



Sustainable Cities Partnership

Frequently Asked Questions

What is SCP?

The Sustainable Cities Partnership (SCP) is a one-year partnership between Western Washington University and a community in Washington State. Partners propose a list of challenging sustainability projects/issues, which are tackled by creative, passionate students and faculty across multiple disciplines. While SCP is new to Western (we're now working with Edmonds, our inaugural partner), it is based upon a successful model used for years at the University of Oregon.

What happens during the year-long partnership?

We expect that SCP will address **9-12 projects** through **9-15 courses** with **250+ students** across **several academic departments** dedicating **thousands of hours of student work**. This work will focus on projects related to Urban Planning, Economics, Energy, Environmental Sciences, Environmental Studies, Design, Communications, Journalism, Management, Entrepreneurship, Computer Science, Marketing, Operations Management, Recreation, or Sociology.

Who can submit a proposal?

SCP will be focused on communities within 1.5 hours driving time of Bellingham. Generally, one city is the lead applicant, enlisting co-applicants depending upon the nature of specific projects and upon the finances of the applicants. We highly encourage such partnerships as they help ensure that ideas generated from the university-community engagement get put into action.

What types of projects can SCP address?

Cities are encouraged to propose a wide range of projects and think of "sustainability" very broadly. Past projects at similar programs have included designs for open spaces, redevelopment planning and visioning, waste and storm-water management schemes, transportation connectivity analyses, civic engagement techniques, strategic communications strategies, bicycle transportation analysis and design, public art planning, transit-oriented development, industrial byproduct re-use, and master plan designs, among others. Projects can emanate from a wide variety of city departments, including planning and development, public works, economic development, parks and recreation, transportation, and public safety, among others. Examples of projects now underway in Edmonds (as well as some completed by Oregon's program) can be seen in this attachment: [SCP Project Examples Appendix](#)

What are the community/agency benefits of SCP?

New Ideas: Dozens of implementable ideas are generated over the course of the year by students who draw on a combination of their training, community expertise, and examples of excellence from around the globe. At the conclusion of each project, students can publicly present their recommendations to the city and community, and SCP compiles their ideas into a professional report that can be a resource for community decision making.

Expanded Conversations & Public Outreach: Students are able to put ideas into the public domain in politically neutral ways that help advance community conversations and spur the imagination of staff and the broader community. Because 250+ students are intimately involved in the community over an academic year, many private, neighborhood, and nonprofit stakeholders become engaged in projects alongside city and agency staff. Students are able to help ‘till the soil’ and catalyze future sustainability-oriented projects, policies, and plans.

How much does SCP cost?

The cost of SCP will vary based on the number of community projects and the number of courses working on each project. Generally, the average cost of a single academic-quarter course targeted at a single project is about \$7,000. With that as a guideline, expect to incur a total cost of \$65,000 to \$85,000 to support a yearlong program that includes 9-12 courses, 250+ students, and 16,000+ hours of effort. In programs elsewhere, cities have funded SCP through their general fund, urban renewal fund, utility funds, and state and federal grants, as well as with partnerships involving school districts, utility districts, and private businesses.

How much staff time does SCP involve?

The success of the SCP partnership relies in part on the engagement of the partner city. The city will need to provide a lead coordinator (typically 0.1 FTE for 15 months), as well as a city contact for each course, who typically would spend one day each two weeks (i.e., 0.1 FTE) for the duration of the quarter-long course. SCP employs a dedicated project manager to coordinate among all the faculty and students and to act as a main point of contact for the city.

What do people say about similar programs in other cities?

- “**That project would not have happened without the students,**” says Linda Norris, Salem’s city manager. ... ‘I was concerned about how we were going to achieve a number of goals we had set with the limited resources we had.’ **The students propelled them forward more than three years,** she says, helping design new energy-efficient street lights, bicycle lanes, park signage and new uses for the wastewater treatment plant that saved the city \$400,000. – *Financial Times* 09.12.2012
- “**‘Students can stretch, be creative and generate ideas we might not think of to get the discussion going,’** said Brian Martin, an associate planner for the City of Gresham. We want to take advantage of that brainpower.” – *Oregon Daily Emerald*, 11.05.2009
- SCYP is “perhaps the **most comprehensive effort by a U.S. university** to infuse sustainability into its curricula and community outreach.” – *New York Times* 08.23.20

How do we get started with our application?

1. Let us know that you are interested! Contact the Sustainable Cities Partnership at 360-650-3824 or SCP@wwu.edu. and we’ll send application materials. Visit the website at www.wwu.edu/scp
2. Complete an application for the 2017-2018 SCP cycle. We’ll work with you as you develop it. SCP staff can help describe the program to proposal teams, city decision makers, and co-applicants. We are available to help brainstorm interdisciplinary project ideas and answer questions about the program. SCP is about developing strong partnerships between universities and communities and the more we work together during the application process, the better the projects will be
3. Submit the completed application via email to SCP@wwu.edu by March 17, 2017. SCP will review applications and select the ‘17-‘18 partner by April 7, 2017.