



MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARCATA ELEMENTARY'S *SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL* ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROJECT GETS MOVING

Arcata, CA, Friday, April 27, 2018 – The City of Arcata Building & Engineering Department announced today that Arcata Elementary School's (AES) *Safe Routes to School* active transportation project is underway. The project will focus on pedestrian and bicycle safety education in addition to sidewalk and intersection infrastructure improvements.

Pedestrian and bicycle safety education programs for AES students, led by BikesThere, a local business dedicated to teaching lifelong pedestrian and bicycle safety skills, will be implemented. As part of the program, second graders will receive pedestrian safety education in the classroom with the opportunity to practice the skills they learn outside in the community. Fourth -grade students will be taught bicycle safety, with curriculum focusing on the importance of wearing helmets to avoid traumatic brain injury. Students will also learn how to check bicycle tires, brakes, and chains before riding.

These lessons will prepare students for National Bike to School Day, a school-wide event taking place Wednesday, May 9. Students will be walking as well as bicycling to school that day to celebrate spring and the joys of active transportation.

For students who wish to participate that live too far to safely walk or bike to school, a drop-off location has been designated at Westwood Murphy's Market. Students may be dropped off before school at 7:30 a.m., so they can walk or bike the rest of the way, supervised by school staff and adult volunteers. Participating students are required to wear a helmet, and staff will be on hand to ensure proper helmet fit and provide helmets to students in need.

In addition, the City of Arcata will be making accessibility and safety improvements to make it safer for AES students to walk and bike to school, thanks to grant funding from California's Active Transportation Program (ATP). Infrastructure improvements are scheduled to take place this summer.

The City of Arcata's Building & Engineering Department has been conducting pedestrian and bicyclist counts to help evaluate the effectiveness of the *Safe Routes to School* program. In partnership with Redwood Community Action Agency, Humboldt State University Kinesiology students staffed five count locations, twice a day, for a five-day period in April 2018. Count times were selected to coincide with student arrival and dismissal times at AES to determine the number of people currently walking or bicycling in the neighborhood. The count locations were placed near to where sidewalk construction and intersection improvements are expected to be completed.

After infrastructure construction is complete, counts will be conducted to determine if the number of pedestrians and bicyclists increases as a result of the improvements.

For more information about local *Safe Routes to School* programs, visit hcaog.net. To learn more about *Safe Routes to School* in Arcata, please contact the City of Arcata Building and Engineering Department at 707-825-2173.

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For additional information, the media may contact:

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