



## Staff Report

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**File #:** 23-266

**Version:** 1

**Date:** 6/26/2023

**Item #:** 6.d.

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:**

**FROM:** Keith Stahley, City Manager

**SUBJECT:**

The City of Salem is partnering with the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program for the 2023 - 2024 academic year to advance City Council and community priorities.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Result Areas - Good Governance; Natural Environment Stewardship; Safe Community; Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure; Strong and Diverse Economy; Welcoming and Livable Community.

**SUMMARY:**

The City of Salem will partner with the University of Oregon's Sustainable Cities Year Program for the 2023 - 2024 academic year to advance City Council and community priorities to include implementation of Climate Action Plan strategies, principles of equity, communications and civic engagement, housing production, active transportation and mobility, and furthering 2022 Community Safety and Livability Bond priorities.

**ISSUE:**

Receive an update on the City of Salem's partnership with the University of Oregon's Sustainable Cities Year Program for the 2023 - 2024 academic year.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Information.

**FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

The Sustainable Cities Year Program (SCYP) is a year-long partnership, based out of the University of Oregon (UO), to help communities solve the problems of today and lay the groundwork for a sustainable, livable future. The SCYP also help students prepare for the workforce through applied learning. For more, see: <https://sci.uoregon.edu/>

SCYP is offering the City of Salem a funding match, through a grant the program secured from the federal Department of Education. SCYP has allocated \$150,000 for Salem and there is a \$150,000 placeholder in Salem's FY24 Budget. The attached agreement outlines the intent to focus up to 20 courses at the University of Oregon on high priority projects for City Council and our community (Attachment 1).

For the 2023-2024 academic year, beginning Fall 2023, staff are working directly with the UO SCYP Program to match high priority project ideas with available courses in the coming academic year. The goal is to move further and faster than we would do without professor and student engagement. While we don't anticipate the student work will lead directly to construction of a building, for example, we do find that the work propels visioning to a state where we can take the next step. Fall course opportunities are becoming more clear, with more options remaining to be defined for Winter and Spring quarters. Here is a partial list of the current project ideas we're investigating for SCYP. The parenthetical italicized language refers to *(how the course and project fits with the Council's Policy Agenda)*:

- **Climate Action Plan Implementation** *(planning for our future, sustainable infrastructure and services)*
  - We're looking at a Community-Engaged Architecture course to discover opportunities for **resiliency hubs**
- **Equity in Operations Fee** *(sustainable infrastructure and services)*
  - As we implement new software, this Public Budgeting course can help us advance new ways of thinking about how to differentiate based on equity considerations
- **Urban renewal, housing production, site redevelopment for middle housing** *(responding to our sheltering crisis, planning for our future)*
  - If there is a next urban renewal area, the Landscape Architecture course would look at where would it be located, how could sites be redeveloped for housing, what would middle housing looks like
- **Volunteerism and civic engagement** *(engaging our community)*
  - A Journalism course will begin thinking about - and a nonprofit consultancy course will further - what the next wave of volunteers look like and how do we engage them now (do we need to change) in volunteer opportunities (Library, Parks, Center 50+, etc.), Neighborhood Associations, Board and Commissions, etc.
- Digital divide and **future of civic engagement** *(engaging our community)*. An Engaged Journalism course will consider where people in Salem get their information and what tools and methods Salem can apply to better connect with our younger population and members of our cultural communities.
- **Furthering Bond projects** *(sustaining infrastructure and services)*
  - An Architecture course may think about mixed use building designs for branch library and housing
  - Another Architecture course may re-think Civic Center to integrate passive cooling into Civic Center redesign for seismic

- **Transportation planning, policy and design** (*planning for our future, sustaining infrastructure and services*)
  - A GIS course can help conduct **walkability assessment** (and gaps) of pedestrian corridors
  - A **mobility-centered planning** course can help advance some topics in TSP Update (bicycle transportation, Vision Zero, active transportation planning and design)

## BACKGROUND:

The City of Salem last worked with SCYP in the 2010-2011 academic year. In all, we had 27 courses with more than 500 students thinking about our community that year (Attachment 2). SCYP hosts the [final reports <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/11432>](https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/11432) and [media <https://www.dropbox.com/s/p7z464p2wgdu4nl/Salem\\_Press\\_Book.pdf?dl=0>](https://www.dropbox.com/s/p7z464p2wgdu4nl/Salem_Press_Book.pdf?dl=0) from that year on their website..

Courtney Knox Busch  
Strategic Initiatives Manager

## Attachments:

1. City of Salem SCYP 2023-24 Contract.
2. SCYP Salem 2010-11 Overview