

Hi everyone,

Our ad hoc advisory group led by Jeff Kuhn and Dan Winey have come up with an incredible plan for our new Town Center that we will present on April 29, and I want you all to know that Friends of Ross Firehouse completely supports the plan. If the Ross Town Council agrees to support and fund this vision, Friends will withdraw their ballot initiative in favor of a bond measure supporting this new plan. We will need the full support of the entire Ross community to pass this bond measure, and Friends will wholeheartedly engage our substantial support group to create a new 100 year vision for the Ross Town Center that respects the heritage of our State Historic Registered Town Hall & Public Safety Facility, while also providing us with an opportunity to return top notch medical and fire service to Ross.

John White designed the Ross Town Hall and Public Safety Building in 1926, and they are co-listed together on the California Historic Registry. White is a noted California architect, and brother in law and partner of famed architect Bernard Maybeck. White designed many notable structures in the Ross Valley including the Meadow Club clubhouse, Lagunitas Tennis Club clubhouse, and several notable Ross single family homes. Dan Winey's design for the renovation and expansion of the historic Public Safety Building retains the historic integrity of White's design, and together with our Town Hall and Post Office presents a unified aesthetic for the Ross Town Center.

Concern has been expressed that the existing public safety building cannot be renovated in compliance with the Emergency Services Act, which requires that public safety facilities remain operational during a major event. In particular concern has been raised that the existing fire truck apparatus bay, built in 1995 with \$3.5 million in donated funds from Ross residents, is subject to flooding during a 100 year storm event.

Our ad hoc advisory group has conducted extensive research and outreach on this topic, and determined the following:

1. RVFD Chief Mahoney has verified to our ad hoc committee that EVERY existing fire station apparatus bay in the Ross Valley Fire district (San Anselmo Station 19, Sleepy

Hollow Station 20, Fairfax Station 21) is currently located below the 100 year FEMA Base Flood Elevation. During severe flood events (every 15-25 years historically), they simply relocate the fire trucks to higher ground in order to remain operational per ESA requirements. Chief Mahoney has confirmed this fact, and provided fire truck relocation plans for each station in the event of high water:

- Station 18: Marin Art & Garden Center
- Station 19: Adronico's
- Station 20: Rutherford Ave or Indian Rock Court
- Station 21: Pavillion parking lot or BofA parking lot

2. For recent (2025) extensive renovations and rebuilds of the Sleepy Hollow and San Anselmo Stations, the existing apparatus bays were left at their existing elevations below the FEMA Base Flood Elevation. San Anselmo Public Works Director Sean Condry stated (see email exchange below) that this approach is compliant with ESA requirements. In the case of the Sleepy Hollow Station 20, which is literally built on top of Sleepy Hollow Creek, they raised the fire station living quarters to 2 feet above Base Flood Elevation (which Dan Winey's plan will also do for our proposed Ross facility). In the case of San Anselmo Station 19, they didn't even raise the living quarters, they simply installed flood barriers on the doorways. Ultimately it is at the Town's discretion to determine ESA compliance, and clearly our RVFD partner towns have determined that relocating fire trucks to higher ground every 15-25 years during a severe flood event is an acceptable practice under the ESA.

Charlie Goodman as Mayor of Ross in 1995 raised \$3.5 million dollars from Ross residents to build a brand new 3 bay apparatus bay behind the Ross firehouse. In today's dollars that's likely \$5 million plus. That apparatus bay remains in good condition, having already weathered one major Ross Valley flooding event in 2005. As part of Dan Winey's plan, we propose to install water resistant building materials on the existing apparatus bay walls in order to minimize damage from floodwaters. According to San Anselmo Public Works Director Condry, this is the approach used at the recent Sleepy Hollow Station 20 rebuild. We fear that tearing down our fully functional apparatus bay would send the wrong message to Ross taxpayers when we are asking them to support a large new bond measure. We're asking for a lot of trust from tax weary residents in order to support a large new bond; retaining our donor funded app bay is a good step towards earning that trust,

and also opens the door for Friends to raise future private donations to help finance our new Town Center plan.

Best regards,

Bob Herbst-President
Friends of Ross Firehouse
415-472-7700

THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We've met a dozen times and arrived at early agreement on a promising project design.

Jeff Kuhn (Finance)

Dan Winey (architecture & construction)

Jeff Koblick (real estate & construction)

Joey Buckingham (architecture)

Bob Herbst (real estate)

Ed Dong (real estate & construction)

Tom Gaffney (municipal finance)

Bill Poland (real estate)

OUR MISSION

The ad hoc committee is composed of eight Ross residents who combined have over 300 years of professional experience in finance and real estate design, construction, and development. Our project design is prepared by Dan Winey of world-renowned architectural firm Gensler Associates. The committee has been meeting twice weekly for over 2 months to develop and refine the plan. This has included a deep dive into the Town's existing Town Center Master Plan, in order to ensure our plan meets all the programmatic needs identified by the Town. Additional areas of research and analysis have included bond issuance, ESA compliance, historical preservation, and emergency services operating procedures. Should the Town Council vote to adopt our plan, the ad hoc committee is prepared to assist Town Council and Staff in full implementation of the plan, all the way from public advocacy of a bond finance measure to final completion of project construction.

The committee was purposely comprised of community members both for and against the closure of the Ross firehouse. We have unanimously coalesced around the Gensler plan which preserves our historic Town architecture in a cost effective and environmentally sensitive manner, while providing sufficient space to house all Town administrative and public safety needs, including police, paramedic, and fire.

The ad hoc committee strongly recommends that the Town Council adopts our plan as the new Town Center Facilities Master Plan, and hires an architectural/engineering firm ASAP to start implementing this plan, with the goal of placing a project finance bond measure on the November 2026 ballot.



ROSS COMMUNITY AND TOWN CENTER

Gensler

APRIL 2026



VISION

Design and construct a **COMMUNITY CENTER** that will contribute to the **HISTORIC FABRIC** of our **COMMUNITY** and **PROTECT** and **ENHANCE** the **LIFE, SAFETY,** and **WELFARE** of our **RESIDENTS** and **STAFF**.

A building that will **STAND THE TEST OF TIME**.



Historic
Fabric



LIFE, Safety
& Welfare



Timelessness

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Design a new Civic Center which will enhance and express the **remarkable history of our town** and act as a meeting place for the entire community.



Design a facility that enhances the **well-being and welfare** of all our town staff.



Reuse as much as the existing facilities as possible while protecting and enhancing the historic nature of the buildings.



Build **consensus across various constituencies** in terms of the highest and best use of the existing buildings and site.



Plan a facility which **meets the needs of the various departments** including police, fire, emergency services, public works and other administrative functions.



Design a building that is **environmentally sustainable** and **minimizes site intervention** and disruption to the existing creek and habitat.

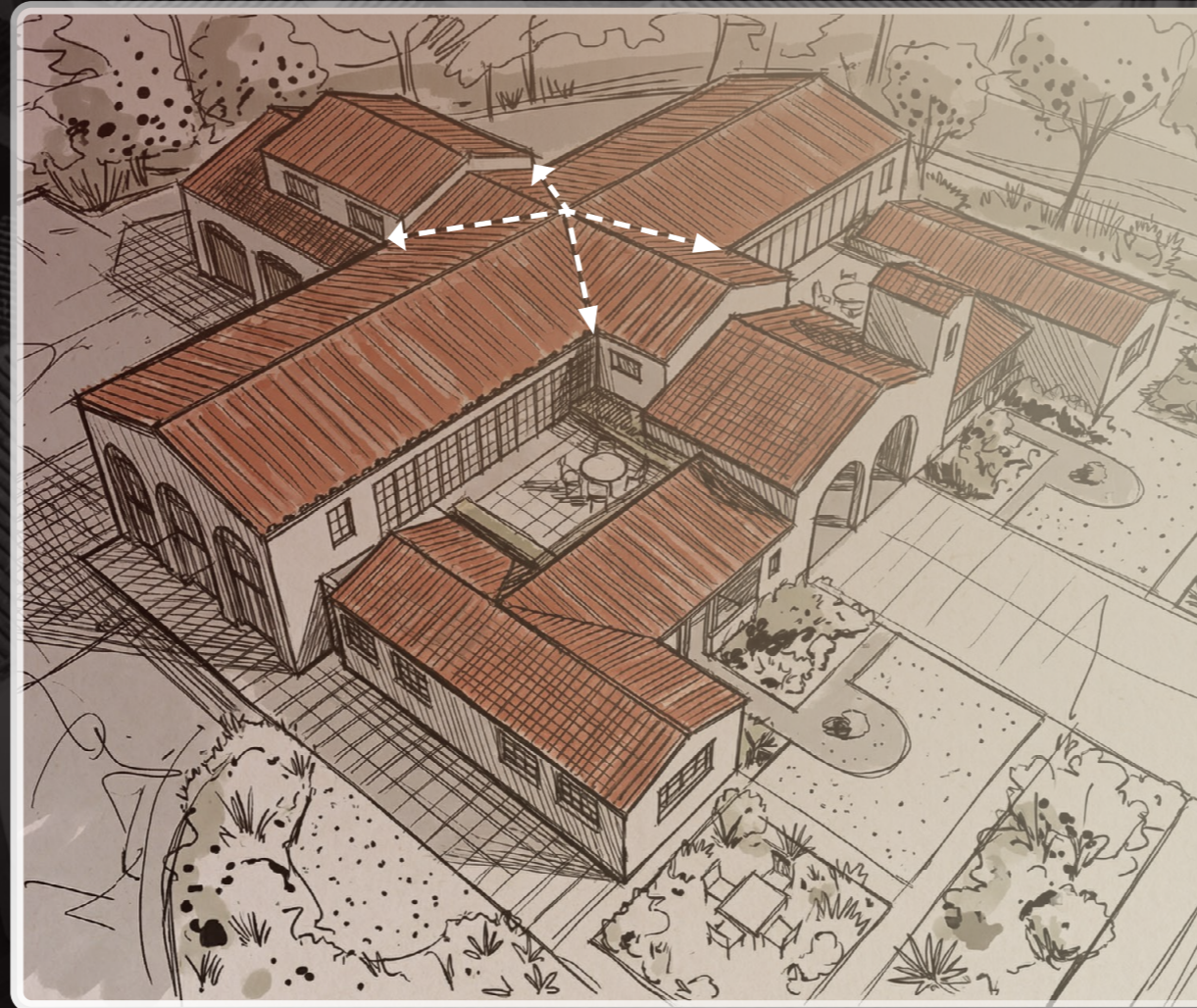


Meet the requirements of a **California Essential Services Building** to ensure the facility remains operational after a major event.



Design and construct a building that is **cost effective and utilizes the capital and resources** of the Town in a **trustworthy manner**.

CHAPTER 1



ADAPTIVE REUSE STRATEGY

The renovation of Ross Community & Town Center restructures its program and spatial composition within the preserved historic façade, introducing refined contemporary elements to create a balanced dialogue between legacy and renewal.



LEGACY AND RENEWAL

Enhances the original Spanish Colonial Revival design by architect John White, where restored façades anchors history with subtle insertions to create a balanced contemporary image

SITE ELEMENTS AND FEATURES



HISTORIC COMPOSITION

Preserve historic integrity of the composition of the existing town hall and post office.

ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY

Preserve existing redwood trees, anchoring the composition with continuity & natural character of the site.



OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY

Welcoming entrance that retains reference to the original fire station





RETAINS EXISTING BAYS

EMS and fire truck bays are left intact and renovated



DEFINES A COMPOSITION WITH TOWN HALL

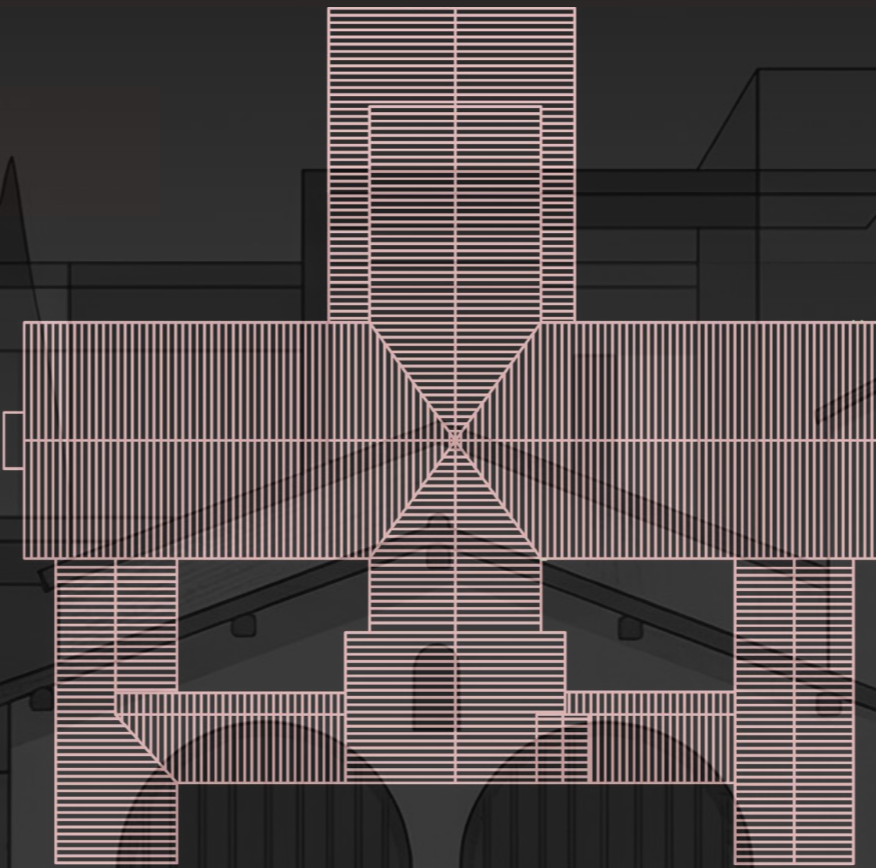
Establishes the Ross Community and Town Center as the primary building for the town



HISTORY OF ROSS

Small public lobby becomes a place to display the history of the town of Ross

CHAPTER 2



PLAN OPTIMIZATION STRATEGY

The plan is reorganized into a clean, efficient layout aligned with the strong façade massing, with distinct program zones operating independently while connected by a shared lobby and central atrium.

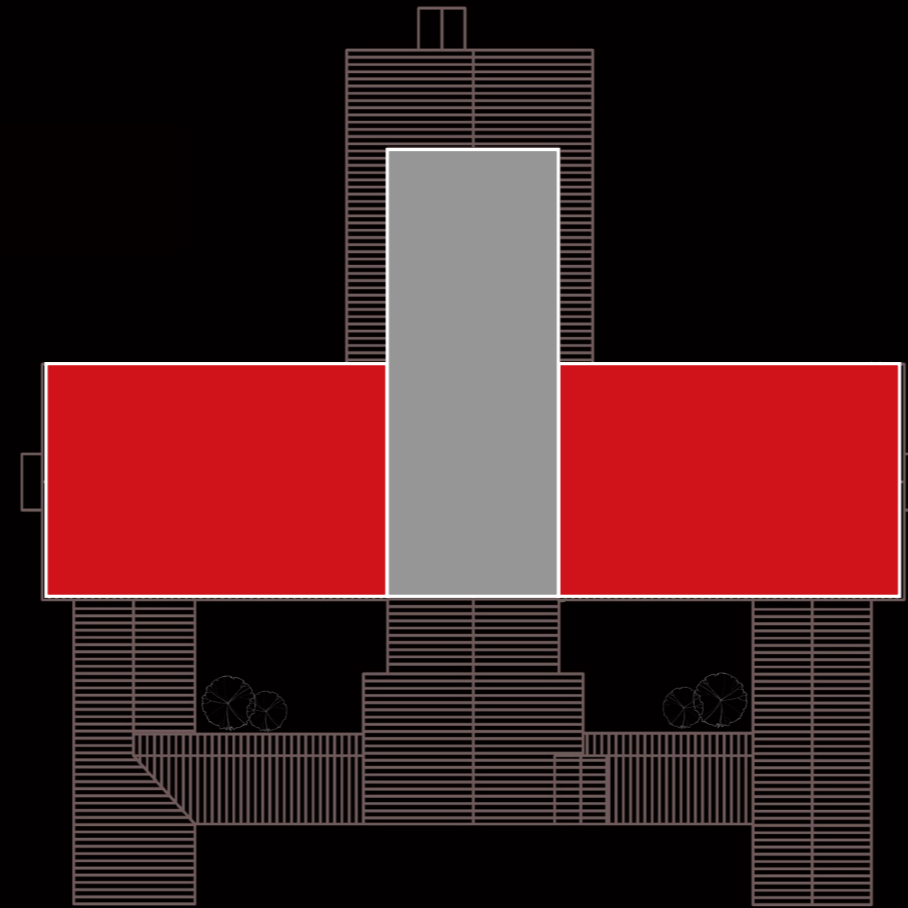
AREA AND PROGRAMS

EXISTING AREA INCREASED AREA



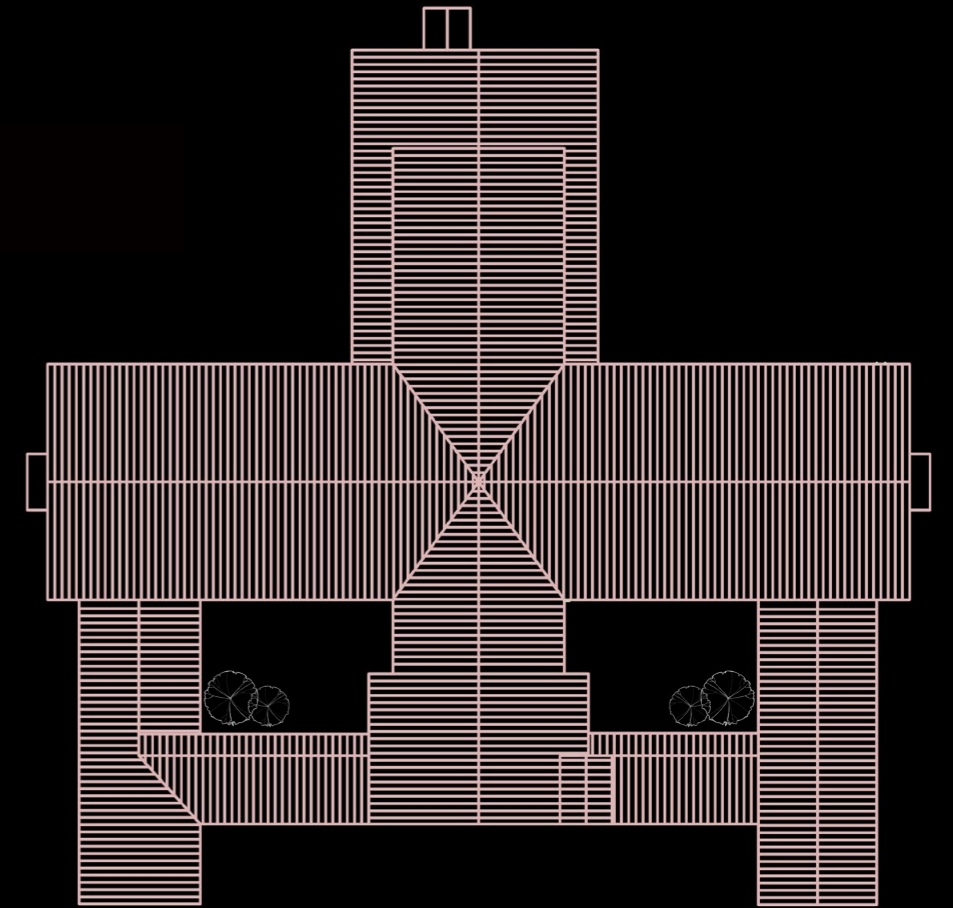
LEVEL 1

MAX INCREASED AREA: **1,583** SF
ORIGINAL AREA: 7,308 SF



LEVEL 2

MAX INCREASED AREA: **3,140** SF
ORIGINAL AREA: 1,494 SF



ROOF

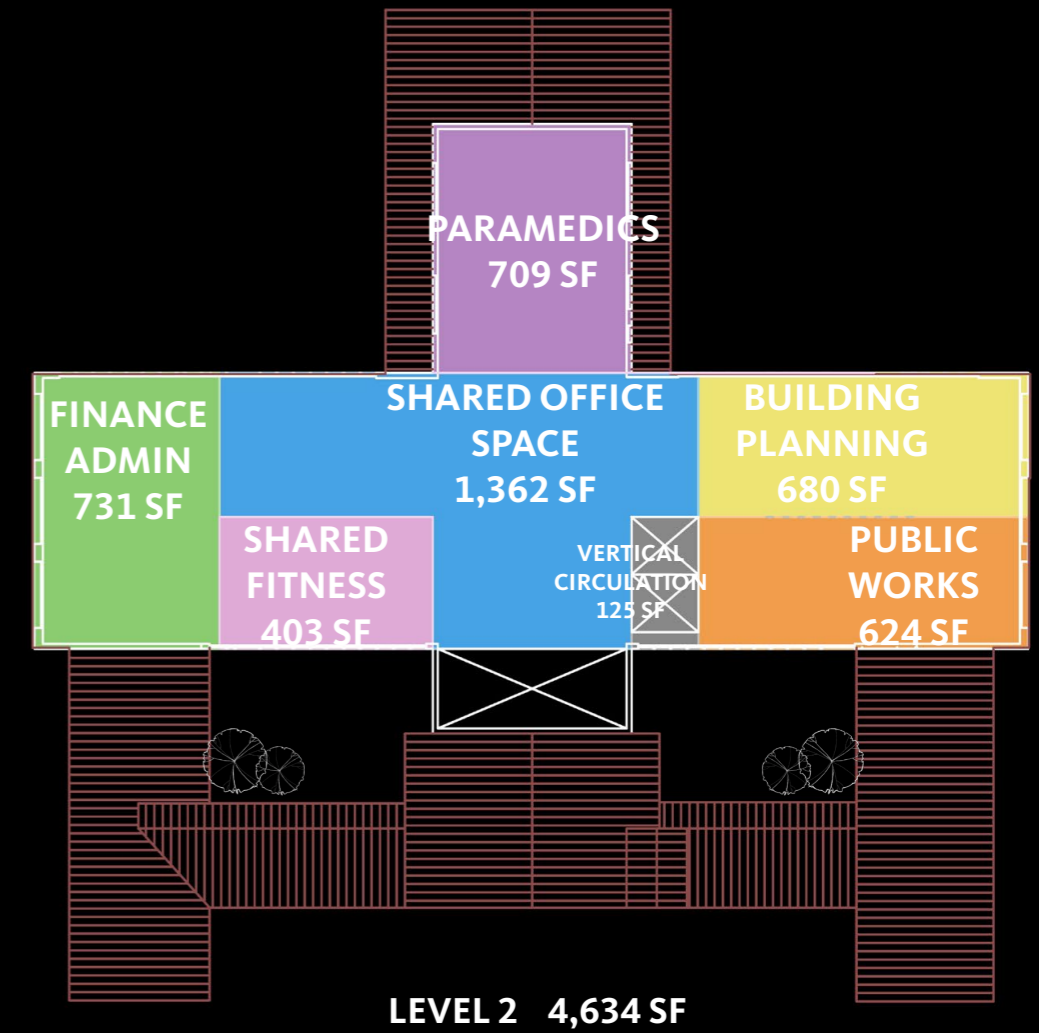
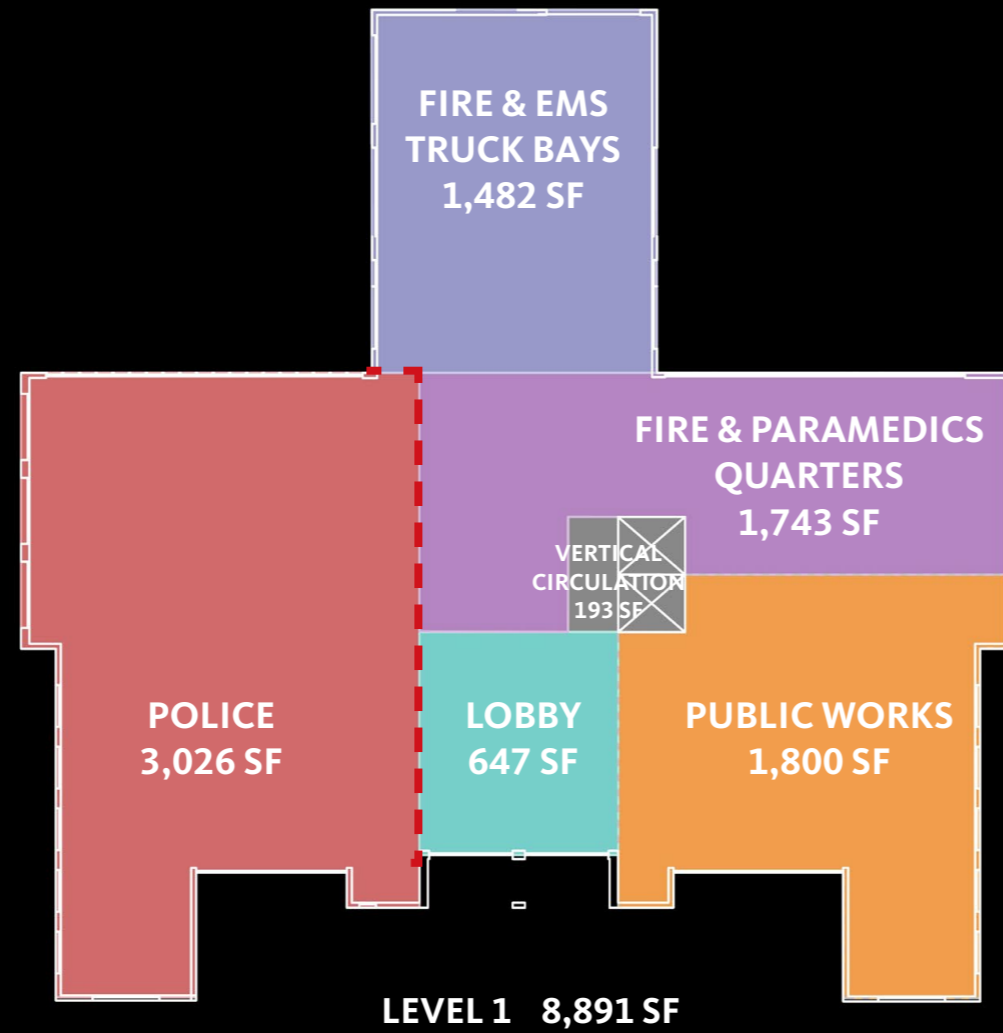
MAX INCREASED AREA: **4,723** SF
ORIGINAL GFA: 8,327 SF
MAX GFA AFTER RENNOVATION: **13,525** SF

AREA STRATEGY

GFA 13,525 SF

POLICE	3,026 SF
FIRE & PARAMEDICS	2,452 SF
PUBLIC WORKS	2,424 SF
FIRE/EMS TRUCK BAYS	1,482 SF
ADMIN/FINANCE	731 SF
BUILDING/PLANNING	680 SF
SHARED OFFICE	1,362 SF
SHARED FITNESS	403 SF
LOBBY	647 SF
VERTICAL CIRCULATION	318 SF

--- SECURITY BOUNDARY

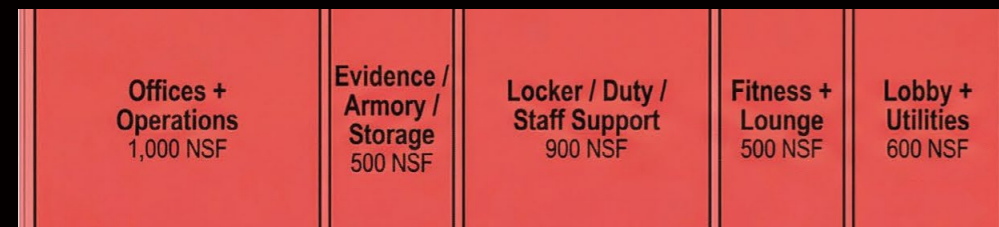


LISTED PROGRAM 11,700 SF

PARAMEDICS 2,150 SF



POLICE (SECURED) 3,500 SF



PUBLIC WORKS 2,650 SF



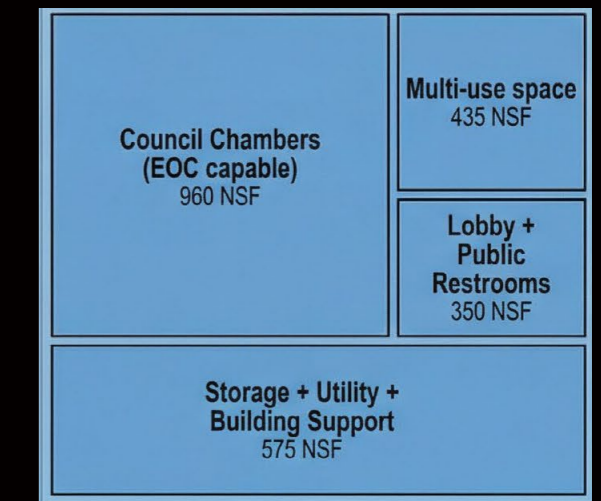
ADMIN / FINANCE 730 SF



BUILDING / PLANNING 700 SF



CIVIC / TOWN HALL 1,970 SF



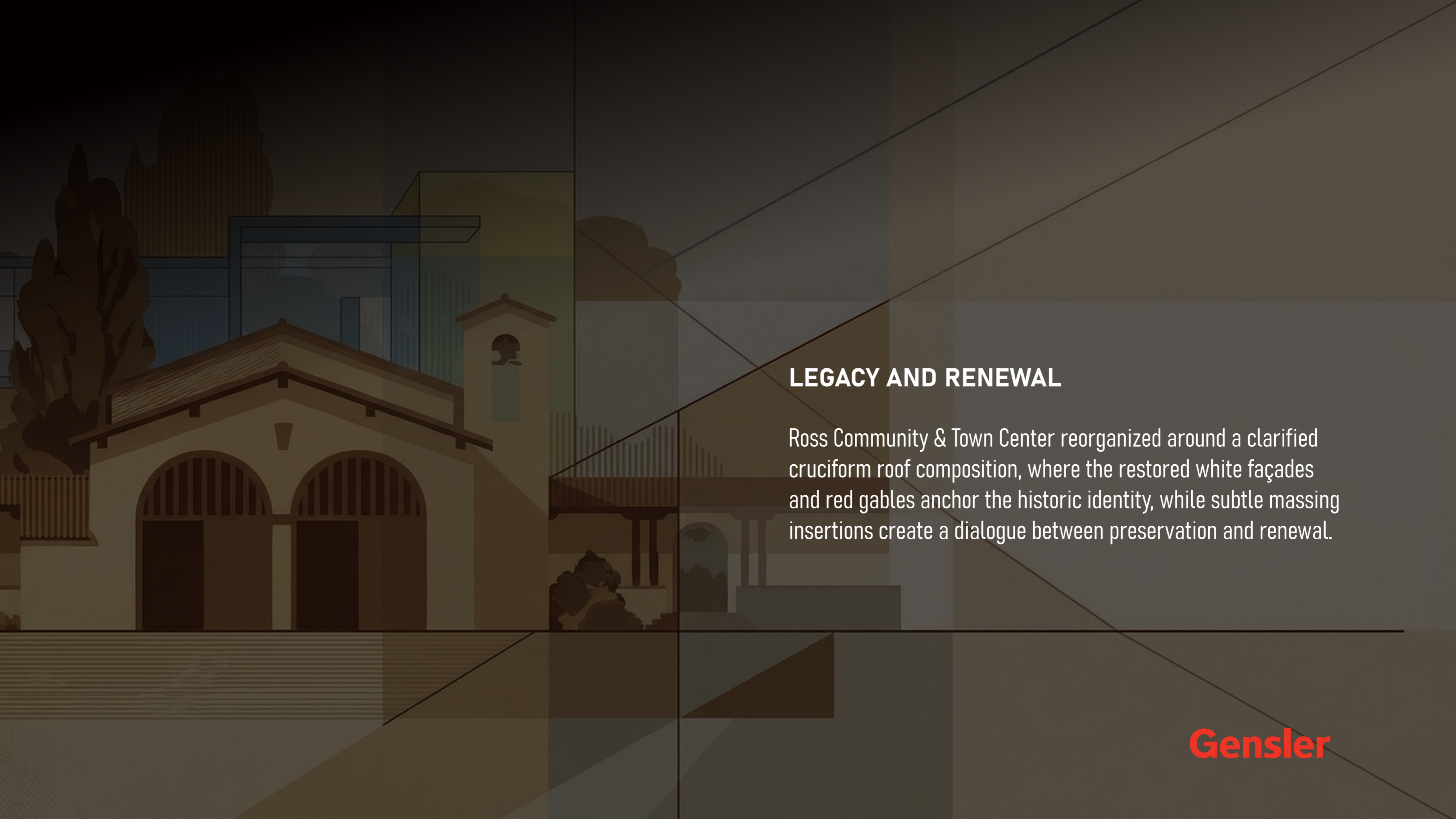
SUMMARY



Concept Advantages

The design weaves history, landscape, and balanced program into a composition of indoor-outdoor places that foster community and transform the civic image into a welcoming new identity.

1. **Satisfies Master Plan Criteria** and meets the needs of the various departments and improves the life, safety, and welfare of our community.
2. **Enhances the original design and historic nature** of our existing town buildings and becomes another important landmark.
3. **Minimizes site coverage, provides more open space** and is more accessible to the community.
4. **Sensitive to the existing environment and minimizes site intervention** and disruption thereby protecting the existing creek and habitat.
5. **Adaptive reuse maximizes existing resources**, is more cost effective, and inherently more sustainable.
6. **Designed to accommodate a fully programmed paramedics station** in early phases of the development if required.
7. **Concept is adaptable and flexible** and will accommodate a fire department or other community functions and activities.



LEGACY AND RENEWAL

Ross Community & Town Center reorganized around a clarified cruciform roof composition, where the restored white façades and red gables anchor the historic identity, while subtle massing insertions create a dialogue between preservation and renewal.

AGENDA

- Our conceptual design for the implementation of the Ross Civic Center Master plan.
- Preliminary cost analysis.
- Review timeline and schedule.
- Review permanent financing for the project.
- Next steps:
 - RFP for architectural, engineering, and consulting services.
 - Funding for site survey, and as-builts, and selective investigations.
 - Appoint public/private working group.
 - Friends of Ross Firehouse will withdraw their ballot initiative and fully endorse this plan.

FIRST PROJECT COST ESTIMATE

Following are data extracted from the proposal of the first contractor to bid for the project.

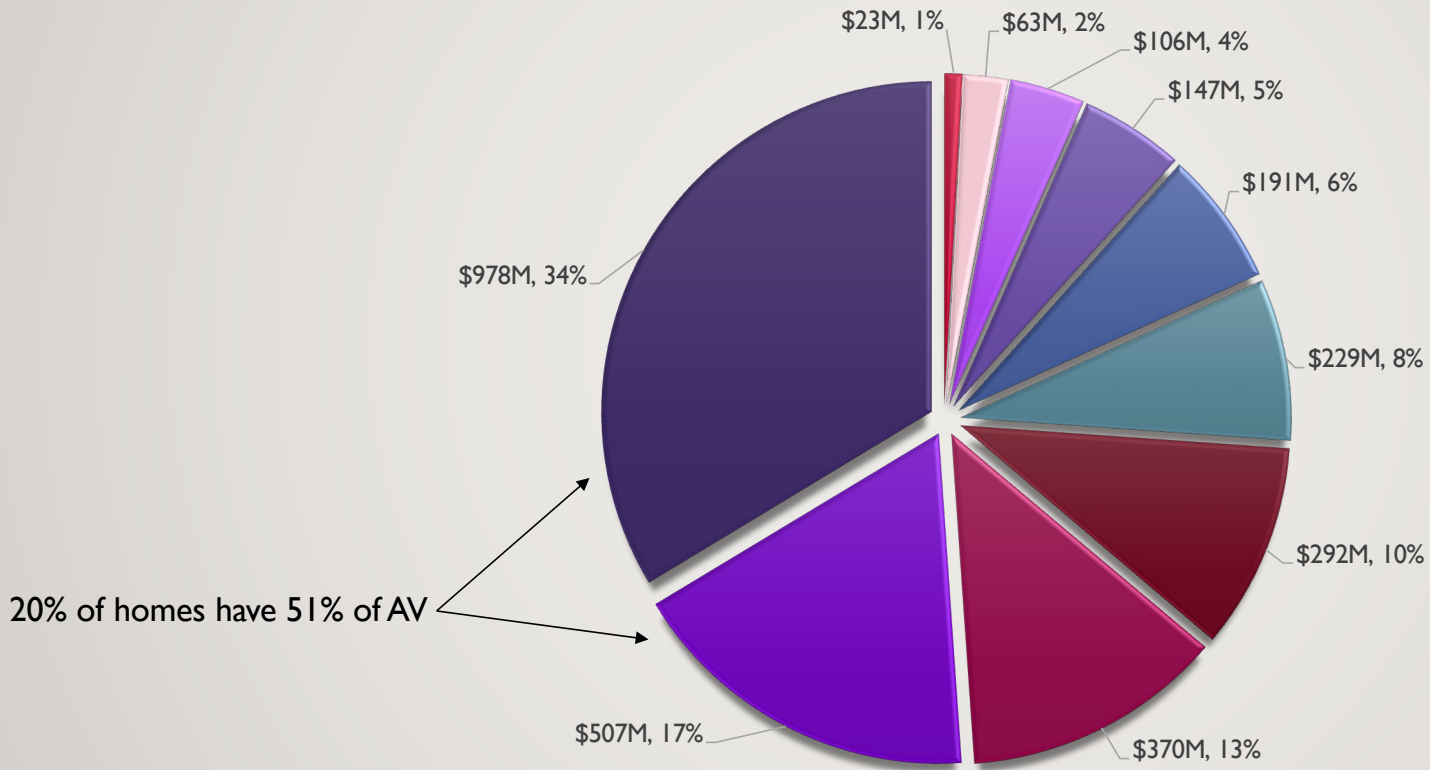
	<u>Total SF</u>	<u>2023 Budget</u>	<u>2026 Budget</u>	<u>2026 Budget/SF</u>	<u>Fire Station</u>	<u>All Programmed Depts</u>
KPA Masterplan Concept B	11,700	\$21 million	\$24.7 million	\$2,115	No	All, except Firehouse
Proposed Civic and Town Center	13,525	N/A	\$22.7 million	\$1,680	Yes	All, including Firehouse
Difference Advantage	1,825		\$2 million	\$435		

FINANCING OF THE PROJECT

- The only realistic and feasible source of financing is a General Obligation Bond.
 - Only permitted use of funds is construction and development, *not* operations.
 - Requires 2/3 approval by voters.
- The GO tax is based on a parcel's assessed value, *not* per parcel.
- A \$10 million bond at 4% interest over 30 years would require annual payments of \$578K.
- In Ross, this means about \$20 per \$100,000 of Assessed Value.
- The Town's Assessed value increases 2-4% annually, meaning the tax goes down each year commensurate with Assessed Value increases.
- For a home with a \$2M AV, that means a tax about \$400 per year, declining with AV increases.

Assessed Value by Decile in \$Millions

Total 2025 Assessed Value of Ross Homes: \$2.9 billion
Median Home Assessed Value: \$2.5 million
Each Decile is 83 homes



URGENT TOWN COUNCIL ACTION REQUESTS

- Hire an architect to do the following:
 - Develop an amended new Town Facilities Master Plan.
 - AS IS survey of public safety building.
 - Investigative deconstruction of shuttered firefighter residence wing.
 - Review of State Historical Building Code and opportunities/constraints of new Master Plan.
 - Architectural services for floor plan and site plan refinement prior to RFP selection.

NEXT STEPS

- Appoint public/private working group to assist new Master Plan implementation, led by the Town Manager. Our role shall be advisory to Staff, and may include the following duties as determined by the Town Manager:
 - Scoping preliminary design work authorized by Town Council.
 - Review RFP responses and advise Town Council on final selection.
 - Liase with Town bond consultant regarding bond issuance to support new Master Plan.
 - Assist with subject matter development for environmental review process, including but not limited to ESA compliance and historic preservation.
 - Review contractor bids and advise Town Council on contractor selection.
 - Review construction to ensure plan is completed on time and on budget.
 - Assess future opportunities, costs, and funding mechanisms to restore fire service to Ross.

NEXT STEPS FOR NECESSARY BOND APPROVAL

- Develop and implement public education campaign in support of bond approval.
- Schedule detailed discussion with leadership of COST (Sensibletaxpayers.org).
- Schedule multiple opportunities with RPOA to educate and offer Q&A for everyone.
- Friends of Ross Firehouse will advocate for bond approval.
- Frequent and regular presence at the Ross Post Office for Q&A.

ADVANTAGES OF OUR PLAN – DESIGN

- ***Satisfies Master Plan Criteria*** and meets the needs of the various departments and improves the life, safety, and welfare of our community.
- ***Enhances the original design and historic nature*** of our existing Town buildings and becomes another important Ross landmark.
- ***Sensitive to the existing environment and minimizes site intervention and disruption***, thereby protecting the existing creek and habitat.
- ***Minimizes site coverage, provides more open space*** and is more accessible to the community.
- ***Designed to accommodate a fully programmed paramedics station*** in early phases of the development if required.
- ***Adaptive reuse maximizes existing resources***, is more cost effective, and inherently more sustainable.
- ***Concept is adaptable and flexible*** and will accommodate a fire department or other community functions and activities.

ADVANTAGES OF OUR PLAN – FINANCIAL

- ***Project minimizes operational disruption and construction time*** by allowing the entire project to move forward rather than in multiple phases.
- ***Vertical space is less expensive than single story*** and adding a second story to a building is much less expensive than additional ground area.
- ***Allows for two means of financing***, one for new Town Center now and optionality for future firehouse operations.
- ***Requires less site coverage and environmental disruption***, minimizing hardscape and prompting other mitigation work.
- ***Allows planning, building, and public works to remain in place until new facilities are ready for occupancy***, which will minimize both costs and operational disruptions.

Hi Christa & Julie,

In advance of your meeting today, I just wanted to express on behalf of Friends of Ross Firehouse that we wholeheartedly support the new plan for the Town Center. We've been active participants in the ad hoc working group, typically meeting twice per week at my home and conducting substantial research and outreach in support of Dan's fantastic vision.

If Town Council approves our plan and authorizes funding to support it, Friends will withdraw our initiative from the November ballot. The last day to do so is August 8, 2026. Ideally by then we will have full schematic designs and costing for the new plan, and the Town will be ready to submit a bond measure to Ross voters. This will require decisive action by Town council and Staff, and our ad hoc working group intends to support the effort every step of the way to completion of the project.

Best regards,

Bob Herbst-President
Friends of Ross Firehouse
415-472-7700