



A Vision for Petaluma's Fairgrounds

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Climate Change Impacts

- With hotter temps and longer droughts, many of our trees are dying – esp in places that don't receive irrigation (e.g., Helen Putnam Park)
- Per USDA, Petaluma has sparse tree canopy cover; we have a lot of hardscape (roads, concrete, etc)
- Creates heat islands & poor air quality
- We need a lot more trees! ReLeaf has a goal of planting 10,000 trees*
- Shaded streets encourage people to walk and bike, which helps our climate/traffic emissions
- Planting native trees (and understory) provides critical food and shelter for our native species
- Most native trees are very drought tolerant



Urbanization & Biodiversity

- Most of us know there's a biodiversity crisis
- Urbanization is #1 cause of species loss – has impacts for our food security
- Where we are a river town, built on a watershed - we have major wildlife habitat within our UGB
- Governor Newsom has passed biodiversity 30 x 30 EO – prioritizes preserving wetlands and rivers
- More important than ever to protect our sensitive environmental lands – along our river – and to create new habitat within our town – to enhance our watershed
- Parcels > 10 acres size needed to protect biodiversity (SFEI)



Priorities

- We need to meet our housing goals without sprawling into open space
- We must maintain the ecological and flood functions of our upper river by protecting our river wetlands and grasslands from development
- Our river parcels provide flood storage, filter our water, recharge our groundwater, maintain healthy river flows, and provide essential habitat
- We need to enhance our urban tree canopy
- We need more green spaces where people can meet and play and that are bikeable/walkable
- We want east & west access to these green spaces
- We want a strong focus on locally-owned businesses and local goods
- We want to develop a more robust, local food shed for our food security



A Vision for our Fairgrounds

- The FG provides us a unique opportunity (with this immense 60-acre parcel) to achieve a # of these critical ends, including our City's climate goals
- Create large, nature-based central park at FG's center; invaluable relief from congestion of our growing City
- Our version of Golden Gate or NY's Central Park
- Parks are the first/best line defense against climate change: cool/clean air, regulate precipitation, mitigate impact of heat islands, serve as refuges for biodiversity
- Create pedestrian walkway over Washington St to connect FG with Petaluma River Trail
- Serve BOTH humans and our native biodiversity



Our Town Square

- Create a Fairgrounds District (Petaluma has # of districts including Historic District, Warehouse District, Maker's District)
- Design layout along lines of historic Sonoma and Healdsburg Plazas - heavily treed (green-focused)
- Historically, town squares were gathering places where community members went to converse, shop and enjoy entertainment
- Built to be the heart of their communities, often with stately landmarks like a City Hall, and surrounding colorful shops and cafes



Sonoma Plaza

- Sonoma Plaza ranked as #1 attraction to visit in Sonoma
- 8.5 acre park, created in 1835; City Hall at center built in 1908, Carnegie restrooms
- A pedestrian paradise
- Immense tree canopy creating lush setting for picnics, cultural activities, and farmers markets
- Eclectic mix restaurants, hotels, tasting rooms, cafes, artisan boutiques, galleries, even vintage movie house
- Within just short distance, wildflower hikes and hilltop vistas



Sonoma Plaza



Sonoma Plaza



Healdsburg Plaza

- Healdsburg Plaza named one of most beautiful town squares in the US (shade trees, fountains, diagonal walkways); considered one most perfect in eyes of urban designers



- Nearby buildings, with varied heights of 1-3 stories, creates sense of outdoor room
- Hold outdoor concerts there
- 55-room Healdsburg Hotel has meeting and event spaces and they partner w/ LandPaths and Russian Riverkeepers & offer chance to create/clear trails, enhance streams, or paddle the river

Healdsburg Plaza



Windsor Town Green

- 4.5 acre park at its center
- Civic space for public events (e.g., summer theater and concert series, holiday celebrations) and park space for informal socializing and recreation
- Shops are locally-owned and run



Barlow (Sebastopol)

- 12-acre outdoor market district
- Pop-up shops, craft and artisan workshops, live music, many happy hour events
- Features local food, wine, beer, spirits and crafts made onsite by Sonoma County artisans
- Organic, edible landscaping



SF Ferry Building

- Primary portal of the City
- World class food market organized along a dramatic indoor street
- Promotes the Bay Area's ethnic diversity and serves as an incubator for artisan producers
- Showcase small regional producers that practice traditional farming or production techniques
- Operate as community gathering-place for the celebration of local culture and cuisine
- Committed to the artisan food community and to fostering the values of that community



Our River Trail

- The CA Coastal Conservancy funded one of our major City policy documents, The Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan
- Focus was on the Corona Reach segment of the river; the largest & most environmentally-sensitive
- The River Plan calls for a pedestrian/bike trail the entire 6.5 mile length of the river, from the peninsula below the D Street bridge to the Denman Reach in the North (where the old Denny's is)
- Some sections of the trail have been built (above Corona Road, at Payran, and alongside the Outlet Mall)
- But the full trail has never been completed



Bridge over Washington St to Trail



Another Example of Pedestrian Bridge



Tourist Draw – sculpture pedestrian bridge - state bird



Our Responsibility Regards Fairgrounds Parcel



- Whatever decisions we make going-forward have to be based on current facts, our climate reality, biodiversity loss
- Unless come from that stance – this incredibly significant site within our town will be yet another lost opportunity, as has happened with so many other sites in our town
- Once clear what can/cannot do, have be science-based, *not* based on emotion
- Must create green spaces, and not have it be car-and building-centric
- Planning for 100 years from now – should enhance the environment and support the community

Reaching Our Goals

- If going reach our climate goals – paradigm has to be that we localize our economy and that we be resilient (e.g., protect town from flooding)
- Want Sonoma County homegrown-type businesses
- Don't want franchises, big box stores or corporate-owned hotels
- Don't want to sprawl; gobble up our open space
- Don't want to cement in our river wetlands/grasslands – needed for safety and carbon sequestration, etc.
- **We deserve excellence/best design!**



Thank you!

