

Summer 2024 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

The UBC Sustainability Hub is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the guidance of a mentor from the partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing sustainability across the region. These opportunities are paid. The pay rate for the summer 2024 program is \$27.50/hour or \$6,875 for a 250-hour project.

- 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 28, 2024.

Project title: Inventory of existing and potential public spaces to inform public realm improvements in the City of Vancouver

Project Background & Overview:

Commercial High Streets across Vancouver are essential for accessing retail, services and community. Conversations promoting active transportation and public life in these areas have improved over the years; however, level of investments in their public realm vary across the city. This results in some neighbourhoods or users having better access to retail, services and community than others.

In the Healthy City Strategy, the City has committed to active transportation and cultivating connections. During the pandemic, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and community partners have advocated for re-allocating vehicle road space for better pedestrian accessibility and public spaces. Examples include wider sidewalks, plazas, patios, street furniture, and supporting community placemaking.

In parallel, the Vancouver Plan has identified High Streets as growth areas. Council has also asked staff to accelerate the development of Villages and therefore their local serving retail areas to respond to the housing crisis. Meanwhile, work is underway to improve the public realm of regional serving high streets inside the metro core.

However, many growth areas are outside of the metro-core and serve local populations with a higher representation of equity denied residents. With growth and density, it is imperative that these areas and their public realm are also planned to become attractive walkable and accessible destinations to better serve the existing community and support future residents.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan guides us to develop complete walkable neighbourhoods, helping more people live within an easy walk or roll of their daily needs. By reallocating road space from vehicles to pedestrian and public realm improvements, we are creating more walkable neighbourhoods and potentially enhancing the urban ecosystem.

Project description

A good public realm provides elements and public spaces that support community building through interaction, cultural expression, community stewardship, amenities for respite such as street furniture as well as shelter from rain or heat.

This project will identify and locate existing public realm elements and public spaces in retail streets (e.g., sidewalks, plazas, etc.), land uses (e.g., retail, restaurants) and potential/existing stewardship (community groups, non-profit organizations, etc.), and existing amenities (benches, trees, washrooms, bike racks).

This inventory will inform innovative approaches and prioritization of new investments relating to space (lack of green canopy, heat island effect), people (equity-serving communities and uses), and stewardship (existing community use).

Project scope

Develop a framework to inform development of the inventory and categorisation of areas and amenities. This will be informed by:

- Research and compilation of CoV policy documents and GIS datasets
- Discussions primarily with project mentor(s); as well as, discussions with host team and collaborators arranged by the mentor(s) to understand staff's perspectives of public space design and stewardship

Drawing on the framework and focusing on five to ten High Streets which mostly correlate with BIA areas (Villages and their retail areas defined in Vancouver Plan's urban typology are secondary and will be included time permitting)

1. Take inventory of (five to ten) existing High Streets (to be determined with City staff) according to existing and emerging policies, BIAs, cultural or historic areas, etc.
 - a. Using existing GIS datasets of retail streets, BIAs, and historic areas, the scholar will identify and categorize them by the existence and extension of the BIA influence
2. Record existing street conditions such as road and sidewalk widths, public spaces, amenities that support walkability and accessibility, reducing heat island effect, etc.
 - a. Score the inventory developed on item 1
3. Record existing land-use and retail composition
 - a. Categorize retail from existing Retail Inventory
 - b. Time permitting, categorize other existing land use into (residential, institutional, parks, mixed use, industrial, etc.)
4. Identify unique investments or features for public life that may serve as good precedents (e.g., community stewardship, healing garden, power outlets, weather protection, etc.)
 - a. Interview City staff to identify good precedents of unique investments or features for public life

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5. Identify the intersection of existing retail streets and low tree canopy/high heat island effect
 - a. Use Parks' GIS datasets for tree canopy and heat island effect; use retail storefront inventory to identify retail streets (done in task 1)
6. Time permitting, identify the intersection of existing retail streets and equity-denied serving services, and other factors to further climate justice
 - a. Use census data or relevant City of Vancouver community planning data

Deliverables

- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
- A final report for the online public-facing [Scholars Project Library](#).
- A GIS shapefile or feature class with location and characteristics of each identified retail street

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete
- This project must be completed between May 1 to August 15, 2024
- The Scholar is to complete hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.
- Weekly check-in meetings are required and can be scheduled to accommodate the scholar's calendar. Additional meetings can also be scheduled as needed.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Strong technical and drafting skills
- Demonstrated GIS experience.
- Design and layout skills
- Lived experience working in the public realm and placemaking, an asset
- Background in urban design, urban planning, landscape architecture or geography, an asset
- Experience working with varied and complex data sets, an asset

Applications close **midnight Sunday January 28, 2024**

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, 2024.

[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>