

Appendix A

# ROSS GENERAL PLAN MAPS AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION ANALYSIS



**TOWN  
OF  
ROSS**

**General Plan**  
2007 - 2025

## **Analysis of Emergency Evacuation Capacity in Ross**

State law (Gov. Code Section 65302(g)(5) and 65302.15) requires that the Safety Element of the General Plan be informed by an assessment of emergency evacuation capacity, including identification of any residential developments that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes, and an evaluation of the capacity, safety, and viability of evacuation routes under a range of emergency scenarios, together with measures to address associated risks. The following analysis is incorporated to address these requirements.

### **Background**

In Marin County, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has the authority to establish an emergency operations center to serve as the location from which centralized emergency management can be performed during a major emergency or disaster, facilitating a coordinated response by community, local, state, and federal agencies. OEM maintains the Marin County Emergency Portal, a website which houses the latest information on emergencies, and operates Alert-Marin, the county's primary system to alert residents of emergencies in which the public may need to evacuate, shelter in place, or take some other protective action. Townwide email blasts and social media posts are also important communication tools in advance of and during emergencies, such as Red Flag Warnings, issued by the National Weather Service, which generally provide 3 days' notice before major wind, low humidity events and high fire danger. Additionally, the Town of Ross is also a party to the Marin County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which provides a science-based assessment of wildfire hazards and threats to homes in the WUI of Marin County. Originally adopted in 2016 and updated in the wake of North Bay fires of 2017, which included five of the top twenty most destructive WUI fires in history, the purpose of the CWPP is to provide fire agencies, land managers, and other stakeholders in Marin County with guidance and strategies to reduce fire hazard and the risk of catastrophic wildfires in the WUI, while promoting the protection and enhancement of the county's economic assets and ecological resources.

The North Bay fires heightened awareness of fire hazards in Marin and potential vulnerabilities. In 2018, the Marin County Board of Supervisors published a report that discussed the lessons learned from the North Bay fires, and the following year, the Marin Civil Grand Jury published a report entitled Wildfire Preparedness: A New Approach, that outlined a more proactive and consistent approach to public education, wildfire preparedness, and vegetation management. The Grand Jury report led to tax Measure C, a bond measure

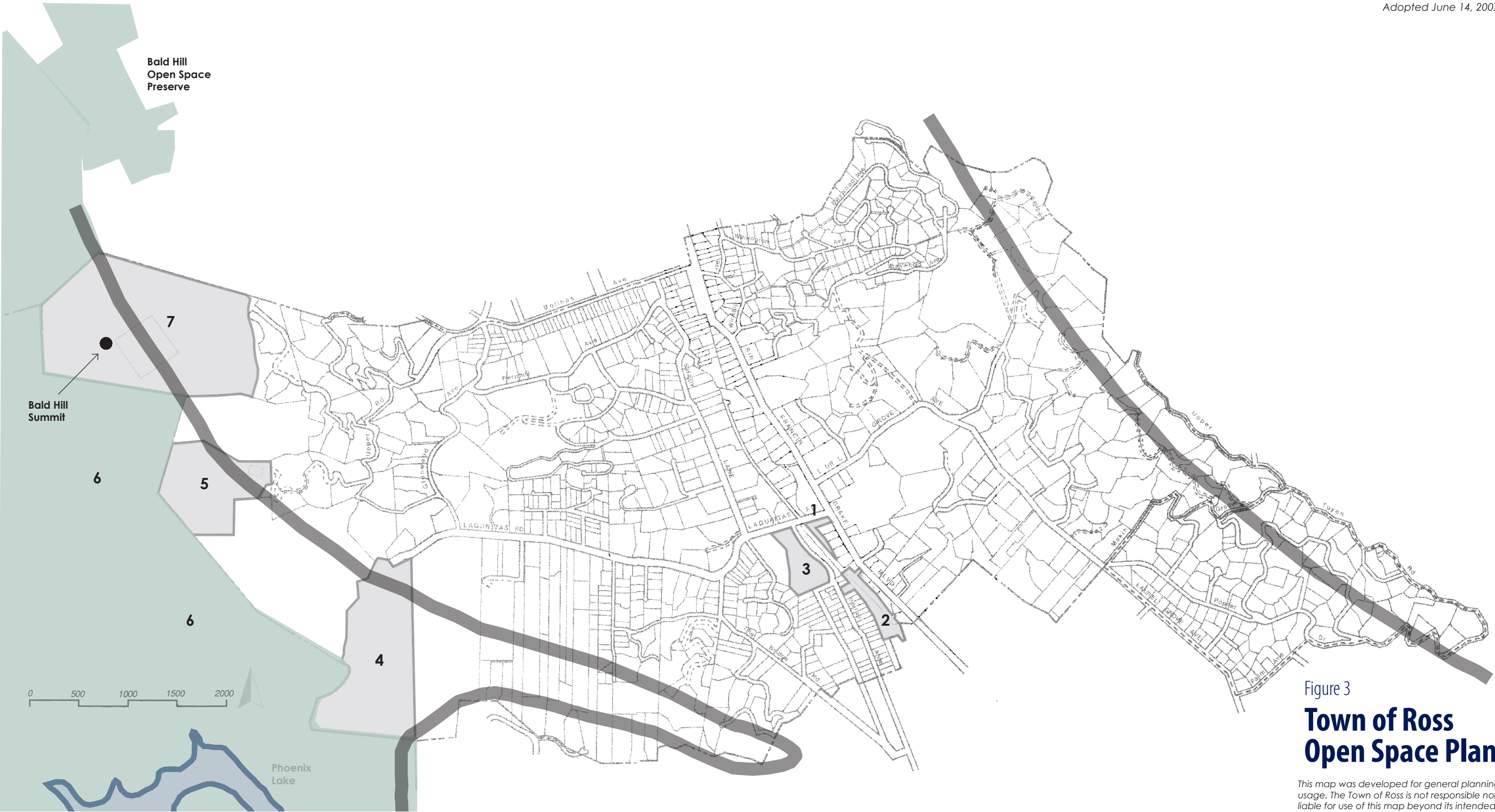
passed by voters in 2020 to fund wildland fire hazard mitigation efforts throughout the county (except for Belvedere and Tiburon Fire District). Funds raised through Measure C are managed by the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA), a joint power agency formed following the passage of Measure C to develop and implement a comprehensive wildfire prevention and emergency preparedness plan for most of Marin County. The MWPA consists of seventeen-member agencies, including the Town of Ross, and leads the development of fire adapted communities using sound scientific, financial, programmatic, ecological practices, vegetation management, community education, and evacuation and warning systems with the support of its member and partner agencies. MWPA works in close collaboration with Fire Safe Marin, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating safe, fire-adapted communities. The organization offers a wide range of programs and resources, which promote wildfire safety preparedness, reduce fuel loads and fire hazards, build community cooperation, and encourage environmentally sound fire mitigation practices. Fire Safe Marin is the official educational arm of the MWPA.

The primary emergency evacuation routes in Ross are shown on Figure 13, together with the locations of wildfire mitigation projects implemented by MWPA. These projects include the Curbside Chipper Day Program, which provides free curbside pickup and disposal of excess vegetation from residential properties; the Greater Ross Valley Shaded Fuel Break Project, which will create a 38-mile shaded fuel break running from Fairfax to Corte Madera; and the Central Marin Zone Evacuation Route Core Project, which includes fuel reduction and vegetation management adjacent to roads to enhance ingress and egress of emergency vehicles and residents during a wildfire emergency along evacuation routes and other roadways in the Greater Ross Valley area. Additionally, the location of critical facilities in relation to areas of natural hazard risk is shown on Figure 14. Major and minor evacuation routes in Ross could face potential disruption from a wildfire, earthquake, or flood event, which may block roadways or damage the roadway surfaces. In the event of widespread disruption to local evacuation routes, major and minor routes may become more congested, slowing down evacuation of the community or specific neighborhoods. This issue may be compounded since Sir Francis Drake Boulevard serves as the primary evacuation route for neighboring communities, and so potential disruptions may have regional effects. Depending on the nature and location of the hazard, evacuation would be either to the south to an evacuation point with gasoline, electric vehicle charging, and supplies such as the Bon Air Center, or to the north to an evacuation point in San Rafael.

## Analysis

An analysis of existing development patterns and roadway connectivity completed with the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) software indicates that some residential areas of the town have constrained emergency access. Shown on Figure 15, these evacuation-constrained properties are all located in at least one hazard-prone area and may have access to only one emergency evacuation route, which can significantly impede the swift and orderly movement of residents to safer locations and can lead to congestion, delayed emergency response times, and heightened risk to life and property. Additionally, in the event of a natural hazard involving wildfire, earthquake, or flooding, relatively more difficult to evacuate areas of Ross are shown on Figure 16. Difficulty was assessed in consideration of roadway conditions, communications difficulty, and presence of fire fuels using MWPA's scenario planning tool. Key factors that contribute to evacuation difficulty include heavy vegetation and steep elevations which increase burn probability, and roadway conditions such as slope, elevation, geometry, and lack of intersections, as well as distance to key infrastructure. The most difficult to evacuate locations are found in areas of steep topography and winding roads, including most areas of the town west of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard as well as areas along West Road, Lagunitas Road, Willow Hill Road and Chestnut Avenue.

General Plan policies focus on the location and design of new development for increased resilience to natural hazards and coordination with neighboring jurisdictions and responsible agencies in the Greater Ross Valley to optimize emergency preparedness and evacuation capacity. Above all, ensuring that community members are prepared for emergency evacuation events and understand what to do is of critical importance.



1

Station Park

2

Frederick S. Allen Park

5

Mudd Dedication

6

Watershed Lands (MMWD)

3

Ross Common

4

Natalie Coffin Greene Park

7

Bald Hill (Potential Open Space)

Upland Ridge and Greenbelt Areas



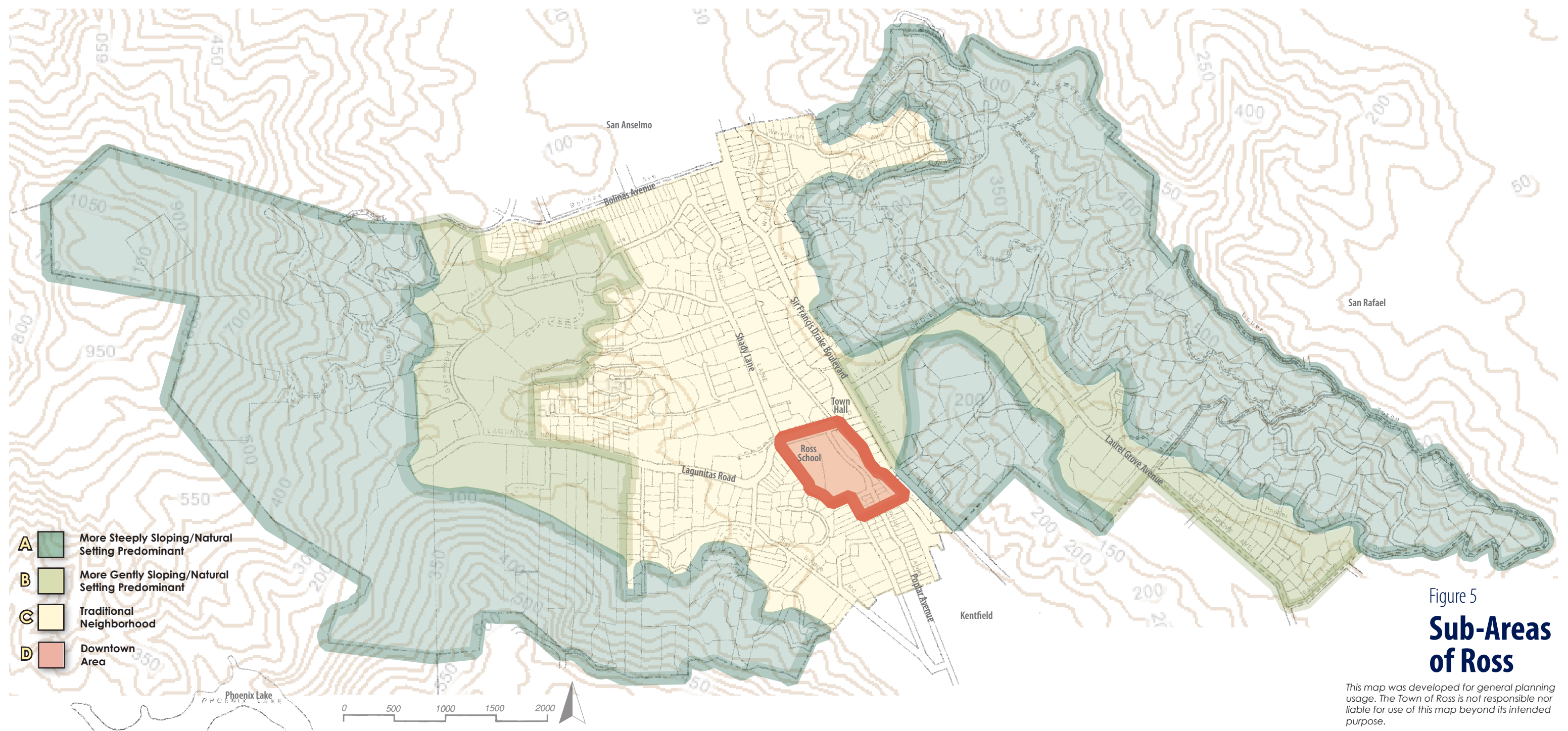
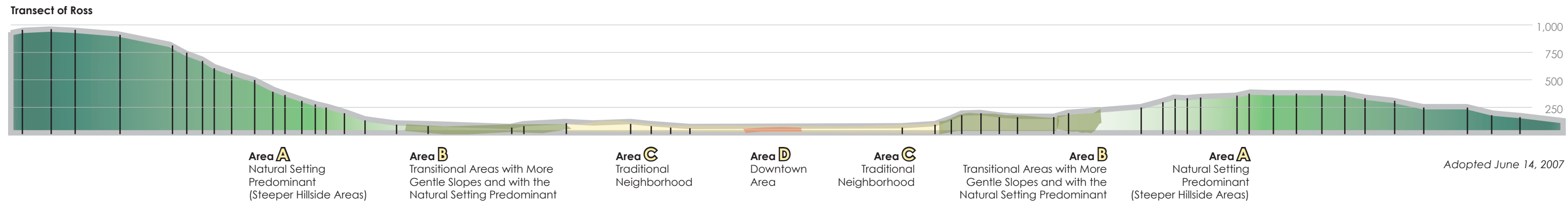












Figure 5  
**Sub-Areas  
of Ross**

This map was developed for general planning usage. The Town of Ross is not responsible nor liable for use of this map beyond its intended purpose.



Figure 11  
**Pedestrian/Bicycle System in Ross**

*This map was developed for general planning usage. The Town of Ross is not responsible nor liable for use of this map beyond its intended purpose.*

- |  |  |   |  |   |
|--|--|---|--|---|
|  Dirt Trail to MMWD Open Space*     |  Busy/Narrow On-Street Bicycle Route* |  Stoplight with Crosswalk    |  Sidewalk or Paved Path |  Proposed Sidewalk   |
|  Secondary On-Street Bicycle Route* |  Primary On-Street Bicycle Route*     |  Stoplight without Crosswalk |  Gravel or Dirt Path    |  Path Indicated on Map, but Not in Use (Severely Overgrown or Steep) |

\* Source for Bicycle Routes: MARIN BICYCLE MAP FOR ROAD, MOUNTAIN, AND TRANSIT BIKING (2004), Published by the Marin County Bicycle Coalition



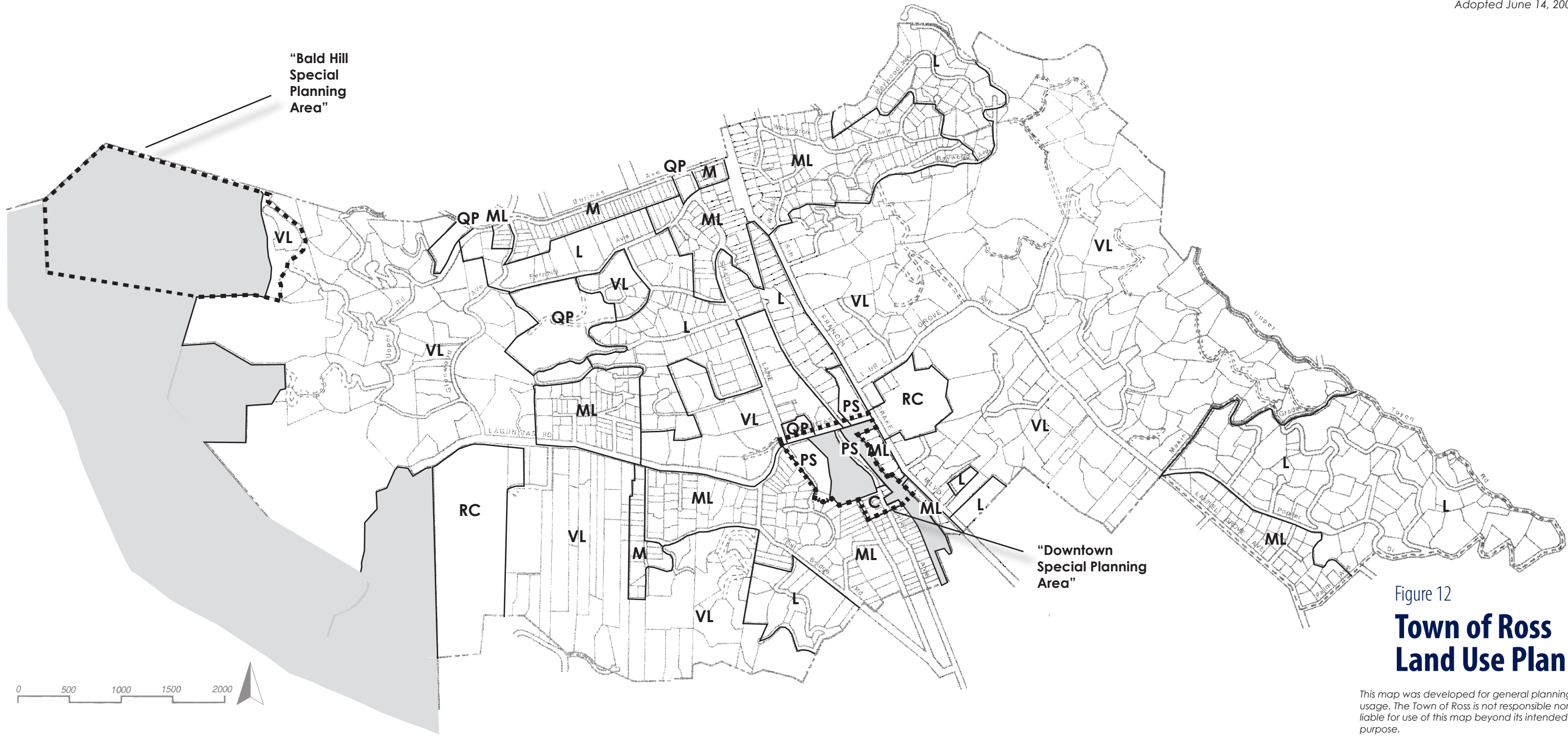


Figure 12  
**Town of Ross  
Land Use Plan**

*This map was developed for general planning usage. The Town of Ross is not responsible nor liable for use of this map beyond its intended purpose.*


**VL** **Very Low Density** (.1-1 Unit/Acre). An average of 0.3 to 3.0 persons per acre; consistent with R-1:B-A, R-1:B-5A and R-1: B-10A zoning, with lots one acre or more in size.


**L** **Low Density** (1-3 Units/Acre). An average of 3.0 to 9.0 persons per acre; consistent with R-1:B-20 and R-1:B-15 zoning, with lots to 20,000 or 15,000 square feet in size, respectively.

**ML** **Medium Low Density** (3-6 Units/Acre). An average of 9.0 to 18.0 persons per acre; consistent with R-1:B-10 and R-1: B-7.5 zoning, with lots to 10,000 or 7,500 square feet in size, respectively.

**M** **Medium Density** (6-10 Units/Acre). An average of 18.0 to 30.0 persons per acre; consistent with R-1:B-6 and R-1 zoning, with lots to 6,000 or 5,000 square feet in size, respectively.

**C** **Local Service Commercial** Applies to the downtown area and is intended to constitute a compact, centrally located area of such size as is necessary to contain local service commercial uses necessary for the convenience of the Town residents. Allows smaller scale residential uses. Uses could be allowed up to a 1.3 Floor Area Ratio but are dependent on consistency with design, parking, height and other policies or standards.

 **Public Park and Open Space** Secured public and private parks, open space and lands managed by the Marin Municipal Water District. Building intensity and population density is essentially 0.

 **Special Planning Area** Require further study and development of area-specific development guidelines.

**RC** **Limited Specialized Recreational/Cultural** This is applied to established recreational or cultural uses (Marin Art and Garden Center and the Lagunitas Tennis Club) which should have very limited intensity, consistent with community character and environmental constraints. FAR is less than 0.1. Allows smaller scale residential uses.

**PS** **Public Service** Lands in this classification are existing public sites upon which public service uses are appropriate, such as Town Hall, Public Safety buildings, post office and Ross Elementary School. Generally, the FAR for these sites should be less than 0.5. Allowances may be made for increased intensity if needed for health and safety purposes. Also allows smaller scale residential uses.

**QP** **Limited Quasi-Public/Private Service** The Limited Quasi Public/Private Service designation recognizes existing quasi public uses, such as churches and private schools that are located throughout the community and which are expected to remain in a similar use throughout the planning period. Standards are intended to minimize impacts on surrounding residential areas.

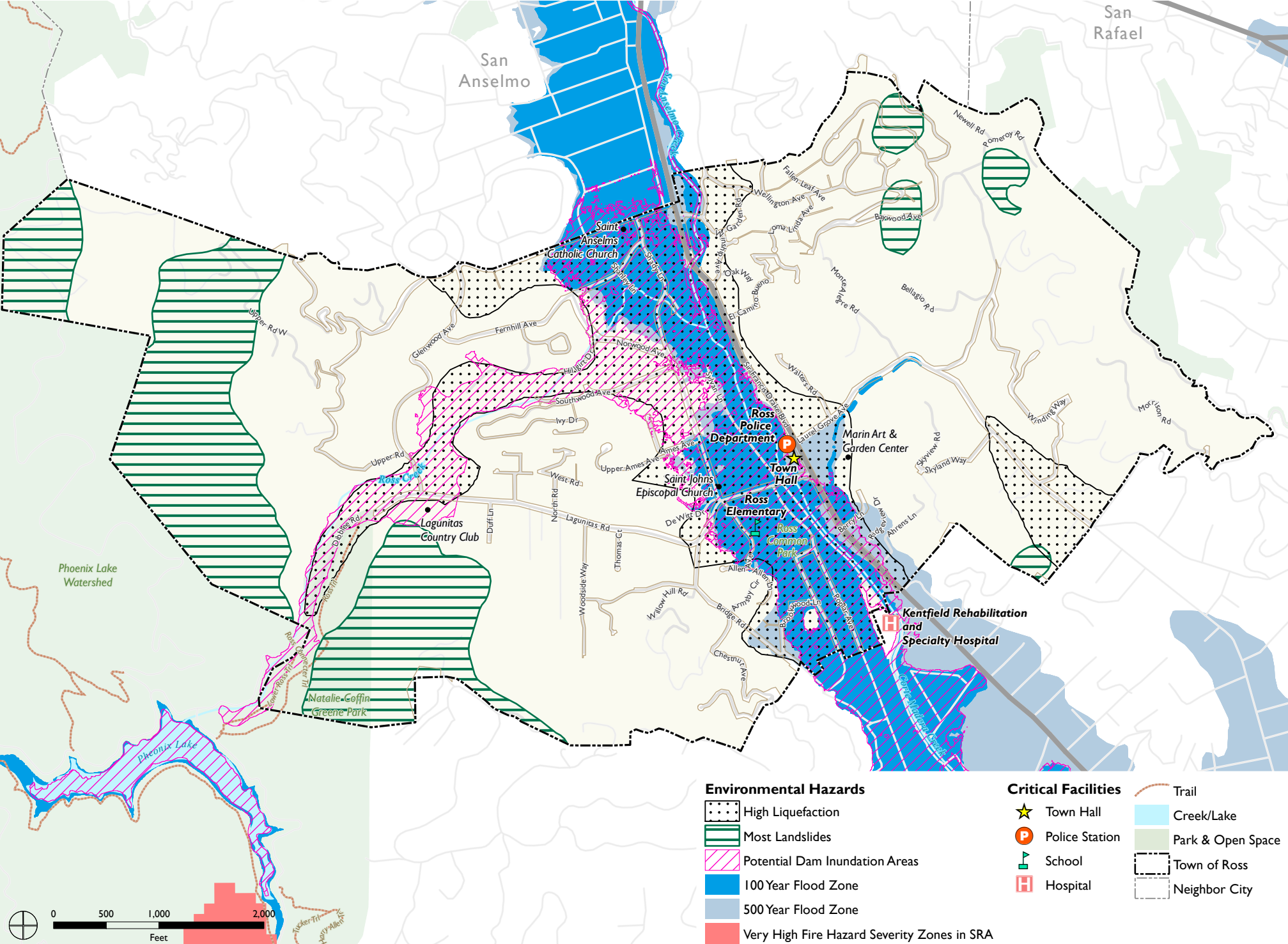
Allows smaller scale residential uses to be included. Intensity of development should be less than 1.0 FAR and shall meet height limit and other development standards and the standards of the zone in which they are located.

*Note: To convert residential units to population, 3.0 persons per household should be used (based on 2000 U.S. Census). Retail uses convert to about 1 job for every 500 square feet of floor area. Office/service uses convert to about 1 job per 300 feet of floor area.*



[illegible]

Figure 14: Environmental Hazards and Critical Facilities



Source: National Flood Hazard Layer, FEMA, 2019; CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zones in SRA, 2024; CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zones in LRA, Recommended, 10/2008; MarinMap, 2022; Dyett & Bhatia, 2022

Figure 15: Evacuation Constrained Residential Parcels

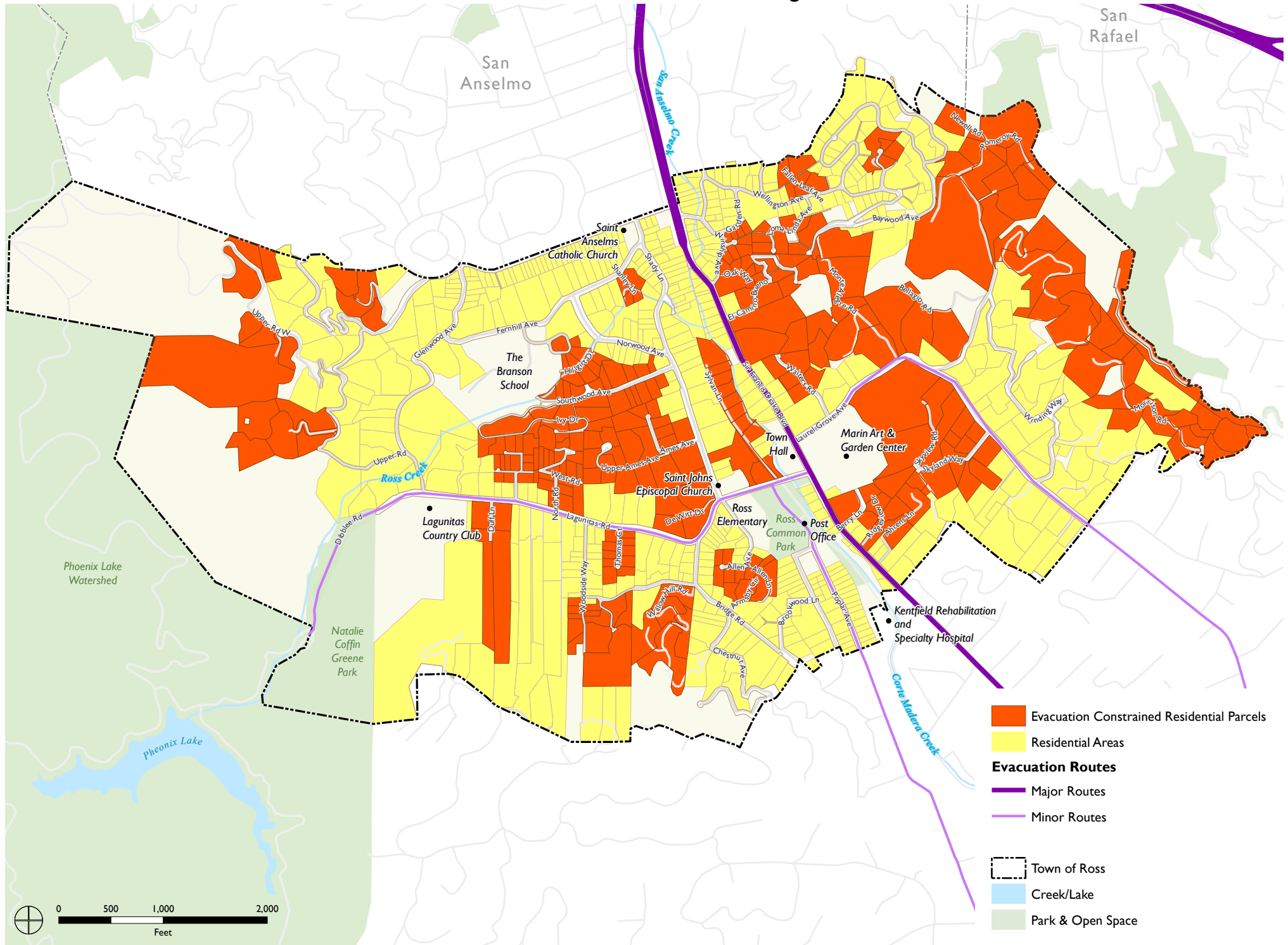
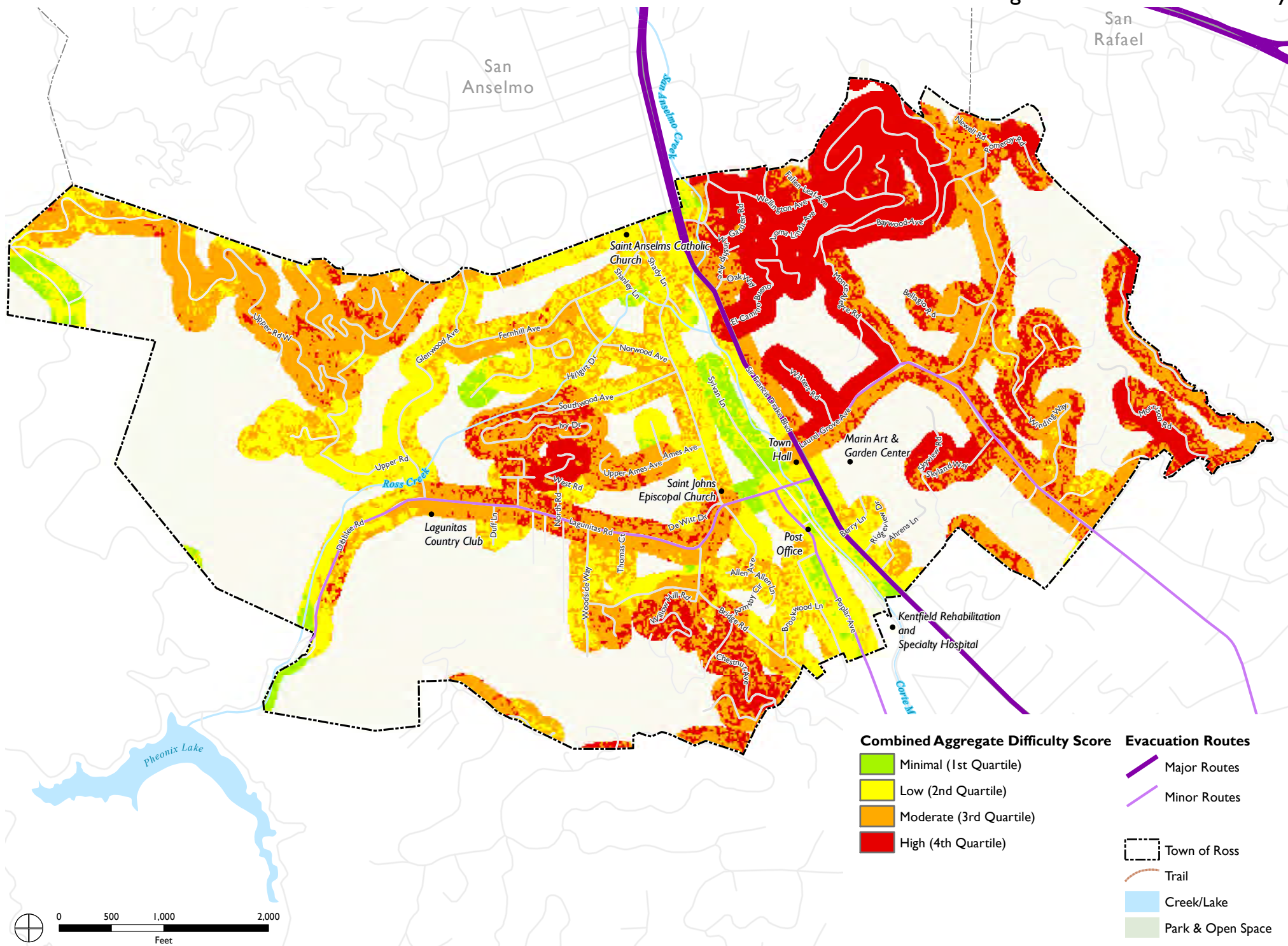




Figure 16: Evacuation Difficulty



Appendix B

# **ROSS GENERAL PLAN VISION FOR THE YEAR 2025**



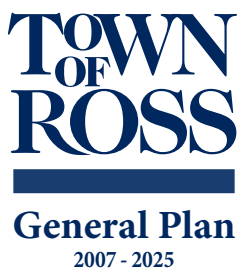
**TOWN  
OF  
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**General Plan**  
2007 - 2025

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# Ross General Plan Vision for the Year 2025

**Visioning** is a way of looking at the future and our ability to define a future state. A vision statement, in its simplest terms, is one's ability to define a future state. A community visioning event was held in 2005. The visioning ideas of the community have been incorporated into each general plan issue topic section.



## OUR VISION OF ROSS IN YEAR 2025

Set in a valley between open hillsides, Ross enjoys a natural environment where cultural and civic activities are encouraged and thrive. There's an abundance of green from tree-lined streets, parks and open space, to healthy creeks and watershed. Ross has maintained access to open space for all people, not just its residents, but this access should not disturb the privacy or peaceful enjoyment of the Town by its residents. Proper management of the eco-system helps to prevent erosion and excess stormwater runoff, reduces ambient temperatures, retains natural habitat for wildlife and birds, and enhances the beauty of the natural landscape.

To perpetuate the health of our community, we have followed environmentally sustainable management and development policies with regard to our environment. The natural environment for plant and animal health and habitat is not to be compromised. The Town has developed and follows policies for "green" building. We have worked to reduce our ecological footprint by shifting our reliance away from fossil fuels toward renewable sources of energy and by ameliorating the local conditions that contribute to global warming.

The Town has encouraged diversity in home design. While design review is based in part on the need to preserve architectural features that serve as significant reminders of the past, it nevertheless encourages 21st century creativity. The Town



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has made investments in infrastructure resulting in architecture and landscaping that promote the aesthetic and sustainable needs of the community.

Each neighborhood shows pride of community through maintenance and design quality. Our government responds to changing needs and is grounded in the recognition that creating and maintaining a quality environment in which to live is everyone's job.

Advisory Design Review (ADR) has been established to assist applicants, staff and Town Council with the permit process. ADR helps maintain and apply consistent guidelines for architectural and landscape design.

The architectural and environmental ambiance that attracted caring residents to Ross since the Town's incorporation in 1908 have been preserved through a tradition of stewardship that has guided the decisions of the Town Council. Ross Recreation, the Marin Art & Garden Center, Town parks, Natalie Coffin Greene Park, Phoenix Lake and proximity to the College of Marin are among the resources that provide cultural, educational and recreational opportunities.

The Lagunitas Bridge, symbolic entry to the Town proper, has been rebuilt to mitigate flood and seismic concerns. The new bridge maintains the character and style of the old bridge, and is consistent with the style of other bridges in Town that were designed by John Buck Leonard. The peaceful ambience of the Ross Common provides the focal point for the community.

The health and safety of the community are critical concerns. We have worked to prepare and practice emergency response and to minimize risks of fire danger by emphasizing responsible landscaping practices (especially in the steeper, less accessible areas of the Town). Additionally, we have worked to minimize noise pollution.

Flood control improvements have been made and a new creek management program has been completed. All new structures are above the 100-year flood elevation in the Downtown area and in new and remodeled houses located along the creeks and in the low areas. Houses in the floodplain have been granted expedited Council approval to be raised above flood levels and all businesses have installed flood protection mitigation. Specific standards for upstream mitigation and drainage system restoration have been implemented and overall runoff reduced.

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Measures are in place to keep our streets and walkways safe for adults, children, pedestrians, bikers and the disabled. We have developed safe bicycle routes and provided bicycle racks in public areas, including the Downtown, parks, schools and the post office. Drivers and cyclists are careful to “share the road.” Everyone observes traffic signs, signals and rules, with consistent enforcement by Public Safety.

As citizens of Ross we are dedicated to leaving our community a better and more beautiful place than we found it. Our neighborly connections, historic heritage, sense of community, natural ecological environments, attractive neighborhoods, local businesses and Town services all work well together.

The Ross Common is where Town residents participate in community celebrations throughout the year, including the annual Ross Town dinner, and the Fourth of July parade and picnic. Next to The Common is the Ross School. We recognize the importance of Ross School to our community. Maintaining the school’s academic excellence is a goal of everyone in Town. The Ross Post Office is an informal gathering place for the community and a place where residents can maintain their connection to the community as a whole.

The commercial downtown area has two-and three-story buildings that are home to an eclectic variety of retail stores, restaurants and professional offices. The Town encourages the community to support these businesses in order to maintain their viability and to sustain a timeless “country village” appeal to the Downtown area.

We visualize Ross in 2025 as a friendly and welcoming Town that encourages interaction and community involvement. The population is diverse and welcomes people of all races, ages, creeds and ethnic backgrounds. All members of the community treat others with friendly respect. Our amicable and considerate demeanor significantly influences the behavior of our children. There is a feeling of inclusion in the community that translates into the opportunity for everyone to participate in the civic and community life of the Town.

The Town has obtained funding to provide affordable housing for teachers, Ross Town personnel and others. Some of the affordable housing units are apartments above the retail establishments.

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The General Plan is a strategic document that identifies commitments to action and implementation goals. It is a blueprint for the adoption of ordinances and for establishing Town Council and staff work priorities.

The planning and permitting process is transparent, understandable and objective. Decisions are based on staff and design review recommendations, familiarity with the General Plan and sound judgment. Applicants for variances or use permits are assisted by staff and the Town's Advisory Design Review Committee (ADR), and are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the process for obtaining variances and permits. The process is simplified and efficient.



Appendix C

# ROSS GENERAL PLAN INDEX



**TOWN  
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