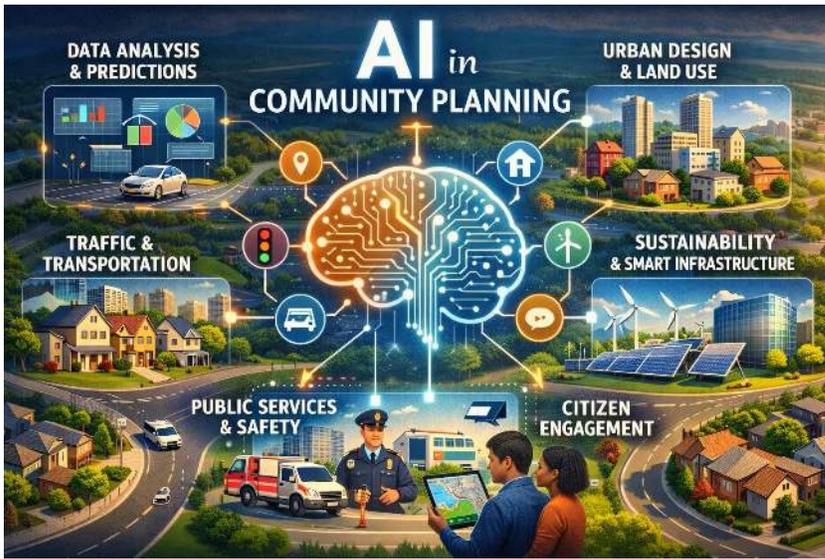


1. Preface: Artificial Intelligence and Community Planning



The New Year provides a benchmark moment to evaluate change, whether personal, societal or global. Since the turning of the global page from the COVID pandemic, AI has quickly evolved into a new globally ubiquitous topic.

From a broad social point of view, AI has advanced from an area of theoretical computer science and research, to a new technological paradigm that is already involved many of our daily lives. Perhaps we haven't been aware, but decades of research into applications like computer chess, spell check, voice recognition and online search algorithms are all examples of AI.

In the last few years, AI applications have become broadly accessible, but with ever expanding capabilities beyond simplistic forms of pattern recognition towards much more complex content creation. The use of AI is rapidly evolving from online curiosity to vital tool within a future that has already arrived in January, 2026.

The purpose of this issue of **Character Towns** is to examine AI as it applies to City Planning, specifically targeting an audience that may not be particularly familiar with the whole notion of AI to begin with, let alone useful applications in the planning, design and A/E industry. We therefore developed this issue in collaboration with AI to explore the topic and relate back to society in general, and community planning and design through in specific applications.

Quick Overview YouTube Links to START:

As a way to introduce yourself to the AI topic, take a look at this 10-minute Google short course for beginners [YouTube AI for Beginners](#)

Get ready for a slightly deeper dive we like this highly conversational video from @Futurepedia [You're Not Behind \(Yet\) AI in 29 Minutes](#)

Curious about current AI theoretical research and the future? Check out this WIRED interview on "General AI" [Demis Hassabis on the the future of AI](#)



If you are more deeply interested in the background of development and forward looks at the power of Artificial General Intelligence, take a look at the full 90-minute, award winning, feature film documentary:

[The Thinking Game](#)