The documents in this section were provided by Friends of the Ross Firehouse (FORF) and therefore do not have a separate staff report.

PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER

REHABILITATION

January 8, 2026

BRW ARCHITECTS

F.O.R.F.

FORF CAMPUS PLAN

BY FRIENDS OF ROSS FIREHOUSE

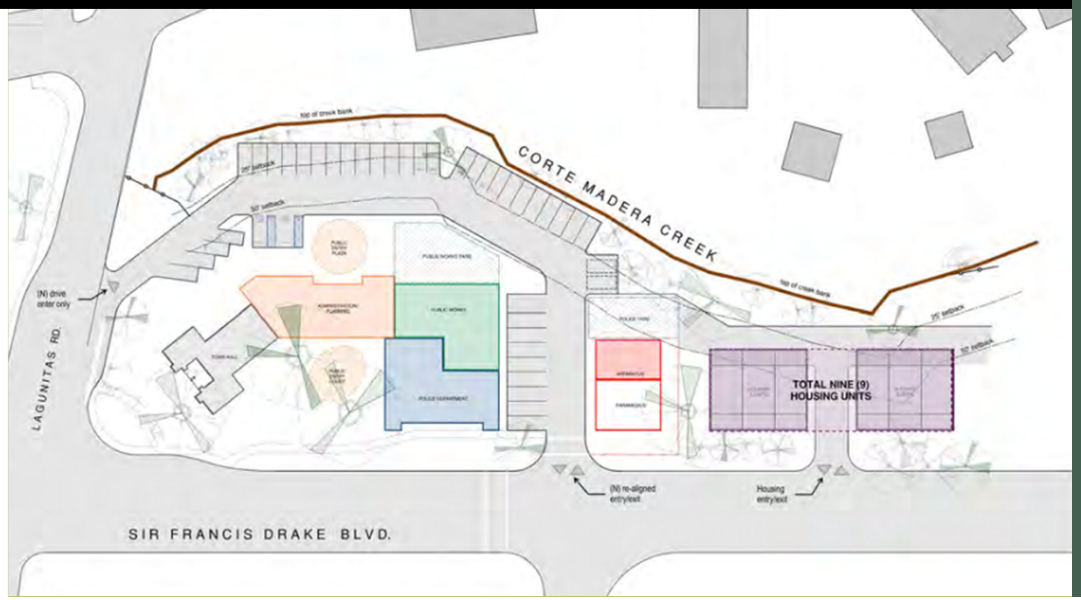
SECTOR	AREA
TOWN HALL	1970 SF
ADMIN / FINANCE / HR / PLANNING / BUILDING	1430 SF
PUBLIC WORKS	2650 SF
9 HOUSING UNITS	TBD
POLICE / PARAMEDICS / FIRE / SHARED	7,540 SF
TOTAL =	**13,590 SF**

- **Includes** a Fire Station
- **Limited** site impact
- **Expedited** Permitting process (CEQA exemption)
- **Preservation** of buildings with recognized historic value
- Limited new construction (1,890 SF)

MASTER PLAN CONCEPT B

BY TOWN OF ROSS 2023

SECTOR	AREA
TOWN HALL	1,970 SF
ADMIN / FINANCE / HR / PLANNING / BUILDING	1,430 SF
PUBLIC WORKS	2,650 SF
9 HOUSING UNITS	TBD
POLICE / PARAMEDICS	5,650 SF
TOTAL =	**11,700 SF**



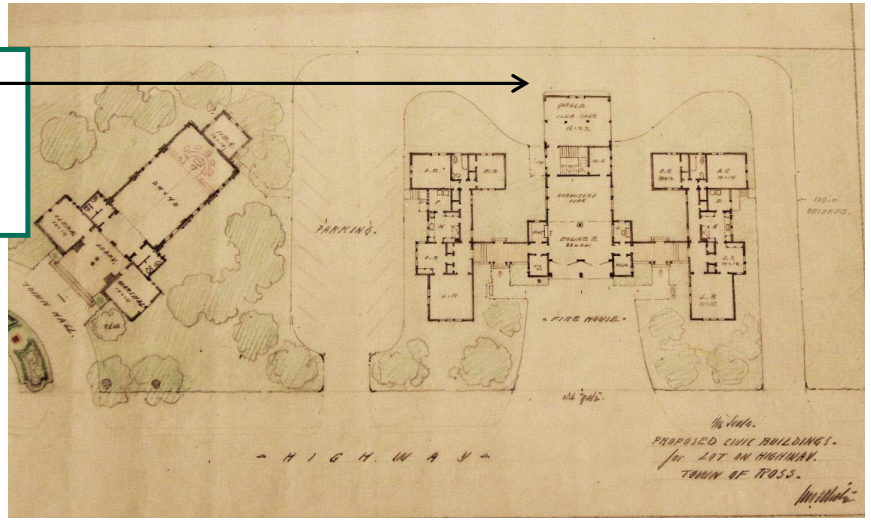
PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Ross Firehouse is a **Historic Resource** (PRC 5024.1):

- **Listed** in the California Register (CR)
- **Eligible** for National Register (NR)
- **Retain** for CEQA negative declaration
- **Avoids** EIR – $ 200,000+ / 12+ mos public review

Spanish Colonial Revival Style

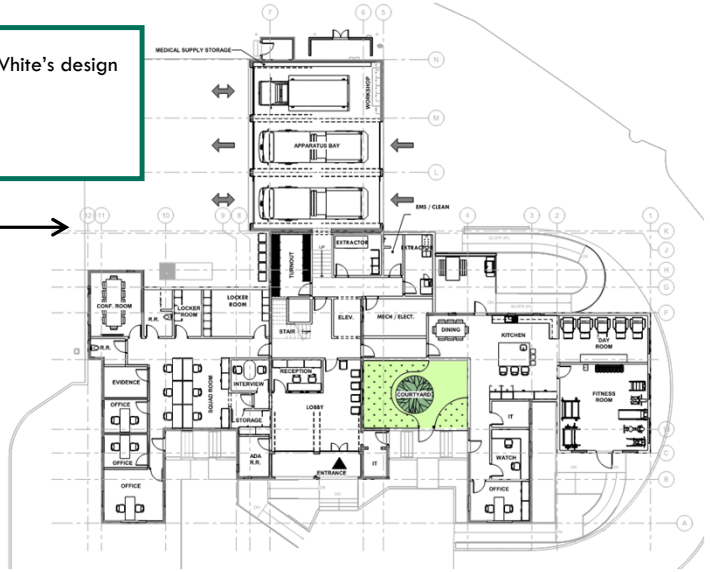
- Symmetry
- Indoor/outdoor connection
- Clear separation between sectors



1927 original site plan
Architect John White

Proposed plan reintroduces critical attributes of John White's design

- **Recreates** original breezeway
- **Maintains** symmetric massing



Proposed
Floor Plan

Public Safety Center
Retains Historic Character

ORIGINAL

CURRENT

PROPOSED

Restores original character:

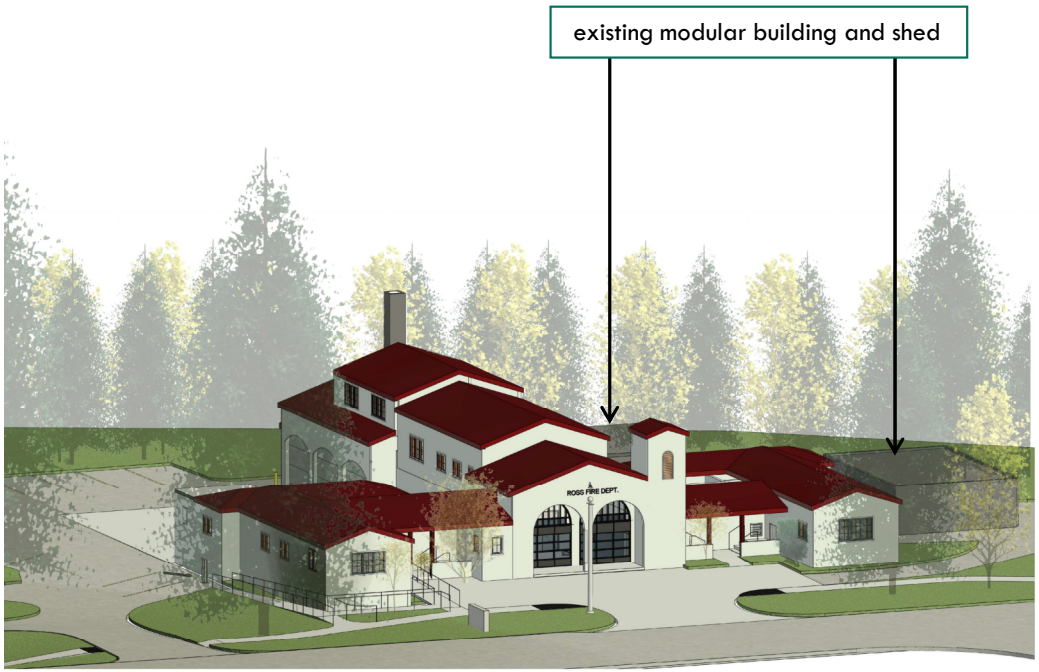
- **Recreates** the original breezeway
- **Maintains** original arch doorways

Public Safety Center

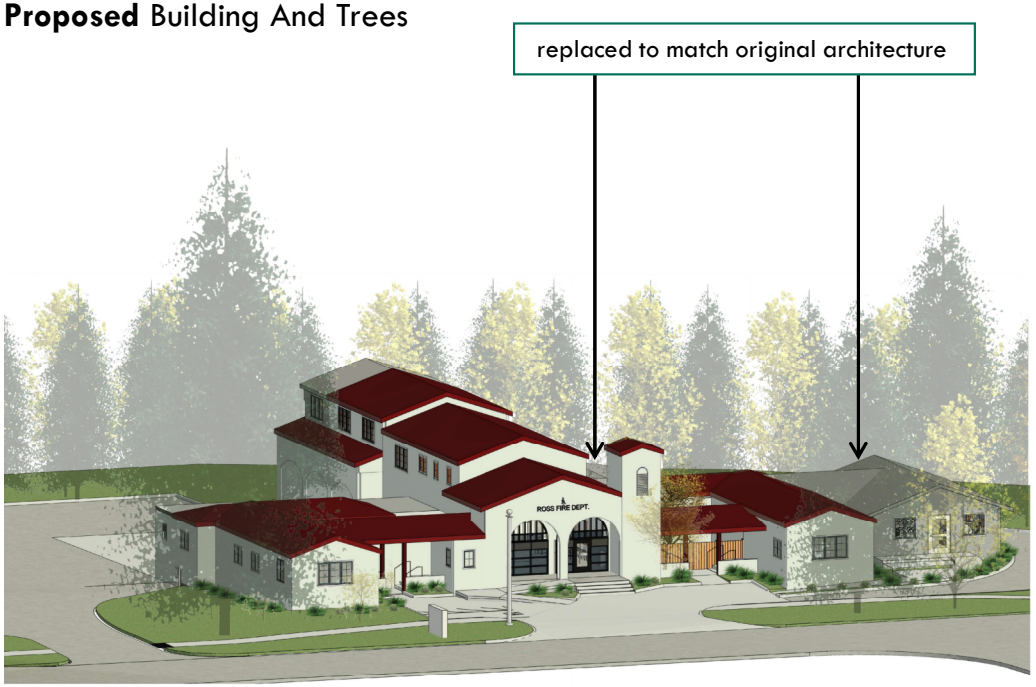
Rehabilitates Existing Building

Minimal Site Change

Existing Building And Trees



Proposed Building And Trees



Public Safety Center
Provides for Full Program

FIRE | PARAMEDICS

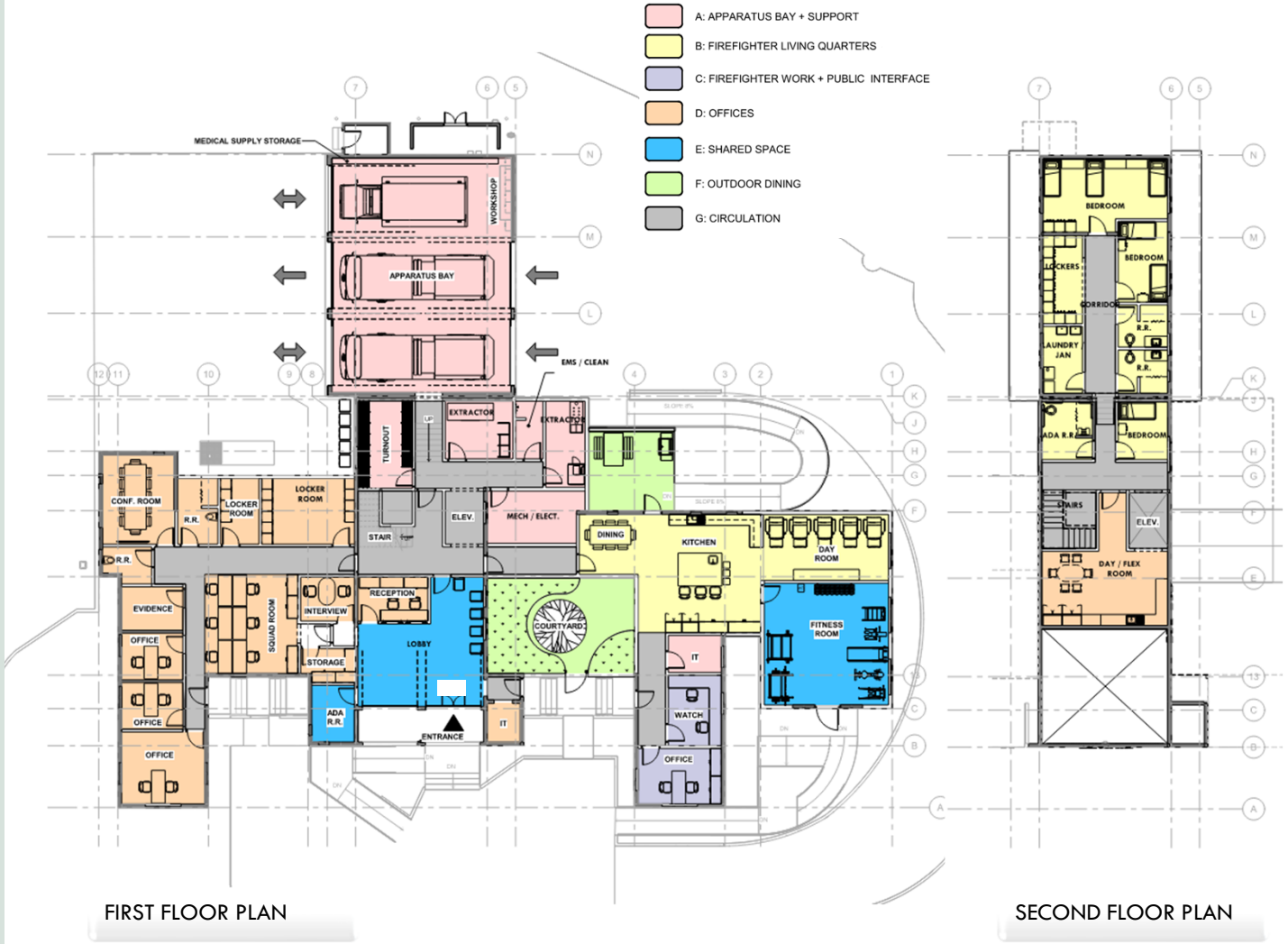
- Clear separation between offices / living / support
- Living quarters with access to outdoors
- 3 firefighters / 2 paramedic / 1 (future)

POLICE

- Operation kept at same location
- Clear separation between public and secure areas
- Increased gear storage / locker space
- Added day/flex room

SHARED

- Lobby for Police / Fire / EMS
- Fitness Room for all Civic Center staff



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Public Safety Center

Program Comparison

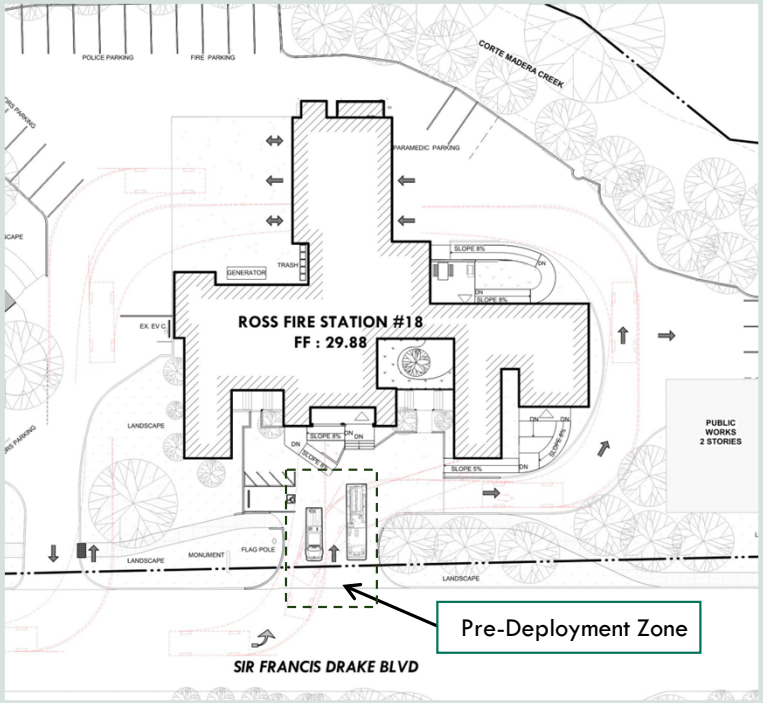
2023 Master Plan by Town of Ross	
POLICE STATION	3500 SF
Offices / C. Room	
Support	
Storage	
Utility	
PARAMEDICS	2150 SF
Apparatus Bay	
Office / Support	
Utility	

2023 Master Plan by Town of Ross	
POLICE STATION	3240 SF
Offices / C. Room	
Support	
Storage	
Utility	
PARAMEDICS / FIRE	4927 SF
Apparatus Bay	
Office / Support	
Utility	

Public Safety Center
100 Year Flood Mitigation Measures

STRATEGY 1

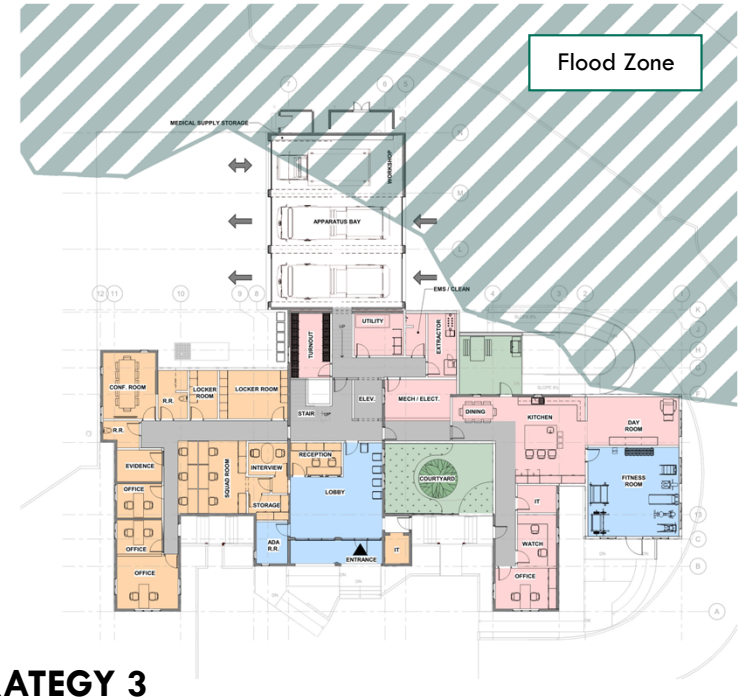
The apparatus can be **PRE-DEPLOYED** above the flood zone while still adjacent to the fire station.



STRATEGY 2

LOCATE ALL supporting functions such as communications, PPE, administration and living quarters above the flood zone.

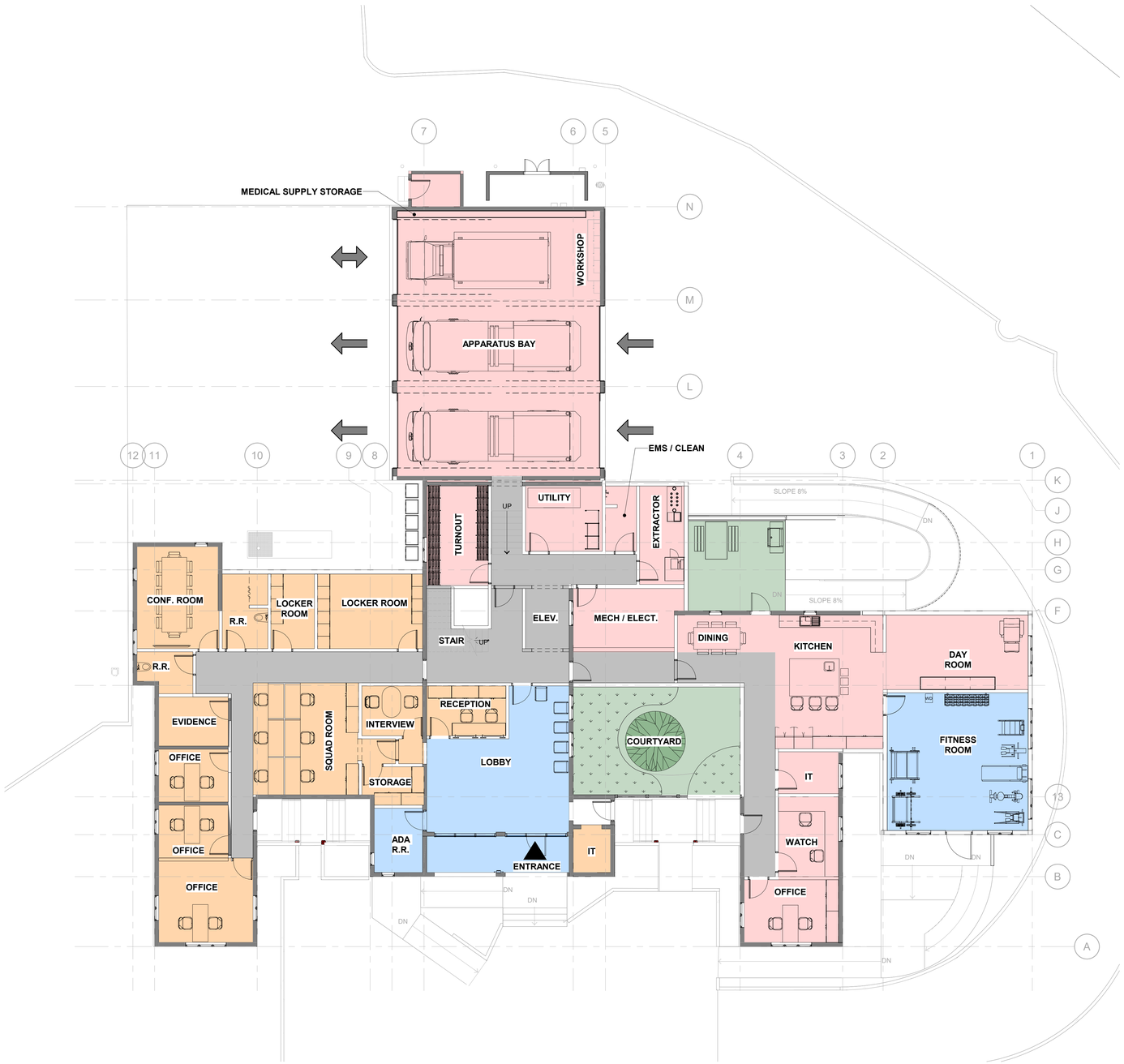
Fairfax Fire Station 11



FEMA FLOOD CONTROL STRATEGY 3

PROTECT areas in the flood zone with a barrier system to allow immediate re-occupation after the flood event has cleared.


THANK YOU
ROSS FIRE DEPT.
BRW
ARCHITECTS
F.O.R.F.

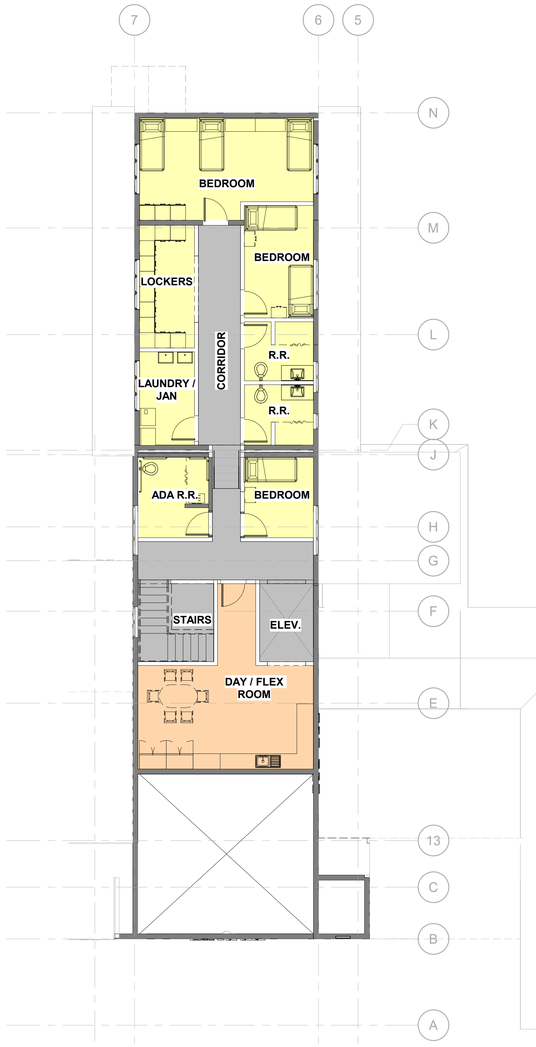


PLAN NORTH TRUE NORTH

1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

0' 4' 8' 16'



PLAN NORTH TRUE NORTH

2 SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

0' 4' 8' 16'

FLOOR PLAN LEGEND

- EXISTING WALLS
- NEW WALLS

KEY TO SPACE TYPES

- A: APPARATUS BAY + SUPPORT
- B: FIREFIGHTER LIVING QUARTERS
- C: OFFICES
- D: SHARED SPACE
- E: COURTYARD
- F: CIRCULATION

SCHEMATIC DESIGN

BRW ARCHITECTS
3535 TRAVIS STREET
SUITE 100
DALLAS, TEXAS 75204
214.528.8704
BRWARCH.COM

DATE	SEPTEMBER 19, 2025
DRAWN BY	OV
CHECKED BY	MSF / FCF
BRW PROJECT NUMBER	225062.00

ROSS FS 18
FEASIBILITY STUDY
33 SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BLVD, ROSS, CA 94957

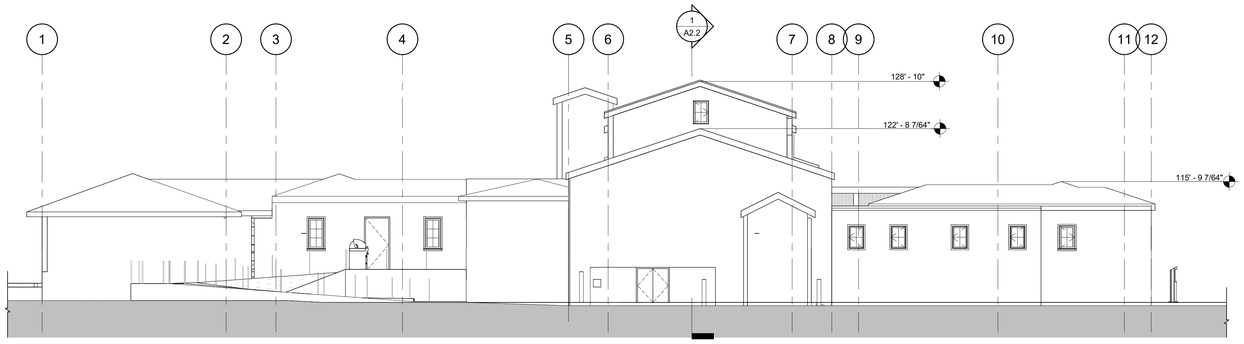
NO.	REVISION	DATE

A1.2

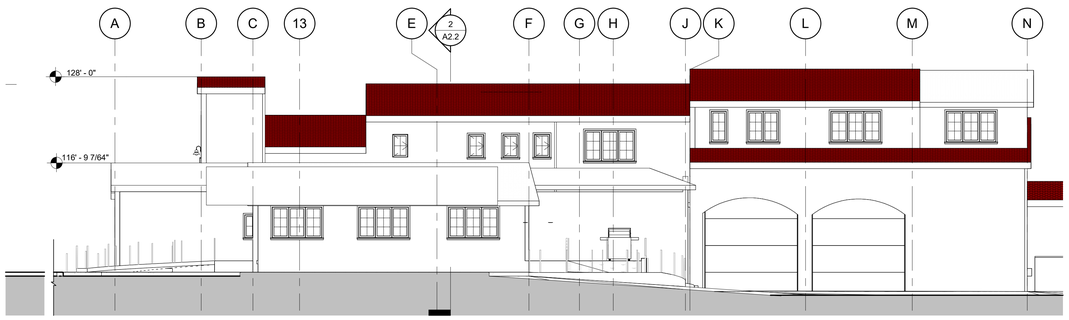
FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1 EXTERIOR ELEVATION - NORTH
1/8" = 1'-0"

2 EXTERIOR ELEVATION - EAST
1/8" = 1'-0"



3 EXTERIOR ELEVATION - SOUTH
1/8" = 1'-0"



4 EXTERIOR ELEVATION - WEST
1/8" = 1'-0"

SCHEMATIC DESIGN

BRW ARCHITECTS
3535 TRAVIS STREET
SUITE 100
DALLAS, TEXAS 75204
214.528.8704
BRWARCH.COM

DATE SEPTEMBER 19, 2025
DRAWN BY PRIMARY DRAWER, PA/PC
CHECKED BY PM/DIR, ARCH. OF RECORD
BRW PROJECT NUMBER 225062.00

ROSS FS 18
FEASIBILITY STUDY
33 SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BLVD, ROSS, CA 94957

NO.	REVISION	DATE

A2.1
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

1 3D VIEW - EXISTING

2 3D VIEW - EXISTING AND PROPOSED

SCHEMATIC DESIGN

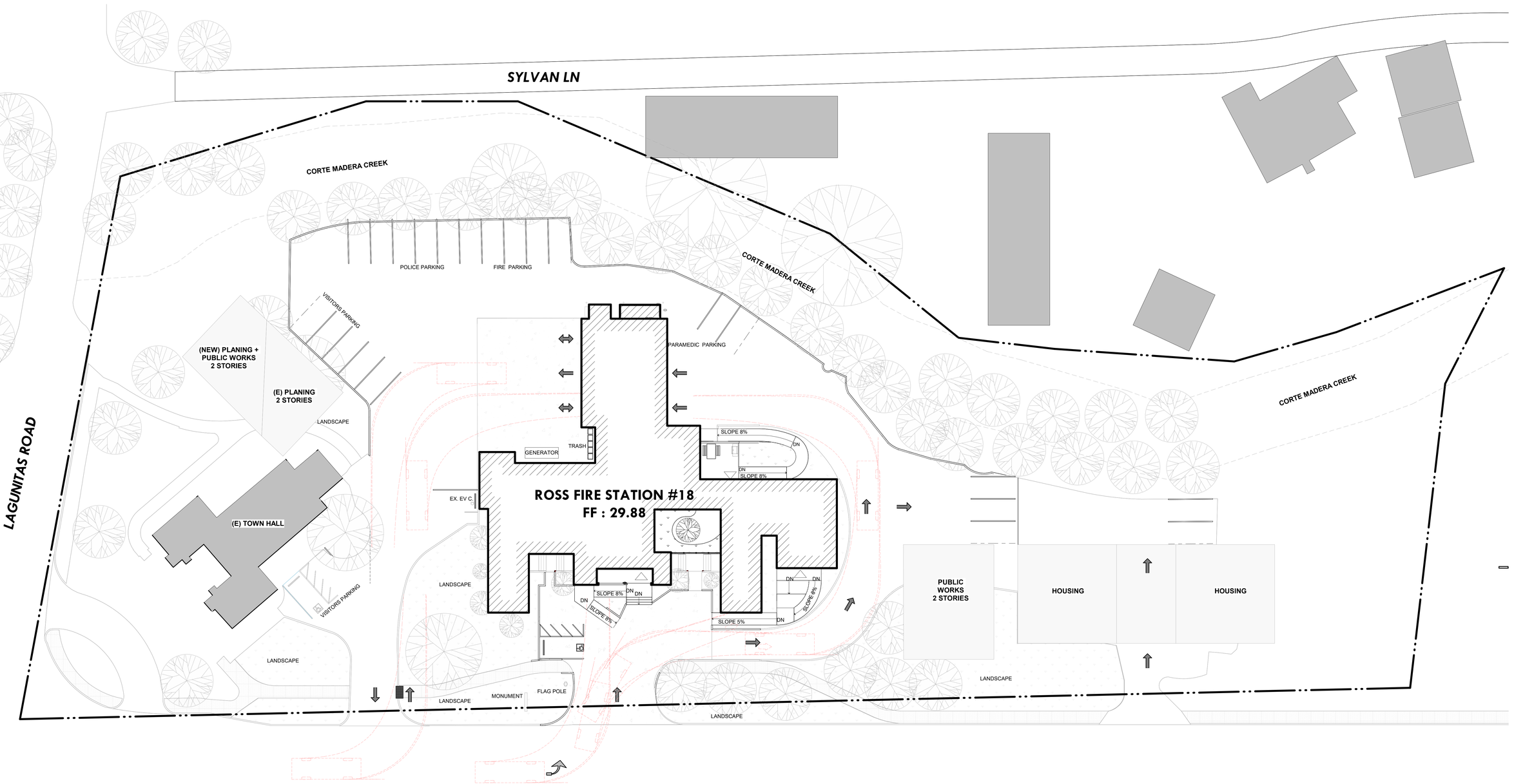
BRWARCHITECTS
3535 TRAVIS STREET
SUITE 100
DALLAS, TEXAS 75204
214-528-8704
BRWARCH.COM

DATE SEPTEMBER 19, 2025
DRAWN BY PRIMARY DRAWER, PA/PC
CHECKED BY PM/DIR, ARCH. OF RECORD
BRW PROJECT NUMBER 225062.00

ROSS FS 18
FEASIBILITY STUDY
33 SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BLVD, ROSS, CA 94957

NO.	REVISION	DATE

A9.1
3D VIEW



PLAN NORTH / TRUE NORTH

1 SITE PLAN

1/16" = 1'-0"

0' 8' 16' 32'

SITE LEGEND

PATTERN	DESCRIPTION
	PROPERTY LINE
	CONCRETE SIDEWALK PAVING
	ASPHALT ROAD PAVING
	EXISTING TREE
	NEW TREE
	ADJACENT BUILDING
	FIRE STATION / PARAMEDIC / POLICE BUILDING
	TRUNCATED DOMES
	CORTE MADERA CREEK

SCHEMATIC DESIGN

BRWARCHITECTS
3535 TRAVIS STREET
SUITE 100
DALLAS, TEXAS 75204
214.528.8704
BRWARCH.COM

DATE SEPTEMBER 19, 2025
DRAWN BY PRIMARY DRAWER, PA/PC
CHECKED BY PM/DIR. ARCH. OF RECORD
BRW PROJECT NUMBER 225062.00

ROSS FS 18 FEASIBILITY STUDY
33 SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BLVD, ROSS, CA 94957

NO.	REVISION	DATE

AS1.6
ARCHITECTURAL SITE PLAN

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING
KNSE

November 19, 2025

Friends of Ross Firehouse
P, O. Box 1363
Ross, CA 94957

Re: Existing Public Safety Building - Structural Assessment
33 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, Ross, CA 94957

Dear Friends of Ross Firehouse,

This letter has been prepared in connection with the potential rehabilitation of the existing public safety building, which includes the vacated Ross Fire Station, Police Station, and Paramedic Facilities. Our engineering team conducted a site visit and structural observation on October 17, 2025, accompanied by representatives from BRW Architects, Thompson Builders, Alten Construction, the Town of Ross Public Works Department, and Friends of Ross Firehouse.

The purpose of our visit was to observe the physical condition of the existing building and surrounding site and to perform a structural engineering assessment. Our observations encompassed the building's foundation, framing systems, roof assembly, and site conditions. As directed by the client, no destructive testing or material removal was performed; the assessment was limited to visual observation only.

Existing Concrete Stem Walls & Foundations

The existing concrete stem walls and foundations appear to be in good condition, with no observed cracks, damage, or signs of settlement. The perimeter foundation was observed through areas of missing floorboards, where no evidence of subsidence or displacement was noted. The concrete footing appeared sound, exhibiting no signs of degradation such as spalling, honeycombing, or disintegration. The wood sill plates and stud framing were intact and undamaged, and the earth moisture barrier appeared properly maintained. Overall, the foundation system is consistent with conventional construction practices, consisting of a continuous reinforced concrete perimeter footing and structural stem wall, as documented in the accompanying photographs.



STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING
KNSE

Existing Exterior and Partition Wall Framing

The existing wall studs appear to be in sound condition, with no visible cracks or signs of damage. Portions of the building envelope and partition wall framing were exposed through areas where the interior lath and plaster had been removed, allowing direct observation. The framing consists of rough-sawn lumber consistent with the original 1927 construction vintage. No evidence of warping, sagging, leaning, or displacement was observed. Overall, the walls appear plumb and flat, and both the exterior and interior wall framing systems remain intact.

Existing Building Roof Framing

The existing roof framing is in good condition, with no visible cracks or signs of structural distress. The roof framing assembly was observed through the interior closet hatch, and all framing members appeared intact, with no evidence of warping, sagging, or displacement. Additionally, there were no indications of water intrusion or staining on the roof sheathing, rafters, or ridge board. It is also worth noting that if a structure experiences foundation settlement resulting in wall deformation, such movement often manifests as roofline irregularities. In this case, no roof deformations were observed—the roofline appears straight and structurally sound.

Exterior Foundation Wall

The perimeter and interior foundation systems are assumed to consist of typical reinforced concrete stem walls supported by continuous spread footings. Visual observation of the exposed exterior portions of the foundation walls revealed no evidence of cracking, settlement, displacement, or concrete spalling. Additionally, the adjacent pavement and contiguous ground surfaces around the building exhibited no signs of settlement or movement, suggesting that the subsurface soils are stable and adequately compacted.

Existing Deteriorated Condition and Mold

The existing condition of the fire station has deteriorated over years of deferred maintenance. All building components—including interior wall finishes, flooring, ceilings, appliances, equipment, and electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems—should be removed, leaving only the intact wood framing structure.

Evidence of mold was also observed on portions of the interior plaster. Although mold is not a structural issue, it is a common condition encountered in rehabilitation projects with moist conditions and poor air ventilation. It is our understanding that remediation will be carried out by a licensed environmental hygienist or mold abatement specialist, following proper procedures in accordance with IICRC (Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification) guidelines.

Based on our experience with similar rehabilitation projects, once the wall, ceiling and floor finishes are removed, the underlying wood framing is typically in sound condition with no evidence of structural degradation. All exposed wood framing members will be examined for any signs of deterioration or decay to verify their suitability for reuse as part of the rehabilitation plan per IICRC. The condition of the Ross firehouse is typical of rehabilitation projects that we are involved with to upgrade the structural design of remaining wood framing per seismic code.




Seismic Discussion

Given our conclusion that the existing foundations are structurally sound and that the building is a suitable candidate for rehabilitation, the seismic design for the new proposed Public Safety Building will be developed in full compliance with the applicable codes and standards, including the 2025 California Building Code (CBC), ACI 318-25 (Building Code Requirements for Structural Concrete), ASCE 7-22 (Minimum Design Loads and Associated Criteria for Buildings and Other Structures), NDS 2024 (National Design Specification for Wood Construction), SDPWS 2021 (Special Design Provisions for Wind and Seismic), AISC 360-22 (Specification for Structural Steel Buildings), AISC 341-22 (Seismic Provisions for Structural Steel Buildings), and AISC 358-22 (Prequalified Connections for Special and Intermediate Steel Moment Frames for Seismic Applications).

The new structural design will incorporate the required moment frames, hardy frames, plywood sheathing, shear connectors, hold-downs, and retrofit of the existing foundation (underpinning system) to ensure compliance with seismic performance requirements and current code provisions

Proposed Fire Station Rehabilitation

KNSE has reviewed the BRW rehabilitation plans and elevations and evaluated the structural design requirements to be implemented in accordance with the California Building Code and applicable Professional Structural Engineering Standards. With nearly 30 years of experience in structural engineering design and construction management, approximately half of KNSE's design and assessment projects have involved building rehabilitation and seismic upgrade work.

The Ross Firehouse is primarily a one-story wood-framed structure with a small two-story component at the rear housing of the living quarters. The proposed rehabilitation plan includes the removal of all interior lath and plaster finishes, while retaining the existing wood framing system, which was observed to be in sound condition during our field inspection.

The new structural design will incorporate moment frames, structural sheathing, hold-downs, and shear connectors throughout the building to comply with current seismic design requirements and ensure the structure meets the latest code provisions.

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING
KNSE

1ST FLOOR PLAN

2ND FLOOR PLAN

Conclusion

Despite the public safety building's reported 1927 construction vintage, the existing foundation system and framing appear to be in generally sound condition, with no evidence of distress such as cracking, displacement, settlement, or structural failure. In our professional opinion, the building is a good candidate for rehabilitation, and the existing foundations, framing system, exterior stucco, and roof assembly can be effectively reused with reasonable structural upgrades to meet current seismic and building code requirements.

If you require any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sean Kim, P.E., S.E.
Principal
KNSE Structural Engineering

Sean S. Kim, P.E., S.E.
Principal

Mr. Kim is responsible for the structural design, coordination and construction supervision for a variety of project types, including experience in new buildings, seismic rehabilitation and earthquake safety evaluation. Mr. Kim has over 23 years of engineering experience and 5 years of construction supervisor. Areas of expertise include Concrete, Steel, Masonry, Wood and Light Gauge Design, Shoring, Glazing, & Glass Design.

Education

M.S./Civil Engineering/University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
B.S./Architectural Engineering/University of Sung Kyun Kwan, Seoul, Korea

Professional Licenses

Registered Civil Engineer, California / Registered Structural Engineer, California

Selected Project Experience

Renovation & Seismic Upgrade / Retrofit

- OCFA (Orange County Fire Authority) warehouse – 1 story reinforced masonry building, Foothill Ranch
- Alliance Health Science – Los Angeles
- Alliance Skirball Middle School – 1 story CMU /wood building, Los Angeles
- Alliance Gertz Ressler High School – 2 story CMU building, Los Angeles
- Alliance College-Ready Public Schools – 2 story wood, Los Angeles
- Oaks Christian middle school – 2 story reinforced masonry building, Westlake Village
- Animo West middle school – 2 story reinforced masonry building, Los Angeles
- UCLA apartment - 2 story wood building over partial parking, Los Angeles
- Temple Beth Chayim Chadashim - 1 story unreinforced masonry building, Los Angeles
- Harmony Historic Creamery building – 1 story concrete building, Harmony
- Marciano Art Foundation– 4 story concrete building and 1 story concrete/steel parking structure, Los Angeles
- Linda Vista apartment – 4 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- Temple Beth Hillel – 3 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- Michael Antonio mixed-use building – 4 story reinforced masonry building, Los Angeles
- Rancho La Paz apartment – 3 story wood building over parking, Downey
- Hayworth apartment – 2 story wood building over partial parking, Los Angeles
- 6336 Orange apartment – 2 story wood building over parking, Cypress
- Pershing apartment – 4 story wood building over 1 level subterranean parking, Los Angeles
- Jefferson – 1 story concrete/reinforced masonry building, Beverly Hills
- 616 New Depot Apartment – 2/3 story wood building, Los Angeles
- 621 S. Wilton Apartment – 2 story wood building, Los Angeles
- Blackmarket (2044 Sawtelle)– 1 story CMU/wood building, Los Angeles
- Bell Shopping Center– 1 story steel moment frames and reinforced masonry building, Bell
- The Aerospace Corporation - 1 story reinforced masonry building, El Segundo

Seismic Evaluation

- UCLA outpatient buildings, Los Angeles
- Aerospace company office buildings, El Segundo
- 1300 (3 story concrete) & 1308 Factory Place (5 story concrete), Los Angeles
- 505 Washington Street (11 story concrete), Boston, MA

New Construction

- Sunset & Everett Apartment (315 units)
  – 5 story wood over 4 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 3475 Torrance Apartment (106 Unit) and Medical Office Building
  – 5 story wood over 2 story concrete deck and 2,3 levels subterranean parking building, Los Angeles
- 446 Shatto Pl Apartment (60 Unit)
  – 5 story wood over 1 story concrete deck and 2 levels subterranean parking building, Los Angeles
- 2567 Hotel (69 Unit)
  – 3 story wood over 1 story concrete deck and on-grade foundation building, Redwood
- 900 & 904 W. Martin Luther King Jr – Residential Building
  – 7 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 2735 E. 6th St. Apartment
  – 2 story wood over 1 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 234 S. Margherita Ave. Apartment
  – 2 story wood building, Los Angeles
- 923 N. Manzanita St. Apartment
  – 4 story wood over 1 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 1037 S. Dewey Ave. Apartment
  – 5 story wood over 2 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 4000 W. Mont Clair St. Apartment
  – 4 story wood building, Los Angeles
- 970 N. Hoover St. Apartment
  – 4 story wood over 1 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 2735 E. 6th St. Apartment
  – 2 story wood over 1 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 6000 N Monterey Rd, Mixed-Use
  – 2 story wood over 1 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 1020 N. Bonnie Brae St Apartment
  – 2 story wood over 2 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 10912 Blix St Apartment
  – 5 story wood over 1 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- 951 S Wilton Pl. Apartment
  – 3 story wood over 1 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Clippers Training Facility
  – 2 story steel building, Playa Del Rey
- Long Beach Gateway Center
  – 1 story steel frame / CMU wall building, Long Beach
- 2300 Beverly mixed-use building & Virgil/Melrose Condominium
  – 3 story wood over 2 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- The Wing of Bel Air (50,000 sq-ft Custom House)
  – 3 story steel structure over 1 level subterranean living area, Los Angeles
- Maytime Apartment
  – 3 story wood building, Los Angeles
- Preston (5 Houses)
  – 3 story wood building, Los Angeles
- 1246 Court Apartment
  – 4 story wood over 2 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- St Andrew Apartment
  – 5 story wood over 2 story concrete building, Los Angeles
- Marriott Hotel (118 units)
  – 2/3 story wood over 1 story partial concrete building, San Diego

- Serrano mixed-use building
  – 8 story steel building over 2 levels subterranean parking, Los Angeles
- Griffin (9 Houses)
  – 2 story wood building, Los Angeles
- Pasadena office building
  – 4 story concrete building over 4 levels subterranean parking, Pasadena
- Wilshire Le Doux medical office building & Canon office building
  – 3 story concrete building over 3 levels subterranean parking, Beverly Hills
- Wilshire Robertson office building
  – 4 story steel building over 4 levels subterranean parking, Beverly Hills
- 138 Culver mixed-use building
  – 3 story wood over 1 story concrete/masonry building over 2 levels subterranean parking, Playa Del Rey
- Washington and National mixed-use building
  – 4 story wood over 1 story concrete building over 2 levels subterranean parking, Culver City
- North Hollywood Lofts multifamily building
  – 4 story wood building over 1 level subterranean parking, Los Angeles
- Croft Lofts multifamily building, Juanita Villas multifamily building, & Cloverdale multifamily building
  – 4 story wood building over 1 level subterranean parking, Los Angeles
- Culver Stoner multifamily building & Alvarado multifamily building
  – 4 story wood building over 1 level subterranean parking, Los Angeles
- High Place and Broadway multifamily building
  – 3 and 4 story wood building over 1 level subterranean parking, Santa Monica
- 612 N. Croft and Norton multifamily building
  – 4 story wood building over 1 level subterranean parking, West Hollywood
- Janet L. Witkin mixed-use building
  – 4 story wood over 1 story concrete/masonry building, West Hollywood
- Noho multifamily building
  – 4 story wood building over 1 level subterranean parking, North Hollywood
- Legado Encino multifamily building
  – 3 story wood building over 3 levels subterranean parking, Encino
- Palmdale Transit Village multifamily building
  – 4 story wood over 1 story masonry building over 1 level subterranean parking, Palmdale

BRWARCHITECTS
1620 MONTGOMERY STREET
SUITE 320
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94111
415-749-2670
BRWARCH.COM

December 15, 2025

Friends of Ross Firehouse
7 Laurel Grove Avenue
Ross, CA 94957

RE: Ross Firehouse at 33 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Ross, CA
Structural Assessment and Preliminary Design

I respectfully disagree with the letter presented to the Ross Town Council by Daniel W. Winey, FAIS, IIDA, LEED Chairman Emeritus, Gensler Architects dated 07.07.25, in which Mr. Winey concludes that the risks and costs of the complete renovation of the Ross Firehouse should be avoided. I do agree with Mr. Winey that a comprehensive examination of the facility conditions should be initiated in concert with the preliminary design. That structural review has now been done. Based on my examination of the existing conditions and the independent Structural Assessment by KNSE Structural Engineering, I am confident that the Ross Firehouse can be successfully seismically retrofit and renovated to current codes and regulations to continue to serve the Town of Ross as a public safety facility.
In coordination with the recommendations by KNSE Structural Engineering, this is to provide a description of the STRUCTURAL STRATEGIES incorporated into the BRW Preliminary Design for the seismic retrofit and rehabilitation of the Ross Firehouse.
REVIEW OF THE KNSE STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING ASSESSMENT REPORT DATED OCT. 23, 2025

A. KNSE Statements regarding the PRIMARY STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS of the original Ross Firehouse:

> Existing Concrete Stem Walls & Foundations: *The existing concrete stem walls and foundations appear to be in good condition, with no observed cracks, damage, or signs of settlement.*
>
> Existing Exterior and Partition Wall Framing: *The existing wall studs appear to be in sound condition, with no visible cracks or signs of damage.*
> Existing Building Roof Framing: *The existing roof framing is in good condition, with no visible cracks or signs of structural distress.*
> Exterior Foundation Wall: *The perimeter and interior foundation systems are assumed to consist of typical reinforced concrete stem walls supported by continuous spread footings.*

B. KNSE Statements regarding the STRUCTURAL REHABILITATION of the original Ross Firehouse:

> Seismic Discussion: *Given our conclusion that the existing foundations are structurally sound and that the building is a suitable candidate for rehabilitation, the seismic design for the new proposed Public Safety Building will be developed in full compliance with the applicable codes and standards…*

Anticipated Structural Design: *The new structural design will incorporate the required moment frames, hardy frames, plywood sheathing, shear connectors, hold-downs, and retrofit of the existing foundation (underpinning system) to ensure compliance with seismic performance requirements and current code provisions.*

STRUCTURAL DESIGN STRATEGIES ADAPTED IN THE PRELIMINARY DESIGN BY BRW

Consistent with our observations and the KNSE statements, our PRELIMINARY DESIGN has been developed using the following STRUCTURAL DESIGN STRATEGIES:

- STRATEGY 1 SELECTIVE REMOVAL: Remove poorly performing remodel insertions to restore the building perimeter back to the original exterior walls.
- STRATEGY 2 UNIFY MULTIPLE FLOOR LEVELS: Adjust the multiple floor levels to accommodate alignment of horizontal diaphragm stability and reduce the need for interior stairs.
- STRATEGY 3 MOMENT FRAME SEISMIC STRENGTHENING: Add a moment to strengthen the "soft front" of the exterior wall facing the street. The additional lateral bracing can be concealed behind the arched openings. This concealed frame solution contrasts with my recent seismic strengthening design of Southern Marin Fire Department Station 4, which added a braced frame on the street-facing side of the apparatus bay.
- STRATEGY 4 PERIMETER WALL SEISMIC STRENGTHENING: The proposed floor plan retains the original perimeter walls. This design provides for a straightforward lateral strengthening solution, achieved by installing the shear walls, hold downs, and straps at the existing perimeter walls. This perimeter wall strengthening approach contrasts with my recent seismic strengthening design of Calistoga Fire Station No. 1, which was a hybrid solution including block wall reconstruction and new interior shear walls.

In summary, the anticipated structural strengthening and seismic rehabilitation strategies planned for the Ross Firehouse rehabilitation project will be based on standard structural design and remodel construction solutions. BRW is well versed in the seismic retrofit of this building type. Should you have any questions or require further information regarding the BRW PRELIMINARY DESIGN and incorporation of the STRUCTURAL DESIGN STRATEGIES, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

F. CHRISTOPHER FORD, AIA, PRINCIPAL

FIRM HISTORY

Established in 1984, BRW Architects is a 170-person architectural and planning firm with over 41 years of experience in delivering high-performing civic projects across Northern California and beyond. We specialize in creating functional, durable, and cost-effective facilities that support public safety operations, and we're proud to have completed more than 350 municipal projects, including dozens of modernized fire station additions/ renovations.

What sets BRW apart is our proven ability to navigate complex, mission-critical environments. Our team understands the operational realities of active stations and brings deep expertise in phasing, cost control, and minimizing disruption to emergency services. Whether designing from the ground up or renovating aging facilities, we prioritize long-term value, resiliency, and crew wellness.

375+

Fire Stations

EXPERTS IN FIRE STATIONS & PUBLIC SAFETY

Our Northern California public safety experience includes urban fire station replacements and renovations, rural fire stations, emergency operations and dispatch centers, headquarter stations, and fire training complexes. The project approach and delivery method has included new facilities, seismic and life safety retrofits, interior and exterior renovations, and hybrid retrofits combined with building expansions. We have collaborated with multiple local, county, state, and federal agencies as clients. Our services have included CEQA compliance coordination, SWPPP documentation, and sensitive habitat mitigation measures.

200+

Communities Served

LOCAL PRESENCE & RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

Principal F. Christopher Ford, AIA, leads the San Francisco Studio. Mr. Ford has spent the past 25 years working in Northern California on municipal, public safety, and federal projects. The San Francisco Studio has twelve full-time staff, including three licensed architects. Our current portfolio is an equal mix of city and county municipal, public safety, and federal (USPS) projects.

100+

Fire Station Awards

F. CHRISTOPHER FORD

AIA

PRINCIPAL-IN-CHARGE

BRW Architects

40 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE | WITH FIRM SINCE 2010

Mr. Ford's experience has included all phases of professional services in architecture, specializing in municipal buildings, fire stations, public safety facilities, office structures, and universities. Mr. Ford's project management specialties include programming, cost estimation, construction contract administration, and field inspection.

FOCUS ON PUBLIC SAFETY

In addition to the recently completed project list, Mr. Ford's 40 years of service in the public safety design and project management sector includes more than sixty municipalities and over one hundred twenty public safety projects, including facility assessments, feasibility studies, bond campaigns, design guidelines, and peer review.

EDUCATION & REGISTRATIONS

State of California Registered Architect: C17552
California Polytechnic State University, Bachelor of Architecture

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS

New Public Safety Facilities

- Marin County Fire Department Throckmorton Ridge Fire Station (Mill Valley, CA)
- Pajaro Valley Fire District Headquarters (Santa Cruz County, CA)
- Patterson Fire Station 2 and Training Facility (Patterson, CA)
- Sacramento Fire Station 14 (Sacramento, CA)
- Salida Fire Protection District Station 2 (Salida, CA)
- Alameda Fire Station 3 (Alameda, CA)
- Alameda Emergency Operations Center (Alameda, CA)
- Ceres Fire Station 4 (Ceres, CA)
- Scotts Valley Fire Station 2 (Scotts Valley, CA)

Fire Station Renovations

- Calistoga Fire Station 1 (Calistoga, CA)
- Marin County Point Reyes Fire Station 4 (Point Reyes Station, CA)
- Southern Marin Fire District Fire Station 9 (Mill Valley, CA)
- Southern Marin Fire District Fire Station 4 (Mill Valley, CA)

MARIANA SEBBEN FLEISCHMANN

LEED GA

PROJECT MANAGER

BRW Architects

15 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE | WITH FIRM SINCE 2024

As Project Manager, Mariana will coordinate all stages of the project, from preliminary design to CA. Her responsibilities include oversight of the project team and balancing the challenges of budget, programming, accreditation requirements, and design details to ensure a successful project.

OLEKSANDR VINOKUROV

PROJECT DESIGNER

BRW Architects

10 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE | WITH FIRM SINCE 2023

As Project Designer, Oleksandr will be responsible for satisfying your goals and vision including creative solutions for design concepts, programmatic needs, and budgetary requirements.

BRW PUBLIC SAFETY PROJECTS NOW IN DESIGN OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- Tejon Public Safety Fire Station and Sheriff Substation (Kern County, CA)
- Alameda County Fire Dept. Fire Station 7 (Castro Valley, CA)
- Alameda County Fire Dept. Fire Station 25 (Castro Valley, CA)
- Palo Alto Fire Station 4 (Palo Alto, CA)
- San Leandro Fire Stations 9, 12, and 13 (San Leandro, CA)
- Stinson Beach Fire Station 1 (Stinson Beach, CA)
- Marin County Hicks Valley Fire Station (Hicks Valley, CA)
- Hart Flat Fire Station (Kern County, CA)

December 4, 2025

Ed Dong

RE: Ross Fire Station

Ed

As discussed, we have reviewed the concept drawings and information provided by BRW Architects as well as the study provided by KNSE Structural Engineers. Based on our site visit and interpretation of this information we are providing a Rough Order of Magnitude cost for the work outlined within the above-mentioned documents.

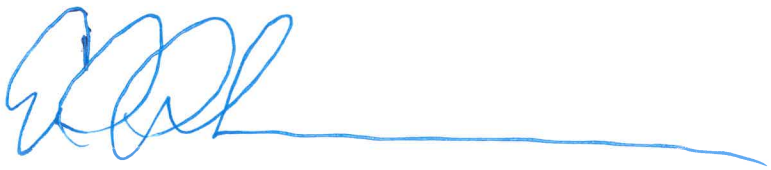
					Union Pricing	
General Conditions	14	Mos	$ 85,813	$ 1,201,382		
Site Construction	22,402	SF	$ 41	$ 918,482	Demo, grading, utilities, hardscapes, landscape, parking	
Power upgrade +600A	1	Ea	$ 180,000	$ 180,000	Comp pricing for Stinson Beach Fire Station	
Demo/Abatement	7,490	SF	$ 66	$ 494,340	Includes new elevator	
Seismic Retrofit	6,906	SF	$ 185	$ 1,277,610		
Remodel	6,906	SF	$ 443	$ 2,924,358		
Addition	3,199	SF	$ 813	$ 2,600,787		
Generator	1	Ea	$ 300,000	$ 300,000	Comp pricing for Stinson Beach Fire Station	
Fee/Bonds/Insurance	1		7.25%	$ 737,612		
Contingency	1		10%	$ 1,017,396		
				$ 11,651,967		

EV Charging	2	Ea	$ 16,000	$ 32,000	
Vehicle Exhaust System	1	Ea	$ 110,000	$ 110,000	
37Kw Solar PV System	1	Ea	$ 135,000	$ 135,000	
				$ 277,000	
				$ 11,928,967	

1141 Marina Way South, Richmond, CA 94804 510-234-4200 Fax: 510-234-4402

While the ROM is based on concept design, it is important to understand our pricing approach to this high-level pricing exercise. The rough costs provided were established using relevant historical data from recent projects we have built or estimated for comparable size buildings or fire stations in the Bay Area. While all buildings have distinct items and features that differentiate cost, this method is an effective way to determine a rough cost for the project.

Sincerely,



Erik Andresen
Chief Estimator

1141 Marina Way South, Richmond, CA 94804 510-234-4200 Fax: 510-234-4402

FIRE STATION & ESSENTIAL SERVICES PROJECTS - 24 TOTAL SINCE 1996

Project	$ Amount	City	Year	SF	Type
Fire Station No. 70 with Training Center with LCA	$10.8M	San Pablo	2021	14,135	New
San Rafael Public Safety Center & Fire Station No. 51	$35.4M	San Rafael	2020	65,647	New
San Francisco Fire Station No. 5	$16.2M	San Francisco	2019	21,193	New
San Rafael Fire Station No. 57 San Rafael Fire Station No. 52 with Training Tower & Classroom Building	$21.1M	San Rafael	2019	9,855 10,973	New
Alameda Fire Station No. 3 Alameda Emergency Operations Center	$8.4M	Alameda	2016	3,360 8,950	New
San Leandro Senior Center (Essential Services Building)	$11.4M	San Leandro	2010	21,400	New
Sausalito Fire Station Sausalito Police Station	$10.3M	Sausalito	2010	11,000 9,000	New
Berkeley Hills Fire Station	$3.8M	Berkeley	2006	7,000	New
Hamilton Fire Station No. 5	$1.8M	Novato	2004	15,000	New
Stinson Beach Fire Station No. 2	$200K	Stinson Beach	2002	--	Modernized
Southern Marin Public Safety Building	$2.2M	Marin City	2000	4,000	New
Corte Madera Fire Station No. 13	$750K	Corte Madera	1999	--	Modernized
Oakland Fire Stations 10, 12, 17 & 23	$1.3M	Oakland	1999	--	Modernized
Stinson Beach Fire Station No. 1	$44.8K	Stinson Beach	1998	--	Modernized
Albany City Hall & Police Station	$195K	Albany	1997	--	Modernized
Ignacio Fire Station No. 4	$25K	Novato	1996	--	Modernized
BART Police Communication Center Facility	$157K	Oakland	1996	--	Modernized

REPORT

FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING FEASIBILITY STUDY

Friends of Ross Firehouse

PREPARED FOR

Bob Herbst, President
Friends of Ross FIrehouse
PO Box 1363
Ross, CA 94957

Report #: 1MSN25002000
Date: December 15, 2025

PREPARED BY

Mike Stanley, M.Ed., CFO, FM, FESA
4445 Northpark Drive, Suite 204
Colorado Springs, CO 80907, USA

mike.stanley@jensenhughes.com
+1-719-257-2721

JENSEN HUGHES

Revision Record Summary

Date	*Revision*	*Revision Summary*
December 5, 2025	Rev0_DRAFT	Draft Submitted to Client for Review
December 12, 2025	Rev1_Final	Submitted to Client
December 15, 2025	Rev2_Final	Jensen Hughes Profiles Added
December 28, 2025	Rev3_Final	Appendix A added

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Friends of Ross is evaluating options to restore a fully staffed firehouse with seventeen (17) firefighting personnel, following the 2025 closure of Fire Station 18 under the current Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD). The closure has resulted in significantly increased emergency response times and a projected drop in response reliability from 96% to 0%, leaving Ross without an in-town engine company for the first time in nearly a century. This report identifies viable pathways for reinstating local fire protection, outlines funding strategies, and recommends a phased implementation plan to achieve sustainable staffing.

Multiple service-delivery options were assessed, including restoring staffing under the existing RVFD structure or contracting with another nearby department, such as Kentfield, Central Marin, or Marin County Fire, using the Town's current RVFD contribution to fund a new agreement. The study also evaluated the potential use of Federal Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants, which can provide multi-year salary and benefit support for fire department personnel, as well as philanthropic strategies such as establishing a public safety endowment. Three-person engine staffing was identified as the optimal model for Ross based on safety, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with regional practice.

The recommended approach is to pursue a phased implementation plan:

- Select the preferred service model and negotiate operational terms
- Preserve and prepare fire-station space within the Civic Center redevelopment
- Implement a diversified funding strategy that incorporates tax-based revenues, JPA restructuring, federal grants, and community contributions
- Transition personnel and apparatus into a restored Fire Station 18.

This structured plan ensures that staffing restoration is financially viable, operationally efficient, and aligned with the community's long-term interests.

Reestablishing a staffed firehouse in Ross will require coordinated leadership, transparent public engagement, and strategic financial planning. By following this implementation strategy, the Town can restore rapid emergency response within its boundaries, improve public safety outcomes, and secure a resilient fire service model for decades to come.

1.0 Town of Ross

The Town of Ross is a small, incorporated residential community located in Marin County, California, approximately 18 miles north of San Francisco. Covering an area of about 1.6 square miles, Ross is bordered by Kentfield to the east, San Anselmo to the north, and the Mount Tamalpais watershed to the west. The town is characterized by its tree-lined streets, low-density residential zoning, and proximity to open space and natural landscapes.

Founded in the late 19th century and incorporated in 1908, Ross retains a distinct small-town character, with a population of approximately 2,300 residents. The community is primarily residential, with limited commercial development concentrated near the town center. Single-family homes dominate the land use, many situated on large, landscaped parcels. Strict zoning and design review standards are in place to preserve the town's rural aesthetic and environmental quality.

Figure 1 Ross Business District

The town's infrastructure includes a municipal government with a council-manager structure, a well-maintained local road network, and stormwater systems designed to address seasonal flows from nearby creeks such as Corte Madera Creek. Given its location in a high wildland–urban interface area, Ross places a strong emphasis on vegetation management and emergency preparedness for wildfire and flood risks.

Figure 2 Town Hall Sign

In summary, the Town of Ross is a low-density, high-amenity residential community that prioritizes environmental preservation, safety, and community character through careful land-use planning and local governance.

Figure 3 displays the boundaries of the Town of Ross.

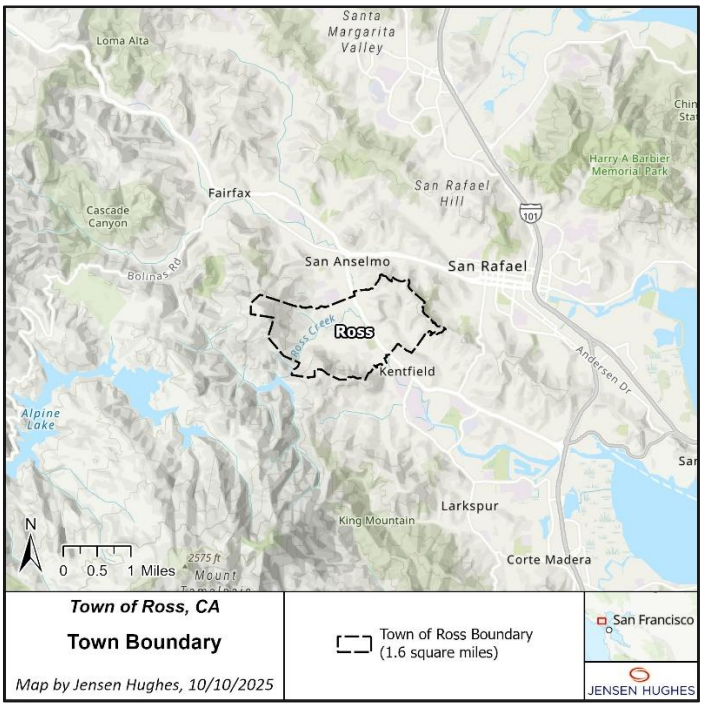


Figure 3 Town of Ross Boundary Map

2.0 *Friends of Ross Firehouse*

The Town of Ross has a long tradition of providing local firefighting and emergency medical services. However, with the increasing regionalization of fire protection, concerns have grown regarding response times, community identity, and long-term service sustainability. The Friends of Ross Firehouse, a 501 (c) (4) organization, functions as a community stakeholder in a Ross Firehouse preservation and redevelopment initiative. Comprised of residents, heritage advocates, and civic volunteers, the group aims to serve as an organized liaison between the Town of Ross and the broader community. Its involvement strives to ensure that public interests and community priorities are formally considered and integrated into project planning, design, and implementation.

Figure 4 Friends of Ross Firehouse Logo

The group hopes to safeguard the historic and architectural significance of the Ross Firehouse. It provides informed feedback on preservation strategies, engages with heritage consultants and regulatory bodies, and supports the alignment of project objectives with established conservation standards. Furthermore, the group facilitates structured communication with the community through public meetings, stakeholder briefings, and educational outreach initiatives. These activities will promote transparency, foster public trust, and encourage sustained community participation throughout the project lifecycle.

In addition to its advocacy and communication functions, the Friends of Ross Firehouse Group contributes to resource development through fundraising efforts. Its active participation enhances the project's capacity to secure external funding and technical support. The group's engagement is therefore integral to ensuring that the redevelopment process upholds both regulatory requirements and

community values. The Friends of Ross Firehouse are committed to restoring a staffed fire station in the Town of Ross and preserving the town's historic Civic Center fire station.

3.0 Project Overview

Jensen Hughes was engaged by the Friends of Ross Firehouse to conduct a feasibility study on fire department staffing and define the staffing, operational, and organizational requirements necessary to successfully re-establish firefighting services in Ross. This study provides a comprehensive, data-driven analysis of optimal staffing levels and deployment models to ensure rapid response times, tailored to meet the community's unique needs. It analyzes industry trends, local and regional practices, and national standards to deliver actionable recommendations to enhance service delivery to the community, improve response times, and ensure long-term sustainability.

The study assesses the feasibility of staffing a Ross-based fire engine, ensuring response times of eight minutes or less, while providing sustainable and high-quality service. It also identifies viable staffing models, associated costs, and funding strategies.

3.1 FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING FEASIBILITY STUDIES

Fire Department Staffing Feasibility Studies are structured evaluations designed to assess whether a fire agency's current and future staffing levels are adequate to meet operational demands, safety standards, and community service expectations. These studies are commonly conducted by municipalities, special districts, or regional fire agencies to support strategic planning, budgeting, and policy decisions.

The core objectives of a staffing feasibility study typically include:

- **Operational Effectiveness:** Evaluating how existing staffing levels affect emergency response times, incident outcomes, and compliance with standards such as NFPA 1710 (for career departments) or NFPA 1720 (for volunteer/combination departments).
- **Service Demand Analysis:** Reviewing call volumes, incident types, temporal demand patterns, and geographic distribution to determine the appropriate number of personnel needed per shift and per station.
- **Workload and Capacity:** Analyzing firefighter workload, availability for concurrent incidents, and coverage reliability during peak demand periods.
- **Risk and Hazard Assessment:** Considering factors such as wildland–urban interface exposure, critical infrastructure, and population density to align staffing levels with community risk profiles.
- **Organizational Structure:** Assessing the balance between line personnel, support staff, and supervisory positions to ensure efficient operations.
- **Fiscal Impact:** Estimating the costs and funding implications of various staffing models, including full-time, part-time, volunteer, or shared services.

A typical study involves data collection (e.g., dispatch records, turnout times, mutual aid usage), stakeholder interviews, standards benchmarking, and modeling of alternative staffing scenarios. Recommendations often include phased staffing increases, resource redeployment, or collaborative solutions such as regional partnerships.

Fire Department Staffing Feasibility Studies provide evidence-based guidance for aligning personnel resources with service delivery goals. They help decision-makers ensure that fire protection and emergency medical services remain effective, sustainable, and responsive to community needs.

3.2 RESPONSE TIME MODELING

The Fire Station drive time analysis was calculated using ESRI ArcGIS Network Analyst software. Weather, terrain, road networks, population density, and traffic congestion impact response time speeds. An industry standard RAND Corporation study indicates that a fire engine response to an incident averages 35 mph over average terrain, with average traffic and weather conditions, and slowing for intersections. This provided the basis for using a speed of 35 mph for all drive time calculations in the analysis. This differs from results provided by Google Maps and other driving programs, because they base their speeds on road speed limits or traffic patterns. However, fire engines do not typically adhere to these requirements.

3.3 CLEAR REPRESENTATION

Jensen Hughes had the opportunity to meet with several Fire Chiefs within Marin County while gathering information for this study. Each meeting was prefaced with the clarification that Jensen Hughes was engaged by the Friends of Ross Firehouse (FORF) and not by the Town of Ross. It was made clear that Jensen Hughes in no way represented the Town of Ross, the Ross Town Council, or the Ross Town Manager. It was also clearly stated that Jensen Hughes had no authority to negotiate for the provision of emergency services to the Town of Ross with any entity, organization, or individual.

4.0 Fire Protection in Ross

4.1 ROSS FIRE STATION

The Town of Ross Fire Station is located at 33 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Ross, California 94957. It was previously renamed the Ross Public Safety Building in 1982 after the consolidation of the Police and Fire departments. The Ross Police Department is co-located at this facility in the South wing of the building. The Public Safety Building is centrally located on the 2.33-acre Ross Civic Center campus, with the Ross Town Hall and the Corporation Yard neighboring the Fire Station.

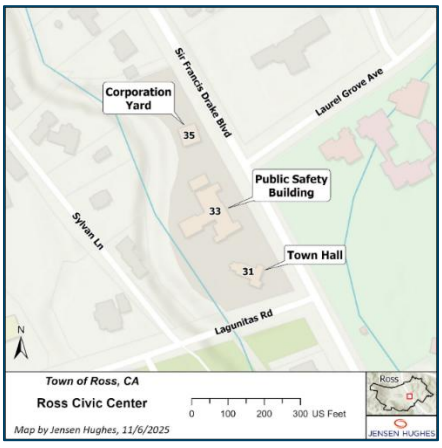


Figure 5 Campus Map of Ross Civic Center

The construction of the Spanish Colonial Revival-style fire station began in 1927, and the station was completed in 1928. With the increasing size of fire apparatus, it became necessary to add additional garage bays at the rear of the fire station in 1995. The apparatus bays at the front of the historic station now house fitness equipment that the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) crew can utilize to maintain physical condition. The larger apparatus bay, located at the rear of the station, houses the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority ambulance, which provides EMS to the community.

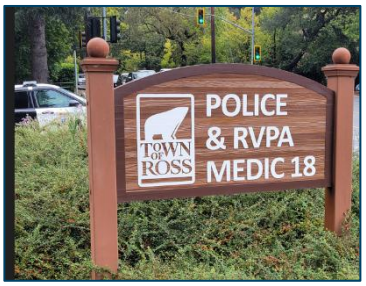


Figure 6 Police and EMS Location

The second story of the firehouse houses the residential quarters for the EMS crew. Remodeled circa 1995, the second floor features sleeping areas, an office, and a common lounge room. Until 2006, firefighting crews were also housed in this location.

The North wing of the firehouse had not been maintained over the years and potentially posed environmental hazards to employees. A double-wide prefabricated temporary structure was installed adjacent to the North wing of the station and connected to an entry door via a metal walkway and staircase. Firefighting crews utilized this structure as crew quarters until 2025, when the Ross Valley Fire Department employees discontinued staffing the station.




Figure 7 West, North, and East Sides of Firehouse

4.2 TOWN OF ROSS REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

In June of 2023, the Town of Ross released a Facilities Master Plan for the redevelopment of the Ross Civic Center campus. The plan calls for the demolition of the existing Ross Public Safety Building. New construction would include new facilities for the Ross Police Department and Ross Valley Paramedic Authorities. The facilities master plan does not include a fire station at the Ross Civic Center campus. The new Facility Master Plan has sparked several points of contention within the community. Questions have arisen around the cost per square foot of the redevelopment, the destruction of historic buildings, and the lack of planning for a future fire station.

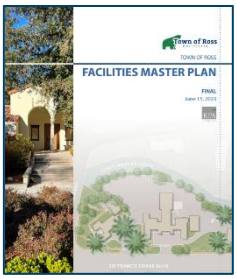


Figure 8 Town of Ross Facilities Master Plan

Jensen Hughes was not engaged to address these specific concerns. It is the understanding of Jensen Hughes that the Friends of Ross Firehouse has engaged the services of another consultant to evaluate the feasibility and cost of remodeling the existing station. Jensen Hughes will solely address the issue of staffing a firehouse with the Town of Ross.

However, one caveat will be offered. During the site visit, a distinct lack of undeveloped properties within the town limits of Ross was observed. If space for a future fire station is not identified on the Ross Civic Center campus, it will likely eliminate any potential for the Town of Ross to have a fire station again. Should the need or desire for a fire station in the Town of Ross arise, property would have to be acquired at what would likely be an exorbitantly expensive rate. While the Town of Ross may view the current arrangement for fire protection as

satisfactory, that may not always be the case. This decision may potentially eliminate the possibility of future leaders adapting services to meet the evolving needs of the community. Even if the complete construction of a fire station at the Civic Center is not realized at this time, it would be prudent to identify and conserve space for a future fire station on the parcel.

4.3 HISTORY OF THE ROSS FIRE DEPARTMENT

Upon incorporation in 1908, the Town of Ross appointed its first Fire Chief, who supervised an all-volunteer department. The original station was located on the corner of Shady Lane and Lagunitas Road, housing a Seagrave chemical and hose engine. The volunteer department remained in service until it disbanded in 1924.

In 1927, the residents of Ross approved a bond to construct a new fire station at its current location and to purchase a new fire engine. This also marked the transition of the Ross Fire Department to having two full-time firefighters who served as the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief. This created a hybrid staffing model of career and volunteer firefighters. Upon moving into the new station on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, the department was centrally located and ideally positioned to reach every portion of the town within a short time. This remains the case today. The location at the Ross Civic Center optimally positions response units to be able to respond to the majority of the properties in the Town of Ross in three (3) minutes or less.

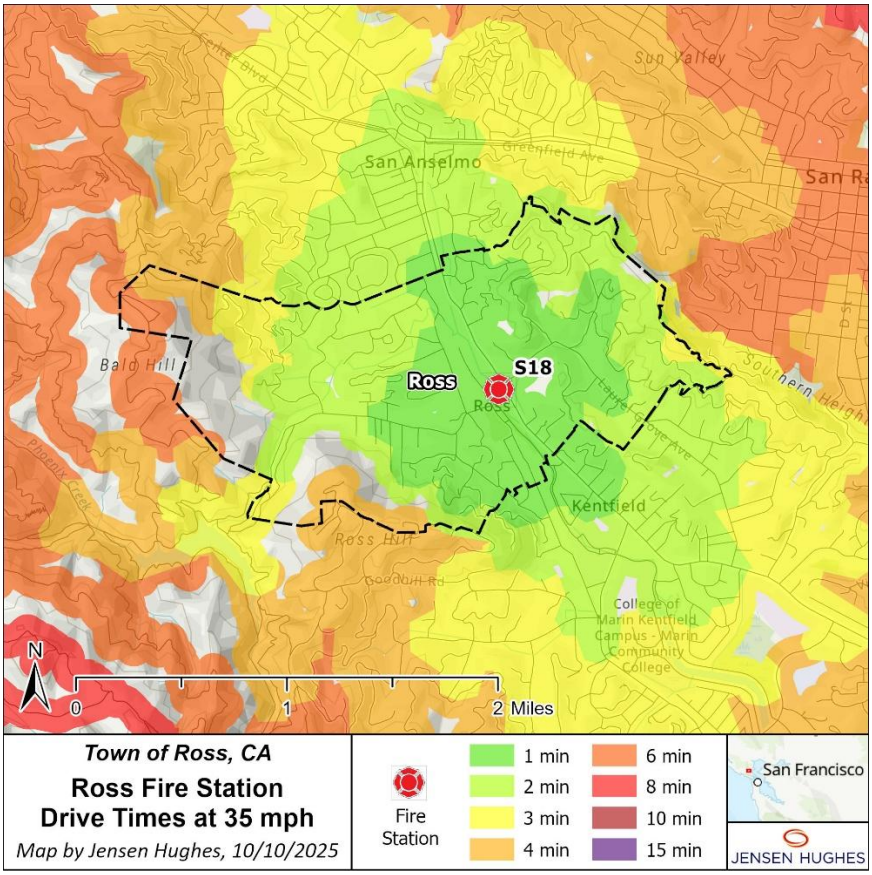


Figure 9 Drive Times from Fire Station 18 to Ross

This staffing model persisted for decades until 1981, when the department hired two (2) Captains to assist the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief. In 1982, the Ross Police Department and the Ross Fire Department merged to form a joint agency. This brought about the name change from the Ross Firehouse to the Ross Public Safety Center. The fire department continued to be staffed by three (3) full-time Captains, paid reserves, and a small number of volunteers until 1998, when the reserve firefighter positions were converted into full-time paid positions. In the years following 1998, the department employed a full-time firefighting staff that provided fire protection to the Town of Ross and that operated autonomously from other fire departments.

In 2012, the Town of Ross entered into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the Ross Valley Fire Department. By entering into this agreement, the Town of Ross Fire Department employees transitioned to employees of the Ross Valley Fire Department. The agreement also ceded control and use of the Town of Ross Fire Department's firefighting equipment and apparatus to the Ross Valley Fire Department. The Town of Ross would be represented by two members on the Board of Directors for the Authority, who are appointed by the Town Council.

The JPA also delineated that the Ross Firehouse "will be routinely open, fully staffed and equipped for 24-hour continuous operation by not less than two (2) full-time sworn trained firefighters." In return, the Town of Ross agreed to "fairly and equitably" share the costs of operating the Ross Valley Fire Department by paying an agreed-upon annual amount of 23.37% of the operating expenses. This arrangement existed until 2025.

On January 1, 2022, a third amendment to the JPA was issued. This amendment provided for the closure of the Ross Fire Station and the "allocation of the Authority's resources, savings, and costs attributable to the Ross Fire Station closure." The intent of this amendment allowed for the closing of Ross Valley Fire Department Station Number 18, with staff being redistributed and assigned to the other three (3) Ross Valley Fire Department Stations.

As of July 1, 2025, the Ross Firehouse has not been staffed with firefighting personnel or a fire apparatus. This resulted in the Town of Ross not having firefighters on duty within its town limits for the first time in nearly a century.

5.0 Ross Valley Fire Department

5.1 ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) operates as a multi-jurisdictional fire protection and emergency response agency serving the Towns of Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, and the unincorporated community of Sleepy Hollow. The department operates under a joint powers agreement (JPA) that standardizes governance, budget administration, and operational policies across the service area. This structure supports unified command, consistent service delivery, and streamlined coordination with countywide and state agencies during multi-operational-period incidents.

With the closing of Fire Station 18 in Ross, the RVFD now operates from three (3) fire stations. Fire Station 19 is in San Anselmo and is co-located with the department's administrative offices. Fire Station 20 is in Sleepy Hollow. Fairfax is protected by Fire Station 21. Of the four members of the JPA, Ross is the only town that does not have a fire station within its borders.

5.1.1 Incident Responses

RVFD reported that they responded to 3,257 incidents in 2024. As an all-hazards department, RVFD responds to a wide range of incidents, including medical emergencies, fires, motor vehicle accidents, and hazardous material incidents. The most prominent call type for the department is providing emergency medical services (EMS). This is not uncommon. For most fire departments across the nation, the highest demand for services is EMS. The department is also supported in its EMS responses through its agreement with the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority (RVPA), which will be discussed in a subsequent section of this document.

When analyzing the incident responses from 2022 to May 31, 2025, the percentage of RVFD's incidents that occurred in the Town of Ross averaged 6.8% of the overall volume. While a trend line would show a slight incline, the deviation from year to year is not extreme. The demand for services for the Town of Ross is relatively low. In fact, when comparing the percentage of the population to the call volume that Ross generates, the incident volume is a lower percentage than the population. Figure 10 demonstrates a historical view of the percentage of incidents that RVFD responded to in the Town of Ross versus the percentage of incidents that occurred outside of Ross.

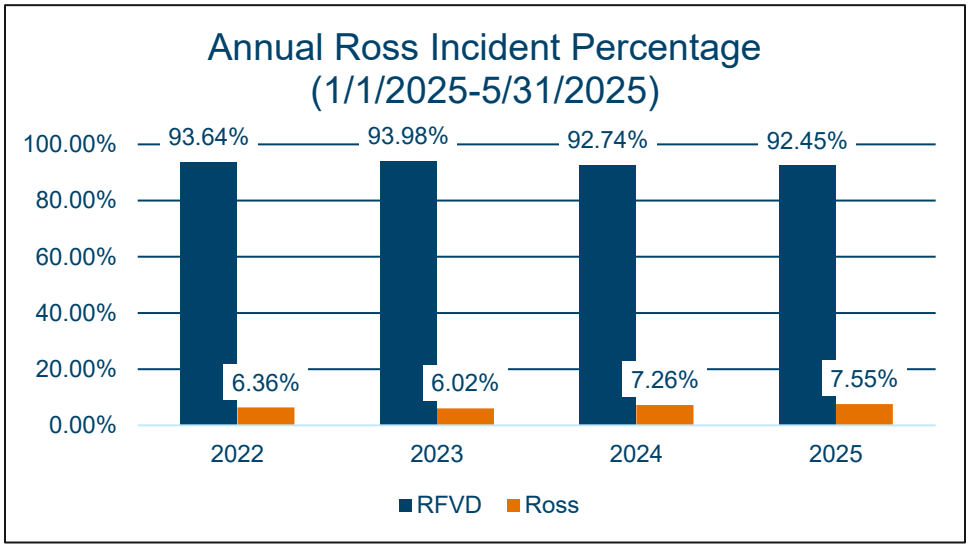


Figure 10 Percentage of Incidents in Ross

In Figure 11, the number of incidents that have occurred in Ross from 2022 to October 1, 2025, is illustrated. From 2022 to 2024, the fire department responded to an average of two hundred and twenty-four (224) unique incidents per year, with an average of two hundred and thirty-eight (238) unit responses per year. These numbers demonstrate that a single fire engine can typically handle the incidents in Ross and do not create a burden on the response system, as they consistently necessitate the dispatch of only one unit from neighboring fire stations.

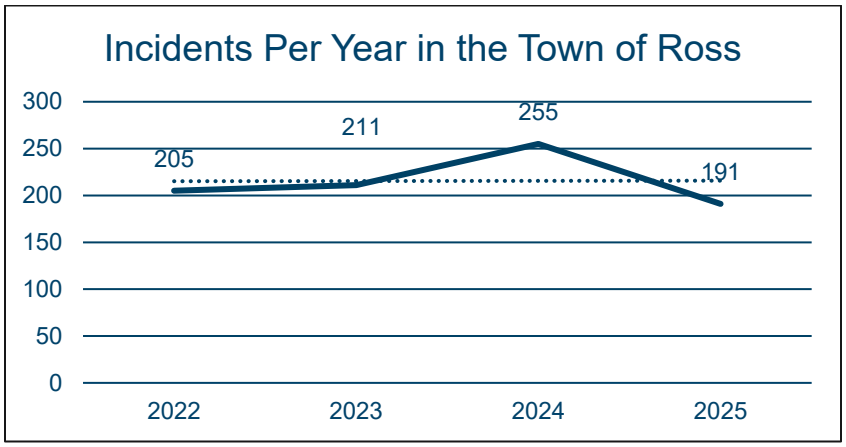


Figure 11 Incidents in Ross Each Year

From the beginning of the year until October 1, 2025, the Ross Valley Fire Department has responded to one hundred and ninety-one (191) incidents in the Town of Ross. This puts the department on pace to respond to two hundred and twenty-seven (227) incidents by the end of the year.

While the incident types that take place in Ross exhibit a wide variation, there are enough similarities to group them into broader categories. These categories align with the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). For this report, the incident types have been further combined into broad category descriptions. For example, placing an incident in the Fire category does not necessarily mean it involves a fire inside a home. This could also have been a rubbish fire or an investigation into the odor of smoke inside a building. Ultimately, avoiding the minutiae of identifying every individual call type allows for the visual display to achieve a general overall understanding.

Figures 12 to 15 provide a visual representation of the number of incidents responded to in each category and what percentage of the overall incident volume that they account for in 2022, 2023, 2024, and up to October 1, 2025.

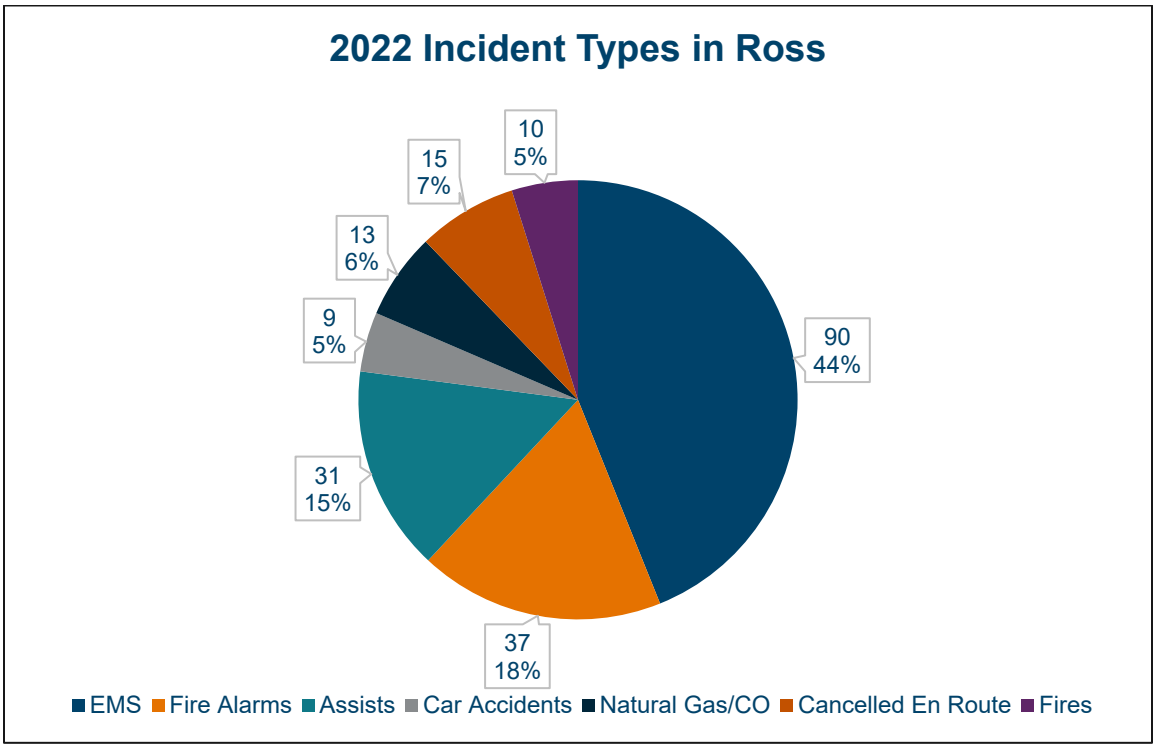


Figure 12 Incidents in Ross 2022

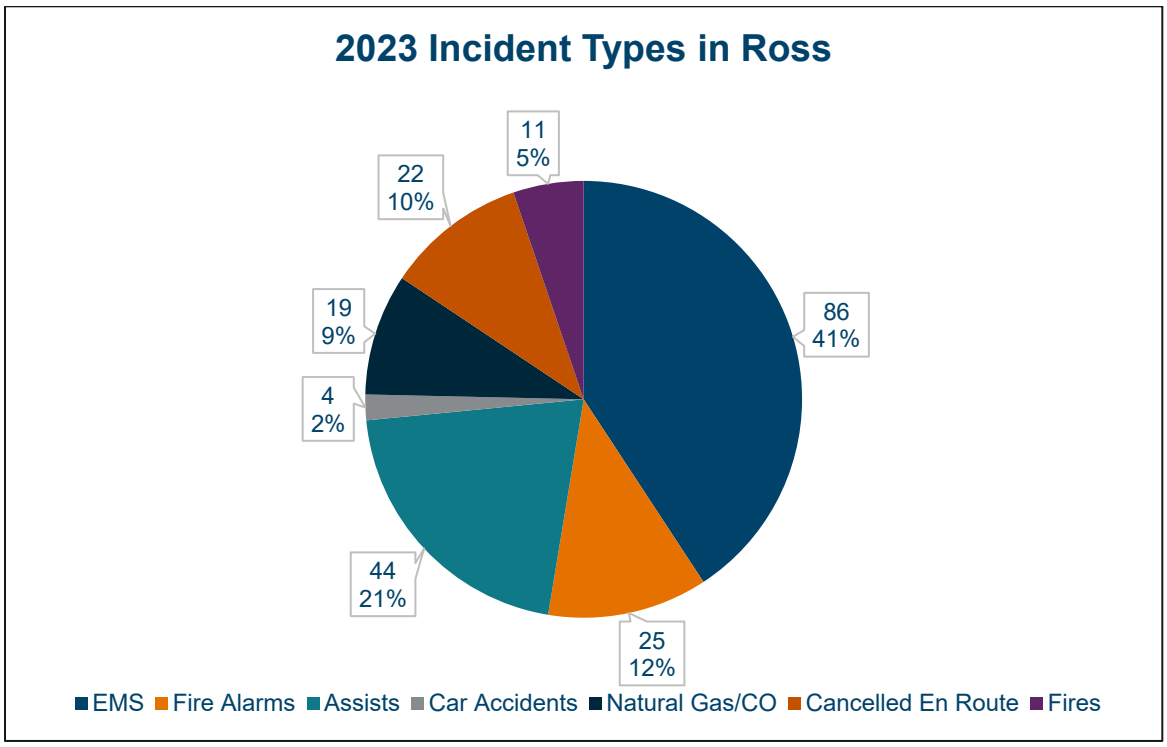


Figure 13 Incidents in Ross 2023

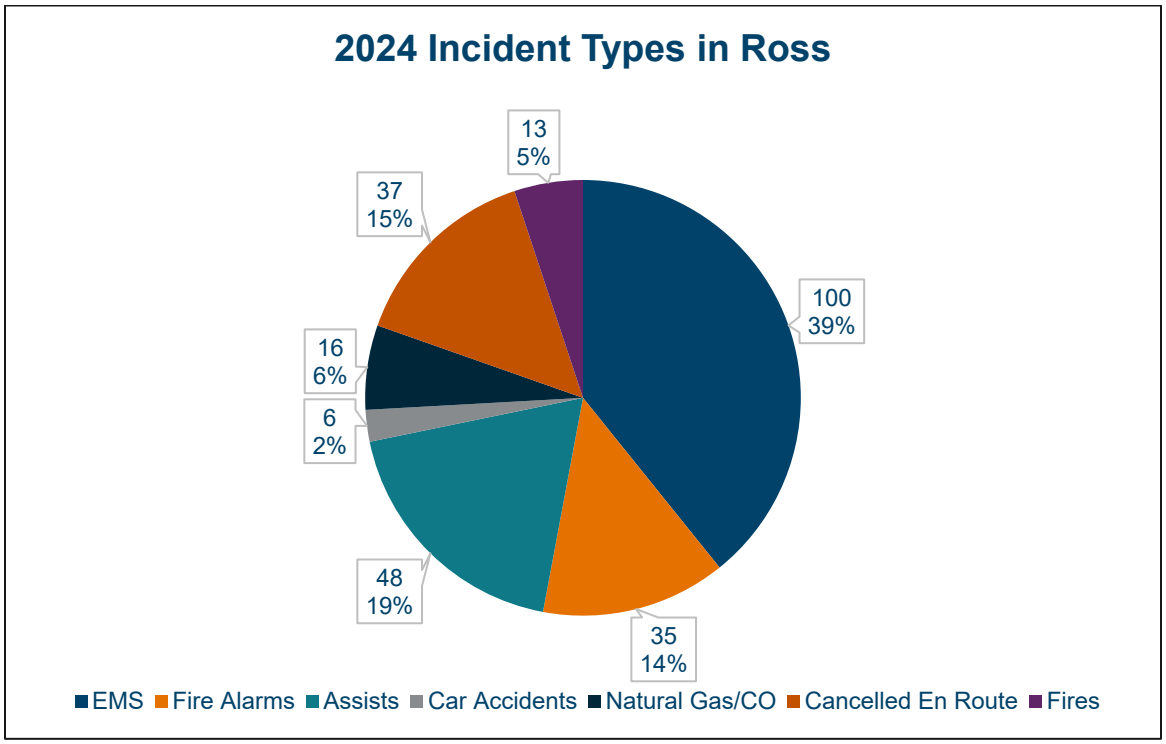


Figure 14 Incidents in Ross 2024

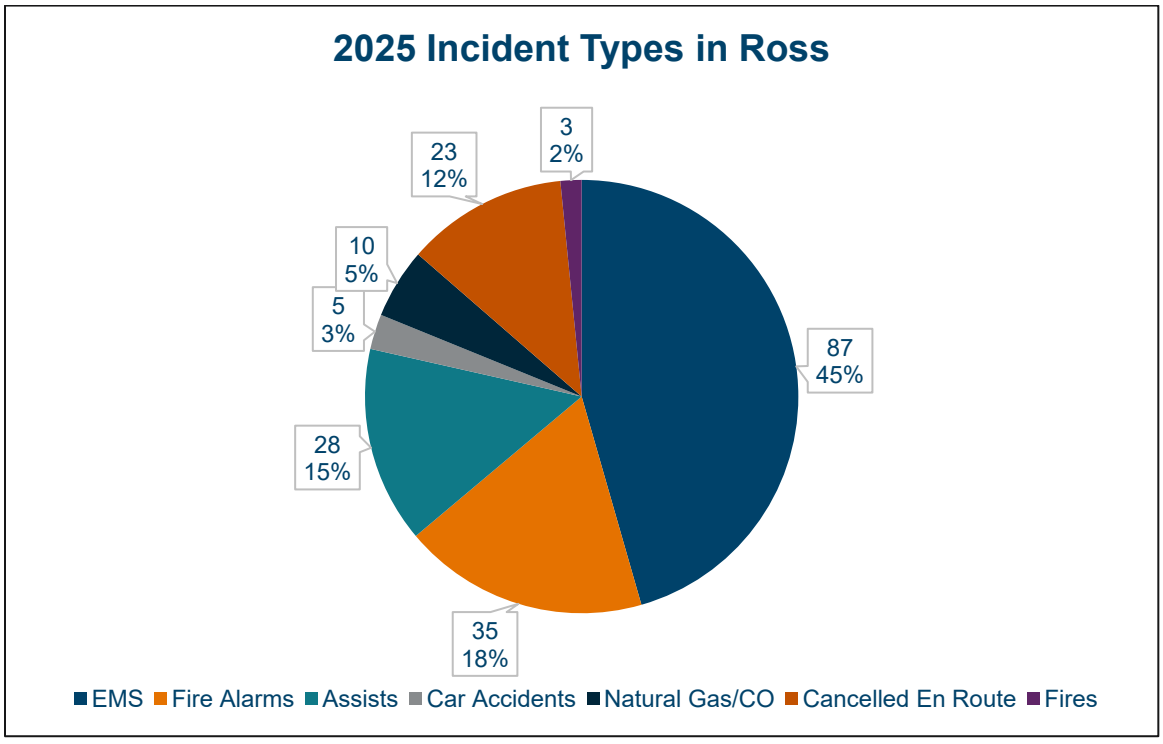


Figure 15 Incidents in Ross 1/1/2025-10/1/2025

As would be expected, the most frequent type of incident that occurs in Ross is for emergency medical services (EMS). As previously noted, this is very standard across the fire and emergency services industry.

5.1.2 Incident Dispatching

Since 2024, all fire incidents in Marin County have been dispatched from a centralized Emergency Command Center under the direction of the Marin County Fire Department. This enables the use of standardized response protocols and seamless integration into regional mutual-aid systems, including the California Office of Emergency Services (CAL OES) and the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement.

The Fire Chiefs in Marin County have also been driving an initiative to utilize automatic vehicle location (AVL) technology further, so that the closest unit to an incident can be dispatched to an area, regardless of which department or jurisdiction it belongs to. The initial implementation would create the closest unit dispatching system for fires and the highest acuity level of emergency medical incidents, such as a fire in a house or someone in cardiac arrest. It does not include emergency medical calls, such as those involving a person having a heart attack, a stroke, or having trouble breathing. This is a significant undertaking to bring the concept to life. At the time of this report, this had not been operationalized. All indications are that this will be in place and tested to its full capabilities in the first quarter (Q1) of 2026. By dispatching the closest available unit to fires and severe medical emergencies, better outcomes can be achieved through life-saving measures that occur more rapidly. However, this form of dispatching will only happen in extreme emergencies. Any further expansion of this initiative would require agreement from the fire chiefs within Marin County. The impact of this dispatching format on the overall responses to the Town of Ross should be closely monitored, as should be the efficacy and sustainability of the program.

It should not be assumed that this initiative will evolve into a “borderless” system where the closest available unit is dispatched to any incident type, county-wide. This type of arrangement can lead to perceived or actual inequities in the shared services between jurisdictions. For example, if the units from the Kentfield Fire Protection District consistently provided coverage for the Town of Ross, it would be predictable that the district would want compensation for providing these services, and its taxpayers would not tolerate this situation for any length of time. Occurrences like this are commonly what lead to the dissolution of agreements that drop the borders for fire departments and closest unit dispatching.

5.1.3 Apparatus and Staffing

RVFD maintains a modest fleet of fire apparatus and support vehicles. The department has fire apparatus that are configured for structural responses and for responding to wildfires. They also have an apparatus that is provided through a cooperative agreement with the Emergency Management Agency (EMA) for responses outside of Marin County. The department has a single reserve fire engine. However, the EMA unit can also serve as a reserve. Currently, the department does not own or operate an apparatus equipped with an aerial ladder. This specific apparatus type is provided by a mutual aid agency when needed.

The apparatus previously assigned to Fire Station 18 in Ross was removed from service and liquidated from the RVFD fleet inventory. To reinstate Fire Station 18, a fire apparatus would most likely need to be procured. This could be accomplished in multiple ways. The first being that a make and model meeting the community's needs and the department's standards could be identified and purchased from a fire apparatus manufacturer. This is a very costly proposition. Over the past several years, due to supply chain issues, increasing material costs, and inflation of wages and benefits, the purchase price for fire equipment has increased significantly, creating a substantial financial burden on operating or capital improvement budgets. The timeline from order to delivery

now spans years, not months. A more palatable option for many communities is to purchase a used apparatus rather than a new one. This would be a suitable solution for an apparatus located at Fire Station 18. There are many units available on the market, and commercial clearinghouses specializing in this service can help departments find the right solution.

Table 1 displays the fire units and staffing assigned to each RVFD station.

Table 1 RVFD Apparatus and Staffing

Fire Station	Location	Address	Apparatus	Staffing
Station 19 (Headquarters)	San Anselmo	777 San Anselmo Ave.	+ Fire Engine + Command Vehicle + Reserve Engine	- Captain - Engineer - Firefighter/Paramedic - Battalion Chief
Station 20	Sleepy Hollow	150 Butterfield Road	+ Fire Engine + EMA Engine	- Captain - Engineer - Firefighter/Paramedic
Station 21	Fairfax	10 Park Road	+ Fire Engine + Wildland Engine	- Captain - Engineer - Firefighter/Paramedic

5.1.4 Staffing

RVFD is staffed by both administrative and operational personnel. Uniformed and civilian staff support the department through the administrative efforts of the Fire Chief, an Administrative Assistant, and the Fire Inspector. The bulk of the department's staff serves in an operational capacity, assigned to shift work with responsibility for responding to incidents.

The department had traditionally utilized a two (2) person staffing model on its fire engines. This had contrasted with the other fire departments in Marin County that had employed a three (3) person staffing model. Before its closure, the fire engine at Fire Station 18 had been staffed by a Captain and an Engineer who served as the

driver/operator. With the closing of Fire Station 18, the intent was to redistribute the staff to the remaining three (3) fire stations to bolster the existing personnel to allow for three (3) persons staffing on the remaining fire companies. The three (3) persons staffing model would include a firefighter/paramedic on each unit and bring RVFD up to the typical minimum staffing number seen in Marin County and in other departments across the country. The reduction in rank of the three (3) Captain's positions to that of three (3) firefighter/paramedic positions was accomplished through attrition. The reduction in rank and tenure of three (3) full-time equivalent (FTE) employees will result in an overall decrease in expenses for wages and benefits. Unfortunately, these savings have not yet been realized, as the department is currently attempting to recruit employees to fill the newly created positions.

5.1.5 Standards of Cover

A Standards of Cover (SOC) document is a comprehensive, data-driven assessment that defines how a fire department evaluates community risks and determines the resources required to respond effectively. It identifies the types and distribution of hazards within the jurisdiction, such as population density, building characteristics, and sites with unique hazards, and establishes performance objectives based on those risks. SOC analyses also examine historical incident patterns, unit availability, and geographic coverage to determine whether current deployment models adequately protect the community.

A critical component of the Standards of Cover is the evaluation of response times, including call processing, turnout, and travel time. These metrics help determine how quickly the department can deliver essential services to an emergency scene, which directly affects life safety, property conservation, and overall incident outcomes. Reliability, often measured as the percentage of time a response unit is available for assignment, is equally important, as it reflects the system's capacity to handle multiple or simultaneous incidents without degraded performance.

Reliability is a key performance indicator that measures the frequency of response units being available to handle incidents within a given response area. High reliability ensures that the first-due unit, typically the closest and most familiar with the response district, is ready to respond without delay. When reliability falls, units are more frequently committed to other calls, forcing dispatch to send units from farther away. This increases travel time, reduces operational efficiency, and may negatively impact incident outcomes.

In each response area, strong unit reliability supports consistent service delivery. It ensures that staffing and apparatus deployment match the local call demand, enabling timely responses even when call volumes fluctuate. Conversely, low reliability in a particular zone can signal resource strain, geographic imbalance, or the need for additional units, revised deployment models, or adjustments to station placement.

By analyzing reliability at the response-area level, fire departments can identify gaps in coverage, understand patterns of simultaneous incidents, and make informed decisions to optimize the distribution and availability of emergency resources. This localized reliability assessment is essential to maintaining equitable service, meeting performance standards, and ensuring a dependable emergency response system for the community.

Response times refer to the total time interval from when an emergency call is received at the Emergency Command Center to when the first fire department unit arrives on scene. This typically includes call-processing, turnout, and travel time components. This measure reflects how quickly a fire department can initiate effective action at an incident and is a key indicator of service performance, operational efficiency, and the ability to influence life safety and property outcomes positively. For this study, response times for all incidents were evaluated regardless of whether they required an emergent or non-emergent response. This yielded a broader

data set and a more accurate understanding of response times for calls for service that occurred in the Town of Ross.

Together, response-time performance and unit reliability provide a clear picture of operational effectiveness. By documenting these factors, the Standards of Cover guide strategic decisions, support resource allocation, and ensure the fire department maintains a consistent and defensible level of service aligned with community expectations and industry best practices.

It is worth noting that the Ross Valley Fire Department last updated its Standards of Cover in 2019. While this should be a living document that is continuously monitored, the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) recommends that a comprehensive review and revision of the SOC should be performed every five (5) years. It would have been prudent to update the SOC before and after the decision to close Fire Station 18 so that a baseline for service could be established and the impact on reliability and response time could be measured.

Although this study does not contain a formal development of the SOC, response times and reliability were both analyzed to gauge the impact of the outcomes resulting from the closure of the fire station in Ross.

When evaluating response times, laypersons often mistakenly gravitate to the average response time. A shortcoming of measuring the average response time is that it hides outliers. The average response time is more indicative of luck than system performance. A more dependable and accurate measurement of system performance is evaluating the 90th percentile of response times.

Figure 16 displays both the average response times and the 90th percentile times for RVFD responses in Ross.

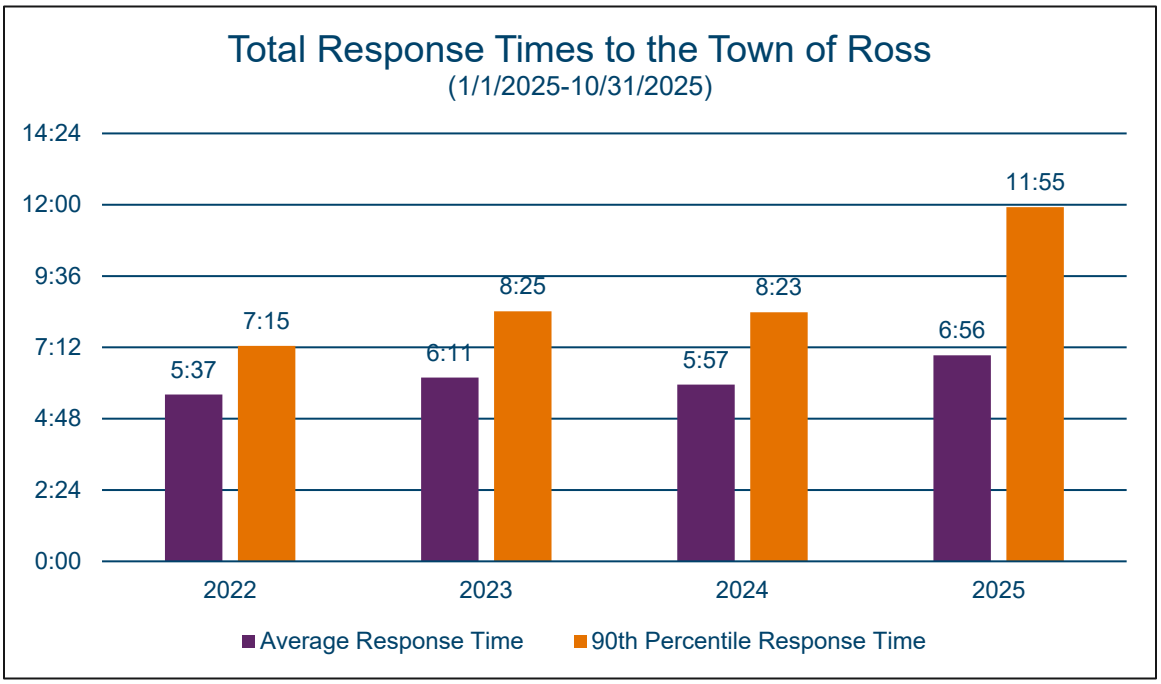


Figure 16 Average and 90th Percentile Times

Up until 2025, the 90th percentile response time has remained relatively consistent. However, as of October 1, 2025, the 90th percentile response time has increased by three minutes and thirty-two seconds (3:32). This

increase reflects a period of half a year during which a firehouse was still operating in Ross. The Town of Ross has already experienced a forty-three percent (43%) increase in response time to its community. When data is available for an entire year, the impact of the closure of Fire Station 18 on the 90th percentile response will be significant. It should not be unexpected that responses to Ross may potentially double the length of time, if not more.

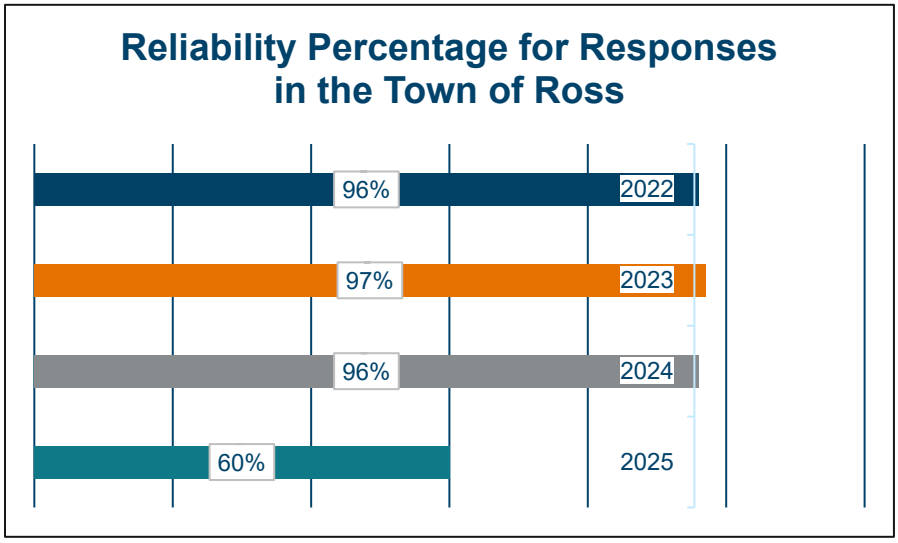


Figure 17 Percentage of Reliability for Ross

Figure 17 illustrates the reliability percentage for the Town of Ross. When Fire Station 18 was in service, the community enjoyed a ninety-six percent (96%) reliability rate. Meaning that if a resident or visitor to Ross called 911, a fire engine from Fire Station 18 would respond ninety-six percent of the time. With the station being decommissioned, the number has already plummeted to sixty percent (60%). That number may seem alarming, but it is only this high because the fire station was operational for the first six months of the year. In 2026, the reliability percentage for responses within the Town of Ross will be zero (0). Meaning that if a resident or visitor to Ross called 911, there is a zero percent (0%) chance that a fire engine from a fire station in Ross will respond. The community will experience a ninety-six percent (96%) drop in reliability, which creates a dependence on responses coming from a fire station outside the Town of Ross, leading to increased response times.

5.2 ROSS VALLEY PARAMEDIC AUTHORITY

The Ross Valley Paramedic Authority (RVPA) is a joint powers authority that provides advanced life support (ALS) emergency medical services to the Ross Valley region. Established in 1982, RVPA's member agencies are the Central Marin Fire Department, Kentfield Fire Protection District, Marin County Fire Department, and the Ross Valley Fire Department. The Authority was formed to deliver a coordinated EMS system capable of rapid response and advanced medical intervention across multiple jurisdictions.

RVPA functions through a cooperative partnership with member fire agencies, including the Ross Valley Fire Department. The Authority funds paramedic staffing, training, and equipment that support ALS response on fire-based first responder units. Paramedics deliver advanced clinical interventions, including cardiac monitoring, medication administration, airway management, and trauma care.

Governed by an eight-member Board of Directors representing each member jurisdiction, RVPA maintains rigorous operational standards. Its integrated model ensures reliable ALS coverage and system consistency throughout the Ross Valley.

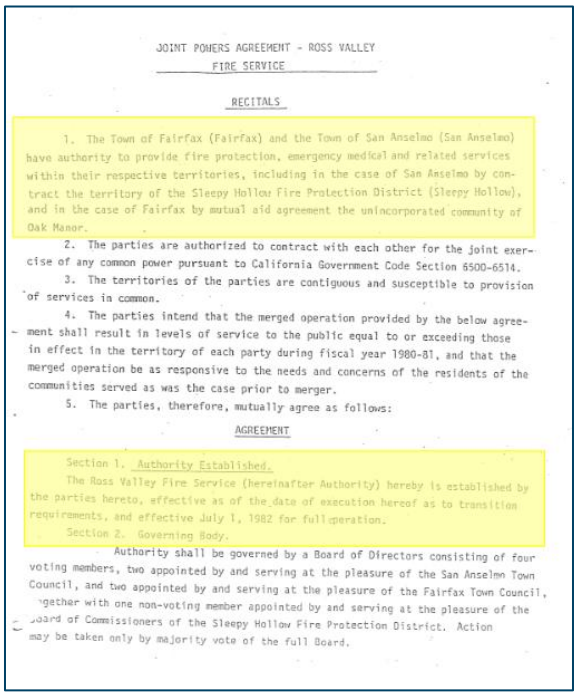
Figure 18 RVPA Ambulance

RVPA has had a two (2) person ALS ambulance stationed at the Ross Firehouse for several years and anticipates continuing to do so for the foreseeable future. Although this ambulance is stationed in Ross, it is not solely dedicated to the town. It is part of a larger system and covers a greater response area. Previous studies have shown that this ambulance has a high unit-hour utilization (UHU), indicating that its availability has been limited due to the high number of incidents it responds to. When the ambulance is available and in quarters, the length of time it should take to respond to an incident within the town should be very short. However, if the unit is unavailable and another unit must travel from outside the town, the responses would be predictably longer.

In the past, when this scenario arose, the fire engine assigned to Fire Station 18 could respond to initiate patient care and begin making possible life-saving interventions. Now, suppose an EMS incident occurs in Ross, and the ambulance is unavailable. In that case, the arrival of EMS providers is further delayed while waiting for an RVFD unit from outside the town's boundaries to arrive.

5.3 HISTORY OF THE JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT

On July 1, 1982, the Ross Valley Fire Service was formed and began operation when the Town of Fairfax, the Town of San Anselmo, and the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District entered into a Joint Powers Agreement to create a Joint Powers Authority, effectively consolidating their fire departments into one. The initial three jurisdictions agreed to pay their respective shares of the adopted budget based on historical costs before the merger. The desired outcome of the newly formed department was to improve services to the communities while being more cost-effective.



JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT - ROSS VALLEY FIRE SERVICE

RECITALS

1. The Town of Fairfax (Fairfax) and the Town of San Anselmo (San Anselmo) have authority to provide fire protection, emergency medical and related services within their respective territories, including in the case of San Anselmo by contract the territory of the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District (Sleepy Hollow), and in the case of Fairfax by mutual aid agreement the unincorporated community of Oak Manor.

2. The parties are authorized to contract with each other for the joint exercise of any common power pursuant to California Government Code Section 6500-6514.

3. The territories of the parties are contiguous and susceptible to provision of services in common.

4. The parties intend that the merged operation provided by the below agreement shall result in levels of service to the public equal to or exceeding those in effect in the territory of each party during fiscal year 1980-81, and that the merged operation be as responsive to the needs and concerns of the residents of the communities served as was the case prior to merger.

5. The parties, therefore, mutually agree as follows:

AGREEMENT

Section 1. Authority Established.

The Ross Valley Fire Service (hereinafter Authority) hereby is established by the parties hereto, effective as of the date of execution hereof as to transition requirements, and effective July 1, 1982 for full operation.

Section 2. Governing Body.

Authority shall be governed by a Board of Directors consisting of four voting members, two appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the San Anselmo Town Council, and two appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Fairfax Town Council, together with one non-voting member appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Board of Commissioners of the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District. Action may be taken only by majority vote of the full Board.

Figure 19 Original Joint Powers Authority Agreement

In 2010, the JPA was amended and restated, which resulted in the Authority changing its name from the Ross Valley Fire Service to the Ross Valley Fire Department.

The 2010 JPA was amended for the first time in 2012 to include the Town of Ross as a member of the Authority. As previously stated, this transitioned the members of the Ross Fire Department to employees of the Ross Valley Fire Department. The Ross Fire Department's staffing model, of a two (2) person fire engine providing 24/7/365 coverage at the basic life support (BLS) level, was maintained at Station Number 18 in the Town of Ross. This amendment also established the contributions that each partner would make for the operation of the Ross Valley Fire Department.

The JPA states that "All costs shall be fairly and equitably allocated among all Members." It also states that the "Members hereby acknowledge and agree that the Percentage Shares in this Section 8.1 represent such a fair and equitable allocation as of the First Amendment Effective Date." The Town of Ross assumed the responsibility of a share of 23.37% of the approved and adopted annual budget for the Ross Valley Fire Department. This amendment resulted in the Town of Fairfax contributing 23% of the funds despite its much larger population. Sleepy Hollow is comparable in size and contributes the smallest amount, at a 13% share.

Figure 12 illustrates the percentage of the overall budget contributed by each organization annually.

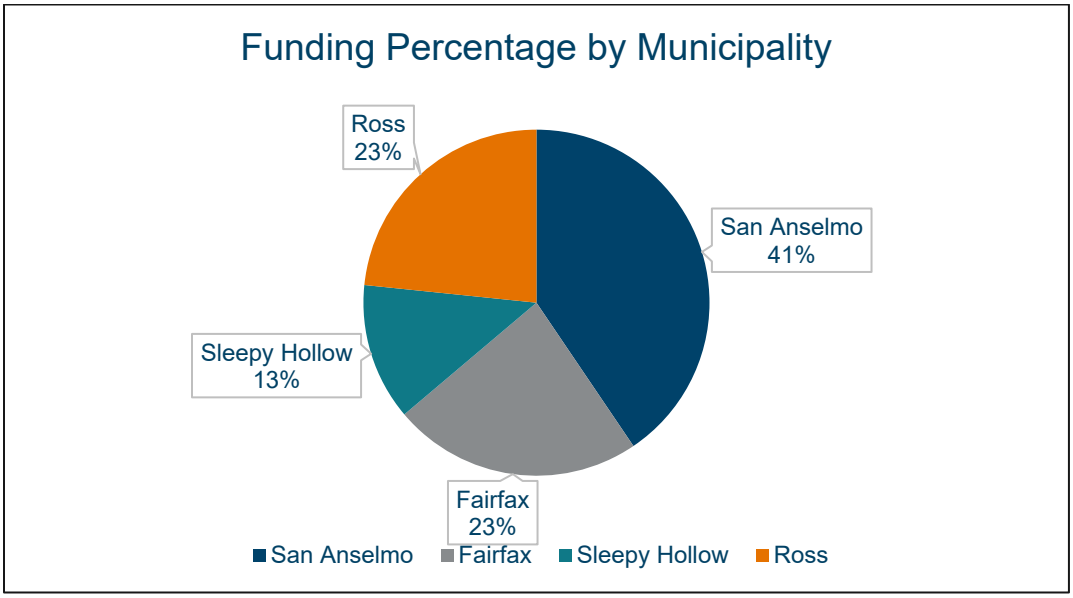
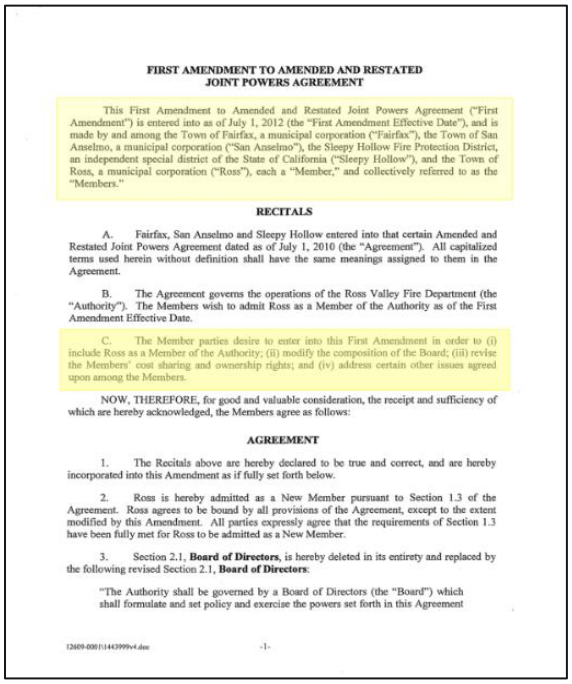


Figure 20 Percentage of Share Contribution

This iteration of the JPA also allows for a triannual review of the percentage shares that were established. Items that would warrant a review could include changes in population sizes, an increase in the number of structures, assessed property values, calls for service, and other factors relevant to the shared costs.

A second amendment to the amended and restated joint powers agreement was issued in 2014 to create a Management Committee and to implement the provisions of Government Code 54956.96.



FIRST AMENDMENT TO AMENDED AND RESTATED JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT

This First Amendment to Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement ("First Amendment") is entered into as of July 1, 2012 (the "First Amendment Effective Date"), and is made by and among the Town of Fairfax, a municipal corporation ("Fairfax"), the Town of San Anselmo, a municipal corporation ("San Anselmo"), the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District, an independent special district of the State of California ("Sleepy Hollow"), and the Town of Ross, a municipal corporation ("Ross"), each a "Member," and collectively referred to as the "Members."

RECITALS

A. Fairfax, San Anselmo and Sleepy Hollow entered into that certain Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement dated as of July 1, 2010 (the "Agreement"). All capitalized terms used herein without definition shall have the same meanings assigned to them in the Agreement.

B. The Agreement governs the operations of the Ross Valley Fire Department (the "Authority"). The Members wish to admit Ross as a Member of the Authority as of the First Amendment Effective Date.

C. The Member parties desire to enter into this First Amendment in order to (i) include Ross as a Member of the Authority; (ii) modify the composition of the Board; (iii) revise the Members' cost sharing and ownership rights; and (iv) address certain other issues agreed upon among the Members.

NOW, THEREFORE, for good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the Members agree as follows:

AGREEMENT

1. The Recitals above are hereby declared to be true and correct, and are hereby incorporated into this Amendment as if fully set forth below.

2. Ross is hereby admitted as a New Member pursuant to Section 1.3 of the Agreement. Ross agrees to be bound by all provisions of the Agreement, except to the extent modified by this Amendment. All parties expressly agree that the requirements of Section 1.3 have been fully met for Ross to be admitted as a New Member.

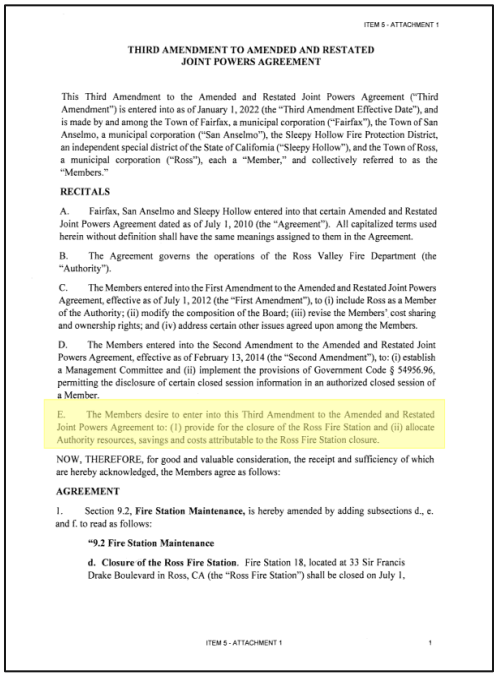
3. Section 2.1, **Board of Directors**, is hereby deleted in its entirety and replaced by the following revised Section 2.1, **Board of Directors**:

"The Authority shall be governed by a Board of Directors (the "Board") which shall formulate and set policy and exercise the powers set forth in this Agreement

12609-0001\1443999v4.doc -1-

Figure 21 First Amendment to the JPA

The third, and most recent, amendment to the JPA occurred in 2022. This amendment allowed for the decommissioning of Fire Station Number 18. It further allowed for the allocation of resources, savings, and costs resulting from the closure of the fire station. The station's closure would increase the daily staffing levels at the department's three (3) remaining stations from two (2) full-time trained firefighters to three (3) full-time trained firefighters. The three (3) remaining fire companies would also be upgraded to the advanced life support (ALS) level from the BLS level. This transition would be facilitated through the attrition of higher-ranking employees and their replacement with lower-ranking employees.



ITEM 5 - ATTACHMENT 1

THIRD AMENDMENT TO AMENDED AND RESTATED JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT

This Third Amendment to the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement ("Third Amendment") is entered into as of January 1, 2022 (the "Third Amendment Effective Date"), and is made by and among the Town of Fairfax, a municipal corporation ("Fairfax"), the Town of San Anselmo, a municipal corporation ("San Anselmo"), the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District, an independent special district of the State of California ("Sleepy Hollow"), and the Town of Ross, a municipal corporation ("Ross"), each a "Member," and collectively referred to as the "Members."

RECITALS

A. Fairfax, San Anselmo and Sleepy Hollow entered into that certain Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement dated as of July 1, 2010 (the "Agreement"). All capitalized terms used herein without definition shall have the same meanings assigned to them in the Agreement.

B. The Agreement governs the operations of the Ross Valley Fire Department (the "Authority").

C. The Members entered into the First Amendment to the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement, effective as of July 1, 2012 (the "First Amendment"), to (i) include Ross as a Member of the Authority; (ii) modify the composition of the Board; (iii) revise the Members' cost sharing and ownership rights; and (iv) address certain other issues agreed upon among the Members.

D. The Members entered into the Second Amendment to the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement, effective as of February 13, 2014 (the "Second Amendment"), to: (i) establish a Management Committee and (ii) implement the provisions of Government Code § 54956.96, permitting the disclosure of certain closed session information in an authorized closed session of a Member.

E. The Members desire to enter into this Third Amendment to the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement to: (1) provide for the closure of the Ross Fire Station and (ii) allocate Authority resources, savings and costs attributable to the Ross Fire Station closure.

NOW, THEREFORE, for good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the Members agree as follows:

AGREEMENT

1. Section 9.2, **Fire Station Maintenance,** is hereby amended by adding subsections d., e. and f. to read as follows:

"9.2 Fire Station Maintenance

d. Closure of the Ross Fire Station. Fire Station 18, located at 33 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in Ross, CA (the "Ross Fire Station") shall be closed on July 1,

ITEM 5 - ATTACHMENT 1 1

Figure 22 Third Amendment to the JPA

5.4 POPULATION SERVED BY THE ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Ross Valley Fire Department serves a population of over twenty-five thousand (25,000) people. They respond to emergencies in San Anselmo, Fairfax, Sleepy Hollow, and Ross. San Anselmo, with its population of over twelve thousand (12,000) people, is the largest municipality. The Town of Ross has the smallest population of the four jurisdictions, with approximately two thousand three hundred (2,300) people served.

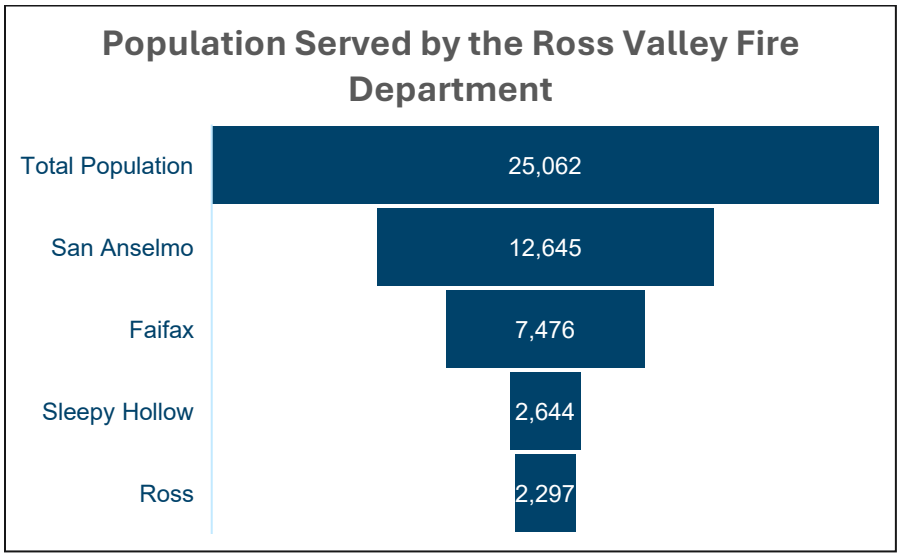


Figure 23 Population Served by the RVFD

Figure 24 shows that the Town of Ross makes up only nine percent (9%) of the overall population served by the Ross Valley Fire Department. They are clearly the smallest municipality among those currently in the joint powers agreement. This will very likely be the case in the future as well. The boundaries for the Town of Ross offer little opportunity for expansion. The lack of available properties for development makes a dramatic increase in population improbable. For the foreseeable future, Ross will continue to trend toward being the smallest town served by the RVFD.

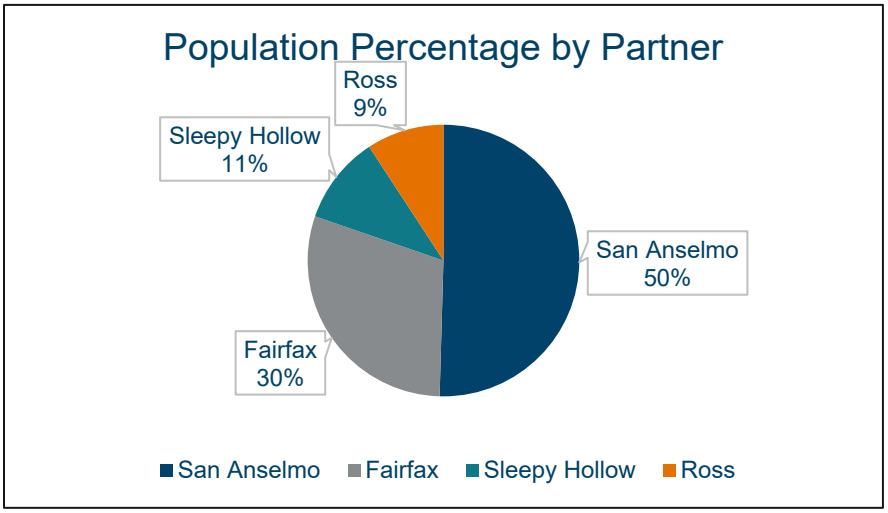


Figure 24 Population Percentage Served by RVFD

5.5 DISPARITY IN SHARE PERCENTAGE

During this study, a disparity in the equity of the share of the percentage that the Town of Ross is responsible for was identified. Presently, the Town of Ross is responsible for 23.37% of the annual approved budget for the Ross Valley Fire Department. This is the second-highest amount of the four partners, despite the Town of Ross having the lowest population.

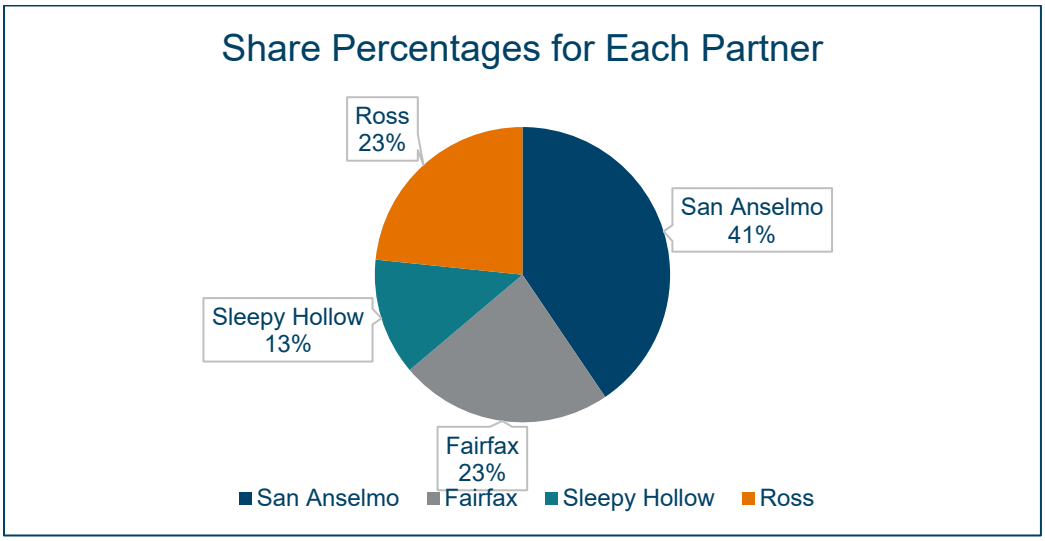


Figure 25 Partner Share Percentages

A methodology that is dependable and equitable, commonly used in shared service agreements to determine financial commitment, is based on population. Since demands for service typically have a direct relationship with the population served, this methodology provides a fair and accurate process for identifying what a community should contribute towards fire and emergency services. It is highly recommended that any recalculation of the percentage shares that the partners in the JPA are responsible for should be directly correlated with the size of the population. This would rectify the long-time imbalance of cost distribution that the Town of Ross has been subjected to.

Figure 26 illustrates the inequity in the budgetary share of each partner compared to their population size. A reevaluation of the current methodology should clearly indicate that the expected share from the Town of Ross is disproportionate relative to the population served by RVFD. Notice that Sleepy Hollow, which accounts for eleven percent (11%) of the population served by RVFD, contributes only thirteen percent (13%) of the budget. The question that must be asked and answered is “Why is the Town of Ross responsible for over twenty-three percent (23%) of the budget when the most comparable partner based on population size is only responsible for thirteen percent (13%) of the budget?”

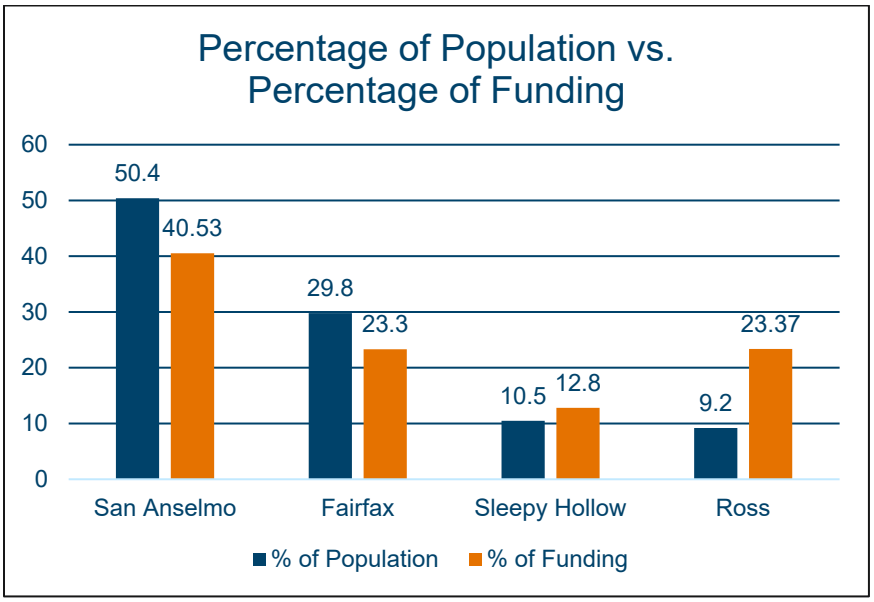


Figure 26 Population vs. Funding Share

Incident volume can also be used to calculate the costs assigned to each partner in a shared services agreement. This is a funding methodology commonly seen throughout the United States of America. It provides a quantifiable metric in relation to the actual demands that communities place on the fire department. Figure 10 showed that the Town of Ross accounts for approximately 7.5% of the overall incident volume for the Ross Valley Fire Department. The generation of 7.5% of the incidents is not commensurate with the responsibility for the 23.37% contribution to the annual budget.

Another factor that can be utilized to develop the methodology for calculating shared service costs is assessed property values within each jurisdiction. This should be a minor consideration and of less importance than population size or service demand. The exception to this is when a community has a significant disparity in its assessed commercial property values. The presence of shopping malls, high-rise buildings, and warehouses could all justify the need for one community to contribute a higher amount towards the fire department's operating budget. However, there are no such properties in the Town of Ross. Nor is there any indication that any will exist in the future. Assessed property values should not be given weight of any significance in future calculations for the provision of fire protection in the Town of Ross.

For the 2025-2026 fiscal year (FYE26), the Town of Ross prepared a budget with an expected expense of $2,973,918.00 for fire department services. This nearly $3,000,000.00 cost for fire protection services does not come with a staffed fire station in the Town of Ross, but does come with a zero percent (0%) reliability and prolonged response times from the fire department.

Conversely, the Town of Ross budgeted $2,615,997.00 for the Ross Police Department. This expense provides nine (9) uniformed law enforcement officers dedicated to the community.

Because of the reduction in personnel costs for wages and benefits with the rank and tenure reductions due to three (3) Captains and three (3) Engineers being converted to six (6) firefighter/paramedic positions, the Town of Ross estimated a reduction to the expense item of $323,283.00. This is only an estimate, and the actual number will not be determined until the employee attrition and hiring of replacement personnel are realized.

Assuming this is an accurate number, it would result in a 2.3% reduction in the town's share contribution from Ross. This would result in the Town of Ross having a share contribution of 21.07% moving forward.

Even with this slight reduction in the share percentage, the amount that the Town of Ross is responsible for is not equitable when considering the incident volume or the town's population. The community went from having a staffed fire engine in their firehouse, with a dedicated fire apparatus, and two (2) firefighters on duty every day, to having a three (3) person advanced life support fire engine responding from outside the Town of Ross for what will amount to a less than three percent (3%) reduction in cost share from the original 23.37% to 21.07%.

Put quite simply, the contribution amount that is required of the Town of Ross by the existing JPA is troubling. At a time when the Town of Ross had an operating fire station with full-time staffing and a fire engine, accounting for over twenty-three percent (23%) of the budget, despite larger communities paying disproportionate amounts, this should have been viewed as unacceptable. Now, having lost its fire apparatus and firefighters, the taxpayers of Ross should be questioning why they are being unfairly charged in comparison to the other members in the JPA. A potential estimated decrease of 2.3% in the contribution is not commensurate with the loss of reliability, an increase in response times, and a lack of firefighter community presence that Ross is now experiencing. Regardless of the outcome of the Ross Firehouse disposition, a concerted effort should be made to create a fair, equitable, and sensible formula for the value of services that taxpayers in Ross receive in exchange for the expense of fire and emergency medical services.

If the Town of Ross opts to remain as a member of the joint powers authority, a reevaluation of the fee proportions should be initiated. Prominent consideration should be given to the population size of each community along with its demand for service. This should result in approximately ten percent (10%) of the annual approved budget. This would be a concession. Even with this reduction, the Town of Ross would still be the only partner without a staffed fire station in its community. It will be incumbent on the elected officials and ultimately their incumbents to determine what the level of service should be and what is a fair price to pay for it now and in the future.

6.0 Benchmarking

6.1 COMMISSION ON FIRE ACCREDITATION INTERNATIONAL

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) is a component of the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). Fire departments across the United States of America and internationally have voluntarily participated in the rigorous accreditation process to demonstrate accountability and commitment to continuous improvement. The Ross Valley Fire Department is not a CFAI-accredited agency. However, that should not exempt the department from the principles of performance measurement, particularly those related to response times.

Rather than establishing prescriptive thresholds for response times, the CFAI requires agency-defined goals. These goals should be established after a community risk assessment (CRA) and a standards of cover (SOC) have been completed, which describes the community’s risk and expected level of service. Based on the CRA and SOC, response time objectives, including baselines and benchmarks, should be established that reflect the community’s needs, resources, and risk profile.

This must be achieved through data reporting and analysis. There is no evidence that the RVFD has published response time goals. This lack of a performance metric is concerning, particularly when alterations to service

levels are being made. With the standards of cover for the RVFD service area not having been completed in several years, there is no accurate baseline for response time benchmarks before and after the service level was altered in the Town of Ross. The reported response times become arbitrary without an established baseline. A lack of a demonstrated baseline and goal allows for a normalization of deviance. As response times become longer and longer, they become accepted and tolerated. This situation raises doubts about the value taxpayers of Ross are receiving in exchange for their tax dollars. The assurance that the fire department will arrive at the scene of your incident at some point is sufficient to meet the community's expectations, particularly when the Town of Ross is paying a higher premium than other communities.

6.2 FIRE SUPPRESSION RATING SCHEDULES

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluates fire protection capabilities in communities across the United States through its Public Protection Classification (PPC) program. This assessment is guided by the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS), which is a comprehensive evaluation system that measures a community's ability to prevent and respond to fires. The FSRS examines key components of local fire protection infrastructure, including fire department operations, emergency communications systems, water supply, and community risk reduction efforts. Each factor is scored and weighted, resulting in an ISO rating ranging from Class 1 (exemplary) to Class 10 (insufficient fire protection). The evaluation process is data-driven and based on nationally recognized standards such as those established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

The FSRS allocates points across several major categories to determine a community's ISO classification. Approximately fifty percent (50%) of the score is based on the fire department's capabilities, such as staffing levels, apparatus types, response times, and firefighter training. Approximately forty percent (40%) of the score is derived from the water supply system, encompassing hydrant distribution, flow capacity, and reliability. The remaining ten percent (10%) evaluates emergency communications and community risk reduction programs, which include fire prevention, public education, and building code enforcement. The ISO uses on-site surveys, documentation reviews, and interviews with fire department and municipal officials to ensure accuracy. This structured approach ensures consistency in evaluating fire protection across diverse jurisdictions.

The ISO rating matters because it has both practical and financial implications for communities. For local governments and fire departments, the PPC score serves as an objective benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of fire protection services and identifying areas for improvement. For residents and businesses, ISO ratings have a direct impact on insurance premiums, as insurers frequently use these classifications to assess property risk and determine rates. A lower ISO score (closer to Class 1) typically results in lower insurance costs and reflects a higher level of public safety. Moreover, strong ISO performance enhances community resilience, supports economic development, and demonstrates accountability in resource allocation, making the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule an essential tool for improving and maintaining effective fire protection systems.

The Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) is rated Class 2 under the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) system. This means RVFD achieved an excellent level of fire-protection capability according to ISO's criteria for fire department effectiveness, emergency communications, water supply, and community fire-prevention efforts.

This rating was achieved before the closure of Fire Station 18, with the decrease in fire engines that are available from four (4) to three (3), and the increase in response times, which will adversely affect the rating. Any reduction in rating could be detrimental to property owners in Ross.

6.3 EFFECTIVE RESPONSE FORCES

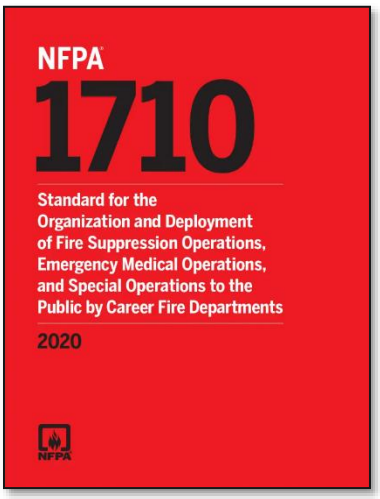


Figure 27 NFPA 1710 Cover

NFPA 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, establishes the benchmark for staffing, deployment, and response times in career fire departments. The standard defines the minimum requirements needed to ensure that fire departments can provide effective, safe, and timely response to structure fires, medical incidents, and other emergencies. It outlines critical elements, such as turnout time (the time it takes for crews to leave the station), travel time (the time it takes to reach an incident), and the total response time objective. By establishing these performance criteria, NFPA 1710 helps ensure that communities receive a consistent level of fire protection and emergency service capability, based on scientifically supported data on fire behavior and survival times.

A central component of NFPA 1710 is the concept of the Effective Response Force (ERF), which refers to the minimum number of personnel and apparatus required to safely and effectively control an emergency incident. For example, the standard specifies that a minimum of fifteen (15) firefighters should arrive on scene within eight (8) minutes, ninety percent (90%) of the time, for a typical single-family dwelling fire, assuming a full-alarm assignment. This force must be sufficient to conduct simultaneous critical operations such as fire attack, search and rescue, ventilation, water supply, and safety supervision while maintaining firefighter safety. The ERF requirement is based on studies of fire growth rates, occupant survivability, and task analysis to determine the minimum resources needed to stabilize the incident before flashover or structural collapse occurs.

The importance of NFPA 1710 and the effective response force concept lies in their direct impact on life safety, property conservation, and firefighter survivability. Adequate staffing and timely deployment ensure that fire suppression and rescue operations can be performed efficiently and safely under high-risk conditions. When fire departments fail to meet ERF standards, the likelihood of uncontrolled fire growth, civilian casualties, and firefighter injuries increases dramatically. By adhering to NFPA 1710, fire departments can justify staffing levels, apparatus placement, and response strategies based on recognized national benchmarks. This not only enhances operational performance and accountability but also supports community trust and provides critical data for policymakers and funding decisions aimed at maintaining adequate public safety infrastructure.

When Fire Station 18 was in service, the reliability for Engine 18 was in the ninety-sixth percentile (96%). In the event of a structure fire, a fire engine could promptly arrive on scene and commence firefighting operations, with the balance of the ERF arriving behind them. With the closing of the fire station, the first arriving fire engine will be from outside the Town of Ross, along with the rest of the alarm assignment. Now it will take longer to establish an effective response force, pushing RVFD further out of compliance with the NFPA 1710 standard.

7.0 Potential Staffing Models

Fire departments across the United States operate under a wide range of staffing models, each shaped by factors such as community size, budget, call volume, and local tradition. In large cities and densely populated regions, career fire departments are the norm. These departments employ full-time firefighters who work scheduled shifts to ensure round-the-clock coverage. Their staffing model often includes specialized units, advanced equipment, and robust training programs, all of which are supported by municipal funding. Career

departments are typically found where emergency call volume is consistently high and immediate response capabilities are essential.

At the other end of the spectrum are volunteer fire departments, which rely on individuals who serve their communities without pay. These departments are especially common in rural or small-town America, where call volumes are lower, and resources are more limited. Volunteers often balance firefighting alongside full-time jobs, responding to emergencies when available. Between these two extremes lies the hybrid model, in which departments blend both paid career firefighters and volunteers. Hybrid staffing allows a community to maintain reliable coverage while managing costs, ensuring a core of paid personnel is always ready. At the same time, volunteers supplement staffing during peak demand or major incidents. Together, these models represent the diversity and adaptability of fire service organizations across the nation.

This study examined various staffing models and deployment options, evaluating their potential as feasible solutions for restoring an operating fire station within the Town of Ross.

7.1 CREATING A TOWN OF ROSS FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Joint Powers Agreement has a provision that allows any member agency to withdraw from the Authority, provided that written notice is given to the other Members by June 30th of any year. The withdrawal will then become effective on June 30th, no sooner than two years after the notification. The Town of Ross could exercise this option with the intent of returning to their own autonomous fire department, exclusively operated by the town.

Doing so would necessitate hiring sufficient personnel to staff the fire station for continuous coverage. In addition to personnel compensation, which includes pay and benefits, there would be initial and ongoing costs to provide and maintain uniforms, personal protective equipment, training, and employee development, among other expenses.

If an independent fire department is created, administrative oversight would need to be established. The Town would need to conduct a search to recruit a Fire Chief and offer a compensation package that is commensurate with the position. Based on the number of commercial occupancies and the rate of development in Ross, the Fire Chief could likely also perform the duties of Fire Marshal and fire prevention. However, either additional administrative support staff would be necessary, or existing staff within the Town of Ross's infrastructure would have to take on additional duties such as managing payroll and purchasing for the fire department.

Hiring a Fire Chief is a significant commitment that extends well beyond base salary. In California, competitive base salary ranges typically fall between $230,000 and $330,000, depending on agency size, complexity, and region, with total compensation often reaching $280,000 to $ 400,000 or more when benefits are included. Comprehensive compensation packages typically include CalPERS retirement with employer contributions frequently exceeding 25–35% of salary, deferred compensation or executive retirement plans, a vehicle or vehicle allowance, cell phone and technology stipends, executive leave balances, and employment agreements that may include severance or contract buyout provisions. Less-visible costs frequently overlooked include relocation expenses, recruitment firm fees, onboarding and transition overlap, executive coaching or assessment centers, legal review of employment contracts, and long-term pension liabilities. Collectively, hiring a Fire Chief is not just a personnel decision; it is a strategic investment with substantial short- and long-term fiscal impacts that must be planned holistically.

Currently, the median salary for a Fire Chief in Marin County is $291,641

Fire Chief salaries comparable to Ross Valley Fire Department:

- Ross Valley Fire Department: $285,497 (total compensation package).
- Marin County Fire Department: $388,467 (total compensation package).
- Central Marin Fire Authority: $299,645 (total compensation package).

An entry-level administrative assistant in a Ross Valley–area fire department typically supports core clerical and administrative functions, including purchasing support, invoice processing, records management, scheduling, handling public inquiries, and coordinating basic human resources functions and payroll. Based on current Ross Valley Fire Department and nearby Central Marin benchmarks, entry-level salary ranges generally fall between $82,000 and $91,000 annually, with fully loaded costs of salary plus benefits and retirement commonly reaching $95,000 to $115,000 per year.

Along with these expenses, the Town of Ross would be responsible for the full costs of managing and operating a fire department. This would include the procurement of fire apparatus and support vehicles, as well as their ongoing maintenance and repair costs. The fire department would also need to purchase the tools, fire hose, and communication equipment to equip all the apparatus and vehicles. The costs associated with this are further explored in Appendix A of this report.

The reality would be to create an autonomous fire department; the taxpayers would see a significant increase in their assessments and would be responsible for the new tax burden.

It is highly doubtful that the town's elected officials or the Town Manager would have an appetite to consider this option. The Friends of Ross Firehouse group has also been very clear about their lack of interest in advocating for or pursuing this option.

Of all the options available for staffing the Ross Firehouse, this should be considered the least palatable.

7.2 CREATING A TOWN OF ROSS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Another potential model that could be employed is the creation of the Ross Volunteer Fire Department. This would return the department to its origins, where members of the community volunteer to respond to emergencies.

This scenario would also require a withdrawal from the Joint Powers Authority.

While there would be significant cost savings on personnel, administrative oversight by a full-time fire chief would be necessary. The costs mentioned above for apparatus, equipment, supplies, and maintenance remain applicable and must be accounted for. Expenses specific to volunteer firefighters should be taken into consideration. These costs could include pension contributions, disability insurance, education and training reimbursements, and incident response stipends.

The limited population size of Ross constrains the available pool of individuals who could realistically volunteer for the fire department. Maintaining even a modestly sized roster would be challenging to sustain over time, given the demands of attrition, turnover, and training. In small, high-income communities such as Ross, volunteer participation rates tend to be low, making long-term continuity and operational reliability unlikely.

Ross functions primarily as a bedroom community, where most residents commute outside the town for employment during daytime hours. This creates significant daytime coverage challenges for volunteer fire

departments, which rely on members being locally available to respond to incidents. During typical business hours, the town's volunteer base would be largely depleted, leaving limited or no responders available for immediate turnout. This is a well-documented issue in suburban and commuter communities nationwide, where volunteer departments experience sharp drops in weekday staffing availability. In practical terms, this means that even if Ross could recruit volunteers, ensuring dependable response capability during daytime incidents would remain a significant operational risk.

Across the United States, the number of volunteer firefighters has declined sharply over the past several decades while call volumes, particularly for emergency medical services, have steadily increased. According to the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), the number of volunteer firefighters decreased from approximately 898,000 in 1984 to about 677,000 in 2020, representing a nearly twenty-five percent (25%) decline. Over the same period, the total number of annual emergency responses increased by more than three times. This inverse relationship between call volume and volunteer availability has created persistent challenges nationwide. Recruitment and retention are now among the most significant issues facing the volunteer fire service, with increasing demands for training, time, and technical competency discouraging new entrants. These national trends would be even more pronounced in a small, affluent, commuter-based community such as Ross.

Although this option may appear attractive from a cost-savings perspective on the yearly expense of career staff, it is unlikely that it could be achieved for one year, let alone be sustainable for multiple years in the future. Pursuing this staffing model is not recommended as a viable solution for the Town of Ross.

7.3 CREATING A TOWN OF ROSS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

A hybrid staffing model creates what is commonly referred to as a combination department. Combination departments utilize both career and volunteer staff to achieve response capability. Frequently, the paid firefighters are assigned to a forty (40) hour work week to address the previously mentioned issue of volunteer firefighters commonly being unavailable during the conventional work week. Many departments across the United States of America employ this model successfully. However, success is contingent upon the availability of volunteers.

Some volunteers reside within the boundaries of the municipality that they serve. The shortcomings of this option have already been discussed for the Town of Ross. Another method that could be used is to create a cadet or resident firefighter program. Participants in these programs are students completing their training in firefighting and emergency medical services who seek opportunities to gain field experience, making themselves more marketable when applying for full-time positions. While there are many benefits to programs like these, they are not without drawbacks. Due to the participants' desire to secure full-time employment, there is a high rate of attrition among them. The department essentially becomes a training ground for other departments. This leads to increased budgetary expenses for training, uniforms, and personal protective equipment.

Another potential obstacle that can be encountered in creating a combination department is organized labor groups. Unionized firefighters very often oppose the integration of volunteer firefighters into the system. They very adamantly feel that a volunteer member would be taking away a position held by a member of the labor unions. This is a long-standing battle and can lead to great organizational turmoil.

More importantly, this model would still come with the start-up costs associated with the autonomous fire department. A Town of Ross Fire Department utilizing a hybrid staffing model would also be discouraged. Agree with a fire district to staff Fire Station 18

What is most likely the most viable solution would be for the Town of Ross to partner with a fire district to reopen Fire Station 18 and resume continuous staffing. The potential for this outcome is interrelated to the discussion on the disposition of the existing station and its potential remodel or reconstruction. This report assumes that a suitable facility will be available for firefighters to operate from in the future.

7.4 PARTNERSHIP WITH AN EXISTING FIRE DEPARTMENT

Multiple departments within the immediate area could be potential partners to provide staffing for a Ross Fire Station. The first and most logical would be the Ross Valley Fire Department. Other departments that could potentially be considered are the Kentfield Fire Department, the Marin County Fire Department, and the Central Marin Fire Department. These departments warrant consideration because of their proximity to the Town of Ross.

Any alteration in the fire protection services would require a change in the existing joint powers agreement. This may take the form of renegotiating the terms within the agreement to reduce the share percentage or to restore service levels in Ross. It could also constitute the Town of Ross withdrawing from the Joint Powers Authority if a suitable alternative can be found that better meets the community's needs and expectations.

The departments discussed below were identified because they are either already providing service to the Town of Ross or, based on their proximity to the town, could potentially respond in a reasonable amount of time. This is not an exhaustive list of the surrounding departments that could be considered. However, it does provide a snapshot of several options. Each department offers comprehensive services that cater to the needs of residents, the workforce, and visitors in the Town of Ross.

Inclusion in this study does not indicate interest in providing services to the Town of Ross. At this point, a change to the JPA is purely hypothetical. Each fire department is either a Joint Powers Authority, an entity of county government, or a fire protection district. Each of which operates under the authority of some form of an elected body. The Ross Town Council would have to direct its staff to explore opportunities and interests with other government units. Should opportunities arise, careful analysis of capabilities and suitability should be conducted before entering negotiations surrounding financial commitments. The goal should be to find the best service provider who brings the most value for the cost of the service.

7.4.1 Ross Valley Fire Department

If the Town of Ross were to decide that they wish to restore staffing to Fire Station 18, this could be accomplished through its existing relationship with the Ross Valley Fire Department. Doing so would require another amendment to the JPA to supersede the previous amendment. The Ross Town Council would have to initiate this effort by deciding to move forward with this course of action. Then, the terms of this amendment would have to be negotiated by the Board of Directors of the Joint Powers Authority. Convincing the Board of Directors to restore the staffing to Fire Station 18 will likely pose a significant obstacle to this outcome. At a minimum, RVFD should be prepared to incur costs higher than they had been accustomed to secondary to no longer staffing the fire engine with two (2) firefighting personnel but instead staffing it with three (3) firefighting personnel. It should also not come as a surprise that the RVFD and the Board of Directors might want the Town of Ross to be responsible for the fully loaded cost of wages and benefits for the personnel assigned to Fire Station 18. Additionally, remuneration for a percentage of the administrative services should be anticipated. Costs associated with apparatus, support vehicles, tools and equipment, and technological support would also be a factor.

However, the Town of Ross already pays a hefty sum for fire protection services from the Ross Valley Fire Protection District. While contributing nearly twenty-five percent (25%) of the total contributions, it is the only one of the four partners that does not have a staffed fire station within its boundaries. This discrepancy should warrant further scrutiny as to its equity, and the terms should be re-examined to either restore services to Ross or to decrease the share percentage the Town is responsible for.

7.4.2 Kentfield Fire Protection District

The Town of Ross could approach the Kentfield Fire Protection District to enter into an agreement to either provide staffing in Fire Station 18 or to provide coverage from their existing fire station to the town.

The Kentfield Fire Protection District (KFPD) provides full-spectrum fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services to the unincorporated communities of Kentfield, Greenbrae, and adjacent areas of Marin County. Established in 1922, the district serves approximately 12,000 residents within a service area composed of residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and wildland–urban interface (WUI) zones. The district's fire station, located along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, houses administrative functions, emergency response personnel, and frontline apparatus designed to address both structural and wildland fire risk.

Figure 28 Kentfield Fire Station 17

KFPD maintains a diversified fleet that includes Type 1 structural engines, Type 3 wildland engines, and command units, supporting rapid and flexible deployment across a range of incident types. District personnel are cross-trained in structural and wildland fire suppression, emergency medical response, and technical rescue operations, enabling the agency to meet the varied operational demands of the service area. The district participates in Marin County's regional mutual-aid system, providing and receiving support during significant incidents such as large-scale vegetation fires and multi-agency emergencies.

Operational readiness is supported by a continuous training program that incorporates professional development courses, live-fire evolutions, and multi-agency exercises. Training priorities include firefighter safety, incident command proficiency, and coordinated response strategies to address evolving hazards, including heightened wildfire activity associated with regional climate trends. The district utilizes modern technological tools, including GIS-based response mapping and upgraded communications systems, to enhance situational awareness, operational coordination, and response efficiency.

Collectively, KFPD's operational capabilities, training programs, and community outreach initiatives support a service model that prioritizes public safety, organizational adaptability, and high standards of professional performance.

KFPD has the advantage of having its fire station in proximity to the Town of Ross. Figure 29 demonstrates that this would allow for very favorable response times for units responding from Fire Station 17 into Ross. KFPD also owns and operates an aerial ladder truck, unlike the RVFD. However, its fire apparatus are not staffed with ALS providers or equipment, so EMS would only be provided at the BLS level. With the KFPD only having one (1) fire station and limited personnel, it does not have the depth of resources that other fire departments in the area possess and rely heavily on mutual aid agreements.

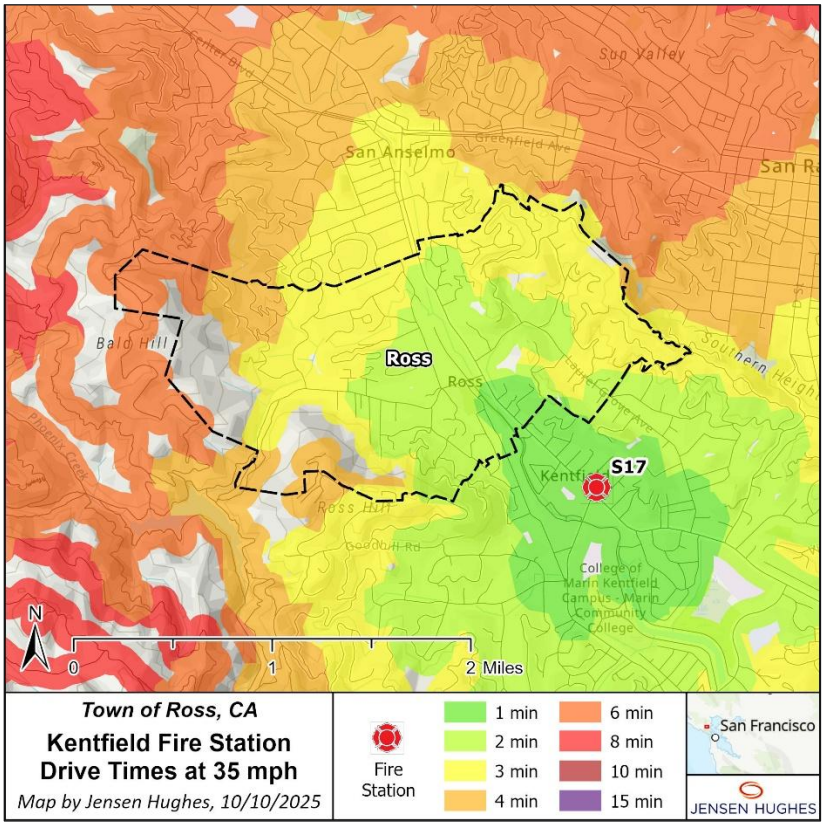


Figure 29 Response Time from KFPD Fire Station 17

7.4.3 Marin County Fire Department

The Town of Ross could approach the Marin County Fire Department to enter into an agreement to either provide staffing in Fire Station 18 or to provide coverage from their existing fire station to the town.

Figure 30 MCFD Headquarters

The Marin County Fire Department (MCFD) is a full-service, all-risk emergency response agency responsible for fire protection, rescue operations, and emergency medical services throughout a substantial portion of Marin County. Established in 1942, the Department provides service to unincorporated communities and state responsibility areas (SRAs) under contract with CAL FIRE. Its jurisdiction covers approximately 145,000 acres encompassing urban neighborhoods, rural communities, and extensive wildland–urban interface (WUI) environments. The department headquarters, located in Woodacre, oversees operations across multiple strategically distributed fire stations to ensure effective and timely emergency response.

MCFD maintains a modern, multi-disciplinary apparatus fleet that includes structural and wildland fire engines, bulldozers, water tenders, and specialized rescue units. Personnel are trained across a broad spectrum of

operational disciplines, including structural and wildland firefighting, emergency medical care, and technical rescue. These capabilities enable MCFD to effectively respond to structure fires, medical incidents, large vegetation fires, and complex rescue scenarios, particularly within the county's rugged topography.

Preparedness and skill development are core components of MCFD's operational framework. The Department conducts continuous professional training, collaborates with partner agencies, and actively participates in regional mutual-aid systems to maintain high standards of readiness. MCFD also holds a leadership role in countywide wildfire mitigation strategies, including vegetation management projects, fire road improvements, and prescribed burn operations designed to reduce hazardous fuel loads and strengthen community resilience against wildfire threats.

Through its integrated approach to emergency response, wildfire mitigation, and public engagement, the Marin County Fire Department serves as a cornerstone of public safety for the region. Its operational readiness, emphasis on prevention, and collaborative partnerships reflect a long-standing commitment to protecting life, property, and Marin County's natural environment.

MCFD has the disadvantage of not having a fire station in proximity to the Town of Ross. Figure 31 demonstrates that this would lead to very unfavorable response times for units responding from MCFD Fire Station 19 into Ross. An agreement with MCFD to provide coverage for the Town of Ross would result in significantly increased response times. Contracting MCFD to staff Fire Station 18 would be a more desirable solution. MCFD has the benefit of having the Marin County Emergency Command Center under its purview. The MCFD Fire Chief also serves as the Executive Officer of the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority. They also have a considerable number of resources, ranging from fire stations to apparatus and personnel. Partnering with a fire department that already provides 911 telecommunication services and oversees the existing ambulance provider should be very attractive for streamlining efficiencies.

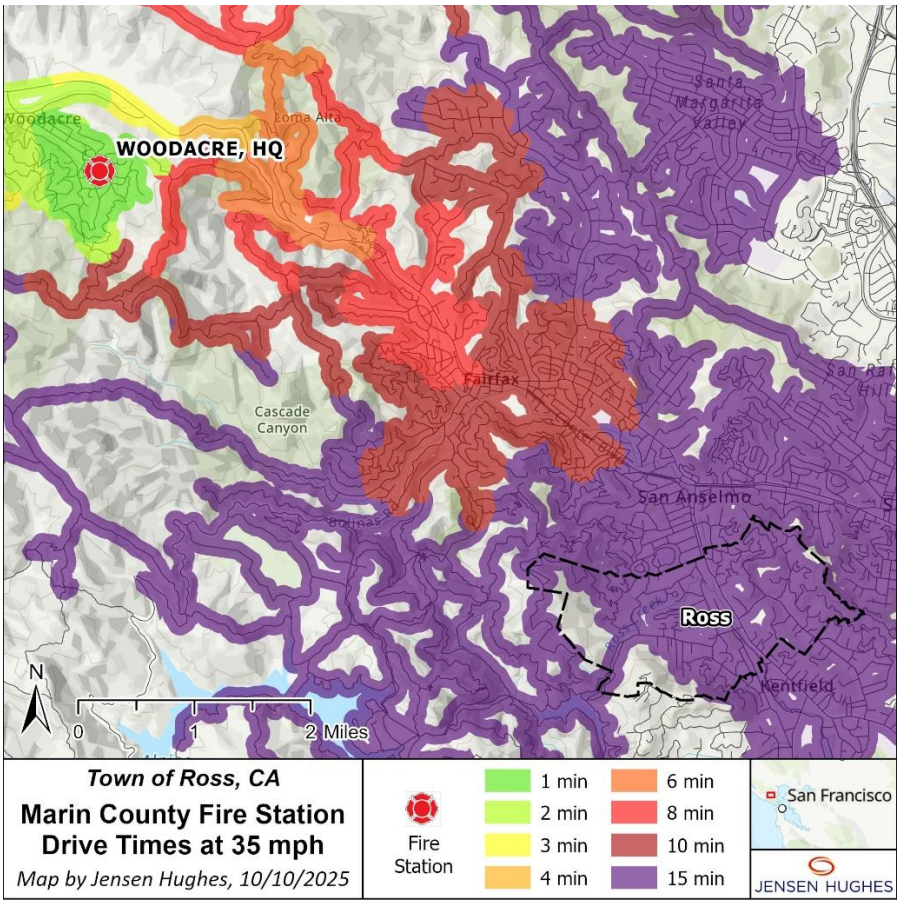


Figure 31 Response Time from MCFD Fire Station 19

7.4.4 Central Marin Fire Department

The Town of Ross could approach the Central Marin Fire Department to enter into an agreement to either provide staffing in Fire Station 18 or to provide coverage from their existing fire station to the town.

The Central Marin Fire Department (CMFD) provides comprehensive fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services to the Cities of Larkspur and Corte Madera. Established in 2019 through the consolidation of the former Larkspur and Corte Madera Fire Departments, CMFD was created to improve operational efficiency, enhance service delivery, and strengthen regional fire and life safety through unified command, shared staffing, and coordinated resource deployment. The Department operates under a Joint Powers Agreement between the two municipalities. It serves an area of approximately seven (7) square miles containing residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and wildland–urban interface (WUI) zones, with a combined population of roughly 20,000 residents.

CMFD operates two strategically located fire stations equipped with Type 1 structural engines, wildland engines, and command vehicles. Firefighters are cross-trained in structural and wildland fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials operations, and technical rescue disciplines. Operational readiness is supported through close coordination with regional partners, including the Marin County Fire Department and neighboring municipal fire agencies, ensuring seamless mutual aid during major incidents such as vegetation fires, severe weather events, and multi-casualty responses.

The Department maintains a robust training and professional development program that includes joint operational drills, wildland fire preparedness exercises, and inter-agency training activities. Core training priorities include leadership development, firefighter safety, and compliance with state and national standards such as those established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the California Office of the State Fire Marshal. CMFD also incorporates modern operational technologies, including digital mapping tools, emergency notification platforms, and mobile data terminals, to support tactical planning and enhance situational awareness.

Figure 32 CMFD Headquarters

Through its integrated approach—combining prevention, preparedness, and professional emergency response the Central Marin Fire Department provides a coordinated, modern, and efficient fire and life safety system for the Central Marin region. The Department's operational capacity, regional partnerships, and community engagement efforts position it to meet current demands while proactively preparing for emerging challenges.

CMFD also has the disadvantage of not having a fire station in proximity to the Town of Ross. Figure 33 demonstrates that this would lead to very unfavorable response times for units responding from Fire Station 16 into Ross. An agreement with CMFD to provide coverage for the Town of Ross would result in significant response times. Contracting CMFD to staff Fire Station 18 would be a more desirable solution. MCFD has the benefit of having the Marin County Emergency Command Center under its purview. Having undergone a consolidation of two (2) departments in the past several years, CMFD may still be in a growth mindset and seeking further opportunities for expansion. Partnering with a department that is pursuing a larger vision and that is open to opportunities can be advantageous.

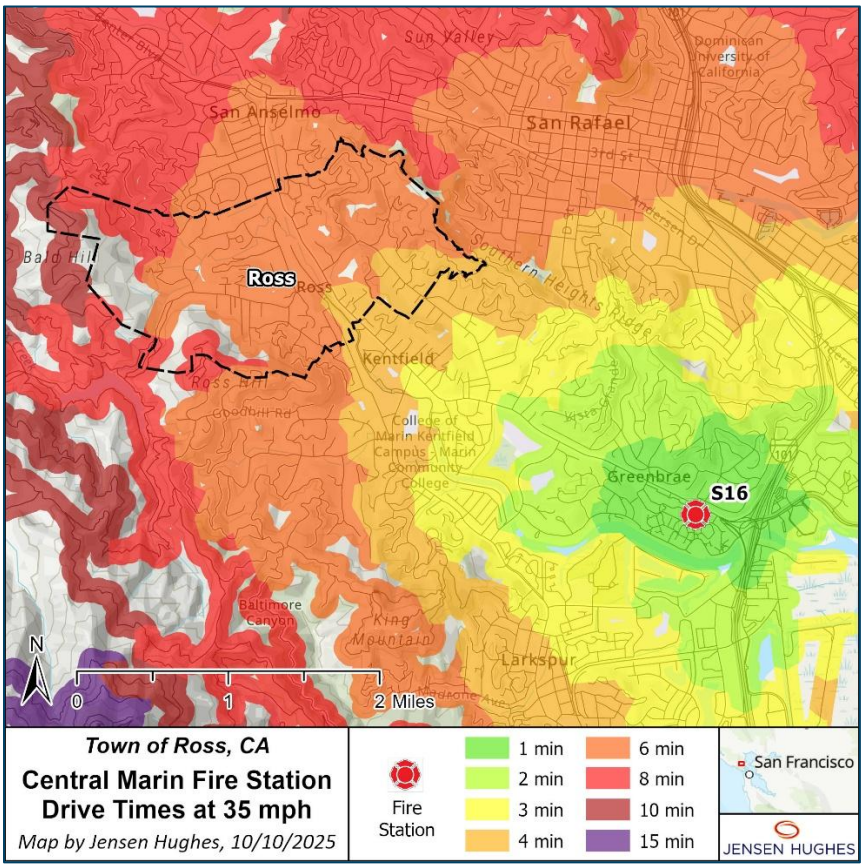


Figure 33 Response Time from CMFD Fire Station 16

8.0 Apparatus Staffing

8.1 TWO-PERSON STAFFING

In the past, the Ross Valley Fire Department staffed its units, and specifically the fire engine in Ross, with two (2) firefighting personnel. In 2025, they very deliberately transitioned to a staffing level of three (3) firefighting personnel on a fire apparatus. This brought the department into line with the standards that exist in Marin County. At the same time, there are no regulations or ordinances that exist stipulating that a fire department within Marin County that prohibits staffing two (2) people on fire companies; there is an understanding amongst the Fire Chiefs on how this number affects interoperability, the effective response force, and firefighter safety.

A return to a two-person staffing model in Ross should be viewed as a regression in service level. The American fire service has conscientiously moved away from this level of staffing for fire companies to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. When the ratio of staffing to apparatus is low, it also requires a larger number of fire engines to assemble the ERF. A fire engine becomes a costly way to shuttle firefighters to the incident scene.

Task analysis reveals a delay in tasks such as search and rescue, deployment of ladders, and incident command initiation when staffing is insufficient. These actions save lives on the fireground. Two (2) person staffing puts the safety of the community at risk and the safety of its firefighters. Although this can be viewed as a cost-saving measure, it comes with a significant degree of risk and liability.

8.2 THREE-PERSON STAFFING

Staffing three (3) people on a fire apparatus can be found in fire departments across the nation. It is especially common in California, as well as in municipalities of similar size to those in the Ross Valley. It is not without forethought that the fire departments in Marin County utilize this staffing level.

Three (3) firefighting personnel become a tactical unit that can manage tasks on the fireground safely and efficiently. This also holds true in other incidents, such as car crashes, emergency medical scenes, and natural gas leaks. This minimum staffing level is an industry standard for a good reason. Having only two (2) firefighters arrive on the scene of a fire places them in grave jeopardy. One firefighter would have to attend to the pump on the fire engine and should not enter the fire building. That would leave one firefighter to enter the structure to attack the fire. This is patently unsafe and has led to line-of-duty deaths in the past.

Utilizing a three (3) person minimum staffing model should be viewed as the optimum model for any fire company stationed at the Ross firehouse. It provides for improved safety and better outcomes for the community and for its firefighters. It also provides a fiscally responsible and affordable solution that sagaciously balances expenses and risk.

8.3 FOUR-PERSON STAFFING

Staffing a fire company with four (4) personnel or more is the highest standard. Unfortunately, this is a luxury item for many fire departments and their taxpayers. Achieving this staffing level is often cost-prohibitive.

Four (4) person staffing is typically found in either high population density urban areas or in fire departments that have a high level of responses that necessitate additional staffing. The Town of Ross matches neither of these descriptions.

For the Town of Ross, much like the rest of Marin County, staffing four (4) firefighting personnel on every fire company would be overambitious. Based on the size of the community, the number of incidents that occur, the hazards that are present, consistency with other surrounding departments, and potential financial constraints, trying to achieve four (4) person staffing for the Ross Firehouse would not be recommended.

The potential exists in the future to create a cadet or internship program that could provide supplementary staffing to reach this staffing level periodically. Programs like these serve as a means to develop future employees and establish a talent pipeline.

9.0 Cost Modeling

The costs associated with providing firefighting services are dependent on a multitude of factors. This section will specifically analyze the expenses related to personnel compensation. Compensation packages should include not only annual wages, but also the other defined benefits provided by the employer, such as health insurance, life insurance, and retirement system contributions.

Even with this expectation, compensation packages can widely vary from one organization to another. The career firefighters from departments in the area enjoy being represented by an organized labor group that negotiates a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the employer to establish pay and benefits for its members. Comparisons between established comparable departments and compensation parity are central tenets of collective bargaining. However, there are many nuances in how this compensation is allocated that can obscure an overall understanding of how one department compensates its employees compared to another.

For instance, there may be incremental salary increases based on seniority milestones. Likewise, additional compensation may be issued for certain licensures, certifications, or qualifications. Traditional and non-traditional benefits, such as healthcare insurance premiums, inclusion of vision and dental insurance, and assignment pay, also influence the compensation package for each department.

9.1 STAFFING

For this portion of the study, the assumption was made that the Town of Ross would accept the recommendation to utilize a three (3) person staffing model. It also assumes that the department providing the service would have a three (3) platoon shift rotation. The composition of the firefighting crew should consist of one (1) Captain to provide supervision to the firefighting crew, one (1) Engineer to drive and operate the fire apparatus, and one (1) firefighter to perform tasks related to firefighting and emergency medical services. At least one of these personnel should be a certified paramedic.

Table 2 Personnel Totals

Position	A-Platoon	B-Platoon	C-Platoon
Captain	1	1	1
Engineer	1	1	1
Firefighter/Paramedic	1	1	1
Daily Total:	3	3	3
Overall Total:			**15**

The relief factor is a widely accepted staffing calculation used throughout the fire service to determine the number of personnel required to maintain continuous twenty-four (24) hour coverage on a given apparatus for each position. It is derived from workforce management principles and labor-hour analysis developed for public safety agencies that maintain 24/7, 365 days a year. While not defined by a specific NFPA standard, the relief factor is a long-standing industry practice supported by organizations such as the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). The calculation divides the total annual hours a position must be staffed by the average yearly hours an employee is available to work after accounting for vacation, sick leave, and other absences. The result, typically ranging from 3.3 to 4.2 full-time firefighters per position, represents the number of employees needed to maintain a constant presence in one position around the clock. When divided across the three (3) platoons, this equates to approximately 1.33 firefighters per position needed to maintain one staffed position, providing a defensible, data-driven foundation for determining appropriate staffing and budgeting levels within a fire department.

To achieve this staffing coefficient, it would theoretically require twenty (20) firefighters to staff the fire station in Ross. However, with the high cost of living in the area, the firefighters commonly desire overtime assignments, and the departments can operate with a much leaner staffing coefficient. A relief factor of 1.15 would likely suffice, requiring seventeen (17) firefighters instead of twenty (20).

9.2 WAGES

Due to the numerous variables noted above, a worst-case scenario was prepared when estimating the cost of wages required to staff a fire station in the Town of Ross. Since this study explores hypothetical scenarios and the potential future service provider has not been identified, it is challenging to quantify exact costs. A

comparison of the pay schedules for the Ross Valley Fire Department, the Central Marin Fire Department, and the Marin County Fire Department was conducted. This comparison revealed that the Marin County Fire Department had the highest salaries amongst the four agencies in 2025.

For this study, the 2025 wages for the Marin County Fire Department were used for the projected computations, as they are the highest and would provide the high end of the potential costs for salaries. Likewise, since the level of seniority for the individuals filling these positions is unknown, the highest end of the pay scale for each rank was used. Also, without knowing which position would hold the paramedic certification, the additional pay was attributed to both the Engineer and Firefighter ranks.

Table 3 Annual Salary for Each Rank

Position	Salary
Captain	$172,070.08
Engineer/Paramedic	$160,043.52
Firefighter/Paramedic	$151,686.08

Table 2 illustrates the number of personnel at each rank required to staff the Ross Firehouse across three (3) platoons. The necessary relief factor has also been discussed. Table 4 illustrates the annual cost for salaries based on the Marin County Fire Department's 2025 wage schedule to staff a fire station in the town of Ross adequately.

Table 4 Salary Costs for Fire Station 18

Position	Salary	Number of Positions	Total
Captain	$172,070.08	3	$516,210.24
Engineer/Paramedic	$160,043.52	3	$480,130.56
Firefighter/Paramedic	$151,686.08	5	$455,058.24
Overall Total:			**$1,451,399.04**

9.3 BENEFITS

The cost of benefits generally accounts for anywhere from forty-five percent (45%) to sixty-five percent (65%) of the employees' salary, without considering any additional compensation for overtime hours worked. If overtime is included, the percentage typically jumps to fifty-five percent (55%) to seventy-five percent (75%) of the base salary.

Based on reports from the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) and data from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), typical employer responsibilities were identified and averaged to create Table 5, which is presented below.

Table 5 Employer Cost Percentages

Benefit	Employer Responsibility	Note
Medicare Contribution	1.45%	
Unemployment Insurance	1%	
Worker's Compensation	4%	
Health/Dental/Vision Insurance	20%	*Dependent on selected plans
California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS)	26.36%	*Does not account for unfunded accrued liability (UAL), which is an additional 15%
Total:	52.81%	*67.81%

9.4 COMBINED COST OF PAY AND BENEFITS

The resulting costs, calculated using the overall total amount for salaries from Table 4 and factoring in the potential 67.81% cost for benefits, amounted to the figure presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Cost of Salary and Benefits

Salaries	x Benefit	Total for Benefits
$1,451,399.04	67.81%	$984,193.68
+ Salaries		$1,451,399.04
Overall Total:		**$2,435,592.72**

At the stated rates, the annual cost for providing salaries and benefits for the seventeen (17) firefighting personnel to staff a fire station in the Town of Ross would be $ 2,435,592.72.

9.5 TOTAL COST PROJECTION

The amount of $2,435,592.72 is solely for wages and benefits and does not include any costs associated with administrative oversight. An appropriate estimate for this cost based on comparable arrangements around the country would be ten percent (10%) of the fully loaded cost of salary and benefits, resulting in an additional $243,559.27. This would raise the total amount to $2,679,151.92. Ultimately, the cost of administrative oversight would need to be negotiated with the service provider that is decided upon.

Employer-provided uniforms, personal protective equipment, employee training, and safety equipment must also be factored into the calculation. To do so, a value of five percent (5%) has been assigned to provide for this expense. After adding the resulting $121,779.63, the total now stands at $2,800,931.55.

The JPA requires that to withdraw from the authority notice, which must be provided by June 30th of that year, with it taking effect two (2) years later. The soonest that this notice could be given is in 2026. The agreement would be severed on July 1, 2028. During those years, successor collective bargaining agreements will likely be in place. This study has provided a generous estimate of a four percent (4%) increase in salary and benefits for

each year, resulting in a total of eight percent (12%). A corresponding inflation rate for the cost of uniforms and safety equipment has also been provided. The projected cost of services offered in 2028 is $3,127,043.33. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year (FYE26), the Town of Ross prepared a budget with an expected expense of $2,973,918.00 for fire department services.

For the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year (FYE25), the Ross Valley Fire Department projected an expense of $13,148,898.00 to fully fund wages and benefits for its employees. With a total expense projection of $14,907,472.00, this demonstrates that the department currently operates with a fifteen percent (15%) overhead above employee compensation. The total projected expenses for FYE25 increased by 3.3 percent (3.3%) above the previous fiscal year. Thus, validating the methodology that was used to estimate costs for this study is reasonable and achievable.

It should be noted that, regardless of whether the Town of Ross remains a part of the joint powers agreement or chooses to withdraw from it, the inflation costs associated with goods and services will apply. What is unknown is the actual result of the negotiated successor collective bargaining agreements. It is possible that increases in salary and benefits will not amount to four percent (4%) a year. Additionally, the pay grade, which is based on the certification and seniority of the personnel assigned to the fire station, is also unknown. It is improbable that all seventeen (17) firefighting personnel assigned to the station would be assigned the top pay grade. Lastly, the selected service provider may not be the agency that has the highest pay scale among the listed agencies. As was previously mentioned, the estimates provided were based on the “worst-case” scenario. It is expected that the actual costs will be lower than the estimated cost of $3,127,043.33 for services in 2028.

9.6 FAIR SHARE PRINCIPLE

This document, along with companion studies commissioned by the Friends of Ross Firehouse, provides a wealth of information and options for the Town of Ross to consider as it moves forward regarding its fire station and fire protection services. Ultimately, the community must determine its risk tolerance and the amount it is willing to pay to minimize and mitigate that risk. To achieve this, they must keep the end goal in mind: a fair value for a fair share. Being charged a disproportionate share for the services received based on an archaic formula needs to be rectified. There are several options available to achieve the goal of having a staffed fire engine arrive at the scene of an emergency in the Town of Ross. Due diligence should be given to exploring the potential of each. Part of this risk-benefit analysis should closely evaluate the cost of services against the value of the services being provided. Regardless of which agency the town partners with in the future, there should be no resulting disparate cost billed to the Town of Ross. The Ross community does not expect to receive something for nothing, but should question “are they getting their money's worth?”

10.0 Options for Funding the Staffing of the Ross Firehouse

Restoring the Town of Ross firehouse to a full contingent of seventeen (17) firefighting personnel will require a sustainable, multi-pronged funding approach that aligns operational needs with community expectations. One pathway involves allocating additional municipal tax dollars to support the restoration of staffing. This could include modest adjustments to existing property or parcel taxes or the creation of a dedicated public safety assessment for this specific purpose. While increasing local revenues will require voter approval and careful communication, it also provides the most stable, long-term funding source for essential emergency services. The Friends of Ross Firehouse has already created a ballot initiative to allow the voters of the Town of Ross to decide whether staffing will be restored at the Ross firehouse or it will remain unstaffed.

Another option is to renegotiate the terms of the existing Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) that governs the shared fire services provided by the Ross Valley Fire Department to neighboring jurisdictions. The Town may explore modifications that rebalance cost-sharing formulas, restructure resource allocations, or update staffing commitments. A revised JPA could ensure that Ross receives a fair distribution of personnel relative to its financial contributions and risk profile, potentially easing the fiscal burden of maintaining full staffing within town limits.

An additional approach would be to redirect the funds the Town of Ross currently allocates to the Ross Valley Fire Department toward a new service provider under a standalone or contract-for-services model. By evaluating cost proposals from regional fire agencies or nearby municipalities, the Town could determine whether another provider could supply the needed personnel more cost-effectively. This type of agreement may offer more predictable service levels, more explicit staffing guarantees, or operational efficiencies not available under the existing JPA structure. While such a shift would require careful financial modeling and transition planning, it presents a viable option for securing adequate staffing within the Town's existing budget footprint.

Federal assistance may also play a crucial role, particularly through the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). SAFER grants are designed to help fire departments restore or maintain adequate staffing levels by funding salaries and benefits for new or rehired firefighters over a multi-year period. While the grant is time-limited and requires adherence to specific hiring and retention guidelines, it can provide critical bridge funding that allows the Town to rebuild staffing more rapidly than local revenues alone would permit.

Finally, the Town may consider establishing or expanding an endowment supported by private donations from residents, local foundations, or philanthropic partners. Such an endowment could generate annual investment income dedicated to fire staffing, equipment, and training. Although endowments require significant upfront fundraising and typically serve as a supplemental, rather than primary, funding source, they offer a flexible mechanism for long-term support and can help alleviate pressure on the general fund.

Together, these funding strategies form a comprehensive framework that balances immediate needs with long-term financial resilience. By combining local tax measures, strategic JPA renegotiation, targeted federal assistance, and community philanthropy, Ross can position itself to restore and sustain a fully staffed firehouse. This diversified approach not only enhances public safety but also reinforces the Town's commitment to responsible governance and collaborative problem-solving.

11.0 Conclusion

The restoration of a fully staffed firehouse in the Town of Ross represents both a public safety imperative and a strategic opportunity to reestablish a reliable, community-centered emergency response. The feasibility study demonstrates that the closure of Fire Station 18 has substantially reduced response reliability and increased travel times into Ross, creating avoidable risk for residents and visitors. Restoring a three-person engine company within town limits is the most effective way to reestablish rapid emergency response, strengthen the Town's resilience to structure fires and medical emergencies, and ensure compliance with established fire-service performance benchmarks. Regardless of the selected model, the Town must align its financial commitments with its service priorities to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

To achieve this objective, Ross should pursue a deliberate and phased implementation plan. First, the Town must determine its preferred service model, whether through renegotiating the current Joint Powers Agreement, contracting with a new provider to staff Fire Station 18, or leveraging transitional federal funding through

mechanisms such as the SAFER grant. Each scenario should include detailed cost modeling, performance expectations, and identification of the partner agency best positioned to deliver consistent and reliable service. Concurrently, the Town should accelerate efforts to secure a long-term facility solution by ensuring that fire-station space is preserved within the Civic Center redevelopment plan. Facility readiness will be a critical path item for reacquiring or contracting for staffing.

Funding will be central to successfully restoring staffing levels. The Town can pursue a combination of strategies, including aligning its current RVFD contribution with a revised agreement, modestly adjusting tax revenues, and competing for federal SAFER grant opportunities that support multi-year staffing restoration. Additionally, community-driven philanthropy, including the establishment of a public-safety endowment, can provide a stable source of supplemental revenue. A diversified financial approach minimizes strain on any single funding source and creates long-term sustainability.

With a clear plan, responsible funding, and community support, the Town of Ross can restore high-quality, locally based fire protection and emergency response. Implementing this plan will reestablish a staffed fire engine within the town, safeguard the community's historic firehouse, and ensure that Ross maintains the emergency-service capabilities expected of a modern and resilient municipality. This path forward not only restores critical public-safety infrastructure but also strengthens accountability, equity, and operational excellence in the delivery of fire and emergency services.

Appendix A -Equipment Needs Assessment and Start-Up Costs

The equipment, gear, and infrastructure items identified in this report, along with any associated cost estimates, are provided for planning and informational purposes only. All cost figures represent planning-level estimates intended to support high-level budgeting, scenario evaluation, and policy discussion. They are not intended to represent final pricing, binding offers, guaranteed costs, or procurement commitments of any kind.

Actual costs for fire department equipment and gear may vary substantially based on a wide range of factors, including but not limited to final equipment specifications; vendor selection; competitive bidding outcomes; cooperative or intergovernmental purchasing agreements; contract terms and conditions; delivery schedules; geographic considerations; supply chain availability; market demand; and economic conditions at the time of purchase. As such, precise costs cannot be determined until the Town completes formal procurement actions in accordance with applicable purchasing policies and regulations.

This analysis assumes conventional procurement methods for planning purposes only. Actual expenditures may be reduced, deferred, or offset through alternative purchasing strategies, including but not limited to state or federal grant funding, donations, surplus equipment transfers, cooperative purchasing programs, lease-purchase agreements, or the acquisition of used or refurbished equipment. The availability, eligibility, timing, and success of such strategies are inherently uncertain and were not assumed unless explicitly stated.
Any potential grant funding opportunities referenced or implied in this report are competitive and subject to external approval processes. No grant funding has been guaranteed or assumed in the development of cost estimates. The pursuit or receipt of grant funding may affect procurement timelines, equipment specifications, and final costs.

Equipment quantities, configurations, and assumptions presented herein are scaled to a single-station, single-engine fire department service model and reflect a minimum viable level of service based on current assumptions regarding community risk, call demand, and service expectations. Changes in service level, staffing model, response requirements, regulatory standards, or community growth may necessitate additional equipment or alternative configurations, resulting in costs beyond those identified in this report.

Cost estimates do not account for future inflation, tariff changes, extraordinary market volatility, or unforeseen economic conditions. Given ongoing variability in public safety equipment markets, particularly for apparatus, personal protective equipment, and specialty response equipment, actual costs at the time of procurement may differ materially from those presented.

Final equipment selection, quantities, specifications, procurement method, and total costs will be determined by the Town through its adopted procurement processes, vendor negotiations, and contractual agreements. Nothing in this report shall be construed as a recommendation to purchase specific products, a guarantee of pricing, or a commitment of public funds.

The equipment and resources identified below represent an estimated minimum baseline necessary to support basic fire and emergency service delivery for a single-engine operation. This inventory is not intended to be comprehensive, nor does it reflect the full range of equipment typically found in a mature or fully built-out fire department. Instead, it establishes a bare-bones, entry-level standard intended solely for planning and feasibility purposes.

Even at this baseline level of capability, the proposed service model would remain highly dependent on mutual aid and automatic aid partners to supplement staffing, specialized equipment, and operational capacity for incidents exceeding routine first-due response.

Fire and Command Apparatus:
Type 1 Fire Engine (used) – $400,000 – 900,000
Type 6 Fire Engine (used) – $150,000 – 275,000
Command Vehicle (used) – $30,000 – 50,000

This assessment does not include the provision of a reserve or spare apparatus to account for periods when frontline equipment may be unavailable due to mechanical failure, scheduled maintenance, or inspection requirements.

1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Structural Firefighting

- Structural turnout coats - $2000
- Structural turnout pants - $1500
- Firefighting boots (rubber/leather) - $200 (rubber) $450 (leather)
- Firefighting gloves (structural) - $115
- Firefighting hoods - $120
- Helmets (structural, compliant with NFPA 1971) - $450

Total for one set of structural firefighting PPE: $4635 (approximate)
Specialty PPE

- Wildland PPE (shirts, pants, helmets) - $500

Total for one set of Wildland firefighting PPE: $500

2. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

- SCBA packs - $7,000-$12,000
- Facepieces (multiple sizes) - $400
- Air Cylinders - $1600
- SCBA fill station (cascade or compressor) - $25,000-$50,000

3. Hose, Water & Fire Suppression Equipment
Hose

- Supply hose (3”) - $300-500/ 50’ section ($7200)
- Attack hose (1¾”, 2½”) - $235/ 50’ section ($2350)
- Wildland hose packs - $700

Nozzles & Appliances

- Nozzle Base (Shutoff) - $500
- Smooth bore tip - $200
- Combination/fog nozzle tip – $600
- Various hose and appliance adapters - $1000

4. Water Supply

- Hydrant tools - $100

---

5. Fire Ground Tools

Forcible Entry

- Pry bars - $300
- Flathead axes - $75
- Striking Tool - $250
- Bolt cutters - $125
- Pike Pole - $200

Ventilation

- Positive pressure fans (electric/gas) - $4,000
- Chain saws (ventilation saw) - $2,500
- Circular saws - $1,500

Search & Rescue

- Thermal imaging cameras - $5,000

---

6. Ladders

- Ground ladders (various lengths)
    - 14’ Straight/Roof - $550
    - 24’ Extension - $1,200
- Attic ladders - $400

---

7. EMS Equipment (if providing EMS)

Basic Life Support (BLS)

- $10,000-15,000

Advanced Life Support (ALS)

- $20,000-25,000

8. Vehicle Extrication

- Hydraulic set-up - $10,000 – 15,000
- Battery-powered set-up - $12,000 – 20,000
- Stabilization struts - $5,000

9. Hazardous Materials Equipment

- HazMat PPE (Levels A–D as required)
- Chemical detection & monitoring meters
- Decontamination pools & tents
- Plug & patch kits
- Absorbents
- Spill containment tools

Engine Company Basic Hazardous Materials Operations Response - $5,000-7,000

10. Maintenance

- Apparatus bay exhaust capture systems - $30,000
- PPE Extractors (NFPA 1851 compliant) - $8,000

11. Communications & Technology

- Portable radios - $2,000/ each

DISCLAIMER: The equipment, tools, hose, personal protective equipment, and related quantities identified in this report are based on minimum, single-unit assumptions only. This estimate reflects the equipment necessary to support one frontline fire engine, one brush truck, and one command vehicle operating at a baseline level of service. It is presented solely for high-level planning and feasibility purposes.

This analysis does not account for reserve or spare apparatus covering periods when frontline vehicles may be unavailable due to mechanical failure, scheduled maintenance, inspection requirements, repairs, or unexpected downtime. No redundancy in apparatus is assumed or reflected in the quantities or cost estimates presented.

Similarly, this estimate assumes single-item quantities for many tools, hose loads, and equipment components (e.g., one engine complement of hose, a limited number of SCBA sufficient only for initial staffing, and single sets of specialty tools). It does not include any reserve, back-up, or replacement inventory necessary to account for everyday wear, damage, contamination, loss, maintenance cycles, or equipment failure.

This analysis further does not account for back-stock inventory, surge capacity, training duplication, or redundancy required to sustain continuous operations over time. In practice, effective fire department operations require multiple layers of redundancy, including spare apparatus, additional hose inventories, duplicate tools,

extra SCBA and cylinders, and replacement PPE to maintain readiness and firefighter safety. None of those redundancy requirements are reflected herein.

Additionally, this estimate does not account for future growth, changes in staffing levels, expansion of service demand, or increased operational complexity, all of which would require additional apparatus, equipment, and capital investment beyond the baseline identified.

Accordingly, the quantities and costs presented in this report should be understood as a minimum viable starting point only. They should not be interpreted as sufficient for long-term, resilient, or fully sustainable fire department operations. Final determinations regarding apparatus quantities, reserve capacity, equipment redundancy, and backstock inventory must be established by the Town based on adopted service levels, operational policies, risk tolerance, and accepted best practices in fire service.

TOTAL COST ESTIMATE: $1,483,590

Appendix B – About Jensen Hughes

BACKGROUND + QUALIFICATIONS

Our Expertise

+ FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
+ RISK AND HAZARDS
+ EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
+ SECURITY RISK CONSULTING
+ FORENSICS

Our Global Reach

Our Purpose is Making Our World Safe, Secure, and Resilient™

Founded in 1980, Jensen Hughes is the global leader in engineering, consulting, and technology services, dedicated to protecting what matters most through technical excellence. We are a global team of over 1,900 engineers, scientists, consultants, and practitioners dedicated to advancing the science of safety and risk management in more than 100 countries and across over 100 offices.

In House Areas of Expertise

Using the diverse backgrounds of our fire safety engineers, consultants, and risk specialists dedicated to protecting people, property, assets, and operations, our firm has developed expertise in understanding the increasingly complex range of hazards, risks, and challenges that fire and EMS departments face. This interdisciplinary perspective enables us to create more comprehensive approaches that meet a range of performance goals tailored to the specific needs of your community.

We have the expertise needed to develop solutions for our customers because of our collective backgrounds in the following areas:

Fire + Emergency Services Consulting

Our Fire + Emergency Services team delivers the expertise needed to develop solutions because of our collective backgrounds in the following areas:

+ Strategic Response Planning
+ Fire Apparatus Design Specifications
+ Private Fire Brigades
+ Staffing and Deployment Modeling
+ Fire Department Consolidation Studies
+ Community Risk Assessments/Reduction
+ Standards of Cover Development
+ Policy and Procedure Development
+ Budgeting and Financial Management
+ GIS Response Time Modeling and Analysis
+ Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)
+ Airport Planning and ARFF Response
+ Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
+ Fire Station Design and Distribution
+ Community Master Planning
+ Crisis Communications
+ Fire Investigations
+ Community Outreach and Education
+ Disaster Planning
+ Training Tower Design and Evaluation
+ Emergency Management and Planning
+ FD Concurrency Evaluations
+ Fire Hazard and Risk Assessments
+ Post Incident Analysis / After Action
+ Emergency Response Capabilities Analysis
+ Alternative Delivery Models

Our extensive involvement in technical committees and professional organizations demonstrates our commitment to advancing the fire and emergency medical services industry. Our past and present involvements include:

- NFPA 1300, Standard on Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan Development
- NFPA 1660, Standard for Emergency, Continuity, and Crisis Management: Preparedness, Response, and Recovery
- NFPA 1700, Guide for Structural Firefighting
- NFPA 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments
- NFPA 1720, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments
- Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)
- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)
- Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS)
- Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)
- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
- International Association of Firefighters (IAFF)
- International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA)
- Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE)

Appendix C -Biography

Experience:

33+ years

Credentials

Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Fire Marshal (FM), Fire and Emergency Services Analyst (FESA) Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)

Michael Stanley, MED, CFO, FM, FESA

Project Role: Sr. Fire and Emergency Services Consultant

- MEd, Education & Human Resource Studies, Colorado State University
- BS, Organizational Leadership for Emergency Services, Charter Oak St. College
- AS, Emergency Medical Services, Community College of Aurora
- AAS, Fire Science Technology, Red Rocks Community College

With over three decades of progressive leadership in emergency services, Mike is a seasoned professional with in-depth expertise in fire and EMS operations, system evaluation, and strategic planning. Currently serving as a Senior Fire and Emergency Services Consultant with Jensen Hughes, Mike leads complex projects involving system assessments, operational reviews, and performance-based improvement plans for public agencies. Before this role, Mike served as Fire Chief and Emergency Manager for the City of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, overseeing fire protection, emergency medical services, and emergency management for a population of over 90,000. In that role, he led the department through the global pandemic, developed strategic initiatives to enhance service delivery, and managed a $16 million operating budget alongside a multi-million-dollar capital improvement plan.

Mike also brings extensive hands-on experience from a 22-year tenure with the Aurora (CO) Fire Department, where he served as Medical Branch Commander and helped develop the Prehospital Care Consortium to enhance community EMS outcomes. As Past President of the Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs Association, he championed legislation that advanced funding and firefighter mental health. A committed educator and advocate, Mike has served as an instructor at the National Fire Academy and multiple higher education institutions, and holds numerous credentials, including recognition as a Chief Fire Officer, Fire Marshal, and Fire and Emergency Services Analyst. Recognized nationally for leadership and valor, Mike Stanley combines operational expertise with strategic insight to deliver solutions that are efficient, equitable, and community-focused.

SSL
LAW
FIRM
LLP

1 POST STREET, SUITE 2100
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104
TELEPHONE: 415.814.6400
FACSIMILE: 415.814.6401
business@ssllawfirm.com

JOHN BEARD
DIRECT TEL: 415.243.2667
jbeard@ssllawfirm.com

December 30, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Town Council
Town of Ross
31 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
Ross, CA 94957
Email: towncouncil@townofrossca.gov
cmartel@townofrossca.gov

Re: Friends of Ross Firehouse - Review of Town's Plan and Friends' Plan

Dear Council Members:

We represent Friends of Ross Firehouse, and on behalf of the organization's members, we write to comment on the Town of Ross's ("**Town**") plan to demolish the historic Public Safety Building at 31 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Ross, California ("**Firehouse**") and replace it as part of the Town's plan to upgrade its administrative facilities ("**Town Plan**"[1]).

While the Town's goals are commendable, its approach, as provided for in the Town Plan, is not. The Firehouse is a registered historic resource and a landmark that defines the Town's character. Additionally, the demolition of the Firehouse is unnecessary to achieve the Town's goals. Friends of Ross Firehouse has worked diligently and thoroughly to develop an alternative plan that differs most significantly from the Town Plan by providing for the rehabilitation of the existing Firehouse ("**Friends' Plan**").

The Friends' Plan has multiple legal and practical advantages over the Town Plan. Below, we explain how the Friends' Plan is the most practical path forward for the Town given:

1. The requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act ("**CEQA**");
2. The lack of an impact by the Friends' Plan on a nearby area reserved for housing units to meet the Town's Regional Housing Needs Allocation requirements and designated for such in the Town's 2023-31 Housing Element ("**Housing Element**");[2] and

[1] The Town Plan is available online at https://www.townofrossca.gov/planning/page/facilities-master-plan.

[2] Available online at https://www.townofrossca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/4342/ross_he_-_amended_5-6-24_opt.pdf.

3. The lack of any significant impact by the Friends' Plan on the Town's obligations under the Lease and Operating Agreement between the Town and the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority, which the Town considered and approved at the November 21, 2025 special meeting ("**Lease Agreement**").

CEQA

Our understanding is that the Town has elected to implement Concept B of the Town Plan. Concept B includes the following primary components:

- Demolition of the Firehouse, a state-registered historic structure;
- Renovation of the Ross Town Hall, a state-registered historic structure;
- Demolition of the existing two-story Public Works building;
- Demolition/removal of the existing modular unit housing the Planning & Building Departments;
- Demolition and relocation of most existing site improvements including parking lots, driveways, landscaping, grading and drainage, and utilities; and
- Construction of new buildings.

The Town Plan's environmental impacts will require a time consuming and expensive environmental review process (i.e., the preparation of an environmental impact report ("**EIR**") under CEQA) and mitigation measures to reduce environmental impacts.

1. Demolition of a state-registered historic resource like the Firehouse will require an environmental impact report.

The Firehouse (and Town Hall[3]) is listed on the California Register of Historic Resources.[4] (The only other building in Ross in the California Register is the Phoenix Lake Log Cabin; the only other historic structures are bridges.[5])

Under CEQA, local agencies such as the Town must prepare an EIR for any project "which may have a significant effect on the environment." (Public Resources Code § 21151(a).) The

[3] The Town Hall and the Firehouse were designed and built together in 1927 by architect John White.

[4] In 2016, VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting prepared a draft Historic Resource Evaluation for the Town. (The report is available through the Friends of Ross Firehouse's website at https://www.friendsofross.com/data.) The report states at page 2, "[T]he Ross Public Safety Building [i.e., Firehouse] is individually listed in the California Register, meaning that it is already considered a 'historical resource' under [CEQA]." *See also* California's Built Environment Resources Directory at https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30338. The Marin County spreadsheet (available for download at the above website) lists the "Ross Town Hall and Firehouse" at 31 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with a status code of "2S2." The status codes are explained at https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1068/files/Resource-Status-Codes.pdf. "2S2" means "Individually determined eligible for [National Register] by consensus through Section 106 process. **Listed in the [California Register]**."

[5] 2016 Historic Resource Evaluation by VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting at page 2.

demolition of the Firehouse would be "a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource" and is "a significant effect on the environment." (14 CCR § 15064.5(b).)

2. The Friends' Plan is a reasonable alternative to the Town Plan that rehabilitates rather than demolishes the Firehouse.

The EIR will require an evaluation of reasonable alternatives to the Town's project, i.e., the Town Plan. (14 CCR § 15126.6.) The EIR will also be required to describe measures to minimize significant adverse impacts. (14 CCR § 15126.4.) We are unaware of any mitigation measures that would compensate for the full demolition of a historic resource like the Firehouse.

Friends of Ross Firehouse has prepared such an alternative, the Friends' Plan. The Friends' Plan rehabilitates the Firehouse. Our understanding is that the Town's position is that the Firehouse structure "contains significant structural damage at dilapidated portion of facility"[6] and that the cost of rehabilitation is more than the cost to replace it with a new structure.[7]

But Friends of Ross Firehouse has engaged professional public safety architecture, engineering, and contracting firms who have prepared plans, reports, and studies that indicate that the Firehouse is in fact a viable candidate for rehabilitation, and can be completed in a cost-effective manner.

3. A CEQA exemption would likely apply to the rehabilitation of the Firehouse.

Under CEQA, the Friends' Plan's treatment of the Firehouse would likely be exempt in accordance with 14 CCR section 15331, which exempts "Class 31" projects that are "limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources." (The rehabilitation work would be required to be done in a manner consistent with Secretary of the Interior's standards.)

[6] Town Plan at p. 26.

[7] *See* https://www.townofrossca.gov/civiccenter/page/frequently-asked-questions-faq:

> 2. **Can we renovate these facilities instead of rebuilding them?**
>
> No. Renovating the existing buildings to ESA and FEMA requirements could cost as much as or more than demolishing the old buildings and constructing a new building and would not resolve the existing floor plan and parcel constraints.

We note that the Town does not plan to demolish the Town Hall building, which was constructed in conjunction with the Public Safety Building (i.e., the Firehouse), casting doubt on the assertion that the Public Safety Building cannot be rehabilitated.

4. The Town Plan will have a greater impact than the Friends' Plan on Corte Madera Creek, and the replacement of storm drainage facilities will require expensive upgrades.

The Town Plan includes the near complete demolition and rebuild of all parking lots, grading and drainage, landscaping, and utilities, all of which extend to the top of the bank of Corte Madera Creek:[8]

The Town's Municipal Code governs and limits any work within 25 feet of top of bank and recommends a minimum 50 feet setback for new buildings. (Ross Municipal Code § 18.41.100(s).) Corte Madera Creek is identified as an active and known habitat for steelhead trout (salmonid family), a federally threatened species.[9] The level of site disturbance contemplated in the Town Plan will require extensive environmental study and construction mitigation measures. (For example, the Town voted on September 11, 2025, to approve the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for upgrades to the Bolinas Avenue storm drain system, mainly the installation of additional piping.[10] Our understanding is that the Town spent approximately $149,000.00 on environmental and cultural resources review and is expected to spend an additional estimated $130,000.00 on construction mitigation and monitoring measures.)

Further, our understanding is that current stormwater treatment at the Town Plan's project site consists primarily of grease trap interceptors mounted in the parking lots, which then drain

[8] Image of Concept B at Town Plan p. 8.

[9] *See* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corte_Madera_Creek_(Marin_County)#Ecology and https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/endangered-species-conservation/central-california-coast-steelhead.

[10] *See* https://www.townofrossca.gov/publicworks/page/bolinas-avenue-storm-drain-improvements-phase-2.

directly into Corte Madera Creek. Due to the demolition and reconstruction of all parking and other site improvements, new and expensive bioretention facilities (e.g., underground bio-swale and retention basins) will be required per current regulatory requirements.[11] Under the Friends' Plan, stormwater drainage into Corte Madera Creek would remain unchanged.

We note that in October 2024, the Town of San Anselmo found the renovation of Firehouse 20, which is "situated over Sleepy Hollow Creek,"[12] to be categorically exempt under a similar exception, 14 CCR section 15301.[13] With regard to the Firehouse, we expect that the Town could find similarly for the Friends' Plan.

5. <u>The Friends' Plan would encounter less public opposition and would require a less extensive CEQA process</u>.

As noted, the Friends' Plan retains and rehabilitates the Firehouse. The Friends' Plan also limits construction work to the pre-existing building footprints, and proposes no new construction or site work within 25 feet of Corte Madera Creek:[14]

Based on our experience with CEQA, we believe that the Town Plan will require an 18-36 month EIR process, at a cost of $500,000-$1,00,000 including construction and other mitigation

[11] *See* https://mcstoppp.org/2020/03/new-and-redevelopment/; https://mcstoppp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/basmaa-postconstruction-manual.pdf; and Municipal Code chapter 15.54.

[12] *See* Item 2.2 (p. 96) of the October 22, 2024 Town of San Anselmo staff packet at https://d3n9y02raazwpg.cloudfront.net/sananselmo-ca/368b3b75-bba9-11ee-8fe8-0050569183fa-f1987086-fb22-4848-a7a9-9d73f32a105d-1729201596.pdf.

[13] Town of San Anselmo Town Council's October 22, 2024 meeting minutes at https://sananselmo-ca.granicus.com/DocumentViewer.php?file=sananselmo-ca_757d0b06e5a4dc39d248fd0743e982b6.pdf&view=1.

[14] Image from materials submitted by Friends of Ross Firehouse for its presentation to the Town Council on January 8, 2026.

measures. Litigation could further extend both of these estimates. Time and cost will be driven in part by the amount of opposition to the plan and could include Town liability for attorney's fees incurred by opposition groups. Depending upon the degree of success, an opposing party may recover the entirety of its fees. In this case, the Town can reasonably expect opposition from local environmental organizations, historic preservation groups, and public safety advocacy groups such as Friends of Ross Firehouse. Here, if the Friends of Ross Firehouse were to successfully challenge the project due to the demolition of a historic resource, any claim it may have for the total recovery of its attorney's fees would be supported by the expert reports, studies, and testimony it has prepared to demonstrate the feasibility of preserving and renovating the Firehouse.

Given that the Friends' Plan calls for the rehabilitation of the historic Firehouse, limits work to existing structures' footprints, and does not contemplate construction near Corte Madera Creek, the Friends' Plan would likely not receive significant pushback from historic preservation and environmental organizations.

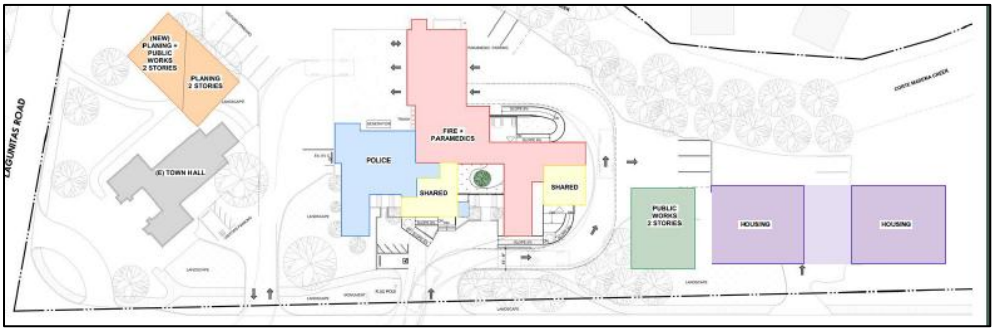
Housing Element Impacts

The Friends' Plan does not require deviating from the Town Plan's allocation of the western edge of the site for nine housing units to meet the Town's Regional Housing Needs Allocation requirements.

The Town Plan shows the nine housing units in purple coloring:[15]

[15] Image of Concept B at Town Plan p. 8.

The Friends' Plan contemplates the same area for the same housing units:[16]



Adoption of the Friends' Plan will not require any changes to the Town's Housing Element.

Impacts to the Lease Agreement

As stated in the Recitals to the Lease Agreement,[17] the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority ("**RVPA**") has been and continues to be a holdover tenant at the Firehouse under the terms of the lease agreement between it and the Town, which expired September 30, 2024. (Lease Agreement, Recital C.) That lease agreement had allowed the RVPA to use the existing paramedic facilities at the Firehouse. The Town and the RVPA recently entered into the Lease Agreement for paramedic facilities contemplated under the Town Plan. (Lease Agreement ¶ 5(a)(ii).)

Our understanding is that the Town staff's position is that the Lease Agreement prohibits the Town from adopting the Friends' Plan, and the Town is legally required to proceed with the Town Plan.

Our review of the Lease Agreement shows that this is not the case.

The term of the Lease Agreement commences on the first business day following the Town's receipt of either a certificate of occupancy (temporary or otherwise) for the proposed paramedic facility or January 1, 2029, whichever occurs first. (Lease Agreement ¶ 4.)

Per the Town's staff report regarding the Lease Agreement, the Town "can terminate the lease on 30 days' notice if the cost to construct the Facility exceeds the 'Final Facility Costs,' which are defined as the 'Projected Facility Costs,' plus 10%." (The estimated cost of the

[16] Image from materials submitted by Friends of Ross Firehouse for its presentation to the Town Council on January 8, 2026.
[17] An unexecuted copy of the Lease Agreement is available online at https://www.townofrossca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/town_council/meeting/4566/final_11-21-25_rvpa_lease_staff_report_with_lm_edits_web.pdf.

paramedic facility is $3,503,125.00.[18]) There is no penalty provision for failing to keep costs within the Projected Facility Costs. (*See* Lease Agreement ¶ 15(b)(i).)

Additionally, if the paramedic facility is not completed within 90 days of the estimated completion date (January 1, 2029), RVPA may terminate the Lease Agreement in accordance with Lease Agreement paragraph 5(c). And, "Force Majeure Events" "at any stage of the project related to the Facilities" which cause "progress on the Facility to stop" for at least six months constitute an "Unreasonable Delay" under the Lease Agreement, and RVPA has the right to terminate the Lease Agreement for such a delay. (Lease Agreement ¶ 5(d).) Force Majeure Events include delays caused by court orders and the environmental review process. (Lease Agreement ¶ 5(c).)

Practically speaking, so long as the Town continues to house RVPA at the Firehouse, as it is doing now under the terms of the current lease, it is difficult to ascertain any legal or monetary damage from the Town's failure to deliver the new paramedic facility.

Further, the Friends' Plan includes brand new paramedic facilities in the existing historic Firehouse, and the plans include all programmatic paramedic requirements contained in the Town Plan. In any case, it's difficult to see why RVPA would object to the Town providing the RVPA with brand new facilities in the Firehouse that meet all current codes and Emergency Services Act requirements. The Lease Agreement requires the facilities provided to RVPA to "substantially comply" with the requirements of the Town Plan. Here, the Friends' Plan would do so *earlier than anticipated* under the Town Plan by providing the same paramedic requirements as the Town Plan within the already existing structure.

***

The Town should seriously consider the alternative plan prepared by the Friends of Ross Firehouse. The Friends' Plan is more likely to survive review under CEQA, does not impact Corte Madera Creek to the same extent as the Town Plan, does not impact the Town's housing efforts, and can be accomplished without significant impact to the Town's Lease Agreement with the RVPA.

Very truly yours,

John Beard

cc (by email): Client

[18] *See* Attachment 2 of the staff report for the Lease Agreement at https://www.townofrossca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/town_council/meeting/4566/final_11-21-25_rvpa_lease_staff_report_with_lm_edits_web.pdf.