

These are ideas for interactive sessions for the **MPO 101** track at AMPO's 2026 Tools & Training Symposium. **You're welcome to use them or to generate your own.** The key is that we're looking for **interactive, engaging sessions!**

1. Travel Demand Modeling — Demystifying the “Black Box”

- **Simulation Lab:** Participants adjust simplified inputs (population, employment, roadway capacity) and see how outputs change in real time.
 - **Modeler Speed-Dating:** Rotating small-group Q&As with MPO modelers who explain what's behind the numbers.
 - **Storytelling Exercise:** Translate model results into plain language and visuals suitable for non-technical audiences.
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2. Safe Systems & Vision Zero — Beyond Compliance

- **Crash Reconstruction Game:** Teams analyze short crash summaries and decide which Safe System elements could have prevented them.
 - **Design Charrette:** Create safer street designs using basic roadway templates and counters for cost/impact.
 - **Policy Roundtable:** Compare local Vision Zero goals and discuss barriers to implementation.
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3. Engagement Lab — Meeting People Where They Are

- **Scenario Design Challenge:** Teams build an outreach plan for assigned contexts (rural, urban, virtual, underserved).
 - **Tool Swap:** Participants share one successful engagement tool or story, then collectively build a “starter toolkit.”
 - **Role-Play Workshop:** Simulate a public meeting to practice facilitation and listening skills.
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4. Transportation & Land Use — Planning in Sync

- **Map Match:** Groups overlay mock land use and transportation layers to identify mismatches or opportunities.

- **Visioning Activity:** Build a “future growth” scenario using colored stickers or cards representing development types.
 - **Case Clinic:** Analyze a real MPO example of how transportation planning supported (or conflicted with) land use decisions.
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5. Follow the Money — How Federal Funds Flow

- **Funding Game:** Teams trace where PL, 5303, and other funds originate and how they are programmed.
 - **Fiscal Constraint Challenge:** Participants allocate a limited budget across competing projects.
 - **Quiz Show Format:** Lighthearted, Jeopardy-style competition about funding acronyms and match requirements.
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6. Build a TIP — From Idea to Implementation

- **TIP Simulation:** Participants “program” projects using mock data and budgets under changing conditions.
 - **Amendment Fire Drill:** Teams react to new project requests, demonstrating modification vs. amendment processes.
 - **Coordination Role-Play:** Practice how to communicate TIP changes with local partners and the public.
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7. Performance Measures in Plain English

- **Translation Exercise:** Participants rewrite technical PBPP metrics into clear, public-facing statements.
 - **Visualization Lab:** Create quick, low-tech graphics to explain performance results to a non-technical audience.
 - **Mock Briefing:** Deliver a short “Board update” and get peer feedback on clarity and engagement.
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8. Air Quality Conformity — Connecting the Dots

- **Scenario Simulation:** Walk through a simplified conformity determination with traffic, emissions, and timing data.

- **Partner Perspectives Panel:** DOT, MPO, and air agency staff each explain their role in the process, followed by audience mapping of responsibilities.
 - **Cause & Effect Game:** Link transportation actions (e.g., adding lanes, TDM programs) to emissions outcomes.
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9. GIS Basics — From Data to Storytelling

- **Hands-On Mapping Lab:** Participants use open data to build a simple thematic map.
 - **Map Critique Gallery:** Review and improve real-world MPO maps for clarity, accessibility, and audience relevance.
 - **“Choose Your Tool” Demo:** Compare how different mapping tools (ArcGIS Online, Google My Maps, etc.) meet MPO needs.
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10. Data Ethics & Transparency — Building Trust

- **Scenario Discussion:** Evaluate real-life dilemmas around open data, privacy, or misleading visualizations.
 - **Transparency Checklist Workshop:** Co-create a list of “must-haves” for public-facing dashboards or reports.
 - **Debate:** Argue for or against publishing sensitive datasets, exploring tradeoffs between openness and caution.
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11. Scenario Planning — Seeing the Future Together

- **Mini Futures Lab:** Teams build 2045 scenarios using cards for technology, funding, and demographics.
 - **Map-Based Simulation:** Adjust inputs (growth, land use, mode share) to see visual shifts in outcomes.
 - **Storyboarding Exercise:** Turn scenarios into short narratives to communicate to decision-makers.
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12. Core MPO Products — MTP, TIP, UPWP, PPP in Practice

- **Product Match-Up Game:** Connect each product to its federal requirement, schedule, and real-world impact.

- **Lifecycle Timeline Workshop:** Build a visual planning calendar linking all products and deadlines.
 - **Peer Lightning Talks:** 5-minute presentations from MPOs showing how each product “comes to life.”
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13. De-Escalation Techniques — Handling Conflict with Grace

- **Role-Play Lab:** Practice responding to angry or misinformed participants using real-world scenarios.
 - **Empathy Mapping Exercise:** Identify what different stakeholders are feeling, needing, and fearing.
 - **Mini Training:** Learn verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques from a professional facilitator.
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14. Multimodal Planning — Balancing Modes & Making Connections

- **Network Design Challenge:** Small groups build an integrated street or corridor plan using transit, bike, and pedestrian layers—then test how well it meets different user needs.
- **Mode Prioritization Game:** Teams allocate limited right-of-way and funding among modes to spark discussion about tradeoffs and equity.
- **Walk Audit or Virtual Tour:** Guided activity (in-person or virtual) to assess safety, accessibility, and comfort from a multimodal perspective.