

The University of Oregon and City of Springfield begin year-long sustainability projects

City and UO faculty and students will team up for Sustainable City Year

EUGENE, Ore. -- (May 16, 2011) – The University of Oregon’s Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) has selected Springfield, Ore. as its partner city for the 2011-2012 academic year. Following two successful years in Gresham and Salem, UO faculty and students will work collaboratively with nearby Springfield to tackle important development, planning and civic engagement issues.

“We are proud to participate in this program and are excited to work as partners with the incredible students and faculty from the University of Oregon,” said Gino Grimaldi, Springfield’s city manager. “Springfield is always looking to take a step forward and improve the lives of our citizens, and this partnership will take us closer to achieving our mission of making Springfield a preferred place to live and work. I’m energized by the possibilities ahead and look forward to a continued partnership with the University of Oregon.”

The Sustainable Cities Initiative selects one city each year to be the focus of its Sustainable City Year (SCY) program. Faculty teach courses and direct student work toward city-identified sustainability projects. Springfield will be SCY’s third partner city and will involve more than 400 students and approximately 20 faculty members in a range of projects.

"The University of Oregon and the City of Springfield are partners and neighbors with a shared goal for a sustainable future," said Richard Lariviere, UO president. "Education includes more than notes and tests in lecture halls. Our students and faculty are getting out of the classroom and into Oregon communities to apply their training and provide a service to a city embarking on important decisions that will improve livability for generations."

The Sustainable Cities Initiative is shaping the future academic priorities at the UO and is promoting sustainability through education, service, public outreach and research. SCY currently extends across two universities -- UO and Portland State University -- and 10 academic departments and programs, including architecture, landscape architecture, interior architecture, planning and public policy, journalism, law, business, product design, arts and administration and civil engineering. For 2011-12, SCY will add courses in economics, historic preservation and the new Oregon Leadership in Sustainability certificate program.

"As a senior member of the House transportation committee and a resident of Springfield, I am committed to the application of best practices and strategic solutions to community questions," said Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon). The University of Oregon's Sustainable Cities Initiative will bring Springfield residents and University of Oregon faculty and students together with other strategic partners to imagine new approaches to projects involving bicycle and

pedestrian transportation planning, redevelopment for some of the city's commercial and industrial sites, and preservation of the historic Dorris Ranch. I am looking forward to seeing the results of the students' work."

Springfield is a family friendly community, ideally located just east of I-5 and between the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers. Once considered a single economy city, today Springfield enjoys a diverse business climate. Several regional and national companies including; Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Symantec Corporation and the dynamic Sacred Heart Medical Center at Riverbend help support a thriving community. Springfield has a history of sustainable practices, including participating in the U.S. Green Building Council's pilot program to retrofit existing buildings and is a leader in sustainable practices in the area of environmental protections, particularly in the areas of Stormwater planning and management.

Springfield projects will involve city staff from many departments, as well as project partners from the Springfield Utility Board, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, Metro Wastewater Management Commission, United Way, Springfield School District 19 and other community groups and organizations. Projects will include:

- A critical analysis of assets and barriers to retrofitting the Laura Street neighborhood, which is situated between a large transportation corridor, a bustling big box commercial center, and a large industrial warehouse area.
- An update to Springfield's Bike/Pedestrian Plan and the creation of a Bike Path Connectivity Plan to be reviewed and potentially adopted into future city-wide plans.
- Design standards, historic preservation recommendations and city code revisions to update the current Glenwood Refinement Plan.
- Urban design and redevelopment concepts for the Mohawk area Waremart property.
- Research and documentation to assist Willamalane Park and Recreation District in applying for the National Landmark Designation for Dorris Ranch Living History Farm.
- Redevelopment concepts for the Booth Kelly Center, which includes 17 acres of land and more than 200,000 sq ft. of industrial business space currently renting to Springfield businesses.

To select the 2011-2012 city, SCI's executive director Robert Liberty and associate directors Nico Larco and Marc Schlossberg invited Oregon cities to apply and submit project proposals. Springfield was selected as the 2011-12 SCY partner city by a review committee of university faculty and SCI staff.

Courses will begin Fall 2011. For more information, visit <http://sci.uoregon.edu/>.

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Links: UO Sustainable Cities Initiative, <http://sci.uoregon.edu/>; City of Springfield, <http://www.ci.springfield.or.us/>

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