Sara Tabatabaie

Email: sara.tabatabaie@colorado.edu

EDUCATION

PhD in Environmental Studies University of Colorado Boulder, USA	2012- 2018
Certificate in Applied Digital Geography and GIS Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada	2011
MA in Urban Planning and Design School of Urban Planning, McGill University, Montreal, Canada	2007
MS in Transportation Planning Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran	2003
BS in Civil Engineering Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran	2001

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

ASSISTANT TEACHING PROFESSOR, Environmental Design Department, CU Boulder	2022-Present
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, Environmental Design Department, CU Boulder	2016 – 2022
GRADUATE PART TIME INSTRUCTOR, Program in Writing and Rhetoric, CU Boulder	2016- 2018
GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT, Environmental Design Department, CU Boulder	2012-2016
GRADUATEE TEACHING ASSISTANT, Colorado School of Public Health	2015
Lens on Climate Change, Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES),	Summer 2017

RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS

Principal Investigator and Project Lead (Shade Canopy Environmental Scan Project) Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)	2024 - Present
Research Associate, CEDaR (The Community Engagement Design and Research Center), University of Colorado Boulder	2018 – Present
Research Assistant, Colorado School of Public Health	2014- 2016
Principal Investigator, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Denver, CO.	2015
Research Assistant, Program in Environmental Design	2011- 2012

PROFESSIONAL & CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

Health Data Analyst, Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment	2021
Core Team Member, Cool Connected Westwood, Denver, CO.	2016 – 2019
Community Engagement Intern, Re:Vision, Denver, CO.	2013
Environmental Planning Intern, Institute for Environmental Solutions, (IES), Denver, CO.	2012
Urban Planning Intern, Community Resource Center (CRC), Denver, CO.	2011
Urban Designer, Bogdan Newman Caranci Inc. (BNC) Architects, Toronto, Canada	2007 - 2010
Urban Planning Intern, Institut international de gestion des grandes métropoles, Montreal	2006 - 2007

Transportation Planner, Sharif Institute for Transportation Studies and Research (SITSR), Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran — 2002 - 2005

Civil Engineering Intern, Bandab Consulting Engineers, Tehran, Iran — 2000

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, FUNDING

Shade Planning for Sun Safety and Heat Resilience: Institutional Roles and Policy Pathways ($21,831) — 2026
PI, Awarded by RIO SEED Grant Program, CU Boulder

Shade Guidelines for Public Spaces in Denver Project ($37, 625) — 2025
Co-PI, awarded by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)

Augmented Reality Topography Sandbox (Institutional Equipment Gift: $10,000) — 2025
coordinated with the CMDI Technology Advisory Group to secure funding for this instrument

Center For Teaching and Learning Fellowship ($750) — 2025
I received this fellowship for participating in Teaching Triad and Student as Partner Programs

Shade Canopy Environmental Scan Project ($53,000) — 2024
Co-PI, awarded by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

University Libraries Collaborative Research Grant (10,000) — 2024
Co-PI, Expanding the ENVD Materials Library to Enhance Research in Sustainable Design and Material Innovation

Experiential Design Learning Accelerator Program ($3000) — 2024
Faculty scholarship to support the design of courses with community engagement component.

Investigating the History of Community Engagement Initiatives in Edu Settings ($4000) — 2022
Awarded by Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP)

Graduate Student Research Grant ($1000) — 2016
Center to Advance Research and Teaching in Social Sciences (CARTSS)

Research Grant for Developing a Shade Audit Method for the CDPHE ($5000) — 2015
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)

Tuition and Teaching Assistant Scholarship for studying PhD in Environmental Studies — 2012-2018
University of Colorado at Boulder

Graduate Research Assistantship — 2014-2016
Colorado School of Public Health

PUBLICATIONS (* are peer-reviewed)

Peer Reviewed Journal Papers

Tabatabaie, S., Litt, J. S., & Muller, B. H. (2023). Sidewalks, trees and shade matter: A visual landscape assessment approach to understanding people's preferences for walking. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 84, 127931.*

Tabatabaie, S., Litt, J.S. & Crane, L.A. The experience of outdoor physical activity for skin cancer survivors: understanding the importance of the built and natural environments. J Cancer Surviv (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11764-020-00889-5*

Tabatabaie, S., Litt, J. S., & Carrico, A. (2019). A Study of Perceived Nature, Shade and Trees and Self-Reported Physical Activity in Denver. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(19), 3604.*

McAndrews, C., **Tabatabaie, S**., & Litt, J. S. (2018). Motivations and strategies for bicycle planning in rural, suburban, and low-density communities: The need for new best practices. Journal of the American Planning Association, 84(2), 99-111.*

Tabatabaie, S., Litt, J., MacAndrews, C., The Role of Bicycle Master Plans in Advancing Bicycle-Friendly Places in Urban Centers, Manuscript ready for review.

Nassiri, H., **Tabatabaie, S**.,& Sahebi, S. (2017). Delay-based Passenger Car Equivalent at Signalized Intersections in Iran. PROMET-Traffic&Transportation, 29(2), 135-142.*

Professional Reports

Tabatabaie, S., Rodriguez, G., Miller, M., Martin, T., Van Guilder, E., Samper, J. (2025). Report No. Designing for Shade: Guidelines to Enhance Sun Safety in Denver's Public Spaces *Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and CEDaR*.

Tabatabaie, S., Shockey, L., Cooper, C., Eberly, C., & Johnson Mencimer, T., Samper, J. (2024). Report No. Shade Canopy Assessment, Denver. *Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and CEDaR*.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Tabatabaie, S., Walker, B., (2025) Advancing Skin Cancer Prevention Through Data-Informed Shade Design Guidelines: A model for sun safety and environmental equity, *National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) Conference*

Tabatabaie, S., Szuberla M., Muller B. (2019) From Forestry Management Actions to a Planning Framework to Mitigate Emerald Ash Borer: A Case Study of Boulder, Colorado *59th ACSP National Conference*, Greenville, SC.

Tabatabaie, S. (2017) Trees, Aesthetics and People's Choices of Physical Activity: A Case Study of Denver's Residential Streets, *57th ACSP National Conference*, Denver, CO.

Tabatabaie, S., Litt, J. (2015) Shade, Health and the Built Environment: How behavioral factors can inform new shade policies, *55th ACSP National Conference*, Houston, TX.

Tabatabaie, S. (2015) Application of Shade Audit Methods to Neighborhoods in Denver, Colorado: implications for chronic disease prevention and community planning, *Colorado Public Health Association Conference*, Vail, CO.

Tabatabaie, S., MacAndrews, C., Litt, J. (2014) Are we getting to bicycle friendly communities? The role of the plan in advancing built environment change: lessons from cities in Colorado, *54th ACSP National Conference*, Philadelphia, PA.

Tabatabaie, S., Nassiri, H. (2004) Delay-Based Estimation of Passenger Car Equivalent at Signalized Intersections, Proceedings of 1st National Congress On Civil Engineering, Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran, May 11-13, 2004.

HONORS THESIS ADVISING

Thesis chair of AJ Jelonnek — 2024 - 2025
Exploring how landscape design and composition influence people's interactions with their surroundings, particularly in relation to foraging.

Thesis chair of Connor Chancey — 2024 - 2025
Investigating the implementation of bicycle master plans in five Colorado cities and the factors influencing their execution.

Thesis chair of Annie Geoghegan — 2023-2024
Investigating on the process of green gentrification in Denver, aiming to identify associations between greenness projects and gentrification indicators across various neighborhoods.

Thesis chair of Ainsley McElwee — 2022-2023
Examining the historic designation process/criteria in Boulder and comparing this process with similar processes in the US and other countries, to parse out the strengths and weaknesses of each process and propose a new paradigm for historic designation in Boulder.

PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS AND TEACHING EXCELLENCE WORKSHOPS

Students as a Partner Program — 2025
By the Center for teaching and Learning

Teaching Triads Program — 2025
By the Center for Teaching and Learning

Experiential Learning Design Accelerator Program
A joint program between CU Boulder and University of Arizona to support the design of undergraduate courses that integrate community-engaged experiential learning components — 2024

Online Teaching Academy
This course provided the knowledge, skills and tools to develop and teach an online, remote or hybrid courses. — 2021

Theory and Practice of College Level Writing Couse — 2018

COURSES TAUGHT

LAND 3003 (Site Planning) (Seminar)	Fall 2022- present
PLAN 3100 (Junior Level Planning and Urban Design Studio)	Fall 2025
LAND 3100 (Junior level Landscape Architecture Studio)	Fall 2024
LAND 2100 (Foundations of Landscape Architecture Studio)(Teaching and Coordination)	Spring 2023 - Present
PLAN 2100 (Foundations of Planning and Urban Design)	Spring 2021
ENVD 1004 (Introduction to ENVD) (Big Lecture)	Spring and Fall 2025
ENVD 1012 (Technology 2) (Teaching and Coordination)	Spring 2020 to 2023
ENVD 1022 (Technology 3) (Teaching and Coordination)	Fall 2022- 2023
ENVD 1030 (Introduction to Landscape Architecture Studio)	Spring 2020 to 2024
ENVD 1040 (Introduction to Planning and Urban Design Studio)	Spring 2020 to 2023
ENVD 1020 (Introduction to Architecture Studio)	Fall 2019 to 2020
ENVD 1130 (Landscape Architecture Studio 2)	Fall 2021- 2023
ENVD 1140 (Planning and Urban Design Studio 2)	Fall 2021
ENVD 1120 (Architecture Studio 2)	Fall 2021
ENVD 3300 (Westwood praxis studio and seminar)	Spring 2016
ENVD 3100 (Junior level Urban Planning studio focused on East Colfax, Denver)	Fall 2018
ENVD 2130 (Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture Studio)	Spring 2019
ENVD 1002 (Technology 1)	Fall 2019
ENVD 1150 (First Year Writing) (Seminar)	Spring 2022
WRTG 1150 (First Year Writing and Rhetoric)	Fall 2016 – Spring 2018
GIS (as part of ENVD 3300, ENVD 3100 and PLAN 2100)	
ENVD 1004 (Graduate TA for Introduction to Environmental Design I)	2012-2013
ENVD 1104 (Graduate TA for Introduction to Environmental Design II	2013
ENVD 3003 (Graduate TA for Site Planning)	2014
ENVD 3124 (Graduate TA for Introduction to Planning History and Issues)	2015
ENVS 3525 (Graduate TA for Health and The Built Environment)	2016
EHOH 6618 (Graduate TA for Environmental Health Policy and Practice)	2015

SERVICES & LEADERSHIP

Service to the Profession

Member of the Colorado Comprehensive Cancer Plan
An initiative affiliated to the CDPHE which focuses on skin cancer prevention and sun safety in Colorado. — 2024- Present

CELA Conference Abstract Reviewer — 2025

Peer-Review of Manuscripts for Accredited Journals — 2019 - Present

Service to the Campus

Sustainability Council Faculty Member — 2025 - Present
I contribute environmental design and community engagement expertise, supporting council priorities, decarbonization planning, proposal review, tracking, and campus outreach initiatives.

Service to the College

Dean's Technology Advisory Committee (Department Representative) — 2025 - Present
The committee brings together faculty leads from seven departments to coordinate technology strategy, prioritize procurement and pilots, address unit needs, and communicate decisions back to departments.

Service to the Department

Hiring Committee (Chair) — 2023-2024
Successfully hired seven instructors over three rounds, managing job postings, acting as liaison between committee, director, and faculty, coordinating interviews, selecting finalists, and organizing in-person interviews while ensuring a fair and inclusive process.

Honors Council (Member) — 2023-Present
The Council members are responsible for managing or amending policies, administering the honors program, admitting students, and ensuring the continued success of the honors program within ENVD.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (Chair and Member) — 2022-2024
Contributed to the development of the DEI Action Plan. Additionally, organized six professional development events for faculty and staff.

Curriculum Committee (Tech Advisor) — 2022-2023
Reviewed ENVD curriculum revisions and prepared Program Learning Objectives for CU's Program Assessment.

Classroom Best Practices Task Force (Member) — 2022- 2024
Worked on the attendance policy and providing pedagogical support for staff and faculty.

Materials Library Task Force (Member) — 2023- Present
Is responsible for the expansion of the materials-specific archives at ENVD and to coordinate relevant workshops and events.

Faculty Mentor — 2023 – 2024
Assisted with onboarding and facilitated the newcomer's transition into ENVD

SELECTED RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS

Research Associate or Independent Researcher, CEDaR

Designing for Shade, Guidelines to Enhance Sun Safety in Public Spaces in Denver, CDPHE and CEDaR	2025
Shade Canopy Environmental Scan Project for Denver, CDPHE and CEDaR	2024
The evolution of participatory practices within community engagement initiatives at ENVD (UROP Advisor)	2022 - 2023
An Analysis of the Distribution and Socio-demographic Characteristics of Manufactured Housing Communities in Colorado	2021
A Planning Framework to Mitigate the Impacts of Emerald Ash Borer in Boulder	2020-2021
The Emerald Ash Borer Survey to Understand People's Baseline Knowledge About Trees and EAB in CO	2018 - 2019
Impacts of Capital Improvement Projects on Gentrification in Westwood, Denver	2021
The Clearinghouse Website for Manufactured Community Residents in Colorado	2019 - 2020
Impacts of Walking Infrastructure Interventions and Related Policies on Walking Behavior in Westwood	2019
City of Boulder/ University of Colorado Sustainability Indicators Project	2012

PhD Dissertation and Related Research Projects

The Application of Visual Landscape Assessment to Evaluate People's Perception of the Residential Street Environment for Physical Activity	2016-2018
Physical Activity Behaviors among Skin Cancer Survivors in Denver, Colorado	2017-2018
A Study of Perceived Nature, Shade and Trees and Self-Reported Physical Activity in Denver	2016-2017
The Role of Bicycle Master Plans in Advancing Built Environment Changes, Colorado	2015
Application of Shade Audit Methods to Neighborhoods in Denver, CO.	2015

Non-Profit Research Projects

A Health Survey to Understand the Impacts of Re:Vision's Food Stainability Program on the Health and Socioeconomic Life of Southwest Denver Participants (Re:Vision)	2013
Integrating Urban Environmental Improvement through Tree Selection and Management, IES, Denver, CO.	2012
Statistical models for Rural Philanthropy Days, CRC, Denver, CO.	2011

Master's Thesis

The Attitudes of Children towards Walkability in Their Neighborhood, Montreal, CA	2007
Delay-based Passenger Car Equivalent at Signalized Intersections in Tehran, Tehran, Iran	2003

Urban Design projects, BNC Architects, Toronto, CA

St. Catharines, ON Downtown Creative Cluster Master Plan	2007 - 2009
Western Hill Revitalization Strategy (Identification of Smart Growth principles and redevelopment options for Western Hill, ON)	2008 - 2009
Vales of Humber Estates Concept Plan	2009 - 2010
Courtice Main Street Study (part of Clarington Official Plan)	2009 - 2010
Review of several Urban Design Guidelines and Official master Plans	2007 - 2010
Transportation Master Plans of Mashad and Shiraz, SITSR, Tehran, Iran	2002 - 2005

EVENT ORGANIZER AND COORDINATOR

Coordinator of the 3rd Annual Community Building, Colorado Style Conference: Squeezed Out, Challenges of Diversity and Affordability in Colorado Communities (CEDaR)	2020
Manufactured Homeowners Symposium, CEDaR	2019 and 2020
Sustainability Indicator Symposium, Program in ENVD, University of Colorado Boulder	2013
Graduate Colloquium Committee member, Environmental Studies Program, University of Colorado at Boulder	2015 – 2016
Editorial Board Member, Civil Magazine, the internal publication of Civil engineering Department, Sharif University	1999 - 2001

MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

American Society of Landscape Architects	2024 - Present
Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP)	2014 - 2019
Canadian Institute of Planners	2007- 2011
US Green Building Council, LEED Green Associate	2011 - 2020

COMPUTER SKILLS

Geographic Information System (GIS)	ArcGIS Pro, ArcCatalog, ArcGIS Online

Graphic Design & 3D Modeling	AutoCAD, Rhino (+ Grasshopper & plugins such as Ladybug, LandKit), SketchUp, Adobe Suits (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), Rendering (Enscape, Twinmotion)
Data Analysis & Visualization	SAS, SPSS, Stata, Excel, R, Tableau
Artificial Intelligence & Generative Tools	Midjourney, Notebook LM, Nano Banana and Vizcom
Qualitative Analysis	NVivo
Survey Design	Qualtrics
Course Management	D2L, Canvas, Blackboard