### CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: August 5, 2025

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**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: Luke Lindenbusch, AICP, Interim Supervising Planner (4LEAF, Inc.)

**Subject:** California Cultural District Grant Application

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#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council adopt the Resolution authorizing the Interim City Manager to sign forms and documents required for submittal of a California Cultural District Grant Application to the California Arts Council (CAC).

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This staff report provides the final update to City Council on Sebastopol's application to the California Arts Council's 2025 Cultural District Program. The California Arts Council (CAC) in May 2025 announced the opening of the application period for the 2025 Cultural Districts grant program. This initiative will select up to 10 new state-designated cultural districts, expanding the original cohort established in 2017. These cultural districts represent vibrant, creative communities across California, driving cultural, economic, and social vitality.

The Cultural Districts program helps communities harness their unique cultural assets to stimulate local economies, attract tourism, preserve historic sites, and support vibrant, inclusive creative economies. Districts are selected through a rigorous, equity-centered application process that emphasizes authentic community partnerships, vision clarity, and demonstrated cultural depth.

With applications due by August 7, 2025, the Cultural Districts program offers grants up to \$10,000 over a two-year period, official state certification, technical assistance, and access to joint marketing and branding resources.

The application has been developed through a series of Public Arts Committee (PAC) workshops held on June 10, July 9, and July 22, and includes a proposed district geography, branding identity, and cultural asset inventory. The proposed name, "Sebastopol Core Arts District," reflects both the centralized nature of Sebastopol's creative assets and its cultural heritage. Staff seeks final input ahead of submitting the application following Council action at this meeting.

#### **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

The Public Arts Committee (PAC) held an initial discussion on June 10, 2025 to refine the recommendation to the City Council that the City pursue designation under the California Cultural District Program. The program provides formal recognition, statewide promotional support, and potential access to future state arts funding.

The PAC convened again on July 9 and July 22, 2025 to guide application development. These workshops resulted in a recommended district boundary defined as a 3000-foot radius from the Sebastopol Mario Savio Free Speech Plaza and an initial consensus around branding the area as the Sebastopol Core Arts District, or Sebastopol Core Arts and Culture District. The use of the word "core" references both the literal concentration of artistic and cultural activity in the Downtown core and the City's agricultural heritage, particularly the iconic Gravenstein apple.



The July 22 meeting formalized PAC recommendations for two Cultural District names:

- Sebtown Core Sebastopol Arts and Culture District
- SebTown: The Core of Arts & Heritage

Staff concurrently developed a detailed inventory of Sebastopol's cultural assets through coordination with the PAC and outreach to artists, cultural producers, and key community stakeholders. The asset inventory documents the diversity and vibrancy of Sebastopol's cultural life, from public art installations and historic resources to performance venues and gastronomic destinations.

#### STAFF ANALYSIS:

The California Cultural District Program offers an opportunity to elevate Sebastopol's existing arts and cultural identity through a statewide framework that supports place-based cultural development. The PAC's proposed district boundary encompasses the heart of the City's cultural activity and reflects a balance between geographic inclusivity and the program's emphasis on a distinct, concentrated cultural zone.

The proposed names—"Sebtown Core – Sebastopol Arts and Culture District" and "SebTown: The Core of Arts & Heritage"—both reflect the City's desire to celebrate local identity, honor its historical roots, and present a unified and compelling narrative to the State and broader public. Staff supports continued community engagement around final naming and branding to ensure resonance with both residents and visitors.

The cultural asset inventory developed in collaboration with the PAC reveals a robust ecosystem of artistic and heritage-based activity. This includes but is not limited to:

- Public art installations, murals, and sculptures
- Historic landmarks and preservation zones
- Performance and exhibition venues
- Arts education institutions and artist collectives
- Festivals, markets, and gastronomic offerings rooted in local culture

This diverse and deeply embedded cultural infrastructure positions Sebastopol as a strong candidate for designation under the State's program. Moving forward, staff recommends the City Council endorse the PAC's efforts and authorize continued development of the application, with attention to refining branding, narrative cohesion, and integration of equity and inclusion metrics as outlined in the program guidelines.

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

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

- Goal 5, Action 7: Diversify City Revenue Base
- Goal 5, Action 9: Grants from Regional Bodies

This agenda item represents the City Council General Plan Consistency:

- CD 4: Support Art of All Types Throughout the Community
- CHW 5: Support Cultural Diversity as a Key Component of a Healthy Community

#### FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with the action to support an application for California Cultural District designation. Preparation of the application has been conducted by City staff. If the City is selected for designation, it may receive a baseline annual stipend historically ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000, with the



potential for significantly higher grant awards depending on available state funding. However, all state funding is contingent on a one-to-one local match, meaning the City would need to allocate or secure matching funds equal to any state-provided grant amount in order to receive those funds. The designation may also increase the City's competitiveness for future arts-related grants and could reduce marketing and promotional costs due to state-provided materials and support. Any future costs associated with implementing or expanding arts programming within the designated district would be subject to separate Council review and appropriation.

#### 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 scheduled 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. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties 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.

#### **RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and provide direction on the City's final application for the California Cultural District Program, including branding, asset inventory, and defined district geography, as prepared in coordination with the Public Arts Committee. Authorize staff to submit the finalized application by the August 7, 2025 deadline.

#### CITY COUNCIL OPTION(S):

- 1. Provide final input on content, branding, geography, or asset list, and direct staff to revise and submit.
- 2. Decline to proceed with application submission.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

1-Draft California Cultural District Grant Application

2-List of Cultural Assets

3-Proposed Cultural District Boundary

4-Letters of Support

#### **APPROVALS:**

Department Head Responsible for Agenda Item: Approval Date: 7/31/2025
CEQA Determination (Community Development/Planning): Approval Date: 7/31/2025
The action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
Administrative Services (Financial): Approval Date: 7/31/2025

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

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: 7/31/2025
City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 7/31/2025

# City of Sebastopol Draft California Cultural District Grant Application

### I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

### **Grant Request Amount:**

\$10,000

Provide a brief summary of your proposal indicating how CAC grant funds would be used. This description will be used to introduce your proposal to the review panel. If funded, this description may be used as the Scope of Work in your grant contract and will be binding. It may also be edited by CAC and used to summarize your proposal in public documents.

This proposal seeks grant funds to support Sebastopol's Cultural District by advancing key projects that enhance community vibrancy and sustainability. Funds will be used to develop coordinated marketing and event programming that unites local arts organizations and expands outreach. Grants will be focused on available matching funds to support the creation of visually striking, functional stormwater infrastructure that doubles as public art. Funding will also enable partnerships with local schools to produce student-led public art installations, fostering youth engagement. Resources would be allocated for community branding efforts, such as Main Street banners celebrating the district designation. These investments will strengthen the district's identity, increase cultural participation, and promote economic development through inclusive, creative initiatives.

#### II. ORGANIZATION DETAILS

Organization details cover administrative and financial information necessary to certify the City organization with the California Arts Council.

Organization's Mission Statement and Purpose: The City of Sebastopol is committed to maintaining a high quality of life for current and future members of our community, through excellent public service and careful stewardship of its financial, human and natural resources. Sebastopol derives its sense of place from its history and role in Sonoma County. Linking the urbanized area of central Sonoma County with the rural western county of large dairy farms and apple orchards, Sebastopol functions as a market center: a town which serves the surrounding region, from Guerneville and the River area, to Graton, Bodega, and Bloomfield. Sebastopol's agricultural heritage and semirural surroundings state, "this is a country town." The community's vision of itself also reflects the surrounding

landscape. Atascadero Creek and Ragle Ranch Regional Park mark the City boundaries on the west and the eastern boundary is defined by the scenic wetlands of the Laguna de Santa Rosa. Large expanses of open space, hills and trees frame the manmade environment of streets, residential neighborhoods, parks and community facilities. Sebastopol's residents want to retain its small town feeling and rural character: a safe, friendly and personal environment where neighbors know each other and merchants greet their customers by first names. The City government is entrusted with the stewardship of the community and its resources in a manner consistent with community priorities.

Organization's Core Programs and Services: The City of Sebastopol provides a range of public services that reflect its values of community engagement, sustainability, and creative expression. Core municipal functions include public safety, infrastructure maintenance, land use planning, environmental stewardship, economic development, and community services. These essential operations are guided by a commitment to responsive governance, public participation, and long-term resilience. Sebastopol is distinguished by its vibrant arts and culture programs, which enrich community life and reflect the City's unique identity. The Public Arts Committee, a City Council-appointed body, supports the integration of art into public spaces and facilitates opportunities for local artists to engage the community. The Committee oversees the Community Sculpture Garden, an evolving outdoor gallery in Ives Park that features rotating public art installations from regional artists, promoting cultural dialogue and accessible art experiences. The Facade Improvement Program offers financial assistance to local business and property owners to revitalize commercial buildings with design upgrades that contribute to Sebastopol's eclectic and artistic downtown character. These efforts support local creativity, economic vitality, and place-based identity. Applicable development projects support a funding mechanism that requires either the commissioning of art or payment into a Public Art Fund equal to 1% of construction costs. These funds have been used for projects including the creation of entryway art to demarcate the City's gateways along state highway routes. Together, these programs reflect Sebastopol's belief that public investment in the arts strengthens community bonds, supports the local economy, and enhances the aesthetic and cultural quality of civic life. The City remains committed to nurturing a creative ecosystem that engages residents, attracts visitors, and celebrates the spirit of Sebastopol.

### III. CENTERING EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Describe your organization's equity and accessibility goals.

The City of Sebastopol embraces equity and accessibility as core values guiding civic planning, decision-making, and public investment. Rooted in the City's General Plan, these

goals reflect a long-standing commitment to social and environmental justice, inclusion, and the well-being of all community members, regardless of age, income, race, ability, or background.

The Community Health and Wellness Element articulates clear equity goals, calling for policies that reduce disparities in access to housing, transportation, education, recreation, and cultural resources. It promotes the creation of safe, inclusive public spaces and programming that reflect the diverse needs of Sebastopol residents. Equity is further reinforced through Land Use and Housing Elements that support affordable, accessible housing near services and transit, enabling all residents to participate fully in community life.

Accessibility is also embedded in Sebastopol's approach to infrastructure and design. The Circulation Element supports universal design principles in streets, sidewalks, and public facilities to ensure mobility for people with disabilities, older adults, and families with young children. The City's capital improvement and streetscape projects incorporate ADA-compliant upgrades, improved crosswalks, and accessible transit stops.

In the cultural sphere, Sebastopol's Public Arts Committee, Community Cultural Center, and related programs work to expand access to creative expression. City-supported initiatives strive to remove physical, economic, and social barriers to participation in the arts, prioritizing inclusion in program design and venue accessibility. Public outreach efforts are also designed to engage historically underserved groups.

#### What does your organization do to achieve these goals?

To advance its equity and accessibility goals, the City of Sebastopol takes a proactive, multi-faceted approach grounded in planning, community engagement, and inclusive service delivery. The City integrates equity considerations into long-range planning documents such as the General Plan and Capital Improvement Program to ensure that infrastructure investments and policies prioritize access for all residents.

City departments routinely evaluate public facilities and services for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and improvements are made through ongoing capital projects, such as sidewalk repairs, accessible curb ramps, and inclusive park amenities. The City also pursues grant funding to support these enhancements.

Sebastopol's Public Arts Committee promotes equity through open, inclusive calls for public art and encourages projects that reflect community diversity. Arts programming supported by the City prioritizes physical and economic accessibility, with free or low-cost opportunities and ADA-compliant venues.

The City actively engages the public through accessible meetings, outreach in multiple formats, and partnerships with local nonprofits serving people with disabilities and underserved communities. These collaborations help identify barriers and guide improvements in programs, facilities, and communications.

#### How does your organization determine progress in achieving these goals?

The City of Sebastopol tracks progress toward its equity and accessibility goals through a combination of internal assessments, community feedback, and compliance reviews. Regular evaluations of capital projects such as sidewalk upgrades, facility retrofits, and public space improvements ensure alignment with ADA standards and universal design principles.

Community input plays a central role in measuring impact. The City gathers feedback through public workshops, surveys, and direct engagement with residents. Proactive engagement encourages input from a broad range of community members including people with disabilities, older adults, low-income households, and other historically underrepresented groups. This feedback helps the City identify barriers, adjust programming, and prioritize future investments.

Sebastopol actively monitors participation rates across its diverse cultural and community services to gauge the impact of its outreach efforts. Local organizations regularly collect detailed attendance data and participant feedback during their events and activities. This data collection helps assess whether programs are reaching a broad cross-section of the community, including individuals with disabilities, seniors, and other historically underrepresented groups.

To enhance coordination among these organizations, targeted grant funding can play a pivotal role. Grants support investments in collaborative projects that synchronize community engagement strategies across departments and partner agencies. This additional funding can not only improve the quality and consistency of participation monitoring, but also enable organizations to share best practices and enhance collaboration. The insights gained from these coordinated efforts inform ongoing planning and policy revisions, ensuring that cultural and civic programs continuously evolve.

Staff review City policies periodically for equity and accessibility implications, including zoning, transportation planning, and community development initiatives. Progress is reported through staff reports to City Council, updates to strategic plans, and grant program evaluations. These efforts collectively help Sebastopol refine its approach, address emerging challenges, and ensure that goals for equity and accessibility continue to translate into measurable community outcomes.

# Describe your organization's approach to ensuring that people with disabilities are able to fully participate in all programs and services.

The City of Sebastopol is committed to fostering an inclusive community where people of all abilities can fully participate in civic life, including arts and cultural programs. This commitment is reflected in the City's General Plan goals and policies, which emphasize accessibility, equity, and universal design.

The City's Public Arts Committee actively promotes diversity and inclusion in public art, supporting projects that are accessible in both location and experience. The Sebastopol Community Cultural Center and the Ives Park Complex offer adaptive facilities and inclusive programming to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy performances, classes, and exhibitions. The Community Sculpture Garden, with its open-air design, provides accessible opportunities for interaction with public art. The landscape was transformed at Sebastopol City Hall & Library, to create Our Front Yard: Sebastopol Living History Garden. The landscape design tells the history of Sebastopol in four distinct areas: indigenous plants, food crops, a Luther Burbank-inspired section, and water-efficient plantings. Farther west, Luther Burbank Gardens are accessible to the public to relive the history and culture of Sebastopol.

Sebastopol's Circulation Element prioritizes accessible pedestrian networks and barrier-free transit connections to ensure that individuals with mobility impairments can reach public destinations. The Community Health and Wellness Element promotes social inclusion through policy directives that encourage programming for people with disabilities and participation in arts, recreation, and community events.

City policies align with ADA standards, and capital improvement projects are reviewed for accessibility compliance. The City continues to invest in infrastructure and facilities that remove barriers, providing residents and visitors of all abilities the opportunity to access public art and traverse the Downtown core with accessibility and mobility.

Sebastopol's inclusive approach ensures that arts and cultural experiences are not only physically accessible but also socially and creatively welcoming to individuals of all abilities.

### IV. PARTNERSHIPS

Explain the background, role, and resources contributed to the district by the non-profit arts organization.

The City of Sebastopol actively partners with arts and cultural organizations in the proposed Cultural District anchored by the Downtown Core to support a vibrant, creative

community. Through its Public Arts Committee and staff liaisons, the City collaborates with groups such as the Sebastopol Center for the Arts, Sebastopol Community Cultural Center, and local galleries to promote inclusive programming, public art installations, and community events. The City also provides logistical and promotional support for festivals, such as Peace Town Summer Concert Series, exhibitions, and cultural initiatives that activate downtown spaces.

The formation of a formal arts district would build on this foundation by fostering deeper collaboration through structured stakeholder engagement and strategic planning. By bringing together artists, organizations, businesses, and residents, the arts district initiative would identify shared goals, such as improving access, coordinating programming, enhancing visibility, and increasing equitable participation. Strategic planning would guide investments in infrastructure, marketing, and shared resources, while also exploring opportunities for grant funding, joint events, and cross-promotion. This focused effort would elevate Sebastopol's cultural identity, strengthen its creative economy, and ensure that downtown remains a welcoming and inspiring destination for all.

# Explain the background, role, and resources contributed to the district by the local government partner.

The City of Sebastopol brings a strong track record of public support for the arts and a deep commitment to equity, accessibility, and community engagement as a foundational partner in the formation of a California Cultural District. As the local government partner, the City plays a convening role to connect artists, cultural organizations, businesses, and residents to collaboratively shape the vision and framework for the district.

Through its Public Arts Committee, Community Development Department, and liaison relationships with local organizations, the City facilitates coordination, supports inclusive stakeholder outreach, and helps guide strategic planning. City staff provide administrative and planning expertise, ensure alignment with General Plan goals, and contribute knowledge of relevant policies, zoning, and capital projects that affect the cultural landscape.

The City also contributes tangible resources, including in-kind support such as meeting space, communications infrastructure, grant writing assistance, and promotional tools. When possible, the City allocates funds from its general budget or outside grants to support public art, placemaking projects, and community programming.

In partnership with the community, the City will help develop the Cultural District's goals, governance model, and implementation strategies to ensure the process is inclusive, transparent, and grounded in the creative and civic values of Sebastopol.

# Explain the background, role, and resources contributed to the district by the local business association or community development corporation.

In the first phase of forming a Cultural District, the City of Sebastopol would collaborate closely with the Chamber of Commerce (who recently merged with the former Sebastopol Downtown Association) to build a strong foundation for the initiative. This partnership would begin with joint outreach efforts to engage local businesses, artists, cultural organizations, and residents, ensuring broad community input and support.

The City and Chamber (Downtown Association), and would co-host public workshops, listening sessions, and stakeholder meetings to identify shared priorities, opportunities, and challenges within the district. Together, they would develop a collaborative vision and goals that balance cultural vitality with economic development.

The City would provide logistical support and coordination, while the Downtown Association and Chamber would leverage their relationships with local merchants and entrepreneurs to foster participation and promote district activities. This partnership would also explore funding opportunities, including matching funds for the California Cultural District grant, to support early planning and activation projects.

By combining the City's planning expertise with the Downtown Association's and Chamber's business networks and advocacy, the inaugural phase would establish a united leadership structure, build momentum, and set the stage for a sustainable, community-driven Cultural District.

# List any anticipated district community members beyond the core partners and how you intend to collaborate with each.

Beyond the core partners, anticipated community members of the Cultural District include individual artists, musicians, craftspeople, writers, and other cultural producers who contribute to Sebastopol's vibrant creative ecosystem. Local galleries, performance venues, studios, and small creative businesses also play vital roles, as do educators, youth groups, and nonprofit organizations engaged in arts and culture.

The City intends to collaborate with these diverse stakeholders through inclusive and ongoing community engagement. This will include public workshops, listening sessions, artist roundtables, and online forums designed to gather input, foster dialogue, and build consensus. Partnerships with local music venues and galleries will help coordinate programming and cross-promote events. Collaboration with educators and youth groups will focus on expanding arts education and youth-led cultural projects. The City will also work closely with creative entrepreneurs and small businesses to support economic development and shared marketing efforts.

Recognizing Sebastopol and West Sonoma County as a hub for independent cultural producers, the City's approach centers on creating accessible platforms for participation and co-creation. This community-driven process will ensure the Cultural District reflects the diversity of local voices, nurtures creative innovation, and strengthens connections among artists, audiences, and the broader public. Community engagement will be foundational to all phases of the district's formation and ongoing evolution.

Identify the personnel who will be dedicated (full or part-time) to district operations and planning. Provide the name, affiliation, experience, and role of each individual.

The City of Sebastopol's Community Development Department is a multidisciplinary team with expertise in planning, economic development, grant administration, and community engagement. Community Development staff manage land use, zoning, and long-range planning efforts that shape the City's growth while ensuring alignment with community values and sustainability goals.

Led by the Community Development Director and supported by a team of planners, the department plays a central role in securing and administering grants that fund infrastructure, public art, and cultural projects. This proactive administration ensures compliance with funding requirements and maximizing resource use. Economic development expertise strengthens local businesses and fosters a vibrant downtown by supporting initiatives that promote creative industries and cultural tourism.

Community and stakeholder development is a key focus, with staff skilled in facilitating public outreach, convening diverse groups, and building partnerships. These capabilities are essential for managing collaborative projects within the Cultural District, where input from artists, residents, and businesses must be integrated into planning and implementation to identify key priorities and support a flourishing public arts ecosystem.

In partnership with the Public Arts Committee and core stakeholders, the Community Development Department will provide comprehensive oversight and technical support for the Cultural District.

Two Year Budget Snapshot: Complete a two-year Budget Snapshot table by clicking the button below. Provide revenue and expense amounts. Address any significant changes in line items from one year to the next and explain anticipated surpluses or deficits.

This table details the City's revenue and expenditures found in the FY 2025-2026 budget.

### V. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL IMPACT

#### **Cultural District Type**

Suburban

#### **Cultural District Focus**

Cultural Production and Cultural Heritage

Provide information on any district overlap with other local, regional or federal designations.

Sebastopol's core area, central to the proposed Cultural District, overlaps with several key designations that highlight its cultural, historic, and civic value. Notably, the area includes multiple properties listed or eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources, such as the George A. Strout House, a prominent Queen Anne-style residence that reflects Sebastopol's early 20th-century architectural heritage. Several buildings within the Downtown Core Historic Overlay District also retain original facades and historic character, contributing to the area's visual identity and sense of place.

These historic assets anchor the cultural narrative of downtown Sebastopol and offer opportunities for interpretation, storytelling, and adaptive reuse. Sebastopol's historic train depot has been adaptively reused as the home of the West County Museum, operated by the Western Sonoma County Historical Society. Such assets also align with the goals of the Cultural District by preserving community heritage while activating historic spaces for arts, events, and public life.

In addition to historic landmarks, the core area includes civic institutions like City Hall and the Sebastopol Regional Library, both of which showcase galleries and sculptures, cultural and active public spaces like the Sebastopol Plaza. Sebastopol is a designated Cittaslow city, acknowledging a commitment to agriculture, locally made products, the arts, and hospitality, while promoting local culture and heritage, new technologies, and connectivity between community members and organizations. The proposed District is complete with walkable corridors and bike routes, making it highly accessible to visitors and residents alike.

Describe the types of space for artists, arts organizations and cultural activities currently present in the district. Include the facilities, activities, events, and history that make the district distinct.

Sebastopol's cultural identity is deeply rooted in the history of the native Pomo people, the original stewards of the land. The nearby Laguna de Santa Rosa is a vibrant wetland and

cultural site partially located within the proposed Cultural District. The Laguna remains central to the region's heritage, reflecting centuries of Pomo connection to the environment, traditional practices, and community life. This rich indigenous history forms the foundation for Sebastopol's culture and ongoing relationship with the land.

The Gravenstein apple, once the backbone of Sebastopol's agricultural economy, continues to shape its identity by linking historic orchards to today's farmers markets, cideries, and farm-to-table dining, anchoring the town's transformation into a vibrant gastronomic destination rooted in local heritage. This enduring connection to the land informs Sebastopol's broader cultural heritage and creative expression.

Sebastopol's uniqueness lies in the seamless integration of its agricultural past with a flourishing culture of artistic production. The City's historic roots remain visible in its landscape and community values, inspiring celebrations, festivals, and public art that honor this legacy. These cultural expressions foster a strong sense of place and continuity, connecting residents and visitors to the natural environment and local history.

Artistic production in Sebastopol reflects deep connection to heritage, blending traditional crafts with contemporary creativity. Public spaces, performances, and exhibitions frequently draw upon themes of nature, sustainability, and community resilience. The City's cultural life is characterized by collaboration and inclusivity, encouraging diverse voices and innovative practices that enrich the local identity.

Sebastopol's commitment to preserving agricultural and cultural legacy while embracing new forms of creative expression makes it a distinctive destination. Its blend of history, food culture, and the arts offers a compelling narrative of place that celebrates both tradition and innovation, inviting all to experience a vibrant community shaped by its heritage and its creativity.

## Describe the ways in which the community is currently engaged in the district and its activities.

The Sebastopol community is actively engaged in the life of the emerging Cultural District through a vibrant mix of festivals, arts programming, and education. Each summer, the Peacetown Concert Series draws hundreds of residents and visitors to Ives Park for free weekly concerts, featuring local musicians and creating a lively, multigenerational gathering space. The Barlow District holds free concerts in summer months, adding to the City's robust musical offerings offered at venues like the Hopmonk Tavern and Soft Medicine Sanctuary and in regular jam sessions and drum circles in the Town Square. In the spring, the beloved Apple Blossom Parade and Festival animates Main Street and the town's parks with music, performances, and art. The Sebastopol Center for the Arts hosts

the Apple Blossom Art Show in conjunction with the festival, showcasing dozens of local artists and offering free admission to the public.

Sebastopol's Rialto Theater hosts the annual OUTwatch Film Festival, showcasing LGBTQI+ films that celebrate queer stories and community, and the Sonoma County Jewish Film Festival. Both festivals foster inclusion, dialogue, and cultural connection through cinema in the heart of the Cultural District. Throughout the year, Sebastopol's schools integrate visual and performing arts into classroom activities and community events, supported by local nonprofits and cultural institutions and a robust volunteer network.

The Sebastopol Center for the Arts and the Senior Center both offer robust volunteer programs that invite community members to be actively involved in the programming of the proposed District, including through The Legacy, beloved community-run resale shop offering carefully sorted, responsibly priced donated yarns, fabrics, sewing notions, and craft supplies, with all proceeds supporting the Sebastopol Area Senior Center's programs and services. Chimera Arts strengthens creative education through hands-on workshops in ceramics, textiles, and maker technologies, serving both youth and adults.

Please describe the process your team used to identify and compile your cultural asset inventory. Include how you engaged the community and ensured a comprehensive and inclusive representation of cultural assets.

The City of Sebastopol's Community Development Department undertook a comprehensive inventory of cultural assets in support of the formation of a California Cultural District. This process was guided by a collaborative approach that combined staff research with direct community input. Over the course of three dedicated meetings with the City's Public Arts Committee, culminating on July 22, 2025, staff worked with committee members to identify and map existing cultural resources. These included public art installations, performance venues, galleries, creative businesses, makerspaces, and key community gathering places. Committee members contributed local knowledge and context, ensuring the inventory reflected both formal institutions and informal cultural spaces that play a role in Sebastopol's creative ecosystem.

In parallel, City staff conducted targeted outreach to cultural and business leaders throughout Sebastopol. These included representatives from key cultural institutions, as well as local artists, educators, and venue operators. Stakeholders were invited to provide letters of support for the California Cultural District designation, offering insight into the breadth and depth of cultural activity throughout the community.

The resulting asset inventory captures Sebastopol's unique blend of historic, artistic, and civic spaces and highlights the strong connections between its creative and economic life.

### VI. DISTRICT VISION AND PLANNING

Identify the key issues and opportunities facing the district and how the cultural district designation will address them.

Sebastopol's Cultural District faces several key challenges that a formal designation will help address through coordinated planning, expanded visibility, and community engagement. Although the City is home to a rich network of arts and cultural organizations, there is currently a lack of centralized marketing and limited opportunities for collaboration. Many initiatives operate independently without shared platforms or coordinated marketing. The first phase of the Cultural District will prioritize bringing these groups together through workshops and convenings to build relationships, identify shared goals, and develop joint promotional strategies.

The City is also navigating a fiscal crisis and is seeking new sources of revenue to spur economic resilience. Arts-based tourism offers a clear opportunity to generate revenue, support small businesses, and draw visitors to downtown Sebastopol. With its walkable core and cultural programming, the City is well-positioned to expand its reach and impact through state recognition and support.

The broader Sonoma County economy has historically centered around wine tourism, but a designated Cultural District can help diversify Sebastopol's economic base by elevating the arts and attracting new audiences seeking a diversity of local experiences in addition to a thriving range of experiences relating to wine and agriculture.

The District could further strengthen the diversity of Sebastopol's arts community. Sebastopol's existing arts programming attracts talent from international exhibitors and visitors alike, and a community deeply rooted in local context with a global outlook would continue to provide a culturally resonant and relevant sense of place through a Cultural District designation.

# Describe how the community's existing residents will benefit from district designation.

Existing residents of Sebastopol will benefit from Cultural District designation through enhanced access to diverse arts and cultural programs that foster community connection and well-being. The district will promote inclusive events and spaces that welcome people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, strengthening social cohesion. By supporting local artists and creative businesses, the district will help sustain livelihoods and create new job opportunities within the community. Improved collaboration among cultural organizations will lead to richer programming and more affordable, accessible cultural experiences. The

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district's focus on placemaking and public art will enhance the quality and vibrancy of public spaces, contributing to residents' pride in their neighborhood. Through arts-based economic development, residents will also see increased investment in local infrastructure and services without sacrificing the community's unique character. Overall, the designation empowers residents to actively shape and celebrate Sebastopol's creative identity, improving quality of life while preserving the City's welcoming and inclusive spirit.

# Describe vision for the next five years for the district and how designation would support the realization of that vision.

Over the next five years, Sebastopol's Cultural District envisions becoming a dynamic, inclusive hub where arts, culture, and community intersect to enrich residents' lives and attract visitors. Central to this vision is the development of coordinated marketing and event programming that unites diverse organizations and showcases the district's unique creative offerings. By pooling resources and aligning outreach, the District will amplify its visibility locally and regionally, fostering a stronger sense of place and cultural identity.

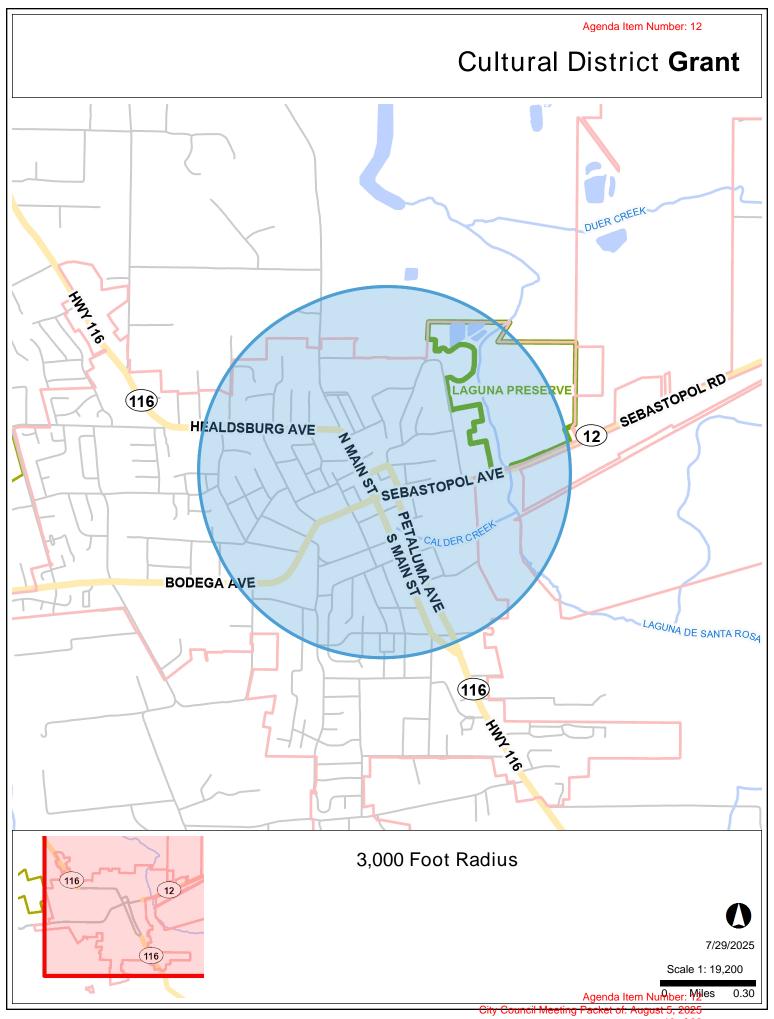
Key initiatives will support this growth. The City plans to partner with stakeholders like the nearby Barlow District to design and implement aesthetically compelling stormwater infrastructure that doubles as public art, enhancing environmental sustainability while enriching the urban landscape. Collaboration with local schools will expand opportunities for student-produced public art, integrating youth voices into the district's cultural fabric and fostering creative learning.

The City will continue promoting its identity through Main Street banners and other public displays that celebrate the Cultural District designation and highlight its broad range of offering, from galleries and performance spaces to festivals and culinary experiences. This ongoing public presence will build community pride and encourage the participation of both locals and visitors to come together and experience all that Sebastopol has to offer.

Designation as a California Cultural District will be instrumental in realizing the vision of the City as a creative hub by providing access to State funding and technical assistance. It will formalize partnerships, strengthen marketing efforts, and support innovative projects that connect art, culture, and community development.

			Cultural Asset Inventory
CATEGORY	ASSETS	LOCATION	, NOTES/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Places	Sebastopol Center for the Arts	282 S High St, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Offers free art classes, camps, open studios, offers a free documentary film festival with very diverse showings, has national and international art exhibits, and a new ADA entrance
Places	Sebastopol Area Senior Center	167 N High St, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Offers classes and provides a free art gallery
Events - Current	Sebastopol Walks	Districtwide	Offers access to history, food, art, and culture
Events - Current	Peace Town Concert Series		Weekly summer concert series featuring live music, local vendors, and community gathering in Ives Park
Public Art Public Art	Florence Avenue - Patrick Amiot Sculptures	Florence Avenue, Sebastopol, CA 95472 Ives Park, S High Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Whimsical neighborhood sculpture walk featuring recycled art installations by local artist Patrick Amiot along Florence Avenue
Public Art	Community Sculpture Garden	ives Park, 5 High Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Rotating outdoor exhibition space showcasing public sculptures by regional artists in Ives Park  Located near the eastern entrance to downtown since 2024, the Spire stands 28 feet tall and shimmers when the breeze comes up — the result of 11,760 reflective bio-based polycarbonate tabs
Public Art	"Sebastopol Spire" - Ned Kahn - East Entrance Sculpture	Highway 12 Bridge (Eastern Gateway of City)	affixed to the stainless steel superstructure
Places - Historic	Laguna de Santa Rosa	East of Sebastopol City Limits	Historic waterway and Pomo cultural site
Events - Current	Holiday Light and Music Show	Analy High School	Free admission, and broadcasted
Public Art	Living Peace Wall	6898 McKinley Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Public art installation honoring individuals who have worked for peace, justice, and nonviolence, located near Sebastopol's Town Plaza
Public Art	Door to Hell	Sebastopol Town Plaza	Publicly accessible sculpture first dedicated in the late 1990s
Public Art	Coyote Mural	195 N Main Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Mural of a coyote at the beach along major thoroughfare. This mural is intended to articulate the Pomo Native American story of the Coyote and the Sonoma Coast.
Public Art	II Carris Manharatti Adiabarat Man Cirarian Library Carristona	Sebastopol Regional Library, 7140 Bodega Ave,	Control of the single
Public Art Public Art	"Gray Matters" - Michael McGinniss - Library Sculpture Park Side Elementary School Mosaic	Sebastopol, CA 95472 Park Side Elementary School (Murphy Avenue)	Stainless-steel labyrinth sculpture installed outside Sebastopol Regional Library, symbolizing creativity and public thought in connection with a civic cultural hub  Aquatic scene mosaic retaining wall made by student artists
Public Art	Park Side Elementary School Mosaic	Analy High School Library, 6905 Analy Ave,	Aquatic scene mosaic retaining wan made by student artists
Public Art	Willard Libby Mural	Sebastopol, CA 95472	Mural honoring Willard Libby, Nobel Prize-winning chemist and Analy graduate
		Analy High School, 6905 Analy Ave, Sebastopol, CA	g
Public Art	Circle of Fifths Harmonic Sculpture	95472	A student-designed installation that blends mathematical and musical concepts, culminating in a public artwork that reflects the school's commitment to interdisciplinary learning
			A striking entrance sculpture at the Joe Rodota Trailhead, crafted from salvaged old-growth redwood and copper, inviting contemplation and symbolizing Sebastopol's dialogue between nature,
Public Art	"Koan" - Bruce Johnson - Sculpture	Joe Rodota Trail, Sebastopol, CA 95472	craftsmanship, and community resilience
Organization	Sebastopol Farmers' Market (Sundays, year-round)	6908 Weeks Way, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Diverse vendors and music performances
Cultural Practices/Events - Current	Sebastopol Community Cultural Center	390 Morris St, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Nonprofit organization offering diverse programming including arts classes, performances, workshops, and community events that foster creativity and cultural engagement
Places	Sebastopol Grange	6000 Sebastopol Ave, Sebastopol, CA 95472 Ragle Ranch Regional Park 500 Ragle Rd, Sebastopol,	A historic civic and event venue, originally built in 1923 by the local Grange chapter, now serving as a hub for community gatherings, local agriculture, and cultural events  Celebrate all things apple, the best local food and drink, top regional music, ag-inspired fun for the whole family, exciting experiences connecting you to your neighborhood farmers and artisans, and
Events - Current/Historic	Gravenstein Apple Fair	CA 95472	Celebrate and unings applie, the best focal flood and unink, top regional music, agrinspired unit of the whole failing, excluding experiences connecting you to your neighborhood failures and actions, and much more! Since 1973.
Events - Current/Historic	Apple Blossom Parade and Fair	Main Street & Ives Park	An annual springtime celebration featuring a festive parade, local artisans, music, food vendors, and the historic Apple Blossom Art Show in Sebastopol's downtown and Ives Parl
Places	West County Museum	261 S Main St, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Rotating exhibits including: Agricultural history, fashion, and dance
	,	Sebastopol Center for the Arts, 282 S High St,	The purpose of AWS is "to foster a spirit of cooperation, exchange of ideas and mutual helpfulness among members; to provide an atmosphere in which individual members can further develop their
Organizations	Art Workshop of Western Sonoma County (AWS)	Sebastopol, CA 95472	art, and provide stimulating programs such as work sessions, instruction, demonstrations, critiques, art exhibits and special events."
			Chimera (pronounced 'Kai-mer-ah') Art Space is a place to unite and empower the North Bay's creative community. A 501(c)(3) non-profit shop and co-op where shared tools, knowledge, and
Places	Chimera Maker's Space	6791 Sebastopol Ave #180, Sebastopol, CA 95472	workspace provide inspiration and opportunity for all.
			A historical and botanical park preserving the experiments of Luther Burbank. Offers community volunteer days every week. During his career, he introduced over 800 varieties of fruits, flowers, vegetables, and grains. He developed many of California's plums and prunes, the ancestor of the Idaho Potato, the Shasta Daisy, and novelties such as plumcots, thornless blackberry, and spineless
Places	Luther Burbank Experiment Farm	7781 Bodega Avenue Sebastopol, CA 95472	regressiones, and grains: the developed many of cantorina's prunts and prunes, the ancestor of the nation rotato, the shasta bassy, and noverties such as pruntous, thormess biackberry, and spinicless cardine.
Places	Ives Park	7400 Willow St. Sebastopol. CA 95472	Centralized park and site of various festivals and events
Places	Sebastopol Community Market	6762 Sebastopol Ave #100, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Hosts free events on their property throughout the year. Employee-owned business
Places	Sebastopol Gallery	150 N Main St, Sebastopol, CA 95472	A cooperative gallery featuring fine art, crafts, and jewelry by Sonoma County artists
Places	Lori Austin Gallery	6790 McKinley St #190, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Showcases contemporary painterly, sculptural, ceramic, and jewelry works by regional, national, and international artists
Places	North Bay Letterpress Arts	925-d Gravenstein Hwy S, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Offers a gallery-style workshop space focusing on fine letterpress and printmaking
Diagos	Articana Functional Art	146 N Main St. Cohastonal, CA 05473	A design to the Chartened houting a character of a circumstance of the control of
Places	Artisana Functional Art	146 N Main St, Sebastopol, CA 95472	A downtown Sebastopol boutique showcasing a curated collective of artisans, offering one-of-a-kind handcrafted jewelry, ceramics, and functional art that blends craftsmanship with everyday use
Places Places Places	Artisana Functional Art The Legacy Create It!	789 Gravenstein Hwy S, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Nonprofit resale shop in Sebastopol offering new and gently used sewing, quilting, knitting, and craft supplies. Operated by the Sebastopol Area Senior Center, all proceeds support senior programs
Places	The Legacy	789 Gravenstein Hwy S, Sebastopol, CA 95472 6906 Sebastopol Ave, Sebastopol, CA 95472 130 S Main St, Sebastopol, CA 95472	
Places Places Places	The Legacy Create It! Retrograde Coffee Roasters	789 Gravenstein Hwy S, Sebastopol, CA 95472 6906 Sebastopol Ave, Sebastopol, CA 95472 130 S Main St, Sebastopol, CA 95472 Analy High School, 6950 Analy Ave, Sebastopol, CA	Nonprofit resale shop in Sebastopol offering new and gently used sewing, quilting, knitting, and craft supplies. Operated by the Sebastopol Area Senior Center, all proceeds support senior program:  Pottery painting studio in Sebastopol offering all-inclusive creative experiences for individuals and groups of all ages  Local coffee shop with rotating artwork for sale
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Events - Current	Barlow Street Fair	Barlow District, McKinley Ave, Sebastopol, CA 95472	A weekly Thursday evening event held from July through September on McKinley Street in Sebastopol, featuring artisan vendors, live music, and family-friendly activities
People	Luther Burbank	7781 Bodega Avenue Sebastopol, CA 95472	Pioneering horticulturist whose innovative plant breeding significantly influenced Sebastopol's agricultural heritage and landscape
People	Charles Schultz	Districtwide - Historic Influence	Creator of the Peanuts comic strip, lived near Sebastopol and drew inspiration from the region's natural beauty for his beloved characters and stories
People	Patrick Amiot	Florence Avenue, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Sebastopol-based artist renowned for transforming discarded materials into whimsical, larger-than-life sculptures that adorn Florence Avenue, turning it into an open-air gallen
People	Jerry Garcia	Districtwide - Historic Influence	Founding member of the Grateful Dead who lived in the Sebastopol area, where the region's vibrant music culture influenced his artistry
•			Nobel laureate and inventor of radiocarbon dating, is honored in Sebastopol through local landmarks such as Willard Libby Park and a mural at Analy High School, reflecting his enduring connection
People	Willard Libby	Districtwide - Historic Influence	the community
•			Created during the 2012 Sculpture Jam, a collaborative community art project. Standing approximately 10 feet tall, it is constructed from natural materials and positioned on two 4x4 concrete pads,
Public Art	Coyote Sculpture	Near the Sebastopol Senior Center	reflecting the area's commitment to public art and community engagement
Public Art	Painted Newspaper Boxes	Districtwide, including Main Street	Led by local Jayne Burns, painted newspaper boxes in Sebastopol are transformed news racks repurposed into vibrant little free libraries, blending public art with community literacy
		St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 500 Robinson Rd,	Grassroots initiative offering over 200 varieties of free, locally grown, open-pollinated seeds to home gardeners. Housed at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, it operates a seed library and garden, and
Cultural Practices	Community Seed Exchange	Sebastopol, CA 95472	hosts educational workshops on seed saving and sustainable gardening practices
Organizations/People	Love Choir	Districtwide, events	Inclusive community singing group that has been "loving the world, one song at a time" since 1997
		St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 500 Robinson Rd,	
Organizations/People	Joyful Noise Gospel Singers	Sebastopol, CA 95472	Interfaith community choir in Sebastopol that uses Black spirituals and civil rights music to foster unity and support social justice causes
		Edman Way (near the parking lot behind City Hall	
Public Art	"To See the World in an Apple Seed" Mural	and the Library)	Mural by Dana Vallarino, done in 2012
		Sebastopol Community Cultural Center, 390 Morris	
Events - Historic	Sebastopol Celtic Festival	St, Sebastopol, CA 95472	Was an annual celebration of Celtic music and culture held in Sebastopol, California, from the mid-1990s until the early 2010s
			Also known as the Herdeljezi Festival, was an annual celebration of Romani culture held in Sebastopol featuring traditional music, dance, and community gatherings; it ceased being held in Sebastop
Events - Historic	Voice of Roma Festival	Ives Park, 7400 Willow Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472	after 2019 but remains active elsewhere



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



Agenda Item Number: 12
Acting City Manager
Assistant City Manager/
City Clerk, MMC
Mary Gourley
mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov

City of Sebastopol

July 28, 2025

California Cultural District Grant Application Committee, California Arts Council

Dear Committee Members,

As Chairperson of the Sebastopol Public Arts Committee, I am writing to provide strong support for the City of Sebastopol's application for designation as a California Cultural District.

Our committee, which reports directly to the Sebastopol City Council, is uniquely positioned to champion the remarkable cultural assets that make our community deserving of this recognition.

#### Sebastopol's Cultural Assets:

- Public sculptures and murals enhancing streetscapes
- Florence Avenue Junk Art by artist Patrick Amiot
- Fine arts galleries, museums, and free art gallery in the Public Library
- Diverse music venues and community-initiated musical jam sessions in the downtown plaza
- Large-scale festivals celebrating arts and community, including Peacetown music festival, Barlow summer concert series, and Sebastopol's Appleblossom Faire, Festival and Parade
- Analy High School arts, music, choral, and drama programs providing performances and artistic contributions
- Active Senior Center contributing to community cultural programming
- Agricultural heritage: Gravenstein apples, wineries, flower farms, diverse produce, and Luther Burbank's Experimental Farm
- Weekly downtown farmers market showcasing local agriculture and Culinary traditions through small farms and fine restaurants
- Indigenous culture

#### Sebastopol Public Arts Committee Commitments:

- Guide grant funding through City Council oversight
- Commission new public art installations within the district
- Hire artists for community-based cultural projects
- Develop branding and promotional materials for district marketing
- Coordinate initiatives encompassing arts, agriculture, history, and cultural heritage

Why Sebastopol Deserves Designation:

- Unique integration of arts and agriculture creating authentic cultural ecosystem
- Strong municipal infrastructure and community support
- Established organizational framework through City government and Public Arts Committee
   Committed leadership ready to maximize Cultural District impact

The Sebastopol Public Arts Committee enthusiastically endorses this application and commits to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure our Cultural District's success and accessibility for all. We believe Sebastopol's distinctive blend of artistic diversity and agricultural heritage creates exactly the kind of authentic cultural destination that the California Cultural District program was designed to support.

Thank you for your consideration of Sebastopol's application.

Sincerely

Jeff Stucker, Chairperson

Sebastopol Public Arts Committee, City of Sebastopol, CA

Maestrobro58@gmail.com

707-318-9202



July 26, 2025

To: California Cultural District Grant Application Committee, California Arts Council

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Jim Corbett and I am writing to support the City of Sebastopol's application for designation as a California Cultural District. Our small town of 8,500 citizens is uniquely positioned to champion the remarkable cultural and artistic assets that make our community deserving of this recognition.

I am the director and organizer of the Peacetown Summer Concert Series that has brought a free community concert series to Sebastopol for the past 13 years. Each year we present live music at Ives Park free of charge to the community, every Wednesday evening in June, July and August. The shows are regularly attended by over 1000 folks each week, who gather to meet neighbors and sing and dance to the music. We present these shows with volunteer help and paid musicians and sound people.

Peacetown seeks to build a community that supports art and music and the cultural diversity of Sebastopol. We are far from the only organization that is promoting these values. We also have Florence Avenue Junk Art by artist Patrick Amiot; the world-class Sebastopol Center for the Arts; an active Community Center that regularly schedules live performing musical acts; and our Analy High School regularly turns out impressive works from the young artists in the area.

As a potential stakeholder in the Cultural District, I believe Sebastopol's distinctive blend of artistic diversity and agricultural heritage creates exactly the kind of authentic cultural destination that the California Cultural District program was designed to support. Thank you for your consideration of Sebastopol's application.

lim Corbett

Peacetown Caretaker

(707)508-5449

### "A Beautiful Place to BE"