

Sustainable City Year Program University of Oregon

City of Sisters

2022-2023 Press Book



Partnership takes on sustainability

Last updated Sep 20, 2022 12:00 pm

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is an innovative university-community partnership program founded at the University of Oregon in 2009. In this unique model, existing courses, faculty, and students from across campus are purposefully directed toward a single Oregon community for an academic year to address issues identified by the city.

According to information from the program, SCYP is more than just students working on a project for a class. It is creating Oregon's future workforce, developing a connection with local government and Oregon communities, and generating creative, out-of-the-box ideas by high-achieving students and faculty experts.

SCYP is a collaboration of faculty and students from multiple academic disciplines, including architecture, landscape architecture, business, journalism, public policy and management, law, and others.

The benefits for the City participating include increased capacity, expanded conversations, innovation, broad outreach, energy, political space, and creativity beyond what would be possible in nine months just utilizing staff. It also involves a much smaller price tag than contracting with an established consulting firm.

Traditionally, large communities have benefitted from 20 to 30 projects at a cost of \$250,000 to \$350,000 over the year-long partnership. However, SCYP recognized that smaller communities have needs but fewer resources, and in 2018, SCYP began scaling its model to work across a range of geographies and contexts, with a focus on smaller Oregon cities. Past small city partners have included La Pine (2018 pilot), Silverton, Dunes City (special project), Hood River (special project), Troutdale, and Hermiston. Smaller city partnerships typically cost \$75,000 to \$120,000.

Past projects have been directed toward affordable housing, environmental sustainability and resiliency, economic development, tourism promotion, transportation and infrastructure, quality of life and city livability, and community involvement and information.

All the SCYP projects in Sisters will align with one or more FY 2022-23 Council goals.





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University Of Oregon: Sustainable City Year Heads To Sisters For Its Latest Project

By [lednewsdesk](#) On Oct 29, 2022

In its 14th year, the UO's Sustainable City Year Program is partnering with the city of Sisters, an Oregon community east of the Cascades.

Part of the UO Sustainable Cities Institute established in 2009, Sustainable City Year partnerships connect University of Oregon students across campus with local communities. Selected cities receive expertise in sustainable planning to improve the community, while students get hands-on experience and preparation for public-service oriented careers. This fall, three classes in the College of Design's School of Planning, Public Policy and Management are focusing on Sisters.

Located at the foot of the Cascades mountains in Central Oregon, Sisters offers stunning natural surroundings, year-round recreational opportunities, and a vibrant local economy. With a population of more than 3,000, the city is also experiencing significant growth.

Using site-based planning and design proposals, graduate students in the community and regional planning classes will envision future uses for an elementary school in Sisters that will be vacated once a new school is built at a different location.

“One fantastic, and very unique, aspect of the fall project is that three different public entities are engaging around the same redevelopment site: the city of Sisters, Sisters School District and Sisters Parks and Recreation District,” said Megan Banks, an instructor in the School of Planning, Public Policy and Management and director of the Sustainable City Year Program.

Throughout the year, students will have the opportunity to work on a variety of projects, from alternatives to fund affordable housing to envisioning future options for the existing elementary school site.

“Students will get a firsthand look into the complexity of local decision-making even as they put together their forward-looking ideas,” Banks said.

A virtual open house is posted online, and winter and spring term courses also will be added throughout the year as project and course matches are made.

“Rethinking a site in Sisters requires looking at it through different areas of expertise,” said Marc Schlossberg, a planning, public policy and management professor and co-founder and co-director of the Sustainable Cities Institute. “We are particularly excited that the outputs of city planning students in the fall will be inputs for architecture students in the winter and spring.”

Students kicked off the project Oct. 7 with a visit to Sisters to meet with the partners in person and start the visioning process.

“After visiting the Sisters site, students were both excited and overwhelmed by the opportunity to be of help to the local community,” Banks said, “but one thing was clear to all: They want to honor the community’s values even as students think big with creative, forward-thinking ideas.”

Through applied learning, Sustainable City Year invites the innovation of students and faculty to offer communities unique perspectives and ideas. Communities emerge from the partnerships with increased outreach, expanded breadth of conversation, and cutting-edge solutions, while students have the opportunity to gain real-world experience ahead of entering the public service-oriented workforce.

“This interdisciplinary work is extremely beneficial for the community itself; it gives students an understanding of where their own developing expertise fits, and it’s a good example of the rethinking of higher education embodied in the UO’s new Environment Initiative,” Schlossberg said.

Previous partners in Oregon have included communities as varied in geography and population as Salem, Hermiston, Portland, Medford, Silverton, Springfield, Albany and Gresham.



University of Oregon

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University students to work on sustainability

[Sue Stafford](#) | Last updated Oct 12, 2022 12:00 pm



SUE STAFFORD

[Students from the University of Oregon visited Sisters last week to tour local facilities as part of a project to build sustainability.](#)

Students from the University of Oregon Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) visited Sisters on Friday, October 7, to meet with City staff and personnel from the Sisters School District (SSD) and Sisters Park & Recreation District (SPRD).

They toured the school district administration building and the elementary school with Superintendent Curtis Scholl to get an initial overview of the facilities. They also walked around town to observe traffic, sidewalks, parks, paths, parking, and transitions to other uses in the neighborhood.

The Sisters City Council earlier approved \$85,000 for an agreement with the University of Oregon for their SCYP during school year 2022/23. The school district and SPRD have joined in and will benefit from the program, while reimbursing the City \$15,000 for the fall classes.

All school year, upper-level and graduate students will work on actual City, SSD, and SPRD projects, and plans related to their coursework on campus. In the fall quarter, they will be working mainly with the school district on how to repurpose the current elementary school and administration building, possibly including use by SPRD.

November 22 is the date scheduled for their final presentations for fall term. The City, SSD, and SPRD will receive all their data, reports, and final presentations to be used as appropriate.

Consideration of the specific classes for winter (which begin January 9, 2023) and spring classes (begin April 3, 2023) is ongoing and yet to be determined but could include supporting the newly formed destination management organization (Explore Sisters), public information, bicycle planning, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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The benefits for the city participating are many, including increased capacity, expanded conversations, innovation, broad outreach, energy, political space, and creativity beyond what would be possible in nine months just utilizing staff.

Working with the program also involves a much smaller price tag than contracting with an established consulting firm.

Past projects have been directed toward affordable housing, environmental sustainability and resiliency, economic development, tourism promotion, transportation and infrastructure, quality of life and city livability, and community involvement and information.



'Sustainable City' students celebrate year in Sisters

[Ceili Gatley](#) | Last updated Jun 06, 2023 2:26pm



Photo by Ceili Gatley

[Sulwyn De Crozuc](#) and [Ravi Cullop](#) were presenters for the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Partnership with the City of Sisters.

Sisters community members, City Council members and University of Oregon students celebrated the end of the Sustainable City Year Partnership (SCYP) between the University and the City of Sisters. Last Thursday evening at FivePine Convention Center, University of Oregon (UO) students ranging from sophomores to seniors to master's students displayed their work for the Sustainable City partnership.

That partnership started last year, between the University's Planning, Public Policy, and Management program (PPPM) and the City of Sisters. Students created mock-ups and designs to model how to make Sisters more sustainable. Specifically, students focused on transportation and making the city more bicycle-friendly, as well as potential ideas for the use of the old elementary school building.

The event marked the culmination of a year's worth of collaboration between students, faculty, City staff, and Sisters School District (SSD).

Students created posters with their various ideas for bike infrastructure in the city, including more bikeability in the newly approved East Portal Transportation Hub at the edge of town.

"We used everything the City had already put in place and created more options for bikeability, as Sisters is the premiere place for biking," said presenting student Ravi Cullop.

Their poster idea included a bike share program where riders could pay for the use of a City bike to use during their time around Sisters.

Throughout the year, students visited Sisters and, alongside City staff, got to know the infrastructure of the town by biking around and hearing about all the up-and-coming projects.

Architecture students focused on various adaptations of the existing elementary school building once the school is housed in the newly constructed building in September 2024. They reimagined the site for housing needs. The PPPM classes looked at the building's potential for adaptive reuse and teacher/workforce housing, age-friendly neighborhood, or a recreation/community center. The students worked closely with Curt Scholl and the SSD in potential adaptations for the property.

Ultimately, the property was designated as a facility for Sisters Park & Recreation District.

"These types of projects and collaborations are important, and they impact people and are hugely important for the city," said Mayor Michael Preedin at the event.

Marc Schlossberg, professor of PPPM and transportation classes, spoke about the inception of the project and how partnerships like this one are happening nationwide and internationally.

"It is the transformational idea of partnership and how to move forward with communities," he said. "The essence of the program is to match the goals of the community with courses offered at the UO."

Schlossberg looks forward to continuing the project with forward-looking students. The SCYP program started in 2010.

Megan Banks, the program's director, thanked Sisters City staff for allowing students to come into the community.

"This program really allows us to think outside of the box in how we approach projects and potential for a community," she said.

All the work students put together will be available in project reports for the public and for City staff to reference. Those project reports should be available by the end of the summer. Many of the students echoed the sentiment that it was really nice to apply what they are learning to a place.


Sisters chosen for UO's Sustainable City Year Program

Jun 7, 2023



The University of Oregon has chosen Sisters for its Sustainable City Year Program.

The program, which just wrapped up, allowed students to get the hands-on experience of working with local city governments and organizations. About 150 students participated in the program this school year.

"We are a conduit for an aspect or a part of Oregon's workforce. So we're able through Skype to  start exposing these students while they're in college to what it's like to work in a city or work with a community or a nonprofit so that they're better prepared when they get when they graduate and they get out in the workforce," said Megan Banks, the program's director.

There was also a class focusing on the future of the old Sisters Elementary School building.

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