
Please Deny the Grocery Outlet Conditional Use Permit Application

From Debra Woods [REDACTED]

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

Greetings,

I am writing again to respectfully express my continued opposition to the proposed Grocery Outlet project in downtown Sebastopol and to urge the Planning Commission to deny the Conditional Use Permit application.

As a community member who deeply values Sebastopol's unique character, I believe this proposal is inconsistent with the vision and priorities outlined in the City's General Plan. Our downtown is more than a commercial district — it reflects the identity, culture, and local relationships that make Sebastopol such a special place to live and visit.

Sebastopol is already well served by a variety of grocery options, including locally owned and independent markets that contribute directly to our local economy and community fabric. The central issue is not access to groceries, but whether adding another large national discount chain supports the long-term health, diversity, and distinctiveness of our downtown.

Large discount outlets are able to leverage pricing models and economies of scale that small, independently owned grocers simply cannot match. While lower prices may appear beneficial in the short term, these business practices often undercut local markets, erode their customer base, and threaten their long-term sustainability. The loss or weakening of our independent grocers would not only reduce consumer choice, but also damage the locally rooted economy that helps define Sebastopol.

Independent businesses are a defining part of Sebastopol's character. They create the walkable, locally rooted atmosphere that residents value and that draws visitors to our community. These businesses recirculate dollars locally, support community events and organizations, and help maintain the individuality that sets Sebastopol apart from surrounding cities. Once that balance is lost, it is extremely difficult to restore.

I respectfully ask the Planning Commission and City Council to uphold the community vision established in the General Plan and carefully consider the long-term impacts this project could have on downtown vitality, economic diversity, and Sebastopol's identity before approving this application.

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

Sincerely,
Debra Woods