Infraday Midwest 2027 Agenda

Wednesday, June 23, 2027 | Chicago, Illinois | Venue TBA

Preliminary program
Panel discussions: 30 minutes | Stand-alone project presentations: 20 minutes

Panel times include audience Q&A. All times Central. Program subject to change.

7:00 – 7:50 AM
Registration & Networking Breakfast

Midwestern public owners, transit agencies, railroads, highway authorities, utilities, ports, airports, industrial developers, investors, engineering and construction firms, and infrastructure technology providers.

7:50 – 8:00 AM
Opening Remarks: Infraday Midwest 2027

Presenter:
Ken Bauco, Founder & CEO, **Infraday**

8:00 – 8:30 AM
Panel: Midwest Capital Renewal: Choosing Investments That Keep the Region Working

Capital plans must weigh visible expansion against the renewal of assets that communities and businesses already depend on. This opening discussion examines how Midwest owners compare service risk, condition, growth and project readiness across their portfolios. Participants will explore the decisions that move an investment from a long list into a deliverable program, including early investigations, operating costs and agreements with other owners. The focus is on making priorities understandable to funders, delivery partners and the people affected by construction.

Moderator:
TBA

Panelists:
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8:30 – 9:00 AM
Panel: Transit Expansion and Renewal: Building Around a Working Network

Chicago's Red Line Extension provides a useful setting for discussing utility relocation, neighborhood access and construction across multiple work zones. Across the Midwest, transit owners also need to renew existing track, structures, stations and maintenance facilities. This session examines how expansion and asset renewal can share delivery resources without weakening daily service. Discussion will cover enabling works, contractor interfaces, passenger information and the operating tests needed before new infrastructure becomes part of a reliable network that riders can use.

Moderator:
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Panelists:
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9:00 – 9:30 AM
Panel: Chicago Rail Interfaces: Delivering Freight, Passenger and Neighborhood Benefits

The CREATE program illustrates how rail improvements can depend on agreements between freight railroads, passenger operators and public agencies. This discussion focuses on the interfaces that make those programs difficult to deliver: track access, grade separations, signal systems, road closures and responsibility for shared structures. Participants will examine how to package interdependent work and demonstrate benefits beyond the railroad boundary. Particular attention will go to neighborhood access, drainage and the handover of assets with multiple operational stakeholders and maintenance obligations.

Moderator:
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Panelists:
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9:30 – 9:50 AM
Stand-alone Project Presentation: TBA

9:50 – 10:10 AM
Morning Networking Break

10:10 – 10:40 AM
Panel: Highways and Bridges: Protecting Regional Freight and Local Access

A bridge closure or interchange reconstruction affects much more than the asset being rebuilt. This session examines how highway owners can coordinate renewal with freight routes, industrial access, emergency services and nearby local roads. Participants will discuss condition assessments, detour planning, utility conflicts and construction methods that shorten disruption. The regional perspective will connect major corridors with county and municipal assets, exploring how investment decisions account for the condition and capacity of the entire route that users actually travel.

Moderator:
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Panelists:
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10:40 – 11:10 AM
Panel: Water Network Renewal: Service Lines, Mains and Streets as One Program

Water renewal becomes difficult when asset records, customer access and street reconstruction are managed separately. This session examines how utilities and municipalities can coordinate service line work, main replacement and public improvements. Topics include field verification, property access, resident communication, restoration standards and construction packaging. Participants will consider repeatable delivery processes that preserve neighborhood flexibility, and the asset information needed to reduce repeated excavation and support future maintenance across the network.

Moderator:
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Panelists:
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11:10 – 11:30 AM
Stand-alone Project Presentation: TBA

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Panel: Managing Urban Stormwater: Regional Systems and Local Responsibilities

Stormwater projects cross the boundary between regional objectives and municipal roads, land and maintenance responsibilities. Drawing on MWRD's partnership program, this session examines detention, drainage improvements, green infrastructure and the public assets they protect. Discussion will cover project selection, property rights, design standards and responsibility after construction. Participants will consider how to compare interventions across a catchment and establish a credible maintenance plan before partners finalize their funding and delivery arrangements.

Moderator:
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Panelists:
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12:00 – 12:30 PM
Panel: Power for Regional Growth: Connecting New Loads Without Losing Reliability

Industrial investment, building electrification and other large loads require coordination with the electric network. This panel examines how Midwest utilities, owners and developers can establish credible connection requirements before committing to land and construction. Discussion will address substations, distribution upgrades, equipment procurement and uncertain demand. Participants will explore how connection milestones, customer commitments and phased energization can support investment while protecting existing customers and the reliability of the wider system.

Moderator:
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12:30 – 1:30 PM
Networking Lunch

1:30 – 2:00 PM
Panel: Reusing Industrial Land: Making Existing Sites Ready for New Investment

An industrial site's location can be attractive while its infrastructure remains poorly understood. This discussion focuses on the public and shared works that determine whether established industrial land can support a new use. Participants will examine environmental investigations, utility capacity, drainage, access roads and connections to freight networks. The emphasis is on assigning responsibility for enabling infrastructure and testing assumptions before a development commitment. Owners and partners will consider how to sequence remediation and construction without transferring unresolved risks between contracts.

Moderator:
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2:00 – 2:30 PM
Panel: Airport Renewal: Delivering Capacity While Keeping Operations Moving

Airport infrastructure must support passenger movement, aircraft operations and the services behind the terminal. This session examines how Midwest airport owners can coordinate terminal renewal, airfield works, utility upgrades and ground access within a live operating environment. Participants will discuss temporary facilities, restricted construction access, commissioning and the interfaces between airline requirements and public investment. The focus will be on the enabling works and operational decisions that determine whether a completed building or pavement project delivers its intended capacity and service.

Moderator:
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Panelists:
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2:30 – 2:50 PM
Stand-alone Project Presentation: TBA

2:50 – 3:20 PM
Panel: Critical Facilities and District Energy: Reliable Services Through Every Season

Hospitals, campuses and public facilities need utility systems that remain available during construction and extreme weather. This discussion explores district systems, central plants and connections between buildings with different operating needs. Participants will consider redundancy, electrical capacity, thermal distribution and temporary service. The Midwest setting puts particular emphasis on seasonal commissioning and winter performance, with procurement and testing designed around facilities that must continue serving patients, students and local communities.

Moderator:
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Panelists:
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3:20 – 3:40 PM
Afternoon Networking Break

3:40 – 4:10 PM
Panel: Working Waterfronts: Connecting Great Lakes and River Infrastructure

Working waterfronts depend on connections between navigation, terminals, rail, roads and utilities. This session examines how Midwest owners can prioritize improvements across those interfaces while accommodating industrial operations and neighboring communities. Topics include terminal renewal, heavy vehicle access, drainage, energy connections and construction near active waterborne operations. Participants will explore how to match investment to credible cargo and tenant requirements, and document public and private responsibilities before construction and long-term maintenance.

Moderator:
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4:10 – 4:40 PM
Panel: Construction Seasons and Delivery Capacity: Building a Workable Midwest Program

Capital schedules must reflect weather, operating restrictions and the availability of crews and equipment. This discussion examines how Midwest owners can coordinate design releases and procurement with realistic construction windows. Topics include off-site fabrication, early materials decisions, work packaging and the balance between program continuity and competition. Participants will consider how an owner can improve pipeline reliability without committing prematurely, and how contracts should address the consequences of delayed access or approvals.

Moderator:
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4:40 – 5:00 PM
Stand-alone Project Presentation: TBA

5:00 – 5:30 PM
Panel: Project Information That Survives Handover: From Field Records to Asset Decisions

The information produced during construction should help the people who operate and maintain the finished asset. This session examines how infrastructure owners can specify useful records, validate field changes and connect project data with their existing maintenance systems. Discussion will cover buried assets, inspections, equipment information and responsibility for keeping records current. Participants will explore practical acceptance criteria that smaller owners can also use, with an emphasis on reducing avoidable surveys, uncertainty and repeated work during the next intervention or capital program.

Moderator:
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5:30 – 6:00 PM
Panel: Paying for Renewal: Affordable Capital Plans and Shared Investment

Renewal programs compete for funding even when the consequence of deferral is well understood. This closing discussion examines how Midwest owners can connect asset condition, service outcomes and whole-life costs to credible financing decisions. Participants will consider rate affordability, debt capacity, grants and cost sharing between jurisdictions or beneficiaries. The focus will be on building a durable capital program with an operating plan behind it, and explaining the tradeoffs clearly enough for boards, customers and partners to support the next decision.

Moderator:
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Panelists:
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6:00 PM
Program Concludes