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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sebastopol Says, “Hop on the Bus—Meet a Buddy”
3-month program launches March 20

SEBASTOPOL, Calif., (March 11, 2019) – The City of Sebastopol is launching a “Bus Buddies” program. The idea is to have some friendly faces aboard to help encourage folks who might be shy about using public transportation to give the free #24 (Electric) Shuttle a try. Overall ridership on the shuttle has already increased over 57% since free fares were announced last summer. The program aims to keep the momentum going, and ridership growing.

Each Wednesday March 20 through the month of May, a different community leader is set to hop on the bus: city council members, local organizations’ board members, and local business owners, among others.



The 3-month program grants riders an interactive experience to get to know local community members, and a chance to share information with others while exploring the city. “Bus Buddies” will ride at least one loop around town, leaving the Transit Hub/Rialto Theater stop at 9:38am and returning at 10:15am.

The Bus Buddies program was first suggested by participants during a public forum while discussing the “Sebastopol Shuttle” in 2018, with the purpose to help the community get familiar with riding the bus.

According to Councilmember Sarah Gurney, the value of this program is essential. Not only will it provide new riders with the opportunity to learn how to use the city’s local transportation, it will also allow individuals to gain familiarity with the resources provided when riding Route #24, an aspect she would have appreciated knowing when she first rode the bus on her own.

“I know this effort works because I’ve tried it myself.” Gurney said. “I also know, from my first solo experience, that I was somewhat uncomfortable riding alone and made enough mistakes that I had to have a second first-ride. I could have been helped by a buddy.”

Subject to update, the community leaders participating in the Bus Buddies program include:

March

March 20

Vice Mayor Patrick Slayter

March 27

Mayor Neysa Hinton

April

April 3

Marsha Sue Lustig, Sebastopol Walks

April 10

Katie Davis, Program Director of the Sebastopol Area Senior Center

Nick Vannucci, Manager at The Legacy

April 17

Lawrence Jaffe, The Sebastopol Grange

April 24

Paul Fritz, Planning Commission

May

May 1

Bill Mattinson, Sebastopol Representative to the Regional Climate Protection Authority,
Community Advisory Council

Back-up Simon Lowings, Sebastopol Walks, and Jim Passage, Past President Western
Sonoma County Historical Society

May 8

Diana Rich, former Executive Director of the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center

May 15

Linda Collins, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce

Back-up Simon Lowings, Sebastopol Walks

May 22

Vicki Reno. Director of the Sebastopol Ukestars

May 29

Cordelia Holst, Executive Director of the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center

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