

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#); [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: CC Mtg June 18 - #7 - Letter of Support for Recommendations
Date: Monday, June 17, 2024 1:16:29 PM

June 17, 2024

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members,

I'm writing to you as a constituent, an enthusiastic Library user, your Representative on the Citizens Oversight Committee for Measure Y, and a former Council Member.

In my first role, I **thank you for your service**. You aren't thanked enough for the hours you devote to our community, often in stressful situations (like zoom bombing, heated controversies, difficult conversations, and difficult choices). I encourage you to keep the pulse of our community, speak up with courage, and make the necessary decisions so that we can move forward.

I'm an enthusiastic Library user (I have 11 books checked out right now). Everytime I go to the Library, I note how many, many people are there and how much activity is going on. Our Branch provides essential services to our youth and our elders, everyone in between, including those who need refuge and help. **The most visited public building in town, our Library is too limited in space - there's just not enough room - and, because of the limited space, it doesn't have enough Staff to do all that they could.** I know, way back to the creation of LANTERN, that our community needs a bigger facility,

Sitting on the Measure Y Oversight Committee, I learned at our last meeting on March 31 that there is approximately \$20 M in reserve. **Sebastopol needs to get in line for some of that funding! It's also very clear to me that the key to improving our Library is to collaborate with the Commission and Headquarters to get in the project pipeline.** That pipeline is already several years' long and regularly experiences delays, such as in permitting.

Presenting our Report tonight, **the Ad Hoc is ready for its next phase. Headquarters wants in - you have Director Erika's letter of support for the recommendations. You also have strong support from Supervisor Lynda Hopkins**, whose Staff participated in our meetings.

Don't say "NO" to regional help and confidence in Sebastopol!

There are financial resources to tap. I've mentioned Measure Y funds. The Caltrans ATP grant of \$250 K can be leveraged because it focuses on making the downtown core safer and more walkable. Commissioner Fred Engbarth just noticed training and grant opportunities from Project of Public Spaces. This group brings public spaces to life by planning and designing for the people who use them every day, to fuel lasting change in their community. Also ahead, there are exciting possibilities through an EIFD.

The Ad Hoc believes **you can enhance Sebastopol's role as the Hub of the West County, not just as the commercial hub, but also as the social service hub and the place presenting abundant opportunities to belong.**

I love the idea that **our free public Library is an economic and cultural engine for our City.** It brings folks into town. Our 7700 citizens cannot support us; we have to rely on the greater rural community. Look at the Library's service area: Guerneville to Rohnert Park, West Santa Rosa to the coast.

Most importantly, **our community yearns for a positive vision for our future.** You've done a very effective job of negative news: the fiscal crisis, looming bankruptcy, cutbacks. **Now is the time to give us a reason to have hope for ourselves and our dynamic, fun future.** Please approve the Ad Hoc Committee's Findings and Recommendations.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Sarah Glade Gurney
Council Member, Retired (2004-2022)
City of Sebastopol