

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 and Analysis of Exclusionary Zoning and Environmental Racism in Vancouver

Project Background & Overview:

Vancouver is home to rich and diverse communities, yet many communities have faced, and continue to face discrimination and exclusion. From the onset of colonization by European settlers, to the entrenched racism of the Bartholomew Plan in 1928, to the destruction of Hogan's Alley in the 1970s to clear space for the Georgia Viaduct, the City of Vancouver has enacted policies and decisions that have systemically displaced racialized communities from these lands. Recently, staff have begun working with equity-denied communities to identify and analyze the role of these types of unjust and exclusionary policies to better understand how they have shaped racial discrimination in the City today.

In parallel to this work, staff working in resilience, disaster risk reduction, and climate adaptation have begun collecting data and mapping on risk in the City. This data includes hazard exposure, physical and social vulnerabilities, and other key information that depicts the spatial dimensions of risk. Early examination by staff indicates that neighbourhoods with higher concentrations of racialized communities are disproportionately exposed and vulnerable to certain hazards and risks.

The goal of this project is to identify historic discriminatory land use policies that have resulted in present day impacts of environmental racism. As the City's [Healthy City Strategy](#) states, we are working toward a city where together we are creating and continually improving the conditions that enable all of us to enjoy the highest level of health and well-being possible. Specifically, goal 6 "healthy ecological environments" of the Healthy City Strategy indicates that: All people have the right to live in a healthy environment, with awareness of pollutants and contaminants that can cause harm.¹ Further, the City's [Equity Framework](#) states that "as a key process of colonization, racism creates unequal power in which those who are not white have unequal access to opportunities for economic, political and social mobility."²

¹ 2018-2025 A Healthy City for All: Healthy City Strategy – Four Year Action Plan Phase 2. Last Accessed on November 17, 2022 at: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Healthy-City-Strategy-Phase-2-Action-Plan-2015-2018.pdf>

² 2021 Getting our house in order: The City of Vancouver' Equity Framework. Last Accessed on November 17th, 2022 at: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/equity-framework.pdf>

Further, as stated in the [Resilient Vancouver Strategy](#), there is a need to promote open and honest dialogue about Vancouver’s past, present, and future. The City has committed to, “support ongoing community dialogue that fosters empathy and understanding across diverse groups, and enables us to talk about hard issues — ranging from racism to climate change... [and] hold space and amplify efforts to elevate the current and historical experiences of diverse people and groups in Vancouver.”³

Recent emergencies, including the 2015 Port Fire and the 2021 Heat Dome, had disproportionate impacts on equity-denied communities in Vancouver. Yet, data gaps remain around disproportionate impacts specifically to racialized communities including, but not limited to, Indigenous Rights Holders, South Asian communities, Black and African diaspora communities. For example, South Vancouver is home to racialized communities including South Asian diaspora, has lower urban tree canopy than many other neighbourhoods in Vancouver, and is hotter than areas of the City closer to the shoreline. During the 2021 Heat Dome a significant number of emergency room visits for heat-related illness originated from this neighbourhood.

In order for the City to dismantle and reconcile inequities and continue to learn from the past so as not repeat it, we must identify where and how discrimination is woven into the policy landscape. Staff working on Anti-Racism and Cultural Redress, Equity, Reconciliation, and Resilience are working to identify actions that directly support and redistribute power to equity-denied communities. This project will better enable the City to apply an equity and anti-racism lens to risk reduction mechanisms that foster health, wellbeing, and vibrancy of historically excluded communities.

Project description

The purpose of this project is to deepen the City’s understanding of specific outcomes of exclusionary policies that interact with present-day hazards and risks identified in the City’s Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA) – including extreme heat.

This will involve identifying 2-3 examples of discriminatory land use policies (e.g., redlining) and analysis regarding how their impacts have pushed specific cultural and racialized communities to areas of Vancouver and to buildings most exposed and vulnerable to hazards in the HRVA. Cultural and racialized communities include but are not limited to, Indigenous Rights Holders, South Asian communities, Black and African diaspora communities to areas of Vancouver and to buildings that are exposed and vulnerable to hazards.

Based on the scholar’s area of expertise and lived experience, the scholar will focus on one particular community and build on research and reports collected during the Vancouver Plan process, as well as analysis and policy documents developed by Social Policy to inventory historical policies and analyze impacts. The scholar will then use data and information contained in Vancouver’s Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment to complete their analysis of hazards and risks, with a specific focus on industrial hazards and using the 2015 Port Fire as a case study. The scholar will be invited to complete the City’s Intersectionality Toolkit worksheets in order to socially locate themselves in the work.

³ Resilient Vancouver Strategy. Last accessed on November 17, 2022 at: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/resilient-vancouver-strategy.pdf>

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Project scope

The scope of this project includes:

- Identification of a particular community or population to focus (this will take place in discussion with the Scholar and based on their expertise and interest)
- Identify, collate, and analyze discriminatory land use policies based on their impact on the identified community, not their intent;
- Describe possible impacts of these policies on the chosen racialized community
- Identify correlations between these policies and recent datasets illustrating Vancouver's demographics and hazard exposure and vulnerability for Vancouver's Hazards of Greatest Concern identified in the City's Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment;
- Identify 2-3 examples of differential exposure and vulnerability of racialized communities to industrial hazards using the 2015 Port Fire as a case study, and where possible, connect these present-day realities to discriminatory policies of the past. This could include indicators of social determinants of health and how that data intersects with racialized groups.

Key Questions for the successful scholar are:

- What overt or covert discriminatory policies has the City of Vancouver adopted over time (specifically policies that discriminate against racialized communities)?
- How have these policies impacted communities (socially, economically, physically, ecologically, and politically)?
- How have past policies shaped present-day spatial distribution of Vancouver's racialized communities?
- Where does Vancouver have disproportionate exposure and vulnerability to hazards outlined as the top 5 in the City's Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment?
- What are the linkages between discriminatory policies, present-day neighbourhood demographics, and hazard exposure and vulnerability?

Deliverables

- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
 - Including an inventory of exclusionary land use policies, their impacts, and visual illustration (map or otherwise) depicting the relationship between residency of racialized communities and hazards.
- 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 Friday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Community engagement experience
- Strong analytical skills

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- ☒ Ability to work independently
- ☒ Deadline oriented
- ☒ Project management and organizational skills
- ☒ Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- ☒ Experience developing or analyzing policy, an asset
- ☒ Demonstrated experience working with complex data
- ☒ Familiarity with and involvement in social justice and equity work, an asset
- ☒ Demonstrated experience working with Indigenous and racialized communities
- ☒ We welcome all candidates to apply for this position. We especially encourage applicants who have knowledge of Black history and politics in Canada and/or lived experience as a member of the Black community; or knowledge of Indigenous ways of knowing and/or Indigenous cultural experience.

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>