

## Summer 2025 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. The pay rate for the summer 2025 program is \$31.25/hour or \$7,812.50 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 11:59 pm on Sunday January 26, 2025.**

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### **Project title: Research on current practices and innovative approaches for sustainable, resilient, accessible greenway and trail design**

#### **Project Background & Overview:**

Metro Vancouver Regional Parks protect natural areas and connect people to nature, the vision for the regional parks system is that these are protected and resilient, connecting people to nature, with benefits for all. Protecting natural areas and providing exceptional nature-based experiences for everyone requires thoughtful planning and design. Metro Vancouver Regional Parks currently operate and maintain approximately 290 km of existing trails. Additionally, proposed trails and regional recreational greenways are planned throughout the region to provide high-quality, inclusive visitor experiences for a variety of users.

Climate change predictions for the region show that climate change is expected to bring rising sea levels, increased temperatures, drought, and flooding, along with increased spread of invasive species and wildfire risk. These impacts will affect park ecosystems and infrastructure. Increasingly, regional parks and the trail and greenway infrastructure are seeing the impacts of climate change and associated hazards.

Greenway and trails are social resources that provide significant benefits for human health and well-being benefits from spending time in nature, not all communities have equitable access to trails and their benefits. The project aims to enhance inclusion by understanding advances in accessibility standards in greenway and trail design, ensuring that regional parks greenway and trails are accessible and enjoyable for people of all abilities.

The outcomes of this research and case study analysis will inform updates to regional park design standards and guidelines. These updates will support the development of efficient, accessible, and resilient park infrastructure designed for long-term sustainability.

## **Project description**

Metro Vancouver Regional Parks is seeking to update the regional park design standards and guidelines. Research, case study review and analysis undertaken as part of this project will inform the development of revised greenway and trails standards which addresses core issues of resiliency, accessibility and sustainability. Outcomes from the project are actionable and will feed directly into key goals identified in the 2022 Regional Parks Plan, in particular that “everyone has the opportunity to benefit from exceptional experiences in nature,” as well as contribute significantly to addressing strategy to “update the design standards and guidelines for regional parks to support the provision of efficient, accessible and resilient park infrastructure over the long term.”

The project will examine current practices and innovative approaches in greenways and trails, specifically focusing on:

**Accessibility:** The project will contribute to a deeper understanding of the best practices in universal design for recreational greenway and trails and identify ways to integrate accessibility in trails planning and design. Understanding how universal design principles enhance accessibility for diverse user groups, including those with disabilities. Research may consider changing demographic and social needs, surface types, barriers, operating envelopes; and how and if different users should be separated

**Resiliency and Sustainability:** Recreational greenways and trails are vulnerable to climate impacts. The project will address how planning, material selection, structures, management techniques and designs adapt to changing environmental conditions and climate challenges and support safe emergency planning

An in-depth analysis of the best practices in trail and greenway design, the project will ensure that updated guidelines and standards prioritize resiliency, accessibility, and sustainability in recreational greenways and trails.

## **Project scope**

### **Literature Review / Jurisdictional Scan:**

- Review key Metro Vancouver Regional Parks documents (Regional Parks Plan, Regional Greenway Strategy and Natural Resource Management Strategy and Trail design guidelines)
- Conduct an in-depth literature review / jurisdictional scan on approximately 5 to 8 trail and recreational greenway standards from leading organizations. This review will examine how other land managers and organizations are integrating climate resiliency, accessibility, and sustainability into their planning and design processes, this may be site planning principles or physical features, standards and materials that can be used.

### **Document Review and Subject Interviews**

- Review relevant Metro Vancouver design standards documentation

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- Conduct 3 to 5 expert interviews with MV staff to understand more about the regional parks systems recreational greenways and trails and the resiliency/accessibility/sustainability practices currently in place.

## Case Studies:

- Based on the literature review/jurisdictional scan, prepare 3 to 5 case studies that highlight best practices for resiliency, accessibility, and sustainability in recreational greenways and trails.
- These case studies will be selected in consultation with the project lead and will serve to illustrate effective approaches to sustainable/resilient/accessible greenway/trails management.

## Final Report:

- Synthesize the findings from the literature review and case studies into a comprehensive final report.
- This report will include actionable insights and recommendations for enhancing the resilience, accessibility, and sustainability of regional parks infrastructure.

## Deliverables

- **Interim report** providing a preliminary outline of literature, interviews and case studies discovered / reviewed to date.
- One to two **presentations** to regional or municipal stakeholders, park staff and relevant committees
- A **final report** containing a summary of the work completed and detailing research findings in addition to 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, 2025
- The Scholars is to complete their 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
- Experience conducting stakeholder engagement events, including facilitation skills, is an asset
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
- Community engagement experience
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently

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- ☒ Deadline oriented
- ☒ Project management and organizational skills
- ☒ Strong technical and drafting skills
- ☒ Demonstrated experience in planning, design, landscape architecture or engineering
- ☒ Familiarity with benchmarking methods and tools
- ☒ Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- ☒ Familiarity preparing feasibility studies
- ☒ Experience with financial modelling and analysis
- ☒ Design and layout skills

Applications close at **11:59 pm Sunday January 26, 2025**

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

Contact Karen Taylor at [sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca](mailto:sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca) if you have questions

## Useful Resources

We are holding a special **resume preparation workshop for prospective Scholars** on January 21, 2025. [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>