
Public Comment: Proposed Grocery Outlet at the Former Rite Aid Site

From D Badger [REDACTED]

Date Mon 8/10/2026 5:25 PM

To John Jay <jjay@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Cc Victoria Henkel <vhenkel@cityofsebastopol.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Hello,

I'm writing to express my opposition to allowing Grocery Outlet to operate out of the old Rite Aid store.

I've lived and worked in Sebastopol for 34 years — I was the manager of Rosemary's Garden back in the 90s. My daughter, whom I raised here, went to Sunridge, Brookhaven, and Analy High Schools. I volunteer for the Sebastopol Area Time Bank, swim at Ives Pool, walk at Ragle and Laguna parks, visit Ives park and the Community Center for concerts, and bike the Joe Rodata trail.

Downtown Sebastopol is simply not a good fit for a Grocery Outlet store, from an aesthetic and character perspective. I strongly believe we need to do everything we can do preserve the unique character of Sebastopol, and of its small businesses. Formula businesses, grossly out of character, are already creeping in, with pizza places with a fast food 'look' arriving. We absolutely don't want or need more in this vein, such as a Grocery Outlet, or we greatly risk losing the appeal of what is wonderful about our town.

We already have two major 'chain'-type grocery stores - Safeway and Whole Foods. We don't need another. The existing grocery store owners certainly do not need or want another competitor.

Sebastopol has become notably more affluent community since the pandemic. The majority of people living here do not need a Grocery Outlet to 'get by'. If they do, they are well served by two others within 15 minutes' drive. If we want to attract tourists who will spend their dollars here, a budget grocery in the center of town will not serve the purpose.

So from the perspective of 'what is good for the town', and out of respect for the long-term vision of the General Plan established through community input, and good folks who cared about the nature of our town, I strongly urge you to reject the bid from Grocery Outlet.

I would love to see that site converted to a building that serves the community, such as an expanded Senior Center, Library, or City Hall. I know there is discussion to move these to the O'Reilly site, but I feel that at least the library and the senior center need to be more centrally located and easily accessible by foot and bike. I know there may be feasibility issues, but just putting it out there!

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter so important to the vitality of our town.

Sincerely,

Diana Badger

Sebastopol