



Department of Urban  
and Regional Planning  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

# Planning Research & Practice Conference

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*Conference Program*

**March 27–28, 2026**

Reitz Union  
University of Florida Campus  
Gainesville, FL

# Welcome

**Welcome to the University of Florida's Planning Research & Practice Conference!** For those who are visiting for the first time, welcome to Gainesville and to our campus. For those returning, we are glad to have you back. **The Department of Urban and Regional Planning** is proud to share this incredible event with you.

The Planning Research and Practice Conference brings together researchers, practitioners, students, educators, and international thought leaders to bridge practice and research. Over the next two days we will collectively explore ideas, innovations, and cutting-edge research that span resilient futures, housing, healthcare and aging communities, and the evolving meaning of what it means to be a planner.

To our students: you are not just the future of this profession, you are already part of it. Your research, intrigue, passions, and experiences shape curriculums and communities alike.

To our alumni: we are grateful you have made your way back to campus. Your experience in practice helps bridge classrooms and communities.

To those joining UF for the first time: welcome to our community. We are glad to have you and we hope that these conversations leave a lasting impression on your work and perspective.

The future doesn't plan itself – let's get started.

**CONFERENCE CO-DIRECTORS** | Department of Urban and Regional Planning

**KYLE DOST, AICP** | Program Director & Instructional Assistant Professor

**ABHINAV ALAKSHENDRA, PH.D.** | Associate Professor

**RUTH STEINER, PH.D.** | Professor

**EMILY TEODORU** | Graduate Student Coordinator

## INDUSTRY SPONSORS

Pioneer Medical Foundation



CDM Smith



CTS Engineering



Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB)



The Corradino Group



## UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SUPPORTING UNITS

Online Master of Urban and Regional Planning



School of Landscape Architecture and Planning (SLA+P)



Florida Institute for Built Environment Resilience (FIBER)



Center for Landscape Conservation Planning (CLCP)



Center for Health and the Built Environment



# Maps & Recommendations

## UF CAMPUS MAP



## REITZ UNION MAP

### GROUND LEVEL (Friday Sessions)

- Barbershop
- Career Connections Center
- Game Room
- Gator Esports Center
- Hotel Reception
- Meeting Rooms G310-G330
- Orange & Brew
- Senate Chamber
- SG Bike Repair

- Orange Elevator
- Blue Elevator
- Meeting Rooms
- Restrooms



## GAINESVILLE LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### DINING DISTRICTS

#### 4th Ave Food Park

409 SW 4th Ave

Muneca's Tacos, Baker Baker, Square House Pizza, Humble Wood Fire Bagels...

#### South Main Station

619 S. Main St

Bingo Deli, Humble Wood Fire Pizza, Grand Scheme Brewery, The Lynx Bookstore

#### Butler Plaza

45+ restaurants, fast food to sit-down

### RESTAURANTS

#### Near Campus

Satchel's Pizza  
The Swamp (American)  
Superette (Mediterranean)  
Afternoon Restaurant (American)  
La Tienda (Mexican)

#### Downtown

Boca Fiesta (Mexican)  
The Top (American)  
Dragonfly Sushi  
Tup Tim Thai

#### Westgate Plaza (Locally Owned)

New Deal Café  
Mildred's Big City Food  
Mi Apá Latin Café

### GROCERIES & PHARMACY

Publix (Univ. Village)  
203 NW 13th St | 7a-11p

Whole Foods (Butler Plaza)  
3490 SW Archer Rd | 8a-10p

Trader Joe's (Butler Plaza)  
3724 SW Archer Rd | 8a-9p

CVS (University)  
311 SW 13th St | 7a-11p

### BREWERIES & PARKS

Cypress & Grove Brewery  
First Magnitude Brewery  
Swamp Head Brewery

Paynes Prairie Preserve  
Sweetwater Wetlands Park  
Depot Park  
Tom Petty Park

### LEVEL 3 (Saturday Sessions)

- Meeting Rooms 3305-3320
- Reflection Room
- Rion Ballroom
- Sorority and Fraternity Life
- Student Engagement
- Student Government
- Student Government Finance
- Student Legal Services

- Orange Elevator
- Blue Elevator
- Meeting Rooms
- Restrooms



# Friday, March 27

8:30am – 7:30pm | Reitz Union & Antevy Hall

8:30 – 9:30am

REITZ CHAMBER

## Breakfast, Welcome & Opening Remarks

*Dr. Laura Dedenbach, AICP | Interim Chair, Department of Urban and Regional Planning  
Dr. Jules Bruck, FASLA | Director, School of Landscape Architecture and Planning  
Dr. Ravi Srinivasan | Assoc. Dean of Research and Strategic Initiatives*

9:30 – 10:30am

REITZ CHAMBER

## Keynote Address

*Mitchell Silver, FAICP, Hon. ASLA*

1 CM

10:45 – 11:55am

REITZ CHAMBER

## Resilient Futures: Planning for a Changing Climate

*Dr. Jeff Carney, AIA, AICP | Director, UF FIBER  
Jake Kheel | Vice President of Sustainability, Grupo Puntacana  
Jennifer Posner | Director, Climate Resilience Academy, University of Miami  
Dr. Ricardo Truffello Robledo | Assistant Professor, Pontifical Catholic Univ of Chile*

1 CM

12:00 – 12:55pm

REITZ G315

## Lunch & Student Poster Competition

1:00 – 2:15pm

REITZ CHAMBER

## Planning for Healthcare and Aging Communities

*Dr. Amit Kumar | Associate Professor, University of Utah  
Dr. Irfan Ali | President and CEO, Pioneer Medical Group  
Laura Streed | Director of Outreach and Engagement, AARP Florida  
Dr. Todd Manini | Professor, UF College of Medicine*

1 CM

2:30 – 3:45pm

REITZ G310

## The Future of Planning Education: Beyond the Classroom

*Dr. Christopher Silver, FAICP | Professor Emeritus, University of Florida  
Dr. Jocelyn Widmer | Dean for Weapons Learning Transformation, Los Alamos Nat'l Lab  
Thomas Hawkins, JD, AICP | Legal Skills Professor, UF Levin College of Law  
Kyle Dost, AICP | Program Director & Instructional Asst. Professor, UF URP*

1 CM

2:30 – 3:45pm

REITZ G320

## Harnessing Planning Technologies

*Dr. Ravi Srinivasan | Assoc. Dean of Research and Strategic Initiatives, UF DCP  
Dr. Wei Zhai | Associate Professor, University of Texas at Arlington  
Andrew Riddle, AICP | Community Planning Manager, Broward MPO  
Dr. Changjie Chen | Assistant Scientist, UF FIBER*

1 CM

4:15 – 5:15pm

ANTEVY HALL

## DCP Collaboratory Tour

1 CM

5:30 – 7:30pm

ANTEVY HALL

## 2026 Ed Stone Lecture

*Sierra Bainbridge, RLA, ASLA | MASS Design Group  
John & Anne Sofarelli Family Gallery; Dhavnit & Saloni Patel Atrium  
Hosted by Dept. of Landscape Architecture – Refreshments provided*

1.5 CM

# Saturday, March 28

8:15am – 3:30pm | Reitz Union

8:15 – 9:00am

REITZ 3315

## Breakfast & Day 2 Opening Remarks

*Dr. Abhinav Alakshendra | Associate Professor, Conference Co-Director*

*Dr. Ruth Steiner | Professor, Conference Co-Director*

*Kyle Dost, AICP | Instructional Assistant Professor, Conference Co-Director*

9:00 – 10:15am

REITZ 3315

## Collaborative Planning in Action

*Jeannine Gaslonde | Chief Mobility Management & Implementation, Miami-Dade TPO*

*Melissa Wyllie | CEO and President, Florida Trust for Historic Preservation*

*Dr. Himanshu Grover, AICP | Department Chair & Associate Professor, Alabama A&M Univ.*

*Chelsea Rivera | Climate Equity Policy Fellow, Central Florida Jobs With Justice*

1 CM

10:15 – 11:00am

REITZ 3320

## Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:15pm

REITZ 3310

## Student Presentations: Ph.D. & Master's Thesis

1 CM

11:00 – 12:15pm

REITZ 3305

## Student Presentations: Master's & Undergraduate

1 CM

11:00 – 12:15pm

REITZ 3315

## Student Presentations: Master's & Undergraduate

1 CM

12:15 – 1:15pm

REITZ 3315

## What It Means to be a Planner

*Whit Blanton, FAICP | Executive Director, Forward Pinellas*

*Ashon Nesbitt | CEO, Florida Housing Coalition*

*Tocarra Thomas, AICP | Asst. Vice President of Housing & Dev., Smart Growth America*

*Stephen Benson, AICP, CNU-A | Planning Practice Leader, H.W. Lochner*

1 CM

1:15 – 2:15pm

REITZ 3320

## Closing Lunch

2:30 – 3:30pm

REITZ 3315

## Student Career Fair

**2026 CONFERENCE AT-A-GLANCE**

Keynote Address: Mitchell Silver, FAICP, Hon. ASLA	FRIDAY MARCH 27
Resilient Futures: Planning for a Changing Climate	FRIDAY MARCH 27
Planning for Healthcare and Aging Communities	FRIDAY MARCH 27
Planning Education: Beyond the Classroom	FRIDAY MARCH 27
Harnessing Planning Technologies	FRIDAY MARCH 27
DCP Collaboratory Tour & Ed Stone Lecture	FRIDAY MARCH 27
Collaborative Planning in Action	SATURDAY, MARCH 28
Student Presentations	SATURDAY, MARCH 28
What It Means to be a Planner	SATURDAY, MARCH 28
Student Career Fair	SATURDAY, MARCH 28

**THANK YOU TO OUR LEADING SPONSORS!**

