



# *cittaslow sebastopol*

Keeping Sebastopol green, local, friendly and artistic

## The Eco-Tourism Polls and Open House, October 29, 2013 Executive Summary

### **The 4 Pillars of Eco-Tourism:**

- The community serves as a steward for the natural and social environment.
- Tourist businesses engage in sustainable practices.
- The hospitality industry partners with the community to make the community stronger.
- Locals and visitors have opportunities to interact one-on-one for meaningful exchange.

### **Benefits of Eco-Tourism**

The more Eco-Tourism creates these positive benefits, the more it will be embraced by Sebastopol residents:

- It's a cleaner form of tourism
- Supports green development
- Expands our horizons with new input
- Builds pride in our town
- Helps us support what we love about Sebastopol
- Brings people who appreciate our spirit
- Helps local businesses/economy
- Creates more jobs (especially for youth)
- Increases property values
- Generates more sales tax (supports city services)
- Generates more transient occupancy tax (city services)
- Brings more awareness of our heritage
- Supports artists, farmers & locally made products



*Conversations and voting at the  
Eco-Tourism Open House*

### **Problems and Solutions**

Over 400 ideas were put forward as possible solutions. They fell into 8 general themes:

- Traffic
- Environmental Impact
- Signs, Maps & Apps
- Activities and Attractions
- Parking
- Policies, Culture and Economics
- Visitor Support Services
- New Business Ideas/Home Stays & Farm Stays

Many ideas received high votes and were noted across more than one theme. Top vote-getters:

- **Increase pedestrian connectors:** Clearly marked pathways between downtown and the Laguna, Joe Rodota Trail and Ragle Ranch Park.
- **Develop online/mobile directories, maps and apps to support visitors:** Easily accessible website and app with directories, parking and maps.
- **Connect the Barlow and downtown:** The two centers must support and feed each other.
- **Create an eastside parking structure:** Ease congestion, encourage travelers to visit.
- **Reduce litter and promote recycling:** Install recycling receptacles throughout town.
- **Convert cement plant property to a Laguna entryway with a museum and café.**

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### Putting it all together for success

Not surprisingly, Sebastopol residents came up with some very creative solutions that merge sustainable development with our friendly and artistic spirit. Also not surprising, they often referenced the Core Project and SDAT reports. Suppose we enacted the top initiatives, with a "Park Once" program and well-marked walking routes, "The Sebastopol Ped Line." Imagine these visitor scenarios:

#### Nancy, Ann and Patty, 3 middle-aged women on a weekend trip to rest and rejuvenate

- Research on website ahead of time. Print out maps for spas, wine-tasting and art
- Stay at Sebastopol Inn, or hotel at the Barlow. Leave their car at the hotel.
- "Take the Green Line" through the Barlow. Eat breakfast at Patisserie Angelica.
- Shop. Lunch at East West Café. Treat themselves to a facial at Bliss Organic Day Spa.
- "Take the Red Line" to stroll along Florence St. Art Walk.
- Dinner and wine-tasting at Peter Lowell's.
- Bicycle rickshaw back to the hotel.

#### Casey and Angel, 20-something outdoor enthusiasts, love cooking organic food

- Unload the kayaks at the new Morris St. boat ramp. Park in the east side parking lot.
- Spend the day paddling the Laguna
- Load kayaks back onto car.
- Consult interactive kiosk in the parking lot
- Walk the Green Line up McKinley to town. Buy a new cookpot at Cultivate Home.
- Check in at Home Stay, get recommendation for dinner and evening activities
- Dine out at Zasu's and go to Hopmonk's for music and dancing

#### Jessica and Sean, and their two young children, on a summer trip to California

- Stay at a local Farm Stay, with big breakfast included
- Kids collect eggs, feed chickens and goats
- Park in east side parking lot. Go to Wetlands Museum
- Notice QR code and get map and directory App onto their mobile phones
- Swing by Community Foods for picnic supplies
- Walk the Blue Line to Ives Park for picnic and a swim.
- Put picnic garbage in recycling containers.
- Dinner at Mary's Pizza parlor
- Use Sebastopol as a launch spot for day trips to the beach, Charles Schultz Museum, Armstrong Redwoods



<b>1453</b>	<b>Total Votes</b>	
<b>125</b>	<b>Pedestrian connectors</b>	<b>9%</b>
38	Walking: Create ped connections & signs to promote walkways	Environmental Impact
26	Create ped connections thru town & to hiking trails w/signs & greenery	Traffic
19	Bike/ped connection btwn Laguna, Joe Rodota, downtown & Ragle	Visitor support
17	Large Map Boards in parking lots (You Are Here). Paper maps?	Signs, maps & apps
14	Self-walking tours: Maps on themes (food, art, used clothes, gardens, dogs)	Activities: New
11	Clearly marking bike/ped connectors (paint a line down the sidewalk?)	Signs, maps & apps
<b>98</b>	<b>Website/App possibilities</b>	<b>7%</b>
19	Map/directory/website/mobile app for eco-tourism website	New Businesses
19	Help marketing Home Stay/Farm Stay	New Business: HFStay
12	Consolidated activity listing by date, weekend: Farmer's Market, Rialto Showings, Live Music, plays, Art Showings, Murals, Public Sculpture, iWalk	Environmental Impact
10	Searchable website with maps/lists of eco- attractions, activities, businesses	Signs, maps & apps
10	Educational signs about our culture and values (green, history, friendly)	Signs, maps & apps
8	Themed maps: art, gardens, wine, farms/food, bikes, kids, healing	Signs, maps & apps
5	Interactive Kiosk in Plaza with iPad displaying our eco-tourist website	Signs, maps & apps
4	Mobile App of eco-tourist website. Post QR code around town	Signs, maps & apps
4	Packets for hotels, restaurants, Visitor Center to pass out	Signs, maps & apps
3	Signs that tell visitors what we are proud of (our values & history)	Culture
3	Brochure on Sebastopol as an eco-tourist destination	Signs, maps & apps
1	Better signs indicating where the parking is (with QR code and mobile	Signs, maps & apps
<b>87</b>	<b>Connecting the Barlow and Downtown</b>	<b>6%</b>
26	Connections for "old" downtown and Barlow: signs, walks, themes, etc. (Lumber Yard redo)	New Businesses
22	Connect the Barlow and downtown	Policy
9	Bicycle rickshaw or electric shuttle loop to connect town, Barlow & Laguna	Traffic
7	Better lighting and wider sidewalks, esp on McKinley btwn Plaza & Barlow	Visitor support
7	McKinley corridor with pedestrian island up the middle for 2 blocks: Barlow to Main St.	Parking
6	Strong connections (physical and social) btwn Barlow & downtown	Visitor support
5	Bicycle rickshaw between Barlow and downtown	New Businesses
5	Widen McKinley: Improve ped connection between downtown & Barlow	Traffic
<b>51</b>	<b>East side parking structure</b>	<b>4%</b>
29	Parking structure at cement plant w/Laguna museum/cafe on top	Parking
22	Create parking at east end of town w/shuttles or nice ped pathways	Parking
<b>47</b>	<b>Recycling receptacles throughout town</b>	<b>3%</b>
19	Have City contract with green waste company for recycle bins in public space	New Businesses
19	Litter: Make it easy to recycle in parks, downtown & shopping centers	Environmental Impact
9	Improve upkeep in Plaza and downtown sidewalks (benches, trash)	Visitor support
<b>27</b>	<b>Make cement plant property a Laguna entryway/museum-café</b>	<b>2%</b>
10	Make cement plant a Laguna gateway with museum/café & viewing tower	Activities: New
11	Café run by Ceres Project at Wetlands Museum at cement plant property	New Businesses
6	Wetlands Museum at Cement Plant (Laguna Foundation)	New Businesses
	<b>OTHER SUGGESTIONS (in descending order: most to least votes)</b>	
30	Provide better bus access from outside of town	Parking
29	Help understanding Home Stay/Farm Stay laws & taxes	New Business: HFStay
27	Make town center pedestrian only	Traffic
26	Co-op marketing for Home Stay/Farm Stay businesses (website?)	New Business: HFStay
25	Ban Styrofoam take-out containers. Require biodegradable utensils	Environmental Impact
25	Living wage for employees and farm workers and a star on restaurants, farms hotels that offer these wages, and stars for locally made, organic and sustainable products	Activities: VisitorLocal
24	Ban chain stores (esp in historic downtown); Emphasize local	Policy
24	Create first-class botanic garden and nursery (with Luther Burbank Farm?)	New Businesses
24	Workshop on how to run a Home Stay/Farm Stay biz	New Business: HFStay
22	Switch back to two-way traffic	Traffic

20	Bicycle rental kiosk at the Plaza	New Businesses
20	Bikes: More bike lanes & bike trails	Environmental Impact
20	Keep clean small town, healthy food, "farmy" feel of Sebastopol	Culture
19	Visitor Center open/staffed on weekends	Visitor support
18	Promote Sebastopol to bike tourists who can ride to town	Parking
17	Alternate route from Llano Road to New Occidental by bypasses	Traffic
17	Safe ped/bike crossing from Joe Rodota trail across Hwy 12 to Laguna Trail	Activities: New
16	Affordable housing & restaurant prices for locals	Economics
16	Organized tours: Art, wine, garden, bike, farms, food, green city	Activities: New
16	Park once!	Parking
15	Program Coordinator for Home Stay/Farm Stay companies	New Business: HFStay
14	Add bike lanes or trails, especially through side streets, alleys and to trails	Traffic
13	More bike activities and facilitation: Trail thru town, events, bike racks	Activities: New
13	Move Visitor Center to central location (Tamberlane Bldg?)	Visitor support
13	Roundabouts for traffic calming (e.g., in front of Whole Foods)	Traffic
13	Signage at Stony Point and Fulton w/alternate routes to Forestville, the River	Traffic
12	Food events: Farm-to-table, food/wine pairing, cook-offs	Activities: New Events
12	Friday night Hubub Club parade looping through the Barlow and downtown	Activities: New Events
12	Greenery: Businesses & Analy Eco-Action class adopt landscape projects	Environmental Impact
11	Be the model we want the world to become	Culture
11	Cittaslow Day: Like Petaluma Palooza but celebrate Sebastopol's slowness	Activities: New Events
11	More murals. Show our spirit!	Visitor support
11	Zone for more sidewalk cafes	Policy
10	Create bypass through Morris, behind Analy, up Hurlbut	Traffic
10	Downtown employee incentives to park in special lots	Parking
10	Think of tourists as guests not adversaries	Culture
10	Underground parking	Parking
9	Alternative transportation from airport and smart rail stations for Group Tourism	Activities: VisitorLocal
9	Don't forget the locals; biz & community work together	Culture
9	Laguna & Ragle markers noting Pomo history, culture & plant lore	Activities: New
9	Make town more European with housing above stores	Culture
9	More businesses open at NIGHT!	New Businesses
9	More flashing light crosswalks	Traffic
9	Multi-story parking	Parking
9	Traffic control: Smarter lights	Parking
8	Attractive Gateway Sculpture w/waterwise landscaping	Visitor support
8	Community kitchen open for homeless	New Businesses
8	Create services and attractions for all income brackets	Economics
8	Daylight (bring to surface) creeks	Traffic
8	Help getting insurance for Home Stay/Farm Stay	New Business: HFStay
8	More public charging stations for eco-friendly cars	Environmental Impact
8	Research/learn from neighboring & international tourist towns	Culture
8	Trains and transit hub at Pellini corner	Traffic
8	Travel articles about our eco-tourist activities/attractions	Signs, maps & apps
7	Create something ecological in town such as electric trains or a native plant showcase, THEN invite ecotourists to journey here in an ecological manner	Visitor support
7	Eco-focused Events: Return of swallows, Canoe the Laguna Day, Tiny House Exhibit	Activities: New Events
7	Nature nearby: Armstrong woods, Laguna, Bodega Head, Sonoma State Beach, Kuther Burbank Farms	Environmental Impact
7	Travelers' center (lockers, shower, laundry, Internet, hostel)	Parking
7	Water-wise planting (w/education) at city entrances.	Environmental Impact
6	Bring back electric train	Traffic
6	Community kitchen (health code cert value added food production)	New Businesses
6	Make sure there are living wage jobs	Economics
5	Advisory Task Force to guide Eco-tourism program & development	Visitor support
5	Air quality: Encourage engine shut off while waiting on Bodega Ave.	Environmental Impact

5	Concern about emphasis on alcohol	Culture
5	Develop list of activities for home stays	Environmental Impact
5	Directions and information about homeless shelter & food	Visitor support
5	Fix Hwy 116 south of town	Traffic
5	Help pluck and eat my ducks	Environmental Impact
5	Limit number of businesses that can sell alcohol	Policy
5	Outdoor areas for leashed dogs	Activities: New
5	Scenic Hwy 116: Restore the integrity of a bucolic experience; native plant beautification, cooperate with CalTrans.	Traffic
4	Agriculture: Permaculture, tractor fair, Picnic on the Farm, U-Pick Day	Activities: New Events
4	Apprentice-for-a-Weekend: Work with a local artist	Activities: VisitorLocal
4	Bring own bags to grocery; no plastic	Parking
4	Co-operative advertising with Sonoma Tourism (County)	Signs, maps & apps
4	Co-operative, worker-owned businesses	New Businesses
4	Create a downtown parking district	Parking
4	Eco-fashion show (recycled clothing; plant-based fabrics...)	Activities: New Events
4	Food forest: Edible public garden	Parking
4	Homeless shelter or other solution: Rich open your homes	Economics
4	Limit the size of tourist developments	Policy
4	More Public Art	Activities: New
4	Sculpture/entryway feature at east end of HWY 12 (Contest?)	Activities: New
4	Showcase organic vinyards and organic farms	Environmental Impact
4	Underground parking	Economics
4	Widen paths & rent family (4-seater) bikes for Laguna Trail & Joe Rodota east	New Businesses
4	Zone live/work/commercial/residential	Policy
3	"Snail Trail": green & history/culture venues w/markers & cell audio tour	Activities: New
3	Art: Competition at Farm Market, People's folk sculpture on a theme	Activities: New Events
3	Create local incentive. Reduce Property tax to Seb citizens to not drive their car downtown	Parking
3	Depave: Less concrete/asphalt; encourage bike/share bike corrals	Parking
3	Enforce vehicle rules to bicyclists: stop at stop signs, walk in crosswalks	Parking
3	Hotels: Low water showers; Less laundry; Energy self-sufficient	Environmental Impact
3	Interactive musical water pump feature added to Plaza fountain	Activities: New
3	Park at smart stations/101 corridor airport shuttle to Sebastopol	Parking
3	Re-energize Sonoma County's equine subculture: horseback riding, boarding, lessons, training, tours Liberty work like Cavalier)	Activities: VisitorLocal
3	Restaurants: Ask if want water; compost food waste; use cloth napkins	Environmental Impact
3	Task force with City support to guide eco-tourist development	Policy
2	Arranged meals with council member, planning commission, city dept.	Environmental Impact
2	Control noise, crime, drugs, speeding, running stop signs	Policy
2	Green business certification program	New Businesses
2	Have tours that arrive by train, shuttle or bus & park outside town	Traffic
2	Help visitors be stewards of the environment	Activities: New
2	Housing and restaurant prices will become unaffordable for locals	Economics
2	Make a tunnel downtown for thru-traffic	Traffic
2	Other kinds of transport in town: bike, taxi, horsedrawn carriage	Environmental Impact
2	Study Palo Alto Parking solution	Parking
2	Year Round crossing pedestrian/bike crossing of Laguna	Traffic
2	Zone Pellini and Frizelle-Enos for high rise hotel and underground parking	Policy
1	25 mph speed limits within city limits posted on all roads leading to town	Traffic
1	All-Nations Picnic: Block out Ragle field where people picnic "by ancestry"	Activities: VisitorLocal
1	Allow for many ways for community to give feedback	Culture
1	Create swallow wall at the Laguna; partner with Audubon Society	Activities: New
1	Fine dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs.	Parking
1	Laguna protection: Citizens ask dog owners to respect leash laws on trails	Environmental Impact
1	Less bike trails	Parking
1	Mandate LED-only street lighting on Seb city streets	Economics
1	More events at Ives Park and Ragle Park	Activities: New Events

1	Refurbish existing attractions: Florence Ave., Luther Burbank Farm	Visitor support
1	Set benchmarks to tell us when we're getting close to limits	Policy
1	Shuttle business: Ecotours, art, food, music, wine, bike, camping	New Businesses
1	Stop sign at McKinley	Traffic
1	The things that make our town attractive to tourists make the town more attractive for all of us. Bike trails, Laguna walks, art, sense of history.	Acivities: VisitorLocal
1	Traffic impact	Traffic
1	Volunteer-for-a-Week Vacations: Ceres, Laguna, Permaculture....	Acivities: VisitorLocal
0	Contests: Scarecrow Contest, folk sculpture	Activities: New Events
0	Do not allow east lane of Petaluma Ave to be replaced by a bike lane	Traffic
0	Laguna protection: More County Rangers to enforce staying on trails	Environmental Impact
0	Local Holidays: Skate Park Saturday, Pickup Baseball (equipt provided)	Activities: New Events
0	Make it easier to cross Main St at different intersections (e.g., Calder & Willow Sts.)	Traffic
0	Organized Walking tours	Activities: New
0	Take-A-Local-To-Lunch: Social Media for meeting locals w/same interest	Acivities: VisitorLocal

# The Eco-Tourism Polls and Open House, October 29, 2013

## Methodology and Logistics

**Purpose of Open House:** To provide a venue for community dialogue so that concerns could be identified, solutions discussed and prioritized, and benefits acknowledged.

Learning from the lessons of Occidental and the Regional Parks' Gateway Project, we want to be sure that Sebastopol residents feel they had a voice in shaping the growth and evolution of the emerging tourism sector. We also hope to assist future developers to understand the concerns of the local population. Wise developers will view the citizens' preferred solutions to concerns and the perceived benefits of eco-tourism as keys to becoming a good neighbor and welcome member of the community.

**Listening Campaign:** Input was received in three types of exchanges:

- Internet polls: one to stakeholder businesses and non-profits; the other to the general public.
- Face-to-face conversations at the Sebastopol Farmer's Market.
- Individuals emailing their suggestions and concerns.

### **Advertisement of the Listening Campaign**

No study is guaranteed to reach all members of the community. Considerable effort was expended, however, to advertise the Internet polls and Farm Market discussion opportunities in the context of multiple channels designed to reach both the business and non-profit stakeholders, as well as the community at large:

- Sonoma West Times and News (Op Ed 9/26/13; display ad 9/26/13; 10/3/13, 10/10/13)
- Sonoma County Gazette (October issue: Sebastopol Column and a display Ad)
- Banner on display on the exterior library wall 10/10/13 -10/30/13
- Post Cards
  - Given away at the Farmer's Market, 10/6/13
  - Mailed to 72 stakeholder businesses and non-profits, 10/11/13
- Email lists that distributed the survey announcement:
  - Cittaslow Sebastopol
  - City of Sebastopol
  - The Core Project
  - Sebastopol Citizens
  - WACCOBB
  - Sebastopol Tomorrow
  - Sustainable Sebastopol (sent to the list manager; did not hear back if it went out to the list)
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Sebastopol Downtown Association
  - Farm Trails

### **Types of information requested:**

- Problems or concerns about eco-tourism
- Potential solutions to those concerns
- Perceived benefits or opportunities

### **Respondents:**

- 114 completed surveys out of 423 visitors to the community survey (SebTourism.org)
- 31 completed surveys out of 120 visitors to the stakeholder survey (SebBizTourism.org)
- 32 ideas submitted at the Farmer's Market booth, or via individual emails mailed in

## **Problems and Solutions**

Over 400 ideas were put forward as possible solutions to community concerns. These fell into 8 general themes. Many ideas were mentioned more than once, and across more than one theme.

- Traffic
- Environmental Impact
- Signs, Maps & Apps
- Activities and Attractions
- Parking
- Policies, Culture and Economics
- Visitor Support Services
- New Business Ideas/Home Stays & Farm Stays

## **Voting at the Open House:**

For each theme, a ballot was created that typically had 12-24 ideas written down. Drawing upon the strengths of "crowd-sourcing," we included those ideas that were mentioned frequently as well as ideas that seemed to be especially thought-provoking, creative responses.

Attendees were invited to read through the solutions proposed under each theme and vote by placing sticker dots beside their top two favorite ideas. Attendees were able to add their own ideas whenever they wanted. (Sometimes it was the spontaneously added ideas that got the highest votes!)

Discussion facilitators were available at each table with the goal of simply helping the attendees to articulate their thoughts. There were no right or wrong answers. The purpose of the evening, remember, was to promote active and constructive conversation.