

Dear Council Members,

I am writing you to remind you why we have the RV Ordinance and why we need to enforce it.

We have the RV Ordinance because conditions on Morris Street were grave and untenable. There was crime, drug dealing, two deaths. Morris Street was unsafe for residents, business owners and visitors.

Analy High School had to move several sports practices to the Forestville location due to inappropriate behavior by RV dwellers. The public high school which serves over 1200 students had to alter their team sports practice and drive to Forestville due to the unacceptable behavior of a small numbers of adults. Is that fair? Is that the message that we want to send to our students and their families?

There were multiple fires associated with Morris Street, including one that took out power for many residents and businesses:

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sebastopol-mobile-home-fire-knocks-out-power-cable-near-highway-12/>

It would be untenable to have 116 North to become a mini-Morris Street. There is too much expense and risk to have an RV encampment in Sebastopol. It is costly on all the City departments, inhibits economic growth and degrades the quality of life for residents and business owners.

The City expended an incredible amount of resources to unwind the RV encampment on Morris Street. We cannot have another RV encampment on 116.

Council mistakenly thought that Sebastopol Inn would take RV dwellers from Morris Street. That did not happen. Not one person from Morris Street went into the Sebastopol Inn.

Council then insisted that we had to provide a "Safe Parking" area for Morris Street RVs; this was not the case as detailed by then City Manager McLaughlin in a 1/18/22 Council Meeting. The RV ordinance discussion starts on page 15 and then on page 30 the City

"Therefore my answer is, you could adopt this ordinance without having to have RV Village.";

https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/APPROVED-January-18-2022-City-Council-Meeting-Minutes_1.pdf

Diana Rich and Una Glass insisted that the City provide "Safe Parking" which has had a tremendous negative impact on the City despite that people living in Horizon Shine have had two years of living with all expenses paid, totally over \$1,200,000. In addition, one of the people living at Horizon Shine is part of a lawsuit which has cost the City over

\$650,000.

The push for this Safe Parking was in the context of Sebastopol having the highest rate of homeless beds per capita of ANY city in Sonoma County, possibly California, which include Park Village, Sebastopol Inn/Elderberry Commons and safe parking at the Community Church.

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sebastopol-church-builds-huts-to-provide-beds-storage-to-homeless-neighbor/?ref=related>

Crime associated with Morris Street is detailed in the police logs at the end of this document.

Here is a PD article with the following stat: "Over last year and into January of this year, officers made 100 police reports related to drug activity, property damage and other crimes on Morris Street, Kilgore said. There were 35 arrests, 10 of which for drug crimes and 15 for outstanding warrants and probation violations. Authorities also towed 21 vehicles."

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/tensions-over-homelessness-in-sebastopol-come-to-a-head-over-planned-safe-p/?ref=related>

Attached are many public comments. I encourage you to read these public comments to engage in why we have the RV ordinance and why we need to enforce it.

Below is a brief the history of Morris Street and the RV ordinance.

As early as 2015, there were complaints regarding homeless encampments along Morris Street and in the Laguna. See attached screenshot from "Appendices 2-7, p. 24" from a public document entitled "Summary of Community Input on the Plan; from a Public Meeting, April 25, 2015" which was public feedback on the Laguna.

Only my ideas. I know money is tight and there's not enough staff
Please leave the Laguna de Santa Rosa untouched! Keep it natural.
Homeless Issues
Encampment spot circled near "high quality riparian habitat"
Problems with encampments
Contact the Sonoma County Health and Human Services departments to provide case management services for the impaired people camping there.
Collaborate with Sebastopol Police Department, SRPD and Sonoma County Sheriff
More presence of officials keeping homeless out of area (Rodota Trail)
Work with app. agencies to help homeless – housing/mental health
Don't feel safe on Americorps Trail – homeless encampments

Appendices 2-7, p. 24

Appendix 7a.

Summary of Community Input on the Plan

From Public Meeting, April 25, 2015, and other written input.
Repeated comments noted with numbers in parentheses.

Starting in 2019, Mitch Lamb and Loretta Castleberry, owners of Coaches Corner, contacted Council on numerous occasions regarding the safety of the Little League field, drug activity and other damaging activities.

In December 2019, the Community Cultural Center experienced a break-in which they believed was committed by Morris Street transients. Sebastopol Police Case #19-0946. The Cultural Center sent two detailed letters which should be in the City's archive. Multiple meetings were held where Community Cultural Center employees described their fears.

In August 2020, Becky Kelso submitted a letter detailing the unsanitary conditions along with a report about a homeless man who had died in his vehicle and whose body remained in the vehicle for several days before being discovered.

On February 16, 2021 Katy Spykra, owner of Spykra Electric spoke at a council meeting detailing security issues at her place of business on Morris Street.

The Barlow management, including Barney Aldridge and Yolanda Mathew, has submitted several letters, had several meetings with various City departments over the course of the last several years. See Yolanda Mathew letter submitted to Council on 10/5/21. <https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Yolanda-City-Council-Public-Comment.pdf>

See the history of the Barlow's contact with the City Council in their 10/5/21 letter.

<https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Barlow-City-Council-Meeting-Public-Record-Statement.pdf> |

Robert Hillman gave public comment on 5/18/21 on how the Morris Street encampment had impacted his property. On 10/5/21, he spoke at a Council meeting stating that he was unable to rent his space due to activities of transients on his property. The failure to rent his property means that the City of Sebastopol lost 40 jobs, which could have helped support local business.

On 9/22/21, there was a sweep of a 20 or more person encampment in the Laguna. 5 fires had been reported in one month. ^[1]_{SEP}"Five fires have broken out in the last several months in the Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetlands Preserve area, where last week as many as 20 people lived along the trails approaching the park, according to Tim Miller, executive director of West County Community Services (WCCS)." (SocoNews, September 24, 2021)

09/28/21 Barney Aldridge and other members of the Barlow managing team contacted the Council and City again regarding health and safety issues from the illegal RV encampment on Morris Street.

In September of 2021, the Council created an ad-hoc committee regarding the the unhoused.

The 9/22/21 Sweep of the Laguna involved a huge amount of City resources dedicated toward non-citizens. It has done nothing to alleviate the conditions of Morris Street. The use of resources is documented in the 10/19/21 Council Agenda Item titled "After Action Report Laguna Encampment Mitigation." <https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/After-Action-Report-Laguna-Encampment-Mitigation-10-7-2021.pdf>

10/5/21 Due to concerns about RVs impacting the use of bike lanes, Council proposed turning Morris Street into a sharrow. Many people write public comments and speak at the Council meeting regarding the impact of the illegal RV encampments on their businesses and bicycle lanes.

<https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Agenda-Item-Number-8-Class-II-Bike-Lane-on-Morris-Street.pdf>

<https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/events/city-council-meeting-october-5-2021/>

In the 10/5/21 City Council meeting, Mayor Glass advocates for transients despite many pleas by local residents to move the illegal encampment. Looking at public comments written and stated from the 10/5/21 meeting shows that actual public sentiment is very mixed on the RVs.

Mayor Glass responds:

"Mayor Glass commented as follows: [REDACTED]

- I am not okay with coming up with a proposal that is eliminating RVs in the immediate future.

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- I am not okay with that. [REDACTED]
 - I am completely in support of finding another location. [REDACTED]
 - I have spoken repeatedly with West County Community Services and [REDACTED] others about looking for viable options for RVs to park. [REDACTED]
 - I am completely opposed to kicking people off Morris Street. [REDACTED]
 - I believe we heard from a very small minority of people that feel that way [REDACTED] earlier in the meeting and I would like to keep our bike lanes but I am [REDACTED] completely opposed to being backed into a corner. [REDACTED]
 - That means we get a configuration that forces people off Morris Street [REDACTED] before we have a viable solution for them to go to. [REDACTED]
 - I don't know how other people feel about that. But that is my bottom line." <https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Agenda-Item-Number-2-October-5-2021-City-Council-Meeting-Minutes-for-Packet.pdf>

Crime [REDACTED]

Attached are several police logs which have been taken from the Sonoma West website. The majority of highlighted police calls are within the Morris Street, Laguna Parkway area, the area of the homeless encampment. The RV encampment bordered many public facilities including the Youth Skate Park, the Laguna Preserve, the Youth Center, the Community Cultural Center, the Little League Baseball Diamond, the Wischman building and a children's playground. [REDACTED]

These crime logs reveal many arrests pertain to parole violation, assault, drugs and there is one for child pornography.

On or about 8/11/21 homeless individuals cut holes in the Skate Park fencing and operated an illegal kitchen in the Laguna Preserve during fire season.

Fire

September 5, 2020, an RV fire started in one of the illegal vehicles which cut off utilities to 10,000 Comcast subscribers.

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sebastopol-mobile-home-fire-knocks-out-power-cable-near-highway-12/>

Five fires started in the Laguna in September 2021:

https://soconews.org/scn_sebastopol_west_county/news/sebastopol-police-county-and-community-groups-clear-camps-near-laguna-preserve/article_2cb9f834-1d5a-11ec-8d92-37817bce45d2.html

“Two fires that ignited over the past month on a stretch of land near Sebastopol were started by people and originated near homeless camps, including a brush fire that burned about 3 acres on Tuesday, according to a Santa Rosa fire investigator.”

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/fire-official-2-fires-near-homeless-camps-east-of-sebastopol-were-human-caused/>

Fire on September 27, 2021 burned three structures in residential neighborhood in Sebastopol:

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/fire-chief-sebastopol-blaze-likely-started-by-trespassers/>

On Friday, October 1, another arsonist was caught at 8:00 p.m. Arson on forest land, possession of a controlled substance paraphernalia and violation of probation at Sebastopol Avenue and Morris Street Adult arrested.”

https://soconews.org/scn_sebastopol_west_county/news/sebastopol-police-logs-sept-27---oct-3/article_b39c42b2-2935-11ec-ab44-ab6ea3676975.html

10:49



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sebastopolpd This afternoon SPD officers were dispatched to a report of a port-potty on fire at the end of Barnes Avenue. When they arrived the privy was already a puddle of burning plastic and...other stuff. Officers deployed fire extinguishers and knocked the flames down. However, the real heroes were a Sebastopol Towing driver, Dave, and another community member who were first on scene and used their extinguishers to keep the fire from getting into the trees and brush around the commode. The @sebastopol.fire.dept arrived shortly after officers and doused the smoldering remains. Great team effort by community members and first responders!

On October 19, 2021 a port-o-potty was burned to the ground behind the Feed Store on Petaluma Blvd. Owner had to contain fire to keep it from burning hay bales. See photos:



Former Council Facilitated Illegal RV Encampment on Morris Street

SEP The City of Sebastopol facilitated an illegal RV encampment on a public street, Morris Street from 2016-2021. The citizens of Sebastopol paid for hand washing stations, garbage removal and clean up by the City's public works departments. The City worked with organizations such as Sonoma Applied Villages Services (SAVS) to enable RV dwellers to live, illegally, on Morris Street.

While many other small cities work to clear RV encampments on public streets, the former Sebastopol City Council let Morris Street persist despite crime, numerous complaints, and public health and safety issues.

Crime associated with this illegal encampment include, theft, drug use, battery, drug sales and parole violation.

July 30, 2020 Memo from Greg DeVore, Acting Chief of Police #370^[1]_{SEP} A memo to Larry McLaughlin, City Manager, dated July 30, 2020 from Greg DeVore, Acting Chief of Police #370 gives a detailed report on Morris Street, which document the citizen complaints, health and safety violations, conditions on Morris Street, and how the Council increased the size of the RV encampment by providing taxpayer funded amenities:

"Since approximately February of 2020 we have seen a large increase in the number of transient vehicles on Morris Street. There has been an ever larger increase in the number of transient vehicles starting about a month ago when the City provided restroom and handwashing facilities."

"Also, with these vehicles comes the issues of sanitary conditions and property storage. It is not uncommon to see these vehicles, Rvs and trailers, leaking septic and grey water tanks. ... The owners of these vehicles are known to store their personal property, such as bikes, generators, boxes and such, on the sidewalks or areas next to their vehicles."

"It is not uncommon for the police department to receive complaints from citizens, wanting to walk the area, or neighboring businesses, in regards to these transient issues on Morris Street."

In addition, Acting Chief Devore indicated that law enforcement on Morris Street was reduced despite consistent complaints and despite the indicated fact that enforcing 72 hour parking codes lessen the burden of transients on the area.

Homeless Activists Confirm Citizen Complaints^[1]_{SEP} In public comment to Council at the 9/21/21 meeting; homeless advocate Arthur George states the public safety and environmental risks of the encampment in the Laguna, which also applies to Morris Street as it is directly adjacent to the Laguna:

"Hello again, Arthur George, of West County Homeless Advocates, the continuing ad hoc volunteer group which has addressed you before. This week, Sebastopol is at a tipping point of action and opportunity concerning the unhoused. A highly-planned, well-coordinated sweep of the Laguna will occur, to remove and hopefully re-locate unhoused persons, initially driven by fire safety and actual fires but also concerns about Zero Waste and Climate Action impacts."

He then states that Morris Street is a safe parking area, funded by the City with amenities:^[1]_{SEP} "Certain business interests west of Morris Street lobby the council and

more, to restrict parking time limits on the east side of Morris, our de facto safe parking zone, to force vehicle campers off of Morris Street. ...Away from the portable toilets and handwashing stations the City has wisely provided for health and sanitation?"

Mr. George confirms all the impacts of the encampment and illegal RV dwellers on the community at large, which included impacts on businesses, cultural and social events and human waste, needles and trash:

"Concerns from other stakeholders in the area about the unhoused are understandable, as to impacts on business, cultural, and social events, but these may face a far greater detriment if no other shelter alternative emerges. The old problems, and the old valid complaints, of common vagrancy in doorways, behind businesses; on darkened peripheral grounds, structures, and porches, with accompanying human waste, syringes, and trash, are likely to re-surface." <https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/September-21-2021-City-Council-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>

Adrienne Lauby supported Arthur George's statement that the Council made Morris Street an unofficial sanctioned encampment on 9/21/21, when she stated:

- "Your activities on Morris, your putting up the Port-A-Potties, allowing people to basically be there in some kind of permissible, legalized way, has made a huge, huge difference."

<https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Agenda-Item-Number-3-September-21-2021-DRAFT-City-Council-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>

The Council's facilitation of this illegal RV encampment supported and fostered the criminal and illegal activities that surround the encampment.

Instead of promoting the health and safety of citizens, local business owners and visitors, the Council is actively supporting the illegal activities of transients.

City supported illegal encampment through resources see 10/19/21 Council Agenda Item "Budget Wish List Update Final" where the costs of transient resources, Item 9 is not even specified with an actual monetary figure:

<https://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/getattachment/Meeting-Event/City-Council/2021/City-Council-Meeting-October-19,-2021/10-19-21-Budget-Wish-List-Update-Final.pdf.aspx>

During Council's ongoing facilitation of the illegal RV encampment at least two people have died on Morris Street. One man in a truck around August 2020 and a woman of drug overdose around October 2021.

In August 2020, a homeless woman was murdered in her RV in Walter Libby Park.

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/woman-dead-in-sebastopol-shooting/>

POLICE LOG Excerpts

From Sonoma West ``Sebastopol Police Logs".

<https://soconews.org> From this there are at least 1.6 calls per week. The Sebastopol Police Department should have more accurate records.

3/20/21^[SEP]5:05 p.m. Served with a felony arrest warrant at Laguna Park Way and McKinley Street. Adult arrested.

3/19/21^[SEP]12:18 p.m. Sexual battery and battery on a person at Mckinley and Brown streets. Pending further investigation.

3/5/21^[SEP]12:56 a.m. Possession of controlled substance paraphernalia and served with a misdemeanor arrest warrant at Morris and Johnson streets. Adult arrested.

3/1/21^[SEP]8:13 a.m. Vandalism, destroying other's property at Laguna Park Way and Flynn Street. Investigation suspended, leads exhausted.^[SEP]2:18 p.m. Vandalism, damage to property, at Morris and Johnson streets. Investigation suspended, leads exhausted.^[SEP]10:11 p.m. Possession of a controlled substance, driving with a suspended license, traffic offense with special circumstances, interlock device required, violation of probation at Brown Street. Adult arrested.

2/25/21^[SEP]4:37 p.m. Exhibiting a deadly weapon, not a firearm; violating probation; served with felony and misdemeanor arrest warrants at South Main and Burnett streets. Adult arrested.^[SEP]2/19/21

2/22/21^[SEP]10:10 a.m. Served a misdemeanor arrest warrant at Morris and Johnson streets. Adult arrested.^[SEP]9:38 p.m. Registration of a transient at Laguna Park Way and Mckinley

Street. Adult arrested.

5:07 a.m. Possession of obscene material depicting sexual conduct involving a minor, at Laguna Park Way and Mckinley Street. Pending further investigation.

10:03 p.m. Attempted burglary, at North Main Street and Keating Avenue. Pending further information.

2/21/21 2:25 p.m. Battery of spouse or companion, violating an ordinance preventing domestic violence, obstructing and resisting a peace officer or emergency medical technician, at Morris and Johnson streets. Adult arrested.

2/7/21 12:41 a.m. Possession of a controlled narcotic and paraphernalia, and served with a misdemeanor arrest warrant, at Sebastopol Avenue. Adult arrested. 2/6/21 1:41 a.m. Driving without a license and without required interlock device, and violation of probation, at Sebastopol Avenue and Morris Street. Adult arrested.

2/2/21 5:27 p.m. Disorderly conduct involving alcohol at Morris Street and Laguna Park Way. Adult arrested.

2/1/21 11:41 a.m. Vehicle theft, petty theft and battery on a person at Morris Street and Laguna Park Way. Victim declines prosecution.

01/25/21 1:52 p.m. Vandalism with at least \$1,000 damage at Morris Street and Laguna Park Way. Investigation suspended, leads exhausted.

01/19/21 7:32 p.m Served with misdemeanor and felony arrest warrants, possession of controlled substance paraphernalia and violation of probation at Morris Street and Laguna Park Way. Adult arrested.

01/11/21^[SEP]3:40 a.m. Served a misdemeanor arrest warrant at Weeks Way and Mckinley Street. Adult arrested.

Sebastopol City Council Grand Jury 39 of 43

1/3/21^[SEP]2:11 a.m. Burglary, grand theft of property valued at more than \$950, receiving stolen property valued at more than \$950, carrying a concealed dirk or dagger and violation of probation at Sebastopol Avenue. Adult arrested.

1/2/21^[SEP]5:32 a.m. Possession of child pornography at Laguna Park Way and Mckinley Street. Pending further investigation.

12/29/20^[SEP]12:30 p.m. Battery on a person at Laguna Park Way and Mckinley Street. Referred to District Attorney for review.

News articles:

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sebastopol-council-approves-rv-village-plan-for-homeless-people-who-live/?ref=related>

<https://www.healdsburgtribune.com/sebastopol-rv-park-village-proposal-meets-more-blowback/>

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sebastopol-neighborhood-group-files-lawsuit-to-stop-safe-parking-program-fo/>

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sebastopol-city-council-weighs-new-rv-parking-regulations-raising-alarm-wi/?ref=related>

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sebastopol-takes-first-step-toward-overnight-parking-program-for-homeless-p/?ref=related>

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/woman-dead-in-sebastopol-shooting/>