

Business Report Summaries Portfolio

University of Oregon business courses have helped propose solutions to city challenges addressing economic development, urban renewal, strategic planning, workforce and industry analysis, and industrial ecology.

SCYP often partners with the Strategic Planning Project, the capstone experience for MBA students in UO's Lundquist College of Business sustainable business practices specialization to apply their two-years of coursework to address a real-life issue that cities face. Business administration courses provides students hands-on learning experiences that can help find solutions to some of their most urgent issues. A selected project portfolio from undergraduate and graduate level business courses follows.



What is the Sustainable City Year Program?

The Sustainable City Year Program is an innovative university-community partnership program founded by the Sustainable Cities Institute at the University of Oregon in 2009-10. In this unique model, existing courses, faculty, and students from across campus are purposefully directed toward a single Oregon community over an academic year to address vexing issues identified by the partner. SCYP and the students, faculty, and communities it engages with are an example of Oregon innovation, leadership, and how leveraging resources can contribute to meaningful, additional, and society-wide value. SCYP creates a conduit for translating knowledge into practice, and provides significant workforce development opportunities for students, adding 'hard' and 'soft' skills and hands-on experience to all levels of students' education.





SPRING 2022

Image Credit: Tigard Public Library

Tigard Microgrid Feasibility Study

Partner: City of Tigard

Instructor: Ryan Cabinte

Project Description: Students conducted a feasibility study for deploying solar microgrids in Tigard. Information sources include through interviews with stakeholders including the City of Tigard, Portland General Electric (PGE), real estate developers, business owners, and specialists from the Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO). The study determined how Tigard can implement microgrids with distributed renewable energy and battery storage at both building and district scales to benefit equity, resiliency, economics, and sustainability.

Recommendations: Students recommended a phased approach for implementing microgrids in Tigard. The initial focus should be on developing a microgrid at the Public Library with solar PV and battery storage, enabling rapid emergency preparedness. Once this Tier 1 project is established, efforts can expand to public and private microgrids in the surrounding area. As the Hunziker core redevelops with resilience, energy efficiency, and solar generation in mind, support should be given to the Tier 3 multi-user microgrid (MUM). This large-scale MUM will enhance the Emergency Operations Center's (EOC) resiliency, reduce local emissions, and save money, attracting investment and new businesses to Tigard. It could also serve as a model for urban community microgrid projects globally. In the meantime, the City should apply for grants to boost the financial viability of these projects and aid in emergency preparedness.



SPRING 2021

Image Credit: City of Troutdale

Troutdale Passenger Rail and Transit Feasibility Assessment

Partner: City of Troutdale
Instructor: Ryan Cabinte

Project Description: Students partnered with Troutdale to explore passenger rail or transit systems focused on the Columbia River Gorge. The project initially aimed to evaluate lodging opportunities, transportation congestion relief, infrastructure optimization, tourism's economic impact, and strategies for integrating Troutdale into Oregon's Statewide Transportation Strategies. The refined focus included identifying ways to alleviate tourist congestion, utilizing and improving infrastructure, collaborating with key stakeholders, and recommending economic development strategies.

Recommendations: Based on student research and analysis, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. Collaborate with existing stakeholders to generate support, reduce financial burdens, and advocate for Troutdale:
 - Continue coordination with ODOT to stay involved with the latest Columbia River Gorge transportation studies and secure funding and infrastructure updates.
 - Establish Troutdale's active participation in the Governor's Regional Solution team initiatives.
2. Actively participate in Region-1-ACT by attending meetings, gaining access to key strategies, and voicing Troutdale's interests to allies.
3. Identify representatives from Troutdale to apply for the vacant Multnomah County Stakeholder seat:
 - Work with the East Multnomah County Transportation Committee (EMCTC) to secure representation on the ACT.
 - Foster relationships within EMCTC through common solutions such as Park and Ride with off-season options.



2020

Image Credit: Chuck Zentmeyer, Port of Green Bay

Smart Mobility Corridors: Exploring Freight Automation for Brown County, WI

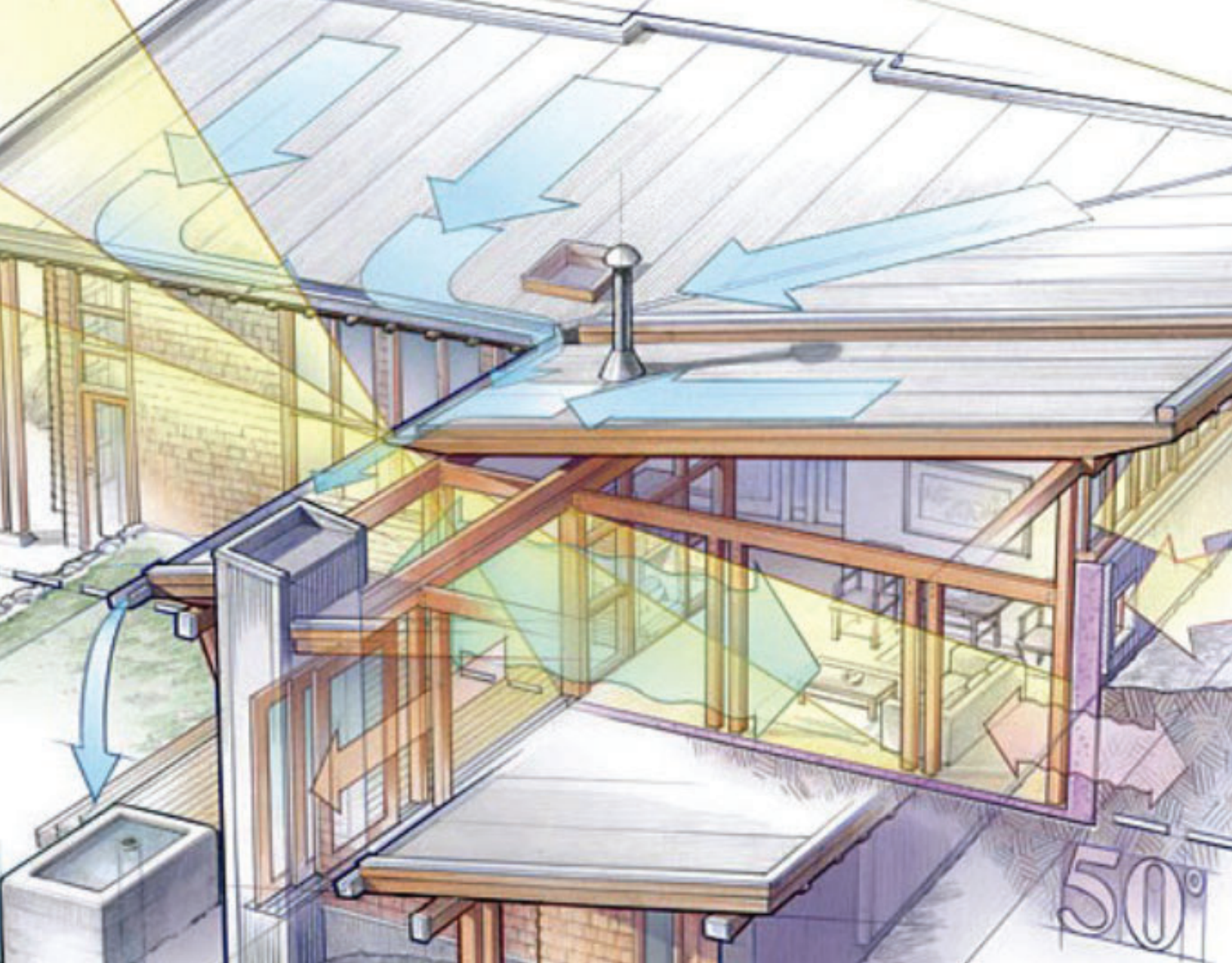
Partner: Brown County, Wisconsin

Instructors: Joshua Skov and Rachel Cohen

Project Description: A University of Oregon team explored the concept of a “smart mobility” corridor for freight at the Port of Green Bay. Their research focused on identifying key technologies, vendors, and business models necessary for such advancements. They highlighted the role of 5G infrastructure as foundational for these technologies.

Recommendations: After conducting extensive market research and consulting with industry experts, the team concluded that deploying autonomous freight solutions in Brown County is not currently feasible. They recommended several steps to prepare for future opportunities:

1. Engage Stakeholders and Thought Leadership: Foster dialogue with local businesses and participate in statewide discussions on connected and autonomous vehicle (C-AV) technologies to stay informed about evolving options.
2. Roadway and Port Improvements: Enhance local infrastructure to attract future smart mobility projects and improve regional competitiveness.
3. Formulate Partnerships: Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions, industry leaders, and local businesses to explore potential future partnerships aligned with Brown County’s goals.
4. Design a Model and Identify Funding: Develop a strategic model based on local needs and conditions, allowing time for technology and business models to mature before committing to specific investments.



WINTER 2018

Image Credit: Clean Energy Solutions:
Community Solar Report

Clean Energy Solutions: Community Solar

Partner: TriMet

Instructor: Joshua Skov

Project Description: The project aimed to implement a community solar initiative as part of TriMet's Southwest Corridor Plan. This involved installing solar panels on TriMet-owned properties such as rooftops of maintenance facilities and new Max line shelters or combining several areas along the Southwest Corridor. The initiative supports TriMet's goals of sustainability, community engagement, and providing cost-effective clean energy options to individuals who cannot install residential rooftop solar systems.

Recommendations: Based on TriMet's goals, the report recommends the "Owner & Subscriber" scenario for TriMet. This model allows TriMet to host and partially own the array, engaging the community and local businesses in the project. Additionally, it suggests completing the project before 2020 to maximize ITC benefits, which are set to decrease in subsequent years. This recommendation aligns with TriMet's goals of supporting community solar, increasing visibility, and attracting local business participation, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and livable future for the region.



Image Credit: City of LaPine

WINTER 2018

Urban Renewal and Industry Analysis

Partner: City of LaPine
Instructor: Doug Wilson

Project Description: The course focused on enhancing La Pine’s appeal for residents, visitors, and businesses through three projects: urban renewal, industry viability, and workforce evaluation. The first project aimed to establish best practices for LaPine’s new urban renewal district, including short and long-term urban renewal-related policies. The second project involved detailed industry benchmarking to assess the attractiveness of each sector within La Pine. Lastly, the third project included a workforce asset analysis to recommend prioritized industries for workforce development efforts in the city.

Recommendations:

Urban Renewal

- Project Matrix: Determine project focus and success potential.
- Leverage Relationships: Build strong ties with business owners and government entities.
- Use Urban Renewal Funds: Share costs and form partnerships.
- Grow Tax Base: Expand to generate additional financing.
- Public Approval: Maintain through surveys and newsletters.

Short-term Recommendations for Urban Renewal

- Storefront Improvement Loan Program: Develop downtown stores, establish guidelines, offer matching funds (\$5,000-\$7,500), and engage businesses.
- Minor Enhancements: Address blight, prioritize projects, avoid disruption, and ensure public involvement.

Long-term Recommendations for Urban Renewal

- Transform ODOT Property: Convert land into retail/entertainment, hire market consultants, use project matrix, leverage relationships, and allocate funds effectively.
- Public Art Program: Allocate a budget percentage for public art, benchmark successful programs, and involve the public.

Industry Benchmarking:

- Overall, wood products manufacturing and food processing are identified as the most viable industries for La Pine, while data centers, brewing and distilling, and paper products manufacturing are seen as having low potential.

Workforce Asset Analysis

- Business Expansion Loan Program: Offer loans up to \$50,000 with low-interest rates.
- Sell Land Below Market Value: Incentivize business expansion into the Urban Renewal District.



Image Credit: SCP Hotel Redmond

WINTER 2016

Downtown Redmond Incubator Feasibility Study

Partner: City of Redmond

Instructor: Beth Hjelm

Project Description: The project assessed the feasibility of establishing a business incubator in Redmond, focusing on reinforcing the city's public-private partnership commitments. Evaluating Redmond's fit involved assessing its entrepreneurial culture, maker community, and economic development resources through stakeholder interviews, suggesting the City's suitability for hosting an incubator. The project concluded with the creation of short- and long-term models for the incubator's implementation, along with a framework for evaluating its success post-implementation.

Recommendations: Recommendations for next steps were categorized into three phases:

Phase 1: Define

- Build coalition for vision
- Identify leadership
- Determine location and facilities
- Secure initial funding
- Establish corporate governance

Phase 2: Develop

- Define incubator focus
- Develop programming
- Create application
- Establish key partnerships
- Establish key resources
- Identify key activities

Phase 3: Launch

- Develop investor relationships
- Develop marketing tools
- Initiate marketing
- Prepare for launch



WINTER 2016

Image Credit: Regional Demand Presentation

Regional Multi-Sports Complex Feasibility Analysis

Partner: City of Redmond

Instructor: Beth Hjelm

Project Description: Students analyzed the feasibility of a proposed regional multi-sports complex in Redmond, Oregon. This initiative involved various regional organizations such as the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, City of Redmond, Visit Bend, Central Oregon Visitors Association, and others. The complex aims to boost economic development through sports tourism by hosting major tournaments not currently supported by the region's sports infrastructure. Additionally, it would serve local community groups and sports leagues. Students undertook Phase 1 of the two phase project, which involved conducting baseline analyses of existing facilities and demands, studying business models and usage patterns, benchmarking similar complexes nationwide, researching tournament demands, and assessing regional demand from leagues and teams.

Recommendations:

- Incorporate findings and suggestions from all research groups into a cohesive vision for the sports complex.
- Identify areas where additional or clarifying research is needed, particularly in areas such as Tier 1 regional participation rates, adult leagues, and little league information.
- Gain internal agreement on specifics such as the number of fields, gymnasiums, and ballparks needed.
- Consider the overall financial feasibility of the project, including the balance of community use and external event/tournament use.

Specific Facility Recommendations:

- Utilize synthetic turf fields for their long-term sustainability, lower maintenance costs, and year-round accessibility.
- Grass ballparks are recommended for their lower upfront costs and cooler temperatures but require high maintenance and water usage.
- Turf ballparks are recommended for their low maintenance and year-round accessibility despite higher upfront costs.
- Indoor facilities are recommended for providing sheltered space for year-round activities and flexibility for multiple sports/events.



WINTER 2015

Image Credit: Visit Central Oregon

Downtown Redmond Market Analysis

Partner: City of Redmond

Instructor: Beth Hjelm

Project Description: The City of Redmond desired to revitalize its downtown area, focusing on new active clusters of businesses to attract residents for retail, services, entertainment, and housing. The project aimed to update a 2005 study on downtown health and identify attractive consumer markets or business clusters, along with recommendations for reaching these consumers effectively. It included both secondary and primary research involving business owners, community leaders, and citizens. Student teams focused on citizen/consumer outreach and examined specific needs and issues for targeted business clusters including retail, food, and lodging.

Recommendations: Students created a set of recommendations to enhance the business environment and revitalize downtown Redmond, including:

- Beautify Vacant Storefronts: Improve vacant storefront appearance and engage property owners to fill vacancies.
- Develop a Downtown-Focused Website: Create an online inventory of downtown stores to increase visibility and attract visitors.
- Public Parking Awareness: Expand awareness of available public parking options to enhance downtown accessibility.
- Action Plan Implementation: Hold town hall meetings, establish a Downtown Redmond Association, allocate funds, define downtown boundaries, and incentivize business openings and marketing efforts.
- Support Downtown Events: Establish a clear event planning process, organize an event page, market events through social media and radio, and measure their impact.
- Increasing Downtown Restaurant Support: Enhance communication between the City, Chamber of Commerce, and local businesses; hold events to promote dining, and utilize online marketing.
- Retail Mix Optimization: Attract and sustain retailers in new categories; analyze vacancy rates and retail mix regularly.



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Sustainable City Year Program

SCI
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WINTER 2015

Image Credit: Redmond Municipal Airport Marketing Assets Report

Redmond Municipal Airport Marketing Assets Report

Partner: City of Redmond

Instructor: Beth Hjelm

Project Description: The report outlines a strategic plan for Roberts Field, Redmond's Municipal Airport, aiming to enhance advertising revenue while maintaining the airport's central Oregon aesthetic. Students conducted primary research through interviews and site visits, and secondary research comparing regional airports. The plan focused on developing a flexible media kit and advertising rate card, which will standardize pricing and streamline approval processes, enhancing operational efficiency and maximizing revenue potential.

Recommendations: Recommendations for next steps were categorized into three phases:

- **Flexible Rate Card:** Develop a rate card that allows dynamic pricing adjustments based on passenger traffic and asset exposure. This flexibility will enhance operational efficiency by reducing the need for frequent council approvals.
- **Zone-Based Pricing:** Establish different advertising zones within the airport. Price these zones according to their passenger traffic and engagement potential to maximize visibility and revenue.
- **Sponsorship and Partnerships:** Pursue strategic partnerships with brands that align with the airport's central Oregon aesthetic. Focus on sponsorships that enhance traveler amenities, such as branded water refill stations and charging stations, providing functional benefits while generating revenue.
- **Dedicated Advertising Staff:** Hire personnel to manage advertising contracts and maintain relationships with advertisers. This role is crucial for sustaining and growing the airport's advertising efforts.
- **Infrastructure Enhancements:** Make minor changes to airport infrastructure to improve advertising asset utilization. Examples include converting outdoor lamp posts for advertising purposes, thereby increasing revenue potential without major alterations.



Image Credit: City of Medford

WINTER 2014

Recreation Services Funding

Partner: City of Medford

Instructor: Beth Hjelm

Project Description: The project sought to enhance Medford Parks & Recreation Department (MPRD) services through improved funding strategies and increased community engagement. Key objectives included reducing costs, boosting program usage, and increasing revenue. The final report comprised three main components: a market expansion assessment, a current marketing analysis, and a pricing and cost recovery model.

Recommendations:

Market Expansion

- Internship Pilot Program: Target bilingual young adults to reduce resource barriers within MPRD.
- Advertisement Expansion: Utilize local Spanish-language media such as Telemundo, Univision, and Caminos magazine.
- Programs in Spanish: Increase and diversify programs offered in Spanish and print program guides in Spanish.
- Incentive Programs: Implement referral discounts and “sweat equity” payment options to incentivize registration and attendance.

Marketing Analysis

- Social Media Plan: Boost user awareness through an integrated social media strategy involving Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.
- University Interns: Hire interns to manage social media accounts, conduct market research, and handle business functions.
- Website Improvement: Create a new, user-friendly website independent of the City of Medford’s platform to increase user activity.

Pricing and Cost Recovery

- Cost Allocation Method: Develop a new method to more accurately categorize program costs.



WINTER 2012

Image Credit: Dorris Ranch, Willamalane

Dorris Ranch: Business Planning and Strategic Project

Partner: City of Springfield

Instructor: Beth Hjelm

Project Description: The Dorris Ranch Master Plan highlighted the need to enhance awareness and usage of the ranch and establish revenue streams for self-sufficiency. The students developed a comprehensive marketing strategy, assessed the park's current situation, and recommended improvements in events, programs, marketing, signage, and visitor experience. The resulting Dorris Ranch Business Planning and Strategy Project aims to enhance park awareness, increase visitor engagement, and ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Recommendations:

Events Improvements

- Diversify event offerings: Introduce new events such as music festivals, arts and crafts activities, dog shows, antique car shows, bike days, and children's activities to attract new visitors and encourage repeat visits.
- Schedule for implementation: A tentative three-year schedule includes the phased introduction of these events, starting with directional signage and educational signage in 2012, and expanding event offerings progressively through 2014.

Revenue Generation

- Facility rentals: Improve rental facilities for private events and weddings based on feedback from past renters. This includes expanded catering options and designated parking areas.
- Hazelnut distribution: Increase local distribution of hazelnuts to restaurants and stores as an additional revenue stream.
- Event partnerships: Form partnerships with local caterers and event planners to offer comprehensive planning services, enhancing the appeal of the venue for private events.

Visitor Experience and Traffic

- Saturday classes: Offer Saturday classes on various topics such as birdwatching, quilting, candle making, wilderness survival, and archery to maintain visitor interest during construction periods.
- Educational signage: Update park signage to provide educational information about the historical, agricultural, and natural aspects of Dorris Ranch. This includes detailed information about the filbert growth cycle, the history of hazelnuts, local wildlife, and river ecology.
- Curriculum development: Collaborate with local teachers to develop formalized lesson plans that enhance the educational value of school trips. This includes materials on biology, ecology, Native American cultures, and farm-to-table agriculture.



Image Credit: City of Springfield

WINTER 2012

Energy and Climate Change: Recommendations for the City of Springfield Regarding Buildings, Electricity, and Transportation

Partner: City of Springfield

Instructors: Joshua Skov & Kelly Hoell

Project Description: Students conducted research on three main topics—buildings, electricity, and transportation—focusing on the City’s influence on energy use, climate emissions, and community quality of life. Based on this research, groups of students made recommendations in these three areas for how the City of Springfield could reduce environmental impacts. Students also aimed to connect goals of reducing energy use and emissions with goals the City of Springfield has already identified for itself in its own documents, including the city’s Strategic Plan and Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Recommendations: The student’s recommendations are aligned with the City’s existing goals outlined in its Strategic Plan and Capital Improvement Program (CIP), emphasizing financial responsibility and effective delivery of government services to enhance community livability. The recommendations are categorized based on municipal operations and community activities, addressing buildings, electricity, and transportation.

Buildings

Municipal:

- Upgrade building envelopes, lighting, and equipment to reduce long-term energy use.
- Integrate building efficiency upgrades into the CIP during planned construction and maintenance.
- Encourage employees to reduce energy use through information and programming.

Community:

- Provide public information on lowering energy use via trainings, websites, and campaigns.
- Partner with agencies like Energy Trust of Oregon and ENERGY STAR to reduce energy use in buildings.

Electricity

Municipal:

- Implement advanced metering in city buildings for electricity use feedback.
- Utilize city buildings for renewable energy production.

Community:

- Promote “smart grid” technologies to manage electricity demand.
- Enable households and businesses to become “prosumers” of grid electricity through smart grid technology.

Transportation

Municipal:

- Optimize the City’s fleet with appropriate vehicle upgrades and fuel replacements.
- Encourage City employees to drive less by providing amenities like bicycle parking, transit passes, carpool parking, and flexible scheduling.

Community:

- Develop infrastructure to incentivize electric vehicle use.
- Enhance “walkability” through strategic planning.
- Implement “feebate” programs to encourage purchasing fuel-efficient vehicles.