



January 30th, 2025

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

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

Dear Members of the Oregon House Higher Education Committee,

On behalf of the University of Oregon, I am writing to express our strong support for the Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP). As someone who has collaborated with and contributed to this outstanding initiative, I have seen firsthand the impact SCYP has on both my students and communities across the state.

SCYP helps make it easier for me to integrate project-based learning into the classroom, which not only helps them learn material and a range of ‘soft’ professional skills, but their work genuinely helps the communities we partner with. My classes focus on transportation planning and policy. Students are genuinely excited each term for real-world experience and when they know their efforts may help an actual Oregon community, they work harder. As a result of their excitement and passion, they learn more and the community benefits more! SCYP is like a bit of magic in how it adds value to students, communities, and us teaching at the University level. I truly enjoy this work too!

A key strength of SCYP is its collaborative, statewide approach. Our partnership with the program has demonstrated the power of universities working together to serve Oregon communities and in-turn bringing diverse perspectives and expertise to the table. SCYP's success hinges on its ability to unite institutions of higher education, local governments, and civic organizations in pursuit of common goals. This cross-institutional effort not only enriches the student experience but also ensures that cities and towns throughout Oregon, regardless of size or resources, can benefit from forward-thinking solutions tailored to their unique needs.

We urge you to support sustainable and on-going funding for the Sustainable City Year Program and to recognize it as an invaluable asset to Oregon's public universities and the communities we serve. Investment in SCYP will help ensure that students across the state gain practical experience, cities receive actionable solutions, and Oregon remains a leader in innovative university-community partnerships.

Thank you for your attention and for your ongoing commitment to higher education and community development in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Binder
Visiting Assistant Professor