

Submitter: Cheyenne Dickenson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce
Development

Measure, Appointment or
Topic: HB3109

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a first year Masters of Community and Regional Planning student at the University of Oregon. I participated in fall 2024 in a Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP). Our cohort collaborated with the city of Bend to reimagine a 30-acre commercial development in a lower income area of the city. The one-mile radius around the site unfortunately lacks transportation access outside of personal cars, and lacks access to cultural amenities like community centers, parks, public art, libraries, and much more. What this area has a surplus of is parking spaces - over 1,400 of them!

Our class was able to visit Bend, experience the site as pedestrians, and meet with city staff to hear their priorities. The city imagines a different future with more equitable access to services, less reliance on fossil fuels, and more affordable housing. This vision aligns with policy currently being implemented by the state on Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities. SCYP is able to bridge the gap between staffing capacity and state planning mandates, all while providing valuable real-world learning opportunities for students like myself and my classmates. We were able to apply what we were learning in our planning and urban design classes to create four different possible designs for the site and present them to city staff. Going forward, these plans can help communicate to the community and developers the type of investment the city needs to meet its housing and sustainability goals. For myself, this was hopefully the first of many projects to help improve communities in Oregon, as it is my goal to continue professionally in the state in the planning field.

I was surprised to hear the financial investment cities make to participate in SCYP. The quality of work provided must be worth the cost if cities are willing to pay, but I could see how it would be prohibitive for communities with a tax base different from a place like Bend. Therefore, I respectfully ask that you provide these matching funds so that communities across Oregon can continue to plan for a better future.

Thank you,
Cheyenne Dickenson, MCRP candidate