

Summer 2022 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 30, 2022.

Research project title: Accessible and Equitable Drinking Fountain Placement Strategy

Project Background & Overview:

The City of Vancouver's Waterworks Utility receives bulk water from Metro Vancouver and distributes it to its customers in a safe, reliable and sustainable manner. Waterworks strives to ensure that potable water is available to the public for hydration, hygiene and cooling off, and that the City is prepared for pandemics and other emergencies. Increasing public access to drinking water is a high priority for the City and is the focus of this project. Increasing public access to water via freeze-proof (i.e. turned on year-round) and barrier-free drinking fountains in the City will:

- Support the City's response to extreme weather events, such as heat waves.
- Support hydration and hygiene year-round
- Reduce toxic pollution resulting from the production of plastic water bottles
- Reduce plastic from water bottles from getting into the garbage stream, or being discarded as litter.
- Reduce long-term health issues related to chronic dehydration and consuming sugar in drinks

The City of Vancouver would like to increase the number of drinking fountains to better serve the public. The sustainability goals achieved would be to:

- Support public health by preventing heat-related illnesses and death during the hotter, drier summers predicted by climate change models
- Enhance livability by improving outdoor experiences in public areas, and minimizing private costs for drinks.
- Support public health by increasing public hygiene
- Support Zero Waste Initiatives to reduce plastic from bottled water purchases
- Support public health by reducing consumption of sugary drinks

Project description

The City of Vancouver recognizes the World Health Organization's resolution that access to drinking water is a basic human right (source: https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/292). The City provides access to drinking water in many of our parks, civic buildings and in the public domain such as sidewalks and mini-parks and plazas. With changes to our weather due to global climate change,

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such as extreme heat events, our goal is to provide more drinking fountains targeted to high need/high risk areas.

The focus of this project would be to determine where these new fountains should be installed, what an appropriate walking distance is from one fountain to the next, and what our “first five years” end goal should be. This project will research various criteria, including socio-economic impacts, previous heat maps, climate change forecasts & trends, etc., to establish where fountains are most needed, to recommend quick-start installations to accomplish in the first five years and to help project medium to long term installation plans.

Physical location considerations to take into account:

- high density areas (residential and/ or business)
- busy bike routes
- underserved areas
- elementary school zones
- popular transit areas

Other considerations should be taken into account such as socio-economic; low income high barrier neighbourhoods; safety at night (i.e. well lit); popular walking routes.

Project scope

Through GIS heat maps and case study interviews with Emergency Response groups (i.e. VEMA, VFRS, VPD & VCH) as well as Emergency Response groups from other municipalities, this project would look at and recommend:

- How many drinking fountains should be installed within 5 years
- Where will installations of the fountains have the greatest impact? Include in recommendations a sliding scale or matrix indicating high to medium to lower priority with justification criteria included.

The scope will include a 5-year plan, a GIS 'heat map' (i.e. colourized areas where there are water access deficits) and an advisory plan for, short, medium and long term planning to continue the work.

Out of scope are any City park properties or facilities. This project will focus strictly on public right of ways such as sidewalks or other areas that are not in the Park Board domain.

Deliverables

- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
- A final report (or executive summary) for the online public-facing [Scholars Project Library](#).
- A spatial representation of the research and recommendations (e.g. a heat map or other spatial indicator mapped out over the City contour)

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between May 2, 2022 and August 12, 2022
- The scholar is to complete hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.

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Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Community engagement experience
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- GIS training or experience desirable.
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- Familiarity preparing feasibility studies

The ideal candidate must be comfortable talking with people from all walks of life. Examples include people experiencing homelessness, social services agencies, business or neighbourhood associations, elected officials, indigenous leaders. Outreach could also include contact with regional, national or international representatives with similar objectives.

Applications close **midnight Sunday January 30, 2022**

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>

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