

Cityscape: February 2018

Headline: Roundabout Construction and New Public Works Director

In June 2014, the Healdsburg City Council approved the Central Healdsburg Avenue Plan (CHAP), a public vision and policy document that established a set of guiding principles and design frameworks for the development of public infrastructure on Healdsburg Avenue extending north from the U.S. 101/Central Healdsburg Avenue exit to the five-way intersection of Healdsburg Avenue, Mill Street, and Vine Street.

Improving the five-way intersection with a roundabout -- considered by traffic engineers to be safer and more efficient to vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians -- rose to the top of the improvements list. Here are some convincing statistics from the Federal Highway Administration Office of Safety (FHWA).

Roundabout Safety Statistics

In comparison to other types of traffic intersections, roundabouts:

- Cut fatal collisions by more than 90 percent
- Reduce injury collisions from 60 to 87 percent
- Reduce total collisions by 35 percent

The City -- along with its contractor Bay Cities Paving and Grading (BCPG) and engineering consultant GHD Inc., -- began work in spring 2016. The Central Healdsburg Avenue Improvements Project -- the first implementation of the CHAP, wasn't just about building a roundabout. Also included were major infrastructure improvements such as installing new water and sewer lines; rebuilding an old, deteriorated culvert that funnels Foss Creek under the road, and upgrading the railroad tracks and ties for eventual SMART train service.

This ambitious project was scheduled to have been completed by August 30, 2017. As you know, the project has encountered significant issues that have extended the completion date to summer 2018. Problems included the discovery of old sewer/water lines that weren't in City maps and inclement, wet weather that further delayed the project.

Some good news: Work is now moving along nicely -- the sewer and water lines have been installed, and the old lines have been properly abandoned. Bay Cities is now beginning to install curb, gutter, and paving, so within the next few months, pedestrians can once again walk south on Healdsburg Avenue from the downtown plaza.

Looking ahead, you'll begin to see the installation of decorative features, such as stone walls, sidewalk pavers, landscaping, and seating areas on West Mill and South Healdsburg Avenue.

New Public Works Director

In addition, we've just hired Larry Zimmer as our new public-works director. He comes to us with decades of experience, having served as the Deputy Public Works Director of Petaluma, a civil engineer

for the City of Santa Rosa, and extensive experience with construction management. He brings new energy and an expert eye to this substantive public-works project.

Our outgoing public works director, Brent Salmi, retired on February 2, and we are very grateful and thankful to Brent for all his hard work and years of commitment to the City.

To keep abreast of roundabout construction, go to: www.healdsburgavenueimprovements.com and click on “construction updates.” There, you’ll see weekly/bi-weekly updates on the project’s progress.