

From: Jamie Skikos [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 3:04 PM
To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: Grocery Outlet public comment

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I am writing regarding the proposal to bring Grocery Outlet to downtown Sebastopol. I urge you to consider what this decision could mean not just economically, but personally — for our children, schools, and youth sports programs.

Our locally owned grocery stores are deeply embedded in this community. They sponsor youth baseball teams, donate gift cards for school auctions, provide food for nonprofit events, and step up when families are in need. My own children's teams and school programs have directly benefited from their generosity. These contributions are not corporate marketing line items — they are personal investments from neighbors who live and work here.

If even one of these grocers were forced to close due to market share erosion from a national discount chain, we would lose far more than a store. We would lose:

- Consistent sponsorship for youth sports
- Donations that support school enrichment programs
- Leadership presence at community fundraisers
- A locally accountable employer

In a small, saturated grocery market like Sebastopol, new competition does not create new grocery demand; it divides existing spending. That redistribution could destabilize long-standing family businesses that have supported this community for decades.

National chains, by contrast, remit a significant share of profits outside the region. Local businesses reinvest here — in payroll, in property taxes, and in community giving. Once a local grocery store closes, the social capital and relationships built over decades cannot be replaced.

Sebastopol already has strong grocery access. The real question is whether adding another store strengthens or weakens the businesses that have strengthened us.

I respectfully urge you to protect our locally owned grocers and the community ecosystem they sustain.

Sincerely,
Jamie Skikos