



August - September, 2024

The City of Sebastopol community newsletter is one way to stay in touch with what's going on in Sebastopol. Our web site, CityofSebastopol.gov is another. It's chock-full of information on City services, public meetings, and community resources. Or, stop by City offices any time we are open!

Finance Matters



Looking Forward as Annual Budget is Finalized

At press time of this newsletter the adoption of the Budget for Fiscal Year 24-25 was slated to be considered at an upcoming City Council meeting. The FY 24-25 Budget represents a deep and collaborative effort to understand financial forecasts, assess community needs, weigh sometimes competing priorities, and make difficult choices. The City will continue to evaluate this budget as our financial situation evolves and affects our responsibilities to our staff and our community. Though much is beyond the City's influence, we will maintain a firm grasp on what falls within our control with a commitment to prudent, conscientious financial management. We will provide transparent and regular reporting to the Council and public. Through robust community outreach, we will together ensure that diverse perspectives are heard and respected. Although we have made progress in managing our resources and services, we still have much to do.

Recurring expenses have exceeded recurring revenues for the last five years. We have used revenues that are no longer available, such as one time funding from Assemblymember Levine for flooding, Federal funding during COVID, and grants to fund on-going programs and services. We have also used substantial amounts of our General Fund balance. The FY 24-25 budget also relies on revenues that will not be available in the long run, particularly building fees from a peak in building activity. Relying on revenues that will not continue and drawing on a diminishing fund balance are not sustainable.

Our financial pressure includes challenges with revenues and expenses. On the revenue side, sales taxes represent our largest funding source. Yet despite a growing economy, these revenues have been stagnant in recent years. The City of Sebastopol needs a large, sustainable new source of revenue. cont.

Looking Forward cont.

See the FY24-25 Proposed Draft Budget that includes a letter from City Manager Don Schwartz for more detailed information on the City's current financial situation and future: <https://bit.ly/4fr67YZ>

Measure U (1/2 cent sales tax)

The most promising source of large sustainable revenues is an addition to our sales tax. After significant outreach to our local citizens to determine their top priorities, the City Council voted to place Measure U on the November 5 ballot. This ½ cent sales tax would generate about \$1.5 million per year of ongoing revenue. And people who live outside of town and shop here would pay these taxes, too – so the burden would not all be on our residents. Measure U funds would help maintain Sebastopol city services such as 911 emergency medical/police/fire response, wildfire/emergency preparedness, maintenance of streets/road, parks/trails, library, youth and senior services, and retaining/attracting local businesses.

How Community Feedback Was Gathered... and the Results

The City of Sebastopol and its elected leaders are committed to maintaining our local quality of life and supporting the core services and infrastructure that our residents, business, and visitors rely on every day. The City is currently facing a number of challenges, including rising costs and the potential for budget deficits in coming years. As part of planning to meet these demands, and potentially present options for additional revenue to support local services, the City asked residents to give feedback on their priorities to help guide decision making. A variety of methods were used: Town Halls, a Community Survey, and a Poll of randomly selected residents conducted by a third-party polling organization.

The City of Sebastopol thanks all those who participated in providing this valuable feedback

Visit <https://bit.ly/SurveyandPollResults> to see the results of the Community Priorities Survey and the Poll conducted by Probolsky Research.

Visit <https://bit.ly/SebTownHall> to view the July 8 Town Hall recording and to see the Town Hall Budget Presentation.

Important Topics at Upcoming City Council Meetings

Look for these two important topics on the agendas for September City Council Meetings: 1) Discussion on potential uses of sales tax, and 2) establishing City priorities. Check the City Meetings page on the website (<https://bit.ly/SebCityMeetingsPage>) for details or subscribe to e-alerts at <https://bit.ly/SebENews>.

Connect with Sebastopol City Government and City Council



There are multiple ways for the citizens of Sebastopol to engage and connect with City government officials and the City Council.

You can make your voice heard by attending City Meetings (some are available both in person and virtually including City Council Meetings). Go the City Meetings page on the City's website (<https://bit.ly/SebCityMeetingsPage>) to see a list of upcoming meetings. Each meeting will include information on how to participate as well as how you can submit public comments. In most cases you can submit your comments in person or virtually during the meeting, and via phone or email before the meeting. See how to participate in the various city meetings at <https://bit.ly/4fDPgmb>

The **Contact & Connect** page at <https://bit.ly/ContactAndConnect> is another resource on the City's website that offers various ways to reach out the city and your local government officials. You can send us a general message or question by filling out the **Send Us A Message** form, you can also go to the **City Directory** page for contact information for all City officials and City Councilmembers or go to the **Mayor & Council** page for council bios and contact info. You can also find instructions for how to submit **Public Comment for Meetings**, submit a **Public Information Request**, or **Report A Problem** on the Contact & Connect page.

September is National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month (NPM) is an observance each September to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and



emergencies that could happen at any time. This September, Ready Campaign's 2024 National Preparedness Month will focus on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities.

Make your emergency plans today! Visit the following sites to learn more.

Preparedness Resources

ready.gov – Emergency and disaster preparedness information from the Department of Homeland Security

socoemergency.org – Sonoma County emergency and preparedness information

caloes.ca.gov – California Governor's Office of Emergency Services website

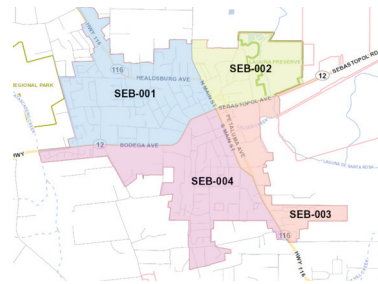
readyforwildfire.org – CAL FIRE's wildfire preparedness website

firesafecouncil.org – California's Fire Safe Council Website

[Pge.com/wildfiresafety](https://pge.com/wildfiresafety) – PG&E's website on what to do before, during, and after a wildfire

[Prepareforpowerdown.com](https://prepareforpowerdown.com) - PG&E's website on how to prepare for Planned Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events

Know Your Zone



As the summer heat continues, so does the danger of wildfire. Know your zone in case you need to evacuate. You can find links on the Emergency & Disaster Preparedness page of the City's website at <https://bit.ly/43Vm5o2>

Sebastopol City Limits - Evacuation Map <https://bit.ly/3g8LzYO> (Enter your address in the top right search bar to find your evacuation zone.)

Sebastopol Addresses Outside City Limits - Evacuation Map <https://bit.ly/3cUHcNW> (Enter your address in the top left search bar to find your evacuation zone.)