



Infraday

7TH EDITION

INFRADAY MIDWEST



JULY 20-21, 2026

📍 THE OLD POST OFFICE | CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
433 W Van Buren Street
Chicago, IL 60607

REAL INFRASTRUCTURE. REAL DELIVERY.

Where public agencies, utilities, transportation leaders, contractors, infrastructure investors, industrial operators, and technology firms come together to address the systems shaping the future of the Midwest economy.

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS



AI, DATA CENTERS & INDUSTRIAL LOAD GROWTH

- AI-driven power demand
- Utility capacity constraints
- Transmission expansion
- Industrial electrification
- Hyperscale infrastructure



FREIGHT, LOGISTICS & SUPPLY CHAIN SYSTEMS

- Rail and truck congestion
- Inland ports and cargo hubs
- Airport infrastructure expansion
- Intermodal modernization
- Manufacturing reshoring



WATER, FLOODING & RESILIENCE

- Combined sewer overflows
- Industrial water demand
- Stormwater infrastructure
- Flood mitigation strategies
- Aging utility systems



DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE & AI OPERATIONS

- Fiber and edge compute
- AI for capital programs
- BIM, GIS & digital twins
- Smart infrastructure systems
- Robotics and automation



CAPITAL PROGRAMS & DELIVERY

- Alternative delivery models
- Procurement modernization
- Program controls platforms
- Workforce constraints
- Infrastructure risk management



ENGAGING FORMAT

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS | PANEL DISCUSSIONS | WORKING SESSIONS | ROUNDTABLES | NETWORKING | PRIVATE MEETING SUITES



PUBLIC AGENCIES | UTILITIES
TRANSPORTATION | AEC | INVESTORS
TECHNOLOGY | CONTRACTORS



THE OLD POST OFFICE
433 W VAN BUREN STREET
CHICAGO, IL 60607



www.infraday.com/mw

Last updated: 6/22/2026

DAY 1 — July 20 (12:00PM – 6:00 PM)

12:00 – 12:30 PM

Panel: The Midwest Infrastructure Supercycle — AI, Manufacturing & Industrial Load Growth

The Midwest is rapidly emerging as one of the country's most important infrastructure battlegrounds as AI infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, battery production, semiconductor supply chains, and industrial reshoring accelerate across the region. Utilities, transportation systems, water agencies, and municipalities are now facing infrastructure demand levels that many systems were never designed to support. This session examines where the largest infrastructure constraints are forming from transmission capacity and substations to freight bottlenecks and industrial water supply and what this means for public agencies and private infrastructure firms over the next decade.

Panelists:

Karalyn Berman, Associate Legal Counsel – Electricity Markets & Resource Planning, **Illinois Power Agency**

Kyle Schulz, Deputy of Strategic Advancement, **Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning**

Ryan Burg, Group Manager, Resilient Infrastructure Science and Applications, **National Laboratory of the Rockies**

12:30 – 1:00 PM

Panel: Grid Congestion, Transmission Backlogs & the New Midwest Power Economy

Utilities across the Midwest are facing unprecedented pressure tied to data centers, EV manufacturing, electrification, industrial expansion, and AI-related power demand. Transmission congestion, interconnection delays, transformer shortages, and generation constraints are becoming major economic development issues across multiple states. This panel explores how utilities, regulators, developers, and infrastructure firms are responding to rising industrial load demand and what major transmission investment will look like across the region.

Panelist:

Ayush Agrawal, Digital Power Services Offer Manager, **Schneider Electric**

Joe De Lia, VP, Power Markets, **Orennia**

Paul Barter, Principal - Client Service Leader Utilities, **CDM Smith**

Roland Flynn, Senior Emergency Management Specialist, **ComEd**

1:00 – 1:30 PM

Panel: The Freight Reality — Trucking, Rail Congestion & Supply Chain Infrastructure

The Midwest remains the logistics backbone of North America, but rail congestion, aging bridges, intermodal bottlenecks, port limitations, and truck corridor stress are creating serious infrastructure pressure. Major warehouse development and industrial expansion are further intensifying demand on regional freight systems. This session examines how DOTs, rail operators, ports, logistics firms, and private infrastructure companies are responding to freight growth and where the largest investment opportunities are emerging.

Panelists:

Matthew Peagler, Chicago Integrated Rail Operations Center (CIROC)| Chicago Transportation Coordination Office (CTCO), **Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad**

Ryan Richter, Coordinating Planner - Freight, Rail & Transit Projects, **Chicago Department of Transportation**

1:30 – 2:00 PM

Panel: Data Centers, AI Infrastructure & Utility Capacity Collisions

The Midwest is becoming a major destination for hyperscale data centers and AI infrastructure due to available land, fiber connectivity, and lower-cost energy markets. However, many utilities and municipalities are struggling to support the enormous power and water demand these facilities require. This discussion focuses on the infrastructure reality behind AI expansion — including substation demand, cooling water requirements, fiber redundancy, permitting timelines, and the race to secure reliable energy capacity.

Panelists:

Alan Howard, Vice President, Data Center Solutions, **National Power, LLC**

Dale Lewis, Director of Data Center Project Development, **The Boldt Company**

Kevin Kramer, Director of Economic Development, **Village of Hoffman Estates**

Ramiro Hernandez, Vice President, Public Policy & Strategy, **Illinois Chamber of Commerce**

Xiomara Gerlach, Sr. Director Data Center Strategy, **Strata Clean Energy**

2:00 – 2:20 PM

Presentation: Surplus to Success — Transforming State Assets into Economic Development Opportunities

Illinois is undertaking one of the Midwest's most ambitious property redevelopment initiatives through the Surplus to Success program, converting underutilized state-owned facilities into catalysts for economic growth and community revitalization. Backed by \$300 million in funding, the program is advancing site preparation, remediation, infrastructure readiness, and redevelopment planning across five major properties, creating significant opportunities for public-private collaboration. This presentation will provide an update on progress at the Dwight Correctional Center, Singer Mental Health Center, Jacksonville Developmental Center, Lincoln Developmental Center, and Shapiro Developmental Center, while exploring the challenges and successes associated with preparing complex legacy sites for future investment. Attendees will also gain insight into upcoming procurement opportunities, vendor engagement pathways, and how large-scale property repositioning can support economic development objectives across Illinois.

Presenter:

Cynthia Johnson, Deputy Director, Illinois Office of Communication and Information, **Illinois Department of Central Management Services**

2:20 – 2:50 PM

Panel: Ports, River Systems & Inland Marine Infrastructure

The Midwest's inland waterways and river systems remain critical to agriculture, energy, manufacturing, and freight movement across North America. Aging locks, port infrastructure, dredging requirements, and multimodal connectivity challenges are becoming major economic risks for regional supply chains. This session examines modernization priorities across inland ports, barge systems, river crossings, and waterfront industrial infrastructure.

Panelists:

Dennis Wilmsmeyer, Executive Director, **America's Central Port**

2:50 – 3:20 PM

Panel: Stadiums, District Redevelopment & the Infrastructure Behind Urban Growth

Major district redevelopment projects across Midwestern cities are reshaping infrastructure investment around transit, utilities, streetscapes, public spaces, broadband, and mixed-use growth. Sports and entertainment districts are increasingly functioning as catalysts for large-scale infrastructure modernization and economic development. This panel explores how cities, developers, and infrastructure partners are financing and delivering complex urban redevelopment programs at scale.

3:20 – 3:50 PM

Afternoon Break

3:50 – 4:20 PM

Panel: Combined Sewer Overflows, Flooding & the Cost of Aging Water Systems

Many Midwestern cities continue to operate legacy combined sewer systems that are increasingly vulnerable to extreme rainfall, flooding, and regulatory enforcement pressure. Stormwater infrastructure upgrades are becoming one of the largest unfunded infrastructure liabilities facing municipalities today. This panel examines how agencies are managing CSO mandates, flood mitigation investment, green infrastructure deployment, and long-term resilience planning.

Panelists:

Brian Katamay, Long Term Control Plan Project Assistant, **City of Aurora**

Joseph Cangialosi, Associate Civil Engineer – Collection Facilities/TARP, **MWRDGC – Infrastructure Management Division**

Shannon Haydin, Stormwater Section Manager, Bureau of Watershed Management, **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

4:20 – 4:50 PM

Panel: Alternative Delivery at Scale — What Owners Actually Want From Contractors

Public agencies are increasingly moving toward design-build, CM/GC, progressive delivery, and integrated project models as schedules tighten and workforce shortages intensify. Owners are demanding more collaboration, earlier contractor involvement, stronger digital capabilities, and improved risk visibility. This discussion focuses on what public owners actually expect from contractors and consultants in the next generation of infrastructure delivery.

Panelists:

Ryan Wolber, Director, Project Delivery, **BrightNight**

4:50 – 5:20 PM

Panel: From Credential to Capability: Is Skills Standardization the Missing Link in Closing the Giga Project Gap?

The infrastructure sector faces a paradox: capital is flowing at record levels – with over \$100 trillion in global investment projected by 2040 – yet the workforce delivering these projects operates without a common professional standard. As a result, giga projects absorb this inconsistency in different ways: through cost overruns, rework, schedule compression, and governance challenges that are rarely recognized as capability gaps. This panel will explore whether establishing a shared baseline for skills and capability is essential to improving delivery outcomes at scale.

Moderator:

TBA, **PMI**

5:20 – 5:50 PM

Panel: AI, Robotics & Autonomous Infrastructure Operations

AI-assisted inspections, robotics, autonomous equipment, drones, and machine-vision systems are beginning to fundamentally change how infrastructure is constructed, monitored, and maintained. Contractors, utilities, transportation agencies, and industrial operators are increasingly deploying automation to offset labor shortages, improve safety, and increase operational efficiency. This session explores where autonomous infrastructure technologies are already delivering measurable ROI and where adoption is accelerating fastest across the Midwest.

Panelists:

Kevin Lynch, Director, Center for Robotics and Biosystems, **Northwestern University**

Raul Verducco, Executive Director, Smart Manufacturing & Robotics Integration, **Verducco Automation LLC**

5:50 – 7:30 PM

Networking Reception

DAY 2 — July 21 (8:30 AM – 5:30 PM)

8:30 – 9:00 AM

Panel: The Post-IIJA Reality — Where Infrastructure Capital Actually Goes Next

The easy federal money phase is ending, and infrastructure owners are now entering a much harder capital environment. Inflation, rising operational costs, debt pressure, and labor shortages are forcing agencies to rethink project prioritization and long-term infrastructure strategy. This panel explores where infrastructure capital is still flowing, what sectors are pulling ahead, and how private firms should position themselves for the next cycle.

Panelists:

Crystal Thomas, CFO/Finance Director, **City of Lansing**

Simone Jackson, Village Treasurer & Finance Director, **Village of Thornton**

Suzy Mika, Director of Finance, **Village of Villa Park**

9:00 – 9:30 AM

Panel: Aviation Expansion, Cargo Growth & Midwest Logistics Dominance

Midwestern airports and cargo hubs are seeing major investment tied to e-commerce growth, industrial reshoring, and supply chain restructuring. Airports are increasingly functioning as multimodal economic engines requiring massive investment across cargo systems, road access, utilities, and terminal modernization. This session examines where airport infrastructure investment is accelerating and how aviation is reshaping regional economic infrastructure strategy.

Panelists:

Alicen Kandt, Group Manager III-Systems Engineering, **National Laboratory of the Rockies**

Peter Leoschke, Senior Aviation Architect, **Jacobs**

Neal Martinez, General Aviation Superintendent, **Clayco**

9:30 – 10:00 AM

In Conversation: AI, Cybersecurity & the Future of Municipal Technology Leadership

As cities increasingly rely on digital systems to deliver essential services, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and technology governance are becoming core operational priorities for local governments. Municipal leaders are now balancing the opportunities presented by AI-driven innovation with growing concerns around cybersecurity risk, data protection, workforce development, and critical infrastructure resilience. In this fireside conversation, Chicago Chief Information Security Officer Bruce Coffing will discuss the City's evolving technology strategy, including AI adoption, cybersecurity priorities, operational resilience, talent development, and the challenges associated with securing one of the nation's largest municipal environments. The discussion will also explore emerging risks, the role of AI in cyber defense, citizen-facing service delivery objectives, and how public sector technology leaders are preparing for the next generation of digital threats and opportunities.

In Conversation With:

Bruce Coffing, Chief Information Security Officer, **City of Chicago**

Interviewer:

Dan Lohrmann, Field CISO, **Presidio**

10:00 – 10:30 AM

Morning Break

10:30 – 11:00 AM

Panel: The Transformer Problem — Supply Chains, Lead Times & Grid Expansion Delays

Utilities and contractors across the Midwest are facing severe delays tied to transformers, switchgear, electrical equipment, and transmission components. Lead times for critical grid infrastructure have become one of the largest barriers to industrial growth and energy expansion.

This discussion examines the supply chain reality behind grid modernization and how utilities are adapting procurement and capital planning strategies.

11:00 – 11:30 AM

Panel: Cybersecurity for Operational Infrastructure — Utilities, Transit & Water Systems

Critical infrastructure systems are increasingly exposed to cyber threats targeting operational technology, SCADA systems, municipal utilities, transportation operations, and industrial infrastructure networks. Infrastructure cybersecurity is rapidly becoming an operational issue rather than simply an IT issue. This session focuses on real-world infrastructure vulnerability, resilience planning, and operational risk mitigation.

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Panel: Workforce Collapse, Automation & the Future Infrastructure Labor Model

The infrastructure sector is facing one of the most severe workforce shortages in decades across engineering, field operations, utilities, construction management, and skilled trades. At the same time, owners are expecting faster delivery schedules and greater technical complexity. This session examines how agencies and contractors are using automation, robotics, AI-assisted inspections, and digital construction tools to offset labor shortages and maintain delivery capacity.

12:00 – 12:20 PM

Presentation: BIM, GIS & Digital Twins — The Infrastructure Operating System

Infrastructure owners are increasingly integrating BIM, GIS, digital twins, scheduling systems, and asset management platforms into unified operational environments. The goal is no longer simply project visualization — it is operational intelligence across the full infrastructure lifecycle. This presentation explores how connected infrastructure data environments are transforming capital program management and operational decision-making.

12:20 – 1:20 PM

Lunch

1:20 – 1:50 PM

Panel: Bridges, River Systems & Freight Corridors at Risk

The Midwest's river crossings, freight bridges, and multimodal corridors remain some of the most economically critical — and structurally stressed — assets in North America. Deferred maintenance, barge traffic growth, climate impacts, and freight demand are increasing pressure on aging transportation infrastructure systems. This panel examines where the most serious risks exist and what major modernization investment may look like over the next decade.

1:50 – 2:20 PM

Panel: Climate Pressure on Midwest Infrastructure — Heat, Flooding & System Failure

The Midwest is increasingly experiencing infrastructure stress tied to severe rainfall, inland flooding, freeze-thaw cycles, heat waves, and extreme weather volatility. Roads, transit systems, utilities, airports, and water infrastructure are all being forced to adapt to changing climate

conditions. This session focuses on resilience investment, system hardening, and how agencies are rethinking infrastructure design standards.

Panelists:

Jim Doten, Carbon Sequestration Program Manager, **City of Minneapolis - Health**
Randy Conner, Commissioner, **Chicago Department of Water Management (DWM)**

2:20 – 2:50 PM

Panel: Robotics, Drones & Autonomous Infrastructure Operations

Robotics, drones, AI-assisted inspections, autonomous equipment, and digital field operations are beginning to reshape infrastructure construction and maintenance workflows. Public agencies and contractors are increasingly using automation to improve safety, reduce labor dependency, and increase operational visibility. This discussion focuses on where autonomous infrastructure technologies are actually being deployed today and where adoption is accelerating fastest.

2:50 – 3:20 PM

Afternoon Break

3:20 – 3:50 PM

Panel: Utilities, Developers & Municipalities — Why Growth Coordination Keeps Failing

Infrastructure growth timelines across utilities, municipalities, developers, DOTs, and private industry often remain fundamentally disconnected. Industrial expansion, housing growth, and hyperscale infrastructure demand are exposing major coordination failures across permitting, utility planning, and capital investment cycles. This session examines why coordination remains so difficult and what models are beginning to work.

Panelists:

Josh Wray, Director of Economic Development, **City of Pekin**

3:50 – 4:20 PM

Panel: Materials Volatility, Procurement Chaos & the Infrastructure Cost Crisis

Steel, electrical equipment, concrete, transformers, switchgear, and specialized infrastructure materials continue to experience pricing volatility and procurement uncertainty across major infrastructure sectors. Owners and contractors are being forced to rethink procurement timing, contract structures, contingency planning, and supplier relationships. This panel focuses on how organizations are managing infrastructure delivery risk in an unstable supply environment.

4:20 – 4:50 PM

Panel: What Actually Gets Built — Infrastructure Prioritization in a Constrained Economy

Infrastructure demand now vastly exceeds available labor, funding, utility capacity, and delivery resources across much of the Midwest. Public agencies are being forced to make difficult prioritization decisions across transportation, water, utility, and economic development projects. This discussion provides insight into how infrastructure decisions are actually being made behind the scenes — and where opportunities still exist for private sector participation.

4:50 – 5:20 PM

Panel: The Midwest Infrastructure Opportunity — The Next 10 Years

The Midwest is entering a historic infrastructure transformation tied to AI infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, energy transition, aviation growth, logistics expansion, and industrial reshoring. Massive investment opportunities are emerging across transportation, utilities, digital infrastructure, industrial water systems, and capital program modernization. This closing session examines where infrastructure markets are heading next and what leaders across the sector should prepare for now.

Panelists:

Neha Soni, Senior Planner, Strategic Planning & Policy, **Cook County Department of Transportation & Highways**

5:20 – 5:30 PM

Closing Discussion + Final Networking