

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Please Distribute To The Council
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The proposed Commons project is contrary to the goals and efforts of the City for our downtown vitality and presents potential financial risks to City finances.

For the nearly 30 years that I have lived here, I have heard about the importance our City places on the vitality of our downtown. Moving key civic functions to the farthest edge of town, especially the library, is a threat to that vitality and a decrease in the walkability of our town.

If you were to draw a half-mile circle around the existing library and the proposed library location, many people would no longer be walking or biking to new location. Families with kids that easily walk to the library after school to be picked up later by their parents would face a longer and less safe journey to O'Reilly location. The Joe Rodota trail is dark in the evening many months of the year when the library is open which presents a safety issue.

As the LANTERN studies have stated, the library "is much more than a repository for books; it acts as a primary **civic anchor and public gathering space** for both Sebastopol and the broader West County region. Keeping it centrally located in the heart of the city guarantees equal, democratic access for all residents."

While the library wants more space, it is beyond the financial capacity of our city to more than double the size of the library when we are a city of 7 thousand people trying to serve the needs of 40,000 people in the West County. The library system should be strongly encouraged to create County funded libraries in the surrounding towns of Occidental and Graton and expand the branch in Forestville.

The financing for the O'Reilly site really only works for the new location if the City is able to leverage or sell existing City properties and find and manage market rate paying tenants at the new location.

While it easy to imagine a buyer for the Sebastopol Senior Center building, renting or selling the existing library site entails unexamined and potentially high risk. Including the adjacent public parking lot as part of any sale risks impacting our downtown merchants.

The O'Reilly site has had a very difficult time finding tenants. While the new civic functions

would make it easier to find tenants, this is no slam dunk that non-civic tenants would sign leases, and the project is financially dependent on that happening.

How much rent per year is the library or senior center committed to paying to make the O'Reilly site work when they are paying nothing now? This key question must be answered before the City commits to spending money on consultants and more staff time.

Thank You,
Steve Pierce