



City of Sebastopol

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: May 19th, 2026

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
Requestor: Sean McDonagh, Police Chief
Responsible Department: Police Department
Subject: Introduction of Ordinance to Adopt Surveillance Use Policy for Safe House Security System at Police Station and Budget Amendment for Safe House Security System

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RECOMMENDATION(s):

That the City Council:

1. Adopt (second reading) an ordinance approving the Surveillance Use Policy for the Safe House Security System at the Police Department;

PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:

1. If the item remains on the Consent Calendar, no presentation is required, and the item will be approved as part of the Consent Calendar.
2. If the item is removed from the Consent Calendar, it will be heard as a regular agenda item and will proceed as follows:
 - a) Presentation by staff
 - b) Council questions and discussion
 - c) Public comment
 - d) Council deliberation and action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This item is presented for second reading and adoption on the consent calendar.

In accordance with Sebastopol Municipal Code Chapter 8.80, the city council must adopt a Surveillance Use Policy by ordinance prior to use of new surveillance technology. Adoption of this ordinance satisfies that requirement. The upgraded system will replace an outdated camera system installed circa 1991 and will significantly improve facility security, incident documentation, and protection of city assets.

BACKGROUND:

The Sebastopol Police Department currently operates with an outdated camera system that lacks modern recording and retrieval capabilities.

Sebastopol Municipal Code Chapter 8.80 requires city council’s approval of a Surveillance Use Policy prior to acquisition and use of new surveillance technology. The Safe House Security System qualifies as new technology due to its recording capabilities; however, the Chief of Police learned on May 7th that the current system did at one time have recording capabilities to VHS. This was voluntarily discarded due to the evolving technology that moved away from VHS but is included here in this staff report in the interests of public transparency and to provide information that the update is to a system that did have recording capabilities at one time.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed system includes:

- High-definition cameras with low-light capability
- Secure digital recording and storage
- Coverage of entrances, lobby, exterior grounds, and parking areas

Video Retention:

Recorded footage will be retained for approximately 90 to 365 days, after which it will be automatically deleted unless required for investigative, evidentiary, or legal purposes and if so required, will be maintained in the police department’s reports management system for the required retention period relating to statutory requirements, policy or as necessary by advice of the District Attorney’s Office.

The system upgrade will:

- Improve facility security
- Enhance documentation of incidents
- Deter criminal activity
- Provide reliable evidence when needed

STAFF ANALYSIS:

Upgrading the police department’s camera system is a necessary investment in public safety infrastructure and aligns with current best practices for municipal police facilities.

Benefits include:

- Improved officer and public safety
- Enhanced investigative capabilities
- Reduced liability exposure
- Protection of city assets
- Increased transparency and accountability

The proposed ordinance complies with Municipal Code Chapter 8.80 and establishes clear policies governing the use, storage, and retention of surveillance data.

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

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

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.

- *Restoring public trust*

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was made available for public review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date. The city has also promoted the council meeting and agenda items through its social media platforms.

As of the writing of this report, the city has not received public comments. Any additional comments received after

publication will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials prior to or at the meeting.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:

That the city council:

1. Adopt (second reading) an ordinance approving the Surveillance Use Policy for the Safe House Security System at the Police Department;

OPTIONS:

Option 1:

Provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Ordinance (Second Reading)

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval:

Approval Date: 5/8/2026

CEQA Determination (Planning):

Approval Date: N/A

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines.

Administrative Services (Financial)

Approval Date: 5/8/2026

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget:

Yes No X N/A

Account Code (if applicable)

City Attorney Approval:

Approval Date: 5/8/2026

City Manager Approval:

Approval Date: 5/8/2026

ORDINANCE NUMBER _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL ADOPTING A SURVEILLANCE USE POLICY AND IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED SAFE HOUSE SECURITY SYSTEM AT THE POLICE STATION

WHEREAS, the City Council previously enacted the Surveillance Technology and Community Safety Ordinance, codified as Chapter 8.80 of the Sebastopol Municipal Code, to govern the City’s use of surveillance technology; and

WHEREAS, Section 8.80.030 requires the City Council to approve (by ordinance) a surveillance use policy, and Section 8.80.050 requires the City Council to approve a surveillance impact report, before the City uses new surveillance technology or uses existing surveillance technology for a purpose, in a manner or in a location not previously approved by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 8.80 defines “Surveillance technology” broadly to include both advanced technology and video cameras; and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance adopts a surveillance use policy and impact report for the safe house security system at the police station; and

WHEREAS, a draft version of the policy and impact report was presented to the City Council on consent during the November 18, 2025 Council meeting; and

WHEREAS, the policy and report have been made available to the public consistent with the requirements of Sebastopol Municipal Code section 8.80.050; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a duly noticed public hearing to consider the proposed ordinance on May 5, 2026, at which time all interested parties had the opportunity to be heard.

NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Recitals. The above recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein by this reference.

SECTION 2. Surveillance Use Policy. The City Council hereby adopts the following surveillance use policy for the safe house security system, or any similar security cameras, at the police station:

- 1. Purpose. The specific purpose(s) that the surveillance technology item is intended to advance.**
The City’s existing surveillance was installed in 1991 and lacks modern recording and retrieval capabilities. The purpose of the new system is to: Protect officers and staff; Ensure the safety of visitors; Secure city owned property; Document incidents for investigations; and Support transparency and accountability

- 2. Authorized Use. The uses that are authorized, and the rules and processes required prior to such use and uses of the surveillance technology that will be expressly prohibited.**
The surveillance system shall only be used for deterring crime, law enforcement investigations, and other official City business related to the protection of City assets and personnel. It shall not be used for any individual’s personal use.

3. **Data Collection. What types of surveillance data will be collected, captured, recorded, intercepted, or retained by the surveillance technology, what types of data may be inadvertently collected during the authorized uses of the surveillance technology, and what measures will be taken to minimize and delete such data.**

The system includes high-definition cameras with night/low-light capability. It will provide coverage of entrances, lobby, exterior grounds, and parking areas. The system records all activity occurring. The system does not include any recognition technology, biometric monitoring, or any other type of advanced technology.
4. **Data Access. The category of individuals who can access or use the collected information, how and under what circumstances data collected with surveillance technology can be analyzed and reviewed, and the rules and processes required prior to access or use of the information.**

The surveillance system shall only be access or used by individuals authorized by the Chief of Police and/or City Manager for the specific authorized uses identified herein.
5. **Data Protection. The general safeguards that protect information from unauthorized access, including encryption and access control mechanisms.**

The system includes access control features allowing for restriction of access to only authorized users. The system supports multi-factor authentication, as well as audit logs to reveal what users have accessed the system. Regular audits will ensure only authorized users will have access to the system data.
6. **Data Retention. The limited time period, if any, that information collected by the surveillance technology will be routinely retained, the reason such retention period is appropriate to further the purpose(s) enumerated in the surveillance use policy, the process by which the information is regularly deleted after that period lapses, and the specific conditions that must be met to retain information beyond that period.**

Recorded video footage will be retained for approximately 90 to 365 days (depending on the camera), after which it will be automatically deleted unless it is required for an investigation, evidentiary purposes, a public records request, or other legal retention requirement. Any footage associated with an incident may be retained longer in accordance with police evidence retention procedures and applicable records laws
7. **Public Access. How collected information can be accessed or used by members of the public, including criminal defendants.**

The City will not release the footage collected by the surveillance system to any member of the public, except when required by law, lawfully issued subpoena, or judicial warrant.
8. **Third-Party Data Sharing. Which governmental agencies, departments, bureaus, divisions, or units may receive data collected by the surveillance technology operated by the City department, including any required justification or legal standard necessary to share that data, and how it will ensure that any entity sharing or receiving such data complies with the surveillance use policy.**

The City will not release the footage collected by the surveillance system to any other governmental agencies except when required by law, lawfully issued subpoena, or judicial warrant.
9. **Training. The training required for any individual authorized to use the surveillance technology or to access information collected by the surveillance technology.**

Any individual with access to the surveillance system will be trained on the City’s applicable policies.

10. ***Auditing and Oversight. The mechanisms to ensure that the surveillance use policy is followed, including internal personnel assigned to ensure compliance with the policy, internal record-keeping of the use of the technology or access the information collected by the technology, technical measures to monitor for misuse, any independent person or entity with oversight authority, and the legally enforceable sanctions for violations of the policy.***

The Chief of Police is responsible for ensuring the surveillance use policy is followed. Individuals who violate relevant policies may be subject to disciplinary action. Any person who believes a violation of the policy has occurred may submit a complaint to the City Manager or Chief of Police. Such complaints may be submitted anonymously.

11. ***Complaints. What procedures will be put in place by which members of the public can register complaints or concerns, or submit questions about the deployment or use of a specific surveillance technology, and how the municipal entity will ensure each question and complaint is responded to in a timely manner.***

Any individual may submit a complaint, concerns, or questions to the City Manager or Chief of Police regarding use of the surveillance system, and may do so anonymously if desired. Such correspondence may be submitted in person or by email. Additionally, formal complaints regarding any member of the Sebastopol Police Department regarding the surveillance system may be submitted through the City’s existing process for formal complaints (and may be submitted in person or by email)

SECTION 3. Surveillance Impact Report. The City Council hereby adopts the following surveillance impact report for the safe house security system, or any security system with the same capabilities, at the police station:

1. ***Information describing the surveillance technology and how it works, including product descriptions from manufacturers.***

The proposed system from SAFE HOUSE Modern Security Systems includes high-definition cameras with night capability and secure network storage. There is no facial recognition or predictive policing capabilities with this system. It is purely designed to be a better quality version of the security system in place at the department now, but with the ability to record.

2. ***Information on the proposed purpose(s) for the surveillance technology.***

To enhance safety for officers, staff, and visitors; deter criminal activity; protect city property; document incidents; and support accountability.

3. ***If applicable, the location(s) it may be deployed and crime statistics for any location(s).***

Deployment at entrances, lobby, outside of the police department and parking lots. The current system does not capture/record and as such cannot provide usable footage, which the new system would address.

4. ***The fiscal costs for the surveillance technology, including initial purchase, personnel, and other ongoing costs, and any current or potential sources of funding.***

The security system has already been approved by the city council and was purchased via the police endowment fund, with no fiscal impact to the city’s general fund. The purchase cost of the system was \$46,008.42 and the cost to install is \$13,875, totaling \$59,883.42.

5. ***An assessment identifying with specificity any potential adverse impacts the surveillance technology might have on civil liberties and civil rights; and affirmative measures to safeguard the public***

Potential impacts: inadvertent recording, misuse of footage. Safeguards: posted signage, restricted access, retention limit (unless deemed to be evidence in a case and will be governed by the retention requirements specific to the type of crime to which it relates).

6. Whether use or maintenance requires third-party handling or storage of data

All data stored on city servers; vendors only have supervised temporary access during installation/maintenance.

7. Summary of experience of other governmental entities with the proposed technology

Security systems of this nature are standard for police departments, nationwide. Benefits include incident documentation, deterrence, and operational safety.

SECTION 4. CEQA. The City Council finds, pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 15378(b)(5), that this ordinance is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in that it is a governmental, organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect changes in the environment.

SECTION 5. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each and every section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase not declared invalid or unconstitutional without regard to whether any portion of the ordinance would be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 6. Effective Date and Publication. This Ordinance shall be and the same is hereby declared to be in full force and effect from and after thirty (30) days after the date of its adoption. Before the expiration of fifteen (15) days after said passage, this ordinance or a summary therefore as provided in California Government Code Section 36933, shall be published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation published and circulated in the City of Sebastopol, along with the names of the Council Members voting for or against its passage.

APPROVED FOR WAIVING OF FIRST READING AND INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE at the Regular City Council Meeting of May 5, 2026.

APPROVED FOR WAIVING OF SECOND READING AND ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE at the Regular City Council Meeting of May 19, 2026.

VOTE:
AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor, Jill McLewis

ATTEST: _____
Mary Gourley, City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____
Alex Mog, City Attorney