

From: Jesse [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 14, 2026 12:39 PM
To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Barbara Jacobs [REDACTED]; Joanna Escolar [REDACTED]; Marcus Jacobs [REDACTED]
Subject: Resident opposition response re grocery outlet

Dear Members of the Sebastopol City Council,

We write as long-time Sebastopol residents and small business owners to express our strong opposition to the proposed Grocery Outlet development. Our concerns center on long-term economic resilience, land-use precedent, and the preservation of Sebastopol's distinct community character.

Sebastopol's economic strength has historically come from its locally owned businesses. Stores such as Andy's, Fircrest Market, and Community Market, along with our vibrant local farmers market, are not only well-loved institutions—they are proof that Sebastopol already has sufficient, community-supported grocery options. These businesses reflect the values of our town: local sourcing, regional partnerships, sustainability, and community engagement. We strongly and unequivocally support them.

Introducing a national discount chain into this environment would not fill a gap; it would destabilize what already works. Even modest revenue displacement in a small market can significantly weaken margins for independent grocers. Over time, that erosion threatens the viability and sustainability of these well-established local businesses. The risk is not theoretical—once local operators are weakened or displaced, the character and economic recirculation they provide cannot easily be restored.

The argument that additional grocery competition inherently benefits consumers deserves scrutiny. Sebastopol is already served by multiple grocery options that meet a wide range of needs. A discount chain operating on a centralized purchasing and opportunistic inventory model does not strengthen local supply chains or regional producers. Instead, it shifts dollars out of the local ecosystem and reduces the multiplier effect that keeps our local economy resilient.

There are also broader land-use implications. Approving a national discount chain establishes a precedent for future development. Once that threshold is crossed, it becomes more difficult to prevent similar proposals. The cumulative effect risks transforming Sebastopol's commercial identity into something indistinguishable from surrounding highway retail corridors—precisely what residents have worked to avoid.

We also believe that urgency should not drive this decision. We would rather see the site remain vacant while waiting for the right operator than rush to fill it with a tenant that does not align with the community's long-term vision. An empty storefront is temporary. The

wrong long-term operator is not. A Grocery Outlet at this location would represent a permanent shift in character and could become a blight rather than a benefit.

Traffic, delivery volume, and regional draw generated by a high-turnover discount retailer would further strain infrastructure and alter the experience of our town center, potentially outweighing any incremental tax benefit.

This decision is not solely about one tenant. It is about the trajectory of Sebastopol's commercial identity and economic sustainability. We respectfully urge the Council to prioritize the businesses and institutions that already serve and reflect this community, and to protect the long-term vitality of our local grocery ecosystem.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jesse
Joanna
Marcus
Barbara

Regards,

Jesse Jacobs

