

SCHOOL OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING
SURP 861: Healthy Community Planning
Winter 2026

Course instructor: Patricia Collins, PhD, patricia.collins@queensu.ca
Class schedule: Thursdays, 11:30am-2:30pm
Location: SURP Classroom (Primary); Sue Hendler & Rutherford Rooms (Secondary)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The rising prevalence of chronic diseases that have built environment links, such as obesity, heart disease, cancer and depression, has stimulated calls for reconnecting public health and urban planning in both pedagogy and practice. This course aims to facilitate this reconnection by engaging soon to be practitioners in urban and regional planning in critical analyses of the determinants of, and responses to, health and health inequities at the local level. Various dimensions of communities and cities will be interrogated for their health and health equity promoting and impeding qualities; planning and policy-based responses will be examined and critiqued; and recommendations for creating healthier and more equitable communities will be formulated.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the multiple domains through which built environments influence health and health equity to facilitate more comprehensive approaches to planning for healthy communities.
- Identify the challenges to planning and designing communities that are both healthy and equitable, and to develop strategies for overcoming those challenges.
- Propose options for addressing a problem that has implications for community health.
- Develop professional skills in group collaboration and writing for policy-maker audiences.
- Work on a project of immediate relevance and importance to a local community.

COURSE FORMAT

For this class, students' primary focus will be on carrying out group projects for the City of Guelph. We will convene each week in the SURP classroom (MC E208) and spend the first 30-45 minutes of class reviewing key themes from the assigned readings. Following these sessions, students will then convene with their groups in one of the three assigned rooms for the class to work on the project to which they've been assigned for the semester. An introductory session with the client will take place in week 1, and final presentations of the group projects will be delivered in week 12.

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

10% Attendance and Engagement
5% Road Safety Lecture Reflection – Jan 30th
15% Policy Brief – March 27th
70% Group Project
15% - Interim Report – Feb 13th
15% - Final Presentation – April 2nd
30% - Final Report – April 17th
10% - Peer Evaluation – April 24th