

El Sobrante alarmed by plan to move methadone clinic there



(TOM LOCHNER/STAFF)

The BAART medical and methadone treatment center has operated at 1313 Cutting Blvd.

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RICHMOND — The planned move of a methadone clinic from its longtime Cutting Boulevard location to San Pablo Dam Road is causing consternation among some El Sobrante Valley residents and business owners.

The BAART medical and methadone treatment center has operated at 1313 Cutting Blvd. near Marina Way South for more than 20 years, an official there said this week. It seeks to move to the former Floor Dimension Building at 3563 San Pablo Dam Road just west of El Portal Drive, on part of a thin finger of Richmond land wedged between San Pablo and unincorporated El Sobrante.

The El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council will discuss the plan at its monthly meeting at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the meeting room at the El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way at Garden Road.

“This clinic is within a half a block from homeowners in San Pablo, as well as local businesses and a pre-school,” a petition on change.org, titled “No Methadone Clinic El Sobrante/Richmond 94803” reads in part. “By allowing BAART to conduct business in

this area, this will bring drug addicts to El Sobrante which will negatively affect the revenues of local businesses.

“With the addition of BAART, the businesses of this town will either move, or go out of business,” the petition continues. “This town needs improvement, not drug addicts and increased crime rates.”

Richmond police did not immediately respond to an inquiry Monday whether there has been an elevated crime rate around the Cutting Boulevard clinic.

[BAART](#) Programs, a division of Texas-based [BayMark Health Services](#), is a multi-service organization that provides opioid addiction treatment and rehabilitation for patients in about a dozen states, according to its website. BAART contracts with the Contra Costa County Department of Health Services’ Alcohol and Other Drugs Services as well as with the Contra Costa Health Plan, said Fatima Matal Sol, Alcohol and Other Drugs Program chief.

“BAART is a highly reputable organization,” she said. The county is responsible for monitoring the BAART facility, but the federal Drug Enforcement Agency as well as the state also can send auditors unannounced, Matal Sol said. She acknowledged that about three years ago, there had been complaints about the Cutting Boulevard facility, “So we brought in a security officer and also required that the exterior premises be kept nice and clean, and assure that there is no loitering outside.”

The building BAART currently occupies on Cutting Boulevard is owned by the county.

According to county Supervisor John Gioia, the city wants to “revitalize” a stretch of Cutting Boulevard and because of that, has wanted the clinic to relocate. But Alex Knox, chief of staff for Mayor Tom Butt, said the city has had no role in the relocation plan. City Manager Bill Lindsay did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment Monday.

Gioia noted that the city gave its plan the title “NURVE,” or Nystrom United Revitalization Effort. The Nystrom neighborhood is centered around Nystrom Elementary School and Martin Luther King Jr. Park and Community Center, and is within the areas of influence of three neighborhood councils — Iron Triangle, Santa Fe and Coronado — according to the [NURVE page](#) on the city’s website. The BAART clinic is adjacent to the park.

“It’s been a priority out of the City Manager’s Office for a few years,” Gioia said.

Gioia also said that the Cutting Boulevard site is too small, “so people wait outside instead of in the small waiting room.”

Matal Sol said she had heard as far back as about five years ago that the city wanted BAART to move because of redevelopment.