



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



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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.

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.

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.

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.

2:00 – 2:20 PM

Presentation: AI for Capital Programs — Predicting Risk Before Projects Fail

AI is beginning to fundamentally change how infrastructure projects are forecasted, monitored, and managed across transportation, aviation, utilities, and vertical construction. Owners are deploying predictive analytics across scheduling, procurement, claims risk, inspections, and cost forecasting to improve delivery outcomes. This session focuses on where AI is already delivering measurable operational and financial impact across major infrastructure programs.

2:00 – 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.

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: Industrial Water Demand, Wastewater Stress & Cooling Infrastructure

Industrial growth across the Midwest is creating major new pressure on water systems, wastewater treatment capacity, and industrial cooling infrastructure. Data centers, chip manufacturing, battery plants, hydrogen production, and advanced manufacturing facilities are all driving substantial increases in industrial water demand. This session examines how utilities and municipalities are planning for industrial growth while balancing affordability, environmental pressure, and long-term water resilience.

4:20 – 4:50 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.

4:50 – 5:20 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.

5:20 – 5:50 PM

Panel: The Digital Infrastructure Buildout — Fiber, Edge Compute & Connected Industry

Digital infrastructure is no longer separate from physical infrastructure. Fiber backbones, edge compute facilities, private wireless networks, industrial IoT systems, and connected infrastructure platforms are becoming foundational to manufacturing, logistics, aviation, and utility operations across the Midwest. This session explores how digital infrastructure investment is reshaping economic development and infrastructure planning across the region.

5:50 – 6:20 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.

6:20 – 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.

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.

9:30 – 10:00 AM

Panel: Housing Growth vs. Utility Capacity — The Infrastructure Bottleneck Nobody Solved

Housing development across the Midwest is increasingly constrained by utility limitations, drainage systems, transportation capacity, and aging infrastructure. Developers and municipalities are struggling to align growth goals with the actual realities of infrastructure delivery timelines and funding limitations. This panel focuses on the growing collision between housing demand and infrastructure readiness.

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.

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.

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.

5:20 – 5:30 PM

Closing Discussion + Final Networking