

# 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.

- Visit the [Sustainability Scholars Program website](#) to learn [how the program works](#) and to [apply](#).
- 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: Determining the impact of retail/commercial redevelopment on existing businesses

### Research supports the following policies

- Greenest City Action Plan/ Climate Emergency Response Plan  
Specific goal area/ big move(s):
  - Big Move #1 – Walkable City: More complete neighbourhoods that have daily destinations (shops, services, jobs, parks, schools, community centres, libraries) within walking / rolling distance of where people live
- Healthy City Strategy  
Specific goal area (s):
  - Adequate income and access to broad range of healthy employment opportunities
  - Connected and engaged in places spaces that matter to us
  - Equitable access to high quality social, community and health services

### 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

#### Scope of work:

- Conduct research and analysis to identify the implications of redevelopment and building age on the viability and presence of small and independent businesses. This will include a review of scholarship and studies from other jurisdictions and analysis of City of Vancouver data.
- The study will be restricted to ground-level businesses in Business Improvement Areas located outside the Downtown Peninsula/Metro Core (i.e., shopping areas located in residential neighbourhoods serving local neighbourhood needs)
- Identify characteristics of buildings that affect building affordability and availability, including age, locational aspects, physical characteristics, amenities and leasing practices
- Characterize the features of new retail/commercial space that are possible under current zoning and what is typically built under current zoning

- Analyze the change in user in retail/commercial buildings before and after redevelopment (e.g., independent versus chain, retail sub-categories, etc.)
- Interview other local municipalities to see what programs, policies, or regulation they use to track, regulate or influence displacement of neighbourhood serving retail/commercial small and independent businesses (i.e., retail/commercial businesses located in neighbourhoods outside the Central Business District/Downtown that are primarily serving the needs of local neighbourhood residents)

#### Why is this work valuable?

- Diverse neighbourhood shopping areas supporting small and independent retailers are critical to creating complete walkable communities and opportunities for local entrepreneurs and business owners.
- During the *Study on Local Shopping Area* and in engagement for the *Employment Lands & Economy Review* (both underway) it was indicated that commercial redevelopment in Local Shopping Areas (i.e., the six Business Improvement Areas selected for the study) resulted in displacement of independent businesses in some areas
- Older ground-floor commercial stock was identified as important for providing affordable, accessible spaces for small, independent retailers.
- Ground-floor commercial space in new, mixed-use developments were said to generally have higher lease rates and pre-leasing practices favouring chains and franchises.
- A major concern is that accelerated rates of redevelopment may displace independent businesses and erode the character and diversity of shopping areas in Vancouver neighbourhoods

#### **Deliverables**

- A typology of commercial/retail building types occupied by different retail users (e.g., chain vs independent)
- Inventory of policy and regulatory tools available to municipal governments to prevent or mitigate displacement of small and independent commercial retail businesses and uses.
- A public facing final report (or executive summary) for the UBC USI website summarizing findings

#### **Time Commitment**

- This project will take 250 hours to complete.
  - 25% for literature review and comparative policy research
  - 15% development of key definitions and typologies
  - 30% data preparation and analysis
  - 30% final Report/Presentation
- This project must be completed between May 4 and August 14, 2020
- The scholar is to complete hours between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 20 hours per week.

#### **Skill set/background required/preferred**

- Excellent research and writing skills.
- Demonstrated interest in local economic development (an asset).



- Strong technical writing skills
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Demonstrated time management skills
- Familiarity with quantitative research methodologies and implementation
- Experience with statistical analysis
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- GIS training or experience would be an asset
- Comfortable surveying and interacting with others to obtain information

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.

