
Opposition of Grocery Outlet

From Andrea Caron [REDACTED]

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To John Jay <jjay@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Victoria Henkel <vhenkel@cityofsebastopol.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Greetings,

As a longtime downtown merchant and business owner in Sebastopol, I would like to formally express my opposition to the proposed Grocery Outlet project.

My concern is not simply about competition, it is about the long-term health and identity of our downtown business community. Sebastopol already has multiple grocery options serving residents, including independent and locally rooted markets that have invested in this town for years and contribute directly to our local economy and community character.

Small businesses in Sebastopol are already operating in an increasingly difficult environment with rising costs, online competition, and changing consumer habits. Introducing another large national discount grocery chain into an already saturated market could place significant financial pressure on independent businesses that cannot compete at the same scale or buying power.

I also believe many community members still reflect on past decisions where national chains entered downtown more quietly than anticipated, recently Caesar Pizza, and over time there has been concern about how those choices impacted the character and balance of our business community. I would hope we take the opportunity now to thoughtfully evaluate the long-term effects this type of project could have before

repeating decisions that some residents and merchants later questioned.

What makes Sebastopol special is not convenience alone, it is the network of locally owned businesses, relationships, and character that people come here for. Once independent businesses disappear, they are incredibly difficult to replace. These businesses support local jobs, local families, local nonprofits, and help keep dollars circulating within our own community.

Sebastopol's General Plan speaks clearly about preserving downtown vitality and protecting the city's unique identity. I respectfully ask the Planning Commission and City Council to carefully consider whether this project aligns with those goals and to evaluate the broader long-term economic impact it could have on our independent business ecosystem.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea

Andrea Caron

