IMPROVING WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS

With the 2017 passage of the Keep Oregon Moving Act, the Oregon Legislature made a significant investment in transportation to help advance the things that Oregonians value: a vibrant economy with good jobs, strong communities with high quality of life, a clean environment, and safe, healthy people. A key piece of Keep Oregon Moving is an annual $10 million investment in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Fund, increasing to $15 million in 2023. The existing rule that governs the SRTS Fund will be updated to include this new dedicated source of funding which will be used to build street safety projects to help Oregon children walk and bicycle to school safely.

WHAT IS AN OREGON ADMINISTRATIVE RULE?
Updating OAR 737-025

Over the past six months, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) worked with a Rules Advisory Committee (RAC) to develop draft updates to an existing rule to guide the use and implementation of new monies dedicated to the Safe Routes to School Fund. The RAC’s process included opportunities for public input through open meeting, public comment at meeting, and outreach by RAC members. This input was incorporated into the draft language to amend Oregon Administrative Rules Chapter 737, Division 25 that will be considered by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) in 2018.

PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT ON DRAFT RULE

Public is invited to comment on the draft rule:
http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Programs/Pages/SRTS-RAC.aspx

RULE MAKING SCHEDULE

• May 1 through May 31, 2018: Public comment period. Send written comments on the draft Rule to LeeAnne Ferguson, ODOT SRTS Manager: leeanne.fergason@odot.state.or.us
• May 15, 2018, 5pm-8pm: Public hearing at Chemeketa Center for Business and Industry, 626 High ST NE, Salem OR
• July 19, 2018: OTC considers draft rule for adoption
• July 23, 2018: Rules go into effect, pending OTC action
What is in the draft rule?

These rules (Chapter 737, Division 25) establish the procedures and requirements for the administration of the additional monies dedicated to the Safe Routes to School Fund for infrastructure projects. The rule divides the funds into three program areas.

**Program areas:**

- **Competitive Grant Program:** The majority of the funds, 87.5 percent or greater, will be used for a Competitive Grant Program to build street safety projects to reduce barriers and hazards for children walking or bicycling to or from schools.
- **Rapid Response Grant Program:** Up to 10 percent of funds will be used for urgent needs or systemic safety issues that occur in between Competitive Program Grant cycles.
- **Project Identification Grant Program:** Up to 2.5 percent of funds will be used by ODOT to help communities identify projects to reduce barriers and hazards for children walking or bicycling to and from school and that will lead to eventual construction.

**Program definitions:** Four important definitions were added to clarify the new law, including:

- **Title I:** Schools where 40% or more students are from low-income households.
- **Plan:** Any related and adopted infrastructure plan, SRTS Action Plan, or SRTS Infrastructure Plan that fulfills the requirements of ORS 195.115.
- **Priority Safety Corridor:** Any road with 40 mph or higher, or additional safety qualifiers.
- **Cash Match:** Hard costs associated with project construction.

**Eligibility:** Cities, counties, ODOT, tribes, and transit agencies may apply for safety projects that are consistent with jurisdictional plans, supported by the school or school district, and that positively affect the ability of children to walk and bicycle to school.

**SRTS Advisory Committee and Decision-Making:** A Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee will form to provide advice on program elements and recommend projects via infrastructure and non-infrastructure funding cycles. Committee recommendations will go to the OTC for formal adoption.

**Additional General Content:** The general rule includes the basic requirements for applying for funds, ODOT's SRTS grant cycle communication and the requirement that any cost overages are the responsibility of the grant recipient.

What is not in the draft rule?

The RAC was not charged with updating the non-infrastructure sections of the existing rule. For example, the SRTS Fund provides rules for education, outreach, training, and other activities associated with a comprehensive Safe Routes to School Program. While minor changes were made to the non-infrastructure sections for clarity and consistency, the RAC focused on adding language to the rule in order to incorporate the new funding for infrastructure projects.

Note: Information about the first round of funding will be determined by the RAC as part of program guidance and will be available by June 19, 2018. Go to: http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Programs/Pages/SRTS.aspx

For more information visit http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Programs/Pages/SRTS-RAC.aspx, or contact LeeAnne Fergason at leeanne.fergason@odot.state.or.us.