

# Sustainable City Year Program

## 2023-24



### Design, Planning and Engineering

Project	Outcome
<b>The Role of Artificial Intelligence and Technology for Cities</b>	Students completed an analysis of key Artificial Intelligence applications, case studies, and challenges. Resources presented to the city included model city policies, draft informational public meeting format, AI software and applications, implementation actions, a glossary, and research references.
<b>Equity-centered Parks &amp; Recreation Case Studies</b>	Using GIS analysis and case study research, students made recommendations on how to prioritize parks and recreation funding across the city based on equity considerations.
<b>Timber Tectonics in the Digital Age</b>	Architecture, Wood Science, and Engineering students designed and constructed a temporary structure for the Salem Parks Department using "kit-of-parts" construction methods. Centered on the adaptable nature of reciprocal frame construction, students focused on the sustainable reuse of panel materials such as plywood and Mass Plywood Panels. The kit-of-parts method meant the structure could be quickly deployed to add immediate benefit to a neighborhood as well as dissembled, moved, and reassembled.
<b>Boardwalks for Beavers: Improving Accessibility at Minto-Brown Island Park</b>	To allow for greater use of Minto-Brown Island Park's floodplain areas while allowing for beaver recovery, Portland State University Engineering students explored the feasibility of developing a quarter-mile long elevated bypass. This boardwalk proposal included design alternatives that could be used to estimate construction costs and potentially secure funding for final design and construction. Student deliverables also included a site plan, project alternative cross sections, and a matrix differentiating alternatives based on key criteria such as capital cost, maintenance cost, environmental impacts, and user experience.
<b>Safe and Connected Salem: Bicycle Transportation Options</b>	Students examined a variety of challenges, perspectives, and possible solutions related to bicycle transportation in Salem, such as multi-use paths and other ways to make streets more bicycle-friendly; safe routes to school opportunities; local and regional bicycle tourism opportunities; and bicycling-centered marketing campaigns. Student recommendations supported bicycle transportation opportunities that were safe, connected, and comfortable for all users.
<b>Equity-Centered Park Assets Condition Assessment</b>	Students supported the city's park planning efforts by developing and testing methods for assessing the condition, performance, and user experience of Salem's parks. Students considered park service, quality, and classification, and explored how these factors relate to equity. Students also developed and implemented data collection methods to evaluate park conditions and performance.
<b>Walkability &amp; Corridor Assessments</b>	Using GIS mapping, students identified sidewalk and pedestrian gaps or redundancies. Students also surveyed and assessed certain corridors, which included an equity and demographic analysis, a network connectivity and land use analysis, and made recommendations to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety; sidewalk accessibility; and create more equitable and walkable neighborhoods.

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### Public Policy

Project Outcome

#### City Operations Fee Evaluation

The City of Salem wanted to examine how to assess and collect its operations fee equitably and efficiently. Students considered balance among user groups (commercial, industrial, institutional, public, residential) and within residential types (single family, multi-family). Initial findings suggest that the City consider charging commercial businesses based on Car Trips per Day or Business Traits and residential properties based on Home Size or Trip Generation since these approaches best fulfill the criteria of equity, administrative efficiency, and productivity.

#### Electric Vehicle Charging

Students made recommendations on how Salem might incentivize electric vehicles; how to equitably locate EV charging stations based on GIS analysis, and how EVs are addressed in selected large city climate action plans, and how that might be helpful information for Salem.

#### City Facilities Solar

The course evaluated the feasibility of installing solar panels and solar lighting within Geer Park. Students offered insights and recommendations with a focus on policy considerations, neighborhood inclusion and trust building, cost analysis, and a comparative study with similar projects across the United States.

#### Age Friendly Communities

Students conducted case studies to help Center 50+, the City's largest senior center, advance their aging-related services and activities with a specific focus on current priorities—transportation, housing, and interagency collaboration.

### Civic Engagement & Nonprofit Management

Project Outcome

#### Volunteerism & Civic Engagement - The Next Wave

Salem relies on diverse volunteers, from the mayor and city council to volunteer boards and commissions. Journalism students helped the city identify what the "next wave" of volunteers might look like and recommended engagement strategies for targeted publics that included the Hispanic community, young families, GenZ, and youth volunteers.

#### The Digital Divide and the Future of Civic Engagement

The class collaborated with Salem city staff, schools, community-based organizations, and local media to co-design and implement a survey of Spanish speaking youth. Based on the premise that a well-informed public is essential for a functioning democracy, the project aspires to continue being a conduit for community-driven solutions and broad participation.

#### Parks Foundation Strategic Planning

The Salem Parks Foundation sought help with board development to include greater representation of diverse groups that more fully reflect the Salem community. Project deliverables focused on a board assessment and diversity plan, best practice review, and strategic planning with a timeline for implementation.

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### Civic Engagement & Nonprofit Management (cont.)

Project Outcome

#### Climate Action Public Relations Campaigns

Across three terms, Public Relations capstone students focused on unique public engagement campaigns to educate and create behavior change among Salem residents to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Student work included research, creating a plan, and a distinct outreach campaign on the following topics:

#### Reduce Vehicle Idling

Students developed a community education campaign focused on "The Lowest Hanging Cherry - Stop Idling." Students developed positive messaging to stop idling starting with city employees who can lead by example; educating youth, who can help influence their parents/guardians; and spreading awareness on the health risks associated with vehicle idling.

#### Heat Pumps

Students developed a two-part campaign strategy: 1) storytelling focused on early adopters of heat pumps within the Salem community and using peer-to-peer communication to help educate others on the benefits and 2) overcoming common barriers to heat pump adoption, such as cost, with action-oriented language and relationships with potential partners. To support these strategies, students developed deliverables such as a new website, tabling materials, postcards, event invitation flyers, yard signs, stickers, news segments, and social media content.

#### Active Transportation

Students created a framework centered around behavior change to encouraging active transportation. The class leveraged work from the Safe and Connected Salem Bicycle Transportation projects to positively encourage the Salem community to utilize alternative forms of transportation, including walking, biking, and transit.

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