



April-May, 2025

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.

Sebastopol's Financial Outlook: An Overview

City staff and the Council's Budget Committee of Councilmembers Sandra Maurer and Phill Carter are preparing the budget for the next fiscal year, which starts July 1.



The City's fiscal picture has improved over the last year. Voters' approval of the ½ cent sales tax, Measure U, is an important factor. However, because of a competing sales tax measure to support childcare that also passed, we may only receive a ¼ cent from Measure U in the long run. We should know more on this in the coming months.

In the long term, financial sustainability will require the full ½ cent from Measure U, plus another significant source of revenue such as a new hotel. One possibility is the Barlow Hotel, which will be going to the City Council for approval on April 15. The other possibility is Hotel Sebastopol, which the City has approved but has yet to move forward. We can't count on revenue from either hotel until they are further along.

Consolidating our Fire Department with Gold Ridge, which you have recently heard about separately, will also help the City's budget and substantially improve services; we recognize that it comes with an additional parcel tax of \$265/year for the typical home. We continue to look for ways to generate revenue and control expenses.

We invite the public to participate in our budgeting by providing your comments and participating in Council meetings. The schedule and agendas are available on our website.

Fire Service Reorganization Virtual Town Hall April 23

Details will be posted to City Website and Social Media channels. You can also sign up to receive updates from the City via email and text on this and other topics here: cityofsebastopol.gov/our-community/subscribe. Learn more about the reorganization here: cityofsebastopol.gov/SebFireReorg.



Sebastopol Selects Sean McDonagh as New Police Chief

The City of Sebastopol has named Sean McDonagh as its next Chief of Police. McDonagh began his three-year term on March 4, 2025.

A native of Australia, Mr. McDonagh brings a wealth of law enforcement experience, having served as a Police Commander for 10 years and most recently as a Police Chief in Colorado for the past



Outgoing Chief Ron Nelson welcomes new Chief Sean McDonagh. Photo: Laura Hagar Rush, Sebastopol Times.

two years. He holds advanced degrees in law enforcement, executive management, and police leadership and security from institutions in both the U.S. and Australia. Mr. McDonagh has successfully obtained California law enforcement certification through the California Police Officer Standards Board, ensuring his qualifications align with state requirements.

Mr. McDonagh participated in a rigorous selection process. It included interviews with a panel of current or former Police Chiefs, another panel of community leaders, an interview with a former local Chief, and final interviews with the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and prior Police Chief. He comes highly recommended by those who have worked with him elsewhere.

McDonagh's appointment marks a new chapter for Sebastopol's police force, as the city looks to strengthen community partnerships and enhance public safety under his leadership.

See the full Press Release HERE: <https://bit.ly/4h5OYDN>

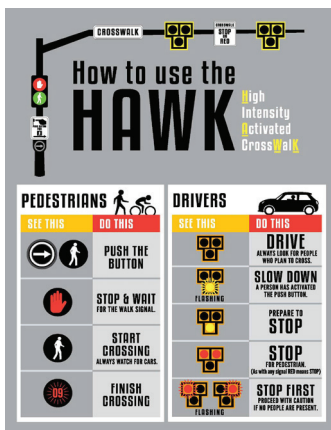
May is Bike Month and May 15, 2025, Is Bike to Work Day



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.

Two New Traffic Signals on Highway 116



Caltrans activated two new traffic signals on State Route 116. They are called High-Intensity Activated Crosswalks (HAWK) and are located at:

- Petaluma Avenue & McKinley Street
- Gravenstein Highway & Danmar Drive

The new signals enhance pedestrian safety by allowing

people to cross Route 116 without walking long distances to standard traffic signals. The beacons remain off until activated by a pedestrian pressing the crossing button. When activated, they display a sequence of flashing and solid lights to alert drivers to stop. The signals are mounted on overhead booms for better visibility.



Following activation, Caltrans made modifications to improve signal performance and driver awareness:

- **Motion Sensor Sensitivity:** Adjusted to reduce accidental activation.
- **Red Light Timing:** Reduced to 6 seconds of solid red followed by 14 seconds of flashing red, meeting minimum safety standards.
- **Visibility Improvements:** Plans are in place to relocate street markings for better driver awareness and add signage explaining proper signal operation.

For more details on how these signals work, visit Caltrans at: <https://bit.ly/Seb116HAWKSignals>.

Sebastopol Spring Organic Compost Giveaway



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

Event Details: Saturday, April 19, 2025

From: 9am – 12pm, or 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.

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

Help Shape the Future of Downtown Sebastopol



The City of Sebastopol is leading a mobility study to enhance the accessibility, safety, and vibrancy of Downtown. We're working to create a more walkable and bike-friendly downtown while easing traffic flow and advancing the City's environmental goals. After gathering community input last fall, we're now focusing on draft alternatives and need your feedback to move forward. Visit our website to learn more, join the project mailing list for updates, and take part in upcoming community engagement events this spring. Your voice matters—let's shape the future of Downtown together! <http://bit.ly/DTSebastopol>

Sebastopol Walks Are Back for Their 17th Year!



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 19 – Saturday, 9am (early due to Apple Blossom Festival)

Trees in Spring, A Walk Around Town – Leader: Virginia Anderegg

May 31 – Saturday, 9am

Exploring the Past, Present, and Future of the Laguna de Santa Rosa – Leader: Anne Morkill

Visit the Sebastopol Walks page on the City's website for more information and the 2025 schedule:

<https://bit.ly/SebastopolWalks>

79th Annual Apple Blossom Parade and Festival – April 26-27

The signs of spring are also a sign that the Apple Blossom Parade & Festival are happening soon. This year's theme is "Flower Power: Peace, Love & Blossoms!" Parade is Saturday April 26. Festival is Saturday and Sunday.

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

