

Chair Hudson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) at the University of Oregon (UO). I am a 2024 graduate of the Masters of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP) program at UO and am currently working as a transportation planner in Portland, Oregon.

As a student I participated in SCYP projects in two separate classes. My experience with the program was transformative and instrumental in shaping my passion for public service. It provided me with valuable hands-on experience and real-world context in the planning field. The two real-world projects that SCYP gave me the opportunity to work on addressed pressing challenges faced by local communities. For the first project, I worked with a team of students to create an adaptive reuse design proposal for an old elementary school site in Bend, Oregon. For the second project, I worked with another student team to propose a more equitable operations fee structure for Salem, Oregon.

SCYP provided meaningful practical experience and gave me useful insights into how fresh thinking, new perspectives, and evidence-based ideas can be customized to the unique contexts of local Oregon communities to improve the quality of life for residents. Collaborating with city officials, faculty, and fellow students further enhanced my technical and analytical skills, as well as allowed me to hone my 'soft' skills like collaborative teamwork, time and project management, presenting ideas to the public, and of course writing effectively – all which are extremely important in the professional workplace. My SCYP experience was also helpful in my post-graduation job search because it provided me with concrete points to discuss in interviews. I am grateful to have had this type of training in college so that I could enter the workforce ready to contribute on day one.

In talking with friends that attended universities in other states, it is clear that SCYP really is a unique and effective program that serves as a bridge between academic learning and practical application, fostering a new generation of leaders who are prepared to address the multifaceted challenges of our time. I feel that SCYP really helped equip me and the hundreds of other students SCYP serves each year with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to contribute meaningfully to society.

I wholeheartedly support sustainable and on-going support of the Sustainable City Year Program and the profound benefits it offers to students, communities, and to Oregon as a whole. SCYP truly is a model of integrating the 'public' into public higher education and the state's investment in SCYP will help create a new generation workforce and leaders who are ready to tackle the economic, environmental, and social challenges Oregon faces.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Betros
Portland, OR