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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL PARTNERS WITH WEST COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND GoA  
TO HOUSE HOMELESS FAMILIES AT VILLAGE MOBILE HOME PARK**

**Unique, cost-effective program also provides supportive services and funds capital improvements**

SEBASTOPOL, CA, March 21, 2017— The Sebastopol City Council tonight approved an agreement to partner with [West County Community Services](#) (WCCS) and affordable housing advocacy organization Group of Advocates (GoA) to begin providing housing and supportive services to the approximately 65 current residents of Village Mobile Home Park (VMHP) as well as for an additional eight homeless or precariously housed Sebastopol-area families at the city-owned property this summer.

The project hopes to reduce the City's current costs of operational management of the property, while working to create a sustainable housing solution for some 30% of the city's homeless population. In addition, the project provides for capital improvements to the city-owned Village Mobile Home Park.

Village Mobile Home Park is located at the eastern entrance to Sebastopol on Highway 12. The property was purchased in September 2007 with the intent of converting it to a public park. A portion of the park, which had been previously operated as a campground, was converted to Tomodachi Park; the balance of the property continues to operate as a mobile home community as part of the City's stated commitment to affordable housing.

"This project meets the longstanding objectives of WCCS and our City to create cost-effective housing opportunities for Sebastopol's homeless residents while making improvements to existing affordable

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housing,” said Sebastopol City Council Member and Housing Subcommittee Member Sarah Glade Gurney. “By partnering with West County Community Services and Group of Advocates, we bring to bear experienced management expertise and quality support services at the least cost to taxpayers. This is a sensible, compassionate, and fiscally responsible approach to confronting the ongoing housing crisis in our region.”

Fellow Housing Subcommittee member and Sebastopol City Council Member Neysa Hinton added, “I am proud to live in a city that puts its resources towards helping our most vulnerable citizens. Housing First is a proven strategy that allows people to get back on their feet and lead more productive lives.”

In addition to addressing the issue of homelessness in Sebastopol, the project provides for much-needed capital improvements to the VMHP facility, which is an important part of the City’s affordable housing resource. The City Council is proposing to increase the amount it budgets from its general fund for operating the facility from the current-year amount of \$75,000 to \$95,800 in fiscal 2017-18.

West County Community Services (WCCS) has provided community services for 40 years in the West County area. Current Sebastopol-based programs include providing supportive services at Sebastopol’s Petaluma Avenue Homes, senior peer counseling, a youth diversion program, and counseling at four Sebastopol area schools. WCCS also manages Mill St. Housing in Guerneville and provides supportive services to Fife Creek Commons, also in Guerneville.

Tim Miller, Executive Director of WCCS, stated, “The people and City of Sebastopol are well known for their creativity and commitment to all members of their community. We are excited to be a partner in this worthwhile effort.” Gail Brownell, a founder of the GoA, a local advocacy group has given her “whole-hearted support” to the housing program. “It will make a positive difference for current and new Village Park residents,” said Brownell.

The agreement offers the City and community of Sebastopol a cost-effective and sustainable solution to house a significant number of its homeless residents. Continuum of Care data show that, on average, the cost of housing a homeless person in Sonoma County is \$31 per day. Expense projections suggest that the VMHP project may provide housing and supportive services to the formerly homeless, as well as supportive services to the other 60+ residents of the park at less than \$15 per day. The three program partners, City of Sebastopol, WCCS and GoA, have stated that they are proud to collaborate, and are committed to working together to engage the people of Sebastopol and the donor community to make the project a long term success and serve as a model for other communities.