

**WELCOME** to Transportation Bonanza 2026. This event is brought to you by the Michigan Association of Planning, in partnership with Michigan Safe Routes to School, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Thank you planning committee members:

Ashley Bradshaw, MDHHS

Joshua DeBruyn, MDOT

Max Fulkerson, Michigan Fitness Foundation

Sam Jablonowski, MDOT

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Colleen Synk, Michigan Fitness Foundation

Christine Zuzga, MDOT

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# TRANSPORTATION BONANZA

# 2026

Thank you to our sponsors!



No government funding was used for the purchase of food or beverages.

8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. | University Ballroom | 1.25 AICP CM

## Welcome and Opening Remarks

**Andrea Brown, AICP**, Executive Director Michigan Association of Planning; **Amy Jordan**, Michigan Association of Planning; **Max Fulkerson**, Director of Michigan Safe Routes to School; **Heidi Phaneuf**, Michigan Department of Transportation; **Ashley Bradshaw, MPH**, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

## Opening Keynote

**Reese Brewer** has served as the Director of Frontier MPO since 2017. Reese has worked in the MPO world for more than 20 years, serving in several roles in Alaska before making her way to Arkansas! Her favorite thing about working for an MPO is the ability to bring communities together and solve transportation needs. One of her favorite projects so far is Ride 4 Smiles Bikeshare because it assists our neighbors and improves quality of life!

9:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. | Networking Break

## 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. | Breakout Sessions

### Room: Beaumont

**Building Smarter Transit: How Technology Creates Connected Journeys** | 1 AICP CM

Emerging and evolving technologies bring the potential to improve riding public transportation and make service delivery more seamless for transit operators. Paired with innovative planning, policy development, and cross-agency coordination, regional and state agencies are well positioned to close gaps between transit providers and build integrated systems. This panel's conversation will exchange experiences with strategic transit technology plans for local, regional, and state agencies. It will feature recent collaboration with the RTA of Southeast Michigan and the Illinois DOT.

**Speakers:** **Matt Orenchuk, AICP**, TYLin | **Mshadoni Smith-Jackson, PhD**, Regional Transit Authority of SE Michigan  
**Moderator:** **Joe Tangari, AICP**, Giffels Webster

### Room: University Ballroom

**The Three Es of Corridor Restoration: Ethics, Empathy, and Equity** | 1 AICP CM ETHICS

When challenged with corridor and neighborhood restoration projects, planners analyze past practice and projects. When was the roadway expanded? What buildings were razed? What people were impacted? What stories can be told? This session examines frameworks to provide justice and promote bold civic visions that are grounded in the needs of people. The lens of ethics can guide the future and shine a light on the past. Examples from Detroit, Minneapolis, and Michigan City.

**Speakers:** **Paul Lippens, AICP**, NCI, Toole Design  
**Mariel Colman, PE**, AICP, Toole Design  
**Moderator:** TBA

### Room: Campus East

**From Planning to Pavement: Addressing the Past in Bath's Safe Routes to School Project** | 1 AICP CM

The Bath Safe Routes to School project repaired and constructed sidewalks to provide a pedestrian network for the three schools. While it may look like a basic sidewalk project, the local team was intentional in how they scoped their project given current improvements and future, planned amenities. Learn about historic and archaeological clearance considerations for delivering a project with Bath as an example.

**Speakers:** **Chris Hagerman**, Bath Township | **Elise Erickson**, Bath Township | **Doug Steffen, PE**, Clinton County  
**Brian Grennell**, MDOT | **Patty Jo Korzeniewski**, MDOT  
**Moderators:** **Evan Stowell**, Michigan Fitness Foundation  
**Colleen Synk**, Michigan Fitness Foundation

# TB2026

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. | Networking Break

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

## Room: Beaumont

Planning for Prevention: Two Paths to Safer Streets | 1 AICP CM

This session explores two innovative traffic safety initiatives from the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council: a public-facing “near-miss” data collection tool and a Complete Streets demonstration project program. Presenters will guide attendees through each program—from initial concept to implementation—highlighting key takeaways, challenges, and creative uses of collected data. Participants will gain practical insights and leave equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to implement these initiatives in their own communities.

**Speakers:** **Mara Gericke**, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

**Peter Kimball**, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

**Moderator:** **Douglas J. Lewan, AICP**, Carlisle | Wortman Associates, Inc.

## Room: University Ballroom

Joining Forces: Combining our Superpowers Diminishes our Kryptonite | 1 AICP CM

Community Planners and Transportation Engineers have a lot in common, and for the most part our goals align. Moving people and goods is important, but it doesn't need to be the sole priority of the road network. Creating productive relationships between the two disciplines begins with clear communication and understanding differing perspectives. We polled planners and engineers, asking them about their experience working with the other profession. The answers may surprise you. Our panel will describe how planners can increase our influence and build a collaborative environment by building trust, educating ourselves, and understanding and embracing the unique superpowers of each profession.

**Speakers:** **Brad Strader, AICP**, Cincar Consulting Group

**Sarah Binkowski, PE, PTOE**, AECOM

**Moderator:** **Christine Zuzga, AICP**, MDOT

## Room: Campus East

Out of the Mouths of Babes | 1 AICP CM

In response to a 2023 fatal crash, Muskegon Charter Township Fire Department launched a pedestrian safety program with Orchard View Cardinal Elementary, targeting grades 2–5. Using interactive lessons and pre/post surveys, the program improved students' knowledge of crosswalks, walking directions, and visibility. Over 550 students participated, showing increased safety awareness. Areas for improvement include recognizing backing vehicles and data collection. The initiative highlights the impact of community partnerships in promoting long-term pedestrian safety for children.

**Speaker:** **Jack Wydeck**, Muskegon Charter Township Fire Dept.

**Moderator:** **Caroline Messerschmidt**, MDHHS

12:15 p.m. - 12:45 p.m. | Networking Break

12:45 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. | University Ballroom | 1 AICP CM

**Keynote Luncheon | Heidi Simon, Smart Growth America, Director of Thriving Communities**

According to Dangerous by Design 2024, an average of more than 20 people per day were struck and killed while walking in 2022. **Heidi Simon**, the Director of Thriving Communities with Smart Growth America, will explore how vehicle-centric street design continues to negatively impact user behavior and public health. She will present practical strategies and Midwest case examples for overcoming entrenched regulatory and cultural barriers, featuring a deep dive into the benefits of quick-build demonstrations. **Moderator:** **Pablo Majano, AICP, MPA**, MAP Board of Directors, MEDC

2:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. | Networking Break

## 2:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

### Room: Beaumont MDOT's Community Engagement Handbook | 1 AICP CM EQUITY

Hear an overview of the new Community Engagement Handbook profiling its consolidation, improved useability, and workbook format to promote flexibility throughout the regions. We will highlight stages of the community engagement process and present research findings on how participants prefer to be reached AND engaged.

**Speakers:** Holly Madill, AICP, PhD, National Charrette Institute  
Zeenat Kotval-Karamchandani, AICP, PhD, MSU | John Martin, MDOT  
**Moderator:** TBA

### Room: University Ballroom Their Roads, Our Places | 1 AICP CM

For many townships and local agencies in Michigan, improving roads can be challenging because design and final decision-making often rest with county road commissions rather than township governments. This session looks at practical ways townships can still shape safer, more welcoming streets by working closely with their county road partners. Learn how to navigate shared responsibilities, successfully advocate for walking and biking needs and aspirations, and help shape road projects that more effectively serve the community.

**Speakers:** Christopher Zull, PE, Progressive Companies | Matthew Boelkins, Progressive Companies | **Moderator:** Sam Jablonowski, MDOT

### Room: Campus East Targeted, Tactical, and Community-Centered: Advancing the Kalamazoo Safety Action Plan | 1 AICP CM

This session explores Kalamazoo's Safety Action Plan, a data-driven approach that integrates intersection, lighting, and transit studies with robust community engagement. Through an interactive mini-workshop, participants will apply this targeted framework to a hypothetical community scenario to design integrated safety strategies.

**Speakers:** Srishti Jaipuria, AICP, RSP1, AECOM  
Dennis Randolph, FITE, PE, City of Kalamazoo | Lexi Petrella, Alta Planning + Design | Nolan Bergstrom, City of Kalamazoo  
**Speaker and Moderator:** Sarah Blouin, AICP, AECOM

## 3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. | Networking Break

## 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

### Room: Beaumont Surface Condition of Active Networks (SCAN) - An approach to shared use path condition assessment | 1 AICP CM

The Michigan Department of Transportation's SCAN Manual helps planners and engineers assess the surface condition of asphalt shared use paths by identifying surface defects. Similar to asset management for roadways, it guides maintenance practices for aging shared use path networks to help improve safety, use, and resource allocation. This presentation will discuss the challenges leading to SCAN's creation, its approach, and seek implementation experiences from other agencies.

**Speaker:** Kole Nicholoff, MDOT | **Moderator:** Josh DeBruyn, MDOT

### Room: University Ballroom Bringing Health and Transportation Together through Michigan Walkability Action Institutes | 1 AICP CM RESILIENCY

The Michigan Walkability Action Institutes bring together interdisciplinary teams to advance policies, plans, and projects that make active transportation safer and more accessible. This session showcases how MDOT and MDHHS are scaling active transportation projects. Participants will learn how the course provides capacity building to develop unified action plans and leverage grants for implementation.

**Speaker:** Karma E. Edwards, MSPH, National Public Health Consultant  
Ashley Bradshaw, MPH, MDHHS | **Mike Smith**, MDOT  
**Moderator:** Max Fulkerson, Michigan Fitness Foundation

### Room: Campus East Automated Wheelchair Securements - Improving Independence and Safety | 1 AICP CM

When a person in a wheelchair rides public transit, the driver normally must use straps and hooks to secure the wheelchair to prevent it from moving. But an automated wheelchair securement lets the rider secure their mobility device without driver assistance, giving them more independence, improving operational efficiency and addressing public health concerns. MDOT has deployed these securements at four Michigan transit agencies.

**Speaker:** Janet Geissler, MDOT | **Angela Jenkins**, Menlo Innovations  
Mollie Callahan, Menlo Innovations | **Moderator:** Valerie Shultz, MDOT

## 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. | Networking Reception: Cash Bar, Appetizers | Atrium