

# Sustainable City Year Program University of Oregon

## City of Salem 2010-2011 Press Book



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## University of Oregon selects Salem as Sustainable Cities partner for 2010-11

City and UO faculty and students will work collaboratively in year-long effort

EUGENE, Ore. -- (May 25, 2010) – The University of Oregon’s Sustainable Cities Initiative program has selected Salem as its focus city for the 2010-11 academic year. Following a successful inaugural year in Gresham, Ore., UO faculty and students will work collaboratively with Salem, Oregon’s capital city, to tackle important development, planning and civic engagement issues.

"We are honored that the University of Oregon selected Salem to participate in this unique program that matches professors and students in a number of disciplines with real-world community projects," said Salem City Manager Linda Norris. "The City's participation in the program allows us to address several City Council goals and leverage existing limited resources to move projects forward much faster than would otherwise be possible. As a result of this work, we will have well-researched designs and plans to present to the community and the City Council. We think this program is a great model for encouraging additional future collaboration between Oregon universities and Oregon cities."

More than 25 courses, 25 faculty members and approximately 600 students will focus on Salem projects during the 2010-11 academic year. The UO anticipates selecting one city each year to be the focus of sustainable design and planning courses as part of its Sustainable Cities Initiative. The Salem City Council, Salem Housing Authority Commission and Salem’s Urban Renewal Agency Board approved participation in the program on May 24.

"The Sustainable Cities Initiative is an ambitious interdisciplinary undertaking," said Frances Bronet, dean of the UO School of Architecture and Allied Arts. "It is unique in its approach to focus on a single city and bring collective expertise and strengths of faculty and students from multiple areas of campus together. The common goal of making a place better through collaboration embodies how higher education institutions contribute and serve the public interest."

Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is shaping the future academic priorities at the UO as a result of a campus-wide discussion and selection process. Started at the UO School of Architecture and Allied Arts, SCI now extends across disciplines into other schools and colleges on campus. The goal is to promote research, education, service and public outreach related to the development of sustainable cities.

The 2009-2010 academic year partner was the city of Gresham, where nearly 100,000 hours of student work was applied to projects throughout the city. Starting with only six courses, the SCI course listing expanded to 21 by the end of the school year, across five academic departments. The completed work will contribute to future planning for Gresham.

"The benefits of working with the students and this program has been incalculable," said Gresham City Manager Erik Kvarsten. "We have been inspired by their enthusiasm and we hope that we’ve inspired some of them to consider bringing that energy to local government one day."

To select the 2010-2011 city, SCI co-directors Nico Larco, Marc Schlossberg and Robert Young invited

Oregon cities with more than 15,000 residents to apply and submit project proposals. Proposals were submitted by five cities: Beaverton, Eugene, Klamath Falls, Salem and Springfield. Salem was selected as the top finalist by a review committee of university faculty.

Salem is the center of a strong agricultural sector; home to sustainable industries like SANYO Solar of Oregon, Kettle Foods, Sequential Bio Fuels, AgriPlas and Truitt Brothers; stable government employment as the state and county seat; large private employers including Garmin Industries, Salem Hospital and the recently announced Home Depot Rapid Deployment Center. Local educational institutions — including Chemeketa Community College Center for Business and Industry, Willamette University and Western Oregon University — provide undergraduate and graduate programs and workforce training, and contribute to cultural events and art that enrich the community. Salem's vibrant, historic downtown has several parks within walking distance, and a wide array of restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions.

Salem projects will apply study from architecture, interior architecture, landscape architecture, arts and administration, planning, public policy and management, law, business management and journalism. Projects were selected because they accelerate positive direction for Salem, fit within curriculum, and will result in fully researched and designed options for the City Council to move Salem forward at the right time. Projects will include:

- A critical look at areas immediately adjacent to Salem's vibrant downtown, to result in development and redevelopment scenarios to make better use of the Riverfront;
- New police facility planning and civic center redesign scenarios to improve public service, utilizing the existing building;
- A civic engagement strategy to expand communication, representation and participation in decision making with use of new technology and other materials;
- A plan to connect Salem's downtown parks with urban trails and bike routes;
- A restoration plan for natural areas at the large Minto-Brown Island urban park;
- A development plan for the Salem Housing Authority Orchard Village site;
- Market analysis to include supply chain and business cluster studies.

Courses will begin Fall 2010. For more information, visit <http://sci.uoregon.edu/> [1].

### **About the University of Oregon**

The University of Oregon is a world-class teaching and research institution and Oregon's flagship public university. The UO is a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), an organization made up of the 63 leading public and private research institutions in the United States and Canada. The University of Oregon is one of only two AAU members in the Pacific Northwest.

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**Links:** UO Sustainable Cities Initiative, <http://sci.uoregon.edu/> [1]; City of Salem, <http://www.cityofsalem.net/> [4]

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- [4] <http://www.cityofsalem.net/>

# City to get planning help from UO

By Stefanie Knowlton

Statesman Journal

May 30, 2010

Salem will get assistance on a variety of planning projects through a yearlong partnership with the University of Oregon's Sustainable Cities Initiative.

More than 25 courses, 25 faculty members and about 600 students will focus on the Salem projects during the 2010 and 2011 academic year. Classes begin this fall. Last year the university worked with Gresham.

The additional help will allow Salem to address several goals of City Council and move projects forward much faster, said Salem City Manager Linda Norris.

Salem's projects will include help from a variety of disciplines such as architecture, arts and administration, planning, public policy and management, law, business management and journalism.

The projects include:

- Development of scenarios to make better use of the riverfront
- Plans for new police facility and redesign of the civic center
- Strategy to expand communication, representation and participation in decision-making
- Plan to connect Salem's downtown parks with urban trails and bike routes
- Restoration plan for natural areas at Minto-Brown Island urban park
- Development plan for the Salem Housing Authority Orchard Village site
- Supply chain and business cluster studies.



## UO picks Salem for sustainable initiative

Projects will allow students and faculty to collaborate with city officials on issues

Sarah Walters | News reporter

**Published:** Thursday, June 3, 2010

**Updated:** Thursday, June 3, 2010



The University is teaming up with the city of Salem for the 2010-11 Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI).

The project gives students the chance to build their resumes and gain real-world experience. Program coordinators, city officials and University faculty are excited about next school year's projects.

University students and faculty will collaborate with Oregon's capital to create solutions to important development, planning, and civic engagement issues, according to the University's May 25 press release.

More than 25 courses, 25 faculty members and 600 students will contribute to Salem projects during the upcoming academic year. Students can get involved in the program by registering on DuckWeb before fall term. The architecture; interior architecture; landscape architecture; arts and administration; law; business; journalism; and planning, public policy and management programs are all involved in the project. Students from other academic fields can also get involved.

According to SCI's Web site, the initiative's mission is to meet local, regional, and national sustainable city design and function goals; provide service and technical assistance to Oregon and beyond; attract students interested in sustainability; and engage experts in discourse and exchange of ideas.

The University chose Salem over four other Oregon cities: Eugene, Klamath Falls, Beaverton and Springfield. "The city (of Salem) is completely invested in this," SCI co-director Nico Larco said.

The Salem City Council, Salem Housing Authority Commission and Salem's Urban Renewal Agency Board approved their participation in the program on May 24.

Some of the projects include north downtown waterfront development, Civic Center space needs, Orchard Village green community integration, and industrial by-product reuse. The first projects are set to begin in late September to coincide with the University's schedule.

"These projects have some sustainable component," Nick Fleury said, SCI project manager. "They'll have some actual real-world components."

Various Salem officials are excited about the project.

"It's different from anything else we've ever done," Courtney Knox said, Salem's representative for the SCI program.

Salem city manager Linda Norris also expressed hope about professional relationships forming with projects such as SCI.

"We think this program is a great model for encouraging additional future collaboration between Oregon universities and Oregon cities," she said in a press statement.

The program experienced success in the city of Gresham this school year.

"We're excited about what happened in Gresham," Fleury said.

Almost 100,000 hours of student work were applied to projects throughout Gresham in the 2009-10 school year. The SCI course listings expanded to 21 by the end of the school year, after beginning with only six and spanned five different academic departments. The students' and faculty members' efforts contributed to future planning endeavors in the city of Gresham.



# Redevelopment in Salem gets a green helping hand

**CAPITAL CITY IS SECOND IN OREGON TO TAKE PART IN A SUSTAINABLE CITIES INITIATIVE PROGRAM THAT BRINGS TOGETHER STUDENTS AND MUNICIPALITIES**

By Melody Finnemore  
Special to the DJC

For the past four or five years, the city of Salem found itself in the middle of a perfect storm of community development proportions.

Blessed with a progressive city council and an energetic city staff, Salem had managed to draft a clear-cut vision of what needed to be done in order to redevelop many of its neighborhoods. Fueled by community support, the city saw the arrival of attention-grabbing projects such as a 30,000-square-foot downtown conference center and the \$33 million Kroc Corps Community.

Nothing, it seemed, would slow Salem's redevelopment - until the recession hit.

Like many cities around the state, Salem thought it would have to set aside any redevelopment plans it had on the boards. But then, at beginning of this year, the University of Oregon rolled into town looking for a new partner for a program called the Sustainable Cities Initiative.

"(This past January) when we saw the opportunity to apply for this project with the University of Oregon, we were very excited about it because it fit so well with a number of the projects we want to complete within our community," Linda Norris, Salem's city manager, said.

The university launched the Sustainable Cities Initiative program last year, with the city of Gresham as its inaugural partner. The goal is to promote research, education, service and public outreach related to the development of sustainable cities.

Starting this fall and continuing throughout the 2010-11 academic year, 25 UO faculty members and

about 600 students will collaborate with the city of Salem to address key development, planning and civic engagement issues.

As part of the program, the projects involved will apply lessons from architecture, interior architecture, landscape architecture, arts and administration, planning, public policy and management, law, business management and journalism.

Salem's projects include: a critical look at areas just south and north of the downtown core, with the goal of making better use of the riverfront; redesign options for the Civic Center that will include a new, separate police department and efficient reuse of the space currently occupied by the police; and a development plan for the Salem Housing Authority's Orchard Village site.

In addition, projects will include a plan to connect Salem's downtown parks with urban trails and bike routes; a restoration plan for natural areas near Minto-Brown Island Park; a market analysis to include supply chain and business cluster studies; and a civic engagement strategy intended to foster community involvement in the city's decision-making process.

Nico Larco and Marc Schlossberg, co-directors of the Sustainable Cities Initiative, said Salem's roster of manageable projects, its commitment to sustainability, and its buy-in from an array of city officials and community members were among the reasons its proposal stood out from those submitted by Beaverton, Eugene, Klamath Falls and Springfield.

"We do this in 10-week terms, so we wanted to make sure the projects are something a student would be able to get into, feel like they contributed something of value to and have some closure on," said

Larco, an assistant professor in the UO's architecture department.

"They also had a broad sector of interest, which works well with what we're doing," he added. "These are projects that are real and will make a difference."

Schlossberg, an associate professor of planning, public policy and management at the UO, said Salem also recognizes that the Sustainable Cities Initiative is designed to help generate ideas the city can realistically carry out.

"They completely understood the relationship with us. We're not consultants. What we are is an idea-generating machine on the latest and greatest in concepts related to sustainability," he said.

Larco said the program's interdisciplinary nature and the fresh energy of the students serves as a catalyst for participating cities.

"What we're doing is really expanding the conversation and helping the city look at ideas they may not have thought of," he said.

In Gresham, Larco noted, the Sustainable Cities Initiative resulted in requests for proposals going out on projects that most likely would not have happened otherwise. Nearly 100,000 hours of work done by UO students was applied to projects throughout the city and will contribute to future planning there.

Norris said Salem is eager to capitalize on the successes the Sustainable Cities Initiative forged in Gresham as the capital city continues moving forward with its own long-range plans.

"We're very excited about working with the students and the faculty," she said. "We've had a lot of interest in our community as well. I think a number of people want to be involved on a volunteer basis and ensure that this is a really successful endeavor."

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(Multnomah Co.)  
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Marc Schlossberg  
CO-DIRECTOR OF THE  
SUSTAINABLE CITIES INITIATIVE



Salem, Ore. The city of Salem is teaming up with the University of Oregon for the Sustainable Cities Initiative program, which could lead to improvements in areas just south and north of the downtown core.

**The New York Times**

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August 23, 2010

# In Oregon, Students Seek Key to a Sustainable City

By MICHAEL BURNHAM of

SALEM, Ore. -- In many cities, the rise of a shopping mall forebodes the fall of a downtown.

A Sears trades Main Street for Mall Drive. Shoppers follow in their cars and so do the automobile dealerships and furniture stores.

But Oregon's capital, which saw its downtown deteriorate when Interstate 5 and strip malls rose to the east in the 1960s, went a different direction: It built a mall downtown. A movie theater, Macy's and dozens of other Salem Center retailers continue to draw shoppers to the corner of Center and Liberty streets.

"The mall definitely helps business," said Lari DeLapp, owner of the Coffee House Café, two blocks south of the mall. "Boy, if that went away, downtown would really be hurting."

Business could be better, DeLapp concedes, but these are not ordinary times. The Great Recession manifests itself here in myriad ways: State workers adjust to "Furlough Fridays," shoppers spend less in downtown stores, and developers build fewer homes and offices.

If Salem's key to economic sustainability in the 20th century was brick-and-mortar buildings such as the mall, then what is the solution for today? Short on tax dollars, this city of 150,000 people is about to be long on ideas -- and perhaps a little paper, glue and elbow grease mixed in.

Roughly 600 University of Oregon students in 25 classes will devote 80,000 hours to Salem during the coming year. The novel program, part of the university's three-year-old Sustainable Cities Initiative, will focus on making Salem more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Students in architecture, planning, law, journalism and business classes will explore how



Salem could nurture green business clusters, reuse industrial byproducts, connect parks with bicycle paths, redevelop brownfields and design energy-efficient municipal buildings, among other things. Just as important, the students will consider market and regulatory barriers to implementing their ideas.

"If there isn't a lot of economic activity and ability to make these kinds of substantive changes in the built environment today, then it's the perfect time to be laying out the ideas and plans for the future," contended Marc Schlossberg, a planning professor and co-director of the Sustainable Cities Initiative. "We like to call this tilling the soil."

### **Till today, reap tomorrow**

Students will create a strategy for redeveloping land between Salem's central business district and Riverfront City Park, which lines the eastern edge of the Willamette River. The architecture, law and planning students' work will take into account the city's downtown strategic action plan, the framework for urban renewal investments.

Meanwhile, the Salem City Council is weighing whether to loan \$500,000 to a team of developers to finish a high-profile tower with space for residents and retailers. The eight-story Rivers Condominiums building sits adjacent to vacant lots today, but city leaders envision a bustling riverfront neighborhood tomorrow.

"That's a key to keeping downtown vibrant," Salem City Manager Linda Norris said.

In addition to brainstorming ways to spur more downtown development, students will consider how to connect the city's parks with bicycle and pedestrian trails. Potential environmental benefits include less automobile traffic and pollution, city planners contend.

"We have a lot of good data about the number of cars that move through but not much about the bikes," said Courtney Knox, the city's lead staffer on the project.

Students will also be tasked with designing a new home for Salem's police department and redesigning a 1972 civic center as a hub for other municipal workers.

"We're looking for ways to make it more energy efficient, leaving the '70s behind, we hope," Knox explained. "The space is just not configured well for current work habits and culture."

Working on such projects will give students a comprehensive look at how a city really works, said University of Oregon architecture professor and program co-director Nico Larco.

"An architecture student starts to see how important the political process is -- that it's not just about design," Larco added.

The city will chip in about \$345,000 for the university collaboration, dubbed the Sustainable City Year. Last year, students put in about 100,000 hours of work for the Portland suburb of Gresham.

Among the students' paper-and-glue models and glossy reports were plans for an energy-efficient city hall and weekday commuter rail parking lot that doubles as an outdoor market and music venue on weekends. Students also explored how this suburb of more than 100,000 people could improve pedestrian activity, redevelop a rock quarry, reduce stormwater runoff and adapt to climate change.

### **Greening the ivory tower**

The Sustainable Cities Initiative is perhaps the most comprehensive effort by a U.S. university to infuse sustainability into its curricula and community outreach. In recent years, green chemistry, business and design classes have sprouted alongside organic gardens and recycling centers at the University of Oregon's campus in Eugene and at other colleges and universities.

In Annville, Pa., for example, farmers feed their pigs food scraps from Lebanon Valley College's dining and catering services. At Meredith College, in Raleigh, N.C., students and employees buy shares in a farm and receive organic produce.

Higher-education officials contend that the sustainability movement is a new twist on an age-old mission.

"We're putting the public back in public university," said Robert Young, a University of Oregon planning professor and Sustainable Cities Initiative co-director.

"By very definition, sustainability is looking at environmental-, economic- and equity-based public interests," Young explained. "It's the historical role of the public university."

Karen Arabas, a professor of environmental science at Willamette University in downtown Salem, said private schools such as hers share that mission. She points to the 168-year-old institution's motto: "Not unto ourselves alone are we born."

"We have a strong sense of service on campus, and sustainability transcends every field," Arabas added. "When students graduate, these are some of the skills and knowledge they'll

need in the world, whether they go into law, business or medicine."

Willamette -- which topped a 2008 National Wildlife Federation ranking of U.S. schools that engage in sustainability activities -- uses its Center for Sustainable Communities to foster campus-community collaboration. The 2,600-student university began hosting regular sustainability retreats for students, faculty and administrators in 2005 and is now working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore habitat in a 300-acre research forest west of Salem.

The school looks at everything from how much locally harvested, organic food it serves to how many tons of greenhouse gases it emits.

Having a small environmental footprint is a big bragging right in these parts.

The Princeton Review and U.S. Green Building Council ranked Willamette, the University of Oregon and four other Oregon universities among the top 286 "green" colleges for 2011, based on the schools' practices, policies and curricula. The mere existence of such a [list](#) is evidence that universities, students and prospective employers are paying increasing attention to sustainability issues, said David Soto, the Princeton Review's director of college ratings.

The publisher surveyed 12,000 college applicants and parents earlier this year, and 64 percent of respondents said they would value having information about a school's environmental commitment. Almost a fifth of those respondents said such information would "very much" influence which school they choose.

"A lot of schools are starting to give guidance on green jobs -- what a green job is and how to secure one," Soto added.

### **'One coffee cup at a time'**

Jobs are on just about everyone's mind in Salem, where the unemployment rate hovers stubbornly above 10 percent. People here are quick to note that a city that works, must be a city that works.

Coffee House Café owner DeLapp suggested that the municipal government could generate downtown jobs and foot traffic by offering building owners incentives to fill vacant street-level retail spaces. At the same time, existing businesses should buy locally when possible.

"One coffee cup at a time, hopefully we can change things," quipped DeLapp, who sells organic coffee roasted in a nearby town.

Christopher Marley, owner of a downtown art gallery called Pheromone, said Salem needs a more effective business-led effort to persuade new companies to move to the city. Salem could improve its prospects of attracting and retaining employers by improving its arts and entertainment options downtown.

"I really do think that if you build it they will come, as clichéd as that sounds," added Marley, who opened his gallery three months ago. "Businesses have to be wooed."

Government is far and away Salem's largest employment sector, so the municipal government is trying to lure clean-technology companies to its new Salem Renewable Energy and Technology Center near the municipal airport and I-5. Among the 80-acre business park's first tenants is Sanyo Electric Co., which opened a factory last fall that produces solar ingots and wafers for photovoltaic cells.

"We're working hard at attracting companies that are good for the environment and related to sustainability," City Manager Norris promised.

In the coming year, Oregon students will explore how Salem could foster such business clusters.

"Sustainability is something we have to pay attention to," said architecture professor Larco. "We're starting to see 'green' translate not only into environmental and human health but into business and dollars."

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# Students add fresh eyes to Salem's priorities for the future

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

October 11, 2010

The city of Salem is harnessing the untapped resources of university students for a year's worth of work that could change the face of downtown and beyond.

Oregon students offer alternative for Salem's park connections, Willamette River waterfront, civic center, an affordable-housing project and more in an effort to propel the city's paper priorities to on-the-ground realities.

From now until June, 600 students from the University of Oregon and Portland State University will be tackling 14 major projects in Salem.

It's part of an innovative program, the Sustainable City Year, designed to provide real-world work and hands-on learning for students and, in turn, generate dozens of ideas, reports and design plans for city staff. The focus is on economic, environmental and social sustainability.

Founded three years ago, the program turns its attention to one Oregon city each year in a competitive process.

Salem's projects will be part of about 30 courses taught by 25 faculty members. The courses range from architecture and public policy to business and law.

"The idea is to push things along," said Chris Jones, co-manager of the Sustainable City Year at the University of Oregon. "Sometimes in a city, in a government, things get stuck. Our plan is to push things along and get things unstuck."

Every course will provide city staff with some kind of document — from architectural drawings to professional posters. Much of the research will be presented at city council work sessions.



**Timothy J. Gonzalez | Statesman Journal**  
Salem police Lt. Scott Hayes gives a tour Wednesday to architecture students from the University of Oregon as part of the Sustainable City Year program. The students are helping with the city's sustainability projects.

Salem's 14 projects

University of Oregon and Portland State University students will work on 14 major projects in Salem as part of the Sustainable City Year program. They are:

Redeveloping the area south of Mission Street SE: Design guidelines for transition area between downtown and residential area.

North downtown waterfront redevelopment: Design concepts for opportunity sites in area between River and Broadway, north of Union; and identify barriers to redevelopment.

Orchard Village green community integration: Create a development plan for 2.87-acre Orchard Village site, between

"A lot of the work is generating ideas and possibilities and raising issues," said Sustainable City Year co-manager Amy Hause. "Sort of like a massive brainstorming for the city on how to approach problems."

University of Oregon staff estimate that Salem will receive 80,000 hours of faculty-supervised multidisciplinary student coursework. The city will spend about \$345,000 for the collaboration. Some of the funds will go toward the fixed costs to operate the Sustainable City Year program and things like field trips.

But most of the city's investment will be used to pay students hired at the end of the term to prepare the final reports summarizing all of the students' ideas. The cost for the service is estimated at between \$3.50 and \$5.50 an hour for the hired students, compared to \$100 to \$200 an hour for a consultant, according to city staff.

"All of this study or planning or input would cost us thousands of thousands of thousands of dollars if we hired engineers, consultants and architects," said Salem Mayor Janet Taylor. "A fresh look by graduates in many disciplines of education is priceless. It may help us to accelerate our ability to accomplish some goals we have had for a long time."

A civic center and police facility redesign is one such goal.

In 2009, a city council subcommittee directed staff to produce a police bond measure to build a new police facility in the civic center. But Salem doesn't have the budget and resources to move that goal along right now.

With the help of two upper-level architecture courses and a firm hired by the city to work with the students, staff will be much closer to actual designs for the facility.

"It's a lot of money (a police facility bond measure)," Taylor said. "It's not something you easily go out and ask for. But when you have a really good in-depth study of what could or couldn't be done, it gives you a foundation to build on to get community support."

For another project, students in five different courses will focus on encouraging redevelopment of properties in north downtown along the riverfront — in the area between the river and Broadway Street NE, north of Union Street NE.

"We are curious about why this area is not redeveloping," said Courtney Knox, a project manager in the city's urban development department. "We want the students to identify the barriers to redevelopment so that the city's urban renewal department can make changes to spur development."

Salem Parkway and Shangri Lane Ave. NE, adjacent private property and infill options for other Salem Housing Authority multifamily properties.

Civic center and police facility: Create two to three design concepts for new police facility and civic center redesign. Student work is fed by and feeds professional architect effort to prepare conceptual design of new police facility and reuse of civic center.

Downtown parks connectivity: Create a single integrated parks connectivity plan for Wallace, Riverfront, Minto-Brown, Bush's Pasture Park, via existing and future trail connections.

Restoration of Minto-Brown Island area: Create an interpretive trails plan to connect the approximately 160 acres of restoration area with the existing 900-acre Minto-Brown Island Park.

Integrating Riverfront Park with Pringle Creek: Design concepts for Pringle Creek trail connection.

Economic prosperity strategic action plan: Develop a community-based five-year economic prosperity strategic action plan that includes goals, objectives, actions and performance metrics.



Another class will examine the opportunities for redevelopment along the Willamette River waterfront south of Mission Street SE to Owens Street S.

Two other classes will work to connect Salem's core area parks with a system of urban trails and bicycle routes.

The reports and architectural designs will be studied by city staff or independent consultants and tweaked based on the public's feedback. In many cases, the ideas won't be implemented for five to 10 years.

For some of the projects, a "fix" or design isn't the goal — it's the in-depth look at an area that is the most beneficial.

For example, city staff also identified downtown traffic circulation as one of the major priorities for the city. Students will develop alternatives to the existing one-way transportation grid and test the impact of those alternatives on downtown traffic circulation, capacity, timing of signals and queuing.

It's not that the city's traffic engineers couldn't do this work — it's that it is so time-consuming to examine all the "what-ifs."

"The results from this course are not going to result in panacea," said Knox, also the city's liaison for the Sustainable City Year. "It's just some great research and data to help us understand how changes to some intersections affect other areas."

But the benefit of the Sustainable City Year is hardly summed up in the research, plans and reports Salem will receive from each class.

In Gresham, which was the program's inaugural city last year, the students impacted city staff far more than the city's built environment.

"City staff got a charge out of the new energy and excitement and learning from the students," said Laura Bridges, communications director for the city of Gresham.

It turned out that having young, enthusiastic people running around Gresham made city staff excited to come to work and apply a whole new way of thinking.

Beth Casper can be reached at [bethanncasper@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanncasper@hotmail.com).

Market analysis: Create a supply chain, business cluster and market analysis for renewable energy product manufacturing, food processing, metal manufacturing or other clusters.

Industrial byproduct reuse: Recommend ways to reuse byproducts of the biofuel process, food processing and at the Willow Lake Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Civic engagement strategy: Create a civic engagement strategy to include new technology and broader participation in decision making; create a multimedia field guide mapping cultural resources in North Salem.

Downtown traffic circulation: Conduct an analysis of alternatives to one-way transportation grid, and test effects of those alternatives.

Parking standards: Review parking standards for mixed-use areas in other communities and create standards for Salem.

City attorney externship: A law school student will work in the city attorney's

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## University students focus on making Salem more sustainable

Sustainable Cities Initiative's second year offers 25 classes to solve real-world dilemmas

Sarah Walters | News reporter

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**Updated:** Wednesday, October 13, 2010 00:10

Students from multiple academic fields across the University have the unique opportunity for their work to be applied to real-world problems.

The Sustainable City Year is a collaboration between the University and Salem to make Oregon's capital city more sustainable under the Sustainable Cities Initiative, a University program that aims to develop and inform the public about sustainable projects.

During the school year, 25 courses, 25 faculty members and more than 600 undergraduate and graduate students will work on development, planning and civic engagement projects in Oregon's capital city. Multidisciplinary fields involved in SCY include architecture, planning, public policy and management, law, business management and journalism. Students inaugurated SCY by making their first visits to Salem earlier this month.

Law and graduate student Jessica Bloomfield is getting her master's degree in community and regional planning in the planning, public policy and management department. She also works as a graduate research fellow for SCI and is taking three SCY courses. Bloomfield is from Philadelphia, and she said that part of the reason she moved across the country was because of SCY.

"It's a great opportunity to combine my two interests (law and planning)," she said. "SCY is how it all comes to fruition."

Architecture graduate student Amanda K. Morgan also works for SCI and is taking a SCY studio class this term. She likes how SCY has a tangible goal with real-world clients.

"It has a practical application to real-world problems," Morgan said. "It's been a really transformative experience for me so far."

Architecture graduate student James Austin is attending his first term at the University and is excited about SCY.

"It's a great experience," Austin said. He went on an SCY field trip to San Francisco for his studio class that Morgan is also registered in. The students looked at examples of how the city designed areas around the waterfront. SCY students also went to Salem on Oct. 1 to speak with the Salem mayor and other city officials.

SCI co-founder and planning, public policy and management professor Marc Schlossberg said that there is nothing else like the SCY in the world.

"It's redefining the way that public institutions of higher education are serving the public good," Schlossberg said.

SCI students and faculty are encouraging interested students to join, SCI co-founder and planning, public policy and management professor Robert Young said.

"It's something that can go into a student's portfolio and give the University of Oregon student an extra boost," Young said.

Undergraduate and graduate students register for courses on DuckWeb to get involved with SCY. All of the SCY courses are already existing classes.

"Energy and excitement is what we want right now," Bloomfield said.

Gresham, Ore., was chosen as the first city for the project, which started last year. Portland State University is involved with SCY for the first time this year.

swalters@dailymerald.com

Students from multiple academic fields across the University have the unique opportunity for their work to be applied to real-world problems.

The Sustainable City Year is a collaboration between the University and Salem to make Oregon's capital city more sustainable under the Sustainable Cities Initiative, a University program that aims to develop and inform the public about sustainable projects.

During the school year, 25 courses, 25 faculty members and more than 600 undergraduate and graduate students will work on development, planning and civic engagement projects in Oregon's capital city. Multidisciplinary fields involved in SCY include architecture, planning, public policy and management, law, business management and journalism. Students inaugurated SCY by making their first visits to Salem earlier this month.

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## South Salem graduate gets chance to shape city

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

December 13, 2010

Max Reich, 21, has a unique opportunity to make a difference in his hometown.

As part of an architecture class at the University of Oregon, Reich is designing a new police facility for the city of Salem.

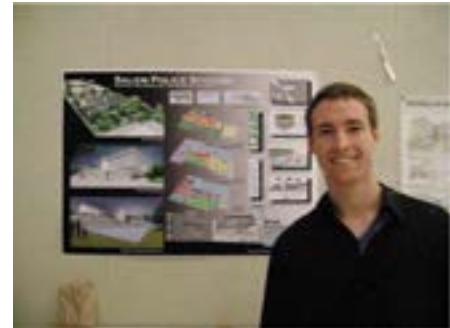
The new facility is a top priority for the city, and one of 14 projects that students will help plan as part of the Sustainable City Year, an innovative program that connects students with real-world problems.

A 2007 graduate of South Salem High School, Reich designed the facility to be environmentally friendly and take advantage of the pond already located on the civic center campus.

"I'm using the pond as a passive cooling system," he said. "The building I designed is sitting on the pond and in the summer, when the winds blow from the north, they blow cool air into the building. Since we have that pond, we might as well use it."

He said the project was a difficult one — partly because of its size and partly because it is on a campus of 1970-era buildings.

"It is a lot bigger than other projects we usually do," Reich said. "It's kind of cool to make this small facility bigger but it is hard to find a place to make it fit on the site."



**Special to the Statesman Journal**  
University of Oregon student Max Reich in front of his Salem Police Station presentation.

Another challenge is tying together the whole campus.

“The buildings and the spaces in between keep them divided,” he said.

Reich, who will graduate in 2012, said that the ability to work on a real project in architecture classes is rare, but the results are better.

“There is some pressure or motivation to do better in this type of project because everyone wants their design to look good in front of the city people,” he said.

A review partway through the course with Mayor Janet Taylor and Chief of Police Jerry Moore gave the students much-needed feedback on whether their conceptual design would work for the city’s police officers.

Reich feels a bit more pressure given that he’s working on a project in his hometown and with people he has worked with before. As a high school student, he was a job shadow with Garth Brandaw and Kirk Sund, now of CB Two Architects, the Salem firm hired by the city of Salem to help students with their designs and to bring a concept to city council in the spring.

“I feel like I’d like to do well with the project because I am from Salem and I know the people who are working on the project,” Reich said. “I feel the need to succeed.”

Being from Salem didn’t offer Reich any advantages for this project. While Reich knows parts of Salem really well, the police facility was not one. He had only visited the police facility on a field trip in grade school.

Beth Casper can be reached at [bethanncasper@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanncasper@hotmail.com)

## Students draft center's future

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

December 13, 2010

Twenty-four University of Oregon architecture students took on a daunting task: design Salem's 1970s-era civic center campus as an icon for the city.

Two architecture studio classes were charged with designing a new building for Salem's police department and redesigning the civic center to be more navigable and accessible.

The task is one of 14 projects that students will help plan as part of the Sustainable City Year, a partnership this academic year between the University of Oregon and Salem in which a number of courses from across the university focus on assisting Salem with its sustainability goals and projects.

Last year, Salem City Council identified the need for a new police facility because the current building is about one-third the size that's needed, inadequate for meeting with the public and seismically unfit.

"They (police officers and staff) are just jammed in there everywhere," said Allen Dannen, Salem's project manager for the civic center redesign. "They do a good job of using every square inch that they have but it makes doing their job much more difficult."

An evaluation last year showed that the police department needed about 100,000 square feet, said Salem Police Chief Jerry Moore.

"And there are safety issues for the community involved," Moore said. "We bring prisoners from the jail and ride up the same elevator as people who need a permit to buy a house."

The police facility is in what would be considered the basement of the civic center — an unsafe place if there was an earthquake, an event where police officers will be needed in the community.

Plus, day-to-day interactions with the public are difficult, Moore said.

"The department is not user friendly," he said. "It is hard for the community to find. There are no meeting rooms for community members and police to take care of business."



**DANIELLE PETERSON | Statesman Journal**

University of Oregon architecture master's program student King Tang presents ideas for a new Salem Civic Center/Police Facility redesign during a review session at the school Nov. 29.

### See students' civic center ideas

The architectural renderings by the students are on display at Salem Public Library, 585 Liberty St. SE, until mid-January. This is part of the city's effort to ensure that City of Salem residents see the final results of the students' work.



The City of Salem and two architecture firms, Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects in Portland and Salem-based CB Two Architects, provided the students with the station's requirements — rooms for lockers, evidence storage and criminal investigations, for example — and ongoing support throughout the class.

"They opened the doors and looked at a wide range of ideas," said Garth Brandaw of CB Two Architects and a University of Oregon graduate. "There were 24 students in the studios, and no two ideas were similar."

The designs ranged from a 25-story tower to a building that wrapped around the west side of city hall. Most students designed the police facility in either Peace Plaza or the space between city hall and Mirror Pond. To connect the existing buildings with the new facility, students used similar shapes in their design and some students mimicked the concrete façade of city hall.

"Essentially we've been hired to explore the crazy options," said Josh Hilton, the adjunct instructor for the course. "The more designs and varied the locations, it is more for the design team to draw from."

That the students developed a design at all is testament to their energy and enthusiasm about the project.

They had a mere seven weeks to design their idea. And at 75,000 square feet, the police facility is one of the biggest buildings these architecture students have been asked to create.

They also had to work around existing buildings, such as the library, with a 40-year-old appearance.

"You want (the new police facility) to fit in in some respects but also pay respect to the existing buildings and layout," said Hilton. "There is any number of ways of doing that — utilize forms or materials, or sometimes you go the other way and set off or highlight the existing buildings."

Open spaces, like Peace Plaza, couldn't just be filled in — city staff asked that if an area is removed, it must be replaced.

In addition, the students incorporated sustainability into their design.

"It's about conserving natural resources and reducing waste and cost and electrical usage and, on the other hand, it is sustainability in a more community-oriented sense — how to have it function now and 50 years from now," Hilton said.

Most students incorporated solar panels into their design, but some tried unique ideas, such as generating energy from a waterwheel in Mill Creek.

"A lot of them are thinking really hard about the public access to the facility and connecting with the larger community toward downtown and Riverfront Park," said the city's Dannen.

The students' final reviews were given in front of city staff, elected officials, architects from the two firms hired by the city and the chief of police.

"You can tell they are juiced," Hilton said about his students. "They really want to succeed in it because people might pick their design. When the police station does get designed and built, the students might go and say, 'They chose a piece of my design.'"

Now, the two architectural firms continue the design work started by the students and prepare several options for city councilors, who are looking into the possibility of a bond measure to

support funding for the new public safety facility.

"We'll be weighing all of the ideas and pulling pieces and parts from the different projects," said Kirk Sund of CB Two Architects.

City staff expects the architects to offer several possible options by early spring.

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SERVING SALEM, KEIZER AND THE MID-VALLEY

## Students draft center's future



DANIELLE PETERSON / Statesman Journal

University of Oregon architecture master's program student King Tang presents ideas for a new Salem Civic Center/Police Facility redesign during a review session at the school Nov. 29.

### UO architecture classes asked to submit designs for facilities

By **BEITH CASPER**  
Special to the Statesman Journal

Twenty-four University of Oregon architecture students took on a daunting task: design Salem's 1970s-era civic center campus as an icon for the city.

Two architecture studio classes were charged with designing a new building for Salem's police department and redesigning the civic center to be more navigable and accessible.

### About the series

The Statesman Journal is following the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with a monthly story about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including Sustainable Cities Initiative connecting city parks, redeveloping the north downtown waterfront and creating a civic engagement strategy.

The task is one of 14 projects that students will help plan as part of the Sustainable City Year, a partnership this academic year between the University of Oregon and Salem in which a number of courses from across the university focus on assist-

ing Salem with its sustainability goals and projects.

Last year Salem City Council identified the need for a new police facility because

See Sustainability, 5A



### South Salem graduate gets chance to shape city

By **BEITH CASPER**  
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Max Reich, 21, has a unique opportunity to make a difference in his hometown.

As part of an architecture class at the University of Oregon, Reich is designing a new police facility for the city of Salem.

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See South, 5A



Special to the Statesman Journal  
University of Oregon student Max Reich is in front of his Salem Police Station presentation.



Book drive total:  
16,000+

We asked  
and again  
you came  
through

Annual book drive  
exceeds goal with  
final count to come

By **MARTIN HANSEN**  
Statesman Journal

The Reading for All Holiday Book Drive wrapped up Sunday after a 12-day run, and although all the books haven't been tallied yet, organizer Cathy Crocker is thrilled with the results.

"We know we have more than 16,000," she said. "We are just super-thankful, that's the message I want to get across. Yes, it's less than last year, but we understand the times and economy."

Last year's inaugural event brought in more than 32,000 books. This year, the group was more specific about the types of books that were needed — new or gently used children's books — which resulted in donations of a better quality, Crocker said.

A final number is expected to be available this evening.

"They're still coming in," Crocker said.

■ **ONLINE POLL:** Did you donate a book (or more) to the Reading for All Holiday Book Drive? Answer at StatesmanJournal.com.

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# Salem Business Journal

SERVING THE MID-WILLAMETTE VALLEY

January 2011 Front Page Articles

## Graduate Students Nurture Salem's Sustainable Future

There are some shrewd, forward-thinking people working for the City of Salem. Here's the deal they brokered with the University of Oregon and Portland State: We'll invest just over \$300,000 to support a one year research and design project that will leave Salem \$12 million richer!

No kidding. In September, more than 600 students began a year of academic coursework, building upon Salem City Council's priorities for increasing livability, sustainability, traffic

navigability, cultural excitement, citizen participation and economic vitality. Before wrapping the project next June, graduate students from schools of: business, architecture, law, transportation engineering, public policy, journalism, arts and humanities, etc. will expend more than 80,000 hours into Salem's Sustainable Cities Initiative package. Consider the "normal" cost for that kind of consulting and you see how quickly the value mounts into the millions of dollars.

The choice of Salem was made based on two things. First, the winning proposal submitted to the U of O's Sustainable Cities Initiative by City Urban Development staff. The second reason was the spectrum of challenging projects Salem has in mind, which proved irresistible to the Sustainable Cities Initiative judges. After all, challenge drives creativity and university professors are looking for suitable laboratories in which to immerse their students. It's a rare win-win opportunity. City Manager Linda Norris said: "The City's participation in the program allows us to leverage existing limited resources to move projects forward much faster than would otherwise be possible." Project manager Courtney Knox estimates the initiative output to get us two or three years closer to the goal than otherwise.

The comprehensive design project will look at the city as a whole, through 18 individual projects. The Economic Prosperity Strategic Action Plan, for example, will combine analysis of existing industry assets with plans for improving those sectors. Ramping up Salem's competitive advantage will be part of the plan, looking at industries such as renewable energy product manufacturing, food processing and metal fabrication. Tory Banford is the city staff member heading up that effort.

Another key element of the work is a traffic circulation project, aimed largely at the downtown core. Because downtown vibrancy is a large part of a city's appeal, planners are keen to make traffic flow more smoothly through the core while simultaneously providing ample parking for business owners, employees, shoppers and visitors.

With a state highway and railroad dissecting easy access to Salem's revitalized riverfront, the plan will also look at alternatives to improve pedestrian and bicycle access on various east-west corridors from downtown.

Sustainable...Continued from page 1 But perhaps the most complex of the projects involves the redevelopment of North Downtown Waterfront. "Because of some business closures along the waterfront, and other large parcels nearby owned by one entity, there is an opportunity to look seriously at a gradual transition from industrial into something more active and profitable, Knox said.



Photo by Ron Cooper

Students, faculty, staff, and community members tour Salem's North Downtown Waterfront Development (specifically, that's Glenn Gross, Urban Planning Administrator, in the forefront. Rebekah Engle, Chair of CAN-DO (Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization) at the far left. UO faculty membe Robert Young is in the center (orange jacket).



Alex Rhoten, principal broker for Coldwell Banker Commercial Real Estate, has his headquarters smack dab in the middle of that area. He has referred to the potential of the area as "Salem's answer to The Pearl District in Portland."

"Five different college courses will be collaborating on this piece of the strategy," Knox said. By early spring, work on concept alternatives will be complete, meetings with various downtown stakeholder groups will be complete, and a presentation of preferred design changes and action steps will be presented to the Downtown Advisory Board, Vision 2020 and the City Council. Sheri Wahrgren, another City staffer, is the contact for this part of the project. Knox said that plans call for exhibiting many of the new design concepts at various public gallery spaces throughout the city, to encourage the public to review what may come next.

Another notable project includes the design for a new police department building to replace the cramped and structurally vulnerable location underneath the Civic Center. Other projects include a multifamily housing complex at Orchard Village in north Salem, and creating stress-relief designs to buffer busy residential areas in the South Mission part of the city from the urban streets feeding downtown.

Connecting parks in downtown to Wallace Marine and Minto-Brown is also in the works, part of the effort to create more of a magnet for visitors and residents alike. "This project is all about 'value-added,'" Knox continued. The Sustainable Cities Initiative is adding tremendous value to efforts begun by City Council, city planners and the Urban Renewal Agency. Once projects are initiated, once some of the "barriers" to better traffic flow and better business opportunities are removed, we'll see even further value added to Salem's attractiveness, economic health and sustainability, she added.

"One of the Council's priorities is also to increase the involvement of residents in the process," Knox continued. There are numerous ways, but neighborhood associations are a great way to leverage your voice; they are our traditional method for public outreach in this city, she said, "and this project may give them an opportunity to rebrand themselves." She also mentioned eagerness to work more effectively with various media organizations as well as organizations representing distinct ethnic groups in the city.

For more information about the Sustainable Cities Initiative or any of the specific projects, check out the City of Salem website: <http://www.cityofsalem.net>. On the homepage, you'll see a link to the Sustainable Cities Initiative on the right, under City Highlights.

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OREGON'S MID-WILLAMETTE VALLEY

## Concept plan for Minto-Brown Island Interpretive Trails to be presented

Statesman Journal • January 11, 2011

A presentation on the Minto-Brown Island Park Interpretive Trails and the Park Concept Plan will be held at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday Jan. 12 at Pringle Community Hall located at 606 Church Street SE.

The plan is part of the Sustainable Cities Initiative which works in collaboration with the University of Oregon that focuses on engaging students to undertake the conceptual design and planning of specific, high-priority projects within Salem through faculty-supervised multidisciplinary student course work.

This course is made up of upper level undergraduate and graduate landscape architecture students.

The public is invited to attend the presentation.

For more information, call parks superintendent Keith Kever, at (503) 588-6336, or e-mail [kkeever@cityofsalem.net](mailto:kkeever@cityofsalem.net).

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The advertisement features the USA Today logo at the top left. The main title 'AutoPilot' is in a large, bold, black font, with a blue airplane icon to its right. Below the title is a smartphone displaying the app's interface, which includes a weather forecast for 'WASHINGTON, D.C.' and a travel itinerary. To the right of the phone, the text reads 'The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®'. Below this, it says 'Presented by: Hampton' with the Hampton logo. At the bottom right, a blue button contains the text 'SEE HOW IT WORKS »'.

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## City and businesses embrace industrial ecology

Field of study marks a change in how local companies interact

By Beth Casper • Special to the Statesman Journal • January 17, 2011

These days, companies looking for ways to be environmentally friendly don't have to go it alone.

Business partnerships are developing between companies that can use each other's waste, combine their transportation needs or increase renewable energy sources.

There is, in fact, an entire field of study related to the idea: industrial ecology.

"There is only so much that one facility can do on its own," said Jennifer Howard-Grenville, assistant professor of management at the University of Oregon's business school. "Rather than looking at environmental issues in one place, students look at a company as part of a supply chain, as part of a regional economy. That's when you start to see symbiotic relationships."

Students in Howard-Grenville's fall Industrial Ecology course studied ways to make two Salem businesses and the City of Salem more sustainable through partnerships. It is part of the yearlong Sustainable City Year program, which connects students with real-world problems in one Oregon city a year.

Howard-Grenville's students worked on five separate projects and then made presentations and produced reports for the city and the Salem businesses.

"I was surprised and impressed," said the city's Annie Gorski about the students' work. "For the most part, they were asked to solve really difficult biological problems. There was a lot of science in what they did. I was surprised by how much information came back."

Students working with the City of Salem researched whether treated water from the treatment plant could be reused at a local business — say, a cement company that needs water in its cement trucks — rather than discharged to the Willamette River.

It quickly became clear to the students that transporting treated water from Willow Lake treatment plant to a nearby business was not cost-effective.

So the students looked elsewhere for solutions.

They found two sustainable approaches. They recommended installing regional water treatment plants near businesses that could reuse the treated water. And they recommended a much more sustainable approach by asking if there was a way to reuse water where it is used initially — that way, the water would never go to a treatment facility in the first place.

For example, if a corporate site reused the water from sinks to water plants in their landscaping, less water would need to be treated at the city's treatment plant and the companies would reduce their water needs.

"Everyone from Norpac to SeSequential is using Class A drinking water (often for processes that don't need such high-quality water)," said Gorski. "Because we don't have a water shortage now it's not a problem. But with future growth, we're going to want to divert water for different purposes so not everyone is getting the same clean drinking water — not everyone needs Class A water."

Gorski said that because of the students' work, the city has some new tools to evaluate infrastructure for water and sewer, including a comprehensive financial model that can be used to evaluate when and how to expand energy generation at Willow

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Lake. The city is also evaluating other recommendations, like installing pipe at the 650-acre Mill Creek Corporate Center to reuse some of the water on site.

In another project, students found that the best solution — both economic and sustainable — was sometimes counter-intuitive.

Norpac's approximately 300 tons of canned food waste — rejected mainly because the cans are dented — is landfilled. At a cost of \$16,800 per year, it seemed like it would make business sense to open the cans, compost or land spread the contents and sell the cans for scrap metal.

But students were surprised to find that the answer was not so simple.

"I started the project with an optimistic point of view," said Kelly McKeag, an MBA student expected to graduate in June. "It seemed like a really easy solution. But when you take into account all the logistical costs, it's expensive."

It quickly became clear to the students that a partnership with several other canneries and a compost facility would be needed. The students also recommended that Norpac centralize its process so that all of the rejected cans end up at the same plant.

"They came up with good ideas, and they got a pretty good handle on the problem," said Mark Steele, an engineer at Norpac. "Because Norpac has been working on these problems for a number of years, it's not easy to find new solutions."

Assistant Professor Howard-Grenville said she appreciated how the students grasped the complexity of the problems and yet still tried to find reasonable solutions.

"To me, the biggest part of the learning is how complex each situation is," Howard-Grenville said. "That's one of the benefits (of the Sustainable City Year program) — to see how messy the real world is."

*Beth Casper can be reached at [bethanncasper@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanncasper@hotmail.com)*



Treated water flows through the outfall into the Willamette River at Willow Lake Water Pollution Control Facility. (KOBBI R. BLAIR | Statesman Journal)

### About the series

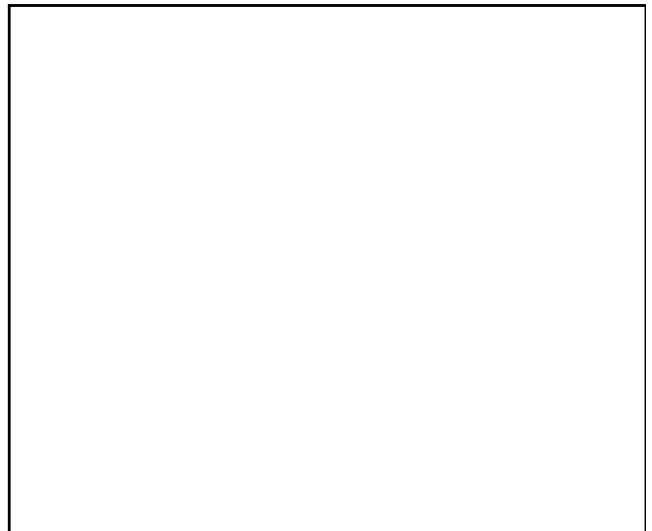
The Statesman Journal is following the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with a monthly story about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including connecting city parks, redeveloping the north downtown waterfront and creating a civic engagement strategy.

### Upcoming presentations

Students in the Sustainable City Year program will present their reports about several Salem projects in the next few weeks. The presentations are open to the public.

Jan. 25: South of Mission redevelopment project at 11 a.m. in City Council Chambers, 555 Liberty St. SE, Room 240.

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Jan. 27: Civic Engagement project at 5:30 p.m. in Pringle Hall Community Center, 606 Church St SE.

Feb. 8: Civic Engagement project at 6 p.m. in the Vern Miller Civic Center, 555 Liberty St. SE, Room 305.

## The projects

Students in the fall Industrial Ecology class chose to work on one of five specific projects:

-Could grease-trap food waste from a local biodiesel company help the City of Salem's wastewater treatment plant generate more energy in its digesters?

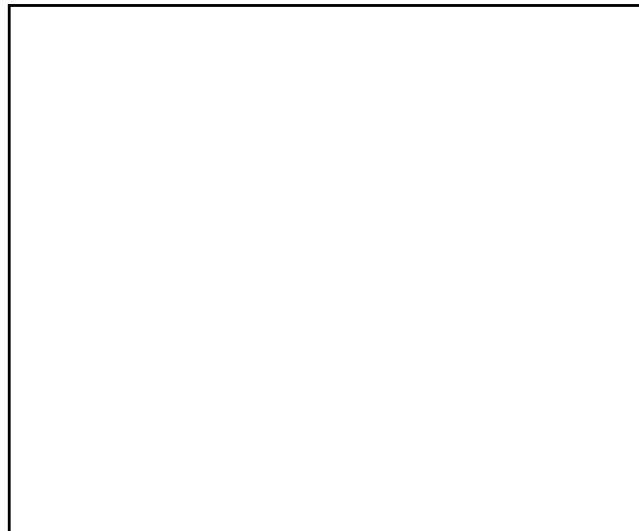
-Could treated water from the treatment plant be reused at a local business — say, a cement company that needs water in its cement trucks — rather than sent to the Willamette River?

-Is a fuel cell a viable alternative to generate energy from the methane produced at the treatment plant's digesters?

-Is there a way for Norpac, a local food-processing company, to recycle and compost 300 tons a year of canned food, rejected for quality reasons?

-Is there a better use 1,000 tons of mixed food waste a year from Norpac's frozen packaging plant than land spreading?

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## Student's background an asset during recent class

### Business and biology come together during management lesson

By Beth Casper • Special to the Statesman Journal • January 17, 2011

Lauren Schwartz' biology background was a surprising benefit in her fall business management class.

The 2008 Willamette University graduate was one of six students trying to determine if a waste product from SeSequential Pacific Biodiesel would help Salem's wastewater treatment plant make more energy while also helping to reduce costs and carbon emissions for the biodiesel company.

Part of the Sustainable City Year program at the University of Oregon, the class worked with Salem businesses to find more sustainable practices and connections with other businesses.

"I felt like I was continuing a mission that was taught to me at Willamette — as far as serving our community," said Schwartz, 24. "I was connecting back with Salem even as a graduate student."

Schwartz is a University of Oregon landscape architecture and business administration graduate student due to complete her studies in 2012.

But her science knowledge proved invaluable in this class.

"What I found most useful was my biology background in general — to understand the function of a digester for example," she said. "I was aware of the questions I needed to ask and how to sift through the science literature to find answers. Knowing the biology lingo - anaerobic versus aerobic — was useful. And so was understanding microbial communities."

Schwartz had visited Willow Lake Water Pollution Control Facility for a microbiology class during college. At that time, students took samples to study the bacteria present before and after two treatment processes.

"I think it was funny at the wastewater treatment facility because I was familiar with the unique smells

and sights and sounds," she said. "I felt a connection to the project."

This time, her class was studying energy production at Willow Lake and the financial details of adding a waste product from SeSequential Pacific Biodiesel to the plant's biodigesters.

The situation currently is this: The biodiesel plant converts used cooking oil to biodiesel. But the cooking oil collected from restaurants' grease traps is often contaminated with bits of food. After SeSequential filters the contamination from the oil, it is shipped to Portland to be dehydrated and landfilled.

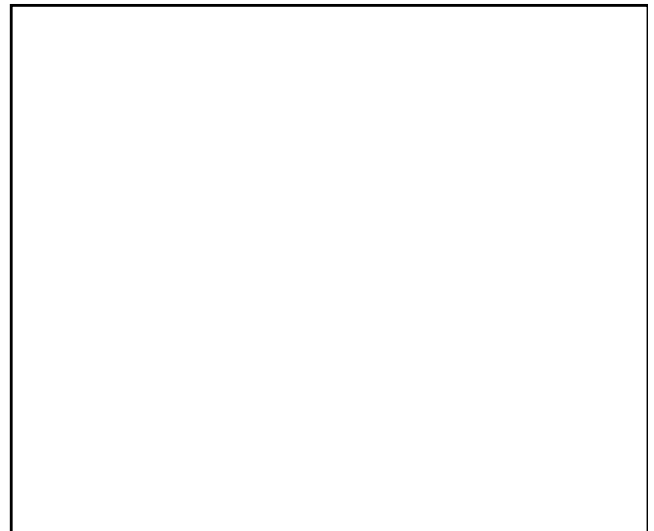
"In addition (to the transportation), we assumed that the process of drying takes some kind of energy," Schwartz said.

At Willow Lake, seven anaerobic biodigesters process solids carried into the plant by wastewater — from flushing toilets, for example. Bacteria in the biodigesters break down the solids so that they become benign enough to fertilize farmers' grass seed or hay fields. The breakdown process produces methane, which is captured and produces enough energy to cover one-third of the plant's electricity needs.

And here's the key: Willow Lake has excess capacity in their digesters.

So if SeSequential Pacific's grease-trap waste could be sent to Willow Lake's digesters, SeSequential could slash transportation costs and Willow Lake, once it

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upgrades its generator, could capture more methane and reduce electricity costs. Both would greatly improve the companies' environmental footprints.

"It's not a revolutionary idea," said SeQuential's Tyson. "It makes sense on paper and it makes sense regarding our carbon footprint and it makes sense financially."

Through their research, the students found that the project could be a successful partnership but several important details need to be worked out. The grease-trap waste from SeQuential needs testing to determine how much methane would be produced and if the waste would have any adverse effects on the digester.

"The biodigester is a sensitive system — anything you put in needs to be the right pH, temperature, etc. because it is relying on natural bacteria," Schwartz said. "Willow Lake would need to know if that sludge (from SeQuential) would need to be treated before going in the digester."

And the financial details for SeQuential are unclear because Willow Lake needs to charge fees for accepting waste from other companies.

But even though Schwartz met the requirements of the class, she wanted to go further. Compelled by her biology background, she wanted to test SeQuential's food waste herself and offer even more information to Willow Lake.

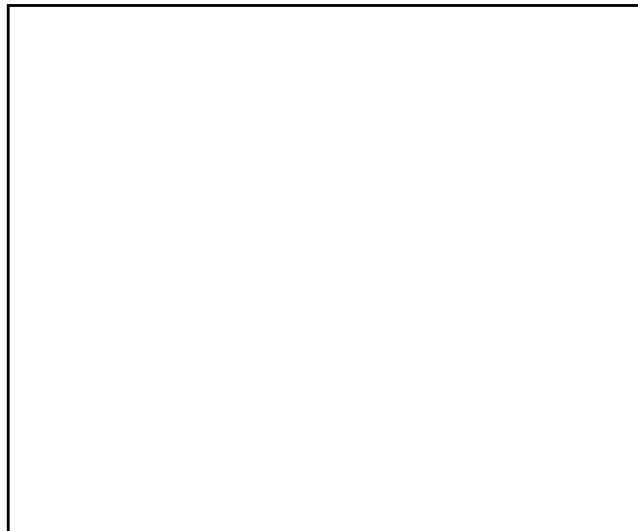
"I wanted to delve into the scientific processes themselves," she said, laughing. "I had to pull back. I wanted to be testing the temperature or pH of the sludge."

*Beth Casper can be reached at [bethanncasper@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanncasper@hotmail.com)*



Schwartz

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## STUDENTS TO SPEAK ON SCI

By [Tavis Evans](#)

from Salem Weekly, Section [News](#)

Posted on Tue Jan 25, 2011 at 11:43:33 PM PDT



Salem is at the halfway mark of the Sustainable Cities Initiative program, which partners University of Oregon faculty and classes with a city each year. The goal is to assist the city in achieving sustainable goals.

The projects help students apply what they have learned in class and provide a laboratory in which to test their skills. It also provides the city with fresh thinking and the latest expertise.

Around 275 students have joined together to help design and conceptualize special projects like the new police facility, new trails and restoration of Minto-Brown Park, improving civic engagement, sustainable streetlights and improving downtown circulation.

Vanessa Nevers, a University of Oregon student who hails from Seattle, said she enjoyed the challenge that these projects have posed to her and her fellow classmates.

"I think it is a really great opportunity to work with a real-world situation with city officials and the general public. It is a lot of information to process and exchange with each other."

But the projects have not been easy. They involve solving complex problems with public input in ten-week studio courses.

"It was definitely an intense process," said Karim Hassanein, an environmental architecture student, who worked on the restoration of the Minto Island area. His group came up with new ideas for trails, habitat restoration and new ideas for entry points and transportation.

"Trying to do all the research that went into this, as well as develop designs that we can stand up and defend in nine weeks of school, with other classes going on, was pretty intense," He said.

But Hassanein said in the end that it was very enjoyable class to be a part of. "It was a lot to think about, but honestly it was one of my favorite studios in the program," he said.

For the city's part, staff provided basic information as well as advice and criticism.

"There were emails going back and forth the whole time," Hassanein said, "We had about three midterm reviews, when a few people from the city came down to Eugene to give us criticism of what we had. We came down here a few times to the park to talk with people. They were definitely involved."

At the end of this year, SCI is expected to have had over 500 students work 80,000 hours for the city of Salem on special projects. SCI expects to involve 28 courses over 10 disciplines to help toward 16 city-identified projects.

Several students will be in attendance at an upcoming Salem City Council subcommittee meeting on February 3 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Pringle Community Hall. The Salem City Council subcommittee will meet on February 3 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Pringle Community Hall (606 Church St. NE). They'll be considering whether to recommend a bond measure to Salem City Council for a potential new policy facility. The design of the facility was part of the Fall course for SCI. Several students will be attendance and giving a presentation at the beginning of the meeting. **Correction: The print version of this story refers to a confidentiality agreement that does not exist, according to Chris Jones, the program manager at SCI. We regret the error. Information on how to access more information on specifics of the project is forthcoming. We'll continue covering the progress of the SCI project in the future.**



# Students reimagine South Salem corridor

Written by

**Beth Casper**  
Special to the Statesman Journal

7:17 AM, Feb. 17, 2011

Commercial and Liberty streets south of downtown Salem function like mini-highways.

Most cars travel quickly through the area bordered by Mission and Owens streets. Drivers keep their eyes on the road, and pedestrians and bikers make their routes on safer side streets.

Architecture students at the University of Oregon imagined a different transition between downtown and South Salem.

They designed a destination spot.

Picture it: Two-way traffic on both Commercial and Liberty streets southeast, which are lined with street trees. People drink coffee from café tables along the wide sidewalks. Apartments line the upper stories of the buildings. Street trees separate parking spots. And bikers travel easily from Bush's Pasture Park to the Willamette River.

The students' work was part of the innovative Sustainable City Year program, which teamed up with the city of Salem to

work on more than a dozen major projects.

The section — from Mission to Owens streets and flanked by the outer alleys next to Commercial and Liberty streets southeast — is part of the South Waterfront urban renewal area, established in 2007.

"We view this area as a critical transition between downtown and south residential areas," said Courtney Knox, project manager for the city of Salem. "Right now, it doesn't function as a transition. It is very tight and constrained and a lot of traffic goes through there. Yet, we want it to be a neighborhood-serving commercial district."

Even though the students were anxious to start designing the four-block stretch, professors Mark Gillem and Michael Fifield asked them to concentrate on the research.

The 30 graduate and undergraduate students in this architecture course took a field trip to San Francisco to study street designs and infill in neighborhoods similar

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to Salem.

Then they conducted nearly 100 interviews with residents, researched Salem's urban growth boundary and studied the history of the area from 1895 until now. They even analyzed how the heights of buildings along the corridors would affect sunlight hitting the streets.

"The traffic is so thick it is hard to see what is there, and you can't see that there is any place to park, and you don't feel like getting out of your car and walking the street," Knox said about the current condition of the section. "The students looked for ways to have all of those things happen. They also recognized that some of the properties are not in their highest and best use. Some redevelopment could entice more visits."

The students presented two plans: an incremental plan that allowed the city to make small changes — such as putting in street trees — which would then spur private development and then more city development; and the Grand Boulevard plan that would require a lot of up-front city investment and major changes to street design.

The centerpiece of the Grand Boulevard plan is Commercial Street as a bustling boulevard: a two-way street that allows traffic just driving through to take the center lanes and local traffic to take the outside lanes. A grassy median separates the two types of traffic.

Both plans added more greenery: street

trees, courtyards, green roofs and grassy boulevards. Both also created a connection between Bush's Pasture Park and Minto-Brown Island Park by extending Bush Street over railroad tracks to the river.

In both plans, the students encouraged the switch to two-way streets. A study in Washington found that switching from two-way to one-way reduced business along the road by 30 percent.

"Converting from one-way to two-way increases business," Gillem said. "So if businesses are really interested in more business, they should be pushing for a conversion."

Encouraging more pedestrians also is good for business, said architecture graduate student Erik Bonnett.

"There's the (Best Little) Roadhouse and other restaurants that are doing well," he said. "There is enough there that it is starting to be a place. But on the other hand, you have a lot of cars going really

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fast."

Traffic calming measures, such as more stoplights, buffers with bushes and parked cars, could increase pedestrian traffic because it's really the speed — not the number — of cars on the road that affect pedestrian numbers, he said.

"It can be a safe place to walk and a place that people can drive through efficiently," Bonnett said.

Another key piece of the students' plans was the preservation of the existing historic neighborhood.

"The historic character of the neighborhood drove their solutions," said Gillem. "They spent a lot of time thinking about the historic quality of the neighborhood and that influenced their design. That is our teaching goal. Architecture and planning is not about the architects. We are facilitators to help communities achieve their goals."

Members of the South Central Association of Neighbors told the students that they didn't want to see historic homes turned to condominiums or commercial development spilling into the residential areas.

That meant that both designs put large, multi-story buildings that accommodated retail, business and residential space on Commercial and Liberty streets and left the streets east and west of there alone.

"I was pleased that the students and professors took seriously our idea of having a firewall arrangement between the

corridors of Liberty and Commercial and the rest of the neighborhood," said Tom Andersen, chair of the SCAN neighborhood. "We live here because we like being close to downtown in a single-family historic residential area, and we want to keep it that way in the foreseeable future."

The students' vision was more than an exercise in beautifying an area or creating a more pedestrian-friendly road. It was an example of how Salem can grow without affecting farmland.

"If Salem grows at its current density, the (urban growth boundary) is going to have to grow by 31,348 acres," Gillem said.

"Basically the UGB is going to have to almost double. It can't go to the river, so it is going to go to farmland. If we are really serious about preserving farmland, we are going to have to incorporate greater density but in ways that are acceptable to neighbors."

The students concluded that building up major corridors with four- and five-story

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developments could accommodate the projected 326,000 people estimated in Salem by 2050 while also preserving historic neighborhoods and their residential atmosphere.

"If growth happens that way, then the wonderful bungalows can stay," said Gillem.

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## About this series

The Statesman Journal is following the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with monthly stories about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including connecting city parks, redeveloping the north downtown waterfront and creating a civic engagement strategy.

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## Guard official aims to help Salem thrive

Written by

**Beth Casper**  
Special to the Statesman Journal

10:42 PM, Feb. 28, 2011

Lt. Col. Arnold Strong spent six years in the Oregon National Guard, during which time he served as the state public-affairs officer and public-affairs officer for the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team. It would be an understatement to say he's familiar with communication methods.

Yet in an effort to further his education and refine his skills, Strong recently decided — after years of putting it off — to go back to school for a master's degree in strategic communication.

"I prioritized work and not taking care of myself," Strong said. "I postponed (graduate school) and postponed. The 9-11 G.I. Bill is in effect, so there was no excuse not to go back to school."

For someone who washed graduate students' dishes, tutored high school kids and catered Hollywood parties to pay for his way through undergraduate school at the University of California at Los Angeles, the G.I. bill's education benefits were too good to pass up.

As a graduate student in the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication, Strong took on a new

challenge: improving communications between the city of Salem and residents through the existing neighborhood associations.

It was part of a multipronged civic-engagement project under the Sustainable City Year program.

Strong worked with five other students to research the problem and create a solution.

"People inside Salem are engaging in city issues but not at a rate that will make Salem thrive," he said. "Salem is doing great things, but residents are unaware of its efforts."

Strong and his classmates developed a set of recommendations for city officials on how they can improve communication. The recommendations are based on in-depth interviews with neighborhood association chairpeople and board members, and city staffers. The students also conducted an informal survey of association board

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members.

"Neighborhood associations are the most present and readily available communication and outreach platform that the city has," Strong said. "Our goal was to help refine that so that we could enable neighborhood associations and city management to have more effective two-way communications."

Strong and his colleagues suggested a rebranding of neighborhood associations so that residents would think of them as relevant, fun and dynamic instead of as institutions fulfilling city requirements and holding mandatory meetings.

The students also suggested exploring new media, such as electronic newsletters, Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

Seventy-two percent of young adults use social networking sites at least three times a week, Strong said.

"For neighborhood associations who need new members, that's definitely a worthwhile niche," he said.

Strong was the only Salem resident in his course, but he said it made a difference in his research.

"I had a dog in this fight," Strong said. "It was my city that I wanted to improve. I want to help the city of Salem to thrive."

His connections within his community run deep, and that was apparent at the

students' first meeting with city of Salem staffers. Strong hesitated when he saw Sean O'Day, Salem's deputy city manager, walk into the students' room. O'Day did the same, Strong said.

They were used to seeing each other in army fatigues because they had served together in Afghanistan in 2006 and 2007, Strong said.

This time, they both were in suits.

"It was sort of a 'Sean, what are you doing in my class?' and 'Arnold, I'm here to brief your class on the city of Salem's involvement with the Sustainable Cities Initiative,' followed by a big hug and a 'Great to see you, brother!'" Strong said.

Strong has a long history with the U.S. Army. He has served all three components: the Army, the Army National Guard and Army Reserve for a total of 25 years of service (so far).

And he's looking forward to completing his

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graduate studies in June.

"Now I'm just finishing my thesis and looking forward to officially being a Duck," he said.

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# Professor hopes to link city with its Latino population

Written by

**Beth Casper**  
Special to the Statesman Journal

9:00 PM, Feb. 28, 2011

From Perry, Iowa, to MacArthur Park in Los Angeles, Gerardo Sandoval has documented how U.S. cities can thrive by fostering civic engagement within their immigrant communities.

As a professor at Iowa State University, Sandoval and his students helped to develop a plan to better integrate the immigrant population into the town's development. They recommended that Perry city officials establish a business incubator, redevelop a park and set up a community-based organization to serve as a liaison between the city and the Latino community.

In MacArthur Park, Sandoval wrote about how the troubled neighborhood's immigrant population was able to revitalize the area.

"It was the worst neighborhood in terms of crime in the 1980s, but it was transformed in 15 years," Sandoval said. "I documented how it was the immigrant population that transformed that neighborhood. They worked with city government to make that happen."

Sandoval wrote a book about the change: "Immigrants and the Revitalization of Los Angeles: Development and Change in MacArthur Park."

Now Sandoval is in Salem, helping city officials and Salem's Latino community members work together to better engage Spanish speakers in the business of city government.

Sandoval is an assistant professor in the department of planning, public policy and management at the University of Oregon. He is teaching "Public Engagement in Diverse Communities" this term. It is part of the Sustainable City Year program, which teamed up with the city of Salem to work on civic engagement strategies.

But Sandoval also has a personal interest in Salem — this is where he makes his home.

He moved to Salem in July and commutes to his job in Eugene. His wife, Franchesca, is a social worker for the state of Oregon. And his two children, Julio, 4, and Giovanni,

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2, are in school downtown.

Sandoval was born in Guatemala and grew up in Los Angeles. He received his undergraduate degree in community and regional development from the University of California at Davis and then his master's degree and doctorate in city and regional planning from the University of California at Berkeley.

Given his mere six months in Salem, he's hesitant to talk about his perceptions of the city and its relationship with the Latino community.

"I don't want to dictate the recommendations," he said. "I am leaving it open."

Like his students, who are "outsiders looking in," he is eager to learn about the city's relationship with the Latino community.

But in addition to simply documenting the relationship, Sandoval hopes the work done in this course makes a difference.

"I'm very interested in helping to contribute to a positive civic engagement environment now that I am a resident of Salem," he said. "I want my kids to grow up in a healthy multicultural environment."

His students are focusing on answering two main questions: How does the Latino community view the city of Salem, and what opportunities for public engagement with the Latino community can be developed?

The 10 graduate students also will try to build capacity within the city to do outreach and also within the Latino community.

"Students are going to engage the Latino community while they do this research," he said. "They'll have focus groups and one-on-one conversations. Sometime next term, we will get different stakeholders from the city and the Latino community together to have a conversation. So the work the students are doing is going to lay the foundation for that conversation."

As far as this course being a part of the Sustainable City Year program, Sandoval says equity — while not as obvious as environmental or economic considerations — is a major component of sustainability.

"The focus on equity is as important as anything else," he said.

*Beth Casper can be reached at [bethanncasper@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanncasper@hotmail.com)*

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## Salem seeks better communication tools

Written by

**Beth Casper**  
Special to the Statesman Journal

7:19 AM, Mar. 1, 2011

When Salem officials propose to put in a new road, make changes to a park or purchase a plot of land, they want and expect residents in the affected neighborhoods to voice their opinions.

"Our citizens are our bosses, our owners," said Mike Gotterba, the public information officer at the city of Salem. "We want to engage them wherever we can in the business of local government."

While city officials say they depend on that kind of civic engagement, they want to see more of it. Ideally, they say, they want to hear from as many of Salem's 155,000 residents as possible.

"We are always going to hear from the people who have the greatest stake in an issue, but we worry if that is a balanced discussion," Gotterba said. "Perhaps the majority of the community feels differently about a subject but just not passionately. We are looking to get greater participation across the board."

So what can Salem do to encourage more civic involvement? Students in three courses

at the University of Oregon are trying to answer that question. They are creating strategies, maps, handbooks and online tools to help the city of Salem communicate better and with more residents. It's one of more than a dozen Salem projects in which students in the Sustainable City Year program at the University of Oregon gain real-world experience while helping Salem reach its goals.

The civic engagement project involved a journalism course, an arts administration course, and a public-policy planning and management course.

It's not just a matter of adding another public hearing or sending out more newsletters.

"There is a whole range of issues working against an engaged community," said Alan Stavitsky, senior associate dean and professor in the school of journalism and communication at the University of Oregon.

Americans are very mobile, he said. People

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move from city to city, so they aren't necessarily putting down roots and feeling a part of a community.

"For many people, there's a cynicism and distrust about government," Stavitsky said.

In light of the recession, city government budgets are stretched thin — pursuing civic engagement strategies is likely to fall to the bottom of a priority list.

The city of Salem faces challenges to enhancing civic engagement: a large and underrepresented Spanish-speaking population; city staff members who are experts in their fields but have little knowledge of communication techniques; and residents who prefer to learn about city issues from people they know instead of a city newsletter or neighborhood association.

One of the challenges that the students are tackling is how to increase civic engagement among Salem's Latinos, who comprise about 15 percent of the city's population, according to 2000 Census Bureau data.

Students in the arts-administration class created a cultural asset map, a tool to determine a community's resources, based on 66 survey responses. They focused on the Latino community in north and northeast Salem.

The four graduate students in the course built a map around five key questions:

-Where do you access information about your community?

-Where do you go when you are not at work?

-Where do you get your food, and is it easy to access?

-What is your method of transportation?

-What do you love in your community?

"Cultural mapping takes an inventory of the resources in a community and identifies trends," Jay Shepherd said at a presentation in early February to the Salem Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission.

They found that a majority of the cultural assets — the Bush Barn Art Center and Mission Mill Museum, for example — are located downtown but that many social organizations are located throughout Salem. For many Latino community members, transportation is a huge barrier

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to accessing these assets.

Some of the students in Stavitsky's journalism class also worked to improve Latino communications. They interviewed leaders within the Latino community and outlined a three-strategy process to help the city get Latinos to participate in city business. Translating materials into Spanish was one of the most important parts of their plan.

"Latinos need more help to encourage their participation in the process," the students concluded in their report. "They need to feel empowered and know that their voice is heard before dialogue starts in earnest."

A public-policy course that began in January will further the work of the journalism students.

Another group of journalism students worked to improve outreach from the city's project managers, who are engineers or planners, not communication specialists.

Heather McDaniel is creating a public-relations toolkit to help Salem's project managers develop a comprehensive communications plan in a short amount of time, with tips on leveraging the power of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. For example, the toolkit will help officials to deal with some of the challenges of social media, such as Twitter's limit of 140 characters.

"The toolkit will address that and help project managers distill information so key

points can be communicated within those limitations," McDaniel said.

It's her final project for her master's degree in strategic communications from the UO.

The third component of research for the journalism students involved studying neighborhood associations and their ability to get the word out, gain volunteers and communicate with the city.

"Salem is a community that prefers to get its news from a trusted source," said Arnold Strong, a journalism student who worked on enhancing the outreach of neighborhood associations.

At a meeting at the end of January, Strong and five other students presented their findings to the chairpeople from each neighborhood association. In addition to other recommendations, the students encouraged the use of new media and technologies.

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Strong pointed to the statistics: 79,880 Facebook users within 10 miles of Salem and 34,490 Twitter users in the greater Salem area.

"It's the perfect opportunity to engage the younger people in the community," Mana Haeri said at the meeting.

"There is a population out there that regularly participates in public meetings. If they are actively engaged, I want to keep them that way," Gotterba said. "But the whole social media thing is not something that local governments do. And there are a lot of people out there that if we don't learn how to use these tools better, they won't be engaged with us."

As a first step, the city of Salem in early February launched Nixle, which will deliver city news to users by cell phone text messages, e-mail and the Web.

"At a time when it may be more important than ever, at a time when communities have fewer resources for public needs, there's more of an imperative than ever to get the views of citizens on how they prioritize what cities ought to be doing," Stavitsky said.

*Beth Casper can be reached at [bethanncasper@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanncasper@hotmail.com)*

## About this series Online Follow Salem news on Nixle

The Statesman Journal is following the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with monthly stories about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including connecting

city parks, redeveloping the north downtown waterfront and creating a civic engagement strategy.

Salem residents can get news updates from the city through a new online service. Nixle sends alerts via text message and e-mail and posts online.

Messages will be immediate public safety and traffic alerts, neighborhood news and other community information. The service is free, but cell phone fees can apply.

To sign up, go to <http://nixle.com>. Click on "citizens and consumers" and follow links from there. When registering select "City of Salem, OR" under settings.

Other local agencies that use Nixle include Keizer Fire District and Keizer Police Department.

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# Industrial area overhaul

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

April 4, 2011

In architecture and planning courses, University of Oregon students imagined what the area north of downtown Salem could look like in 30 to 40 years.

Their ideas incorporated the industrial feel of the area while adding amenities — brewpubs, a river research institute and a path along the river — to draw tourists, residents and shoppers. Their final reports and plans are part of the yearlong Sustainable Cities Initiative, where students work on real-world projects in Salem.

They looked north of Union Street NE, south of Mill Creek and west to the Willamette River. They were bounded by Broadway on the east side, but they left new developments such as Salem Cinema and the YWCA alone.

Students realized early on that the area was underused given its proximity to downtown and because of its desirability as an industrial area.

It's blocks from retail stores, restaurants and cultural attractions and yet it's not a neighborhood filled with residents who can enjoy the nearby amenities.

At the same time, it's not an industrial hub. Although years ago, industries wanted to be near a river to take advantage of the power source and transportation, now businesses tend to locate near highways and airports.

Its image has suffered as a result: It's an aging industrial area speckled with successful businesses — Truitt Bros. and Montag Heating and Air Conditioning — and defunct ones, such as Keith Brown Building Materials. It contains residents, many warehouses and a still-in-use railroad track that runs through the center of one of its streets.

But the students saw the potential.

"This is where growth is going to happen," said assistant architecture professor Nico Larco. "If downtown is going to grow, it is going to go north. That's great because there is space for it."



**Kobbi R. Blair | Statesman Journal**  
Cars and trains must share the roadway along Front Street NE.

## About this series Students' work

The Statesman Journal is following the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with monthly stories about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including connecting city parks, redeveloping the north downtown area and creating a civic engagement strategy.

See the students' illustrative plans on the main floor of the Salem Public Library, 585 Liberty St. SE.

Larco's students created urban design schemes that better defined north downtown and gave it a distinct image.

Most of the students added more common space and had a big emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle transportation.

Also, many of the students created a better connection with the Willamette River — designing a path that extends from the Union Street pedestrian bridge north along the river until Mill Creek and then follows Mill Creek to Liberty Street NE, for example.

"There are really some beautiful natural assets there: The creek and river are beautiful natural resources that people in Salem could really enjoy," student Molly Rogers said. "There is a disconnect between the water and the city, and this is a city on the water."

Rogers' group also added a river research institute where Mill Creek meets the Willamette River. The idea is that this public entity — perhaps an Oregon State University fresh water research center — could help spur commercial development in the area. And the third piece of the group's proposal widened Liberty Street NE and created a pedestrian mall to connect Salem's City Center mall with north downtown.

"It's a visionary tool," Sheri Wahrgren, Salem's downtown revitalization manager in the Urban Development Department, said about the students' plans. "It sparks your imagination about what could be seen in these locations."

Students also respected the industrial feel of the area by incorporating it into their designs. One group envisioned a railroad museum and another put a brewpub amid this industrial zone.

"A lot of the students thought it would be a mistake to lose the grit of the area," Larco said.

But every student thought it would be a mistake to keep the layout of the roads, Larco said.

All of the students addressed the confusion and complexity of the roadways in the area.

Most students came up with alternatives to having the railroad track run through the middle of Front Street NE. One group eliminated the Commercial Street NE access to the Marion Street Bridge over the river. One group added a new boulevard-type street that ran right to the Willamette River.

Housing developments were included in the students' designs — a senior housing project on the Willamette River and condominiums, for example.

"They did a good job with recognizing the financial limitations of how this area will develop," said Rich Margerum, associate professor and department head in the University of Oregon's department of planning, public policy and management. "They looked at housing to support the work force — more affordable housing. A lot of them were thinking about the range of housing options and recognizing how some of the recent economic downturn has hurt the high-end accommodations."

Rick Yurk, who works at BAM Agency, an advertising firm in north downtown, said that he hoped the ideas spur incremental changes that over time improve the area.

"It's a neat area that hasn't been given much attention as far as improvements and development but you see the potential with the river," Yurk said. "I like how the students thought about how to complement downtown — making this area and downtown work



together."

Beth Casper can be reached at [alwaysrunningmama@hotmail.com](mailto:alwaysrunningmama@hotmail.com)

## Students focus on future of street lights

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

April 4, 2011

Salem's more than 11,000 streetlights cost the city \$1.6 million per year for electricity, maintenance and replacement.

Students at the University of Oregon are studying how to reduce those costs with new technologies, better lighting designs and unique funding mechanisms. It's part of the Sustainable City Year program, an innovative program that pairs students in multiple disciplines with city projects.

Product design students in Jason Germany's class researched Salem's lighting system, analyzed the problem and then designed streetlights that consumed less energy, reduced maintenance costs and provided better lighting. They found that some areas in Salem, particularly in downtown, had too many lights.

All of the students recommended the use of LED bulbs. Light emitting diode bulbs use less energy than high pressure sodium bulbs currently used in streetlights, and they reduce maintenance costs because they do not need to be replaced as often.

"Students were also playing with this idea that LEDs are more directional," Germany said. "They apply a light where you want it and do not light areas where you don't want light. That reduces light pollution."

Some students designed streetlights that incorporated solar panels along the top to help reduce electricity costs. Others designed modular systems so that you could build different types of lights — for pedestrians in parks or cars on streets, for example — out of the same parts.

Some students also recommended reducing the number of lights. At an intersection, for example, keep two street lights instead of four.

Kevin Hottmann, a traffic engineer with the city of Salem, said that weighing the public's preference for increased lighting with the financial savings of reduced lighting is tricky.

"Budgetwise, I look at ways of trying to reduce the costs through new technologies or less lighting requirements," he said. "Colorado Springs turned off much of their street lighting to reduce costs. Can we reduce the lighting but still provide the benefit?"



Another group of students — in a public policy, planning and management course — are researching how all of the streetlights costs are funded and if there are better options. Now, the city uses gas tax funding, which takes money from street maintenance. The planning students will recommend alternative funding sources.

Beth Casper can be reached at [alwaysrunningmama@hotmail.com](mailto:alwaysrunningmama@hotmail.com)

```
Group3: Parks, Public Spaces(function() { var scribd = document.createElement("script");
scribd.type = "text/javascript"; scribd.async = true; scribd.src =
"http://www.scribd.com/javascripts/embed_code/inject.js"; var s =
document.getElementsByTagName("script")[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(scribd, s); })();
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# Students design Salem-based river research facility

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

April 23, 2011

At the confluence of the Willamette River and Mill Creek, University of Oregon student Matthew Linn envisions a river research institute that would allow people to see river wildlife and riparian areas up close while also learning about researchers' cutting-edge work.

There is no facility like it to focus on how we live within a riparian habitat, said Linn, an architecture student graduating this year.

"The Willamette River is a very big part of Oregon," he said. "The three largest cities in Oregon are on the river. But Salem is the state Capitol. It could give Salem an opportunity to be a leader in Oregon."

Linn's design was a part of the Sustainable City Year program, an innovative partnership between Salem and the University of Oregon in which students work on real-world problems.

Along with two other students, Linn presented his design work at the Salem City Club meeting Friday at the Willamette Heritage Center at Mission Mill.

"It has really been successful — beyond my wildest dreams," said Salem City Manager Linda Norris. "I know we will be using this work for years and years to come — we are going to make as many of these projects reality as we can."

Linn's idea for a Center for River Ecology Research already has created a ripple of excitement among city staffers and beyond. Linn is preparing for a presentation about the center to Oregon State University, a leader in environmental research.

Linn said the center could draw researchers from across agencies, such as Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Environmental Protection Agency, in the same way



University of Oregon student Matthew Linn presented a proposal Friday for a Center for River Ecology Research as part of the Sustainable Cities Initiative. This computer image depicts the central walkway. Special to the Statesman Journal

## Celebration

The community of Salem is invited to an end-of-year celebration for the Sustainable City Year program from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 20, at Broadway Commons, 1300 Broadway NE in Salem.

The Sustainable City Year program is a partnership this academic year between the University of Oregon and Salem in which courses from throughout the university focus on assisting Salem with its sustainability goals and projects.

Refreshments and a light lunch will be served.

R.S.V.P. to [sci@uoregon.edu](mailto:sci@uoregon.edu) or (541) 346-6395.

## About this series

The Statesman Journal is following the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with monthly stories about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including connecting city parks, redeveloping the north downtown area and creating a civic engagement strategy.

the Hatfield Marine Science Center houses marine researchers from different agencies.

His plan includes office space for those researchers and a central area so researchers could bring their studies to the public. There's space for watershed councils, an auditorium for presentations, and a library space.

The exhibit space would be outdoors and indoors — the outdoor exhibit space would include beavers and their habitat. The indoor spaces are aquarium-like and could feature rare salmon species.

A boardwalk around the institute would allow people to get close to the river by connecting to a larger urban path along Mill Creek to Liberty Street NE, down Liberty to Union Street NE, and back to the institute along the Willamette River.

A highlight of the institute would be a tower called the Heron's Nest, which would allow people to get high above the Willamette River — to see the river, the river research center and the city of Salem, Linn said.

Gloria and Alan Holland, Salem City Club members, were enthusiastic about Linn's proposal.

"I was just giddy," Gloria said after hearing Linn's presentation. "I think it is a wonderful place to take the family."

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## Streets are given 'mobility rating'

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

May 11, 2011

Emma Silverman, 24, grew up in South Salem, biking to and from various jobs throughout town and to and from Sprague High School, where she graduated in 2005. But it wasn't until she came back as a college student that she realized what she had missed.

"I noticed all of the different areas of Salem and how much I liked them," she said. "And I wish I spent more time in downtown areas. There is a strong community in Salem, but when I was growing up I didn't see it."

As a student in a geographic-information-system course in the fall, Silverman came back to Salem to create ideas for better parks connections.

Silverman and another student, Trafton Bean, rated the bicycle and pedestrian accessibility of streets around Willamette University. Their project was unique in its data-collecting method: using personal digital assistants to answer a series of questions about any given street.

"The idea of using (PDAs) in a community setting for gathering information — like handing them out to volunteers — is a fairly new idea," she said.

The answers to questions such as "Is there a buffer space between pedestrians and traffic?" and "Are there barriers to bicycle use?" gave each street a "mobility rating."

They found that bikers and pedestrians have serious barriers to traveling safely and comfortably around Willamette University. Vehicle speeds, high traffic volumes, dangerous lane shifts for bikers and unacceptable surface conditions were the most common problems.

Their findings could help the city of Salem identify specific areas in need of immediate improvement but also provide vital information for transportation planning.

After spending so much time back in Salem, Silverman realized that one of her passions — parks — was an integral part of the city she grew up in.

"I appreciate Salem mostly for the parks," she said.

Silverman, an interior architecture and public policy major, plans to move to Chicago after her June 2012 graduation.

"Ideally, I would like to work in a multidisciplinary firm where I can meld my interest in interior

architecture and the greater built environment," she said. "What I do is for people, it's all about how people react to a space and function, whether it's inside a building or outside in a community park."

Beth Casper can be reached at [alwaysrunningmama@hotmail.com](mailto:alwaysrunningmama@hotmail.com)

# Students chart a new path for Salem

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

May 11, 2011

University of Oregon students who studied how to connect Salem's downtown parks came up with ideas for more than a simple urban trail.

They developed entirely new ways of determining safety for pedestrians and bikers, established a Salem marathon route and rated intersections that abut parks and natural areas. One student focused on the lack of bus service on weekends and created bicycle routes to popular locations. Another proposed bicycle boulevard routes in east Salem to connect schools, parks and downtown Salem.

"Most students thought, 'Let's broaden the conversation,'" said associate professor Marc Schlossberg.

Their presentations and reports are part of the Downtown Parks Connectivity project under the Sustainable City Year program, a yearlong initiative between the city of Salem and University of Oregon. Under the program, students are helping provide ideas for 14 major Salem projects.

"The incredible thing is how much raw creativity the students have," said Schlossberg, also co-founder of the Sustainable City Year program. "They came up with these great things that city staff doesn't have time to think about."

"We can have one foot in reality and one foot in dreamland," Schlossberg said. "We have the luxury of being dreamy. We don't have to be constrained by things like finances. But to move in any of these directions is feasible."

In Schlossberg's fall GIS course — geographic information system, a technology that allows users to interact with maps — Michael Duncan, Kory Northrup and Ted Sweeney created a transportation database related to how bicyclists use roads.

"We went on a bike ride in Salem and we noticed some scary sections," Sweeney said.



**Timothy J. Gonzalez / Statesman Journal**  
Visitors to Bush's Pasture Park make their way along the main path Tuesday. University of Oregon students have been focusing on downtown parks' connectable accessibility and safety.

## About the series

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## Celebration

The community of Salem is invited to an end-of-year celebration for the Sustainable City Year program from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 20 at Broadway Commons, 1300 Broadway St. NE in Salem. The Sustainable City Year program is a partnership this academic year between the University of Oregon and Salem in which courses from throughout the university focus on assisting Salem with its sustainability goals and projects. Refreshments and a light lunch will be served. R.S.V.P. to [sci@uoregon.edu](mailto:sci@uoregon.edu) or (541) 346-6395.

The database can identify streets with high degrees of perceived danger and show where cyclists of varying confidence levels can comfortably ride. The trio rated the "fear factor" of each street by looking at vehicle speed limit, the number of lanes, the lane crossings and the type of infrastructure, i.e. a bike lane, shoulder, multi-use path or something else.

Bicyclists then could plug in two points and find the shortest distance and the route with the lowest fear factor.

Students Eric Stipe and Tanner Semerad created a similar database for pedestrians.

Student Kevin Belanger marked a marathon route through Salem that combines both trail and street running — the first to do so, he said.

"I thought it was important to bring people downtown," he said.

Student Daniel Ronan studied the accessibility of all of the entrances into Bush's Pasture Park because improving the accessibility improves the park. He noted that good intersections have crosswalks and curb cuts at all the corners. Even better intersections have pedestrian signals and enhancements for the deaf and blind.

"As we age, parks like this one are going to be really important places for people to go," he said. "If we built our sidewalks and crosswalks like we built our streets, think about how much more inviting for our pedestrians our cities would be."

Ronan and another student, Emma Silverman, spent much of their research time creating a way for the community to rate accessibility. Community members could open their PDA, answer some questions about the ease of use on a given path, and that data could help rate a street or path.

"Why couldn't citizens go around with their smartphones, answer a question or two and give input to the city?" said Schlossberg. "Engaging citizens in evaluating their own environment is pretty powerful. The whole point of that is to empower people in their local environment so they can make it known what is not working for them and then help the city focus their resources."

Julie Warncke, the transportation planning manager for the city of Salem, said the students' ideas will help with the update to the city's bicycle and pedestrian plan, which is expected to be adopted in the fall.

"It gave us a breadth of analysis and viewpoints on bicycle and transportation connections focused on the downtown area," she said. "The different concepts and ideas help to prime the pump for the update for the bicycle and pedestrian plan for the city."

Schlossberg is currently teaching an interdisciplinary Bicycle Planning course that is working on additional ideas for the Downtown Parks Connectivity project for Salem.

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# Students' 80,000 hours of ideas in sustainability project honored

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

May 19, 2011

By the end of the academic year, about 500 University of Oregon and Portland State University students will have given Salem their best ideas.

In 28 courses, graduate and undergraduate students studied 15 major projects within Salem. Their 80,000 hours of work culminated in hundreds of pages of reports, architectural renderings design schemes and presentations to city officials and staffers.

The program, the Sustainable City Year, partners students with a city to offer sustainability ideas and provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Next year, the program will focus on Springfield.

The University of Oregon is sponsoring an end-of-year celebration Friday with student presentations about a few projects, comments from the program's founders and a look forward from Salem City Manager Linda Norris.

"The primary purpose is to just celebrate everything that the community has received," said Courtney Knox of the city of Salem.

Monique López, a graduate planning student at the University of Oregon, will explain how in one course students proposed to engage Salem's Latino population in city issues. Included in their recommendations is to engage Latinos in places where they feel comfortable, such as schools, churches or sporting events.

López said this program allowed students to give back to the community and put theory into practice.

"It was a great experience to talk to various people in the community and understand the barriers to engaging the Latino community in Salem," she said. "We were able to get a better understanding of the issues by talking to people."

The celebration also will feature examples of student work from across the 10 academic

## If you go

The celebration is from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Broadway Commons, 1300 Broadway NE. The public is welcome. Registration is required, email [sci@uoregon.edu](mailto:sci@uoregon.edu) or call (541) 346-6395.

## What's Next

Upcoming city council work sessions are scheduled to focus on the students' work and the city's plans for using it.

June 13: Redevelopment opportunities

June 27: Parks and Transportation projects

July 11: Economic Development and Civic Engagement projects

July 25: Transportation Projects/Stormwater

These work sessions will be in the City Council Chambers, Room 240, Vern Miller Civic Center, 555 Liberty St. SE.

The work session schedule is tentative. For up-to-date information, go to [www.cityofsalem.net/CouncilMeetingAgenda/default.aspx](http://www.cityofsalem.net/CouncilMeetingAgenda/default.aspx).

disciplines.

"The student work delivered to the city has generated a lot of energy and enthusiasm," said Chris Jones, program manager of the Sustainable Cities Initiative. "(The celebration is) sort of the hand-off from the students to the city. Now we are really excited to see what the city can do with the products we delivered."

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# Students' work on city celebrated

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

May 21, 2011

Tree houses in Minto Brown Island Park. Extending the commuter train line into downtown Salem. A living laboratory boardwalk along the Willamette River. An open-air plaza on Liberty Street NE.

These are some of the hundreds of ideas generated by University of Oregon and Portland State University students during the yearlong Sustainable City Year program. Students in 10 disciplines and 28 different courses tackled major projects in the city of Salem. They delivered hundreds of pages of reports, dozens of architectural renderings and hours of presentations to city staff.

"Students in this program really care about Salem as much as we do," said Salem city manager Linda Norris.

Their work was celebrated Friday by faculty proud of the students as well as by city staffers impressed with the breadth and depth of the work and community members anxious to see some of the designs become reality.

"It makes me wish Salem had a much bigger piggybank," said Cory Poole, chairman of Southeast Mill Creek Association.

Alice Berntson, a resident of South Salem since 1983, said that the students' ideas were very forward-thinking — with Salem's population expected to increase substantially by 2050, it's important to plan for that growth now, she said.

"It is starting to feel like a city instead of just a town," she said.

Dave Smedema, board member of Friends of Straub Environmental Learning Center, said he is particularly interested in the north downtown project. He wants to see the Willamette River become a place for people to bike and walk along instead of a throwback to the time when it



**Kobbi R. Blair / Statesman Journal**  
Virginia Green and Christopher Hackett, who both live in the Grant Neighborhood in Salem, attend the Sustainable City Year end-of-year celebration Friday at Broadway Commons.

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These work sessions will be at 5:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers, Room 240, Vern Miller Civic Center, 555 Liberty St. SE.

The work session schedule is tentative. For up-to-date information, as well as previous stories about the Sustainable Cities project, see this story at [StatesmanJournal.com](http://StatesmanJournal.com).

was used as transportation for mills and other businesses.

"I think of Salem as a small town, but you can go for urban hikes now," he said. "I'd like to see that grow."

While many of the students' ideas will not become reality in Salem, most community members agreed that even those pie-in-the-sky ideas have their place.

"We limit our sense of what is possible if we don't dream big first," said Darlene Strozut of Highland Neighborhood Association. "I think it is so healthy to have really bright people from outside our community offer a fresh perspective."

Councilor Laura Tesler said that the students may help Salem residents think differently about where they live.

"We needed people who could dream. We needed dreamers with ideas that were totally out of the box," Tesler said. "It's OK to dream big. Some of those dreams will become reality. ... We need to be able to take a leap of faith and embrace some of these concepts."

The students and their work were admired so much by city officials that they received a special invitation to live in the city upon graduation.

"You've been ambassadors for Salem," Mayor Anna Peterson said, smiling. "We think it would be fabulous when you finish your studies if you would come and live in Salem."

Beth Casper can be reached at [alwaysrunningmama@hotmail.com](mailto:alwaysrunningmama@hotmail.com).

## Council OKs \$40,000 for site search

By Timm Collins

Statesman Journal

May 24, 2011

Salem City Council agreed to fund a search for a new public safety facility location at Monday night's meeting. No construction has been planned.

The council agreed to spend up to \$40,000 to weigh the merits of building a new facility on the existing site or starting from scratch elsewhere.

The Vern Miller Civic Center was constructed in 1972. As the population has grown over time, city services have outgrown the facility.

In addition, the building has been deemed seismically inadequate for emergency responders such as police. In the event of an earthquake the building could topple rendering the facility useless when it potentially is most needed.

A council subcommittee, relying on input from the University of Oregon's Sustainable Cities Initiative, determined the police department's needs could be met by building a new facility on the campus of the Civic Center. The group also agreed it would be useful to consider alternative sites before asking voters for an estimated \$50 million construction bond.

The issue was met with contention.

Councilor Bob Cannon thought the council should move forward without a study, and hiring someone to "observe the obvious" is wrong.

"I think that we should not spend \$40,000 on a consultant to go out and find out if there is additional space. There is additional space. It's currently available," he said. "This is pure and simply a waste of money."

Councilor Laura Tesler sympathized with Cannon's opinion but said the study was absolutely necessary.

"I know it's eye-rolling to consider another study," Tesler said. "I would rather have a study and make sure we are doing the right thing by the police department."

The alternative site analysis will include at least one site with an existing building for retrofit and at least one bare-land site.

The analysis will consider existing buildings compared to construction of a new facility on bare

land or at the Civic Center site.

The study requires at least three months, pushing a potential future bond measure to 2013.

In other business, the council scheduled a June 13 public hearing regarding an ordinance that would prohibit smoking in parks.

tdcollins@StatesmanJournal.com, (503) 399-6750 or follow at [twitter.com/TimmCollinsSJ](https://twitter.com/TimmCollinsSJ)

## Council to hear students' advice

By Timm Collins

Statesman Journal

### If you go

What: Salem City Council meeting

When: 6:30 tonight

Where: Room 240, Salem city hall, 555 Liberty St. SE

Information: [www.cityofsalem.net](http://www.cityofsalem.net) or (503) 588-6255

May 23, 2011

The city of Salem needs to use more energy efficient streetlights, according to students involved with the Sustainable Cities Initiative.

Although a recent study indicates using LED technology would be cost prohibitive under current circumstances, adding a special fee to pay for upgrades is a possibility.

At tonight's meeting, Salem City Council will receive the results of the study conducted by University of Oregon students and listen to options that could help the city save money maintaining its 10,500 streetlights.

Three primary factors affect the cost involved with the upkeep of streetlights in Salem: funding, ownership and energy efficiency.

The council would rather use money from state gasoline taxes exclusively for street maintenance, but that means revenue for streetlights would have to come from a different source.

Presently, Salem uses about 20 percent of gas-tax funds to pay for streetlights. At the same time, Salem uses roughly \$1 million from the city's general fund to pay for street maintenance each year.

Ownership of individual streetlights currently is split between three owners: the city, PGE and Salem Electric. Without streamlined ownership, the report maintains the city is unable to tweak maintenance costs or purchase low-energy LED replacements.

The study recommends the city council consider taking the following actions:

-Implement a direct streetlight fee to pay for streetlight maintenance and electricity costs, supplanting up to \$1.5 million in State Highway Funds.

-Purchase streetlights currently owned by Salem Electric.

-Delay investments in LED or other energy-efficiency technology until acquisition costs and reliability improves.

The council could decide to do nothing after receiving the full report or instruct city staffers to proceed with the recommendations.

tdcollins@StatesmanJournal.com, (503) 399-6750 or follow at [twitter.com/TimmCollinsSJ](https://twitter.com/TimmCollinsSJ)



## Looking at Pringle Creek, students see a dream stream

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

June 1, 2011

Just before Pringle Creek drains into the Willamette River, it disappears into a dim labyrinth of concrete.

As it flows from Mirror Pond, across from the Salem Civic Center, under the Commercial Street bridge, its personality changes. No longer a babbling brook, its waters roar as they echo off a 325-foot-long concrete ceiling. It rushes around hundreds of concrete columns and cuts south, blocked on its northern bank by an old mill's million-gallon storage tank.

Flowing out from under the ceiling, it remains covered — by a railroad trestle with two tracks.

When it emerges into daylight to flow into the Willamette River, a 15-foot-tall concrete wall marks its northern bank as it rounds its way around Riverfront Park.

"This is where we want the students to dream," said Salem's water and environmental resources manager Nitin Joshi, standing on the south bank of Pringle Creek.

University of Oregon architecture and landscape architecture students are designing ways to connect Mirror Pond and Riverfront Park with a trail along Pringle Creek. It is part of the Sustainable City Year program, a partnership between students and Salem to work on 15 city projects.

Their work will offer ways to restore the salmon-bearing Pringle Creek, create connections between city parks and bring people closer to natural features such as creeks and rivers. The students also are committed to preserving the industrial history of the site.

"This is a tricky project but an exciting one," said the course's professor, Roxi Thoren, assistant professor in the departments of architecture and landscape architecture.

It's tricky because of major obstacles including access around the railroad tracks, financial costs and environmental regulations regarding salmon and toxins.

"The Willamette River is the reason Salem is where it is, and connecting the city to the waterfront is important," Thoren said. "To have a project that includes ecological



**Thomas Patterson / Statesman Journal**  
City of Salem water resources manager Nitin Joshi leads University of Oregon students on a tour of Pringle Creek and its surroundings. The students are developing ideas to integrate the creek with nearby Riverfront Park and Minto-Brown Island Park.

### About the series

The Statesman Journal is following the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with monthly stories about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including connecting city parks, redeveloping the north downtown area and creating a civic engagement strategy.

restoration and parks and open space infrastructure plus cultural history is really neat and a great opportunity for the students."

The area has seen its share of industrial uses. Starting as early as the 1850s, there was a lumber mill. Then a flour mill took advantage of the power of Pringle Creek. Since then, pulp and paper plants took over. Then, Boise Cascade sold the property to investors, who are working on redeveloping the area.

The history of the site is detailed in a master's thesis by Lexie Costic, a Salem native who received her master's in architectural history last year from the University of Virginia.

The 2002 South Salem High School graduate now is a University of Oregon architecture graduate student. She is in Thoren's Sustainable City Year course working on connecting Pringle Creek and Riverfront Park.

Her detailed knowledge of the site's history helped her better understand the challenges to redeveloping the area, as well as the opportunities to highlight the past.

"Here is an opportunity to tell a moral tale about land use and abuse," Costic said. "The site remediation can make visible some of the area's industrial history. This site can again play a productive role in the community."

In Costic's group, students envision the site as a regional transit center — a new gateway to Salem. Local and regional transit lines would start and end here, and it would be bustling with commuters, pedestrians and bicyclists. A streetcar would bring people to downtown, state buildings and the hospital.

Her group's design also includes a mixed-use development that could include an entertainment or arts center so that the site could draw people in the evening as well.

Some students in the class are researching and designing ways to create environmental learning experiences that also educate the public about the industrial landscape along Pringle Creek.

"No matter what, one of the most important elements is to bring the focus back to the creek — to open it up and allow for opportunities for people to experience the creek," the city's Joshi said. "I'm not looking for a pristine creek. It's an urban creek, but at the same time, we don't want a Disneyland feel."

Connecting Pringle Creek to Riverfront Park has several major obstacles. The concrete wall along the north side of the creek makes it hard to create a path up to the south end of Riverfront Park, where the Eco-ball is located.

Some students have proposed a cantilevered path along the wall. Others are proposing to take down the wall, restore the creek's bank and create a path there — a mighty task itself because the soil behind the wall is contaminated with toxins from the former pulp and paper plant.

Another major barrier is the railroad company, which owns the tracks over the creek and won't allow a path under the tracks. Costic said a path over the railroad would be cost-prohibitive.

"It is so important to connect the Mill Race paths at the Civic Center with Riverfront Park," she said. "We are hoping that if the community puts enough pressure, they could build some kind of protective structures to satisfy the railroad."

Professor Thoren said the site is an obvious one for industrial use because it had a water source for mill operations and the convenience of a rail line for transportation. But transforming the site to what people want today is difficult.

"Everything makes perfect sense until today when you want to connect salmon habitat and human habitat," she said. "We want to connect Willamette University and the Capitol and the Willamette greenway. This is a wonderful urban amenity and wonderful green space for the city."

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# Students see a lot of potential for affordable housing

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

June 15, 2011

In a spring class, University of Oregon architecture students proved that affordable housing does not need to look like affordable housing.

Graduate and undergraduate students designed homes with open floor plans, huge windows, garden and patio spaces and underground parking. Their ideas were part of the innovative Sustainable City Year program, a yearlong partnership in which students worked on 15 major Salem projects.

Their houses were comfortable, and in some cases artsy, but they were still part of a high density development.

That's important given that the Salem Housing Authority has 3,000 people on its waiting list for affordable housing.

Thirty units of public housing — called Orchard Village — were demolished two years ago off Broadway NE along the border with Keizer. It's next to Parkway Village, which has 120 units of public housing.

Students were tasked with designing an environmentally friendly affordable-housing complex on the empty Orchard Village site that also could integrate the Parkway Village units. Students also were asked to design units that could be added to other existing Salem Housing Authority multi-family properties.

Professor Peter Keyes emphasized livability first. Students spent the first several weeks exploring daylighting, cross ventilation, outdoor spaces and many other aspects of housing.

"We wanted to think about good housing first and then make it affordable after that," Keyes said.

Keyes said that the students came up with big ideas.

Graduate student Caitlin Gilman designed housing that evolves to meet the needs of a city's changing demographics. Her units included an atrium, which can be a private entrance to a



**Timothy J. Gonzalez / Statesman Journal**  
University of Oregon students are looking at a plot of land off Broadway NE for development for public housing as part of the Sustainable City Initiative.

## About the series

The Statesman Journal is following the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with stories about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including connecting city parks, redeveloping the north downtown area and creating a civic engagement strategy.

house-sized unit, or an entrance for multiple people to access smaller apartment-like units.

"Demographics shift constantly and housing must be able to shift with it," she wrote on her presentation poster. "Tearing down obsolete complexes in order to rebuild new, more relevant housing models is not only environmentally damaging but economically unsustainable."

Right now, Salem needs family housing, but if senior housing is needed in several decades, Gilman's units just need some changes to the placement of the studs and new drywall.

Shane Harper was trying to make his housing look and feel like suburban housing while still working at higher densities. To do this, he designed open floor plans and transparent barriers between rooms. Outside, he "hid" parking spots between clusters of units.

"When you are standing on the road, you don't see parking, you see garden spaces," he said.

Andy Drake designed Chanterelle Commons, a development with four distinct home types. While the homes are small, Drake added amenities to the site such as a community building for neighbors to meet and people to rent out. A toolshed on the site allows dwellers to share gardening tools.

The sustainable elements that the students incorporated — such as passive heating, cross ventilation and natural lighting — are essential to Salem Housing Authority.

"Sustainability is a huge thing for us," said Andy Wilch, housing and social services administrator of Salem Housing Authority. "It increases the life of the building, reduces costs to us and our clients and it is environmentally friendly."

Tenant safety also is crucial, said Nicole Utz, housing services supervisor for Salem Housing Authority.

Students designed open patio areas, low-traffic streets that could be paved play areas and community gathering spaces such as gardens so that neighbors would get to know one another and keep each other safe.

"There are only so many ways to design a 3-bedroom row house," Keyes said. "But the outdoor spaces encourage neighbors to be friends and give kids a place to play if you make social outdoor spaces work. The students spent a lot of time on those spaces."

Keyes said he was impressed with the simplicity of the students' designs.

"Anything you design that is complicated is going to get lost. Anything that is simple is going to have a possibility of turning out how you want it to," he said. "We don't want to design pretentious architectural statements. This is someone's home."

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# Students focus on Minto-Brown park's design

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

June 27, 2011

Salem residents long ago discovered the gems hidden in Minto-Brown Island Park: a place to find a beaver lodge, turtles or an eagle nest; trails perfect for running or biking along the Willamette River; farm fields that draw Canada geese; and meandering paths that feel far from any urban center.

But the 898-acre park has its limitations, too — areas where there are conflicts between dogs and wildlife, a lack of signs and trail maps, invasive species that block views and take over native plants, and limited pedestrian and bike access to the park.

University of Oregon landscape architecture students created a comprehensive plan for Minto-Brown as part of the Sustainable City Year program, a unique partnership between the university and the city in which students worked on 15 major city projects.

Their suggestions for Minto-Brown include a water area for dogs to play, a floating esplanade trail from Riverfront Park, a nature-inspired area for kids to play, a boat launch, habitat improvement for Western pond turtles, and sites for a community garden and orchard. They even added camp sites — elevated platforms because the Willamette River floods there — and what they called an "art farm," a space for outdoor art.

"Knowing we need to do a master plan, we could allow the students the opportunity to dream and get their perceptions of Minto-Brown park," said Keith Keever, city of Salem parks superintendent.

Karim Hassanein, a landscape architecture undergraduate student, said the students in his class tried to stay true to the history and appeal of Minto-Brown park while also recognizing that population growth will change the park eventually.

"I thought it was beautiful," Hassanein said about his first visit to the park. "It is so huge. There is so much there already for everybody. I loved the diversity — the different ecozones and habitat types. And it is really cool to have access to water and beautiful views of Salem and the river."



**SPECIAL TO the Statesman Journal**  
This is a rendering from University of Oregon landscape architecture students' plan for Minto-Brown Island Park as part of the Sustainable City Year program.

### About the Series

The Statesman Journal is following the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with stories about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including connecting city parks, redeveloping the north downtown area and creating a civic engagement strategy.

Online

See this story at StatesmanJournal.com to see the students' report on Minto-Brown Island Park.



The students were challenged to keep the character of Minto while accommodating more people and activities.

"Realistically, if you are trying to maintain a park like Minto with the projected population growth, it would take a lot of work to keep Minto-Brown the empty pastoral landscape it is now," he said. "We wanted to make sure it would stay a strong center for the future."

The students focused a lot of time on the dog park and what dog owners wanted.

"It's one of the most popular activities in the park, but there are user conflicts in the park," Keever said. "There is a problem when people walk their dogs off-leash in other areas."

Students designed an off-leash canine recreation circuit complete with a sports course, a savannah run and water play. Students proposed that the 44-acre area be funded by a \$1 per month donation from Salem's 30,000-plus dog households.

The idea is to create such a wonderful play area for dogs that owners do not see a need to take their dogs off-leash in other areas of the park, where there might be conflicts with bikers, runners or wildlife.

Students came up with other unique ideas. They suggested having fields where biodiesel crops, such as canola, would grow. They proposed adding bat towers to the park to encourage bats, which feast on insects and protect farm crops while also drawing visitors to watch the bats. And they redesigned the first parking lot at the park so that it included a bus stop.

"The current lot is a place to stow your car. You don't think about any experience you could have there," said Michael Weir, a landscape architecture graduate student.

"In our design, we have the bus stop on one side and then natural paths for the park would be on elevated areas throughout the parking lot and planted with native plants historically found in that area."

Another major component of the students' suggestions was using signs.

"We have a lack of adequate signage and wayfinding in the park," Keever said. "I emphasized our need for a really good system for mapping and at every intersection someone comes to there should be a clear logical map that shows them precisely where they are and how to get back."

Students designed a logo for the park — a cottonwood leaf — and placed it on all of their signs and maps. The leaf tip always points north so that the leaf itself is also a wayfinding device.

Students suggested placing signs every mile for people with exercise goals, educational signs about the harmful effects of feeding waterfowl, and map signs at major trail heads and activity centers. The map signs have distances in miles and minutes for pedestrians and bikers.

"A person's ability to navigate a site is connected to their feelings of safety, comfort and happiness within a space," the students wrote in their report. "When we were asked to investigate wayfinding solutions this was at the forefront of our design decisions."

Brady Rogers, administrator of Salem's Neighborhood Enhancement Division, understands the need for people to feel safe in parks.

He said that volunteers who help keep the park clean and people safe at Minto-Brown Island Park sometimes are verbally abused when they ask park-goers to pick up cigarette butts or

keep dogs on a leash. Rogers has been asked in the past if he could spare a code officer to patrol the park once per week.

The master's degree journalism students at the University of Oregon created a 30-page plan to instill a sense of pride and ownership in the park so that the last thing people want to do is litter in the park or take their dogs off a leash where they aren't supposed to. Their ideas included landscape design that would help people feel safe as well as where to add signage.

"I don't think the city has the money to do the code officer patrol thing, and I am not so sure people want the kind of city where you have an officer on a bike in the park," Rogers said.

"Their ideas about communication and outreach were far superior to going around giving tickets to people."

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#### Links

<http://www.cityofsalem.net/CityCouncil/CityProjects/SalemSustainability/Pages/Minto-BrownIsl andRestoration.aspx>

# Salem gets UO students' final report on redevelopment ideas

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

August 1, 2011

In three distinct areas of Salem, University of Oregon architecture and planning students tackled the redevelopment of those challenging sites.

-In north downtown, students worked to place work force housing, commercial businesses and connections to Mill Creek on a site that now houses several auto dealerships, known as the O'Brien site.

-In northeast Salem, students placed live-work units, a grocery store, a public park and traditional townhouses on a 14-acre parcel at 3350 Portland Road NE.

-In West Salem, students remade Second Street NW into a bustling, pedestrian-friendly "Main Street," complete with a plaza area marked by a clock tower.

It was part of the Sustainable City Year, an innovative program in which students work on real projects and issues in Salem. The student-city program is wrapping up its 15 projects in Salem. It will focus on Springfield next year.

The University of Oregon course on city growth and city design tackled the three Salem sites is unique in its approach — architecture and planning students take the course together in order to learn how to work together and understand the language of the other discipline. It's rare in academia; yet architects and planners often must work together in professional work environments.

"We just want to make it normal to have them interact with one another, so when they finish their degree their expectation will be they have to work with one another," said planning professor Marc Schlossberg, who co-taught the class with architecture professor Nico Larco.

"They are in class together; they are hearing each other's questions," Larco said. "It is a great leg up when they work professionally. And the project work got that much stronger



**Danielle Peterson / Statesman Journal file**  
Warren Bednarz (second from left) of the West Salem Redevelopment Advisory Board talks to students Courtney Mild, Patricia Neighbor and Corey Templeton of the Sustainable City Year program at the University of Oregon as they take a field trip Jan. 13 to explore three sites in Salem, including this site on Second Street NW in West Salem.

## About the series

The Statesman Journal followed the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year program with stories about the students' work on each of the city of Salem's projects, including connecting city parks, redeveloping the north downtown area and creating a civic engagement strategy. The final story in the series will take an overall look at the projects and how the program changed Salem.

## Links

<http://www.cityofsalem.net/CityCouncil/CityProjects/SalemSustainability/Pages/CityGrowthCityDesign.aspx>

because of great collaboration between architects and planners."

Strong collaboration was necessary to tackle the difficulties found at the Salem sites.

### **North Downtown's O'Brien site**

At the O'Brien site, Commercial Street NE proved to be a huge barrier to pedestrian and bike-friendly pathways, and even the development of housing within the block. The other streets in the area — Marion, Center, Liberty, High and Division — already are congested and traffic is expected to increase during the next 20 years.

"Commercial (Street) is always a barrier," said Rithy Khut, a graduate student in community in regional planning expected to graduate in 2012. "It supports so much traffic — it works well for a car dealership but it doesn't work well for people, so we were trying to figure out ways to not focus so much on Commercial and Liberty."

Khut's group designed multi-family units, a specialty grocery store, a park along Mill Creek, and a mixed-use area with commercial and residential.

Architecture student Amanda Morgan also worked on the O'Brien site. Her group spent some time asking whether this area should be a destination spot or simply an area people pass through.

"Our group saw that there were enough amenities on site and nearby that it could become a place of its own — a mini neighborhood," Morgan said. "It is so close to the bridge head, we knew traffic would be an issue. We weren't going to turn it into quaint, pedestrian downtown area. But if you did a roundabout, put in interior parking courtyards on the inside of the block and celebrated Mill Creek as an amenity on the site, it could be a huge draw."

Morgan's group also envisioned a partnership between the city and the Chemeketa Center for Business and Industry to support new start-up businesses. Live-work units along Commercial would allow people to work from home.

Sheri Wahrgren of the city of Salem said that the students' work reinforced the city's downtown strategic action plan.

"They all say the same thing — you have issues with transportation and circulation, and you have a need for more housing," Wahrgren said. "The housing just makes sense because we have such little housing options here downtown and we need more options for work-force, entry-level housing."

### **North Salem's Epping property**

In North Salem, students had similar ideas but had to work around an odd-shaped parcel with only one access.

The Epping property, at 3350 Portland Road NE, is 14 acres and within a mile of the Kroc Center, Interstate 5, Oregon State Fairgrounds and Center 50+, a senior center. Despite its proximity to these amenities, students found it difficult to connect the site to those places.

"The site, as is, is only accessible from Portland Road, which is a major arterial," said Mark Braseth, a graduate student in community and regional planning expected to graduate in 2012. "This makes getting in and out of the site difficult given the volume of traffic currently coupled with the increased volume that would be added with the development."

Braseth's group added an access road — only feasible if a developer purchased more property

or got an easement — and two pedestrian/bicycle access paths to connect the site to residential areas to the east and north.

His group designed space for commercial businesses, including a grocery store, along Portland Road. The students also recommended creating business incubator space in a partnership with Chemeketa — and perhaps even flexible, communal office space for people to telecommute.

They added 119 housing units on the rest of the site with a park in the center. Half of the housing would be live/work units with the bottom floor available for retail or office space.

"The live/work units idea is a good idea," said Jill Corcoran of the city of Salem. "A lot of people are working out of their garages or balconies now. But the scary part for the market is it hasn't been done in Salem yet."

### **West Salem's Second Street**

Two other groups of students focused on Second Street in West Salem — a half-mile stretch of road that includes industrial uses, a shopping mall and multi-family housing.

Students designed a comprehensive green-streets idea that focused development on Second Street with commercial uses at the intersections and heavy street plantings. Between the intersections would be some cafes or restaurants but it would not be as densely populated.

They also designed a focal point for the street where people could gather, and establish a farmers market or festival.

"An eye-catching and defining landmark, perhaps a stately clock tower, rises from one corner of the intersection of Kingwood and Second, marking this district as having its own distinct identity within the city of Salem," students wrote in their final report to the city.

"They gave us, in a way, more than what we asked for," said Annie Gorski of the city of Salem.

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## Student-driven action

By Beth Casper

September 19, 2011

Salem city staff has already begun work on the suggestions by students in several of the Sustainable City Year projects.

"I am shocked and amazed at how far along Salem is this early in the process," said Nico Larco, co-founder of the SCI program. "In Salem, it seemed to be happening in real time."

**Willow Lake Treatment Industrial digester:** This fall, city staff will begin an eight-week trial to test the use of SeQuential BioFuels' waste product in the city's Willow Lake Treatment Industrial digester, which turns waste into methane to fuel the treatment plant. If the digester produces more methane and there are no adverse effects of adding SeQuential's waste, the city will work with SeQuential on a financial agreement for accepting the waste. For more information, contact Annie Gorski at [agorski@cityofsalem.net](mailto:agorski@cityofsalem.net) or (503) 588-6178.

**Commercial Street corridor area:** The city budgeted \$87,000 to determine the feasibility of the students' work in the area south of Mission and north of Owens streets SE. The students suggested infill developments to accommodate growth, development on Commercial Street to preserve the surrounding neighborhoods, an east-west link to connect Bush Park to Minto Island and wider streets to accommodate future traffic. The city's first step is to meet with property owners, business owners and residents. For more information, contact Courtney Knox at [cknox@cityofsalem.net](mailto:cknox@cityofsalem.net) or (503) 588-6178.

**North downtown area:** In the north downtown area, the city plans to do a mobility study because students identified access and circulation as major barriers to development there. After the mobility study, the city plans to evaluate the market for new housing in the area, since students said adding homes is a critical first step. For more information, contact Sheri Wahrgren at [swahrgren@cityofsalem.net](mailto:swahrgren@cityofsalem.net) or (503) 588-6178.

**Civic engagement:** The city is organizing a civic engagement team made up of city employees to work on strategies outlined by students in four different courses and three independent studies focused on engaging citizens in city affairs. Also, as a result of students' recommendations, six of 19 neighborhood associations launched Facebook pages. For more information, contact Mike Gotterba at [mgotterba@cityofsalem.net](mailto:mgotterba@cityofsalem.net) or (503) 588-6347.

"We have an abundance of ideas from the students," said Mike Gotterba of the city of Salem. "We are still working on prioritizing their ideas, but the idea of pulling together a team is best. We want to pull together the ideas in a structured way."



**Danielle Peterson / Statesman Journal file photo**

New lights at Salem's Riverfront Park are expected to save the the city approximately \$3,400 per year in energy and maintenance costs.



Energy efficient lights: In a pilot project, the city is installing 96 LED (energy efficient) lights at Riverfront Park this fall. If the lights are bright enough, easy enough to maintain and on track to reduce energy costs, LED lights could be installed throughout the city. The pilot project is estimated to save the city \$2,100 in annual energy costs and \$25,320 in maintenance costs. LED lights are expected to be maintenance-free for 18 years, whereas lights used today are replaced every three years.

"It is still an emerging technology, so you don't want to jump into the deep end until you test the water," said Mark Becketl, the city's parks and transportation services manager. "We want to make sure it works well."

For more information, contact Becketl at [mbecketl@cityofsalem.net](mailto:mbecketl@cityofsalem.net) or (503) 588-6211.

Park signage: This fall, city staff will ask the public for input on wayfinding and interpretive signage for Minto-Brown Island Park. Just as the students' recommended, the wayfinding signage will be placed in each parking lot and at major intersections with smaller "You are here" signs at other intersections in the park. The students' work also pointed to the need for an updated master park plan, which will likely start in the spring. For more information, contact Keith Keever at [kkeever@cityofsalem.net](mailto:kkeever@cityofsalem.net) or (503) 588-6284.

Police facility, civic center campus: The students' work on a new police facility and civic center campus jumpstarted the city's progress by a year. The city's architect team, ZGF Architects and CBI Two Architects, have developed a concept plan with the new police facility north of the existing civic center. The city now is determining whether there are any environmental issues at the site and comparing that site to three other alternative sites. Those results — and an update to the seismic analysis for the rest of the building — are expected back this fall. If all goes as planned and Salem councilors approve moving forward with a bond measure, voters could expect to make a decision on a bond measure for a new Salem police facility in 2013. For more information, contact Allen Dannen at [adannen@cityofsalem.net](mailto:adannen@cityofsalem.net) or (503) 588-6211.

— Beth Casper

# Students' ideas begin taking hold

By Beth Casper

Special to the Statesman Journal

September 19, 2011

The more than 500 University of Oregon students who tramped around Salem re-envisioning the city for months left behind more than stacks of architectural renderings and how-to reports.

City staff and officials, Salem residents and university professors said the students participating in the Sustainable City Year program gave Salem energy, enthusiasm and a community dialogue about how the city should grow and develop in the future.

"They kicked off a discussion about how areas might be developed that really meet the future needs of the city," said Bill Smaldone, chair of the South East Salem Neighborhood Association. "Some of the models they laid out were interesting, and I am sure that the city planners will be drawing on those as they start to do things."

The students worked on 15 city-identified projects throughout the 2010-2011 academic year as part of the innovative program called the Sustainable City Year at the University of Oregon.

Among these 15 projects, they designed buildings, created pedestrian- and bike-friendly urban developments, wrote manuals on how to engage more of the Salem population in city affairs and invented new energy-efficient outdoor lighting systems.

Some of the student ideas were too expensive, too outrageous in their design or just not quite the right fit for Salem, said students, professors and city staff.

But thinking far outside of the box was exactly what the students were supposed to do.

"One of the biggest things that the students end up doing is giving a space for conversations to happen," said University of Oregon associate planning and public policy professor Marc Schlossberg.

"City staff is hesitant to propose things that are too radical, and consultants don't propose things too crazy because they want to keep their work, but students can do that. If we are talking about redoing our cities, that is important."

City staff already has begun work on several major initiatives studied by the students.

For one, in the area south of Mission and north of Owens streets SE, the city budgeted \$87,000 to look further at the students' suggestions, which include adding an east-west link to connect Bush's Pasture Park to Minto Island and widening streets to accommodate future

traffic. The city's first step is to meet with property owners, business owners and residents.

Risa Cowley, owner of The Fussy Duck at Commercial and Kearney streets SE, said that any work that would help pedestrians cross Commercial Street SE would be welcome.

"From Konditorei to my side, people stand there forever and traffic doesn't stop," she said about the intersection that does not have a light. "It scares me. Sometimes I want to call 911. Traffic goes by really fast."

City staff also is evaluating a recommendation by students to add housing in north downtown. For Michael O'Brien, owner of the O'Brien Auto Group in north downtown, the students' ideas for housing are exactly how Salem could accommodate population growth while keeping a lively and vibrant downtown.

"I've seen San Francisco and San Diego and Bellevue and Seattle go on a huge condominium build, and in those cities, that's what makes the inner part of the city sustainable — because with all the people comes the restaurants and the nightlife," O'Brien said. "Getting people downtown is the key."

The partnership between the city and the university was mutually beneficial. While the city received input about future development, pedestrian-friendly streets, better designed parks and other possibilities, students received real-world experience by interacting with city staff, presenting their ideas and writing their proposals.

"This is being looked at as a national model of how universities can be part of the redevelopment and greening of cities and putting the public back in the public university," said associate professor Nico Larco, co-founder of the Sustainable City Year program. "The way Salem structured this has let us see the potential impact of this kind of collaboration with students and the city. This is happening."

The Sustainable City Year program is new: the city of Gresham kicked off the program in 2009-2010. But Salem was the first city officially chosen through a competitive process.

Salem taking on this program has proved to students and university professors that the city's image as traditional and conservative is unfair.

"Their planning department and city government is very brave and gutsy and forward thinking to even consider a project like this," said Amanda Morgan, a graduate fellow with the Sustainable Cities Initiative. "We were excited and impressed that the city had the political will and support for this kind of endeavor."

This is a place willing to take on progressive and sustainable initiatives, said City Manager Linda Norris.

Norris noted that the projects that the students worked on were not projects initiated by the university — they were priorities of the Salem City Council.

"The reason we applied was we had a number of pretty aggressive council goals, and we wanted to move forward quickly on those," she said. "This program brought tremendous research and planning and design expertise to us that really supplemented city staff... Some of these projects we might not have gotten to in the next five years. We got three to five years closer."

And the fact that the city is pushing — so soon — on many of the recommendations by the

students is further proof that Salem is serious about sustainability.

"When we started this year, we couldn't use the word sustainability," said Schlossberg, co-founder of the program. "Salem as a town wasn't particularly engaged with this idea of sustainability. Yet here we are at the end of the year, talking about sustainability, and now people are talking about it all the time."

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Sustainable City Year: Changes already taking place

Salem city staff already has begun work on the suggestions by students in several of the Sustainable City Year projects.

Willow Lake Treatment Industrial digester

What's happening: Eight-week trial to test the use of SeQUential BioFuels' waste product in the city's Willow Lake Treatment Industrial digester

Commercial Street corridor area

What's happening: The city budgeted \$87,000 to determine the feasibility of the students' ideas in the area south of Mission and north of Owens streets SE.

North downtown area

What's happening: The city plans to do a mobility study and evaluate the market for new housing in the area.

Civic engagement

What's happening: The city is organizing a team to work on students' strategy ideas. Also, six of 19 neighborhood associations launched Facebook pages.

Energy efficient lights

What's happening: In a pilot project, the city is installing 96 LED (energy efficient) lights at Riverfront Park this fall; LED lights could be installed throughout the city.

Park signage

What's happening: This fall, city staff will ask the public for input on wayfinding and interpretive signage for Minto-Brown Island Park.

Police facility, civic center campus

What's happening: The city's architect team, ZGF Architects and CBITwo Architects, have developed a concept plan with the new police facility north of the existing civic center, based on students' ideas.



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## University students help improve Salem

Sustainable Cities Initiative cuts costs after taking suggestions

**DARIN MORIKI**  
NEWS REPORTER

In Salem's Riverfront Park, the small, yet bright yellow LED lights set the 23-acre recreation area ablaze as dusk begins to fall.

However, these lights are not just placating the concerns of safety activists and watchful joggers, but also the city as it begins a pilot project to install 96 energy-efficient LED lights at the park. The plan for the pilot project, which is estimated to save the city \$2,100 in annual energy costs and \$25,320 in future maintenance costs, arose from recommendations made by the University's Sustainable Cities Initiative.

The Riverfront project is just one of many that the initiative has aided since it began in fall of 2009. Originally a modest effort by three University professors to assist Oregon communities in tackling sustainability issues, the initiative has now developed into a nationally recognized, award-winning organization with 20 faculty

members and 500 students at any given time.

Marc Schlossberg, a Sustainable Cities Initiative co-founder and University planning, public policy and management professor, explained that the main reason the organization was created was to share student ideas (typically saved for the eyes of their instructors) with cities that may be able to use and incorporate them in its planning goals.

"As professors, we get to read so many great projects and final papers that students turn in at the end of the term, and it seems kind of frustrating and a little silly to us that we're the only ones that get to read the brilliant suggestions that we get from students every year," Schlossberg said. "We wanted to figure out a way so other people got to see that work and ensure the work got put into practice in our local community."

Nico Larco, another co-founder and University architecture professor, said the goal of the program is both simple and complex: take a bunch of existing courses on campus — including those in the departments of architecture,

business, landscape architecture, public planning, law and journalism — and target them to assist a selected community. The students and faculty members provide ideas, suggestions, and insights into how to address and execute municipal sustainability issues.

"If you're going to deal with issues of sustainability, you need to work across disciplines," Larco said. "We're really interested in applying the work that we do here at the University, so students understand how the work happens outside of the University walls while having a chance to really affect the world around us."

Currently, the initiative pulls professors and students from 13 different departments. In addition, since the project began nearly three years ago, Schlossberg said the University's Sustainable Cities program has begun working with Portland State University and has helped the cities of Gresham, Salem and Springfield by conducting about 40 projects in 75 different courses, engaging a total of 1,300 students, and contributing about 200,000 combined hours worth of work in the service of local communities.

"There are many, many examples of a direct correlation between the student work and our current business practices," City of Salem project manager Courtney Knox said.

She went on to explain that nearly 500 University students from about 25 different courses tackled a variety of issues ranging from civic engagement to waste water treatment methods over the course of a year and presented their findings to the city. Knox said many of these findings, including the installation of energy-efficient lights, are being implemented and strongly considered by city legislators who were satisfied by the ideas presented by University students and faculty members.

"The student work amazed us," Knox said. "The students far exceeded all of our expectations. We're still sifting through the many ideas that they provided us, because it was just so extensive. They gave us fresh ideas, they gave our citizens and our staff an opportunity to re-examine our own assets and, as a community, there's just so much excitement and enthusiasm in Salem right now as a direct result of the student work."

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## Sustainable Cities Initiative allows Oregon students to provide fresh ideas to city developers

By DARIN MORIKI

Published October 10, 2011, last modified October 11, 2011

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