



UBC CREATES SUSTAINABILITY STREET

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES
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UBC INTRODUCES A NEW KIND OF STREET SMART: Vancouver, BC – UBC Sustainability Street showcases UBC's world-first achievements in sustainable urban design, demonstrating new approaches to managing waste, energy and water in an urban environment.

"There's an urgent need for affordable and transferable solutions to urban environmental challenges," says David Grigg, Associate Director, UBC Campus and Community Planning. "With UBC Sustainability Street, we're showing what's possible, using technologies that can easily be replicated – both here in Vancouver and elsewhere."

Sustainability Street represents the world's first closed-loop system of water recycling and re-use that integrates storm water management, wastewater treatment and ground source heating.

A storm water system collects rainfall and naturally filters contaminants before the water enters the groundwater table and surrounding streams. Wastewater from nearby buildings is treated with the Smart Microbial Process (developed by Vancouver-based Vision Envirotech International with assistance from UBC faculty), converting it into clean reusable water which is stored in the ground. Heat pumps use the treated wastewater and storm water to generate energy, replacing one of the Earth and Ocean Science's building's natural-gas-fuelled heating and cooling units.

The site will also incorporate a small-scale biodiesel production unit that converts waste cooking oil generated on campus into clean-burning biodegradable fuel to power campus maintenance vehicles.

"These solutions could easily be applied elsewhere," adds Jorge Marques, UBC Sustainability Office Energy Manager. "The closed-loop water recycling and re-use system would definitely benefit drier climates where fresh water is scarce, and in wetter climates like Vancouver, it prevents the erosion and ecosystem damage that happens when municipal storm water is discharged directly into waterways. The geo-exchange technology is an alternative to burning carbon fuels that can reduce energy costs by 20 to 60 percent over conventional heating and cooling systems. And the technology behind the biodiesel facility produces an economic and efficient fuel."

Sustainability Street has transformed the formerly non-descript thoroughfare of Stores Road into a visually appealing pedestrian-oriented promenade. Imaginative landscape architecture by Space 2 Place and innovative communications by Elio Creative complement the environmental processes and promote awareness of the interrelationships between people, the built environment and the natural world.