



PRESS RELEASE

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MEDIA ADVISORY – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CITY OF NATIONAL CITY TO CELEBRATE COMMUNITY CORRIDORS WITH “WALK TO SCHOOL” EVENT & RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY AT KIMBALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - AUGUST 14, 2014

The City of National City is ready to unveil much anticipated improvements along Coolidge Avenue and W. 18th Street near Kimball School. This unveiling is a culmination of years of hard work and collaboration between the City, the National School District, Kimball School and residents of the Old Town (Westside) Neighborhood to identify opportunities to enhance safety and access for students walking to school. These two streets, were identified as “Community Corridors” as part of development and implementation of the National City’s Westside Specific Plan (2010) and General Plan Update (2011). These documents identify Community Corridors as “complete streets,” with the purpose of calming traffic, enhancing safety and access for pedestrians and bicyclists, and improving walkability and quality of life through functional and attractive streetscaping.



Completion of the project will be celebrated this Thursday, August 14th through a series of activities beginning at 7:45am at Big B’s Market & Deli (1540 Coolidge Ave, National City, CA 91950). Students, parents, school staff, and community members will meet at

Big B's to enjoy healthy snacks, a yoga session and fun prizes. At 8:00a.m., participants will take a symbolic walk down Coolidge Avenue from Big B's Market to Kimball Elementary School (302 W. 18th Street, National City, CA 91950). A formal ribbon cutting ceremony with guest speakers will be held at the new plaza area in front of the school from 8:10am-8:40am.

The \$1.8 million project, funded through a \$730,000 Federal Safe Routes to School Grant (Coolidge Avenue), portions of a \$2 million SANDAG Smart Growth Incentive Program Grant (to establish pedestrian and bicycle connections between Downtown and Westside National City), and local *TransNet* and Gas Tax funds, will deliver much needed pedestrian and bicycle enhancements between Kimball School and the surrounding residential neighborhood. The project spans eight blocks along Coolidge Avenue between Kimball School (W. 18th Street) and Plaza Boulevard. Improvements include new, wider sidewalks, corner bulbouts to calm traffic and shorten pedestrian crossing distances, new pedestrian curb ramps to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, enhanced school zone signing and striping, new lighting and landscaping. The project also provides over ½ mile of new bike lanes along 18th Street between Wilson Avenue and "D" Avenue, and a new plaza area with benches, bike racks and raised crosswalk in front of Kimball School.

Walk to School events emphasize the importance of increasing physical activity among children, enhancing pedestrian safety, alleviating traffic congestion, supporting a healthy environment, and strengthening connections between families, schools and the broader community. "As an older, dense and metropolitan community it is imperative to have our community as walkable and our routes to our schools as safe and convenient as possible. This is just one more example of our community rising to the task," says Mayor Ron Morrison.

While capital improvements for the project were funded through a series of competitive grants, similarly, National City was successful in securing a \$500,000 Federal Safe Routes to School Grant to provide a variety of walk to school activities (such as Thursday's event,) combined with health and safety education, for ten local elementary schools and the surrounding neighborhoods. National City partnered with Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego and the National City Police Department to implement the program over a four-year period, which kicked off in Fall 2012.

"National City's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program has really taken off over the past five-to-seven years, with over \$3.5 million in "competitive" State and Federal SRTS grants plus an additional \$2.5 million in other active transportation grants for improvements around our local schools. Traffic is slowing down, more students are walking, and more and more parents are volunteering their time to serve as Parent Safety Patrols. Events like our upcoming Coolidge Avenue SRTS celebration provide excellent opportunities for the Community to participate in the Program. We are very excited!" – Steve Manganiello, Director of Public Works / City Engineer.

National City's Coolidge Avenue Walk to School Event and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is a collaborative effort with the community. Under the City's SRTS Program, Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego and the National City Police Department have taken the lead in organizing the event with the support of National City's Mayor and City Council, City Manager Leslie Deese and staff, National School District, Principal Sonia Ruan and staff from Kimball Elementary School, parent volunteers, Big B's Market & Deli, UCSD School of Medicine, Environmental Health Coalition, Live Well San Diego and other community partners.

The City of National City was incorporated in 1887 and is the second oldest city in San Diego County. National City was originally part of the 26,000 acre El Rancho de La Nacion which was purchased in 1868 by Frank Kimball. National City is approximately nine (9) square miles and has 63,000 residents. It is located 5 miles south of downtown San Diego, on San Diego Bay in southern San Diego County, and 10 miles north of Baja California, Mexico. The City is bordered by San Diego to the north and east, Chula Vista to the south, the unincorporated areas of Lincoln Acres and Bonita to the south and southeast, and San Diego Bay to the west.

National City Police Department- "Mission Statement:" In partnership with our Community, the National City Police Department is committed to providing the highest level of service and public safety. We will pursue this commitment with an unwavering resolve while always respecting the rights and dignity of those we serve.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement that has been implemented in communities throughout the United States. The concept is to increase the number of children who are walking or biking to school safely by funding projects that remove the barriers that prevent them from doing so. Those barriers include lack of infrastructure and a lack of programs that promote walking and bicycling through education/encouragement programs aimed at children, parents, and the community.

Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego is a 475-bed pediatric care facility providing the largest source of comprehensive pediatric medical services in San Diego, Southern Riverside and Imperial counties. Rady Children's is the only hospital in the San Diego area dedicated exclusively to pediatric healthcare and is the region's only designated pediatric trauma center. In June 2013, U.S. News & World Report ranked Rady Children's among the best children's hospitals in the nation in all ten pediatric specialties the magazine surveyed.

UCSD School of Medicine-The *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*, sponsored by the California Department of Public Health, is the largest, most diverse and longest running nutrition initiative for low-income families in the nation. The *Network's Retail Program* provides retailers statewide with a unique variety of tools, resources, and outreach activities to inspire healthy change among consumers. The *Retail Program* is proud to partner with Big B's Market to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as daily physical activity and address food insecurity in National City with the help of community residents. The *Retail Program* is working with many community partners in National City to make Big B's not only a safe place for children to convene before and after school, but also a place to purchase healthy snacks like fresh fruits and vegetables.

Environmental Health Coalition- Environmental Health Coalition is dedicated to achieving [environmental and social justice](#). We believe that justice is accomplished by empowered communities acting together to make social change. We organize and advocate to protect public health and the environment threatened by toxic pollution. EHC supports broad efforts that create a just society and fosters a healthy and sustainable quality of life.

Live Well San Diego- *Live Well San Diego* is an initiative of the County of San Diego to improve health, safety and well-being for all residents. It represents a shared vision that can only be accomplished through collaboration with partners in every sector. This vision also calls on every resident to take action to improve their own health, safety and well-being, as well as that of their families and neighbors.