

City Council

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



Interim City Manager

Mary Gourley
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City of Sebastopol

September 3, 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,

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Zollman". The signature is written in a cursive style.

AA585927058C4493...
Stephen Zollman

Mayor

City of Sebastopol