

City Councilmembers, Staff, and Members of the Public

I am writing today to express my appreciation for the progress highlighted in the Building Department's recent report. It is encouraging to see that Habitat for Humanity is set to begin construction immediately on the four new units across from Safeway. Projects like these are vital in addressing our community's critical housing needs, and I support efforts to expedite their completion.

However, I would like to raise a concern regarding the downtown corridor moratorium on construction from November 20, 2024, to January 5, 2025. While I understand the intent is to protect holiday sales and activities, I believe this restriction could inadvertently delay projects that are essential for the well-being of our residents. Initiatives like the Habitat for Humanity build are exactly the kind of community-oriented developments we should be prioritizing, especially given the urgency of the current housing shortage. Revisiting the blanket nature of this moratorium might help balance the needs of our local businesses with the broader goal of improving housing access.

Furthermore, I encourage the council to discuss item 7 regarding the Woodmark project. Despite the challenges faced on its path to completion, it is troubling that this development, which was intended to help address the pressing demand for low-income housing in Sebastopol, has not yet achieved that goal. As of now, there have been no verified rentals at Woodmark, even with the significant need for affordable housing in our community. It is crucial that we understand how we have ended up in this situation—where available units are not meeting their intended purpose—and work to ensure that future projects do not encounter similar difficulties.

- Kyle Falbo