



City of Sebastopol

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: September 2, 2025

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Interim City Manager Mary Gourley
City Council Liaison to Non Profits Mayor Zollman
Responsible Department: City Administration
Subject: Letter of Support for Application to Sonoma County Department of Health Services for: St. Vincent de Paul Society (Gravenstein Commons) (Measure O: Behavioral Health & Homelessness Pathways to Sustainability Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA))

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council, by minute order, authorize the Mayor to sign a Letter of Support for Application to Sonoma County Department of Health Services for: St. Vincent de Paul Society (Gravenstein Commons)

This request is pursuant to the Measure O: Behavioral Health & Homelessness Pathways to Sustainability Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:

1. If item remains on consent, no presentation of item is required. Item would be approved as a consent calendar item.
2. If item is removed from the consent calendar; item would be placed at the end of the regular agenda items for discussion following the process below:
 - a. Presentation of agenda item by Police Chief
 - b. Questions and discussion from Councilmembers
 - c. Public comment period
 - d. Council deliberation and motion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Measure O funding, approved by Sonoma County voters, provides resources for behavioral health programs and initiatives addressing homelessness. The Department of Health Services has issued a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) inviting applications from community-based organizations (CBOs) and local governments that operate programs critical to the behavioral health and homelessness support network.

BACKGROUND:

In 2023, SVdP and the City were awarded \$6.449 million from the California Department of Housing and Community Development to construct Gravenstein Commons, a 22-unit permanent supportive housing community. The project received a building permit in 2025, and foundation work is now underway. It was understood that SVdP would pursue grant opportunities to support long-term permanent supportive housing development.

DISCUSSION:

The project seeks to provide permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals, identified through the Coordinated Entry System, with wraparound services provided by case managers.



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At a 2024 Council meeting, Sonoma County Department of Health Services Director Tina Rivera presented a commitment letter pledging \$3 million in County support as a financial backstop. While this commitment has not yet materialized, Measure O funding offers a vital opportunity for the County to demonstrate its support and ensure the project's success.

The City's letter of support will strengthen SVdP's application to help secure Measure O resources to stabilize this shovel-ready project.

STAFF (RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT) ANALYSIS:

The City Manager's Office recommend Council approval of the letter of support. The Gravenstein Commons project is intended to address homelessness in Sebastopol by transitioning individuals from temporary encampments and the safe parking program into permanent supportive housing. SVdP has agreed to be monitored by the City, including the City's right to request dated bank statements at any time to transparently review available cash on hand and the rate of expenditure. The City's consultant, 8th Wave, has been instrumental in assisting with reporting requirements and oversight. Both SVdP and the City continue to evaluate operational funding opportunities as programs are changing and coming online such as this NOFA.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS/PRIORITIES; AND/OR GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

This agenda item represents the City Council goals/priorities as follows:

Goal 4: HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION

Restoring public trust

Improve Public Communications

Goal 2: PUBLIC SAFETY

Strengthen the public's safety and improve the quality of life. Includes supporting our first responders (police, fire, public works), responding to emergencies, protecting people, property, and businesses, and engaging in emergency preparedness community outreach, public education and prevention activities.

Explore Ways to Address Homelessness

Pursue no additional costs and or low cost solutions to homelessness

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date. The City has also used social media to promote and advertise the City Council Meeting Agenda Items.

As of the writing of this agenda item report, the City has not received public comment. If staff receives public comments following the publication and distribution of this agenda item report, such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting and will be posted to the city website.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with approval of this item.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council, by minute order, authorize the Mayor to sign a Letter of Support for Application to Sonoma County Department of Health Services for: St. Vincent de Paul Society (Gravenstein Commons)

OPTIONS:

The Council can deny the request and provide direction to staff.



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ATTACHMENTS:

Letter of Support

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval:

Approval Date: 8-28-2025

CEQA Determination (Planning):

Approval Date: 8-28-2025

The proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Administrative Services (Financial):

Approval Date: 8-28-2025

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: ☐ Yes ☐ No XX N/A

Account Code (if applicable) _____

City Attorney Approval:

Approval Date: 8-28-2025

City Manager Approval:

Approval Date: 8-28-2025

City Council

Mayor Stephen Zollman
Vice Mayor Jill McLewis
Councilmember Phill Carter
Councilmember Neysa Hinton
Councilmember Sandra Maurer



City of Sebastopol

Agenda Item Number: 10

Interim City Manager

Mary Gourley

mgourley@Cityofsebastopol.gov

September 2, 2025

Sonoma County Department of Health Services
1450 Neotomas Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

RE: Measure O: Behavioral Health & Homelessness Pathways to Sustainability Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

Dear Honorable Members of the Measure O Review Committee,

The City of Sebastopol wishes to submit this letter to you to express our support for the Gravenstein Commons permanent supportive housing community, and to urge you to award the full one million dollars that has been requested.

Our attention to this project began when we had over sixty houseless people living on Morris Street. In conjunction with The Society of St. Vincent de Paul District Council of Sonoma, Incorporated (SVdP), and Sonoma Applied Village Services (SAVS), we identified a suitable place to temporarily provide safe parking for these individuals in one, central location that would not impede the public right of way, nor put our waterways at risk of pollution from unsanctioned dumping. Most importantly, this action provided a safe place for people to park so that they could center themselves and reach for a better life. This was all done with the public understanding that SVdP would then begin applying for grants with the City's support as the co-applicant for this project, so that these folks, and people like them, could have a place to call home in the long term.

Shortly thereafter, SVdP and the City were awarded \$6.449 million from the California Department of Housing and Community Development to begin construction of a 22-unit housing community. At the time, the Sebastopol City Council had a great deal of trepidation about the project, because the City was facing a budget deficit and as co-applicant of this project, want to see the project succeed.

During a 2024 Council meeting, Department of Health Services Director Tina Rivera presented a formal letter to the Council and the public committing \$3 million to the project in the form of a financial backstop to ensure the City would not be at risk, financially. This commitment led the Council to reluctantly vote to press on. However, since then, the County has made no significant steps to follow through on their commitment to the project, the City of Sebastopol, SVdP and, most notably, the people we are collectively trying to help. Lacking this follow-through, Gravenstein Commons has become dependent on the support of the County through such venues as this, granting of funds from Measure O.

Commitments aside, this project is very worthy of your support. As stated, it has received \$6,449,000 in funding already, a building permit has been issued, and the foundation is being poured at the time of this writing. The project seeks to serve the chronically homeless, using the Coordinated Entry System, with wraparound services provided by case managers. This project is shovel ready and worthy of your support.

We thank you for your consideration. Your support will help to ensure the viability of this project and provide rapid housing relief to people in need in our area.

Sincerely,

Stephen Zollman
Mayor
City of Sebastopol