

SAMANTHA LEGER PhD, MCIP RPP, Urban Planner and Designer



Relevant Experience

Current Position

Post-Doctoral Fellow, SSHRC funded

Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto
Toronto, ON 2026-2028

Key Projects: Enabling mobility justice: interrogating how sustainable transportation practices plan for neurodivergence and invisible dis/ability

Education

PhD, Urban Planning

School of Planning, University of Waterloo
Waterloo, ON 2020-2025

Key Projects:

Graduate Research Assistant for Mobilizing Justice: Towards evidence-based transportation-equity policy.
September 2022-Present

Graduate Research Assistant for Communities left behind? A timely examination of school closure controversies for justice-informed decision-making on the fate of public schools in Ontario. September 2020-December 2020.

Dissertation: *Mindful Streets: Examining the politics and practices of everyday mobility negotiated by those who are neurodivergent and the potential for more inclusive (and just) street design for 'all'.* My dissertation critically examines the 'all ages and abilities' inclusivity promise of sustainable transportation planning by engaging with the everyday mobility practices and tactics performed by those who are neurodivergent, and how planners can accommodate more-inclusive transportation practices and policies into their work.

Master of Research, Interdisciplinary Urban Design

Bartlett School of Planning, University College London
London, U.K. 2019- 2020

Thesis: Leger, S. (2020). From Walkable to Sociable: An exploration into the ways we walk together and how the socialness of walking affects perceived walkability of the built-environment. (Unpublished master's thesis). University College London, London U.K.

Bachelor of Environmental Studies, School of Urban Planning

School of Planning, University of Waterloo
Waterloo, ON. 2013- 2018
Specialization: Urban Design

Key Project: Undergraduate Student Lead for the Places to Grow initiative: Achieving Urban Growth Centre Activity Integration through Walking. December 2017- April 2018

Practice

Urban Planner, TAKE consulting (part-time)

Remote, April 2025- current

Key projects:

Project Researcher, Burlington Community Trails Strategy Update

Urban Planner, CIMA+ (part-time)

Kitchener, ON, August 2021- March 2024

Key Projects:

Project Coordinator, *Grimsby Recreational Trails Master Plan, Kawartha Lakes Trails Master Plan, Southwest Public Health Planning Integration Project.*

Transportation Planner, WSP Canada Group

Toronto, ON, June 2018- Sept. 2019

Key Projects:

Lead author for *National white paper exploring e-bikes and micromobility for the Canadian context.*
Key Canadian contact for the *WSP Global Vision Zero Strategy.*

Professional Accreditations: Canadian Institute of Planners Full Member (2025).

Teaching

Contract Lecturer

School of Planning, University of Waterloo

Waterloo, ON January 2026- April 2026

Course PLAN 110: Visual Communication for Planners and Designers, a first-year core course focused on the fundamentals of visual communication, including how to design materials that clearly convey and communicate information to the public, and how to read, and develop spatial information, including maps, site-plans, cross-sections, elevations, 3D plans, and renderings.

Contract Lecturer

School of Planning, University of Waterloo

Waterloo, ON January 2025- April 2025

Course PLAN 203: Transportation Planning and Mobility, a second-year core course focused on the fundamentals of transportation planning, taking a critical approach that explored the histories of transportation in Canada, an accessibility approach to transportation planning and mobility, the politics of transportation decision-making, and paths forward towards more sustainable and inclusive mobility futures.

Contract Lecturer

School of Planning, University of Waterloo

Waterloo, ON September 2024- December 2024

Course PLAN 309: Site Planning & Design Studio, a third-year design studio focused on the technical dimensions of urban design and site planning. Students were led through a typical development process and learnt how to analyze site context, create schematic designs and high-level visioning, and prepare detailed site designs and planning justifications.

Contract Lecturer & Studio Instructor

School of Urban and Regional Planning, Toronto Metropolitan University

Toronto, ON January 2024- May 2024; January 2025-May 2025

Course: PLG220: Planning Studio I, an intensive studio-based course teaching first-year undergraduate students the basics of urban representation, including mapping, cross sections, elevations, and perspective renderings. The course covered a range of software from ArcGIS to AutoCAD and the Adobe Suite.

Guest Lectures

Leger, S. & Wong, E. 2025. Designing for Chage: paving the way to healthier built environments, a case study about a parking lot. Guest Lecture for Health Context and Design 2. OCAD University

Leger, S. 2021. Transportation Planning and Urban Design. Guest Lecture for PLAN 409- Urban Design Studio. University of Waterloo

Leger S. 2018. The role of emerging transportation technology in fostering sustainable cities. Guest Lecture for EUS 850- Sustainability in Organizations. Toronto Metropolitan University

Workshops

Leger, S. 2023. Designing Posters for Planning Projects. Workshop for PLAN 471- Planning Law. University of Waterloo

Teaching Assistant Roles

Teaching Assistant, Physical Infrastructure Planning (PLAN 483)
School of Planning, University of Waterloo,
May 2024- August 2024

Teaching Assistant, Planning Design and the Environment (PLAN 210)
School of Planning, University of Waterloo,
September 2023- December 2023

Teaching Accreditations: Fundamentals of University Teaching Certificate (2024).

Research Contributions

Refereed Publications

Leger, S., & Dean, J. (2025). Automobility, velomobility, and complete streets? Discursively analyzing the politics of complete street design guidelines in Ontario, Canada. *Mobilities*, 1-18.

Co-Author roles

- Conceptualized the manuscript and conducted in-depth critical discourse analysis of policies; drafted a final manuscript of the findings and analysis

Linovski, O., Dean, J., Leger, S., McLaren, A., & Cascante, I. (2025). Transportation barriers and equity: Values and experiences of elected officials. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 1-21.

Co-Author roles

- Providing input to the conceptualization of the manuscript through data analysis
- Providing edits to manuscript

Leger, S., Dean, J., Thompson, C., & Collins, P. (2023). "Nothing in my years of community organizing has affected me as deeply as this closure did": A critical exploration of the socio-spatial consequences of public-school closures in Ontario, Canada. *Canadian Planning and Policy / Aménagement Et Politique Au Canada*, 2023(1), 38-61. <https://doi.org/10.24908/cpp-apc.v2023i1.15714>

Co-Author roles:

- Conducted qualitative interviews and analysis of interview data; drafted a final manuscript of the findings and analysis.

Leger, S., Dean, J. L., Edge, S., & Casello, J. M. (2019). "If I had a regular bicycle, I wouldn't be out riding anymore": Perspectives on the potential of e-bikes to support active living and independent mobility among older adults in Waterloo, Canada. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 123, 240-254.

Co-Author roles:

- Conducted an extensive literature review regarding older-adult cycling and all qualitative primary data collection (interviews and focus groups); drafted a final manuscript of the findings and analysis.

Non-Refereed Publications

Leger, S. (2023). Transportation equity? Not without understanding the politics of decision-making. *Mobilizing Justice*. Published.

Leger, S., McLaughlin, D & Tracksdorf, K. (2019). WSP. Leading the Charge: A discussion to the emerging and uncharted role of micromobility. Published.

Filion, P; Leanage, N; Ovieado, N & Leger, S. (2018). Achieving Urban Growth Centre Activity Integration through Walking Final Report. Places to Grow Implementation Fund. Published.

Leger, S. (2018). Clarifying the differences in emerging transportation technology: How do we define e-bikes? *OPPI Journal*. Published.

Conference Presentations

Leger, S. & Dean, J. (2025, Oct. 23-25). "I miss the bus or I take the wrong bus so many times: Understanding the micro-politics of everyday neurodivergent mobility practices for inclusive transportation planning": ACSP 2025. Minneapolis, MI

Leger, S. & Dean, J. (2024, Nov. 7-9). *Planning for Neurodiversity*. ACSP 2024, Seattle, WA.

Leger, S. & Dean J. (2024 Aug 18-21). "I end up on the wrong bus more times than I can count": A Critical Exploration into the Micro-Politics of Neurodivergent Mobilities. Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Geographers. St. John's NF.

Leger, S. & Dean, J. (2024 April 24-28). "I end up on the wrong bus more times than I can count": towards more inclusive streetscapes by planning for neurodiversity. International Conference on Urban Affairs 2024, New York, NY.

Leger, S. & Dean, J. (2023 Oct. 18-21). *The (im)mobilities of complete streets: a critical analysis into the all-ages-and-abilities promises*. ACSP 2023, Chicago, IL.

Leger, S. (2022, Nov. 3-5). *Walking as not just a good thing: a critical examination into the production of space, mobility, and what it means to walk*. ACSP 2022, Toronto, ON.

Leger, S., Collins, P. Dean, J. Thompson, C. (2021, Oct. 21-23). *Nothing in my years of community organizing has affected me as deeply as this closure did": A critical exploration of the socio-spatial consequences of public-school closures in Ontario, Canada*. ACSP 2021, Virtual Conference.

Other activities

Scholarships & awards

- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Post-Doctoral Award. Awarded for two years from 2026-2028
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Doctoral Award. Awarded for three years from 2021-2024
- WTS (Women in Transportation) Toronto Chapter Graduate Award, 2024
 - Awarded to graduate student who shows promise in advancing women's representation within the transportation discipline
- University of Waterloo PhD Award of Merit. Awarded from 2021-2023.
 - Awarded to top-performing doctoral students within the School of Planning program

Panels

- Panelist, OTC Summit 2025. Future of Driving Panel.
- Panel Moderator, NACTO Designing Cities 2019. Sharing Two Wheels: A Guide for Practitioners
- Panelist, Ontario Bike Summit 2019. Let's Talk About E-bikes.

Competitions

- First Place Prize, Bartlett Hacks: Climate solutions in a time of pandemic, June 2020. UCL initiated Hackathon. *Submission Title: Cycle City London.*
- Canadian Institute of Transportation Engineers Student Competition Presentation Winner, March 2018 *Presentation Title: Creating Accessible and Sustainable Transportation: Introducing E-bikes to support ageing in place.*

Administrative Activities

- Referee. Urban studies, Journal of Transport and Health, Mobilities
- PhD Student Representative. Association of Graduate Planners Fall 2024 - Summer 2025
- M.Res Student Representative. Bartlett School of Planning 2019-2020

Association Membership

- Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning student member
- Canadian Association of Geographers student member
- Urban Affairs Association student member
- Urban Land Institute member

Software proficiencies

- Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop)
- SketchUp
- AutoCAD