

Summer 2023 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 on the Apply page to confirm your eligibility before applying.

Applications close at midnight on Sunday January 29, 2023.

Project title: Research to understand factors influencing travel mode decisions to access regional parks

Project Background & Overview:

In Metro Vancouver:

- regional parks protect regionally important natural areas and connect people to nature
- people who may not be able to afford their own cars / car shares do not have **equitable access** to the benefits of nature offered by Metro Vancouver's regional parks system;
- demand for automobile parking can significantly surpass parking supply in some parks on peak visitation days and constructing additional parking may harm sensitive ecosystems;
- there is a global climate emergency and Metro Vancouver is working to mitigate climate change by promoting transit use and active transportation to lower regional emissions.

Regional Parks wants to:

- reduce transportation access barriers to regional parks for equity deserving residents, and
- promote the use of sustainable / low carbon travel methods to regional parks to mitigate climate change and manage parking demand on peak days/hours.

Project description

Metro Vancouver wants to promote the use of transit and cycling to access regional parks. Staff recently completed a two-part transportation study to better understand the relationship between the sustainable transportation connectivity (bus & bike) of regional parks and visitor travel mode. The study found a weak relationship between transportation infrastructure and visitor travel behavior. This weak relationship means that better connecting regional parks to the wider community by constructing more quality cycling infrastructure or increasing transit connectivity will not necessarily increase cycling or bus travel to regional parks.

Metro Vancouver concluded that to achieve the goal of increased sustainable transportation to regional parks, the corporation needs to understand the likelihood a range of design, service and programming initiatives would support a behavior change. By surveying visitors who travelled to regional parks by bus or bike Metro Vancouver can better understand the factors influencing regional parks visitor travel mode decision making. The knowledge gained from this sustainability scholar project will help Metro

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Vancouver better prioritize its efforts to improve access to regional parks by transit and cycling and improve outcomes.

To gain this information a survey of visitors to a selection of regional parks with high transit and cycling transportation mode shares is proposed. The survey questionnaire will endeavor to explain how and why residents use (or don't use) public transit to visit regional parks. This will explore visitor travel motivations & constraints with a specific focus on park facilities / programs / characteristics that impact transportation mode choice.

It is anticipated that the study will be completed in the spring and summer of 2023. Project planning and development of the survey instrument will be completed by end of May, the in-park surveying will be completed by mid-July and the data analysis and reporting by mid-August.

Project scope

The Sustainability Scholar will be asked to:

- Develop a project plan in consultation with regional parks supervisor.
 - a. Project plan will be informed by the approach used in Metro Vancouver's [2013](#) and [2019](#) regional park visitor surveys and information in Metro Vancouver's Alternative Transportation Study [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#).
 - b. Survey locations will be informed by sites used for Metro Vancouver's regional park visitor survey program improved to better target transit users and cyclists.
- Conduct a literature review that identifies the determinants of transit and cycling as a travel mode for park visits.
 - a. Literature review will expand on the literature review from Metro Vancouver's alternative Transportation Study Part 2 and may be informed by the parks of interest analysis in the [LA Metro Transit to Parks Strategic Plan](#).
- Develop a paper or digital survey instrument (questionnaire).
 - a. Successful candidate will be provided examples from Metro Vancouver's 2013 and 2019 regional park visitor surveys (linked above) and current general market research on the topic as examples. They will need to review best practice in quantitative research methods and develop the survey to answer the main research question.
- Conduct in-park data collection (surveying).
 - a. Using intercept method, the successful candidate will administer survey instrument to regional park visitors.
 - b. Data collection will take place at selected regional parks and preferred survey sites.
 - c. Survey sites will be identified as appropriate to the study and will learn from experience from past work including visitor survey program and alternative transportation study.
- Input survey results into an excel database, cleaned and conditioned to create final database.
 - a. Successful candidate will be provided regional park visitor survey database structure as an example. Database will need to be modified to suit the survey needs.
- Complete summary and statistical analysis of data.
 - a. Summarize and undertake statistical analysis on the data as is relevant to survey questions.
- Write a final report that summarizes the completed work & makes recommendations for future actions.
 - a. Development of a draft table of contents for the report during the project planning phase will be helpful in guiding the study and writing of the final report

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- b. Recommendations should be action oriented, informed by the literature review and survey results, and tailored to the scope of Metro Vancouver's jurisdiction.
- Present results and the final report to Metro Vancouver senior leadership and prepare deliverables for the online public-facing Scholars Project Library.
 - a. Development of a PowerPoint presentation including photos, charts and tables as appropriate, and a script will be the core of the presentation to Metro Vancouver leaders.

Deliverables

- A project plan
- A survey instrument (i.e., paper or digital questionnaire)
- Cleaned and conditioned database of survey results
- A final report containing a summary of the work completed, analysis of the results and conclusions
- A summary PowerPoint presentation which will be delivered to Metro Vancouver's Corporate Planning Committee
- A final report for the online public-facing [Scholars Project Library](#).

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete
- This project must be completed between May 1 to August 15, 2023
- The Scholar is to complete hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Sunday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.
- Mandatory meetings: Project kick-off (1st week of May), field survey check-in (3rd week of June) & final results presentation (September). A series of regular check-in meetings will also be included in the project plan. These meetings will be scheduled based on the Scholar's and the Mentor's availability.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Statistical analysis
- Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- Because regional parks have varied transit service, access to a personal automobile or a car share account will be an asset (reasonable mileage expenses will be reimbursed).

Applications close **midnight Sunday January 29, 2023**

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 23, 2023. [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>