

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
BUILDING THE COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE
AGENDA ITEM REPORT

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Subject: Communication Needs Assessment Subcommittee

Recommendation: That the Building the Commons Standing Committee receive and discuss the *Community Needs Assessment Subcommittee Proposal* and provide input and direction to staff and subcommittee members.

- **Attachment A:** Community Assessment Subcommittee Proposal
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BACKGROUND:

The *Building the Commons Standing Committee* was established by the City Council to define and advance the concept of a *Sebastopol Commons*—a coordinated, multi-use infrastructure initiative aimed at enhancing civic life, economic vitality, and community connection in downtown Sebastopol.

To ensure that the Committee’s work is grounded in community needs, the *Community Needs Assessment Subcommittee* has developed a proposed approach for gathering input from potential Commons users, tenants, and stakeholders.

DISCUSSION:

The *Community Needs Assessment Subcommittee Proposal* (Attachment A) recommends a targeted and efficient process to understand the potential composition and needs of the Commons. Key points include:

1. **Lean & Agile Committee Structure:**
Conduct community interviews and surveys rather than attempting to represent all stakeholder voices within the Standing Committee itself.
2. **Focused Assessment:**
Engage a manageable number of interviews and surveys to reach roughly 80% understanding of potential tenants and user groups, including space, amenities, parking, transit, accessibility, and adjacent services. A more detailed final assessment may occur later, beyond the current Committee’s scope or timeline.

3. **Committee Input Requested:**

Each Standing Committee member is asked to bring a **written list of their top ten (10) recommended community members or organizations** for interviews to the **November 10th meeting**.

NEXT STEPS:

Based on Committee discussion and direction, the Subcommittee and staff will:

1. Refine the community assessment framework and outreach plan;
2. Begin conducting interviews and surveys as identified by the Committee; and
3. Report back with summarized findings and recommendations for next-phase planning.

ATTACHMENT A

The goal of the Sebastopol Commons Standing Committee being to define the concept of a Sebastopol Commons, the Community Assessment Subcommittee proposes:

- 1) We keep the Sebastopol Commons Standing Committee “lean & agile” by pushing the vital assessment work into community interviews and surveys, instead of trying to represent all the major voices. We intend to assess broadly, focusing on potential full-time tenants, such as City Services, the Branch Library, and key NPOs, service organizations, emergency coordinators, and other community groups as well as the individual users themselves.
- 2) We will work quickly and thoroughly with a manageable number of interviews and survey participants, to get 80% of the way towards understanding who and what would comprise the Commons. Ideally, the conclusion of these assessments will result in rough ideas of the potential major tenants and users, plus an aggregate statement of their respective needs for square footage, structural amenities, parking/transit, accessibility, and adjacent services. If there is broad appeal of this “rough cut” concept of the Commons, we then envision professional, detailed, and deeply inclusive assessments to refine the final 20%. The final 20% may be beyond the scope or timeline of the current of the Sebastopol Commons Standing Committee and may need additional time for additional input.
- 3) We ask that each Sebastopol Commons Standing Committee member come to the November 10th meeting with a prepared written list of the top (10) community members and/or organizations with whom the Subcommittee should conduct these assessment interviews.