

# MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING

Program Director: S. Whitehead

The graduate programs in sustainable urban planning will give you the necessary skills and education to help you lead communities towards healthier, more inclusive futures.

Designed to transfer the knowledge and skills needed to promote health and equity, this program has an emphasis on policy analysis, climate solutions, and equity. This accredited program is taught by thought leaders across a variety of fields such as engineering, sustainable energy, parks, and brownfields redevelopment.

The program has an emphasis on people, prosperity, and place as a framework for understanding and influencing policies, plans, and procedures. To do this, the program offers classes focusing on:

- Parks and parks planning
- Health, equity, and the built environment
- Green infrastructure and energy

The MPS in sustainable urban planning also offers professionals from other sectors a unique opportunity to gain the technical grounding necessary to jump-start careers in urban planning and sustainability.

Graduates of the MPS in sustainable urban planning program can expect to play pivotal roles in policy development, systems change, and policy implementation in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

In addition to the 48-credit MPS in sustainable urban planning degree program, we also offer an 18-credit graduate certificate (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/professional-studies/certificate-programs/sustainable-urban-planning/>).

Visit the program website (<http://cps.gwu.edu/master-professional-studies-sustainable-urban-planning-0/>) for additional information.

## ADMISSIONS

**Admission deadlines:** **Fall** - Priority Deadline: February 1; Final Deadline: May 1  
**Spring** - Priority Deadline: August 1; Spring Final Deadline: October 1

**Recommendations required:** Two (2) letters of recommendation from professional and/or academic references; at least one academic reference for those who graduated within the last five years.

### **Prior academic records:**

Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript.

Transcripts from institutions outside the United States must be accompanied by an official transcript evaluation from an accredited independent evaluating agency. Please be sure you request a detailed, course-by-course evaluation that includes all course titles, credit hours, grade-point average (GPA), United States degree equivalency, and date of degree conferral. Please see the list of acceptable foreign credential evaluation services (<https://www.naces.org/members/>).

### **Statement of purpose:**

In an essay of 200-500 words, state your purpose in undertaking graduate study in this field as well as your academic objectives and career plans and how they relate to the program's mission of training the next generation of change agents addressing the crisis of climate change. Also, address any unique attributes or experiences you bring to the classroom as it relates to one or more of the program's values of active learning, democracy, diversity, research or world engagement.

### **Additional requirements:**

#### **International applicants only:**

A resumé.

Please review International Applicant Information (<https://www.cps.gwu.edu/international-student-admissions/>) carefully for details on required documents, earlier deadlines for applicants requiring an I-20 or DS-2019 from GW, and English language requirements.

### **Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:**

College of Professional Studies – Office of Admission  
George Washington University  
805 21st Street, NW

Suite 301  
Washington DC 20052

**Contact for questions:**

CPS Office of Admission  
applycps@gwu.edu ~ 571-553-0025 (phone) ~ 202-242-1047 (fax)  
8:30 am – 5:00 pm EST, Monday through Friday

## REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled: 48 credits, including 33 credits in required courses and 15 credits in elective courses.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required</b>		
PSUS 6201	Principles of Sustainable Urban and Regional Planning	
PSUS 6202	Urban and Environmental Economics	
PSUS 6203	Research Methods: Geospatial and Econometric Analysis	
PSUS 6204	Land Use Law	
PSUS 6210	Transportation Planning in City Systems	
PSUS 6211	Regional Development and Agricultural Economics	
PSUS 6212	Sustainable Communities I: Housing and Design	
PSUS 6220	Planning Resilient and Low-Carbon Cities	
PSUS 6221	The Scientific Basis of Climate Change	
PSUS 6230	Sustainable Community Design Studio	
PSUS 6233	Capstone in Sustainable Urban Planning	
<b>Electives</b>		
15 credits in elective courses selected from the following:		
PSUS 6205	Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	
PSUS 6213	Advanced Research Methods Individual Mentoring	
PSUS 6214	Food and Cities	
PSUS 6215	Urban Health Impact Assessment	
PSUS 6216	Megacities in a Globalized World	
PSUS 6218	Urban Growth and Affordability	
PSUS 6223	Reading Cities and Towns	

PSUS 6224	Sustainable Energy for Cities and the Environment
PSUS 6227	Critical Infrastructure for Cities and Regions
PSUS 6231	Practicum: Climate Change Management and Policy
PSUS 6235	Advanced Topics in Urban Sustainability
PSUS 6236	International Studio in Sustainable Urban Planning

## COURSES

### Explanation of Course Numbers

- Courses in the 1000s are primarily introductory undergraduate courses
- Those in the 2000s to 4000s are upper-level undergraduate courses that also may be taken for graduate credit with permission and additional work assigned
- Those in the 6000s and 8000s are for master’s, doctoral, and professional-level students
- The 6000s are open to advanced undergraduate students with approval of the instructor and the dean or advising office

**PSUS 5099. Variable Topics. 1-99 Credits.**

**PSUS 6201. Principles of Sustainable Urban and Regional Planning. 3 Credits.**

The environmental, social, and economic elements of sustainability. Present and future challenges, including environmental management, energy policy, financial crises, global warming, inequality, public education, third and first world slums, the success and failure of nations, urban agriculture, urban economics, and more. The implications of sustainable development and conducting research based on evidenced-based policy. Students focus on the work of researchers outside of the planning field as they write a series of research essays containing reviews of relevant scientific literature.

**PSUS 6202. Urban and Environmental Economics. 3 Credits.**

The application of neoclassical economics to problems faced by practitioners of the field of sustainable urban and regional planning. Key economic concepts including supply and demand, consumption and production, markets and market failure, and measurement of environmental and other non-market commodities. An economist’s perspective on the principals and methods for understanding urban and environmental challenges and solutions, urban growth, environmental quality, public policy, and other issues fundamental to contemporary development.

**PSUS 6203. Research Methods: Geospatial and Econometric Analysis. 3 Credits.**

Developing proficiency in geographic information systems (GIS) and econometric analysis; building and analyzing spatial datasets using ArcGIS and Stata statistical software.

**PSUS 6204. Land Use Law. 3 Credits.**

Understanding the legal context of land use planning as it applies to contemporary issues. The role of land use law in shaping the urban context and its implications for policy and practice.

**PSUS 6205. Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. 3 Credits.**

Current patterns of urban development, including segregation, concentrated poverty, suburban sprawl, and gentrification. Restricted to students in the sustainable urban planning program.

**PSUS 6210. Transportation Planning in City Systems. 3 Credits.**

Transportation planning with long-run goals in mind, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The role of planning at local and regional scales within the broader framework of transportation engineering.

**PSUS 6211. Regional Development and Agricultural Economics. 3 Credits.**

The economics of land use patterns and development processes in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Introduction to the field of agricultural economics and examination of food deserts and other food-related problems relevant to the field of sustainable urban planning.

**PSUS 6212. Sustainable Communities I: Housing and Design. 3 Credits.**

Community development with a focus on policy and the various sectors of interest that affect contemporary urbanization. How policies, planning techniques, and implementation strategies form the core work of planning practitioners. Topics include water supply, food deserts, public health, and urban resilience. Pathways to more sustainable communities are explored through the policy arenas in which key decisions are made; key sectors that make up the fabric of communities; and special topics that have emerged as critical challenges for sustainable community development.

**PSUS 6213. Advanced Research Methods Individual Mentoring. 3 Credits.**

Builds on research skills learned in PSUS 6203. Students in the sustainable urban planning program work one-on-one with a faculty member of their choice on a project of joint design. Prerequisite: PSUS 6203.

**PSUS 6214. Food and Cities. 3 Credits.**

Examines agricultural systems, food production, consumption, and trade, and their links to urbanization, city growth, and public health, through lenses of history, technology, economic theory, geography, and public policy. The course explores the roles that food plays in the lives of urban inhabitants, and in shaping the urban landscape, and the role of cities in determining the geography, sustainability, and business of agriculture.

**PSUS 6215. Urban Health Impact Assessment. 3 Credits.**

Examines the relationship between the allied fields of urban planning and public health. Addresses the link between the built environment and various health outcomes and the value added incorporating health concerns into the planning and design processes.

**PSUS 6216. Megacities in a Globalized World. 3 Credits.**

Research-oriented course in which students identify, analyze, and recommend ways of addressing land use change and economic development within one of the world's megacities.

**PSUS 6218. Urban Growth and Affordable Housing. 3 Credits.**

Real estate economics, with an emphasis on urban growth and affordable housing; the process and outcome of economic development and the relationship between economic development and sustainable urban planning.

**PSUS 6220. Planning Resilient and Low-Carbon Cities. 3 Credits.**

International perspectives on urban planning, taking into consideration increased global temperatures resulting from greenhouse gas emissions-induced climate change. The course is taught with reference to the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and considers how urbanization around the world must adapt to the reality of global warming and its consequences.

**PSUS 6221. The Scientific Basis of Climate Change. 3 Credits.**

The science underlying climate change policy and decision making. Earth systems, climate change projections, the need for mitigation, and impact assessment. Designed for non-scientists.

**PSUS 6222. Climate Change Economics. 3 Credits.**

Energy use in built environments with an emphasis on fundamental drivers of energy demand, strategies to promote energy efficiency, and essential features of energy supply; the relationship between energy demand and supply in development.; how advances in construction technology can help counter greenhouse gas emissions.

**PSUS 6223. Sustainable Communities II: Tools for Assessment and Transformation. 3 Credits.**

Builds on PSUS 6212 by further detailing the theory and tools relevant to the assessment and transformation of neighborhood and communities. Geospatial analysis explore the fundamental drivers of urban form, advanced transportation systems, theories of change, and various impact assessment tools used to inform policy implementation.

**PSUS 6224. Sustainable Energy for Cities and the Environment. 3 Credits.**

Resource management and renewable energy technologies. Vulnerabilities of existing urban structures, particularly the energy grid. Implications of and solutions to energy-related problems likely to arise in present and future cities.

**PSUS 6228. Open Space and Public Facilities Planning. 3 Credits.**

Relevant skills applicable to urban park planning. Students learn site assessment and analysis tools and produce a professional quality project.

**PSUS 6230. Sustainable Community Design Studio. 3 Credits.**

Students gain practical experience by applying research skills and creativity to analyze and resolve a real-world urban issue.

Prerequisites: PSUS 6201, PSUS 6202, PSUS 6203, PSUS 6204, PSUS 6210, PSUS 6211, PSUS 6212, PSUS 6220, and PSUS 6221.

**PSUS 6231. Practicum:ClimateChangeMgt&Pol. 3 Credits.**

**PSUS 6233. Capstone in Sustainable Urban Planning. 3 Credits.**

The SUP Capstone is a self-paced project specific to individual students, conducted under the supervision of a faculty member/s of the student's choice. The capstone is a significant piece of research that ties the student's broader experience in the Sustainable Urban Planning Program together – and brings their cumulative learning to bear on a research question / topic / project of their choice and definition. The capstone is intended to be a piece of exemplary work that the student can use to help them get to the "next level."

That is, the capstone is a project that demonstrates the students capabilities and ability to work independently – it might be used, for example, as a sample of work in the job application process.

Capstone projects may take the form of academic research papers; applied policy briefs; posters; executive training courses; and more. The capstone is no less (and no more) than a full semester's worth of intensive work on a particular project; it is NOT a thesis, as defined by the George Washington University. Ideally, the capstone project is of sufficient quality that it is worth of being presented at a meeting of the American Planning Association (local chapter or national meeting) or other relevant professional context.

**PSUS 6235. Advanced Topics in Urban Sustainability. 3 Credits.**

**PSUS 6236. International Studio in Sustainable Urban Planning. 3 Credits.**

International immersion designed to promote an international exchange of research and scholarship on sustainable urban development and provide instruction on operating in a foreign setting.