


Agenda Report Reviewed by:
 City Manager: 

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
 CITY COUNCIL
 AGENDA ITEM**

Meeting July 18, 2023
To: Honorable Mayor and Honorable City Councilmembers
From: Fire Chief/Director of Emergency Services
Subject: Twice-Annual Informational Report on Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) and Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit (SNCU) Presented by Skip Jirrels and Stan Green
Recommendation: That the Mayor and City Council Receive the Informational Report
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No X N/A
 Net General Fund Cost:

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) AK (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION:

This item is to request City Council receive a Twice-Annual Informational Report on the Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) and the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit (SNCU) programs.

BACKGROUND:

The primary purpose of the Sebastopol MYN Program is to enhance community-level preparedness, resident self-reliance, and neighborhood resilience, resulting in a reduced impact on local demands for EOC resources during an emergency. The Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit helps improve and expand community-level communication opportunities through the use of handheld radios to support self-reliance and resilience.

DISCUSSION:

The Map Your Neighborhood and Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit are citizen-based groups that provide emergency preparation and planning support for our community. Both groups meet monthly, including training sessions and drills. The Map Your Neighborhood group is led by Skip Jirrels, who is under contract with the City of Sebastopol as our Public Safety Outreach Coordinator. The Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit is an initiative within the MYN Program and is led by long time CERT member Stan Green. They both function under the auspices of the Fire Chief, Sebastopol Fire Department.

GOALS:

4.2.2: Foster a Sense of Community by Providing and Encouraging Participation in Community Events, Volunteering, and working with Non-Profits to Support Local Events

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the city has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report, such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the recommended action tonight.

RECOMMENDATION:

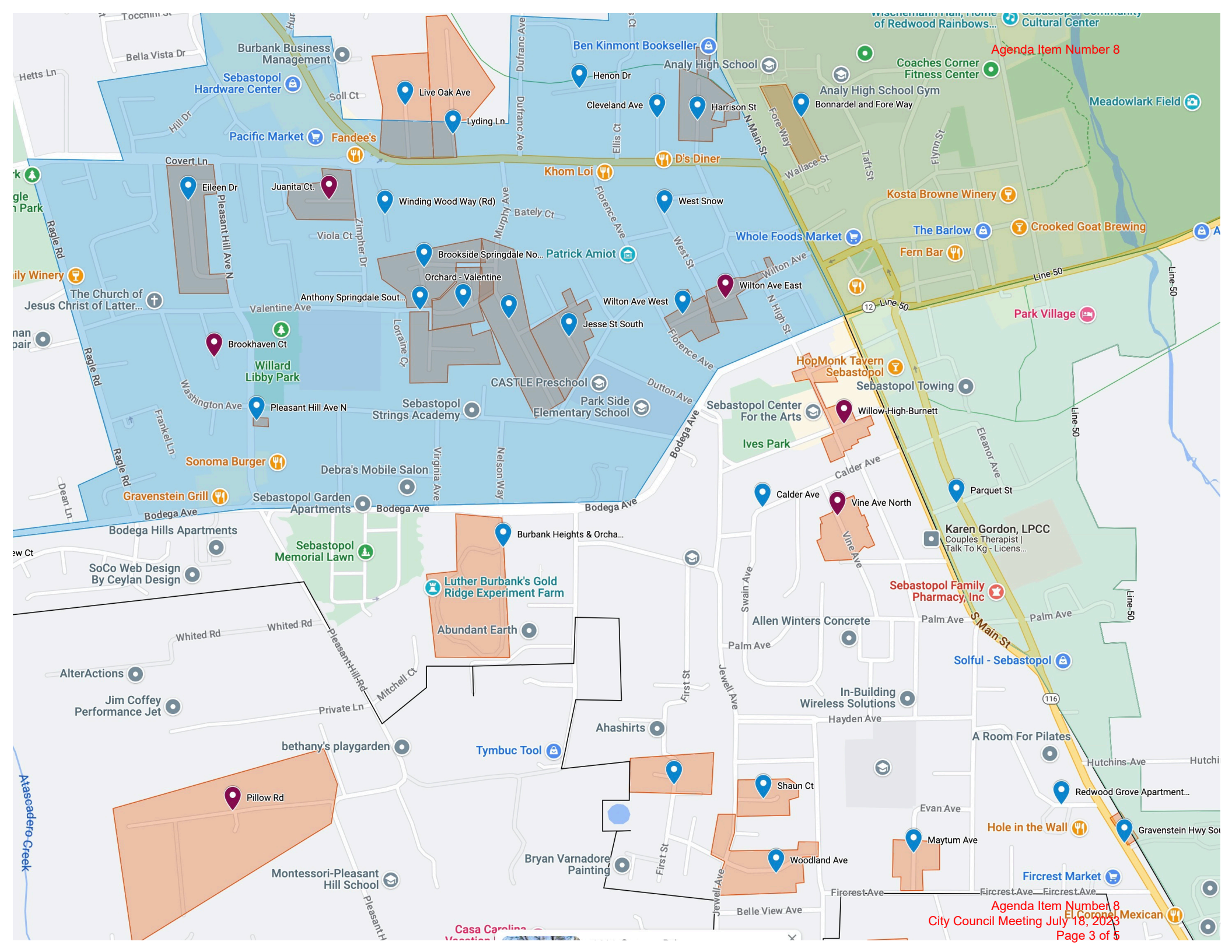
That the Mayor and City Council Receive the Presentation on the Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) and the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit (SNCU) Programs.

ATTACHMENT(S):

NYN Map Project Map

NYN Map Project overview

SNCU Overview



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Sebastopol Fire Department's Meet Your Neighbor (MYN) Program - July 2023

MYN Leader Council (LC) Map Project

The Meet Your Neighbors (MYN) program is all about bringing neighbors together to help each other during times of emergencies or disasters. The MYN Leader Council (LC) provides an opportunity for neighborhood Leaders to come together and discuss what is or isn't working to improve each neighborhood's resilience. Learning to reach out and dialogue about issues, needs and the abilities to address those is a slow but important process to improving preparedness. As Leaders have connected and identified how to become better prepared within their neighborhood, a logical evolution was to begin looking outside of the immediate neighborhood to see how surrounding neighborhoods are progressing. As a part of this evolving process within the Leader Council, the need for a map became apparent.

A small group of LC members came together to discuss and further develop the idea of a map. Although paper, foam core and a large format physical map were created early on, the use of Google Maps to more easily make anticipated frequent changes and additions was chosen.

As the Map Project began to take shape, the need for neighborhood boundaries and a neighborhood naming convention arose. In response to an initial survey, 48 neighborhood Leaders submitted their locations and 32 Leaders submitted boundaries for their neighborhoods as a beginning. A basic naming convention of using street names was adopted and the MYN Leader Council map you see was created.

Consensus on what information would show up by scrolling over a neighborhood icon has not been achieved, as of yet. There are numerous competing interests regarding what is available to 'all' and what might be available to our larger MYN list or what might be available to LC members only. (Privacy and confidentiality (P&C) have always been important issues when considering 'working together' to achieve resilience. The benefit of being able to share information across neighborhoods is refining our ability to maintain P&C.) As the Map Project continues its slow evolution, one point of information seen as necessary is whether or not the neighborhood has an FRS, GMRS or HAM radio operator.

As noted in the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communication Unit (SNCU) document attached, SNCU uses 'hubs' to connect neighborhoods within each of the 4 evacuation zones in Sebastopol. (County Evacuation Zones are noted for MYN neighborhoods outside city limits.) The LC Map Project is adding radio information for MYN neighborhoods and includes evacuation zone differentiation for the 4 City zones for easy reference. The relationship of SNCU's development and evolution to that of the LC's evolving want to connect across neighborhoods has been anticipated and planned. As more and more neighborhoods adopt MYN and become part of the Leader Council, and as those Leaders see the value of radio communication, the LC Map Project will continue to evolve.

Although still evolving and in draft form, the LC Map Project presents a picture of the evolution of emergency preparedness and resilience in the Sebastopol area. When current issues are resolved, the LC Map project will be available on sebastopolready.org.

Sebastopol Neighborhood Communication Unit (SNCU)

1. The Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit was organized in 2019 to assist the Sebastopol Fire Department to organize disaster resilient neighborhoods through the MYN Program, even when there is no power.
2. The mission/purpose of the SNCU is to strengthen neighbors and neighborhoods before and during emergencies by implementing a power-out communications system. The primary goals are to facilitate neighbors, neighborhoods, and evacuation zone residents to help each other with resources as needed and as available from other residents. As the first goal becomes realized, the second goal; to reduce the number of non-emergency calls going to the 9-1-1 system, becomes self-evident.
3. The Communications Unit intentionally selected 3 different radios, each with a specific role:
 - FRS (low cost and minimum training) for neighbors within a neighborhood,
 - GMRS (Still under \$100 but does require a \$35 for a 10 year license) for communications between a neighborhood and a Communications Hub,
 - 2-meter Ham radio for communications between the Communication Hubs and the Net Control Operator, located at the Fire Station.
4. There are 4 hubs, one for each Evacuation Zone and 1 hub dedicated for Spanish speaking residents (under development). The purpose of the Communications Hub is to manage the requests from neighborhoods and to assure proper handling of messages between the Net Control at the Fire Station and neighbors and neighborhoods.
5. SNCU offers communication services to Sebastopol residents and adjacent MYN neighborhoods. Services offered may be limited by distance and geography, where radio transmission may not be available.
6. 9-1-1 level messages for help received from an MYN neighborhood will be handed to the Fire Chief's designee serving as liaison at the Fire Station. Once the incoming 9-1-1 message is transferred to the Fire Department liaison, the SNCU has no further involvement in that message.
7. The leadership of SNCU will use the tenants of ICS to staff, operate and manage the operations of the Communications team.