Stanwood Joins Edmonds in WWU’s Sustainable Communities Partnership

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Stanwood has become the second city, along with Edmonds, to take part in Western Washington University’s Sustainable Communities Partnership.

The program is a joint endeavor of Western and the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) that brings Western students into these communities to help local officials problem-solve long-standing issues in those towns.

In the case of Stanwood, as many as 100 Western students and faculty, mostly from the Environmental Science Department, will work with city officials over the next year to study flood risks in the city’s downtown core and gather data from those who live, work, and shop in West Stanwood with a goal of better understanding what the town’s options are with its long and often turbulent relationship with the Stillaguamish River.

Stanwood officials are looking at ways to keep its historic downtown viable while at the same time alleviating flood and property risks to the area.

Students will be involved in communications and outreach, geographical information systems work and mapping, property owner interviews, and using the data to construct models that take into account factors such as global climate change and sea-level rise as well as strategizing ways to protect individual structures and using the data to help lower residents’ flood-insurance costs.

[Image: Analyzing Stanwood’s relationship with the flood-prone Stillaguamish River will be one of the projects Western's students and faculty will work on with the city. (image courtesy washingtonnature.org)](https://westerntoday.wwu.edu/files/stanwood.jpg)
“Western students are excited to have the opportunity to apply their book learning in a real-world setting, helping a community tackle a pressing problem,” said David Davidson, coordinator of the Sustainable Communities Partnership.

AWC CEO Peter B. King agreed.

“This partnership brings minds together to harness knowledge, create solutions and define future directions,” said King. “It’s a valuable opportunity for all involved.”

Western students have been at work for the past year in Edmonds helping city officials there on a number of projects, from reducing damage to wetlands from stormwater runoff to building a mobile app that makes visitors aware of amenities in downtown Edmonds.

For more information on the work in Stanwood or the Sustainable Communities Partnership, contact David Davidson, director, at (360) 650-3824 or david.davidson@wwu.edu.

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