



## City of Chico

# SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS REPORT



OCTOBER 2016



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GRUB

Butte County Air Quality Management District

Butte County Association of Governments

California Water Service Company

Public Works Department

Administrative Services Department

Fire Department

Police Department

*October 2016*

*Sustainability in Chico means maintaining a culture of stewardship to enhance our natural environment, economic interests, and quality of life for present and future generations.*



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 12, 2011, Chico’s City Council adopted an innovative and comprehensive General Plan. The new General Plan reflects the community’s commitment to building a sustainable future. Sustainability entails aligning the built environment and socioeconomic activities with nature’s constraints and opportunities. Central to this concept is meeting both present and future needs through a balance of three considerations: maintenance of a healthy and equitable society, protection of the environment, and ongoing prosperity of the local economy. These components are interdependent and equally important.

The General Plan calls for the development of indicators to gauge progress in advancing its sustainability-related policies and goals.<sup>1</sup> An indicator serves as a proxy, or representation, to gauge the status of a larger issue. The indicators included in this report have been selected because they are understandable, quantifiable, and valuable for generating community dialogue.

A starting place, or base year, has been established for each indicator to reflect the state of the indicator at a particular point in time. A base year is a point of reference to demonstrate movement toward or away from a goal over time.

To highlight recent trends and progress, one of the following ratings is applied to each indicator:

- Clear Progress**
- Moderate Performance**
- Improvement Area**

This report is divided into elements addressing three subjects: **Natural Systems and Agriculture, Built Environment, and Socioeconomics**. Each element is further refined into sections. For 2015, four indicators show clear progress, six show moderate performance, and three show need for improvement.

Clear Progress	Moderate Performance	Improvement Area
Air Quality Ag & Local Food Production Economic Development Community Participation	Open Space Public Facilities & Services Housing Circulation Waste Reduction & Recycling Arts & Culture	Bio Resources/Urban Forest Climate Change Public Safety

This report will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the Chico 2030 General Plan Annual Report or Five Year Review, which consider and measure additional topics that are closely linked with community sustainability. The Indicators Report may help direct program development, and assist with developing departmental work programs.

<sup>1</sup> The General Plan directs using groundwater levels as an indicator. Butte County has an ongoing effort to comprehensively monitor groundwater levels, including data from Cal Water for the Chico area. The 5-6 page excerpted section from Butte County’s Groundwater Status Report regarding the state of Chico’s groundwater level monitoring are provided to Council annually under a separate cover.

# NATURAL SYSTEMS & AGRICULTURE

## Goals

Protect and conserve sensitive species and habitats; Provide a healthy and robust urban forest

## Background

Chico's distinct natural setting is home to a wide variety of plants and animals, a number of unique natural communities, and highly sensitive biological and wetland resources. Protecting and restoring native habitat is the most effective method for preserving natural diversity. The City recognizes known locations of sensitive, threatened, or endangered species and requires that they be protected consistent with state and federal guidelines. The General Plan limits urban expansion in areas with sensitive biological resources and calls for City participation in regional planning efforts to protect and preserve sensitive habitat.

In addition, Chico has a healthy urban forest that provides important aesthetic benefits, energy savings from its shade canopy, areas of refuge from summer temperatures, and foraging and nesting locations for fauna. Chico's urban forest

creates a significant sense of pride and community identity. Since 1984, the City has been designated as a 'Tree City USA' by the National Arbor Day Foundation. Public Works maintains approximately 31,000 street trees and 4,000 planting sites.

## Indicator

Number of street trees planted versus the number of trees removed in the City's right-of-way.

## Trend

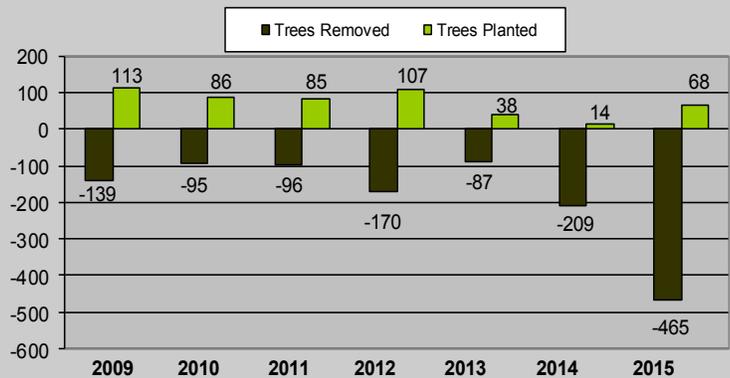
Chico's urban forest is aging, and there is a need to properly maintain and replenish it with new trees to retain the canopy's many benefits. Over the past 7 years there were more street trees removed from the right-of-way than planted, but it is important to note that there are approximately 38,000 street trees remaining in the City's right-of-way alone.

**Rating**  
**Improvement**  
**Area**

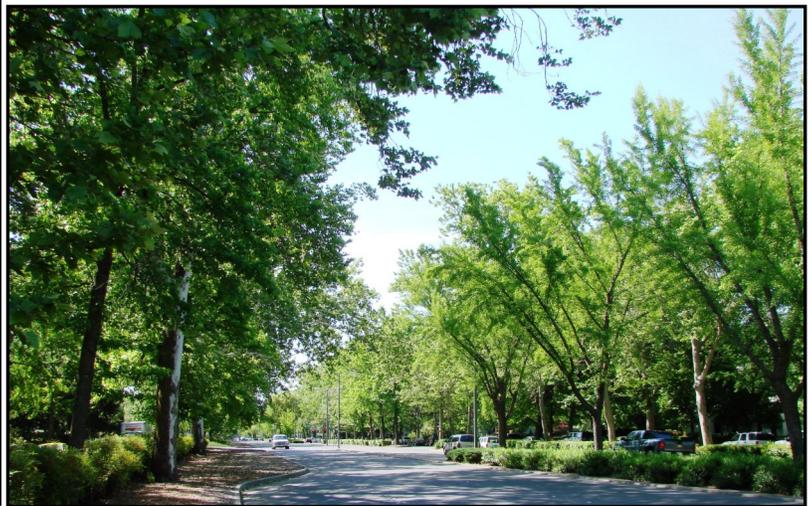
## Recent City & Community Actions

- To improve transparency with the public, the City established a new tree maintenance tracking system that is shared with the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission monthly regarding tree pruning, planting, and permitting.
- The Public Review Draft of the Butte Regional Conservation Plan is available. The Plan seeks to provide comprehensive species, wetland, and ecosystem conservation and contribute to the recovery of endangered species in Butte County.
- The following tree work was conducted in 2015: 752 service requests, formative/priority pruning on 993 trees, and traffic safety and school zone pruning on 805 trees.
- The City received its designation as 'Tree City USA' by the National Arbor Day Foundation.
- In 2015, PG&E donated \$20k to the City to plant approximately 52 trees throughout the community.
- The non-profit Chico Tree Advocates planted more than 50 trees, and raised \$11k to buy more trees, to enhance Chico's urban forest.
- In early 2016, the City planted over 100 street trees to replace previously removed trees.

## Number of Street Trees Planted vs. Removed



Source: GSD, City of Chico.



## Web Links & Other Resources

- City of Chico Street Tree Program - [www.ci.chico.ca.us/general\\_services\\_department/park\\_division/street\\_trees.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/general_services_department/park_division/street_trees.asp)
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife - [www.dfg.ca.gov/](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Sacramento) - [www.fws.gov/sacramento/](http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/)

## Goals

Improve year-round air quality; Meet state and federal air quality standards

## Background

Chico is located in the Northern Sacramento Valley Air Basin and air quality is locally regulated by the Butte County Air Quality Management District (District). Due to physiographical, meteorological, and human activities, the air quality in Chico occasionally does not meet all state and federal air quality standards. Wood burning has been identified as a major source of PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution in the area during the winter. During summer months, the City has experienced non-attainment levels of ozone pollution, though most of this pollution travels to the area from urban areas to the south and southwest. Poor air quality contributes to health problems such as asthma, lung disease, and heart disease. Air quality monitoring is performed by the District.

## Indicator

The City measures its progress in this area by tracking the number of days annually that the Chico air quality monitoring station exceeds federal ambient standards for ozone or PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

## Trend

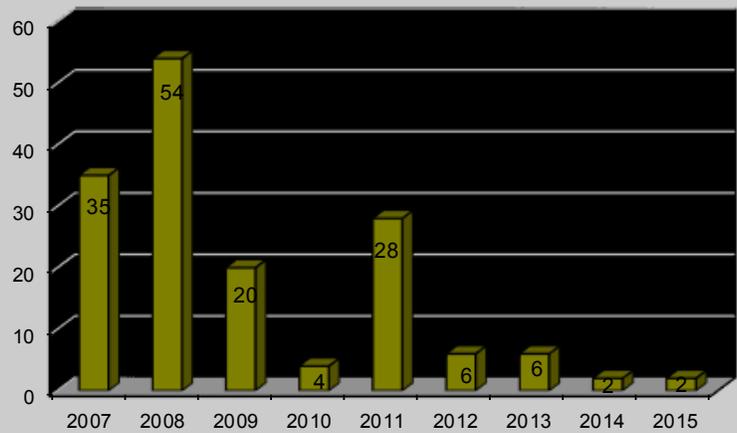
It can be difficult to identify trends for air quality measurements because of the many factors that effect them, including meteorological conditions and catastrophic events. As an example, the 2008 wildfires resulted in an unusual number of summer days where the PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone thresholds were exceeded. The trend is improving and stabilizing, especially with ozone. Based on data collected in 2012–2014, the EPA last year proposed to re-designate Chico as an “attainment” area for the federal 8-hour ozone standard! Meanwhile, the City and Air District continue to aggressively address air quality issues.

**Rating**  
Clear  
Progress

## Recent City & Community Actions

- In 2012, Butte County was designated by the EPA as nonattainment for the 2008 federal 8-hour ozone standard. In 2015, the EPA proposed a determination that the nonattainment area had attained the standard based on data collected in 2012–2014. Nonetheless, the Area’s official designation will remain non-attainment until additional Clean Air Act requirements are met.
- In Chico, there were 2 days that exceeded the Federal 24-hour average PM<sub>2.5</sub> Standard in 2015. There were no exceedances of the 8-hour ozone standard in Chico during 2015.
- The Air District continued its outreach and education efforts for the *Check Before You Light* program which encourages voluntary curtailment of wood burning during periods of forecasted poor air quality. This effort supports the City’s wood burning curtailment ordinance. During the 2015/2016 season, no advisories were issued for the first time since the program began 10 years ago!
- The final year of the 3-year *Wood Burning Device Change-out Program* is nearing completion. The program was funded by an EPA consent decree. Approximately 480 older, non-certified woodstoves in Butte County were replaced with either a cleaner burning natural gas stove, pellet stove, or EPA Certified woodstove. The program helped reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub>, hydrocarbon, and carbon monoxide emissions.

## Number of Days over Ozone or PM<sub>2.5</sub> Federal Standard



Source: Air Resources Board AQMIS website. 2008 data reflects extreme wildfire events.



## Web Links & Other Resources

- Butte County Air Quality Management District- [www.bcaqmd.org/](http://www.bcaqmd.org/)

## Goals

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions Citywide; Reduce vehicle-generated pollutants; Adapt to climate change

## Background

The City has long valued environmental stewardship. Consistent with that tradition, the City Council has made climate change and GHG emission reduction community priorities. Chico has not waited for State directives to address GHG emissions and climate change. In 2006, Chico's Mayor signed the U.S. Conference of Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, adding Chico to a group of 600 cities pledging to reduce GHG emissions. In 2008, Chico prepared an emissions inventory, which estimated the amount of heat-trapping gases that the community released to the atmosphere in the baseline year of 2005. In 2008, the Council approved a GHG emissions reduction target of 25% below 2005 levels by the year 2020. To achieve this goal, the City maintains a Climate Action Plan (CAP) that identifies actions to meet the City's GHG reduction goal.

## Indicators

The indicators are annual electricity (kWh) and natural gas (therms) use; fuel (gallons) sales; and waste (tons) generation from the 2005 base year. These macro indicators are key for determining GHG emission trends.

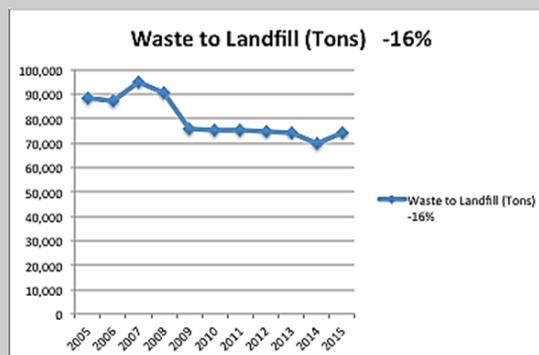
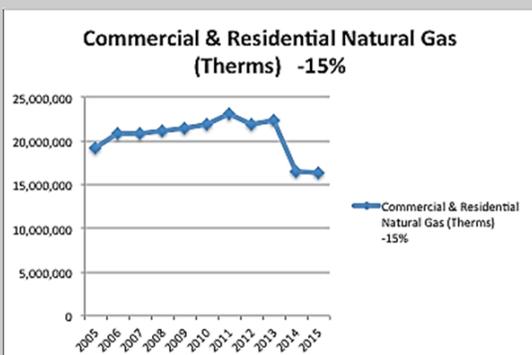
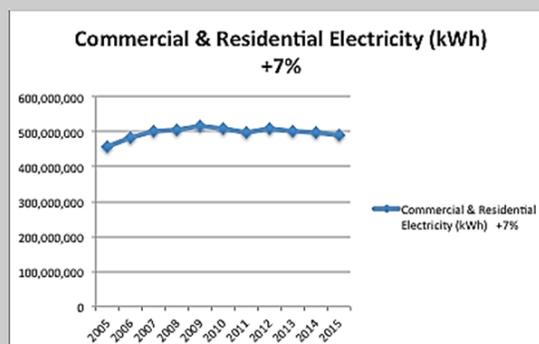
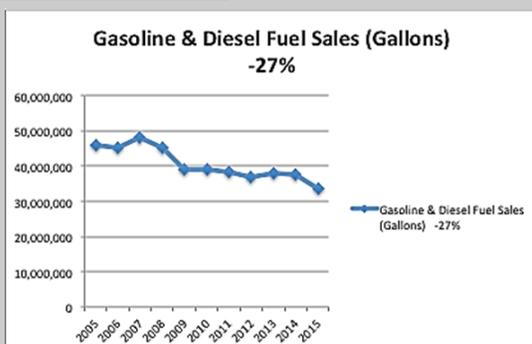
## Trend

State and local efforts have helped reduce GHG emissions. While the indicators show that electricity consumption has increased, the largest GHG emission producer identified in the CAP - Transportation - is showing a promising trend. The CAP includes monitoring and implementation of additional actions. Implementation of state mandates directing a more sustainable grid mix and new higher efficiency fuel requirements, as well as progress on the State's Cap-and-Trade program, will have a significant effect on reducing GHG emissions. Continued work by the City, the Sustainability Task Force, and community to address climate change must remain a priority.

**Rating**  
**Improvement Area**

## GHG Emission Indicators

Source: PG&E, Chico DPW, Butte County, CA State Board of Equalization



## Recent City & Community Actions

- The City launched its Sustainability website at [www.chicosustainability.org](http://www.chicosustainability.org). The site contains important information for residents and businesses interested in reducing GHG emissions and saving money.
- The Sustainability Task Force collaborated with the Chamber, and Sierra Nevada Brewery to sponsor a Sustainable Business Expo that engaged and connected area businesses with information (e.g., rebates), inspiration, and motivation to incorporate sustainable business practices. The event will run again in 2017!
- The City developed a community-wide greenhouse gas emissions inventory to serve as an annual indicator of the City's progress in reaching its GHG reduction goal.
- The Department of Public Works is developing a plan to replace all remaining City-owned street lights with LEDs.
- The City Building Division processed 895 residential and 21 commercial solar permits in 2015, up from 765 residential and 10 commercial permits in 2014.
- CUSD is proceeding with its Strategic Energy Plan, including solar power plans that will cost \$12M over 5 years.

**Web Links** Chico Sustainability Website - [www.chicosustainability.org](http://www.chicosustainability.org) PG&E Climate Smart - [www.pge.com/climatesmart/](http://www.pge.com/climatesmart/)

## Goals

Preserve agricultural resources; Support a healthy local food system

## Background

A sustainable food system is one which supports and promotes the health of individuals, communities, and the natural environment. It requires infrastructure and networks that support the life cycle of food, from production to waste recovery. It makes nutritious food available and increases food security.

Butte County is a leader in agriculture. Local producers have undertaken significant efforts to certify organic production and Chico's farmers markets are an outlet for those products and have become a vital part of the local economy. The local food system in Chico currently includes four farmers markets (two are year round), twelve community gardens, one food co-op, and many local restaurants and grocers serving or selling local food.

## Indicator

The City measures its progress in this area by tracking Electronic Balance Transfer (EBT) card (or food stamp card) sales at local farmers markets. The majority of Chico's farmers markets allow food vendors to sell eligible food products to individuals with EBT cards by setting up a central point of sale terminal that debits the amount requested by the customer in exchange for tokens that can be used to shop at the market. EBT sales at Chico's farmers markets serves as an indicator of the community's growing understanding of the benefits of buying fresh, nutritious, local products.

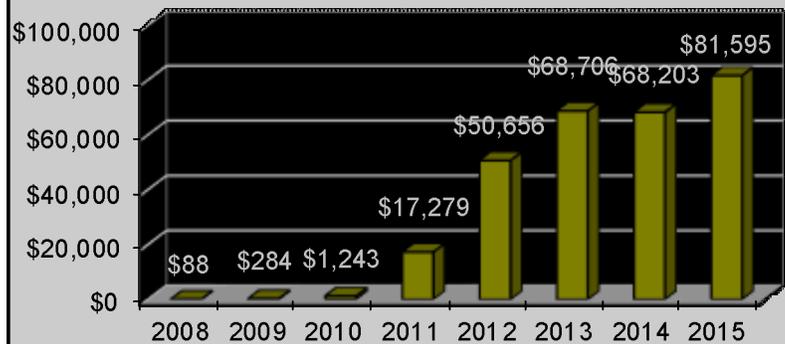
**Trend:** EBT card use at farmers markets grew quickly and continues to rise. The success is due, in part, to the CCFM accepting EBT in 2010 and the Thursday Night Market adding EBT access in 2012. A grant-funded EBT incentive program at markets, and the popularity of the markets, is providing greater access to healthy food.

**Rating**  
Clear  
Progress

## Recent City & Community Actions

- In 2015 the Saturday Farmers' Market expanded in Parking Lot #1, adding more than 20 vendor spaces and allowing for food demonstrations, educational events, and cultural celebrations.
- The CSU, Chico College of Agriculture houses *Buy Fresh Buy Local, North Valley*, an agricultural marketing program for small and medium-sized growers direct-marketing in the tri-county region. The 2015/2016 Eater's Guide to Local Food was released in summer 2015 and includes a listing of restaurants, farmers' markets, and stores where locally-grown agricultural products can be found.
- Chico's North Valley Food Hub has established itself as an online marketplace where growers can post their product inventory to sell to wholesale buyers like restaurants, grocery stores, and institutional food service customers. The sales transactions happen online through the market and then the food hub's Market Manager coordinates the logistics of product pick-up and delivery.
- Smuckers is expanding its presence in Chico, including a new facility to house its Smuckers Natural Foods grain and pasta products.
- Butte County has prepared a draft Ag Mitigation Ordinance to mitigate the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses.
- The Municipal Code has been updated to allow community gardens as a permitted use in all zoning districts.

## EBT Sales at Chico's Farmers Markets



Source: CSUC Research Foundation.



## Web Links & Other Resources

- Butte County Agricultural Department - [www.buttecounty.net/AgriculturalCommissioner.aspx](http://www.buttecounty.net/AgriculturalCommissioner.aspx)
- Certified Farmers' Market - [www.chicocertifiedfarmersmarket.com/](http://www.chicocertifiedfarmersmarket.com/)
- Thursday Night Market (DCBA) - [www.downtownchico.net/](http://www.downtownchico.net/)
- GRUB - [www.grubchico.org/](http://www.grubchico.org/)
- Chico Grange Hall - [www.chicogrango.org/](http://www.chicogrango.org/)

**Goal:** Preserve and effectively manage open space

**Background:** Chico residents enjoy a wealth of accessible public open space unparalleled in the North Valley. Open space provides habitat and movement corridors for wildlife, as well as recreational, educational, aesthetic and other benefits to the community. Open areas within and around the community are a defining characteristic of Chico. The City owns significant open space resources, which are managed for resource preservation, as well as lower impact recreational uses such as hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. Examples of City open space include Bidwell Park, Bidwell Ranch, Teichert Ponds, Lindo Channel, and the Comanche Creek Greenway. There are additional open space holdings in the area managed by resource agencies and non-profit organizations. In some cases, funding resources are inadequate for proper maintenance

and management of these lands.

**Indicator**

City-owned open space with a funded management plan.

**Trend**

The City owns significant open space, including large contiguous holdings protecting vernal pool areas and creekside greenways. While these areas are protected, much of the land has no management program, and no ongoing maintenance and management funding. General Plan Action OS-2.1.1 calls for the development of an Open Space Master Plan to catalogue the City's open space holdings, ensure that management and maintenance programs are in place, and identify long-term funding sources.

**Rating**  
Moderate  
Performance

**City-owned Open Space with a Funded Management Plan**

Open Space Areas	Acres	Status	Mngmt Plan?	Funded Activities?	Acreage w/ Funded
Bidwell Park	3621	The City funds maintenance activities annually and is constantly seeking grants and other funding opportunities to implement the programs and policies established in the Bidwell Park Master Management Plan.	Yes	Yes	3621
Foothill Park Preserve	292	The site is managed and maintained by a third party consistent with the Foothill Park Preserve Management Plan (1999). Management and monitoring was funded as mitigation for development on adjacent properties.	Yes	Yes	292
Verberna Fields Restoration Site	16	This site is located along Lindo Channel and maintained by Parks. Using grant funds, this site was transformed into a passive park with an accompanying restoration plan. While the plan lays out basic site design and steps for establishing native vegetation, it will be updated in the future with a focus on long-term maintenance.	Yes	Yes	16
Bidwell Ranch	760	A draft management plan has been developed as part of the effort to develop the site as a wetland mitigation bank. The City is awaiting progress on the Butte Regional Conservation Plan to better determine the future disposition and funding of long-term management of the property.	Yes (Draft)	No	0
Comanche Creek Greenway	20	The Comanche Creek Management Plan was approved by the BPPC in 2012. In 2015, the City secured grant funding for capital improvements. Neighbors have pledged \$17k annually for 3 years for maintenance/patrol. Management will continue as needed until funding can be identified. The Greenway will open as a park in 2016.	Yes	Yes	20
Teichert Ponds	39	This site is currently maintained for its use as a stormwater facility. A site restoration plan has been developed to address stormwater detention, recreation and education, and habitat enhancement. Funding is being sought. A bridge across Little Chico Creek and a kiosk have been constructed. As funding becomes available, the City anticipates improvements to trails on the site and removal of invasive plants.	Partial	Partial	39
Hillview Preserve	10	This property has a maintenance district used to fund maintenance, but there is no management plan.	No	Yes	0
Lindo Channel (Sandy Gulch)	129	Lindo Channel is maintained by DWR to ensure flood conveyance. Weed control, trash cleanup, and other activities are completed on an as needed basis. Management concepts are being developed for a future management plan.	No	No	0
Little Chico Creek Greenway	53	The channel is maintained by DWR to ensure flood conveyance. The City addresses homeless encampment removal, trash cleanup, and invasive plant removal occurs as needed. There is no management plan.	No	No	0
Wildwood Vernal Pool Reserve	3.5	This site is located between Wildwood Park and the Sycamore Diversion Channel, and maintenance activities are conducted on as needed basis. Foothill Associates completed the plan for this preserve in 2009.	Yes	Partial	3.5
Eaton Road Preserve	3.7	This property is a set aside for the future Eaton Rd. connection to Manzanita Ave. Maintenance is completed on an as needed basis. No long-term management plan is in place.	No	No	0
South Chico Preserve	14.9	Minimal maintenance completed on an as needed basis. No management plan in place.	No	No	0
South Deadhorse Slough	50	Minimal maintenance completed on an as needed basis. No management plan in place.	No	No	0
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>5012.1</b>				<b>3991.5</b>

**Recent City & Community Actions**

- Installed trail kiosks at 3 locations in Middle Park to enhance way-finding and education to Park users.
- The Teichert Ponds Foundation in collaboration with the Parks Division, Mosquito Abatement, and others installed a kiosk at the Ponds to provide education and enhance site management.
- Volunteers logged 25,000 hours in City parks, greenways and open spaces, removing invasive plants and trash, planting, trail work, repairing infrastructure, and conducting Park Watch.

- Using a \$1M State grant, the City is implementing key components of the Comanche Creek Management Plan, including developing trails, a bike/pedestrian bridge over the creek, and other amenities.
- Working with Chico Velo and CCC, the City completed over 230ft. of stonework and trail bed hardening at Monkey Face.
- Parks completed major trails rehab on the south side of Upper Park along Annie B's Trail.
- City and volunteers eradicated significant amounts of arrundo in Little Chico Creek between Humboldt Park and Bruce Rd.

**Web Links & Other Resources**

- Chico Parks Division - [www.chico.ca.us/general\\_services\\_department/park\\_division/home\\_page.asp](http://www.chico.ca.us/general_services_department/park_division/home_page.asp)
- Northern California Regional Land Trust - [www.landconservation.org/](http://www.landconservation.org/)
- Chico Creek Nature Center - [www.bidwellpark.org/](http://www.bidwellpark.org/)

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

**Goals**

Provide cost-effective and efficient public facilities & services; Ensure a sustainable water supply; Eliminate failing septic systems

**Background**

A fundamental responsibility of a City is to provide public facilities and services to the community. Cost-effective and efficient public services and infrastructure are vital to the overall health and well-being of a community. New development and redevelopment generates a need for expanded public facilities. In addition, existing development must be periodically retrofitted with modern services. Chico’s vision for a sustainable future includes addressing service needs while recognizing resource limitations

**Indicator A:** The City and County are working to eliminate septic systems that are the cause of nitrate hot spots that have the potential to pollute groundwater. Tracking the total annual acreage of new sewer connections in the Nitrate Action Areas will help measure the City’s success in providing sewer service.

**Trend:** Sewer mains will be extended throughout the nitrate hot spot areas by 2017. The difficulty remains getting residents to hook-up to the system. Tracking this trend will help determine if additional hook-up programs or incentives are needed.

**Indicator B:** The Tuscan aquifer is a groundwater reservoir providing municipal and agricultural water to the area. Its protection is critical. Cal Water is responsible for providing a safe and sustainable water supply. In response to new state regulations, Cal Water directed customers to use 32 percent less water than they did in 2013.

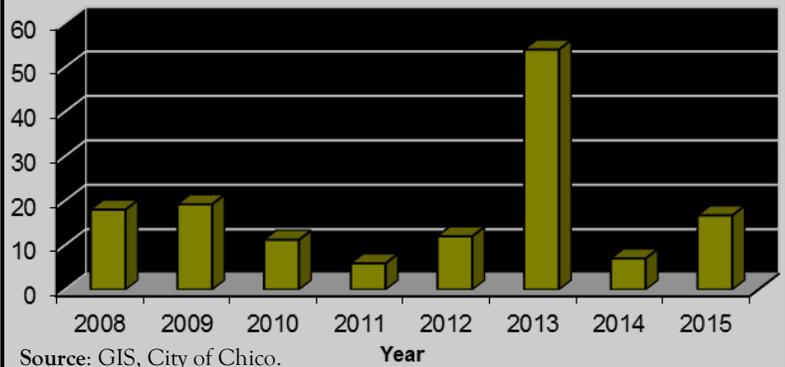
**Trend:** Annual water usage in Chico has decreased from approximately 301 GPCD in 2004 to approximately 159 GPCD in 2015!

**Rating**  
**Moderate Performance**

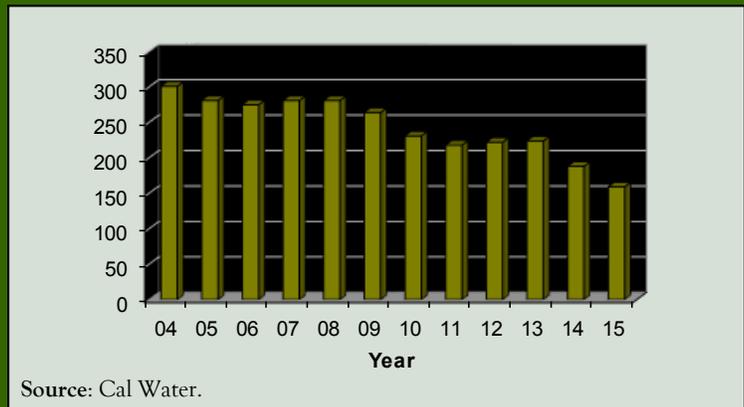
**Recent City & Community Actions**

- The City and Butte LAFCo entered into an agreement to help facilitate the connection of County parcels to city sewer in the high Nitrate Areas of Concern, particularly in the Chapman and Mulberry neighborhoods, as part of the Nitrate Compliance Program.
- The City utilized a \$717k State grant for a series of Low Impact Development demonstration projects, such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable surfaces, which reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater.
- Council adopted new landscape parkway conversion guidelines allowing for low-water use plants and high efficiency irrigation systems.
- As a response to new statewide rules, Chico water customers were asked to use 32 percent less water than they did in 2013. By the end of 2015, water usage was reduced by 29 percent from 2013 levels.
- DPW kept the community’s streets, storm drains and waterways clean by: 1) collecting 40,000 CY of leaf material during the annual collection program; 2) sweeping 27,700 curb miles and collecting 5,241 CY of material from streets; 3) servicing 93 storm water interceptors and 1,500 storm drain inlets capturing 50 CY of material; and 4) performing illegal encampment cleanups removing 400 CY of debris within City greenways.

**Indicator A—Acreage of New Sewer Hook-ups**



**Indicator B—Gallons of Water Used Per Capita Per Day**



**Web Links & Other Resources**

- Chico Sewer and Storm Drain Webpage - [www.ci.chico.ca.us/building\\_development\\_services/sewer/sewer\\_storm\\_drain.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/building_development_services/sewer/sewer_storm_drain.asp)
- City of Chico General Services Department - [www.ci.chico.ca.us/general\\_services\\_department/home\\_page.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/general_services_department/home_page.asp)
- Chico Urban Area Nitrate Compliance Program - [www.nitratecompliance.org/](http://www.nitratecompliance.org/)
- Cal Water Service Company - [www.calwater.com/index.php](http://www.calwater.com/index.php)
- Butte County Dept. of Water & Resource Conservation - [www.buttecounty.net/Water\\_and\\_Resource\\_Conservation.aspx](http://www.buttecounty.net/Water_and_Resource_Conservation.aspx)

## Goals

Increase housing opportunities for all people; Increase home-ownership; Retain capacity to achieve housing goals

## Background

Chico offers an exceptionally attractive residential environment in the North Valley. To address demand, the City strives to provide an adequate supply of housing in a range of costs to meet the needs of all income groups. The City also collaborates with local groups to address the special housing needs of the elderly and disabled, as well as provide opportunities for first-time homebuyers. These objectives are pursued within the constraints of today's housing market and financial resources.

Chico has established goals to ensure that new housing is compatible with the existing community character and is sensitive to the area's environmental conditions. The City works to increase the number of affordable housing units and implement sustainable development patterns.

## Indicator

Percentage of Chico households paying more than 50 percent of income toward rent.

## Trend

The number and proportion of rent-burdened households has hovered between 31 and 35 percent over the last eight years. The City pursues opportunities to fund affordable housing in partnership with affordable housing developers. Unemployment and increasing rents present affordability challenges, particularly for low-income renters. The decline in federal and state housing support, and the elimination of RDA, increase the importance of furthering locally-controlled actions identified in the City's Housing Element. These measures include expanding the North Valley Housing Trust, promoting employer-assisted housing, and promoting micro-housing and live/work lofts.

## Rating

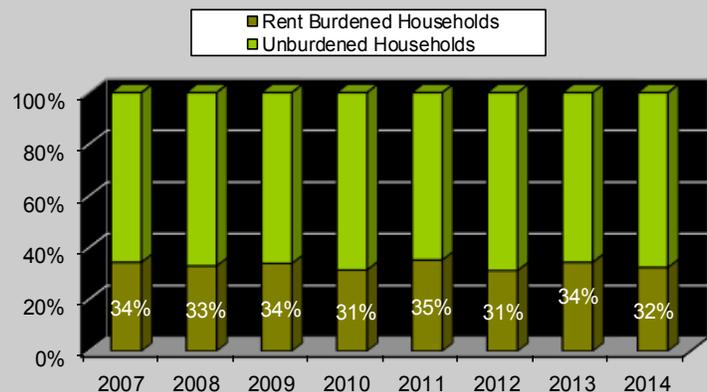
Moderate Performance



## Recent City & Community Actions

- The City adopted a 5-year HUD Consolidated Plan to guide efforts for the use of federal funds for the development and preservation of housing and community facilities.
- Habitat for Humanity removed blighted houses and began construction of 2 new homes, including solar electric systems, for low-income families.
- Thirteen low income homeowners in Nitrate Compliance Areas were assisted with grants to connect to City sewer.
- The City executed funding agreements to assist the development of a 14-unit supportive apartment complex for homeless individuals or at risk of homelessness with mental disabilities. The City-sponsored North Valley Housing Trust also awarded funding to this project.
- The City provided funding to local social service providers to assist 971 people with emergency or transitional housing.
- The Chico Housing Action Team continued its Safe Space program, providing shelter to 40 individuals unable to utilize other shelters for 50 nights over the winter months.

## Percent of Households Paying >50% of Income Toward Rent



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey.



## Web Links & Other Resources

- City of Chico Housing Office - [www.ci.chico.ca.us/housing\\_neighborhood\\_services/housing/housing.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/housing_neighborhood_services/housing/housing.asp)
- Housing Authority of Butte County - [www.butte-housing.com/](http://www.butte-housing.com/)
- Community Housing Improvement Program - [www.chiphousing.org/](http://www.chiphousing.org/)
- Habitat for Humanity (Butte County) - [www.buttehabitat.org/](http://www.buttehabitat.org/)
- Community Action Agency of Butte County - [www.buttecaa.com/](http://www.buttecaa.com/)

**Goals**

Reduce the use of single-occupant motor vehicles; Ensure safe and efficient movement of people and goods; Increase bicycle and pedestrian access; Support effective and affordable public transportation

**Background**

Using transportation other than driving can be good for our health, budgets, and the environment. Transportation options include taking the bus, carpooling, bicycling and walking. The City plays an important role in creating corridors that are safe and accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists, and promoting alternative transportation.

The City’s 2008 greenhouse gas emissions inventory found that most of the community’s greenhouse gas emissions are transportation related. The City seeks to establish and enhance its integrated, multimodal transportation network to increase travel mode choice, improve goods movement, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and limit capital infrastructure costs.

**Indicator A:** Miles of new bikeways City-wide.

**Trend:** The SR99 Bikeway Project provided a boon for the City’s bikeway system. Chico has been successful in procuring grant monies, but grants do not provide a reliable funding source as can be seen from the data for 2012, 2014 and 2015. Finalizing the Bike Master Plan, identifying new funding sources, and incorporating multi-modal infrastructure into capital projects will expand and improve the bikeway system.

**Indicator B:** Total number of B-Line riders annually.

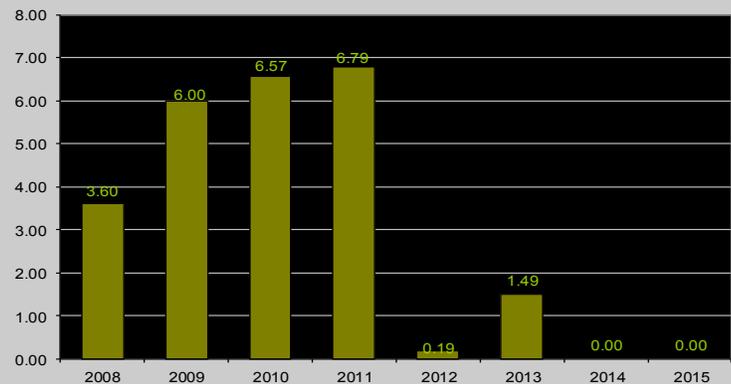
**Trend:** B-Line ridership dropped over several years, but has shown a steady rebound over the past four years. BCAG is investing resources into promoting its use and enhancing service (e.g., smart phone apps, improved routes, increased headways), which will be critical to continued ridership increases.

**Rating**  
Moderate  
Performance

**Recent City & Community Actions**

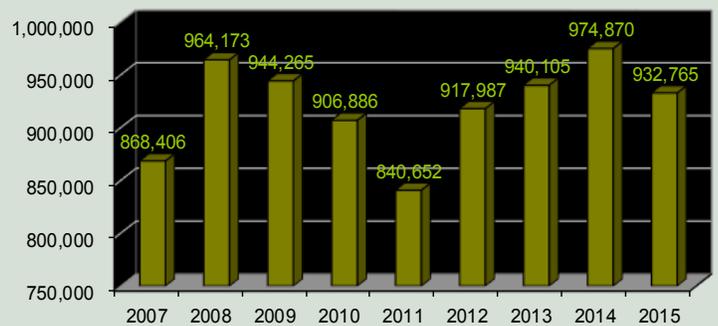
- The City is updating its Bicycle Master Plan to promote bicycling, identify routes and standards to enhance movement and safety, and qualify for funding.
- BCAG adopted the Butte County Transit and Non-Motorized Plan, which focuses on improving transportation networks for people who walk, bike, or take public transit in Butte County.
- Caltrans installed a stoplight at the busy pedestrian crossing on Nord Avenue to improve safety for students commuting to Chico State.
- BCAG submitted a grant proposal to prepare an EV fueling station siting analysis for Butte County. Preparation of the study would support funding opportunities for EV infrastructure city-wide.
- The City is utilizing a \$1M grant to construct the Comanche Creek Greenway Plan, which includes new bike/pedestrian facilities, including an important bike bridge connection over the creek.
- The City is preparing the Esplanade Corridor Safety and Accessibility Study to address safety and operational concerns for all modes of transportation between Memorial Way and 11th Avenue.
- A bike/pedestrian citizen committee has been reconstituted, which includes City and Chico State staff, local bike and ADA advocates, and others to promote multi-modal opportunities city-wide.

**Indicator A—Miles of New Bikeways**



Source: Engineering Dept., City of Chico.

**Indicator B—Annual B-Line Ridership**



Source: BCAG.

**Web Links & Other Resources**

- Chico Traffic Engineering Division - [www.ci.chico.ca.us/building\\_development\\_services/traffic/traffic\\_engineering.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/building_development_services/traffic/traffic_engineering.asp)
- BCAG’s B-Line - [www.blinetransit.com/](http://www.blinetransit.com/)
- Butte Bike Coalition - [www.buttebicyclecoalition.org/](http://www.buttebicyclecoalition.org/)
- Chico Velo Cycling Club - [www.chicovelo.org/main/](http://www.chicovelo.org/main/)

## Goals

Provide solid waste collection services that meet or exceed state requirements for source reduction, diversion, and recycling

## Background

Living produces waste materials. The earth's resources are finite, so reducing waste by limiting consumption of natural resources and by recycling are priorities for the City. Through contracts with two waste-hauling companies, the City provides solid waste collection and disposal, as well as recycling services to the community. In addition, the City runs a popular street side leaf pick-up program from mid-October through mid-January of each year. Green yard waste is disposed of at the City's Compost Facility near the Chico Municipal Airport. Finally, local residents are able to recycle and properly dispose of household hazardous waste at the Butte Regional Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility located near the Chico Municipal Airport. These services combined help the City meet or exceed state requirements for source reduction, diversion, and recycling.

**Indicator A:** Annual amount of waste disposed at the Neal Road Waste and Recycling Facility.

**Trend:** Progress continues to be made in the areas of source reduction, diversion, and recycling. There are real opportunities to further enhance waste reduction and recycling in Chico, which will be pursued under a new waste franchise agreement.

**Indicator B:** Annual amount of waste disposed per capita per day.

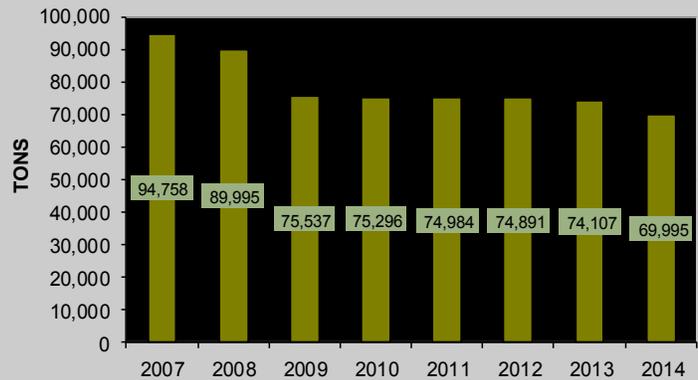
**Trend:** Progress in this area has been good, but there are ample opportunities through education and enhanced services to further reduce per capita waste disposal.

**Rating**  
Moderate  
Performance

## Recent City & Community Actions

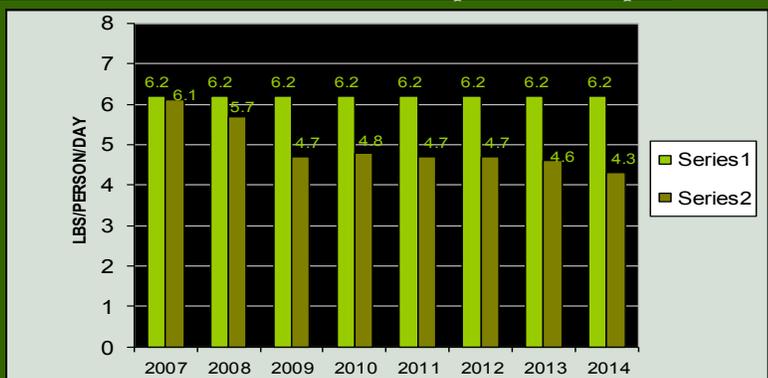
- Butte County approved a solid waste franchise zone system for residential solid waste collection for the unincorporated areas of the County, including portions surrounding Chico. The new system was implemented in 2015 and establishes new recycling zones that will reduce the number of solid waste trucks traveling residential streets.
- Beginning in January 2015, grocery stores and other large retailers who carry a full line of groceries can no longer provide single-use plastic bags upon carryout, and must charge a minimum of 10 cents per paper bag used.
- The City's consultant, R3, continues to evaluate options for a solid waste franchise system, which will be considered by Council in 2016.
- AB 1826 became law in October 2014, and requires businesses and multi-family complexes (5 or more units) to recycle their organic waste, including food waste, starting April 2016. The City has been working closely with Butte County, other jurisdictions, and North State Rendering to come up with a plan to meet the new organics recycling requirements.

## Indicator A—Amount of Waste Disposed Annually



Source: City of Chico, GSD.

## Indicator B—Amount of Waste Disposed Per Capita



Source: Chico, GSD.

## Web Links & Other Resources

- Chico GSD/Solid Waste and Recycling - [www.chico.ca.us/general\\_services\\_department/solid\\_waste\\_and\\_recycling/solid\\_waste\\_and\\_recycling.asp](http://www.chico.ca.us/general_services_department/solid_waste_and_recycling/solid_waste_and_recycling.asp)
- Waste Management (Chico) - [www.northvalley.wm.com/chico.asp](http://www.northvalley.wm.com/chico.asp)
- Recology (Butte Colusa Counties) - [www.recolgybuttecolusa.com/](http://www.recolgybuttecolusa.com/)
- Neal Road Landfill - [www.buttecounty.net/Public Works/Divisions/Solid Waste/Neal Road Recycling and Waste Facility.aspx](http://www.buttecounty.net/Public Works/Divisions/Solid Waste/Neal Road Recycling and Waste Facility.aspx)

# SOCIOECONOMICS

**Goals**

Support a vibrant and diverse economy; Enhance regional tourism opportunities

**Background**

Economic development efforts are meant to improve and maintain economic vitality. The City’s role is to foster a positive climate for economic development, ensure the readiness of physical conditions to support development, target public investments to support local prosperity, create partnerships within the region to help attract investment, and ensure a quality of life that supports the local economy. Chico offers a range of business opportunities in industry, retail, and tourism. Export businesses compete successfully in global markets with many of these ventures having grown out of a connection with CSU, Chico and relying on the skilled workforce from the University and Butte College. Chico is also a major retail center in the North State with national retailers serving the region, and a thriving Downtown creating a vibrant commercial center. The community also serves as a tourism destination focused around outdoor education and recreation, agriculture, wildlife and natural resources, and arts and culture.

**Indicator A:** Annual sales tax revenue City-wide.

**Trend:** City-wide sales tax revenue trended consistent with the global economic recession. Data reflects that the economy hit rock bottom, and then steady growth in sales tax revenue. Last year, sales tax revenue was up over \$5M from the \$14.2M low generated in the 2007/2008 fiscal year. This is good news for the community and the City’s fiscal health.

**Indicator B:** Annual sales tax revenue for Downtown.

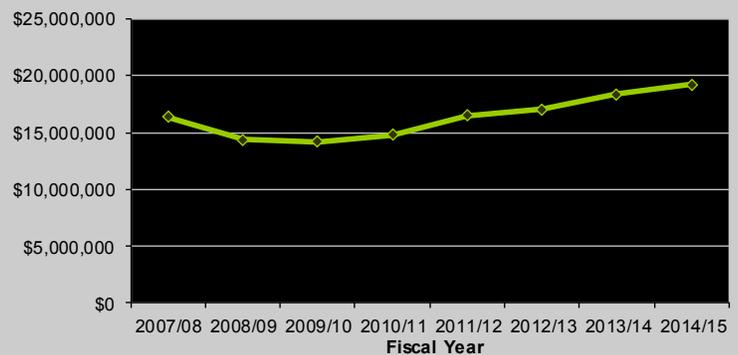
**Trend:** The upturn in sales tax revenue for Downtown started a year earlier than city-wide, and tax revenue over the past 6 years continues to grow nearing \$1.2M last year! This is a phenomenal trend for Downtown businesses.

**Rating**  
**Clear**  
**Progress**

**Recent City & Community Actions**

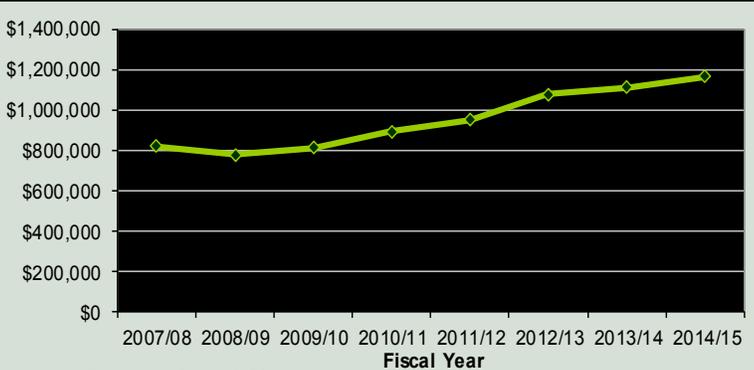
- According to Bureau of Labor statistics, the unemployment rate for Chico was 6.4% in February 2016 compared to 7.9% in February 2015. The unemployment rate in Chico peaked in January 2011 at 15.2% and is now 8.8 percentage points lower.
- Team Chico was honored with the California League of Cities’ most prestigious award - The Helen Putnam Award for Excellence for Community Services and Economic Development.
- The City is implementing a \$400k EPA grant to inventory and assess brownfield sites with the greatest potential to lead to redevelopment and business expansion.
- In 2015, Klean Kanteen consolidated its operations into one large facility at the former Tile City location off the Skyway.
- The City is hiring an airport manager in 2016 to promote economic growth at the airport.
- In 2015, Chico’s Economic Index reached 100! Based on five measures (sales tax, building permits, housing, TOT, and employment), Chico reached this pre-recession level for the first time since 2007.
- The Building Division has expanded its “on-line” permitting system, saving time and money for local contractors.
- The Downtown Chico Business Association (DCBA) continues the Downtown Ambassador Program and the Jesus Center Clean-Up Brigade enhancing cleanliness and safety in the Downtown corridor.

**Indicator A—Annual Sales Tax Revenue**



Source: Finance, City of Chico.

**Indicator B—Annual Sales Tax Revenue for Downtown**



Source: Finance, City of Chico.

**Web Links & Other Resources**

- City ED webpage - [www.chicoeconomicdevelopment.com/](http://www.chicoeconomicdevelopment.com/)
- Chico Chamber of Commerce - [www.chicochamber.com/](http://www.chicochamber.com/)
- Downtown Chico Business Association - [www.downtownchico.net/](http://www.downtownchico.net/)
- Center for Economic Development - [www.cedcal.com/welcome/](http://www.cedcal.com/welcome/)
- 3 Core - [www.3coreedc.org/](http://www.3coreedc.org/)
- Chico Economic Planning Corporation - [www.cepc.com/](http://www.cepc.com/)

**Goals**

Ensure safe neighborhoods; Reduce crime; Provide effective and efficient fire protection

**Background**

Generally, Chico is a safe and healthy city. Maintaining a safe and secure environment is one of the highest priorities for the community. To ensure that Chico neighborhoods remain safe places to live, the City strives to reduce crime and provide efficient and timely fire fighting capacity. A critical issue for the future is finding a balance between the community’s desire for a high level of public safety service and the City’s limited fiscal resources to provide a full range of municipal services.

**Indicator A:** Number of Part 1 crimes per 1,000 population versus number of sworn officers per 1,000 population.

**Trend:** The data reflects a problematic trend for law enforcement in Chico. The City’s population grows as does the number of Part 1 crimes (e.g., homicide, sexual assault, robbery, etc.) while the number of sworn officers per 1,000 population is steadily dropping and remains below the average ratio for other similar sized western cities. Most sworn personnel have been reassigned to street patrol operations, except detectives, forcing the elimination of important pro-active units.

**Indicator B:** Chico Fire Department engine call to at scene response time at the 90th percentile.

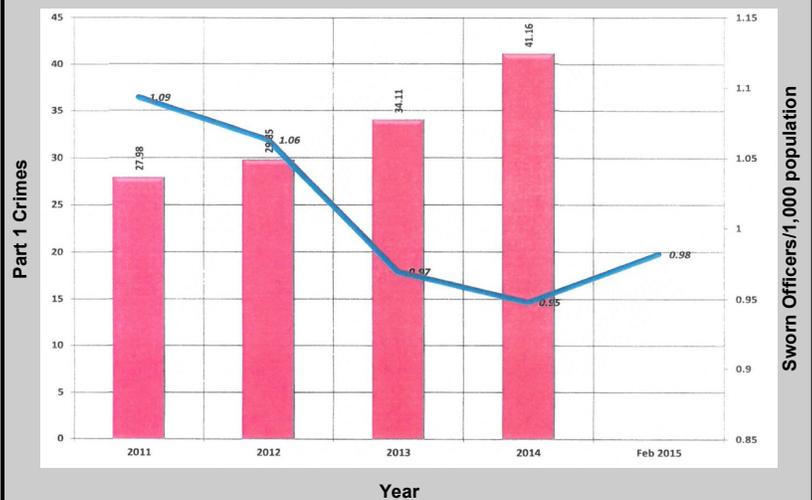
**Trend:** Call to at scene response time has shown a consistent trend the past 4 years, however, the Department strives for a five minute thirty second response time at the 90th percentile. The Department utilizes computer modeling to analyze station locations, staffing, and company placement to maintain and enhance response times and reliability.

Rating  
Improvement  
Area

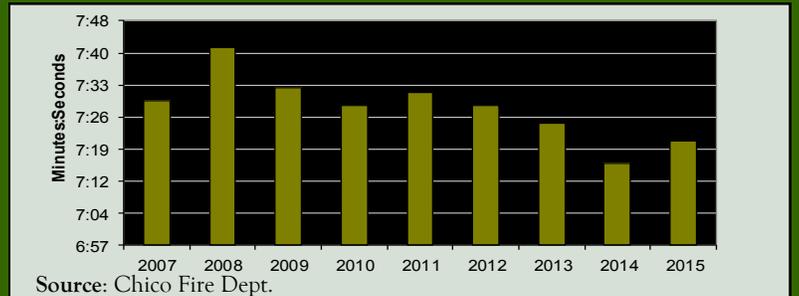
**Recent City & Community Actions**

- Chico Fire will get 3 new fire engines in 2016.
- Chico Fire’s new tiller truck is more maneuverable and faster to set up than the old ladder truck, greatly increasing fire-fighting capability.
- Chico Fire received and/or administered over \$3.5 million in grants this past year.
- Chico Fire continued its focus on Community Risk Reduction ~ a significant philosophical shift from reactionary fire protection to a proactive, forward-looking fire and disaster response service model.
- A 12-person Fire Investigation Team responsible for determining origin, cause, and circumstances of Chico fires was established in 2016.
- Under new Chief O’Brien, Chico PD instituted a major re-organization that focuses on community-oriented policing.
- Team Chico and Chico PD hosted meet-and-greet community safety meetings for businesses and property owners throughout the City to increase communication and awareness.
- Chico PD launched *Next Door*, a virtual Neighborhood Watch social media program.
- Chico PD evaluated several Body Worn Cameras systems, and is moving forward with the program in 2016.
- Council adopted new or amended existing regulations related to local control of alcohol sales, use of waterways and public spaces, and the City’s noise and unruly events ordinances.

**Indicator A—Part 1 Crimes vs. Sworn Officers**



**Indicator B—Response Times at the 90th Percentile**



**Web Links & Other Resources**

- Chico Fire Department - [www.ci.chico.ca.us/fire/home\\_page.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/fire/home_page.asp)
- Chico Police Department - [www.ci.chico.ca.us/police/home\\_page.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/police/home_page.asp)

**Goals**

Support public art and expand its role in providing quality of life and economic vitality; Promote and expand participation in cultural activities and special events

**Background**

Chico is a culturally rich community with an arts industry that is a growing contributor to the local economy and quality of life. The City seeks to increase public access to art and culture, heighten awareness of existing cultural resources in the community, and broaden opportunities for local artists and performers.

Landmarks and public art (street murals, sculptures, etc.) provide focus and structure within the City and give greater meaning to the urban experience. One of the goals of the General Plan is to expand the City's role in enhancing cultural opportunities. Visitors are drawn to the area to enjoy the rural scenery, arts and cultural activities, recreation, and special events.

There is an opportunity to build upon existing tourist attractions.

**Indicator**

The City measures its progress in this area by tracking annual transient occupancy tax, or TOT, which is a reflection of the community's draw as an arts and culture destination (e.g., art shows, special events, sports, recreation, etc.).

**Trend**

TOT is a reflection of many factors, and the recession likely had a greater impact on the past downturn than anything else. The last 5 year's steady increase in TOT is promising. Growing popularity of Chico's numerous events, and the addition of new ones, bodes well for the Chico's growing identity as an arts and culture destination. The loss of City staff and funding dedicated to promoting the arts was difficult, but a new paradigm moving forward looks promising.

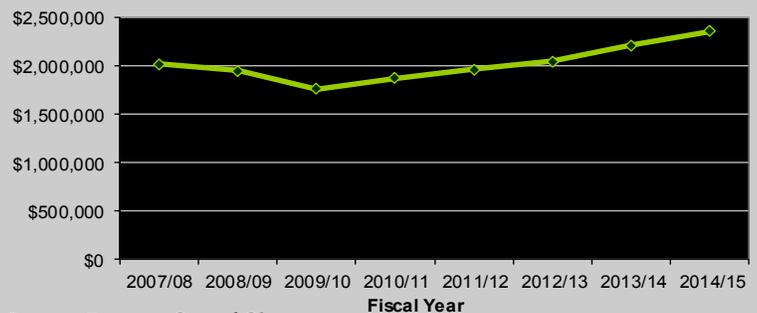
**Rating**  
Moderate  
Performance

**Recent City & Community Actions**

- Major renovations took place at the iconic Chico Veterans Memorial Hall on Esplanade, which is now home to the Museum of Northern California Arts (MONCA).
- The Chico Arts Foundation was developed to serve as the funding arm of the City's Arts Commission.
- Chico Velo dedicated a cycling-inspired art piece in honor of Ed McLaughlin entitled "Decide and Ride" in Lower Bidwell Park.
- The Arts Commission has been reconstituted and will meet 4 times a year as an advisory body to the Council on aesthetic treatments, memorials, gifts, and tourism related items.
- The 2,600s.f. Floral Avenue Arts Center was opened and will be home to the Children's Choir of Chico and other arts organizations.
- *Friends of the Arts-Butte County* was honored at the State Capitol for its innovative community work through Artoberfest and Chico Palio.
- Much to the community's delight, John Pugh re-created his mural "Academe" (pictured below) on the new CSUC Arts and Humanities Building.



**Annual Transient Occupancy Tax**



Source: Finance, City of Chico.



**Web Links & Other Resources**

- City Arts Program - [www.ci.chico.ca.us/arts\\_commission/home\\_page.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/arts_commission/home_page.asp)
- Artoberfest - [www.artoberfest.org/](http://www.artoberfest.org/)
- Chico Art Center - [www.chicoartcenter.com/](http://www.chicoartcenter.com/)
- Mechoopda Indian Tribe - [www.mechoopda-nsn.gov/](http://www.mechoopda-nsn.gov/)
- Downtown Chico Business Association - [www.downtownchico.net/](http://www.downtownchico.net/)
- Chico Museum - [www.chicomuseum.org/](http://www.chicomuseum.org/)

**Goals**

Increase community participation in addressing local issues and needs

**Background**

Active community participation is critical to community success. It engages the community’s special talents and interests and empowers its citizenry. In addition, active citizens tend to be informed citizens, and local government performs best with an informed community. The City supports community participation by welcoming it, creating valuable roles for residents to play, actively reaching out to build partnerships, and creating and supporting meaningful volunteer opportunities. In addition, the community has countless service organizations, business groups, and non-profits that volunteer tens of thousands of hours to help others, address local needs, and improve the community.

**Indicator**

The City measures its progress in this area by tracking participation (in volunteer hours) in the City-sponsored Make a Difference Day and Earth Day events.

**Trend**

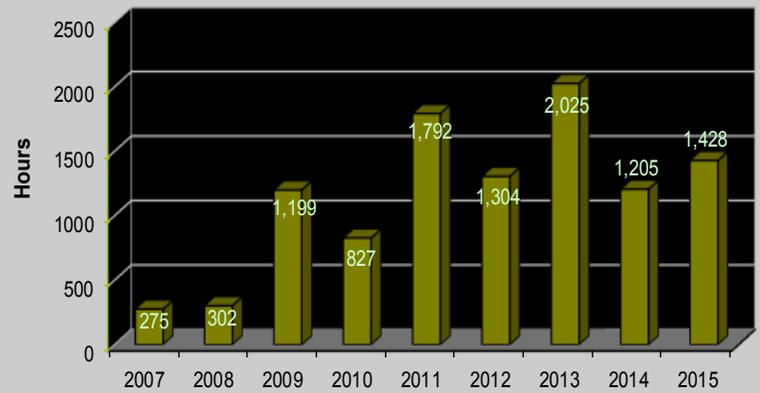
Quantifying volunteer hours and community participation in local decision-making for the betterment of the City is an impossibility. However, the result of this interest and passion can be seen everyday throughout the community. Harnessing that energy is critical, and the City’s commitment to a volunteer coordinator has helped connect residents, organizations, and businesses to opportunities to make a difference. The increase in volunteer participation in the two City-sponsored volunteer events (as well as total “tracked” volunteer hours in the Park) over the past 9 years is a direct reflection of the community’s commitment to be actively involved in improving Chico.

**Rating**  
Clear  
Progress

**Recent City & Community Actions**

- In 2015, Park Watch and other community volunteers contributed 24,633 hours of work to Bidwell Park and other Chico Greenways. Tasks included litter cleanup, weed removal, trail work, planting of natives, and painting.
- Chico Velo volunteers and the California Conservation Corps completed over 230 feet of stone work and trail bed hardening on the Monkey Face trail.
- Friends of Bidwell Park supervised over 900 hours of volunteer invasive plant and trash removal in Bidwell Park.
- The local California Native Plant Society chapter coordinated 1,074 hours of volunteer invasive plant and trash removal mostly along Little Chico Creek.
- A new Park Services Coordinator was hired in early 2015!
- The Alliance for Workforce Development contributed over \$150k of in-kind service to Bidwell Park removing and reducing fire fuels.
- The *Clean and Safe Chico* program continues its successful goodwill ambassadors program to provide information and a street pastors program for ministering to the homeless in Downtown.

**Participation in Chico’s Make a Difference Day Events**



Source: DPW, City of Chico.



**Web Links & Other Resources**

- City of Chico Volunteer Program - [www.ci.chico.ca.us/general\\_services\\_department/park\\_division/volunteering.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/general_services_department/park_division/volunteering.asp)
- Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE) - [www.aschico.com/cave](http://www.aschico.com/cave)
- Friends of Bidwell Park - [www.friendsofbidwellpark.org/](http://www.friendsofbidwellpark.org/)