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**"STG Downtown Comments"**

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From [REDACTED]

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To Planning <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>

My name is Alex Douglas, and I live on Walnut Lane here in Sebastopol. I've called this town home since I was ten years old, and at eighty, I've seen its evolution over seven decades.

I remember when Main Street was a true two-way thoroughfare, shared with the train line that ran right down the center of town. I remember when Sebastopol offered everything a resident could need: car dealerships, appliance stores, lumber yards, clothing and shoe shops, multiple drugstores, jewelers, hardware stores—you name it. Then came Amazon, and the retail landscape changed forever.

My mother worked in the City's finance department during the period when Caltrans proposed several major rerouting plans to divert highway traffic around downtown. I remember the thick binders and detailed maps outlining each option. None of those plans were ever adopted, and the result was the one-way circulation system we live with today.

Main Street was once the beating heart of Sebastopol. Three major changes have eroded that sense of place: first, the shift to the one-way street system; second, the loss of business diversity; and third, the transformation of The Barlow from a manufacturing hub into a boutique, tourist-oriented district located away from the main traffic flow.

Looking at the options presented today, only Option #3 appears to meaningfully restore the "vitality and sense of place" that once defined our downtown. After a lifetime here, I believe it is the only path that aligns with what Sebastopol was—and what it can be again.