

Community Impact Memorandum

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From:	Claire Bromund, Project Manager
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Date:	December 6, 2019
Subject:	Community Impact Assessment for the Esplanade Corridor Safety and Accessibility Improvement Project in the City of Chico, California Federal Project No. ATPCML-5037(037)

Introduction

This memo describes potential effects, if any, of the proposed project on community resources. For this memo, the project study area consists of the census tract block groups encompassing and adjacent to the project footprint, some of which extend more than 1 mile from the Esplanade corridor.

Proposed Project

Project Location

The proposed project is located along an approximately 1.25-mile segment of the Esplanade in the city of Chico between Memorial Way and East 11th Avenue, along Oleander Avenue between Memorial Way and East 10th Avenue, along East 10th Avenue between Esplanade and Oleander Avenue, and along Memorial Way between Esplanade and approximately 0.06 mile (335 feet) east of the Memorial Way and Oleander Avenue intersection. The project is in the "Chico, CA" USGS

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Quadrangle, Sections 22 and 27, of Township 22 North, Range 1 East. See the project vicinity map and project aerial at the end of this document.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to enhance mobility, connectivity, safety, and accessibility for roadway users of all ages and abilities, including automobiles, trucks, buses, and other large vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians, on the Esplanade from Memorial Way to 11th Avenue in Chico. The City's primary goal is to incorporate "complete streets" features and provide safer connectivity for all users between the downtown and destinations along the corridor.

The project is needed to correct multimodal operational deficiencies and lack of sufficient facilities for pedestrian and bicycle travel modes on the Esplanade and the parallel roadway, Oleander Avenue. Currently, no facilities, signage, or pavement markings are provided for bicycle riders on the complex Esplanade boulevard or frontage roads. Car/bicycle collision rates are extremely high. Pedestrians have no pedestrian signal crossings indicators, compounded by a signal system that does not provide the minimum crossing time needed. Curb ramps are installed at marked crosswalk locations with sidewalks, but the ramp designs do not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design requirements. There are substantial gaps in the sidewalk on the east side frontage road of the Esplanade between 8th and 11th Avenues, and in various locations on Oleander Avenue and East 10th Avenue.

Project Description

The City of Chico proposes to create a separated and paved Class I multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path along the Esplanade, connecting downtown; California State University, Chico; Chico Junior and Senior High Schools; a regional hospital; and neighborhoods adjacent to the existing Airport Class I multi-use path at 11th Avenue. Oleander Avenue, the parallel street east of the Esplanade, would also receive signage, sidewalk, signal, and stop control improvements between 10th Avenue and Memorial Way. A roundabout would be installed at the intersection of Oleander Avenue and Memorial Way adjacent to Chico Junior High School. Two traffic signals are proposed to be installed at the intersections of Oleander Avenue/1st Avenue and West Sacramento Avenue/Esplanade.

Existing traffic signals would be outfitted with pedestrian signal crossing equipment (now absent), updated detection equipment, an associated traffic signal timing plan to accommodate the added pedestrian phases, and pedestrian refuge islands where applicable. Appropriate ADA ramps and sidewalks would be added.

The proposed non-motorized "complete streets" improvements along the Esplanade corridor and on Oleander Avenue are listed in more detail in the sections below and are shown on the project footprint map at the end of this document.

Pedestrian Improvements

Install new pedestrian countdown crossing signal heads and pedestrian push button activation
at all existing traffic signals on the Esplanade with sufficient crossing timing that meets federal
guidelines.

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- Add vehicle detection as necessary by replacing timed signalization with an on-demand detection system.
- Provide adequate pedestrian crossing refuge islands at unsignalized intersections on the Esplanade.
- Consistently mark pedestrian crosswalks at all crossing locations.
- Prepare enhanced signal timing plan to respond to vehicles, bikes, and pedestrian needs.
- Maintain signal progression on the Esplanade during off-peak hours.

ADA Improvements

- Improve connection to the 11th Avenue Airport Class I multi-use path with adequate walkway and ramps on the southwest, southeast, and northeast corners of the intersection.
- Install ADA-accessible curb ramps at all crosswalk locations.
- Install missing sidewalks at identified gap closure locations (see project footprint map).

Bicycle Facility Improvements

- Install paved Class I multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path on old rail right-of-way (east side of Esplanade) with appropriate safety crossing measures.
- Discourage wrong-way riders on the west side frontage road by adding a shared space pavement design to slow vehicle and bicycle traffic through conflict zones.
- Add marked bicycle route on Oleander Avenue which favors minimal stopping except at 1st Avenue and 5th Avenue.
- Install traffic signals at West Sacramento Avenue/Esplanade and Oleander Avenue/1st Avenue with bike crossing emphasis.

Junior High School Area Improvements

• Change intersection design at Memorial Way/Oleander Avenue (near Chico Junior High School) to a single-lane roundabout.

General Vehicle Guidance Improvements

- Provide clear and consistent pavement markings at frontage road intersection areas.
- Create the shared space area at crossings of the east-west streets and frontage roads.
- Install traffic signal indications guiding cross traffic to stop "outside" of the frontage road where appropriate.

11th Avenue Connection Improvements

• Enhance connections between the 11th Avenue and the Airport Class I Multi-use path.

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Other Amenities

- Install pedestrian-scale lighting in the form of full cutoff, energy-efficient LED fixtures restricted to illuminate pathways in order to minimize light "spill over" to adjacent properties.
- Install replacement landscaping within the project footprint.

Typical Signalized Intersection

- Provide a Class I multi-use path in the eastern median.
- Provide textured "mixing zone" at the intersection of southbound frontage and east-west cross streets.
- Eliminate northbound right-turn pocket, where applicable.
- Provide pedestrian refuge islands on medians.
- Update signal timing with adequate crossing time in the east-west directions.
- Refresh striping and add crosswalks, where applicable.

Typical Unsignalized Intersection

- Provide a Class I multi-use path in the eastern median.
- Provide textured "mixing zone" at the intersection of southbound frontage and east-west cross streets.
- Provide pedestrian refuge islands on medians.
- Refresh striping and add crosswalks, where applicable.

Right-of-Way Acquisition and Temporary Construction Easements

To construct the roundabout at the intersection of Memorial Way and Oleander Avenue, both temporary (1,200 square feet) and permanent (1,400 square feet) acquisitions are needed from undeveloped land on a parcel containing several Butte County department offices (APN 003-180-022). Temporary and permanent acquisitions would be from a small portion of undeveloped land at the southeast corner of the parcel, away from structures, trees, and other parcel features.

Construction and Schedule

The project would be constructed in one phase. It is currently anticipated that the proposed improvements would be constructed over an approximately 9-month period starting in early spring of 2022.

Typical construction equipment would include pneumatic jack hammers, excavators, grading equipment, paving equipment, concrete equipment, striping equipment, generators, or other similar devices. The maximum grading and excavation depth needed for most of the project is approximately 3 inches. However, depths of 3 to 4 feet may be necessary for the roundabout excavation. All construction noise would be temporary and subject to the noise limits in the Chico

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Municipal Code, Chapter 9.38 Noise Ordinance, which regulates noise generation within the City of Chico. Construction activity noise is typically restricted to the hours from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekdays (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays), unless otherwise approved by the City Engineer. No night or weekend work is anticipated for the proposed project.

Traffic Management

A traffic management plan would be developed and implemented during construction in accordance with Caltrans' 2018 Standard Specifications and in compliance with the *California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*, Part 6, "Temporary Traffic Control." The Esplanade and Oleander Avenue would remain open during construction; however, the project would temporarily affect traffic patterns with on-site traffic controls (e.g., flagging, pilot car) and episodic, temporary, single-lane traffic closures. The proposed project would not permanently close roadways or block access to private or commercial properties.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, improvements to bicycle lanes and pedestrian facilities, ADA improvements, and other non-motorized improvements in the Esplanade project area would not be built, and there would be no improvements to intersections along Esplanade and Oleander Avenue.

Discussion of Resources and Impacts

Resources and Topics Not Affected

The project area is outside the coastal zone and does not contain any farmlands, timberlands, or wild and scenic rivers. The project is also outside the limits of the Airport Influence Area for Chico Municipal Airport (Butte County Airport Land Use Commission 2017: Exhibit 5-5). No habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans exist for the project study area, which is in an urban setting. Accordingly, these resources would not be affected, or do not pertain to the project, and are not discussed further.

Land Use

The proposed project would take place along established streets in a developed neighborhood, and almost entirely within City right-of-way (ROW). The Chico General Plan designates land uses in or adjacent to the project footprint as Road ROW, Public Facilities and Services, Medium-High Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Office Mixed Use, Neighborhood Commercial, Commercial Mixed Use, and Manufacturing and Warehousing. City of Chico Zoning designates existing uses as Road ROW, Public/Quasi Public Facilities, Medium-High Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Office Residential, Neighborhood Commercial, Office Commercial, Community Commercial, and Light Manufacturing. Applicable land-use policy documents are described below.

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Because no new roadways would be constructed, and there would be no change to existing land uses or to motor vehicle circulation patterns, the project would not physically divide the existing community. The proposed project would not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation.

Consistency with Existing Land Use Policy Documents

The following documents that drive land use in the project area apply to the proposed project.

The Butte County Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy guides transportation development in the project region. It contains goals to provide options and infrastructure improvements that support and encourage walking and bicycling, and that facilitate regional linkages of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (BCAG 2016). The project supports and is consistent with these goals.

The *City of Chico 2030 General Plan* Circulation Element (City of Chico 2011) contains goals and policies that pertain to the proposed project. Goal CIRC-1 aims to provide a comprehensive multimodal circulation system that serves the safe and effective movement of people and goods. Goal CIRC-2 promulgates applying complete streets principles when retrofitting the street network. Goal CIRC-3 and Goal CIRC-4, respectively, are concerned with expanding and maintaining a comprehensive, safe, and integrated bicycle system throughout the City that encourages bicycling; and designing a safe, convenient, and integrated pedestrian system that promotes walking. Goal CIRC-5 is to support a comprehensive and integrated transit system as an essential component of a multimodal circulation system. Goal CIRC-9 aims to reduce use of single-occupant motor vehicles. The project supports and is consistent with these goals.

The *Chico Bicycle Plan 2019 Update* (City of Chico 2019) lists the Esplanade Protected Bikeway as a Class IV facility fully funded in 2019 by Caltrans' Active Transportation Program (ATP). After conducting additional in-depth traffic analysis, the City's Public Works – Engineering Department, with the approval of the California Transportation Commission, determined that a separated Class I multi-use facility along the old-street car right-of-way of the Esplanade is a safer and more appropriate alternative for both bicyclists and pedestrians. The bicycle plan provides built-in flexibility to adapt/modify proposed projects in response to new information. The plan's goals include designing and implementing a complete bikeway network, improving the safety, efficiency and comfort for bicyclists on the network, and promoting bicycling as part of a multimodal system. Though now proposed as a Class I facility, the project supports and is consistent with these goals.

The Caltrans *Active Transportation Program* was created by legislation in 2013 (Senate Bill 99, Chapter 359 and Assembly Bill 101, Chapter 354). The ATP consolidated existing federal and state transportation programs to encourage the increased use of active modes of transportation in California. The ATP funds "infrastructure projects, non-infrastructure projects and plans that encourage increased use of active modes of transportation, such as biking and walking and projects that meet at least one of the program goals" (Caltrans 2019). The goals of the ATP include increasing the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking; increasing safety and mobility for non-motorized users; advancing the ability of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals; enhancing public health, and ensuring that the ATP benefits disadvantaged communities and provides a range of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users (City of Chico 2019). The project supports and is consistent with these goals.

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Property Acquisition

Construction of the roundabout at the intersection of Memorial Way and Oleander Avenue would require both temporary (1,200 square feet) and permanent (1,400 square feet) acquisitions from undeveloped land on a parcel containing several Butte County department offices (APN 003-180-022). The land to be acquired would be from the southeast corner of the parcel, away from structures, trees, and other parcel features. Therefore, the proposed project would not displace any existing housing, people, or businesses, or require relocating residents or businesses; there would be no need for relocation assistance.

Growth

A "first-cut" screening for growth impacts was conducted in accordance with Caltrans guidance (Caltrans 2006). The project does not involve any changes in land use. It would not create a new transportation route, expand a roadway, build new structures, or create opportunities for new housing or businesses. The proposed project would improve access and mobility in the project area by creating a dedicated bicycle route and adding or upgrading curb ramps to current ADA standards. Implementing the project would not permanently change travel times or access to existing residences, businesses, or community services. It is not likely to influence population growth in the project area because the project is in a fully developed part of the city. Accordingly, no project-related growth is reasonably foreseeable.

Economic Conditions

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide enhanced connectivity between destinations along the Esplanade corridor, and enhance access and safety for bicyclists, pedestrians, and disabled community members. Improved accessibility may increase activity for some businesses. The project involves painting and restriping existing streets, installing new traffic signals and modifying existing signal timing, creating pedestrian refuge islands, and installing one roundabout near the junior high school. It would not prevent parking, add or remove any businesses or housing, or require any relocations. Access to all businesses, housing, and community facilities would be maintained during construction. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to cause any economic changes to the community that could result in a physical impact on the environment. Table 1 displays regional and local employment and income characteristics.

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Table 1. Existing Regional and Local Employment and Income Characteristics (2017)

	Total Labor	% Unemployment	Median Household	% Families below	% All People below		
Area	Force	Force Rate ^a		Poverty Level	Poverty Level		
Butte County	102,855	9.0	46,516	12.0	20.5		
City of Chico	47,979	5.2	45,337	12.8	24.6		
CT 6.01 Block Group 2*	480	10.0	_	0	5		
CT 6.01, Block Group 3	836	9.0	_	9	25		
CT 6.03, Block Group 1	227	2.0	-	15	35		
CT 6.03, Block Group 2	491	9.0	-	19	50		
CT 6.03, Block Group 3	10	0.0	-	0	0		
CT 7, Block Group 1	619	3.0	-	12	16		
CT 7, Block Group 2	1,100	3.0	-	24	32		
CT 7, Block Group 3	674	8.0	_	6	7		
CT 7, Block Group 4	523	3.0	-	9	18		

Source: U.S. Census 2017a, b, c, d.

CT = Census tract.

Public Service Facilities

Chico Junior High School, Chico High School, CSU Chico, Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park, and Gateway Science Museum are among the public service facilities in or adjacent to the project footprint. The proposed project would enhance access to these facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians but would not physically change or increase the use of existing community facilities and services. The proposed project would improve congestion and sight distance at the junior high school intersection at Memorial Way and Oleander Avenue by installing a roundabout at that intersection.

Emergency Services

Chico is served by Chico Fire Rescue and the Chico Police Department. Enloe Medical Center with its Emergency Services department is adjacent the project footprint on the west side of Esplanade, and Chico Fire Department Station 2 is just east of Esplanade on East 5th Avenue. When completed, the proposed project would not affect access to emergency services, emergency routes, or response times because it would not change street configuration or directional travel. During construction, implementing the project's traffic management plan would avoid or minimize any delays in emergency response.

Utilities

Excavation necessary for the project is not anticipated to exceed 4 feet in depth. Information on potential need for utility relocation is not available as of this writing. Service disruptions are not

^{*} The study area for this table consists of the census tract block groups encompassing and adjacent to the proposed project footprint (see project study area figure at the end of this document).

^a Unemployment rate is proportion of population 16 years and over in the labor force.

b Median household income data is not available at the Census block group level.

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anticipated, but if services must be briefly interrupted to perform work, the duration of interruption would be kept to a minimum. Following City procedures for excavation, the City will coordinate with service providers prior to and during construction to confirm the location and depth of their facilities, and if location conflicts exist, will work with the providers to coordinate any needed relocations. The City will arrange for advance notification to residents and businesses if any temporary disruptions in service are necessary.

Environmental Justice

This project has been developed in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." Title VI states that "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Executive Order 12898 requires each federal agency (or its designee) to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address "disproportionately high and adverse" effects of federal or federally funded projects on minority and low-income populations.

The proportions of environmental justice populations (minority or low-income) in the study area are generally comparable to or less than for Chico and Butte County. Only census tract (CT) 6.01, block group 3, and CT 7, block group 4, are home to an Asian population higher (7.9 percent and 8.3 percent, respectively) than in Butte County (4.5 percent) or the city (4.7 percent) (Table 2). In terms of poverty, CT 6.01, block group 3; CT 6.03, block group 1; CT 6.03, block group 2; and CT 7, block group 2 have higher percentages of individuals below poverty level than Butte County and Chico (Table 1).

However, as described throughout this memo, the proposed project would not have adverse economic, health, social, environmental, or other effects on any city residents. The project may benefit some environmental justice populations equally or more than other residents because low-income people are more likely to utilize alternative modes of transportation (FHWA 2014). Accordingly, the proposed project would have no disproportionate adverse effects related to environmental justice. Table 2 displays race and ethnicity data for the study area.

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Table 2. Race and Ethnicity Data

	Total	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)		Not Hispanic or Latino													
Geographic Area			%	White	%	Black or African American	%	American Indian/ Alaska Native	%	Asian	%	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	%	Other Race	%	Two or More Races	%
Butte County	225,207	35,445	15.7	185,221	82.2	3,372	1.5	2,633	1.2	10,174	4.5	424	0.2	9,646	4.3	13,737	6.1
City of Chico	90,660	16,080	17.7	74,627	82.3	1,837	2.0	633	0.7	4,227	4.7	175	0.2	4,373	4.8	4,788	5.3
CT 6.01, Block Group 2	768	67	8.7	669	87.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	32	4.2
CT 6.01, Block Group 3	1,368	162	11.8	1,069	78.1	17	1.2	0	0.0	108	7.9	0	0	0	0	12	0.9
CT 6.03, Block Group 1	356	52	14.6	292	82.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	12	3.4
CT 6.03, Block Group 2	1,014	113	11.1	828	81.7	13	1.3	0	0.0	18	1.8	0	0	0	0	42	4.1
CT 6.03, Block Group 3	1,130	230	20.4	809	71.6	17	1.5	6	0.5	23	2.0	0	0	0	0	45	4.0
CT 7, Block Group 1	1,020	75	7.4	945	92.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
CT 7, Block Group 2	1,657	149	9.0	1,467	88.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	35	2.1	0	0	0	0	6	0.4
CT 7, Block Group 3	1,175	144	12.3	1,031	87.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
CT 7, Block Group 4	940	39	4.1	823	87.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	78	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0.0

Source: U.S. Census 2017e, f.

CT = Census tract.

^{*} The study area for this table comprises the census tract block groups encompassing and adjacent to the proposed project footprint (see project study area figure at the end of this document).

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Public Involvement

City staff and consultants conducted community outreach during 2015 and 2016 with key target audiences and stakeholders. The goals, process, and results are documented in the *Community Outreach* section and Appendix E of the feasibility study (W-Trans 2016). The outreach process consisted of meetings with stakeholders such as hospitals, schools, California State Parks, museums, B-line transit, and historical association; meetings with business owners near the Esplanade; online public surveys; public workshops; media outreach; and a project webpage. Outreach identified stakeholder preferences and critical deficiencies for the study to address. Project components were modified or developed to address the deficiencies identified during the outreach process. Final recommendations incorporated into the project considered comments from City Council, input from City staff, key stakeholders, and the public, integrated with the need to meet traffic engineering standard practices, state guidelines, the traffic engineering analysis, and collision history review.

Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Project objectives and features to maintain acceptable vehicle traffic operations and improve transportation safety, especially for bicycles and pedestrians, are consistent with the RTP/SCS, the City of Chico General Plan, the Chico Bicycle Plan 2019 Update, and Caltrans' ATP (which funds this project), as discussed under *Land Use*, above.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

The project would improve access and circulation by creating a Class I bike lane and modifying intersections, signals, and signal timing to minimize vehicle-bicycle and vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. Project design, signage, and street markings are expected to improve wayfinding and safety along the corridor.

There is no congestion management program for the project corridor. Accordingly, the proposed project would not conflict with any congestion management program.

Both Esplanade and Oleander Avenue, and the cross streets within the project limits, would remain open during construction; however, the project would temporarily affect traffic patterns with onsite traffic controls (e.g., flagging) and sporadic, temporary single-lane traffic closures. During construction, a traffic management plan would be implemented to coordinate the travel routes of service providers and maintain emergency access, transit, and school bus service and response times.

The project would maintain on-street parking where it currently exists in front of businesses and homes. The project would also not change parking regulations or driveway access.

Public Transportation

Butte Regional Transit operates the B-Line public bus, which has two routes (#s 15 and 16) along the Esplanade within the project footprint (Butte Regional Transit 2016).

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The proposed project would not change the location of or access to bus stops or otherwise permanently affect transit service. Implementation of the project's traffic management plan would ensure that access to and the schedule for public transportation in the project corridor would not be adversely affected during construction.

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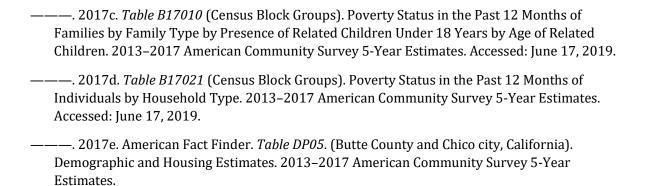
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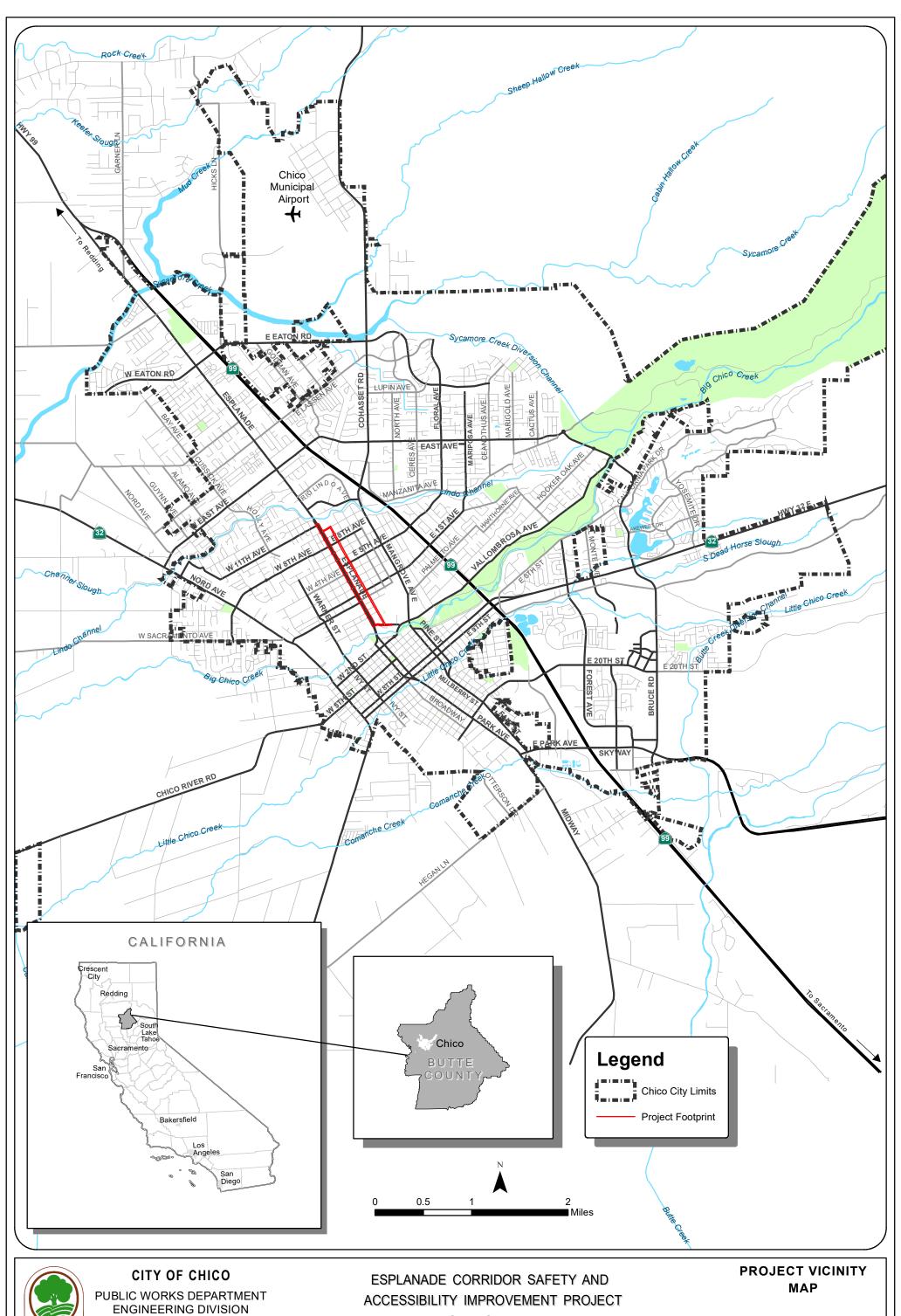
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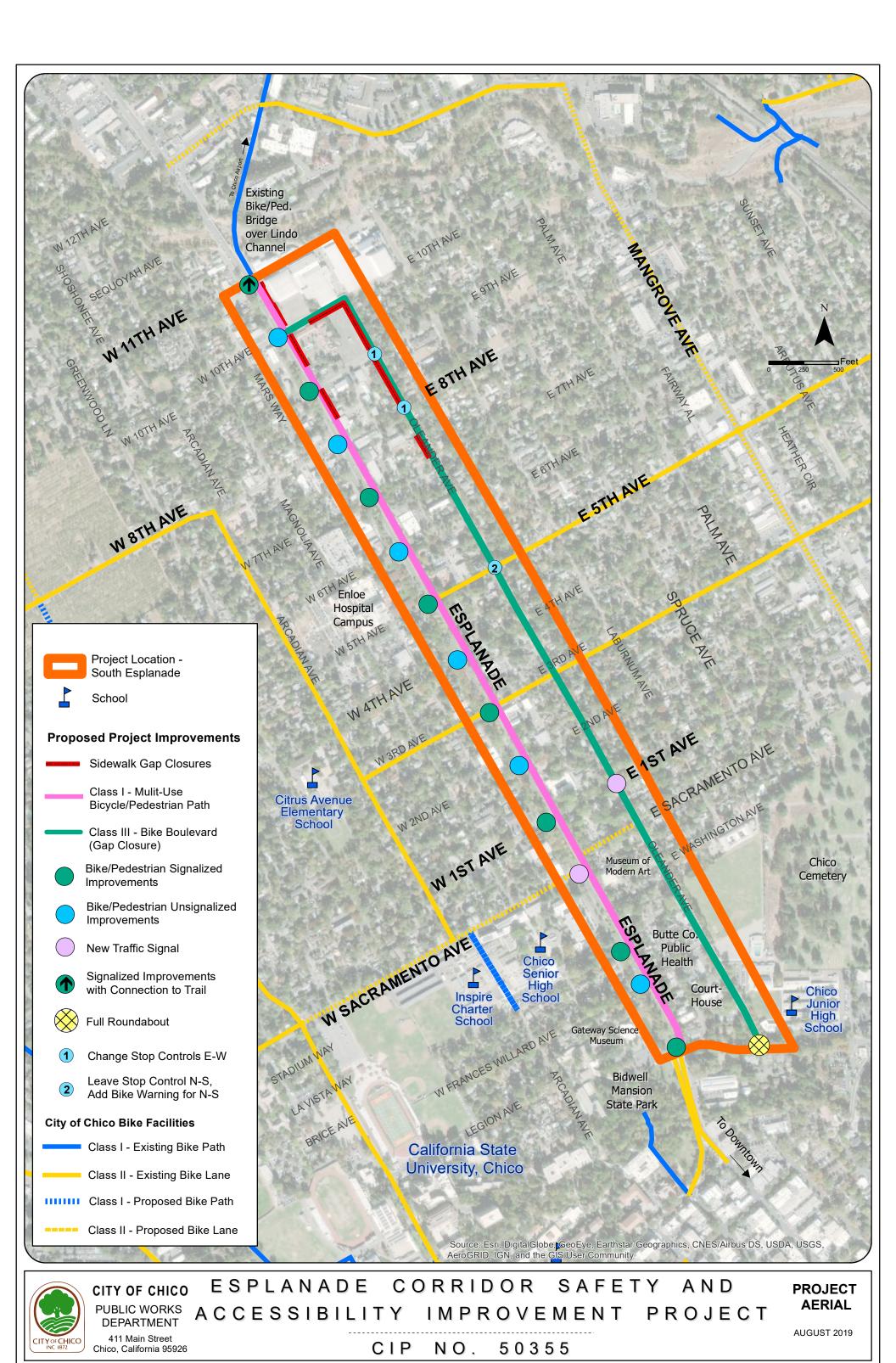


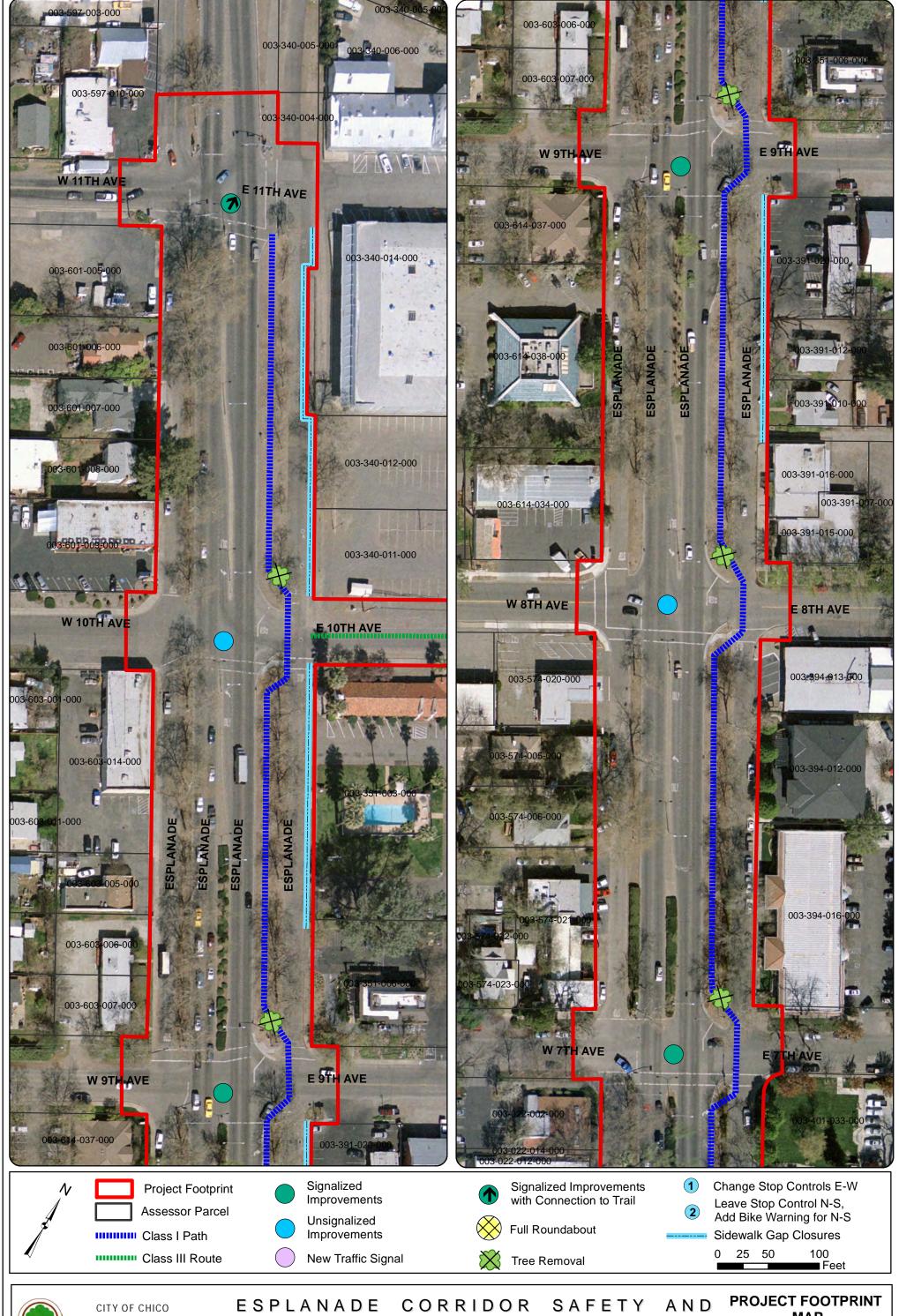
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411 Main Street Chico, California 95926 CIP NO. 50355

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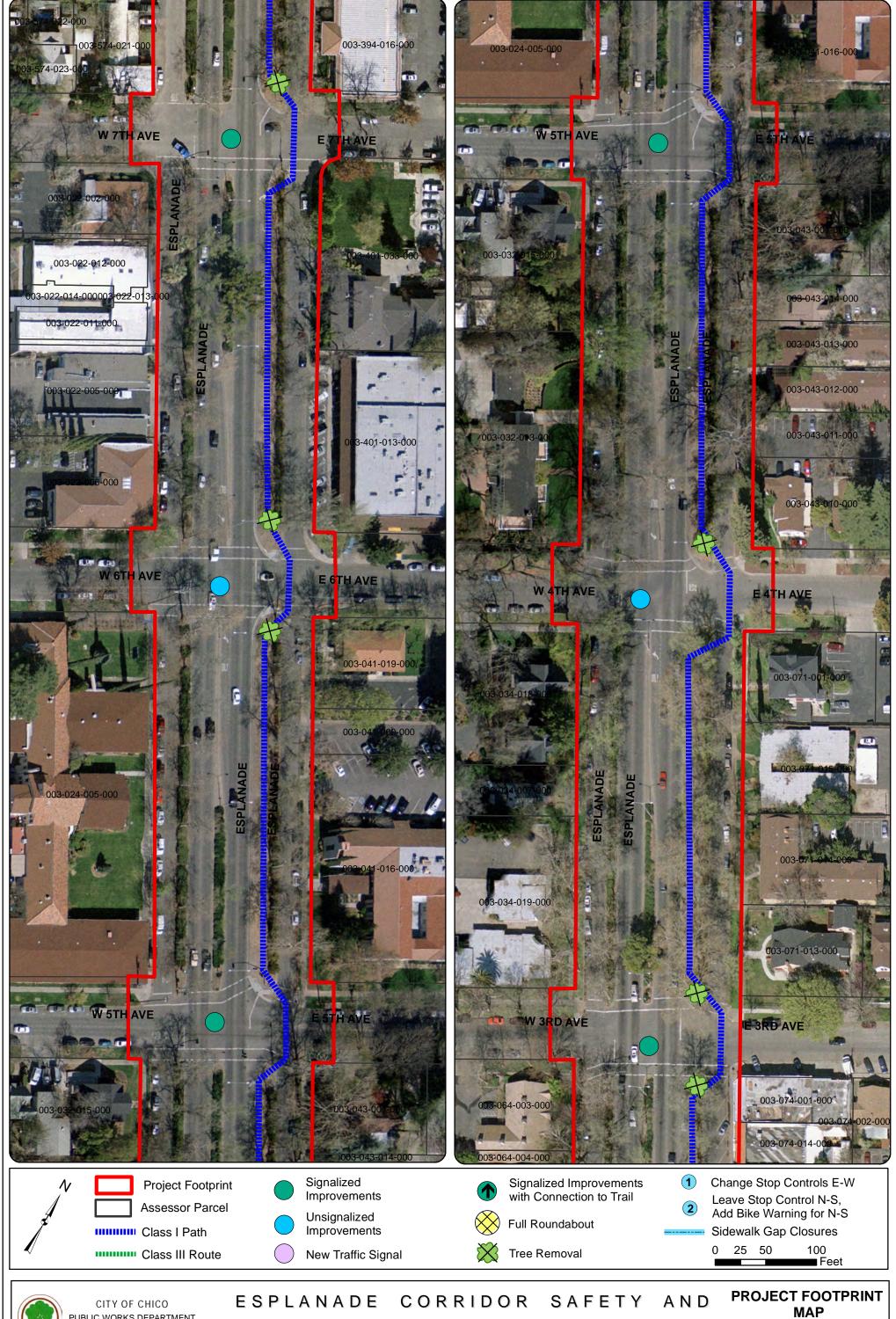




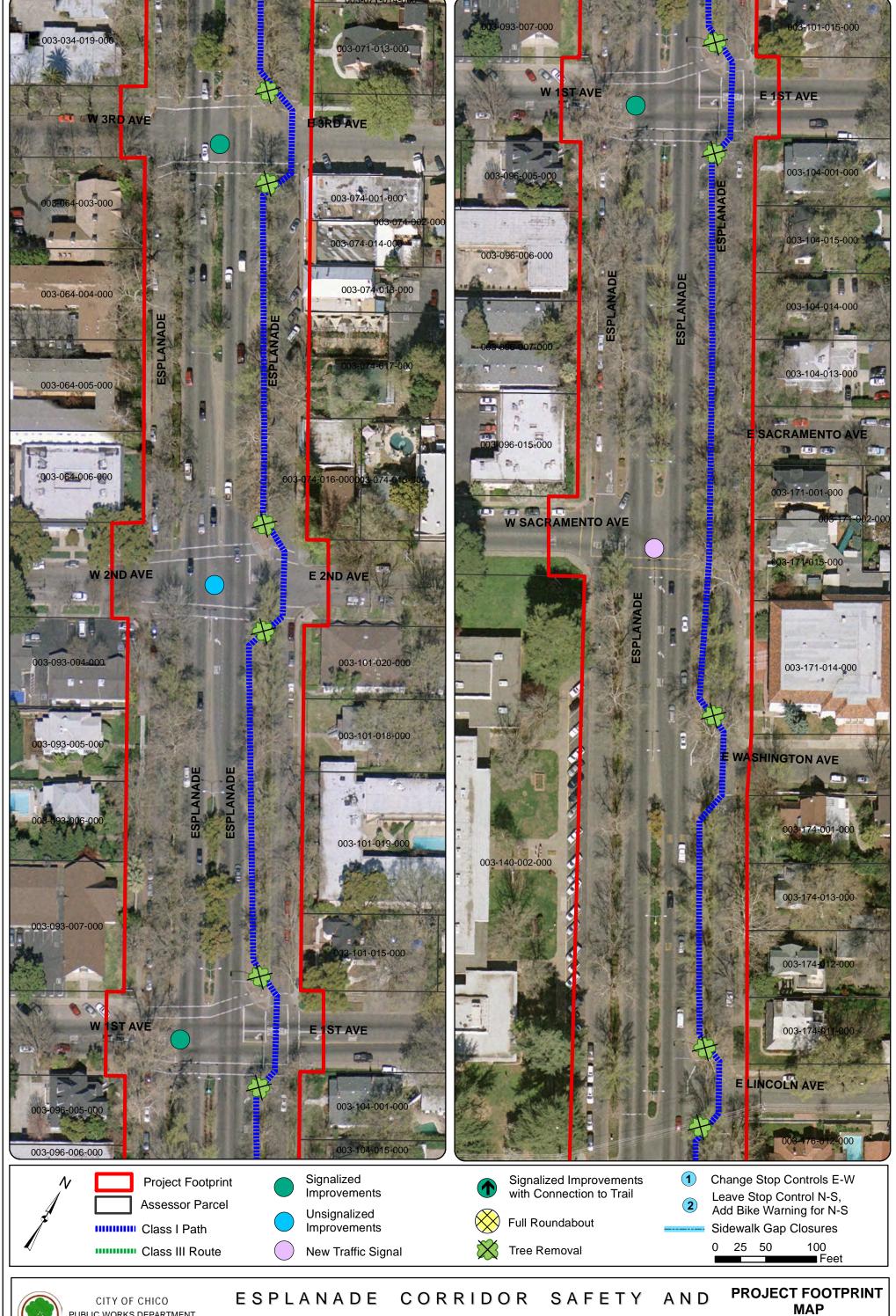
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MAP

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ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



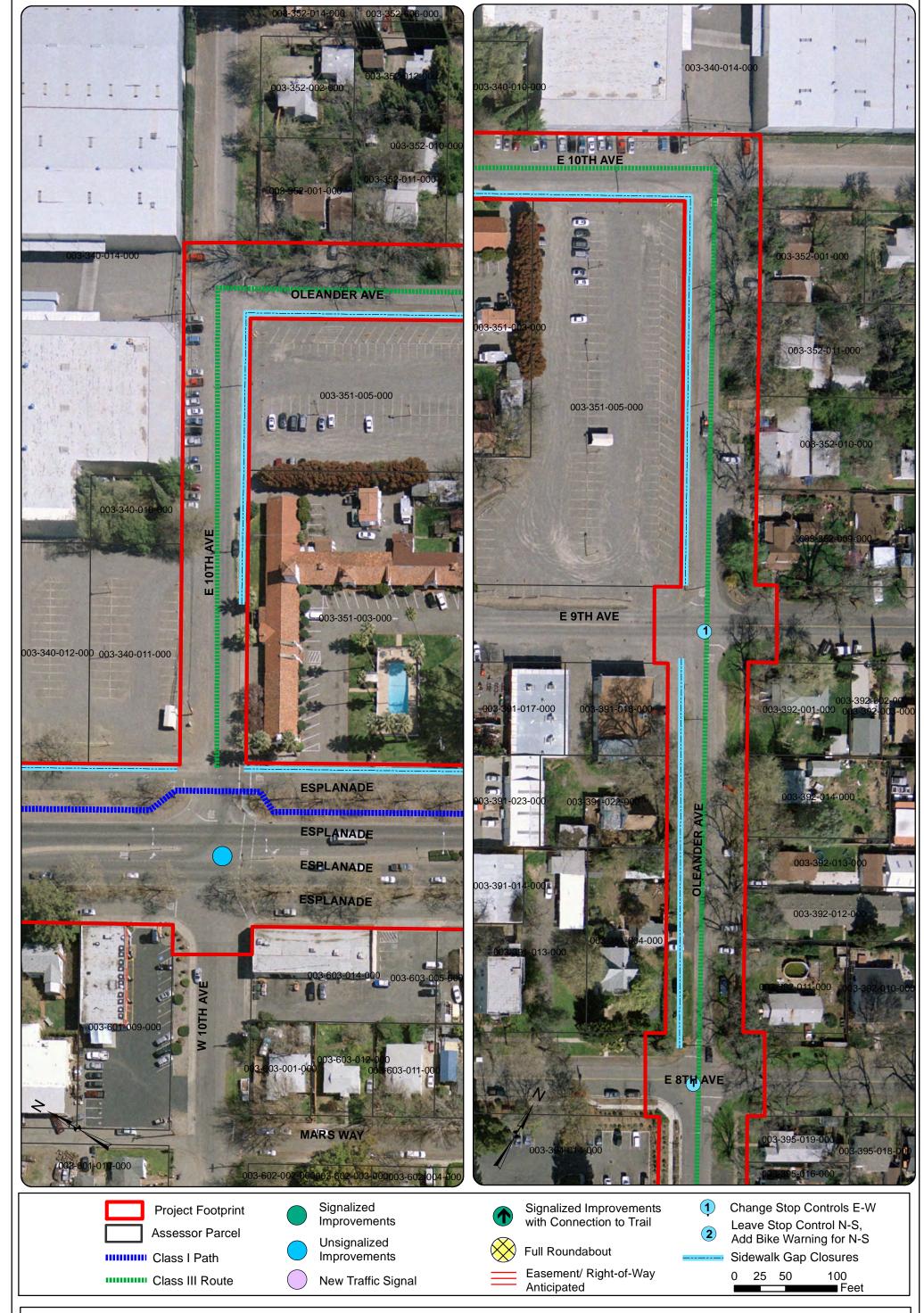
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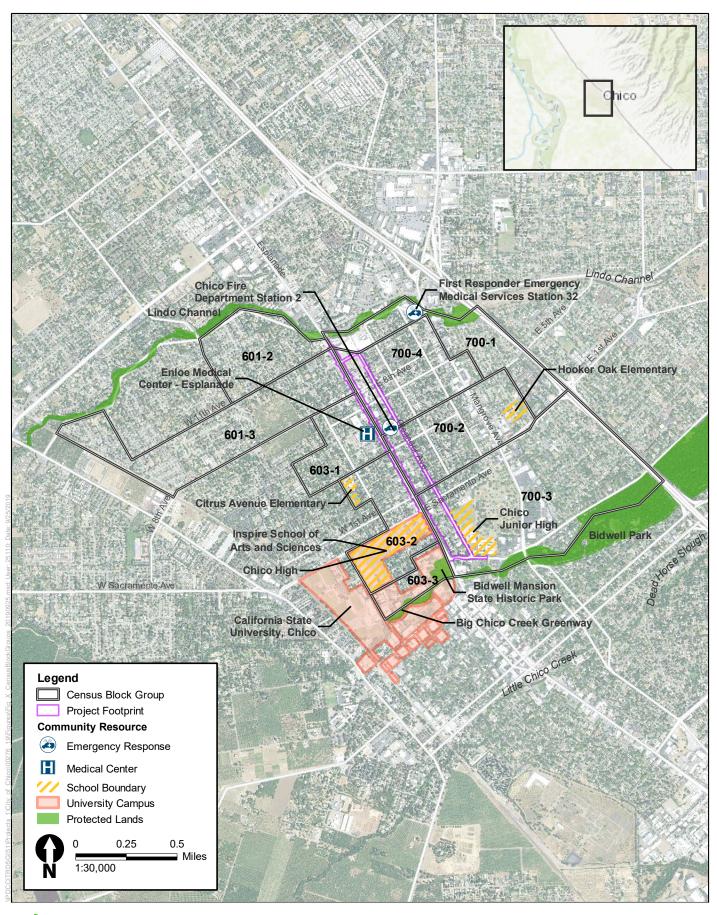
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ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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Project Study Area and U.S. Census Block Groups