SPRO3 report

Botond Bencsik
Casper Hvide Bjerre Simenel
Felix Leo Hoch
Henrik Maarten Bongers
Laura Barney
Arthur Kibalama

08/09/2023

## Contents

1 Introduction

Throughout history a certain industrial trend has become the most pronounced it has ever been, automation. Any and all tasks that could be automated in a financially viable way have seen at least one instance of it happening. This is due to the numerous benefits that an autonomous system can provide. In a similar vein our team also aimed at contributing to this phenomenon within the scope of the third semester project. The aim of the project was to make an autonomous intelligent vehicle.

Project work started with exploring the possible fields where such a vehicle could find sensible applications. A mindmap was used to order and keep track of various ideas. Some of these include a food and beverage delivery system both in a restaurant and home settings and some were related to various
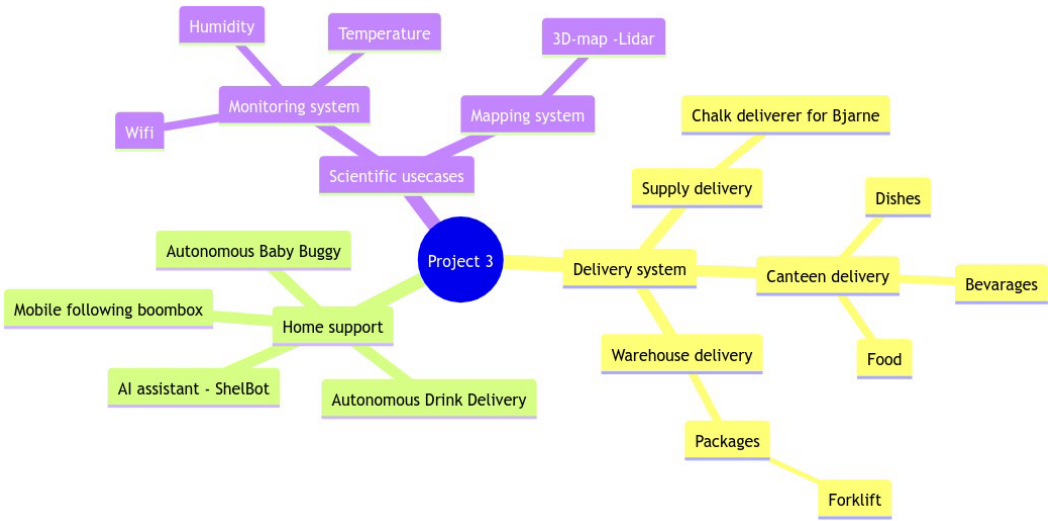
2 Problem Formulation

In the third semester our professors assigned us a project where the focus was to be the importance of sensors and actuators with autonomous vehicles being one example. Following this lead the first topic that came to mind was logistics, more precisely forklifts. To investigate the applicability of such devices in the aforementioned field our team members conducted market research starting from two separate perspectives, one being more industrial and the other more social.

2.1 more like a problem formulation???

2.1.1 Forklift related accidents and injuries

Forklift related accidents are a common occurrence, both with solid stationery objects and moving pedestrians. According to data from "article 1" there a around 34,000 injuries from forklifts in the US every year. This results in a great number of lost work days and extra strain and pressure to make up the deficit.

Out of 143 incidents, where the collision happened with a solid object 75 of them are with stationery objects. And 53 of them are collisions between forklifts. Both of these types of incidents are related to human errors, like not paying attention to the surroundings when operating forklifts.

Out of 322 incidents involving pedestrians around 50% of them have been caused by a forklift striking a pedestrian by accident.

The safety of forklifts can be greatly increased with the use for sensors that enable the forklifts to avoid obstacles on their own, even with the human error factored in. This is similar to how safety in cars has been greatly improved in recent years.

2.1.2 Is there a market for self-driving forklifts?

Most companies are always competing to maximize the quality of the product while keeping the cost as low as possible. Many companies choose to outsource manufacturing to countries where, due to the

lower average salary, they could further the aforementioned goal. This could achieve lower manufacturing prices but sometimes the quality suffered in turn. After learning this some companies choose to move manufacturing back to their origin. To stay competitive despite the higher costs, automating tasks can be a lucrative investment. For example having warehouses that can work 24 hours a day can greatly reduce certain costs. All without compromising the quality of the products.

2.1.3   Real-life applications

A research paper from a japanese university revealed that in countries with aging demographics autonomous vehicles such as an autonomous forklift are required to lighten the burden on manpower and manual labor. The authors of this paper detailed an autonomous pallet handling system for forklifts, which is able to handle pallets used for harvesting vegetables with no further human input in an outdoors environment. From a paper about aging populations it is stated that 11% of the world is over 60 years of age and this ratio is expected to rise up to 22% in 2050. From a paper about aging populations it is stated that 11% of the world is over 60 years of age and this ratio is expected to rise up to 22% in 2050.

2.1.4   Conclusion

These four papers clearly indicate that there is indeed a market and an application of highly automated processes regarding logistics and forklifts as well. This is how our group came to the conclusion that an automated forklift would solve a relevant problem all the while fitting in the frame outlined by our professors.

2.2   Requirements set by Teachers:

The technical focus this semester lays on sensor and actuator technology for mechatronic products. This should be applied in the prototype of a autonomous vehicle.

1. Object avoidance

2. Mechanical parts from RC-platform, or own Design(3D printing or Laser cutting)

3. !

4. At least 2 Analog sensors

5. At least 1 Analog filter

6. !

7. Basic Artificial Intelligence for avoidance/steering/braking

8. no machine learning

2.2.1   Project requirements:

1. Working prototype,tested and documented

2. Risk analysis(small part, 1-2 pages)

3. User interaction / requirement study

4. Hardware

    (a) 1 analog sensor(stated 2 above)

    (b) Motor control / driver, can be a module

    (c) At least one small designed custom PCB

    (d) Basic Mechanics

5. Software of own choice

6. Max 1000kr new stuff

2.2.2   Safety basics:

We have to implement the base of a Risk-analysis based on IEC14971 Standard for medical devices. This has to include functional risk and operator/person safety risk. Subjects can be Hazard, Likelyhood of occurrence and it´s Severity

2.3   Project requirements

1. Prove of concept

2. down scaled version of a autonomous forklift

3. Maximum size of pallet: (to be decided)

4. Maximum size of vehicle: (to be decided)

5. modular?

6. load and unload pallets from truck?

7. stack pallets up to 2nd level (total of 2 levels (1 and 2))

8. drive with a 2 pallets stacked

Further requirements for the movement are to be defined but the base lays in not driving into anything (including stopping when object moves infront of drive path), and moving pallets without preprogrammed paths ergo autonomously.

2.4   Similar products

Similar products are already widely available on the market and customers can decide based on their requirements without having to focus on only one "innovative" product available.

Hyster Robotics provides autonomous forklifts up until stage 3. features are

1. Running on programmed path or manual mode

2. self locating and navigating

3. does not require laser reflectors, guide magnets or wires

4. communicates with WMS warehouse management systems

Otto Motors Lifter is one of their products next to the mobile robots featuring

1. Intelligent Pallet detection

2. autonomous lane clearing

3. in house Fleet Manager software

4. continuos remapping of area adapting to dynamic workplace

Toyota has the Automated Workhorse which can only lift pallets up for moving, but can lift up to 8tons which is much more than others in this sector.

Other companies selling autonomous forklifts are Multiway,Vecna, Cronw and more are there to find which gives a statement for the interest in this sector.

Company	MaxLoad kg	sensors	speed m/s	accuracy m	turning radius m
Hyster	cell5	cell6			
Otto Motors	1200	5x Intel RealSense Cameras 3x SICK Microscan3 (360°FOV)	1.5	0.05	1.9
Toyota	8000		1.2		0.1

2.5   Technical requirements

In order to select certain parts for the project some technical requirements have to be estimated. These include, but are not limited to the mass of the payload, the mass of the vehicle and the desired operating speed of the forklift.

2.5.1   Payload

The group agreed that the payload, for modeling purposes, will be cans of soda.

1. Forklift can lift a pallet of 4 european standard sized cans. Individual can dimensions: Width: 66.1 * 10^{-3} m; Height: 115.2 * 10^{-3} m; Volume: 0.33 L.

2. Forklift can lift 3.5 kg of mass. This includes 8 cans and a pallet.

3. Dimensions of the pallet should be 150 * 10^{-3} m by 150 * 10^{-3} m.

4. Payload can be lifted at least 150 * 10^{-3} m high.

5. Two pallets can be stacked on top of each other.

6. Lifting speed reaches 10 * 10^{-3} m / s.

2.5.2   Movement

1. Vehicle can travel at 50 * 10^{-3} m / s.

2. Vehicle can turn at least 18 ° / s.

3. This would be about how accurately the vehicle can follow the path but there is no solution to navigation yet so this could be meaningless with some movement types

4. Instead of the previous one we could have something like this: The vehicle can deviate less than 100 * 10^{-3} m left or right every meter traveled.

5. Vehicle is able pick up a pallet by inserting the forks into the pallet.

2.5.3   Mass of the vehicle

1. Vehicle should weigh less than 10 kg including the payload.

3   Management

3.1   Time management

We aimed to include everyone in all areas of the project deployment. This meant we insured that everyone got the opportunity to be involved, with a task fitting to there knowledge level.

We began with creating a general time plan for the whole semester project progress.
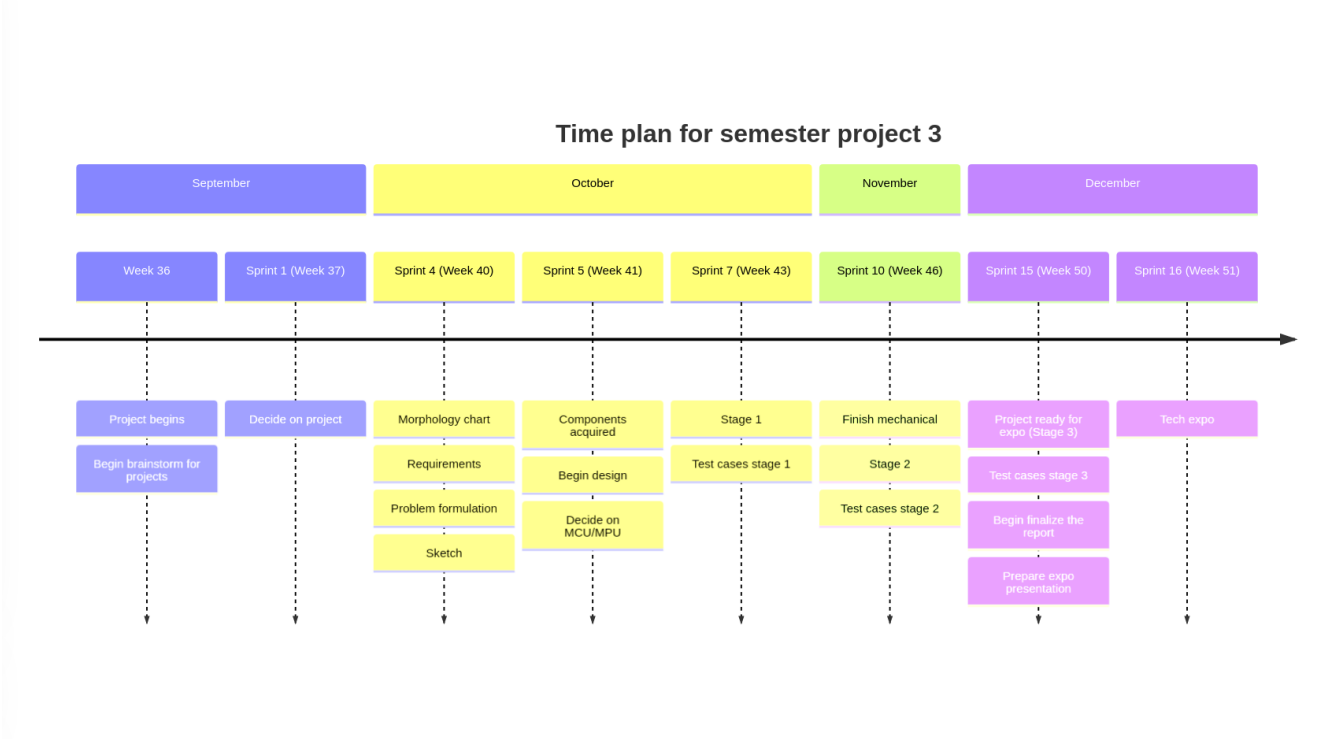
Time plan for semester project 3

September		October			November	December	
Week 36	Sprint 1 (Week 37)	Sprint 4 (Week 40)	Sprint 5 (Week 41)	Sprint 7 (Week 43)	Sprint 10 (Week 46)	Sprint 15 (Week 50)	Sprint 16 (Week 51)

Project begins	Decide on project	Morphology chart	Components acquired	Stage 1	Finish mechanical	Project ready for expo (Stage 3)	Tech expo
Begin brainstorm for projects		Requirements	Begin design	Test cases stage 1	Stage 2	Test cases stage 3	
		Problem formulation	Decide on MCU/MPU		Test cases stage 2	Begin finalize the report	
		Sketch				Prepare expo presentation	

Figure 1: Initial time plan

3.2   Task management

We adopted the Scrum agile management framework and customized some parts of it to fit our project and teams needs. We chose specifically this model due to the agile planing it introduces, and gradual learning curve. We defined a sprint to be 7 days, from friday to friday with an estimate of 8 hours of workload per team member. We categorized each task according to the time estimated to complete it using these tags:

- Sønderborg - 0.5 hours

- Keil - 1 hours

- Valencia - 2 hours

- Budapest - 4 hours

- Hamburg - 6 hours

We chose our home cities and sorted them by size to make it more simple to use in conversations and to give a better visual idea of the task size. We decided that the time limited on a task should be 6 hours. If a task would require more time then it should be split into multiple tasks. This was to ensure that it was possible to see if the task was possible to achieve before investing more time into it.

3.3   Individual evaluation

A short evaluation of the project from each member in their own opinion. This is used to improve upcoming projects, to prevent making the same mistakes again. **member name:** Write here **member name:** Write here **member name:** Write here **member name:** Write here **member name:** Write here **member name:** Write here

3.4   Stage division

Why divide the project up into multiple smaller stages? It means that there will be multiple deadlines, this helps keep the project on track. Keeping the project on track in the early stages contributes to the final stages where more issues may occur, this mens that there is always a working earlier version to showcase if it becomes necessary. It is also earlier for both the customer and the development team to see how the project will turn out and if there are any design mistakes that have to be changed before the final version.

It is impotent for this method to work, that each stage is clearly defined. This ensures that all features for each stage are implemented.

The below list contests all the requirement of functionalities for each stage. It is not a implementation list.

Stage 1: Basic movement

- The forklift should move unrestricted in any direction.

- The forklift should be powered by a battery.

Stage 2: Line following

- The forklift movement should be restricted to a pre-defined path.

- The path should be a line on the floor.

- The forklift should stop moving if there is a obstacle in its path.

- The forklift platform is solid with no risk of electronic or mechanical parts getting loses.

Stage 3: Pallet placement

- The forks on the forklift should be able to move up and down.

- The forklift should be able to pickup a pallet by itself.

- The forklift should be able to place a pallet by itself.

- The pickup and placement should be in predefined locations.

The functionalities are not restricted to a specific stage. It is fine that if a functionality can be implemented before the begin of its related stage. The only requirement is that the required functionalities for the current stage is completed before the deadline of the stage.

4   Consideration
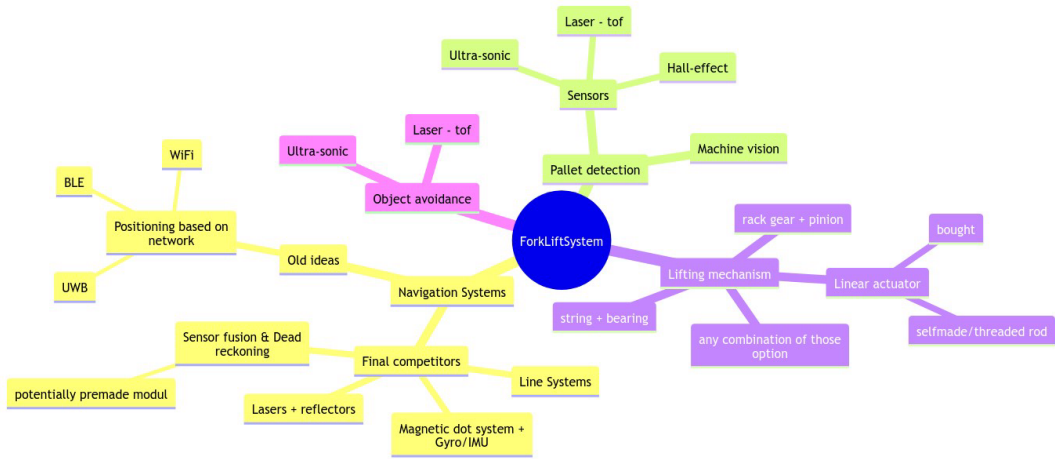
4.1   Forklifts

When looking into forklifts there are different types, that are task dependent. Some of those are the pallet jack or Low Lift Truck, Stacker and the most common Counterbalanced forklift.

The basic parts of the Counterbalanced forklift as seen in the picture.

1. fork

2. mast

Figure 2: Counterbalanced Forklift

3. drive and steering wheels

4. counterweight

5. motor compartment

subsection

4.1.1   Functionality

For the functionality of forklifts there are two different subjects that concern us. For one the drive, which should make it possible to rotate 360° around the center axle and the lifting of the fork it self. The amount of lifting is dependent on the type of forklift. Therefor the task of a low lift truck is lifting of the ground for simple 2 dimensional movement and other types need to be able to lift up to multiple pallets or meters, where also the name stacker derives from.

Lifting The lifting mechanism works by actuating an actuator which is and hydraulic cylinder in this case. A chain that is connected between an anchor, roller and the fork lifts the fork and by making use of the leverage of this system the forklift can lift greater weights than when connecting the fork directly to the actuator.

Driving On a forklift as seen in [2], the front wheels are connected to the drive while the back wheels are able to rotate 360° and only act for steering.

4.2   Lift solutions

When choosing our solution for the lifting of the fork it is important to specify the mast type before hand or decide on designing a modular solution, where different mast´s can be mounted depending on the request of the customers.

Those different mast types are called Simplex, Duplex, Triplex and Quadriplex which stand for the stage of the mast assembly and in essence for the maximum height it can operate at.

For each stage after the Simplex the freelift is also of interest, as states at which point the mast will extend. Having full freelift allows the forklift to lift the fork until the top off a Simplex stage without extending the mast, which makes the forklift

Figure 3: Stages

useable in areas where not much overhead clearance is given, for example when emptying a truck.

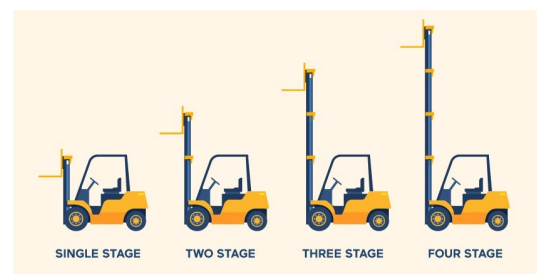### 4.2.1   Real lifting systems

Taking a closer look at the forklifts on the market, each lifting system is working with hydraulics. Reasons for this are:

1. Ability to switch forks easily(clamping, rotating, extra long and changing width)

2. Safety(Forks will never lower without permission) and no moving parts

3. Easy to maintenance

4. high power output

5. precise control

For lifting a hydraulic piston pushes a roller bearing up with a chain connected to an anchor on one side, rolling over it and connected with the fork on the other side. This creates a 2to1 lifting ratio where, 1meter lifted piston lifts the fork up 2meters.

4.2.2   Lifting solutions

Because of the high cost, low weight of load we will carry and not having the focus on a acurate downscalled forklift we won´t be able to use a hydraulic system for lifting. Using a roller-chain should be considered in each solution for better load distribution and less movement need due to the 2to1 ratio. Options can be:

1. Linear Actuator(Bought)

2. Linear Actuator(own design)(threaded rod)

3. string+bearing

4. rack gear and pinion

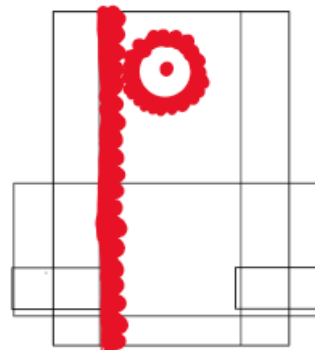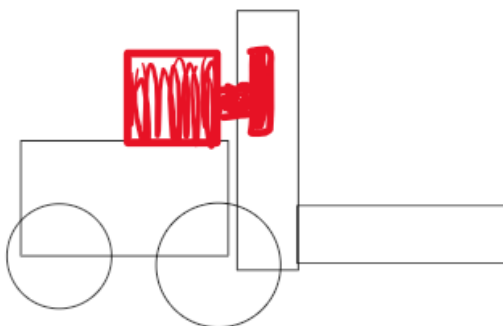5. //any combination out of those for higher stages

As our focus in this project lays on sensors and autonomous driving a Simplex stage 1 forklift will be enough of a mechanical task and could be upgraded if there is time to fill. Solutions could look like:
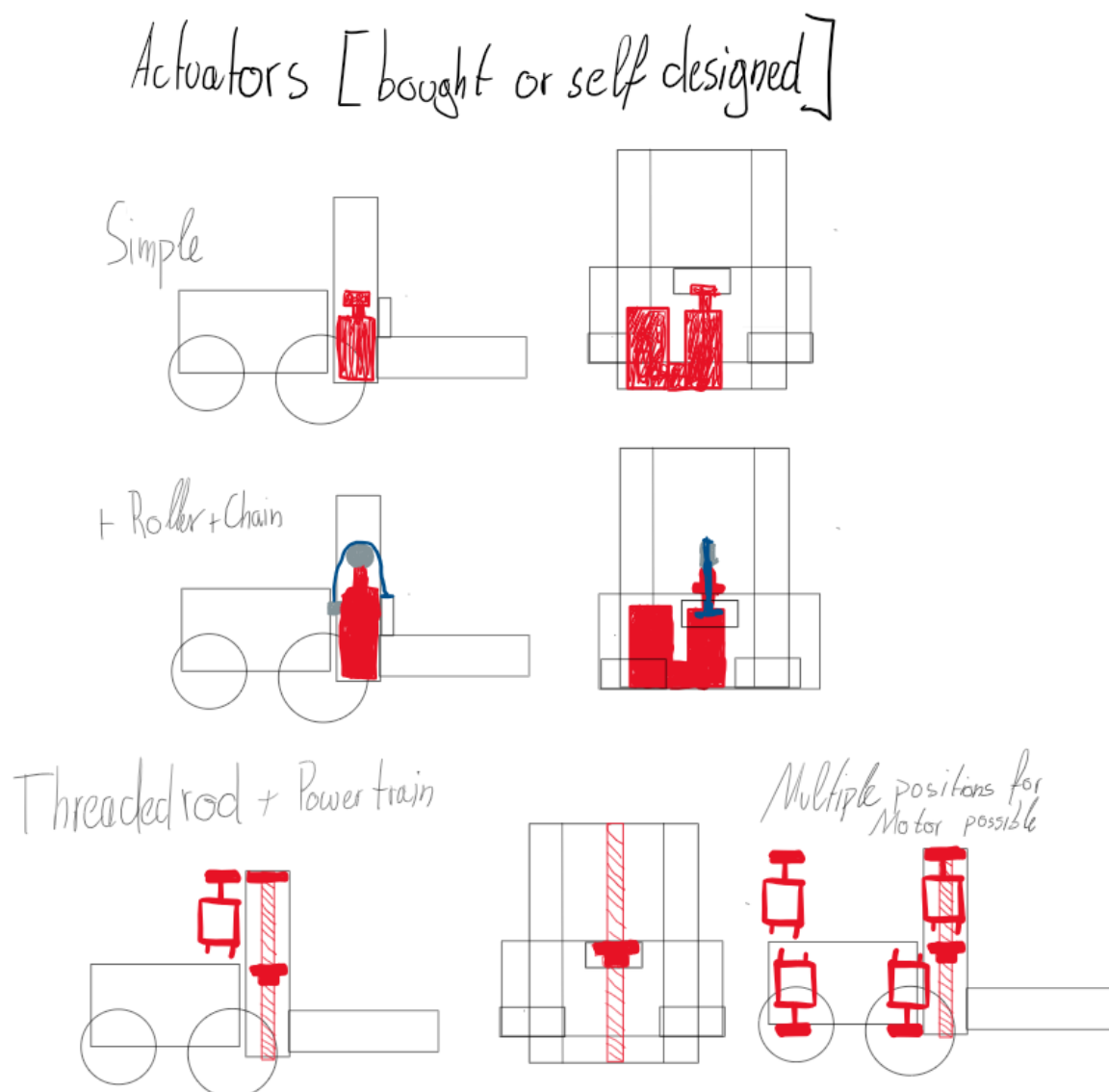
String + Bearing , Different Motor positions possible
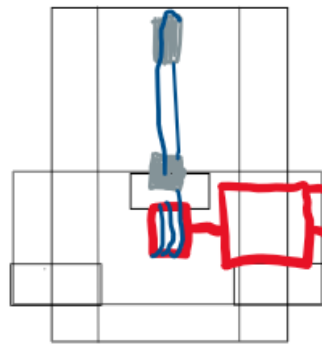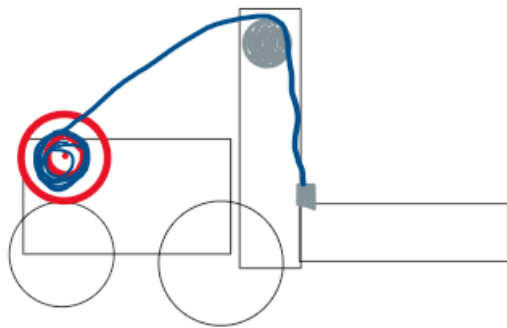
Rack and Pineon

4.2.3   Lifting Calculations

To add a first value of safety the choosen system should be able to lift at least 30% (to be defined by a standard later) more than the maximum weight specification of our forklift. In this way we account for variances and fatique of the components we are working with. We want to lift 4 beer cans per pallet and two pallets stacked which gives:

$$4 * 0.333 * 2 * 1.3 = 3.46 kg$$

Including weight of pallets and fork into the 30% and rounding up would give a plausible 3.5 kg actual lifting force or $3.5 * 9.81 = 34.5 N$ which our lifting solution should be able to to provide.

5   Electronics

Introduction

One of the main focuses of this third semester project is analog electronics. Electronics bring the software and the mechanical part together. The software needs feedback from the analog world. It needs to know how heavy the load is and whether there is an obstacle in front. Furthermore, all the smart digital electronics need to be powered. But when powering everything from a battery the current state of the battery has to be evaluated. All these tasks are necessary to guarantee safe operations.
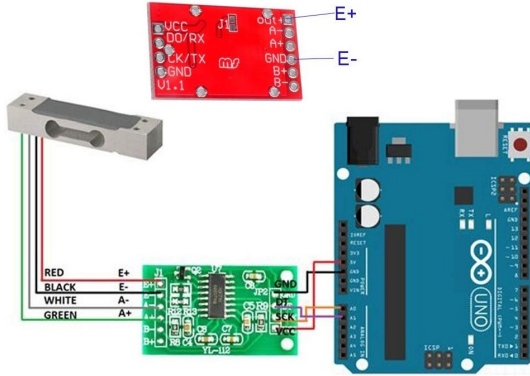
The tasks include the following:

- Interfacing the analog load cells
  - Loadcell PCB Design
- Power Supply and monitoring

- - VeroBoard Design
- Motor Drivers
  - Motor Driver PCB Design
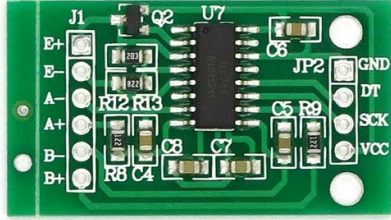
(a) HX711 Interface Module

(b) HX711 Interface Module and Load cell using Arduino-microcontroller

6   Mechanical

6.1   Part numbering

Part numbers begin with FL - indicating that they belong to our project (FL = Forklift). The forklift is split into sections. For example, base, fork and top. These are just examples and we can adapt them when the time comes and we start designing. So far, the number consists out of the following: FL-Xx, where Xx is being replaced by the starting letters of the subsection - for instance, Ba for base. This is then followed by D or M, which indicates whether it is a drawing or a model. Giving as a formula: FL-XxX. This is then followed by the version number -xx. **The numbering starts with 00**. Leading to the final and **general formula**:

- **FL-XxX-xx**

The general assembly is marked as **FL-AsX-xx**.

6.1.1   Examples

Part number:

- FL-BaM-00 - Project forklift - Base Model - version 0 (meaning original)
- FL-FoD-04 - Project forklift - Fork Drawing - version 4

7   Code

7.1   FreeRTOS

7.1.1   Why FreeRTOS

When designing a autonomous vehicle factors like: precise timing, responsiveness, and predictability are crucial for the software. If the software dose not process inputs from sensors fast enough it could result in a accident. These factors can be forfeited by using a real-time operating system like FreeRTOS. With RTOS task scheduling, actions like stopping movement when a obstacle is blocking the way, is executed within a specified time constraint. Meaning that the action of stopping the vehicle is not blocked by another action, thus preventing accidents.

7.1.2   FreeRTOS flavor

One of the reasons we choose the ESP32 MCU was to utilize its capability with FreeRTOS. The ESP32 liberty uses a custom made flavor made for the ESP32 by Espressif. One of the key difference for this

flavor is its support for Dual-Core processors. Meaning that tasks can be distributed across two cores, instead of the original one core support in FreeRTOS.

7.2 ADC

When programming the ability to use a ADC (Analog to digital converter) to read a analog value on the microprocessor is of crucial impotents. In our project the ADC is use for reading values from our infrared and load sensors. On the ESP32 a total of 18 ADC channels are available with a config resolution options of 9,10,11 and 12-bits.

7.2.1 Configuring

It is impotent to ensure when using RTOS that functions are Thread safe. If not it can result in RTOS not being able to handle a task in the desired time frame. For this reason the libraries that are include in the ESP-IDF environment that are designed with thread safe in mind. The particular library used to facilitate ADC is called *esp_adc/adc_oneshot.h* that replaced the previous one in version 5.0.4 of ESP-IDF.

To configure a ADC unit:

```
adc_oneshot_unit_handle_t adc1_handle;
adc_oneshot_unit_init_cfg_t init_config1 = {
    .unit_id = ADC_UNIT_1,
    .ulp_mode = ADC_ULP_MODE_DISABLE,
};
ESP_ERROR_CHECK(adc_oneshot_new_unit(&init_config1, &adc1_handle));
```

Listing 1: Configuring ADC unit 1

The program utilize handles to reference the objected throughout the program. When *calling adc_oneshot_new_unit* a new instance is created with the specified configuration. In a similar way the channels are configured and created to the handle.

7.2.2 Reading

To read the raw value of the ADC unit 1 channel 0:

```
adc_oneshot_read(adc1_handle, ADC1_0, &adc_value);
```

Listing 2: Readning ADC unit 1 channel 0

This function takes 3 augments: the handle itself, the desired channel to read from and where the output should be stored. This function can acquire the raw value from any ADC on the given unit as long as they are configured.

To calculate the voltage level:

$$V_{out} = D_{out} * \frac{V_{max}}{D_{max}} \tag{1}$$

Where:

D_{out}: ADC raw digital reading result

V_{max}: Max measurable analog input voltage

D_{max}: $2^{bitwidth}$

7.2.3 Implementation

The Analog-to-Digital Converter (ADC) is employed to convert analog signals from both the infrared and load cell sensors. The two infrared sensors collectively generate 16 analog outputs, while the load cell sensor contributes one. However, the specific ESP32 utilized in this project features only 12 available

ADC pins on the breakout board. This poses a constraint on the number of outputs from the infrared sensors that can be accommodated.

In the context of the infrared sensors, the ADC value varies based on the reflective properties of the surface. To facilitate line-following, the program assesses the ADC values and executes movement actions based on the reflectivity of the surface for each sensor in the array.

8   Testing

When testing the functionalities it is important to clearly define what the expected behaviour would be before preforming the test.

8.1   Test cases

Stage 1

#	Objective	Steps	Expected result	P/F
1.1	Forward movement	1.Flash stage 1 code 2.Place forklift down on the floor 3.Press start	The forklift moves forward a arbitrary distance	
1.2	Backward movement	—"—	The forklift moves backward a arbitrary distance	
1.3	Forward right movement	—"—	The forklift moves forward and right a arbitrary distance and angle	
1.4	Forward left movement	—"—	The forklift moves forward and left a arbitrary distance and angle	
1.5	Stationary right turn	—"—	The forklift turns right a arbitrary angle	
1.6	Stationary left turn	—"—	The forklift turns left a arbitrary angle	
1.7	Read battery voltage	1.Measure the battery voltage with a multimeter 2.Flash stage 1 code 3. Read displayed voltage in display	The multimeter measurement and display value should be the same with a tolerance of 2%	
1.8	Battery voltage low	—"—	The forklift should not start when the start button is pressed. Instead it should prompt the user that the battery needs to be charged.	

Stage 2

#	Objective	Steps	Expected result	P/F
2.1	Movement following the line path	1.Flash stage 2 code 2.Place the forklift on line 3.Press start	The forklift should follow the line path when moving at a arbitrary speed.	
2.2	Detected obstacle stop	—"—4.Place obstacle on path	The forklift should stop before hitting the obstacle	
2.3	Detected obstacle start	1.Run test case 2.2 first. 2.Remove obstacle for the path	The forklift resumes it movement along the path	

Stage 3

#	Objective	Steps	Expected result	P/F
3.1	Move fork up	1.Flash stage 3 code 2.Place the forklift on line 3.Press start		
3.2	Move fork down	—"—		
3.3	Move fork to minimum	—"—		
3.4	Move fork to maximum	—"—		
3.5	Detected pallet	—"—	The forklift should detected and move into position of the pallet	
3.6	Move pallet up	—"—	The forklift should move the forks under the pallet and move it up a arbitrary distance	
3.7	Move with pallet	—"—	The forklift lift should move with the pallet to the destination point along the path	
3.7	Move pallet down		The forklift lift should move the pallet down to ground level	

9   Conclusion

10   Appendix

10.1   Acronyms

OS	Operating system
RTOS	Real-time operating system
MCU	Microcontroller
ADC	Analog to digital converter
IDF	IoT Development Framework
PDB	Printed circuit board

10.2   Glossary

FreeRTOS	A open source real-time operating system
base10	Decimal numeral system
base16	Hexadecimal numeral system
base2	Binary numeral system
c language	General purpose programming language
DevOps	A means for improving and shortening the systems development life cycle.
Flash memory	An electronic non-volatile computer memory storage medium
Gantt chart	A bar chart that illustrates a project schedule.
Github	A DevOps software package
git	Distributed version control system
Microcontroller	A small computer on a single VLSI IC chip.
Scrum	An agile project management framework