



## Connecting the dots

**City bike plan update focuses on closing gaps, improving navigation**

**A**s Janine Rood looked at the intersection of East 20th Street and Highway 99 on a recent afternoon, she admitted that “even for the strong and fearless bicyclists, it’s hair-raising” to pedal in that part of the city. A cacophony of idling and revving engines, and the occasional bleating horn, punctuated her point.

Often, bicyclists just avoid areas of Chico where bike infrastructure (or crosswalks) don’t exist or they don’t feel safe, she added. That’s why she’s thrilled about the bicycle and pedestrian bridge slated for construction in 2023. It will connect Bikeway 99, which currently dead-ends in the Chico Mall parking lot, to the other side of the busy thoroughfare. From there, the bicycle route will wrap behind several restaurants, Walmart and other big-box stores before connecting to the Skyway.

This is a major gap closure for the city’s bike network. Rood focused on connectivity and “way-finding” when she was given the opportunity to dive into the city’s guiding document for those traveling on two wheels. As the former director of Chico Velo Cycling Club, Rood was a natural choice to spearhead a 2019 update of the Chico Bicycle Plan. She became a part-time city intern/bike and pedestrian coordinator about a year ago.

Last Tuesday (April 16), the approximately 50-page updated plan was approved unanimously by the Chico City Council. Overall

**Look it over:**  
Go to [tinyurl.com/2019chicobikeplan](http://tinyurl.com/2019chicobikeplan) to view the Chico Bicycle Plan.

recommendations include closing network gaps and creating more physical separations from traffic, higher-visibility crossings and paved paths. While projects are on the way, there remains a long list of unfunded connections and unmet maintenance needs.

**Rood has been cycling in Chico for 20 years.** In that time, she has developed her own methods of navigating the city’s fragmented



Janine Rood stands near where a bike and pedestrian bridge will arch over East 20th Street, connecting Bikeway 99 from where it ends in the Chico Mall parking lot (where she’s standing) to the other side of the thoroughfare. Construction should begin in 2023.

PHOTO BY ASHIAH SCHARAGA

biking network.

As she worked on the bike plan update, she examined the city’s all-too-familiar streets and bike paths daily and developed a new perspective, spotting “faster and safer” routes she didn’t even realize connected. Cyclists tend to “just go the way we’ve always gone,” she told the CN&R.

She began to envision a broader navigational plan for cyclists, and—working with city staff and considering public input—created key north-south and east-west bicycle corridors and established a way-finding plan. These corridors mark natural, logical places cyclists will want to ride, and correlate with city bike projects.

High-priority projects are those that focus on “creating and improving safe routes on lower-stress streets” and developing that wayfinding system, to encourage cyclists to move off of streets where the majority of bike-related collisions take place. This includes completing Bikeway 99 and constructing protected, separated bike lanes on both The Esplanade and Bruce Road.

This marks an important change in the bike plan, according to Brendan Ottoboni, city public works director-engineering. While the “backbone” of the network was

already in place—namely, Bikeway 99 and Bidwell Park routes—the connectivity was lacking. Now the city’s bikeways don’t come across as “a hodge-podge of random paths connected in different places.”

Wayfinding is a significant part of the update, as well, and listed among the priorities. The goal is to install different signs along the bike corridors: some at intersections that include distance, time and even route difficulty; others to reassure travelers they are headed in the right direction; and others to alert cyclists when they are near key destinations.

It isn’t practical to expect people to whip out the city bike map to navigate during a trip, Rood said, and GPS applications aren’t always trustworthy.

“The thing that could drive you completely crazy in Chico is trying to figure out what’s the best place to get to where [you] want to go,” Rood said. “With this grid/corridor system we invented, we’re going to do a huge wayfinding project once we can get funding.”

**ARC STORE**

Worthy Goods  
Timeless Boutique

GOOD AT ALL  
ARC STORES!  
[www.thearcstore.org](http://www.thearcstore.org)

CNR coupon expires 05.25.19 Excludes ARCoffee & consignments.  
Not valid with other specials. One coupon per visit.

**\$5 OFF**

any purchase of \$20 or more

**Chico**

2020 Park Ave. • 530.343.3666

**Oroville**

2745 Oro Dam Blvd E • 530.532.1272



**Ocean Forest  
Potting Soil**  
1.5 Cu ft.

Reg  
\$11.99

**\$9<sup>85</sup>**

- Smart Naturals - Ready to use
- Bring your plants to life!
- Expires May 31, 2019

**510 Esplanade • 342-7661**



**LET'S  
PLANT!**

### SPRING VEGETABLES

Visit Prestige Nursery for heirloom to hybrid tomatoes, cucumbers, summer squash, eggplant, herbs and peppers from sweet to insanely hot. Or stop by our booth at the Thursday night Farmers Market to pick out your Veggies.

Plant • Bloom • Repeat  
**Prestige Nursery**  
worktraining center  
A NON PROFIT

MON-SAT 8AM-4PM | 2270 FAIR STREET | 343-7615

