

Dear Members of the Sebastopol City Council Budget Committee,

On behalf of the Downtown Sebastopol Business Improvement District (BID), we respectfully submit our proposed allocation of funds for the upcoming fiscal year and request your approval to proceed.

The BID currently holds approximately **\$17,000 in available funds**, with **annual revenue of approximately \$9,000**. Our proposal reflects a careful and conservative approach—balancing **one-time investments that create lasting shared assets** with **ongoing annual expenses that align with our recurring revenue**.

Our goal is to ensure that every dollar spent delivers **broad, visible benefit to the entire district**, while maintaining long-term financial sustainability.

Proposed Budget Framework

One-Time / Foundational Investments (Year 1)

These investments create shared tools that all BID businesses can use over multiple years:

- **Website & Downtown Events Calendar: \$2000 – \$3000**
Development of a centralized, easy-to-use website that highlights downtown businesses and provides a single location for events and promotions. All BID members will be able to participate and list offerings at no additional cost.
- **Professional Content Creation (Photo & Video): \$4000 - 5000**
Creation of a high-quality, evergreen library of images and short-form video showcasing Downtown Sebastopol. These assets will be shared with all BID businesses to support their individual marketing efforts, reducing the need for each business to invest separately.

Estimated One-Time Total: \$6000 – \$8,000

Annual / Recurring Investments

These ongoing investments focus on visibility, visitor experience, and steady economic activity:

- **Main Street Beautification (Seasonal Flowers & Holiday Lighting): \$4,000 – \$5,000 annually**
Enhancing the appearance of downtown creates a welcoming environment that encourages visitors to stay longer, explore more businesses, and return more often.
- **Sonoma County Tourism Magazine (2-Page Spread): Approximately \$3,400 - \$3,600 annually**
Inclusion in this widely distributed publication ensures Downtown Sebastopol is represented to visitors already traveling within Sonoma County. This provides broad exposure for multiple businesses within a single placement.

- **Website Maintenance & Updates: \$300 – \$700 annually**
Ongoing support to keep the website and events calendar current and useful for both businesses and visitors.

Estimated Annual Total: \$7,700 – \$9,300

This funding plan reflects a disciplined and practical approach: investing once in shared assets, maintaining manageable annual costs, and prioritizing improvements that benefit the entire downtown business community.

- **Aligned with Annual Revenue**
Recurring costs are intentionally kept within the BID’s approximate \$9,000 annual income, avoiding structural deficits and ensuring sustainability.
- **Shared Value Across All BID Members**
Investments focus on tools and visibility that benefit the entire district—not individual businesses—ensuring equitable return on BID contributions.
- **Supports Small and Independent Businesses**
By providing shared marketing assets and a common promotional platform, this plan reduces the burden on individual businesses to fund their own advertising and content creation.
- **Increases Customer Activity Downtown**
A more attractive streetscape, stronger regional visibility, and clear information about what is happening downtown all contribute to increased visitation and greater participation across multiple businesses.
- **Builds Long-Term Marketing Infrastructure**
One-time investments in content and digital presence will continue to generate value in future years, reducing the need for repeated large expenditures.

We believe this proposal represents a responsible use of BID funds and supports the City’s goals of economic vitality, small business support, and a vibrant downtown.

We appreciate your consideration and welcome any questions.

Warmly,

Downtown Sebastopol Business Improvement District represented by:

Jen Koelemeijer - Gather

Danielle Connor - Retrograde

Andrea Caron - Silk Moon

Erin Hillmer - Gather

Tessa Grul - Dressers

