Memorandum

To:	Mayor and Councilmembers
From:	Christa Johnson, Town Manager
Date:	February 25, 2026
Subject:	Overview of FORF's submittal package to the Ross Town Council

This memorandum provides a summary overview of the report and presentation presented by the Friends of the Ross Valley Firehouse (FORF) at the January 8, 2026 Town Council meeting. A separate Technical Review Memorandum (Attachment 1) including a memo from Mary McGrath Architects and Police Chief Pata (Attachment 2-3) and a slide deck presentation (Attachment 4) are attached which provide an evaluation of the technical completeness, feasibility, and implementation risks associated with FORF's report and presentation.

Executive Summary

The Friends of Ross Firehouse (FORF) submittal package for the January 8, 2026 Town Council meeting included a conceptual design, structural assessment, preliminary cost estimate, and staffing analysis including correspondence from FORF's legal team providing legal interpretations regarding CEQA as part of their proposal to rehabilitate the existing Fire and Police Station at 33 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

Overview of FORF Submittal Package

FORF's submittal package for the January 8 Ross Town Council meeting includes the following five components/documents:

1. Conceptual Design Plans/visual slides for restoration of the existing Fire and Police Station prepared by Brown Reynolds Watford Architects, Inc (BRW)
2. Structural Assessment of the existing Fire and Police Stations prepared by KNSE Structural Engineering
3. Rough Order of Magnitude Construction Cost Estimate prepared by Alten Construction
4. Fire Department Staffing Feasibility Study prepared by Jensen Hughes
5. Letter entitled Friends of Ross Firehouse - Review of Town's Plan and Friends' Plan prepared by SSL Law Firm LLP

Staff reviewed FORF's submittal from a technical completeness and feasibility perspective, consistent with the Town's adopted Section 9212 fiscal impact report and the initiative's controlling legal standard requiring compliance with current public safety facility requirements.

Key findings:

- The BRW architectural materials are best characterized as schematic design concepts and feasibility narratives, not implementation or construction ready plans.
- The KNSE structural assessment supports the conceptual feasibility of seismic rehabilitation but anticipates near-total interior demolition and replacement of building systems.
- The Jensen Hughes "Fire Department Staffing Feasibility Study" is primarily an advocacy-oriented feasibility narrative that argues service levels in Ross degraded after Station 18 closure and recommends restoring a staffed in-Town engine (ideally 3-person minimum staffing). Several staffing models are evaluated, including creating an independent Ross fire department, volunteer or hybrid models, and contracting with existing regional fire agencies. The study finds that re-staffing Fire Station 18 through a partnership with an existing department is the most viable option. It provides detailed cost modeling showing that fully staffing the firehouse would cost roughly $2.8–$3.1 million annually, depending on escalation and assumptions.
- The FORF design submittal by BRW does not demonstrate compliance with all elements of "current public safety facility requirements," particularly related to:
    - Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing (MEP) systems and essential facility performance;
    - Floodproofing reliability;
    - Constructability risks and unknown conditions;
    - Phasing and interim operations during construction; or
    - Security, functional separation, and operational continuity.
- FORF's submittal does not resolve the displacement and interim operations impacts identified in the Town's Section 9212 report; rather, these impacts are deferred to later project phases.
- Accordingly, while the FORF concept may be appropriate for continued evaluation, it should not be considered a "permit-ready compliance plan", nor relied upon to assume reduced CEQA risk, accelerated delivery, or minimal fiscal and operational impacts without additional technical work.

Conceptual Design Plans/visual slides prepared by Brown Reynolds Watford Architects, Inc (BRW) for restoration of the existing Fire and Police Station

The documentation submitted to the Ross Town Council by BRW is best characterized as a conceptual design and feasibility narrative, supported by limited structural observations and a conceptual flood-mitigation approach.

FORF's submittal by BRW provides the following:

- A building program and space allocation based on the rehabilitation of the existing Fire and Police station.
- Conceptual first- and second-floor layouts
- A professional opinion that the existing building is a candidate for rehabilitation with code-referenced seismic upgrades.

However, the submittal does not provide the level of completeness typically required to support conclusions regarding:

- Compliance with "current public safety facility requirements" (the initiative's controlling standard) including the Essential Services Act, Americans with Disability Act and current building code standards.
- Feasibility of constructability and phasing while maintaining operations
- Certainty regarding floodproofing, interim operations, and the permitting/CEQA pathway

Accordingly, while the BRW concept may be appropriate for further technical evaluation, it should not be treated as a permit-ready compliance plan or a definitive basis to assume reduced risk or accelerated delivery without additional analysis.

1. What BRW/KNSE is proposing (high-level summary of the design):

A. Program and layout

The schematic plans depict a combined Fire and Police facility including:

- Apparatus bay and support areas (turnout, workshop, EMS/clean rooms, utilities)
- Police functions (evidence, interview rooms, squad room, IT, offices)
- Shared public areas (lobby/reception, ADA restroom)
- Second-floor living quarters (bedrooms, lockers, laundry, restrooms)

B. Flood Mitigation Approach

BRW presents a "100-year flood mitigation" concept based on:

- Pre-deployment of flood control apparatus stored adjacent to or near the apparatus bay/ public safety building;
- Use of barrier systems to protect flood-zone areas; and
- Placement of critical functions (communications, PPE, living quarters) above the floodplain.

C. Structural Rehabilitation Narrative (KNSE)

KNSE's assessment includes:

- Assumed reinforced concrete foundations with no observed distress in exposed areas.
- Removal of interior building components and MEP systems, leaving primary wood framing.
- Mold observations and intent to remediate per IICRC standards.
- Seismic retrofit strategies consistent with current codes (CBC 2025, ASC).

2. Technical Critique by Topic (scope completeness, code pathway, constructability, phasing, interim operations):

A. Scope completeness

The BRW/KNSE package emphasizes architectural programming and structural feasibility but provides limited information on other disciplines that typically control feasibility for an essential public safety facility, including:

- Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP)
- Civil and hydrology
- Fire protection systems
- Hazardous materials and abatement
- Accessibility and path-of-travel
- Security and circulation
- IT, dispatch, and operational continuity

KNSE's description of a near "down-to-studs" interior removal indicates a project scope closer to substantial reconstruction than a limited rehabilitation.

<u>Additional Evaluation Recommendation:</u>

Preparation of a discipline-by-discipline scope matrix identifying replacement scope, applicable standards, and code upgrade triggers.

B. Code Pathway and "Current Public Safety Facility Requirements"

KNSE commits to designing upgrades in compliance with current codes. However:

- No essential facility performance objectives (e.g., post-event operational continuity) are identified in their report.
- No comprehensive code analysis is provided addressing occupancy classifications, mixed-use separations, egress, fire ratings, or allowable area.
- Mold remediation is acknowledged, but associated abatement scope, cost, and schedule impacts are not detailed. The existence of mold elevates the importance of a hazmat/abatement plan and cost/schedule impacts which are not provided or included in FORF's report or presentation.

C. Constructability and Unknown Conditions

While KNSE reports no observed foundation distress, the structural assessment relies largely on limited visual observation. Interior demolition may reveal concealed conditions such as rot, insect damage, or foundation deficiencies.

Additional Evaluation Recommendation:

It is necessary to conduct further predesign investigations including selective destructive testing, hazmat surveys and testing, geotechnical confirmation of the foundation and structural members, and review of available as-built documentation.

D. Flood resilience

FORF's proposed flood mitigation approach is a conceptual method utilizing flood wall technology that is deployed by Town staff prior to or during flood events. FORF's submittal does not include the requisite engineering analysis and deployment plan necessary for a flood control system and does not specify:

- Design flood elevation and freeboard;
- Wet vs. dry floodproofing strategy;
- Barrier deployment protocols and reliability; or
- Egress and access impacts during flood events.

For a public safety building that serves as an essential services facility, flood mitigation must be demonstrably reliable, not dependent on ad-hoc or unvalidated deployment assumptions.

E. Phasing and interim operations

FORF's submittal references expertise in phasing projects. However, FORF's report does not provide:

- A demolition/construction phasing plan;
- An interim operations or "decanting" strategy;

- Temporary facilities or communications continuity plans particularly for the Ross Police Department which will need to be relocated during construction.

Given the anticipated removal of interior finishes and MEP systems, significant displacement will be necessary. The FORF submittal does not address the displacement and relocation impacts identified in the Election Code Section 9212 record and does not appear to include the cost in the Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) construction cost estimate.

Additional Evaluation Recommendation:

In order to address phasing and the need to maintain services during construction, BRW/FORF should be asked to provide:

1. A conceptual decanting plan (who moves where, for how long, security),
2. A temporary facilities plan (modulars, swing space, communications),
3. Response continuity measures during construction, and
4. A phasing schedule aligned with procurement and permitting realities.

F. Security and Functional Separation, and public interface

The schematic plans include public and secure police functions, but no security circulation narrative is provided. While typical at schematic stage, this omission bears directly on compliance with public safety facility standards.

3. Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) Construction Cost Estimate – Alten Construction

The FORF submittal includes a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) construction cost estimate prepared by Alten Construction intended to demonstrate the feasibility of rehabilitating the existing Fire and Police Station. As presented, the estimate provides a conceptual cost envelope, not a fixed or design-validated construction budget.

ROM estimates are commonly used at early feasibility or schematic design stages; however, by definition, they carry significant uncertainty and are highly sensitive to scope definition, unknown conditions, code upgrade triggers, and phasing assumptions many of which remain unresolved in the current submittal. There are a number of cost drivers that are not fully defined or clearly quantified in the ROM budget including MEP Systems replacement, floodproofing, civil improvements, hazardous material abatement and code upgrade triggers for Essential Service Act facilities.

4. Fire Department Feasibility Study Prepared by Jensen Hughes.

The Jensen Hughes "Fire Department Staffing Feasibility Study" is primarily an advocacy-oriented feasibility narrative that (1) argues service levels in Ross degraded after Station 18 closure, (2) recommends restoring a staffed in-Town engine (ideally 3-person minimum staffing), and (3) provides a high-level personnel cost model for staffing scenarios.

A. Response Time and Reliability

Jensen Hughes argues that average response time can mask outliers and emphasizes the 90th percentile as a better system performance measure. It reports that as of Oct. 1, 2025, Ross 90th percentile response time increased by 3:32, described as a 43% increase, and suggests responses could "potentially double" once a full year of post-closure data is available.

A central feature of the Jensen Hughes report is its use of a "reliability" metric, defined as the probability that a fire engine physically based in Ross (Station 18) responds to a call within the Town. The report defines "reliability" as the probability that a fire engine from Station 18 (in Ross) responds. It reports 96% when Station 18 was in service; 60% in 2025 (because the station was active for part of the year); and asserts 0% in 2026 because no engine would be based in Ross. The Jensen Hughes study utilizes a location-based response unit reliability, which is not a standard "reliability of fire service delivery" measure. This is distinct from system-wide service reliability or overall emergency response capability.

B. Staffing

Jensen Hughes study characterizes 3-person staffing as the "optimum" minimum model for a company stationed in Ross.

For the staffing cost model, Jensen Hughes assumes:

- Ross adopts 3-person staffing and three-platoon rotation (1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter/Paramedic per shift).

Jensen Hughes Staffing study then estimates:

- Wages + benefits for 17 personnel ≈ $2.436M/year
- Add 10% for administrative oversight ≈ $2.679M
- Add 5% for uniforms/PPE/training/safety equipment ≈ $2.801M
- Uses 4% annual increase and projects 2028 services ≈ $3.127M (noting labor agreements and pay grade uncertainty).

The Jensen Hughes staffing cost model provides a preliminary, assumption-driven estimate for personnel-related costs under a 3-person staffing concept. The Town's §9212 fiscal impact disclosure relies on Citygate's projections and the Town's budgeting framework, which are designed for municipal decision-making and public disclosure.

C. Response Time and Performance Metrics

The report emphasizes the 90th percentile response time as a performance metric, asserting that average response times can mask longer response outliers. Jensen Hughes reports that, as of October 1, 2025, the 90th percentile response time within Ross increased relative to prior periods when Station 18 was operational and suggests that response times may increase further as a full year of post-closure data becomes available.

These observations are presented as indicative of performance trends associated with the absence of a Ross-based engine. The report does not evaluate alternative deployment strategies, mutual aid dynamics, or broader system-wide response performance.

Analysis of Jensen Hughes Fire Department Staffing Feasibility Study

The Jensen Hughes Fire Department Staffing Feasibility Study provides a FORF-commissioned perspective on staffing and response considerations associated with restoring a Ross-based fire station. While the study contributes useful context regarding station-based operations and staffing concepts, it relies on defined assumptions and limited scope. The report should **not** be relied upon as:

- A determination of fiscal impact under Section 9212
- A comprehensive Standards of Coverage analysis.
- An implementation plan demonstrating cost certainty, regulatory compliance (e.g. LAFCO Approval), or delivery feasibility

For statutory fiscal disclosure and municipal decision-making purposes, the Town's Section 9212 report and Citygate Associates analysis remain the primary sources for evaluating fiscal impacts, risks, and implementation considerations for staffing a station.

<u>Additional Evaluation Recommendation:</u>

While the 90th percentile is a commonly referenced performance metric, RVFD Chief Mahoney's report to the Town on December 11, 2025, on response times notes that response-time analysis can vary depending on time period evaluated, call type mix, seasonal patterns, and system deployment conditions. The July–October 2025 dataset represents a limited post-closure period and may not reflect stabilized long-term performance.

Chief Mahoney recommended that, if the Town wishes to evaluate response-time impacts in a consistent and methodologically sound manner, the following approach be used:

- Utilize at least one full year of data (July 1, 2025 through July 1, 2026);
- Exclude incidents occurring outside the Ross Town limits; and
- Exclude non-emergency incidents.

Applying this methodology would allow for evaluation of response times specifically to emergency incidents within the Ross Town limits and would provide a more consistent and comparable dataset. Based on preliminary review, response times calculated using this narrower and more focused methodology may be shorter than those derived from broader datasets that include mutual aid responses, non-emergency calls, or incidents outside Town boundaries.

Accordingly, while the Jensen Hughes report provides analysis based on available data and emphasizes 90th percentile metrics, the Town's operational analysis indicates that a longer evaluation period and refined incident filtering would provide a more reliable basis for policy conclusions.

Conclusion

- The BRW package is a conceptual rehabilitation framework with a structural narrative that the building is a candidate for rehabilitation and that code-compliant seismic upgrades are feasible in principle.
- It is not yet a complete implementation plan for the initiative's controlling legal requirement ("current public safety facility requirements"), nor does it currently resolve the key risk drivers of flood reliability, constructability unknowns, phasing/interim operations, and security/functional separation.
- Any Town Council discussion that treats the BRW approach as "low risk / fast track / minimal impact" should be conditioned on additional technical deliverables to avoid overcommitting the Town based on schematic-level information.

This memorandum is intended to assist the Town Council in distinguishing between conceptual feasibility and implementation readiness, and to ensure that any further consideration of the FORF proposal is grounded in a complete, defensible technical record.

Attachment 1

Technical Review of FORF Proposal Presented to the Town Council on January 8, 2026

A technical review of the slide presentation prepared by the Friends of Ross Firehouse (FORF) for the Ross Town Council on January 8th (the "FORF Slide Deck") was conducted focusing on technical feasibility of construction and implementation of the concept as proposed.

This Technical Review Memorandum identifies several areas where the FORF submittal does not yet demonstrate technical feasibility or implementation readiness, including code compliance, flood resilience, constructability, interim operations, police facility adequacy, cost certainty, and CEQA pathway. These observations are consistent with the conclusions of the Section 9212 fiscal impact report.

The brief review outlined below provides an evaluation of the slide deck for:

- Technical accuracy
- Completeness
- Consistency with accepted public-sector planning and project management practices
- Alignment with the Town's Elections Code Section 9212 fiscal impact report
- Suitability for reliance in municipal decision-making

Analysis:

The FORF Slide Deck functions primarily as an advocacy and illustrative presentation, not as a technical implementation plan. While it presents conceptual architectural imagery and simplified narratives intended to demonstrate feasibility, it overstates certainty and understates risk in several material areas.

The presentation does not provide sufficient technical detail to demonstrate:

- Compliance with the initiative's controlling requirement to meet "current public safety facility requirements"
- A viable floodplain and essential-services resilience strategy
- Constructability and phasing while maintaining operations
- Interim relocation and continuity of police and emergency services
- A defined CEQA and permitting pathway
- A complete and reliable project cost

Accordingly, the FORF Slide Deck should not be relied upon as evidence that the initiative can be implemented quickly, at the stated cost, or with minimal fiscal, operational, or environmental impact.

The FORF Slide Deck, similarly to their report, is framed to:

- Visually contrast rehabilitation of the existing building with new construction
- Emphasize historic preservation and reduced site disturbance
- Present conceptual flood mitigation and phasing narratives
- Characterize costs and schedules as favorable and achievable

However, the slide deck:

1. Does not include a code analysis
2. Does not include engineered floodproofing
3. Does not include a phasing or interim operations plan
4. Does not include a CEQA or permitting analysis
5. Does not reconcile cost assumptions with identified risks

Technical Review by Topic

A. Architectural Design and Historic Preservation

The slide deck presents architectural renderings and diagrams emphasizing preservation of the historic structure and Spanish Colonial Revival character.

Technical Review Assessment:

While preservation goals are clearly articulated, architectural imagery alone does not demonstrate regulatory feasibility. Historic preservation does not negate requirements related to:

- Seismic performance
- Floodplain compliance
- Accessibility
- Essential facility operation
- Security and functional separation

The slide deck conflates architectural desirability with regulatory and operational feasibility, which are distinct considerations.

B. Scope and Constructability

The slide deck characterizes the project as a limited rehabilitation with minimal new construction. However, the accompanying structural narrative (prepared by KNSE) anticipates removal of essentially all interior components, including mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

Technical Review Assessment:

This scope is more accurately characterized as substantial reconstruction, not light rehabilitation. The slide deck does not address:

- Unknown conditions typical of older public buildings
- Hazardous materials and abatement risks
- Structural integration challenges
- Construction risk and schedule sensitivity

Without predesign investigations, constructability risk remains unresolved.

C. Floodplain and Resilience Strategy

The slide deck presents conceptual flood mitigation strategies relying on barrier systems, pre-deployment measures, and elevation of certain functions.

Technical-review Assessment:
These strategies are conceptual and not engineered. The presentation does not identify:

- Design flood elevation or freeboard
- Wet versus dry floodproofing methodology
- Deployment protocols or reliability
- Failure modes or redundancy
- Impacts to access, egress, and emergency response during flood events

For an essential services facility, flood mitigation must be demonstrably reliable. Conceptual barrier strategies alone do not appear to satisfy this requirement.

D. Phasing and Interim Operations
The slide deck asserts that construction can be phased to minimize disruption to police and emergency services.

Technical Review Assessment:
No phasing diagrams, interim operations plans, or temporary facilities strategies are provided. Given the anticipated interior demolition and MEP replacement, significant displacement of existing operations is likely.
The slide deck does not demonstrate how:

- Police operations remain functional
- Communications and dispatch continuity is maintained
- Public access and security are preserved
- Emergency response readiness is ensured during construction

This omission is significant given the displacement impacts identified in the Town's Section 9212 report.

E. CEQA and Permitting Assertions
The slide deck suggests that rehabilitation may avoid preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and be processed expeditiously.

Technical Review Assessment:
The presentation provides no legal or technical analysis to support these assertions. Floodplain work, hazardous materials remediation, essential facility upgrades, and interim operations all raise potential CEQA considerations. Absent a formal environmental analysis, claims of CEQA exemption or streamlined review are speculative and should not be relied upon.

F. Cost and Schedule Representations
The slide deck references the Alten Construction Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) estimate to suggest cost feasibility.

Technical-review Assessment:
ROM estimates at schematic design stage carry significant uncertainty. The slide deck does not clearly account for:

- Floodproofing systems
- Interim operations and temporary facilities
- Hazardous materials abatement
- Full essential-facility MEP systems
- Security and communications hardening
- Code upgrade triggers

The Town's Section 9212 report identifies cost uncertainty and funding displacement as material risks. The slide deck does not resolve these issues.

G. Staffing and "Reliability" Metrics
The slide deck repeats the Jensen Hughes framing that closure of Station 18 results in a "96% drop in reliability" and "0% reliability."

Technical-review Assessment:
The metric measures the probability of a Ross-based engine responding, not the reliability of fire service delivery. While mathematically accurate under that definition, it is not a standard fire-service reliability metric and overstates service degradation by conflating station location with system performance. This framing is rhetorically well written but technically misleading if interpreted as a loss of emergency service.

V. Consistency with Election Code Section 9212 Findings
The FORF Slide Deck does not negate the Town's Election Code Section 9212 findings and, in several respects, reinforces them:

- Capital costs remain uncertain
- Funding sources are unresolved
- Displacement impacts are unaddressed
- CEQA and permitting risks remain
- Implementation timelines are speculative

The slide deck does not provide new technical evidence sufficient to alter the conclusions of the Town's fiscal impact analysis.

VI. Conclusion
Based on the analysis of the FORF presentation and this technical review:

1. The FORF Slide Deck is appropriate for illustrative and advocacy purposes.
2. It does not constitute a technical demonstration of feasibility or compliance.
3. It should not be relied upon as evidence that the initiative can be implemented:
    - At the stated cost
    - On the implied timeline
    - Without significant displacement
    - Without material CEQA and permitting risk

Further technical work would be required before any such conclusions could be supported.

MARY MCGRATH | ARCHITECTS

January 6, 2026
David Kelly
Project Manager
Town of Ross
PO Box 320
Ross, CA 94957
dkelley@townofrossca.gov

RE: FORF Proposal

Dear Mr. Kelly:

We have reviewed the Friends of Ross Firehouse (FORF) proposal and believe that since the proposal is to significantly renovate and expand the existing facility this leads to requiring seismic, accessibility and life safety improvements to current codes at all affected areas. Below we have provided comments on both the fire station and police station layouts for consideration by the Town.

Although the layout is at a conceptual level we would ask for clarity on the approach to accessibility compliance. For example, some renovated and expanded areas of the building do not meet accessibility requirements as described by the CBC. Selected examples include:

- Fire Department Watch Entrance
- ADA Restroom at Lobby
- Reception Office at Lobby
- Interview, Locker Rooms and Storage Rooms at PD
- Office at PD
- FF restrooms at second floor (50% need to be accessible)
- Stairway from decontamination zone to apparatus bay
- Lack of ADA clearances at fitness equipment
- Door clearances are not met at the Turnout Room

The life safety upgrades driven from the expansion of the second floor will require a second exit from that level and a 1-hour fire separation and secondary protection of all structural elements supporting the second floor above. The second exit does not appear on the drawings, and it is unclear if the 1- hour occupancy separation construction scope of work has been included in the Alten Bid. In addition, there is not a legal exit from the apparatus bay to the building exterior. Other life safety items typical in this comprehensive of a renovation includes the addition of fire sprinklers, fire alarm, smoke detectors in living areas, automatic transfer switch at the generator, etc. We would recommend asking for clarity on the Alten Bid to what extent these items are included. A fire riser was not shown on the drawings.

MARY MCGRATH | ARCHITECTS

The floor plan appears to not provide all the program areas necessary to support a five-person station with a 6th person in the future. Shortfalls include:

- Insufficient number of turnout lockers
- Insufficient number of personnel lockers
- Insufficient number of dayroom chairs
- Lack of secure and conditioned medical supply storage
- No hose storage or Ice machine locations
- Workshop location in apparatus bay prevents access to the rear of the ambulance for gurney loading.

The fire station layout does not reflect the best practices of fire station design. There are three areas that this plan falls short.

- Since the early 1990's, providing gender privacy has been a goal in the fire service. In this proposed layout, there no private sleeping rooms or dressing areas included to provide gender privacy. Providing this type of privacy is a standard practice in the fire service.
- In the last two decades, the removal of sources of carcinogens from the workplace and living quarters has emerge as an especially important goal in fire station design. There have been many studies which have identified that workplace contamination has been a cause of the increased rate of cancer in fire fighters. The proposed plan has the decontamination spaces and source for contaminates in the center of the station and on the only path of travel to and from the living quarters to the apparatus bay. This would never be acceptable in a new station design and is contrary to the goal of removing carcinogens from the fire station.
- The proposal to pre-stage the apparatus bay when a flood warning is issued blocks the egress for the public works personnel and equipment from leaving the site.

The Police Department layout is missing several program spaces including:

- An armory
- Secure interview room
- Patrol equipment room.
- Duty-bag room
- Two-sided evidence lockers and evidence processing area.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our observations on the FORF proposal. Please let us know if you have any questions.

MARY MCGRATH | ARCHITECTS

Sincerely,

Mary McGrath
President
Mary McGrath Architects

Attachment 3
Ross Police Department Memorandum

TO: Christa Johnson, Town Manager

FROM: Raffaello Pata, Police Chief

RE: Review of FORF's Documents for Fire Station

DATE: January 5, 2026

On January 5, 2026, I reviewed the documents submitted to the Town by the FORF group. I found these documents attached to the link: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yC41jf_TmedlyIh-NV9f_-A0Ne8JkNRW?usp=sharing

I accessed this link on January 2, 2026, and again on January 5, 2026.

Upon my review of the proposal submitted to the Town and based upon my training and 41 years of experience, having worked in 5 police spaces (Headquarters, Detective Facility and Substations) and visited and worked from at least 12 additional police stations across the state, I find the proposal in its current form for the rehabilitation of this space to be inadequate for the day to day operation of a police department, much less a natural or other critical incident.

I have worked in a police station where a rehabilitation project in the 1990's was executed by the City of San Rafael. They tried to rehabilitate the police station instead of build a new facility. The cost of that project was considerable then, but did not extend the life of the police station. It ultimately cost the city more because we had to move and rent new spaces for the police. After the rehabilitation, the facility was still not adequate. The rehabilitation essentially moved walls, added paint, renamed or repurposed offices and purchased new furniture. I see a similar trend with this proposal.

San Rafael eventually could not rehabilitate the police station (and Fire Headquarters, built in 1917), any further and would have to be relocated across the street. This required a new build into a modern, functional Public Safety Center, one that recognizes the challenges and needs of both disciplines.

I recognize the scope of FORF's report is to rehabilitate the existing building(s) with an emphasis on the Fire Station. In fact, next to nothing is mentioned about the police station in the submitted reports. Page 1 of KNSE Structural Engineering, dated November 19, 2025, simply mentions the 'vacated Ross Fire Station, Police Station, and Paramedic facilities' in the first paragraph of the report. That is the total context of the words Police Station.

In the BRW Architects report, dated December 15, 2025 there is no mention of the Police Station. Of note is that in the biography of their firm profile, they call out 375 Fire Stations they have worked on, but zero Police Stations.

The Alten Construction letter, dated December 4, 2025 makes no mention of the Ross Police Station, however, they do have experience in public saftey centers, to include the new San Rafael Public Safety Center, that houses the Fire and Police Department.

Another study was conducted by Jensen Hughes Inc. This study, dated December 15, 2025 mentioned the Police Department 6 times in their report. The context is acknowledging it's existence for the first time on page 9 of 56 in section 4.1 "The Ross Fire Station." In that segment, it recognized that the 1982 consolidation of the police and fire department. It then simply notes that the police department is co-located in the Fire Station facility. In fact, the Police station is a stand alone facility separate from the Fire Station, but connected by a hallway to the old Fire Bay.

The next mention of the police station in this report is on page 10 of 56, in section 4.2 "Town of Ross Redevelopment Plan." In the first paragraph is speaks of new construction and facilities for the Paramedics and Police. The forth recgonition of the police station is the word Police under a photograph of the sign in front of the station. Figure 6, Page 10 of 56.

On page 12 of 56, in the first paragraph, the Jensen Hughes Staffing Report again mentioned the merger in 1982 of the police department with the fire department. The final mention of the police is on page 28 of 56, calling out our budget and current staffing. Nothing is mentioned about our staffing use of our facility, the demographics of our staff or any other function of the police department. Additionally, I did not see anywhere in this report the police department's response to medical calls and how or if there was an impact or collaborative benefit with our response. Again, this report and the biographical information show a specialty toward the fire service and no indication of experience specific to police operations.

It seems the "rehabilitation" of the police station was not the main focus of this study. As you know, this police station was never designed or intended to be a police or public safety center. My understanding from the past chief is this was a residence. Evidence of that is apparent in the layout of the station.

No where in the attached layout did I see any plans for the following functions of police stations:

- Secure entry and parking for suspect delivery to the station
- Secure and separate entry for officers and equipment
- Drug evidence safety ventilation hood and processing area
- Evidence processing area, Finger printing dust, chemical processing of prints
- Sleep room for officers who have court, or have to work long hours due to rain and fire danger.

Attachment 4

Initial (Preliminary) Technical Review of FORF Concept

Ross Town Council | January 2026

Purpose and Scope of Review

- Town staff Conducted preliminary evaluation of FORF Concept Proposal
  - Evaluated technical accuracy and completeness
  - Assess consistency with public-sector planning and project management practices
  - Review alignment with Elections Code Section 9212 fiscal impact report
  - Determine suitability for reliance in municipal decision-making

Note: Town staff's review was limited due to review time, is preliminary and does **not** evaluate policy preferences or community sentiment.

Big Picture

- FORF Concept Proposal functions as advocacy
- Presents architectural renderings/design concepts developed privately without public input.
  - FORF proposal is not a technical implementation plan.
  - Risk significantly understated in several material areas.
  - FORF proposal conflicts with the Council Adopted 2023 Facilities Master Plan.

What the FORF Concept Proposal Does / Does Not Do

- Effectively communicates preservation goals and conceptual layouts
- Should be treated as illustrative and informational
- Initiative cannot be implemented quickly, at the stated cost, with minimal fiscal, operational, or environmental impacts:
  - Does not demonstrate compliance with current public safety facility requirements (Essential Services Act, ADA, California Building Code)
  - Does not establish flood resilience, provide a realistic CEQA pathway, or plan for operational continuity of Police station and other civic uses.

Architectural Design and Constructability

- Historic preservation goals are clearly articulated.
  - Structural narrative anticipates near-total interior demolition
  - Proposal includes replacement of all mechanical, electrical & Plumbing (MEP) systems
  - Scope is more accurately characterized as substantial reconstruction verse rehabilitation

Conflicts with Master Plan

- Prioritizes exclusive or dominant reuse of the existing Fire/Police building for fire services
- Assumes police functions can be:
  - Co-located during rehabilitation, or
  - Temporarily or permanently displaced without detailed analysis
- Does not evaluate downstream impacts on other Civic Center uses

Conflicts with Facilities Master Plan

- Does not provide driveway alignment with Laurel Grove
- Eliminates additional staff and public parking and proposed access from Lagunitas
- Reduces planned Police Department size and eliminates secure parking/secure Sallie Port for Police vehicles
- Likely require alternative location for other planned civic uses (e.g Public Works Corp. Yard)
- Unresolved issues with fire engine turning movements from Sir Francis Drake

Conflicts with Ross Valley Paramedic Authority Lease Agreement

- Conflicts with the legal description identifying the lease area for the RVPA Paramedic Facility
- Would require renegotiation with RVPA to amend the lease agreement
- Impede the Town's ability to construct the Paramedic facility by 2029
- Town would incur additional staff time and legal expenses
- Jeopardizes long term viability of paramedic location in Ross

Independent Architectural Review – Key Findings (Mary McGrath, FAIA)

- Proposed scope triggers full seismic, accessibility, and life-safety upgrades*
- Multiple CBC accessibility deficiencies identified
- Required second exit and fire separations not shown
- Alten ROM scope unclear on required life-safety systems
- Fire and police programs do not meet operational requirements
- Layout conflicts with modern fire station health and safety best practices

*** Confirmed by the Town's Building Official**

Code Compliance Triggered by Scope

Because the FORF proposal involves significant renovation and expansion, it triggers seismic, accessibility, and life-safety upgrades to current code for all affected areas.

Why this matters:

Directly contradicts implication that the project could avoid full code compliance*

It elevates the project from “rehabilitation” to substantial reconstruction.

It has direct implications for:

- Project Cost
- Project Implementation Schedule
- CEQA pathway
- Constructability

*Due to the level of deconstruction proposed in the FORF proposal the project will be considered, from a code standpoint, the same as the construction of a new fire station. Both replacement and retrofit require full compliance with the California Building Standards Code using the requirements for critical facilities – Building Official Greg McFann

Accessibility Deficiencies (CBC Compliance)

McGrath identifies multiple areas that do not meet CBC accessibility requirements, including:

- Fire Department Watch Entrance
- ADA restroom at lobby
- Lobby reception office
- PD interview, locker, storage rooms
- PD office
- Firefighter restrooms (second floor – 50% must be accessible)
- Stairway from decontamination zone to apparatus bay
- Fitness equipment clearances
- Turnout room door clearances

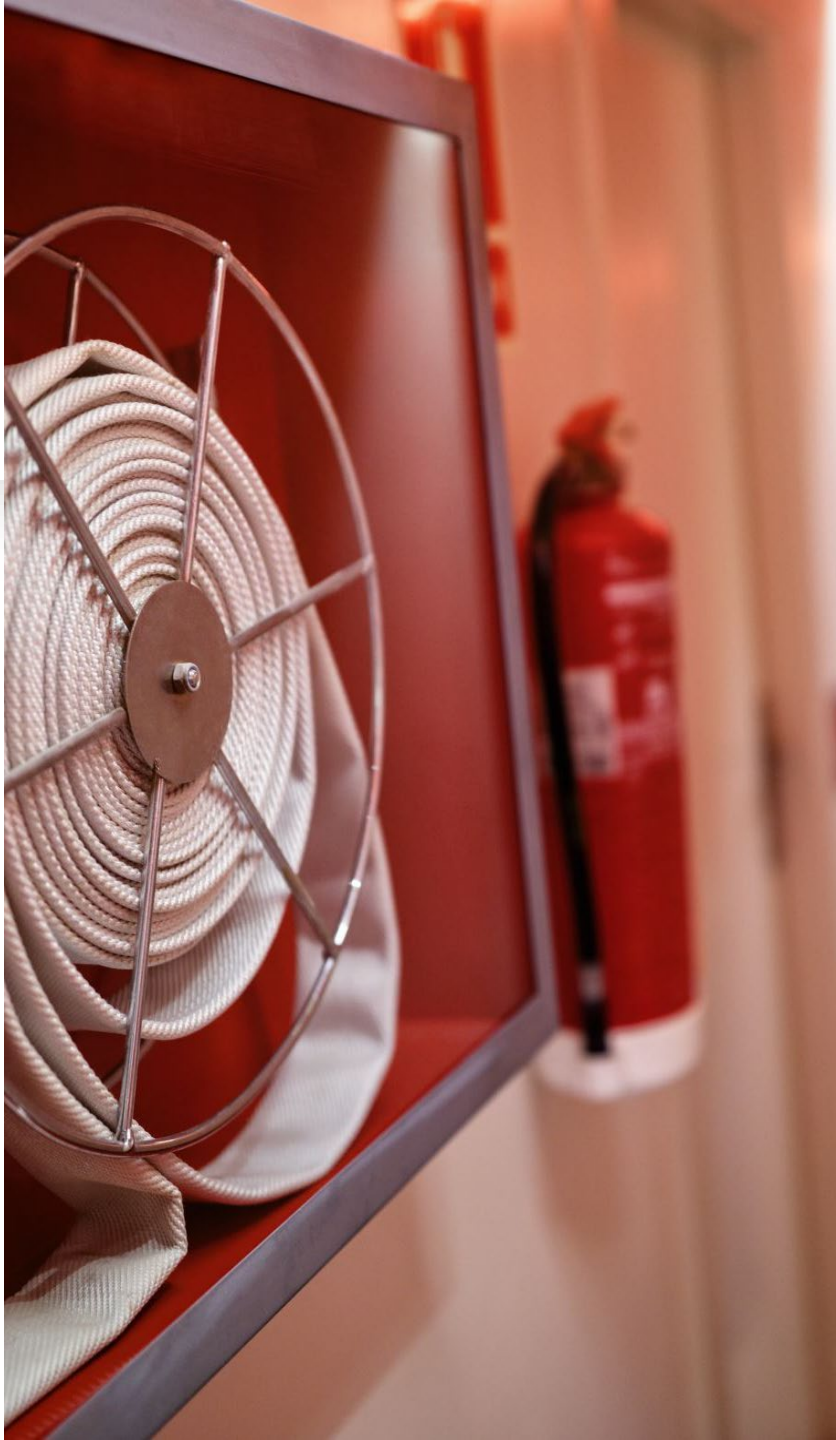
Life Safety Deficiencies (Egress, Separation, Fire Protection)

- **Life Safety Deficiencies (Egress, Separation, Fire Protection)**
- **Key findings:**
- Expansion of the second floor requires:
  - A second exit, which is not shown
  - A 1-hour fire separation
  - Fire protection of all supporting structural elements
- No legal exit from the apparatus bay to the exterior
- Unclear whether Alten's bid includes:
  - 1-hour separations
  - Fire sprinklers
  - Fire alarm system
  - Smoke detection in living areas
  - Generator automatic transfer switch
- No fire riser shown

Fire Station Program Deficiencies (Operational Capacity)

Plan does not adequately support a 5-person station with room for a paramedic trainee:

- Insufficient turnout lockers
- Insufficient personnel lockers
- Insufficient dayroom seating
- No secure, conditioned medical supply storage
- No hose storage or ice machine locations
- Workshop location blocks ambulance gurney access



Failure to Meet Fire Station Best Practices

Three major departures from modern fire station design standards:

1. No private sleeping or dressing rooms

- Contradicts decades of accepted practice in the fire service
- Gender Privacy

2. Carcinogen Exposure Control

- Decontamination and contaminant sources are:
  - Centrally located
  - On the only path between living quarters and apparatus bay
- This is explicitly contrary to modern cancer-prevention design principles

3. Flood Pre-Staging Conflict

- Pre-staging apparatus during flood events blocks public works egress

Police Department Program Deficiencies

The PD layout is missing essential spaces including:

- Armory
- Secure interview room
- Patrol equipment room
- Duty-bag room
- Two-sided evidence lockers
- Evidence processing area

The Police Chief's independent operational review concludes that the FORF proposal, as presented, does not provide a functional or secure police facility and does not demonstrate how police operations could be maintained during or after rehabilitation.

FORF Proposal Does Not Adequately Address Police Operations

Chief Pata's finding:
The proposal is focused almost entirely on the fire station. Police operations are largely ignored or treated as incidental.

Supporting observations:

- KNSE's structural report mentions "Police Station" only once, in passing.
- BRW's architectural report does not meaningfully address police functions and highlights experience with fire stations only.
- Alten's cost letter does not describe police-specific scope.
- Jensen Hughes' staffing report mentions police only tangentially and does not analyze:
  - How police use the facility
  - Demographics or operational needs
  - Police response to medical calls
  - Collaborative or co-location impacts

Police Operations Review – Chief's Findings

Chief Pata identifies numerous missing police station functions, including:

- Secure entry and parking for suspect delivery
- Secure and separate entry for officers and equipment
- Drug evidence safety ventilation hood
- Evidence processing area (fingerprinting, chemical processing)
- Secure evidence handling and storage
- Officer sleep room for extended duty, court, or emergencies

Floodplain and Essential Services Resilience

- Flood mitigation strategies are conceptual, not engineered
  - No defined design flood elevation/freeboard, (may be in conflict with Town's Floodplain Ordinance)
  - deployment reliability is uncertain

  Essential Services requires demonstrably reliable flood protection

Alten Cost Estimate and Staffing Metrics

- Alten construction cost estimate is Rough Order of Magnitude based on schematic-level design
  - Subject to significant uncertainty (does not appear to cover entire Civic Center)
  - Key costs not fully addressed (floodproofing, interim operations, abatement)
  - Reliability metric measures station location, not service delivery

Cost Estimate

Alten ROM scope unclear on required life-safety systems :

- 1-hour separations
- Fire sprinklers / Fire alarm system
- Smoke detection in living areas
- Generator automatic transfer switch
- The construction bid does not carry a design contingency nor escalation, only a bid contingency.
- Unclear if the cost amounts from previous projects are escalated.

Operational Cost Analysis

Based on Citygate's review, it was determined:

- Fire Crew staffing plan too high for an independent department; 17 vs 10 actual FTE
- Firefighter personnel costs not accurate; did not use actuals, especially for benefits
- Chief officer staffing insufficient and can't meet 24/7 command/safety needs
- Options discussed for contracting with other Fire Departments are not viable
- Station crew floor plan is inadequate

Phasing, Interim Operations, and CEQA

- No phasing diagrams or interim operations plans provided
  - Displacement of police and emergency services likely during construction
  - CEQA and permitting assertions are speculative without formal analysis of critical environmental issues (e.g. construction impacts, hazards (mold asbestos), tribal consultation, air quality, traffic safety, water quality)

Alignment with Section 9212 Report

- Capital and Operational costs remain uncertain
  - Viable funding sources are not identified
  - Displacement and CEQA risks remain unaddressed
  - FORF Concept Proposal does not alter Section 9212 conclusions

Independent architectural review confirms that rehabilitation of the existing facility would require substantial code upgrades, expanded scope, and additional cost, reinforcing Section 9212 findings regarding fiscal and implementation risk

Bottom Line for Council

- FORF Concept Proposal is appropriate for illustrative and advocacy purposes
  - Does not constitute a technical demonstration of feasibility or compliance
  - Further technical work and review required before implementation decisions
  - Would require significant amendment of the Facilities Master Plan
  - Does not identify a viable funding source for capital costs and on-going (into perpetuity) operational expenses