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**To:** [Mary Gourley](#)  
**Cc:** [Bill Braga](#); [Dante Del Prete](#); [Kevin Kilgore](#); [Linda Irving](#); [Myriah Volk](#); [Fernandez, Evert](#); [Fritz, Paul](#); [\[REDACTED\].com](#); [Peggy Cella](#)  
**Subject:** Transparency, Transient Services, No Sneaky Safe Parking - Public comment 4/5/22  
**Date:** Monday, April 04, 2022 9:51:29 AM

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Dear Council Members,

I am writing in regards to Council's lack of public transparency in regards to their support of Safe Parking at the Christian Science Church on Bodega and Florence Avenues.

In their May 2021 memo, the Council Members Gurney and Rich clearly outline their pursuits of safe parking at churches and also outline taxpayer costs. In addition, Council Member Rich contacted community members regarding their support for the parking.

Taxpayers will clearly be supporting the project through port-o-potties, handwashing stations and the funding of West County Community Services.

Yet, this expense was never discussed as an agenda item in a public meeting. I was under the assumption that all City funded programs would be part of a public discussion.

While it is unclear if Council followed legislative protocol, it seems that it would be common courtesy to put this on the Council agenda so that neighbors and citizens could have given comments for public record.

Sebastopol already has an extremely high and disproportionate amount of transient services which are funded by taxpayers and impact our downtown, businesses, public spaces and neighborhoods. There is no reason why we should support any additional

services until the City is able to fully fund our fire, police and public works departments.

Safety and fire protocols should be public knowledge. Sufficient insurance should be provided by any site hosting safe parking in case there is a fire or accident. Park Village had a fire on September 20, 2020. An RV caught fire on Morris Street, knocking out utilities for hundreds of local businesses and residents, and on March 24, 2022 a homeless trailer on Morris Street caught fire.

Are there fire extinguishers and hoses onsite? This should be included in any Safe Parking site, given the fires on Morris Street. On 3/24/22 a trailer caught on fire and burnt to the ground. The Lions are currently raising funds for hoses and fire extinguishers for the SAVS Safe Parking at 845 Gravenstein. Why doesn't the 845 Gravenstein site have enough hoses and fire extinguishers given their large per person budget of over \$33,000 per resident?

The City is currently in a lawsuit because it did not provide adequate notice to residents regarding the 845 N. Gravenstein Site. Does the City not feel that it needs to provide adequate notice in this instance?

It is especially egregious on Council's part as there have been two instances of reporting from the Committee on the Unhoused which failed to mention this location, project and timeline. Why was there no mention of this site? Why was there no public announcement that the Church would be taking comments? This type of obfuscation of information and notice is undemocratic and does not honor the role of being a community representative.

In addition, it is unclear how much neighbors were informed of this change of use. Neighbors should have been given advanced notice and multiple forums as this change of use could impact important aspects of their property including but not limited to:

1. The cost of insurance premiums;
2. The ability to insure their properties;
3. Impact on resale value;
4. Impact on refinancing opportunities;
5. Impact on rental value.

Wouldn't anyone putting their house up for sale have to disclose they shared a fence line with a Safe Parking site? How would that impact their property value?

Has Council and the Church investigated what happens when homeowners disclose they share a fence line with a Safe Parking site? Have they done any due diligence on what would be required to negate any impact on insurance and/or property values? What insurance and protocols would need to be in place so neighbors do not suffer negative consequences of this action?

As we all write checks for our property taxes, it should be Council's responsibility to ensure that they are not directly endangering anyone's home, their ability to insure their home and are adequately guarding against generalized risk to citizen's homes.

If someone wants to change the use of a site or develop a property, they have to go through a permitting process and through the planning commission to discuss the impact on the neighborhood. Why is that not the case with Safe Parking? The Community Church had to apply through the Planning Commission to erect their microstructures.

This is an important question as many people consider their home their primary asset and Sebastopol has many senior women living on fixed incomes who could not afford to lose their insurance or have insurance premiums go up.

In addition, it appears that people were told that only senior women would be accepted into the program. Is that legal? Wouldn't that be discrimination in a publicly funded site? Is it equivalent to saying only men would be accepted?

Most importantly the 5/21 Memo notes that this Christian Science community only has 9 congregants, the majority of whom live out of town. Why is this incredibly small group of non-residents determining the fate of a neighborhood?

Don't we have zoning laws and public process so that neighborhoods are not impacted by small groups of people who do not live in the neighborhood? Why would a very small group of people have the power to change a neighborhood without more public dialogue? For instance, was this issue brought before the Parkside School Community and Board as it is within 2 blocks of the site?

I ask that this site and all future Safe Parking sites be put onto Council's agenda for public discussion and that all the impacts onto neighboring homeowners be clearly addressed as part of the public discussion. Insurance requirements, responsible parties, site rules, fire protocols and security should all be part of public documents available to the public prior to the discussion of the agenda item. With any project that concerns transient services, the public documents should also include the total budget for transient services and how much a particular project will cost. The public should also have a list of all transient services currently in City Limits with the number of people served. There is very little transparency on how much transient services cost in terms of police, fire, public works, cost to repair

public buildings and public spaces, funding of West County services, funding of the homeless outreach coordinator, outside attorney fees, insurance and other public liabilities.

Any transient service within City Limits has a public cost as our police and fire departments would respond to any emergencies. Our public works department is responsible for maintaining any public space that is used by transients before or after they receive a shower, free overnight parking, a hot meal or any other services.

We also have a needle exchange located in a Teen Clinic where IV drug users can get clean needles and then shoot up anywhere they want. Public works and the police department would be involved in any used needle clean up. These are embedded costs to the public.

Thus far I have seen no written documents that discuss any of these items in regards to this potential safe parking program.

Best,  
Kate Haug

5/21 Memo to Council from Council Members Gurney and Rich  
<https://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/getattachment/Meeting-Event/City-Council/2021/City-Council-Special-Meeting-Fiscal-Year-21-22-B/Memo-Follow-Up-to-City-Council-Unhoused-Needs.pdf.aspx>