

# SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

## Summer 2020

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 sustainability across the region.

- For more information about the Sustainability Scholars Program and to apply to work on this project, please visit the [Student Opportunities](#) page.
- Be sure to review the [application guide](#) to confirm your eligibility before applying.
- **Applications close at midnight on Sunday February 2, 2020.**

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## Research Project Title: Review and Analysis of Transit Agency Intergovernmental Agreements for Major Transportation Investments

### Sustainability Goal or Operations Plan Objective

Transportation mode shift—maximizing ridership on sustainable transportation modes

### Project Description

In 2017, British Columbia's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were 64.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e), with the transportation sector accounting for an estimated 37 percent of total provincial GHG emissions. Shifting to more sustainable modes of travel, such as mass transit, has never been more critical given the current global climate crisis.

To support the success of major transit investments, TransLink and a project's host municipality sign multi-agreement Partnership Agreements. A Supportive Policies Agreement (SPA) is a key component of these Partnership Agreements, which are called for by the [Mayors' Vision](#) (2014) and are required prior to funding approval for major transit projects in the region. The SPAs are legal documents that include commitments from each party for actions that are outside the direct project scope, but will have significant influence on the achievement of project objectives with the ultimate goal being increased mode shift to more sustainable modes of travel. A number of the SPA commitments include sustainable city-building initiatives such as the development of cycling and walking strategies, affordable housing strategies, and other transit-oriented community initiatives such as rapid transit-supportive population and job densities.

The research conducted through this project will inform TransLink's approach to future Supportive Policies Agreements, including considerations regarding process, content, and scope.

### **Scope of Work:**

In order to identify best practices, the scholar will pursue a review of the agreements/tools that North American and/or European transit agencies take in partnering with local governments (and other entities) to achieve success for major transit projects (e.g., rapid transit).

This project has two components: research and recommendations.

1. The research component of the study will generally contain the following:
  - a. Identification of approximately 5 to 8 agreements/tools with similar objectives as TransLink's SPAs;
  - c. Through desk research, an analysis of the structure, scope and legal status of such agreements/tools as well as the signatories and/or agencies involved;
  - d. Development of a question set for phone interviews/individual consultations with practitioners;
  - e. Through phone interviews, identification of the level of involvement by each party (i.e. consultation, collaboration, etc.);
  - f. The process for drafting the agreement/tool (e.g., which agency is the lead, working processes to develop the agreement/tool) based on individual consultations with practitioners;
  - g. Involvement from higher levels of government (Regional, State/Province, Federal);
  - h. The governance structure and areas of responsibility of the transit agencies involved;
  - i. The types (e.g., financial and/or policy) of reciprocal commitments made in those agreements;
  - j. Mechanisms for monitoring the compliance and progress of commitments (e.g., performance measures frameworks, reporting procedures, etc.), as well as for providing security that commitments will be implemented (e.g., legally-binding status, performance bonds, etc.);
  - k. Review of the efficacy of precedent agreements through individual consultations with practitioners; and
  - l. Summary evaluation of the key differences between TransLink's SPAs and other agreements of similar nature.
  
2. Based on the research and individual consultations conducted, the scholar will provide specific recommendations on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of TransLink's SPAs (including recommendations on process, content, scope, etc.).

### **Deliverables**

- A final report and presentation to key stakeholders outlining a) the work undertaken b) the findings from the best practice research, and c) recommendations on additional opportunities for TransLink's Supportive Policies Agreements; and
- A final report [or Executive Summary] for the UBC Sustainability Scholars online project library.

### **Time Commitment**

- This project will take 250 hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between May 4, 2020 and August 14, 2020.



- The Scholar is to complete hours on their own time, approximately 12 hours per week, with a weekly check-in (by email, phone, or Skype) during regular working hours. Some meetings will be required at TransLink's Sapperton office in New Westminster.

### Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Strong analytical skills
- Strong communication skills
- Ability to work independently
- Project management and organizational skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Stakeholder engagement and qualitative interviewing skills an asset
- Demonstrated understanding of the connection between transportation and land use planning
- Demonstrated understanding of the critical and current regional transportation challenges and opportunities faced by TransLink and its member municipalities
- Comfortable doing close readings and analysis of complex documents
- Comfortable using Excel or Google Sheets to track and analyse qualitative data

Applications close **midnight Sunday February 2, 2020.**

Apply here: <http://sustain.ubc.ca/scholarsapply>

Contact Karen Taylor at [sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca](mailto:sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca) if you have questions

## Useful Resources

Below are some links to useful resources to help you with your resume and cover letter (there are many more online). Some of these resources also provide information on preparing for your interview.

<https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/resumes-cover-letters-curricula-vitae>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-pathways-success>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/cover-letter-cv-resume-templates-ubc-career-services>



The Centre for Student Involvement & Careers will host a resume & cover letter webinar tailored for graduate students on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 from 12:00-1:30. Registration will open approximately two weeks before the webinar, and can be accessed at [Careers Online](#).

