

# Serving Rural Communities Through Applied Learning House Bill 2594

## Background

The University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is an innovative model for bridging the gap between universities and communities. It advances local community redevelopment efforts, provides applied education for college students and develops the next generation Oregon workforce. Developed in 2009, this "Oregon Model" has been adopted by more than 25 other universities across the United States and is being disseminated globally with the help of the United Nations.

Each year, SCYP works in a different community and matches community-identified project ideas with up to 35 university courses, 20+ faculty, and 500 students across more than 12 disciplines giving over 40,000 hours of effort. Students add capacity, fresh thinking, and the political space for communities to think and act anew.

To date, SCYP has worked in partnership with the cities of **Gresham, Salem, Springfield, Medford, Redmond,** and **Albany**. This past year, SCYP piloted two new expansions of its model, including partnering with a transit agency, **TriMet** and its proposed 12-mile Southwest Corridor light rail project, and with a smaller Oregon city, **La Pine**.

*"The ideas proposed are beautiful, inspiring, and incredibly forward thinking; they are illustrations of what is possible without compromising what is necessary."*

—Mayor Christine Lundberg  
City of Springfield, Oregon

## The Problem

Many Oregon communities, especially those in rural areas, could benefit from a partnership with SCYP but cannot fully afford to participate. SCYP partners must meet several standards, including buy-in from local political leadership and staff, interest in a range of community improvement issues, and having financial "skin in the game." Cities participating in the program provide \$60,000–\$350,000, which leverages \$150,000–\$400,000 of investment directly from the UO through faculty and staff time as well as professional program coordination.

## Proposed Solution

With a biennial appropriation of \$300,000, SCYP could help more Oregon cities—both urban and rural—become program partners. This type of financial match, provided last year by The Ford Family Foundation, was key in moving the SCYP–La Pine partnership forward. A more stable, predictable state appropriation will allow diverse Oregon communities such as **Roseburg, Oakridge, Florence, Sisters, McMinnville, Hillsboro, Ashland, Independence,** and **Prineville** to take full advantage of this unique program.

For additional information please contact **Libby Batlan** at [batlan@uoregon.edu](mailto:batlan@uoregon.edu) or visit [www.uoadvocates.com](http://www.uoadvocates.com)





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## Student Profile: Alex Nelson B.A., Planning, Public Policy, and Management, 2018

Alex Nelson is a native of Sandy, Oregon, and he participated in SCYP projects during two years of his undergraduate education. He regards SCYP as one of the most valuable components of his undergraduate education. Working with Albany and Tualatin gave him real experience, and helped Alex become workforce-ready, deepened his critical thinking skills, and helped him connect theory to practice. Following graduation, Alex joined the private sector as an assistant planner and looks forward to working with municipalities throughout Oregon.

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Architecture students listen to city of Tigard planner Gary Pagenstecher during a visit to downtown Tigard.



Passive Heating students using a Pathfinder to analyze solar access in La Pine.

