



CITY OF HEALDSBURG

Parks Design Team & Consultant Design Team Site Visits and Kickoff Meeting — MEETING MINUTES

Project Name: Healdsburg Parks, River Access, & Connectivity Masterplan
Meeting Date: August 15, 2019
Meeting Subject: PDT Site Walks & Meeting #1
Meeting Location: Badger Park, Railway Park, the Montage site, and the Community Service Center

Present: David Fletcher, Fletcher Studio **(FS)**
Jessica Pilon, Fletcher Studio **(FS)**
Cory Hallam, Fletcher Studio **(FS)**
Andrew Prindle, Fletcher Studio **(FS)**
Liza Court, Fletcher Studio **(FS)**
Mark Themig, City of Healdsburg **(CoH)**
Jaime Licea, City of Healdsburg **(CoH)**
Parks Design Team, City of Healdsburg, Fitch Mountain, and Beyond **(PDT)**

Session 1 – PDT Introductions and Opening Thoughts

1. Montage as the site of a 3rd dog park area, existing dog park areas are overtaxed and expanded access would be a significant help for dog owners; connectivity across the parks system
2. Parks should support children and youth activities, as well as support senior health and social connectedness
3. Increased connectivity, transportation should not be so dependent on cars.
4. People of all ages and abilities should feel safe and able to move between open spaces
5. Community gardens are important assets that may require expansion or further support, river access is a critical feature that should be celebrated in safe ways, children should have safe access to play areas and other opportunities
6. Connectivity between parks is paramount, and while new assets are great opportunities, existing resources should be analyzed and incorporated accordingly
7. Openspace is a critical resource, and being able to move between them via bicycle would be great. River access via foot or bicycle could greatly help. See the Vine Trail for a valuable precedent.
8. Active areas to support field athletics.
9. River access is very important, volleyball areas would be valuable additions for active recreation
10. Volleyball and any active or passive recreational opportunities would be great.
11. The potential for a lake to be created at the Montage site, or improved wetlands. Can the chainlink fence be removed?
12. Fitch Mountain trail areas could be improved, but access should be carefully studied for both safety and integrity of the trail system.
13. Are dedicated bike lanes across town feasible? Bicycle transit does not always feel safe, supported, or well-connected.
14. Healdsburg has incredible views from many of its hills – these should be embraced.
15. How can we draw out the community to use all of its resources?
16. Healdsburg can and should do more than ‘Elevate’ it should use its resources to soar!
17. How can we stay connected across surrounding lands, and connect to resources beyond Healdsburg proper?
18. Parks and playgrounds are critical to, having connectivity and cycling between elements is important. Bring the river into the community, and the community to the river.
19. Playgrounds are essential assets, can cycling be incorporated into the playgrounds?
20. Parks and walking opportunities both within and to/from parks. The ability to move generally should be celebrated and improved.
21. Connectivity between the city, river, and Fitch Mountain should be improved with an eye towards recreation and safety, as well as respect for their social and environmental contexts.



22. Activities for senior citizens to remain healthy and active are important. Pickleball has found a strong following and would benefit from more concerted support, the availability and diversity of activities should be generally improved.
23. Senior health and interactivity should be improved, with opportunities to interface with each other and a variety of age groups.
24. Cycling lanes across the city and connected to the river would be great, with recreation opportunities distributed across the city.
25. Bicycle connectivity and safety are important for all generations and ability levels. Look at the achievements of the surrounding area – what can we do here? How can we serve cyclists from visiting professionals to the casual cyclist and adolescent riders?
26. The parks systems should be better connected and safer for all ages.
27. Badger is a key site for river connectivity, and should support bicycles more as getting to it feels very car-centric currently. Can we get pickleball and volleyball at Badger Park?
28. What current opportunities exist for children, what future opportunities should we consider? Where?
29. Connectivity through cycling should be a driving factor, we should bring the River into the community.

Part II – PDT: “What’s the most important thing for us to get right?”

1. Connectivity is paramount to activating, linking, and empowering the entire community to utilize its open spaces, support car-free transportation, keep the community active, connect all age groups, capitalize on the existing cycling culture of the area, and maximize the recreational and social potential of Healdsburg’s open spaces.
2. A balance should be struck between what we currently have available, what we do provide, and how can we provide for all residents and users of Healdsburg’s facilities and open spaces?
3. If we understand this as a legacy project, we should have a strong understanding of current conditions and challenges, but also be forward looking, e.g.: if the importance of cars falls and traffic declines, what sort of vision should we have for a bicycle centric transportation network?
4. The project should function as a vision for what the city should look like in 10- 15- 25-years, and beyond? Where are we now? Where do we want to be in the future? What steps do we take to get there?
5. What should our relationship with the river look and feel like? There are safety, water quality, and flooding challenges. The city has had a very mixed and varied relationship with the river in the past, what should the future look and feel like?
6. Respect for the city and region’s natural resources should be a guiding force. We should also be thinking about how proposed changes might impact, support, or hurt the area’s flora and fauna? How can they find the right opportunities? How do they stay connected to the areas that are important to their health and safety?
7. Connectivity should focus on a door-to-door level of thinking, e.g.: “How do I get to things from ‘my’ front door? The neighborhood experience and how things are accessed from all areas of the city are incredibly important to making sure people feel able, willing, and excited about exploring all of Healdsburg.
8. As new relationships, connections, and ideas are explored, safety should be at the forefront: safe movement and circulation through the city and parks; children’s safety while moving to and from spaces, as well as within parks; and risk management and safety at the River.
9. Circulation for bicycles and pedestrians should have both strong North & South, *and* East & West connectivity, and amongst all parks. While the Foss Creek Pathway is a great asset, it currently has limited utility for empowering broader connectivity.
10. Community messaging will be an important task of the Parks Design Team, as well as the Consultant Design Team. Collectively, the passions and positivity of the team should be continually improved. The PDT can help unify and amplify the opportunities and possibilities for the project in an inclusive and supportive way.
11. Ultimately, the designs and interventions should be timeless – they should feel present, contextual, valid, and enduring.
12. The design and interventions should also feel intentional, informed, and far sighted.



13. The project should ensure utility and practicality for all neighbors, and whatever impacts the project(s) may have on neighborhoods should be mindful, clearly communicated, and both present and forward focused.

Part III – Fletcher Studio Summary

Meeting with you all was an invaluable experience and one we are thankful for, seeing your passion, ideas, and convictions about the possibilities for this project are inspiring – we could not ask for a better group of community members to collaborate with. Now that we've moved through the preliminary and foundational aspects of visiting the sites with you, meeting and speaking with you all we'd like to provide a brief summary of what we heard.

Parks – Montage & Badger Parks

While Montage and Badger Parks are incredibly unique sites with different possibilities for and relationships to the greater Healdsburg area, they are both large scale spaces roughly at the northern and southern edges of the city. And, while their size affords the opportunity to support new and existing programs and amenities, developing a deep understanding the inventory of resources at existing parks, balanced by potential future need, must inform this. We understood the PDT as recognizing that both Montage and Badger possess enormous potential to support expanded recreation, new amenities, and opportunities for ecological resiliency and conservation. The PDT indicated that the expectation is not to maximize activation and amenities, but to understand these sites within the context of Healdsburg. Badger and Montage should be analyzed, activated, and designed through careful study of their particular contexts, with a robust understanding of the existing assets and resources within Healdsburg, and with a careful eye towards the future conditions that will shape Healdsburg's open space needs.

River Access

Our trip to the Healdsburg Museum helped further our preliminary research regarding the multifaceted and diverse relationship that Healdsburg and the surrounding area has had with the Russian River throughout its history. As the County, City, and other agencies revalue and push for enhanced access, protection, and conservation along the River, incredible new opportunities can be realized to develop precedent setting work at the local, regional, and potentially national levels. However, given the fragile state of the River and the risk of over-formalizing access, or over-expanding access to the River – the risks of environmental degradation and endangered human safety are ever-present. As the climate continues to change, and a variety of social groups find a renewed value and sense of place along the river, access will have to be developed in concert with adjacent communities, partner agencies, and key stakeholders to ensure the River's vitality is protected and enhanced.

Connectivity

We immediately recognized connectivity as a key component for the project's success early on. However, after hearing over 70% of the PDT specifically name connectivity as integral to the project's success during the August 15 Meeting, combined with many of the conversations we had with you during our site walks, its already high-importance has only been further demonstrated. The value placed on expanded access, enhanced safety, and inclusive access for pedestrians and cyclists of all ability levels was clear. People spoke about wanting to rely on their cars less, and wanting to feel safe and excited moving about Healdsburg with their families and friends whether on foot, by boat, or on bicycle. Healdsburg's natural areas, preserves, parks, and waterways are uniquely special open space assets, their individual integrity and possibilities are deeply important. However, the connections between them will be the critical factor in not only strengthening individual assets, but collectively realizing a truly transformative master plan that takes interconnectivity, quality of experience, and the safety and integrity of multi-modal transportation as a core guiding principle.