



AEC PM CONNECT 2026

*Advancing Project Management in the
Architecture, Engineering, and Construction Industry*

EngineeringManagementInstitute.org

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Welcome to

AEC PM Connect New Jersey

June 10, 2026

Forsgate Country Club
375 Forsgate Dr, Monroe Township, NJ 08831

	PM Track	PM Development Track	
	Highlands Ballroom	Edinburgh East	Edinburgh West
8:45 AM	Welcome and Introduction		
9:10 AM	What Growth Taught Us About Project Management		
9:30 AM	Networking Break		
9:45 AM	Large-Scale Redevelopment: A Strategic Approach to Project Management	Beyond PM Training: Building a PM Culture	Stakeholder Alignment for PM Development in High-Utilization Firms
10:25 AM	Networking Break		
10:40 AM	Panel: AI in Project Management - Clones, Agents, and Other Trends		
11:40 AM	Lunch		
12:10 PM	One Project, Two Worlds: Navigating Public-Private Collaboration in AEC		
1:10 PM	Networking Break		
1:25 PM	Panel: How to Handle Scope Creep and Change Management	Using Analytics to Strengthen PM Hiring and Leadership Development	Building a PMO that Works for Your Organization
2:05 PM	Networking Break		
2:20 PM	Panel: Ask Me Anything About Project Management	Practical Knowledge Management with AI Agents	Building PM Career Paths that Align with Development Needs
3:00 PM	Break		
3:05 PM	From Project Table to Boardroom: The Negotiation Mindset That Drives Growth		
3:35 PM	Connection Against All Odds: Structured Communication and Negotiation Strategies for Engineering Project Managers		
4:45 PM	Closing Networking Reception (Sponsored by Colliers Engineering & Design)		

Session Descriptions and Objectives

What Growth Taught Us About Project Management

- **Ernesto Aguilar, PE**, Ardurra

Winning work is only half the battle. Many AEC firms build their early success around business development — and it works, until it doesn't. When projects get bigger and teams scale, the firms that can't deliver start to unravel. Ernesto Aguilar, CEO of Ardurra, learned this firsthand growing a company from scratch to 2,600 people while securing some of the largest water infrastructure projects in U.S. history.

Panel: AI in Project Management - Clones, Agents, and Other Trends

- **Jigar Desai, PE, MBA, PhD**, ECS Limited
- **Nicholas Heim, PE**, Engineering Management Institute
- **Brian Sullivan, PE**, Trinovate Advisors
- **Joe Viscuso, PE, PLS, ENV SP**, Pennoni
- **Natasha Luthra**, HKS
- **Lauren Collier**, PBK

This forward-looking panel, facilitated by Nicholas Heim, host of the AEC AI & Tech Podcast, will dive into the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence in project management within the AEC industry. Panelists will discuss current AI tools, emerging trends, and practical applications for improving project efficiency and decision-making. The session will also explore the ethical considerations and potential challenges of AI integration.

One Project, Two Worlds: Navigating Public-Private Collaboration in AEC

- **Daniel L. Hesslein, PE**, New Jersey Turnpike Authority
- **Parth Oza, PE**, New Jersey Department of Transportation
- **Michael A. Shamma, PE**, TYLin
- **Simona Shapiro, PE**, The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
- **Catherine Sheridan, PE**, Triborough Bridge & Tunnel Authority
- **Steven Burke, PE, LEED AP**, Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission

Infrastructure projects increasingly require collaboration between AEC project managers in the public and private sectors. Despite differences in expectations, processes, and priorities, these teams must work together to deliver successful projects. This session explores key dynamics PMs must understand and strategies to bridge cultural and procedural gaps. Participants will gain practical insights to improve collaboration and achieve outcomes that meet both public mandates and private-sector goals.

From Project Table to Boardroom: The Negotiation Mindset That Drives Growth

- **Kevin L. Haney, PE**, Colliers Engineering & Design

Every project manager negotiates. Most just don't realize it. Scope changes, contractor pushback, shifting client expectations — AEC PMs are in high-stakes conversations every day. Kevin L. Haney, PE, CEO and President at Colliers Engineering & Design, brings negotiation into nearly every aspect of his role at scale. In this session, he'll share how executive-level negotiation principles translate directly to the realities of AEC project management — helping PMs hold their ground on scope, align difficult stakeholders, and turn conflict into forward momentum without burning relationships.

Connection Against All Odds: Structured Communication and Negotiation Strategies for Engineering Project Managers

- **Dan Oblinger**, Leadercraft

Engineering project managers often navigate high-stakes situations involving schedule pressure, stakeholder conflicts, budget constraints, and regulatory demands. When communication breaks down, projects can face delays, cost overruns, and reduced team performance. This session adapts proven communication and negotiation techniques from crisis and hostage negotiation for the engineering project environment. Participants will learn practical strategies to manage conflict, improve stakeholder alignment, and achieve more collaborative outcomes on complex AEC projects.

PM Track

Large-Scale Redevelopment: A Strategic Approach to Project Management

- **Dan Busch, PE, PP, CME**, Colliers Engineering & Design

Large-scale redevelopment projects don't forgive weak project management. The complexity, the stakeholders, the moving parts—one missed handoff or unclear scope and you're looking at write-offs, delays, and damaged client relationships. In this session, Dan Busch of Colliers Engineering & Design pulls back the curtain on a real, complex redevelopment project he's currently leading and walks you through what managing it actually looks like day-to-day.

Panel: How to Handle Scope Creep, Change Management & Difficult Project Conversations

- **Angelo J Waters, PE, LEED AP**, Urban Engineers
- **Seth Greenwald, PMP, LEED, MID**, US Army Corps of Engineers
- **Jared Green, PE, BC, GE, F.ASCE**, Langan Engineering & Environmental Services
- **Sara Irick, PE, PMP, CME, TDM-CP**, French & Parrello Associates

Scope creep is one of the most persistent and costly challenges facing AEC project managers, often derailing schedules, budgets, and client relationships. This panel brings together experienced PMs and technical leaders to share real-world strategies for recognizing early warning signs, managing difficult client conversations, and implementing structured change-management processes that protect both the project and the firm. Through practical examples and discussion, attendees will gain actionable approaches to setting boundaries, documenting changes, and maintaining alignment across internal teams and external stakeholders.

Panel: Ask Me Anything About Project Management

- **Michele Aitkenhead**, McCormick Taylor, Inc.
- **Dana Hecht, PMP, ENV SP**, H&H
- **Jesse Heimowitz, CCM**, Tectonic
- **Michael R. Thomas, PE, PMP, LEED AP ND**, T&M Associates
- **Sebastian Lobo-Guerrero, PhD, PE, D.GE**, American Geotechnical & Environmental Services, Inc.
- **Lynn Browning, PE, PMP**, Henderson Engineers

This interactive panel will provide attendees the opportunity to ask seasoned project management professionals questions about navigating challenges within the AEC industry. From initiating projects to closing them successfully, panelists will offer insights, share experiences, and provide guidance based on audience-driven inquiries. Attendees can expect candid discussions that address a wide range of PM topics.

PM Development Track

Beyond PM Training: Designing a Strategic System for PM Development

- **Anthony Fasano, PE, AEC PM, F. ASCE**, Engineering Management Institute
- **Emily White**, Timmons Group

Strong project management capability isn't built through training alone. In high-utilization AEC firms, sustainable PM performance requires a broader development system that integrates learning, experience, exposure, and the environment PMs work in every day. This interactive session blends EMI's Project Management Ecosystem with the 4E Talent Engine (Education, Exposure, Experience, Environment) and the 70-20-10 framework to help leaders rethink how project managers actually develop. Participants will explore how adult learning principles apply to PMs, identify gaps in their current approach, and leave with practical ideas for strengthening PM development beyond one-off courses.

Stakeholder Alignment for PM Development in High-Utilization Firms

- **Kelly Gascoigne**, VHB

Building and sustaining a project management development program is challenging in firms where billable hours drive operational and financial performance. This session focuses on how L&D leaders, PMO leaders, and senior PMs can gain leadership buy-in by making a compelling case for PM development as a strategic investment, not a cost center. Participants will explore techniques for aligning PM development with utilization demands, overcoming cultural barriers, demonstrating ROI, and integrating training into a high-pressure billable environment. The discussion will equip attendees with messaging, metrics, and engagement strategies that resonate with executives and drive long-term support.

Using Analytics to Strengthen PM Hiring and Leadership Development

- **Luke Carter**, Talent Matters
- **Collin George, MBA**, Talent Matters

This session will guide participants through assessing their project management population's capabilities across the five process groups: Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring & Controlling, and Closing. Practical frameworks and tools will be discussed to help organizations identify skill gaps and optimize their PM processes. The information presented will be based on extensive research done by Talent Matters and the Engineering Management Institute on 100 AEC project managers.

Building a PMO that Works for Your Organization

- **Jordan Volk**, Colliers Engineering & Design
- **Cara Henegar**, Verdantas

This session will focus on designing and implementing a Project Management Office (PMO) that aligns with your organization's needs and goals. Participants will learn how to establish PMO frameworks, define clear roles and responsibilities, and ensure the PMO effectively supports project management excellence.

Practical Knowledge Management with AI Agents

- **Bailey Faeth**, Jaros, Baum & Bolles
- **Matthew Espejo**, Jaros, Baum & Bolles

As AI rapidly reshapes how AEC firms capture, organize, and use knowledge, L&D leadership must learn not just what tools exist, but how to adopt them effectively. This session provides a practical, PM-focused approach to implementing AI agents that support project delivery, reduce rework, and improve access to organizational expertise. Building on real experience with deploying new technologies in PM environments, the session explores how AI can streamline knowledge capture, automate repetitive tasks, and strengthen knowledge flow across teams. Participants will leave with actionable steps for selecting tools, piloting them successfully, and driving adoption within their firms.

Building PM Career Paths that Align with Development Needs

- **Anne Davis, SHRM-SCP**, H2M Architects + Engineers
- **Matthew Alboum, PE**, Dewberry

This session will explore the various career paths available for project managers in the AEC industry. Discover strategies to provide employees with a roadmap for progression, whether in technical roles, leadership positions, or project management, empowering them to take ownership of their development.

Session Notes

Use this space to jot down notes or key points from each session.

Session 1:

Session 2:

Session 3:

Session 4:

Session 5:

Session 6:

Session 7:

Session 8:

Top 3 Take-Home Goals

Review your notes above and choose three key goals and actions you plan to take home and apply from what you've learned.

AEC PM Ecosystem™ Goals



Instructions

Write your goal(s) for each topic area below. Leave blank if not applicable right now.



Phase I - PM Pillars

Topic:

Goals:

Phase II - PM Development

Topic:

Goals:

Phase IV - PM Support

Topic:

Goals:

Phase III - PM Utilities

Topic:

Goals:

Focus Area

Which area do you want to focus on first?



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Have a story, challenge, or insight to share?

One of our goals at AEC PM Connect is to spotlight the brilliant professionals driving change in the AEC industry and we want to feature YOU on one of our leading podcast channels.

Whether you're a seasoned project manager, emerging leader, or passionate about tech and innovation in AEC, we invite you to join us as a guest or interviewer on an upcoming episode.

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Reflection & Development Plan

Reflection

Reflect on what you've learned today. What stood out most? How has your thinking shifted?

1. What was the most valuable insight or idea?

2. What challenges or questions do you still have?

My Personal Development Plan

Use this space to start mapping out your plan for applying what you've learned.

Identified Goals	Action Steps	Resources or Support Needed	Target Date for First Step

How will you share progress on these goals within your company?

Access Event Materials

Thank you for attending the 2026 New Jersey PM Connect Event!

To support your continued learning and application of the content, we've made all related resources available in a dedicated cloud-based storage folder. This includes:



Presentation
Slide Decks



Handouts
and Worksheets



Reference
Articles and Links

How to Access the Materials



1

Complete the Seminar Evaluation Form

Your feedback is essential! It helps us refine future experiences and ensures we continue meeting your professional needs.



2

Receive Instant Access

Upon submitting the form, you will automatically be directed to the cloud-based folder containing all conference materials.

Note: Bookmark the link for future access.



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