

CONNECTICUT PLANNING

Fall 2026

A publication of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association



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Connecticut Chapter

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Little Boxes: Planning for the Warehouse Boom in Central Connecticut

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Building CCAPA's Future Together



I hope that everyone had a wonderful summer, and that many were able to take some time to rest and enjoy the outdoors. This time of year always makes me think about two main themes of preparedness: back-to-school and hurricane season. There was always a sense of excitement when my kids were back in the classroom, and now that they are both headed to college, we may be excited about having a cleaner, more organized

house, but I know I will miss the daily updates about what they are learning and what is happening in school. And then there's hurricane season. Sure, there's the excitement of some fun surfing, but it also makes me think about the risks associated with storms and the preparedness that we all need to take, especially for those who live along the coast.

As President of the CCAPA, the back-to-school season takes on new meaning for me. As part of our AICP Code of Ethics, we are encouraged to commit to the advancement of the planning profession, including contributing time and resources to the professional development of students, interns, beginning professionals, and other colleagues (Section A.5.e). Advancing this goal is a priority for me in my term as President.

We will continue current initiatives, such as the awarding of our Diana Donald Scholarship. [The Diana Donald Scholarship-Internship Program](#) offers the opportunity for organizations and agencies to hire an intern in the planning or planning-related field to work on an identifiable planning initiative within the organization. If you have a project that you think could fit this program, please consider applying next year.

We are also working to release a **Jason Vincent Scholarship**. Jason was a former CCAPA President, a brilliant planner, and a great friend and human. His contribution to planning in Connecticut was significant, and this scholarship in his memory is a great way of honoring his impact on our organization and profession.

Additionally, we are establishing new connections with future planners across all age groups, including:

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CONNECTICUT PLANNING

is published quarterly by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association. Contributions are encouraged. Submissions must include the name and contact information of the contributor. Material may be edited to conform to space or style requirements. Please address submissions to Executive Editor Tabitha Wilson, AICP (contact information below).

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President's Message, cont'd

- **Building a relationship between CCAPA and Trinity College** to establish a Master of Arts in Urban Planning since 2023. Since then, they have graduated one student and currently have ten enrolled.
- **Finding ways to engage with high school students**, whether that be at career fairs, civics classes, or in our current planning efforts. We want to meet these homegrown future planners where they are. Talk to your local high school civics teacher and see if they want you to come in and talk about the planning profession.
- **Brainstorming how we can introduce planning to younger community members**, such as through partnerships with libraries and other youth

organizations. Planning great communities for all includes our youngest voices (and their parents).

If any of these initiatives interest you, please reach out. Those working on these efforts could use additional volunteers!

Whether you are engaging in the back-to-school rush with your children, going back to school yourself, or are reminiscing about what this time meant in your life, I hope that you'll join us in creating an environment where the next generation of planners knows that we are cheering for them and can't wait for them to join us. 📺

— Jonathan Reiner, AICP 

FROM THE EDITOR



Hello, all. My name is Tabitha Wilson, and I will be assuming the role of editor from Jeanne Davies, who worked tirelessly on this magazine for many years. I owe her a debt of gratitude for showing me the ropes! By way of introduction, I am an AICP planner who has worked in the

Connecticut planning scene for several years, first as a municipal planner for the Town of Groton and now as a Senior Planner with BSC Group. In my free time, I enjoy oil painting, mountain biking, and plant identification. I am so pleased to take on the role of editor for this publication and dive into some hot topics!

This issue is all about warehouse-style development. Across Connecticut and beyond, we are seeing large development footprints built for relatively low occupancy, while AI is changing the way we work and driving increased demand for computing power. Our digital economy has encouraged rapid development of warehouses, storage facilities, and data centers. These buildings can also be difficult neighbors, carrying significant land, energy, water, infrastructure, and environmental impacts that have fueled growing public concern. But are we overreacting? This issue of *Connecticut Planning* presents several perspectives on these development trends to get you thinking.

Groton offers a useful Connecticut case study in how local zoning can shape that debate. After proposals emerged for two 250,000-square-foot data centers (in Groton) and, later, a 1.5-million-square-foot cam-

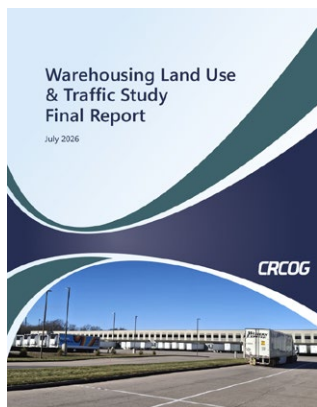
pus tied to power from the Millstone Power Plan (in Waterford), the Town first imposed a moratorium and then took more permanent action. The Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously adopted regulations limiting data centers to 12,500 square feet. The threshold was intended to continue allowing smaller, on-site facilities used by local businesses while effectively excluding hyperscale projects. The zoning action followed the Town Council's decision to end negotiations over a host municipality agreement for a proposed project. Litigation came next, including claims naming Groton and other parties, but the regulations stand.

That experience is especially relevant as Connecticut considers the next generation of AI-driven data centers. A June 2026 *CT Mirror* commentary pointed to the substantially greater land, power, and water demands associated with hyperscale and AI-focused facilities and argued that municipalities should address these uses before an application arrives. Plans of Conservation and Development can establish community priorities, but zoning provides the enforceable framework. Communities can determine where data centers belong and establish standards for building size, setbacks, infrastructure, and other impacts in advance. Groton illustrates the practical effect of that approach. It is also a reminder that planners have an important role in helping communities weigh both the benefits and consequences of rapidly evolving land uses before the next proposal arrives at the door. 📺

— Tabitha Wilson, AICP 



A new regional study by CRCOG explores how municipalities can manage warehouse development driven by e-commerce, air cargo growth, and their strategic position within the Northeast supply chain.



Planning for the Warehouse Boom: Lessons from Central Connecticut

by Stephanie Finch, AICP, and Kyle Shiel, AICP

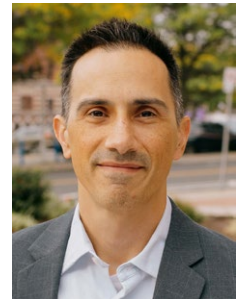
Over the past decade, warehousing has gone from a relatively mundane industrial land use to an increasingly contentious flashpoint in many communities. In central Connecticut, it has become a front-door planning challenge, evident in traffic patterns, land-use debates, truck-parking pressure, and questions about how communities share in the benefits of the logistics economy. A new regional study by the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) explores how municipalities can manage warehouse development driven by e-commerce, air cargo growth, and their strategic position within the Northeast supply chain.

Long-Term Logistics Trends Are Reshaping Land Demand

E-commerce has created more decentralized logistics networks that require multiple types of warehousing. Meanwhile, air cargo activity at Bradley International Airport nearly doubled between 2010 and 2022, strengthening central Connecticut's role as a secondary logistics hub. Data centers may also compete for industrial land while creating different infrastructure and community impacts.



Stephanie Finch



Kyle Shiel

Warehouse Growth Is Following the Runways and the Interstate

Growth is concentrating near Bradley International Airport and along I-91. The "North of Hartford" submarket contains 61 percent of the region's distribution facilities and could capture about 70 percent of industrial growth through 2050. That translates to 10.7 to 16.9 million additional square feet, beyond 4.9 million square feet already in municipal approval pipelines.

Municipal Tools Have Not Kept Pace

Local zoning has not always kept pace. Cold storage, distribution centers, fulfillment centers, middle-mile hubs, and last-mile facilities can differ substantially in

(continued next page)

Planning for the Warehouse, cont'd

employment, vehicle fleets, traffic peaks, and infrastructure needs. More precise warehouse definitions can help communities regulate these uses based on how they actually operate.

Traffic Impacts Depend on Operations, Not Just Size

A study collected week-long traffic data from 16 facilities and found that operational function often matters more than building size. Vehicle mix, peak activity, weekend operations, and hourly surges varied widely among warehouse types. The study recommends evaluating logistics function, vehicle type, routing, parking demand, and peak activity rather than relying primarily on gross floor area. Doubling building size does not necessarily double traffic impacts.

Truck Parking Is an Emerging Regional Constraint

Truck-parking shortages along I-84 and I-91 are contributing to roadside

staging and undesignated parking. GIS screening identified 23 candidate sites for detailed evaluation and 35 more for further investigation.

Best Practices for Local Governments

CRCOG's [Best Practice Guide](#) emphasizes clarity, flexibility, and transparency. Recommendations include clearer warehouse definitions, adaptive reuse in industrial zones, truck routing and staging plans, infrastructure improvements tied to approvals, post-occupancy monitoring, and coordinated traffic management across municipal boundaries. The larger message is that oversight should continue after project approval.

What Other Regions Can Learn

As logistics facilities grow larger and more integrated into e-commerce networks, local regulations and traffic-analysis methods must evolve. CRCOG's study offers a practical model grounded in local data, clear distinctions among warehouse types, and a balance between economic development and quality-of-life concerns. ■

As logistics facilities grow larger and more integrated into e-commerce networks, local regulations and traffic-analysis methods must evolve.

— *Stephanie Finch is Vice President & Service Area Manager, Freight & Logistics Advisory Services, at WSP... Kyle Shiel is a Principal Planner at the Capitol Region Council of Governments. He is the CCAPA Government Relations Committee Co-Chair.*



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Only about 3% of Connecticut land is zoned for industrial use, although that estimate is imperfect because communities define industrial uses differently. One issue is consistent, however: industrial land is nearly impossible to create.

Is it Time to Focus on Industrial Zoning?

by Samuel Gold, AICP

In last spring's legislative session, H.B. No. 5502 was introduced in the General Assembly to make middle housing by-right on industrially zoned land statewide. CCAPA testified in opposition, and the bill failed. Still, it and the possibility of similar legislation raise the profile of industrial zoning and its role in our communities.



Zoning was established a century ago to protect public health, safety, and welfare by separating noxious industrial uses from residential areas. Environmental laws and industrial decline have reduced, though not eliminated, those impacts. As industries moved to places with cheaper labor and electricity, lower taxes, and more available land, industrial zoning received less attention. Today, many communities have more former mills and factories converted to housing than active industries.

create land-use conflicts and often require large parcels and public utilities, making it harder to grow jobs and municipal tax bases.

In the early 2010s, mixed light-industrial zoning gained popularity as industry became cleaner, quieter, and more R&D-focused. Denver's 2010 citywide form-based code created an MX district intended to combine middle housing with light industrial and commercial employment while buffering heavier industry.

Denver now considers the experiment unsuccessful and is seeking to rewrite the zone in 2026. According to a city planner involved in its creation, no industrial development occurred in the MX zone over 16 years.

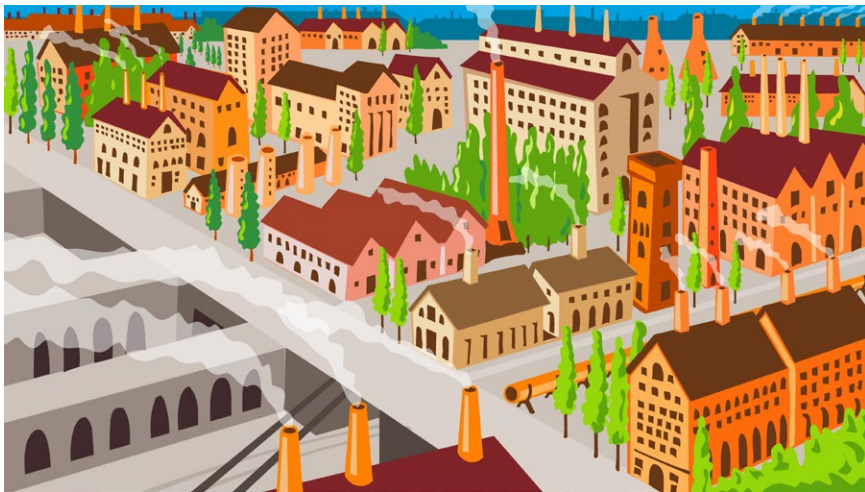
Residential development can offer greater and faster returns, making it difficult for industrial real estate to compete with condos and apartments.

Denver is now considering residential maximums and mandatory industrial set-asides. Its experience also shows that residential neighbors can pressure nearby businesses to curtail operations. Protecting industrial businesses may require separating them from residential uses.

Connecticut lacks uniform definitions for industrial uses, statewide protections from nuisance complaints, and an industrial land policy focused on creating or preserving industrial land. The state's 2025 Economic Action Plan does not identify industrial land availability as a constraint on growth, and many municipal POCDs give limited attention to preserving scarce industrial opportunities. Housing is critical, but jobs and tax base matter too.

Since 1990, Connecticut has added 2.6 housing units for every job added to its economy, the highest ratio of any state. Massachusetts, by comparison, added 0.84 housing units per job while adding 672,600 jobs, compared with 77,300 in Connecticut. These figures were calculated using federal Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census data.

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Today, many communities have more former mills and factories converted to housing than active industries.

Only about 3% of Connecticut land is zoned for industrial use, although that estimate is imperfect because communities define industrial uses differently. One issue is consistent, however: industrial land is nearly impossible to create. Sitting new industrial businesses is difficult and getting harder. Modern uses such as 24/7 warehouses and AI data centers also

Industrial Zoning, cont'd

Housing growth without job growth is not accompanied by the same increases in wealth and tax revenues to support public services and infrastructure. Some Connecticut housing demand reflects demographic change, including the need for smaller rental units, but those units do not necessarily bring new jobs or income-tax revenue.

Connecticut already faces challenges growing businesses. Planners should not compound them through deficient industrial zoning or a lack of coordinated planning for industrial growth. The state should be cautious about reducing land available for industry and preserve opportunities for businesses to establish or expand. Protecting and expanding workplaces is important to helping Connecticut's economy thrive. 

— *Samuel Gold, AICP, is Executive Director of RiverCOG and serves as CCAPA Treasurer. He received his master of urban planning degree from the University at Buffalo.*



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Celebrating Connecticut Planning Excellence: The 2026 CCAPA Awards

This year's honorees reflect creativity, leadership, and public service shaping communities across Connecticut.

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association recognized an outstanding group of planners, projects, and regional partners through the 2026 CCAPA Awards. From emerging leaders and innovative engagement programs to comprehensive planning and statewide collaboration, this year's awards highlight the many ways planners are helping Connecticut communities become safer, more inclusive, and better prepared for the future.

Rising Stars: Kate Rozen and Bryce Kelly

■ **Kate Rozen, Project Planner with Toole Design**, was recognized for her growing influence in transportation planning. Her work includes serving as planner and engagement lead for CRCOG's Priority Pathways initiative, helping communities align active transportation priorities with funding opportunities. She also led a successful \$19 million Safe Streets and Roads for All grant proposal for Aquidneck Island municipalities and has secured more than \$600,000 for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in Woodbridge.



■ **Bryce Kelly, Planner II with the Town of Groton**, was honored for his work on "Meeting in the Middle: Unlocking Housing Opportunities in Groton." As project manager, Kelly organized public meetings and walking tours, developed an online engagement hub, and created an inventory StoryMap. His nomination emphasized his contribution to advancing one of Connecticut's most pressing planning challenges: making communities more affordable and accessible.



Planning Through Inclusive Engagement

■ **New Haven's Vision 2034 Comprehensive Plan** received the Social Equity and Inclusion Award for a community-driven approach that moved engagement from outreach to implementation. The process included 10 resident community navigators, seven public workshops, 18 stakeholder interviews, 18 community events, more than 1,500 online survey responses, bilingual promotional materials, youth-to-youth outreach, and an interactive project website and map. The plan was also recognized for connecting local priorities with broader statewide issues such as housing, transportation, economic development, and climate resilience.

■ **Windsor 2035: Summer of 10,000 Flowers** received the Education and Outreach Award for a memorable, branded engagement campaign supporting the town's Plan of Conservation and Development. The program combined surveys, workshops, community dialogue events, a photo contest, a public input session, a website, and StoryMap tools, using the "10,000 Flowers" theme to make planning visible, approachable, and fun.

Leadership and Statewide Collaboration

■ **Emmeline Harrigan, AICP**, received the 2026 President's Award in recognition of her contributions to the planning profession and the chapter.

■ **CCAPA also presented a Special Chapter Award to Connecticut's Councils of Governments** in recognition of the staff who served on the New Housing Legislation Roll-Out Committee. Honorees represented CRCOG, MetroCOG, NECOG, NHCOC, NVCOG, RiverCOG, SCRCOG, SECOG, and WestCOG, reflecting an extraordinary level of regional collaboration in responding to new housing legislation and supporting municipalities across the state.

Congratulations to all of the 2026 CCAPA Award winners and to the Awards Committee for recognizing work that continues to strengthen planning practice throughout Connecticut!

DEI Committee Update

by Stephanie Camp and Devin Clarke

Coming Soon: Transformative Engagement Lunch & Learn Series

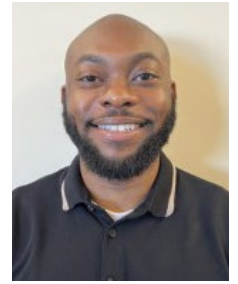
CCAPA is launching a new virtual **Lunch & Learn Series on Transformative Engagement**, highlighting creative, inclusive, and practical approaches to public engagement. Through brief, practical presentations, organizations will showcase innovative strategies for reaching and involving communities across land use, transportation, environmental planning, economic development, zoning, and more. Presenters will share what worked, what didn't, and what they learned along the way, leaving with new strategies you can put into practice! The first webinar is planned for late fall/early winter, with additional sessions to follow!

Do you have an innovative engagement approach to share and are interested in presenting? CCAPA is seeking local, regional, and state agencies, nonprofits, community-based organizations, consultants, and other partners to participate as presenters. Visit <https://forms.gle/PftVgJDPQxpyNAao8> to fill out the interest form!

Stay tuned for program dates, speakers, and registration info! You can contact Stephanie Camp at ccapaevents@gmail.com and Devin Clarke at dclarke@newhavenct.gov. 



Stephanie Camp



Devin Clarke

— **Stephanie Camp** is a planner with Weston & Sampson, and serves as Co-Chair of the CCAPA Program Committee. She is passionate about increasing diversity and inclusivity in planning as a profession... **Devin Clarke** serves as CCAPA Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Chair. He works as the Senior Transportation Planner at the Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments (MetroCOG) in Bridgeport. Devin attended both Clark University and the University of New Haven.

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The most successful buffer systems perform multiple functions. They can provide stormwater management in the form of bioswales, infiltration areas, and restoration of wetland areas.

Tabitha Wilson, AICP, CCAPA Communications Co-Chair and editor of this magazine, works as a Senior Planner for BSC Group. She holds a Masters in Landscape Architecture from CalPoly University in California and a Bachelors from the University of Hartford.

The Buildings You Don't Want to Look At

Why Landscape Buffers Are Becoming Critical Infrastructure for Data Centers, Warehouses, and Storage Facilities

by Tabitha Wilson, AICP

Across the country, communities are being asked to accommodate a new generation of development: data centers, logistics warehouses, and self-storage facilities. They occupy enormous amounts of land while generating relatively little daily human activity. The answer may lie in rethinking landscape buffers — not just decorative, but as critical infrastructure.



The Landscape Buffer

Warehouse, storage, and data center buildings share a similar architectural treatment: one of security and control. They often have windowless facades, expansive parking, and prominent service areas. Most zoning ordinances have landscape requirements written for small-scale industrial buildings and commercial uses. These often include narrow landscape strips around parking areas, single rows of immature evergreen trees, minimal setbacks, and generic screening standards

meant for benign commercial properties. These approaches are increasingly inadequate for facilities that may span 500 to 1,000 feet in length and operate continuously. The scale of today's facilities demands a new approach. Landscape buffers should be viewed as multi-functional systems that address visual, acoustic, ecological, and community impacts simultaneously. Buffering strategies include:

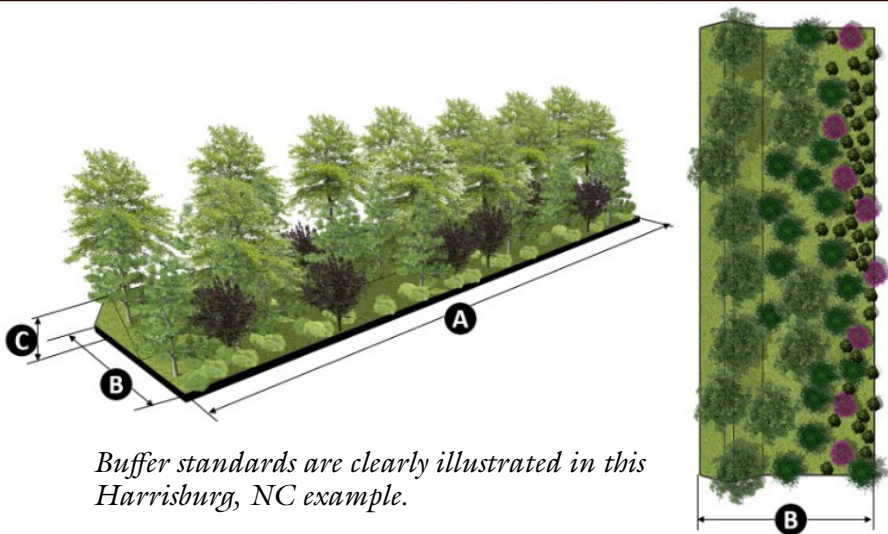
- Preservation of existing woodland edges
- Deep buffer zones rather than narrow strips
- Layered vegetation with canopy, understory, evergreen, and deciduous components
- Berm and planting combinations (Not plants on top a berm, please!)
- Viewshed analysis from public roads and residential neighborhoods

To mitigate noise, research shows that vegetation alone provides limited acoustic reduction. More effective solutions combine earthen berms, strategic grading and dense planting as well as discrete sound attenuation walls integrated into landscape design. Buffers can also reduce security lighting spillover, headlight glare, and lighting impacts to sensitive wildlife and insects.

The most successful buffer systems perform multiple functions. They can provide stormwater management in the form of bioswales, infiltration areas, and restoration of wetland areas. They can also provide flood resilience, habitat creation, and wildlife connectivity.

This makes landscape infrastructure one of the most durable components of site development. In an era defined by larger buildings, the landscape may be the most important tool communities have. ■

Figure 141.04.03-6
Type D Buffer Planting Standards With Berm



Buffer standards are clearly illustrated in this Harrisburg, NC example.

FROM THE NATIONAL APA:

Warehouses and Data Centers Take Center Stage



Warehouse and data center development is not just a Connecticut issue. APA National is taking a closer look at how planners across the country are responding to these rapidly growing land uses.

APA's recent article, **"Where Will the Warehouses Go?,"** looks at how zoning can help communities better manage warehouse development and its impacts. The article highlights new research examining where warehouses are being built, how local regulations influence their location, and the environmental justice implications associated with freight and logistics development.

Data centers are also getting attention. In September, APA hosted **"Balancing Land Use and Economic Tradeoffs of Data Centers,"** a webinar exploring the benefits and challenges communities face as demand for these facilities grows. The discussion focused on the role planners can play in weighing economic development opportunities against land consumption, infra-



structure needs, energy demand, and impacts on surrounding communities.

Both topics should sound familiar to Connecticut planners. As warehouses and data centers become larger and more specialized, APA's recent work offers another reminder that communities may want to think about these uses early, before the application arrives. Learn more and explore APA's resources at planning.org. 

From the desk of a CT Planner

We asked a few CT Planners: What's coming across your desk right now?

Increase in residential and multifamily

development, restaurants

zoning reform.

including a beverage manufacturer producing both THC-infused and nonalcoholic/non-THC beverages, new

commercial infill projects,

unprecedented housing.

While this has created many challenges; it has also opened the door for opportunity.

Several multifamily developments are under construction, while others are preparing to start construction.

commercial developments.

over 400 residential apartments

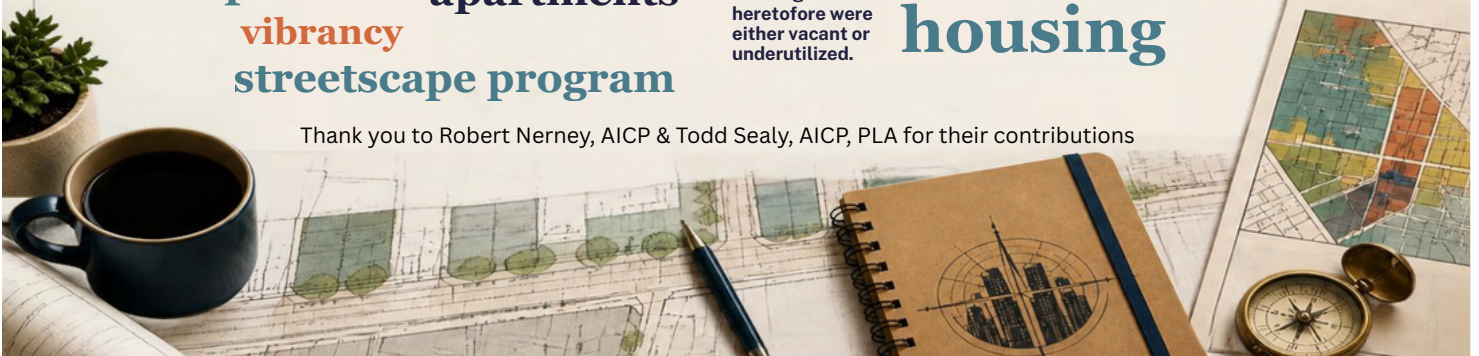
Much involves the conversion of upper level floor space in buildings that heretofore were either vacant or underutilized.

downtown housing

vibrancy

streetscape program

Thank you to Robert Nerney, AICP & Todd Sealy, AICP, PLA for their contributions



2026 Wendell Legacy Impact Award

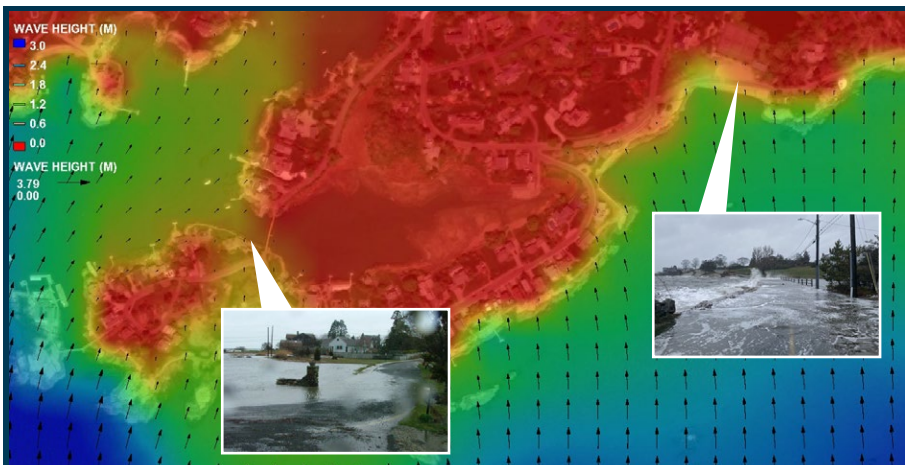
The Women & Planning Division is honored to announce the recipient of the 2026 Wendell Legacy Impact Award, **Savannah-Nicole Villalba, AICP**. Among other notable accomplishments, Savannah-Nicole conceived and facilitated an innovative Youth Summit that not only introduced high school students to the planning profession, but also empowered them to become active participants in shaping their community's future. Her fearless willingness to develop a new model for youth engagement, overcome challenges with determination, and champion the idea that young people deserve a meaningful voice in planning exemplify the inspirational leadership the Wendell Award seeks to recognize and celebrate.

Savannah-Nicole "SN" Villalba, AICP, AZT, is the Principal Housing Planner for the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), located in Hartford, Connecticut. SN provides technical assistance on housing planning and policy to 38 municipalities in the Greater Hartford area. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Urban and Community Studies from the University of Connecticut and a Master of Arts in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning from Tufts University. SN is currently a 4L in the University of Connecticut School of Law's Evening Division.

Savannah-Nicole will receive a \$4,000 honorarium and a glass award commemorating her accomplishments.



Congratulations, SN!

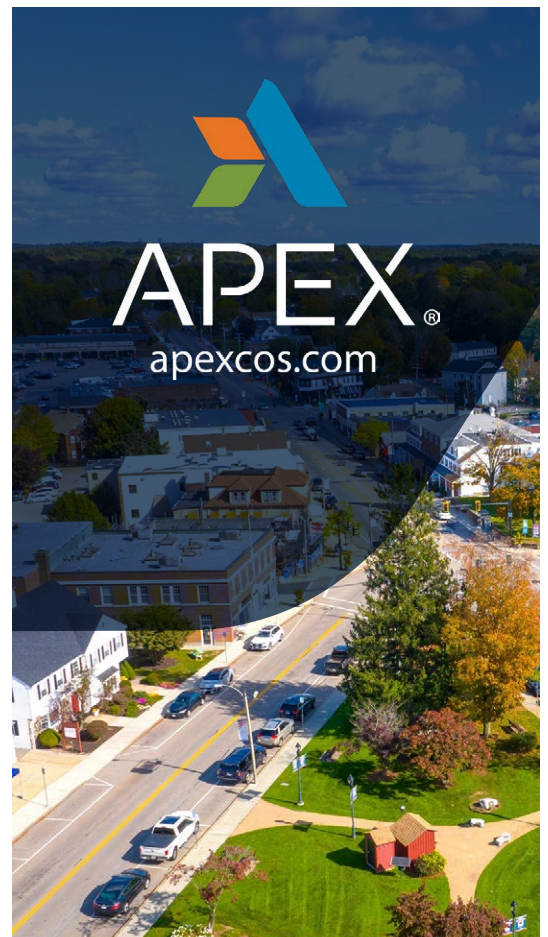


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Letter to the Editor

I commend the Stamford Zoning Board for unanimously approving the "Sustainability Amendment" to the zoning regulations. This important action will strengthen tree protection, require major developments to meet a high sustainability standard, and require larger new projects to include solar panels and/or vegetated green roofs. Together, these requirements will expand green infrastructure, enhance Stamford's tree canopy, improve building energy efficiency, and reduce the heat island effect that affects many city neighborhoods. Other Connecticut communities have followed the Zoning Board's deliberations with interest as they consider revising their own regulations to advance sustainability. Although the board's action is a significant step toward addressing climate concerns, members agreed that more remains to be done. One important next step is for the city to hire an urban forester, as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan, to help implement tree protection and canopy enhancement measures.

—Robin Stein

stein.robin.m@gmail.com

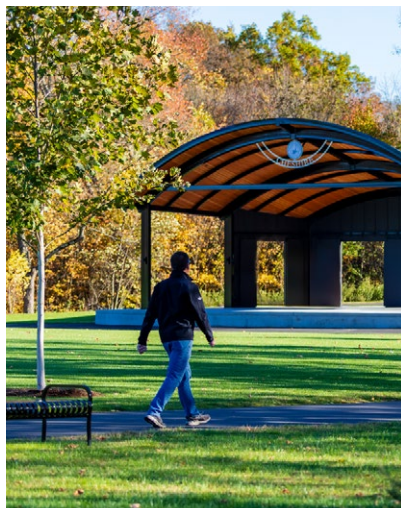


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CCAPA Hot Topics: A Chapter in Action

Highlights from the Connecticut Chapter of APA's May 22 Program

With membership at 372 and growing, the chapter continues to encourage planners to contribute ideas, mentor emerging professionals, participate on committees, and take on leadership roles.

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association gathered on May 22 for its annual Hot Topics in Land Use Law and Practice program, bringing together planners, attorneys, chapter leaders, and partners for updates on the profession and the legislative issues shaping planning in Connecticut.

President Jonathan Reiner opened with a look at APA's national priorities and the changing role of planners. Housing and affordability, climate resilience, and equity remain central themes. APA's 2026 trend work also points to emerging issues including artificial intelligence in permitting and planning, gaps in federal data, instability among higher-education anchors, and the growing connection between zoning reform, infrastructure capacity, and long-term fiscal impacts.

CCAPA continues to turn these national themes into practical resources and professional development. Since January 2024, chapter programs have offered approximately 48 Certification Maintenance education credits, in addition to APA National and SNEAPA offerings. Programs have covered land use law, ethics, housing, sustainability and equity, accessibility, adaptive reuse, historic preservation, and real property markets. The chapter is also investing in the next generation through the Diana Donald Scholarship Internship Program and by exploring additional mentorship, networking, and professional-skills programming for students and emerging planners.

The Government Relations Committee reported on an especially active legislative agenda. CCAPA priorities included

(continued next page)

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Hot Topics, cont'd

zoning reform for housing, modernization of legal notices, state assistance for local matches to federal infrastructure grants, and clarification of municipal authority related to sidewalks. The committee also submitted testimony on bills affecting housing, transit-oriented development, municipal planning, wetlands, parking, resilience, and zoning administration.

Two major measures received particular attention. Senate Bill 9, enacted as Public Act 25-33, expands Connecticut's climate and resilience framework through flood-risk disclosures, hazard mitigation requirements, bridge and culvert data, municipal resilience funding, updates to local plans of conservation and development, and sea-level-change preparedness. House Bill 5002, Public Act 25-49, addresses housing and homelessness through provisions involving middle housing, parking, fair-share planning, transit-oriented development, affordable

housing programs, fair-rent commissions, infrastructure funding, and changes to the 8-30g process. Together, the measures underscore how closely housing, infrastructure, transportation, climate resilience, and local planning are now connected.

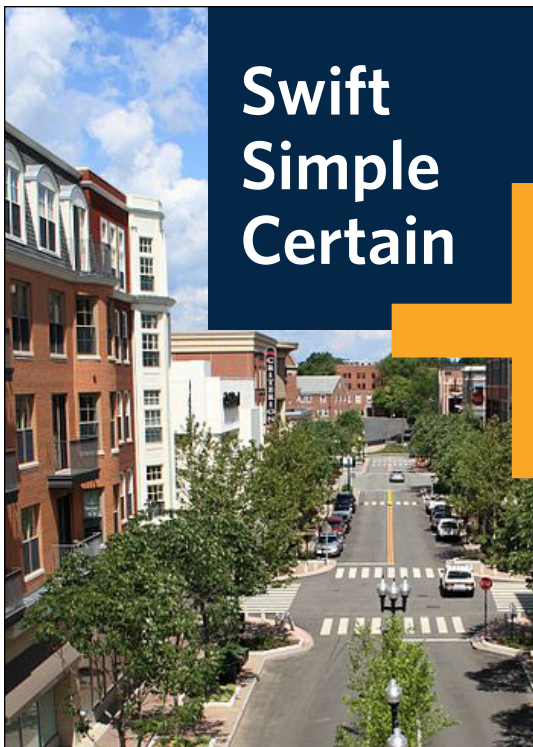
Hot Topics also celebrated the people behind the profession. CCAPA congratulated John Guskowski and David Kooris on their induction into the 2026 AICP College of Fellows and recognized the work of its volunteers, committees, and award recipients. With membership at 372 and growing, the chapter continues to encourage planners to contribute ideas, mentor emerging professionals, participate on committees, and take on leadership roles. The event's message was clear: as planning practice changes, CCAPA is strengthening the resources, advocacy, and professional network needed to help Connecticut planners keep pace. ■

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Planners Should Plan, Right? — A Dispatch from the Inter-Session Doldrums

by John Guskowski, FAICP, CZEO

The 2026 “short session” of the Connecticut General Assembly recalls the “Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow” soliloquy from Macbeth, ending with the immortal quote “It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” I’m happy to be pegged as the idiot here, especially if the alternative is referring to our noble legislators as such...but in truth, for all the shouting and hand-waving during the session, not much happened. “Signifying nothing” is pretty accurate.



As we recapped at the “Hot Topics” event following the legislative session, almost all the many bills the legislature considered that intended to change the way the State regulated zoning, housing, and development died in committee or never came up for a floor vote. CCAPA

submitted positions and testified on nearly 30 bills and saw only a few minor pieces of legislation limp across the finish line. Much of the energy in the legislature sought to undo or over-correct for the passage of PA 25-1 in November 2025, and perhaps the confusion and muddle of the many proposals assisted in the failure of much of anything to pass. Probably the two most notable bills included requiring utility connections for ADUs to be treated identically to principal residences and eliminating the odd 16-unit “loophole” in treatment of parking regulations for multifamily developments created by PA 25-1.

Of CCAPA’s major legislative priorities, which included allowing municipalities to require fee-in-lieu of sidewalk developments and reversing the Coastal Area Management requirement to refer single-family residential construction to DEEP, the long quest to end the publication of public notices in newspaper actually passed the House...before dying on the floor of the Senate. Very

(continued next page)

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Legislative Update, cont'd

much a close-but-no-cigar situation for the age of vaping. We are buoyed by the energy and momentum that Representative Eleni Kavros-DeGraw brought to that bill and have hope that we can get this passed next year. Perhaps most importantly, no major damage was done to the State's housing, transportation, or zoning laws; and no major new planning or regulatory burdens were placed on municipalities.

In response to some constructive criticism from the members of the Government Relations Committee, we are attempting to increase our level of input and conversation with the membership (which, as of this writing, includes about 40 people) both before and during the legislative session. We hope this will generate stronger legislative proposals at the front end and more active participation and sense of buy-in on bills and testimony during the session itself.

This input began with a lively brainstorming session in July that resulted in several interesting ideas to consider. These concepts include things as technical as redefining "hardship" as a standard for obtaining a variance to creating a State Office of Planning, as well as potential studies of how the state organizes and promotes its industrial land or taxing vacant commercial land at higher levels to incentivize development.

Following that discussion, we created a survey of these potential priorities for the Committee (and may be shared in the future with the full CCAPA membership) to gauge the level of interest and enthusiasm in these concepts. If ideas have a lot of energy behind them, they have a better chance of garnering support and legislative champions. We will be meeting through the fall and early winter to refine the "top" ideas and get them into shape as true legislative proposals so that we'll be better prepared when the session begins in January. Hopefully, our large and diverse committee membership will coalesce behind several of these proposals, and we can really announce our presence with authority in 2027.

As ever, we are appreciative of the active support and vocal participation of our Government Relations Committee membership and the strong and growing relationship that we have both with key legislators and their staff as well as advocates and partners from allied professions. If anyone has questions or concerns about CCAPA's legislative agenda or activities, we encourage you to reach out to us at ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com. ■

— *John Guskowski, FAICP, is the CCAPA Government Relations Officer and Co-Chair of the Government Relations Committee. He is the co-founder and principal of Tyche Planning & Policy Group, based in Vernon, CT.*



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SNEAPA Update

The 2026 Southern New England American Planning Association (SNEAPA) Conference is coming to Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket, Connecticut, on October 8-9, 2026. Bringing together planners from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, SNEAPA is an opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the region, share ideas, and learn from the projects and communities shaping Southern New England.

This year's conference will feature sessions covering a range of timely planning topics, along with opportunities for professional development, networking, and conversation with planners working in municipal, regional, state, nonprofit, and private-sector roles. As always, SNEAPA offers a chance to step outside of our day-to-day work and hear how other communities are approaching similar challenges.

We hope to see a strong Connecticut contingent at Foxwoods this October. Whether you are looking for new ideas, AICP CM credits, professional connections, or simply a chance to catch up with fellow planners, SNEAPA is one of the region's best opportunities to reconnect with the planning community. Learn more at https://app.expopass.com/public/sneapa_2026.

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Membership Committee Report

by Anthony Lagana

The Membership Committee has spent recent months completing its regularly scheduled work: assisting CCAPA members with membership questions, sending welcome emails to new members, and trying to find ways to both increase membership and improve membership services for existing members. One of our core goals is to diversify CCAPA's membership, both in terms of diversifying demographically and professionally, inviting planners from non-land use practice areas to join (e.g., transportation, environmental, institutional). Our committee is still looking for additional members. If you are interested in joining, feel free to contact me at alagana@nvcogct.gov.



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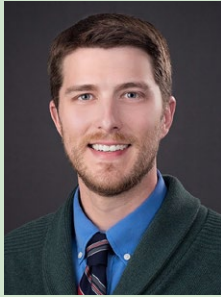
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PDO Corner

A Message from CCAPA's Professional Development Officer

by *Jeremy DeCarli, AICP, CZEO*



As the calendar turns toward fall, we approach the close of the AICP exam session for 2026. As you may recall, AICP exams are now administered through a much longer window, beginning in April and running through November. Gone are the days of two limited win-

dows for taking the test. As of early September, only one member of the Connecticut APA chapter has taken the exam. Congratulations to Jessica Petro on achieving her certification!

Anyone interested in taking the AICP exam should keep an eye on the session schedule at SNEAPA. The three chapter PDOs will team up once again to host an AICP exam prep session. This is a great opportunity to learn about the exam, and how and when to take it. Stay tuned! 

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