



April - May, 2024

The City of Sebastopol community newsletter is one way to stay in touch with what's going on in Sebastopol. Our web site, CityofSebastopol.gov is another. It's chock-full of information on City services, public meetings, and community resources. Or, stop by City offices any time we are open!

Finance Matters



Spring Overview

At its March 19 meeting, the City Council received an overview of the City's financial situation (see past meetings on the Meetings page on cityofsebastopol.gov). In a nutshell, the City of Sebastopol faces major long-term budget challenges with our General Fund, which supports most City functions including police, fire, land use, housing, maintenance of parks and facilities, support for non-profits, and administrative functions.

Some takeaways:

- We are on a path to run out of money within three years unless we add revenue and/or reduce spending.
- We've been using funds that we'll receive only once to fund expenses that continue, creating an unsustainable situation.
- Our per capita costs for service are high compared to most other cities in the County; we need to figure out what's driving that and what we can do about it.

We are looking at a \$2 million deficit in next year's budget. The Recommended Budget that the City Council will consider in June will include substantial cuts to help us get on a path to financial sustainability. We know that these will be difficult, but we need a financially strong City in the long run. Our water and sewer funds also have major challenges. The City Council will consider options to address them, likely in April.

To help stay informed of upcoming City Council meetings, agendas, and other news, visit cityofsebastopol.gov and subscribe to e-alerts by clicking the blue "Subscribe" button found on the upper right of every page.

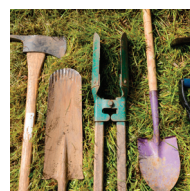
The Dirt on Trash

The City of Sebastopol's contract with its current waste hauler, Recology, expires at the end of this year. Long-term contract proposals from Recology would put Sebastopol's rates 23% above the average of other cities in Sonoma County and increase rates nearly 50% in four years. While the quality of service at Recology is not an issue, the City declined to sign the contract.



Although negotiations over the past several months to protect residents and businesses from these substantial rate increases have been unsuccessful, Recology has agreed to a six-month extension (to June 30, 2025) at the current terms and conditions. The City has begun the process to obtain competitive bids and a better deal for our residents. Read the full staff report here: <https://bit.ly/4c8D8aR>

Celebrate Earth Day Through Laguna Stewardship on April 20



Earth Day is April 22. The Laguna de Santa Rosa, part of which is located on Sebastopol's eastern border, is the largest freshwater wetlands complex on the northern California coast and is Sonoma County's richest area of wildlife habitat. Join the City of Sebastopol and the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation (<http://www.lagunafoundation.org>) to connect with Mother Earth and help protect this valuable natural resource with your time and a little elbow grease. Sebastopol Public Works is taking care of hauling away all the debris collected. This month's Laguna Stewardship Day is at Meadowlark Field on Saturday, April 20, 2024, from 9am to noon. Full details on how to volunteer at the event can be found on the Laguna Foundation's website under Laguna Stewards (http://www.lagunafoundation.org/volunteer_lagunastewards.html) on the Volunteer tab.

Sebastopol Spring Organic Compost Giveaway

The Sebastopol Climate Action Committee will host an organic compost giveaway in May. Home and school gardeners are invited to come to the pick-up site and load their free compost.



Event Details:

Date: Saturday, May 11, 2024

From: 9am – 12pm until the pile is gone

Location: 425 Morris Street Sebastopol - Behind Youth Annex

Free ½ cubic yard per household - self serve, come prepared with shovels, gloves, containers, or truck.

The Sebastopol Climate Action Committee is a group of dedicated citizens in Sebastopol working to address the global climate emergency through local action.

See the Compost Giveaways page on the City's website for more info: <https://bit.ly/3wCfMda>

Apple Blossom Parade and Festival – April 27-28, 2024



The signs of spring are also a sign that the Apple Blossom Parade & Festival are happening soon. This year's theme is "Blossoms in Wonderland." Parade is Saturday April 27. Festival is Saturday and Sunday.

Visit <https://www.appleblossomfest.com> for more information.

Sebastopol Walks Are Back!



See what you've been missing from the driver's seat!

It's the best time of year to enjoy walking in Sebastopol! Be a tourist in your own small town and walk where you've never walked before. Most Walks are the last Saturday of the month starting at 9am (Meet at the Downtown Plaza).

Upcoming Walks:

April 20 – Saturday, 9am

Walkable Sebastopol

Leader: Paul Fritz

May 25 – Saturday, 9am

Music Sebastopol

Leader: Scott King

Visit the Sebastopol Walks page on the City's website for more information and the 2024 schedule: <https://bit.ly/SebastopolWalks>

May is Bike Month and May 16, 2024, is Bike to Work Day



Join the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition and thousands of folks throughout the Bay Area - in a host of cycling activities, challenges, and classes throughout the month of May. Get fit, save money, and have fun.

Visit www.bikesonoma.org/btwd/ for more information.

City of Sebastopol

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