

Dear Council Members,

I ask you to oppose a sales tax measure for the November ballot.

I ask you to oppose this action for many reasons.

- 1) It will cost taxpayers precious tax money, which could be applied more effectively within the community toward paying for fire service, police service, pool repairs, and park maintenance.
- 2) The poll that was conducted was extremely limited in its sample (only 198 participants out of a community of 7500) is not a good data sample;
- 3) The questions in the poll did not reveal that there will be a County wide fire initiative on the ballot, which would raise over \$1,000,000 for Sebastopol and thus the poll was not giving the full context of the economic future for Sebastopol's fire service;
- 4) The questions in the poll did not state that Sebastopol already has the highest per capita of homeless beds in Sonoma County and already has 3 sites (Sebastopol Inn, Park Village, and Horizons Shine) that offer wrap around services and also has Safe Parking at the Community Church that also offers support services. We also offer free meals and showers at a community church. Sebastopol also employs a homeless outreach coordinator. Sebastopol has an abundance of services for the unhoused, significantly more than any other town of our size and does not need any additional services;
- 5) The questions in the poll did not state that Sonoma County residents already support a tax for mental health services in Measure O, which brings in \$25,000,000 annually for mental health services in the County;
- 6) The ballot language does not specify how money will be spent and is extremely vague;
- 7) There is no infrastructure at the library to offer mental health and drug treatment services and no staffing at the library to do so. There are no showers or medical treatment rooms at the library. There are no mental health professionals, doctors or nurses on staff at the library. If Council has learned anything from its work with SAVS, it is that medical professionals are necessary in the treatment of the unhoused and that staffing and resources are key. Horizons Shine has spent close to \$2,000,000 with extremely poor results. Setting up social service and medical treatments at the small, community library is a fool's errand given the high medical needs of the unhoused. If Council Members Zollman and Rich want to help the unhoused community, they should be working with the County to establish more mental health beds (only 12 are currently staffed and operational by the County) and more drug treatment beds. These are the only two methods which have proven consistently successful in helping moving chronically homeless people out of homelessness.
- 8) The library is downtown and is a community resource for a huge segment of the population, including families with young children. Unfortunately, many of the unhoused exhibit anti-social behavior so it is a liability to mix populations of people who have severe mental illness and addiction issues with our young families and children. The unhoused community is an extremely small percentage of the overall population and there are already 5 sites in Sebastopol which address this community (Park Village,

Horizons Shine, Sebastopol Inn and two local churches). We have an extremely large footprint for homeless services. We need to preserve other public spaces for services to the general public and families like our parks and public library. We do not need to turn every public space in a treatment center for the unhoused. It does not represent a fair distribution of public resources.

- 9) The poll questions did not let residents know that there will be water and garbage increases within the next 12 months.

In short, the poll and this ballot measure appear to be extremely deceptive and a means of raising money without any broader vision on the future of Sebastopol's infrastructure and community wellness.

Council needs to create a plan for revitalization of business, of working with our small business community and nonprofits and our general citizen population to create public spaces and public infrastructure – both on the safety front and vital systems like roads, water and parks.

This tax measure is expensive, deceptive and does not address the planning needs that Council will need to tackle in order to create a sustainable economic environment and a healthy living environment for the majority of residents.

I ask you to vote no on this measure. I ask you to work with our local businesses to see what they need to be successful. I ask you to develop a long range plan to fund critical water, road and park infrastructure.

Best,  
Kate Haug