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To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Cc: [Kevin Kilgore](#); [Dante Del Prete](#); [Lawrence McLaughlin](#)
Subject: No Sneaky Safe Parking/Where's The Budget? Where's The Data? Committee on the Unhoused - Public Comment
Date: Monday, January 31, 2022 7:16:47 AM

Dear Council Members,

In your document, Agenda Item #13/ Committee for the Unhoused Report, it appears that the Council is intent on adding more Safe Parking in addition to the 20 spots at the SAVS RV Safe Parking Lot. In addition, it has no financial accounting for the services taxpayers fund for transients and contains incomplete data from the Homeless Outreach Coordinator. This proposed Safe Parking in the Ad Hoc Report has had no public input and the sites have not been disclosed.

Given Sebastopol's size and budget, Sebastopol cannot provide any more transient services.

As this report clearly documents, citizens, City Staff and Council have spent an extraordinary amount of time and resources on a very small segment of the population. Although we pay are paying \$72,000 per year for a Homeless Outreach Coordinator, there is no data which says how many transients live in Sebastopol (this might be anticipated as they are transient) but it would be reasonable to put the number at 70 or less which means that the 99.2% of Sebastopol's population is housed. Would it be fair to say that Council, City Staff and Citizens should only be spending .08% of time and resources on transients instead of 25% or 50%?

As Council and community members know, Sebastopol has more transient services per capita than any other City in Sonoma County. If we include the housing at the proposed RV Village, which can hold up to 35 residents (per the Document), Sebastopol could earnestly be called a transient mecca. Sebastopol is the only town of this size and of this budget that pays for a Homeless Outreach Coordinator.

No Need for Additional Safe Parking

Sebastopol has 45 transient beds at the Sebastopol Inn, 85 people housed at Park Village (with 2 new apartments and 10 RV Spots), 5 Safe Parking Spots at the Community Church and 35 spots at the proposed RV Village.

$45+85+5+35 = 170$ transient beds, which equals one transient bed per every 44th resident.

Forestville, home of Supervisor Hopkins - population 3700, would need 84 beds to meet our current ratio. Supervisor Hopkins has no transient beds (and as far as I can tell no transient services) in her hometown. Adrienne Lauby, President of SAVS, would need 170 transient

beds. She has none. Rohnert Park, population 42,000, would need 954 beds to match our ratio; they currently have zero. Santa Rosa, population 179,700, would need 8084 beds. County wide they'd need over 11,000 beds to match our ratio of one transient bed to every 44th resident. 11,000 is almost 4 times the amount of transients within the County.

Clearly, Sebastopol has no need for any additional transient beds. Yet, Council for some unexplained reason and without any public input wants to create more.

From Page 4 of the Document:

"Safe Overnight Parking: WCCS is providing support to the existing overnight parking program at Community Church, and they are prioritizing the expansion of the safe overnight parking to additional lots. WCCS has been meeting with the Ad Hoc Committee and various parties that have stated they are open to hosting safe overnight parking in their lots. There are two churches in addition to Community Church that are considering safe overnight parking. This could potentially expand the safe overnight parking program from five spots to fifteen."

From Page 13 of the Document

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Safe Overnight Parking: Local advocates report that there are many vehicular unhoused who are living in four door or other "normal-sized" vehicles. There is a general sense that what is needed for these vehicular unhoused is safe places to park overnight.

Preliminary Proposal:

- Expand Program: Continue to work with WCCS to expand the current program, in order to increase the available safe overnight parking spots from 5 to 15.
- WCCS: Encourage the City Council to renew the WCCS contract for next fiscal year, so that WCCS can continue to oversee the safe overnight parking program, and the WCCS navigator can continue to connect the safe overnight "parkers" to social, medical, and mental health services, as well as long-term housing opportunities.
- Funding: Provide funding for reimbursement of expenses incurred by churches or others that have offered their parking lots for the program.

It is completely unclear and unexplained why Sebastopol would have any interest or need to create additional Safe Parking until the County and other Cities match our current ratio of 1 transient bed for every 44th resident. It seems to be Council's personal agendas and ideology rather than need that is driving this decision.

This tunnel vision on Safe Parking might be the result that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Unhoused is made up entirely of homeless advocates and Council Members Glass and Rich. Council Members Rich and Glass mislead the community by linking Safe Parking with Parking Ordinances, revealing they want to institute Safe Parking whether the community wants it or not.

Committee on Unhoused Needs Develop and Show How Tax Money is Spent on Transients - \$2,000,000 Per Year?

In addition, there are no financial figures associated with any of these services. There is no budget shown for the financing of Park Village. There is no accounting for the time of City Departments such as fire, public works and police - all of which have clearly spent many hours working on transient issues from meeting with the \$72,000 per year Homeless Outreach Coordinator to clearing encampments to mitigating the impact of transients on the Community. If Public Works spends 25% of their time on transients, that would be equivalent to around \$340,000. If Police spend 25% of their time on transients, that would be equivalent to \$1,289,603.75. If City Staff uses time to write grants, that is a cost to taxpayers. If the City has to hire outside attorneys that is a cost to taxpayers. None of this financial information is included in the report. The Committee even left out the salary of the Homeless Outreach Coordinator. I would ask that the next report include a budget with a line item for each City Department of exactly how much money is spent on transient related activities.

My rough estimate is a yearly expense of close to \$2,000,000 spent on transients if City Departments and Staff Time is recognized and accounted for. This would be roughly 25% of the City's total budget.

Costs are from Agenda Item 12 - Mid Year Budget.

City took money from Citizens to Fund Unhoused Services

When the County transitioned Sebastopol's only downtown hotel into transient housing, they gave the City a one time reimbursement for lost TOT (transient occupancy tax). TOT typically goes into the general fund to pay for city services such as fire, police, public works, City administration and operation. TOT is collected to off-set the impact transients/tourists have on cities. It is a form of general revenue. Council took this money and used it on transients instead of residents.

From Page 10 of the Document

"Funding has been received by the City of Sebastopol for a variety of efforts related to the unhoused: \$370,000 from the County as partial reimbursement for lost hotel tax revenue as a result of the County purchasing the Sebastopol Inn and using it for shelter for the unhoused; \$80,000 from the County recently to provide funds to pay lease obligations for the RV Village; and \$36,814 for the sanitation work on Morris Street and surrounding areas."

Data from Homeless Outreach Coordinator Appears Incomplete

In reading through Jennifer Lake's report, there is no demographic data collected, which would be helpful in assessing the needs of the transient population. There is no data on age, sex, employment status, history of mental illness, former incarceration, last place where the person paid rent or a mortgage, place of birth, current government assistance using, applicable government assistance programs, veteran status, level of education, years homeless, or whether or not the person has family in the area.

There is no total given for the number of transients.

In addition, the chart details "Q1" and then the months typically associated with "Q4". In Ms. Lake's chart, it is very difficult to determine if the same person is receiving housing referrals, mental health referrals and food referrals or if these are different people, each receiving a unique referral.

Why Data is Important

Data collected here should be shared with County, State and Federal agencies. It can help target funding toward preventing and solving homelessness. For instance, if Ms. Lake finds that 30% of transients have a history of mental illness, are between 25-30, are men with high school educations, and have had some history of prior incarceration, this is crucial information on what types of programs could prevent homelessness and also what type of programs would help people move from the streets.

If Ms. Lake finds that 50% of transients are women, over the age of 60, college educated, veterans, that would indicate a different population that would utilize a different set of programs to prevent homelessness and also a different set of programs and resources which would transition them out of homelessness.

In addition, it is important to know what services transients take in bundled options like housing, food and medical versus which transients take singularly. If you shop online, most retailers would try to "bundle" together items based on their data. If a person buys a pair of pants, the retailer might then suggest a belt or shirt based on consumer patterns. The same would hold true in this scenario. If someone accepts help with car registration, which other

services are they likely to accept? This is important because it makes it more efficient to administer services.

Concierge for Transients

It appears that Ms. Lake spent the majority of her time helping a limited number of transients with vehicle registration and appointments. While I'm sure this is very convenient and helpful for the 20 or so transients, it is not a general service or general benefit to the 7500 citizens of Sebastopol who are repeatedly told that there is no money for basic services like a parking permit system.

Ms. Lake includes meeting Homeless Activist Courtney at the library (assuming this is the Courtney on all the Council Calls) to discuss transients and make transient contacts as part of her taxpayer funded activities. Is it justified as a taxpayer expense as it has such limited reach and is concentrated on such a small number of people (3) who do not even live here?

From Page 16 of the Document

1.

"Met with Courtney at the Library to discuss strategy for reaching safe parkers who use the library during the day and other unhoused people. Made three new contacts at the library."

Ad Hoc Committee to Report on Current Facilities and Their Budgets

As the Document suggests, Sebastopol has many transient facilities including the Sebastopol Inn, Park Village and Safe Parking at the Community Church. Yet the Committee did not report on these facilities.

As part of the Committee's work, it would be beneficial to have a list of the different facilities, maxim occupancy, current occupancy, how many residents are employed, how many have entered in the quarter, how many have exited either by personal choice or through transition to different housing, the cost of running the facility and funding sources.

For instance, there has been no formal presentation on the Sebastopol Inn in terms of how many people live there, how much it costs to operate, the funding sources and outcomes.

There has been no formal presentation on how many spaces are available at Park Village, who occupies them, the budget for Park Village and its funding sources.

The same is true for the Safe Parking at the Community Church.

Transient Services Bring More Transients Into the Area

In addition to transient beds, Sebastopol's churches offer many transient services, including free showers at Sebastopol Community Church, 7433 Bodega Avenue and free hot lunch at

Sebastopol Community Church, 7433 Bodega Avenue, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 500 Robinson Rd and Sebastopol Methodist Church, 500 North Main St.

As these services are directed toward homeless individuals, churches should work with the County homeless outreach services, HOST and/or a CAHOOTS representative to try and connect individuals with additional services and shelter.

As these Church benefits attract homeless individuals, there should be a conscious effort by the County and the churches to use this opportunity to create a pathway into service, shelter and other county programs.

These programs draw homeless people into Sebastopol for services without providing structure or accommodations for homeless individuals after they receive services. This puts a burden on public restrooms, the public library and other public spaces. If people come into Sebastopol to receive services, they should be guided towards housing, jobs, and other social services which are appropriate for their circumstance.

A volunteer program by the churches to help clean public bathrooms and other public spaces should be initiated to offset use of public spaces by transients brought into the area by their services.

There is no requirement of working in Sebastopol or ever having lived in Sebastopol to receive services thus the public burden created by these programs should be shared between homeless advocates and the churches.

The Document reveals that Ad Hoc Committee set up a warming station for transients, which should have been the responsibility of the County.

Once again, Council needs to look at the services offered in Sebastopol and see if the ratio is comparable to other Cities and the County. These services should be offered throughout Sonoma County and not concentrated in Sebastopol.

Citizen Request for Next Ad Hoc Committee on the Unhouse Report

1.

I request the next report include a budget for transient services, including time spent by Police, Fire, Public Works, City Staff and any outside attorney fees;

2.

I request the next report include demographic data on transients served to get a better picture of the transient community to give to the County, State and Federal Government to help them focus funding on specific populations such as the mentally ill, the formerly incarcerated and the drug addicted;

3.
I request a report on the transient facilities located (Sebastopol Inn, Park Village, Safe Parking at Community Church) in Sebastopol which details maximum occupancy, current occupancy, budget, funding sources, and outcomes. In addition, it would be helpful to have a one page mission statement for each facility to see how goals and services either overlap or have distinct missions;
4.
I request that the \$370,000 in TOT money from the County be used toward creating a RV permitting program, cleaning up downtown, refurbishing the civic spaces outside the library, City Hall, the public sculpture garden, the Post Office and Chamber of Commerce;
5.
I request that if Council feels that a town of our size needs a Homeless Outreach Coordinator that the position be funded by the County and that at least 50% of this person's time be spent on service that benefits the general citizens such as working with the public works department to organize volunteers to clean public restrooms, clean public streets, clean public parks and clean other public spaces impacted by the transient community. As Public Works is understaffed and underfunded, a volunteer corps who spends 170 hours per month on cleaning and maintaining public space would be greatly welcomed.
6.
I request that the Ad Hoc Committee work with the County to ensure that other locations in Sonoma County have transient services such as warming/cooling centers, showers, free meals, to alleviate the transient burden on Sebastopol and to make sure services are available at the same rate throughout the County. I request until other City and County locations have the same services, that Sebastopol not take on any additional services.
7.
I request that no more transient accommodations be considered until other Cities and the County meet Sebastopol's current ratio of 1 transient bed for every 44th citizen.

Best,

Kate Haug