3152 for aligning map data, including 3D map data in some cases, relative to one or more registration points. Further, logic 3141 provides data 3142 representing states of loop closures for use by a global pose graph generator 3143, which is configured to generate pose graph data 3145. In some examples, pose graph data 3145 may also be generated based on data from registration refinement module 3146. Logic 3144 includes a 3D mapper 3154 and a LIDAR self-calibration unit 3156. Further, logic 3144 receives sensor data and pose graph data 3145 to generate 3D map data 3120 (or other map data, such as 4D map data). In some examples, logic 3144 may implement a truncated sign distance function ("TSDF") to fuse sensor data and/or map data to form optimal three-dimensional maps. Further, logic 3144 is configured to include texture and reflectance properties. 3D map data 3120 may be released for usage by a manual route data

editor 3160 (e.g., an editor to manipulate Route data or other types of route or reference data), an automated route data generator 3162 (e.g., logic to configured to generate route data or other types of road network or reference data), a fleet of autonomous vehicles 3164, a simulator 3166, a teleoperator computing device 3168, and any other component of an autonomous vehicle service. Mapping engine 3110 may capture semantic information from manual annotation or automatically-generated annotation as well as other sensors, such as sonar or instrumented environment (e.g., smart stop-lights).

[0120] FIG. 32 is a diagram depicting an autonomous vehicle application, according to some examples. Diagram 3200 depicts a mobile computing device 3203 including an autonomous service application 3240 that is configured to contact an autonomous vehicle service platform 3201 to arrange transportation of user 3202 via an autonomous vehicle 3230. As shown, autonomous service application 3240 may include a transportation controller 3242, which may be a software application residing on a computing device (e.g., a mobile phone 3203, etc.). Transportation controller 3242 is configured to receive, schedule, select, or perform operations related to autonomous vehicles and/or autonomous vehicle fleets for which a user 3202 may arrange transportation from the user's location to a destination. For example, user 3202 may open up an application to request vehicle 3230. The application may display a map and user 3202 may drop a pin to indicate their destination within, for example, a geo-fenced region. Alternatively, the application may display a list of nearby pre-specified pick-up locations, or provide the user with a text entry field in which to type a destination either by address or by name.

[0121] Further to the example shown, autonomous vehicle application 3240 may also include a user identification controller 3246 that may be configured to detect that user 3202 is in a geographic region, or vicinity, near autonomous vehicle 3230, as the vehicle approaches. In some situations, user 3202 may not readily perceive or identify autonomous vehicle 3230 as it approaches for use by user 3203 (e.g., due to various other vehicles, including trucks, cars, taxis, and other obstructions that are typical in city environments). In one example, autonomous vehicle 3230 may establish a wireless communication link 3262 (e.g., via a radio frequency ("RF") signal, such as WiFi or Bluetooth®, including BLE, or the like) for communicating and/or determining a spatial location of user 3202 relative to autonomous vehicle 3230 (e.g., using relative direction of RF signal and signal strength). In some cases, autonomous vehicle 3230 may detect an approximate geographic location of user 3202 using, for example, GPS data or the like. A GPS receiver (not shown) of mobile computing device 3203 may be configured to provide GPS data to autonomous vehicle service application 3240.

Thus, user identification controller 3246 may provide GPS data via link 3260 to autonomous vehicle service platform 3201, which, in turn, may provide that location to autonomous vehicle 3230 via link 3261. Subsequently, autonomous vehicle 3230 may determine a relative distance and/or direction of user 3202 by comparing the user's GPS data to the vehicle's GPS-derived location.

[0122] Autonomous vehicle 3230 may also include additional logic to identify the presence of user 3202, such that logic configured to perform face detection algorithms to detect either user 3202 generally, or to specifically identify the identity (e.g., name, phone number, etc.) of user 3202 based on the user's unique facial characteristics. Further, autonomous vehicle 3230 may include logic to detect codes for identifying user 3202. Examples of such codes include specialized visual codes, such as QR codes, color codes, etc., specialized audio codes, such as voice activated or recognized codes, etc., and the like. In some cases, a code may be an encoded security key that may be transmitted digitally via link 3262 to autonomous vehicle 3230 to ensure secure ingress and/or egress. Further, one or more of the above-identified techniques for identifying user 3202 may be used as a secured means to grant ingress and egress privileges to user 3202 so as to prevent others from entering autonomous vehicle 3230 (e.g., to ensure third party persons do not enter an unoccupied autonomous vehicle prior to arriving at user 3202). According to various examples, any other means for identifying user 3202 and providing secured ingress and egress may also be implemented in one or more of autonomous vehicle service application 3240, autonomous vehicle service platform 3201, and autonomous vehicle 3230.

[0123] To assist user 3302 in identifying the arrival of its requested transportation, autonomous vehicle 3230 may be configured to notify or otherwise alert user 3202 to the presence of autonomous vehicle 3230 as it approaches user 3202. For example, autonomous vehicle 3230 may activate one or more light-emitting devices 3280 (e.g., LEOs) in accordance with specific light patterns. In particular, certain light patterns are created so that user 3202 may readily perceive that autonomous vehicle 3230 is reserved to service the transportation needs of user 3202. As an example, autonomous vehicle 3230 may generate light patterns 3290 that may be perceived by user 3202 as a "wink," or other animation of its exterior and interior lights in such a visual and temporal way. The patterns of light 3290 may be generated with or without patterns of sound to identify to user 3202 that this vehicle is the one that they booked.

[0124] According to some embodiments, autonomous vehicle user controller 3244 may implement a software application that is configured to control various functions of an autonomous vehicle. Further, an application may be configured to redirect or reroute the

autonomous vehicle during transit to its initial destination. Further, autonomous vehicle user controller 3244 may be configured to cause on-board logic to modify interior lighting of autonomous vehicle 3230 to effect, for example, mood lighting. Controller 3244 may also control a source of audio (e.g., an external source such as Spotify, or audio stored locally on the mobile computing device 3203), select a type of ride (e.g., modify desired acceleration and braking aggressiveness, modify active suspension parameters to select a set of "road-handling" characteristics to implement aggressive driving characteristics, including vibrations, or to select "soft-ride" qualities with vibrations dampened for comfort), and the like. For example, mobile computing device 3203 may be configured to control HVAC functions as well, like ventilation and temperature.

[0125] FIGs. 33 to 35 illustrate examples of various computing platforms configured to provide various functionalities to components of an autonomous vehicle service, according to various embodiments. In some examples, computing platform 3300 may be used to implement computer programs, applications, methods, processes, algorithms, or other software to perform the above-described techniques.

[00126] Note that various structures and/or functionalities of FIG. 33 are applicable to FIGs. 34 and 35, and, as such, some elements in those figures may be discussed in the context of FIG. 33.

[0127] In some cases, computing platform 3300 can be disposed in any device, such as a computing device 3390a, which may be disposed in an autonomous vehicle 3391, and/or mobile computing device 3390b.

[0128] Computing platform 3300 includes a bus 3302 or other communication mechanism for communicating information, which interconnects subsystems and devices, such as processor 3304, system memory 3306 (e.g., RAM, etc.), storage device 3308 (e.g., ROM, etc.), an in-memory cache (which may be implemented in RAM 3306 or other portions of computing platform 3300), a communication interface 3313 (e.g., an Ethernet or wireless controller, a Bluetooth controller, NFC logic, etc.) to facilitate communications via a port on communication link 3321 to communicate, for example, with a computing device, including mobile computing and/or communication devices with processors. Processor 3304 can be implemented with one or more graphics processing units ("GPUs"), with one or more central processing units ("CPUs"), such as those manufactured by Intel® Corporation, or one or more virtual processors, as well as any combination of CPUs and virtual processors. Computing platform 3300 exchanges data representing inputs and outputs via input-and-output devices 3301, including, but not limited to, keyboards, mice, audio inputs (e.g., speech-to-text devices),

user interfaces, displays, monitors, cursors, touch-sensitive displays, LCD or LED displays, and other I/O-related devices.

[0129] According to some examples, computing platform 3300 performs specific operations by processor 3304 executing one or more sequences of one or more instructions stored in system memory 3306, and computing platform 3300 can be implemented in a client-server arrangement, peer-to-peer arrangement, or as any mobile computing device, including smart phones and the like. Such instructions or data may be read into system memory 3306 from another computer readable medium, such as storage device 3308. In some examples, hard-wired circuitry may be used in place of or in combination with software instructions for implementation. Instructions may be embedded in software or firmware. The term "computer readable medium" refers to any tangible medium that participates in providing instructions to processor 3304 for execution. Such a medium may take many forms, including but not limited to, non-volatile media and volatile media. Non-volatile media includes, for example, optical or magnetic disks and the like. Volatile media includes dynamic memory, such as system memory 3306.

[0130] Common forms of computer readable media includes, for example, floppy disk, flexible disk, hard disk, magnetic tape, any other magnetic medium, CD-ROM, any other optical medium, punch cards, paper tape, any other physical medium with patterns of holes, RAM, PROM, EPROM, FLASH-EPROM, any other memory chip or cartridge, or any other medium from which a computer can read. Instructions may further be transmitted or received using a transmission medium. The term "transmission medium" may include any tangible or intangible medium that is capable of storing, encoding or carrying instructions for execution by the machine, and includes digital or analog communications signals or other intangible medium to facilitate communication of such instructions. Transmission media includes coaxial cables, copper wire, and fiber optics, including wires that comprise bus 3302 for transmitting a computer data signal.

[0131] In some examples, execution of the sequences of instructions may be performed by computing platform 3300. According to some examples, computing platform 3300 can be coupled by communication link 3321 (e.g., a wired network, such as LAN, PSTN, or any wireless network, including WiFi of various standards and protocols, Bluetooth®, NFC, Zig-Bee, etc.) to any other processor to perform the sequence of instructions in coordination with (or asynchronous to) one another. Computing platform 3300 may transmit and receive messages, data, and instructions, including program code (e.g., application code) through communication link 3321 and communication interface 3313. Received program code may be

executed by processor 3304 as it is received, and/or stored in memory 3306 or other non-volatile storage for later execution.

[0132] In the example shown, system memory 3306 can include various modules that include executable instructions to implement functionalities described herein. System memory 3306 may include an operating system ("O/S") 3332, as well as an application 3336 and/or logic module(s) 3359. In the example shown in FIG. 33, system memory 3306 includes an autonomous vehicle ("AV") controller module 3350 and/or its components (e.g., a perception engine module, a localization module, a planner module, and/or a motion controller module), any of which, or one or more portions of which, can be configured to facilitate an autonomous vehicle service by implementing one or more functions described herein.

[0133] Referring to the example shown in FIG. 34, system memory 3306 includes an autonomous vehicle service platform module 3450 and/or its components (e.g., a teleoperator manager, a simulator, etc.), any of which, or one or more portions of which, can be configured to facilitate managing an autonomous vehicle service by implementing one or more functions described herein.

[0134] Referring to the example shown in FIG. 35, system memory 3306 includes an autonomous vehicle ("AV") module and/or its components for use, for example, in a mobile computing device. One or more portions of module 3550 can be configured to facilitate delivery of an autonomous vehicle service by implementing one or more functions described herein.

[0135] Referring back to FIG. 33, the structures and/or functions of any of the above-described features can be implemented in software, hardware, firmware, circuitry, or a combination thereof. Note that the structures and constituent elements above, as well as their functionality, may be aggregated with one or more other structures or elements. Alternatively, the elements and their functionality may be subdivided into constituent sub-elements, if any. As software, the above-described techniques may be implemented using various types of programming or formatting languages, frameworks, syntax, applications, protocols, objects, or techniques. As hardware and/or firmware, the above-described techniques may be implemented using various types of programming or integrated circuit design languages, including hardware description languages, such as any register transfer language ("RTL") configured to design field-programmable gate arrays ("FPGAs"), application-specific integrated circuits ("ASICs"), or any other type of integrated circuit. According to some embodiments, the term "module" can refer, for example, to an algorithm or a portion thereof, and/or logic implemented in either

hardware circuitry or software, or a combination thereof. These can be varied and are not limited to the examples or descriptions provided.

[0136] In some embodiments, module 3350 of FIG. 33, module 3450 of FIG. 34, and module 3550 of FIG. 35, or one or more of their components, or any process or device described herein, can be in communication (e.g., wired or wirelessly) with a mobile device, such as a mobile phone or computing device, or can be disposed therein.

[0137] In some cases, a mobile device, or any networked computing device (not shown) in communication with one or more modules 3359 (module 3350 of FIG. 33, module 3450 of FIG. 34, and module 3550 of FIG. 35) or one or more of its components (or any process or device described herein), can provide at least some of the structures and/or functions of any of the features described herein. As depicted in the above-described figures, the structures and/or functions of any of the above-described features can be implemented in software, hardware, firmware, circuitry, or any combination thereof. Note that the structures and constituent elements above, as well as their functionality, may be aggregated or combined with one or more other structures or elements. Alternatively, the elements and their functionality may be subdivided into constituent sub-elements, if any. As software, at least some of the above-described techniques may be implemented using various types of programming or formatting languages, frameworks, syntax, applications, protocols, objects, or techniques. For example, at least one of the elements depicted in any of the figures can represent one or more algorithms. Or, at least one of the elements can represent a portion of logic including a portion of hardware configured to provide constituent structures and/or functionalities.

[0138] For example, module 3350 of FIG. 33, module 3450 of FIG. 34, and module 3550 of FIG. 35, or one or more of its components, or any process or device described herein, can be implemented in one or more computing devices (i.e., any mobile computing device, such as a wearable device, an audio device (such as headphones or a headset) or mobile phone, whether worn or carried) that include one or more processors configured to execute one or more algorithms in memory. Thus, at least some of the elements in the above-described figures can represent one or more algorithms. Or, at least one of the elements can represent a portion of logic including a portion of hardware configured to provide constituent structures and/or functionalities. These can be varied and are not limited to the examples or descriptions provided.

[0139] As hardware and/or firmware, the above-described structures and techniques can be implemented using various types of programming or integrated circuit design languages, including hardware description languages, such as any register transfer language ("RTL")

configured to design field-programmable gate arrays ("FPGAs"), application-specific integrated circuits ("ASICs"), multi-chip modules, or any other type of integrated circuit.

[0140] For example, module 3350 of FIG. 33, module 3450 of FIG. 34, and module 3550 of FIG. 35, or one or more of its components, or any process or device described herein, can be implemented in one or more computing devices that include one or more circuits. Thus, at least one of the elements in the above-described figures can represent one or more components of hardware. Or, at least one of the elements can represent a portion of logic including a portion of a circuit configured to provide constituent structures and/or functionalities.

[0141] FIG. 36 is a diagram depicting implementation of automated extraction of semantic information based on sensor data from an autonomous vehicle, according to some examples. Diagram 3600 illustrates a road network 3650 having autonomous vehicles 3630 and 3630A that are autonomously navigating roads of the road network and driver operated vehicles 3640 being driven on roads of the road network 3650. Road network 3650 may represent a geo-fenced region or a portion of a geo-fenced region that may limit or otherwise control the movement of the autonomous vehicles 3630 and 3630a, for example. Autonomous vehicles 3630 and 3630a may be a subset of autonomous vehicles in a fleet of autonomous vehicles, for example. Each autonomous vehicle 3630 and 3630a may implement sensing of an environment external to the autonomous vehicle using a sensor system included with each autonomous vehicle. For example, an autonomous vehicle denoted as 3630a may include sensor suites 3610a - 3610d to sense the environment external to the autonomous vehicle 3630a as the vehicle autonomously navigates road surfaces within the road network 3650. Sensor suites 3610a - 3610d may be configured to provide 360 degrees of overlapping sensor coverage regions (denoted as dashed circle 3601a) around the autonomous vehicle 3630a, for example. The other autonomous vehicles 3630 may also include sensor suites that provide 360 degrees of overlapping sensor coverage regions (denoted as dashed circle 3601) around the autonomous vehicles 3630, for example.

[0142] Further to diagram 3600, the autonomous vehicle 3630a may be autonomously navigating a road surface in a region 3624 of the road network 3650 in a direction of travel along a lane of the road surface generally indicated by arrow 3632, for example. Sensor system 3670 of vehicle 3630a may detect objects on or proximate the road surface and sensor data indicative of those objects may be processed and classified by one or more systems (e.g., a perception system and/or planner system) of the autonomous vehicle 3630a, for example. In the region 3624, the environment external to the autonomous vehicle 3630a may include but is not limited to the following detected objects (e.g., based on processed sensor data): a building

3602; a road surface 3623; lane marker 3625; curbs 3627 and 3629; a pedestrian cross-walk A, pedestrians 3620, a stop sign B; an un-classified region C; and pedestrians 3622. The pedestrian cross-walk A may be detected and classified as a pedestrian crosswalk due to markings (e.g., paint, reflector studs, lights) on the road surface 3623. The un-classified region C may not include structure (e.g., painted lines or the like) detectable by sensors in the sensor system 3670 that would allow classification of the region C. However, pedestrians 3622 transiting 3634 across the road surface 3623 within the region C may be sensed by sensors in the sensor system 3670. In diagram 3600, the building 3602 may represent one example of an attraction, destination or venue (e.g., a concert hall) of interest to pedestrians 3622 that may be a motivation for the pedestrians 3622 to jaywalk across the road surface 3623 proximate the region C instead of crossing the road surface at the designated pedestrian cross-walk A (e.g., pedestrians 3622 prefer crossing at the region C because it is closer to the building 3602). The dashed lines that denote the region C are depicted as not being straight lines to illustrate that the pedestrians 3622 may not transit 3634 the region C in a straight line, but instead may transit 3634 the region C in a non-linear manner. In some examples, the region C may be crossed by pedestrians on a wheeled apparatus, such as a bicycle, skate board, scooter, etc., and those pedestrians may not transit 3634 the region C in a straight line. Therefore, region C may not have a well-defined outline as to where region C begins and where region C ends along the road surface 3623. The pedestrians 3622 upon being classified as a pedestrian object type (e.g., by a perception system of vehicle 3630a) may also have an associated predicted behavior that may be used to account for a range of non-linear motion of the pedestrians 3622 as they transit 3634 the region C.

[0143] Sensor data from sensors in the sensor system 3670 may be processed to classify objects in the region 3624 and generate data representing semantic classifications associated with the detected objects as denoted by data representing semantic classifications 3641-3679. The data representing semantic classifications 3641-3679 may include other data associated with each detected object, such as an object type and a predicted object motion, for example. There may be more or fewer semantic classifications as denoted by 3649 (e.g., based on the number of detected objects in the region 3624).

[0144] A semantic classification 3643 (depicted in dashed line) may represent one or more blobs or point clouds (e.g., composed of colored laser and/or image capture return data) or other elements constituting pedestrian objects (e.g., pedestrians 3622) that may be detected during transit 3634 across the road surface 3623. At a point in time when the autonomous vehicle 3630a detects the pedestrians 3622 making their transit across the road surface 3623

there may not be a semantic classification of the region C as being used as a trail or an unofficial pedestrian crossing (e.g., an impromptu or ad-hoc pedestrian crossing). However, sensor data captured over time from autonomous vehicles (e.g., 3630, 3630a) that navigate through the region 3624 may be used to infer a semantic classification for the region C as will be described below. The inferred semantic classification for the region C may be a separate classification that is separate from any semantic classification assigned to pedestrians 3622, for example.

[0145] The data representing the semantic classifications 3641 – 3679 may be communicated 3691 (e.g., via a communications interface COMMS 3680) to an external resource, such as network 3699 (e.g., a Cloud resource or the Internet), for example. A processor 3696 (e.g., a server) may receive the data representing the semantic classifications 3671 - 3643 and compare the data representing the semantic classifications 3641 - 3679 with data representing reference semantic classifications. For example, processor 3696 may access a data store, such as reference data 3698, to retrieve the data representing the reference semantic classifications. The processor 3696 may compare (e.g., using on one or more algorithms embodied in a non-transitory computer readable medium) the semantic classifications 3671 - 3643 with the reference semantic classifications and may determine that the data representing semantic classifications 3641 - 3679 are matched with corresponding reference semantic classifications, and may also determine that semantic classification 3643 (e.g., blobs associated with pedestrians 3622) has no corresponding match in the reference semantic classifications. Although pedestrians 3622 may have a semantic classification (e.g., a pedestrian type object) and a corresponding matching reference semantic classification, the region C through which the pedestrians 3622 transit 3634 may not have a corresponding matching reference semantic classification and may constitute a subset of detected objects in the region 3624 having semantic classifications that do not match the reference semantic classifications. As autonomous vehicles 3630 and 3630a autonomously navigate within road network 3650, those vehicles may communicate 3693 semantic classification data via COMMS 3680 to network 3699 and that data may be used to generate updated or otherwise amend map data, map tile data, or route data (e.g., RNDF) as denoted by data 3697, for example. One or more of the autonomous vehicles (3630, 3630a) in road network 3650 and/or in one or more other geo-fenced regions may receive updated data representing semantic classifications (e.g., data 3697) in real-time, in near-real-time, or at some other interval of time (e.g., hourly or daily updates of data). In some examples, one or more of the autonomous vehicles (3630, 3630a) in road network 3650 and/or in one or more other geo-fenced regions may receive updated map data

and/or route data (e.g., data 3697). In other examples, data 3697 may include updated data representing semantic classifications, map data, route data (e.g., RNDF) or some combination thereof, in real-time, in near-real-time, or at some other interval of time (e.g., hourly or daily updates of data).

[00146] FIG. 37 is an example of a flow diagram to automate incremental changes to mapping data based on an inferred semantic classification, according to some embodiments. In flow diagram 3700, at a stage 3702, data representing a region of an environment (e.g., region 3624 of FIG. 36) may be received from an autonomous vehicle that has autonomously navigated the region (e.g., vehicles 3630 and 3630a of FIG. 36). The data received may be post processed (e.g., by a perception system and/or a planner system) sensor data from a sensor system of the autonomous vehicle and/or POSE data from a localizer system of the autonomous vehicle.

[0147] At a stage 3704, semantic classifications data associated with objects disposed in the region may be extracted. The semantic classifications data may be associated with static (e.g., stop sign B, lane marker 3625, and cross-walk A of FIG. 36) and dynamic objects (pedestrians 3620 and 3622 of FIG. 36) in the region. At a stage 3706 the extracted semantic classifications data may be compared with reference semantic classifications data associated with the region (e.g., associated with road network 3650 and sub-regions thereof, such as 3624) to detect a subset of objects having semantic classifications that do not match the reference semantic classifications (e.g., the data representing the semantic classification 3643 in FIG. 36).

[0148] At a stage 3708, predicted behavior data associated with the subset of objects may be tracked over a period of time. The tracking may constitute one or more of the autonomous vehicles gathering sensor data over different periods of time as the vehicles autonomously navigate (e.g., in the region 3624 of FIG. 36) in the region. For example, in reference to FIG. 36, the autonomous vehicles (3630 and 3630a) may travel through region 2624 multiple times, and during each pass through the region 3624, detect and track motion associated with objects in the region (e.g., objects 3622 of FIG. 36). The predicted behavior data may be included in object data generated by a planner system of the autonomous vehicles, based on sensor data from the sensor system of the autonomous vehicles, for example.

[0149] At a stage 3710, based on the tracking, a probability that the subset of objects will be positioned at a location in the region over the period of time may be determined. At a stage 3712, an inferred semantic classification may be associated with the subset of objects when the probability indicates a pattern, over the period of time, that the subset of objects will be positioned at the location in the region. At a stage 3714, the inferred semantic classification may be included in data representing objects disposed in the environment.

[0150] In one example, the stage 3714 may include updating map data and/or one or more map tiles with the inferred semantic classification. In another example, the stage 3714 may update route data (e.g., a route definition network file - RNDF or a mission data file - MDF). In other examples, the data representing objects disposed in the environment may be transmitted to some or all or a portion of the autonomous vehicles in a fleet of autonomous vehicles (e.g., via network 3699). For example, autonomous vehicles 3630 and 3630a in road network 3650 may receive updated data representing objects disposed in the environment (e.g., see data 3697 in FIG. 36) and that data may include the new semantic classification for the pedestrian crossing 3623.

[0151] FIG. 38 is a diagram depicting an inferred semantic classification implemented in mapping data for autonomous vehicles in a fleet of autonomous vehicles, according to some examples. In diagram 3800, data associated with road network 3850 now includes a semantic classification for the un-marked pedestrian cross-walk, denoted as D in region 3624. Autonomous vehicles (3830, 3830a) that are autonomously navigating in road network 3850 (as depicted in dashed circles 3801 and 3801a, respectively), and optionally other autonomous vehicles in the fleet of autonomous vehicles have data representing the semantic classification for the un-marked pedestrian crosswalk D and upon detecting pedestrians 3622 in or near the un-marked pedestrian cross-walk D, may either stop (e.g., execute a safe-stop trajectory), slow down or otherwise autonomously maneuver to prevent a collision or close pass with one or more of the pedestrians 3622. Similarly, upon detecting pedestrians 3620 in or near the marked pedestrian cross-walk A, may either stop (e.g., execute a safe-stop trajectory), slow down or otherwise autonomously maneuver to prevent a collision or close pass with one or more of the pedestrians 3620. In some examples, the marked A and the un-marked D pedestrian cross-walks may be treated equally in terms of actions taken by autonomous vehicles that encounter pedestrians in those cross-walks.

[0152] Further to diagram 3800, sensor data generated by sensor system 3870 may include data representing the semantic classification 3843 for the un-marked pedestrian cross-walk D, as well as other semantic classification data denoted as 3841 - 3879, for example. There may be more or fewer datum for the semantic classification data as denoted by 3849. Accordingly, as the autonomous vehicle 3830a travels in a direction generally along arrow 3832 along road surface 3623, the vehicle 3830a may detect pedestrians 3622 in and/or near un-marked cross-walk D and take appropriate autonomous actions (e.g., via its perception, planner, and drive systems) to alter its trajectory to avoid a potential collision or close pass.

[0153] As autonomous vehicles 3830 and 3830a autonomously navigate within road network 3850, those vehicles may communicate semantic classification 3893 data via COMMS 3880 to network 3899 and that data may be used to generate updated or otherwise amended map data, map tile data, or route data (e.g., RNDF) as denoted by data 3897. In other examples, data 3897 may include updated data representing semantic classifications, map data, route data (e.g., RNDF) or some combination thereof, in real-time, in near-real-time, or at some other interval of time (e.g., hourly or daily updates of data).

[0154] FIG. 39 is a diagram depicting implementation of automated extraction of semantic information based on sensor data over a period of time, according to some examples. In diagram 3900, examples 3991 - 3995 of changes in objects detected on or near road surface 3623 in the region 3624 over time 3915 (e.g., over a period of time such as minutes, hours, days, weeks, etc.) are depicted. In example 3991, during a first period of time, a single pedestrian 3620 is positioned near marked pedestrian cross-walk A and no pedestrians are positioned near the un-marked pedestrian cross-walk D. In example 3993, during a second period of time, several pedestrians 3622 and bicyclist 3936 are either transiting 3934 the un-marked cross-walk D or are positioned near the un-marked cross-walk D; whereas, only two pedestrians 3622 are positioned near marked cross-walk A. The second period of time may be associated with a single event at building 3602 or a recurring event at building 3602 that may occur at a regular temporal rate, such as twice a month or twice a week for example. In example 3995, during a third period of time, there are no pedestrian objects in or near the un-marked cross-walk D and a single bicyclist 3932 crossing the marked cross-walk A.

[0155] In example 3993, the pedestrian activity associated with the second period of time may be monitored by autonomous vehicles (not shown) as they autonomously navigate in region 3624 and sensor data captured from object activity associated with road surface 3623 may be analyzed (e.g., at network 3699 of FIG. 36 or 3899 of FIG. 38) to detect a temporal pattern to object activity (e.g., dynamic objects in region 3624) associated with the un-marked cross-walk D and/or building 3602. As one example, if data collected over time indicates the object traffic associated with cross-walk D has temporal pattern of recurring every Friday of the week from about 7:00pm to about 11:00pm, then autonomous vehicles in the road network associated with region 3624 may have their associated route data, map data, or both, modified, updated or the like to avoid autonomously navigating the road surface 3623 during those hours on that day of the week, and may instead, autonomously re-route their trajectories to select a different route within the road network.

[0156] Similarly, in examples 3991 and 3995, the absence of significant object activity (e.g., dynamic objects) in the region 3624 may be associated with one or more temporal periods and the autonomous vehicles in the road network associated with region 3624 may have their associated route data, map data, or both, modified, updated or the like to autonomously navigate the road surface 3623 during those temporal periods to take advantage of the absence of significant object activity.

[0157] In the examples 3991 - 3995, semantic classification data associated with objects on or near road surface 3623 and temporal data associated with the objects may be used for route planning and/or to update data associated with route planning, such as map data, route data, or both.

[0158] FIG. 40 is a diagram depicting implementation of automated extraction of semantic information based on heat map data over a period of time, according to some examples. In diagram 4000, over a period time 4015, inferred semantic classification based on object activity, over time, in or around a location in the region 3623 may be determined using heat map data generated from sensor data output from one or more sensors of the sensor system of the autonomous vehicles in a road network. The heat map data may be communicated to an external resource (e.g., network 4099) for processing and analysis. In some examples, heat map data may be generated external of the autonomous vehicles by communicating sensor data the heat map data will be generated from to an external resource.

[0159] In example 4091, sensor data from an autonomous vehicle may be used to generate data representing heat maps 4021. The heat maps 4021 may constitute heat maps of sensor data generated by different types of sensors in the sensor system, such as LIDAR, RADAR, Image Sensors, Stereo Cameras, SONAR, etc., for example. The sensor data may constitute a sequence of frames of sensor data over time and the associated heat maps 4021 may be representative of one or more of the frames of sensor data.

[0160] Similarly, in examples 4093 and 4095, sensor data (e.g., frames of sensor data) from one or more sensors and/or different types of sensors may be used to generate data representing heat maps 4031 and 4041, respectively. The sensor data may constitute a sequence of frames of sensor data over time and the associated heat maps (4031, 4041) may be representative of one or more of the frames of sensor data. The data representing the heat maps 4021, 4031, and 4041 may be communicated 4029 to an external resource (e.g., network 4099) for processing. The data representing the heat maps 4021, 4031, and 4041 may be stored in a data store (e.g., heat map data store 4098) and may be later accessed by one or more processors for subsequent processing (e.g., in one or more stages of flow 3700 of FIG. 37).

[0161] As one example, data representing a probability of a subset of objects in the region 3623 being positioned at a location (e.g., an un-marked pedestrian cross-walk) in the region 3623 may be determined by data representing one or more heat maps generated from sensor data included in the data from the autonomous vehicle (e.g., included in the sensor data from the autonomous vehicle). In some examples, the data representing the probability of the subset of the objects being positioned at the location in the region 3623 may be determined by data representing heat maps that are simultaneously generated from frames of sensor data included in the data from the autonomous vehicle. The frames of sensor data may be generated by different types of sensors in the sensor system of the autonomous vehicles.

[0162] The types of sensors and the data generated by those sensors may include but is not limited to light detection and ranging sensor configured to generate laser depth information associated with the subset of the objects, multispectral image capture sensors configured to generate data indicative of near infrared wavelengths of light associated with the subset of the objects, hyperspectral image capture sensors configured to generate data indicative of an electromagnetic spectrum of energy emitted by objects (e.g., a broad spectrum of light of various wavelengths associated with an object), and image capture sensors configured to generate data indicative of color intensity of light associated with the subset of the objects, for example. The heat map data may be used to infer semantic classification of objects or a region (e.g., an un-marked pedestrian cross-walk or trail) that exists in the region based on the heat map data indicating usage or patterns of usage in the region based on behavior associated with detected objects in the region (e.g., objects classified as pedestrians transiting the region that may constitute the un-marked trail or crosswalk). Updated or otherwise amended or changed data 4097 (e.g., map data, map tiles, route data, RNDF, etc.) may be generated based on inferences that may be drawn from the heat map data.

[0163] FIG. 41 is a diagram depicting generation of heat map data from sensor data generated by a sensor system of an autonomous vehicle, according to some examples. In diagram 4100, a sensor system 4110 of an autonomous vehicle 4130 may include a variety of different types of sensors, such as one or more LI DAR 4101, one or more RADAR 4102, one or more SONAR 4103, one or more Cameras 4104, one or more Stereo Cameras 4105, GPS 4106, and IMU 4107, for example. One or more of the sensors in sensor system 4110 may generate data representing sensor data 4131 - 4135. The sensor data may be one or more frames of sensor data captured over one or more periods of time. In some examples, the sensor data and/or frames of sensor data may be continuously generated by sensors in the sensor system 4110 during driving operations of the autonomous vehicle 4130, for example. Sensor data from

sensor system 4110 may be communicated to various systems of the autonomous vehicle 4130, such as a planner system, a perception system, a localizer system, a safety system, and a drive system, for example.

[0164] Sensor data 4131 - 4135 may be communicated to a heat map generator 4140 configured to receive the sensor data 4131 - 4135, generate heat map data representative of the sensor data, and output heat map data 4141. The heat map data 4141 may be representative of one or more frames of the sensor data the heat map data was generated from.

[0165] FIG. 42 is a diagram depicting implementation of automated extraction of semantic information based on sensor data over a period of time, according to some examples. In diagram 4200, over a period of time 4215, the region 3624 may have undergone change, such that building 3602 is no longer present (e.g., demolished) and stop sign B may be replaced with stop lights E and F. Removal of the building 3602 may change behavior of objects (e.g., pedestrians) in the region 3624, such that the un-marked pedestrian cross-walk B may no longer be semantically inferred based on object data (e.g., heat map data) associated with pedestrians transiting the road surface 3623. Stop lights E and F may be assigned semantic classifications based on sensor data being compared with reference semantic classifications as described above. For example, a perception system of the autonomous vehicle may process object data associated with the stop lights E and F (e.g., LIDAR data and Image Capture data) and classify objects E and F as stop lights E and F (e.g., static objects in region 3624).

[0166] Diagram 4200 depicts an example of points in time where data associated with region 3624 has changed (e.g., building 3602 and stop sign B are gone). Data representative of the region 3624 before the change (e.g., reference data 4298) may be compared with data representative of the region 3624 after to the change (e.g., change data 4221) to determine that map data, route data or other data associated with autonomous vehicles ought to be updated to reflect the current state (e.g., state of static and/or dynamic objects) of objects in the region 3624. Reference data 4298 may constitute reference data indicative of a prior state of the region 3624 before the change depicted in example 4200. Change data 4221 may constitute data indicative of the change in one or more objects in the region 3624. Network 4299 may process (e.g., on server 4296 the reference data 4298 and the change data 4221 to determine whether a change in region 3624 has occurred and may generate updated data 4297 (e.g., map data, route data, RNDF, etc.) if a change is determined. One or more of the autonomous vehicles (e.g., in a fleet of autonomous vehicles) may receive the updated data 4297, for example. Statistical change point detection may be applied to probabilistically determine and/or confirm that a change has occurred in the region 3624 (e.g., lines for a bike lane have been added or crosswalk

A has been removed). Data of the region 3624 prior to the change may be compared with data of the region 3624 after the change to determine (e.g., based on a confidence interval) that a change has or has not occurred. Map data (e.g., one or more map tiles) and/or route data (e.g., RNDF) may be updated to reflect the change in region 3624 (e.g., the confidence level indicates a change has occurred). In some examples, sensor data (e.g., frames of data) generated by sensors of the autonomous vehicles in a region may be processed (e.g., by network 3699, 3899, 4199, 4299, in the Cloud, via the Internet, etc.) using a probabilistic statistical inference algorithm, a Bayesian inference algorithm, or other probabilistic inference algorithms, for example. A determination that a change has occurred in a region may be based on a confidence interval or other metric associated with the inference algorithm, for example.

[0167] According to some embodiments, the term "circuit" can refer, for example, to any system including a number of components through which current flows to perform one or more functions, the components including discrete and complex components. Examples of discrete components include transistors, resistors, capacitors, inductors, diodes, and the like, and examples of complex components include memory, processors, analog circuits, digital circuits, and the like, including field-programmable gate arrays ("FPGAs"), application-specific integrated circuits ("ASICs"). Therefore, a circuit can include a system of electronic components and logic components (e.g., logic configured to execute instructions, such that a group of executable instructions of an algorithm, for example, and, thus, is a component of a circuit). According to some embodiments, the term "module" can refer, for example, to an algorithm or a portion thereof, and/or logic implemented in either hardware circuitry or software, or a combination thereof (i.e., a module can be implemented as a circuit). In some embodiments, algorithms and/or the memory in which the algorithms are stored are "components" of a circuit. Thus, the term "circuit" can also refer, for example, to a system of components, including algorithms. These can be varied and are not limited to the examples or descriptions provided.

[0168] Although the foregoing examples have been described in some detail for purposes of clarity of understanding, the above-described inventive techniques are not limited to the details provided. There are many alternative ways of implementing the above-described invention techniques. The disclosed examples are illustrative and not restrictive.

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:

receiving, at a computing system, first data sensed at a first time by a sensor system of an autonomous vehicle, the first data being representative of a plurality of objects on or proximate a road surface in a region in an environment the autonomous vehicle has autonomously navigated;

for each of the plurality of objects, comparing a semantic classification associated with the respective object with data representing reference semantic classifications;

based at least in part on the comparing, determining that a first of the plurality of objects has a semantic classification that does not match the reference semantic classifications, the first of the plurality of objects and additional objects having the semantic classification that does not match the reference semantic classifications comprising a subset of the objects;

receiving, at the computing system, second data sensed subsequent to the first time, the second data representing a behavior of at least one of the additional objects in the subset of objects;

determining, based on the first data and the second data, a probability that objects in the subset of the objects conform to a behavior;

generating, at the computing system, data comprising an inferred semantic classification associated with the subset of the objects when the probability indicates a pattern of objects in the subset of the objects conforming to the behavior;

updating, at the computing system, map data associated with the environment to include information about the inferred semantic classification; and

transmitting the updated map data to the autonomous vehicle and at least one additional autonomous vehicle.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining the probability includes analyzing a heat map generated from sensor data included in at least one of the first data or the second data.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the objects in subset of the objects includes data representing a pedestrian object type.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the inferred semantic classification associated with the subset of the objects comprises an un-marked pedestrian crossing associated with a road network in the region.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the first data comprises route data.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the route data comprises a route network definition file.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the first data comprises map data.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein the map data comprises at least one map tile.
9. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

updating the reference semantic classifications to include the inferred semantic classification.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining the probability comprises analyzing data representing heat maps simultaneously generated from frames of sensor data included in the first data from the autonomous vehicle, the frames of sensor data being generated by a plurality of different types of sensors in the sensor system.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein the plurality of different types of sensors includes a light detection and ranging sensor and the frames of sensor data generated by the light detection

and ranging sensor include data representing laser depth information associated with the subset of the objects.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the plurality of different types of sensors includes a multispectral image capture sensor and the frames of sensor data generated by the multispectral image capture sensor include data representing near infrared wavelengths of light associated with the subset of the objects.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein the plurality of different types of sensors includes an image capture sensor and the frames of sensor data generated by the image capture sensor include data representing color intensity of light associated with the subset of the objects.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining the probability comprises analyzing map data based on simultaneous localization and mapping, the map data being generated by a localizer of the autonomous vehicle, the map data including temporal information associated with the period of time.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the generating the data comprising the inferred semantic classification is based on the temporal information.

16. A system comprising:

a bi-directional autonomous vehicle configured to drive forward in a first direction or drive forward in a substantially opposite second direction without turning around the bi-directional autonomous vehicle, the autonomous vehicle configured to drive autonomously on a roadway;

a plurality of sensors on the bi-directional autonomous vehicle configured to sense a plurality of objects on or proximate a roadway in an environment surrounding the bi-directional autonomous vehicle; and

a computing system communicatively coupled to the bi-directional autonomous vehicle to receive data from the plurality of sensors, the computing system being programmed to:

determine a semantic classification for a first object of the plurality of objects, the first object being a moving object at a location in the environment;

compare the semantic classification to reference semantic classifications data indicating object types and object behaviors at locations in the environment;

determine, based on the comparison, that the semantic classification does not match the reference semantic classifications data;

determine, based at least in part on data acquired at different times, a pattern of behavior of additional moving objects at the location;

based at least in part on the pattern of behavior of the additional moving objects at the location, associate an inferred semantic classification with moving objects located at the location;

update the reference semantic classifications data to include the inferred semantic classification; and

update route data used to navigate the roadway based on the inferred semantic classification.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the moving object is a pedestrian, the additional moving objects are additional pedestrians, and the route data is updated to indicate an un-marked pedestrian crossing the roadway.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the system is further programmed to generate navigation instructions responsive to the updated route data.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the navigation instructions include instructions to navigate the un-marked pedestrian crossing according to predetermined instructions for navigating a marked pedestrian crossing.

20. The system of claim 16, wherein the location in the environment comprises a position proximate a stationary object of interest.

21. The system of claim 16, wherein the computing system is further programmed to transmit the updated route data to a plurality of autonomous vehicles comprising a fleet of autonomous vehicles.

22. The system of claim 16, wherein the pattern of behavior comprises temporal information including at least one of a time of day or a day of the week.

23. A system comprising:

a fleet of bi-directional autonomous vehicles, each of the bi-directional autonomous vehicles configured to drive forward in a first direction or drive forward in a substantially opposite second direction without turning around the autonomous vehicle;

a plurality of sensors on the bi-directional autonomous vehicles configured to sense a plurality of objects on or proximate a roadway upon which the bi-directional autonomous vehicles travel, in an environment surrounding the bi-directional autonomous vehicles;

one or more data stores storing reference semantic classifications data indicating object types and object behaviors at locations in the environment;

one or more data stores storing mapping information used by the fleet of bi-directional autonomous vehicles to navigate the environment; and

a computing system communicatively coupled to the fleet of bi-directional autonomous vehicles to receive data from the plurality of sensors, the computing system being programmed to:

determine a semantic classification associated with each of the plurality of objects, the semantic classification for a first object of the plurality of objects indicating that the first object is a pedestrian at a location in the environment;

compare the semantic classification to the stored reference semantic classification data;

determine, based on the comparison, that the semantic classification does not match the reference semantic classifications data;

determine, based at least in part on first sensor data from a first of the bi-directional autonomous vehicles in the fleet of bi-directional autonomous vehicles and at least in part on second sensor data from a second of the bi-directional autonomous vehicles in the fleet of bi-directional autonomous vehicles, a pattern of behavior of additional moving objects at the location;

based at least in part on the pattern of behavior, associate an inferred semantic classification with the location or with pedestrians at the location; and

update the mapping information using the inferred semantic classification to indicate an object at the location.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the system is further programmed to generate navigation instructions responsive to the updated mapping information.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein the navigation instructions include instructions to navigate the location according to predetermined instructions for navigating a stationary object.

26. The system of claim 23, wherein the location in the environment comprises a position proximate a stationary object of interest.

27. The system of claim 23, wherein the computing system is further programmed to transmit the updated mapping data to the fleet of autonomous vehicles.

28. The system of claim 23, wherein the pattern of behavior comprises temporal information including at least one of a time of day or a day of the week

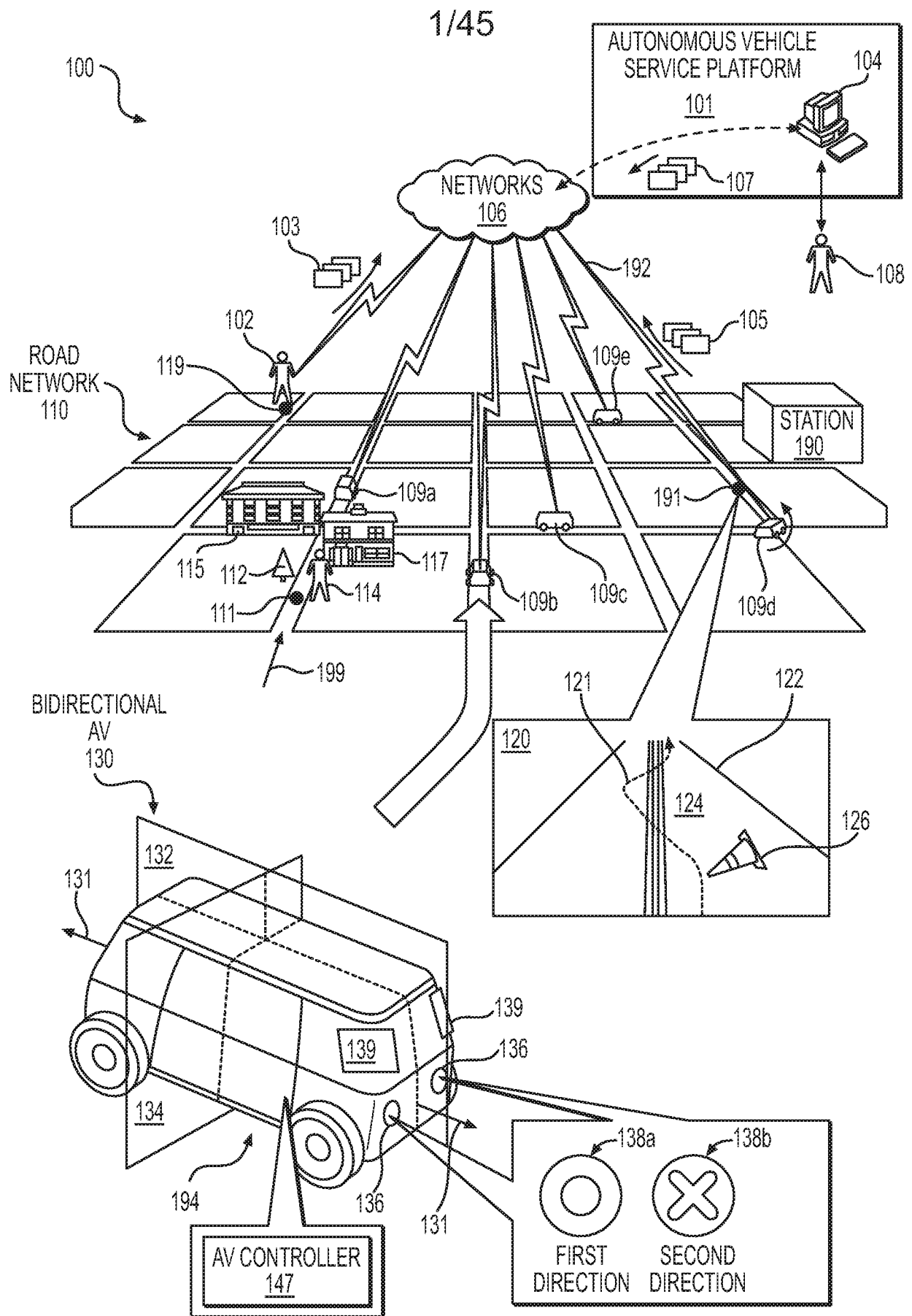
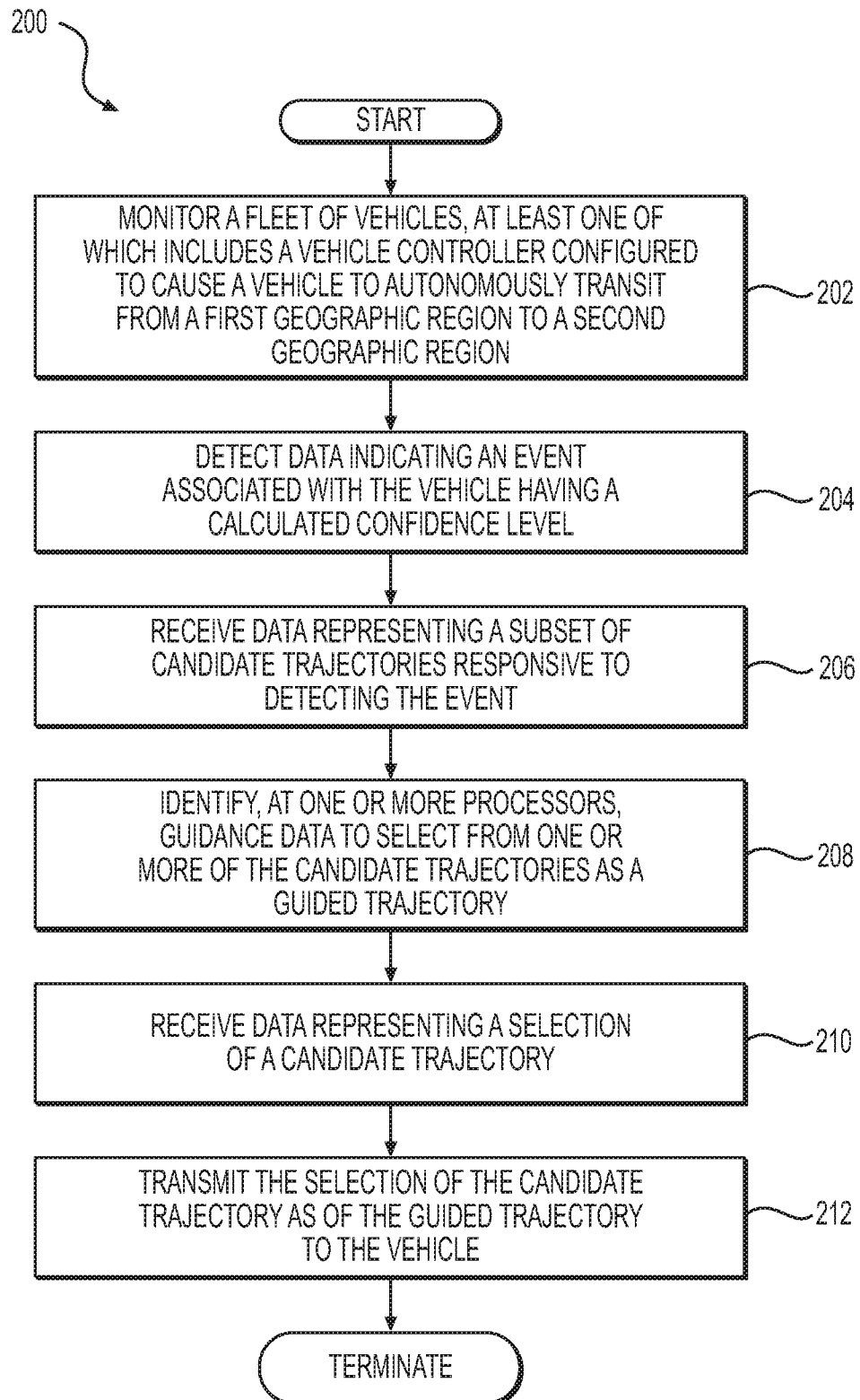


FIG. 1

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**FIG. 2**

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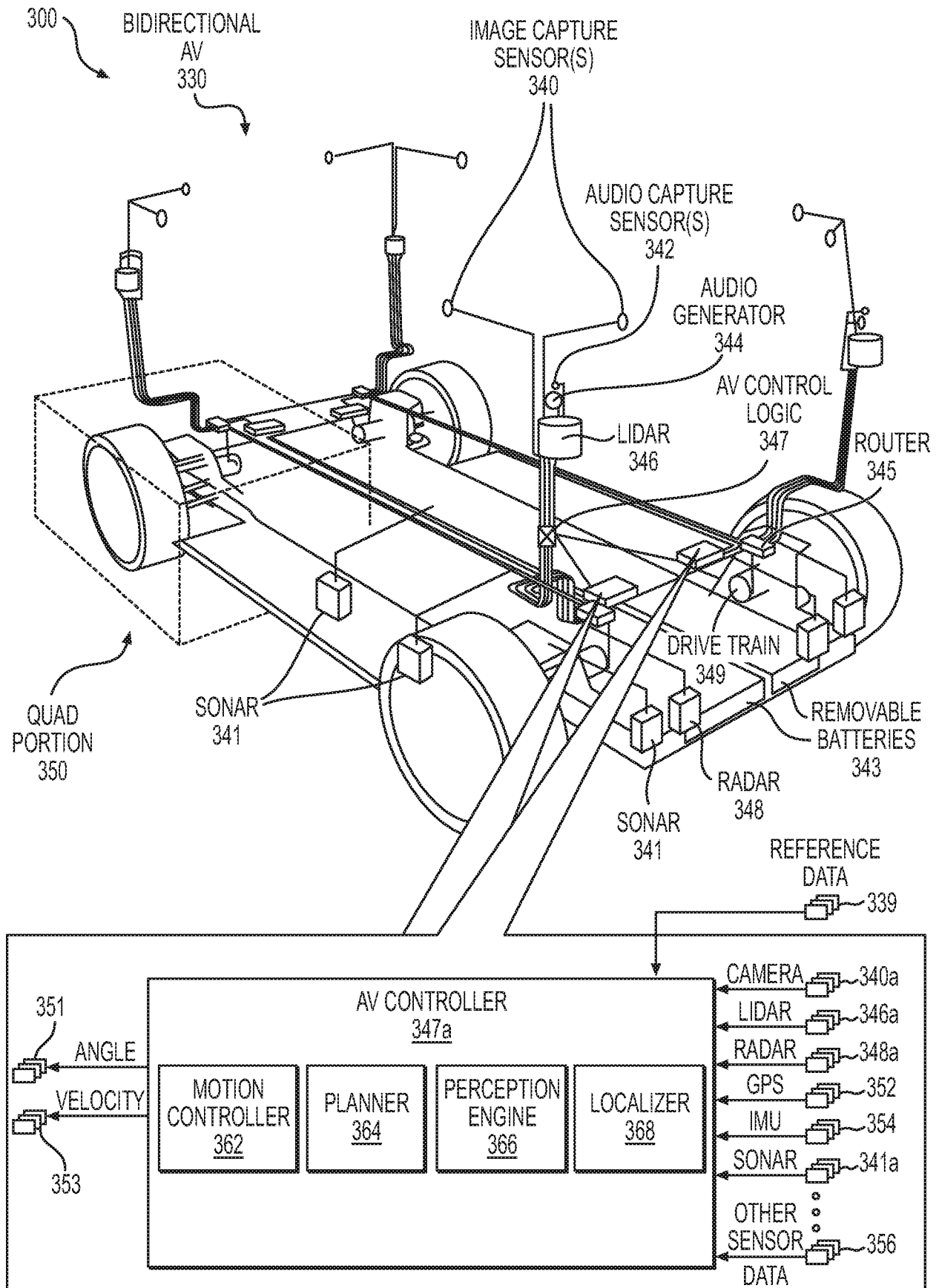


FIG. 3A

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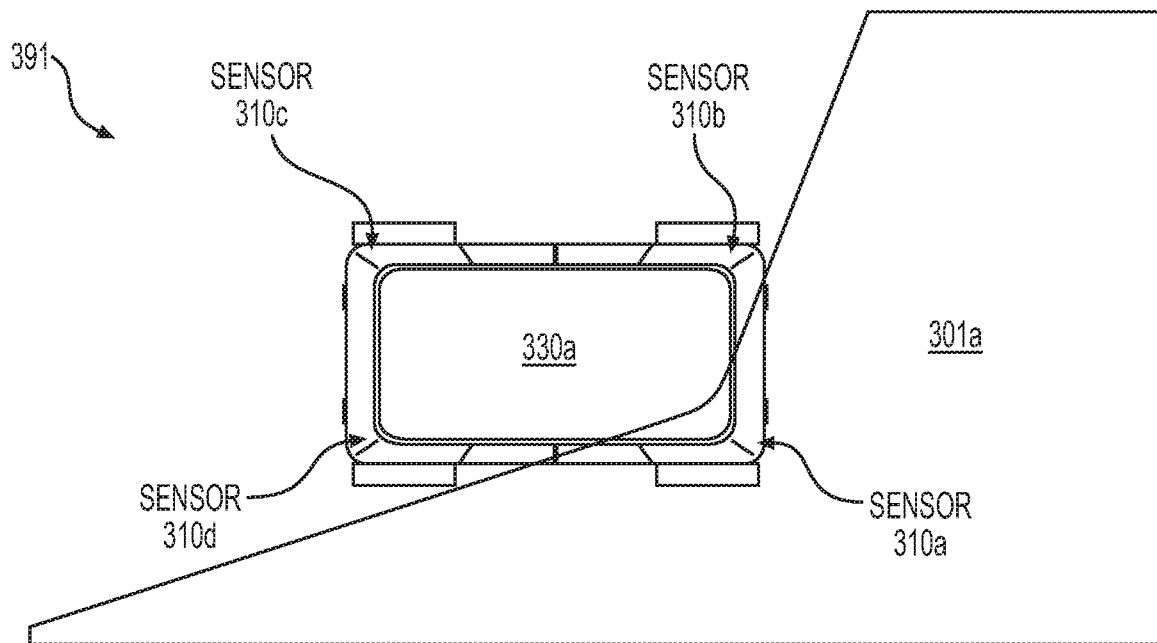


FIG. 3B

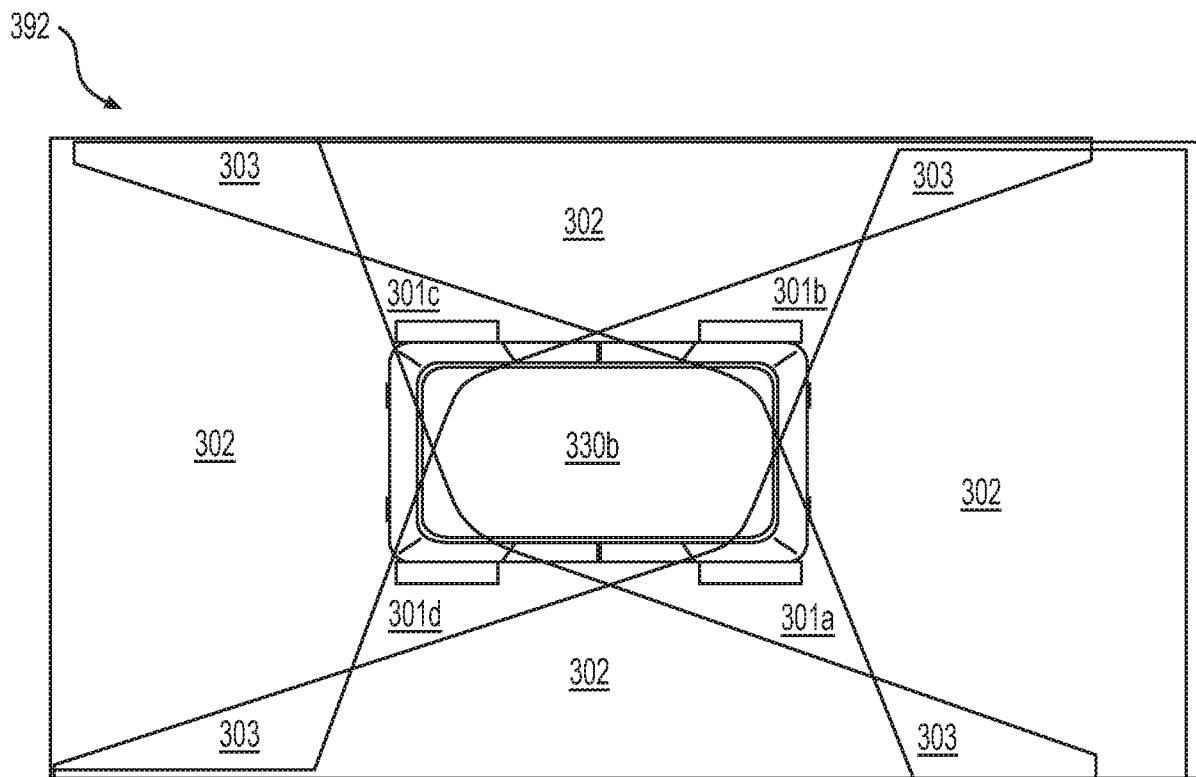


FIG. 3C

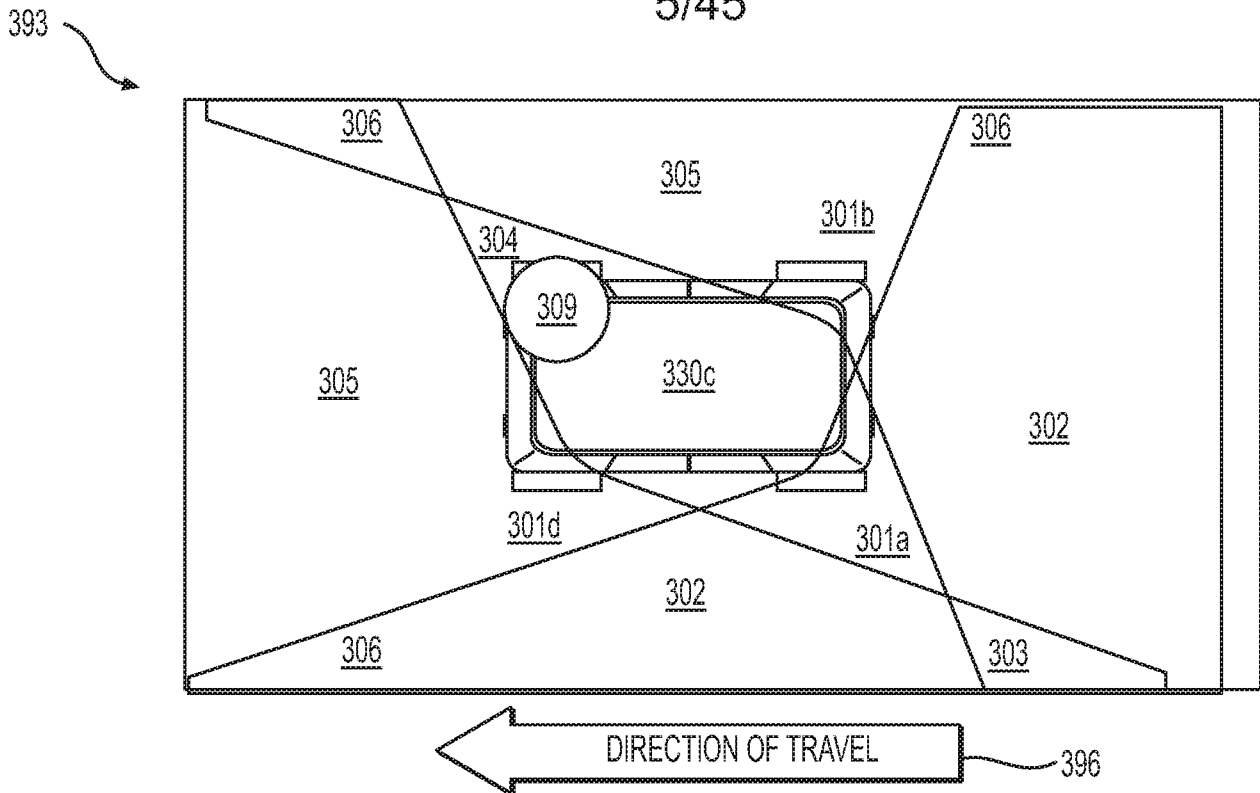


FIG. 3D

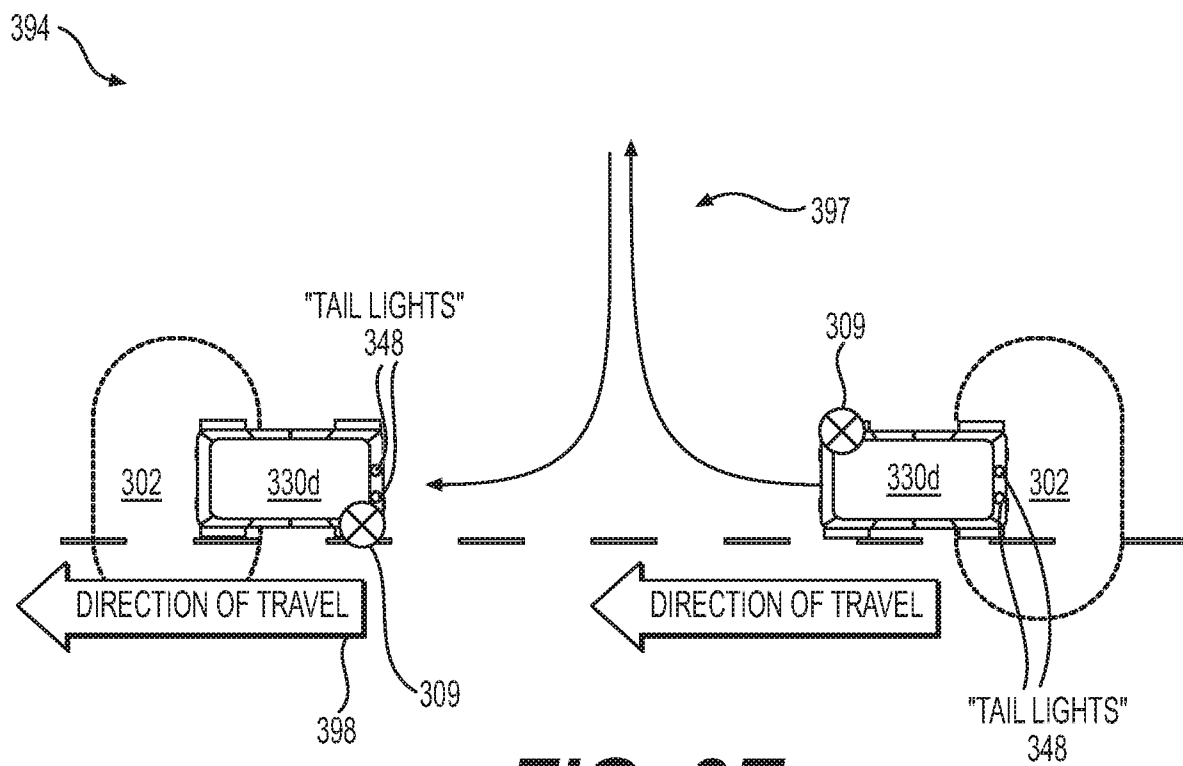


FIG. 3E

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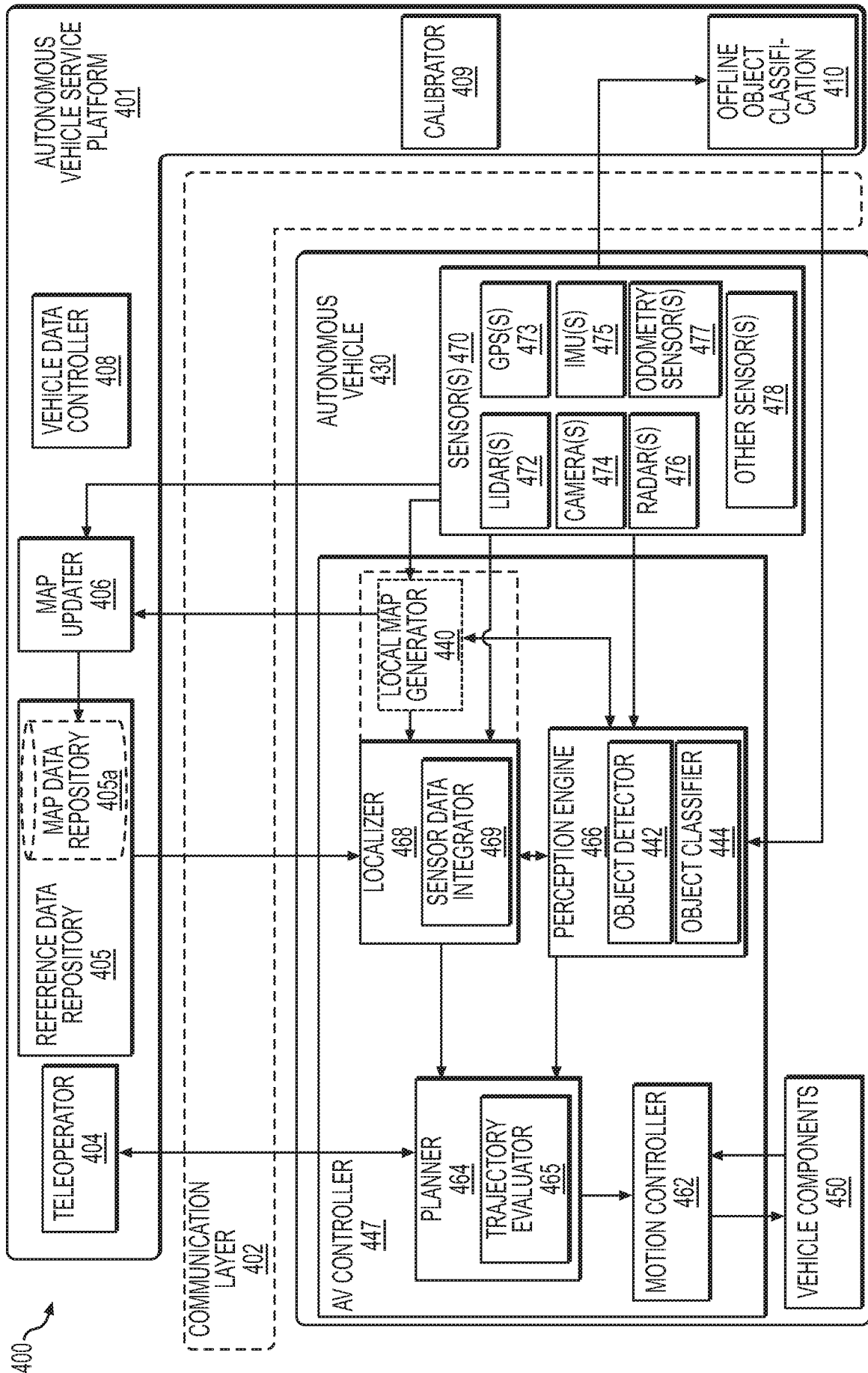
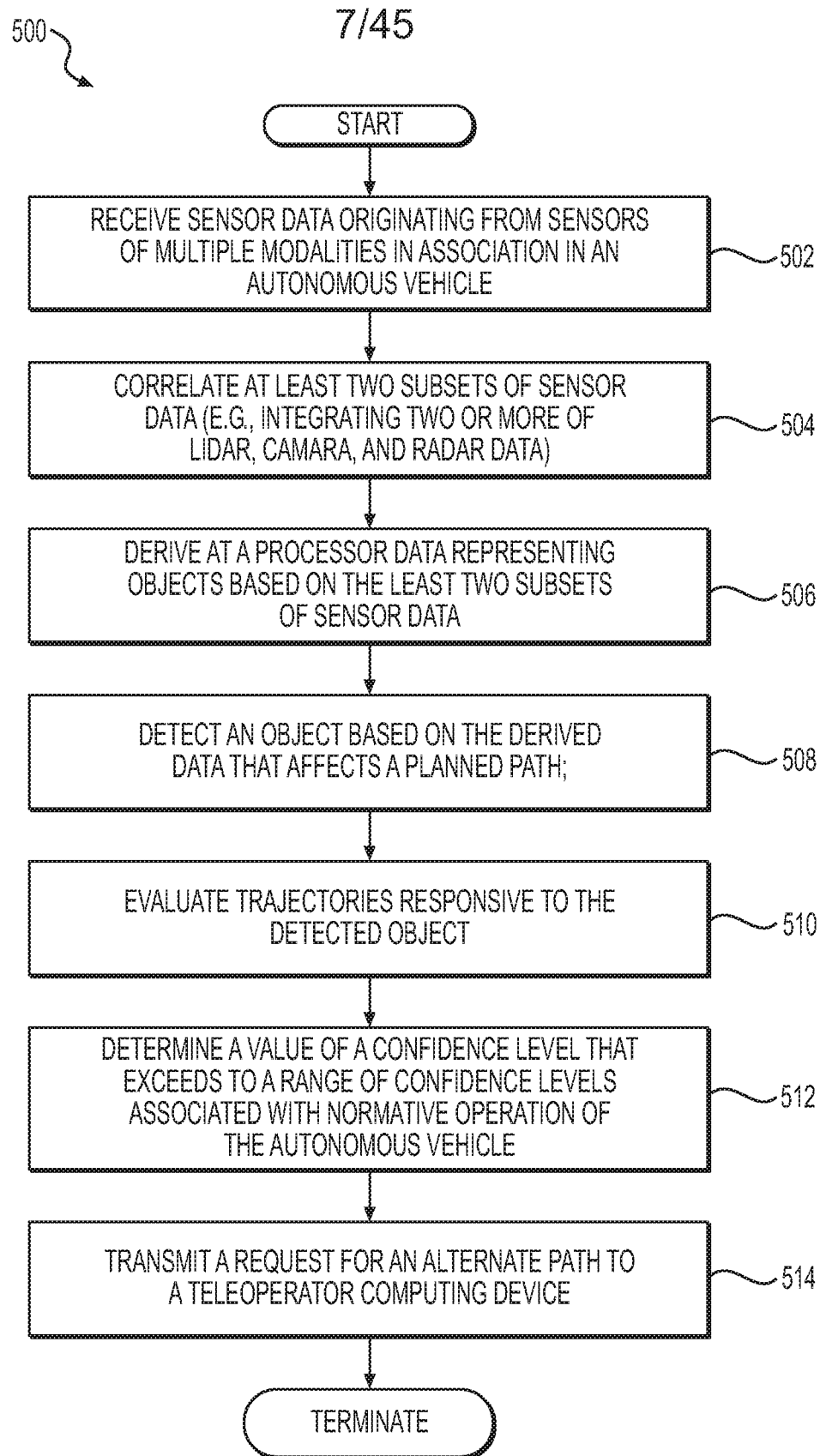


FIG. 4

**FIG. 5**

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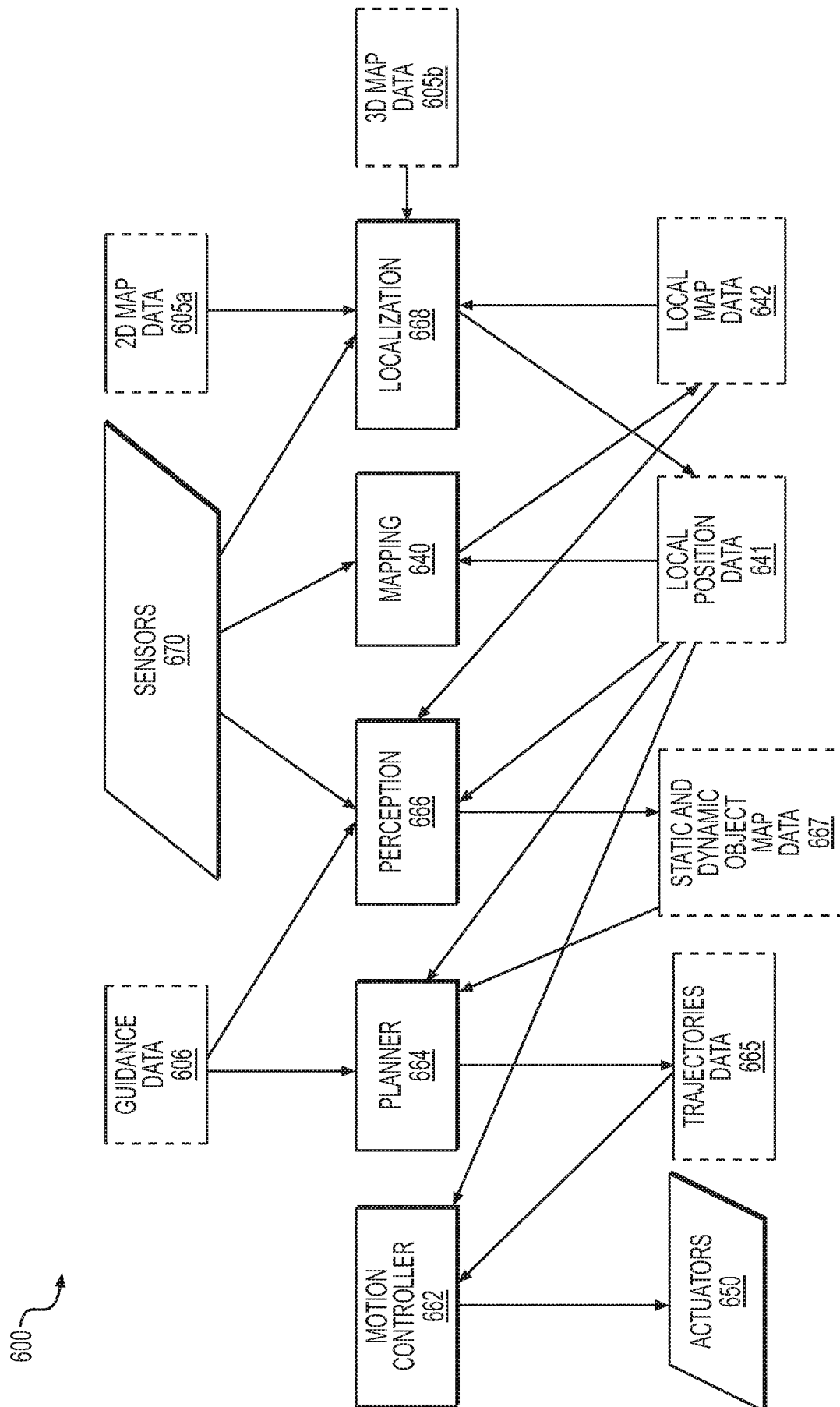
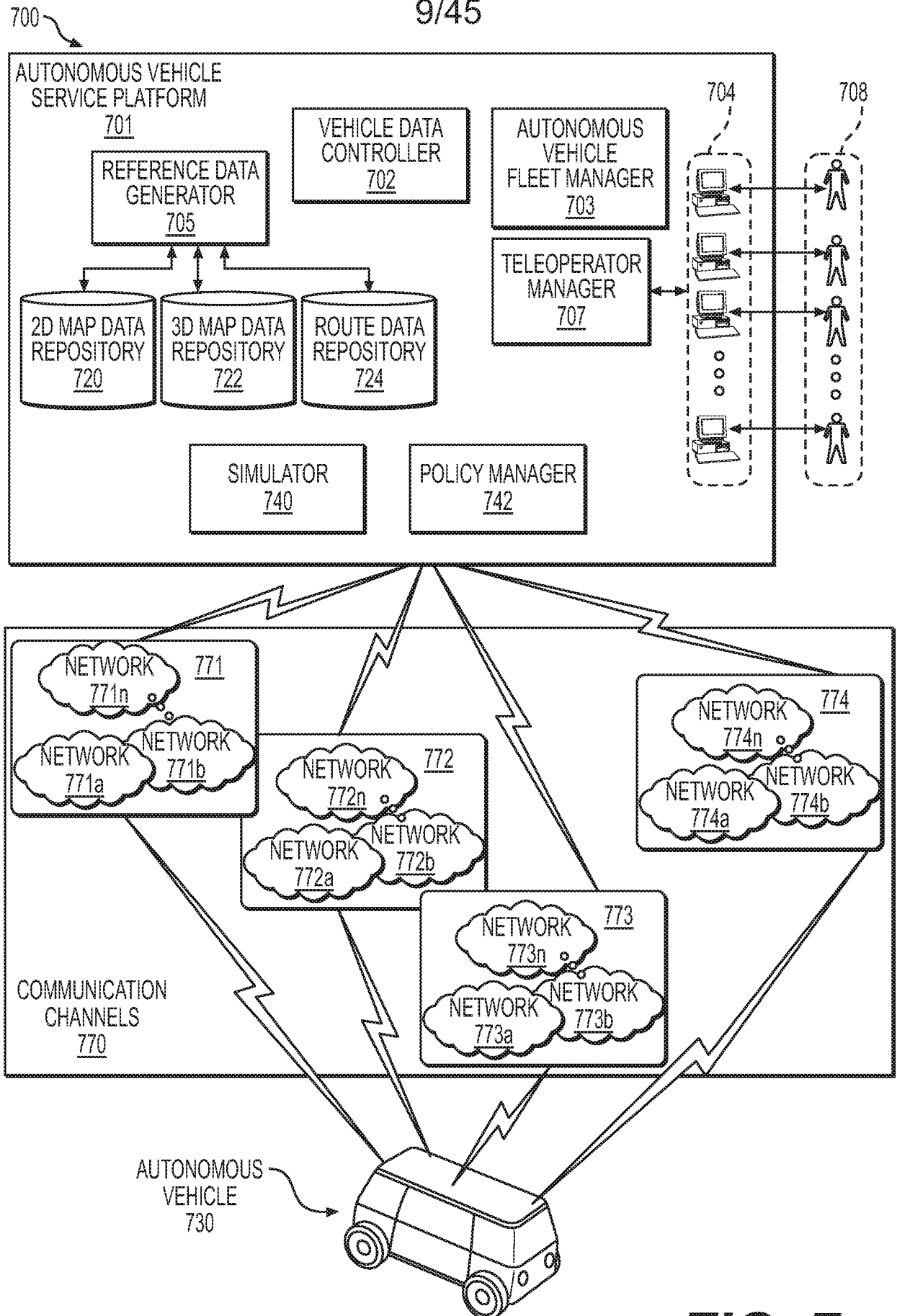
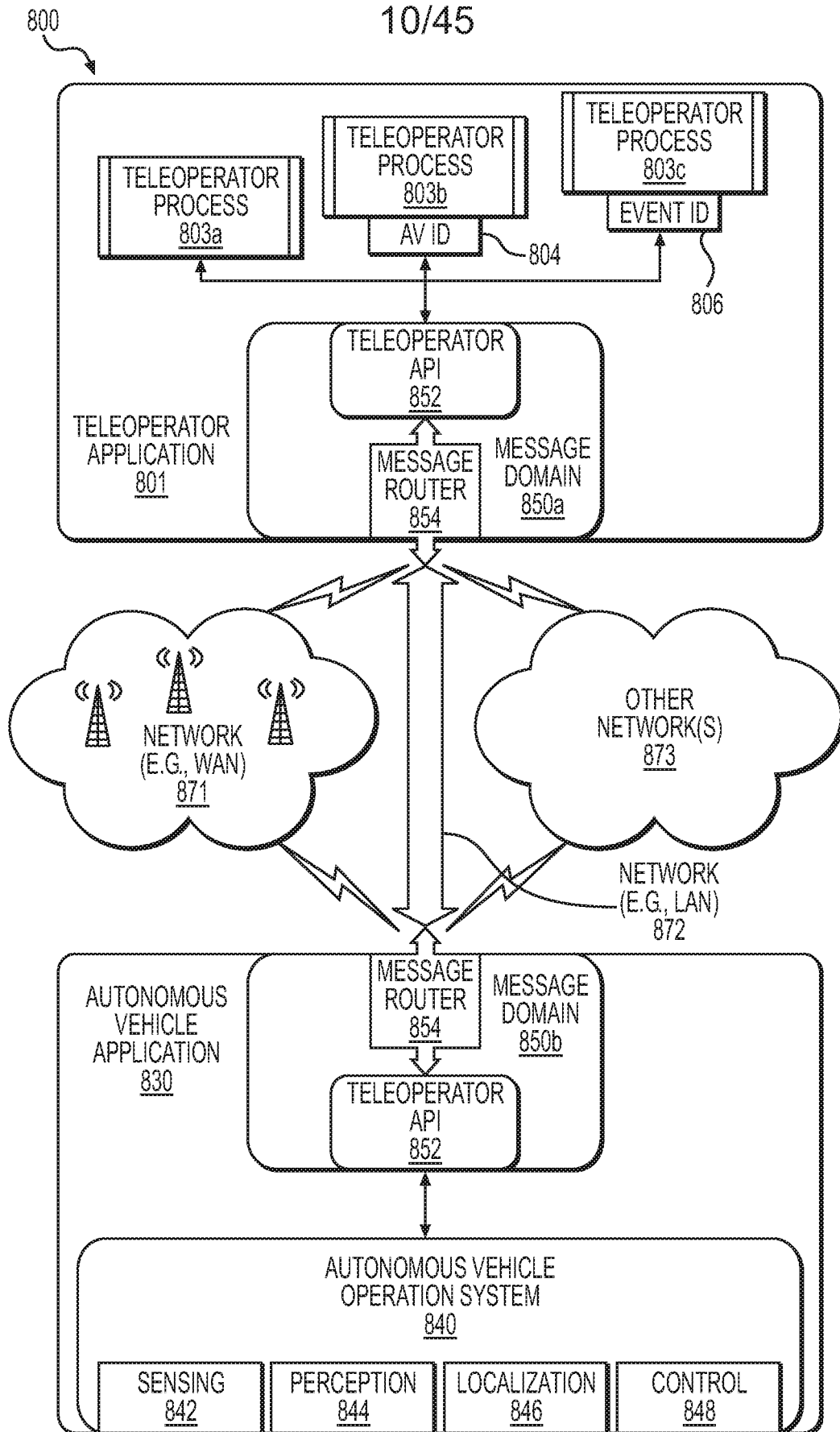


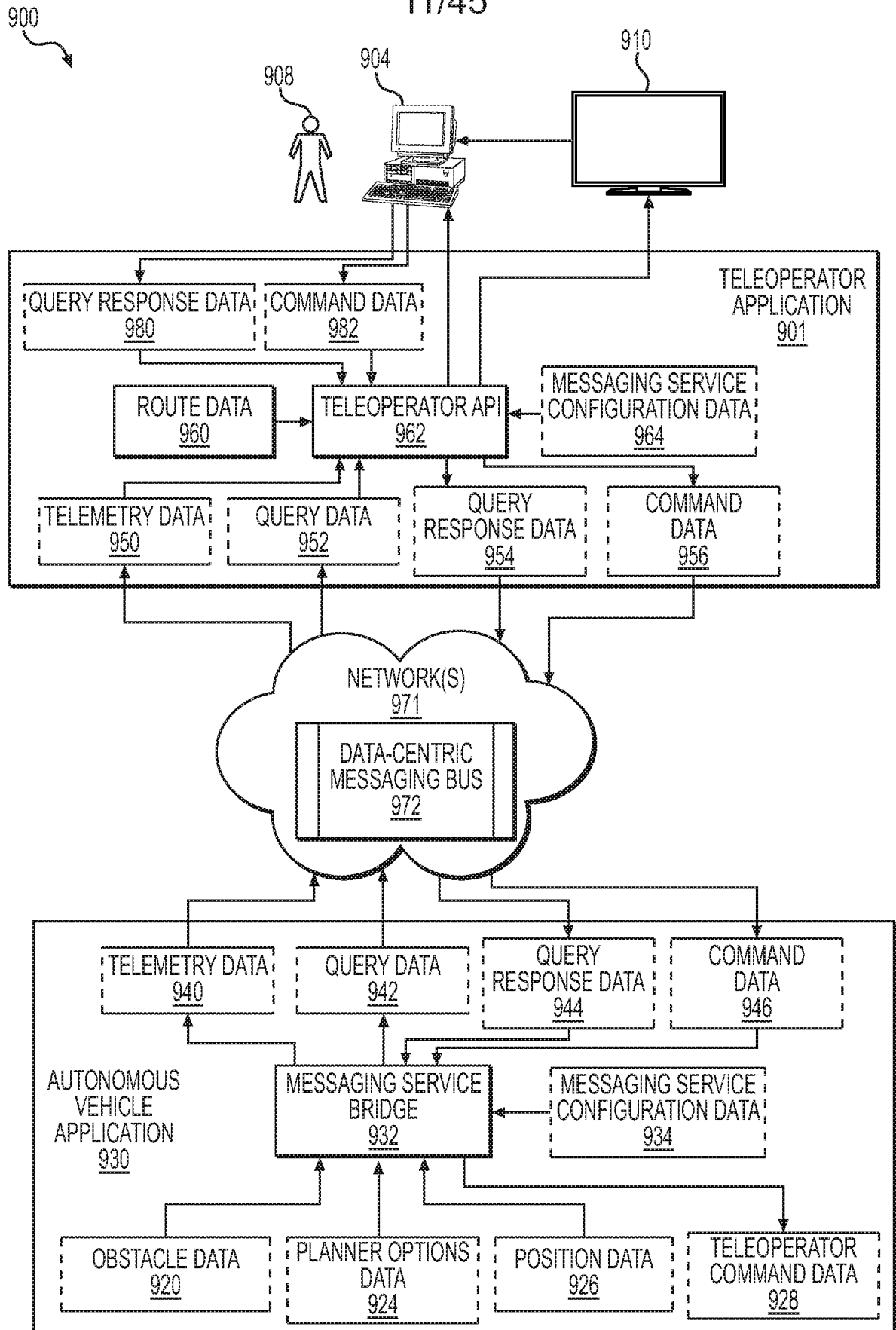
FIG. 6

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**FIG. 8**

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**FIG. 9**

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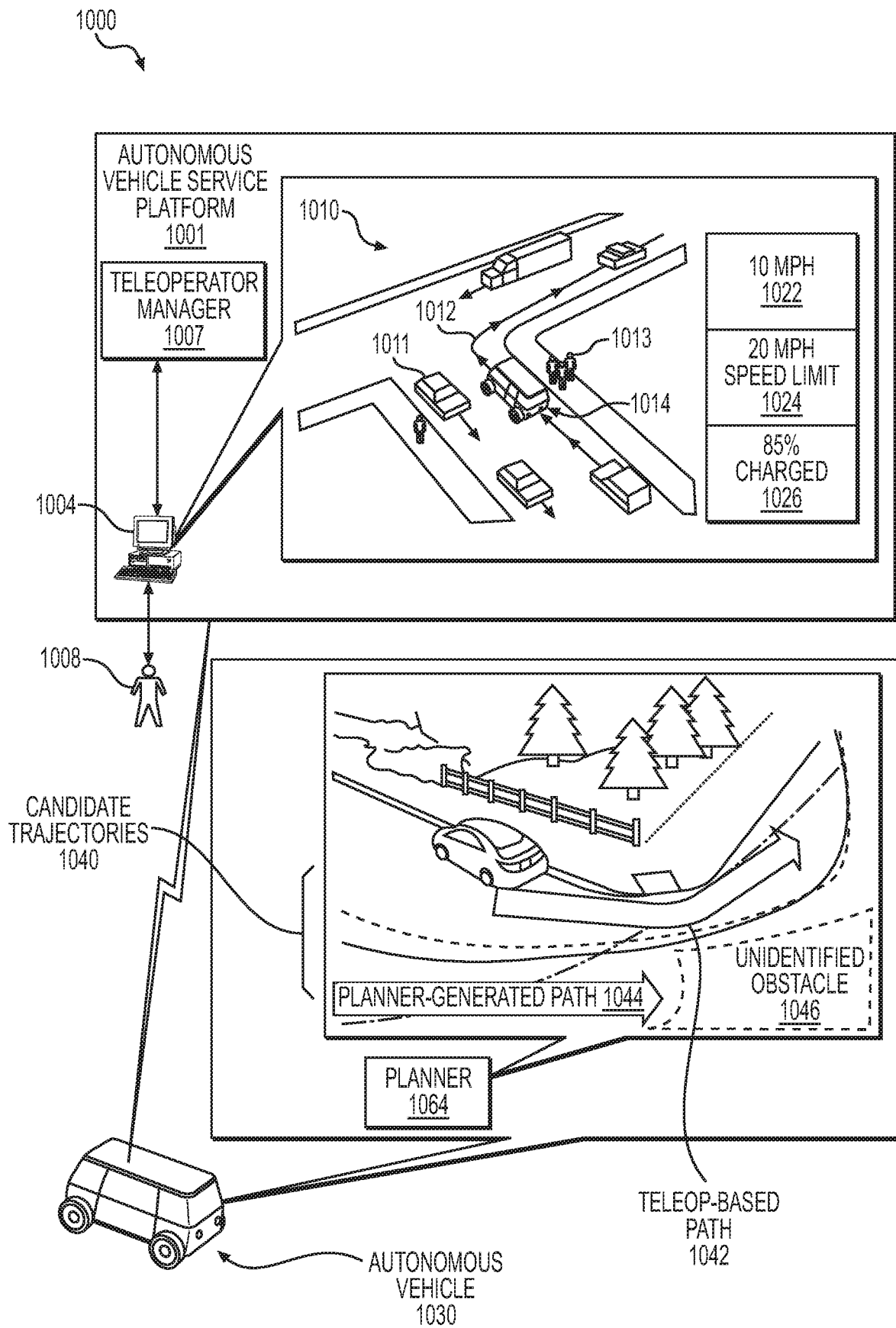
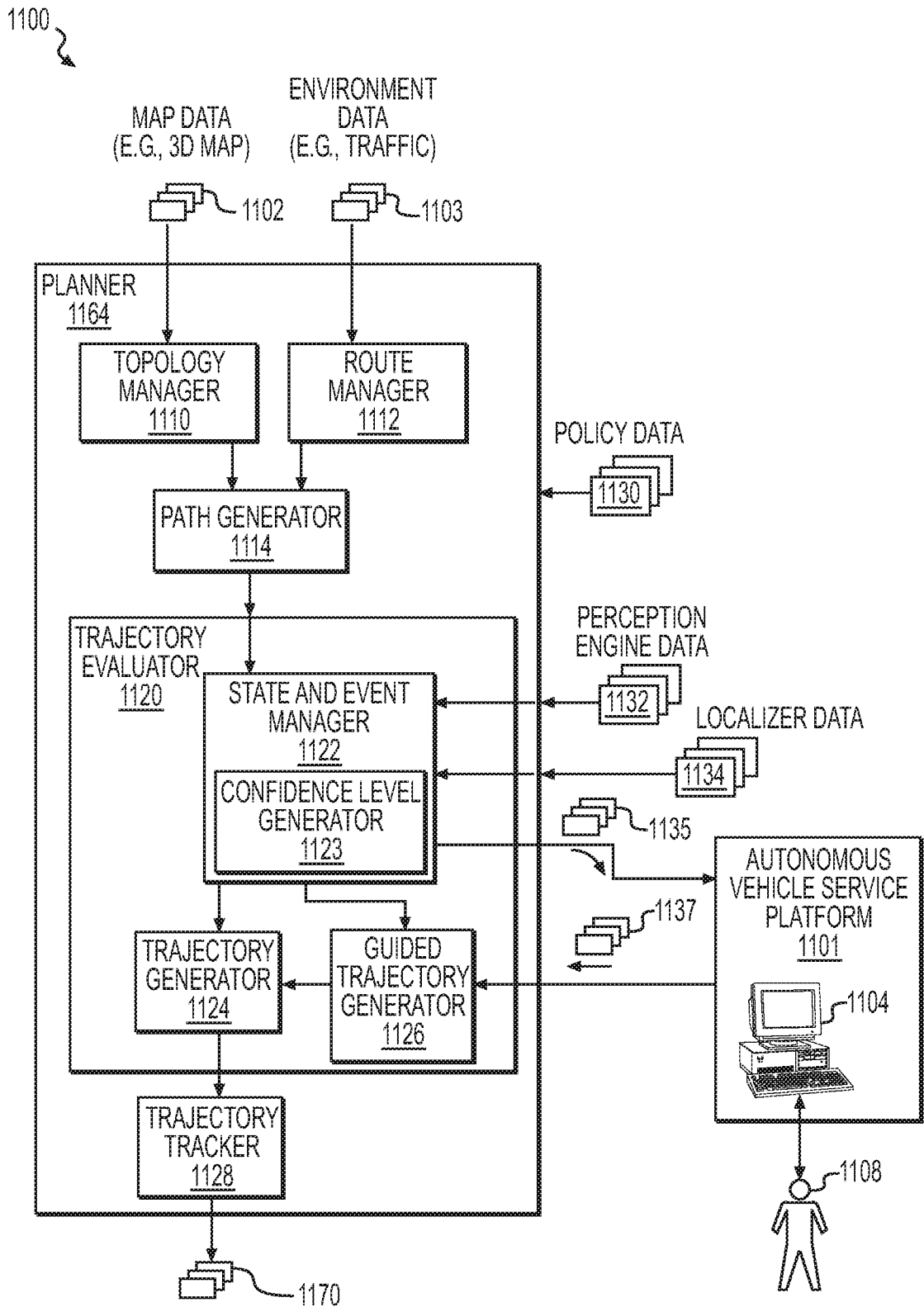
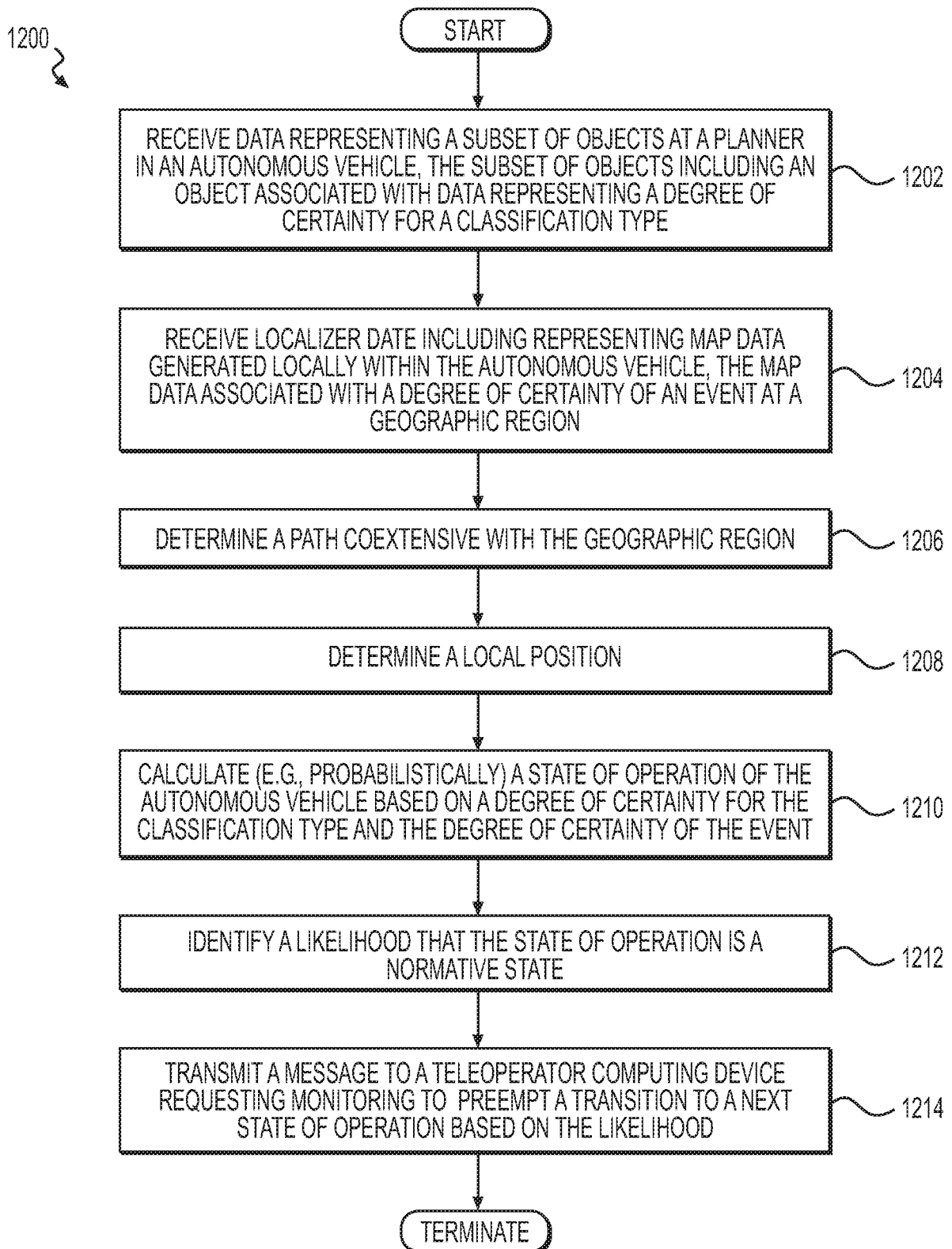


FIG. 10

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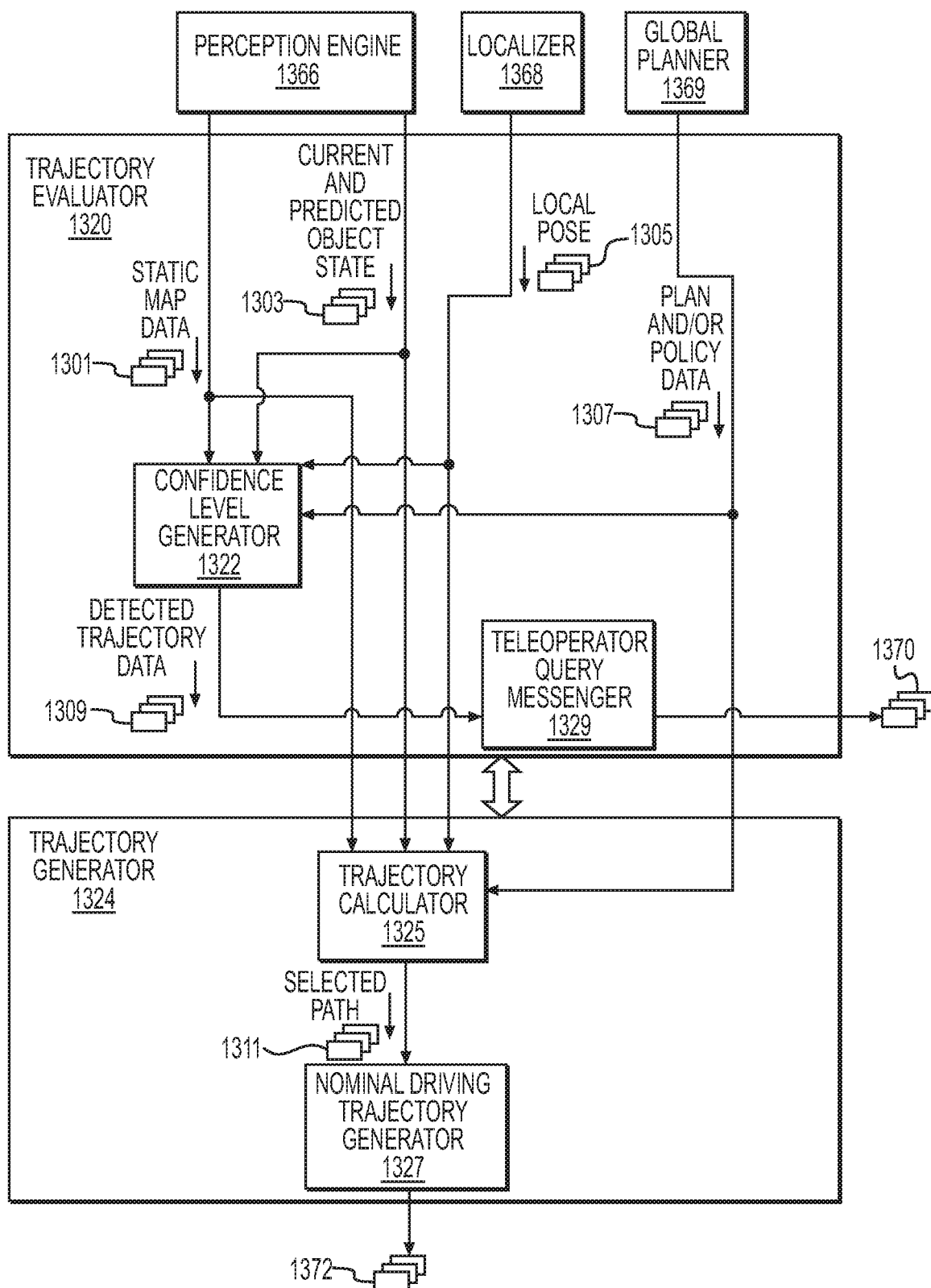
**FIG. 11**

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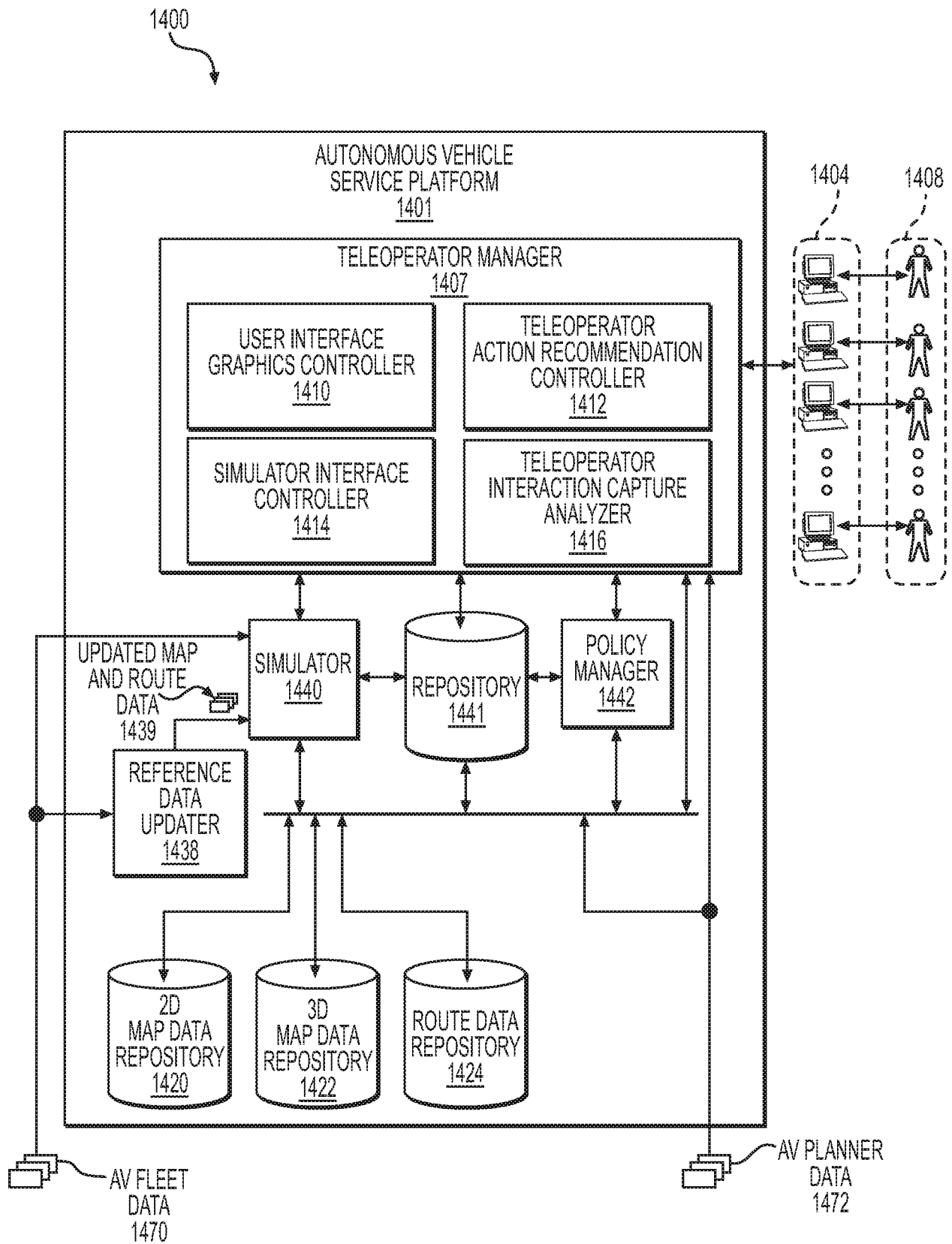
**FIG. 12**

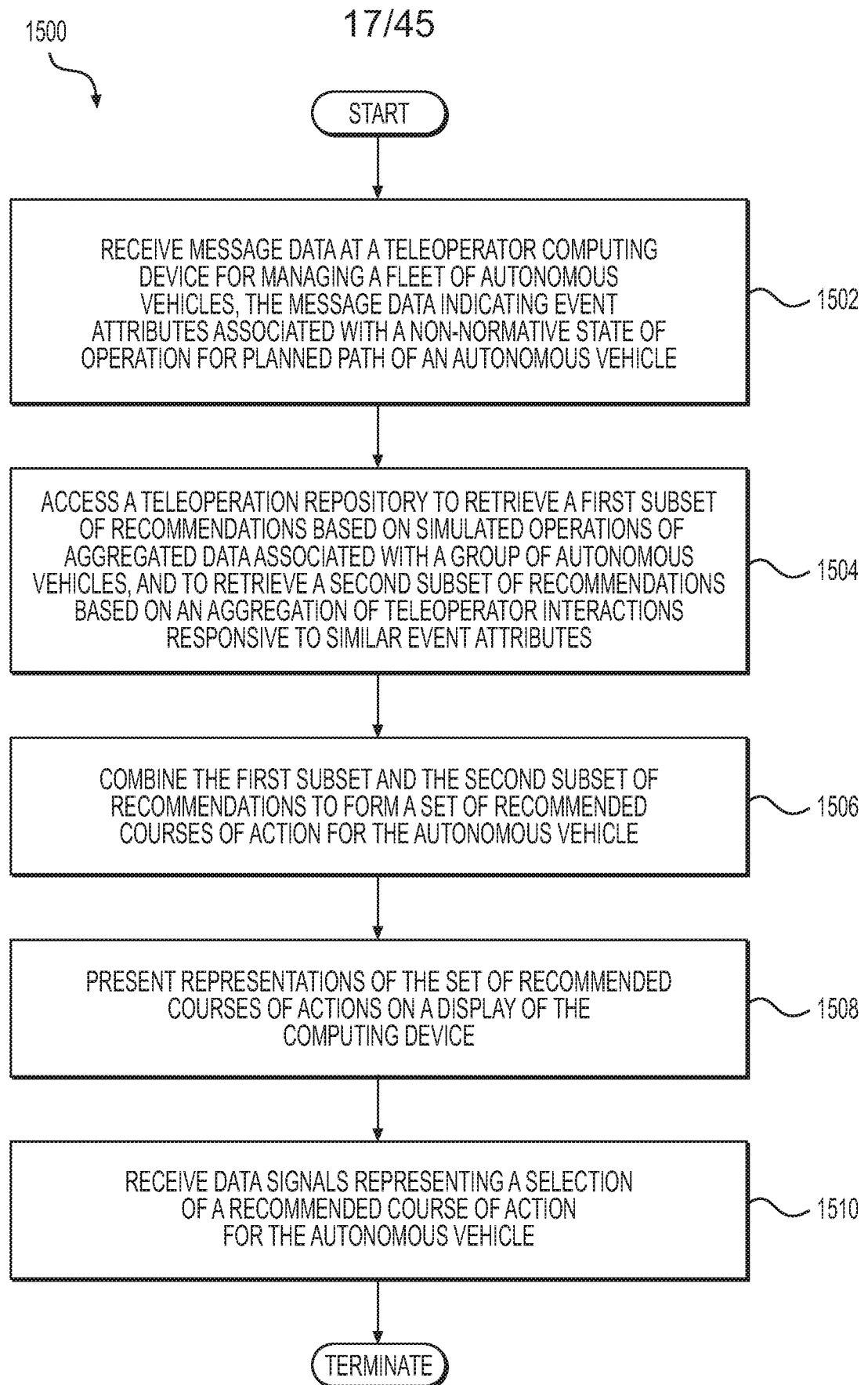
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**FIG. 13**

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**FIG. 14**

**FIG. 15**

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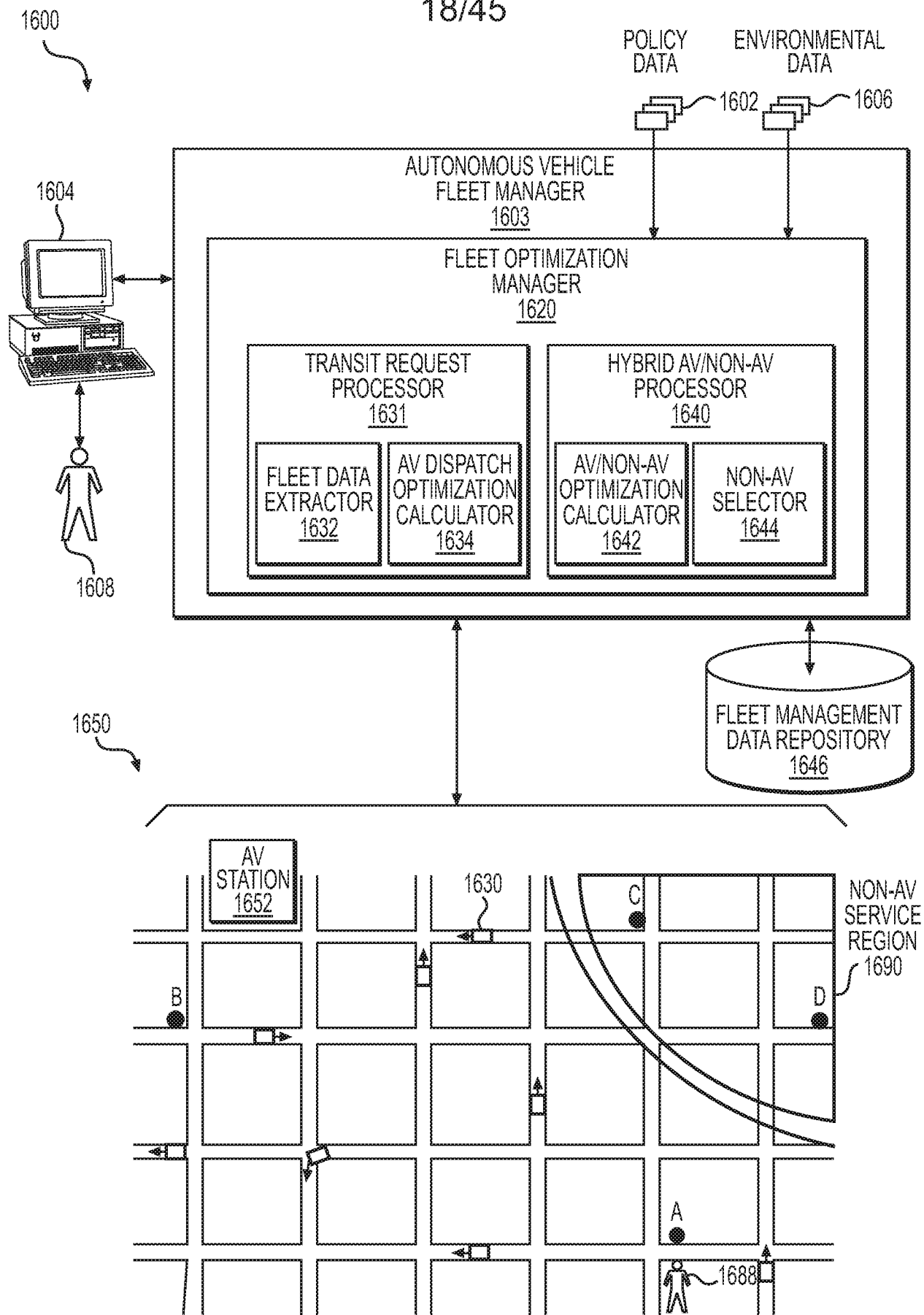
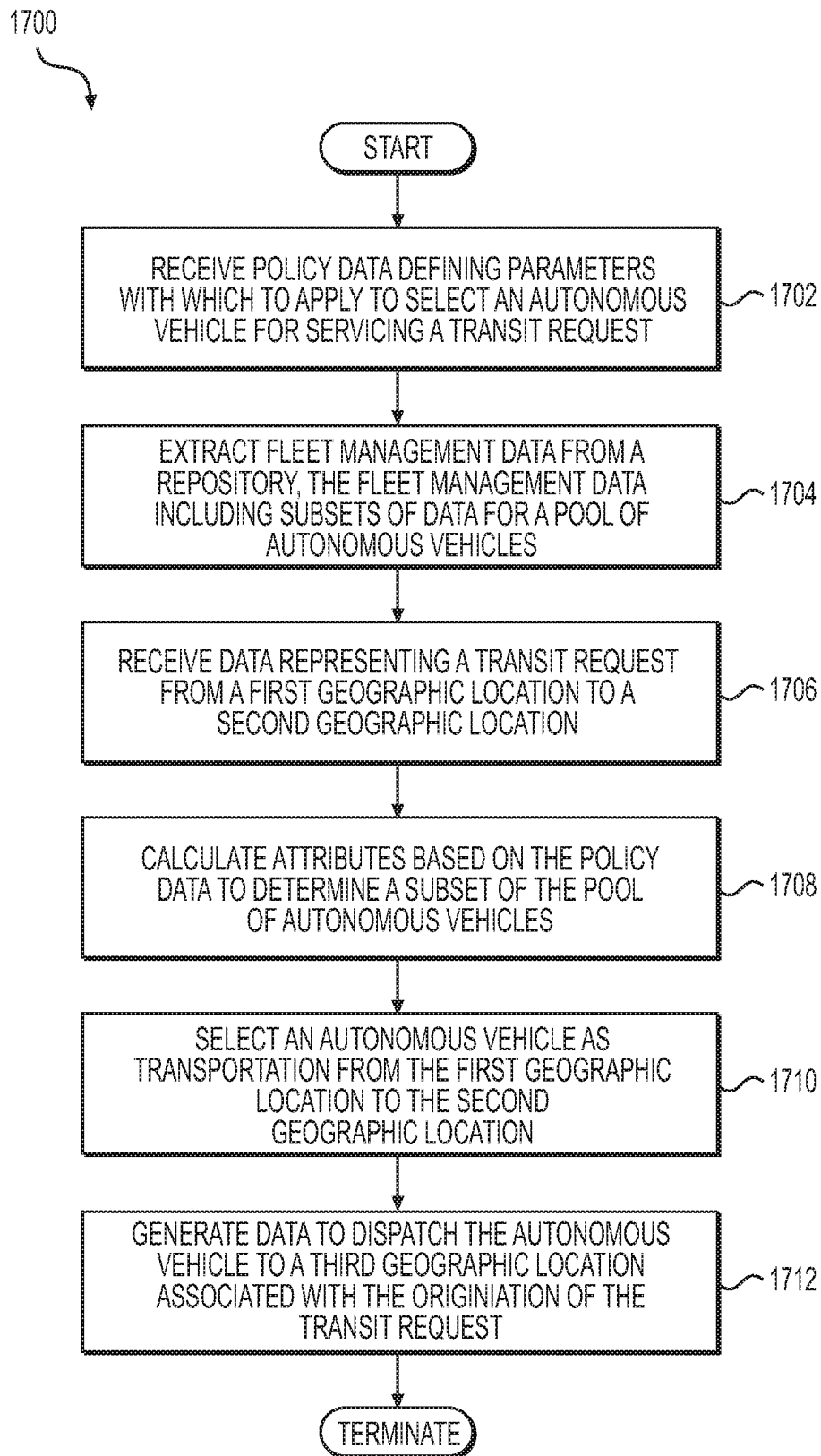
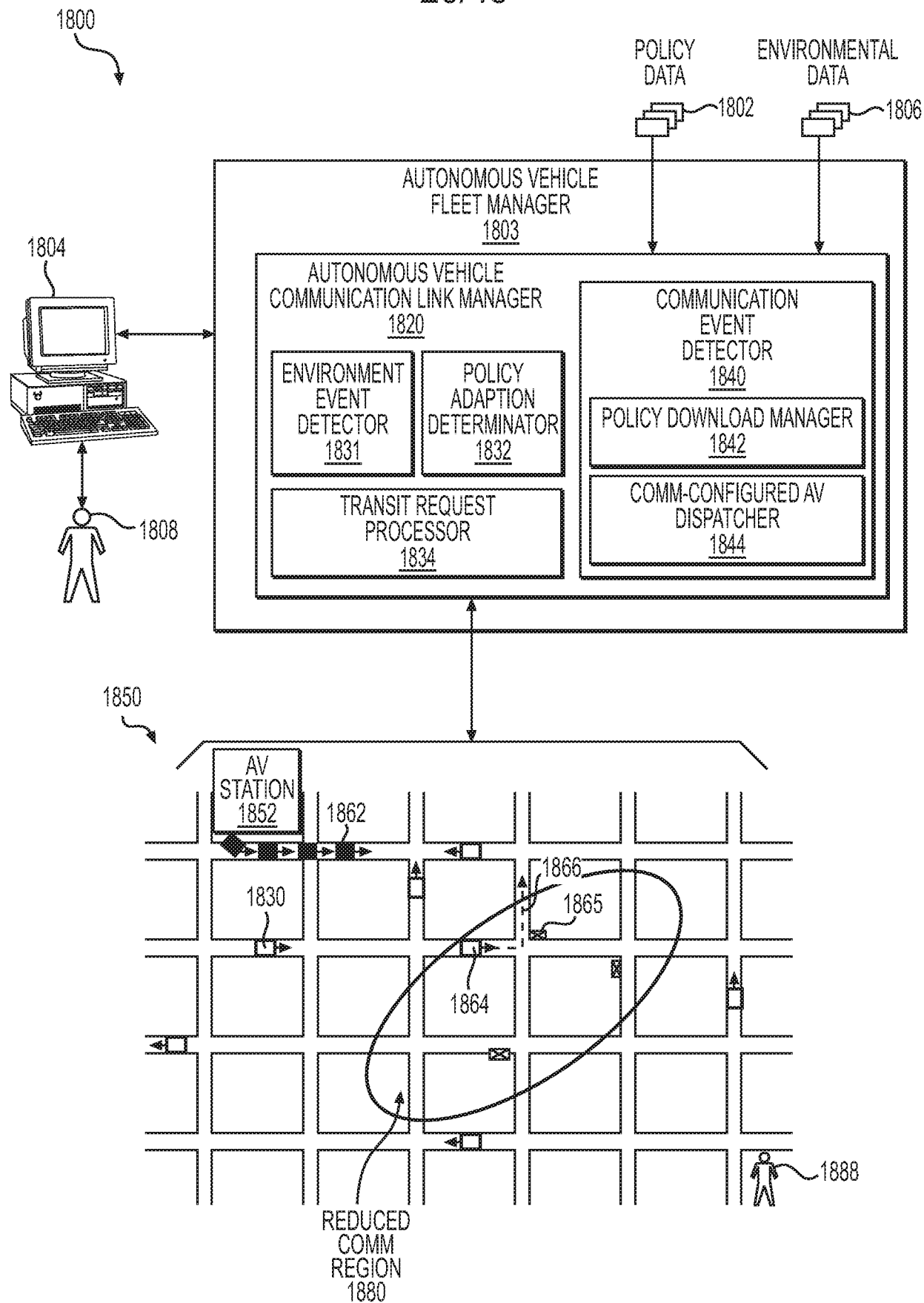


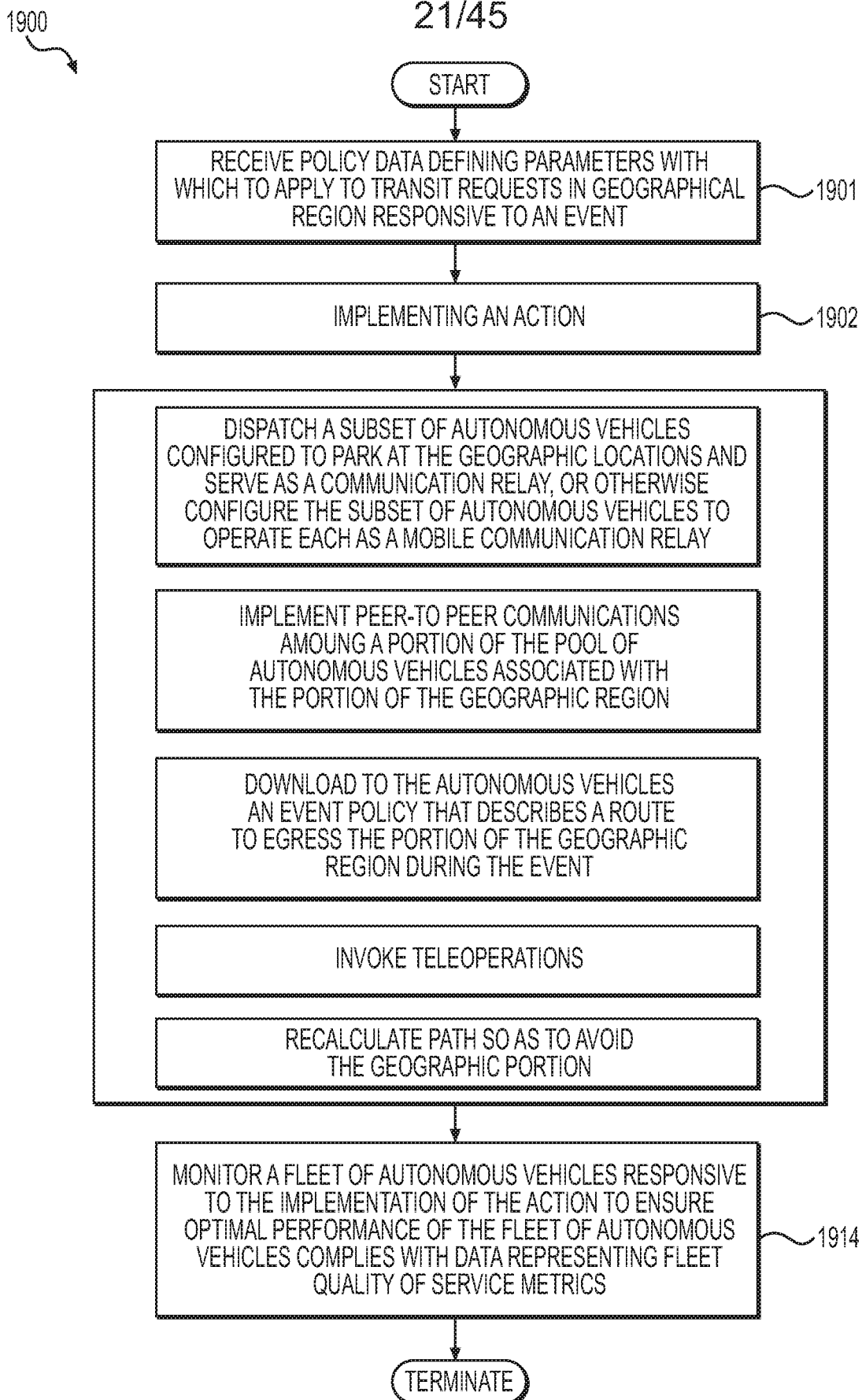
FIG. 16

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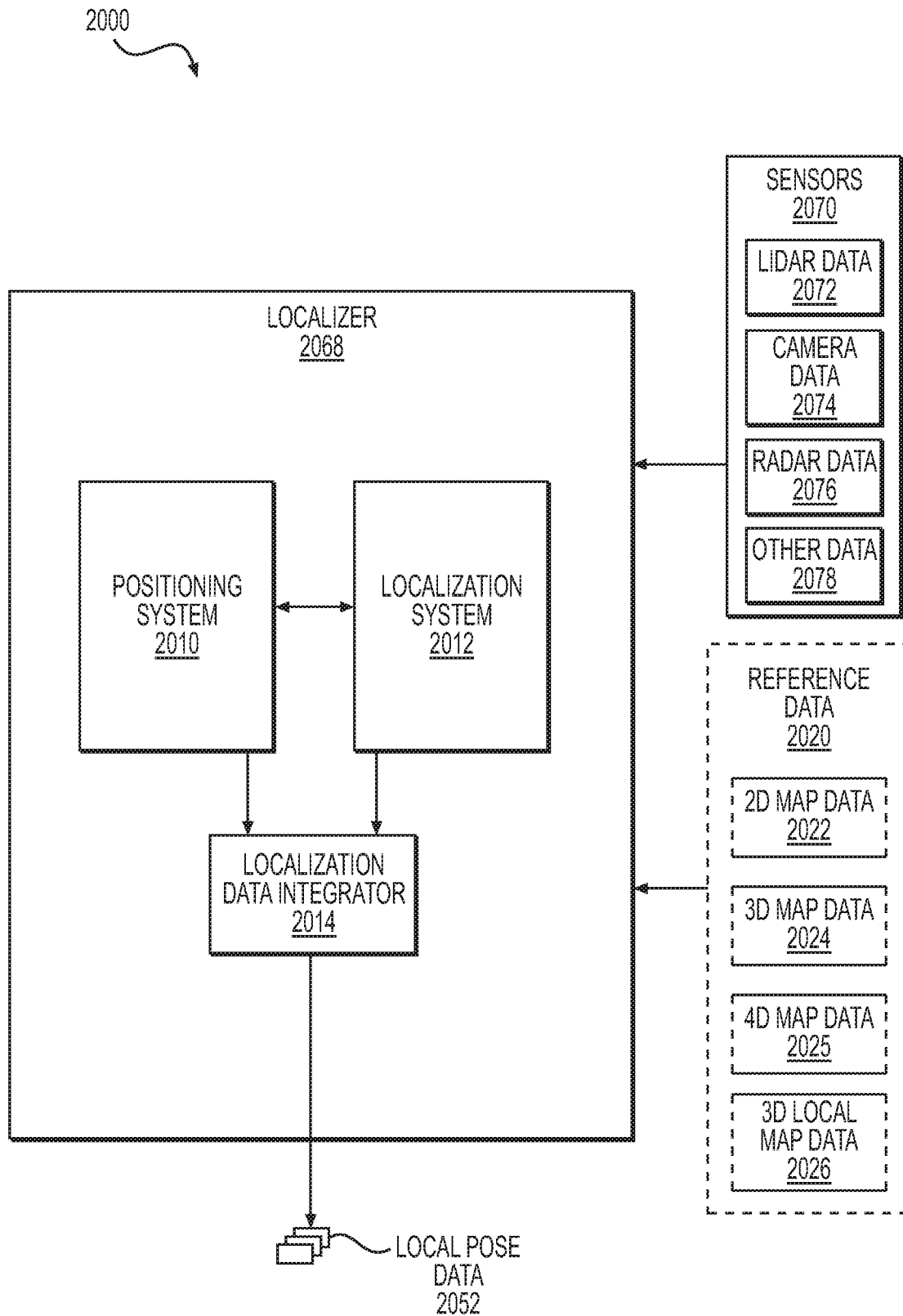
**FIG. 17**

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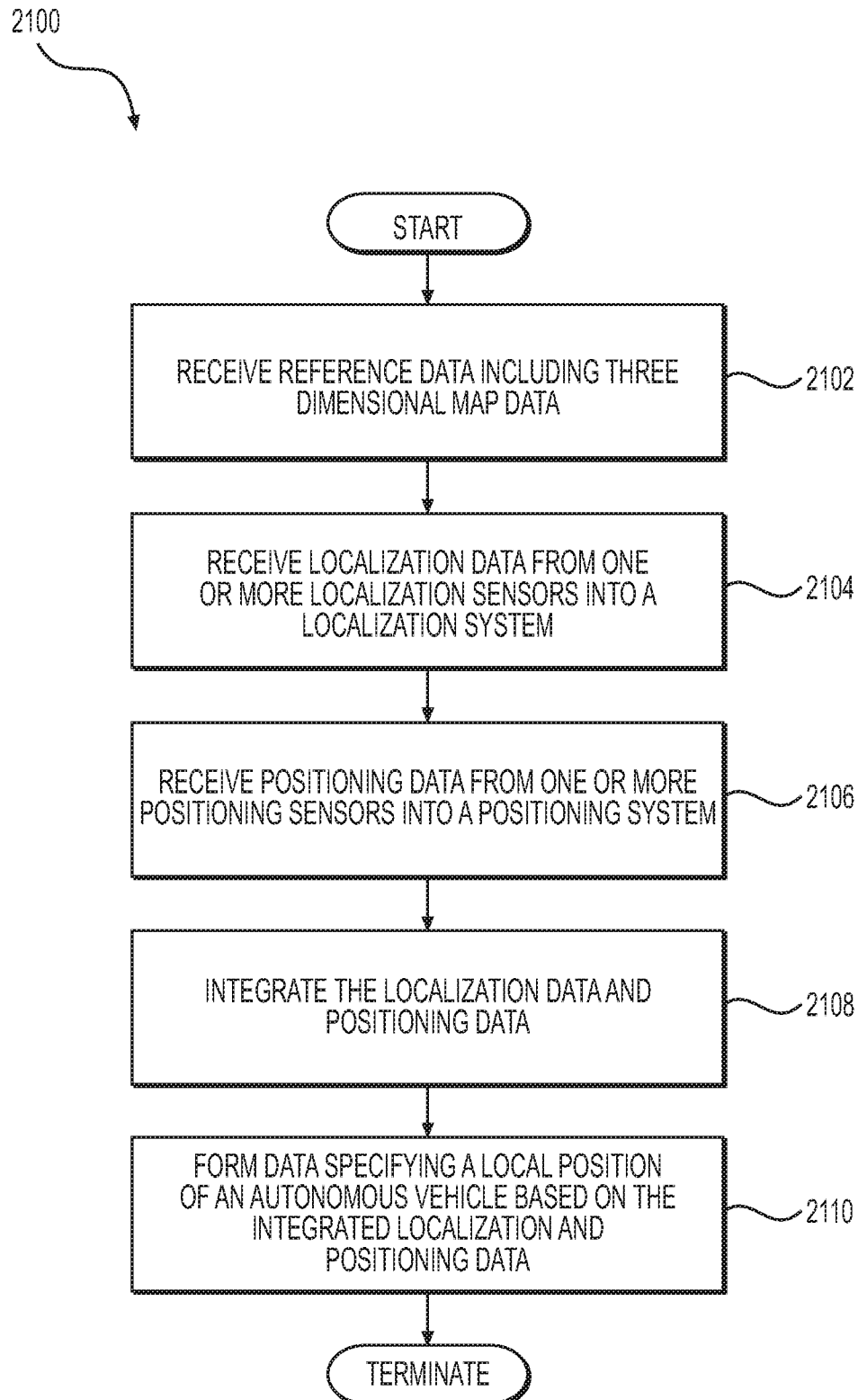
**FIG. 18**

**FIG. 19**

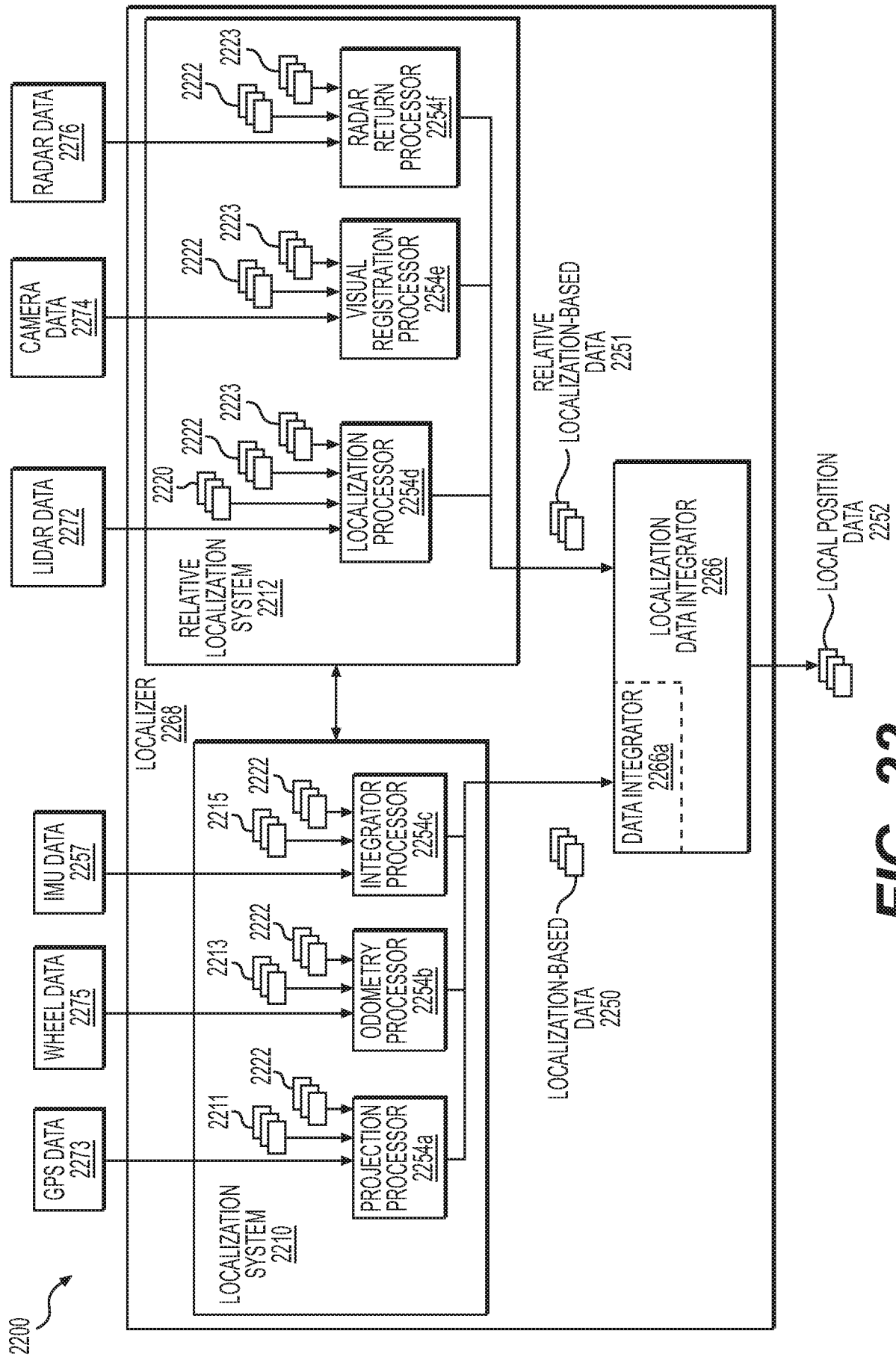
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**FIG. 20**

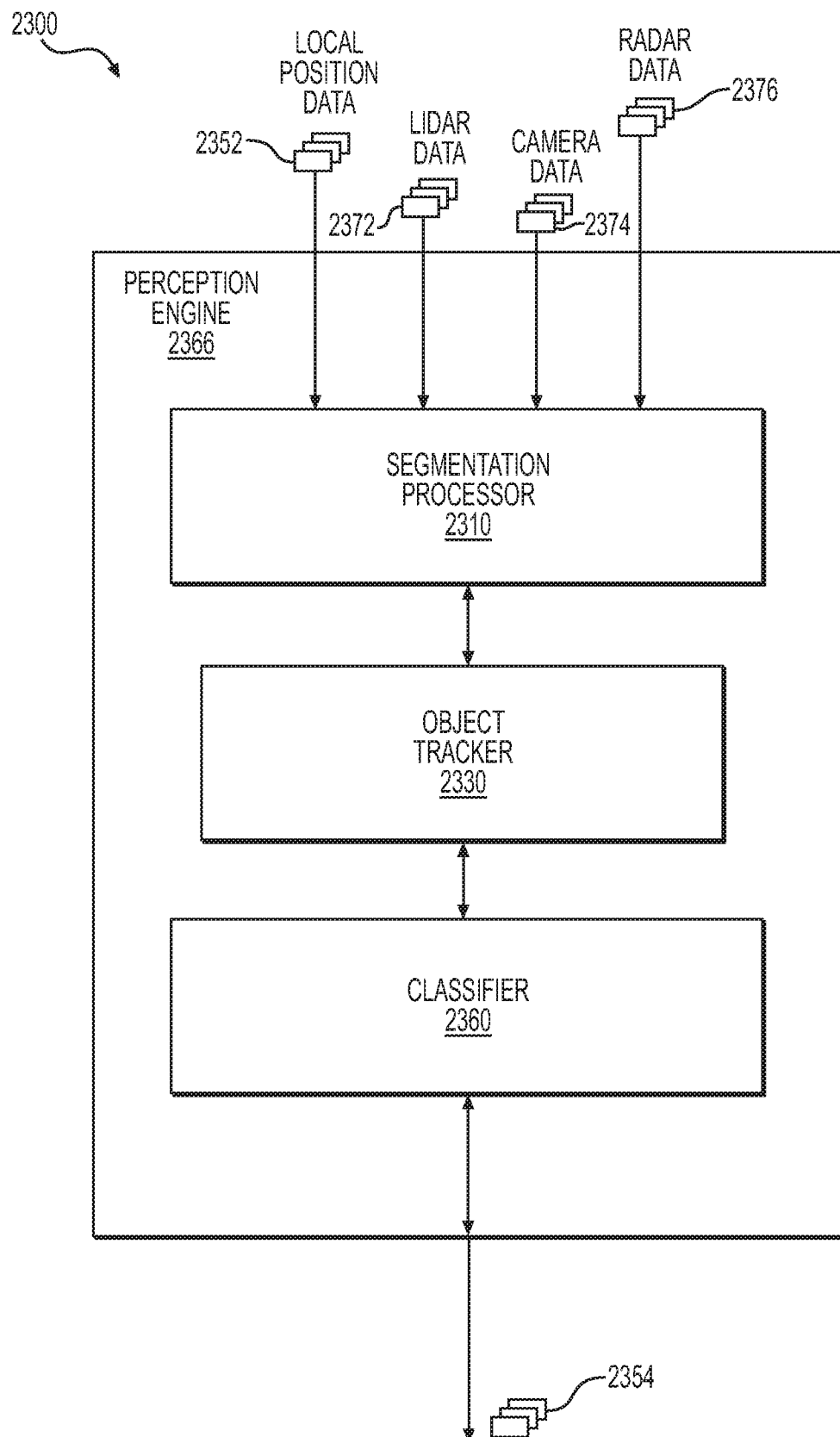
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**FIG. 21**

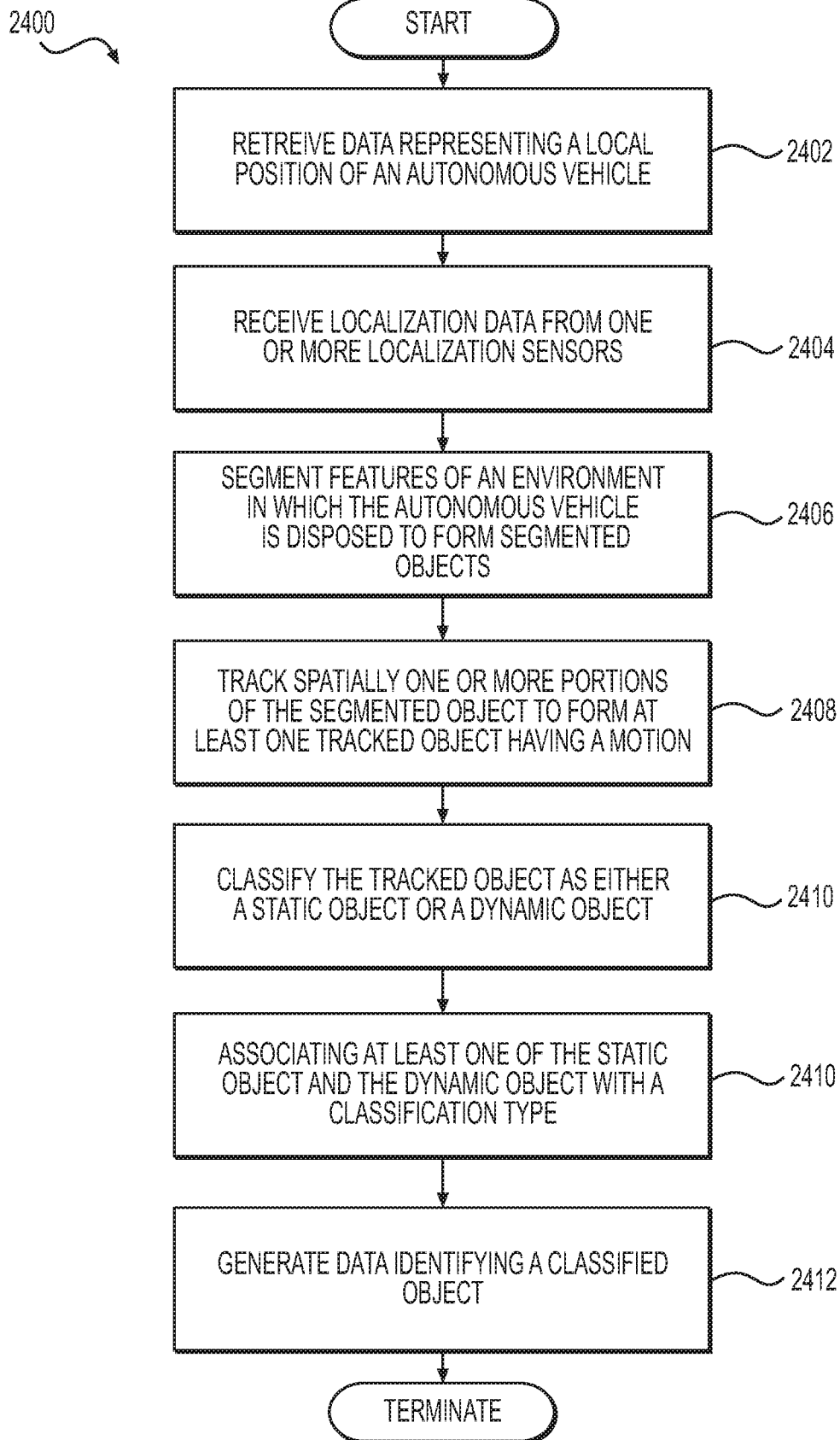
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**FIG. 23**

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**FIG. 24**

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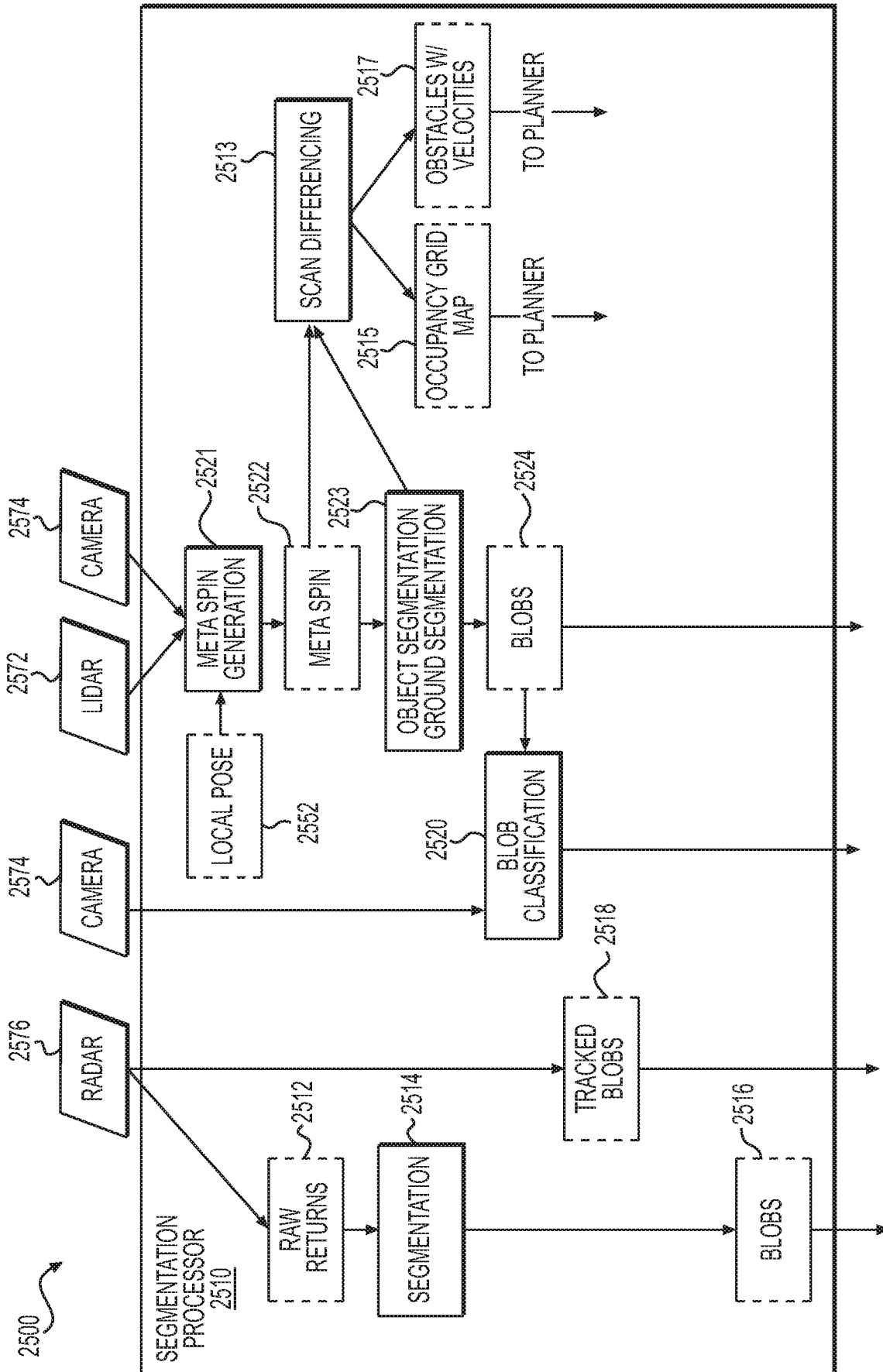
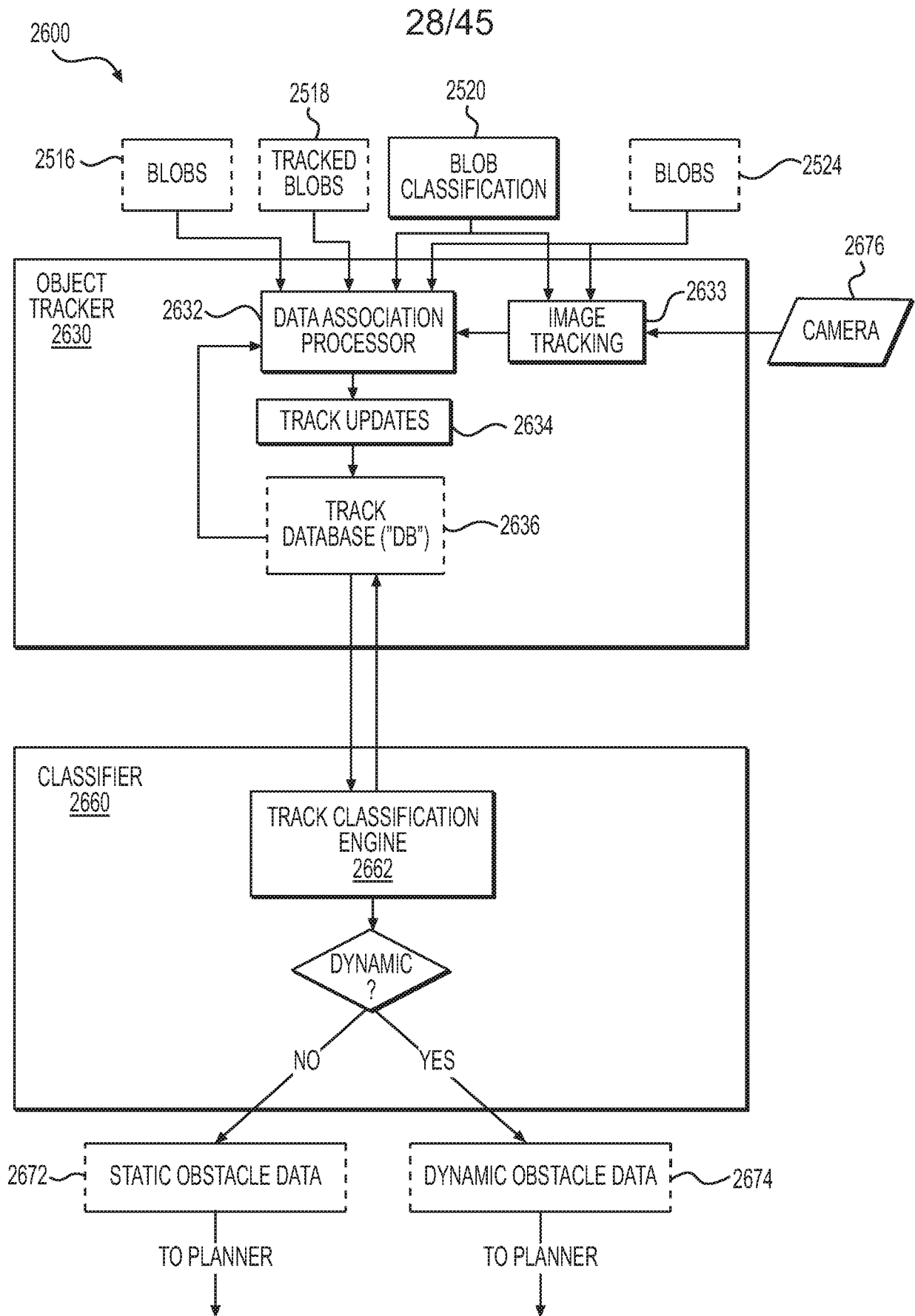
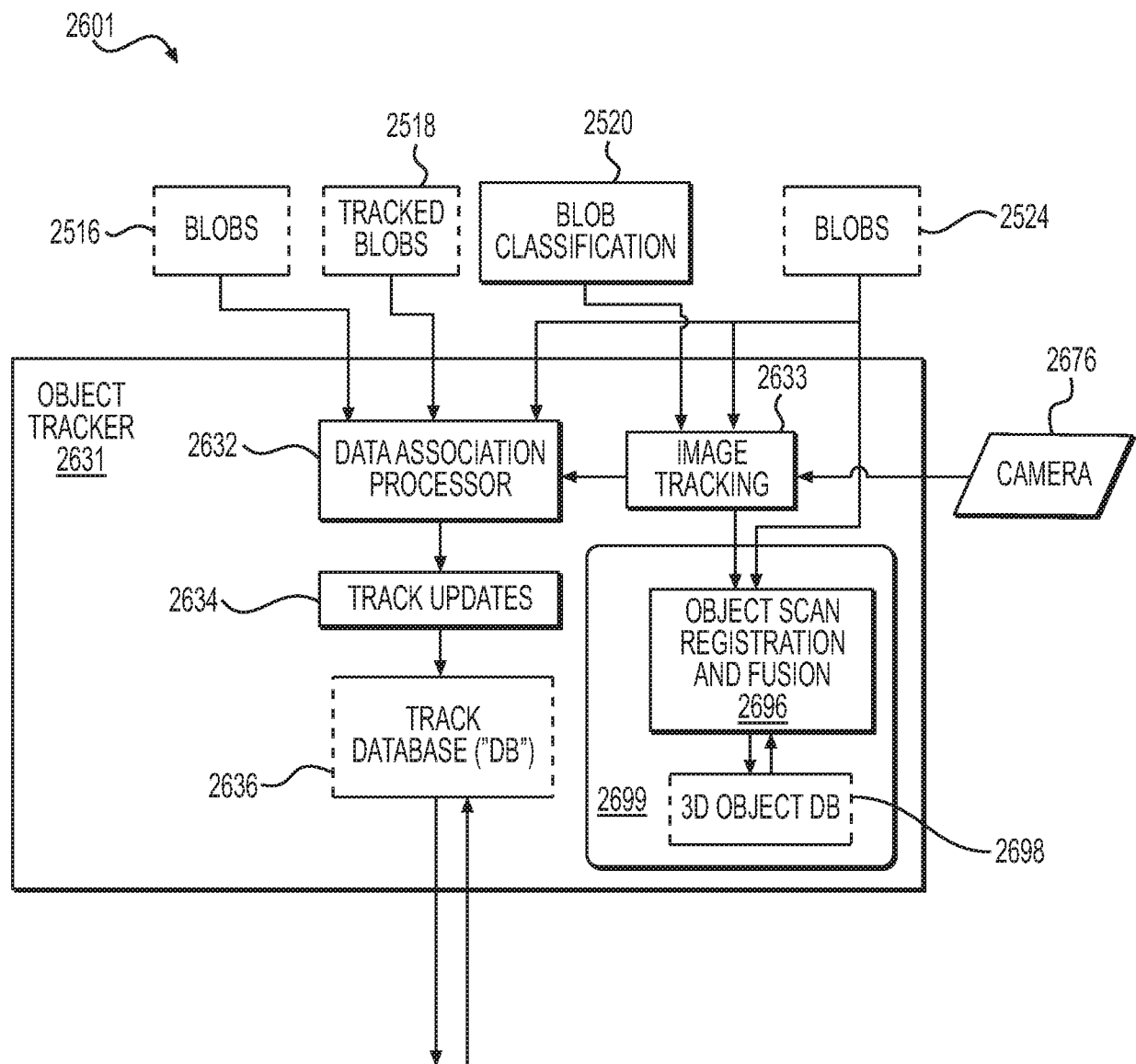


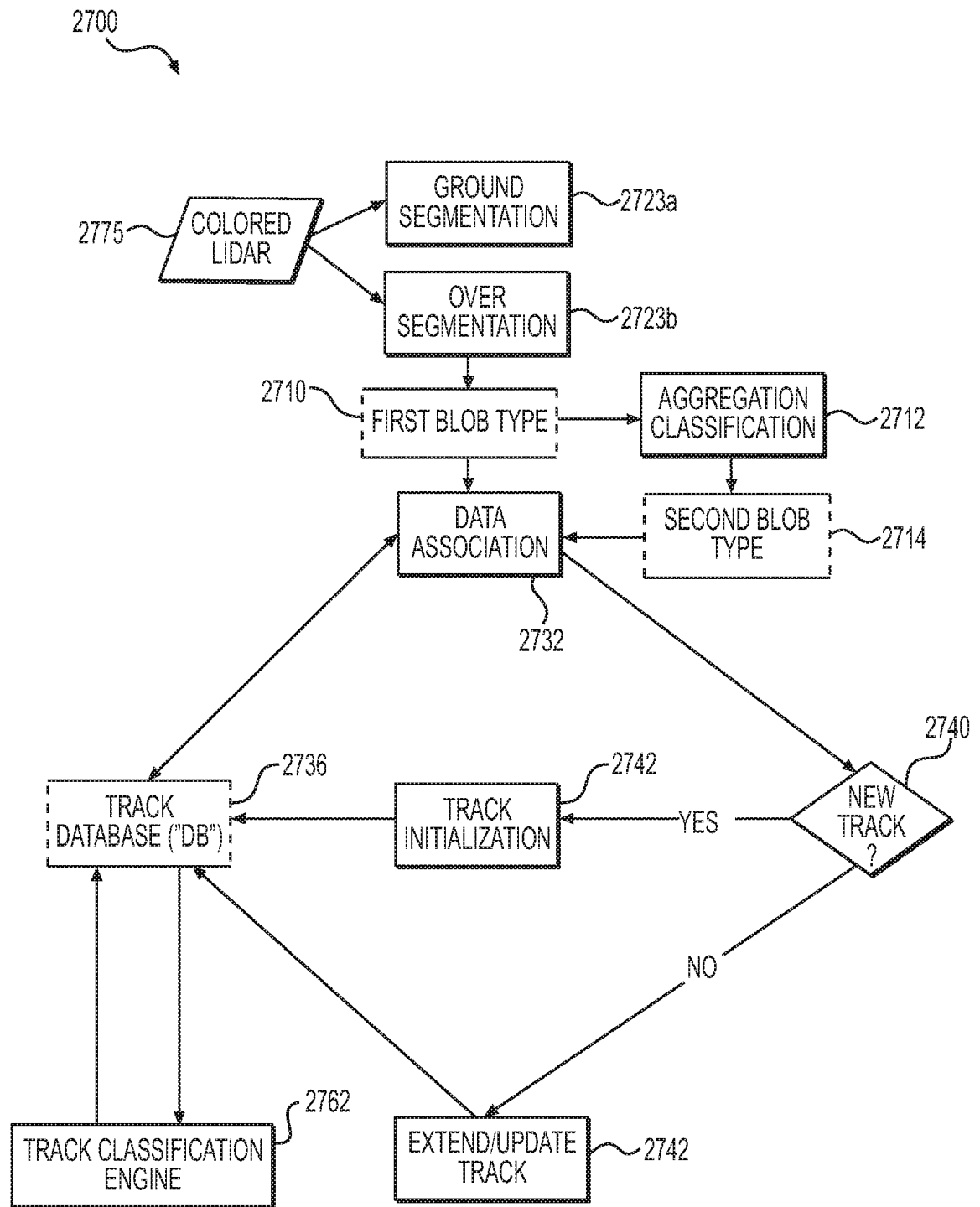
FIG. 25

**FIG. 26A**

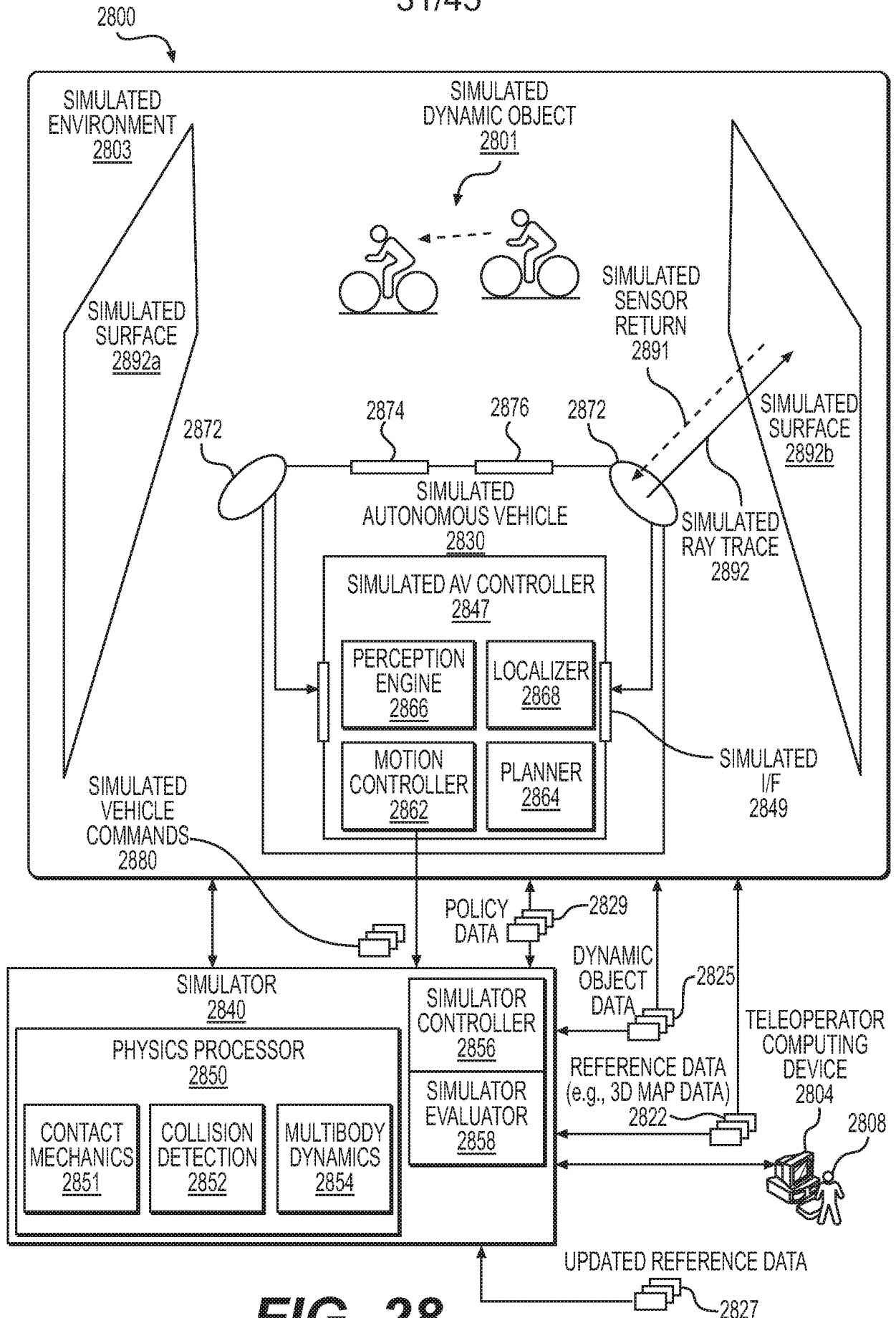
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**FIG. 26B**

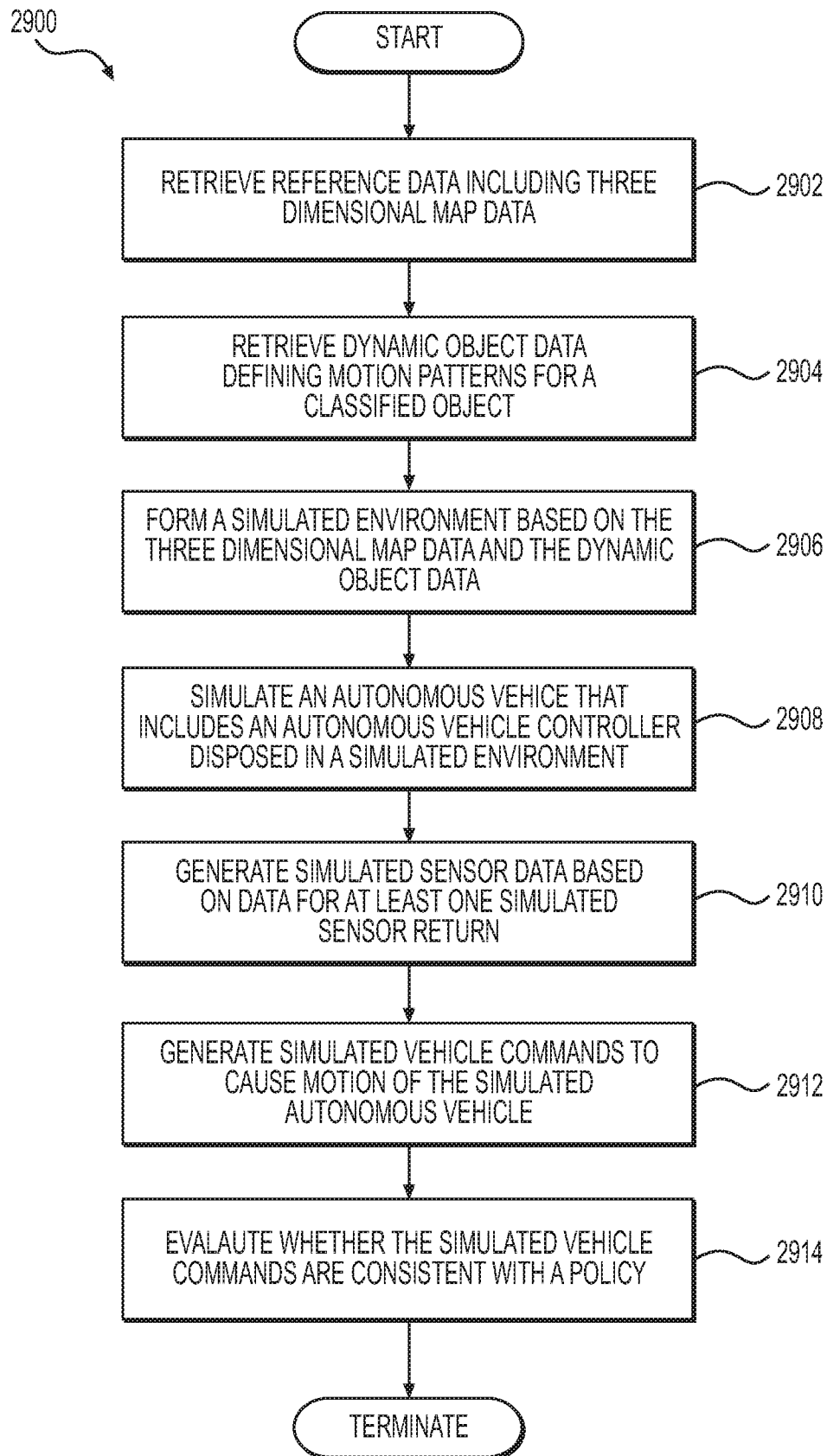
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**FIG. 27**

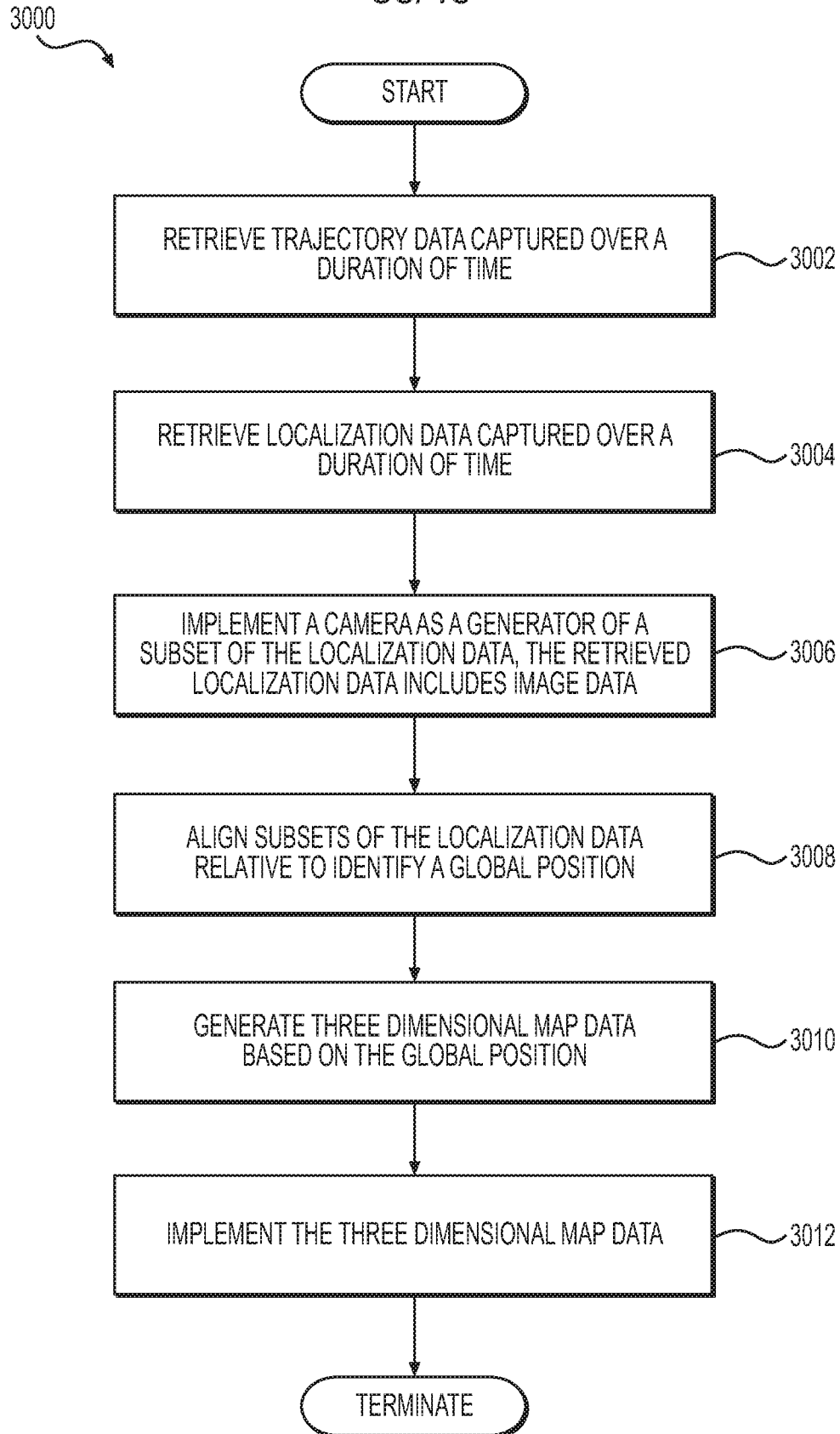
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**FIG. 28**

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**FIG. 29**

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**FIG. 30**

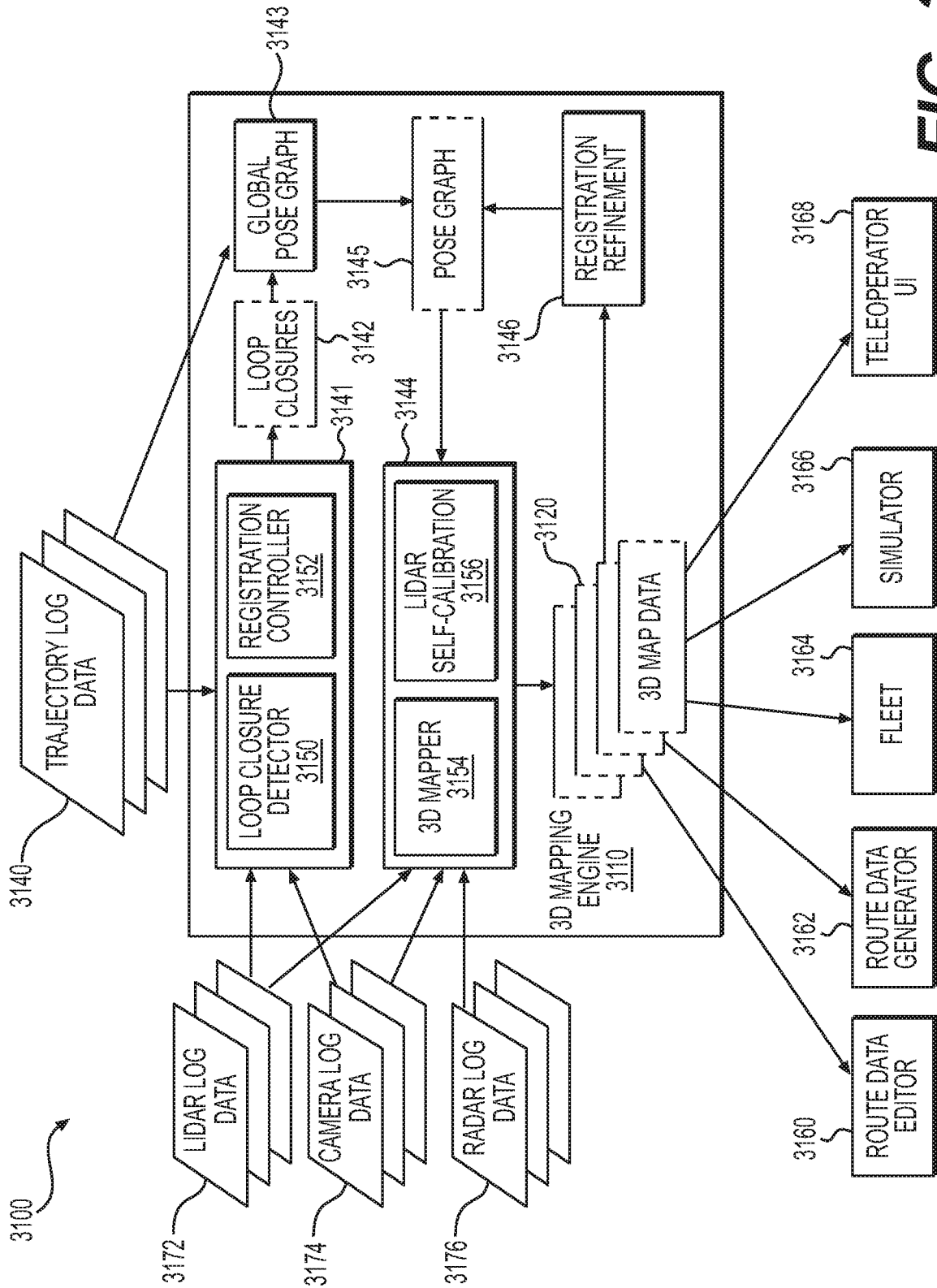
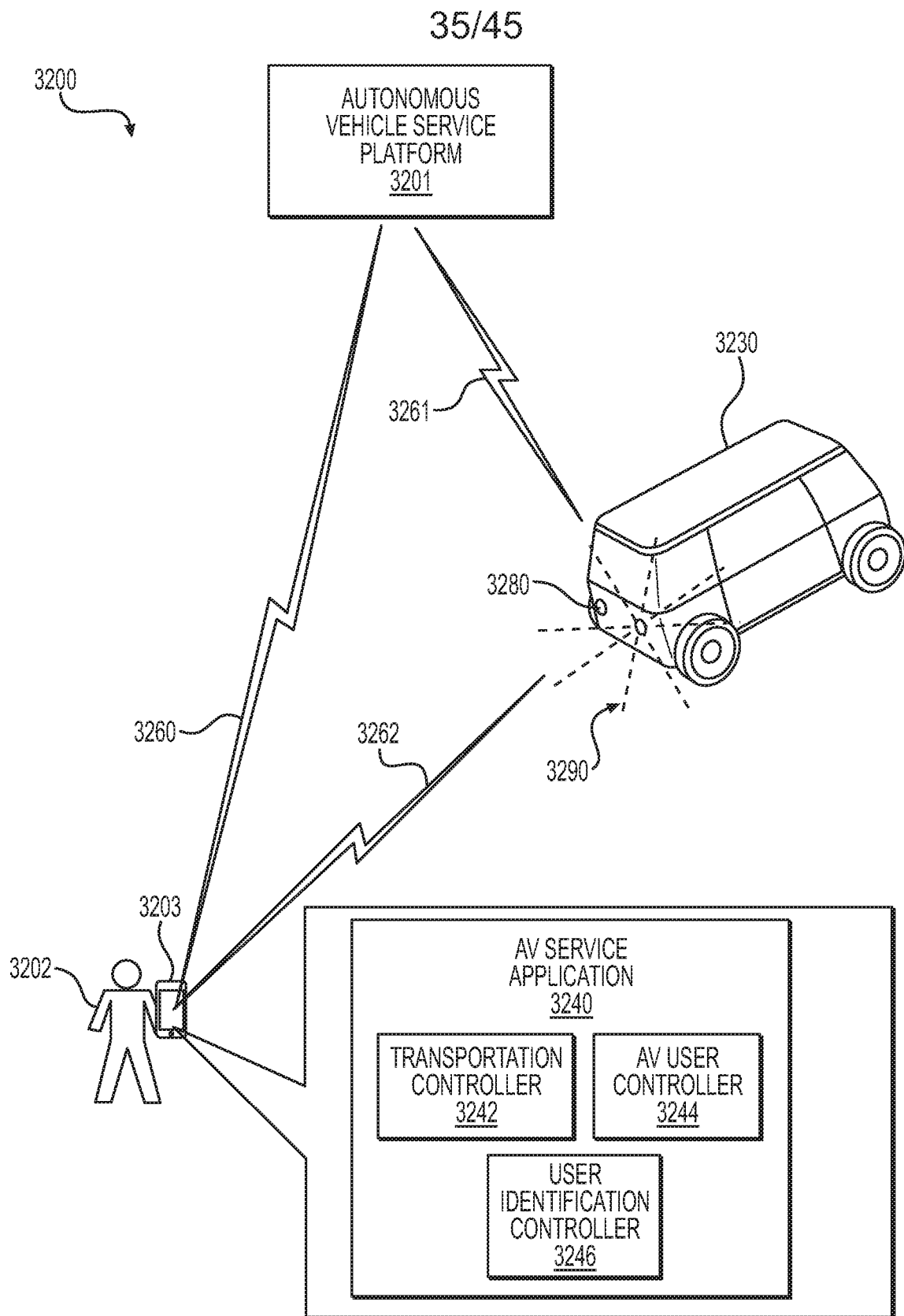
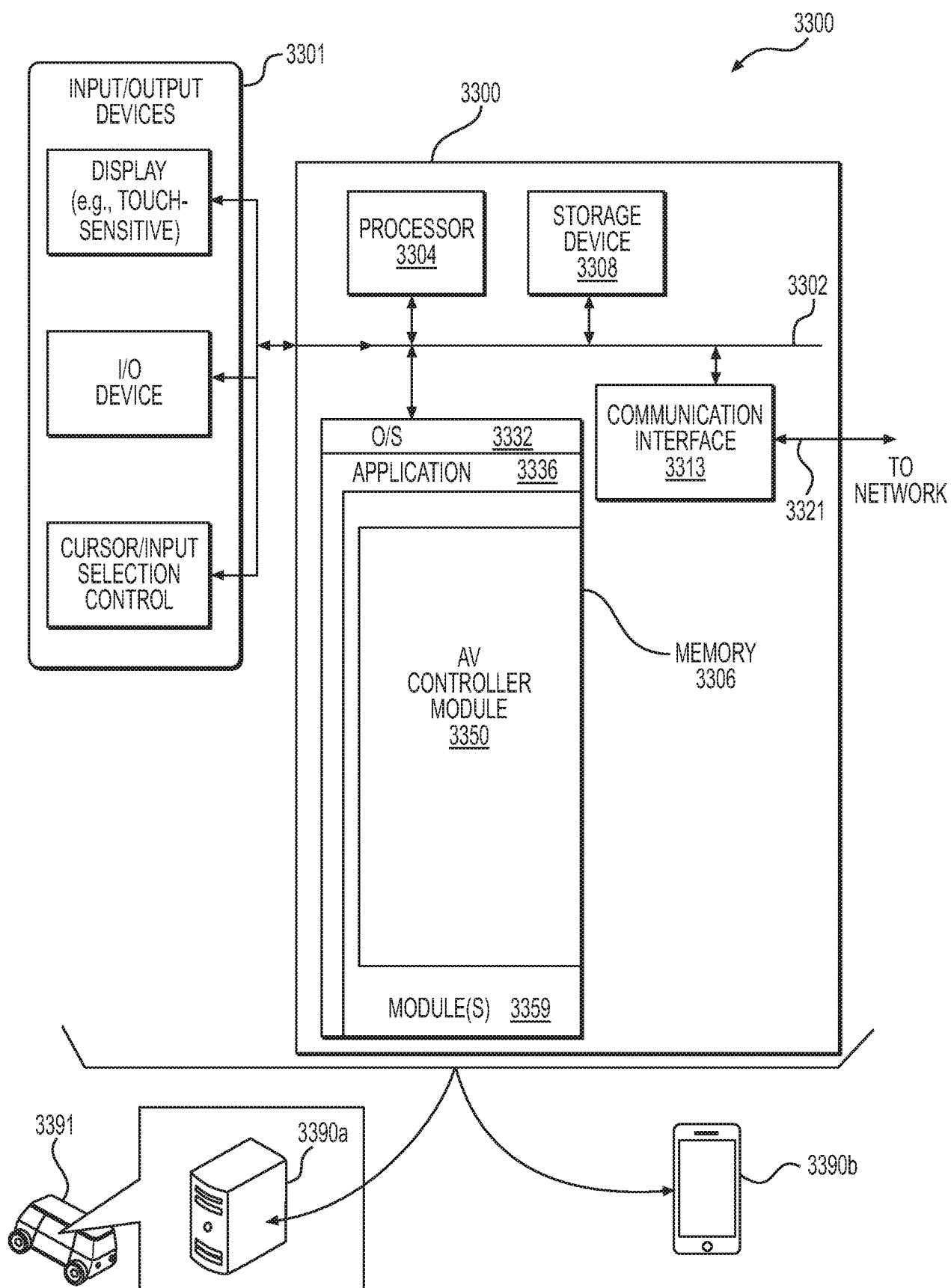


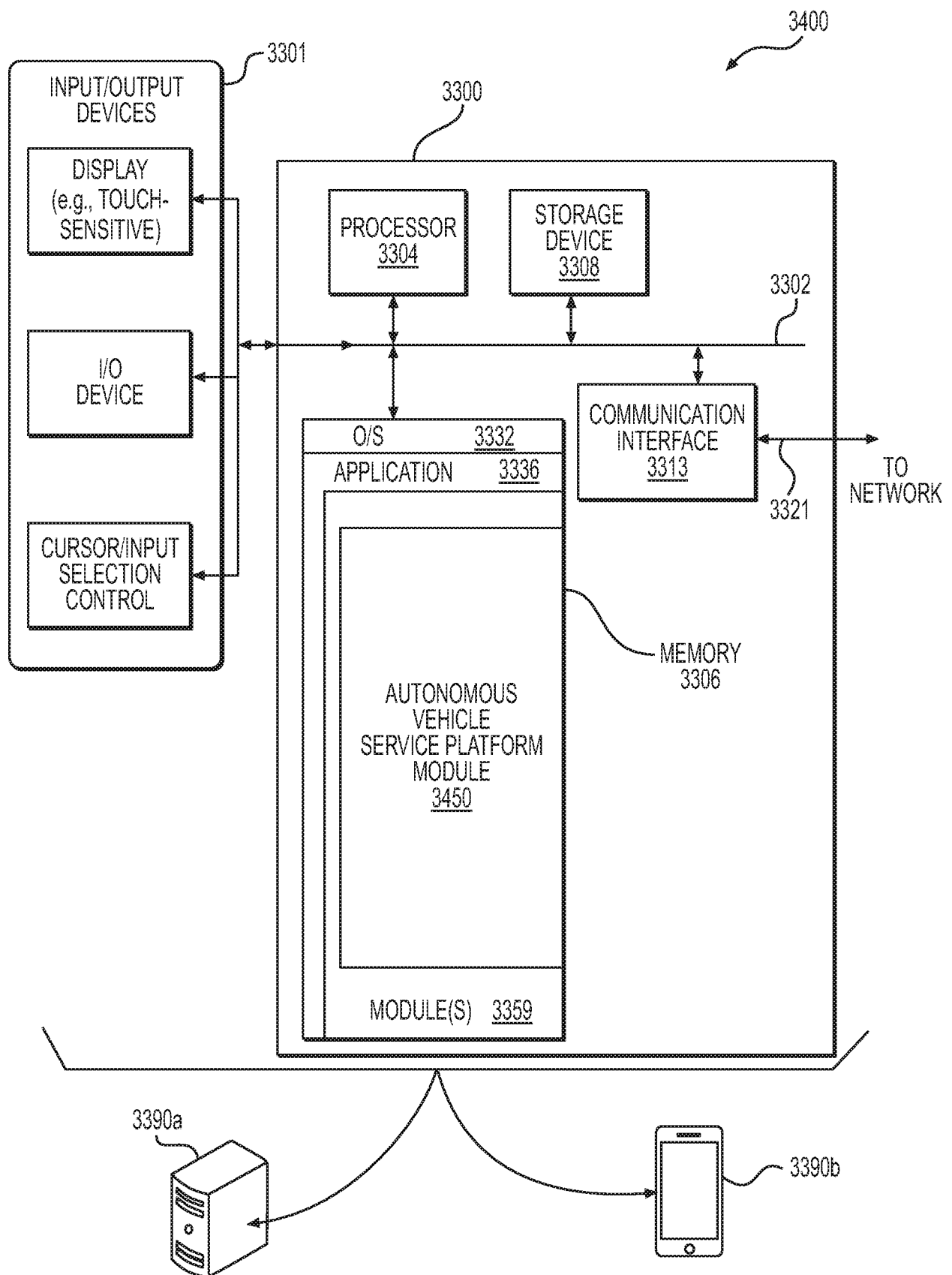
FIG. 31

**FIG. 32**

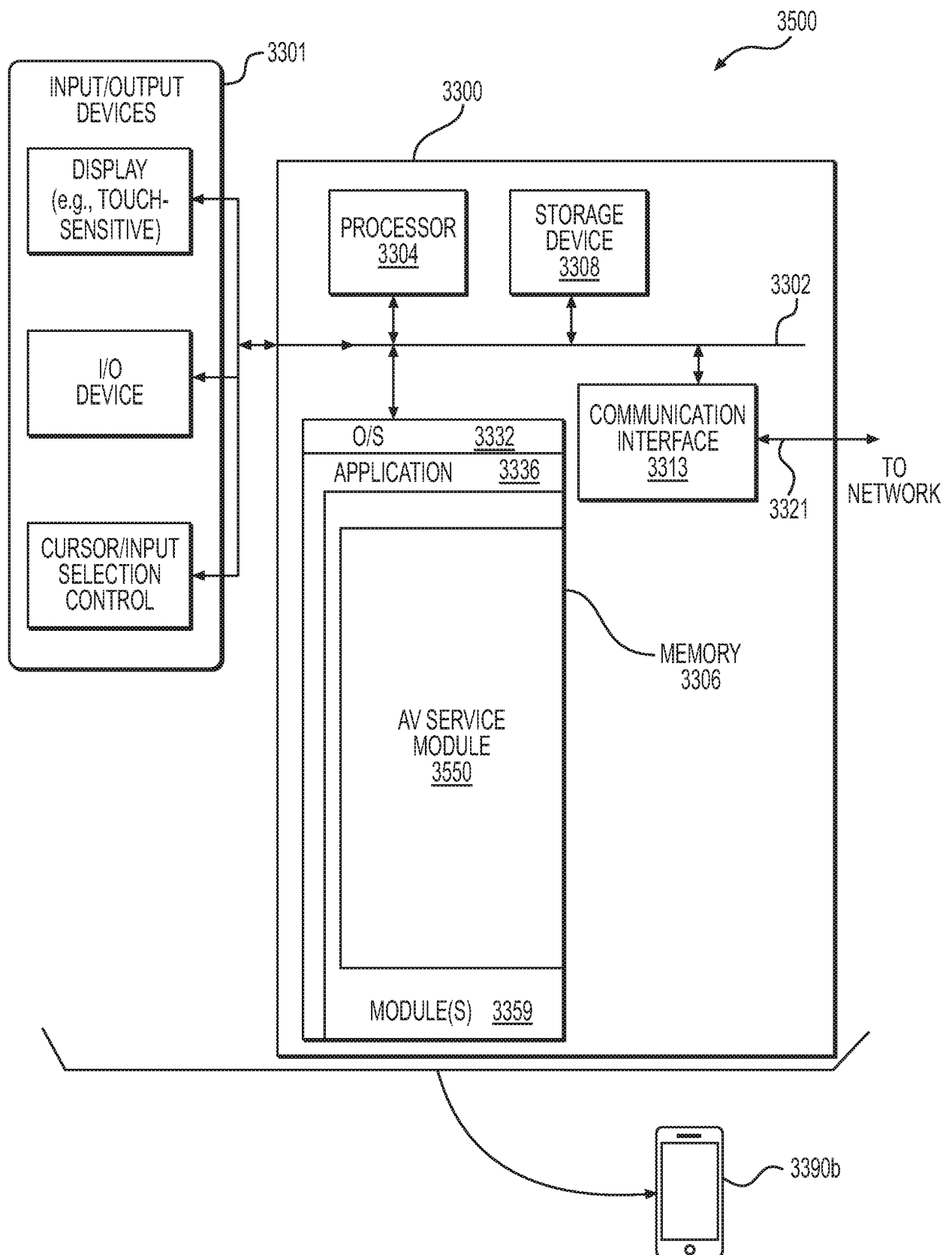
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**FIG. 33**

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**FIG. 34**

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**FIG. 35**

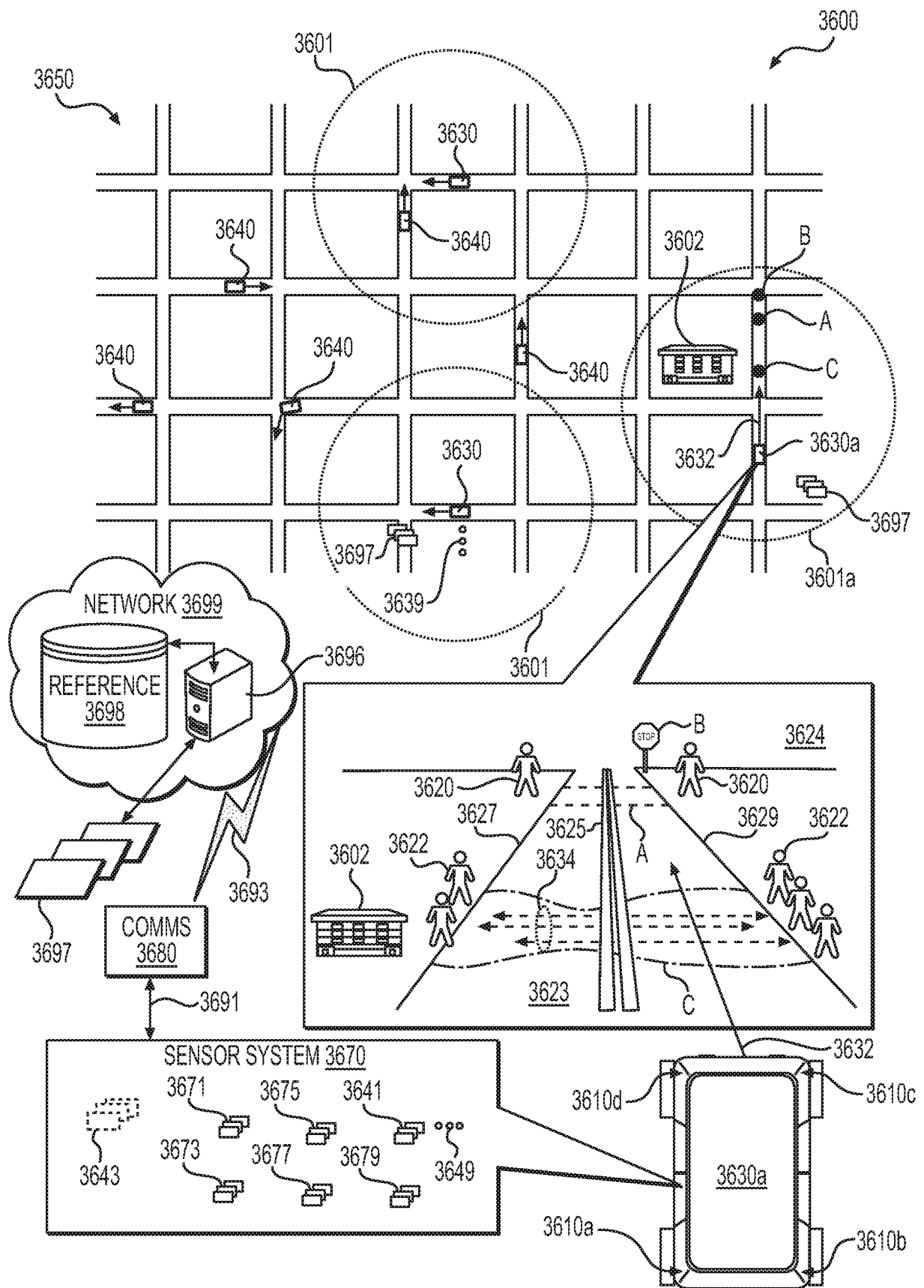
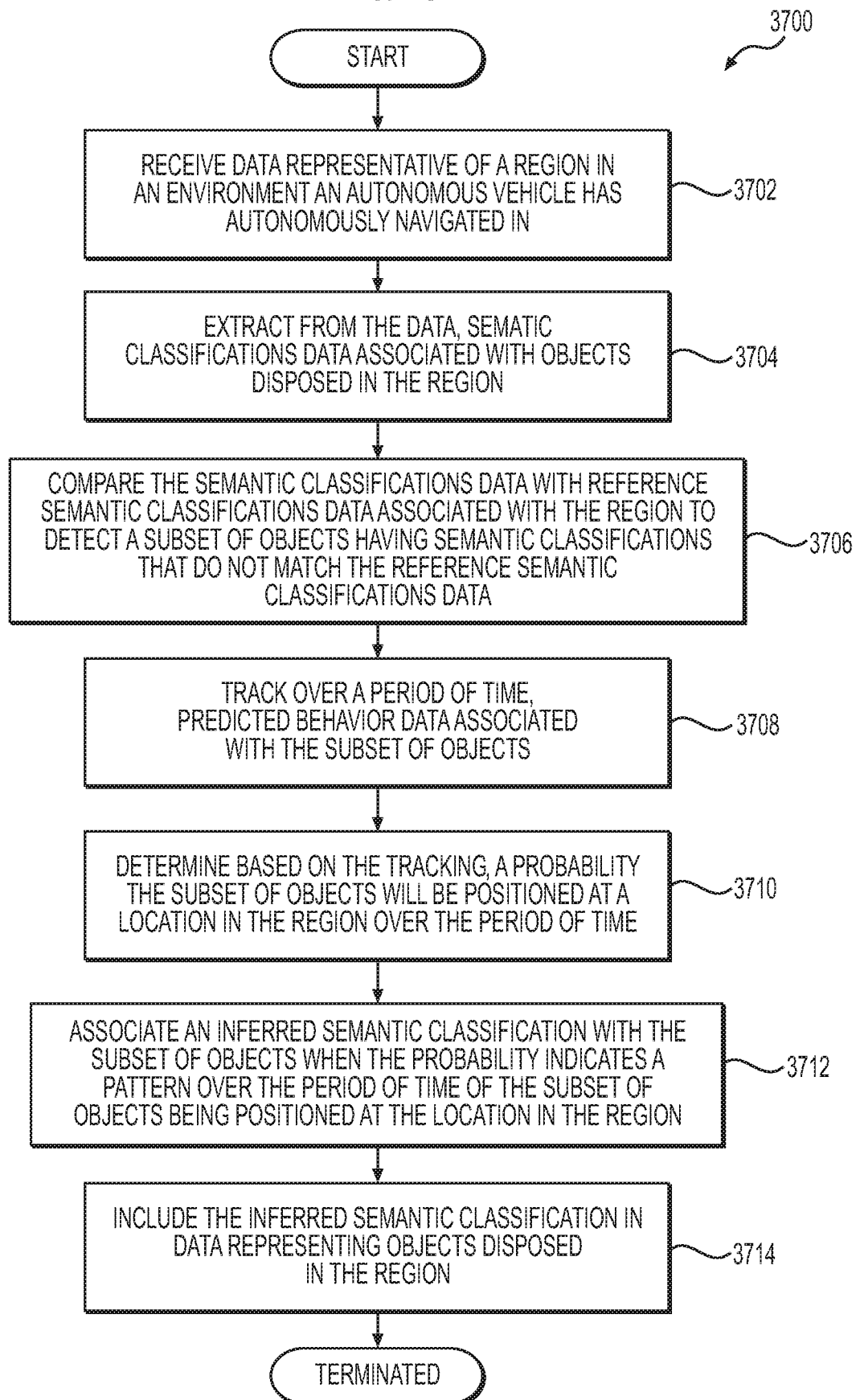
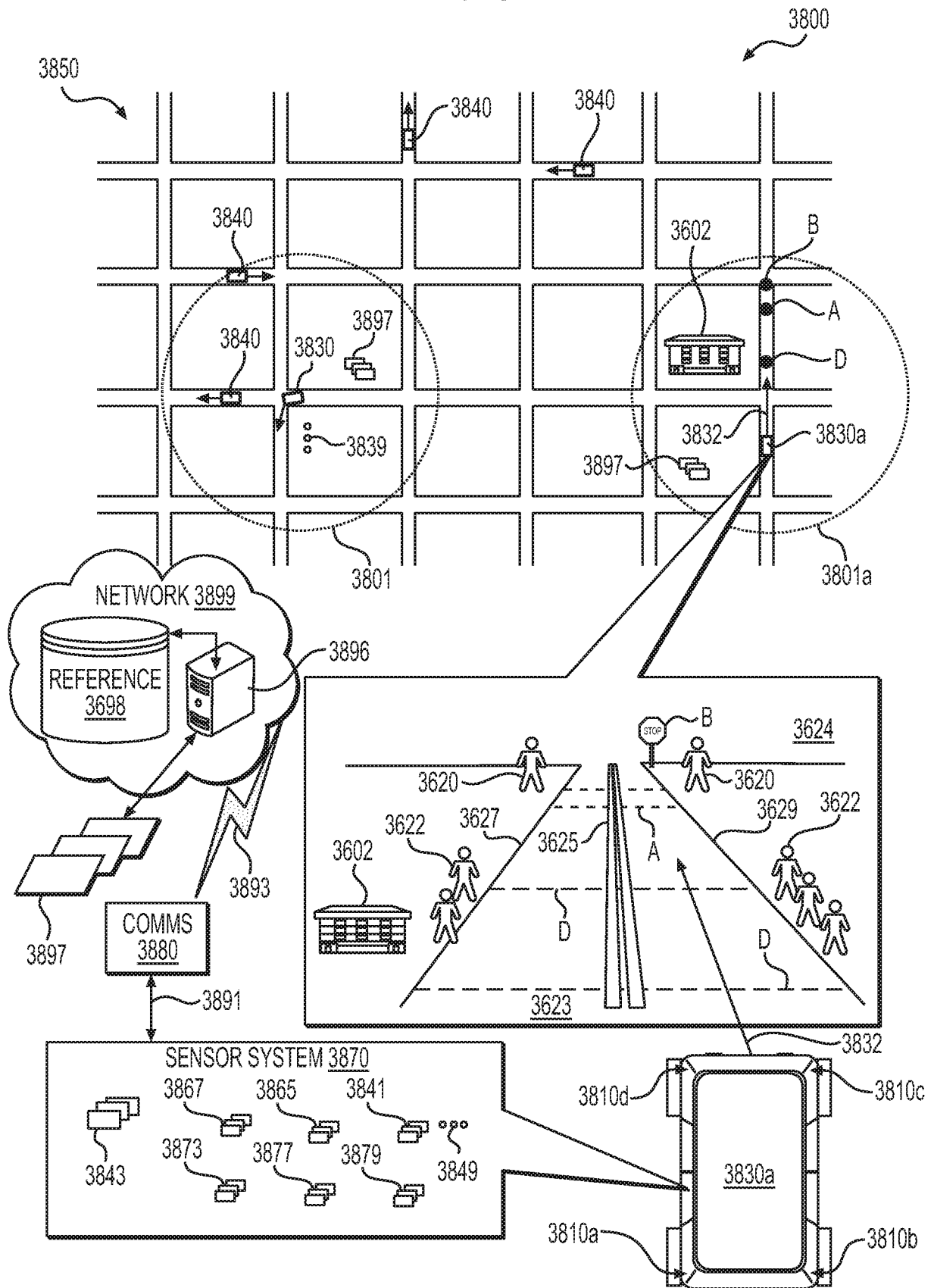


FIG. 36

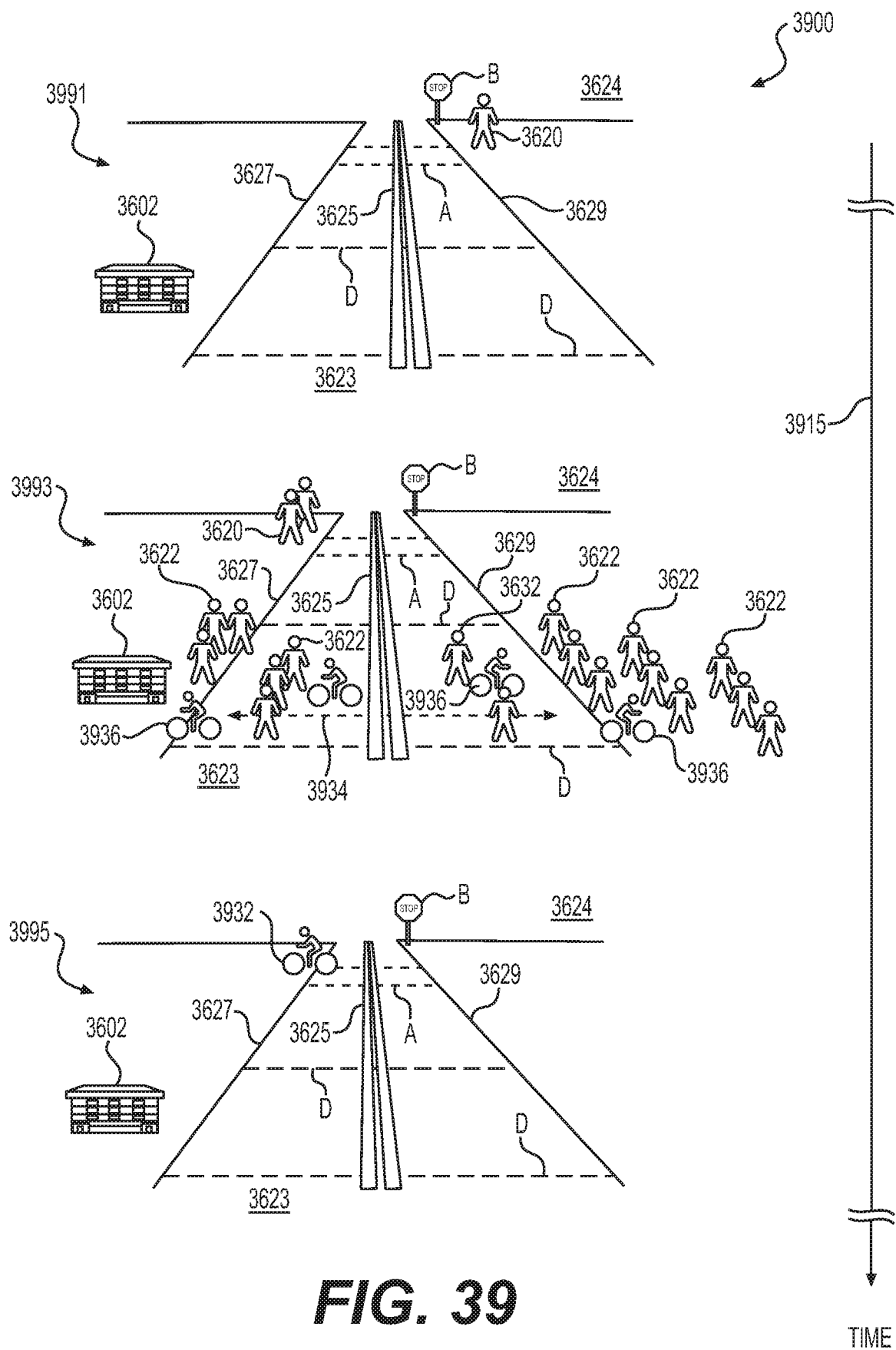
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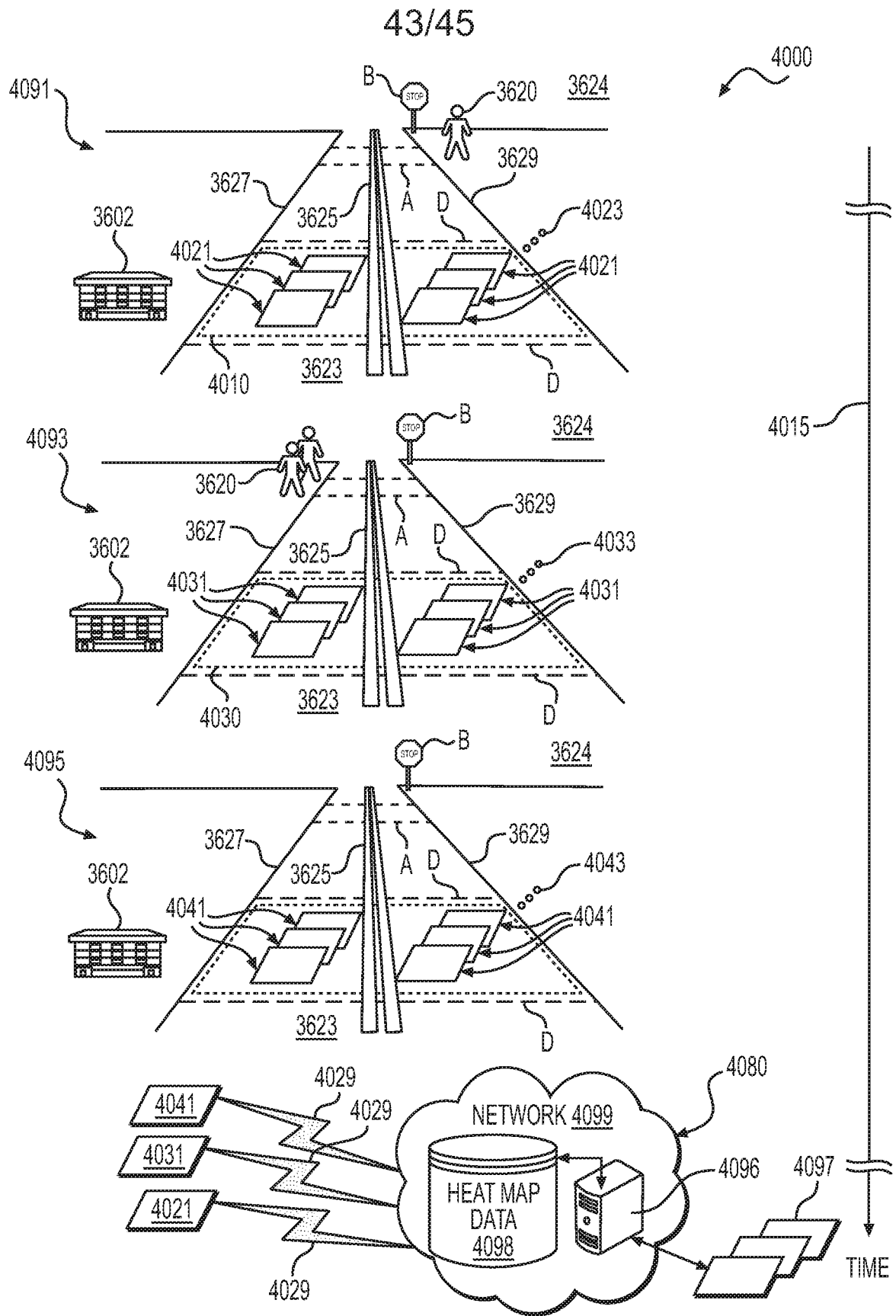
**FIG. 37**

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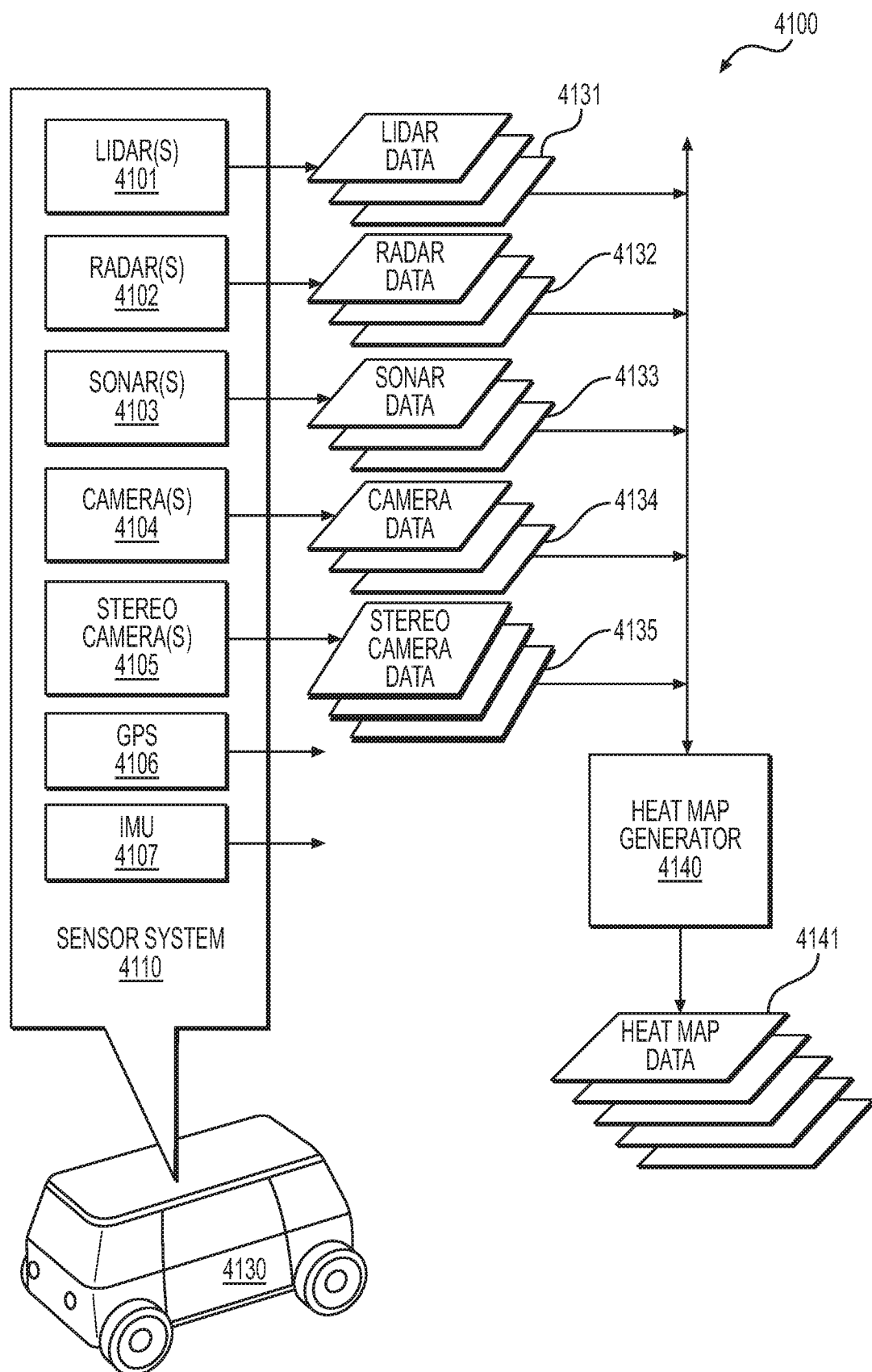
**FIG. 38**

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**FIG. 40**

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**FIG. 41**

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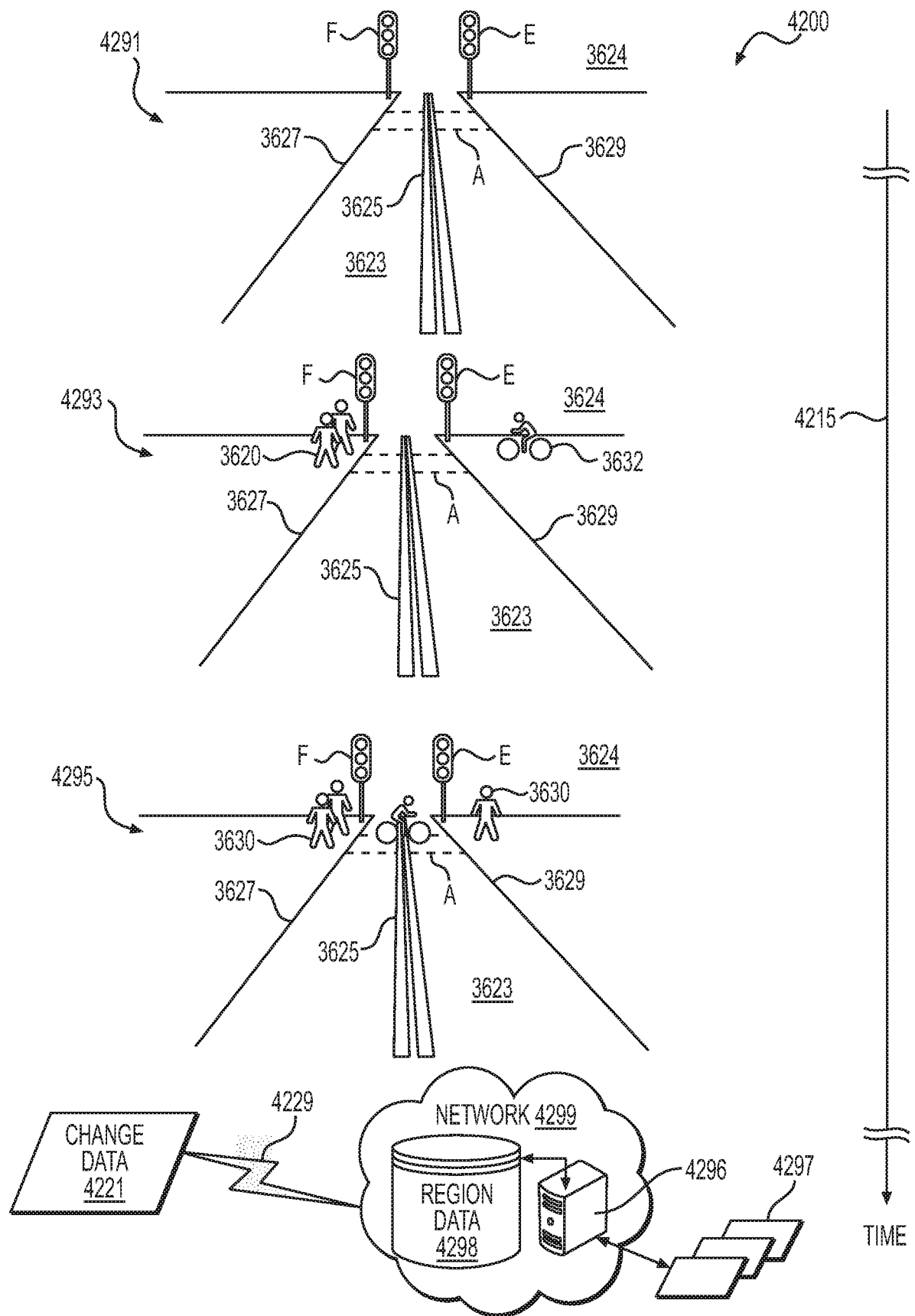


FIG. 42