

From: Amanda Aaron <amandamenary1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2026 6:30 AM
To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: Grocery Outlet Public Comment

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

As you consider the proposal to bring Grocery Outlet to downtown Sebastopol, I encourage you to look beyond surface-level economics and examine the broader community impact this decision could have.

Sebastopol's locally owned grocery stores are more than retail businesses — they are community partners. They:

- Sponsor youth sports teams
- Donate to school auctions and enrichment programs
- Provide food for nonprofit events
- Offer quiet support to families in need
- Show up personally at fundraisers and school functions

These contributions are not driven by corporate strategy. They come from neighbors who live here, work here, and raise their families here.

In a small, already well-served grocery market, adding a national discount chain does not necessarily increase demand — it divides existing spending. Even a modest shift in market share could threaten long-standing local grocers. If one were to close, the loss would extend far beyond grocery shelves. We would lose trusted employers, reliable sponsors, and deeply rooted community relationships.

Local businesses reinvest their earnings in Sebastopol through payroll, taxes, and community giving. National chains often send profits elsewhere. Once a locally owned store disappears, the decades of connection and goodwill it built cannot simply be replaced.

Sebastopol already has strong grocery access. The real question is whether introducing another chain strengthens our community — or weakens the businesses that have consistently strengthened us.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Amanda Aaron