

From: [Kate Haug](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: Public Comment for SAVS Safe Parking Site at 425 Morris
Date: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:41:46 PM

10/26/21

Dear Council Members,

In regards to Sonoma Applied Villages intent to operate a 24/7 Safe Parking Site, I have the following comments.

1.
This process has not followed normal procedure. This has never been an agenda item or previously discussed in a public forum. This application has been organized by Council and SAVS. The rushed timeline does not allow for public comment or due process. The meeting is not held at a regular Council time. There has not been a 48 hour notice period. It does not follow any established protocol.
2.
Sebastopol already has more homeless shelter options than Rohnert Park, a city with over 42,000 people. Currently Sebastopol has the following shelters for homeless individuals: Sebastopol Inn, Park Village, Safe Parking at the Community Church. This represents at least 50 spaces. With an additional 20 spaces, Sebastopol will have 70 spaces, which is more than the 50-60 units that Rohnert Park is currently discussing and has not implemented.
3.
In this proposal, there is no recommendation to implement a citywide RV Permit program so even if Council supports this Safe Parking site, there are no policies in place to prevent RV campers from illegally camping on Morris Street, around Ives' Park, on Palm Avenue South and along 116.
4.
In this proposal, the City would be funding additional homeless services even though the City has a budget deficit and the City is already funding a \$72,000 per year homeless outreach coordinator, clean up from Morris Street, port-o-potties on Morris Street.
5.
How does spending this money benefit the taxpayers and business owners of Sebastopol? It is clear that SAVS will earn money and accomplish its mission in homeless advocacy by running the program but does this fund the taxpayer's immediate needs for road repair, replacing fire equipment, staffing the Police Department and implementing the Ives' Park Master plan?
- 6.

Is there any requirement in this proposal that people using this resource are working in Sebastopol, have ever paid property tax in Sebastopol, have ever paid rent or a mortgage in Sebastopol or is this program open to any person who happens to decide to park their RV on the street in Sebastopol and live on a public street illegally?

7.

Since the Sebastopol Inn has been converted to permanent supportive housing, how much more are the residents and business owners of Sebastopol paying for homeless services? My estimation is that it is over \$300,000 in additional services costs, including the homeless outreach coordinator, services on Morris Street, and extra Public Works time. With the loss of revenue from the Sebastopol Inn, the citizens and small business owners are contributing close to \$500,000 per year in transient services even though we are a town of 7500 and have an annual operating budget of less than \$10,000,000.

8.

People who rent hotel rooms in Sonoma County pay a Transient Occupancy Tax in recognition that tourists in hotel rooms are using public services and public infrastructure and thus are asked to contribute to the public infrastructure. How are people using these resources asked to contribute back to the community - through work, volunteerism? We are in a labor shortage, will people using these resources be asked to join our local workforce while they are receiving this benefit of housing, security and sanitation services?

9.

How does this proposal benefit the Council's constituents who are paying property taxes and running businesses that generate sales tax? Does this proposal represent Council's advocacy for its constituents or does it represent advocacy for the homeless population? Does this proposal support Council members to meet their fiduciary duties to taxpayers? As Sebastopol already has the Sebastopol Inn, Park Village and Church Safe Parking, how does this additional Safe Parking site benefit anyone other than SAVS and members of the transient community?

10.

How does this proposal fit into Council's obligation to the residents of Sebastopol to ensure that residents do not have crumbling infrastructure, a fire department hampered by old equipment, and a fully staffed City administration?

11.

Why is this the best use of public tax money?

12.

Does this proposal prevent illegal RV encampments within Sebastopol's City Limits?

While I support the proposed model, I do not think it is appropriate for Sebastopol at this

time. Sebastopol cannot afford to fund any more transient housing and services until the Council has a balanced budget and a plan to meet its infrastructure needs. Sebastopol has some of the worst roads in Sonoma County. In addition, the City needs to fully staff the Police and Fire Departments. The City needs to replace aging fire equipment. Until the City has a balanced budget and a plan to meet its fiscal obligations and its infrastructure obligations, the City should not commit any more funds to homeless advocates and nonprofits who service the homeless community.

If Council Members would like to make personal donations with their own money to support these programs, I fully support that. As a taxpayer, I would like to see Sebastopol's roads fixed, old fire equipment replaced with new and functioning equipment and Ives' Park master plan implemented.

Best regards,
Kate Haug