

# Non-Infrastructure Projects

Non-infrastructure projects are guided by the 5 E's of Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Evaluation, and Equity. From Safe Routes to School Programs to Transportation Demand Management strategies, non-infrastructure projects address the "how" of getting more members of the Chico community out of their single occupancy vehicles and onto the growing active transportation network.

This chapter includes a menu of non-infrastructure projects that can be submitted as components of future grant funding applications. Non-infrastructure projects help to strengthen grant applications, with tactics recommended below utilized as planning and engagement strategies in funding opportunities, such as the Active Transportation Program.

Projects in this chapter serve as recommendations and may be pursued based upon staff availability and funding.



*Example of a safe routes to school bicycle safety class*

## COVID-19 Acknowledgement

Over the course of the global COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects of everyday life have been impacted or altered. From the pausing of public events and in-person activities to the pivot to virtual and online for school and work, planning for and engaging with the Chico community looks different today than it did in the recent past. While the future state of the world is

unpredictable, this chapter acknowledges the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on projects, planning, and public engagement activities and contains flexibility in its strategies for implementation.

## Safe Routes to School

Chico's Safe Routes to School Program is managed by Butte County Public Health. The SRTS Program educates students on pedestrian safety and encourages them to safely commute to school, whether by bicycle, scooter, walking, or riding the school bus.

A student's experience arriving to school can set the tone for the rest of their school day. Studies show that students who walk and bike to school are better prepared to start the school day, having higher levels of concentration, academic performance, and regular attendance. Walking and biking to school fills an average of 16 of the 60 minutes of physical activity recommended for school aged children.

BCPH's SRTS program offers existing program descriptions on its website, encouraging active transportation and safe school commuting through events like Walk to School Day, Bike Rodeos, and in class lessons.

This section provides recommendations for expanding and/or reconfiguring the existing





SRTS program to increase adoption of active transportation and improve safety and comfort for students and families who walk and bike to school.

### *Safe Routes to School Coordinator*

Neither Butte County Public Health, the City, nor Chico Unified School District (CUSD) staffs a dedicated Safe Routes to School coordinator. Instead, SRTS relies on various agencies and departments to collaborate as necessary with parents, school officials, and students. A SRTS Coordinator would help to design and implement SRTS programming in Chico. SRTS in Chico would benefit from the focused attention of a dedicated SRTS Coordinator position.

This Plan encourages the City, CUSD, or BCPH to create and fill a SRTS Coordinator position, where appropriate. This new position would organize and facilitate existing events like Walk or Bike to School Days and elevate the SRTS Program as a priority for Chico's schools. The SRTS Coordinator could also play a key role in coordinating with the City's implementation of the programs outlined here and identifying other programs and events.

### *Safe Routes to School Plans*

A Safe Routes to School Plan documents existing walking and bicycling routes located near a school and can increase walking and bicycling to school through additional project and program recommendations. This Plan recommends the City collaborate with CUSD and BCPH to develop a Safe Routes to School

Plan, which includes a map of preferred walking and bicycling routes to each school. The SRTS Plan should be made available to parents and students via digital or print media and should be updated to illustrate changes to routes as this Plan is implemented. This Plan also recommends that the City and California State University, Chico work together to develop a Safe Routes to School Plan for students, faculty, and staff navigating to, from, and between the main university campus at the heart of the City, as well as other university facilities. Typical SRTS plans include the 5 E's of encouragement, education, engineering, evaluation, and equity and may feature, but not be limited to, some or all of the following components:

- ◆ Mapping of preferred walking and bicycling routes to each school
- ◆ Infrastructure recommendations (up to 30 percent design)
- ◆ Programming priorities
- ◆ Evaluation criteria
- ◆ Time schedule

Additional ideas for SRTS plans, including guides, toolkits, and curricula can be found on the Active Transportation Resource Center website<sup>24</sup> or the Safe Routes National Partnership<sup>25</sup>.

### *Walk and Bike Audits*

Conducting walk and bike audits as part of the SRTS program can help to identify challenges and strategies to improve walking and biking near schools and along student routes. An audit is simply a data collection method that can be

<sup>24</sup> [https://caatpresources.org/resources\\_ni\\_srts.html](https://caatpresources.org/resources_ni_srts.html)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/>



conducted at any time; sometimes, specific concerns prompt audits, but they can also be conducted to determine what opportunities are present for improvement. On a walk and bike audit, community members survey active transportation routes together, noting conditions that make their streets feel comfortable and those that make them challenging. Walk and bike audits can be used to:

- ◆ Document barriers to walking and biking
- ◆ Identify disparities between neighborhoods that may have different walking and biking environments
- ◆ Identify problems that can be easily addressed and problems that need a greater investment of time and funding
- ◆ Encourage walking and biking to school
- ◆ Engage students in understanding and improving their communities

A walk and bike audit should lead to improving safety, comfort, and accessibility for students of all ages, abilities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Walk and bike audits can be conducted successfully using many different strategies. For additional information, the Safe Routes National Partnership provides detailed guidance in their manual, *How to Plan and Conduct a Walk Audit*. The manual and other resources can be found at [www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org).

### *Walking School Buses and Bike Trains*

Walking school buses and bike trains create regular and ongoing opportunities for groups of parents and students who live near one another in neighborhoods to walk and bike together to and from school. Walking and biking as a group improves community connections, increases visibility, and can encourage wider adoption of active transportation.

Butte County Public Health has organized walking school buses in the past. This Plan recommends further collaboration between BCPH, CUSD, school parent organizations, and

the City, as needed, to implement regular walking school buses and/or bike train programming, with route and schedule information added to the CUSD website(s). A dedicated SRTS coordinator could also help to implement and advertise regular walking school buses and bike trains.

### *Address Walking and Biking in Arrival and Dismissal Procedures*

Arrival and dismissal can be a challenge for students and parents traveling by any mode, whether it be walking or biking, taking the bus, or riding in the car. When developing a school arrival and dismissal program, some key principles should address pedestrians and bicyclists specifically:

- ◆ Assess needs through walk and bike audits
- ◆ Prioritize the safety and comfort of students walking and biking
- ◆ Use multiple strategies that incorporate the 5 Es of SRTS: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation, and Equity
- ◆ Separate buses and vehicles from pedestrians and bicyclists and reduce conflict points and areas between motorized and non-motorized modes
- ◆ Clearly demarcate and enforce the appropriate channels for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians with signs, pavement markings, and educational materials and events

The Safe Routes National Partnership published an info brief for implementing these strategies, called *Keep Calm and Carry on to School: Improving Arrival and Dismissal for Walking and Biking*. The manual and other guidance for implementing SRTS strategies can be found at [www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org).





*A walking school bus from the Step by Step: How to Start a Walking School Bus at Your School SRTS National Partnership toolkit*

## Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is defined as policies and strategies intended to reduce travel demand, especially from single occupancy vehicles, or to shift demand to off-peak times. Successful TDM programs decrease motor vehicle trips and increase trips on alternative modes, like carpooling, bicycling, walking, or transit. Non-Infrastructure TDM strategies include:

- ◆ Promoting alternatives to driving alone, like walking, bicycling, or taking transit through encouragement campaigns and initiatives (see Encouragement Campaigns below)
- ◆ Promote telecommuting or alternative work schedules
- ◆ Encourage employer-sponsored vanpool/shuttle programs
- ◆ Increase awareness of car sharing and rideshare programs
- ◆ Create and distribute bicycling maps to highlight the best routes to key destinations (see Mobile Friendly Bikeway Map below)

## Behavior Change Strategies and Educational Programs

### “STREET SMARTS” CAMPAIGN

This Plan previously mentioned Street Smarts campaigns in the Methods of Increasing Walking and Bicycling chapter. These effective educational programs use print and digital media, radio, and television to educate the community about safe driving, bicycling, and walking behavior to encourage the adoption of new attitudes and behaviors that will make streets safer for all road users.

This Plan recommends initiating a Street Smarts campaign targeting community-identified behaviors that create challenges for people walking and biking in Chico, such as speeding, how to properly position trash cans so they don't obstruct bicycle facilities, or how to stop at Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons.

For successful implementation of a new Street Smarts campaign, begin by:

- ◆ Determining the implementing agency or organization to run the campaign
- ◆ Selecting community-identified behaviors as campaign focus areas
- ◆ Creating messages that target these specific behaviors
- ◆ Selecting “hot spot” locations where these behaviors frequently occur
- ◆ Investing in campaign materials that make sense for Chico, like ads on the back of B-Line buses or street pole banners in Downtown

Past and present examples of successful Street Smarts campaigns can be found on websites for the City of Davis<sup>26</sup> and Street Smarts Marin<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.cityofdavis.org/city-hall/public-works-engineering-and-transportation/bike-pedestrian-program/street-smarts/outreach-campaigns>

<sup>27</sup> <https://streetsmartsmarin.org/index.html>



**BICYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION FOR ADULTS**

As noted in an earlier chapter, this Plan recommends that the City supports Chico Velo’s continued Bike Safety Skills Classes that focus on safe bicyclist behavior with advertising and by providing meeting space or other in-kind support.

**BICYCLE REPAIR PROGRAM**

This Plan recommends the City support the establishment of a bicycle repair program by a sanctioned group that offers courses on bicycle repair and proper bicycle maintenance. Similar programs have been supported by various organizations and agencies in the past, including at or by Chico State, the Chico Police Department, and Chico Velo. The City could provide meeting space, in-kind support, or collaboration with this program, encouraging a new source of community input on existing and future bicycle infrastructure throughout the City, helping to make the City more responsive to the needs of active transportation users.

A new bicycle repair program would benefit from collaborative partnership with an organization like Chico Velo, the Chico State Bell Memorial Union Adventure Outings Program’s Bike Cart, or another community organization, growing the network of citizen leaders while allowing City staff to take on other priorities.

**BIKESHARE PILOT PROGRAM AND FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Bicycle sharing systems, also known as bikeshare programs, are one potential solution for micromobility and connecting people to their destination by closing the gaps between their first and last mile. Bicycles used in a bikeshare program could be electric or human powered and with or without a docking station. These programs are meant to make bicycles available to rent at a low-cost and to be easily accessible through a mobile application. Throughout the process of community engagement, several stakeholders voiced their desire for a bikeshare program within Chico. The following are recommendations that could be considered to potentially implement a bikeshare program long term in the City.



*Bikeshare station in Truckee, California*



The City, in partnership with other local agencies, may consider establishing a short-term bikeshare pilot program that gauges the feasibility of bikeshare within the community. Some options for launching a program like this could be:

- In a location where the infrastructure is more bicycle friendly, and vehicles move slower
- Recreationally, such as at the entrance of Lower Bidwell Park
- In partnership with local employers

This type of program may encourage people to get out of their vehicles and ride bicycles more frequently. It could also be beneficial in collecting valuable feedback from the community on the prospect of a long-term bikeshare program. To better serve the Chico community, this Plan also recommends pairing this program with a helmet safety education program.

When including a bikeshare program as a part of a grant application, considerations should include maintenance, upkeep, and longevity of the program (including how the program could be funded beyond the expiration of funds) and whether the program would serve residents within a disadvantaged community.

## Encouragement Campaigns

### WALK AND BIKE CHALLENGES

Chico's calendar of popular bicycling events includes the Wildflower Century ride and WildFest every April<sup>28</sup> as well as the Chico Tweed Ride every fall<sup>29</sup>. To expand upon this success, the City should encourage walking and bicycling to non-bicycle-focused events through

walk and bike challenges, reducing VMT and shifting trips to active travel modes. This Plan recommends piloting a walk and bike challenge program where a specific day or event annually/quarterly/monthly can be chosen to promote walking and/or bicycling to a specific destination. The Downtown Chico Business Association hosts signature events<sup>30</sup> in Downtown, from the *Art & Wine Walk* to *Slice of Chico*, and may be an appropriate collaboration partner for establishing a walk and bike challenge to an existing or new event.

### NATIONAL BIKE TO WORK DAY

Butte County Public Health encourages the annual participation in both National Walk to School Day in October and National Bike to School Day in May<sup>31</sup>. This Plan recommends that the City and BCPH, along with community groups like Chico Velo, expand this campaign to also encourage participation in National Bike to Work Day<sup>32</sup> as a part of National Bike Month each May.



*Bike to Work Day participants stopping at a recharge station along their ride to work*

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.wildflowercentury.org/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.chicoer.com/2022/11/21/fall-leaves-greet-tweed-bikers-in-bidwell-park/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.downtownchico.com/signature-events.htm>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.buttecounty.net/publichealth/SRTS>

<sup>32</sup> <https://bikeleague.org/content/bike-month-dates-events-0>



## DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Demonstration projects are short-term, temporary “pop-up” projects that provide an opportunity for the community to test out potential bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the roadway. Examples of facilities that can be demonstrated for the community include, but are not limited to, temporary crosswalks; curb extensions; neighborhood traffic circles or roundabouts; different classifications of bikeway infrastructure, including separated bikeways; median refuge islands; or parklets. These types of projects not only indicate a safer and more inviting roadway for pedestrians and bicyclists, but also encourage people to test out the changes and provide valuable feedback before greater financial investments are made.



*Curb extension in Portsmouth, NH using colorful surface treatments, cones, and plants*



*Class IV Protected Bikeway demonstration in Chico using planters as barriers from vehicular traffic*

This Plan recommends that the City consider pairing demonstration projects alongside community engagement efforts, like at existing events, festivals, during National Bike Month, or other local events, and as a part of a non-infrastructure project to collect feedback and provide the opportunity for the community to test out potential roadway features prior to them being built.

## OPEN STREETS EVENTS

Open Streets events are temporary street closures that provide connected roadway segments of car-free streets for people to walk, jog, bicycle, skate, and socialize. Open Streets events encourage sustainable, active transportation as well as community connections, exploration, and play. This Plan recommends that the City pilot an annual Open Streets event to encourage active transportation in lower-stress environments and to help foster connections between communities.

## HIRE A BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN COORDINATOR

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, this Plan recommends that the City dedicate or hire a staff position to focus on bicycle and pedestrian projects and program coordination on a full-time basis. This position would assist with Planning, Public Works, and transportation projects in accounting for bicyclists and pedestrians. The position would prepare grant applications to fund projects and programs and support coordination with the public and neighboring jurisdictions.

Contingent on funding availability, the City may instead consider an alternate solution, like adding bicycle and pedestrian coordination as a program element of an existing City staff position, hiring as a part-time position, dedicating internship resources to work on bicycle and pedestrian projects until a full-time position can be funded, or retaining external consultancy services.



**SOCIAL WALKS/RIDES**

This Plan recommends the City support and encourage regular social walks and bicycle rides in Chico in order to provide an encouraging space for people who are uncomfortable walking or bicycling alone, or who are unfamiliar with the best routes to use. Including links and listings on City websites, calendars, and newsletters can help spread the word about these events and entice more members of the community to try walking or bicycling.

**MOBILE-FRIENDLY BIKEWAY MAP**

This Plan recommends the City create a mobile-friendly Bikeway Map that provides a current and comprehensive wayfinding resource for people walking and bicycling in Chico. It also encourages the City to link to, utilize, or partner with a third-party and/or open source website like AllTrails or Google Maps to take advantage of mobile-friendly features and benefits already in use by community members.

**WALKING & BICYCLING AMBASSADORS**

A volunteer walking and bicycling ambassador program in Chico could encourage community members to act as eyes on key trails and bikeways, reporting maintenance needs, sharing educational materials and maps, and providing a friendly presence throughout the active transportation network.

As mentioned in the Methods of Increasing Walking and Bicycling chapter, this Plan recommends the City launch a pilot ambassador program, in partnership with a community organization, like Chico Velo, to:

- ◆ Establish a volunteer organization that improves overall community feelings of comfort and safety along the bikeway network
- ◆ Build on best practices and innovative community ideas
- ◆ Coordinate volunteer training sessions
- ◆ Seek grant funding to use as ambassador or coordinator stipends or for program needs

Alternatively, Chico Velo's existing Adopt-A-Path program could be expanded, in collaboration with the City, to incorporate walking and bicycling ambassadors.

**BICYCLE RACK PROGRAM**

This Plan recommends the creation or continuation of a bicycle rack program in Chico to coordinate and streamline bicycle rack installation. Managed by a City staff member who works collaboratively with both staff and business owners to install bicycle racks and corrals citywide, this new program will ensure bicycle racks are properly installed to avoid blocking sidewalks and are in convenient and accessible locations. And to encourage employees throughout Chico to bicycle instead of drive, this program should also coordinate with local businesses to provide long-term bicycle parking, such as bicycle lockers, for employees and visitors.

This Plan also recommends that the City continue to develop customized and/or branded bicycle racks, highlighting the identity of Chico as a bicycle-friendly community and doubling as public art and placemaking features.

