

To: Mayor and Ross Town Council
From: Gary Broad, Town Manager and Christine O'Rourke, Project Planner
Re: Floodgate Installation Financial Assistance for the Downtown
Commercial District
Date: January 5, 2007

I. Project Summary

Town Council consideration of Resolution No. 1616 to provide financial assistance to business owners and commercial property owners for the installation of floodgates at the entryways of their businesses and buildings located in the downtown commercial district. Financial assistance in the amount equal to one-half the cost of floodgate materials and installation, up to \$350 per entryway, is proposed, subject to the owner satisfying certain conditions of installation.

III. Discussion

The Ross downtown area lies in a 100-year flood plain that periodically experiences significant flooding up to several feet in depth. Many businesses experienced severe flood damage from the December 31, 2005 flood. When flooding occurs, many businesses are forced to close for repairs, and some businesses choose to relocate or discontinue operations permanently, to the detriment of the viability of the downtown commercial district.

Several businesses in neighboring San Anselmo installed floodgates, both before and after the 2005 flood, that are designed to prevent flood water from entering buildings through doors and other entryways. While not fail safe, these floodgates have been shown to significantly reduce floodwater intrusion into structures when properly installed and operated. Typically, these devices consist of a metal channel that is permanently attached to a building and in which a piece of plywood, 3 to 4 feet high, is slid into place and secured whenever a flood threatens. While a few Ross business and property owners are currently making plans to install floodgates, the majority of owners in the downtown area remain uncommitted.

The cost of floodgate installation can run between \$500 and \$600 for a typical four-foot entryway. Mayor Strauss has lobbied over the past year for floodgates to be installed in the downtown area. To encourage installation of floodgates, staff recommends that the Town provide financial assistance to business and commercial property owners who install floodgates at their downtown buildings. This report proposes the Town provide a financial incentive of payment of one-half the cost of floodgate materials and installation for each entryway, up to a maximum of \$350 per entryway.

In order to minimize visual impacts of the floodgates and to preserve the aesthetically pleasing elements of the downtown, owners will be required to paint or color any permanently installed fixtures to match the background material. As a condition of payment, owners will also be required to submit their paid invoice and proof of

installation, and to sign a hold harmless agreement with the Town related to floodgate installation.

The fiscal impact of this financial assistance will depend upon the number of owners who decide to install floodgates. Presently, two owners plan to install floodgates at a total of eight entryways. Staff estimates that an additional 37 entryways would be eligible for assistance under this program. At an estimated cost to the Town of \$350 per entryway, the total financial expense to the Town, assuming all entryways are protected, would be \$15,750.

IV. Recommendation

Staff recommends that Town Council provide financial assistance to business owners and commercial property owners as discussed above and adopt attached Resolution 1616.