

If you've driven in the south end of town recently, you'll see that the Healdsburg Avenue Improvements Project, commonly referred to as the roundabout project, is just about complete. All road surfaces have been paved and all pedestrian walkways are in place. Roadway markings and signs are currently being installed. Landscaping is the final major item to be completed; planting will begin soon and is expected to take approximately three weeks to complete.

In November, the City will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate this important project. The City is also planning a larger event in the spring to celebrate the roundabout's completion; we will provide more details on both projects soon and invite you to join us.

Roundabout is Part of Community-Approved CHAP

The roundabout is an integral component of the Central Healdsburg Avenue Plan (CHAP), which was created with the help of comprehensive community input. Here's a little history about the CHAP, which is a public vision and policy document that establishes guiding principles and design frameworks to develop public infrastructure on Healdsburg Avenue from the U.S. 101/Central Healdsburg Avenue exit to the five-way intersection.

The CHAP was created in 2010-2012 through an extensive community process. A wide base of Healdsburg residents and business owners helped to shape the final plan via numerous public meetings, forums and workshops. Through community input, improving the five-way intersection – its safety, capacity and image – rose to the top of the list to realize the plan's vision and unlock future potential on adjoining lands.

Roundabout Safety Statistics

Traffic engineers determined that a roundabout was safer and more efficient for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians than the five-way intersection. The Federal Highway Administration Office of Safety has compiled statistics showing that roundabouts cut fatal collisions by more than 90 percent, reduce injury collisions by up to 87 percent and reduce total collisions by 35 percent in comparison to other types of traffic intersections.

The new roundabout has been functioning as expected, moving traffic safely and efficiently. Not only has vehicular traffic flow improved, but pedestrians can now move throughout the area in a safer and more direct method. The speed reduction of vehicles entering the roundabout now allows cyclists to ride through the roundabout at roughly the same speed as vehicles. Based on the large number of cyclists in town, the roundabout is well-received by the community.

What Did it Cost to Build the Roundabout?

Many people have asked about the cost of this project. The contractor, Bay Cities Paving and Grading of Concord, submitted the low bid of \$10,318,540.40. It should be noted that City projects must follow public contract code which requires that a contract be publicly bid and awarded to the lowest responsive and qualified bidder. The project was awarded on April 18, 2016, with a 10 percent contingency, thus allowing a total budget of \$11,350,395. The project also underwent value engineering to reduce costs and increase functionality, which eliminated nonessential items valued at \$1,907,209.46.

Several unforeseen conditions resulted in extra work of \$781,391.54, which has been approved and paid to the contractor. Additionally, the contractor has submitted requests for additional extra work; some of that cost has either been denied or is still being investigated. Extra work, which is any work not covered in the original contract, is common on nearly all projects and particularly on large complex public works projects.

Construction contracts are awarded with contingency funds of 10 to 15 percent as standard practice to cover any extra work. Projects involving underground construction, particularly in older areas of town, may include higher contingencies due to the likelihood of finding unknown utility lines, concrete structures, and contaminated soils.

The items of work from the original contract that have been paid, and yet to be paid, plus the approved extra work, are well within the project budget. The remaining unresolved issues and disputes, including delays to the project, will need to be evaluated, perhaps even after the actual improvements have been accepted.

If you would like to learn more information about the roundabout project, please go to www.healdsburgaveimprovements.com.

