

Cityscape: Livability and Tourism

Over the past several months, there has been much discussion about the impacts of tourism on our community. One of Council's adopted 2017/18 goals is to conduct a study on both the positive and negative impacts of tourism on our community. In essence, that impact is composed of two parts: one to evaluate the economics of tourism / hospitality and the other to evaluate the impact of tourism from a livability perspective.

Staff received about a half-dozen proposals for a tourism study and prices ranged from \$75,000 to \$180,000. Based on the cost of the studies and the fact that some of the work had already been completed, Council decided to forgo the study for now and record a broader discussion on a variety of issues as they relate to tourism. To that end, Council decided to hold a public work session so community members could weigh in on schools, health, transportation, housing and other issues, and how tourism impacts them.

North Bay Fires

As staff was preparing for the livability workshop, on October 8, Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Mendocino Counties were faced with the most destructive fires in California history. The impacts of these fires -- specifically the Tubbs Fire -- will be felt for years to come. We already knew before the fires that we had to address important community issues. After the fires, we knew it was also important to recognize that these fires affected everyone differently.

To get a holistic view of our community, staff called together a diverse group of citizens to help develop the livability workshop. I want to thank Richard Berg, John Wordon, Todd Everett, Janice Watkins, Brian Sommers, Ariel Kelley, Taya Levine, and Carla Howell for their time. Their key takeaway was that the work session should focus on topics that impact livability in our community.

Consequently, our aim was to ask community members about the opportunities and benefits as well as the challenges and concerns of these topics: culture, food, health, housing, play, schools, transportation, work, and other, which was a catch-all for issues people whose comments didn't fit the other categories. Tourism and hospitality were mentioned as a positive and negative impact on almost all them.

Livability Public Work Session: November 1

On November 1, the City hosted the public work session on livability at the Villa Chanticleer, and about 100 community members attended. Our facilitator, Taya Levine, walked everyone through the comment process and asked everyone to provide feedback on any and all subjects of interest.

We were heartened to see lots of engagement and discussion among attendees, and it was clear that people took this task seriously. Staff has transcribed handwritten comments verbatim from more than 500 post-it notes, and your passion, commitment, and love for Healdsburg is clear. Now that transcription is complete, we will present your comments to Council and post online for all to see. The

City may be able to address some of the comments quickly, while others may take more time. As we identify those action items, we'll report out what actions are being taken to address those concerns.

Spanish-language Work Session Coming Soon

One of the glaring weaknesses of the Nov. 1 event was the lack of participation from our Latino community. We are meeting with Corazon Healdsburg's Comité (board) to determine the look and feel of a Spanish-language event, and logistics such as the date of the work session, topics to be presented, facilitator, English-language translation, and child care. After we meet in late November, I will report out dates and details of the workshop.

The livability workshop on November 1 is just the beginning of a much broader conversation over the coming months about livability and the role and impact of tourism on a small but high-profile City, and we will be reaching out to the community in more ways to gather feedback. The information we gather from these workshops will help inform the City on how Healdsburg will continue to evolve as we go forward on creating Council goals, updating the City's 5-year strategic plan, and more.

Thank you for your help in steering Healdsburg to become a truly livable place for all.