

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Proposal for FY 2003-2005 Funding

Title: *Smart Ways to School* Project

Project Location: 4-J (Eugene), Springfield, and Bethel School Districts in Lane County, Oregon

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Funds Requested: \$60,000 Operating Costs
\$30,000 Capital Investment

Partners: Commuter Solutions / Lane Transit District
4-J (Eugene), Bethel, and Springfield School Districts
City of Eugene
City of Springfield
Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority
Lane Council of Governments
Lane County

Abstract:

Smart Ways to School is a two-year project based on public/private partnerships to reduce energy consumption associated with school-based commute trips through interventions at the school, neighborhood, and regional levels.

I. Project Narrative:

The *Smart Ways to School* (SWS) project is a tiered approach to encouraging and supporting students and their parents’ travel choices to schools in Lane County. The overall goal of the project is to reduce energy consumption related to the school commute.

Smart Ways to School is a project proposed by the Commuter Solutions Program, a regional transportation demand management program supported by the Oregon Department of Transportation and Lane County’s jurisdictions: Lane Transit District, City of Eugene, City of Springfield, Lane County, Lane Council of Governments, and Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority.

To reduce energy consumption associated with the school commute trip, the SWS project focuses on three levels:

- **School:** School-based transportation programs
- **Neighborhood:** Business-school transportation partnerships
- **Region:** Regional School-Related Transportation Task Force

School-based programs will take place in Lane County’s three primary school districts: Bethel, 4-J (Eugene), and Springfield. The SWS Project will target schools with high congestion and safety concerns. Project sites will be determined with input from school districts and city public safety departments.

Table 1 outlines student population per school type within the three targeted Lane County school districts.

TABLE 1

SCHOOL DISTRICT	ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
<i>BETHEL</i>	2630	1359	1610
<i>EUGENE</i>	6839	5049	6050
<i>SPRINGFIELD</i>	5211	2664	3234

School-neighborhood partnerships will focus on high schools located near businesses and other commercial development. Partnerships will center on incentive-based transportation programs for students and employees to reduce energy consumption.

At a regional level, the SWS project will coordinate and staff the development of a school-related transportation task force to address policies associated with the school commute, congestion, and safety concerns around Lane County schools.

II. Operating Request

Tasks: The *Smart Ways to School* Project, administered through a subcontract with a school transportation coordinator and overseen by Commuter Solutions, has seven key tasks over the course of two years.

In year one:

[1] Establishment of school-based transportation programs in two to three elementary and two to three middle schools within each of the targeted school districts. The coordinator will provide a menu of transportation programs to schools aimed at reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and fuel consumption. Such programs include:

- **School Pools:** School Pools are an easily implemented carpool matching program for parents. Parents voluntarily fill out an information form with their child's school schedule, grade level, and home address. Commuter Solutions compiles a list based on geographical boundaries and returns them to participating parents. Parents coordinate their own school pools with others on the list. The school has no involvement other than distribution of initial information, follow-up survey forms, and information referral.
- **Walking School Buses:** Walking school buses are similar to regular bus routes with walking as the mode. Students who live within a mile of the school are picked up by a parent "driver" who walks the children along a safe route for trips to and from school.
- **Cycling School Buses:** Similar to a walking school bus, cycling school bus has a parent who bicycles with children to school along safe designated corridors. The SWS project will combine this program with a bicycle safety program.
- **School Transit Pass Program:** Transit passes may be offered to students at a discounted rate through the school or through a subsidy provided by businesses.

[2] Development of **Regional School Related Transportation Task Force**. The Coordinator will work with school districts to establish the Task Force. The primary mission of the Task Force is to develop district-wide TDM policies for staff and students.

[3] Establishment of **Smart Ways Transportation Teams** in the schools that develop school transportation programs. It is not foreseen that all the schools that develop transportation programs will require a School Transportation Team; only schools with programs that require more coordination with students and parents (e.g. walking school bus or cycling school buses).

Teams may include the following participants:

- Students
- Parents
- PE / Health teacher
- Law Enforcement representative
- Administrative representative
- SWS Coordinator

In year two:

[4] Establishment of school-neighborhood partnerships around one major high school within each of the targeted school districts. The business community surrounding targeted high schools will be invited to participate in a school-business transportation partnership.

[5] Expansion of School Related Transportation Task Force’s focus to examine students’ transportation needs for after-school activities.

[6] Research and evaluation of project by Commuter Solutions and Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority.

[7] Development of School Transportation Program Guide for dissemination throughout targeted school districts.

III. Capital Request

Commuter Solutions, as the Rideshare Coordinator for the region, requires updated software and equipment to meet the demand the SWS project will create. Capital funds of \$22,000, towards the purchase of the software, RidePro, will enable Commuter Solutions to effectively match participants in the school pool, walking buses, and cycling buses. In addition, RidePro allows for monitoring of

performance measures. The additional \$8,000 in capital request is to fund the necessary investment in hardware, software, and technical support services associated with the SWS project Coordinator's work over the two-year period of time.

IV. Role of Partners

The SWS project is a joint-partnership with the region's school districts and jurisdictions. Partners have offered the following in-kind operating assistance.

Commuter Solutions

- Oversight and supervision of coordinator
- Rideshare database coordination
- Assistance with educational materials and outreach efforts
- Monitoring of performance measures
- Assistance with expenses associated with housing of coordinator

School Districts

- Assistance with employment recruitment
- Participation in school site determination
- Some administration assistance with information distribution (e.g., school pool forms)
- Participation in School Related Transportation Task Force and designated Smart Ways Transportation Teams

City of Eugene

- Support of bike/pedestrian efforts
- Law enforcement participation
- Safe routes to school mapping services

City of Springfield

- Support of bike/pedestrian efforts
- Law enforcement participation
- Safe routes to school mapping services

Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority

- Pre/post air quality monitoring at a congested school site

V. Project Evaluation

Outlined are the SWS project’s key objectives, performance measures, and evaluation methods.

Objectives	Performance Measures	Evaluation Methods
Fuel reduction in school commute trips (energy)	# of school pool trips # of walking school bus trips # of cycling school bus trips	Pre/post surveys Intercept surveys
Reduction of emissions around targeted school zones	Auto emission monitoring	Monitoring stations as provided by Lane Air Pollution Authority
Development of School-Related Transportation Task Force	Geographic review of areas affected by policies	Representative sample surveys of sites to measure policy’s effectiveness
Development of public/private partnerships near school zones	# of school based public/private partnerships # of participants in incentive program	Pre/post surveys of participation in incentive programs

IV. Work Plan and Schedule of Activities

Outlined are the proposed tasks, targeted and completion dates.

TASK	TARGETED DATE	COMPLETION DATE
<i>YEAR ONE</i>		
Purchase of <u>RidePro</u> Software	July, 2003	July 31, 2003
Development of school coordinator job description	July, 2003	July 11, 2003
Advertisement of position	July, 2003	July 25, 2003
Interviews/Candidate Selection	July, 2003	July 31, 2003
Start date	August 4, 2003	June 30, 2005
Determination of target elementary and middle schools	July, 2003	July 30, 2003
Task 1: Establishment of School Transportation Programs in Elementary /Middle School targets	September, 2003	June 30, 2005
Task 2: Establishment and staffing of School Transportation Task Force	September, 2003	June 30, 2005
Task 3: Establishment of School Teams	September, 2003	June 30, 2005
<i>YEAR TWO</i>		
Task 4: Establishment of School/Neighborhood Partnerships	September, 2004	June 30, 2005
Task 6: Expansion of School Transportation Task Force's focus to after-school activities	September, 2004	June 30, 2005
Task 7: Development of Program Guide	September, 2004	June 30, 2005

V. Two-Year Budget and Resources

Outlined are the key project activities, requested funds, and in-kind offered services from the region's jurisdictions over the SWS project two-year funding.

Project Activities	DOE Funds	Contributions/Services	Total Cost
Program Management	\$60,000 (School Trans. Coordinator)	Commuter Solutions: \$10,500	\$70,500
Facilities and supplies	-----	Commuter Solutions: \$5,000	\$5,000
RidePro Software	\$22,0000	Commuter Solutions: \$20,000*	\$42,0000
Technical support (e.g., safe routes mapping)	\$8,000	Commuter Solutions: \$17,500 City of Eugene: \$1,600 City of Springfield: \$1,700	\$28,800
Monitoring	-----	LRAPA: \$15,000 Commuter Solutions: \$4,000	\$19,000
TOTAL	\$90,000	\$75,300	\$165,3000

* Commuter Solutions contribution to RidePro software purchase.