

The update was a substantial undertaking, as the plan, which is focused on developing a comprehensive bikeway network, hasn't been modified since 2012, according to Ottoboni. A consulting firm was hired in 2015, but the results were lackluster, he added, and the update was placed on hold in 2016 due to a lack of staffing that has since been remedied.

Having an updated bicycle plan is essential when applying for grants from Cal Trans' Active Transportation Program, he wrote in a staff report. This program was created specifically to encourage biking and walking and safety and mobility for non-drivers. Since 2015, the city has taken in \$25 million in state and federal grants for multimodal transportation projects. These grants typically cover the bulk of a project's cost. For example, the city received \$14.2 million in state and federal funding to build the bridge over East 20th Street. The remaining \$1.3 million of the project's cost will come from development impact fees. Also on the horizon is a largely grant-funded pedestrian bridge over Little Chico Creek, near Humboldt Avenue and East 10th Street.

While public works has made strides in getting outside funding for new bike pathways, Ottoboni said that doesn't address a key component: maintenance. Local funding is limited. Like its roadways, the city's existing bike paths are suffering—much of the network was installed decades ago. Encroaching tree roots are outlined in spray paint on popular paths, and Bidwell Park's thoroughfares—Petersen Memorial Way and South Park Drive—are especially in need of repair.

"We lack funding overall for needed maintenance," Ottoboni said.

The city is pursuing an adopt-a-trail partnership with Chico Velo, which would address some of the maintenance issues, such as waste cleanup and minor vegetation pruning, as well as alert the city to areas of concern.

Rood expressed confidence in the plan and in the cycling community, which provided feedback during the update process through several public meetings, an online survey and a working group of advocates and city staff.

"It's easy to become a bicyclist in Chico, because the community is strong," she said.

—ASHIAH SCHARAGA
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