

From: amanda zangara [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, March 22, 2026 8:04 PM

To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Jill McLewis <jmclewis@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Sandra Maurer <smaurer@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Phill Carter <pcarter@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Neysa Hinton <NHinton@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Stephen Zollman <szollman@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: jjPlease support Grocery Outlet's Sebastopol proposal

Hello Sebastopol Council Members,

I am writing in support of the proposal for Grocery Outlet to open a store in the former Rite Aid location on Main Street. I realize that there is much debate amongst Sebastopol residents regarding the proposed store, with many people arguing that it is not true to the small-town feeling of the community. However, when you look around Sebastopol, there are other stores such as Whole Foods (hello-Amazon!), Safeway, and CVS, that nullify this belief as well. Mainstream corporations like Starbuck's, Little Caesar's, CVS, Round Table, and Taco Bell also reside here.

I am a long-time Sebastopol resident and a lifelong early childhood educator, and I have personally felt the impact of the rising cost of living in West County in numerous ways. While my rent is lower than many other places out there due to the fact that I have lived in the same place for over fourteen years, my landlord is now increasing the rent 10% per year until it reaches market value. I was unaware that this could happen in Sebastopol until last year she issued the significant increase. I need not mention all the other ways that the cost of living has increased here, as I am sure you are aware, but the cost of groceries is certainly at the top of the list.

Despite the huge increase in cost of living, my husband and I continue to prioritize supporting local businesses above all others. We do not use Amazon at all, and shop at EVERY local market that is now fearing Grocery Outlet. Pacific Market, Community Market, Fircrest Market, and Andy's all receive our regular business, as well as local vendors at the farmer's market. However, it is not possible for us to shop at these stores for all our needs, otherwise we just couldn't pay the rest of our bills. The addition of Grocery Outlet would allow us to continue to contribute tax dollars in Sebastopol, while helping meet our needs

for lower-cost groceries. It would not stop us from shopping at the other stores, and I have a feeling it wouldn't stop others from doing so either. But perhaps it would help those businesses lower their incredibly high markups—I've done plenty of cost comparisons between markets here and elsewhere in the greater Bay Area, and undoubtedly, Sebastopol's markets have the highest prices of all.

There has been a priority placed on making Sebastopol a destination for tourists, but it is time to prioritize making Sebastopol a more affordable place for us locals to continue to live a quality life here. We are already paying huge bills to PG&E, and for water and sewer services (which if I am correct, our water bill has increased due to prior mismanagement, and we are now footing the bill for the new infrastructure—not our fault but coming out of our accounts nonetheless). There is also a population of seniors in our community on a fixed income, and surely their shopping bills would be lower if they had an option like Grocery Outlet. Do you want a diverse community, or just a cute little town for rich people and tourists? I think this is more than the identity crisis some naysayers are suggesting, and really an issue suggestive of whether or not Sebastopol value the lives of ALL the people who reside here. NIMBYism has been suggested before, and it seems to be making a comeback with this proposal.

I recognize this is quite a long email, and I appreciate you taking the time to read it and consider my perspective. I again urge you to support the Grocery Outlet proposal.

Sincerely,

Amanda Zangara