

Local Government Certificate Programs Dalhousie University

Sustainable Communities

1. Description of the course

Sustainable Communities presents issues of sustainability, and introduces possible tools and solutions, using examples from Canadian municipalities. The student will emerge from the course with a well-rounded perspective on what it takes for a community or municipality to become sustainable, and will become familiar with tools to move ahead towards sustainability.

The course will introduce local government administrators and students of local government to the three pillars of sustainability. These pillars are:

- human physical and social health;
- environmental health; and
- economic health.

The course material and the readings will emphasize the inter-related nature of these pillars. A change in one pillar will affect the other two pillars, in a never-ending dance of adjustment and adaptation.

2. Learning objectives

- Recognize that issues facing a municipality are often interconnected and must be addressed together in order to achieve net benefit and genuine progress
- Explain the concept of sustainable community with reference to the social, economic, and environmental foundations upon which it is based
- Apply the sustainable community concept in identifying, understanding, and addressing issues within your own municipality
- Describe the trend in governance away from the traditional roles of government, and outline the implications of this trend
- Recognize the policy implications of sustainability
- Describe how sustainability should be integrated into decision making processes
- Describe how organizational structures can facilitate or impede sustainability
- Identify the potential roles for capital and operating budgets in the effort to create sustainable community
- Describe the concepts of community, health, and determinants of health and success
- Explain the significance of each of the following, in achieving sustainable communities: community, health, and determinants of health and success
- Outline the evolution of municipal roles in addressing health issues

- Describe how various sectors can work individually and together to support health and social development in sustainable communities
- Identify specific strategies that promote health and social development
- Describe how strategies for promotion of human health can also strengthen the environmental and economic pillars of sustainable communities, and how action to strengthen those pillars may be necessary to address health issues
- Identify the constituents of the physical environment, within which a community is situated and upon which it exerts influence
- Describe historical changes in the human perception of the environment, and discuss how these changes have influenced the management of cities
- Describe the environmental mandate now held by municipalities, and its history in Canada
- Describe environmental problems now experienced by Canadian towns and cities, and trace possible linkages to municipal government activities and operations of the present and the past
- Describe and critique traditional approaches to solving environmental problems in municipalities
- Describe some of the tools and mechanisms that may be employed to reduce the harmful or unsustainable effects of a community on its environment
- Outline the reasons economic and fiscal analysis needs to become part of the decisions that will make our municipalities (communities) sustainable
- Identify the optimum time for decision makers to incorporate economic and fiscal analysis into the decision making process
- Describe the contribution of economic and fiscal analysis to making communities sustainable
- Differentiate between three basic approaches to this kind of analysis
- Describe the relationships between economic and fiscal analysis to other forms that should be undertaken in order to make communities sustainable
- Explain the importance of monitoring and evaluating
- Identify key elements of an effective system of monitoring, evaluation, and indicators (MEI)
- Outline the steps in an effective MEI planning process
- Identify best practices in municipal government sustainability reporting for internal and external stakeholders
- Distinguish between evaluation and performance measurement

3. Text and/or readings used

Required Readings

Scott Campbell, "Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities?," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (1996), pp. 296-315.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "Sustainable Development and Sustainable Communities," Part 1 in *Practices for Sustainable Communities* (Ottawa: CMHC, 2000), pp. 2-12.

Mark Roseland, "Rx for Healthy Cities and Towns," *Wingspread Journal*, Spring, 1996.

K.A. Graham, S.D. Phillips, and A.M. Maslove, *Urban Governance in Canada: Representation, Resources and Restructuring* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1998), pp. 251-254, 260-263.

M.E. Tyler, "The Ecological Restructuring of Urban Form," in T. Bunting and P. Filion (eds), *Canadian Cities in Transition* (2nd ed.; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 494-498.

E. Krupa, *Community Action Toward Children's Health (CATCH)* (Kelowna, BC, 2002).

Bretta Maloff, *Strengthening Community Action Framework for Health and Wellness*, 4.4 (Calgary Health Region Authority, 2000), pp. 26-29. Available online at www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/hecomm/comdev/pdf/SCAFrameworkFull.doc.pdf, 9 July 2004.

Waterloo, City of, *5th Annual Eat Smart! Awards Handed Out in Waterloo Region*, News release, 21 June 2004.

World Health Organisation, *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, First International Conference on Health Promotion* (Ottawa, 21 November 1986 - WHO/HPR/HEP/95.1) http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/ottawa_charter_hp.pdf (7 July 2004).

World Health Organisation (WHO), *Social determinants of Health: The Solid Facts*, Richard Wilkinson and Michael Marmot (eds) (2nd edition), pp. 10-17, 27-29. Available online at <http://www.euro.who.int/document/e81384.pdf>, 9 July 2004.

Mike Quinn, "Green Infrastructure: A Vision for a Greener Calgary," in *Breaking Ground: Creating a Greener, Healthier City, May 2nd 4th, 2002, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Conference Proceedings*, pp. 3-4. Available at <http://www.evergreen.ca/en/cg/bg-calgary1.pdf>, 21 July 2004.

SmartGrowthBC, *East Clayton Greenfield Project*, available online at http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/index.cfm?group_ID=3465 (July 20, 2004)

Jeff Celentano, "Analysing Community Growth: Is Fiscal Impact Analysis the Best Tool?" in Canadian Institute of Planners, *Plan Canada* (Ottawa: November 1992), pp. 20-27.

Enid Slack, "Municipal Finance and the Pattern of Urban Growth" in *Commentary—The Urban Papers* (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 2002), pp. 1-17.

Virginia W. Maclaren, "Urban Sustainability Reporting," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (1996), pp. 184-200.

M. Seasons, "Monitoring and Evaluation in Urban Planning," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (2003), 4VV-4MM.

M. Seasons, "Indicators and Core Area Planning: Applications in Canada's Mid-Sized Cities," *Planning Practice & Research*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2003), pp. 63-77.

4. Overview of course

Module 1 explores the concept of sustainability and explains why sustainability is central to the continuing successful functioning of local governments.

Module 2 presents potential applications of the concept of sustainability as it relates to municipalities.

Module 3 focuses on the pillar of human physical and social health, providing insights into the evolution of thought on this aspect of sustainability and introducing tools municipalities can use to encourage sustainable community health.

Module 4 reviews the evolution of municipal involvement in environmental issues, tracing the history of such involvement from the establishment of municipal governments to deal with water management and hygiene issues through to today's interaction between municipalities and the environment.

Module 5 examines ways in which local government can be fiscally and economically sustainable. In particular, it discusses economic and fiscal analysis.

Module 6 presents tools that municipalities can use to assess the sustainability of their actions, to monitor them, and to refine them. By applying these assessment tools, municipalities can be continually improving their approaches to sustainability.