

Cityscape – August 2018

It's already August, which means school is around the corner and the busy fall season will soon begin. It also means that the completion of the roundabout is within sight.

We're on track to complete the roundabout in late August/early September. If you've driven the roundabout recently, you'll see how much progress we've made. For example, we've built the inner and outer circle and the median islands for the five streets leading into and out of the roundabout. We've laid the railroad tracks and installed other railroad equipment, formed and poured sidewalks and installed pavers on North/South Healdsburg Avenue, East/West Mill and Vine Street, and installed graceful wrought-iron streetlights to light the roundabout.

That's just for starters. In the coming weeks, you'll see a contractor lifting and re-paving sections of North/South Healdsburg Avenue and the other streets near the roundabout. A contractor will also plant shrubs, bee-friendly plants such as meadow sage, and red maple and crepe myrtle trees in the roundabout area to give residents and visitors a more welcoming entrance into town.

We've Come a Long Way

A little history: The roundabout project was never just about building a roundabout.

It's part of the comprehensive Central Healdsburg Avenue Plan (CHAP) -- a policy document approved by City Council in 2014 that established 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 first iteration of the CHAP was the Central Healdsburg Avenue Improvements Project, which includes the roundabout as well as intensive installation of water and deep sewer lines (almost 1,800 ft.), the rebuilding of an old, deteriorated box culvert that funnels Foss Creek under the road and the undergrounding of electric utilities.

As you likely know, we encountered challenges early in the roundabout project, which broke ground in the spring of 2016. We discovered old sewer and water lines that weren't in the original city maps. We also had one of the wettest winters on record in early 2017, which further delayed construction.

However, all of that is behind us. In the coming months, the City will organize a community-wide celebration of the completion of the roundabout, so stay tuned for more information about this event.

Navigating the Roundabout

In addition to the roadwork, you may have noticed that we've built decorative stone walls within the circle and to line sections of the streets near the roundabout. Last month, we found that the wall on Vine Street, near the Chamber of Commerce, was inadvertently damaged by a vehicle.

Please keep in mind that while the roads leading into and out of the roundabout are wide enough to accommodate a two-lane roadway for modern cars, trucks and cyclists, that area is still a construction

zone, with orange barrels, cones, wooden barriers, and signage. So, we ask you to please stay alert and drive well within the speed limit to safely navigate the roundabout.

Since the roundabout is still a very new concept to many Americans, here are some roundabout rules for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians:

- When entering a roundabout, always yield to vehicles and cyclists already within the circle. That means that traffic on the left has the right of way.
- Use turn signals correctly so you don't confuse other road users.
- Circulate counter-clockwise around the circle.
- Pedestrians: Do NOT cross into the center island within the circle. That is extremely dangerous. Instead, walk on the sidewalks and crosswalks around the circle to get to your destination.

If you'd like to learn about the progress of roundabout construction, I encourage you to go to www.healdsburgaveimprovements and click on "Construction Updates" to get our latest updates, which we provide weekly.