

# Construction, Design & Engineering Stewardship: Many viewpoints but only one mission

Consulting engineers are trained to collaborate with other engineers, planners, architects and owners in delivering complex projects. Collaboration yields better solutions and integrates diverse objectives while preserving resources and protecting public health, welfare and safety. In today's world, a collaboration among conventional partners is necessary; however, consulting engineers increasingly engage other professions: educators, first responders, business people, data specialists and more to deliver complete projects that reflect our industry mission of improving quality of life.

As technology fuses the built environment with the human experience through real-time information and behavior modification, consulting engineers are shaping a better future for all as visionary leaders with holistic, effective and inclusive approaches. For example, we are applying lessons learned by firefighters while responding to wildfires to improve safe and effective management of traffic crashes. Meanwhile, firefighters are learning about traffic system safety and congestion consequences of lane blockages, and they are able to see a larger picture of how our community is impacted when crashes occur.

Interestingly, maximum success



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in protecting public safety is generated when transportation engineers tighten their "system" view and first responders broaden their "scene" view. The two views are complementary, not mutually exclusive, and neither is complete without the other.

Our shared mission of community safety serves all. We save lives every day when we hold each other accountable as peers to put community first.

Similarly, consulting engineers are spending more time learning about building users and their daily habits in developing the systems that make indoor spaces safe, comfortable, useful and dynamic. Understanding more realistically what doctors, nurses, patients, educators, students, and others do and how they do it informs projects in a way that matches programming, physical considerations and human elements.

Heating, cooling, lighting and many other elements of buildings of the future are changing

to link what users need with what is possible. Options to create buildings that serve both owner objectives and user needs equitably at a reasonable cost are expanding at the pace of innovation. Creating the world of the future occurs when we, as consulting engineers, look at what is needed tomorrow, employ those well-honed solutions that remain relevant, and lead our teams to develop, test and execute the next set of best practice solutions.

Certainly, keeping up with the pace of technological advancement, including incorporation of artificial intelligence and digitalization, is generating change all on its own. Meeting our industry's mission to serve the values, health, welfare and safety of the public cannot happen successfully absent of community values. Recognizing that engineering firms must evolve to deliver comprehensive solu-

tions, the composition of our skills and staff are changing. Today's engineering firms employ engineers, planners, architects, builders, scientists, environmental and technology specialists, public relations personnel and researchers. These expanded teams are helping our communities, businesses and governmental agencies to manage the consequences of change. The many perspectives of today's engineering firms allow owners, communities and even specific projects to draw out the best of what each participant has to offer and to resolve conflicts productively.

In many ways, expanding partnerships beyond traditional teams brings the engineer full circle from ideation through execution. It is natural for the consulting engineer to work to understand a community's needs and desires, to map those elements against a set of possibilities, then to optimize, design and execute a preferred program of improvements. The process of

listening, learning, understanding and executing responsibly for our communities is stewardship.

Maximum success in stewardship results from transforming the activities that we already do every day. As we work and participate in public life, we continue to keep an eye on speaking up to make sensible, engineering-based policy. We look for missing partners and engage them. We infuse the public's image of engineers with leadership, vision and responsibility. We attract the best and brightest minds of future generations to our profession. We share our knowledge and the lessons we learn along the way. We also make businesses that support the desired lifestyles of current and future engineers; businesses that employees want to be part of in the future.

Colorado's consulting engineers are intentionally contributing our skills beyond projects to make improvements in our communities. We continue to support present and future quality of life for engineers and our communities alike. Success as stewards delivers Colorado's quality of life in a way that will assure that the promise of the independent spirit of the West and the great outdoors will continue to inspire and attract great minds for future generations. ▲

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