
STG Downtown Comments

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To Planning <planning@cityofsebastopol.gov>

It is great to see that the city is trying to improve our aged city look. The town plaza definitely needs some help.

After looking over and considering the improvement plans promoted I do not support many of the improvement plans and none of the 4 choices given. I will explain why I feel this way.

Sebastopol has two highways that go through its downtown. Over the years the congestion has increased since the removal of the previous lanes and the addition of the current bike lanes it has become worse. All of these changes will make it harder if not impossible for emergency vehicles to navigate through our already congested downtown streets. One example if there are Bulb Outs at Main and Sebastopol will make it hard for Fire vehicles to make a turn without taking up multiple lanes.

Roads are supported by the gas tax to help support their upkeep and keep them working. All of the stated ideas take away drive lanes and parking. As you take away the major roads people still have to get through the city forcing them on to side streets and making our neighborhoods more unsafe. Our roads are for driving.

I know they are popular but, I do not support pedestrian parklets. They put people in areas that cars used to be and still are close by. People walking down the street usually have a sense of what is going on around them. People sitting in parklets out next to traffic are stationary and not focused on the area around them but the area near them. It would only take one traffic incident for people to get hurt or killed using these parklets. People are also experiencing larger volumes of exhaust fumes and car noise in parklets. Last thing it is not fair for private businesses to take over public streets and parking spots for their financial gain.

In all these ideas it is stated that you are trying to make Sebastopol more accessible, but these ideas all take away the limited parking that Sebastopol has. We need the parking areas around the town plaza. As much as I love food trucks, adding them to the town plaza are will take away from our brick and mortar restaurants in downtown.

Item C vaguely talks about making bike improvements to Willow and High Street. I have bicycled these streets without issue with other cars for years. I am concerned that improvements would take out the parking that these streets currently have. This also talks about connecting with down town. In its current situation when you come out of the trail you simply take a right turn onto the bike lane and proceed the several hundred feet to the downtown area. It's not that hard, its actually really easy. I could see improved signage for people not from this area though.

In your plan item G adds a crosswalk mid span of Main Street. Our city blocks are very short we don't need another cross walk mid-block. Adding another light on that block will just make traffic worse potentially causing more frustration in drivers.

Item H seems redundant. There is already a controlled crossing here. Where bicycles can stop and cross as pedestrians or they can simple go through the parking area and come out on South main street and cross like any other wheeled vehicle is supposed to. As a bicyclist I would much rather go down Burnett street to reach Ives park than go up Willow Streets hill.

Burnett Street is a side street and makes more sense to add bicycle pathways if parking is not taken away and the street is still open to traffic. Currently both Burnett and Willow streets are used by motorist to bypass the Main street grid lock that happens.

As far as the four ideas all of them take away from traffic being able to freely move through the downtown area and takes away much of the current available parking. As traffic has increases and the congestion has gotten worse in downtown I find that I am less likely to go to downtown. One example is I love Screaming Mimi's but the access and parking have become so bad that I have started going to Angelica's Ice Cream in Forestville because it takes the same amount of time and less stressful than getting through downtown. My family and I walk around our neighborhood area and walk to the grocery store near us. We have noticed an increase of traffic already on side streets. I feel that these plans will just push more cars to smaller side streets.

Thank you,

Shawn-Paul O'Dell

Sebastopol Resident