Throughout all of these efforts our goal has been to ensure that ITE maintains a relevant and recognized position in this emerging CAV world. We have emphasized the important role that infrastructure owners and operators will play in the deployment of CAV, advocated for vehicle to infrastructure connectivity in achieving CAV safety and mobility goals, and championed increased collaboration between the public and private sector stakeholders. You can see these thoughts vividly reflected in the recent update to ITE’s position on CAV, which our Steering Committee helped shape.

As we move forward into 2019, we will continue to be ITE’s external voice on CAV issues, as well as maintain our internal efforts to educate and inform ITE members on the initiative. In 2019 our CV/AV Steering Committee will also be establishing two new work groups to support these efforts. The first will focus on increasing CAV-related outreach and communications, with ITE membership as the target audience. The second will explore the role of infrastructure owners and operators in planning, designing, managing, and operating in a CAV-focused world. Through this dialogue, we hope to identify opportunities for public agencies to enhance CAV effectiveness and to ensure that CAV provides the promised benefits for all citizens, while also providing an avenue for private companies to garner feedback from our membership on issues that are critical to achieving those objectives. If you are interested in participating in either of these new work groups please reach out to me at steve.kuciemb@wsp.com.

THE ROLE OF THE TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONAL IN THE AUTOMATED FUTURE

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About a year ago I attended the national conference for another professional society. While working my company’s booth in the exhibit hall of that conference, I was approached by an individual. We exchanged pleasantries, and I introduced myself as a traffic engineer. He then asked what my career plans would be in five years when traffic engineers are out of work and looking for new employment. While the conversation had a sarcastic tone, it was a familiar topic. In fact, I have been approached by younger engineers asking the similar question, “Will I still have a job as a traffic engineer in five years?”

At the Joint ITE International and Midwestern/Great Lakes Districts Annual Meeting and Exhibit in August 2018, the Advocacy Committee hosted a meeting of ITE leadership from across ITE to discuss this topic. Individuals from the International Board of Direction (IBOD), District/Section Board representatives, and chairs from each of ITE’s Technical Councils and Committees were invited to participate in a discussion with the potential to shape ITE’s future.

During the discussion the group brought to light the myriad related topics that will be impacted with the projected connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV) future envisioned by the masses. These topics included pedestrian and urban design, transportation equity, Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO), and curbside management policy. Throughout the conversation, it was noted that there are many “future thought leaders” pushing information—right or wrong—with predictions for the future of transportation. This conversation boiled down to two primary questions: What are the facts, and what is ITE’s position? Can ITE be the factual voice on this topic just like it is on other transportation related topics?

It is obvious to all that our Community of Transportation Professionals who make up the membership of ITE are not the only disciplines dancing in the CAV ballroom. Electrical engineers, software designers, urban planners, data analysts, robotics engineers, systems engineers, and mechanical engineers are all disciplines involved in various aspects of attaining the autonomous future. In addition to this list, there are the elected officials melding public policy and insurance industries working to identify possible new business models that all have a stake in the game.

Can ITE partner and collaborate with these other disciplines to provide a consistent and professional message that supports the advancement of these future technologies in a responsible manner?

The group concluded that issues and challenges identified are really all about people. Our partnerships and combined memberships seek to enable infrastructure to support the heavily laden technological future. Our student chapters seek to produce graduates with the skills needed in the future workforce. Our elected officials need trusted sources of information. This input along with other issues and thoughts is being considered by our Coordinating Council and our IBOD to develop a position for our membership, one that ultimately follows and advocates on our role in the automated future.

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