

Planning for Communities with Better Air Quality



Air Quality Considerations for Community Planners



Minimize urban sprawl and plan for more interconnected, and dense communities.



Reduce reliance on the car by promoting and incentivizing active travel routes, and efficient public transportation systems.



Plan more public green spaces and parks. Prioritize urban greening and forestry; plant more trees and create green roofs.



Buy out residences in significant, heavy-emitting industrial zones.



Create more stringent zoning laws for development of residences and communities near industrial centres.



Promote and fund renewable energy resources and electric vehicles and buses.

Air quality may be overlooked in urban and community planning, and as a result, key community centres like schools, playgrounds, hospitals, and residential developments are often located near major roadways. The people using these facilities, then, are exposed to more vehicle exhaust and pollutants.

Quick Facts

- The World Health Organization has reported 9 million annual deaths from air pollution globally
- As temperatures rise due to climate change, concentrations of ground-level ozone - a component of smog - are predicted to rise by 22%
- The Canadian Institute for Climate Choices predicts the health impacts of increased ozone exposure could account for 25% of all health care costs in Canada
- Exposure to air pollution can occur inside vehicles, especially while idling in heavy traffic
- Cyclists and pedestrians are at risk of exposure while walking or cycling alongside busy roads
- Studies have shown pollution exposure diminishes on bicycle and foot paths separated from motor traffic.