



City of Sebastopol

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR GOALS WORKSHOP MEETING OF: April 14, 2026

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Interim City Manager
Department: All Departments
Subject: FY 26 27 Goals and Priorities Workshop

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RECOMMENDATIONS: Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Review the summary of Councilmember priorities and public input received through the 2026 community survey.
2. Provide direction to staff regarding priority initiatives under each of the six adopted Council goals.
3. Confirm, refine, or modify the City Council Goals and Priorities to guide work planning and budget development for FY 2026–27.

PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:

- a. Introduction of agenda item by City staff
- b. Questions and discussion from Councilmembers
- c. Open for Public Comment
- d. Council Deliberation and Action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The City Council conducts an annual goal-setting process to establish policy priorities that guide City operations, staff work plans, and budget development.

This report summarizes Councilmember-submitted priorities and public input received through a community survey conducted in early 2026. A total of 236 survey responses were received from residents and community members.

The report provides an overview of:

- Councilmember priority proposals aligned with the six adopted Council goals
- Key themes emerging from the community survey response
- City staff submitted goals
- Status of current FY 2025–26 goals for context on potential carry-over items

Staff recommends that the City Council review the information and provide direction regarding priority initiatives and potential updates to the City’s adopted goals for the upcoming fiscal year.

BACKGROUND: The City of Sebastopol conducts an annual Council goal-setting process to establish priorities that guide staff work plans, budgeting, and resource allocation. In 2025, Council adopted six overarching goals:

- Goal 1:** Community Vitality
- Goal 2:** Public Safety

Goal 3: Infrastructure

Goal 4: High Performance Organization

Goal 5: Long Term Financial Sustainability

Goal 6: Economic Development

As part of the annual review process, Councilmembers were invited to submit priority initiatives aligned with these goals. In addition, the City distributed a community survey to gather public input regarding priorities within the same goal areas. The survey received 236 responses, providing insight into community perspectives and priorities.

DISCUSSION: Staff recommends Council use this information to refine and adopt updated goals for the coming year, balancing Council direction with strong public feedback on traffic/parking, roads, fiscal responsibility, local business support, homelessness/safety, and downtown vitality.

This report summarizes:

1. Councilmember-submitted priorities.
2. Key themes from the 236 public survey responses.
3. City Staff Submitted Priorities
4. Current status of 2025-2026 goals (for context on carry-over items).

A table of combined goals / themes from current goals and priorities (discussion of carry over items); Council goals; public and staff input is attached. The intent is to review line by line proposals/themes and provide direction to staff.

1. COUNCILMEMBER PRIORITIES SUMMARY:

Goal 1: Community Vitality

- Downtown History Walk (bronze plaques or markers); “I ❤️ Sebastopol” week-long event.
- WESCO Urban Multi-Sport Facility (youth soccer/pickleball/basketball) at Youth Annex – shovel-ready
- Volunteer Program with Coordinator
- Charles Schulz Peanuts/Snoopy public art sculpture

Goal 2: Public Safety

- Joe Rodota Trail Corridor Safety – vegetation management, sight-line improvements, blackberry removal
- Increase police foot patrols downtown

Goal 3: Infrastructure

- Desktop feasibility study for Apple Blossom Trail (\$35K);
- Prioritize Laguna Wetlands Preserve care (including possible bathroom upgrade)
- Traffic Ad Hoc Committee.
- Advance Apple Blossom Trail and Gravenstein Trail development (coordinated with downtown street reconfiguration)
- Review cost allocation plan and make necessary adjustments

Goal 4: High Performance Organization

- Establish West County Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD) – initial \$20K scoping for legal/financial analysis to fund major capital needs (library/senior center, trails, etc.).
- Strengthen collaborative working relationships between the City and recognized labor unions through proactive communication, transparent processes, and early engagement on operational, budgetary and workforce issues

Goal 5: Long Term Financial Sustainability

- Clean Energy Rate Competitiveness (SCPA 2026 IRP – GeoZone geothermal), GeoZone investment
- Pavement Asset Management (preventive maintenance to avoid higher future costs).
- Review cost allocation plan and make necessary adjustments.
- Review pension/other benefits funding levels.

Goal 6: Economic Development

- Renew Economic Gardening program budget; launch Downtown Business Listening Series + “Downtown Roots” recognition for long-tenured businesses.

Councilmembers also expressed support for continuing work on several previously adopted initiatives, including:

- Road repairs and infrastructure maintenance
- Sewer and water system repairs
- Avoidance of the Builder’s Remedy through compliant housing planning
- Emergency preparedness
- Restoring public trust and transparency
- Maintaining a balanced budget
- Revenue diversification and grant seeking
- Quarterly financial reporting and “Budget at a Glance” public summaries
- Low-cost homelessness solutions
- Community events and holiday decorations
- Pomo cultural recognition and public art
- Local business support programs
- Ives Park improvements

2. PUBLIC INPUT: Public input strongly emphasized practical, near-term actions and fiscal responsibility.

Goal 1 – Community Vitality

- Preserve local character / support small businesses / avoid chain stores (42 responses)
- Traffic, parking, and street configuration concerns (26)
- Infrastructure repairs including roads and sidewalks (20)
- Downtown cleanliness, safety, and homelessness (16)
- Public spaces, parks, arts, and community events (13)

Goal 2 – Public Safety

- Homelessness enforcement / public space management / drug activity concerns (24)
- Traffic enforcement and speed control (22)
- Increased police visibility and community policing (18)
- General satisfaction with current services (17)

Goal 3 – Infrastructure

- Roads, potholes, and repaving (58 responses)
- Parks and public spaces including Ives Park (18)
- Bike infrastructure and trails (14)
- Sidewalks and pedestrian safety (12)
- Water and sewer infrastructure (11)

Goal 4 – High Performance Organization

- Council responsiveness and listening to community input (23)
- Fiscal management and reducing waste (20)
- Staffing levels and filling City vacancies (11)
- Transparency, accountability, and public trust (10)

Goal 5 – Long Term Financial Sustainability

- Balanced budget concerns (32)
- New revenue generation such as tourism taxes (TOT) (28)
- Spending reductions and limiting consultant costs (24)
- Interest in hotel development to increase TOT revenue (18)

Goal 6 – Economic Development

- Strong support for local businesses and limiting chains (42)
- Reuse of vacant commercial spaces (Rite Aid, CVS, etc.) (22)
- Traffic and parking impacts on downtown businesses (20)
- Reduce regulations and streamline permitting (16)
- Tourism promotion and hotel development (15)

3. CITY STAFF SUBMITTED PRIORITIES

Goal 1: Community Vitality

Enhance Sebastopol as a great place to live while preserving its unique character

- 125th Centennial Event
- Public Arts Committee requested monthly meetings

Goal 2: Public Safety

- Strengthen public safety and support first responders
- Prioritize public safety through programs and initiatives that assist the Council, City departments and the community prepare for a major disasters and continue disaster preparedness with a regional approach
- Prioritize volunteer programs to enhance public safety, support the Police Department
- in non-enforcement duties, and improve community relations by engaging in a variety of community service roles.

- Evaluate industry best practices in public safety delivery models and identify potential opportunities to adapt and expand capacities, including a focus on staffing strategies and limiting reliance on overtime
- Traffic enforcement; community policing; walking downtown; walking the plaza and parks routinely; strengthen code enforcement

Goal 3: Infrastructure

Focus: Maintain high-quality infrastructure, facilities, and services by *Planning and providing for future facilities and equipment needs, including assessments of current resources, growth projections, and technological advancements.*

- Review and evaluate impact of Loan Forgiveness for Enterprise Fund to address infrastructure needs
- Advance Project Readiness for Grant and Funding Opportunities
 - Develop a portfolio of projects to at least 50% design across infrastructure sectors.
 - Position the City to compete effectively for state and federal funding by maintaining “shovel-ready” projects.
 - Leverage both internal expertise and specialized consultant support, as appropriate, to efficiently advance design.
- Street Paving
 - Utilize the Pavement Management Program (PMP) as a foundational tool to guide roadway investments.
 - Combined PMP recommendations with the CIP Program, available funding, and community priorities.
- Advance Implementation of the City’s Asset Management System
 - Continue building out and refining asset inventories, including stormwater and roadway systems, and validating legacy data.
 - Integrate work order tracking, maintenance activities, and inspection programs into a unified system.
- Deliver the FY 2026/27 Capital Improvement Program
 - Successfully implement the full suite of programmed CIP projects.
 - Maintain focus on schedule, budget, and quality delivery.
 - Utilize a balanced approach of internal staff and consultant resources to optimize project outcomes.

Goal 4: High Performance Organization

Focus: Improve organizational effectiveness and public trust by *Increasing community engagement, accessibility and transparency with increased communication to build public trust with staff, elected officials, boards, committees, and commissions.*

- Support an environment of transparency, clear public communication, collaboration and teamwork. Enable the City to recruit, train and compete for talent and high-performing employees and ensure institutional knowledge is retained.
- Proactively manage the loss of institutional knowledge by documenting procedures, practices and processes and succession planning efforts including the ability to provide for overlap in critical positions.

- Municipal Code Updates – City Wide
 - Update ordinances and policies to reflect current regulatory requirements, sustainability goals, and operational needs. Items Include but not limited to:
 - Water loss and construction water use
 - Sidewalk maintenance and responsibility
 - Non-functional turf and water efficiency
- Strengthen Development Review Integration with all Departments
 - Reestablish leadership in the development review process to ensure infrastructure consistency and long-term maintainability.
 - Develop clear workflows and coordination protocols across departments.
 - Expand staff capacity and training to increase in-house capability, while continuing to partner with consultants where specialized expertise is needed.

Goal 5: Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Focus: Achieve greater fiscal resilience.

- Review and evaluate reserve policies, including reserve levels and criteria governing the use of reserves. Evaluate the long-term structural balance of revenues and expenditures to maintain a sustainable General Fund
- Invest in technologies that minimize low value-add processes, increase transparency in communications and most efficiently utilize our staff. Commit to continuous improvement in the communication of City financial information through a variety of media acknowledging that the City's professional staff and consultants are obligated to conform to accounting and reporting standards in order to provide balanced financial information that informs policymakers.
- Strive to achieve cost recovery goals for fee-based services
- Reduce City utility costs by assessing and identifying strategies to increase efficiency and sustainability.
- Conduct a comprehensive community engagement effort to build understanding of City services, finances, and budgetary limitations.
- Continue to evaluate the most cost-effective method to provide services at a specified level that provides the City with flexibility in all economic conditions, including the use of contracted services, shared services, and regular and limited-term employees.
- Ensure a fund's fiscal year-end balance estimate is positive.
- Implement efforts for improved business license compliance.

Goal 6: Economic Development

Focus: Support local business growth *by establishing Sebastopol as a welcoming destination for businesses and families with vibrant arts and events in downtown centers and protecting business and residential areas from blight and deterioration and encourage residents and business owners to maintain their properties.*

- Facilitate the development of entitled and proposed hotels to increase local amenities and options for future visitors.
- Explore additional community event offerings and continue sponsoring non profit events.
- Continue streamlining development processes/policies

- Identify and evaluate strategies to support local businesses, including bike racks, use of sidewalks for table service; parklets on selective streets; and selective street closures for events.









4. UPDATE TO CURRENT FY 25 26 CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Many of the goals adopted for FY 2025–26 remain in progress and may continue into the upcoming fiscal year. These include infrastructure maintenance initiatives, financial management improvements, and ongoing community development programs.

Goal 1: Community Vitality

-  **Labyrinth Teen Memorial restoration:** Completed (spent \$5,726 of \$6,000 budget)
-  **Support community events with sponsorship & fee waivers:** Ongoing – waivers reviewed case-by-case as requests come in
-  **Pomo land acknowledgement & public art:** Completed (language approved and added to website/agendas; mural funded)
-  **Graffiti cleanup downtown:** Ongoing – bi-weekly cleanups continuing as routine Public Works task
-  **Festive/Holiday events & decorations:** Completed for 2025 (Halloween & holiday installations done); beautification to continue next year
-  **Grant writer assistance (student or contract):** Ongoing – staff actively applying for grants; Sonoma State outreach pending













Goal 2: Public Safety

-  **Address homelessness – new county lead agency & ordinances:** In progress / Council consideration
-  **Homelessness resources & WCCS/HEART partnership:** In progress – \$40k approved; HEART worker (Julian Sanchez) onboarded January 2026 and performing well
-  **Emergency backup power for EOC/Police Station:** In progress – feasibility study complete; design underway; full construction planned for FY27
-  **Update Emergency Operations Plan (EOP):** In progress – draft reviewed by County; public feedback and final Council approval targeted for 2026
-  **Update Hazard Mitigation Plan:** In progress – on track for December 2026 deadline (multi-jurisdictional with County)
-  **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT):** Ongoing – included in EOP; PD supportive of county free trainings
-  **Drug enforcement & foot patrols:** Ongoing – 789+ foot patrols completed; Narcan dispenser location under review
-  **Harm reduction / needle exchange discussions:** Ongoing – Narcan placement advancing; vending machine proposal previously reviewed










Goal 3: Infrastructure

-  **Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Grant:** Completed – preferred alternative selected; final plan returning to Planning Commission & Council in April/May 2026
-  **Pothole repairs & street resurfacing:** In progress – grant application submitted; digout list approved; Palm Ave & Strout returning to Council April 21
-  **Flood Resiliency & Wastewater/Sewer Master Plans:** In progress – contracts awarded; GIS work underway; Sewer Master Plan to Council April 21
-  **Calder Creek silt removal (storm drain):** In progress – addressed in Flood Resiliency Plan; lower-cost alternative identified
-  **CUSP Grant for Calder Creek & Ives Park naturalization:** In progress – grant applications submitted
-  **Rotary Centennial Plan / Ives Park revisions:** In progress – Rotary redesigning; Parks Subcommittee formed
-  **Well 4 design & funding:** In progress – RFP completed; design work advancing in 2026
-  **SCTCA / Bodega Ave Bike Lanes funding:** Completed – initial meeting held and revisions submitted
- **II Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD):** On hold – paused pending clarity on Measure U funding
-  **ADA walkway in Ives Park:** Programmed for FY27 using Measure M funds
-  **Water Master Plan:** In progress – engineering ongoing
-  **Trench cut ordinance, building replacement schedule, fleet electrification:** Not yet started or early planning stage




Goal 4: High Performance Organization

-  **Staffing assessment & recruitment:** In progress – Public Works Director onboarded; Planning Director recruitment underway
-  **City Council protocols & procedures:** Ongoing – regular review
-  **RFP for HR Management consultant:** In progress
-  **Avoid Builder’s Remedy / Housing Element compliance:** In progress – critical items completed January 2026
-  **Housing Element implementation (ABAG PDA Grant):** In progress – consultant selected; contract expected spring 2026
-  **Replace SMART Gov permitting system:** Under review – evaluating vendor options
-  **Replace CIP tracking software:** Planned for FY27 due to cost
-  **Restoring public trust / transparency:** Ongoing
-  **IT Audit:** In progress – RFP issued; responses under review; completion targeted for June 2026
-  **Improve public communications:** Ongoing
-  **Shared services exploration:** In progress – limited opportunities identified so far
-  **Cross-training of administrative staff:** In progress – Building Department relocated to City Hall; two Admin Techs onboarded




Goal 5: Long Term Financial Sustainability

-  **Balanced budget:** On track – FY25-26 adopted with surplus; monthly Budget Committee meetings established
-  **Quarterly financial reports (General Fund & Enterprise Funds):** Ongoing – regular updates to Budget Committee and Council
-  **Measure U priority tracking:** Ongoing – included in quarterly reports
-  **“Budget at a Glance” publication:** In progress – 4-page version developed and posted on website
-  **Diversify revenue base & façade improvement program:** In progress – potential revival under discussion
-  **Fee increases & Impact/User Fee Study:** In progress – permit fees already raised; RFP for new study in preparation (target June 2026)
-  **Update financial policies (CIRA compliance):** Pending – staff capacity limited
-  **Pursue regional & other grants:** Ongoing – multiple applications submitted
-  **Zoning code streamlining for permitting:** In progress – Planning Commission subcommittee working on housing-related updates

Goal 6: Economic Development

-  **Economic Gardening Program / “Growing Businesses Together”:** In progress – listening session held; first event completed March 26, 2026
-  **Develop Economic Development Strategy:** On hold – waiting for PDA data expected mid-2026
-  **Barlow Hotel permitting:** In progress – Development Agreement approved; building permits expected September 2026

Overall Summary

-  **Completed:** Several high-visibility community projects delivered
-  **In Progress / On Track:** Majority of goals showing solid momentum (infrastructure planning, emergency preparedness, staffing, Housing Element, budget oversight)
-  **On Hold:** EIFD and full Economic Development Strategy
- Most goals are advancing well, with visible results in community vitality and public safety initiatives.

As part of the goal-setting process, the Council may wish to:

- Continue existing priorities
- Modify priorities based on community input
- Add new initiatives proposed by Councilmembers

STAFF ANALYSIS: The Council goal-setting process provides an opportunity to align policy priorities with available financial and staffing resources while responding to community concerns.

Public input indicates strong support for prioritizing infrastructure maintenance, fiscal responsibility, public safety, and local business support.

City staff took all input; merged similar strategies/themes and created the attached table to streamline the process. City Council and community members will have additional opportunity at this meeting to discuss strategies/priorities submitted or to submit additional strategies/priorities.

Staff recommends that the Council focus on a manageable set of priority initiatives that can realistically be advanced during the upcoming fiscal year while maintaining progress on ongoing capital and operational projects. Based on the City Council's direction, staff will prepare a list of priority initiatives to be formally adopted at a future Council meeting.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS / PRIORITIES / GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY: The proposed priorities are generally consistent with the goals and policies of the Sebastopol General Plan, including policies related to community vitality, economic development, infrastructure maintenance, environmental stewardship, and public safety.

PUBLIC COMMENT: A public survey was conducted and results of the survey are attached for reference. As of the preparation of this staff report, no further public comments have been received on this item. Any comments received after distribution of the report will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials. Public comment will also be accepted during the workshop.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: This item has been noticed and made available for public review in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT: Future goals will have associated budget impacts to be addressed during the FY 2026-27 budget process.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council review the Councilmember priorities and community input summarized in this report and provide direction regarding updated City Council goals and priority initiatives for the upcoming fiscal year.

OPTIONS

1. Modify the proposed priorities and provide additional direction to staff.
2. Continue the item and request additional analysis or information from staff.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Community Survey Summary (236 Responses)
2. Councilmember Priority Submissions

3. FY 2025–26 Council Goals Status Update
4. Merged Strategies/Priorities for City Council Consideration/Direction Tabulation Sheet