

City Council

On Tuesday four of you voted to allow homeowners to build an ADU and to sell it. Four of you also voted to **allow a homeless shelter to be placed downtown, in the residential area next to Analay and in many of the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the city and along the length of 116**. This was not discussed.

Specifically, you voted to permit “Low Barrier Navigation Centers” to be placed downtown (Zone CO, CG, CD) and in many residential areas including R5, R6 and R7. Perhaps it was overlooked due to the innocuous designation of Navigation Centers.

The “Navigation Center” is described by the state to include individual units (e.g. tiny homes, pods, cabins, shipping container rooms, a tent village (with services), temporary modular structures or relocatable facilities (trailers). Low barrier references removal of eligibility and behavior requirements. Pets must be allowed. Storage for personal items must be provided, no sobriety requirement and no exclusion for active substance abuse, mental health conditions or criminal background.

Perhaps you passed it without discussion because you thought the changes were required by law?

Below is an excerpt from the applicable law:

A Low Barrier Navigation Center development shall be a use by right **in areas zoned for mixed use and non-residential zones permitting multifamily uses** if it meets specified requirements.

RESIDENTIAL R5, R6 and R7

Although R5, R6 and R7 are designated zones for homeless shelters in the ordinance approved 1/20, the law specifically states non-residential zones. R5, R6, R7 are all zoned residential. The second criteria are mixed use and the description of each of these in the city zoning ordinance do not include “mixed use” in the description. (Included at the end of this document). It would have been good to discuss publicly what created the requirement to designate these areas appropriate for a homeless shelter. One of these areas is the residential neighborhood adjacent to Analay High School.

COMMERCIAL CO, CG and CD

The language change in the zoning code allows “Navigation Centers in zones CO, GG, and CD. However, the ordinance in Section II mentions only the Residential zoning changes. Did you overlook the Commercial Districts?

The downtown zones appear to be candidates for Navigation Centers primarily because they are primarily described as commercial (non-residential) but include Mixed Use and residential in the description. While this mixed use is a common goal of planners, the reality is that there is currently no mixed commercial and residential areas in CD or CM zoned areas and none has evolved over the 125-year history of the city. Given that there is none, and it is likely not a realistic place to put mixed use in those zones perhaps **the city should discuss removing mixed use from those zones**. This would not prohibit homeless shelters in the city only in the downtown core. They would be allowed in CO which is zoned for mixed use and already has some mixed use in the area. Maybe it is difficult to change.

There might be support from the council to create an opportunity for more homeless services in the city. The question is do you want to leave the choice of location up to fate, the county and the non-profits or take an active role through appropriate zoning. As we learned from Elderberry and Gravenstein Commons, the decision will be largely made based on zoning. This new law makes that perfectly clear.

IMPACT ON THE CITY CENTER

I think it is safe to say that a fair number of voters in Sebastopol would be dismayed to see another Hotel owner sell property to the county or a non-profit to create a “Navigation Center” in the center of downtown. This could happen if Piazza loses interest in their project and the State, County or a nonprofit can find some grant money. (It has happened before).

The two permanent supportive housing units already provide more homeless assistance per capita than any city in the county, probably the State. 20% of our housing stock is deed restricted “affordable housing”. These do come at a cost to the city.

Permanent Supportive Housing is responsible for increased demand for police services and increases in crime. We heard from the city’s consultant that the residents are not the problem, it is the people who tend to hang around these facilities, presumably friends and drug dealers. Dealing with these costs the city money.

20% of the deed restricted “affordable” housing stock does not pay property tax. This means the city is giving up nearly \$1MM in property tax revenue to make affordable housing available in the city.

If you wonder why the city struggles to find money to fix streets and pay for fire services when other cities have few issues, look to the generosity of past city councils. Everyone needs to understand that there is a cost to being generous. Residents are paying for it with poor streets; highest sales tax in the state and parcel tax to pay for fire.

It is important the Council and the public have a debate. It is inappropriate to pass zoning ordinances with such significant impacts, buried in pages of technical zoning changes.

Note: To add to the confusion of what this vote meant: The **Resolution (included with the January 6 staff report) states** you are allowing low barrier Navigation Centers to the residential zones R5, R6 and R7. It is silent regarding the Commercial Districts CO, CG and CD included in the discussion.

Current Zoning Descriptions:

R5 – Single-Family and Multifamily Residential. The purpose of the R5 [District](#) is to implement the upper end of the “Medium Density Residential” land use category of the General Plan. This [district](#) is applicable to areas appropriate for high density single-family, townhome, condominium, duplex, triplex, and fourplex residential uses and allows densities up to 12 units per acre.

R6 – Multifamily Residential. The purpose of the R6 [District](#) is to implement the lower end of the “High Density Residential” land use category of the General Plan. This [district](#) is applicable to areas appropriate for attached single-family development, including townhome and condominium, and multifamily development and allows densities from approximately 12.1 to 17.4 units per acre.

R7 – Multifamily Residential. The purpose of the R7 [District](#) is to implement the “High Density Residential” land use category of the General Plan. This [district](#) is applicable to those lands within that category which are appropriate for densities from approximately 12.1 to 25 units per acre.

Office Commercial. The CO [District](#) is intended to create, preserve, and enhance areas containing a mixture of professional, medical, administrative, and general [offices](#), residential, and small-scale [retail uses](#) and to encourage mixed-use developments of commercial and residential uses. This [district](#) is typically appropriate along major thoroughfares and adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

B. General Commercial. The CG [District](#) provides areas for [commercial uses](#) with clusters of [street](#)-front stores. This [district](#) permits primarily local-serving retail establishments, specialty shops, banks, professional [offices](#), [motels](#), residential uses, and business and personal services that are typically appropriate along major thoroughfares as well as regional [commercial uses](#). The following types of [retail](#)

[uses](#) are discouraged: factory outlets, large regional-serving [shopping centers](#), and other similar [retail uses](#) generating high traffic volumes.

C. *Central Core*. The CD [District](#) is intended to create, preserve, and enhance the [downtown](#) area as the historic retail core of Sebastopol. This [district](#) provides for a range of uses, including [office](#), retail, [restaurant](#), service, and other [commercial uses](#), while allowing for residential growth, including mixed-use and [affordable housing](#) development, with the intent of increasing the vibrancy of the [City's](#) central [downtown](#) area, and it is noted that the CD [District](#) is not applied to the entire [downtown](#).