



2026 OHIO KENTUCKY INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING CONFERENCE

September 30 - October 2
Dayton Convention Center
22 E 5th Street
Dayton, OH 45402

Register, purchase tickets, and learn
more about all that OKI26 has to offer
at www.ohioplanning.org/oki26



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PROGRAM SESSIONS

WELCOME TO GEM CITY!

Dayton's legacy of innovation and ingenuity makes it the perfect place to gather for OKI26. As the birthplace of aviation and home to generations of visionaries, the city inspires us to think boldly about creating stronger, healthier, and more vibrant communities. This year's theme, Healthy Planners for Healthy Places, reminds us that thriving communities begin with the people who plan them. By sharing ideas, building connections, and investing in our own well-being, we strengthen our ability to create places that support health, resilience, and quality of life for all.

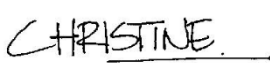
Our peer-reviewed conference program features the latest planning strategies, emerging trends, and practical solutions to help you make a lasting impact. We hope you'll leave OKI26 with fresh perspectives, valuable connections, and renewed inspiration.

Because we believe healthy planners create healthier places, we're adding even more ways to connect, recharge, and be inspired at OKI26. Join us for new conference experiences, including wellness activities, a pop-up pocket park, fireside chats, and a conference brunch and raffle. Don't miss these additions, along with our traditional offerings, as we come together to learn, connect, and celebrate the planning profession.

The OKI26 conference would not have been possible without the dedication and leadership of our local and regional planning committee. Their time, expertise, and commitment to creating a meaningful and engaging conference experience are sincerely appreciated. Thank you for your hard work, collaboration, and continued support of the planning profession and the communities we serve. Learn more at ohioplanning.org/okicommittee.

#BecauseWePlan


Andrew Rodney, AICP
OKI26 Conference Chair


Christine Dersi Davis, AICP
Executive Director, APA Ohio

		THURSDAY	FRIDAY
SPECIAL EVENTS	EXHIBIT HALL 3rd Floor	9:00AM - 4:00PM	9:00AM - 2:00PM
	QUIET ROOM Rm 208 Open to All	9:00AM - 4:00PM	9:00AM - 2:00PM
	VIP LOUNGE 3rd Floor Speakers & Sponsors Only	9:00AM - 4:00PM	9:00AM - 2:00PM
	WELLNESS STUDIO 3rd Floor	9:00AM - 4:00PM	9:00AM - 2:00PM
	PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOTS Gem City Complimentary, Drop-In	10:00AM - 11:00AM	10:00AM - 11:00AM
	OKI FIRST TIMERS LUNCH 1st Floor Lobby Self-Pay	12:30PM - 2:00PM	
	PET THERAPY 3rd Floor Terrace	10:00AM - 2:00PM	

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM, Dayton Convention Center | RM 302-303

>> Mastering the Essentials of Local Government: A Professional Development Boot Camp

\$50 (parking included)

Designed for planning, zoning, and historic preservation board and commission members, this training provides the essential knowledge and legal insights needed to serve effectively. Learn from experts in planning law, plan review, and planning management about meeting procedures, interpreting planning documents, and working with planning staff. [CM | 3](#)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1

REGISTRATION & NETWORKING BREAKFAST

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM, Gem City Ballroom

WELCOME & KEYNOTE ADDRESS

9:00 AM – 10:10 AM Exhibit Hall C

Featuring: Phil Green, AICP

>> The Joy of Planning

A planner, improviser, and comedian, Phil delivers a keynote that's anything but typical. Blending humor, storytelling, and real-world insight, he'll set the tone for a conference focused on wellness, creativity, and connection in the planning profession.

Phil's keynote celebrates the power of creativity in planning and the magic that happens when people come together as an ensemble. Expect laughs, a little improvisation spirit, and a refreshing reminder to take the work seriously... but not yourself. Along the way, he'll challenge attendees to think differently about collaboration, embrace uncertainty, and rediscover the joy in what they do.

More than just a keynote, it's a call to action. This is your moment: lean in, meet new people, spark new ideas, and make the most of being in a room full of passionate professionals. The mission is simple: find cool people, and do cool things with them. [CM | 1](#)

MORNING MOBILE WORKSHOPS

10:30 AM – 12:45 PM Meetup in 1st floor lobby 10-15 minutes before departure

>> Building the Future by Preserving the Past: A Downtown Troy Tour on Economic Development, Sustainability, and Historic Preservation

Bus | \$30

This guided bus tour with walking stops will explore how Downtown Troy has leveraged historic preservation, adaptive reuse, public spaces, and local businesses to drive revitalization while preserving community character. Participants will visit key sites and gain practical insights into how preservation, placemaking, and strategic investment can support long-term economic vitality.

CM | 2.25 SR | 1

SPEAKERS

Tim Davis, City of Troy

Austin Eidemiller, City of Troy

Cameron Goschinski, AICP, City of Dayton

>> Downtown Dayton Past and Present

Walking | \$20

Led by Dayton historian Angie Hoschouer Berghuis, this guided walking tour explores downtown Dayton's retail, industrial, entertainment, and residential architecture. Learn what has been lost, preserved, and transformed from the 1820s to today, and how those changes shaped the downtown of 2026. This rain-or-shine tour requires walking on city sidewalks and streets; comfortable shoes and a water bottle are recommended. **CM | 2.25**

SPEAKERS:

Ann Schenking, AICP, APA Miami Valley

Angie Hoschouer Berghuis, Preservation Dayton

>> Revitalizing Greater Old North Dayton: Progress and Community Transformation

Walking | \$20

Led by Dayton historian Angie Hoschouer Berghuis, this guided walking tour explores downtown Dayton's retail, industrial, entertainment, and residential architecture. Learn what has been lost, preserved, and transformed from the 1820s to today, and how those changes shaped the downtown of 2026. This rain-or-shine tour requires walking on city sidewalks and streets; comfortable shoes and a water bottle are recommended. **CM | 2.25**

SPEAKERS:

Katie Lunne, CityWide Development Corporation

Caitlin Jacob, AICP, CityWide Development Corporation

Karen DeMasi, CityWide Development Corporation

CONCURRENT SESSIONS 10:20 AM – 11:20 AM

>> Bettering Kettering: Unlocking Potential in a Land-Locked Community

RM 302

In physically-locked cities, land is finite and a profoundly consequential resource. Every acre is already spoken for, shaped by prior decisions, existing infrastructure, and community expectations. This session explores how cities like Kettering are working within that reality to reposition land toward

higher and better uses that support fiscal sustainability, make progress on community goals like expanding housing options, and strengthen overall community well-being and the qualities of place. Grounded in Kettering's recently adopted comprehensive plan and shaped by the economic realities of the Dayton region, this session examines why redevelopment has become central to the city's long-term strategy. Kettering occupies a distinct position in the regional landscape. It is neither a small town nor a major urban center, but a mature, built-out community with established neighborhoods, legacy commercial corridors, and major employers embedded within its physical fabric. With little to no greenfield opportunity, the city's future depends on how effectively it can evolve its existing land.

Panelists representing planning, management, and economic development will highlight how Kettering has taken on complex redevelopment efforts in the past, transforming aging sites, repositioning commercial corridors, and reinvesting in legacy properties through patient deal-making and strategic partnerships. These experiences inform how the city identifies areas susceptible to change using indicators such as vacancy, land value dynamics, and physical condition, and how those insights guide site prioritization today.

The discussion will also explore how the city structures redevelopment conversations, balancing fiscal needs, housing demand, and community expectations while navigating competing interests across departments and stakeholders. Particular emphasis will be placed on translating the comprehensive plan into actionable implementation, including partner selection, investment sequencing, and policy alignment over the next five years. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Kyle May, AICP, MKSK

Matt Greeson, City of Kettering

Bryan Chodkowski, City of Kettering

Tom Robillard, AICP, City of Kettering

>> Beyond the Sticky Note: Reimagining Community Engagement

RM 303

Traditional public meetings often attract the same voices, in the same rooms, using the same formats. But what happens when planners rethink engagement as a unique experience? This session highlights innovative and community-centered engagement strategies from two Northeast Ohio planning projects: the Cleveland Heights Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan and the GROW/ Jefferson Community Plan. Together, these projects engaged over 2,000 participants through a wide range of methods that met people where they already were—in schools, libraries, parks, neighborhood events, and community gathering spaces.

Participants will explore approaches that moved beyond traditional meetings: youth-led design workshops where students built physical prototypes of neighborhood ideas; pop-up events embedded in existing community activities; large-scale interactive mapping exercises; special-interest listening sessions; love letters to parks; kids' corners; visioning exercises; and open houses featuring interactive station, even a DJ. More importantly, the session will examine what these methods accomplished: reaching new audiences, elevating youth voices, creating memorable experiences, and generating richer, more actionable feedback. Attendees will leave with practical strategies, adaptable engagement tools, and lessons learned that can help transform participation from a checkbox exercise into a meaningful and enjoyable process. Because great plans start with great conversations, and sometimes those conversations happen around a popsicle stick prototype, a map, or a groovy playlist.

[CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Abbie Emison, AICP, McKenna

Michelle Parkkonen, AICP, Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Lauren Sayre, AICP, McKenna

Kathy Szenda Wilson, Pulse

>> Bridging Possibilities: Lessons Learned through Connecting with Communities to Improve Transit Access

RM 304

The Bridging Possibilities project examined how the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority can more effectively understand and respond to access barriers in communities experiencing persistent poverty. Funded through the Federal Transit Administration's Areas of Persistent Poverty program, the study focused on engaging residents in parts of Greater Cleveland that have sustained economic hardship for more than 30 years. The study highlights how transit remains essential in communities, but often does not fully support access to employment, healthcare, education, or other daily needs. Rather than relying on traditional public meetings or formal presentations, GCRTA worked with neighborhood partners and trusted peer connectors to engage more than 200 participants through small group conversations and one on one discussions. These settings were intentional, recognizing that many residents have been repeatedly asked to participate in studies without seeing meaningful outcomes. As participants highlighted transit access barriers related to service design, reliability, safety, and connectivity, GCRTA was prompted to reevaluate its internal processes and policies, resulting in a set of short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations aimed at improving transit access, enhancing service coordination, and better aligning transit investments with community priorities.

This session will share lessons learned about engaging residents who are fatigued by conventional outreach methods, developing long-term partnerships with neighborhood organizations, and working through organizational internal processes to develop real change. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Amy Yost, AICP, HDR

Maribeth Feke, AICP, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority

Braden Davis, HDR

>> The Downtown Showdown: Ohio v. Michigan

RM 307

Downtown revitalization is rarely just about streetscapes, events, or redevelopment project, it's about leadership, governance, and who is responsible for moving the vision forward. This session explores two Midwest communities taking dramatically different-but equally intentional-approaches to revitalizing their downtown districts. In Pickerington, Ohio, the City is leading implementation through the *Elevate District* initiative, coordinating branding, redevelopment strategy, placemaking, and public-private partnerships to strengthen an evolving historic downtown. In Brownstown Township, Michigan, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) serves as the driving force, leveraging tax increment financing (TIF), long-range investment planning, and catalytic infrastructure improvements to support the creation of a new downtown identity. Same challenge. Same goal. Two very different

implementation models. Through a candid comparison of these approaches, participants will gain insight into how governance structure influences funding, decision-making, project delivery, partnerships, and long-term sustainability.

The session will move beyond theory to examine what each model enables, where complications arise, and how communities can determine which framework best aligns with their local capacity, political environment, and redevelopment goals. Designed as an interactive discussion, the session will incorporate audience polling, real-world implementation examples, and facilitated dialogue to help participants evaluate the strengths and tradeoffs of each approach in real time. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how cities, DDAs, and other entities can lead downtown revitalization efforts, practical insight into funding and implementation tools that support downtown investment strategies for aligning organizational structure with community vision and redevelopment goals, and lessons learned from two communities actively navigating downtown transformation today. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Abbie Emison, AICP, McKenna

Dave Gulden, AICP, City of Pickerington, Ohio

John Jackson, AICP, McKenna

Sue Trussell, Brownstown Township, Michigan

>> DEEP DIVE SESSION Park Centered Development: Creating the Places We Want to Live

RM 308-309

A perfect session for this Healthy Places theme. This is a more advanced session used in-house at MKSK related to the planning and design of park-centered districts. It is presented by Chris Hermann, a Fellow of AICP, and Jeff Pongonis, a Fellow of ASLA. This Deep Dive session delves into trends, best practices, partnerships, costs, and results of park-centered developments in Ohio such as Quarry Trails (Columbus), Bridge Park (Dublin), Van Aken (Shaker Heights), and Summit Park (Blue Ash). It first examines lessons learned from successful design of historic parks in our cities, with central Ohio as a case study.

Best practices and their application to park-centered development will be highlighted. Park-centered development intentionally integrates park space as the focal point of new development. Multiple forces are converging to renew a focus on the practice of park-centered development: including mixed-use development trends, the cost of land, desire for proximate green space, the power of parks as a center of activity, the need for activated and inclusive spaces, and the potential for public-private partnerships. Parks can be successful at various scales and when done well, serve as the organizing and signature element of new communities. Well-placed and designed parks can increase business, attract tenants, and satisfy the needs of residents while improving their health, interaction, and well-being. As with mixed-use projects, parks in park-centered development can share infrastructure, parking, services, and programming. As a result, more cities, park districts, developers, businesses, and planners are considering park-centered developments.

The presenters will share lessons learned from historical precedents and experience from their firm's involvement in planning and designing recent exemplary park-centered development projects across the state of Ohio. As a Deep Dive Session, it will be interactive with guiding principles shared and discussion around each element. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Chris Hermann, FAICP, MKSK

Jeff Pongonis, FASLA, PLA, MKSK

>> TECHNICAL SESSION Designing for the Lifespan: How Dayton's Age-Friendly Plan Nurtures a Thriving Community

RM 309-310

This session details Dayton's multi-year journey from securing initial community assessments to building actionable steps across the 8 Domains of Livability. More importantly, it highlights the essential connection between a community's design and the well-being of the people within it. By building spaces that prioritize safety, accessibility, and social connection for modern elders, we inherently create healthier, more supportive neighborhoods that allow all residents to live vibrant, connected lives. Attendees will walk away with a practical roadmap for regional age-friendly implementation and strategies to create deeply supportive environments. **CM | 1 Eq | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Elizabeth Ellen Sizer, AICP, City of Dayton, Ohio

>> FIRESIDE TALK Lessons Learned: Wisdom from Seasoned Planners

3rd Floor, In Front of Theater

The region is fortunate to have so many seasoned planning professionals who are still actively involved in both the professional world and have dedicated their time to APA. These professionals have spent years carefully cultivating their technical expertise, they have been in leadership positions, and they have taught and mentored the next generation of planning professionals. They are not only good at the work that they do, but they are dedicated to ensuring that our strong history of exceptional planning carries on.

These leaders in the Planning field will talk about their own experience in the profession. They'll explain how the profession has changed over the past 20-30 years and how they expect it to change in the future. They'll talk about the challenge of maintaining integrity under political pressure. They'll relay their experience with the skills that are most needed for long-term success in the profession. They'll also share challenges they've faced over the years, the mistakes they've made, and the lessons they've learned. These issues will be addressed in this session by a number of planning leaders in Ohio, all of whom have successfully navigated the evolution of their career, and who are generously passing their knowledge along to the planning professionals who are readying to take their places. There will also be plenty of time for questions from the audience. Ultimately, all participants will learn from each other.

CM | 1

SPEAKERS:

Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, City of Cincinnati, Ohio

Eric Anderson, AICP, KZF Design

C. Gregory Dale, FAICP, McBride Dale Clarion

>> Celebrating Community & Culture: Revitalizing Downtown Canton Through Arts & Placemaking

RM 302

This session explores the evolution of Downtown Canton's revitalization efforts through the lens of public realm investment, creative placemaking, and community-driven partnerships. This session will trace the progression of projects and initiatives that have helped reshape Downtown Canton into a more vibrant and welcoming destination.

The discussion will begin with the development of Centennial Plaza, a transformational public gathering space that reestablished Downtown Canton as a center for community activity. Building upon the momentum created by Centennial Plaza, the City of Canton and its partners advanced the Re-Imagining the Public Realm Vision and Tactical Plan, which created a framework for activating streets, public spaces, and underutilized areas throughout downtown. A featured component of the discussion will focus on Mural Fest an event created by the City of Canton and its partners to activate downtown spaces through large-scale public art installations. Participants will learn how the festival contributed to downtown vibrancy, increased visitation, supported artists, and reinforced Canton's emerging arts and entertainment identity.

The session will also showcase several other projects including Art Box installations, and a variety of America 250 initiatives celebrating Canton's culture, history, and creativity. Featured America 250 projects include the Canton, Ohio Puzzle developed by DOWDLE Studios, Celebrating the Legacy of Canton: Canton's America 250 Video, and public art and storytelling initiatives that honor the people, places, and achievements that have shaped the community. The session will conclude by highlighting how these collective efforts are building toward the Reimagining of Court Avenue as a signature arts, entertainment, and public gathering corridor that will further strengthen Downtown Canton's identity and long-term revitalization momentum. Attendees will gain insight into how creative placemaking, collaboration, and cultural investment can serve as powerful tools for downtown revitalization, community identity-building, and long-term economic development. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Cassie Pearson, City of Canton, Ohio

Donn Angus, City of Canton, Ohio

>> Public Art Playbook: From Plans to Paint

RM 303

Public art plays a vital role in shaping vibrant communities. It enhances public spaces, reflects community identity, and fosters a sense of belonging. Beyond aesthetics, public art can stimulate economic activity and encourage social interaction, transforming ordinary spaces into gathering places and destinations. Thoughtful collaboration between planners, artists, and citizens ensures that public art helps create more livable, engaging environments that connect people to place. We'll explain how to start, who to include, how to proceed, and how to avoid pitfalls that can slow or halt a project.

Our team will share their varied public art experience: public art/placemaking in comprehensive and corridor plans (North Olmsted, Ohio & Lakewood, Ohio), creating public art plans (LAND studio throughout Northeast Ohio), and implementing public art from artist calls and selection, contracting,

community engagement, funding, design, cost estimating, fabrication, and maintenance (Lakewood, Ohio, Shaker Heights, Ohio, and LAND studio). **CM | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Kara O'Donnell, AICP, City of Shaker Heights, Ohio

Amanda Cramer, AICP, City of Lakewood, Ohio

Nahid Parsipour, City of North Olmsted, Ohio

Erin Guido, LAND studio

>> The Ever-Evolving Ethical Challenges of AI

RM 304

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies increasingly inform data analysis, land use decisions, transportation modeling, and public engagement, planners must continuously examine how AI applications intersect with AICP's principles of serving the public interest, promoting equity, safeguarding transparency, and avoiding conflicts of interest. The unique challenge of the ethics of AI is that it is fast moving and constantly changing. Planners may find themselves in the middle of ethical dilemmas related to AI, but the AICP Code of Ethics provides no direct guidance. Planners are left to apply broad planning ethics principles to a technology that was not contemplated when the Code of Ethics was written.

This session is the latest in a series of sessions facilitated by the speakers at previous local, state and national sessions exploring the topic, including a recent session at the National Planning Conference in Detroit. Each session has been unique, with evolving perspectives that have deepened over time. Through these sessions, it has been clear that we are just starting to scratch the surface of understanding the ethical implications of AI in the planning profession, ranging from accuracy, unintended and built in biases, privacy concerns, equity issues, the use of planning-specific tools, and the physical impact of AI driven infrastructure.

This session will include a summary of what we have heard to date as well as tabletop discussions of what the future might bring. The content is ideal for practitioners, students, and officials seeking a practical framework to navigate the evolving role of AI in planning with integrity, transparency, and public trust at the forefront. **CM | 1 E | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Todd Kinskey, FAICP, ZoneCo LLC

C. Gregory Dale, FAICP, McBride Dale Clarion

>> Planning for Health: Where Do We Stand?

RM 307

A healthy community does not happen by accident. It requires a comprehensive approach covering all aspects of social, physical, and economic environments. The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission's (MVRPC) PLAN4Health - Miami Valley (P4H) Initiative, launched in spring of 2021, has been exploring how planning can impact health outcomes and achieve the goal of healthy people and communities in the Dayton Metro Region.

As planning professionals, how well are we doing in promoting and advocating for *Health in All Plans and Policies* in our communities? Through our work, are we designing and building our communities

where the healthy choice is an easy choice? Are we providing environments where our residents can stay healthy with increased physical activities during their daily routine? To answer these questions, MVRPC has completed the "Local Plan Health Assessment" and "Healthy Communities Needs Assessment". These two assessments review existing plans, such as comprehensive and land use plans, and survey planning professionals in the Dayton region to answer the questions: Do we incorporate health and to what degree does our community's policy framework explicitly address public health? What are barriers and opportunities for cross-sector collaboration for embedding health into the planning process?

In this session, the MVRPC team will: 1) provide updates from the PLAN4Health Initiative; 2) share the findings from the "Local Plan Health Assessment" and "Healthy Communities Needs Assessment" to provide insights on current planning practices and barriers that are preventing communities from planning for health; and 3) engage the audience to discuss opportunities to break down these barriers and resources that are needed to advance planning for healthier communities. The audience will be challenged to think critically about how planning and public health are intertwined, how planners influence the overall health of people and places, and how health can be incorporated into their work.

CM | 1

SPEAKERS:

Milo Simpson, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission

Martin Kim, AICP, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission

>> DEEP DIVE SESSION Transformative Dialogues, Planner Well-being, and Community Healing: The Reimagining Columbus Story

RM 308-309

In the turbulent summer of 2020, when protests erupted over police brutality against people of color and controversial statues were being toppled and vandalized nationwide, the City of Columbus preemptively removed its Christopher Columbus statue from the steps of City Hall. Three years later, with the statue still in storage, the City of Columbus partnered with Designing Local for *Reimagining Columbus*, a 2-year research, community engagement, and design process to reckon with the statue and consider what should be done with it. During a high-profile process fraught with emotion and controversy, the team's planners, designers, and community engagement leaders strove to ground themselves while extending care to one another and everyone who participated in the conversation.

This session will explore how the team navigated this challenge, as well as additional issues relevant to planning practice, including considerations for public art and cultural infrastructure, effective engagement in contentious contexts, and developing community spaces that honor myriad perspectives and facilitate healing. It will begin with a grounding exercise, similar to what was employed during each of Reimagining Columbus' meetings and events, before delving into the story of the Columbus statue and its removal.

The project and its unique engagement methodologies will then be described in detail, alongside anecdotes revealing how planners dealt with specific emotional stressors throughout. The session will conclude with renderings of the conceptual commemorative space that emerged from this process wherein the statue would be reinstalled and recontextualized demonstrating how community feedback was translated into a new model for commemorative spaces that aim to transform painful histories into opportunities for connection and restoration. CM | 1 Eq | 1

SPEAKERS:

Amanda Golden, Designing Local

Kimberly Danielle, Designing Local

Matt Leasure, AICP, Designing Local

>> FIRESIDE TALK Professional Development Officer Office Hours

3rd Floor, In Front of Theater

Bring your career questions! Drop in for informal, one-on-one time with a professional development officer who can help you navigate your next career move. Get feedback on your resume, talk through job-search strategies, ask questions about career paths and professional growth, or get advice on positioning your skills and experience. Whether you're actively looking for a new opportunity, considering a career change, or simply wondering what's next, come with your questions and leave with practical ideas and guidance.

SPEAKERS:

Kimberly Burton, AICP, APA Ohio Professional Development Officer

AFTERNOON MOBILE WORKSHOPS

2:00 PM – 4:15 PM Meetup in 1st floor lobby 10-15 minutes before departure

>> Installation Development Planning at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

RTA Bus | \$35

The Installation Development Plan (IDP) is the comprehensive plan for military installations. Come see the Wright Patterson AFB IDP in action. The base is host to over 100 missions including research, intelligence, medical, museum, airport, and command mission uses. With a working population over 30,000 people, the base functions as a little city with all the transportation, utility, and environmental challenges that come along. Rather than working through private owners, the Civil Engineering Group (including the community planners) is the landlord that manages growth and development. We'll showcase our plans and growth opportunities. Peek behind the fence! **CM | 2.25**

SPEAKERS

Kjirsten Frank Hoppe, AICP, US Air Force

>> Planning for "No": Power, Privatization, and the Future of Equitable Cities

Walking | \$35

This session uses the documentary film *Emergent City* (2024, 1hr. 35min.), directed by Kelly Anderson and Jay Arthur Sterrenberg, as a springboard for examining the complex realities of contemporary urban planning, community development, and equitable growth. Through the lens of Brooklyn's Sunset Park neighborhood and the redevelopment debates surrounding Industry City, audience members will explore the intersection of planning practice, public policy, economic development, environmental justice, and community power.

Attendees are invited to participate in a post screening discussion - examining the competing interests and values that shape urban change while considering critical questions facing planners, civic leaders, developers, and residents across the country.

Drawing connections between the film and real-world planning challenges, questions emerge such as: Who benefits from redevelopment? How can planners balance economic investment with anti-displacement strategies? What role should community voices play in shaping neighborhood futures? And how can cities pursue climate resilience without deepening inequities? These ongoing debates are reshaping cities nationwide and how planners can help foster more democratic, resilient, and people-centered urban environments. Ideal for planners, architects, public officials, community advocates, students, and interdisciplinary practitioners, this session invites thoughtful dialogue about the future of cities and the evolving role of urban planning in advancing equity and belonging.

CM | 2.25 Eq | 1

SPEAKERS

Debi Chess, AICP, Urban Book Book Club

Matt Sauer, Matthew Sauer Architect LLC

CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

>> **The Human Side of Planning: Communication, Presence, and Facilitation in Civic Engagement**

RM 302

Planning processes depend on communication, trust, attentiveness, and the ability to navigate complex group dynamics under pressure. Yet many planners receive little formal training in the human and relational skills that shape public engagement, collaboration, and meeting effectiveness. As civic environments become increasingly emotionally charged, planners are often expected to facilitate difficult conversations, manage public frustration, and maintain productive dialogue across competing perspectives. These demands can affect not only meeting outcomes, but also the long-term sustainability of planning professionals and civic relationships.

This interactive session explores the human side of planning through practical exercises focused on communication, attentiveness, emotional awareness, listening, and facilitation presence. Participants will examine how stress, environmental conditions, and interpersonal dynamics influence public meetings, stakeholder engagement, and collaborative planning processes.

Through guided reflection, paired activities, and planning-specific applications, attendees will practice approaches that support clearer communication, stronger relational awareness, and more responsive engagement in civic settings. Rather than positioning communication as a purely technical skill, this session invites participants to consider how planners shape public process not only through policy and procedure, but through presence, responsiveness, and the environments they help create. **CM | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Danielle Wonkovich, Independent Planning & Human Sustainability Practice

>> Finding the North Star: Community Narratives, Trust, and Healthy Revitalization

RM 303

Community revitalization efforts often focus on physical outcomes: new investment, updated infrastructure, activated public spaces, and catalytic redevelopment. Yet planners know the hardest challenges are rarely technical. Communities carry memory, distrust, pride, and deeply rooted narratives about who they are and what change means. Ignoring those realities can derail even the most well-funded plans.

This interactive session explores how planners, land banks, brownfield practitioners, and community partners can use authentic community narratives to guide revitalization efforts in ways that build trust, strengthen belonging, and support healthier communities. Through case studies from urban and rural communities across the Midwest, speakers will discuss how storytelling, visioning, and public engagement can help communities identify a shared *North Star* that keeps redevelopment people-centered and locally grounded.

Participants will engage in facilitated discussion and small-group activities focused on community identity, difficult public conversations, and lessons learned from both successful and challenging projects. The session will also explore the growing emotional labor placed on planners as they navigate conflict, skepticism, burnout, and competing community expectations.

Attendees will leave with practical tools to improve engagement, navigate trust dynamics, and create revitalization strategies that align redevelopment with local identity, long-term stewardship, and healthier places for both communities and the professionals serving them. [CM | 1 SR | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Roxanne Anderson, Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields

Sally Gladwell, Mannik & Smith Group

Michael Anderson, AICP, Central Ohio Transit Authority

Crystal Lorimor, Belmont Community Improvement Corporation

>> Data Centers: A Community Checklist Before Saying Yes

RM 304

Data centers are rapidly reshaping conversations around economic development, land use, infrastructure, and energy across the country. For many communities, the challenge is not simply whether to support them, but rather how to evaluate proposals that often arrive quickly, promise major tax revenue, and carry long-term implications that are not always fully understood.

This session explores the realities communities should consider before approving large-scale data center development. Speakers will review a step-by-step checklist for creating plans, completing a fiscal analysis, and making zoning code changes that address data centers before a proposal is at their doorstep. Participants will examine the opportunities, tradeoffs, and planning pressures associated with these projects, including infrastructure demands, utility capacity, land consumption, public perception, regional competition, and questions around long-term community benefit. Rather than taking a pro-or anti-data center position, this session provides planners, local officials, and economic development leaders with a practical framework for asking better questions, identifying risks, and making more informed decisions so they are ready to act when proposals emerge. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Jessica Kuenzli, AICP, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)

L. Carson Bise, AICP, TischlerBise, Inc.

Sarah Kelly, AICP, Planning NEXT

C. Gregory Dale, FAICP, McBride Dale Clarion

>> Is It Just Me? Reflections on Public Discourse in Planning

RM 307

You are not alone. Planning conversations have become more charged, threatening planning effectiveness. Why is this happening? What can be done? This interactive panel discussion is about how planners should address this vitriol and return community dialogue to productive conversations. This past decade has seen increasingly tumultuous discourse related to planning issues of all types "housing, mobility, equity, sustainability, zoning, and development including public discontent at a breadth and scale not previously experienced in many communities. This is occurring throughout the country.

Our interactive session will begin with a short presentation on public discourse in the United States and research on root causes of communication issues that are impacting community conversations. Then our team of experts will present three scenarios featuring real world examples from across the country (names changes to protect the innocent/guilty) that demonstrate the challenges that all planners face today. Participants will be asked to evaluate each scenario and provide potential solutions to deal with the presented issues. We will facilitate this discussion and wrap up each scenario with how the real situation was resolved and then discuss takeaways and best practices. The session will conclude with robust attendee participation to share their own experiences and scenarios to get feedback from our speakers and the audience. This will be a hands-on session, where attendees are participants and come away with techniques and approaches they can apply in their own communities.

CM | 1

SPEAKERS:

Sarah Lilly, AICP, MKSK

Kyle May, AICP, MKSK

Chris Hermann, FAICP, MKSK

>> DEEP DIVE SESSION Scaling Micromobility for Small Towns

RM 308-309

To date, micromobility planning has focused on large cities with the assumption that micromobility is only possible in cities with density, built-out bike networks, and robust transit options. However, micromobility devices and shared micromobility programs are increasingly popular and successful in small cities, suburban communities, and rural regions. These communities need guidance tailored to their needs from planners that understand how to implement micromobility at this scale.

This session will highlight two projects where Burgess & Niple (B&N) created detailed micromobility guidance for two small cities and their surrounding regions. The first project is a Micromobility Implementation Framework for the Fayette-Raleigh Metropolitan Planning Organization, which serves the Beckley, WV urban area and the newly established New River Gorge National Park. The second

project is a micromobility feasibility study, part of a broader active transportation plan for the Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC), the MPO for the Charleston, WV urban area. This session will explore the innovative planning approaches used to develop micromobility recommendations for each community's unique context. The approaches included innovative use of crowdsourced mobility data to overcome limited local datasets, interviews with communities already operating small-scale programs, and targeted stakeholder engagement to identify local priorities and barriers. These efforts informed practical recommendations such as low-cost operational models, phased implementation strategies, and unique funding opportunities.

Attendees will gain a stronger understanding of micromobility as an emerging transportation mode, including current industry trends, emerging technologies, and the latest planning and operational best practices. The session will explain how these tools and strategies can be adapted for small cities and rural areas, helping planners identify right-sized solutions that reflect local resources, travel patterns, and community goals. Participants will leave with actionable ideas to evaluate demand, build support, and implement scalable micromobility programs in communities that have too often been overlooked.

CM | 1

SPEAKERS:

Jacob Miller, AICP, Burgess & Niple

>> TECHNICAL SESSION Death by Dot Exercise? Not Today

RM 309-310

Public participation is essential to good planning. But too often, it can feel exhausting for planners and uninspiring for the communities they are trying to reach. Traditional engagement methods can lead to low turnout, repetitive feedback loops, and stakeholder fatigue, leaving planning teams burned out and residents wondering whether their input really matters. Play with us using real games, interactive activities, and thoughtfully designed engagement tools that made public participation more fun, accessible, and effective for the Slavic Village Neighborhood Plan. We'll focus on three of our activities: 1) The interactive game that helped us craft our community vision 2) The Groundtruthing Initiative tools that helped us gain resident feedback on every vacant parcel in the neighborhood 3) The Recommendation Cards that helped us go over the recommendations in the plan and quantify community priorities

By meeting people with activities that are clear, creative, and easy to join, planners can generate better feedback earlier in the process, reduce the need for repeated outreach, and build stronger community trust. Learn directly from the planners behind the process how we shaped activities to ask questions that directly informed the plan process and dodged engagement fatigue from an already active community. Hear from a member of the Steering Committee and a resident turned Community Consultant who acted as ambassadors for the plan and deployed these engagement activities with their neighbors. Test these tools out yourselves! See how we took that feedback and turned it into data that directly informed the community plan. Attendees will leave with strategies to make public meetings more welcoming, more useful, and maybe even fun. **CM | 1 Eq | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Catherine Clarke, AICP, SmithGroup

Tatiana Marie Burks, Slavic Village Development Community Consultant

Krystal Sierra, AICP, Slavic Village Development

>> FIRESIDE TALK The Road to AICP: Process, Preparation, and Passing

3rd Floor, In Front of Theater

Thinking about earning your AICP certification but not sure where to start? This session will demystify the road to AICP, from understanding eligibility requirements and navigating the application process to preparing for the exam and building a study plan that works for you. Hear practical tips, lessons learned, and strategies for tackling the exam with confidence—including what to expect, how to prepare, and how to avoid common pitfalls. Whether you're just beginning to consider certification or are already preparing for exam day, you'll leave with a clearer roadmap and actionable next steps.

SPEAKERS:

Eric Anderson, AICP, APA Ohio Board Member

Christine Dersi Davis, AICP, APA Ohio Executive Director

CONCURRENT SESSIONS 3:10 PM – 4:10 PM

>> What's Happening with Planning Legislation in Your Statehouse?

RM 302

Legislative Policy Committee Chairs from all three states (Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana) have come together to provide brief, 15-minute updates on what's happening (or not happening) with Planning legislation in each state. Followed by 15 minutes of Q&A.

Whether it is pre-emption, incentives, or confusing state law, we're here to share what the latest and greatest is! Ever wondered what your role is or how to get started with advocating for or against a policy proposal in your state house? Attend here to find out. For example, state legislators want to get in on the action of helping with the national housing crisis, but they are not always sure what the state's role should be. Should it be a carrot or a stick, or both? Legislators also get lobbied by special-interest industries, which can lead to pre-emption proposals that seem to come out of nowhere (think Airbnb or small cell poles)! Does advocacy for one side or another look different between public sector and private sector planners? If so, how, and what to do about it? Should you even take a side or simply ask questions? The goal of this session is to leave feeling more empowered and confident in getting involved in legislative action in your state. **CM | 1 L | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Sam Perry, AICP, City of Oxford, Ohio

Deborah Luzier, AICP, Code Crafters

Shawn Dade, AICP, Taylor Siefker Williams Design Group

>> Columbus Avenue: Designing a Downtown for Community Wellness and Economic Vitality

RM 303

In 2025, the City of Sandusky completed a transformative \$5 million renovation of Columbus Avenue, its central downtown corridor. Recognized by Assisted Living Magazine as one of America's Top Main Streets for Wellness Walks, the project combined infrastructure investment, community development, and economic revitalization to create a more vibrant, accessible, and flexible public realm. Expanded sidewalks, enhanced accessibility, adaptable gathering spaces, and thoughtfully crafted placemaking elements have helped re-energize downtown and reinforce Columbus Avenue as the civic heart of

the city. Already proving to be a catalyst for revitalization, the streetscape project transformed three blocks of Sandusky's primary commercial corridor into a dynamic, pedestrian-oriented destination. Guided by extensive public engagement, the project translated direct community input into a public space that prioritizes high-quality public realm design while seamlessly adapting to downtown events and festivals including Bike Week, the Witches Walk, and the Farmers Market. According to the Greater Sandusky Partnership, summer visitation foot traffic increased 11.8% over 2024, drawing local, regional, and overnight visitors alike. The project reflects years of strategic planning and investment, including the establishment of a Central Public Improvement Tax Increment Financing district in 2018 and the adoption of the 2021 Downtown Master Plan vision for making Columbus Avenue Sandusky's Most Vibrant Street. Driven by innovation and collaboration, the project demonstrates best practices in partnerships, financing, planning, design, construction, and public communication.

Join us for an in-depth discussion of this cornerstone initiative in Sandusky's place-based economic development strategy and learn how the city is creating a destination where people are proud to live, work, and visit. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Arin Blair, AICP City of Sandusky

Cullen Meves, MKSK

Andrew Overbeck, AICP, MKSK

>> Grassroots to Google: Visioning and Engagement in Bowling Green, KY

RM 304

As featured in the 2026 Trend Report for Planners, learn how Bowling Green, the fastest growing city in Kentucky, combined innovative approaches, a grassroots campaign and evolving Artificial Intelligence technologies to run the largest town hall in US history. The following excerpt from the APA Trend Report provides a good summary. Public engagement is one of the biggest, most time-consuming endeavors for planners. Planners must balance getting as much public input on projects and decisions as possible against associated time and monetary costs. Bowling Green, Kentucky, tackled this challenge as part of their BG2050 plan process. The planning team wanted to ensure they received the most public input possible before making big decisions about the future of the city, which is set to double in size in the next 25 years. The city launched *What Could BG Be?* - a month-long online public polling and commenting forum supported by the Computational Democracy Project and Google Jigsaw. The forum used machine learning to pose questions to participants and to understand and synthesize massive amounts of community feedback into data that plan makers could use effectively in the long-range strategic plan. Through this process, nearly 8,000 residents gave their input on the future of Bowling Green and Warren County.

The speakers will share experiences from their partnership and illustrate the methods they used to engage their community - including outreach, campaign design, and consensus building - as well as the data gathered, results of analysis (including a community example), and how the city and county are now leveraging those insights for a comprehensive plan. [CM | 1 Eq | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Ben Peterson, AICP, City-County Planning Commission of Warren County, KY

Amanda Havard, InnoEngine

Sangita Shresthova, PhD, University of Southern California

>> From Legacy Sites to Lasting Places: Adaptive Reuse and Community-Centered Affordable Housing in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana

RM 307

Healthy communities depend on more than good intention, they require planning decisions that support stability, accessibility, and long-term well-being. This panel examines how planners, developers, and community partners collaborated to transform challenging legacy sites into affordable housing that advances healthier places across Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky.

Through three real-world case studies, panelists will explore how planning policy, zoning flexibility, land-use decisions, and public investment directly shaped outcomes for residents and neighborhoods. Projects include Warner & Swasey in Cleveland, a large-scale historic adaptive reuse that preserved a landmark industrial building, vacant for 40 years in Cleveland's mid-town neighborhood; Kohr Community Flats in Bloomington, Indiana, a historic adaptive reuse project that will serve as the cornerstone for the larger master-planned redevelopment of a centrally located former-hospital campus; and Park Hill Algonquin Acres in Louisville, Kentucky, a creative reuse of an industrial site that reconnects housing, community space, and neighborhood fabric.

Moderated by Jeff Beam of OCCH, the discussion will focus on practical lessons learned at the intersection of planning and implementation. Panelists will candidly discuss how these difficult projects emerged from community plans, engaged communities, and how they aligned development with broader goals around housing stability, preservation, and equitable access to opportunity.

Attendees will gain actionable insights into how planning choice, made early and often-can enable affordable housing that supports housing choice, community resilience, and sustainable redevelopment. **CM | 1 Eq | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Geoff Milz, AICP, Pennrose

Jeff Beam, OCCH

James Beckett, Re:land

Karly Brinla, Brinshore

>> DEEP DIVE SESSION When the Campus Closes: Turning a Higher Education Crisis into a Once-in-a-Generation Redevelopment Opportunity

RM 308-309

More than 80 private nonprofit colleges have closed or merged since 2020, and demographic projections suggest the pace will accelerate through 2029. Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana are among the most exposed states in the country campuses in Springfield, Yellow Springs, Wilberforce, Frankfort, and Steubenville are already closed, in active financial distress, or under state fiscal intervention. For host municipalities, a closure is the largest single redevelopment opportunity most communities will encounter in a generation but only if planners can navigate the competing interests that determine whether the site is actually redeveloped.

This Deep Dive engages participants in a live redevelopment exercise built around three stakeholders whose interests rarely align: the higher education institution seeking maximum sale value, the municipality seeking a fiscally positive mix of housing, commercial, and civic uses, and the developer requiring a 12% IRR and 10% cash-on-cash return to justify the risk. Participants will choose from three pre-analyzed at-risk tri-state campuses at the start of the session, then work in three tables to develop

build-out programs for the selected site that attempt to satisfy all three interests simultaneously. While the tables work, 4ward Planning analysts will model each program live using financial feasibility, fiscal impact, and residual land value tools testing whether each build-out delivers acceptable developer returns, generates net positive tax revenue, and produces a defensible acquisition price for the institution. Participants leave with an applied framework for evaluating campus reuse and a direct view of why permissive zoning so often fails to produce projects. **CM | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Todd Poole, 4ward Planning Inc.

Erin Camarena, AICP, 4ward Planning Inc.

Susan Crowell-Bergan, 4ward Planning Inc.

>> TECHNICAL SESSION Context is Key: Speed Management Strategies that Look Beyond the 85th Percentile

RM 310-311

Louisville's *Speed Management Plan* was completed in March 2025. The plan recommends strategies to manage speeds through policy changes, street design, education, and enforcement to help Louisville realize its vision of zero roadway deaths by 2050. A key element of the plan is the creation of road context classifications and speed limit ranges for different types of streets based on crash data, land use, population density, and other factors.

Through this session, participants will evaluate speed-related issues, learn emerging methods for speed limit setting, and explore speed management countermeasures through interactive case studies. **CM | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Steph Leonard, AICP, Louisville Metro Department of Transportation

Andrew Ceifetz, WSP

Elizabeth Farc, WSP

>> FIRESIDE TALK Grounded: Making Mindfulness an Everyday Practice

3rd Floor, In Front of Theater

Learn simple, practical ways to find your footing when life gets overwhelming. Drop in to explore breathing techniques, recognize the signs that you're becoming overstimulated, discover what helps you personally reset, and practice simple grounding techniques you can use anytime, anywhere.

No formal session. No pressure to participate. Stop by, pull up a chair, try a technique, or simply listen. Stay for five minutes or stay awhile. Breathe. Reset. Ground yourself.

SPEAKERS:

Danielle Wonkovich, Independent Planning & Human Sustainability Practice

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

REGISTRATION

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM, *Gem City Ballroom*

CONFERENCE BRUNCH & OKI RAFFLE

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM *Exhibit Hall C*

Join us for a lively brunch featuring a spirited raffle emceed by keynote speaker Phil Green, AICP and APA Ohio Executive Director Christine Davis, AICP. Expect a little business, a lot of brunch, a few laughs, and a chance to win!

MORNING MOBILE WORKSHOPS

10:30 AM – 12:45 PM *Meetup in 1st floor lobby 10-15 minutes before departure*

>> Shaping the Dayton Main Street Story Through Urban Design over the last 40 years

Walking | \$20

A 5-block walking tour of Main Street. The first half will leave from the Convention Center and cover how Dayton redeveloped Main Street from 1947 until today touching upon Urban Renewal and post-Urban Renewal Actions including Ohio Impacted Cities Legislation and modern public finance methods and tools to implement the Vision. The return walk will start at Main and Monument where we will see Dayton's first survey monument. We will then tell the story of the reshaping of Dayton over the last 45 years applying the urban design principles of Placemaking. [CM | 2.25](#)

SPEAKERS

John D Gower, CityWide Development Corporation

>> Brownfield to Bike Trail - Transforming Dayton's Wolf Creek into a Recreational Amenity

RTA Bus, Walking | \$30

In 2016, Dayton staff had an audacious idea: transform a long-vacant, tax delinquent 2.75-acre site strewn with collapsing buildings and debris along the Wolf Creek into a bike path segment. This bike path segment would connect Downtown Dayton with Five Rivers MetroPark's Wesleyan Center and complete a continuous recreational path along the creek. The project is in a majority Black, low to moderate income community that did not have direct access to this part of the Wolf Creek through an along the river bike path. The Dayton region has an extensive river corridor bikeway system and Dayton wanted to provide that experience here. Complicating things was a Dayton-owned railroad spur that bordered Wolf Creek at the site, and the creek was eroding the railroad embankment. Part of the project involved the restoration of more than 1,000 linear feet of Wolf Creek. The restoration addressed significant degradation of the stream channel and eroding channel banks. Completed in June 2025, the project required extensive partnerships and leaps of faith between city departments and outside agencies, along with multiple funding sources. This rain or shine mobile workshop will travel to the site, walk it, and discuss how the project came to fruition. [CM | 2.25](#)

SPEAKERS:

Joe Weinel, City of Dayton, Ohio

Keith Klein, City of Dayton, Ohio

Ann Schenking, AICP, APA Miami Valley

CONCURRENT SESSIONS 10:25 AM – 11:25 AM

>> The Shrinking Campus: Community Planning Amidst Institutional Decline

RM 302

What happens when the institution your community was built around begins to disappear? For many rural communities and small towns, colleges and universities are more than educational institutions. They are major employers, economic engines and cultural anchors. Not to mention, they're often part of the community's identity. So, when they begin to falter, the impact is felt beyond the campus itself. This session will explore the growing pressures facing small colleges and universities and why communities must begin planning before a crisis point arrives. Participants will examine the warning signs of institutional decline, including shrinking enrollment, aging faculty and changing beliefs around the value of higher education.

The discussion will also explore what communities can do when uncertainty begins to emerge. From campus redevelopment to adaptive reuse, participants will learn how communities across Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana - as well as in other parts of the country, from Carbondale, Illinois to Burlington, Vermont - are responding to closures, downsizing and decline.

Participants will leave with practical ideas for how communities can start planning proactively, strengthen relationships with institutions, and prepare for multiple futures before decisions are made for them. **CM | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Sarah Kelly, AICP, Planning NEXT

Kevin Hively, Ninigret Partners, LLC

>> The Hidden Opportunity in Vulnerable Places: Planning for Cultural Continuity within Suburban Growth

RM 303

As suburban growth reshapes communities across the Midwest, new development often occurs without connection to the context of the places it occupies, resulting in homogeneous environments and the gradual loss of long-standing cultural identity. Many of these vulnerable places, rich with history and meaning, are at risk of being slowly erased through incremental change. At the same time, development brings needed housing, investment, and vitality to expanding communities. Together, these conditions present an opportunity. By identifying underappreciated existing resources and working with the cultural narratives already present, planners and designers can preserve cultural continuity while shaping development that is more authentic, vibrant, and grounded in its surroundings.

Using the Hortonville Village Center Vision Plan in Westfield, Indiana as a case study, this session traces the full arc from discovery to implementation. The effort began as a planning-led investigation to

identify overlooked sites and evaluate their potential to serve as new community anchors. A former grain elevator site—once the heart of a 19th-century agricultural village—emerged as an opportunity to reconnect new development with its historic context. Presenters will outline the methodology used to identify and evaluate the site, then demonstrate how these findings were translated into a vision that incorporates adaptive reuse, reinforces cultural continuity, and supports implementable outcomes. Attendees will gain practical strategies for identifying meaningful context in areas planned for development, balancing redevelopment with preservation, and navigating real-world challenges.

CM | 1 SR | 1

SPEAKERS:

Caleb Ernest, AICP, City of Westfield, IN

Jacob Lafever, V3 Companies

>> Shine Responsibly: How Communities are Tackling Illuminated Signage

RM 304

In the decade following *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*, many communities have revised their sign codes to address content neutrality, shifting regulatory focus toward the physical and operational characteristics of signs. This evolution has brought increased attention to sign illumination and to questions about when, where, how, and how much sign lighting should be permitted well beyond traditional concerns related solely to digital brightness. The focus of this session will be on signs, but from the perspective of regulating lighting type (internal, external, neon, LED?) and illumination levels.

The objectives of the session will be to outline how sign lighting contributes (or doesn't) to a community's overall concerns about light pollution, and how different communities from across the nation are tackling questions that include how communities are addressing signs as part of dark sky ordinances. This will include discussions of regulations that will focus on balancing First Amendment considerations with community objectives related to aesthetics, traffic safety, placemaking, and business visibility. Attendees will leave with practical insight into how sign illumination can be regulated using clear, content neutral standards that align with community goals, lighting policies, and economic development goals.

By attending this session, participants will be able to: ☐ Understand sign illumination types and technologies and their regulatory implications. ☐ Apply content-neutral, defensible approaches to sign illumination that balance visibility, placemaking, and community character. ☐ Evaluate whether existing sign illumination standards effectively align with broader planning and economic development objectives. **CM | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Wendy Moeller, FAICP, Compass Point Planning

Dan Boron, AICP, City of Springboro, Ohio

James Carpentier, AICP, International Sign Association

>> Rural Risk or Urban Risk? The Connections and Consequences

RM 307

Across the Midwest, rural communities are experiencing declining population, worsening health outcomes, workforce shortages, and visible disinvestment. All while nearby metropolitan areas continue to grow. But these trends are not separate realities. They are deeply connected.

This session explores the growing imbalance between healthy, expanding metros and struggling rural communities, and why the region's long-term vitality depends on both. Participants will examine how this reshaping of small, rural towns and counties is creating ripple effects that reach far beyond their borders, influencing workforce stability, economic resilience, and quality of life. Rather than framing this as a rural issue alone, this discussion challenges planners, local officials, and regional leaders to think beyond jurisdictional boundaries and toward more connected, multi-county approaches to planning and investment. Participants will explore how regional collaboration and state policies can help communities better respond to demographic shifts, infrastructure pressures, and shared economic challenges they cannot solve on their own.

The panel will discuss what these challenges mean for the future of planning and why healthier communities increasingly depend on healthier regions. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Jamie Greene, FAICP, Planning NEXT

Alex Downard, Community Foundation of Wabash County, IN

>> DEEP DIVE SESSION DEI Amidst Uncertainties: A Multi-State Perspective in Equity Practices

RM 308-309

APA Chapters of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana come together in this deep dive session to discuss the state of DEI+ amidst today's polarized political environment and how that is impacting the planning profession and the communities we serve.

With a lens on equity, this session serves as a forum for practitioners to learn, be engaged, and help guide the future of our practice. The deep dive will be organized around three key components as stated below: 1) Where Have We Been: DEI+ at the Chapter level - Hear Board representatives share what each of their state's Chapter has been doing to further equity in Chapter leadership, membership, educational programming, organizational policy, and more. 2) Where are We Now: Discuss present day uncertainties around DEI+ practices and the profession and how that is actively influencing each of the Chapters. Speakers will share candid conversations they have had internally at their Chapter level, with each other, and peers from other regional Chapters to gauge potential impact and the shifts that may be necessary in a polarized political environment. 3) Where Do We Want to Go: Engage the room in genuine, candid, and thought-provoking, future-forward conversations as they pertain to equity practices within our profession.

We want to learn from attendees what they see the role of planners in furthering DEI in our practice, the challenges they expect to be facing, and how their APA Chapter should support their goals in this regard. [CM | 1 Eq | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Megha Sinha, AICP, NBBJ (APA Ohio)

Dominique Edwards, PhD, City of Michigan City, IN (APA Indiana)

Samantha Castro, AICP, TSW Design (APA Kentucky)

>> TECHNICAL SESSION Behind the Podium: The Emotional Tax of Public Engagement

RM 309-310

Public engagement is central to the planning profession, but the emotional demands placed on the professionals leading that work are rarely discussed. Planners, consultants, and public agency staff are often expected to present complex information, answer difficult questions, manage conflict, and remain calm and neutral in rooms where distrust, frustration, fear, and anger may be directed toward them personally. While these moments are often treated as simply part of the job, repeated exposure to hostile or adversarial public meetings can affect professional confidence, staff morale, burnout, decision-making, and the overall quality of engagement.

This session will explore the human side of public engagement and examine how emotionally charged public processes affect the planners and professionals tasked with leading them. Through personal reflection, audience discussion, and practical examples, the session will consider why public meetings become heated, how planners often become the face of broader institutional frustration, and what organizations can do to better prepare and support staff before, during, and after difficult engagement settings. Rather than discouraging public participation, this session will argue for stronger, more intentional engagement practices that support both community members and planning professionals.

Participants will leave with practical strategies for designing safer, more productive meetings; setting clear expectations; managing conflict; supporting junior staff and presenters; and building post-meeting debriefs into project workflows. The goal is to reframe public engagement not only as a project requirement, but also as a professional practice and workplace condition that deserves training, structure, and care. **CM | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Arthur Schmidt, OHM Advisors

CONCURRENT SESSIONS 11:35 AM – 12:35 PM

>> Lights, Camera, Action: Understanding the Cast of Characters in Community Planning

RM 302

Ever feel like you are in an actual episode of Parks and Recreation, with all the small-town shenanigans? Every neighborhood has its cast of characters. There's the long-term resident who has seen every plan come and go and isn't afraid to tell you about it. The Ron Swansons: your town grumps who don't want to be doing this in the first place. The local business owner who shows up to every meeting with a specific agenda. The quiet attendee in the back row who says nothing for months and then submits three pages of written comments the night before adoption. And of course, the enthusiastic newcomer who wants to redesign the entire street network by the second meeting. AKA the Leslie Knopes. Sound familiar? Welcome to community planning.

This session looks at the recurring characters planners encounter, and more importantly, how to work with them effectively. Because behind every "difficult" stakeholder is a set of real concerns, lived experiences, and priorities that, if understood and channeled correctly, can actually make your plan stronger. **CM | 1 SR | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Catherine Clarke, AICP, SmithGroup

Tuba Baloglu, Slavic Village Development

Krystal Sierra, AICP, Slavic Village Development

>> Regional Approaches to Infill Housing for Legacy Communities

RM 303

Cleveland's inner ring suburbs are historic, walkable, and diverse places to live; however, years of demolition left more than 5,000 vacant, single-family lots scattered in neighborhoods. These lots provided an opportunity for infill housing, but outdated zoning hindered construction. More than 40 percent of single-family lots did not meet local code requirements for minimum lot size, and more than 45 percent did not meet local code requirements for minimum lot width. Over the course of two years, a multi-jurisdictional, regional consortium of the First Suburbs, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, the Cuyahoga Land Bank, banks, and local communities partnered to address zoning challenges.

Hear about impacts of this work, which was awarded the APA County Planning Division's Award of Excellence, including two communities' experiences as they welcomed more than 100 new homes. In this presentation, learn how to measure your zoning issues and discover free tools to address them, including a checklist for assessing codes, a strategy guide for approaching updates, a tool to test zoning changes, and approaches to incentivizing infill. Greater Cleveland's unique partnership is addressing local reform and you can use these tools to address the issue locally. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Patrick Hewitt, AICP, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission

Jennifer Kuzma, First Suburbs Consortium of Northeast Ohio

Patrick Grogan-Myers, City of Euclid, Ohio

Michael Love, City of South Euclid, Ohio

>> Essentials for Surviving a Public Service Career

RM 304

Public service requires resilience, adaptability, and a strong commitment to ethics and the public interest. Drawing on more than 75 years of combined experience, two seasoned public-service professionals share practical lessons for navigating political pressures, competing interests, organizational dynamics, and community expectations while maintaining integrity and public trust.

Through real-world examples, humor, and actionable strategies, participants will explore ethical decision-making, transparency, accountability, professional boundaries, and ways to remain mission-focused when pressures arise. [CM | 1 E | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Tom Robillard, AICP, City of Kettering, Ohio

Erik Collins, City of Centerville, Ohio

>> DEEP DIVE SESSION No More Mobile Home Aisle: Factory Built Homes for the Future

RM 308-309

Homes built in a factory have been part of America's housing landscape for more than 50 years, providing an affordable housing option for individuals and families. Over time, manufactured homes, commonly and incorrectly referred to as a trailer home, single-wide, or still a mobile home, have earned a negative reputation for quality, safety, and value, due to relaxed construction standards and decentralized regulatory oversight. Local and state ordinances often echo this prejudice by limiting or prohibiting the placement of factory-built homes in our communities. However, updated federal regulations and improved construction techniques have resulted in modern factory-built homes that offer the same long-term benefits as a traditional site-built home at a more affordable price. The only difference is the process, not the product. It is essential that our local and state regulations allow for flexibility in the design and location of factory-built homes, reflecting the advancement of the industry and providing additional options for affordable home ownership.

This session will inform attendees about the federal regulatory framework for modern factory-built homes, including both manufactured and modular, as well as the quality, cost, and efficiency benefits of these homes. The speakers will also discuss changes made at the local and state level to remove regulatory barriers for factory-built homes and streamline the local land use approval process, focusing on updates to the Louisville Metro Land Development Code in 2024 and House Bill 160, approved by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2025. Finally, this session will cover potential for the future of factory-built and other non-traditional housing types, from modular multi-family to online home sales. **CM | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Rachel Casey, AICP, Louisville Metro Office of Planning

Logan Hanes, Kentucky Manufactured Housing Institute

>> TECHNICAL SESSION The Planner's Improv Playbook: Practical Training with Keynote Phil Green

RM 310-311

In this hands-on improv class, you'll learn how to listen loudly, laugh in the face of failure, and make silly noises all in the name of being a better planner. By learning to stay in the moment, you'll leave with practical skills to find more Joy in Planning.

SPEAKERS:

Phil Green, AICP, The Improv Planner

CONCURRENT SESSIONS 12:45 PM – 1:45 PM

>> Right-Sized Planning: Practical Project Identification for MPOs and Communities

RM 302

Communities and MPOs are expected to deliver long-range transportation plans that are data-informed, community-centered, fiscally realistic, and resilient - often with vastly different levels of staff capacity, technical resources, and local partner readiness. Identifying the right projects is the critical step that transforms a long-range plan from a vision document into an actionable investment strategy.

This session explores scalable approaches to project identification and prioritization that can be adapted for urban, suburban, and rural planning environments. Through real-world examples, attendees will learn how agencies can right size their planning process without sacrificing transparency, defensibility, or alignment with community goals.

Speakers will walk through three practical project development frameworks. The first highlights a data-driven approach that leverages travel demand models, GIS analysis, safety data, and automated screening methods to systematically identify transportation needs and candidate investments. The second presents a hybrid process that combines quantitative analysis with structured stakeholder engagement and local partner input to balance technical rigor with community context. The third demonstrates low-cost, highly adaptable methods for smaller or data-limited communities, using targeted outreach, project solicitation, and survey-based prioritization techniques to build actionable project lists. Participants will leave with practical tools, lessons learned, and adaptable workflows that support healthier planning processes, stronger regional coordination, and transportation investment decisions that communities can realistically advance. **CM | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Erin Grushon, AICP, Burgess & Niple

Shannon Salvatore, AICP, Burgess & Niple

Mark Sullivan, AICP, Burgess & Niple

>> The Price is Right: Housing Edition

RM 303

What if understanding housing and affordability issues felt less like a lecture and more like a game show? "The Price Is Right: Housing Edition" transforms one of America's most pressing planning challenges into an unforgettable, interactive, and audience-driven learning experience. Modeled after the beloved television classic and designed to illustrate the real and sometimes surprising state of housing affordability across Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana.

Attendees will submit their names upon entering and take their seats as the studio audience. The hosts will guide contestants through a series of rounds where real housing and market data become the items being bid on. Contestants are called to "Come on Down!" to compete in pricing challenges built around actual residential listings across urban, suburban, and rural communities in the OKI region. Mini-game rounds tackle the metrics that matter most to planners: cost-burdened household rates, median home values versus area median income, income-to-value ratios, and fair market rents. The session will culminate in a Showcase Showdown where finalists must estimate the total development cost of an actual residential project in the region, incorporating land acquisition, construction, soft costs, and financing assumptions. This final challenge grounds the game in the real-world constraints planners and developers navigate every day.

The session will be rounded out by a short debrief that connects the data to planning policies like zoning reform, inclusionary housing, density bonuses, and subsidy tools. Attendees leave with a visceral, data-backed understanding of regional housing affordability, concrete policy takeaways, and perhaps most importantly, proof that learning more about serious and critical topics like housing affordability can be a relaxed, fun, and interactive experience. Game rules, procedures, and questions will also be shared with conference attendees, so it can be replicated at a local scale as a fun and interactive public engagement tool. **CM | 1 Eq | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Jonathan Miller, AICP, GISP, McKenna

Abbie Emison, AICP, NCI, McKenna

>> Listening, Leading, & Delivering a Modern Update to the Boone County, KY Transportation Plan

RM 304

Boone County is one of Kentucky's fastest-growing counties and a vital regional hub. Anchored by the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, it plays a key role in logistics and freight industries that support the nation's economy. The Boone County Transportation Plan update took a deep dive into current and future transportation needs, leveraged data analysis, evaluated how to prepare for advanced technologies, collaborated with stakeholders, and conducted public engagement to develop a prioritized list of capital improvement projects. This list serves as a blueprint for investments through 2050. A standout element of this update is the extensive public engagement, which included an online website, surveys, a public meeting, and tactical engagement at community events that resulted in thousands of participants who directly shaped the project recommendations. However, this plan is more than just a project list; it's a promise to enhance quality of life, create a stronger economy, and support visitors by responsibly investing taxpayer dollars. Since many of the major roads in the county are state or federal routes, this plan also strengthens Boone County's voice in advocating for improvements to be implemented by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

Hear multiple perspectives from the Gresham Smith consultant team, Boone County staff, and OKI staff to discover how combining data-driven decision-making with robust community engagement can empower you to develop a forward-thinking, actionable transportation plan that meets the challenges of tomorrow. [CM | 1](#)

SPEAKERS:

Amanda Deatherage, AICP, Gresham Smith

Robyn Bancroft, AICP, Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments

Robert Franxman, PE, Boone County Fiscal Court

Elaine Zeinner, Boone County Fiscal Court

>> The Importance of Ohio House Bill 361

RM 307

Ohio communities are facing unprecedented growth pressures tied to housing demand, infrastructure expansion, economic development, and the rapid rise of large-scale projects such as data centers. As planners and local governments work to balance growth with community character, Ohio House Bill 361 represents one of the most significant modernization efforts of Ohio land use law in decades. This session, presented by Brian Lorenz, AICP, the only Planner serving in the Ohio General Assembly will examine how HB 361 creates a more predictable, transparent, and locally empowering framework for planning and development across Ohio.

The presentation will focus on how the legislation strengthens local government authority while improving certainty for developers, residents, and planning professionals alike. Attendees will learn how HB 361 encourages proactive planning, establishes clearer development review expectations, and enables communities to create stronger submission requirements and review procedures that work on local timelines rather than reacting to outside pressure. The session will also explore how the

bill helps communities address emerging land use challenges, including utility-scale development and data center growth, while preserving local decision-making authority.

Designed specifically for planners, zoning administrators, elected officials, economic development professionals, and attorneys, this session will provide practical insight into how the legislation impacts comprehensive planning, zoning administration, public engagement, housing production, and economic competitiveness. The discussion will also highlight how predictability in the entitlement process can support housing opportunities from both market-driven and community-centered perspectives.

As Ohio continues to grow, HB 361 offers planners a critical opportunity to shape development through clearer rules, stronger local processes, and forward-looking planning tools that empower communities to guide their own future. **CM | 1 L | 1**

SPEAKERS:

Brian Lorenz, AICP, Ohio House of Representatives, 60th District

>> DEEP DIVE SESSION Underutilized No More: Inside Dayton's onMain Innovation District

RM 3108-309

Vacant fairgrounds. Uncertain market conditions. Anchor institutions' leadership. This session goes beyond the case study and into the process behind Dayton's emerging onMain Innovation District. Participants will get insights into how public, private, and institutional partners worked together to transform an underutilized site into a long-term redevelopment opportunity grounded in Dayton's history of innovation.

The discussion will walk through the key decisions that led the project from vacant parcel to long-term community asset, including cultivating partnerships, securing site control, aligning funding and infrastructure investments, and building momentum in a market where a conventional development path was not guaranteed. Participants will also explore how the project team approached community identity, land use, and strategic positioning to create a district rooted in local heritage. Designed as a practical planning conversation, this session offers attendees a roadmap for navigating complex redevelopment projects in legacy cities and underutilized areas where the future may be uncertain, but the opportunities are significant.

SPEAKERS:

Mariah Vogelgesang, onMain

Steven Gondol, City of Dayton, Ohio

Jamie Greene, FAICP, Planning NEXT

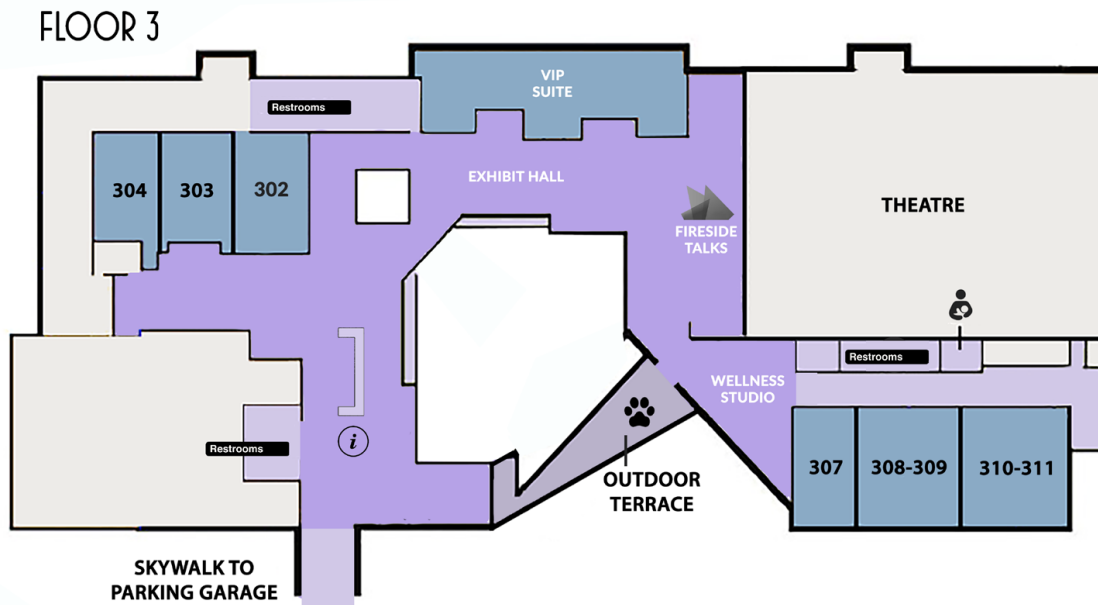
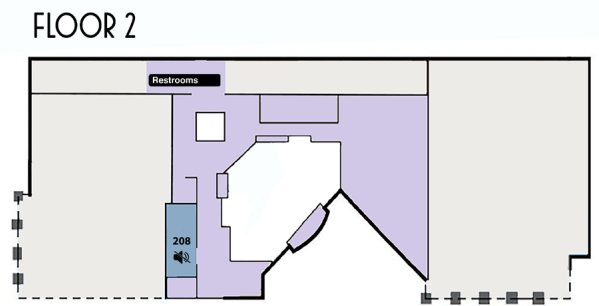
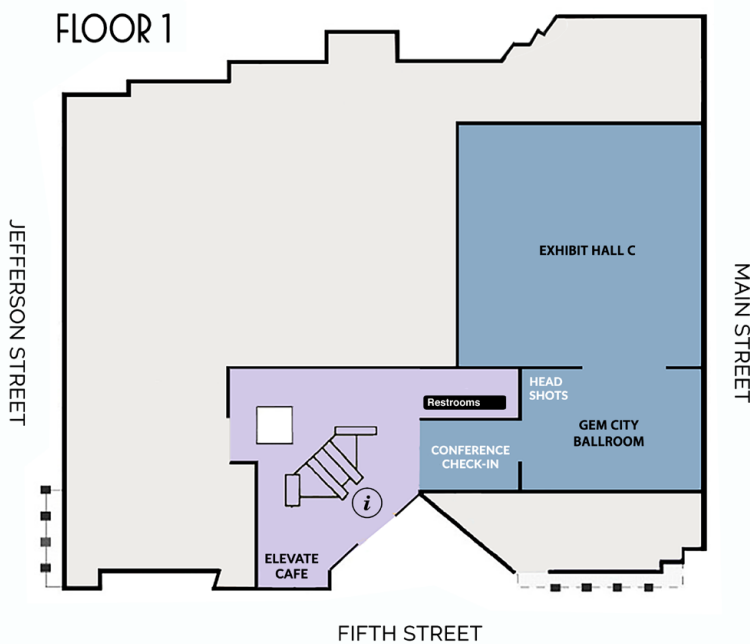
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