



Kelowna teams up with university for sustainable future

In 2011, the Sustainable Community Development Grant Pilot Program was launched. The project was a partnership project between the University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus and the City of Kelowna. "The grant was developed for the purposes of providing faculty, students and staff the opportunity to work with City staff and community members to apply sustainability-related research and learning in the community," says, Leanne Bilodeau, director of Sustainability Operations, who was involved in the development of the project with the Provost and Vice Principal, AVP Administration and Finance, City of Kelowna Mayor and City Manager. "The concept was to facilitate community engagement, capacity building and actions to advance shared sustainability goals".

The Glenmore community was selected by the City of Kelowna as the project pilot site, given its demonstrated engagement in sustainability related projects such as "Cool Ways to School," which promotes safe, healthy, sustainable transportation options to local schools. Now, Glenmore will be at the centre of sustainability projects aimed at helping the environment.

Three research projects were awarded funding by UBC's Okanagan campus, under the terms of the grant: the social potluck - social sustainability through local food and story, reducing potable water use in civic parks and the sustainable transportation CompASS pilot project.

Several workshops held by the Okanagan Sustainability Office facilitated stakeholder dialogue and collaboration throughout the process. During the final public forum, faculty members, students, City Staff and community members expressed the benefits associated with the pilot program.

Community members expressed the benefits associated with the program such as, the collaboration built between the University and the neighbouring community; the potential to improve their community; and the partnership between the University and the City. Community members said the program increased their levels of awareness regarding sustainability issues and actions they could undertake to support sustainable development in their community. All respondents surveyed about the program expressed its value and recommended that it be continued and expanded upon.