



UTAH PLANNER

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2026 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Written by Francis Xavier Lilly

Utah's 2026 Legislative General Session brought major updates that will shape planning across the state. New funding tools like the State Housing Infrastructure Partnership (SHIP), changes to moderate income housing reporting, and new requirements for planning commission procedures and ethics are just the beginning. Updates to appeals, decision timelines, and transparency standards will affect daily workflows, while new rules for detached ADUs expand housing options. Additional changes touch on land use processes, family impact considerations, and economic development incentives. Together, these shifts signal important changes ahead — planners should take note and prepare for how these new laws will influence their work.

Read more at the [link here](#).

CALL FOR CONTENT

As you read this, know that any APA Utah member can contribute. If you have ideas for an article or are willing to write one yourself just reach out to Nicole (admin@apautah.org) and Erika (communications@apautah.org).

To be great planners we need to share our stories not just with each other but also with the broader community.



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APA UTAH ANNOUNCES 2 MEMBERS NAMED TO 2026 CLASS OF AICP FELLOWS

DR. ARNAB CHAKRABORTY, FAICP

Dr. Arnab Chakraborty became dean of the University of Utah's College of Architecture and Planning in July 2023. Since then, he has led significant growth in academic programs, scholarships, career support, research, and community impact. Under his leadership, the college added the top-ranked Division of Games as a fourth department and launched new degree offerings in Architectural Studies and Design. Previously, he spent 16 years at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign as a professor and associate dean. An internationally recognized scholar in planning, his research has earned more than \$2 million in grants and helped shape planning practice nationwide.

Read the press release [here](#)



TED KNOWLTON, FAICP

Ted is the Chief Planner and Deputy Director at the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for greater Salt Lake City, Utah. Ted has dedicated his career to forging strongly supported, coordinated plans among communities, the private sector, and government agencies, aiming to enhance shared quality of life and sustainability. While serving as the Planning Director at Envision Utah, Ted created humanizing engagement practices now used in an estimated 80 regional planning efforts around the country. Envision Utah's impact is estimated to have helped reduce sprawl by 140 square miles within Utah. Ted also launched and scaled WFRC's Transportation and Land Use Connection program (TLC) for communities. TLC has implemented 150 projects and is enabling 50,000 new housing units to be built near public transit. His innovative work has garnered significant recognition, including two prestigious Daniel Burnham awards from the American Planning Association. Ted holds a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University and serves as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Utah. He is also a City Councilor for the City of North Salt Lake. Read the press release [here](#)



ETHICS WITH A LITTLE DUST ON THE BOOTS: THE CODE OF THE WEST AND ETHICAL PLANNING

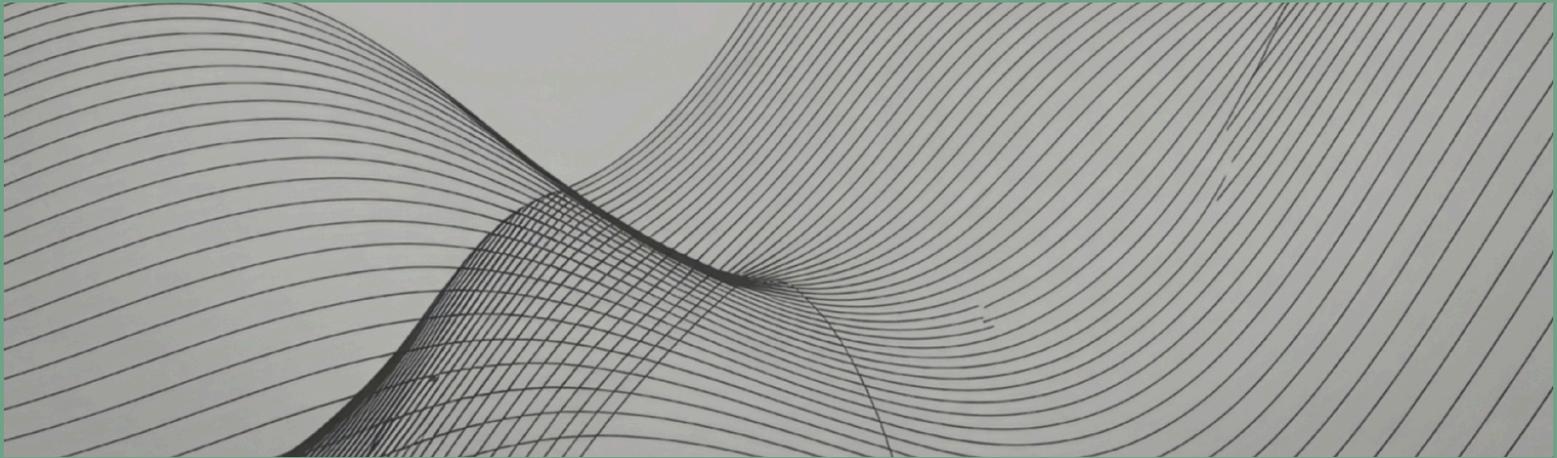
While the AICP Code of Ethics provides crucial guidance in everyday planning, its formal nature can make it hard for citizen planners and the public to relate to. Planners serving in the small communities around the west can apply these ideals through the practical and culturally relatable Code of the West. Planning is not just following professional standards but also honoring community character, building trust, and doing the right thing in the real-world context of western communities.

Read the full article at [this link](#).

THE NEIGHBOR ZONE: DESIGN POLICY TO SUPPORT REAL COMMUNITY BUILDING

The space between the front door and the public sidewalk is more than a setback — it's an opportunity. In this inaugural column, Molly O'Neill Robinson makes the case for coding the "neighbor zone" into our planning practice and challenges planners to treat the front yard as a community-building place.

Read the full article at [this link](#).



RETHINKING PUBLIC SPACE STARTS WITH THE STREET

Project for Public Spaces' 2025 report offers a clear warning: public spaces are falling short in most communities. While parks and plazas often get the spotlight, the report highlights a critical reality—streets make up 80% of public space. For planners, that shifts the focus toward everyday corridors as key sites for social life, culture, and economic activity. In growing regions like Utah, this perspective challenges conventional approaches to placemaking. Local examples, such as open street initiatives and culturally grounded street redesigns, show what's possible. The takeaway is simple but powerful: better public spaces may already exist—we just need to plan and manage our streets like they truly matter

Read the full article at [this link](#).



Historic 25th Street in Ogden. Source: [planning.org](#)