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**To:** [Mary Gourley](#)  
**Cc:** [Kari Svanstrom](#); [Fritz, Paul](#); [Kathy Oetinger](#)  
**Subject:** Housing Workshop - 3/7/22 Public Comment  
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Dear Council and Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for all your hard work on creating these draft housing elements.

I have a few comments.

I do not see any current housing inventory in the document. I might have missed it as there are many pages. Is there currently a list of how many Single Family Residences, Apartments, Townhomes and ADUs are part of our current housing stock? Is there a break down of existing market rate, low income and extremely low income housing stock?

As we look toward the future it might be useful to know how many of each type currently exist. Once again, apologies if I missed the list.

The second comment is that in your survey questions, you do not ask respondents what type of housing they would like to rent or buy. For instance, how many first time home buyers want a 3 bedroom/ 2 bath home versus a 1 bedroom townhouse? How many square feet do people typically want in senior housing?

It seems that this information would be valuable as you move forward with looking at the development of Sebastopol's housing stock. The majority of families, for instance, want 2-4 bedrooms. Some looking for senior housing might want a 2 bedroom cottage.

If you could conduct a survey regarding size of units and numbers of bathrooms and bedrooms, this data would be crucial in terms of what to build.

A document such as this breaks down statistics for buyers and sellers:

<https://www.nar.realtor/sites/default/files/documents/2021-home-buyers-and-sellers-generational-trends-03-16-2021.pdf>

I encourage and support the development of affordable housing for families, especially those who are part of our workforce in education, caregiving, law enforcement, city agencies and emergency response. I support the idea of creating a City or County supported low or no cost loan program for people living in Sebastopol and/or Sonoma County who perform this vital work on behalf of our community.

I encourage and support the creation of mixed income developments in Sebastopol city limits, especially those which have larger units to accommodate families at all income

levels. If we can support our families, we can support our schools, local businesses and service organizations.

As most people living in Sebastopol and Sonoma County are car dependent for work and school, I would suggest parking quotas reflect this reality. Very few people in Sonoma County, especially parents and those in the working class, can function without a car. Most families have multiple vehicles. It should be taken into consideration that a unit with two people will, most likely, have two cars. Parking and vehicle ownership is another question that should be included in any future surveys.

### **ADUs are Not Good Policy**

I do not support the development of ADUs as currently proposed for the following reasons:

1. ADUs do not pay impact fees thus potentially increase density without funding the infrastructure necessary to support more density;
2. ADUs do not guarantee new housing production. ADUs can simply increase the owners living space without having to abide by normal set back rules. ADUs can be used for any purpose and the builder is not obligated to use them as long-term rentals;
3. ADUs can be used as short-term rentals thus increasing cars and noise in residential neighborhoods. As building costs are very high, a person who builds an ADU can easily rent it out on VRBO or AirBnb for a much higher nightly rate than they would receive from a long term renter. In addition, hosted short term rentals, where the owner lives on the property, are more likely to receive licenses than "non-hosted" short term rentals. As Sebastopol lost its only downtown hotel to transient housing, there is a high demand for short term rentals in the area. Until Sebastopol gains more hotel rooms and puts a stronger short term rental policy in place, there is a great likelihood that ADUs, if rented, would be turned into short term, vacation rentals.
4. Has the Planning Department done any use analysis of current ADUs to see what percentage are long-term rentals, what percentage are short-term rentals, what percentage are used by owners as home offices, what percentages are used for multi-generational housing? If not, it would be useful to see how ADUs are currently being used to determine if promoting ADUs is actually effective at building new housing or if it is simply a way for existing homeowners to increase square footage of their properties and pay off the building costs through short term rental fees.
5. ADUs change the density in residential neighborhoods that were zoned for single family residences without necessarily building new housing stock.

Development of new housing where developers pay impact fees, include parking, and design a space to accommodate density is preferable to ADUs and will house more people.

Sebastopol has many infill opportunities from the Redwood Marketplace to large and underutilized church lots. As Sebastopol has many available infill sites, it would be much more prudent and also guarantee new housing to work with developers on creating new housing at all income levels. Design and infrastructure are key to successful neighborhoods, which can be achieved through new, infill development.

In addition, Sebastopol needs to develop at least one or two new hotels downtown to generate TOT, property tax and tourist foot traffic. Hotel rooms will lessen the need for local, short term vacation rentals, put tourists and their cars downtown and preserve housing for people who work in Sebastopol and Sonoma County.

Best,  
Kate Haug  
Sebastopol