

# COMMUNITY PLANNING

Community planning is how local, state, and regional governments manage growth, navigate change, and make informed decisions about where to invest in housing, transportation, infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources. Planning is about helping communities define their goals and chart paths to achieving them. Planning professionals offer three essential strengths to this work. First, they take a long-term view, helping leaders understand how today's policy decisions will shape a community for generations. Second, they offer expertise rooted in professional training, best practices, and real-world case studies, equipping government officials to manage both unforeseen challenges and emerging opportunities. Third, their recommendations are grounded in rigorous, data-driven research: planners draw on extensive community conversations and multi-source data analysis to reveal insights such as which neighborhoods lack adequate housing options or transit access, translating complex findings into clear, actionable guidance.

The Community College of Rhode Island offers two academic pathways for students interested in entering the planning profession. The Community Planning associate in arts (<https://catalog.ccri.edu/programs-study/community-planning/assoc/community-planning-aa/>) is a two-year degree that prepares graduates for careers as planning technicians in local, state, and regional planning offices, as well as private consulting firms. The program blends planning theory with hands-on technical training in zoning administration, building plan review, GIS mapping, and code enforcement, developing students' ability to communicate planning regulations clearly to diverse audiences. Graduates are equipped to review permit applications, conduct site investigations, create data visualizations, manage multiple projects, and maintain professional legal records. For students seeking a more focused credential, the Community Planning certificate (<https://catalog.ccri.edu/programs-study/community-planning/cert/community-planning-cert/>) covers the same core competencies—land use planning, zoning administration, site plan review, and code enforcement—with an emphasis on the day-to-day procedures and tools that planning technicians rely on in municipal, county, and regional agencies, as well as consulting environments. Both programs prepare students to process development applications, evaluate site plans for regulatory compliance, and produce documentation that meets legal and professional standards, opening doors to careers as planning technicians, zoning administrators, permit coordinators, and GIS specialists.

## Programs

### Associate Degree Programs

- Community Planning - Associate in Arts (<https://catalog.ccri.edu/programs-study/community-planning/assoc/community-planning-aa/>)

### Certificates

- Community Planning - Certificate (<https://catalog.ccri.edu/programs-study/community-planning/cert/community-planning-cert/>)

## Courses

### Community Planning (CMPL)

#### CMPL 1010 - Introduction to Community Planning (3 Credits)

This course examines the history, theory, and practice of community planning at state, local, and regional scales. Students explore how planning authorities operate within state, local, and regional governments—from managing grant programs to coordinating development reviews across departments and agencies. Through applied learning, students gain foundational knowledge essential for advanced study in community and regional planning.

Lecture: 3 hours, Lab: 0 hours, Other: 0 hours

#### CMPL 2010 - Site Planning (3 Credits)

This course introduces students to the principles and methods of site planning. Using a case studies approach, students will trace the planning and design processes for residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments.

Lecture: 3 hours, Lab: 0 hours, Other: 0 hours

**Prerequisite(s):** CMPL 1010

#### CMPL 2020 - The Comprehensive Plan (3 Credits)

This course familiarizes students with the roles of comprehensive plans, state planning and land use statutes, and local subdivision and land development regulations as they relate to land use and development applications and decisions made by local officials, including city or town councils, planning boards, technical review committees, and administrative officers.

Lecture: 3 hours, Lab: 0 hours, Other: 0 hours

**Prerequisite(s):** CMPL 1010