

To: Planning Commission and City Council

Below is an attempt to show how ADUs can affect the character of a street. Essentially no front setback and no requirement the ADU meet any objective design requirements that make them fit better into the character of the neighborhood. This is not hypothetical. Also below are before and after for a Sebastopol resident that literally took out a large tree and garden and dropped a mobile home in the backyard.

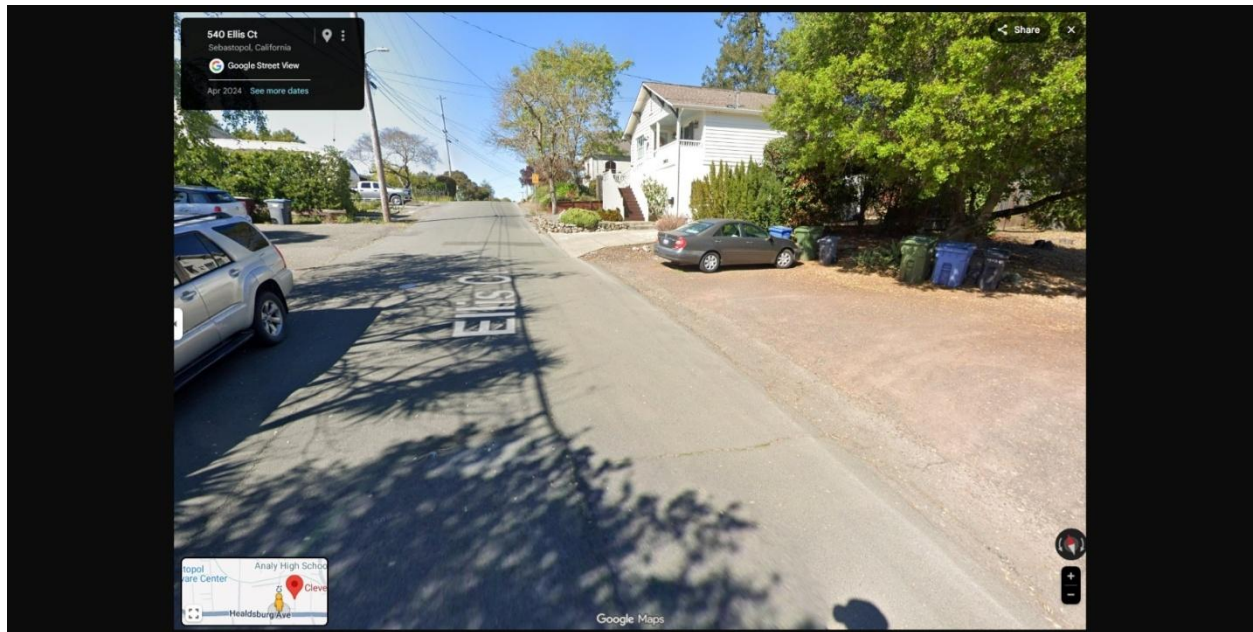
The Legislature gave cities no choice with the ADU law in 2020. After six years they were unhappy with the lack of impact and added a financial incentive. They also left open the opportunity for the city to establish design criteria for ADUs approved for condo conversion, allowing a city to protect the character of their neighborhoods.

Somehow the Planning Commission and four members of the council didn't feel turning our residential neighborhoods into mobile home parks was a problem. The decision to approve condo ADUs without any design criteria whatsoever has opened the opportunity for wealthy corporations to come in and buy up properties, drop a cheap mobile home on the driveway, create condos and turn it for a quick profit.

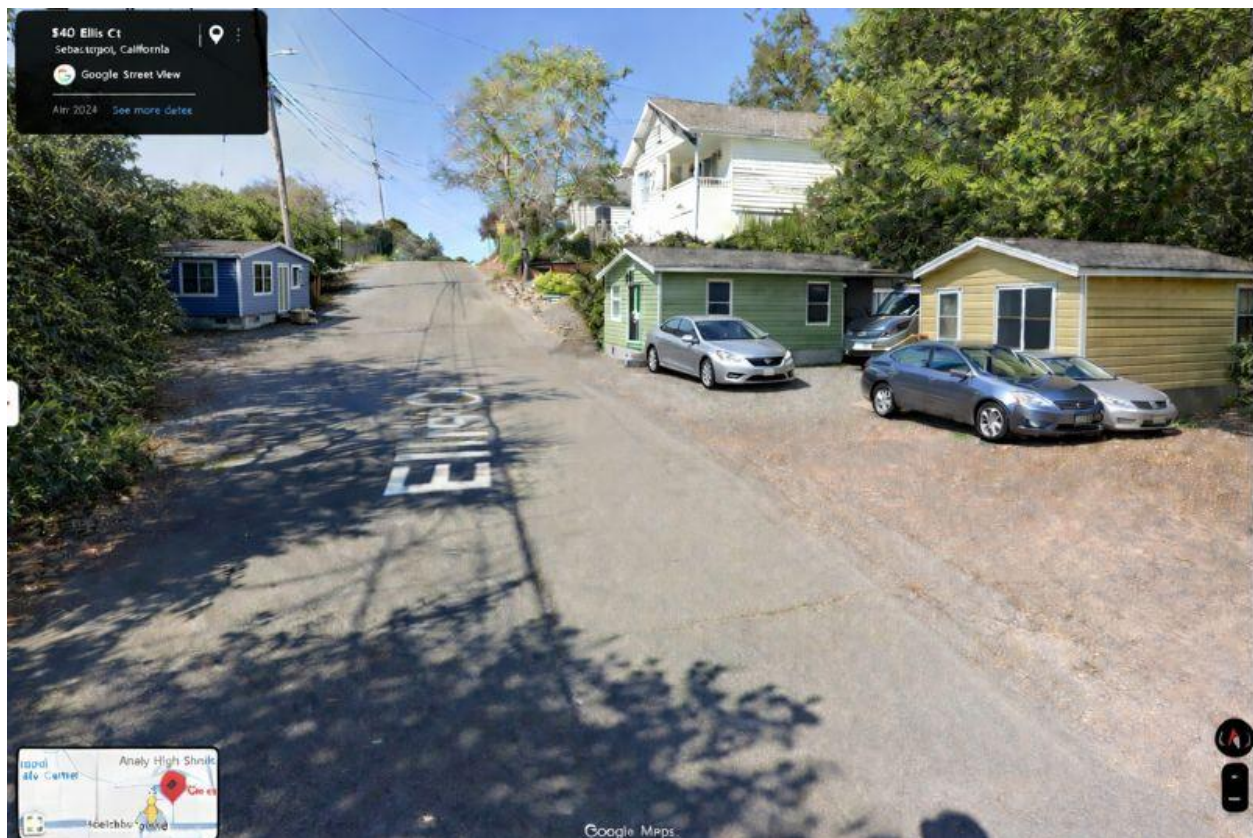
The character of our residential neighborhoods and the value of neighboring properties apparently are not a concern of the city government. Planning and DRB spent hours debating the fine details of the Barlow Hotel project. Unfortunately based on votes at the last meeting, a non-profit can drop a "Low Barrier Navigation Center" on the Piazza property if they want to sell. The entrances to our city that the Planning Commission wants to improve can become mixed cottages and mobile homes. Probably not the vision you articulated when you asked the Barlow to make the back face of their building on highway 12 more attractive.

The city spends endless money (grant money) to reimagine downtown. At the same time elected officials make decisions that encourage homelessness downtown and in residential neighborhoods, allow individuals to profit off mobile homes with no design criteria and watch our streets continue to fall into disrepair.

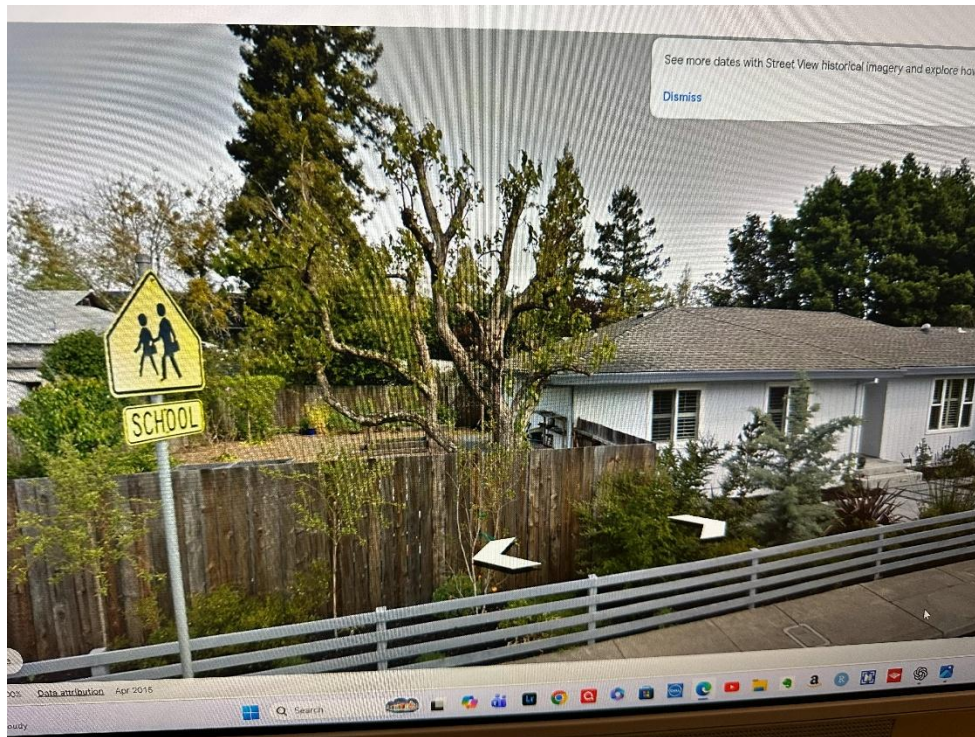
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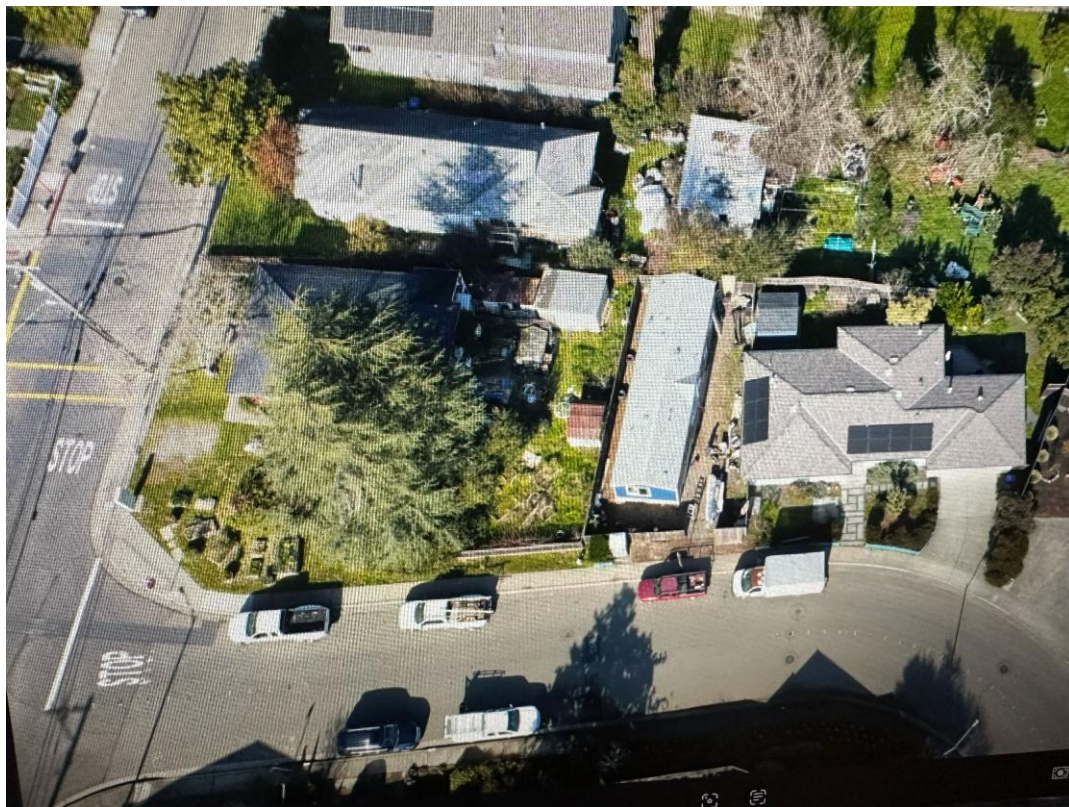
AFTER:



ACTUAL BEFORE:



ACTUAL AFTER



Received

SEP 16 2026

Thomas R. Boag

City of Sebastopol
Admin Services - Finance

September 15, 2026

John Moe, PE, City Engineer (Moe Engineering, Inc.)
Darrin DeCarli, District Fire Marshal (Gold Ridge Fire Protection District)
Oriana Hart, Director of Public Works
City of Sebastopol
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Sent via email and U.S. Mail

Re: Formal Request for Written Determination on Access, Emergency Egress, and Sewer Capacity — Grupe Investment Company / 8100 Valentine Avenue Housing Project (“Valentine Avenue Homes”)

Dear Mr. Moe, Chief DeCarli, and Ms. Hart:

I am writing as a member of the public regarding the pending subdivision and Tree Removal Permit applications for the Grupe Investment Company project at 8100 Valentine Avenue (the “Project”), currently under review by the Planning Department and described on the City’s project page as “application complete, processing has begun” as of June 2026. I have reviewed the Project’s Vesting Tentative Map and supporting submittals, and I have specific, unresolved questions about vehicular access and emergency ingress/egress, as well as wastewater capacity, that I believe should be formally addressed by your offices — and by the Public Works/Utilities Department as applicable — before this Project proceeds further through the review process.

Sebastopol Municipal Code Section 16.40.040 (Circulation) provides, in relevant part:

“Subdivisions with streets longer than 500 feet may be required to provide multiple access. Access shall be deemed satisfactory only if it will allow reasonable ingress and egress for emergency vehicles.”

Based on the Vesting Tentative Map, the Project proposes 39 residential units accessed from a single entrance/exit onto Valentine Avenue, with an unpaved secondary path that appears to cross or adjoin shared recreational open space. Given this configuration and the density of the proposed project, I respectfully request the following in writing, for inclusion in the administrative record for this Project:

Length and access determination. Based on my own scaled measurement of Sheet C2.0 of the Vesting Tentative Map — using the plan’s stated graphic scale of 1” = 20’ — the Project’s main driveway appears to run approximately 550 to 575 feet from the

Valentine Avenue curb cut to the fire apparatus turnaround (“FSS Turnaround”) at the north-west end of the site, which is at or above the 500-foot threshold in SMC 16.40.040. Please confirm the exact length of this internal street network from its intersection with Valentine Avenue — using your office’s own engineered plans and centerline stationing rather than a scaled estimate — and provide a written determination as to whether SMC 16.40.040 requires the Project to provide multiple access given that length.

Evaluation of the secondary route. Please provide a written evaluation of the proposed secondary/emergency access path against the ordinance’s “reasonable ingress and egress for emergency vehicles” standard, specifically addressing: (a) whether the surface is paved or all-weather; (b) whether it meets Fire Code apparatus access requirements for width, turning radius, and load capacity; and (c) whether its location within or adjacent to shared recreational open space creates a foreseeable risk of obstruction during an emergency (e.g., parked vehicles, gatherings, temporary structures, or gating).

Public Health and Safety Risk? - Note from the Project Overview (Updated March 3, 2026) a description of a “secondary emergency evacuation route along the western corridor. This route connects the end of the project’s street” [FSS Turnaround] “to Valentine Avenue. The evacuation route will be provided through an intentional 12-foot-wide unobstructed drivable landscaped surface that can be used during emergency situations to allow residents to safely exit the community. The homeowner’s association will maintain this 12-foot evacuation route to ensure it remains clear and that homeowner improvements do not obstruct its use during an emergency.” (Note that NFPA 1 Fire Code specifies a width of 20 feet, exclusive of shoulders, expanding to 26-foot width required for an aerial truck.)

I would ask the addressees, especially the District Fire Marshal to certify that the unpaved, landscaped, 12-foot-wide route through the project’s “amenity space”) would be adequate - in width, turning movement, and load-bearing capacity - for the fire trucks, including aerial apparatus, needed to fight a fire in a project that is largely two stories, up to 30 feet in height, but very high density. Given that a major regional risk is a significant earthquake and resulting fires, a single stalled homeowner vehicle or fire apparatus could block this sole secondary exit entirely. Based on fire-protection experience, how likely is it that homeowner association maintenance of this minimal secondary route would be neglected over time? The lessons of the 2017 Tubbs Fire, and reported conflicts between responding fire apparatus and evacuating resident traffic, makes me concerned about this very high-density project.

Compounding evacuation risk near the elementary school. Given that an elementary school is located approximately one block from the Project on Valentine Avenue, please advise whether any analysis has been conducted of a concurrent evacuation scenario (e.g., a fire or other emergency coinciding with school arrival/dismissal traffic) affecting this single point of access, and whether the City’s General Plan Safety Element has been updated to reflect the two-evacuation-route requirement for hazard areas under Government Code Section 65302(g).

Sewer capacity determination. We understand from discussion with a city technician (and confirmed in the Project Description – Sewer), that our neighborhood plus the proposed project will be served by one 6" sewer line that passes through my property, continues to flow across the proposed project 8100 Valentine property, and then winds through the western part of the City, along Calder creek, and joins other lines at the Morris Street pump station. We understand also that this single line is some 50 years old and has experienced some settlement problems ("belly") due to fill compaction. Please confirm whether the City's wastewater collection, pipes, and treatment system currently has sufficient capacity to serve the Project's 39 proposed units in addition to existing committed demand, and provide the written engineering analysis on which that determination is based. State law requires such a written engineering analysis and report before a provider may cite insufficient sewer treatment or collection capacity as a basis to condition or limit a development (Gov. Code § 65589.7). If no current capacity study exists for this segment of the system, I request that one be prepared and made part of the record as part of environmental review for the Project.

Sewer capacity — CEQA disclosure. Please confirm that wastewater capacity will be evaluated under the "Utilities and Service Systems" category of the Project's CEQA checklist (whether an Initial Study, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or EIR), including any need for collection-system, piping, or treatment-plant upgrades attributable to this Project, and how any such upgrade costs would be allocated.

Existing analyses. If a traffic, circulation, fire-access, or sewer-capacity analysis addressing any of the above already exists in the Project file, please treat this letter as a request for a copy of that document under the California Public Records Act (Gov. Code § 7920.000 et seq.). If no such analysis exists, I respectfully request that one be prepared and made part of the record before further discretionary action is taken on the Project.

I recognize that the Project must ultimately be evaluated under the objective standards that govern it, including the Housing Accountability Act. My request is limited to obtaining clear, written determinations on existing, adopted City standards — SMC 16.40.040 on access, and the statutory requirement for a written sewer-capacity engineering analysis — so that access and utility adequacy are resolved on the record rather than assumed. I would appreciate a response within 30 days, or sooner, if possible, given the Project's current processing timeline, and I ask that this letter and any response be included in the public file for this application.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. (Tom) Boag

cc: Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director, City of Sebastopol
John Jay, Associate Planner, City of Sebastopol
City Clerk, City of Sebastopol

[illegible]

APN 004-510-054



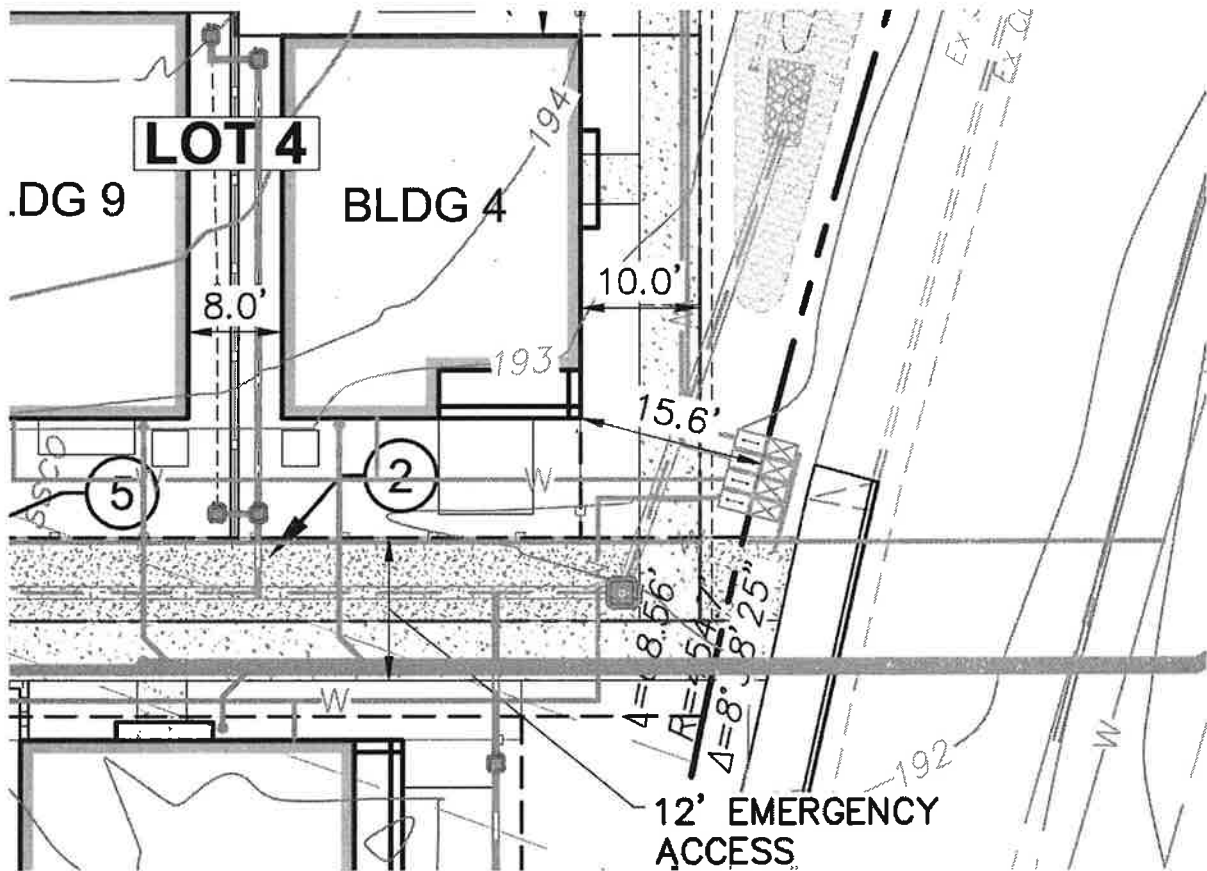
Casey Rhea Talbot, PE 91962
My license expires 3/31/2027



1220 N. Dutton Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401
P. (707) 541-2300 F. (707) 541-2301
Website: www.adobeinc.com

"A Service You Can Count On"

[illegible]



Recipient Contact Information (for emailing/mailing)

John Moe, PE, City Engineer — Moe Engineering, Inc., c/o City of Sebastopol Engineering Division;
engineering@cityofsebastopol.gov; (707) 823-2151; 714 Johnson Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Darrin DeCarli, District Fire Marshal — Gold Ridge Fire Protection District;
darrindecarli@goldridgefire.org; (707) 823-1084; 4500 Hessel Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Oriana Hart, Director of Public Works — City of Sebastopol; ohart@cityofsebastopol.gov; (707) 823-5331;
 714 Johnson Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director (cc) — City of Sebastopol; planningtemp@cityofsebastopol.gov; (707)
 823-6167; 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA 95472

John Jay, Associate Planner (cc) — City of Sebastopol Planning Department; jjay@cityofsebastopol.gov;
 (707) 823-6167; 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA 95472

From: Candice Mick [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2026 9:02 AM
To: Planning; City Council; Victoria Henkel
Subject: Major development on Valentine Avenue

I am writing to submit official public comments regarding the pending major subdivision application by Grupe Development Inc. at 8100 Valentine Avenue (the former Mormon Church site). As an adjacent property owner, we have deep concerns regarding the developer's stated intent to remove 7 protected redwoods.

A closer examination of the site reveals that these 18 mature coast redwoods actually form two distinct, ecologically significant clusters that must be evaluated individually rather than treated as disposable landscape obstacles:

1. **The East Grove Clump (approx. 16 Redwoods):** This significant, high-density cluster forms a massive, contiguous canopy on the east side of the parcel. It serves as a vital local carbon sink, neighborhood microclimate regulator, and essential stormwater retention asset for Valentine Avenue. Removing nearly 40% of this specific grove constitutes a substantial adverse environmental change. A simple categorical exemption under CEQA is entirely inappropriate here; an independent arborist audit must evaluate this east grove as a single, indivisible ecological unit.
2. **The West Property Line Clump (2 Redwoods):** On the west side of the property, there is a pair of mature redwoods located directly across the fence line from our own individual mature redwood. These three trees function biologically as a single root-interlocked network.

Under **Sebastopol Municipal Code Chapter 8.12 (Tree Protection and Preservation)**, these trees meet the criteria for Heritage and Protected status. The proximity of the west clump to our property line creates two major planning and legal conflicts:

- **Critical Root Zone (CRZ) Infringement:** The high-density layout proposed by Grupe—which packs 39 total housing units onto 2.96 acres—demands tight setbacks and aggressive foundation grading. Any trenching or heavy machinery compaction on Grupe's side of the fence will fatally sever the root networks of the 2 west redwoods, **which will directly impact and destabilize our own connected redwood tree.**
- **Civil Property Liability:** If the developer compromises the root stability or windbreak integrity of the west clump, it puts our home and property at direct risk of tree failure. Under California common law, causing a boundary-adjacent tree to die or become hazardous triggers severe civil liability and triple timber damages.

We urge the Planning Department and the Design Review / Tree Board to reject the current site plan and mandate a layout revision. By adjusting the lot configurations and re-evaluating the grading plan near the east grove and the western property line, Grupe Development can easily preserve these heritage resources while building their project. Please enter this letter into the official public record for the 8100 Valentine Ave files and forward it to the Tree Board ahead of their upcoming public hearing. Kindly reply to confirm receipt.

Sincerely,
Candice Mick

Sent from my iPad

input regarding 8100 Valentine Development

From Catherine G Murray [REDACTED]

Date Thu 7/16/2026 2:07 PM

To Planning <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Hello my name is **Catherine Murray**.

I am writing to submit official public comments regarding the pending major subdivision application by Grupe Development Inc. at 8100 Valentine Avenue (the former Mormon Church site). As an adjacent property owner, we have deep concerns regarding the developer's stated intent to remove 7 protected redwoods.

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Please enter this letter into the official public record for the 8100 Valentine Ave files and forward it to the Tree Board ahead of their upcoming public hearing. Kindly reply to confirm receipt.

Sincerely,
Catherine Murray

Property Tax # 004-510-054. Project ID 2025-054

From Janet [REDACTED]
Date Wed 9/16/2026 11:37 PM
To Darrin Decarli <darrindecarli@goldridgefire.org>; Director of Public Works Sebastopol <ohart@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Engineering <engineering@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Cc Planning <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>; John Jay <jjay@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Mary Gourley <mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Janet Lundgren
[REDACTED]

September 17, 2026
Planning Commission
City of Sebastopol
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

RE: Public Hearing Opposition – 8100 Valentine Avenue
Tentative Subdivision Map, Density Bonus, and Tree Removal Permits (Rob Toste / The Grupe Company, LLC)

Dear Honorable Members of the Sebastopol Planning Commission,

I am writing as a neighboring homeowner to formally object to the current proposal for the 2.69-acre lot at 8100 Valentine Avenue. As a resident whose property sits immediately adjacent to some of the tall redwood trees on this site, I have a direct stake in the outcome of this development. Specifically, my property shares proximity with a tall redwood that stands alongside two other mature redwoods—trees that are deeply threatened by the applicant's request for a waiver to remove up to seven protected native trees.

I want to be entirely clear: my opposition is not a blanket rejection of housing. I recognize the critical need for housing in our region. However, the core flaw of this project is not that it builds homes, but how it builds them. The extreme density proposed—fitting 20 lots and up to 39 total units (20 single-family homes and 19 ADUs) into a mere 2.69 acres—creates a severe overcrowding issue that is wildly out of character with the surrounding neighborhood.

To achieve this high density, the developer is asking for extensive waivers and concessions under Government Code 65915 to allow greater lot coverage, reduced building setbacks, and greater building heights. In essence, the developer is asking the City of Sebastopol to abandon its own zoning and environmental safeguards to squeeze a hyper-dense development into a space that cannot naturally support it. The parking of the new residents is a proposal of no garages and carports, not a

very aesthetic and more auto overcrowding affecting Valentine Avenue, a very busy street year round now. There are so many mitigating factors, parking, sewer strains on an already aging sewer system, emergency/evacuation considerations also have not been properly addressed.

The most devastating consequence of this artificial density is the proposed destruction of up to seven protected native trees. Sebastopol is known worldwide for its fierce environmentalism, deep respect for nature, and commitment to the climate. Our town's culture dictates that development should reflect these values. A project in Sebastopol should be thoughtfully designed to fit into the existing environment, preserving our historic canopy, rather than violently reshaping the landscape by clear-cutting mature, carbon-sequestering native trees.

I am also concerned that the 'tree specialists' were hired by the developer, how damning is that, will the City of Sebastopol do their own study? I feel that this is a biased report pushed through our city counsel because they are concerned about bringing our city out of debt and not the impact of a neighborhood. I also feel that this project has not taken into account any of the impacted homeowners that surround this lot at 8100 Valentine Avenue. Mitigating the removal of 100-foot-tall redwoods with saplings per "Tree Inventory Report" is a false equivalence that permanently damages our local ecosystem and neighborhood canopy.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, introducing parking for 83 vehicles while simultaneously maximizing lot coverage and reducing setbacks will inevitably create a stark, paved urban island that rejects Sebastopol's green identity. The claim that this project should be exempt from further environmental review under CEQA Section 15183 because it is "consistent with a community plan"; ignores the reality that removing protected redwoods and bypassing setbacks directly contradicts the spirit of Sebastopol's General Plan and community values.

I strongly urge the Planning Commission to deny the requested tree removal permits, reject the aggressive design waivers, and compel the applicant to scale back the project's density. The developer must submit a revised plan that honors the existing neighborhood layout, retains the 15-employee threshold of environmental stewardship, and preserves all seven protected native trees.

Let us build housing that fits Sebastopol—housing that grows around our trees, not over them. Thoughtful housing for those in need and not just looking for the money to save the City from it's funding mismanagement at the cost of a family driven neighborhood.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued service to our community.

Sincerely,

Janet Lundgren

Public comment development 8100 Valentine Ave

From Joan Evans [REDACTED]

Date Fri 7/17/2026 12:10 PM

To Planning <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Victoria Henkel <vhenkel@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Joan Evans

I am writing to submit official public comments regarding the pending major subdivision application by Grupe Development Inc. at 8100 Valentine Avenue (the former Mormon Church site). As an adjacent property owner, we have deep concerns regarding the developer's stated intent to remove 7 protected redwoods.

A closer examination of the site reveals that these 18 mature coast redwoods actually form two distinct, ecologically significant clusters that must be evaluated individually rather than treated as disposable landscape obstacles:

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Under **Sebastopol Municipal Code Chapter 8.12 (Tree Protection and Preservation)**, these trees meet the criteria for Heritage and Protected status. The proximity of the west clump to our property line creates two major planning and legal conflicts:

- **Critical Root Zone (CRZ) Infringement:** The high-density layout proposed by Grupe—which packs 39 total housing units onto 2.96 acres—demands tight setbacks and aggressive foundation grading. Any trenching or heavy machinery compaction on Grupe's side of the fence will fatally sever the root networks of the 2 west redwoods, **which will directly impact and destabilize our own connected redwood tree.**
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We urge the Planning Department and the Design Review / Tree Board to reject the current site plan and mandate a layout revision. By adjusting the lot configurations and re-evaluating the grading plan near the east grove and the western property line, Grupe Development can easily preserve these heritage resources while building their project.

Please enter this letter into the official public record for the 8100 Valentine Ave files and forward it to the Tree Board ahead of their upcoming public hearing. Kindly reply to confirm receipt.

Sincerely,

Joan Evans
Sebastopol, CA



8100 Valentine Ave, Sebastopol development design

From Lia Jacobsen [REDACTED]

Date Sat 7/18/2026 2:05 PM

To Planning <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Joel Jacobsen:

I am writing to submit official public comments regarding the pending major subdivision application by Grupe Development Inc. at 8100 Valentine Avenue (the former Church of Later Day Saints site). As an adjacent property owner, we have deep concerns regarding the developer's stated intent to remove 7 protected redwoods.

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Sincerely,

Joel Jacobsen



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2026 10:12 AM
To: Planning
Subject: 8100 Valentine Avenue

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Sincerely,

Jolene Orr
[REDACTED]

8100 Valentine Avenue residential development

From [REDACTED]

Date Tue 9/1/2026 2:42 PM

To Planning <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Cc Sandra Maurer <smaurer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Dear Planning Department-

I live within a few blocks of the proposed Grupe residential development at 8100 Valentine Avenue.

We need more housing. I am in general support of this 'affordable by design' residential infill development.

There are at least two traffic safety mitigation measures which should be considered relative to this project:

- Installation of a traffic signal at Bodega Avenue/Ragle Avenue. The City has already established the need for this signal, and project traffic will exacerbate existing problems. It should be required to contribute its fair share towards construction and implement construction of the signal.
- Construction of a traffic circle at the intersection of Valentine /Pleasant Hill. This intersection in particular will be impacted by project vehicles. Traffic circles are documented as superior to stop signs in promoting traffic safety, as well as providing better traffic flow. There appears to be sufficient intersection width to accommodate a traffic circle.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

-Kenyon Webster

Neighborhood Letter to the Sebastopol Planning Commission

Regarding Proposed Development at 8100 Valentine Avenue

Date: January 25, 2026

To: Sebastopol Planning Commission

Subject: Neighborhood Concerns Regarding the Development Proposal at 8100 Valentine Avenue

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning Commission,

We, the undersigned residents of the Valentine, Eileen, and Robinson Drive neighborhood, respectfully submit the following concerns regarding the proposed development at 8100 Valentine Avenue, formerly the site of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to recent reporting in the Sebastopol Times, the project is now advancing to the Planning Commission for review.

The parcel directly borders homes on three sides, all constructed in the mid-1970s, forming an established, cohesive single-family residential neighborhood. These homes were built under earlier planning standards featuring appropriately sized lots, generous setbacks, mature trees, and a low-density pattern that has defined the community for nearly 50 years. Any major increase in density on the adjacent parcel would significantly impact our neighborhood's character and livability.

1) Actual Zoning Is R-4 (Not "X"), Allowing ~23 Homes

Some commercial listing websites incorrectly display the zoning for 8100 Valentine Ave as "X." However, "X" is not an official zoning district within the City of Sebastopol. The City's zoning districts are defined in Municipal Code Section 17.10.010, and "X" does not appear in the list of legally recognized zones.

The correct zoning—verified through detailed property records—is: R-4: Single-Family Residential (8.7 units per acre). Given the parcel size of 2.69 acres, the maximum number of primary homes permitted under R-4 zoning is approximately 23 units. Many neighbors were previously unaware that this density was already allowed, due in part to the property's long-time use as a church (a conditional use). Clear communication about what zoning permits is critical for meaningful public participation.

2) Proposed Density and the Addition of ADUs Raise Major Concerns

Discussions in city meetings and community reporting have referenced conceptual plans including 19 homes with ADUs and earlier considerations of up to 51 units, far beyond what current zoning supports. Furthermore, during the January 20 City Council meeting, Councilmembers revisited significant concerns about ADUs, including neighborhood compatibility, mobile-home-sized ADUs, and the impact of ADUs on smaller, suburban lots.

Allowing most or all lots within the development to add ADUs would effectively double the density, increasing impacts far beyond what R-4 zoning anticipates. Our neighborhood asks that the Planning Commission not approve ADU-driven density amplification until the City's ADU regulations—currently under active review—are fully resolved.

3) Infrastructure Constraints: Water, Traffic, Parking, and Safety

Sebastopol is fully groundwater-dependent, drawing from local wells and relying on two storage facilities for redundancy. City policy requires the municipal water system to be capable of producing twice the daily water demand for resilience. We request confirmation that the City has performed updated water-capacity analysis before considering major new development approvals. High-density projects — especially those including ADUs — will increase demands on this already constrained system.

With multiple large projects now under review — including the proposed development at 8100 Valentine Avenue and the potential 51-unit project on the Catholic Church parcel along Pleasant Hill Road — it is essential to understand whether Sebastopol's wells, pumping capacity, and storage reservoirs can support the increased daily and peak water demand.

Traffic & Parking: Higher density increases vehicle trips, on-street parking spillover, congestion on narrow residential streets, and risks for pedestrians and bicyclists. Brook Haven Middle School, located one block east on Pleasant Hill Road, already experiences heavy congestion during school drop-off and pick-up times. Additional development at 8100 Valentine — combined with a 51-unit project feeding into Pleasant Hill — will significantly worsen traffic conditions and reduce safety for students and families.

Emergency Access: More vehicles and narrower roadway clearances create challenges for police and fire response, ambulance access, and community evacuation during emergencies.

4) Privacy, Massing, and Setbacks

Two-story homes or ADUs placed close to rear property lines pose substantial privacy and shading concerns for existing homeowners, many of whom have small backyards and rely on existing landscaping and mature trees for buffering. We respectfully request that the Commission require height limits compatible with existing neighborhood patterns, adequate setbacks, and preservation of existing buffering vegetation where possible.

5) Tree Preservation and Environmental Impacts

The northwest corner of the parcel contains mature redwoods and wildlife-supporting trees that provide habitat for raptors, crows, and a variety of birds. These trees also offer shade, sound buffering, and neighborhood identity. Their removal would permanently alter the environmental and visual character of our community.

6) Need for Meaningful Public Engagement

Many neighbors learned of the project's progress only from local reporting, not direct city notices. Given the potentially significant changes to neighborhood density, scale, and daily life, we request: early release of project documents (site plan, elevations, tree survey, traffic study, ADU plans); clear notice of all hearings; community meetings prior to any approval; and a transparent explanation of how ADUs will be treated in density calculations.

Conclusion

We are not opposed to development consistent with the City's zoning standards and respectful of our neighborhood's long-established character. However, the scale of proposals discussed—particularly with the addition of numerous ADUs—raises serious concerns that must be fully evaluated before any approvals are granted. We respectfully ask the Planning Commission to ensure that all impacts, especially ADU-related density increases, water capacity, traffic, privacy, and environmental factors, are thoroughly analyzed with comprehensive community involvement.

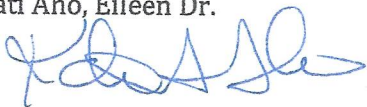
Thank you for your attention and commitment to thoughtful planning.

Sincerely,

Linda Helton, Eileen Dr.



Kati Aho, Eileen Dr.



(Signatures attached)

Public Comment: Major Subdivision at 8100 Valentine Avenue

From Mara Kiggins [REDACTED]
Date Thu 7/16/2026 12:09 PM
To Victoria Henkel <vhenkel@cityofsebastopol.gov>

I am writing to submit official public comments regarding the pending major subdivision application by Grupe Development Inc. at 8100 Valentine Avenue (the former Mormon Church site). As an adjacent property owner, we have deep concerns regarding the developer's stated intent to remove 7 protected redwoods.

A closer examination of the site reveals that these 18 mature coast redwoods actually form two distinct, ecologically significant clusters that must be evaluated individually rather than treated as disposable landscape obstacles:

1. **The East Grove Clump (approx. 16 Redwoods):** This significant, high-density cluster forms a massive, contiguous canopy on the east side of the parcel. It serves as a vital local carbon sink, neighborhood microclimate regulator, and essential stormwater retention asset for Valentine Avenue. Removing nearly 40% of this specific grove constitutes a substantial adverse environmental change. A simple categorical exemption under CEQA is entirely inappropriate here; an independent arborist audit must evaluate this east grove as a single, indivisible ecological unit.
2. **The West Property Line Clump (2 Redwoods):** On the west side of the property, there is a pair of mature redwoods located directly across the fence line from our own individual mature redwood. These three trees function biologically as a single root-interlocked network.

Under **Sebastopol Municipal Code Chapter 8.12 (Tree Protection and Preservation)**, these trees meet the criteria for Heritage and Protected status. The proximity of the west clump to our property line creates two major planning and legal conflicts:

- **Critical Root Zone (CRZ) Infringement:** The high-density layout proposed by Grupe—which packs 39 total housing units onto 2.96 acres—demands tight setbacks and aggressive foundation grading. Any trenching or heavy machinery compaction on Grupe's side of the fence will fatally sever the root networks of the 2 west redwoods, **which will directly impact and destabilize our own connected redwood tree.**
- **Civil Property Liability:** If the developer compromises the root stability or windbreak integrity of the west clump, it puts our home and property at direct risk of tree failure. Under California common law, causing a boundary-adjacent tree to die or become hazardous triggers severe civil liability and triple timber damages.

We urge the Planning Department and the Design Review / Tree Board to reject the current site plan and mandate a layout revision. By adjusting the lot configurations and re-evaluating the grading plan near the east grove and the western property line, Grupe Development can easily preserve these heritage resources while building their project.

Please enter this letter into the official public record for the 8100 Valentine Ave files and forward it to the Tree Board ahead of their upcoming public hearing. Kindly reply to confirm receipt.

Sincerely,

Mara Kiggins

Fw: Public Comment: Major Subdivision at 8100 Valentine Avenue

From Renee Johnson [REDACTED]
Date Mon 7/20/2026 6:20 PM
To City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Cc Planning <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>

I am writing to submit official public comments regarding the pending major subdivision application by Grupe Development Inc. at 8100 Valentine Avenue (the former Mormon Church site). As an adjacent property owner, we have deep concerns regarding the developer's stated intent to remove 7 protected redwoods.

A closer examination of the site reveals that these 18 mature coast redwoods actually form two distinct, ecologically significant clusters that must be evaluated individually rather than treated as disposable landscape obstacles:

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We urge the Planning Department and the Design Review / Tree Board to reject the current site plan and mandate a layout revision. By adjusting the lot configurations and re-evaluating the grading plan near the east grove and the western property line, Grupe Development can easily preserve these heritage resources while building their project. Please enter this letter into the official public record for the 8100 Valentine Ave files and forward it to the Tree Board ahead of their upcoming public hearing. Kindly reply to confirm receipt.

Sincerely,
Renee Johnson

[REDACTED]

Sebastopol

Fw: Public Comment: Major Subdivision at 8100 Valentine Avenue

From Richard Johnson [REDACTED]

Date Mon 7/20/2026 6:17 PM

To City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Cc Planning <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>

I am writing to submit official public comments regarding the pending major subdivision application by Grupe Development Inc. at 8100 Valentine Avenue (the former Mormon Church site). As an adjacent property owner, we have deep concerns regarding the developer's stated intent to remove 7 protected redwoods.

A closer examination of the site reveals that these 18 mature coast redwoods actually form two distinct, ecologically significant clusters that must be evaluated individually rather than treated as disposable landscape obstacles:

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Under **Sebastopol Municipal Code Chapter 8.12 (Tree Protection and Preservation)**, these trees meet the criteria for Heritage and Protected status. The proximity of the west clump to our property line creates two major planning and legal conflicts:

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We urge the Planning Department and the Design Review / Tree Board to reject the current site plan and mandate a layout revision. By adjusting the lot configurations and re-evaluating the grading plan near the east grove and the western property line, Grupe Development can easily preserve these heritage resources while building their project. Please enter this letter into the official public record for the 8100 Valentine Ave files and forward it to the Tree Board ahead of their upcoming public hearing. Kindly reply to confirm receipt.

Sincerely,
Richard Johnson



Received

SEP 16 2026

City of Sebastopol
Admin Services - Finance

Thomas R. Boag

September 15, 2026

John Jay, Associate Planner
Contact for Design Review Board/Tree Board
City of Sebastopol Planning Department
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Sent via email and U.S. Mail

Re: Written Comments for the Design Review/Tree Board — Tree Removal Permit, Grupe Investment Company / 8100 Valentine Avenue Housing Project ("Valentine Avenue Homes")

Dear Mr. Jay:

I am writing to submit written comments regarding the Tree Removal Permit application for the above-referenced project, for the Design Review/Tree Board's consideration at its September 22, 2026, meeting.

Below please find "Questions for the Sebastopol Tree Board," which sets out several specific, unresolved questions concerning the application's compliance with the City's tree ordinance. My principal concern is that the Project's Updated Project Description (filed March 3, 2026) states that "[t]ree replacement requirements will be addressed during construction drawings," while Sebastopol Municipal Code Section 8.12.060(E) requires the Tree Board itself — not a later, non-public administrative phase — to determine the final number and species of replacement trees, related to the significance of the trees proposed for removal.

I have also found that the Tree Removal Permit Application as filed leaves the fields for individual tree data (species, diameter, location, and proposed replacement) blank, referring instead to the arborist inventory report, which documents tree condition rather than replacement mitigation.

I respectfully request that this letter and the enclosed questions be included in the Board's meeting packet and made part of the administrative record for this application, and that the Board decline to approve the Tree Removal Permit until the application specifies enforceable replacement-tree and tree-protection terms consistent with SMC 8.12.060(E) and SMC 8.12.050.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, and please confirm receipt of this letter.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. (Tom) Boag

Questions for the Sebastopol Tree Board

Tree Removal Permit — 8100 Valentine Ave ("Valentine Avenue Homes," Grupe Investment Co.) focus: impacts on the retained north-side redwood grove

Deferred replacement mitigation — a threshold problem

- The applicant's own Project Description states, under Entitlement Requests/Applications, item 5 (Tree Removal Permit): "Tree replacement requirements will be addressed during construction drawings." But SMC 8.12.060(E) requires the *Tree Board itself* to determine the final number and species of replacement trees, related to the significance of the trees removed, as a condition of the permit. How can the Board make that finding tonight if it isn't in the application?
- The filed Tree Removal Permit Application leaves the real-tree rows (species, diameter, reason, proposed replacement) blank, directing reviewers instead to "see arborist inventory report" — which documents tree condition, not proposed replacement species/counts. Is the application complete as submitted under SMC 8.12.060's application-content requirement?
- The Meserve arborist report includes a detailed "Tree Preservation Guidelines" specification (protection zones, fencing, root-cutting protocol, monitoring) — but it never mentions the performance bond (\$1,500 per protected tree) that SMC 8.12.050 requires, and it is silent on replacement species/count for the trees approved for removal. Does the city consider this specification a formally adopted Tree Protection Plan under SMC 8.12.050, and has the required bond been posted?
- If mitigation is deferred to "construction drawings," what public process exists at that stage — given it is typically an administrative, staff-level review with no Tree Board hearing or neighbor notice?

Project alternative: Building 25 sits on a protected redwood

- Sheet C2.0 of the Vesting Tentative Map shows Lot 13 / Building 25 as the only unit in the entire 39-home project not paired with an ADU. The plan draws that building's own footprint directly over the trunk location of tag t28 (tree #128), a 34-inch protected redwood — which is listed on the same sheet's "Protected Trees to Be Removed" schedule. A second protected redwood, tag t30 (#130), is marked for removal just a few feet off Building 25's corner.
- Will the Tree Board ask the applicant to evaluate eliminating or relocating Building 25 — the project's lowest-yield, non-ADU unit — as a project alternative that could retain tree #128 (and possibly #130), before approving removal of these protected trees?

Other buildings sited close to retained trees

- Building 25 is not the only place this concern arises. The Meserve report's own Tree Location Plan shows several other retained, protected redwoods — trees #24, #25, #26, #27, and #32 — positioned immediately adjacent to Building 24, Building 27, and Building 28 in the Lot 12–15 cluster, with canopy driplines that appear to reach very close to those building

footprints.

- Has the applicant verified, building-by-building and not solely for Building 25, that no foundation, wall, or grading limit intrudes on the tree protection zone of any retained protected tree across the whole site, and can that verification be provided in writing and made part of the record before permits issue?

Is dripline an adequate protection-zone standard for this grove?

- The Meserve report defines the tree protection zone as the canopy dripline itself, and SMC 8.12.050 likewise conditions the Tree Protection Plan on work located “within the dripline,” without independently specifying a numeric protection radius — leaving the exact boundary to the discretion of the project arborist.
- Under widely used arborist practice, the protection radius for a mature or sensitive tree is often calculated from trunk diameter (DBH) rather than canopy edge alone — commonly 1 to 1.5 feet of radius per inch of DBH — and dripline is considered an adequate proxy mainly for trees growing in an open setting. Dripline is specifically flagged as inadequate for trees in a forest or grove setting, older specimens, or trees with a small crown relative to trunk size. The retained redwoods here are a closely spaced, mature grove — arguably exactly the condition where dripline can understate the true root zone.
- The report’s own figures reinforce the concern: nearly every redwood on site — with trunk diameters ranging from 15 to 44 inches — is assigned the same 16-foot canopy radius and the same 70-foot height, suggesting these are rounded, categorical field estimates rather than individually measured values. Will the Tree Board ask the applicant’s arborist to confirm whether the 16-foot dripline figure was individually verified for each retained tree, and to justify why dripline — rather than a diameter-based protection radius — is adequate for this particular grove?
- The inventory report does include a per-tree “Height (± feet)” column, so a height table exists — but given it repeats the same rounded figure for most redwoods, would the Board find it useful to request more precise, individually verified height and canopy-radius measurements before relying on them to fix protection-zone boundaries?

Root grafting & adjacency

- Were trees 23, 28–31, and 41 checked for root grafts to their retained neighbors (20–22, 24–27, 40)? If grafts exist, what cutting protocol will be used?

Wind exposure at new gaps

- Has wind-exposure change been modeled for retained trees newly facing an open gap (20–22, 24–27)? Are wind-firming measures required, or is fencing/mulch alone deemed sufficient?

Construction protection adequacy

- How will excavation of the removed trees’ stumps/roots avoid crossing into the adjacent retained trees’ Tree Protection Zones, given the tight spacing?
- Who verifies dripline fencing is correctly placed before grading, and what happens if it’s found missing or moved?

- How is the required hand-cut (not ripped) standard for roots >2" actually enforced during construction, not just specified on paper?

Monitoring & enforcement

- Which retained redwoods trigger the >20% protection-zone-disturbance threshold requiring monthly arborist monitoring, and will those reports be filed publicly with the city?
- If monitoring shows a retained tree declining after construction begins, is there a defined remediation plan, or does it default to a new permit process?

Mitigation & replacement

- What mitigation (fee and/or replacement plantings) applies to the six mature 30"+ trees proposed for removal, given their size and age?
- Is a bond held by the city guaranteeing the retained redwoods' health post-construction, and what triggers forfeiture if one dies?

Process & independent review

- Since the arborist was retained and paid by the applicant, will the city commission an independent arborist review before this permit is approved?
- Given the report is now many months old, will a re-inspection of tree health and grading plans be required before permits issue?

Source: Grupe Valentine Avenue Tree Inventory Report (Dec. 5, 2025, John C. Meserve, Horticultural Associates); Building/Lot numbering and protected-tree removal schedule from Sheet C2.0 of the Vesting Tentative Map Package (Adobe Associates, Inc.); Tree Removal Permit criteria under Sebastopol Municipal Code Ch. 8.12, esp. SMC 8.12.060(E) replacement-tree findings and SMC

8.12.050 Tree Protection Plan requirement; applicant deferral language from the Updated Project Description – Written Statement (March 3, 2026), Entitlement Requests/Applications §5; critical-root-zone / dripline-adequacy standards from North Carolina Urban Forest Council, "Tree Protection During Construction".

Received

SEP 16 2026

City of Sebastopol
Admin Services - Finance

Tom Boag



John Jay, Associate Planner
Contract for Design Review Board/Tree Board
City of Sebastopol Planning Department
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

cc: Planning Department, City of Sebastopol

cc: John Moe, PE, City Engineer, Moe Engineering, Inc. —
engineering@cityofsebastopol.gov

Darrin DeCarli, District Fire Marshal, Gold Ridge Fire Protection District —
darrindecarli@goldridgefire.org

Sent via email and Hand Delivery to 7120 Bodega Avenue

**Re: Request for Information -- CEQA Section 15183 Exemption Determination for
8100 Valentine Ave Housing Project (Project ID 2025-067)**

Dear Mr. Jay and Planning Department Staff <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>,

I am writing regarding the pending application for the "Valentine Avenue Homes" project at 8100 Valentine Avenue (APN 004-510-054), Project ID 2025-067, the 20-lot, 39-unit subdivision proposed by Grupe Investment Company on behalf of applicant Rob Toste. I received the City's notice of Public Hearing for the September 22, 2026, Planning Commission hearing which states that the project has been determined to be exempt from further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 (Projects Consistent with a Community Plan or Zoning).

I am copying Mr. Moe and Mr. DeCarli because I have separately raised site access and emergency-evacuation concerns with their offices for this same project, and the scope of the City's CEQA review may bear directly on that review. I want to keep all three offices aligned on the same facts.

I would appreciate clarification on the following:

1. Which prior certified EIR (general plan, community plan, or zoning action) is the City relying on as the basis for the Section 15183 exemption, and does that EIR specifically analyze impacts to the retained on-site redwood grove - including the grove's role in visually screening the projects largely two-story, substantially denser development from the existing surrounding neighborhood - or does it address only general density and land use impacts at a citywide or community plan level?
2. Has the City evaluated whether removal of up to 7 protected native trees, and construction adjacent to the retained redwood grove, constitutes a "peculiar" project-specific significant effect under CEQA Guidelines 15183(b)(1) - i.e., an impact not

analyzed as significant in the prior EIR relied upon for the exemption? This should include the fact that the existing trees currently screen the project's two-story, substantially denser buildings from view of the existing neighborhood, not merely the direct loss of tree canopy itself. If the City has evaluated this visual-buffer effect, what analysis or mitigation measures have been prepared to address it?

3. Section 15183(b)(3) also requires examination of potentially significant off-site and cumulative impacts not addressed in the prior EIR. Has the City evaluated the off-site aesthetic impact of removing the tree buffer that currently screens the project's two-story, considerably denser massing from the existing surrounding neighborhood - as distinct from, and in addition to, cumulative tree-canopy loss from this project together with other pending or approved subdivisions in the vicinity?

4. The notice lists the site as 2.69 acres. Based on that figure, the 20-unit base density is approximately 7.4 units/acre, and the total with 19 ADU's is approximately 14.5 units/acre. Please confirm this acreage figure and which density figure (base or ADU-inclusive) the City used in its consistency analysis supporting the Section 15183 finding.

5. Will the Section 15183 exemption determination and any supporting consistency checklist or analysis be made available for public review prior to the September 22 hearing, and will it be included in the hearing packet or staff report as referenced in the Notice?

I would appreciate a written response at your earliest convenience, and I ask that this inquiry and any response be included in the public file for this application.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Boag

