

# Introduction

The City of Chico is well positioned to grow its reputation as a walking and bicycling friendly community, catering to the diverse transportation needs of residents, students, and visitors. The short (under 15 minutes) commute time of the majority of Chico residents offers untapped potential to shift commuting patterns to active modes such as walking, bicycling, and rolling, reducing congestion and promoting healthy lifestyles. Additionally, recent upgrades of pedestrian and bicycle facilities proximate to area schools encourage students and their families to arrive via active modes.

Building upon the backbone network of Bikeway 99, a world-class recreational trails system in Lower and Upper Bidwell Park, and a walkable downtown core, targeted investments in upgrading pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will result in a safer, more connected network for users of all ages and abilities.

This Active Transportation Plan (ATP) is a critical tool for City staff and the broader Chico community as they shape a balanced transportation system for Chico. The ATP provides a baseline understanding of the current status and long-term vision for the active transportation network, as well as supporting policies and programs in Chico. The ATP presents a focused, achievable action plan for improvements to bicycling and walking facilities, providing both short-term priority projects and longer-term improvements.

As this ATP is a high-level document outlining pedestrian and bicycle facilities, all proposed projects will require further study and design prior to implementation. This Plan sets the stage for all future pedestrian and bicycle projects, with the ultimate goal to improve resident quality of

life through providing a safe and connected pedestrian and bicycle network, improving access to area amenities and destinations, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting healthy lifestyles.

As noted in the Implementation Plan chapter, recommendations made in this Plan may change over the years as the City begins to implement, especially if other safety needs arise or the City identifies safer options along particular corridors or within certain communities.



*Multi-use paths in Lower Bidwell Park provide recreation and transportation options*



*The City of Chico was designated as a Gold Level Bicycle Friendly Community for 2016 to 2020*



## Purpose of the Plan

This Active Transportation Plan (ATP) will establish a long-term vision for improving walking and bicycling within Chico and identify a short-term action plan of implementable projects, programs, and policies.

The ATP provides a strategy to develop safe and comfortable citywide walking, bicycling, and transit connections that provide access between residential neighborhoods, schools, transit, and jobs. These network improvements are combined with a menu of options for recommended education, encouragement, and evaluation programs to provide a holistic approach to improving active transportation in Chico. The ATP also identifies a plan to implement these projects and programs through prioritization and phasing to ensure implementation is manageable and achievable.

This ATP represents an aspirational vision for walking and bicycling in Chico, identifying potential financing for improvements while recognizing that limited funding and resources may require strategic phases of implementation over many years.

The City has established nine goals for this ATP:

1. Encourage active transportation within Chico
2. Strengthen Chico's cultural identity as a bicycle friendly city
3. Increase safety for people walking, bicycling, and rolling
4. Gain a better understanding of Vision Zero in Chico, the concept of establishing a citywide goal of zero traffic deaths or severe injuries among all road users
5. Provide a connected network of comfortable facilities for people to walk, bike, and roll
6. Enhance the spine network of Bikeway 99, including enhancement of wayfinding and crossing facilities
7. Enhance mobility throughout Chico to meet the needs of all users, including those commuting to work or school, visiting local businesses, and enjoying recreational opportunities
8. Maintain the active transportation network in a state of good repair
9. Assist in achieving Chico's greenhouse gas emissions reductions goals and target of carbon neutrality by 2045, as detailed in the Climate Action Plan



*A roundabout in Downtown Chico, which provides a safer travel environment for all roadway users, including active users*



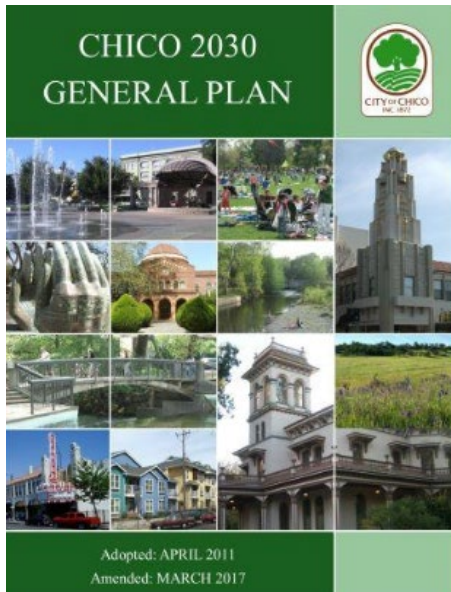
## Relationship to Other Documents

A variety of local, regional, and state documents relevant to the development and implementation of the Active Transportation Plan were reviewed. For example, these documents include local and regional planning documents which set an overall trajectory for the City and include policies and strategies the ATP must be consistent with, while others provide a foundation for the ATP and will effectively be incorporated into the ATP. Documents reviewed, and the guidance relevant to the ATP, are discussed briefly below; the Policy and Planning Context chapter will include additional detail on consistency with and potential recommended updates to relevant documents.

### Chico

#### 2030 GENERAL PLAN AND MUNICIPAL CODE

Chico's 2030 General Plan guides the community's vision and decision makers' implementation of priorities for future development, including growth and preservation targets.



Chico 2030 General Plan cover

The General Plan envisions a network of walkable “complete neighborhoods” featuring multimodal access to employment, recreation, and services. The plan fosters development that offers alternatives to the personal motor vehicle, providing efficient and safe resident access.

The ATP is a critical tool to assist the City in achieving this vision. Specific priorities in the General Plan relevant to the Active Transportation Plan are as follows:

- ◆ Provide convenient access to local items, with a focus on alternative transportation
- ◆ Prioritize a Complete Streets multimodal network to ensure safe travel for users, when feasible
- ◆ Increase travel choice, improve goods movement, and reduce vehicle miles traveled
- ◆ Bicyclists must not ride on the sidewalks within the central business district (area bounded by the northerly property line of First Street; on the south by the southerly property line of Fifth Street; on the east by the center line of Wall Street and on the west by the center line of Salem Street)

#### CHICO BICYCLE PLAN 2019 UPDATE

The City's Bicycle Plan was developed to help inform the ATP, providing a relatively recent inventory of facilities and recommendations for improvements. The ATP will consider these recommendations, make updates, and essentially serve as an update to this document.

- ◆ Design and implement a complete bikeway network that connects people with the places they want to go to and supports bicyclists of all ages, ethnicities, incomes and abilities
- ◆ Improve safety, efficiency, and comfort for bicyclists on the bikeway network
- ◆ Provide sufficient, secure bicycle parking facilities where they are needed and address ongoing bike theft concerns



- ◆ Provide and plan for bicycle facilities during land development review
- ◆ Promote bicycling as a part of the multimodal transportation system
- ◆ Improve bicycling safety through driver and bicyclist education programs
- ◆ Encourage and support both recreational and utilitarian use of the bikeway network
- ◆ Pursue and obtain optimal funding for bicycle programs and projects



*Bicycle parking example near 118 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, from the Chico Bicycle Plan 2019 Update*

See the Successes in Recent Years chapter for progress updates on projects proposed within the 2019 Chico Bicycle Plan.

### LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PLAN (LRSP)

The Local Road Safety Plan analyses safety data as well as characteristics of the roadway network to develop solutions to safety issues which can be implemented citywide.

- ◆ Identify safety focus areas, and recommended countermeasures and strategies across the four E's of traffic safety: engineering, enforcement, education and emergency services
- ◆ Reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries occurring on the City of Chico roadway system for all modes of travel
- ◆ Facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while promoting walking, encouraging bicycling, and supporting a

comprehensive and integrated transit system

### CHICO CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

The City's Climate Action Plan acts as a strategy guide for Chico to meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets in alignment with State goals.

The ATP supports the Climate Action Plan, as the primary purpose of the ATP is to increase bicycling and walking in Chico, reducing motor vehicle trips and related greenhouse gas emissions as a result. The following are specific CAP measures and actions that the ATP supports:

- ◆ Improve active transportation infrastructure to achieve greater than 6 percent bicycle mode share by 2030 and 12 percent bicycle mode share by 2045
- ◆ Implement Chico's Bicycle Master Plan by adding miles to the bikeway network, improving wayfinding, conducting road maintenance, etc.
- ◆ Require secure, shaded, and convenient bicycle parking in new developments
- ◆ Require major road upgrades to include bicycle infrastructure
- ◆ Perform a street and intersection study
- ◆ Complete an Active Transportation Plan
- ◆ Identify and partner with stakeholders to conduct outreach, promotion, and education
- ◆ Create a Bicycle/Pedestrian/Parking Coordinator position for the City of Chico
- ◆ Prepare for shared bicycle programs and consider launching a bicycle share pilot program in Downtown Chico



*Bicyclists ride on a Class I multi-use path*

## Regional Plans

### BUTTE COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The County's Climate Action Plan is a long-term planning document setting greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and providing strategies for jurisdictions to reduce emissions. It includes the following goals:

- ◆ Ensure development in Butte County remains sustainable and fosters resiliency in the face of climate change
- ◆ Reduce emissions contributions from the transportation sector by targeting vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reductions
- ◆ Given that the transportation sector was accountable for 30 percent (of 2006) community emissions, lower barriers to alternative/clean-fueled vehicle adoption among area residents
- ◆ Create a county-wide Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program to reduce single occupancy vehicle commuting, including requirements for large employers and suggested actions for smaller employers



*Green in-pavement markings indicating the presence of bicyclists on sidewalks approaching a roundabout in Chico*

### BUTTE COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (BCAG) REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY 2020-2040

The Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) is updated every four years and provides a framework for growth and change in the transportation network for the County and jurisdictions within it.

- ◆ Provide an efficient, effective, coordinated regional transit system that increases mobility for urban and rural populations, including those located in disadvantaged areas of the region
- ◆ Work with local agencies to develop and construct bicycle and pedestrian facilities including access to transit and assist local jurisdictions in pursuing grant funding
- ◆ Increase public transit and carpooling/vanpooling and bicycling/walking
- ◆ Provide economical, long-term solutions to transportation problems by encouraging community designs which encourage walking, transit, and bicycling
- ◆ Provide a forum for participation and cooperation in transportation planning and facilitate relationships for transportation issues that transcend jurisdictional boundaries

## California

### TOWARD AN ACTIVE CALIFORNIA

The State's first bicycle and pedestrian plan provides policies and actions for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and partner agencies to undertake to improve comfort, connectivity, safety, and feasibility of travel by walking and bicycling. This plan will be updated starting in 2024.

- ◆ By 2040, people in California of all ages, abilities, and incomes can safely, conveniently, and comfortably walk and bicycle for their transportation needs



## CALTRANS ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANS

One action item Caltrans identified in the *Toward an Active California* document was to create an Active Transportation Plan for each Caltrans District. This effort, known as the *Caltrans Active Transportation Plans* (or CAT Plans), identified high priority corridors and specific locations for bicycle or pedestrian needs. In District 3, Caltrans identified that State Route 32 (SR 32) has “Tier 1” priority locations located in and near downtown and “Tier 2” along the rest of SR 32 within Chico<sup>1</sup>. Because SR 32 is within Caltrans jurisdiction, the process to recommend and implement projects will require partnership and planning efforts outside of the scope of this Plan. Through the update of the *Toward an Active California* plan, Caltrans will identify how to further implement the CAT Plans in partnership with local agencies.

## Organization of this Plan

This ATP is organized into the following chapters:

- ◆ **Introduction** sets the planning context and vision for this Plan
- ◆ **Existing Conditions** documents the current walking and bicycling environment
- ◆ **Categories of Interest** identifies disadvantaged communities within the study area
- ◆ **Methods of Increasing Walking and Bicycling** outlines potential infrastructure improvements, policies, and programmatic recommendations
- ◆ **Bikeway 99** describes the history and existing conditions of the bikeway and provides improvement recommendations
- ◆ **Successes in Recent Years** discusses recent active transportation projects in Chico
- ◆ **Goals, Objectives, and Strategies** outlines goals for the City and methods for achieving them
- ◆ **Policy and Planning Context** details existing local and regional plans, policies, and programs influencing Chico
- ◆ **Stakeholder Engagement** discusses community engagement methods and results
- ◆ **Proposed Non-Infrastructure Projects** describes program options that encourage active transportation and enhance infrastructure improvements
- ◆ **Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities** lists potential infrastructure improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle network
- ◆ **Implementation Plan** provides strategies for activating the Plan, including cost estimates, construction, funding, and potential challenges
- ◆ **Benefits** outlines benefit analysis methodology and results

In addition, several appendices provide detailed data, analysis, or documentation:

- ◆ Appendix A: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress
- ◆ Appendix B: Outreach Documentation
- ◆ Appendix C: Recommendations
- ◆ Appendix D: Plan Benefits
- ◆ Appendix E: Prioritized Project Costs
- ◆ Appendix F: Protected Facilities
- ◆ Appendix G: Resolution of Plan Adoption

Together, these elements—the Plan and appendices—will guide the City of Chico as it works to improve bicycling and walking in the community.

<sup>1</sup> [Caltrans Active Transportation \(CAT\) Plans | Caltrans](#)

