

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Mary Gourley](#); [City Council](#); [Phill Carter](#); [Stephen Zollman](#); [Sandra Maurer](#); [Neysa Hinton](#)  
**Subject:** Keeping Commercial Chains out of Downtown  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 16, 2025 7:30:07 AM

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Good morning,

I am highly concerned about the potential for commercial chains being allowed to come into downtown Sebastopol. This directly threatens the identity of our community and the economic viability of small businesses downtown, many of whom are already struggling to stay afloat due to inflation, tariffs and general economic sentiment being down. It's ironic that this is even being brought up for discussion after the meeting last week to further engage and support small businesses - **allowing chains into downtown Sebastopol has the potential to decimate small businesses.**

**Commercial chains benefit financially from scale** - they are able to get better prices on items because they are purchasing enmasse from suppliers that most small businesses cannot afford to shop from due to our size and inability to store many products in bulk over time. This pushes out small businesses who cannot compete on price, even if our quality of service is better.

**Small independent businesses keep more money circulating locally.** We shop from small local makers, local farmers, and reinvest in our community. Chains funnel profits to corporate headquarters, often not located in our community.

**Small businesses are owned by people who live in our community.** We can experiment with new ideas and services because we are intertwined in the community. Chains make every town look and feel the same, when a big part of Sebastopol's identity and what helps us attract visitors and locals alike is that we do not have chains downtown. 10 years ago before I lived here, I visited and was so charmed with Sebastopol and its community of small businesses I not only chose to move here but I chose to open my business here for that reason.

**Small businesses provide better working conditions for our employees** and have stronger connections. We work with our team directly to be able to hear and understand their concerns in ways that big companies simply cannot.

I seriously hope you consider not changing the current downtown ordinance and continue to make decisions that better serve the small business community here. If you want to do some economic gardening, you should not be looking at bringing in large corporations to further threaten the livelihood of existing small businesses.

Thank you,  
Danielle



**Danielle Connor, she/her**  
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