

SCI

SUSTAINABLE CITIES INSTITUTE

The Sustainable Cities Institute (SCI) works across disciplines that match the complexity of cities to address sustainability challenges, from regional planning to building design and from enhancing engagement of diverse communities to understanding the impacts on municipal budgets from disruptive technologies and many issues in between.

SCI focuses on sustainability-based research and teaching opportunities through two primary efforts:

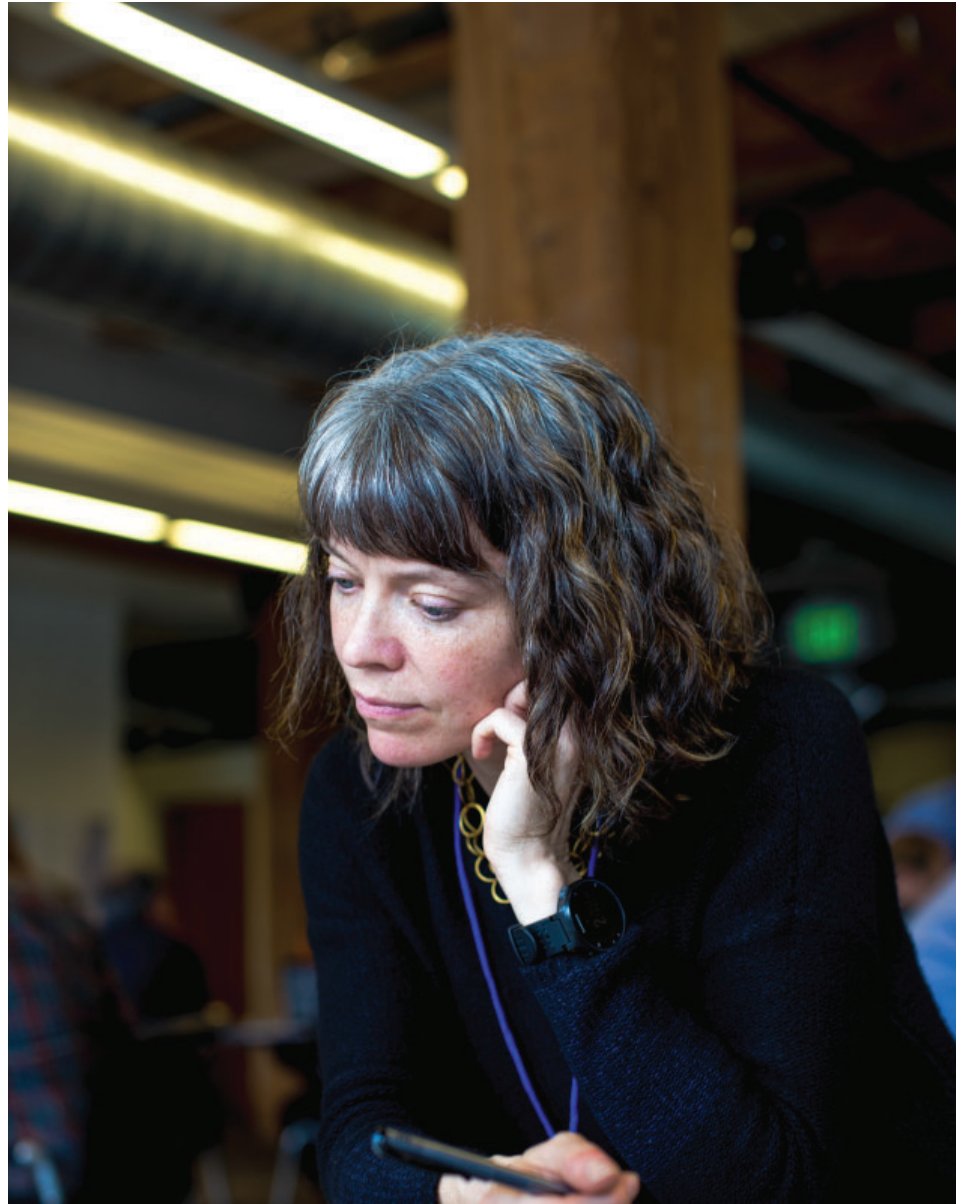
1. Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP)

A massively scaled university-community partnership program that matches the resources of the University with one Oregon community each year to help advance that community's sustainability goals; and

2. Urbanism Next Center

Focuses on how autonomous vehicles, e-commerce, and the sharing economy will impact the form and function of cities.





SCI IS AN APPLIED THINK TANK FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN CITIES

TURNING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE INTO REALITY

We work across disciplines inside and out of academia to re-define the delivery of higher education, conduct applied and policy-relevant research, and serve the public in the design and development of sustainable, resilient, and livable cities.

Our work is consistently applied, multi-disciplinary and sustainability focused, matching the complexity of cities with the disciplinary expertise to match. We focus on everything in cities, from sustainable architecture to transportation to engaging marginalized communities to impacting the larger, relevant policy frameworks at the local and state levels.

SCI BEGINNINGS AND FRAMEWORKS

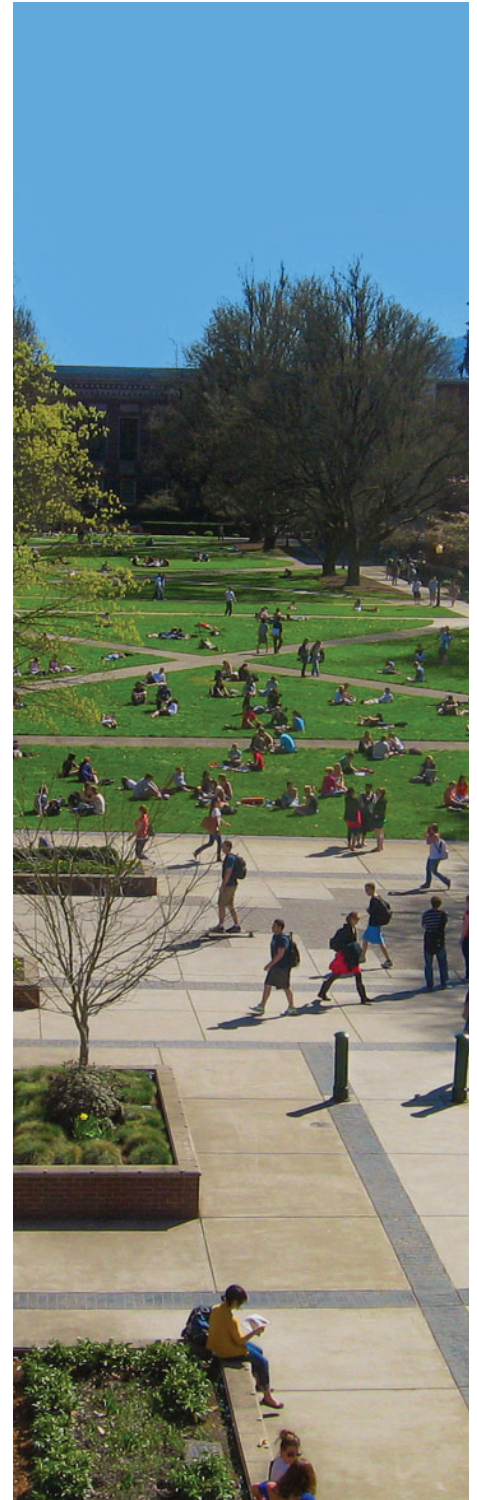
Most sustainability issues play out at the community or city level. A city's inability to innovate often comes from a limited capacity to put knowledge into practice, effectively and efficiently, not from a lack of knowledge about better solutions to pressing problems. This makes filling the gap between knowledge and practice the key for effective and innovative city operation, that meets community goals.

In 2009, the University of Oregon's Marc Schlossberg and Nico Larco pioneered a radically simple framework to solve this problem: the Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP), a framework based around a year-long partnership between a university and a city which provided cities the innovative perspective of university students' minds, while allowing students the opportunity to learn in practice. The model's symbiotic nature proved to be the defining factor that fostered its success. The program quickly gained notoriety and credibility.

In 2010, The New York Times called SCYP "*perhaps the most comprehensive effort by a U.S. university to infuse sustainability into its curricula and community outreach,*" and in 2013, the Chronicle of Higher Education called the model "*one of higher education's most successful and comprehensive service-learning programs.*" Today, the program has received national awards, recognition, and has vastly expanded: over 80 universities nationwide and across four continents have now implemented the Sustainable City Year model, forming the Educational Partnership for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N).

Since its origins, SCI has continued expanding far beyond the SCYP program. The organization conducts innovative research that investigates urban design, transportation, communication, and civic engagement.

SCI launched Urbanism Next, an initiative that is pioneering the national investigation into the ramifications of technology on the design and planning of our cities. The Urbanism Next Center focuses on the impacts and implications of emerging technologies on the design and planning of our cities. In addition to engaging in research, Urbanism Next is building a national network of thought leaders from the private sector, public sector, and academia to collaborate on these topics.



SUSTAINABLE CITY YEAR PROGRAM (SCYP)

The Sustainable City Year Program is an SCI-facilitated partnership between an Oregon city, municipality, county, or agency and the SCYP. Through these partnerships, the Sustainable City Year Program helps communities solve the problems of today and lay the groundwork for a sustainable, livable future—all while helping students prepare for the workforce through applied learning. The program enables communities to utilize the talents and harness the potential of University of Oregon students to accomplish critical projects and strengthen Oregon communities.

Each year, the SCYP partner receives assistance within 20-30 community-defined projects. The project engages 30 courses and nearly 500 students, across 13 disciplines. Over an academic year, the partner will have received over 40,000 hours of student work.

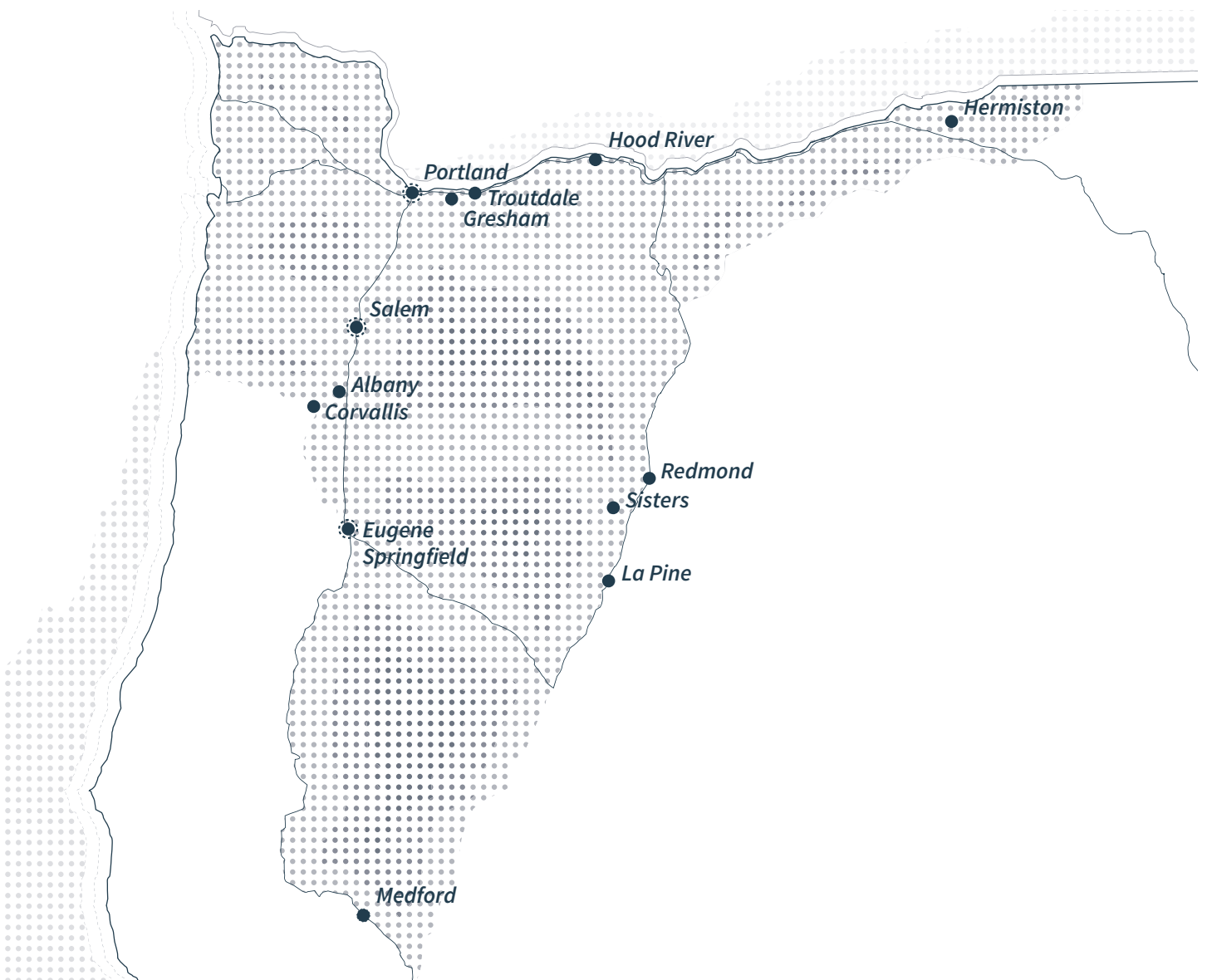


Students across disciplines, including business, planning and public administration, journalism, architecture, and more engage in the projects identified by partner cities to develop recommendations that bring the best of creativity, freedom, and rigor of academia to the “real world”.



List of Past SCYP Partnerships

- Albany
- Corvallis
- Eugene
- Gresham
- Hermiston
- Hood River
- La Pine
- Medford
- Portland
- Redmond
- Salem
- Sisters
- Springfield + Dunes City
- Troutdale



EPIC NETWORK



In 2011, SCI began training other universities and communities to adapt the SCYP framework through a national conference, site visits, and individual technical assistance.

EPIC's success demonstrates its scalability and replicability across varied cities and universities.

As of 2024, there are over 80 universities implementing or organizing their own Sustainable City Year Program. What was originally known as the "Oregon Model" is now collectively referred to as the Educational Partnership for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N).



In 2017, SCI launched its most ambitious research initiative yet: Urbanism Next. Urbanism Next focuses on the ramifications of changes in technology on the design and planning of cities. It engages in research, and is building a national network of leaders from the private sector, public sector, and academia. Urbanism Next is unique because it pioneers an investigation that has not yet been explored.

SCI engages and informs faculty, students, and practitioners on timely and significant issues. SSCI research focuses on cross-disciplinary collaboration and works across all university institutional functions. Focus is placed on urban design, transportation, communication, and civic engagement.

Though current research targets current technology itself, SSCI asks a new question: what will happen to the traditional framework of cities, and how will it change?

LEADERSHIP



Nico Larco
Professor, Architecture
Co-Founder + Co-Director, SCI
Director, Urbanism Next

Nico Larco assists cities and projects with future-proofing, has run workshops and charrettes nationally on this topic, and is currently coordinating work in this area with various municipal and state agencies around the country. Nico's research focus includes sustainable urban design and the impacts of emerging technology on cities.



Marc Schlossberg
Professor, PPPM
Co-Founder + Co-Director, SCI

Marc Schlossberg's applied research focuses on redesigning cities so that more people can walk and bike more while traveling. This work has ranged from bottom-up, participatory GIS planning to more standard analysis of urban form and transportation. Marc has completed three case study books of Rethinking Streets, or street redesigns for sustainability.



Megan Banks
Professor, PPPM
Director, SCYP

Megan Banks's work is about building community and working with an extremely diverse set of people across campus. As Program Manager of the Sustainable City Year Program, Megan annually matches 25-30 existing university courses and their professors to community-defined project areas in one Oregon community over that year.

ACCOLADES Ashoka U-Cordes Innovation Award
FT/Citi Ingenuity Award: Urban Ideas in Action
Faculty Sustainability Leadership Award
Fulbright Distinguished Scholar
Globe Award for Sustainability Research Finalist
NCARB Prize for Creative Integration of Practice and Education in the Academy
Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association: Special Achievement in Planning
Partners for Livable Communities Bridge Builders Award

RECOGNITION Financial Times
Forbes
Salem Reporter
The Chronicle
The Huffington Post
The New York Times
The Oregonian

“The Sustainable Cities Initiative is perhaps the most comprehensive effort by a U.S. university to infuse sustainability into its curricula and community outreach”

-The New York Times

“One of higher education’s most successful and comprehensive service-learning programs”

-The Chronicle of Higher Education

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