



City of Oakridge

48318 E 1st Street - PO Box 1410

Oakridge, Oregon 97463

www.ci.oakridge.or.us

1/29/2025

House Higher Education Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Letter of Support for the Sustainable City Year Program at the University of Oregon

Dear Members of the House Higher Education Committee,

On behalf of the City of Oakridge, I am pleased to offer our strong support for the Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) at the University of Oregon. Our city has had the privilege of participating in the SCYP from 2024-2026 (we are still an active participant in the program), and the experience has been absolutely incredible. It has provided our staff with fresh perspectives, innovative policy solutions, and an energized approach to addressing community challenges. So far, the University of Oregon SCYP has provided assistance to the City of Oakridge with the following 9 classes, with even more to come in 2025-2026:

1. **Oakridge Industrial Park Development** - aid in marketing lots in the OIP, research targeted industrial sectors, and research alternative energy sources including micro-hydro, geothermal, and biomass.
2. **Housing Development** - aid in land use planning and research housing development strategies.
3. **Urban Renewal & Tax Incentive Financing (TIF) program** - aid in researching urban renewal best practices and determine if a TIF program would be viable in Oakridge.
4. **Willamette Activities Center Redevelopment** - aid in planning, development, and community outreach for the WAC.
5. **Website development** - aid in improving the city website to build trust with the community, promote tourism, and attract new residents to Oakridge.
6. **Capital Improvement Planning** - aid in planning for water, sewer, and streets, parks, and other infrastructure and capital improvement projects, including identifying possible funding sources.
7. **Civic Information/News Assessment** – A needs assessment and community survey regarding how local residents receive news and information.
8. **Municipal Court Community Service Program** – aid in developing policies and procedures to create a voluntary community service program for use by the Oakridge Municipal Court.
9. **Nonprofit Consultancy** – aid and support to local nonprofit organizations.

Through our collaboration with SCYP, we engaged with talented students and faculty who brought creative ideas, data-driven insights, and forward-thinking strategies to our most pressing local issues. The program infused our city departments with new energy, empowering our staff to think differently, embrace innovative solutions, and build upon their professional expertise. The interdisciplinary approach of SCYP allowed us to explore policy solutions that might not have been possible within the constraints of our day-to-day operations.

Specifically, our partnership with SCYP resulted in actionable recommendations that have helped us advance key community initiatives, from sustainable transportation planning to economic development strategies and environmental resilience projects. The program has provided us with valuable research and analysis that we continue to use in decision-making, fostering a culture of creativity and forward progress within our organization.

Beyond the tangible policy benefits, SCYP has also strengthened our community by fostering collaboration between our local government and the academic community. It has created pathways for public service career exploration among students and built long-lasting relationships that benefit both our city and the University of Oregon.

We urge the committee to support funding for the Sustainable City Year Program to ensure that more communities across Oregon can benefit from its positive impacts. SCYP is a unique and invaluable resource that not only enhances the education of university students but also empowers local governments to innovate and thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Cleavenger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James M. Cleavenger, JD, LLM

Oakridge City Administrator

cityadministrator@ci.oakridge.or.us

541-782-2258 x6