

# EVOLUTION

By Timothy H. Haahs, PE, AIA

I am pleased to introduce a new *The Parking Professional* column written by IPI's consultant members and designed to share insights on our industry from the consultant's perspective. This monthly column will address all aspects of the parking industry, from planning and design to operations and best practices.

When I began as a parking consultant 30 years ago, we had a near singular focus on functional design and structural engineering as it relates to parking garage and lot design. In the last 20 years, our business has been transformed, not only by innovative planning and design, but also by the amazing leap in technology that we have experienced. As consultants, our purpose is to create solutions to parking and transportation challenges, and to foster a collaborative environment that can incubate innovation and progressive thinking. This column is just one forum provided by IPI for that collaboration.

Our 288 individual consultant members from 60 member companies offer a wide array of services and expertise, from planning and design to management and technology. In this role, we are exposed to and learn a great deal from different clients and teaming partners. As collectors and collaborators, we can share this experience—case studies, lessons learned, success stories, and even barriers, challenges, and failed projects. We have a good sense of the state of the industry as well as the state of the art. We would like to use this piece of real estate to share these insights with the full IPI membership, offering the perspective of a different consultant member each month.



**TIMOTHY H. HAAHS,**  
P.E., AIA is president  
of Timothy Haahs &  
Associates and chair  
of IPI's Consultants  
Committee. He can be  
reached at [thaahs@timhaahs.com](mailto:thaahs@timhaahs.com) or  
484.342.0200.

## A Unique Position

It is an honor for me to write this inaugural column, and I would offer a topic that I hope will be familiar to you: *Parking Matters*®. The evolving discussion of sustainability has many aspects, but one of the most prominent is the role of transportation and parking. What we do critically affects the stated goals of many

in the sustainability movement, reducing carbon emissions, alleviating traffic congestion, and improving the quality and health of the physical environment, primarily in urban areas. We have a role to play, and to play it, we need a seat at the table.

When an educational institution seeks to grow enrollment, provide additional on-campus housing, or green its fleet, parking will be affected and can shape policies that support these goals. The same follows for healthcare and other anchor institutions, corporate headquarters, and municipal and parking authorities.

Often, the consultant has a unique position as an external observer and expert, called in to solve a particular problem or make recommendations for improvement. This position can give the consultant a vantage point that's once removed from the owner, allowing consideration of innovative opportunities and more diverse opinions. We have the option to provide merely the services requested or go a step or two further and genuinely seek to identify the inherent opportunities in a master plan, design layout, or operational review. Our work, done well as a team with the consultant and owner jointly pursuing a goal, can attract the attention of the highest decision makers, and earn that seat at the table.

I encourage all of our consultant members and all IPI members to avail themselves of this opportunity: to look through an external perspective, to consider turning the tables on a problem, and to get that seat at the table. *Parking Matters*®.