

# ***City of Salem, Oregon***

*2010–2011*

**Salem staff re-energized by over  
\$8 million in faculty and student efforts**

Program Details

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**Sustainable City Year  
Program**

University of Oregon  
204 Pacific Hall  
6206 University of Oregon  
Eugene, OR 97403

sci.uoregon.edu  
541.346.3582



## **University partnership found solutions to Salem's complex problems**

City of Salem, Marion  
County, Oregon,  
United States

Community Size:  
2017: 169,798

Status: Completed

**S**uccessful financial management during the financial crisis contributed to the city's ability to invest in a unique community-university partnership program at the University of Oregon. The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a multi-disciplinary year-long effort directing faculty and their students towards the issues faced by a community.

As a member of the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N), SCYP brought in about 500 students in architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, urban planning, public administration, arts administration, law, product design, journalism, and business from the University of Oregon as well as a civil engineering course from nearby Portland State University to focus on making Salem more socially and economically inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and democratic.

### **SCYP 're-energized the whole city workforce' to tackle issues of sustainability**

By partnering with SCYP, Salem accessed expertise and labor on a large-scale to advance toward sustainability without incurring steep costs.

Of the 2010-11 year, Courtney Knox Busch, the city's Strategic Initiatives Manager, said the experience "propelled conversations within the city forward by two to three years...The students re-energized the whole city workforce. We could not have done that by ourselves," she said.

**SCYP delivers great ideas, furthering work among local consultants.**

Salem officials estimate that, based on standard rates, SCYP gave them over \$8 million worth of service. Since the projects completed, the City of Salem was able to use the work with local consultants to immediately begin putting ideas into practice. The 18 projects completed during the partnership ranged from street lighting to civic engagement and more. Four of the greatest benefits were:

- **Five designs to redevelop** the city's North Downtown Waterfront.
- **A bike system study** that detailed the diversity of bicyclists in the community and recommended how to build a more connected system of in-street (sharrows), dedicated on-street (bike lanes, bike boulevards), and off-street trail connections. Since the project completed, city officials report student work greatly influenced the current transportation system plan in the comprehensive plan.
- **All new LED streetlights used throughout the city that are aimed to save the city money for future years.** A public administration capstone project provided Salem an adjustable model for a proposed streetlight fee which analyzed complex ownership of Salem's streetlight infrastructure, fee structures, and their impact on plans to convert current street lights to LED. When Portland General Electric asked Salem if it wanted to continue buying its (non-LED) lights, the city was "able to say no because it didn't make financial sense because the students had given us such a good model," Knox Busch said.
- **Students proposed three project ideas to reuse industrial byproducts at the City of Salem Willow Lake Treatment Facility.** After matching one local waste generator to Salem's wastewater treatment facility, the city gained immediate and unanticipated revenue from tipping fees and increased power generation for the plant.

Some officials suggest the real impacts of the SCYP occur after the program ends. For example, after students turned in their work for the Willow Lake site, Salem completed a market study for hauled waste with a consultant and received over \$3 million in incentives from Energy Trust of Oregon and other partners. The funding is for continued expansion efforts of the cogeneration facility at Willow Lake to power more of the plant. Besides the obvious benefits of the contributions from students, the SCYP initiatives have given Salem officials a new way of looking at sustainability.



***This program allowed us to “open our eyes widely to concepts and ideas that will shape the city’s future.”***

— Rick Scott, former Director of Urban Development, City of Salem



**28**  
Classes



**500**  
Students



**80,000**  
Hours



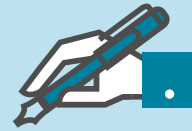
**18**  
Projects



**11**  
Disciplines



**24**  
Faculty  
Members



**14**  
Assistants, Staff,  
& Report Writers

***“These strategies move  
our community closer  
to our goals of a safe  
and livable community.”***

— Rick Scott, former Director of Urban Development, City of Salem

Contact Us

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info@epicn.org  
epicn.org

PO Box 44069  
Madison, WI 53744-4069