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President's Message



By Giancarlo Gandini, T.E., ITE Western District President

To recap the summer, the Joint International and Western/Mountain Districts Annual Meeting was held on July 20-29th. The District and several of our members were recognized at the International level, including International's District Innovation Award and "Best in Class" for the Transportation Transforms Communities Video Challenge. Of our members,

David S. Hurwitz was selected for the Wilbur S. Smith Distinguished Transportation Educator Award, Neelam Dorman and Daniel Lai were included in the first class of Young Leaders to Follow, and Oregon State University won a compelling competition for the International Collegiate Traffic Bowl.

Our Fall Joint Sections Technical Webinar Series ("What you Knew is Changing") was held over five weeks beginning in October and was well-attended by over 185 attendees from all Western District Sections! Thank you to the ITE San Diego Section for hosting, all our presenters, and sponsors (Michael Baker International, KOA Corporation, W-Trans, HDR, Counts Unlimited, and Econolite).

As we roll out a couple of new Western District initiatives this

fall, I'd like to acknowledge our MiteY Mentorship Program Lead, Daniel Lai (Washington Section), and Technical Committee Chair, Patrick Marnell (Oregon Section), for their efforts. In association with our Career Guidance Committee (chaired by Jenny Tapat), the MiteY Mentorship program was announced at the Annual Meeting in July and is kicking off on November 18th with a virtual event focused on providing mentorship insights for students and young professionals on a range of career development issues.

Coinciding with National STEM day on November 8th, our Technical Committee has worked to re-structure the Western District's student project RFP into an effort that will also advance STEM outreach. In addition to facilitating Student Chapter activities, mentoring, and approximating real-world RFP experience for university students, this newly envisioned program aims to generate new STEM content for introducing high school and middle school students to transportation planning/engineering. Student chapters should keep an eye for the RFP in early November! Remember to save the date and visit www.westernite.org for more information regarding the following Western District events:

- Student Leadership Summit: January 28-30th, 2022.
- Annual Meeting: June 26-29th, 2022

Have a happy and safe holiday season!

2022 WesternITE Annual Meeting

Palm Springs, CA - June 26-29

Annual Board Meeting Highlights

By Kimberly Leung, P.E., T.E., ITE Western District Secretary-Treasurer

On July 23, 2021, the Western District Board members, committee chairs, section representatives, and guests met virtually for the 2021 Western District Annual Board Meeting. **President Giancarlo Ganddini** announced the reappointment of Cameron Shew as Website Manager and the resignation of Erica Jensen as WesternITE Managing Editor. **Vice President Joe De La Garza** provided updates on awards, committee travel budgets, and the leadership directory.

Secretary-Treasurer Kimberly Leung reported that an excess of funds is expected for FY20-21 and shared a balanced budget for FY21-22. The District's Zoom licenses have been made available to Sections during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to be available in FY21-22. \$3,000 was allocated to LeadershipITE scholarships in FY20-21, and this funding will be moved forward to FY21-22.

Past President Neelam Dorman announced that the City of Fremont's Vision Zero Program was the Western District's Transportation Project of the Year and the ITE International Award winner in the Safety category.

ITE Executive Director Jeff Paniati congratulated the Western District on winning two awards this year – Best in Class for the ITE 2021 video challenge and the ITE 2021 District Innovation Award. He also touched on the first ITE International Student Leadership Summit; the spring technical conference, which had a large public sector presence; the inaugural class of Young Leaders to Follow; and the upcoming LeadershipITE program.

ITE International President Alyssa Rodriguez spoke about ITE International's focus on newly formed Sections and Districts following OneITE. She also shared that an initial white paper focused on the topic of equity will be prepared following a series of listening sessions and that a report with an action plan for transitioning student members to young members has been prepared by the Student to Young Member Task Force.

District Administrator Dalene Whitlock reported updates made to the International Director Duties document and the Board Procedures manual. Charters were prepared for 27 student chapters, and final charters were issued to 21 student chapters.

Committee updates were given by **WesternITE Managing Editor Erica Jensen, Advertising Manager Ryan Zellers, Website Manager Cameron Shew, Technical Chair Pat Marnell, Career Guidance Chair Jenny Tapat, Student Funding and Initiatives Chair Ashley Kim, Public Relations Chair Paul Stanis, and LAC Committee Chair Cathy Leong.**

Section Representatives provided reports from each of the 11 sections regarding activities and provided a forum for coordination among all the Sections and the Board. The key discussion topic was whether Sections will be pursuing virtual, in-person, or hybrid meetings beginning in the fall.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 am. The next Board Meeting will held Friday, January 21, 2022 in Southern California

Annual Business Meeting Highlights

By Kimberly Leung, P.E., T.E., ITE Western District Secretary-Treasurer

The Western District Annual Business Meeting was held on Friday, July 23, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm by President Giancarlo Ganddini and commenced with a moment of silence for deceased members Dennis Belluomini, Chuck DeLeuw, James Federhart, Kevin Jones, and Robert Kniefel.

President Giancarlo Ganddini recognized the District's Committee Chair, Section Representatives. Local Arrangements Committee, and other volunteers that planned and executed the annual meeting and District virtual events.

The District held its Mid-Year Board Meeting on 01/29/21 and its Annual Board Meeting on 07/23/21. The Student Leadership Summit was held in January. The Northern California Section hosted the SB743 webinar series, and the Oregon Section hosted the diversity and inclusion webinar series.

Secretary-Treasurer Kimberly Leung shared a balanced budget for FY21-22. The District's restructured advertising and sponsorship program exceeded its income goals for FY20-21, and the FY21-22 budget increases the expected income from the sponsorship program.

The election results were announced, and the winners of the 2021 election were International Director Neelam Dorman, President Joe De La Garza, Vice President Kimberly Leung, Secretary-Treasurer Doug Smith. ITE International President Alyssa Rodriguez officiated the installation of the new District officers

President Giancarlo Ganddini provided closing remarks to the members and announced that the next Annual Meeting will be from June 26-29th, 2022 in Palm Springs. The meeting adjourned at 12:34 pm.

MiteY Mentorship

The purpose of the Western District ITE Career Guidance Committee is to promote the advancement of the transportation planning and engineering profession by fostering the close association of senior professionals with civil and transportation planning, ITE, and young professionals. One of the ways we hope to achieve this is through a re-vamped mentorship program (MiteY Mentorship).

Unlike traditional one-on-one programs, the MiteY Mentorship initiative takes a community-based approach with a network of professionals who will serve as mentors. Mentees will have access to a community of mentors who are able to provide advice on a variety of topics depending on the needs of the mentees. At this time, our community of MiteY Mentors includes over 40+ professionals who are eager to provide guidance on a variety of topics including but not limited to the following topics:

- Career growth/advancement, especially in years 1-5
- Expanding technical know-how
- Writing, time management, and organization
- Dealing with other employees
- Leadership roles/positions
- East vs west coast jobs
- Knowing when to change jobs
- Negotiating compensation
- Public vs private sector
- Graduate school



"I've been very lucky to have several fantastic mentors that have played an integral role in shaping my path forward. Their faith in me has truly helped me develop the confidence to be where I am now. It has contributed immensely both to my professional development and to my feeling connected to the transportation profession—I can't speak highly enough about how important mentoring has been to me."

Events will be held on a quarterly basis with the first quarterly event held on November 18, 2021. The November event included a panel session comprised of Sowmya Chandrasekhar (Kimley-Horn), Henry Hammel (Metropolitan Transportation Commission), Daniel Lai (City of Bellevue), Lisa Patterson

(Portland Bureau of Transportation), Cameron Shew (Sacramento County Department of Transportation), and Tyler Wong (Toole Design Group). The panel discussion explored issues relating to work/life balance, how to negotiate compensation, and deciding the right time to leave a job.



Please check out the Career Guidance tab on our Western District Website for more information on the event as well the MiteY Mentorship program. As the future of our industry, one of the most critical steps we can take to ensure our younger member's continued success is to support them through mentorship. Amy Wyman, 2021 Outstanding Student Awardee wrote:

If you are interested in serving as a mentor or know of someone who would benefit from the program, please contact program lead Daniel Lai or Jenny Tapat, Career Guidance Committee Chairperson.

Save the Date for the San Jose State University Student Leadership Summit

January 28-30

Mark your calendars for the 2022 SLS! This virtual event is hosted by the San Jose State Student Chapter and registration ends **January 1st**. See more details and register at sjsuite.weebly.com/student-leadership-summit-2022

2021 Annual Meeting Award Winners

Award	2021 Recipient
Best Annual Meeting Paper Award	Jessica Miranda and Jeanne Bowie, "Road/Rail Crossing Reduction Study in Fairbanks and North Pole, Alaska"
Best Annual Meeting Paper Award by a Young Professional	Andrew Sullivan, "Flanders Bridge & Neighborhood Greenway"
James H. Kell Award	1st Place: UCLA 2nd Place: Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (Team SLO1) 3rd Place (Tie): Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (Team SLO2) 3rd Place (Tie): Oregon State University
Lifetime Achievement Award	Dalene J. Whitlock
Individual Achievement Award	Sowmya Chandrasekhar
Outstanding Undergraduate Student	Katherine Lee (Cal Poly SLO)
Outstanding Graduate Student	Amy Wyman (Oregon State University)
Outstanding Educator	Dr. Masoud Ghodrat Abadi (Cal State Sacramento)
Richard T. Romer Endowment Fund: Highest Contribution Per Member Award Highest Overall Contribution Award	Central Coast Section (per member), San Francisco Bay Section (overall), Souther California Section (overall)
Section/Chapter Activities Award, Large Section	Oregon Section
Section/Chapter Activities Award, Small Section	San Diego Section
Section/Chapter Communication Award	Southern California Section
Section/Chapter Momentum Award	Hawaii Section
Student Chapter Award	Oregon State University
Student Chapter Momentum Award	UCLA
Student Paper Award	Marcus Chan (University of California, Davis)
Student Traffic Bowl Winner	Oregon State University
Wayne T. and Patricia VanWagoner Award (for best paper by a WD member published in ITE Journal in prior calendar year)	Dr. David Hurwitz
Young Professional Achievement Award	Daniel Lai
Outstanding Technical Paper	Dr. David Hurwitz

In addition, the Western District received the **2021 Innovation Award** and **2021 Transportation Transforms Communities Video Challenge** Best in Class Award from ITE international

2021 Best Paper

The District's Best Paper Award is one of the most prestigious presented each year. The winning paper is presented here.

Road/Rail Crossing Reduction Study in Fairbanks and North Pole, Alaska

Jessica Miranda, PE and Jeanne Bowie PE, Ph.D., PTOE

This paper has been slightly edited for length. Read the full text at www.westernite.com

1 Introduction and Background

Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) located in the center of Alaska and includes the incorporated cities of Fairbanks and North Pole. Home to approximately 86,000 people, this area is the second most populous area in the State of Alaska. Fairbanks is a freight hub for Alaska's mineral extraction industry, with petroleum and coal products moving from extraction locations through Fairbanks to Alaska's ports, while heavy equipment and supplies head from the ports to the extraction locations, mainly the North Slope oil fields along the northern edge of Alaska. The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) transports many of these goods; approximately 12 percent of the containers that enter the Port of Alaska are transported to Fairbanks by rail. ARRC also provides freight service to the area military bases and provides year-round passenger rail service between Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Given the size of the population, Fairbanks has a well-developed road network with good continuity and connectivity that fosters relatively low average annual daily traffic (AADT) volumes throughout the area. The highest volume segments on arterials entering and exiting the urban area carry around 25,000 vehicles per day.

Of specific concern to the FAST Planning area, the Fairbanks area has been designated a nonattainment area for PM2.5 particulate matter. Improvements that reduce transportation-related emissions is one of the tools being

used to reduce overall emissions in the area and one of the goals of the crossing reduction study is to reduce congestion and emissions at the at-grade crossings in the area. Approximately 16 percent of the rail/road crossings in Alaska are located within the FAST Planning boundary, including 5 grade separated crossings and 69 at-grade crossings.

In 1985, the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) prepared the Fairbanks Railroad Industrial Area (FRIA) Relocation Report, which recommended the relocation of the railroad track, rail yard, and industrial customers outside of the Fairbanks urban core area. An environmental assessment has been prepared for Phase 1, which would relocate the track outside of the core area of North Pole. While the relocation project would decrease congestion and improve safety, the project would be very costly (at least \$500 million) and is expected to take many years to complete.

The current planning effort, the Fairbanks Road/Rail Crossing Reduction/Realignment Plan (Plan), is a near term effort to enable FAST Planning and partnering agencies to implement an efficient and effective approach to address safety and operational concerns at at-grade rail/road and rail/pedestrian crossings (hereafter referred to as crossings) within the FAST Planning boundary.

2 Choosing Crossings to Focus On

The 5 separated grade crossing facilities are generally newer crossings with

adequate designs and were therefore excluded from the study. Data was collected for the 69 existing at-grade crossings within the FAST Planning boundary. Data gathered include roadway and rail traffic information and physical characteristics, crossing permittee, public facilities that may be impacted by the crossings, and the crossing's impact on the surface transportation system.

The at-grade crossings were screened for those most in need of safety and/or operational improvements using a two-level screening process. The screening process was performed under the advisement of a steering committee who provided local and technical perspective on recommendations and planning efforts. During the process, the team also looked for opportunities to reduce the density of crossings by eliminating or consolidating them. Most of the potential candidates for elimination or consolidation were ultimately ruled out due to a lack of roadway connectivity or the nature of the crossing agreements.

2.1 Level 1 Screening

2.1 Evaluation Metrics

Level 1 screening criteria included safety and operational assessment factors, crossing geometrics, and public comments. Safety and operational factors and public comments were the primary assessment metrics, and crossing geometrics were used as a secondary measure.

Safety Metric - Accident Prediction Value (APV) and APV Capacity: One of the safety metrics used for the screening process was Accident Prediction Value

(APV), a calculated value intended to predict the likelihood of a crossing-related crash occurring over a given period of time. The team used direct comparison of the APVs at different crossing locations as one method to prioritize crossings.

Calculating the APV also allowed the team to look at how close a crossing is to needing increased traffic control protection. A set of threshold values published in the Alaska Policy on Railroad/Highway Crossings, indicate the minimum APV for which increased traffic control is required at a crossing, based on the crossing’s existing traffic control devices. Because the existing traffic control devices are not the same at every crossing the threshold value is not the same for each location; therefore, using APV by itself does not address the need for improvements at the crossings.

Thus, the team came up with a new metric, “APV capacity”, which is calculated by dividing the APV at a specific location by the threshold APV for that location, given the existing traffic control. The APV capacity metric allowed prioritization of crossings based on how close they are to requiring the next level of traffic control protection. As an example, Table 1 presents 3 crossings with different levels of existing traffic control devices, so that they each have different APV thresholds. In the example, each crossing has the same calculated APV. The traffic control for Crossing A is signs only. Because the APV is above the threshold APV (APV capacity >100%), the crossing is in immediate need of improvements¹ (the next level of traffic control device). The existing devices for Crossing B, flashing signals, are appropriate as the minimum requirement¹,

Table 1: APV Capacity Comparison

Crossing	Existing Traffic Control Devices	Calculated APV	Threshold APV	APV Capacity	Minimum Required Traffic Control Devices (TCD) ¹
Crossing A	Signs Only	0.16	0.12	133%	Install next level of TCD - Flashing Signals
Crossing B	Flashing Signals		0.18	89%	TCD is ok; but close to needing next level
Crossing C	Automatic Gates & Flashing Signals		1.98	8%	TCD is good; no need to install next level

but the APV is nearing the threshold value (APV capacity >80%), which indicates a safety improvement may be needed in the near future.

The calculated APV at Crossing C, with Automatic gates and flashing signal, is well below the threshold value (APV capacity <50%). Therefore, no safety improvement needs¹ are anticipated in the near future.

Safety Metric – Crash History and Crash Sensitivity Analysis: The safety assessment also considered the 5-year crash history between 2013 and 2019. Alaska’s crash rate for rail crossings is very low; therefore, the team chose to evaluate any crossing with a recent crash history.

In addition, the team used a new metric called “crash sensitivity,” which involved calculating the number of additional crossing-related crashes needed to increase the crossing APV to the point that the threshold value for needing additional crossing protection is reached. The crash sensitivity measure provides an additional method for prioritizing crossings that are closer to requiring enhanced traffic control devices.

Operational Metric – Exposure Factor: A crossing’s exposure factor was used as an operational metric for prioritizing crossings. Exposure factor is calculated as the vehicle traffic volume multiplied by the train traffic volume and is a surrogate measure of the probability of conflicts and vehicle delay at a crossing.

Crossing Geometric Metric – Sight Distance: Geometric metrics were evaluated for each crossing, and those where a concern was identified were more likely to be included as a prioritized crossing. Sight distance triangles, unobstructed

views from motorists to an approaching train, were reviewed for each crossing using aerial imagery both for stopped vehicles and for those approaching the crossing at speed. The required sight distance varies based on the maximum potential train speed and the posted roadway speed limit, as shown in Table 2.

Crossing Geometric Metric – Approach Skew: Approach skew, the smallest angle between the roadway and the railroad track at an at-grade crossing, was also evaluated as a geometric metric. Ideally, roadway approaches should be perpendicular to tracks. Sharp skews at a crossing require drivers to twist their head and torso, sometimes uncomfortably for elderly or disabled drivers, making it difficult for a driver to see an oncoming train and assess whether or not it is safe to cross the tracks. In Alaska, the minimum skew angle for passive traffic control (signs only) is 75-degrees, otherwise, automatic gates and/or flashing signals should be present at the crossing. During Level 1 screening, aerial imagery was used to approximately estimate the approach skew.

Crossing Geometric Metric – Vehicle Storage: Vehicle storage, the distance between the tracks and a downstream-nearby roadway intersection, was looked at as a geometric metric. When there is not enough room for vehicles to queue between the intersection and the tracks, drivers may spillback and stop on the tracks, which could contribute to crashes between trains and stopped vehicles and/or between vehicles. The minimum vehicle storage length should be at least equal to the length of the longest vehicle expected to frequently use the crossing; however, it is desirable to be able to store the entire vehicle

queue. During Level 1 screening, aerial imagery was used to determine crossings that potentially had a vehicle storage issue.

Public Comment: During the Level 1 screening process, the public had an opportunity to comment on issues and concerns for specific crossings. Any crossing that received a public comment that indicated a concern was identified for further review.

2.1.2 Level 1 Screening Results

At the level 1 screening, the intent was to identify approximately 30 crossings most in need of improvements. Crossings that were noted to be further evaluated included those with the following metrics:

- Highest Safety Assessment, which included crossings meeting all of the following 3 criteria:
 1. ranking in the 30 highest for APV capacity
 2. having collision sensitivity analysis resulting in the least number of crashes required to meet the next APV threshold for crossing protection
 3. ranking in the 30 highest for HI
- History of prior collisions
- Highest exposure factor
- Recent crash history
- Any applicable public comment

Crossings meeting one of criteria noted above were individually reviewed for geometric concerns.

From the Level 1 screening, 29 of the 69 existing at-grade crossings were advanced to Level 2 screening. Of these, 27 crossings were selected based on the safety, operational, or geometric assessments. Two additional crossings were added based on public comments only.

2.2 Level 2 Screening

2.2.1 Evaluation Metrics

The 29 crossings selected under the first screening process were reviewed with the steering committee. Based on steering committee input, crossings that had programmed projects were

excluded and the remaining crossings were further screened using two general categories: safety issues and maintenance issues. Reviewing crossings for maintenance issues allowed lower volume crossings with potentially low cost improvements that would otherwise be overshadowed by the higher safety-centric measures to be included in the analysis.

Safety Issue Category: The safety issue metrics were again applied to the crossings selected from Level 1. This category included assessment of the Hazard Index; APV Capacity; Crash Sensitivity; safety-related crossing geometrics, including sight distance, vehicle storage, and approach skew; and safety-related public comments.

All the metrics were normalized based on the maximum values or maximum number of occurrences per individual crossing when computing the safety score. A summation of the metrics was taken for a total safety issue score per crossing. Equation 1 describes the normalized computation.

Maintenance Issue Category: Crossings identified as having possible maintenance issues were evaluated separately from the whole. These included crossings with public comments noting poor crossing condition as well as any crossing identified during the Level 1 screening as having possible sight distance issues due to overgrowth of vegetation. These crossings were then ranked relative to each other based on the safety issues category.

2.2.2 Field Review

The top 10 crossings under both categories were compiled and individually reviewed for duplication and consideration of public comments such as noise complaints. In total, 11 crossings were selected for further evaluation due to safety or maintenance concerns. These crossings were reviewed in the field by the study team, accompanied by

representatives of ARRC. The existing sight distance and vehicle storage were measured; the existing signage, striping, and signal controls, if applicable, were inventoried; and traffic operations were observed. In addition, approach grade was assessed. Per ARRC Technical Standards, a 50-foot-long level area is required at the crossing to prevent low, long trailers from damaging or getting stuck on the tracks. Each crossing was discussed by the team and possible elements for improvement were identified.

2.2.3 Level 2 Screening Results

As a result of the field review, 1 additional crossing was added to the crossings for which alternatives were developed, so it could be reviewed as a system with other crossings. In total, 12 crossings were advanced to the alternative development stage.

2.3 Alternative Development

After the field review and consideration of possible improvements, alternatives were recommended for 12 crossings. The alternatives were reviewed with the Steering Committee and final recommended improvements, along with accompanying priorities, were established. The alternatives were also evaluated to determine the benefits provided. Benefits evaluated include:

- Reduction in vehicle delay
- Reduction in vehicle emissions
- Safety improvement (reduction in likelihood of crashes)
- Reduction in train noise where noise was identified as a concern
- Reduction in crossing maintenance efforts
- Meeting current standards

3 Plan Summary

The team, in coordination with the Steering Committee, developed the draft Plan, which will be presented for public comment in May 2021 and finalized in September 2021. The Plan outlines the screening process and presents the recommended improvements.

In summary, the Plan proposes the following types of improvements:

Update Crossing Equipment to Current Standards: Two crossings propose adding pedestrian automatic gates and/or signals. In these locations, the non-motorized facilities lack traffic control devices for the crossings. In order to be in compliant with ARRC standards, non-motorized facilities require the same crossing protection as the adjacent roadway. This will enhance safety, especially for bicyclists who often are traveling at a higher speed and may not have as much time to react to train activity.

For two other crossings, mitigations are recommended to address geometric concerns, such as approach grade or approach skew. These improvements will improve sight distance, increasing safety for the motorists, and could also reduce the maintenance burden at the crossings.

The Plan also recommends area-wide train signal control cabinet improvements. During the field review, ARRC noted many of the existing crossing signal cabinets, including the equipment contained within them, are out of date or obsolete and do not provide the controlled environment that is required for modern crossing signal electrical equipment. Updating the cabinets and included equipment will increase safety for railroad maintenance personnel and decrease the likelihood of faulty signal function, which increases motorist safety.

Quiet zone study: One recommended improvement involves initiating a quiet zone study. The crossings included in this improvement are within a residential neighborhood and received many public comments concerning train noise. Establishing a quiet zone in this area will enhance the quality of life for the residents.

School crossing: One pedestrian crossing is adjacent to and on a walking route

for a middle school. Enhanced traffic control devices are recommended at this crossing. Adding visual and physical devices at this crossing will alert pedestrians (including school children) of train activity. The improvements are proposed to be included with pedestrian crossing improvements for a nearby collector street, to further improve the safety for the school route. Proposed turning lane improvements could additionally reduce delay for vehicles when a train is in the crossing, incrementally improving air quality.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS): Flashing advance warning signs are recommended at a crossing on a high speed, high volume highway with an extremely skewed crossing. This crossing is associated with the highest number of crashes of all the crossings within the study area. Installation of flashing advance warning signs will alert motorists ahead of time that the crossing is active, to prepare them to stop. Flashing advance warning signs have been successful in alerting drivers of an active train crossing in Anchorage, Alaska.

Conversion from Manual Switch to Automatic Switch: Currently, the train yard has a manual switch, which affects one of the highest used crossings (in terms of train traffic, as well as vehicle traffic) in the study area. The trains coming up to Fairbanks from Anchorage are typically long enough that the train must stop in the crossing while an operator steps off the train to manually activate the switch. These train movements often coincide with morning rush hour traffic. Replacing the manual switch with an automatic switch that could be activated without stopping the train would greatly reduce vehicle and train delay and

emissions at this location. Of particular interest, this recommendation has a high benefit/cost ratio.

Elimination/Consolidation/Improvement: A system evaluation of 3 crossings recommended improving 2 and eliminating 1. The three crossings are located in an area with low traffic volumes, and all serve the same neighborhood. The crossing that is proposed for elimination is unpermitted and therefore lacks maintenance. Eliminating the crossing will reduce the maintenance burden without significant effects to roadway connectivity, congestion, or delay.

Grade Separation: Grade separation alternatives were considered for several of the crossings. In many instances, grade separation is not practical due to nearby driveways and streets requiring the roadway grade to remain the same, high water tables, and nearby sidings requiring the railway track to remain at the same grade. One segment of the railroad was recommended for elevation, which would eliminate 6 at-grade crossings, grade separating 5 crossings with higher traffic volumes and closing 1 lower volume crossing. This would increase safety by removing the vehicle-train conflict points and it would significantly reduce vehicle delay and improve emissions.

4 Case Study for Old Steese Highway/ Steese Expressway Crossings

The Steese Expressway is a four-lane, di-



Figure 2: Aerial View of At-Grade Crossings and Issues of Alaska Railroad at Old Steese Highway and Steese Expressway near Trainor Gate Road

vided highway with access control that serves as a major north-south route through Fairbanks. Upon leaving Fairbanks, the Steese Expressway is the route for all truck traffic heading to the North Slope oil fields. A planning and environmental linkages (PEL) study that was completed in 2015 concluded that grade separation is desirable for the Steese Expressway intersections within Fairbanks.

The Old Steese Highway is a three-lane highway with a center two-way left turn lane that runs parallel to the Steese Expressway for about a mile, traveling through a major commercial corridor. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is currently designing a reconstruction project for the Old Steese Highway, which is expected to expand the road to a four-lane highway with two-way left turn lane.

The two roadways cross the Eielson Branch of the Alaska Railroad and a cross street, Trainor Gate Road, at the location where the distance between the two roads is narrowest, as shown in Figure 2.

The at-grade rail/road crossings of the Old Steese Highway and Steese Expressway ranked 5th and 1st in the initial plan screening and were considered a top priority by the steering committee. The close proximity between the railroad track and Trainor Gate Road, as well as the short distance between the Old St-

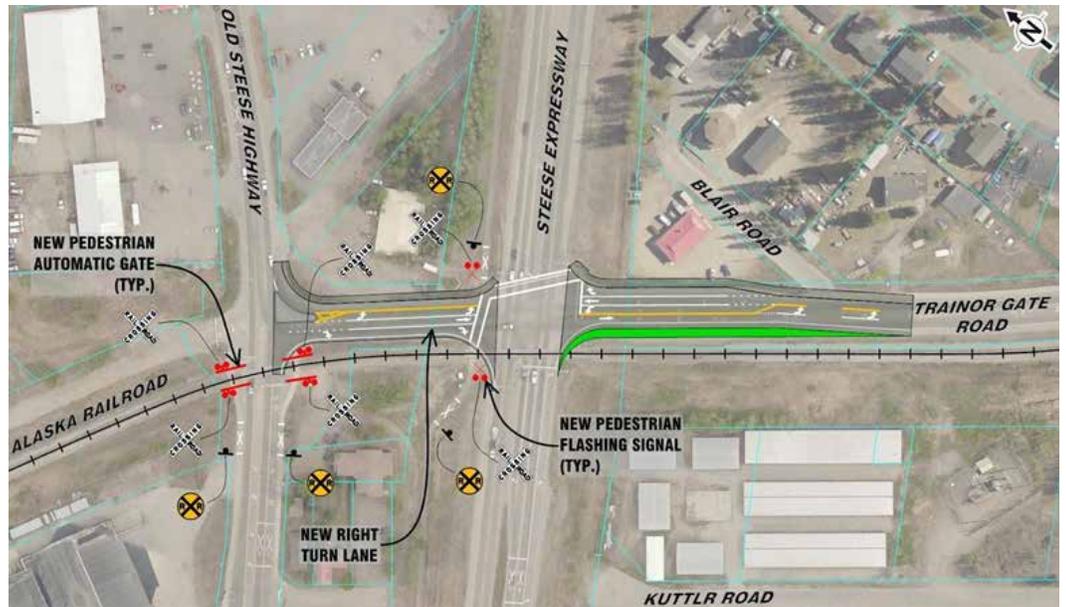


Figure 5: Old Steese Highway and Steese Expressway Concept Design

ese Highway and Steese Expressway have led to a number of concerns, which were identified during the field review:

- A history of 5 incidents from 2013 through 2019 in which drivers turned onto the tracks, thinking they were turning onto Trainor Gate Road, four of which occurred at the Old Steese Highway crossing. None of these incidents were in the DOT&PF crash database; they were all provided by ARRC from the ARRC security and police records.
- Limited storage space for pedestrians/bicyclists between the train tracks and Trainor Gate Road as identified in Figure 2 and shown in Figure 3.
- Queues for eastbound vehicles traveling from Old Steese Highway to Steese Expressway sometimes queue back to Old

Steese Highway, resulting in vehicles occasionally queuing across the railroad tracks as identified in Figure 2 and shown in Figure 4.

In addition to these crossing-related concerns, there are roadway operational concerns, for example queues for westbound vehicles traveling from Steese Expressway to Old Steese Highway sometimes extend back onto the Steese Expressway, blocking lanes on the highway. This occurs even though the westbound traffic is limited to a yield-controlled right turn only at the Old Steese Highway.

After the field review, the study team prepared a concept design for an alternative to move Trainor Gate Road away from the tracks at these two intersections and to install an eastbound right turn lane on Trainor Gate Road, for the turn onto the Steese Expressway, as a



Figure 3: Lack of pedestrian storage



Figure 4: Vehicle Queue across the Old Steese Highway Crossing

means of addressing the crossing-related pedestrian and vehicle storage concerns. In addition, pedestrian crossing traffic control devices were proposed to meet the ARRC standards. The concept design is presented in Figure 5.

As mentioned previously, DOT&PF has a reconstruction project currently in design for the Old Steese Highway that will expand the roadway to two lanes in each direction, with a center two-way-left-turn lane. The study team worked closely with DOT&PF to vet the team's alternative concept. After internal discussions, DOT&PF concluded that they would convert Trainor Gate Road to one-way westbound, as shown in Figure 6. This will effectively move Trainor Gate

Road away from the tracks without requiring any right-of-way acquisition, and will also eliminate the problem of eastbound vehicles queuing across the tracks. DOT&PF proposes to address the problem of westbound vehicles queuing back to the Steese Expressway by installing a free right turn from Trainor Gate Road onto the Old Steese Highway. Capacity improvements elsewhere in the street network are expected to accommodate the displaced eastbound traffic from Trainor Gate Road.

As a result of this process, the Fairbanks Road/Rail Crossing Reduction/Realignment Plan will succeed in achieving immediately implementable improvements that will significantly benefit

nonmotorized and vehicular traffic traveling across these two crossings.

5 Lessons Learned

- The railroad security and police records were not easily available (the ARRC steering committee member had to manually compile the incident record); however, they provided important insight into safety concerns at these crossings that would not have been understood only by reviewing the DOT&PF crash database.
- By checking in with the steering committee members frequently throughout the plan development process, the study team was able to keep apprised of other pertinent projects, ensuring that the plan remained up-to-date and could be implemented immediately.

6 References

- *Fairbanks Railroad Industrial Area (FRIA) Relocation Report*, FNSB, 1985
- *Alaska Policy on Railroad/Highway Crossings*, ADOT&PF and ARRC, September 1988
- *Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Handbook*, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), July 2019, Third Edition
- *Technical Standards for Roadway, Trail, and Utility Facilities in the ARRC Right-of-Way*, Alaska Railroad, January 2014

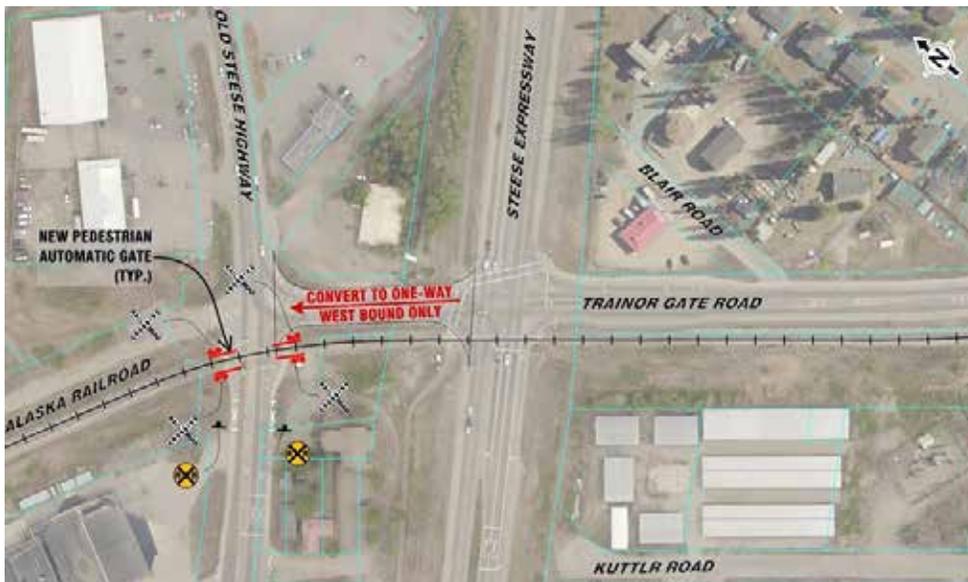


Figure 6: Old Steese Highway and Steese Expressway DOT&PF Solution

Committee Updates

District Local Arrangements Committee (LAC)

By Cathy Leong, PE, Committee Chair

The District LAC Committee also continues to assist the local LACs for the upcoming annual meetings. The 2022 Palm Springs LAC is well underway with meeting planning with the Call for Papers already issued and registration expected to commence soon. In addition, the District signed a contract this past spring with the Sheraton Grande Sacramento Hotel for the 2024 meeting to be held June 23-26, 2024. The 2023 meeting will be a joint meeting with International in Portland from Aug 13-16, 2023.

Committee Updates cont'd

Public Relations Committee

By Paul Stanis, Committee Chair

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Western District Lifetime Achievement Award is considered the District's highest recognition of professional accomplishment and outstanding services in the interest of Western District. It is designed to honor members of Western District who, as active or retired members in good standing of Western District, have accomplished significant achievements over a period of not less than 20 years that have benefited the membership of Western District, ITE as an organization, and the profession of transportation engineering and/or planning. The 2021 ITE Western District Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to **Dalene Whitlock** at this summer's Virtual Annual Meeting.

Individual Achievement Award

The Western District Individual Achievement Award is presented annually to an active member in good standing of Western District who has accomplished significant individual achievements that benefit Western District, and/or ITE, and/or the profession of transportation engineering/planning primarily during recent years. The 2021 ITE Western District Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to **Sowmya Chandrasekhar** at this summer's Virtual Annual Meeting.

Student Funding & Initiatives Committee (SFIC)

By Kayla Fleskes, PE, Committee Chair

Earlier this summer, the joint Western District and ITE International Annual meeting was held virtually. The SFIC led the Kell Competition and Western District Student Traffic Bowl, while handing out several student awards. For the first time since 2017, the Western District is once again home to the winners of the International Student Traffic Bowl Competition: congratulations Oregon State University!

Coming up in January 2022, San Jose State University will host a virtual Student Leadership Summit (SLS), an event planned by students, for students. Through the promotion of leadership and professional development, the SLS events aim to guide future transportation professionals. Many of ITE's professional members typically provide support through sponsorships and participation in the summit's program. For more details about this year's SLS, visit: westernite.org/students-education/student-leadership-summit

Technical Committee

By Pat Marnell, Committee Chair

The Technical Committee engages members with various technical activities by disseminating information through the District website, newsletter, and e-mails as well as numerous competitive technical programs.

Are you are interested in joining the Technical Committee? We are always looking to expand our pool of reviewers for awards and abstracts. If you are interested, please contact Pat Marnell (patrick.marnell@q-free.com). Students are encouraged to participate as well.

Student Data Collection Fund – This year the Technical Committee is shaking up the Student Data Collection Fund RFPs. For the 2022 data collection RFP, we are asking for innovative STEM outreach activities to be generated by the student chapters. As always, student chapters from across the District will have the opportunity to submit project proposal and receive a \$1,000 grant to support the chapter's ITE activities. Don't worry if you love trip generation, we will cycle back around to trip generation data collection in a year or two. Our goal is to provide a greater diversity of opportunities to students who participate in the Student Data Collection Fund multiple years in a row. This year's RFP is due out in early November.

Looking at last year's Trip Generation Data Collection Project, two of the four student chapter projects were delayed due to COVID-19 related restrictions. One of those projects has recently been submitted and is under review by the committee. The second delayed project will be collecting data at a ski resort in January 2022.

Annual Meeting Best Paper Award – Due to the scheduling of this year's joint ITE Western District Annual Meeting and ITE International Annual Meeting and Exhibit we were unable to announce the winners of the Annual Meeting Best Paper Awards at the Western District Awards Banquet. This year's winners are:

- Annual Meeting Best Paper Award -- Jessica Miranda, PE and Jeanne Bowie PE, Ph.D., PTOE for their paper Road/Rail Crossing Reduction Study in Fairbanks and North Pole, Alaska
- Annual Meeting Best Paper by a Young Professional Award -- Andrew Sullivan, PE, PTOE for his paper Flanders Bridge & Neighborhood Greenway



*Mark your calendars for
the 2022 Annual meeting
in Palm Springs*

June 26-29

The 2022 ITE Western District Annual Meeting will be held in Palm Springs, CA from June 26-29 at the Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel and Palm Springs Convention Center. The annual meeting website has been updated with the latest information about the meeting including travel, hotel and preliminary meeting details.

Visit westernite.org/annualmeeting

Call for Papers!

The call for papers is now open, with abstracts due by 5:00 PM (PST) on December 20th, 2021. Abstracts are encouraged in the following general topic areas:

- Context Sensitive Solutions and Complete Streets
- Adapting infrastructure to environmental Change
- Performance-Based Planning
- Active Transportation
- Micro-Mobility/Shared Economy (Car Sharing, Bike Sharing, and Scooter Sharing)
- Travel Demand Management
- Traffic System Performance and ITS
- Parking Policies, Design and Operations
- Corridor and Network Operations
- Bus Rapid Transit/Light & High Speed Rail
- Vision Zero/Safety Analysis and Evaluation
- Human Factors in Transportation
- Connected and Autonomous Vehicles
- Fiber Optic Design
- Broadband Communications
- Truck and Goods Movement
- Corridor Management Planning

Section and Chapter Updates

Alaska Section

The Alaska section continued to host virtual meetings throughout 2021, with meetings well attended. They awarded a \$7000 of scholarship funds to students of transportation disciplines in July. Alaska is postponing their social luncheon and Joint Annual Meeting until summer 2022 due to the continuing covid pandemic. Alaska's board consists of Jared Travis (President), Tony Liang (Vice-President), Patric Whitesell (Secretary/Treasurer), and Renee Whitesell (Past President).

Hawaii Section

by Keoni Wasano, Vice President

The Hawaii Section continues to be resilient navigating the hurdles triggered by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. In May, the Hawaii Section hosted its inaugural Industry Day Event

which was themed around Transportation Solutions. The goal of the event was to provide attendees with innovative solutions for transportation issues and share lessons learned. Industry partners Carmanah, Econolite, Iteris, McCain, Ped-Safety, and Q-Free each hosted breakout sessions highlighting projects they've worked on outside of Hawaii and their potential application locally. The section hopes to establish Industry Day as a yearly event and plans to bring new partners and new solutions in each year.

The section continues virtual monthly meetings featuring local leaders and ITE Western District officers. Our meeting topics focused on the future of mobility, multimodal project planning, electrification of transportation, and climate change impacts and resiliency. The section also continues to lend its support to the ITE student chapter and the University of Hawaii-Manoa College of Engineering. In September,

several section members participated in a 2-day resume and interview workshop to help prepare students attending an upcoming career fair.

In October, the Hawaii Section held its Annual meeting with the Year 2022 Section officers sworn in. They include Jasmine Teramae-Kaehuaea (President), Keoni Wasano (Vice President), and Mike Motoki (Secretary-Treasurer).

Oregon Section by Richard Gamble, Scribe

Current officers are Past President Julie Kentosh, President Maggie Lin, Vice President Carl Olson, and Treasurer-Secretary Molly McCormick. In 2021, with Covid closures still implemented, the Oregon Section continued this year with doing a series of webinar lunch presentations on a wide variety of topics. Perhaps many of you have participated! Webinar topics were as follows:

- May Webinar on ODOT Tolling with this topic being the highest attended webinar attendance we've had with 118 people actively logged in.
- June SensorAMA webinar with an event filled afternoon and great vendor session. We had roughly 50 participants on the call with a good discussion afterwards and a thank you feedback from FHWA.
- October webinar presented by ODOT on their first Vision Zero corridor. In addition to technical presentations, the Oregon Leadership Section held a kayaking event with great attendance and the satisfaction of seeing colleagues in person.



Oregon ITE in August

San Diego Section

San Diego, like many sections, continued hosting virtual events throughout 2021. They hosted a variety of meetings, including a panel discussion on the pandemic impact to local budgets and projects, a joint meeting with SoCal and Central Coast on the switch to vehicle miles traveled, and a presentation on the latest improvements to the MUTCD. The San Diego section moved to hybrid in-person/virtual events for the second half of 2021 as local guidelines permitted. Currently, the San Diego Section board consists of Karen Jewel (President), Phuong Nguyen (Vice-President), Raul Armenta (Treasurer), Jacob Swim (Secretary) and Mohammad Amin (Past President).

Southern California Section

By Dina Saleh, Vice President

2021 has been a productive year for the ITE Southern California Section. In April, the SoCal Section held a virtual panel discussion on "QuickBuild: A New Trend for Future ATP Implementations" with two local speakers and a speaker from the City of Seattle. The SoCal Section continued the virtual Training Series in May with "ITS Network Design".

The SoCal Section's Student Presentation Night was hosted virtually along with the Orange County Traffic Engineering Council (OCTEC) in May. The SoCal Section awarded \$20,000 to Student Chapters throughout 2021. Then in June, the SoCal Section joined ITS California for a virtual meeting on intelligent transportation systems strategies and technologies being used to improve safety at intersections. The SoCal Section was proud to host the first in-person social mixer in August while observing local COVID-19 protocols in an outside space. Then in November, the SoCal Section hosted a virtual meeting in part of the Section's Equity Series entitled "Equity Within New Mobility Services." With this series, the SoCal Section intends to include diverse members of the community by hosting engaging conversations. In October, the SoCal Section was



SoCal ITE in October

thrilled to host an in-person Technical Tour of Long Beach's innovative bicycle facilities with bikes provided through the City of Long Beach's bike share program. The SoCal Section also held a joint discussion in October with OCTEC about the "Federal Infrastructure Bill Updates." The SoCal Section plans to close out of the year with the Section's Business Meeting and Board Elections as well as hosting an in-person holiday social.

Washington Section

By Ryan Peterson, Secretary

Like most others, we have continued to adjust our programs to the dramatic impact of COVID-19. We have had some great success in holding virtual meetings and conferences, as well as some great training events! In May, we hosted a virtual student night with a presentation on career development and

Section and Chapter Updates Cont'd

professional activities. We continued to support our student chapters by offering four scholarships this year. The recipients were graduate students Cole Kopka and Gabriela Giron, as well as undergraduate students Iman Haji and Peter Yu, all from the University of Washington. We also had a fun competition using Streetmix.net in breakout rooms.

June was a busy month that featured three events. First, we held the section's annual meeting featuring a virtual panel of speakers from various agencies and companies. Next, we were able to host a socially distanced golf classic, which has been an annual tradition for 33 years. Finally, we had a virtual technical program focused on the design and analysis of Diverging Diamond Interchanges (DDI). At the Committee Chairs and Past President's meeting we discussed the year's plan for each committee and asked several of our past section presidents for their perspective on the industry and on what areas they thought our section should focus.

In September, we held a virtual kick-off meeting featuring Washington State DOT, Deputy Secretary Amy Scarton, who presented on a new multi-modal ferry terminal in Mukilteo and several general updates on the agency. October, we held another virtual meeting to learn about WSDOT's efforts to develop a cutting-edge Virtual Coordination Center meant to gather, filter, and present incident information from multiple agencies and jurisdictions.

Riverside San Bernardino Section

Riverside San Bernardino Section continued to have virtual meetings in 2021, with the first joint in-person/virtual meeting occurring in September. October 2021 saw a golf tournament, with elections occurring in November. They are planning a joint holiday event with OCTEC and the SoCal ITE section in December. The current officers for the Riverside San Bernardino section are Ronal Chan (President), Balraj More (Vice President), Steve Latino (Secretary/Treasurer), and Mahmoud Khodr (Past President).

Central Coast Section

The central coast section has a new website domain! Please visit www.centralcoastite.org moving forward to see their officers and events. The virtual meetings hosted by the Central Coast Section have been very well attended, with feedback indicating that the members would prefer to continue having virtual meetings due to the large geographic area of our section. Some of the meetings held in 2021 included a joint mega section meeting in March with SoCal, San Diego, and River-

side San Bernardino, a joint meeting in May between the Central Coast and Cal Poly Student Chapter, and a joint meeting in June with the Central California section. The current officers for the Central Coast section are Travis Low (President), Vidhi Sachdeva (Vice-President), Jorge Vanegas-Moran (Secretary/Treasurer), and Kathryn Kleinschmidt (Past President).

San Francisco Bay Section

By Lauren Davini, Vice President

The San Francisco Bay Area Section has hosted a series of virtual section meetings across a wide range of topics, including advocacy & advancement in transit, analyzing vehicle miles traveled, a student showcase post-COVID travel demand management, connectedvehicle data by Wejo, and new facilities for development of automated and connected vehicles (co-hosted). The Section co-hosted the annual Acronym Happy Hour along with WTS, APA, YPT and ITS CA/YPG on September 23, 2021 at Oeste rooftop lounge in Oakland. This is always a great opportunity for people to network across the broad range of transportation professionals across the Bay Area. We were happy to be able to participate safely in an in-person event.

The Section has been supporting two universities interested in forming ITE chapters: Stanford University and San Francisco State University. This would bring the total number of student chapters within the Section area to four, adding to the existing student chapters at UC Berkeley and San Jose State University.

The Section election for the 2022 Board is currently underway. We look forward to continuing more events next year and hope to be able to see people in-person again soon!

Northern California Section

Northern California has been continuing virtual meetings throughout 2021, with some hybrid in-person events planned for the fall. In September, they hosted a board and lunch meeting, and in October they hosted an Oktoberfest Golf Tournament. In November, there was an in-person meeting on using new technologies to maximize arterial performance.

Election ballots will be sent out in November, and will be returned in December. The outgoing board consists of Jana Cervantes (President), Zach Bosch (Vice President), Chris Gregeron (Treasurer), Byron Tang (Secretary) and Ravi Narayanan (Past President). They look forward to welcoming in a new board in the new year!

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