



DATE: September 23, 2026
TO Citizens Oversight Committee Member
FROM: Zoe Unruh, Planning Manager
SUBJECT: Healdsburg Station Location Consideration Outreach

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion Item

SUMMARY:

On September 16, 2026, the SMART Board of Directors directed staff to initiate a public engagement process around the location of the SMART Healdsburg Station. Upon the Board's direction staff has initiated that process, which is expected to run through November 2026.

Background

Prior to the Board's direction, station location discussion occurred in late 2023 and early 2024. At that time, the City of Healdsburg partnered with SMART to conduct outreach around the SMART Healdsburg station location. The engagement took the form of a City Council meeting on August 21, 2023, at which SMART was requested to make a presentation regarding the station location options, followed by a public workshop on October 19, 2023. A public survey was developed by SMART and posted for a limited period in January 2024, receiving only 12 responses. A second City Council meeting was held on February 20, 2024, to receive a City staff presentation and provide Council direction to staff. At the February 2024 meeting, SMART's General Manager provided an update and answered questions on the status of the project and the potential station locations and recommended a Downtown Station location. At the same meeting, the City determined that absent additional information, they would advance the Depot/Hudson Street location as the City's recommended station location.

In the nearly 3 years since the public workshop in Healdsburg, there have been meaningful changes with SMART's project advancement and ridership as well as new and updated information that justifies the reconsideration of the station location. Listed here are many of the substantive developments since 2024.

- SMART's sales tax approval with 3 out of 4 people saying yes to funding through 2059;

- Continued record ridership, with August 2026 ridership 123% higher than SMART's average monthly ridership in FY24 and average weekday ridership now over 5,600, with over 25% youth under 18 many traveling to and from schools along the corridor.
- The Cloverdale Extension has been included in financially constrained, prioritized regional and state plans including:
 - the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Plan Bay Area 2050+ regional transportation financially constrained project list;
 - Sonoma County Transportation and Climate Protection Authority's Countywide transportation plan, and
 - State of California's financially constrained State Rail Plan as a Near Term project to be completed by 2031.
- SMART secured funding for the Healdsburg Extension project, including funding approval for track upgrades up to Lytton Springs Road and has additional pending and in-development applications to complete discrete segments of the remainder of the system to Cloverdale.
- SMART's Board adopted a Geyserville Station, enabling the segmentation and phasing of the northern extension.
- SMART constructed and opened the Windsor and Petaluma North Stations and 10 new miles of pathway/Great Redwood Trail.
- SMART has additional data including station area travel, jobs, and parking impacts since the 2023/2024 station location discussions.

As recently shown with the public dialogue around the Geyserville SMART station, as SMART extends north, the opportunity exists to consider station locations in the context of how the local and corridor-wide community functions today versus when the railroad was built in the late 1800s. Additional consideration for station siting should be given to the future success of the entire SMART rail network and public and private first- and last-mile bus connectivity to the SMART regional rail system. In the case of Healdsburg, criteria for a successful regional rail station location include the following:

- Proximity to the highest concentration of jobs and people, and
- Connectivity through bike and pedestrian networks, and
- Directly connecting to regional road networks that can accommodate regional bus services including Sonoma County Transit, future Intercity Bus services from North Coast, private shuttle or school buses.

Utilizing the criteria and new information stated above, staff is engaging the public by requesting inclusion on Healdsburg City Council agendas, holding a separate SMART-hosted

community workshop in Healdsburg, providing opportunity at multiple SMART Board meetings, and deploying a public comment survey that will be available in English and Spanish. The focus of the outreach will be on the two station locations and the public's travel needs, the ways in which the train and pathway can support those needs to help inform station siting and future rail service to Healdsburg.

Following the public engagement opportunities in the project area and throughout SMART's service area and the solicitation of public comment via the online survey, staff will return to the SMART Board, with the results of the engagement and other necessary information for consideration of the station location.