

Summer 2021 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

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 January 31, 2021.

Research project title:

Research to understand the intersection of land use planning and human rights: A scoping study for the City of Vancouver

Project description:

Overview

Human rights are the rights that are inherent to every person simply by virtue of being human, and are entrenched in the constitution through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Under human rights law, municipal governments and planners are required to consider the human rights impacts of planning actions by asking whether these actions have the potential to result in discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. For example, in a recent case, a municipality in British Columbia developed a bylaw that only allowed secondary suites when occupied by family members. The bylaw was brought into question under human rights grounds and was suppressed by the Supreme Court of BC.

The City of Vancouver is now in the process of developing the Vancouver Plan, which will be a city-wide strategic plan to help guide the long-term planning of our city. This comprehensive plan aims to create a strategy for a healthy, just, resilient, sustainable and vibrant city by embracing bold actions for change. Vancouver City Council has approved 10 Provisional Goals to guide these actions, which include the goal of creating an Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive City. This goal acknowledges that in order to achieve a more fair, equitable, and vibrant future, we must recognize and reconcile the City of Vancouver's colonial history that has disproportionately excluded Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour, and the City must embrace an equitable approach to planning and transform its processes and practices.

The City of Vancouver is also currently in the process of creating its first Equity Framework. The framework is a project of the City's Healthy City Strategy and builds on the Reconciliation Framework. The City's commitment to Equity is broad; while prioritizing a commitment to reconciliation, and communities disproportionately impacted by existing inequities, in its essence, it reflects the City's commitments to human rights. The Equity Framework also reinforces the need for a racial justice and an intersectional approach to policy development, practice, and decision making.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to develop a scoping study assessing the intersection of human rights and land use planning in a municipal context to help the City of Vancouver identify priority actions and future

work on this topic. Through a review of other municipal practices and interviews with municipal staff and other key informants, the goal of this research is to identify opportunities for action through the Vancouver Plan, and to identify other priority actions that might be beyond the scope of the Plan, but that should be acknowledged and addressed by the City through future efforts and additional work. While a 2019 Healthy City Scholar [project](#) covered the broad and overarching policies on equity and justice in planning, this project will examine applied planning approaches.

The development of the scoping study will align well with the timeline of the Vancouver Plan, which is currently in Phase 2 where the focus is on envisioning the future and starting to develop policy directions through engagement with the community. Initial policy ideas will be shared with the public as part of public engagement activities scheduled for Fall 2021. In addition to supporting the development of a narrative around human rights and municipal planning that could be included in the Vancouver Plan, there is also an opportunity for actions identified through this research to be incorporated into the policy ideas that are being brought forward to the public in Fall 2021.

Deliverables:

The Scholar will develop a final report and presentation containing the following:

- A review of the key concepts underpinning the topic of human rights and land use planning. This should include an overview of the applicable legislative human rights framework (i.e. international, national, provincial)¹, the municipal charter under which the City operates, and the relationship between Human Rights Law and Aboriginal and Indigenous Law;
- A review of leading practices in assessing and promoting human rights through municipal planning²
 - The review will help to identify a list of key informants to be interviewed
- A summary of findings from virtual/phone consultation with key informants, which could include staff from other municipalities and potentially other jurisdictions (e.g. First Nations) and organizations (e.g. Human Rights Commissions) to help identify key areas of focus on this issue and examples of municipal responses. It is anticipated that a total of 8-10 interviews will be conducted.
 - City of Vancouver staff have started to identify relevant input/areas of focus for this scoping work and will be available to connect with the Scholar throughout the process, including to help design the interview guide;
 - Include from the outset when working with Indigenous Nations, communities, and peoples the importance of adopting the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) Principles that help ensure respectful data collection and research takes place³.
- A scoping summary that includes:

¹ The *Human Rights in the City* issue of Plan Canada Magazine (Summer 2017, Volume 57 Number 2) provides a starting point for this review. The issue is available online at: <https://viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/8440>

² Ontario, for example, has developed clear guidance for municipalities to help ensure that human rights are part of planning decisions. See, for example, the Ontario Human Rights Commission report *In the Zone: Housing, Human Rights and Municipal Planning* available at: http://www3.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/In%20the%20zone_housing_human%20rights%20and%20municipal%20planning_0.pdf

³ More information is available in the following document: <https://www.fnhma.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Understanding-the-Basics-of-OCAP.pdf>

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- Examples of transformative practices, policies, and regulations emanating from human rights approaches to planning in other municipalities;
- A list of key areas of analysis/focus within a municipal land use context, which may include for example assessing zoning by-laws (including zoning restrictions, definitions), licensing requirements and regulations around service provision (health services, social services, etc), land use planning strategies and area plans (i.e. this deliverable is a list of focus areas for future work, not work to be completed within the scope of this project);
- An outline of key areas of focus that are beyond the scope of the municipality to address but that affect land use planning practices at the local level (for example, land use covenants, strata by-laws and other property regulations);
- Priority actions and/or recommendations for how City staff can move forward with this work.
- A final report or executive summary for the online Scholars Project Library

Time Commitment

- This project will take **250** hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between May 3 and August 13, 2021
- The Scholar is to complete hours between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday, approximately 20 hours per week.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- An interest in Human Rights Law and Planning Law
- A commitment to equity and social justice
- A proven understanding of how to respectfully engage First Nations and Indigenous peoples is an asset

Applications close **midnight Sunday January 31, 2021**

Apply here: [Click here to apply](#)

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

Useful Resources

We are holding a special **resume preparation workshop for prospective Scholars** on January 19. [Click here for details and to register.](#)

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>

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