How are technologies like automation and digital optimization shaping the ways people travel? Transportation agencies are doing everything they can to provide coherent solutions for their consumers, aided by data and technology. As I look at this market, it’s all about smart mobility, also called mobility-as-a-service, and that’s what our customers focus on: making journeys easier and quicker. When it comes to digital optimization, travelers today are pretty technology agnostic. They just care about outcomes. They care about the solutions working effectively and efficiently, so technology is a very important means to an end.

How can agencies better meet the needs of their constituents? Transportation leaders need to understand how travelers’ journeys are constantly changing amid developments in data and innovation. Agencies’ services and solutions should follow the insights from the data they use, and they need to look at innovative ways to collect data and provide technology solutions that suit the traveler’s journey. Agencies are focused on outcomes like enabling smart mobility, shrinking their carbon footprints and automating where possible. And finally, they want to increase affordability and accessibility for travelers.

How can digital tools help achieve those outcomes? I think it’s all about Internet of Things, or IoT, using tools such as cameras, sensors, monitors and data flow to manage congestion — especially during peak travel times. Technology can help control the rate of vehicles entering roadways and highways to keep traffic flowing. That also helps with safety and traffic monitoring. The other thing is smart mobility, providing travelers with an array of options to complete their trips. These include transit, bicycling and micro-mobility to reduce the number of vehicles on roads.

How are cities rethinking the use of curbs and sidewalks? On a broad scale, there are different demands for the curb. Cities need to accommodate all travelers, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motor vehicles, etc. And then there’s the added pressure of delivery vehicles loading and unloading. There’s a recognition in the industry that the curbside should be flexible and multipurpose — not just for parking — and rarely should space be available for one purpose 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We’re moving into a complete-streets approach to improve pedestrian safety and reduce vehicle collisions while enhancing traffic flow, accessibility and livability within neighborhoods. Finally, management has to be flexible and dynamic. The future comes down to using data for things like curbside management, transit and road usage charging. There’s a plethora of data out there — agencies should use it to make better decisions within the city or the jurisdiction they manage.