

UBC Sustainability Scholars Program 2019

The UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on funded sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the mentorship of a partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing organizational sustainability goals.

For more information about the Sustainability Scholars Program and to apply to work on this project, please visit the [Student Opportunities](#) page.

Please review the application guide (PDF) before applying.

Applications close **midnight Monday February 25, 2019.**

Research project title: *Improving equity through increasing access to nature and canopy cover in the Downtown Eastside*

Research supports the following City of Vancouver policies -

- Greenest City Action Plan; specific goal area: Access to Nature
- Healthy City Strategy; specific goal area: Vancouverites have the right to a healthy environment and equitable access to liveable environments in which they can thrive.
- Resilient City: Ecological Sustainability
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Biodiversity Strategy
- Rewilding Strategy: Environmental Education and Stewardship Action Plan

Outline scope of project and why it is of value to the City of Vancouver and describe how and when the scholar's work will be actionable

This collaborative project will involve working across Park Board and City of Vancouver departments including planning, arboriculture, operations, engineering and housing to explore issues of equity regarding access to nature through greening and urban forest planning in the Downtown Eastside (DTES).

The DTES has the lowest canopy cover in the city making it the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. In addition, the Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan (DTES LAP) and the Park Board's recent Park Provision study demonstrate the importance of improving access to parks and green space for DTES residents.

The Urban Forest Strategy adopted in 2018, sets a new priority to double street tree density in the Downtown Eastside by 2030. Aligning both the work of DTES LAP implementation and the Urban Forest Strategy, this project will directly work to develop a proactive plan to improve canopy cover and increase access to green space in order to bridge this equity gap in our park system.

To set a foundation for the project, the scholar will complete a literature review and case study research to summarize best practices for urban forestry and greening in socially vulnerable neighbourhoods. Interviews with City of Vancouver (CoV) and Park Board staff will provide the scholar with local context and constraints. The Scholar will then investigate opportunities to enhance green space and canopy cover in the DTES on both private and public lands through an analysis of future development sites, existing parks and public lands. The research will inform planting guidelines and recommendations for current development proposal sites and current park development opportunities.

The scope of work includes:

- Conduct a literature review to identify best practices for urban forestry planning in socially vulnerable neighbourhoods. Review 3-5 case studies (Seattle, others) to identify policy considerations
- Interview CoV staff working in Urban Design and Park Board Development & Arboriculture to identify parameters for greening and urban forest opportunities such as set-backs, street pattern changes, laneways, etc.
- Interview CoV Social Planners and Park Board Operation staff to learn about the unique opportunities and challenges of greening and urban forestry in the DTES
- Select 3-5 potential greening opportunity locations by using the findings from the literature review, case studies and City interviews and by completing an economic analysis of the identified sites to determine the maximum development potential
- Develop a planting guide for above selected locations in DTES (private developments, parks and streets) based on the social and environmental needs of the neighbourhoods
- Make recommendations on key findings for the City to use in its development of new guidelines and by laws to increase requirements for urban forestry and green space in new DTES developments

The Scholar's work will provide the analysis for staff to use to advocate for green space and urban forestry in future redevelopment projects in the DTES.

Deliverables

- An analysis report for internal purposes
- A map illustrating green opportunity locations
- Recommendations for minimum public greenspace requirements for new developments
- Presentation of findings to City and Park Board Staff
- A public facing final report (or executive summary) for the UBC Sustainability Initiative website

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between April 29 – August 12
- The scholar is to complete hours between 8:30am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, approximately 16-18 hours per week.

Skill set/background required/preferred

- Experience working with marginalize and socially vulnerable communities
- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in urban forestry and environmental justice
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Demonstrated time management skills
- Project management and organizational skills
- Demonstrated experience in urban design and planning
- Familiarity with quantitative research methodologies and implementation
- Experience with statistical analysis
- Familiarity preparing feasibility studies
- GIS training or experience (asset)
- Demonstrated ability to conduct an economic analysis (A land economics background would be an asset)

Applications close **midnight Monday February 25.**

Apply here:

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/student-opportunities>

To learn more about the program here:

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/ubc-sustainability-scholars-program>

Read the application guidelines to confirm your eligibility to participate in the program here:

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/student-opportunities>

Contact Karen Taylor at sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca if you have questions.