Thought leaders gather for “What’s Next? Designing the Future City”
January 30, 2020 at the Chicago Architecture Center
Discussion and networking event the second in a new series at the CAC

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High-resolution images with captions and credits downloadable here
Video with excerpts from the discussion available here

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CHICAGO – The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC) welcomed more than 75 design industry leaders and executives to its Joan and Gary Gand Lecture Hall on Thursday, January 30, 2020 for the second event in its ongoing series, “What’s Next?”

Titled “Designing the Future City,” and following up on the inaugural “What’s Next?” in May 2019, this networking breakfast and discussion was centered on challenges and opportunities related to mobility and transportation in urban centers. Moderated by Cityfi Co-Founder Gabe Klein, the panel included Ben Bear, Chief Business Officer at Spin; Ron Burke, Head of Micromobility Policy for the Central U.S. at Lyft; Angel L. Mendez, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at HERE Technologies; and Karina Ricks, Director of the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure for the City of Pittsburgh.

“This series is not just about the future of cities, but how we gather good ideas and move them forward,” said CAC President and CEO Lynn J. Osmond. “The important role that the CAC plays is as a convener for conversation. We have the ability to bring together the design community, our thought leaders with us today, and you in the C-suite to look at how we can move change. The big thing we want to consider is: What are Chicago’s strengths and what do we need to do to achieve greater equity and resilience?”

“Chicago is no different from any other city,” noted Klein in his opening remarks. “It’s facing incredible pressure to adapt—to all change but particularly to technological change.”
“What’s Next?” panelists mentioned public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaboration throughout the conversation. Observed Mendez, “No single vehicle company can produce enough data to generate enough insights...for the algorithms that can optimize everything on the road. So, building a collaborative effort to share data in an open way, which then calls for standards, is absolutely critical.”

Automated vehicles (AVs) and facilitating “last-mile” freight and transportation were two additional topics revisited during the discussion.

“We know in Pittsburgh which, sadly, is pretty standard for even the most urbanized areas, that 25 percent of driven trips are less than a mile,” added Ricks. “I could solve congestion four times over, I could get your goods to market without a hitch, I could increase real estate values, I could get more eyes on the products that are in my streets, I could get more livable places, I could cure air pollution, I could save the planet, [Laughs] if I can get that 25 percent of motor vehicle trips into something other than a driven car. That’s really where we are laser-focused at this moment, because it’s so easy. These trips are less than a mile."

To further deepen and disseminate content and key themes from the “What’s Next?” discussion on January 30, the CAC plans to unveil a new, temporary exhibition on future mobility in fall 2020, to be announced at a later date.

Acknowledgments
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The “What’s Next?” series at the CAC is generously supported by Sandra Helton and Norman Edelson.

About the Chicago Architecture Center
The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), formerly the Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF), is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring people to discover why design matters. As an education leader in architecture and design, the CAC is a hub for everything architecture in Chicago, offering tours, programs, exhibitions, field trips, curricula, and online tools that are part of a dynamic learning journey for all ages. Proceeds from CAC’s tours and store, as well as from grants, sponsorships and donations, support this educational mission.

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