



**MENDOCINO
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Point Arena Wins Grant for Safe Routes to School Project

Caltrans recently announced a grant of \$450,000 awarded to the City of Point Arena under its Safe Routes to School (SR2S) program. This highly competitive program is aimed at removing barriers to students walking and biking to school. 85 projects were chosen this year from all over California, funded by \$25 million from the State Highway Account. Point Arena's project was ranked number one in Caltrans District 1, comprising Humboldt, Del Norte, Lake and Mendocino counties. Only two awards were made in the district, with Point Arena receiving the maximum funding. Point Arena Mayor Lauren Sinnott wrote the successful grant application.

The project flowed directly from the Point Arena Community Action Plan, which was funded by Caltrans, sponsored by the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG), and conducted by the Bay Area firm Design, Community & Environment (DC&E). The plan was based on extensive public participation, with a City Council-directed emphasis on practical solutions. The street intersectino and sidewalk design improvements to be built as the SR2S project were identified in the plan.

"It's gratifying to see such immediate results from a planning project," said Phil Dow, MCOG's Executive Director. "Point Arena was rewarded for their efforts—this is what we strive for as transportation planners."

The full project is estimated at a cost of \$571,000. Point Arena will apply for the required ten percent funding match from MCOG's local Bicycle & Pedestrian program. Awards are expected to be decided at MCOG's regular board meeting on December 6.

“Technical assistance from MCOG staff and City Engineer Dave Paoli, as well as the support of local agencies was invaluable during the grant writing process,” said Sinnott, who sits on the MCOG board. She noted direct benefits she gained from MCOG’s dedication to boardmember education, having attended the National Safe Routes to Schools Conference in Portland, Oregon.

According to the California Department of Transportation’s website, “Safe Routes to School is an international movement that has taken hold in communities throughout the United States. The concept is to increase the number of children who walk or bicycle to school by funding projects that remove the barriers that currently prevent them from doing so. Those barriers include lack of infrastructure, unsafe infrastructure, lack of programs that promote walking and bicycling through education/encouragement programs aimed at children, parents, and the community.”

More information can be found at http://www.mendocinocog.org/reports_projects-PtArena.shtml and <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm>.

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