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**Please deny the Conditional Use Permit application for grocery outlet**

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**From** [REDACTED]  
**Date** Thu 5/14/2026 9:52 PM  
**To** John Jay <jjay@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Victoria Henkel <vhenkel@cityofsebastopol.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Hello,

I hope the city council will do the right thing and represent what the people of Sebastopol want this time! The council definitely let us all down a few years ago, allowing businessmen from Southern California to come up and tell us we needed a CVS right at the entrance of our town. My out-of-town guests always comment on how out of place that business is. Please don't turn Sebastopol into "Anywhere USA". We have character because of our small-town vibe.

I hope to attend the public meeting on this subject, but meanwhile, I am writing to formally oppose the proposed Grocery Outlet project in Sebastopol and urge the Planning Commission to deny the Conditional Use Permit application.

I was the owner of AIM Mail Center until 2022, and I can't imagine that when I purchased that business, I couldn't anticipate my competition because a big box store offering huge discounts was allowed to move into town. More importantly, I also believe Sebastopol's economic vitality and long-term resilience depend on maintaining a strong locally rooted business environment. Independent businesses contribute directly to the city's identity, downtown charm, and community-centered economy in ways that large national chains cannot.

Sebastopol's General Plan emphasizes preserving downtown vitality, supporting local businesses, and protecting the city's distinct community character. I am concerned that approving another national chain grocery retailer in an already saturated market could negatively impact the independent business ecosystem that helps make Sebastopol unique. We already have too many empty businesses in Sebastopol; if Whole Foods, Pacific Market, Fircrest, or Community Market go out of business, we will have more empty buildings. Just look at the awful situation in the Redwood Market Plaza!!

Local businesses help keep economic activity circulating within the community, support local workers and organizations, and contribute to the authentic downtown environment that residents and visitors value so deeply.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Planning Commission and City Council to deny the proposed Conditional Use Permit application for Grocery Outlet.

Thank you,  
Helena Holthuis-Catalano