

Sebastopol Planning Commission
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

March 16, 2026

RE: Grocery Outlet Conditional Use Permit – Former Rite Aid Site

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing as a Sebastopol resident to express my ***strong disapproval*** of the proposed Grocery Outlet at the former Rite Aid location on Main Street.

Under Sebastopol Municipal Code §17.340.070, a formula business conditional use permit can only be approved if specific findings can be made, including that the project complements existing businesses, promotes economic vitality, preserves Sebastopol's unique character, and provides needed goods or services.

These required findings cannot reasonably be made in this case.

Sebastopol **already has seven full-service grocery stores** (Safeway, Lucky, Whole Foods, Pacific Market, Community Market, Fircrest, and Andy's) serving a population of approximately 8,000 residents. These businesses already operate in a highly competitive environment. Introducing a corporate-backed, national discount grocery store into the center of town would not create new demand but instead shift existing demand away from locally owned businesses.

Rather than promoting economic vitality consistent with Sebastopol's character, this proposal risks **destabilizing long-standing local businesses** and weakening the local economic ecosystem that supports schools, nonprofits, and community programs. In addition, there are already two Grocery Outlet locations within a short driving distance of Sebastopol, further calling into question whether this project provides a needed service.

Sebastopol's General Plan emphasizes supporting existing local businesses, protecting the City's unique character, and discouraging an oversupply of similar businesses. This proposal appears inconsistent with those adopted policies.

I am also concerned about increased traffic impacts associated with a high-turnover grocery model, including more frequent delivery truck traffic on already congested streets.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Planning Commission **to deny the conditional use permit** for this project.

Sincerely,

Rick Mead

