

# Bikeway 99

This chapter describes Bikeway 99, a popular bicycle and pedestrian pathway and route in Chico, which links people to important destinations. This chapter outlines the history of the bikeway, the existing conditions, potential gaps in the network, and opportunities for future improvements.

## Background

The State Route 99 Corridor Bikeway, referred to as Bikeway 99, is an approximately seven-mile-long bicycle corridor located in the City of Chico. The Bikeway primarily runs along SR 99 and serves as the “spine” of the bicycling network within Chico. Bikeway 99 holds significant importance in the active transportation network of Chico, as it serves to link popular destinations across the City, including educational and employment centers.



*Bikeway 99 Class I multi-use path entrance along Vallombrosa Avenue*

## History

Bikeway 99 began as a series of separate bicycle facilities, brought together as a system to provide a more extensive connection and “spine” of bicycle facilities across the City. Much like SR 99 provides significant north-south connectivity for motor vehicles traveling across Chico, Bikeway 99 provides that connectivity for people who bike. The development of Bikeway 99 began in 2010 and has continued to today with additional improvements.

## Projects

The original Bikeway 99 network was formally described in the 2012 *Chico Urban Area Bicycle Plan*. The Bikeway consisted of four separate segments of Class I multi-use paths, six separate segments of Class II bicycle lanes, three segments of Class III bicycle routes, and a portion of the network with no designated bicycle facilities.

Projects to enhance the connectivity and continuity of Bikeway 99 have been completed or planned since its inception in 2010. The Bikeway was developed in phases, with Phases 1 through 3 occurring from 2010 to 2015. Phase 4 included planning and design work from 2017 to 2019, with construction completed in 2020. This phase featured the development of a 0.8-mile Class I segment of Bikeway 99, upgrading an existing Class II/Class III facility.

Phase 5 of the Bikeway 99 project includes the planning and design of a 0.6-mile Class I facility to both close the gap in an existing segment of the Bikeway without any designated bicycle facility and to upgrade an existing Class III bike route in another segment. Phase 5 includes a planned eight- to ten-foot-wide paved Class I



multi-use path running for a portion of the Bikeway parallel to SR 99 as well as a major bicycle/pedestrian bridge to facilitate a seamless connection across East 20<sup>th</sup> Street. This new overcrossing will provide a grade-separated facility for people bicycling and walking to cross East 20<sup>th</sup> Street, rather than crossing at street level or at intersections nearby, all of which are considered high stress. This new facility will help provide access to many nearby businesses and employment opportunities, including the Chico Marketplace as well as businesses located in or adjacent to the Village Center commercial zone. Construction for Phase 5 will begin in 2023, with completion expected in 2024.

### Funding

The Bikeway 99 facilities have been funded in part through state and federal grants. Phase 1 through 3 of the Bikeway were funded from 2010-2015 using funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program (CMAQ) from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Phase 3 also received state funding from the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Grant Program from the California Natural Resources Agency. Phase 4 received funding from CMAQ and state Active Transportation Program (ATP) funding. The design and implementation of Phase 5 also received funding from CMAQ and ATP.

### Existing Conditions

The existing Bikeway 99 is approximately seven miles long and consists of a mix of facility types. The network is primarily made up of Class I multi-use paths and Class II bicycle lanes. However, segments of Class III bicycle routes also exist to connect the Class I and Class II facilities. Throughout the route, Bikeway 99 transitions between facility types approximately a dozen times.

The routing of Bikeway 99 begins in the north of the City as a Class III bicycle route starting on Silverbell Road. The bikeway ends in the south of the City as a Class II bicycle lane on Notre Dame Boulevard, near the intersection with Morrow Lane. The route also features bridges and undercrossings carrying Bikeway 99 as a Class I multi-use path underneath SR 99 and over Little Chico Creek. Figure 25 depicts a full map of the bikeway and other local bicycle facilities.

Bikeway 99 serves as a bicycle trunk route in the City and as a link between areas of the City without bicycle facilities. The Bikeway serves to connect residents with educational institutions, shopping, employment, and recreation. Fairview High School, Neal Dow Elementary School, Parkview Elementary School, CSU Chico, and Butte College (Chico) are all located adjacent to Bikeway 99 or to another facility connected to it. Lower Bidwell Park, Chico Community Park, Chico MarketPlace, and North Valley Plaza are all also located adjacent to the bikeway.

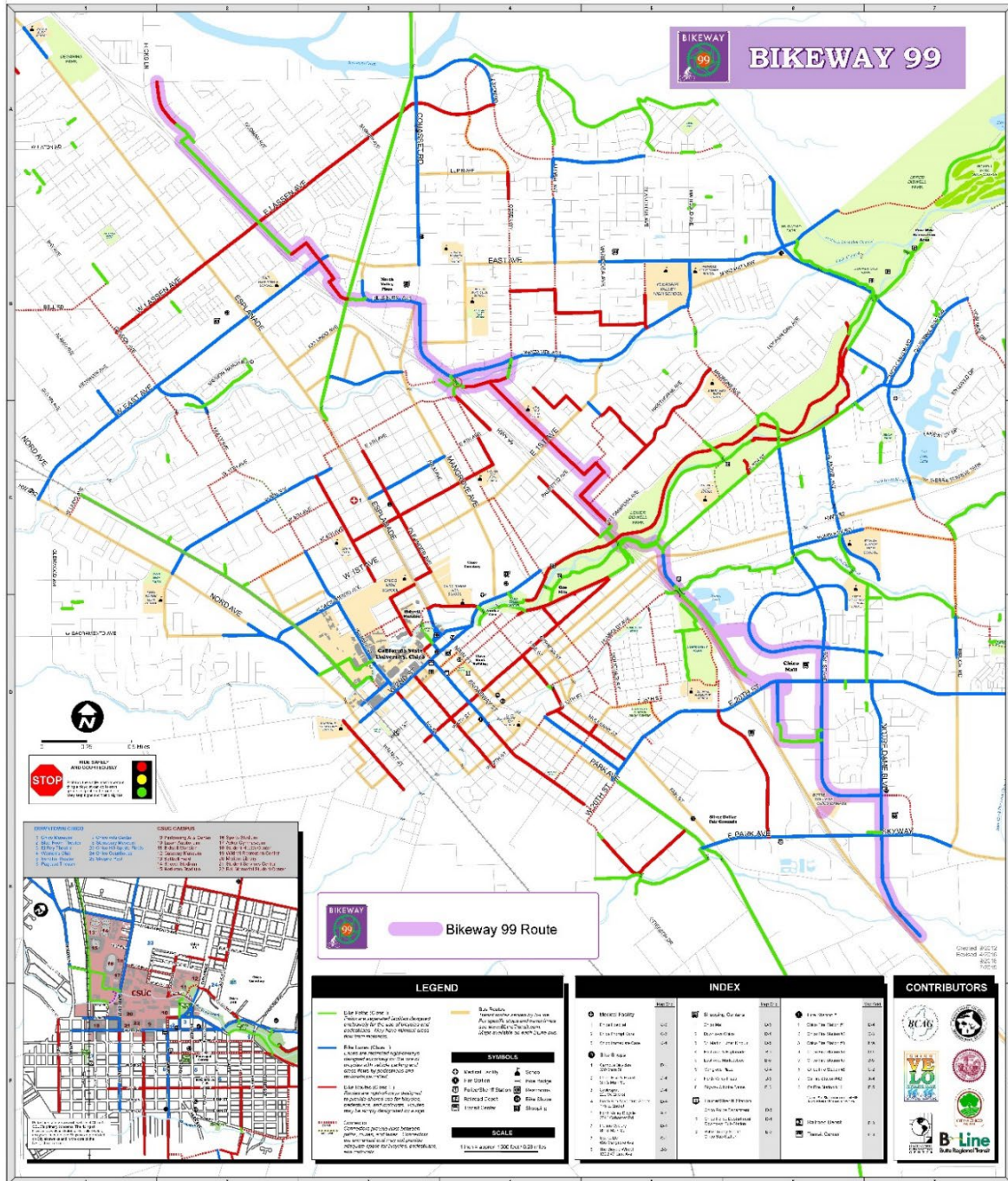
Neighborhoods in Chico located near Bikeway 99 provide a greater opportunity for residents to choose to bicycle, possibly encouraging nearby Chico residents to choose to bike over another transportation mode.



*Bikeway 99. Source: Google Maps*



Figure 25: Bikeway 99 Map



## Wayfinding

The Bikeway 99 facility offers significant wayfinding resources to users. For example, many portions of the Bikeway, especially along the Class I multi-use path segments, contain high-quality wayfinding and informational signage at key points. The image below illustrates an example of a wayfinding sign on Bikeway 99. The sign contains a map of the entire network, highlighting key destinations along the Bikeway as well as other bicycle connections in the City. Additionally, the sign uses Bikeway 99 branding, along with decorative elements, to help enhance the placemaking effect of the bikeway and highlight it as a dedicated and memorable facility for community benefit.



*Modern gateway map and wayfinding sign along Bikeway 99*

Despite the high-quality signage present in many areas of the Bikeway, some older portions do not contain adequate wayfinding signage. This is especially prevalent in areas of the Bikeway with Class III bicycle routes, on streets with mixed traffic. Signage on these segments is often only a “Bike Route” sign, lacking route name, as well as upcoming destinations, distance, or time to destinations. This presents an opportunity for more high-quality wayfinding and informational signage throughout the bikeway.



*Bicycle route signage without wayfinding on an older portion of Bikeway 99*

## Current Gaps and Maintenance Needs

### Gaps

Closing gaps along the Bikeway 99 corridor will improve bicyclist and pedestrian comfort and reduce the level of traffic stress for vulnerable road users. By strategically upgrading the least comfortable segments on the route – the gaps, which are the stretches of roadway that are currently Class III bicycle routes or those without any bikeway designation at all – the City will significantly improve the overall convenience and utility of the Bikeway as a spine connecting countless other active transportation facilities citywide. To note, Phase 5 of the Bikeway 99 project will close the last significant bikeway facility gap along the route. Upgrades to increase bikeway comfort for all ages as well as gap closures in connections to Bikeway 99, particularly from neighborhoods to the east of SR 99, will remain important goals.

Specific gap closure recommendations are included in the Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities chapter.

### Maintenance Needs

Trail and bikeway surface quality has been a frequent concern of Chico residents and visitors,



particularly those that utilize Bikeway 99. For an active transportation network spine like the Bikeway, pavement and surface condition should be regularly assessed and problem areas prioritized and addressed to maintain the expected good condition, enhancing safety and comfort along the corridor.

## Improvement Recommendations

Several important improvements are proposed for the facilities that make up Bikeway 99. These include improvements to pavement condition, signage, and the closure of gaps that currently exist in the network. These improvements are designed to enhance connectivity for bicycle users and improve the condition of existing facilities along the route.

### CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

- ◆ Improved connectivity between the northern end of Bikeway 99 and Eaton Road
- ◆ Improved connectivity between Bikeway 99 and East Lassen Avenue
- ◆ Improved connectivity between Bikeway 99 and East Avenue
- ◆ Improved connectivity between Bikeway 99 and the North Valley Plaza shopping mall
- ◆ Improved connectivity between Bikeway 99 and Bidwell Junior High School, through lower-stress facilities in residential areas
- ◆ Improved connectivity between Bikeway 99 and Ceres Avenue
- ◆ Improved access to Bikeway 99 from the north side of Lower Bidwell Park, including improvements to Bikeway connections with Vallombrosa Avenue
- ◆ Improved access to Bikeway 99 from East 20th Street
- ◆ Improved access to Bikeway 99 from East Park Avenue

### FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

- ◆ Improved bicycling conditions for portions of the Bikeway running on Class III bicycle facilities in mixed traffic
- ◆ Reduced level of traffic stress for portions of Bikeway 99 running through residential neighborhoods near Neal Dow Elementary School
- ◆ Pavement condition and quality improvements in Lower Bidwell Park, to improve the bicycle riding experience on existing facilities in the park
- ◆ Crossing improvements at the intersections of Bikeway 99 and East 8th Street and East 9th Street
- ◆ Crossing improvements at Forest Avenue & Notre Dame Boulevard, to improve access to the Bikeway 99 segment that begins there

A complete description of improvement recommendations is available in the Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities chapter.



*Class III bicycle route passing Neal Dow Elementary School*

