

ICSC+CONTINUING EDUCATION MICHIGAN

Retail Intelligence: AI, Economics and Michigan's Market Momentum

Vibe Credit Union Showplace, Novi, MI

April 23, 2026

Concurrent Session 2A: Enabling Growth — The Role of Data Centers in Modern Communities

Moderator

Ian Cosgrove, Partner, Honigman

Panelists

Ron Akers, Director of Municipal Services, Van Buren Charter Township

Justin Robinson, Chief Program Officer, Detroit Regional Partnership

Rami Younes, Marketing Program Manager, DTE

Description:

Data centers are reshaping our landscape—transforming real estate, energy systems, and economic growth. Join industry experts as they pull back the curtain on one of the fastest-growing development trends in the state.

What's driving this rapid expansion? What obstacles—and misconceptions—need to be addressed?

Our panelists of experts will explore the boom in Data Center development, the challenges that developers are facing and the prevailing misconceptions. Attendees will gain insight

into the different types of Data Centers, what infrastructure is needed for the development of Data Centers and how the communities can benefit from this development.

Session Outline

- 1 Introductions
 - Moderator
 - Panelists
- 2 Discussion
 - a. Role of Data Center ecosystem
 - b. Different types of data centers
 - c. Drivers for the data centers-who is a good fit, criteria for data centers, how communities benefit
 - Tax benefits
 - Zoning
 - d. Why data centers matter/ What makes a good data center
 - e. Environmental concerns-identifying and overcoming concerns, water supplies, discharge etc.
 - f. How DTE is structuring the deals to not impact the citizens
 - Public/Private partnerships
 - g. Why communities would want data centers
 - h. Community pushback-How to handle
 - Perspective of a community
 - Public engagement
 - i. Benchmarking
- 3 Audience Q&A

