

# Technology in Rural Transportation



A recent study documented more than eighty proven, cost-effective, “low-tech” solutions to rural transportation needs, most developed or implemented by local transportation professionals. One of these solutions is outlined below:

Learn all about the simple solutions on the Internet at <http://inform.enterprise.prog.org>

The simple solutions report is available from Hau To at (503) 892-2533, or email: [to@crc-corp.com](mailto:to@crc-corp.com)

## Talking Signs for Visually-Impaired Pedestrians

<b>Overall goal:</b>	To develop signs for visually impaired pedestrians that help orient the pedestrians without disturbing other people in the vicinity.
<b>Technical approach:</b>	The talking signs transmit recorded messages via infrared light waves, which are decoded by a small receiver held by the pedestrian. Because of the directional nature of infrared light, messages can be focused in one direction, so a receiver will only decode the message if it is pointed in the correct direction.
<b>Current status:</b>	The system is being piloted at present. Over 900 signs are currently located in San Francisco. Signs have been installed in public buildings such as banks, libraries, restaurants and restrooms. Signs are also used to identify intersections, ticket booths, boarding areas, and exits in a subway station.
<b>Location / geographic scope:</b>	The pilot system is highly localized but could be used at any intersection where a crossing light is installed.
<b>Agencies involved:</b>	San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic, Talking Signs, Inc., Baton Rouge, LA, Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute.
<b>Cost information:</b>	The system is expected to cost \$1000 per transmitter and \$250 per receiver.
<b>Key contacts:</b>	Bond Yee, San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic. (415) 554-2300 Dr. Bill Crandall, Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute. (415) 561-1657 <a href="http://www.talkingsigns.com">http://www.talkingsigns.com</a>
<b>Have goals been achieved?</b>	No results of the pilot testing are yet available.



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## Solution timeline:

Further implementation will depend on the success of these pilot tests. These tests are ongoing and more signs are being installed due to their popularity.

