

SHELLEY MCMULLEN, MPA, MURP, PE

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EDUCATION

PhD Candidate | University of Colorado Denver | Geography, Planning and Design | 2020 – Fall 2026

- Dissertation research focus: Impacts of land use and development policies on flood and landslide management and the influence of international organizations on climate resilience in Rwanda

M.A. Urban and Regional Planning | University of Colorado Denver | 2018 - 2020

M.A. Public Administration | University of Colorado Denver | 2017 - 2020

- Master's thesis research: The Role of Social Capital on Earthquake Recovery in Ecuador

B.S. Engineering, Civil Specialty, Minor in Public Affairs | Colorado School of Mines | 1999 - 2003

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Planning Consultant | Headwaters Economics | Denver, CO | Nov 2025 – present

- Consultant for Headwaters Economics' Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire (CPAW) program providing technical assistance with adoption, implementation and enforcement of wildfire-urban interface (WUI) codes. Assisted fire districts, rural communities and counties with implementation of Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code through land use policy and code analysis, public outreach strategies, and problem-solving strategies for implementation of wildfire. Provided customized support for medium-sized city with designing and implementing WUI codes. Write reports and technical guides for wildfire resilient planning strategies.

Adjunct Lecturer | University of Colorado Denver | Denver, CO | Aug 2023 – present

- Developed new curriculum and taught master's level course, "Disasters and Climate Change Planning" which covers disaster management strategies, vulnerability assessments, disaster cycle frameworks, climate adaptation strategies, disaster cycle management, environmental justice frameworks, development of hazard mitigation plans, climate action plans and incorporating resilience planning strategies throughout planning documents
- Instructed master's-level courses in Environmental Planning and Management and Planning History and Theory, adapting teaching methodologies for both in-person and synchronous online formats

Leader for National Science Foundation International Research Project "Mapping Natural Disaster Resilience of Displaced People in Rwanda" | Kigali, Rwanda | June – Aug 2023

- Led international research team that mapped 800+ disaster-impacted sites following May 2023 floods, resulting in report and recommendations for Rwanda's Ministry of Emergency Management
- Designed and implemented GIS-based survey methodology using Survey123, enabling systematic post-disaster assessment across affected regions
- Coordinated field operations across US and Rwandan government officials, managed logistics, developed data collection protocols, and stakeholder engagement with government officials

Policy Researcher | University of Colorado Denver | Denver, CO | Sep 2018 – May 2023

- Conducted mixed-methods research on housing vulnerability and recovery following Hurricanes Harvey, Michael, and Irma, resulting in peer-reviewed publications
- Analyzed land use regulations across 134 jurisdictions in the Houston area to identify policy barriers to the recovery of mobile home parks after Hurricane Harvey

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Planning and Engineering Consultant | Fox Tuttle Transportation Group | Remote | Nov 2019 – Dec 2022

- Provided technical consulting for 20+ bike lane improvement projects for Denver's Department of Transportation Infrastructure and City of Broomfield, Colorado
- Improved community engagement outcomes by synthesizing thousands of public comments into recommendations for project managers
- Created and maintained GIS database tracking bike lane implementation status and addresses targeted for community feedback

Senior Civil Engineer | Entitlement and Engineering Solutions | Denver, CO | Nov 2011 – Sep 2018

- Managed small team of engineers for drainage and stormwater management designs, incorporating both traditional and nature-based stormwater management strategies for public and private clients
- Provided technical expertise on green infrastructure approaches to enhance natural drainage systems and reduce flood risks in urban environments

PUBLICATIONS

- Technical Report submitted to the Government of Rwanda Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management: 2023 Flood Post Disaster Assessment (2023).
- Rumbach, A., Sullivan, E., McMullen, S. & Makarewicz, C. (2022). You Don't Need Zoning to be Exclusionary: Manufactured Home Parks, Land-Use Regulations and Housing Segregation in the Houston Metropolitan Area. *Land Use Policy*, 123, 1-12.
- Swann, W., McMullen, S., Graeve, D., & Kim, S. (2019). Community Resistance and Discretionary Strategies in Planning Sustainable Development: The Case of Colorado Cities. *Urban Planning*, 4(4), 98-110.

PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 Global Alliance of Disaster Research Institutes (GADRI) in Fort Collins, CO *International Frameworks and Local Realities: Lessons from the 2023 Rwanda Floods*
- 2025 Natural Hazards Conference and Researchers Meeting *Global Land Policies Applied Locally: Lessons from the 2023 Rwanda Floods*
- 2025 Urban Affairs Association in Vancouver, CAN *Sustainable Development and Disaster Risk Management Strategies in Rwanda*
- 2024 Guest Lecture at Colorado School of Mines for Global Engineering students, *Resilience*
- 2024 Guest Lecture at University of Colorado Denver Urban Studies course, *International Planning*
- 2024 ACSP Annual Conference in Seattle, WA, *Disaster Risk Management and Land Use Planning in Rwanda*
- 2024 Natural Hazards Conference and Researchers Meeting, *Disaster Risk Management and Land Use Planning in Rwanda*
- 2024 NHERI Graduate Student Council Mini Conference, *Disaster Risk Management and Land Use Planning in Rwanda*
- 2022 ACSP Annual Conference, *Manufactured Home Parks and Land Use Regulation in Houston Metropolitan Area*
- 2021 ACSP Annual Conference, *Roles of Social Capital in Earthquake Recovery in Ecuador*

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SERVICE

- North American Alliance of Hazards and Disasters Research Institutes (NAAHDRI) Policy Action Committee Member (2024 – present)
- University of Colorado Denver Master's of Urban and Regional Planning Alumni Association (MURPAA) (2025 – present)
- Natural Hazards Engineering Research Infrastructure Graduate Student Council, Vice Chair Networking and Community Building (2024 – 2025)
- Women in Design, Communications Chair and Board of Directors (2009 – present)
- Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Committee for Denver, Chair (2021 – 2023), Committee (2017 – 2024)
- Master of Public Administration Student Association Chair (2019 – 2020)

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AWARDS, HONORS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Investigations in Disasters and Emergencies: Advancing Applied Learning in Disaster Research Response (IDEAAL DR2) Fellow at Center for Disaster Resilient Communities at University of Washington
- National Science Foundation International Research Experience for Students (IRES) Rwanda (Summer 2023)
- Doctoral Program Fellowship from CU Denver College of Architecture and Planning (2020)
- David Hill Memorial Scholarship (2019)
- School of Public Affairs Marshall Kaplan Scholarship (2019)

SKILLS

- Technical Tools: GIS/QGIS, AutoCAD, R, NVivo, Adobe InDesign and Illustrator, Microsoft programs
- Project Management: Team leadership, stakeholder coordination, research design, public engagement
- Climate and Disaster Resilience: Vulnerability assessments, climate adaptation planning strategies, disaster mitigation and recovery frameworks, nature-based solutions
- Soft Skills: Strong communication skills (written and presentation), adaptable to juggling multiple assignments and deadlines, ability to work both independently and collaboratively, problem-solving
- Environmental Analysis: Land use policy analysis, social vulnerability assessments, stormwater management, technical writing skills
- Colorado licensed Professional Engineer