

Pride in Public Service

The men and women working for the City of Healdsburg wish you a very happy, healthy New Year!

Healdsburg Lodging Numbers

A lot of numbers have been bandied about with respect to the number, size and type of lodging facilities. According to the City's business license and tax records there are 28 separate businesses representing a total of 454 rooms. Of this total, 124 hotel rooms are located within the boundaries of the traditional downtown business district. These operators are collecting TOT and submitting it to the City on a monthly basis

Transient Occupancy Tax

Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) also referred to as a "bed tax" or "room tax" is the tax assessed to visitors staying in all lodging establishments within the city limits. This includes hotels, motels, resorts, inns, suites and B&Bs.

The current TOT rate in Healdsburg is 12%. In 2004 voters passed a ballot measure designating 10% of all TOT revenues to fund Community Services. The remaining 2% goes into the General Fund to support public safety. According to the ballot language, Healdsburg residents wanted to ensure there would be an ongoing funding source for parks, recreation and open space. Last fiscal year (July 2012 through June 2013) TOT raised \$2.1 million in revenue: \$1.8M for Community Services and \$361K for the General Fund.

What is Community Services?

It is a department within the City's organizational structure that houses all functions related to parks, open space, recreation and senior services. This department is set up as an enterprise fund which means that its revenue must support its operational expenses. In addition to TOT, Community Services obtains revenues from grants, facility rentals, program fees and donations. There is **NO** General Fund subsidy to the Community Services department.

The Community Services Department provides a wide range of amenities and services to community members:

Parks and Open Space: Healdsburg has over 220 acres of parks and open space that is operated and maintained by Community Services. Within this acreage is Plaza Park, Healdsburg Ridge, two dog parks, multiple playgrounds, picnic areas, a skate park and athletic fields. The Foss Creek Pathway and other downtown green spaces are also maintained by parks staff. TOT and grant funds were combined to complete major renovation projects at Giorgi and Recreation Parks. Community Services has a strong partner in the Agriculture and Open Space District. The agencies are currently working together to negotiate the acquisition of additional open space land that can be utilized for public trails.

Community Facilities: Among the community facilities funded by Community Services are the Villa Chanticleer, Foss Creek Community Center and the Senior Center. Not only do these facilities house programs, they are available to citizens and local organizations for meetings, activities and private events.

Transportation: The City's fixed and deviated transit routes are operated through Community Services.

Senior Services: The Senior Center is an activity and resource center dedicated to providing seniors with services and programs that encourage physical and emotional well-being, connection with others and enrichment. Programs include senior bus trips, exercise, computer use and writing. Through a

partnership with the Council on Aging, seniors are able to visit the center to receive a healthy, affordable noon meal; Meals-on-Wheels uses the center to package meals for the homebound.

Recreation Programs: These activities are designed to meet a variety of needs, interests and age groups. Program offerings include sports, education, wellness, leisure, camps and enrichment classes for youth and adults. Examples of recreation programs are: swim lessons, computer classes, dog obedience, soccer and music lessons. Twice each year staff reviews past program offerings, analyzes individual program evaluations and obtains input from the community. The next season's program guide is then developed based on those evaluations. Every effort is made to keep programs as affordable as possible. Scholarships are offered for those who cannot afford the fees yet want to participate in programs.

The City has created solid partnerships with other organizations to leverage resources. One of the most successful partnerships is with Healdsburg Unified School District. By working cooperatively with HUSD, Community Services is able to operate a specialty After School Program that serves over 200 children per day. Community Serves has also taken a leadership role in partnering with the County's Health Action 2020. This project is designed to promote holistic healthy living in Sonoma County – a goal that fits nicely given the functions of Community Services.

Special Events: The most notable event put on by Community Services is the Tuesday Concert Series held in Plaza Park each summer. What many people do not realize is the amount of assistance other event organizers receive from Community Services. City staff works behind the scenes to ensure that events held in Healdsburg a safe and well-coordinated.

Community Services – Looking Back

In 2006 the City developed a Recreation Needs Assessment to identify community wants and needs. The assessment was compiled with citizen input and included a ranking of the recreational activities residents wanted to have available locally. Shortly after the Needs Assessment was completed the City Council adopted a Parks and Open Space Master Plan. These documents provided a blueprint that has allowed the department to undertake long term planning that addresses both capital and operational needs.

Over the past five years the Community Services department has seen significant growth in all aspects of the operation, including the public's utilization parks and facilities and those registering for programs. In 2009 there were 2,400 people registered in various programs, compared to 2013 with 4,890 registrants.

Community Services – Looking Forward

The acquisition of Foss Creek Community Center (School) provides the City with more classroom and outdoor recreational space. Community Services will be working on an updated Recreation Needs Assessment that will help determine how the Community Center is developed moving forward.

It is anticipated program enrollment will continue to increase. Staff is also monitoring the status of development projects that have the potential to impact Community Services. Impacts may range from a pocket park featuring a public art piece to Saggio Hills and the construction of new field facilities. The objective is to be prepared; to anticipate resource needs and plan accordingly.

TOT Revenues Provide Direct Benefit to the Community

All of the TOT derived from the local lodging industry directly benefits Healdsburg residents. TOT funds those amenities that significantly contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by Healdsburg's citizenry.

