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To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Cc: [Kari Svanstrom](#); [Dante Del Prete](#); [Kathy Oetinger](#); [Fernandez, Evert](#); [Lawrence McLaughlin](#); [Ana Kwong](#); [Miko Lim](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Budget Priorities and Goals - Fund Public Works! :)
Date: Friday, May 14, 2021 9:56:53 AM

May 14, 2021

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to encourage you to increase the Public Works budget in the next year.

Why Increase Public Works Budget?

Sebastopol has a well-developed and well-loved public parks system. Data from your recent Co-Mission residential survey shows that residents really love outdoor space and the parks. See page 22 of 32.

https://08804ca8-59dd-40e9-be70-b9f6e81feb84.filesusr.com/ugd/d3e96a_ce0cc489555246ae8ab15d279decdddf.pdf

For our small town, our parks system is crucial and serves not only residents but visitors to the area. Ives draws in people through its events and the pool. It is a half block from downtown; people visiting Ives could also frequent downtown businesses.

Through my work on the Ives' Park Subcommittee, I had the pleasure of working with Dante Del Prete, Public Works Superintendent. From conversations regarding Ives Park, it became clear that we need to fund the Public Works department in order to reach a higher level of maintenance and service in our parks and other public spaces. When you walk down Main Street, there are weeds in the tree wells and the meridians need maintenance.

The Ives' Park Subcommittee has prepared several items that could be addressed by the Public Resources if they had the necessary financial resources. The Public Works Department has been very responsive but they are also constrained by a lack of resources and labor force.

In addition, the Subcommittee documented that the City owned parking lot on High Street across from the Arts Center could use an upgrade in terms of irrigation, planting and removal of unnecessary poles in order to integrate it more with the park, block the large commercial dumpsters in the adjacent parking lot and the back of the restaurant, which currently has some graffiti on it.

As the PAC is about to install their Ives' Park Sculpture Garden, it would be nice to have the High Street Parking Lot more visually integrated into the park to function as an extension of the park rather than a somewhat barren and unsightly space.

The Ives Park Subcommittee consisting of Planning Commissioners Evert Fernandez and Kathy Oetinger meets regularly and has an on-going list of priorities and accomplishments.

Measure O - Work with the County for Homeless Outreach

From reading various Council minutes, it seems that there has been some discussion of hiring a social worker to do homeless outreach in Sebastopol.

As you know, Measure O will generate \$25,000,000 annually for homeless outreach and mental health services.

You can see from the breakdown below that 44% or \$11,000,000 will be spent annually on Crisis and Emergency Psychiatric Services, including mobile support teams.

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Health/Behavioral-Health/Projects/Measure-O/Expenditure-Plan/>

Given this tremendous resource, it seems that it would be more financially prudent for the citizens of Sebastopol to use these County funded resources rather than hire their own social worker.

More importantly, a lone social worker does not have the administrative and professional support that one would have being part of the County's team. The City of Sebastopol would be responsible for integrating and supervising this professional. In addition, one person could not be available 24 hours per day/ 7 days per work.

It seems that it would be best to integrate our emergency services professionals with the extensive and well-funded system the County is developing with Measure O Funds.

Sebastopol Inn - Reimbursement from County

Supervisor Hopkins promised the residents of Sebastopol a \$370,000 reimbursement due to the City's loss of transient occupancy tax, sales tax and tourist dollars when the County converted the Sebastopol Inn into a minimum security Permanent Supportive Housing complex.

I have not seen or read anything about this money arriving for the citizens of Sebastopol.

A recent article in the Post Democrat revealed that the County spent approximately \$55,000 per month on security for the Sebastopol Inn, which runs \$1,000 or more per month per resident in security costs alone.

It appears that the County will pay \$660,000 per year for security for the Inn.

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/security-startup-with-ties-to-dominic-foppoli-to-fold-in-wake-of-sexual-ass/?ref=mosthome>

If the County can pay \$660,000 for security for 50 people, they can easily reimburse a town of 7800 residents \$370,000 for loss of revenue, especially as we have many nonprofits who

need funding, including those who are losing revenue from the ban on the sale of fireworks.

In addition, I would urge the Council to seek reimbursement annually for loss of revenue. As the residents of the Sebastopol Inn are now residents of Sebastopol, despite living on County property, they will enjoy our public amenities as any other residents would.

The County will not only be receiving money from Measure O, it will also most likely be receiving more money to address homelessness from the State and Federal governments. In light of this, the citizens of Sebastopol should not lose revenue because the County, who is well-funded in terms of homeless programs, decided to turn a tax revenue generating hotel into Permanent Supportive Housing.

While I know that the Council wants to help play its part in solving the homeless crisis, it should not come at the reduction of funds to the general population for public services and infrastructure which benefit residents, small businesses, children, seniors and families.

Financial and Data Report on Sebastopol Inn

We have yet to see a complete accounting for Hotel Azure and the Sebastopol Inn, but given that security costs are \$55,000 per month, one can imagine that DEMA, food service, janitorial service and building insurance would most likely bring up the cost to \$3,000-\$4,000 (\$36,000-\$48,000 annually) per person depending on the occupancy rate of the hotel.

I know the Council considers the Inn to be a success and hope that the Council sees that generously funded programs do work and extend that to our Public Works Department.

I hope that at the year's end, Mayor Glass and Council Member Slayter will present a full accounting of the Sebastopol Inn, including total program costs, outcomes and goals. As the Inn is moving toward Permanent Supportive Housing, the goal is to keep people in occupancy as they are people who require full-time support.

It's very important that this data is made available and shared as Project Homekey is a new program and will be generating a significant amount of important information around true costs, outcomes and the overall success in reducing the number of homeless people on the streets.

It seems that the State would have a database for all Homekey recipients to enter data so that there is transparency for taxpayers and information for people who are in charge of administering social safety net programs that have the goal of reducing homelessness, especially in vulnerable populations of people suffering from mental health issues and drug addiction, which are the majority of homeless individuals.

Thank you for your work.

Best regards,
Kate Haug