

January 5, 2025

Honorable Council Members
Town of Ross, CA

Re: Ross Fire Station and Public Safety Protection Initiative

This letter is in full support of the Town's proposed renovation of Station 18 without an engine company.

The process of evaluation of Fire Station 18 began in 2010 when the Mack5 Construction Management firm determined the cost to renovate the Station was prohibitive. This conclusion has been independently verified by structural engineering companies in 2016 and 2020. Since then there have been many discussions with the Ross Valley Fire Authority, Ross Valley Paramedics Authority, the Ross Valley and Marin County Fire Chiefs, the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority, and representatives from Ross, San Anselmo, Sleepy Hollow, and Fairfax. Public hearings, opinion polls, and community workshops have been conducted. After years of debate, the difficult decision to close the fire station was reached in 2017.

In January 2021, a poll of Ross residents indicated that most respondents were not willing to pay an additional tax or raise money to construct a new fire facility. This makes sense because data shows the overwhelming majority of emergency calls are medically related. Structure fires are rare occurrences. This is why Medic 18 is an advanced life support ambulance station and why the fire station was closed.

Response time has become a forefront issue. The stated goal is 7 minutes from call to arrival. Like any issue, it depends on how you look at the data. A 2025 Citygate report lists the Station 18 incidents that occurred between July and October of 2025. A response time of 10:56 for the first "Fire Engine" to arrive on the scene was derived from data including 38 incidents. A response time of 14:02 was calculated for the first "Paramedic Ambulance" to arrive on the scene using data from 36 incidents. This is the conclusion espoused by the Friends of the Firehouse.

The same report, however, continues to refine the data stating that when incidents outside the Ross Town limits were excluded, the response times fell to 9:34 and 9:52 respectively. Furthermore, if the haphazard trips into the Phoenix Lake area are also excluded, the response times fall to 7:27 and 6:55. The conclusion is that the engine response is a bit long but the ambulance response is right on the mark.

We all felt the angst of this year's Palisades fire. The 2017 Santa Rosa fire was equally unsettling. These were catastrophic events that are far beyond the capacity of a

local fire station, even one with a full contingent of firefighting personnel. The lessons learned were to remove fuel and fire harden homes. This is being accomplished by the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority, the Marin County Open Space District, the Conservation Corps North Bay, the Ross Valley Fire Authority and promoted by Fire Safe Marin and Alert Marin. The action plan is managed by the Marin County Office of Emergency Management utilizing AI enabled fire detection cameras and a contingent of equipment supported by the National Interagency Fire Center.

Let's place our confidence in the hundreds of hours spent by involved citizens, competent agencies, and qualified professional groups analyzing and dealing with this issue. Let's thank the competent staff at Medic 18 and appreciate them for keeping us safe. Most of all, let's support the Mayor and Town Council for their tireless efforts to make difficult decisions on our behalf and to the benefit of our community.

Sincerely,

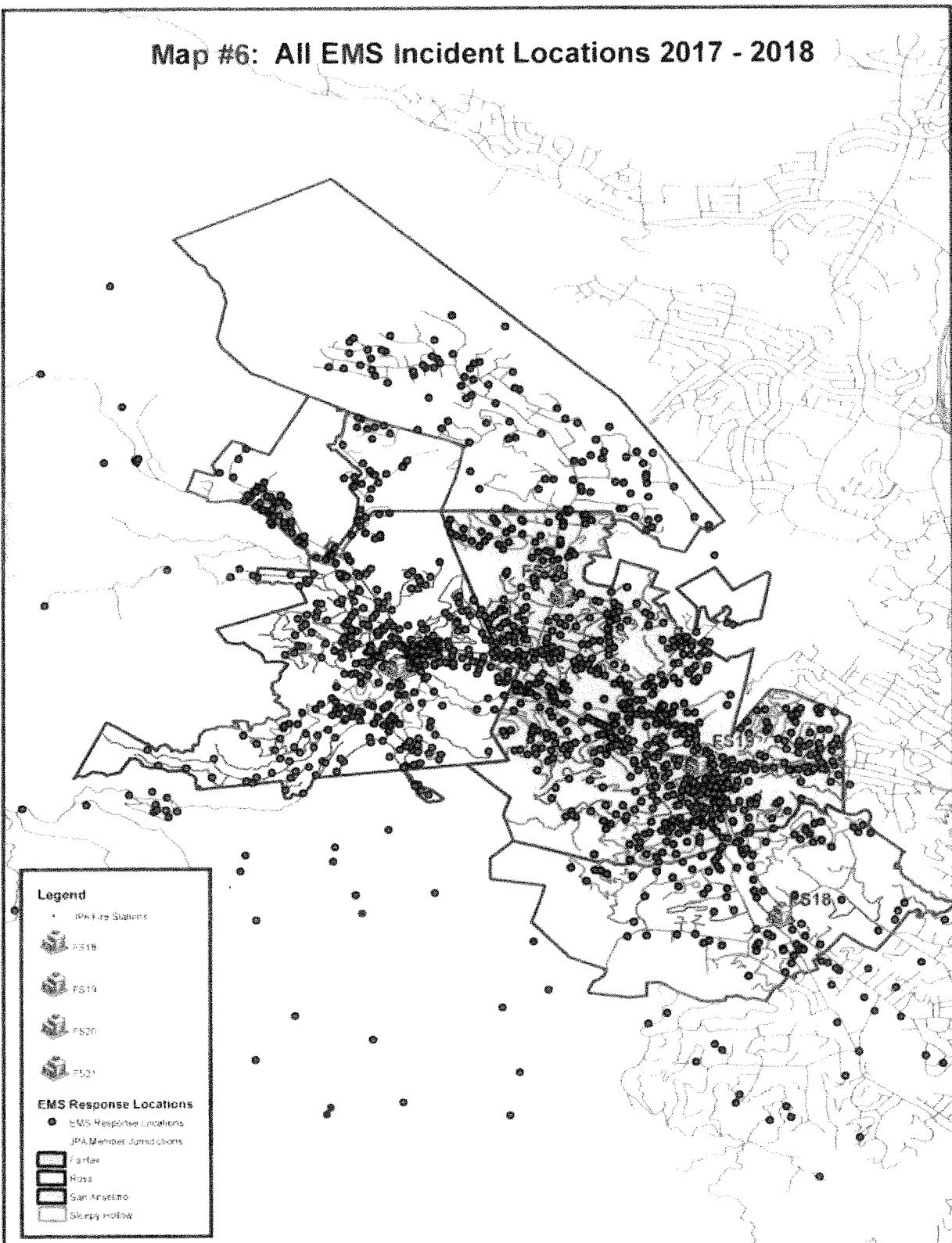
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Allen".

Tom Allen
23 Canyon Road
Ross, CA 94957

Attachments:

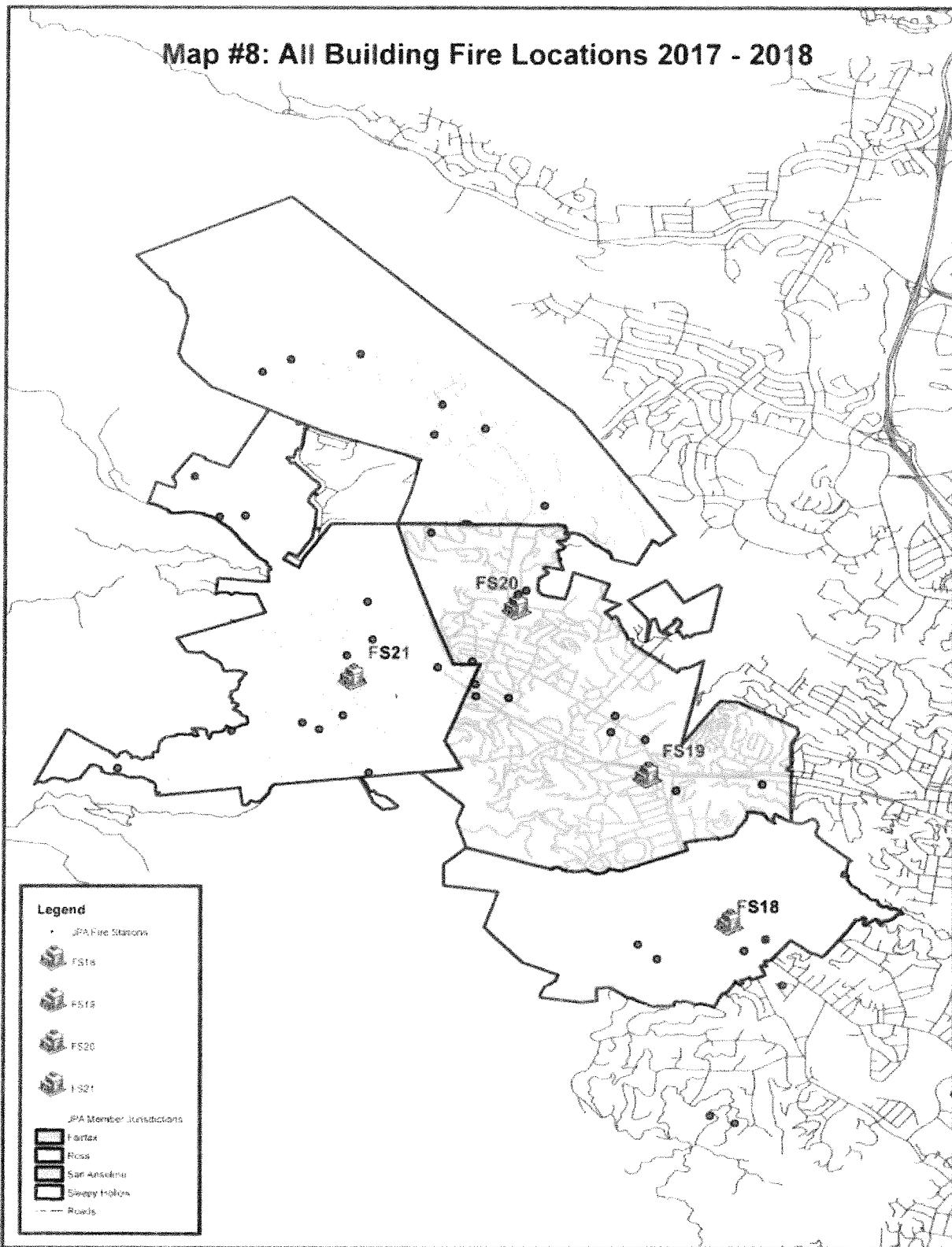
- 2012-2013 Ross Valley Fire Department Annual Report calls p. 24-27
- 2019 Citygate technical report map # 6 - All EMS Incident Locations 2017-2018 p. 116
- 2019 Citygate technical report map # 8 - All Building Fire Locations 2017-2018 p. 118

Map #6: All EMS Incident Locations 2017 - 2018



https://www.townoffrossca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/3641/citygate_report.pdf

Map #8: All Building Fire Locations 2017 - 2018



https://www.townoffrossca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/3641/citygate_report.pdf