



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
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CHICAGO, IL 60607



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Last updated: 7/17/2026

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.

Moderator:

Christy Hunt, Product Marketing Manager, **Contruent**

Panelists:

Alex Iseri, Director of Economic Development, Regional Opportunities, **World Business Chicago**
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.

Moderator:

Jo Borrás, Sr. Policy Advisor; Electric Vehicles, **Illinois EPA**

Panelist:

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

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

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.

Moderator:

Bill Abolt, Specialist Executive, **Deloitte**

Panelists:

Carrie Cooper, Deputy Director of Rail – Office of Intermodal Project Implementation, **Illinois Department of Transportation**

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.

Moderator:

Nicholas Johnson, Chief Evangelist, **Kahua**

Panelists:

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:

Erik Colón, Acting Assisting Director, **Illinois Department of Central Management Services**
Clarence Carson, Senior Infrastructure Advisor, **Illinois Department of Central Management Services**

2:20 – 3:00 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.

Moderator:

Elizabeth Collins, President, **Collins Engineers**

Panelists:

Aaron Halcomb, President, **Middle River Marine**

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

Erik Varela, Executive Director, **Illinois International Port District**

Robert Sinkler, Executive Director & Founder, **Corn Belt Ports**

3:00 – 3:10 PM

Presentation: AerisIQ: AI-Powered Weather Intelligence for Smarter Infrastructure Decisions

Weather is becoming one of the biggest drivers of infrastructure risk. In this presentation, Ashish Sharma will introduce AerisIQ, an advanced weather intelligence platform developed by the Discovery Partners Institute that delivers high-resolution, AI-powered forecasts to support infrastructure planning, emergency management, transportation, utilities, and public agencies. Learn how precision weather analytics can help organizations make faster decisions, improve resilience, and better prepare for flooding, extreme heat, severe storms, and other climate-related challenges.

Presenter:

Ashish Sharma, Climate & Urban Sustainability Lead, Discovery Partners Institute, Grainger College of Engineering, **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**

3:10 – 3:30 PM

Presentation: Standing Programs, Sustainable Practices, and Implemented Innovations — Chicago Department of Transportation

This presentation will cover selected standing programs at CDOT. The presentation will also provide details on selected innovations implemented in the design and construction of transportation projects. These innovations include using advanced computer softwares to model an entire structure or structural components and using CFRP. It also includes the use of Self-Propelled Modular Transporters (SPMT) for constructing bridges. Selected sustainability practices in the design and consultation of projects will also be highlighted.

Presenter:

Soliman Khudeira, Section Chief Major Projects, **Chicago Department of Transportation**

3:30 – 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.

Moderator:

Aaron Worley, Consultant - Stormwater, **Raftelis**

Panelists:

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

Jeff Stone, Commissioner, **Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District**

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**

Sophia Belvedere, Assistant Civil Engineer, **MWRD Engineering Department**

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.

Moderator:

Andrew Shetty, Strategic Account Executive, **Procore**

Panelists:

Mohinder Singh, Managing Director, **Deloitte**

Roosevelt Moneyham, III, Director of Project Delivery, Chicago, **R.M. Chin & Associates, Inc.**
Ryan Wolber, Director, Project Delivery, **BrightNight**

4:50 – 5:30 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:

Raphael Ani, Partner Success Manager (Construction), **PMI**

Panelists:

AJ Waters, Field COO - Public Sector, **Procore Technologies**

Antoinette Bryant, Senior Project Manager, **Cook County Government**

Clarence Carson, Senior Infrastructure Advisor, **Illinois Department of Central Management Services**

Kimberly Dowdell, VP of Strategic Partnerships, **Amrize**

5:30 – 6:00 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.

Moderator:

David Rossman-Mallow, Senior Solution Engineer | Innovation Partnership & Experience Design, **Oracle**

Panelists:

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

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

Ted Gibbs, Director and Counsel for Administrative Hearings, **Illinois Secretary of State**

5:50 – 7:30 PM

Networking Reception

DAY 2 — July 21 (8:30 AM – 5:30 PM)

9:00 – 9:20 AM

Presentation: Strong Opinions, Loosely Held: A Mindset for the Future of Construction

In a fast-changing construction industry, holding tightly to outdated beliefs can be a silent killer of innovation. This session challenges attendees to reexamine what they “know” to be true and introduces the transformative mindset of “Strong Opinions, Loosely Held.” Through thought-provoking examples and real-world tech insights, Kahua’s Nicholas Johnson dismantles common industry myths, advocates for humility over hubris and proposes actionable strategies for navigating paradigm shifts.

Walk away with a fresh perspective and an actionable plan to foster adaptive leadership, question assumptions and model the mindset needed for tomorrow’s challenges.

Presenter:

Nicholas Johnson, Chief Evangelist, **Kahua**

9:20 – 9:40 AM

Presentation: A New Model for Funding Infrastructure — How Municipal Endowments Can Deliver Generational Investment

As communities across the Midwest face aging infrastructure, constrained budgets, and growing demands for investment, local governments are increasingly searching for new ways to finance long-term priorities without placing additional burdens on taxpayers. The Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence represents the nation's first dedicated municipal endowment created to permanently strengthen a city's finances by reducing property taxes, supporting general government operations, and funding strategic community investments. Since 2017, the Foundation has helped direct more than \$220 million toward infrastructure, affordable housing, economic development, parks, neighborhood revitalization, and youth initiatives while maintaining exceptionally low operating costs and a transparent governance model. This presentation will explore how municipal endowments can complement traditional public funding sources, the governance and financial structures that make the model successful, and how similar approaches could be replicated by communities seeking sustainable, long-term investment strategies.

Presenter:

Steve Brown, Co-Founder & Executive Director, **Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence**

9:40 – 10:20 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.

Moderator:

Evan Levine, Vice President, **Deloitte**

Panelists:

Anne Lockyer, Finance Director, **Vernon County, WI**

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

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

Udit Goyal, VP, Americas Project Finance, **Ørsted**

10:10 – 10:40 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**

10:40 – 11:00 AM

Presentation: Modernizing Chicago's Natural Gas Infrastructure — Inside the Pipe Retirement Program

Chicago is undertaking one of the largest natural gas infrastructure modernization efforts in the country through the Peoples Gas Pipe Retirement Program (PRP). The multi-year initiative will replace aging cast and ductile iron gas mains with modern infrastructure, improving system safety, reliability, and long-term resiliency while supporting the city's future energy needs. This presentation will provide an inside look at the program's progress toward retiring more than 1,000 miles of legacy gas mains, replacing 177,000 service lines, and transferring 266,000 customer meters by 2035. Attendees will gain insight into the engineering, construction, operational, and project delivery challenges associated with executing one of the nation's largest urban utility infrastructure replacement programs, along with lessons learned for managing complex capital projects in dense metropolitan environments.

Presenter:

Karl Frisk, PE, Operations Manager – PRP Construction, **Peoples Gas**

11:00 – 11:20 AM

Morning Break

11:20 – 11:50 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.

Moderator:

John Strothman (Carter), Vice President, Capital Programs, **Jacobsen|Daniels**

Panelists:

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

David Bodary, General Manager – Cargo, ORD, **Swissport**

11:50 – 12:30 PM

Panel: Capital Program Control: Delivering Infrastructure Projects With Connected Data

As infrastructure programs grow in size and complexity, owners and contractors are under increasing pressure to improve cost control, schedule certainty, risk management, and executive visibility. Fragmented data, disconnected workflows, and inconsistent reporting continue to create delays and budget overruns across major capital programs. This discussion explores how connected project management platforms, standardized processes, and real-time program intelligence are helping infrastructure organizations deliver projects more efficiently from planning through closeout.

Moderator:

Nicholas Johnson, Chief Evangelist, **Kahua**

Panelists:

Abigail “Abby” Ramirez, Data Analytics Manager – Data Analytics Unit, **Illinois Power Agency**

Daniel Flynn, Chief, Data and Performance, **Army Enterprise Marketing Office (AEMO)**

Ishu Gupta, Lead - Innovation and Data Strategy, **City of Green Bay**

Keith Haynes, Principal Consultant, **Black & Veatch**

Sadhana Vasa, Data Analyst, **Kansas Highway Patrol**

12:30 – 1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 – 2:00 PM

Panel: Connected Infrastructure — Managing the Full Lifecycle of Capital Programs

Infrastructure owners are increasingly connecting BIM, GIS, digital twins, asset management, scheduling, and program controls platforms into unified data environments. The goal is to create a single source of truth that supports planning, delivery, operations, and asset management across

the entire infrastructure lifecycle. This session explores how agencies and infrastructure owners are using connected infrastructure to improve capital program visibility, project delivery, operational performance, and long-term asset decision-making.

Moderator:

Eric Bielby, Senior Manager, **Deloitte**

Panelists:

Sayeh Amirshaghghi, Chief Water Engineer, Department of Water Management, **City of Chicago**

Raven DeVaughn, Director, **Illinois Department of Central Management Services**

Richard Seay, Deputy Mayor, Director, Information Technology, **Pontiac, MI**

2:00 – 2:30 PM

Panel: Governing Major Capital Programs — Executive Visibility, Controls & Decision-Making

As infrastructure owners manage increasingly complex capital programs, maintaining control across hundreds of projects has become as important as delivering individual assets. Inflation, labor shortages, supply chain disruptions, and evolving funding requirements demand greater financial discipline, forecasting accuracy, and executive visibility than ever before. This discussion explores how infrastructure organizations are strengthening program controls, improving portfolio governance, and using real-time performance intelligence to make better investment decisions, mitigate risk, and deliver major capital programs with greater confidence

Moderator:

Christy Hunt, Product Marketing Manager, **Contruent**

Panelists:

Esha Manchanda, Manager, Project Controls, **LanzaJet**

Nana Ohene-Adu, Senior Project Controls Specialist, **Arcadis**

2:30 AM – 3:10 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.

Moderator:

Tim Pratt, Industry Strategy – Local Government, **Aurigo**

Panelists:

Anastasia Kopp, Program Manager, Occupancy, Property and Asset Management, **Chicago Housing Authority**

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

Sayan Pradhan, Staff Engineer - Renewables, **DTE Energy**

Tony Chartrand, Director of Electric Engineering & Operations, **Traverse City Light and Power**

Will Howard Jr, Sr. Commercial Compliance Investigator, **ComEd**

3:10 AM – 3:40 PM

Afternoon Break

3:40 – 4:20 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.

Moderator:

Sicheng Wu, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Discovery Partners Institute, The Grainger College of Engineering, **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**

Panelists:

Ashish Sharma, Climate & Urban Sustainability Lead, Discovery Partners Institute, Grainger College of Engineering, **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**

Bridget Degnen, Cook County Commissioner - 12th District, **Cook County Board of Commissioners**

Jim Doten, Carbon Sequestration Program Manager, **City of Minneapolis - Health**

Randy Conner, Commissioner, **Chicago Department of Water Management (DWM)**

Rebecca Leitschuh, Senior Resilience Project Manager, **Stantec**

4:20 – 4:50 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.

Moderator:

TBA

Panelists:

Mark Nitz, GIS Solutions Architect, **Globetrotters Engineering Corporation**

Mark Riley, Director - Department of Public Service, **City of Cincinnati, Ohio**

Will White, Alderman At-Large, **Aurora, IL**

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.

Moderator:

Mark Nicholson, Senior Account Executive, **Aurigo**

Panelists:

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

Ty Warner, Executive Director, **Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission**

5:20 – 6:00 PM

Closing Discussion + Final Networking