

Dear Council Members,

I am writing regarding the urgent need for more community policing, specifically around Safeway and downtown after school. Last week there was a fight between two high school students that was widely “attended” and filmed with a disturbing social media *Lord of the Flies* zeitgeist. See attached videos.

Fights like this are unacceptable in the middle of the day in a space that is used by a significant portion of our community. As I’m sure Council is aware, fights have also escalated into murder as is the case in a Santa Rosa High School. It is paramount that the school and the community work together to prevent fights from happening and escalating to much more serious harm. <https://www.ktvu.com/news/student-dies-after-stabbing-at-high-school-in-santa-rosa>

Social media escalates tensions and drives dangerous performance risk taking in teens. We need to have adults present to signal that social norms are expected and that social rules are enforced, especially at school and in public spaces.

As you can see in the video, Myriah Volk, the ED of the Chamber of Commerce, broke up the fight. It was a risk that she took but she should have not been the person to intervene in this scenario.

The City needs to work with Commercial Landlords and businesses to make sure that common spaces are not the site of violence and mayhem.

The City also needs to support the local landlords in keeping their spaces free of squatters and garbage as it presents a public health issue. I have been in communication with Piazza Hospitality regarding squatters and trash on their lot. I have also contacted the Police Department about squatters and trash on the El Favrito Lot on Main Street. See attached photographs.

If the City wants to support our local businesses and make sure that commercial spaces don’t pose health risks with garbage and squatters, the City needs to work with landlords to keep space litter, graffiti and squatter free.

It is a huge drawback for our local businesses to have lots full of garbage in the middle of our shopping district and large brawls taking place in the middle of day.

I suggest that the Planning Department start contacting commercial landlords and working with them to make sure their properties are safe and attractive so they don’t negatively impact the surrounding businesses.

Best,  
Kate Haug